

In the United States, refugees face many new challenges that may cause stress. Stress is your response to upsetting events in your life. It can also be a reaction to many demands and pressures. But stress is just a part of life that everyone deals with. Stress can be dealt with if managed well. If left untreated, stress can be harmful or cause illness.

### IS STRESS THE SAME FOR EVERYONE?

People feel stress in different ways. Stress may be felt in your body, your mind, or with your relationships. Stress can lead to illness if it is not relieved. However, what is stressful for one person may not be for another.

Some causes of stress are:

- not having enough money or a good job
- loneliness
- painful memories
- separation from family

Some signs of stress are:

- feeling sad or nervous
- having difficulty breathing
- headaches
- muscle pain
- feeling tired all the time
- no appetite
- stomach pain
- drinking too much alcohol

### HOW CAN I RELIEVE STRESS?

Stress does not have to take control of your life. You can relieve stress by:

- doing relaxing activities such as deep breathing, meditation, listening to music, or reading
- talking to close family and friends
- becoming active outside of the house
- eating nutritious foods

#### Breathing Easier

Deep breathing and meditation calms the mind and decreases stress. Close your eyes and breathe deeply, slowly, and regularly. You should do this a few times each day. Additionally, listening to soft music helps to calm the mind.

#### Talking to Close Family and Friends

Talking to someone you trust, such as family or friends, is one of the best ways to work through your stress. They will listen to your problems and help you find ways to get rid of your stress. You could also talk to someone who has been or is going through the same stress that you are. Talking about what is bothering you and understanding that there are people who have the same problem is a good way to reduce your stress.

#### Becoming Active

Becoming active is a great way to reduce your stress. It allows your mind to focus on other things than the stress in your life. Make a daily

routine to go for a walk or visit your friends or neighbors.

#### Eating Healthy

Eating properly keeps you physically healthy. It is important to eat fruits, vegetables, proteins, and whole grains. Drink plenty of water and avoid alcohol. You should also avoid foods that are greasy.

If you don't feel better, even after doing these activities, there might be a bigger problem. It is important to see a doctor. Your doctor will discuss other things you could do to manage your stress.

### DO CHILDREN EXPERIENCE STRESS?

Refugee children not only face stress from their new life in the United States, but also from past experiences. Some refugee children suffer from health problems, nightmares, and have trouble settling into their new location. It is important to teach children how to manage their stress. Parents should also pay attention to signs of stress in their children as many do not understand the effects of stress.