

Eleven Ways to Deal with Tensions

Tension and anxiety are normal reactions to events in our lives which threaten our well-being. Such treats can come from accidents, financial troubles, problems on the job or in the family. How we deal with these pressures has a lot to do with our mental and emotional health. The following are 11 recommendations from the Canadian Mental Health Association:

1. Talk it out – if something is bugging you, let it out. Talk over your worries and concerns with someone you trust – husband or wife, father or mother, family doctor, clergyman, teacher or close friend. Talking relieves the strain and helps you bring problems into perspective.
2. Run away for a while – don't spend all your time worrying about your problems. Escape for a while into a book, a movie, a game. True "escapism" can be overdone, but occasional breaks will help you see things more clearly.
3. Work off your anger – give your emotions a rest by switching to physical activities. Dig up the garden. Clean out the garage. Start a building project or hobby.
4. Give in occasionally – if you find yourself getting into frequent quarrels, stand your ground only when you're sure you're right. Make allowances sometimes for the fact that the other person might be right. It's easier on your system to give in now and then.
5. Give something of yourself – doing things for others can take your mind off your own problems. And you'll have a feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment.
6. Tackle one thing at a time – if your workload seems unbearable, do the most urgent jobs one at a time. Put all the others aside for the time being.
7. Don't try to be perfect – there are things you like to do best, and things that give you the most satisfaction. Give yourself a pat on the back for those you do well, but don't try to get into the Guinness Book of World Records with everything you do.
8. Ease up on your criticism – don't expect too much of others. Try to remember that each person has his own strengths, his own shortcomings.
9. Don't be too competitive – often cooperation is the best approach. When you give other people a break, you often make things easier for yourself, too. If they no longer feel threatened by you, they stop being a threat to you.
10. Make the first move – sometimes we have the feeling that we are being left out, slighted or rejected by others. This could be just your imagination. If you make the first friendly move, very often others will respond.
11. Have some fun – too much work can be harmful. Old-fashioned play is essential for good physical and mental health. Everyone should have a sport, hobby or outside interest that provides a complete break from the work routine.