



Colorado Lawyer Assistance Program

Mitigating Stress: Self-Care for Lawyers

1. Become aware of sources of stress in your life. Make a comprehensive list.
2. Examine the different types of reactions you have to the stress:

| Emotional | Behavioral | Physical |
|--|---|--|
| Depression, anger, nervousness, tension, irritability, overly serious, diminished sense of humor | Withdrawing from family/friends, excessiveness, avoidance of issues, scapegoating, passive aggressiveness | Headaches, digestive problems, frequent colds, poor concentration, change in sleep habits, adrenaline rushes followed by fatigue |

3. Recognize what can be changed: Can you avoid or eliminate the stressor? Can the intensity of the stressor be reduced? Can you shorten your exposure to the stressor?
4. Reduce the intensity of your reaction to the stress: Breathe, slow down your thoughts, orient yourself to your surroundings, place the stress in perspective and do not catastrophize the situation.
5. Build your physical and psychological reserves to be able to cope with stress: Exercise, meditate, develop a hobby, create a mantra or calming phrase, focus on positive or humorous aspects of situations rather than the negative, improve your eating habits, increase your leisure time, and stay on a consistent sleep schedule.
6. Build and maintain your emotional reserves: Develop mutually supportive relationships, pursue realistic goals that are meaningful to you, practice living at a slower pace, concentrate on one task at a time, be kind and patient with those around you, and be kind and patient with yourself.
7. Let go of what you cannot control: Identify what you learned from the situation, identify your role in the situation, and put yourself in the other person's shoes before you let it go. Your stress hurts you more than the person or situation that is the source of the stress. Put wings on it and let it fly!
8. Organize and prioritize the sources of stress that you do have control over: Clean your living and work space, create a manageable schedule for your time (focus balancing work with personal time), and tackle any situation or project you have been avoiding in small steps.