



February 2016

Coaching Tip of the Month for Staff

Identifying and Managing Workplace Stress

Let's face it – working in social services can be emotionally draining. More than almost any other profession, it is important that we can identify and manage our own stress.

When we are stressed we are less patient and empathetic, and we are more likely to fall into old habits that do not align with coaching. For example, we may be more likely to tell a participant what to do, respond emotionally when participants are late or rude, or give unsolicited and unwanted advice. Reducing stress isn't just good for our bodies, minds and overall happiness, it makes us better at our jobs and *better coaches*.

This February, try intentionally incorporating new habits that reduce your work-related stress. Try one of the tips below, or reflect on what else would make a big impact for you. Consider making a stress reduction SMART Goal with your co-workers or friends and encourage each other to stay on track.



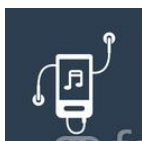
Move

Sweat out the stress! Go for a short walk with a coworker, set an alarm reminding you to stand and stretch, or commit to taking the stairs every day.



Prioritize

Rome wasn't built in a day. Start the day with your most daunting tasks, create "planning time", and practice saying "no" when possible.



Relax

Feel yourself getting overwhelmed or frustrated? Listen to your favorite song or look at a picture that makes you happy. Schedule tough participants right before lunch, so you can decompress before your next meeting.



Connect

Make time during the work day, or after, to connect with the people around you. (Research shows this reduces stress a lot!) Call an old friend on your drive home, take time to let coworkers know you appreciate them.

Additional Resources:

- Excellent tools and resources from University of Buffalo School of Social Work: <https://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit.html>
- Clear, simple steps to reduce workplace stress: <http://www.apa.org/helpcenter/work-stress.aspx>
- Practical resource and quick read: <http://psychcentral.com/blog/archives/2011/07/11/10-practical-ways-to-handle-stress/>