

Stress and Self-Care Strategies

At one time or another, your important role on the Crisis Management Team may leave you feeling overwhelmed and pushed to your limit. As an important resource to your team, you may also feel vulnerable, especially when dealing with highly stressful or traumatic events. These feelings are normal responses to challenging situations, and it is important that you practice good self-care so that you can be your best for your team, your family, and yourself.

Causes of Increased Stress

- Increased demand for your time (often during significant events)
- Limited resources
- Juggling multiple tasks
- Lack of control over a situation
- High expectations placed on you
- Difficulties maintaining balance of team needs and self-care needs (e.g., not enough time in the day to be with family, eat well, sleep, or exercise)

Signs of Being Overwhelmed

- Anger
- Depression
- Mental/physical exhaustion
- Irritability
- Sleep and/or appetite disturbance
- Unreasonable personal expectations
- Reluctance to take time off
- Feelings of not being caught up/not having enough time
- Feeling there is more work than you are able to do
- Headaches
- Difficulty concentrating

Self-Care Strategies

- **Rely on your support systems.** Spend time with supportive people in your life. Talk about your concerns; enjoy sharing common interests and conversation with them for a while.
- **Make time, several times a day, to take a break.** Leave work for lunch or a walk, find a quiet place to meditate, listen to relaxing music, or practice breathing exercises.
- **Get enough rest and nourishment.** Do your best to maintain regular, routine sleeping and eating habits. Put away work materials or highly stimulating reading, turn off the television, or stop other activities at least an hour before bedtime. Include fruits, vegetables, and whole grains in your diet.
- **Take time to engage in activities you enjoy, even if only briefly.** Take part in personal creative pursuits, athletic activities, attending a show or event, or eating out with friends. Don't forget that play is an important balancing factor against work, even if it is in small doses during high-demand times.
- **Practice good stress management in your personal life.** Avoid increased use of alcohol or misuse of drugs. Schedule time to practice relaxation methods, engage in physical exercise, and spend time with friends or family.



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- **Set realistic goals and expectations.** Focus on what's important and keep perspective of the big picture. Determine the one or two most critical, achievable tasks for you to accomplish each day and focus on achieving those goals.
- **Delegate when you can.** When your stress or workload is high, it can be difficult to let go and rely on others to complete tasks. Whenever possible, assign tasks to others on your team so you can focus on those tasks that require your expertise.
- **Stay organized.** Arrange to-do lists and categorize tasks by high, medium, and low priorities. Keep a calendar of deadlines so that you can plan your schedule.
- **Set good boundaries.** Remember that saying “no” to some requests allows you to say “yes” to the things that are most important.
- **Ask for resources you need.** Some demands may be beyond your area of expertise or are more than you can handle alone. It is OK to recognize and acknowledge that you need additional assistance and support to responsibly meet your team's needs.

If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed and struggling to cope, **support is here for you** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Members of the NFL family—current and former players, coaches, team and league staff, and their family members—can call the independent, confidential NFL Life Line at **(800) 506-0078**, or go to www.NFLLifeLine.org to chat online or take a self-check quiz. Members of the NFL family can also access counseling and mental health support through the NFL's Employee Assistance Program by calling Cigna at **(866) 421-8628**.