

## De-Stress for Women

### Strategies for Managing Stress

#### **\*Relax regularly:**

Take time to slow down 'every day' especially when life is more hectic. Find a quiet spot, close your eyes, and take some slow deep breaths, inhaling and exhaling evenly for even just a few minutes. Research shows that slowing down, pausing and taking in just 6 deep breaths (doing this even once a day) has tremendous health benefits and helps reduce stress.

Conscious breathing, being aware of your breathing is a powerful meditation all on its own:

Follow your breath with your attention as it moves in and out of your body. Breathe into your body and feel your abdomen expanding and contracting slightly as you inhale and then as you exhale. Notice how your breath feels on the back of your throat as you inhale and exhale. Pay attention to your breath, and imaging the oxygen, fresh air you are breathing in, going into every cell of your body.

#### **\*Get enough rest:**

Without adequate sleep on an ongoing basis, and sleep that is restorative and uninterrupted, cortisol levels rise, making it more difficult for you to fully rest, or to manage daily stressors. Cortisol also suppresses your immune system making you more susceptible to flu, colds and disease.

#### **\*Manage your fears:**

Fear is a primary cause of stress, anxiety, worry and feeling overwhelmed. Fear of loss, fear of failure, fear of being hurt, fear of not measuring up, fear of not having enough time contributes to physical, mental and emotional stress. Fear keeps our attention in the past or in the future which impedes calmness:

- When you meditate or pay attention to your breathing, you are aware of the present moment and focused on your body which takes you out of your worrying mind.
- When you completely accept what is, you are able to let go mentally, and stop resisting the issue or problem. Anxiety and stress decreases as a result and you are more able to relax. Not easy to do, nevertheless it works.

#### **\*Stay Positive:**

Research shows that a positive outlook on life boosts your immune system. Think about what you are grateful for and write it down. Practice thinking about 5 things you are grateful for each morning and then each evening before you fall asleep. Think about what you do well, your positive attributes, characteristics, and accomplishments. Women tend to focus on what they are not able to do, their lack, instead of their worth.

#### **\*Get Connected:**

Find and maintain a supportive network of friends that suits your personality and your needs. Seek support when dealing with difficult events or challenges. Avoid or remove yourself from toxic and ongoing situations (i.e. bad relationships—work and home) as much as possible.