

CALIFORNIA SCHOOLS



YOUR HEALTH, OUR PURPOSE

STRESS MANAGEMENT for Mental Well-Being Toolkit

01

Stress Less: *Your Daily
Five-Minute Reset*

02

Stress Management Calendar

03

Clean Sweep: *Declutter Your
Home & Workspace*

04

Daily Affirmations for Stress
Management

01 |

STRESS LESS: YOUR DAILY FIVE-MINUTE RESET

Managing stress is essential for mental well-being. By learning to manage and reduce stress, you can develop healthy habits and foster positive relationships.

The best part? You can integrate stress management practices into your daily routine with just five minutes a day!



Understanding the Impact of Stress

Stress can disrupt your thinking, behavior, heart rate, and breathing, often becoming unpredictable. While everyone experiences stress, it is particularly prevalent in those with a history of trauma.

Key symptoms include sudden feelings of panic or depression, intense emotions, and physical discomfort. Stress can distort reality, making safe situations appear threatening and impairing judgment, which can lead to repeated mistakes. Recovery may take hours or days, affecting your ability to be present, productive, responsible, and maintain relationships.

Common Signs of Stress

- ▶ Feeling disoriented or at a loss for words.
- ▶ Struggling to focus, attempting many tasks at once but completing none.
- ▶ Experiencing anger or rage.
- ▶ Numbness in body parts like hands, mouth, face, nose, or feet.

The Bright Side: **Stress Can Be Managed!**

Through practice and mindfulness, you can identify stress triggers and understand your reactions, equipping you to de-stress and restore emotional balance.

JUST *5 Minutes* CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Benefits of Stress Management for Your Mental Health



- ▶ Improved self-esteem
- ▶ Better sleep
- ▶ Decreased anxiety symptoms (i.e., panic attacks)
- ▶ Higher motivation
- ▶ Lower risk of medical issues (i.e., heart disease, high blood pressure)
- ▶ Improved communication and relationships
- ▶ ***AND MUCH MORE!***

Stress management isn't about eliminating feelings like stress, anxiety, anger, frustration, or fear—they're all part of being human. Instead, it's about being able to handle those feelings when they inevitably show up.

Stress Management Practices

If you're new to stress management techniques, start by setting dedicated time to do it. For example, you can set an alarm on your phone for 12:00 pm every day as a reminder to do a five-minute guided meditation. Or, begin your day with five minutes of stretching to ease into the morning.

Try different techniques and find what works best for you. As you consistently schedule these practices, they'll become a natural and familiar part of your routine.

Explore the following worksheets for different stress management techniques you can do in just five minutes! Or, create your own calendar (using the blank template) with your favorite ways to manage stress.

02 |

STRESS MANAGEMENT CALENDAR: CALENDAR PROMPTS

1

Take a few minutes to color for calm: Even a few minutes of coloring can reduce stress.

2

Close your eyes and visualize a relaxing scene (like your last vacation) and how you felt in that moment.

[Video: Journal Prompt: Memory Lane](#)



3

Make a quick, brain-boosting snack or smoothie with yogurt, berries, or walnuts.

[Video: Mindful Eating to Relieve Stress](#)



4

Boost your mood: List three things you're grateful for right now.

[Article: An Act of Gratitude a Day Keeps the Doctor Away](#)



5

To stimulate serotonin (a neurotransmitter associated with happiness), take a quick break outside to soak up the sun.

6

Set the alarm on your phone as a reminder to do guided meditation or breathwork.

[Video: 60-Second Breath Practice](#)



7

Morning ease: Start your day with five minutes of gentle stretching.

8

Alleviate stress and indulge your sweet tooth in a healthy way with a spoonful of honey or a square of dark chocolate.

9

Splash cold water on your face, wrists, or hands to trigger the release of stress-reducing endorphins.

10

Focus your attention on each part of your body from head to toe, noticing sensations and releasing tension with each breath.

[Video: Body Scan Meditation](#)



11

Chew away stress: Chew on gum to stimulate the jaw muscles and help calm the nervous system.

12

Soothe your feet: Try a tennis or golf ball foot massage to help increase circulation and release tension.

13

Inhale the scent of essential oils (via a diffuser) or apply diluted oils on the skin to relax, reduce anxiety and boost mood.

[Article: 4 Easy Ways to Use Essential Oils](#)



14

Declutter: Create a sense of calm and order by tidying up one small area (desk, junk drawer, entryway, etc.)

15

Fidget for focus: For distraction and stress relief, play with a stress ball, fidget toy, sensory gadget, or therapy dough.

[Video: Self-Regulation Tip: Fidget Toys](#)



16

Dance your cares away by grooving and/or singing along to a favorite tune.

[Video: Self-Regulation Tip: Dance to De-stress](#)



17

Have a calming cup of tea (green, chamomile) to reduce stress and boost your mood.

[Video: Immunity Boosting Teas and Herbs](#)



18

Get the blood flowing by standing up and marching in place or jump roping (with or without the rope).

[Video: Movement to Relieve Stress](#)



STRESS MANAGEMENT CALENDAR:

CALENDAR PROMPTS (CONTINUED)

<p>19</p> <p>Phone a friend: Voice calls enhance emotional connections for better bonding.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>Ground yourself: Notice five things you can see, four you can hear, three you can touch, two you can smell, and one you can taste.</p> <p>Video: Grounding Exercise Using Your Five Senses</p> 	<p>21</p> <p>Play with your pet for stress relief and mood-boosting benefits.</p>	<p>22</p> <p>Jot it down: Journaling helps to express your emotions, change your mindset, and manage anxiety.</p> <p>Video: Journaling to Relieve Stress</p> 	<p>23</p> <p>Box Breathing: Focus your mind and relax by inhaling, exhaling, and holding your breath in counts of four.</p> <p>Video: 4-4-4-Breathing</p> 
<p>24</p> <p>Reconnect to hidden joys: Close your eyes and notice four things you normally overlook (birds chirping, the aroma of coffee)</p> <p>Video: A Guided Meditation to Tune Into Your Surroundings</p> 	<p>25</p> <p>Work on a puzzle (jig saw, crossword) to help you focus and challenge your brain.</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Before you go to bed, write down tasks and your to-do list for the next day. Clearing your mind of this "chatter" before bed can lead to a more restful sleep.</p>	<p>27</p> <p>Hum your stress away: Hum or sing to give yourself an instant mood boost.</p> <p>Video: Self-Regulation Tip: Humming & Singing</p> 	<p>28</p> <p>Brush your teeth with your non-dominant hand to stimulate your brain in new ways.</p> <p>Video: Self-Regulation Tip: Non-Dominant Hand Use</p> 
<p>29</p> <p>Seven-11 Breathing: Calm yourself by inhaling seven seconds and then exhaling 11 seconds.</p> <p>Video: seven-11 Breathing</p> 	<p>30</p> <p>Gently place your index and middle fingertips at the temples beside the eyes and perform six-eight clockwise and counterclockwise circular movements.</p> <p>Article: Easy Acupressure Techniques for Stress Management</p> 	<p>31</p> <p>Turn down the brightness on your phone, dim the lights, and turn down the thermostat before bed to create an environment for restorative, restful sleep.</p>		



VIDEO

Visit the California Schools (CalVEBA) YouTube Channel for stress-management tips and guided meditations.



RESOURCE

Visit VebaResourcecenter.com for mental well-being tips and resources.

03 |

CLEAN SWEEP:

DECLUTTER YOUR HOME & WORKSPACE FOR A CLEAN SPACE, CLEAR MIND

Decluttering can do wonders for your mood, health, and happiness. According to a survey conducted by the **National Association of Productivity & Organization Professionals (NAPPO)**, respondents said when they felt organized, their families also felt less stressed, less irritable, and calmer.



BENEFITS OF DECLUTTERING

Reduced Stress: A cluttered space can feel overwhelming, while a tidy one creates a sense of calm.

Improved Focus & Productivity: Fewer distractions = enhanced concentration.

Enhanced Creativity: An organized area sparks innovative, creative thinking.

Increased Clarity: Make decisions with a clearer mind.

Boosted Motivation & Well-being: Feel more in control, confident, and positive.

Get Started:

TIPS TO HELP TAKE THE FIRST STEP

Start Small:

Tackle small areas in short chunks of time.

Progress Over Perfection:

You didn't accumulate everything in a day. Celebrate small wins; decluttering is a journey.

Make it Fun:

Get the family involved & turn it into a game! Set your phone timer & see who can collect the most items.

5 WAYS, 5 MINUTES

Easy Ways to Organize Your Home & Workspace



HOME

- 1 Focus on a single space:** Choose 1 drawer, counter, or shelf to organize and clean thoroughly.
- 2 Purge expired items:** Clear out outdated items from the pantry, fridge, or medicine cabinet.
- 3 Declutter kitchen:** Eliminate duplicates and unused items from cabinets. Donate or discard those rarely used mugs!
- 4 Donate clothes:** Select 5 unworn pieces from the past 6 months to donate.
Tip: Start with your socks and toss any single, worn-out, mismatched pairs.
- 5 Restore order:** Return 5 misplaced items to their proper places.



WORKSPACE

- 1 Clear your desktop:** Remove unnecessary items from your desk surface. Tidy up pens, papers, and other unused objects.
- 2 Organize cables:** Use clips or ties to keep them neat and tangle-free.
- 3 Sort & prioritize your papers:** Quickly go through any loose papers on your desk. Categorize them into "to-do," "file," or "discard."
- 4 Clear your digital desktop:** Tidy your computer desktop by deleting and organizing files. Create folders to keep things neat.
- 5 Empty your trash:** Dispose of any waste and recycle what you can.

Bonus tip:

25% of people can't park in their garage due to clutter. * Spend 5 minutes each week tidying your garage or vehicle.

By decluttering, you create space for what truly matters, gaining a sense of calm, lightness, and control in your life.

Happy Decluttering!

Sources:
(2020, January 9). Declutter to De-Stress Says Survey on Organizing and Productivity. National Society of Organizing Professionals (NAPO). [Resolutions 2020: Declutter To De-Stress Says Survey On Organizing And Productivity](#)

35 Surprising Home Garage Stats You Might Not Know. Garage Living (U.S. Department of Energy study). [35 Surprising Home Garage Stats You Might Not Know.](#)

04 |

DAILY AFFIRMATIONS FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

Positive affirmations are short statements that can help change your thinking, improve your mood, and reduce feelings of stress and anxiety. They can be incredibly beneficial to your self-esteem and mental health. Repeating affirmations consistently helps reframe your thoughts, giving you the ability to better handle life's challenges.

Begin by integrating positive self-talk into your daily routine. Write down encouraging notes that resonate with you or use our inspirational list as a guide. Customize it to suit your needs.

Keep your affirmations accessible, whether on your phone or a sticky note in a visible spot like the bathroom mirror or fridge. Reflect on them daily to gradually feel calmer and more confident, improving your ability to handle stress and setbacks positively.

Bonus tip:

Set a reminder on your phone or schedule specific times to review and recite your affirmations.

"I am" AFFIRMATIONS

*I am worthy of peace, love, and tranquility in my life.
I am choosing to trust my ability to cope with challenges.
I am in control and able to navigate whatever comes my way.
I am resilient and capable of handling stress with grace and confidence.
I am calm and centered, embracing my uniqueness as a source of strength.*

"I feel" AFFIRMATIONS

*I feel confident, energized, and optimistic about my future.
I feel grateful for the relationships, love, and support in my life.
I feel motivated and inspired to manage stress in a healthy way.
I feel calm and relaxed at home, at work, and in social situations.
I feel optimistic about reaching my goals and attaining my dreams.*

"I love" AFFIRMATIONS

*I love the calm and balanced person I am becoming.
I love and embrace my confidence in new situations.
I love and appreciate my body for its ability to relax and rejuvenate.
I love and accept myself unconditionally, even in moments of stress.
I love and celebrate my ability to embrace change as an opportunity for growth.*



PROFESSIONAL, CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE: *We're Here to Help*

Affirmations are a valuable tool to enhance a healthy lifestyle, but we recognize that sometimes prioritizing your mental well-being can be a challenge. If you're experiencing persistent feelings of overwhelm, anxiety, or depression, **you're not alone** – and help is here if you need it.

Our programs offer caring support and guidance, addressing emotional challenges and helping you set and achieve balanced goals that align with your strengths, values, and identity. These resources are exclusively available to California Schools VEBA (CalVEBA) members and their dependents aged 18 and older.



OPTUM EMOTIONAL WELLBEING SOLUTIONS (EWS):

Support When You Need It

Through Optum Emotional Wellbeing Solutions (EWS), you can get short-term, no-cost counseling with a therapist and speak with an emotional support professional anytime, 24/7. Whether you're dealing with stress management, relationship issues, or other emotional challenges, EWS is here to assist you and your dependents. You can access support via phone or virtual appointments.



Call: 888-625-4809



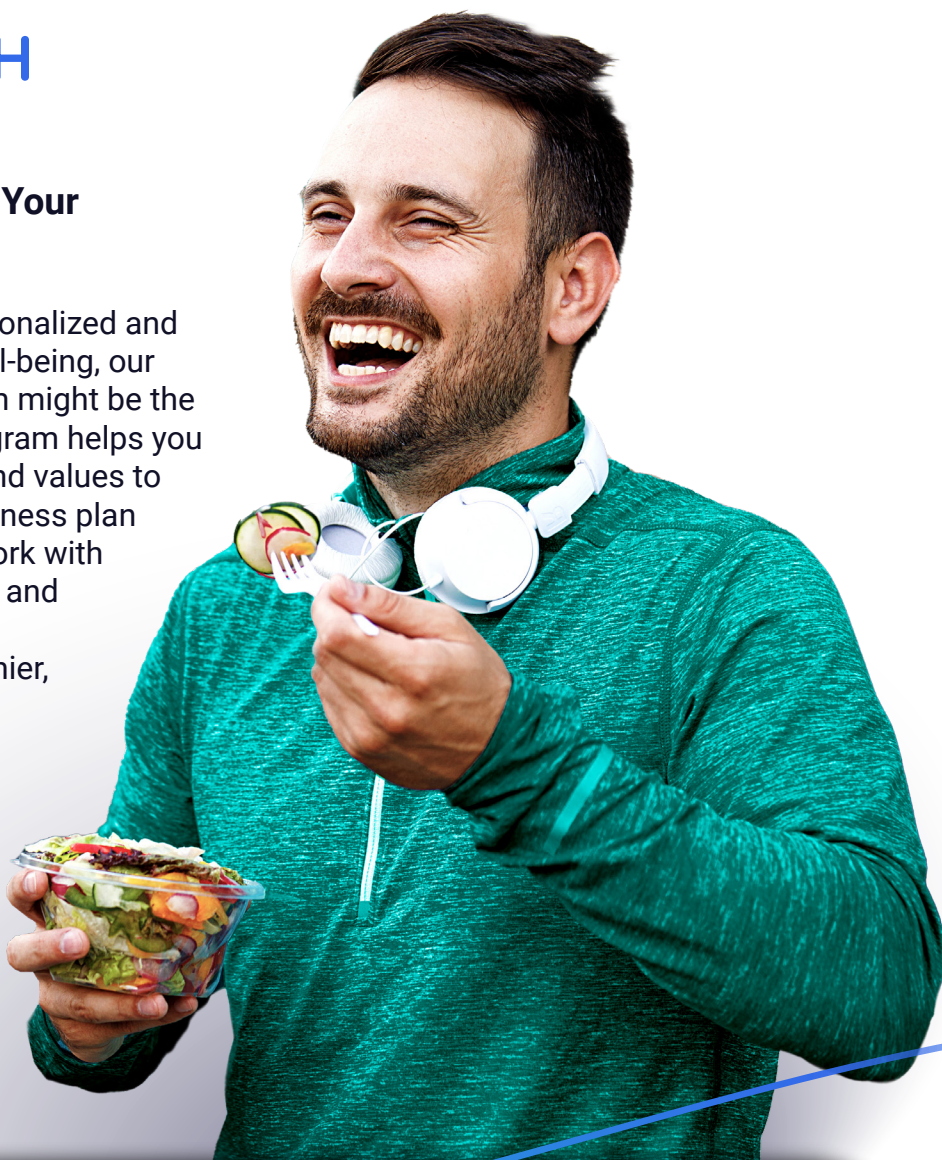
Visit: [LiveAndWorkWell.com](https://www.LiveAndWorkWell.com) (access code: VEBA)

WHOLE HEALTH COACHING:

Personalized Guidance for Your Well-being Journey

If you're looking for a more personalized and structured approach to your well-being, our Whole Health Coaching program might be the perfect fit. This six-session program helps you identify your goals, strengths, and values to create a tailored health and wellness plan just for you. Our coaches will work with you to develop actionable steps and provide ongoing support as you navigate your journey to a healthier, more fulfilling life.

[Learn more.](#)



Remember:

Prioritizing your mental well-being is as crucial as maintaining your physical health. Don't hesitate to seek support whenever you need it, regardless of where you are on your journey. If you have questions about your benefits or need help navigating your health care, please contact the California Schools VEBA Advocacy Team. Call 888-276-0250 or complete the [contact form](#) for assistance.