

# The 4 As of Stress Management

Stress is a part of everyday life and can make us feel out of control, but effective stress management can give you control. Stress can often take us by surprise, but there are also predictable stressors. When confronted with predictable stressors, you can either change the situation or change your reaction. The 4 As are helpful in challenging situations.

## Avoid

Planning ahead can help you predict certain stressors and decide whether they are avoidable or if they need to be addressed. Avoid or limit your time spent with people that cause stress. Learn how to say “no” and know when you’re taking on too much. Make a daily list with your most important tasks first and the save less important tasks for later. In addition, you can always ask others for help.

## Alter

If situations cannot be avoided, change the way you handle them. Express and communicate your feelings instead of keeping them bottled up. Use “I” statements when communicating stressors to others; for example, “I’m feeling overwhelmed by the workload. Could you please help me balance it?” Be willing to compromise and find a middle ground when finding a solution.

## Adapt

If you cannot change your environment or the behavior of those around you, change your expectations and attitude. Try to view situations from a positive lens and reflect on the things you appreciate in your life. Stop expecting perfection and remind yourself that sometimes good is enough. Change your perspective and ask yourself, “Will this matter in a year?” This can make stressors seem less overwhelming.

## Accept

Sometimes you cannot avoid, change, or alter your perspective of the stressors. Don’t try to control the things beyond your control. View these situations as opportunities for personal growth. Learn to forgive and let go of any anger or resentment. Communicate these stressors with someone that you trust. Sometimes the only response to stress is acceptance.



### References:

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