

Six Steps to Managing a Stressful Situation

1. **STOP** – Just for just a moment, stop what you are doing and the continuous flow of negative thoughts and judgments about the situation.
2. **BREATHE** – Take three deep breaths. Inhale deeply and exhale slowly. Imagine cooling a bowl of hot soup. Feel your abdomen rise and fall, releasing any tension in your body as you exhale.
3. **STRETCH** – Release the tension in your body. Open you arms wide. Reach up to the sky. Touch your toes. Clench and unclench your fists. Stretch out your fingers. Open your jaw wide. Stick out your tongue. Open your eyes wide.
4. **REFLECT** – Consider what is really going on. Just the facts. Is the situation a crisis? What can you do now to cope? Do what works.
5. **CHOOSE** – Recognize that you have choices. You can make a choice about your thoughts about the situation. You can make a choice about how you will react. You can make a choice to ask for help. Notice what your choices are.
6. **ENCOURAGE** – As you breathe out, say to yourself a simple word or phrase of encouragement, such as: “Calm,” “Wait, step back,” “This will pass,” or “I’m doing the best I can right now.”

Keep breathing, slowly and deeply.

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