

HALT: GOOD STRESS MANAGEMENT

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Have you heard the acronym: HALT? Widely used in Alcoholic Anonymous it stands for *Hungry – Angry- Lonely - Tired*. Individuals in recovery are cautioned that feeling Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired – is a signal to HALT- stop - and re-group because they're in danger of relapse.

HALT is good stress-management advice. When we're unaware of our vulnerabilities, feeling hungry, angry, lonely, or tired, we become "out of sync," anxious, or depressed. How we care for ourselves when we're not stressed has a direct impact on our ability to cope. The main ingredient in good stress management is self-care: eating healthy, sleeping enough, creating a positive support system, and balancing emotions.

To increase your coping skills, follow these guidelines.

- 1.) HUNGRY -Do you get stressed and too busy to eat? Do you become irritable? Unable to focus? Do you forage for unsatisfying junk food which leaves you feeling unsatisfied and empty? Increase your nutritional awareness. Plan your meals and snacks. Think of food as fuel for your system. Want to stay emotionally healthy? Follow healthy eating habits.
- 2.) ANGRY –Pay attention to your feelings. If you're angry, talk –don't act. Take a time out. Breathe. Remove yourself from the situation. Anger causes us to act rashly and irrationally. Take control of your anger before it controls you!
- 3.) LONELY - Humans are social creatures. We *need* to feel we belong. When we're highly stressed, depressed or anxious, we isolate. Loneliness is a breeding ground for mood disorders. To cope well with stress we need a positive support system. Don't let excuses prevent you from creating a social network. Volunteer, join a support group, go to church, exercise in a group, or do something kind for someone else.
- 4.) TIRED - Fatigue makes us grumpy. When we're stressed, we often have problems sleeping. Our bodies need a certain amount of rest to function optimally. Take time out to rest, quiet your mind, and make sure you get a healthy amount of sleep.

If you or someone you know is feeling "down," anxious, or depressed, pay attention to how you feel – physically, mentally, and emotionally. See your doctor to rule out medical conditions, talk to friends, or call a professional for help.

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