



For managers and supervisors, this time of year often adds to personal pressures and increased professional demands. Maintaining a healthy balance for yourself and your workforce can be challenging, making what is meant to be the most wonderful time of the year also one of the most stressful.

This month, we want to shift the focus from merely surviving the season to truly thriving in it—both for you and your teams. We hope the strategies outlined here can help you engage in personal healthy stress management and serve as a model to share with employees.

## What to do about work-related stress for you and employees

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Stress happens. It can impair the ability to focus and use imagination. Stress also increases the chance of making mistakes. An employee under stress can have difficulty pulling their weight and fulfilling their role. Because of this, other team members have to step in to bear the load and the team becomes unbalanced.

### Understanding stress

The way people respond to stress depends on their personality and their workplace culture. As a manager, effectively managing your own stress is a crucial first step in supporting your employees during their stressful times. Below are some strategies to incorporate in your routine that you can encourage your team to adopt, too.

### Manage your time

**For everyone:** Correct time and priority management can reduce a lot of workplace stress. Start each day by making a to-do list of tasks, calls to make, and e-mails to write. Prioritize the list according to tasks you must do, those you would like to do, and those that can wait. Don't schedule too much, and build time for interruptions.

**As a leader:** Support employees in effective time and priority management to reduce preventable stress caused by poor planning or overloading.

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## Check reality

**For everyone:** When you're in a high-pressure situation, examine your train of thought to see if it's adding to the stress you feel. Are you imagining a far worse outcome than is likely? Are the immediate demands really more of a challenge than a disaster in the making?

**As a leader:** When employees are under pressure, their cognitive biases can exaggerate perceived threats. Managers can intervene by helping them examine their thought patterns and ground their concerns in reality.

## Take a break

**For everyone:** Hourly mini-breaks where you stretch your shoulders, back, and neck can provide physical stress relief. This can then reduce mental stress. Lunch is often skipped at the expense of more stress. Try to take lunch if you can.

**As a leader:** Normalize rest and recovery. Managers should actively demonstrate and support this behavior.

## Visualize

**For everyone:** Sit or lie down and close your eyes. For 5 to 10 minutes, imagine you're in a place you love. This may be the beach, the mountains, or the house you grew up in. Breathe slowly and deeply as you imagine what you see, feel, hear, taste, and smell in your special place.

**As a leader:** While not all employees will adopt visualization, help promote techniques that help them step away mentally for a short period of time.

## Communicate

**For everyone:** Talking with a family member or friend outside of work about the issues that cause your stress at work can help you put things in perspective. Explore solutions and ways to cope together.

**As a leader:** Incorporate check-ins that include time to address how employees are genuinely feeling. Encourage the formation of non-work-related team social activities.

## Get support from FCH EAP! Call us at 800-777-4114.

Managing work commitments while juggling personal holiday obligations can be tough on everyone. Our goal is to ensure you feel supported, refreshed, and ready to enjoy the moments that matter most.

FCH EAP is available for immediate, confidential phone support and consultation 24/7. Connect with us for in-the-moment counseling, confidential supervisor consultation, critical onsite trauma debriefing, and more.

*If you or someone you know needs the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline, call or text 988 or use the chat function online at [988lifeline.org](https://www.988lifeline.org).*