Bridges

BUILDING STRENGTH IN DIFFICULT TIMES

UT Health
San Antonio
Center for Research to Advance Community Health
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INTRODUCTION

Why this booklet and how it may help?

The migration process brings many changes that often cause stress and can affect your physical and mental health.

The purpose of this booklet is to provide you with practical steps and exercises to learn about your health and to help you keep strong in the face of difficulties.
HOW CAN THE MIGRATION PROCESS AFFECT YOUR HEALTH?

- Exhaustion
- Problems in Relationships
- Trouble sleeping
- Nostalgia and sadness
- Confusion and lack of focus
- Worries and fear
- Isolation and loneliness
- Eating changes
PRIORITIES

Setting priorities can help you achieve your goals and feel less stressed

- Lay out a weekly planner and jot down your ideas.
- What do you need to do first?
- Mid-week follow up on your progress.
- Edit your plan as necessary

Choose your top two priorities for this week and write them below

1. 
2. 

How do you plan to focus on your top two priorities this week?

1. 
2. 
EMOTIONS

Learn to recognize and validate your emotions

- Observe and experience your emotions without judgement.
- Think about where your emotions come from.
- Learn to accept your emotions.

How do you feel when you are stressed?
Circle or write emotions that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Angry</th>
<th>Anxious</th>
<th>Mistrust</th>
<th>Sad</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annoyed</td>
<td>Dreadful</td>
<td>Afraid</td>
<td>Depressed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Enraged</td>
<td>Fearful</td>
<td>Concerned</td>
<td>Hopeless</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>Jittery</td>
<td>Insecure</td>
<td>Empty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustrated</td>
<td>Nervous</td>
<td>Resentful</td>
<td>Nostalgic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritable</td>
<td>Helpless</td>
<td>Doubtful</td>
<td>Guilty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mad</td>
<td>Worried</td>
<td>Uncertain</td>
<td>Lonely</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Why are you having these emotions? Where do they come from? Example: Family, work, money, loss, etc.

Accept your emotions without judgement and love yourself
# Symptoms

Identify your symptoms of stress

**Body:** headaches, aches and pain, tension, etc.

**Mind:** indecisiveness, worrying, nightmares, etc.

**Emotions:** anxiety, depression, insecurity, etc.

**Behaviors:** overeating, lack of sleep, drug/alcohol use, etc.

What symptoms do you have when you are stressed?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Mind</th>
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<table>
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<th>Emotions</th>
<th>Behaviors</th>
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TRIGGERS

Identify your triggers of stress

A trigger can be a person, place or situation that makes you feel stressed.
Just about anything can be a trigger!

Using the categories below, identify your common triggers

People ________________________________________________________________
Places ___________________________________________________________________
Things __________________________________________________________________
Thoughts __________________________________________________________________
Activities/Situations _______________________________________________________
Other _______________________________________________________________________

The best way for dealing with triggers is to avoid them or to create strategies for dealing with them

Describe your strategy for avoiding or reducing exposure to each trigger identified above

People _______________________________________________________________________
Places ________________________________________________________________
Things _____________________________________________________________________
Thoughts _________________________________________________________________
Activities/Situations _________________________________________________________
Other _______________________________________________________________________
Coping skills are actions we take to deal with stress.

Examples of healthy coping strategies:
- Use relaxation techniques (e.g. meditation)
- Pray
- Do physical activities (e.g., walking, stretching)
- Talk about your problems with someone you trust
- Tell your story to a friend
- Spending time with nice people
- Play games with friends or draw
- Sing songs that you like
- Tell jokes or riddles
- Help someone in need
- Ask for professional help

What are some healthy coping strategies that you could use when you are stressed?

1. ______________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________
4. ______________________________________________________
5. ______________________________________________________
Identifying Values

- Your values define what is most important to you.

- Your values guide each of your choices in life.

- Understanding your values will help you recognize areas of your life that need more attention.

- Identifying your values will help you prioritize in the future.
Circle the five most important values in your life

Love
Recognition

Honesty
Nature

Wealth
Popularity

Humor
Responsibility

Family
Independence

Loyalty
Achievement

Morals
Beauty

Reason
Spirituality/Faith

Success
Respect

Knowledge
Peace

Power
Stability

Friends
Wisdom

Free Time
Fairness

Adventure
Creativity

Variety
Relaxation

Calmness
Safety

Freedom
Kindness
STRENGTHS AND POSITIVE QUALITIES

- People who know their strengths and use them frequently are less stressed.
- To use your strengths effectively, have a clear idea of what they are and how to use them.
- Some of your greatest strengths might be easy to recognize, while others are overlooked.

Think carefully.
List your strengths and describe how to use them.

Identify your top strengths

Use your strengths to . . .
SOURCES OF SUPPORT

List three people, groups or communities that provide you with support?

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________

How can your sources of support help you feel less stressed?

1. __________________________________________
2. __________________________________________
3. __________________________________________
SOURCES OF HOPE

"It is often in the darkest skies that we see the brightest stars."

What things or thoughts help you feel hopeful about the future?

1. __________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________

"What looks like a hurricane today is wind opening new paths for you."
BOUNDARIES AND LIMITS

Setting boundaries or limits can help protect yourself and make your relationships with others more respectful, appropriate, and affectionate.

What are some boundaries or limits
What do you need in your life right now?

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________

How can you build safe boundaries or limits with others?

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
Safety Plan

- **Step 1**: Know when to get help. Evaluate your situation. Do you feel safe?

- **Step 2**: Set goals and develop a plan to be safe. Identify helpful information and coping skills for self-care.

- **Step 3**: Build social support. Contact trusted people or sources for help and share your feelings.

- **Step 4**: Seek help from professionals when needed to help you stay safe.

Do you have a safety plan in place?
Outline below steps for your safety plan

1. ____________________________________________
2. ____________________________________________
3. ____________________________________________
4. ____________________________________________
5. ____________________________________________

Do not wait.
Be prepared by planning ahead.
REFERENCES

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