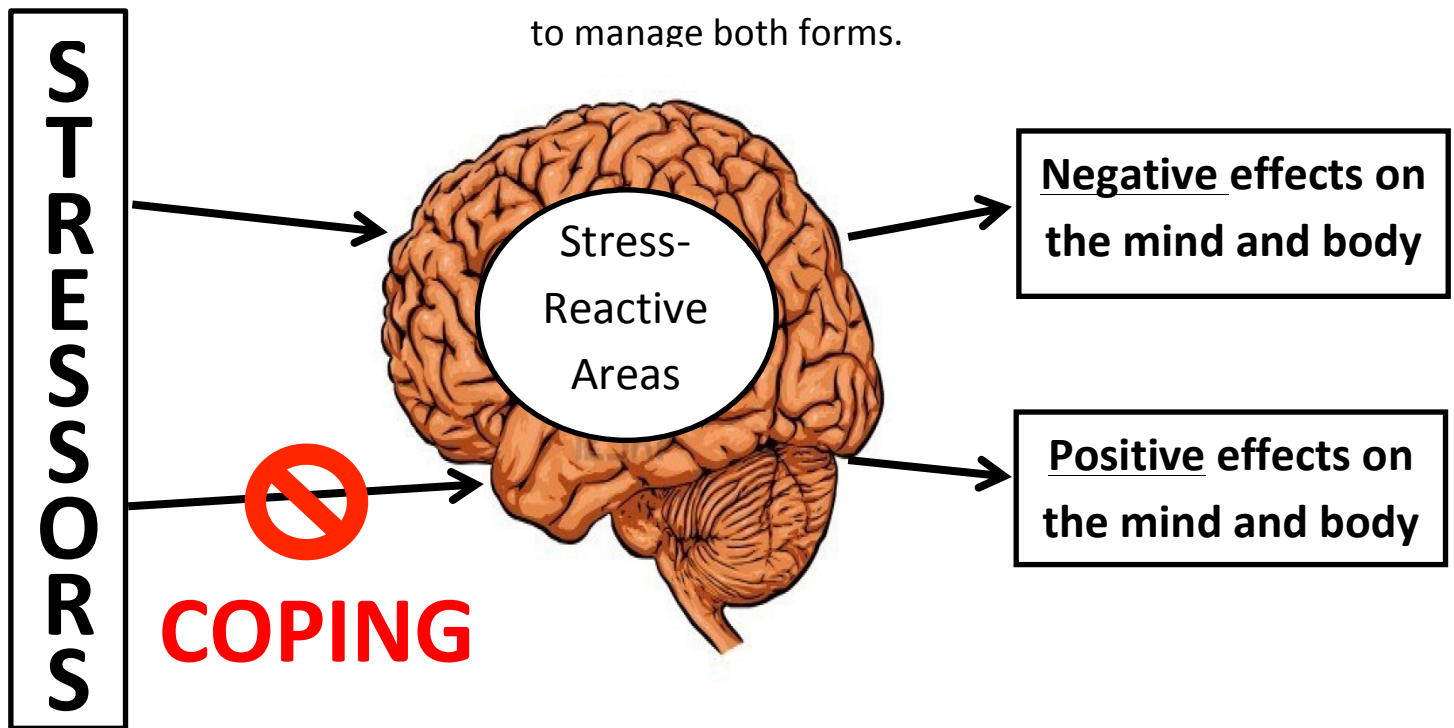




How to Cope with Stress and MS

What is Stress?

Stress is a result of inability to cope with an event that you observed or experienced. When you are unable to cope, the stress-reactive areas of your brain are activated and stress hormone levels in the blood increase. As a result, of the increase, you feel the mental and physical effects of stress. Stress can be acute and chronic and there are ways to manage both forms.



Negative Effects (not managed)

- Decreased ability to focus
- Depression
- Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- Decreased function of the immune system
- Exacerbations of autoimmune diseases
- Difficulty managing weights

Positive Effects (when managed)

- Happier
- Immune function is unaffected
- Autoimmune disease remain at baseline
- Less agitation
- Lower heart rate and blood pressure
- More energy and less fatigue
- Greater peace of mind

Don't forget to RELAX!

Reflection:

Take time to reflect on the things that add meaning, purpose, and joy to your life.
E.g. Spiritual or Religious activities

Expectations:

Be optimistic.

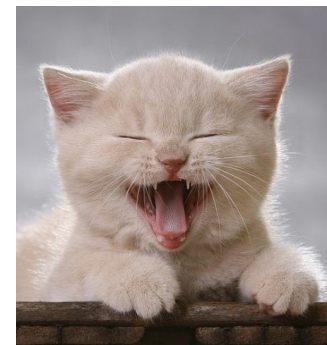
E.g. On each day, write or think about good things you did and interactions with others that you enjoyed.

Always remember IT IS OK TO MAKE MISTAKES; YOU DO MORE GOOD THAN BAD.



Laughter:

Increase sense of humor. Having a positive outlook and a sense of humor may be excellent stress buffers.



Acquaintances:

Participate in social interactions.

E.g. Get involved with the National MS Society events or find your Local Support Groups available at www.nationalmssociety.org

Exercise:

Increase Physical Fitness.

E.g. Walking is a great way to start.

Try Big Circles by holding medicine ball,

and rotating the ball clockwise and counterclockwise without bending arms.



The next time you are feeling stressed,

Try to use RELAX and see what works best for you!



More Information and Resources!

Information is provided from book

'Coping With Stress For Health And Wellness'

by Bruce S. Rabin, M.D., Ph.D.

The National MS Society has a chapter in Pittsburgh! Get involved with the local chapter through fundraising and volunteering!

For more information, you can go online and

Check out our website at ms.pitt.edu



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society