



**The Norman Knight Nursing Center
for Clinical & Professional Development**

PCAs Quick Reference: Moving From Stress to Resiliency

What is Stress? Stress is a normal reaction to a perceived threat to your well-being which results in a series of responses and adaptations by your body. Stress can affect the body in many ways including: the skin, stomach, pancreas, immune system, head, heart, intestines, reproductive system and joints and muscles.

What do you need to know? How to identify your sources of stress and how to develop strategies to manage them.

External sources of stress include: Social, Workplace, Environment, Major Life Changes and Unpredictable events.

Strategies to manage external sources of stress include: eating a healthy diet, being physically active, getting enough sleep, asking for help, using humor, learning to be assertive, practicing problem-solving and time management

Internal sources of stress include: Fears, Uncertainty, Lack of Control and Beliefs

Strategies to manage internal sources of stress: Reframing your thoughts, challenging negative thoughts, using relaxation techniques and talking with a trusted friend or counselor

What is the Relaxation Response? The relaxation response is a physiologic response that directly counters the body's fight or flight response to stress. It is a state of profound rest that can have a lasting effect throughout the day when practiced on a regular basis. (Dr. Herbert Benson)

Eliciting the Relaxation Response at Work: Mini mindful stretching, body scans, diaphragmatic breathing, cuing with a word (name of your favorite place) or cuing with a ritual (holding a warm cup of tea), basic yoga movements (shoulder shrugs, gentle neck rolls, wrist circles, touch each finger to your thumb and ankle circles) and meditation.

What is the role of the PCA (under the direction of the RN)? Daily practice! Work with the RN and other team members to support each other's daily stress reduction practice and self care.

- Work as a team to provide each other with breaks and lunches.
- Use humor, active listening and teamwork on the unit.
- Take advantage of the free services of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
- Take advantage of the free on-line digital Wellbeing Tool called myStrength at myStrength.com.

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