# The Catholic University of America - Stress

## CDC Guidelines for Coping with Stress

Everyone experiences stress. Stress is a reaction to a situation where a person feels threatened or anxious. Stress can be positive (e.g. preparing for a wedding) or negative (e.g. dealing with a natural disaster). Learning healthy ways to cope and getting the right care and support can help reduce stressful feelings and symptoms.

After a traumatic event, people may have strong and lingering reactions. These events may include personal or environmental disasters, or threats with an assault. The symptoms may be physical or emotional. Common reactions to a stressful event can include:

* disbelief, shock, and numbness
* feeling sad, frustrated, and helpless
* difficulty concentrating and making decisions
* headaches, back pains, and stomach problems
* smoking or use of alcohol or drugs

## Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress

Feeling emotional and nervous or having trouble sleeping and eating can all be normal reactions to stress. Here are some healthy ways you can deal with stress:

* Eat healthy, well-balanced meals
* Exercise on a regular basis
* Get plenty of sleep
* Give yourself a break if you feel stressed out
* Talk to others. Share your problems and how you are feeling and coping with a parent, friend, counselor, doctor, or pastor.
* Avoid drugs and alcohol. These may seem to help, but they can create additional problems and increase the stress you are already feeling.
* Take a break. If news events are causing your stress, take a break from listening or watching the news.

Recognize when you need more help. If problems continue or you are thinking about suicide, talk to a psychologist, social worker, or professional counselor.

Retrieved from:

https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/suicide/copingwith-stresstips.html