

Humor

an Antidote for Stress



"I used to have a handle on life – but mine broke." Did you know that laughter is good for your health? Researchers at the Loma Linda University School of Medicine's Department of Immunology have found that laughter stimulates the immune system and reduces the effects of stress that weaken our immune system or our ability to fight off illness. In short, the old saying that laughter is the best medicine appears to be true when it comes to protecting people against stress. The healthful benefits of laughter are cause for celebration among counselors who recognize the therapeutic value of humor in the workplace and home and have begun to prescribe it to their clients for building resilience.

Using humor to relieve stress is simple – the benefits are measurable. Follow these easy steps and you will be on your way to relieving stress:

Take a Humor Break

Keep a book of cartoons, a funny family photo, or anything that you find amusing handy in a Funny File. Find out what makes you laugh and nurture it. Ten minutes before a meeting or potentially stressful situation take a look at your own Funny File.

Use Humor at Work

It seems that humor is even good for business. An article in the New York Times reported that "humor can aid problem-solving as well as contribute to creativity in the business environment." Humor can also be a constructive force in diffusing the normal workplace tension that inevitably arises from time to time.

The effective humor at work takes a stressful work situation and makes light of it, focuses on the commonalities among people rather than the differences, and includes everyone in the audience. Of course, all workplace humor must show respect for the workplace and fellow co-workers.

Laugh At Yourself

Researches have found that the people who are most effective at protecting themselves from stress-related disease are the people who are able to see humor in themselves and their situations. When you make fun of yourself, it takes the sting out of what other people might say. Learn to laugh at your flaws. You do not want to constantly put yourself down, but this type of humor shows that you are human and that you are self assured enough to poke fun at yourself.

Do Things That Make You Laugh When You Get Home

Do things that make you laugh, such as watch your favorite sitcom reruns or comedy specials, go to a funny movie, or read a funny book.