



APRIL 2025

Benefits Buzz...

Turn the page on your health! Spring is the perfect time for a fresh start, especially when it comes to health. The change in season can inspire new habits and a focus on self-care.

This edition of Benefits Buzz focuses on how to identify stressors and face them head on.

IN THIS EDITION

- **STRESS AWARENESS MONTH**
 - **FEEDBACK SURVEY**
- 

STRESS

IDENTIFY STRESSORS

In a world full of unpredictability, stress levels can often spike. Being aware of what specifically triggers uneasy feelings is crucial because it allows us to recognize patterns and take proactive steps to manage stress. Some common stressors include work pressure, social situations, financial concerns, or even global events that feel out of our control.

Taking the time to identify these triggers can empower us to cope better, whether that means creating boundaries, seeking support, or practicing mindfulness to stay grounded. **Check out this Health Tip flier from United Healthcare on ways you can identify the 3 stages of stress.**

CLICK THE IMAGE BELOW



Stage 1: ALARM
The bodies automatic response to a perceived threat.

The activation of the "fight-or-flight" response is a survival mechanism that prepares the body to either confront or escape danger. It's fascinating how this primal response still shapes our reactions today, even when the stressors are not life-threatening but rather emotional or psychological.

- **Increased heart rate**
- **Rapid breathing**
- **Muscle tension**

These are meant to give us the strength and energy to react quickly. However, in modern life, these responses can be triggered by non-physical stressors, like a looming deadline or a difficult conversation, which don't require physical action but still provoke that same intense reaction.

STRESS

Stage 2: RESISTANCE **The body's attempt to adapt.**

It's like the body is in "overdrive" mode, continuing to manage the heightened physiological state while also trying to return to some semblance of balance. The ongoing release of stress hormones, like cortisol, helps sustain this elevated state, allowing us to keep functioning. However, it's also where the toll of prolonged stress starts to show.

- **Drained**
- **Trouble Focusing**
- **Headaches**

While you're able to keep going, the challenge is that this stage isn't sustainable for long without recovery. It can be hard to push through and maintain peak performance when you're essentially running on stress hormones.

Have you ever noticed how difficult it is to stay productive or present when you're in this stage? It can feel like you're going through the motions without real engagement or energy. Finding ways to manage the stress during this stage is key to preventing burnout.



Stage 3 : EXHAUSTION **The body's attempt to adapt.**

If the stressor continues for too long, the body's resources become depleted. The body's ability to cope with stress diminishes.

- **Physical and mental health problems**
- **Anxiousness**
- **Depressed**
- **Trouble sleeping**

What makes this stage especially concerning is that it's not just about feeling "tired"—it's more like the body has been running on empty for so long that it can't function properly anymore. That's when burnout can set in, and mental health concerns can escalate.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

The 3 C's of Stress Management refer to three key attitudes or approaches that can help manage stress effectively. They are:

Control:

This is about focusing on what you can control and letting go of what you can't. In stressful situations, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by all the factors out of your hands. By taking charge of the aspects you can influence—like your responses, actions, or choices—you can regain a sense of agency and reduce anxiety. It's about setting realistic goals and creating a plan that puts you in the driver's seat.

Example: If you're feeling stressed about a big project, break it down into smaller tasks you can control and prioritize.



Commitment:

This focuses on maintaining dedication and involvement in your goals or values, even during tough times. People who stay committed to their purpose, whether personal or professional, tend to manage stress better. Being committed means staying connected to what matters to you, even when things get difficult, which helps sustain motivation and resilience.

Example: Keeping a strong sense of commitment to your personal growth or career goals, even when obstacles or setbacks arise.



Challenge:

This involves seeing stressful situations as challenges rather than threats. When you view stress as an opportunity for growth or learning, it can shift your mindset and reduce the feeling of being overwhelmed. Embracing challenges as a part of life can build your resilience and help you adapt in a healthier way.

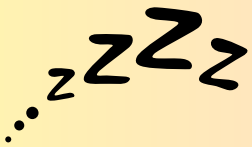
Example: Instead of seeing a stressful presentation as a scary task, you might reframe it as an opportunity to showcase your skills and improve.

These 3 C's can help reshape your perspective and enable you to respond to stress in a more constructive and positive way. Have you tried using any of them in managing your own stress?

Self-care is all about nurturing yourself, physically, mentally, and emotionally. Here are some habits you can adopt to enhance your overall well-being:



Keep your body moving with regular exercise such as walking, yoga or strength training .



When possible, give your body 7-9 hours of sleep to rest & recharge.



Drinking adequate amounts of water each day can have a big impact on your energy levels & overall health



Practice Mindfulness – Even 5-10 minutes of deep breathing or mindfulness can help reduce stress and boost focus.



Writing down your thoughts, feelings, and gratitude can help clear your mind and improve mental clarity. Below are names of some popular free journal apps options:

Daylio
Day One
5 Minute Journal

Understanding Anxiety Trainings Provided by United Healthcare

Understanding Anxiety. Anxiety is one of the most common mental health disorders globally, yet it is often misunderstood. Everyone worries or feels nervous sometimes; this is a normal human response to stress in our environment. However, those fears and worries aren't temporary for people with anxiety and can even worsen over time. People with anxiety can become overwhelmed by their emotions and have particularly adverse reactions to situations. This session explores some of the science and psychology behind the why of anxiety and provides specific strategies to help with worry and anxiety.

Register for a live 1-hour training session or use the on-demand option to watch the training when it's convenient for you. Training options are in English and available globally.

**Recorded Sessions
On demand
(no Q&A)
Watch here**

**April 16th
7:00-8:00 AM Central
(with Q&A)
Register now**

**April 16th
1:00-2:00 PM Central
(with Q&A)
Register now**

**April 17th
1:00-2:00 AM Central
(with Q&A)
Register now**

**April 22nd
11:00AM-12:00 PM Central
(with Q&A)
Register now**

**Short on time?
Watch the 10-minute summary Watch here**