






## 10 Tips for Navigating Stress and Developing Resilience

Warfighters and their families are sometimes asked to do things other people might not be expected to do, face unusually challenging situations or make tough decisions in a split-second. You can build resilience and use positive coping skills to protect yourself from the negative effects of high stress situations. Use the following ten tips to navigate stress; grow in your relationships with your leaders, friends and family; and thrive in your community.

- 1 Identify sources of stress**
  - Make a list of what causes your stress, recognize situations or problems that trigger stress and plan ahead to navigate and avoid unnecessary.
  - ✓ Lowers the chance of unexpected stress.
  - ✓ Allows you to manage stress that you can handle and remove unnecessary stressors in your life.
- 2 Create a strong social support network**
  - Turn to a support system of peers, friends and family that you trust.
  - Participate in activities you enjoy with others.
  - ✓ Helps you maintain connectedness with others and develop positive coping behaviors for managing difficult situations.
  - ✓ Builds relationships and serves as an outlet for reducing stress.
- 3 Make healthy living a priority**
  - Eat healthful food and exercise regularly.
  - Develop good sleep habits. Aim for seven to eight hours in a 24-hour period.
  - ✓ Helps your mind and body better deal with stress and repair themselves.
- 4 Learn self-relaxation techniques and breathing exercises**
  - Take some down time to rest, recover and regroup.
  - ✓ Helps calm you down when you are feeling stressed and overwhelmed.
- 5 Keep a positive outlook**
  - Find opportunities to laugh and comfort yourself, such as participating in the activities and hobbies you enjoy the most.
  - Look to people who deal with stress well as role models. Try to view the world from a hopeful and positive perspective.
  - ✓ Opens opportunities for growth in stressful situations, and helps you view the glass as half full.

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## Accept limits and circumstances

- Put situations in perspective, accept things you cannot change and remember that change is a part of life.



- ✓ Develops mental flexibility and increased ability to bounce back and rebound.
- ✓ Resiliency is a skill you can learn and a foundation you can build upon.

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## Volunteer in your community

- Look for opportunities to volunteer and be of service to others in your community or at your command.



- ✓ Makes you feel good and connected to others and builds confidence.
- ✓ Being of service to others can make you more open to receiving help when you need it.

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## Seek meaning in life experiences

- Use experiences, positive and/or negative, as an opportunity to learn from past challenges and mistakes.



- ✓ Learning important life lessons helps you emerge stronger after navigating a stressful experience.
- ✓ Learn to laugh at your own mistakes.

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## Be responsible with your drinking

- Drinking too much alcohol can lead you to take risks you normally wouldn't take; drinking responsibly can prevent risky behavior.
- Understand your drinking habits by thinking about the reasons you are drinking and avoid heavy or binge drinking.



- ✓ Know your limits. Being drunk can affect your mood and influence your ability to cope with challenges and think things through before you make a decision.
- ✓ Leads to recognition of unhealthy drinking habits and whether or not you are using alcohol as a way to cope.

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## Talk to a health care provider

- *Take charge of your mental health:* schedule checkups regularly and keep a list of any concerns you may be experiencing.
- Contact a professionally trained health care consultant, mental health counselor or chaplain if you are experiencing psychological health care concerns.



- ✓ Seeking care early is a sign of strength.
- ✓ Help is readily available and works.