

Welcome to the Youturn Health Stress Management Solution

We are thrilled to have you with us! First let's clarify the Youturn Health stress management philosophy and model:

- 1) YOU ARE STRESSED:** Because all human beings are stressed. Unless you are a robot, you are stressed.
- 2) YOU LEARN:**
 - a. You learn the facts about stress, mental health, substance use, gambling, poor eating habits, etc. Stress fuels all self-defeating behaviors.
 - b. You learn self-assessment and self-motivating exercises that serve as catalyst to change.
 - c. You learn resilience practices and coping skills to better respond to stress.
- 3) YOUTURN:**
 - a. Away from self-defeating and escapist coping.
 - b. Toward health and wellness-oriented habits and lifestyle.
- 4)** You course correct over and over. It becomes a process of constant recalibration.
- 5)** You avoid progression or relapse into the most severe manifestation of the condition.

That is a simple, straightforward, and commonsense way to understand effective stress management. However, we think you should also have awareness of the underlying science and psychological theory that guides our model.

The Stress Vulnerability Model of Mental Health:

There is universal agreement among clinical providers that stress is the trigger for our most serious behavioral health issues. Known as the Stress Vulnerability Model, it states simply that:

- 1) As stress becomes more chronic and/or more toxic...
- 2) ...maladaptive coping tends to undermine healthy lifestyle choices.
 - a. “Maladaptive coping” means any behavior that serves a purpose but ultimately leads to MORE stress and MORE problems.
 - b. It’s a short-term relief that ultimately becomes self-defeating in nature. Examples include increased alcohol consumption, the use of other drugs, very poor eating habits, spending, gambling, compulsive internet usage, and even high levels of irritability and conflict. Anything that helps us ESCAPE the stress.
- 3) This maladaptive coping and ESCAPISM lead to increased stress as we deal with the fallout from the escapism. This, in turn, leads to more self-defeating behaviors, which leads to more stress. It activates a viscous cycle.
- 4) Left unchecked, this cycle spins downward until we find ourselves in the middle of a full-blown mental health or substance use disorder crisis. It can trigger depression or drinking. Or maybe depression or substance use had been in check, and the stress leads to a recurrence of symptoms. Or perhaps all of it gets worse and moves into an unmanageable and dangerous zone.

It All Starts with Self-Assessment

We will encourage completion of surveys where appropriate. However, these are not diagnostic tools. These are commonsense questions that will force you to evaluate your current “internal landscape.” This self-assessment process provides the foundation that is essential to an individualized stress management plan.

This action plan will include exercises and steps that are proven to reduce stress and raise wellbeing. Your internal processing system will become habitually oriented toward optimism.

These Tools Include:

- **Lesson 1:** Building an action plan
- **Lesson 2:** Identifying your character strengths and values
- **Lesson 3:** Living with your character strengths and values
- **Lesson 4:** Gratitude exercises
- **Lesson 5:** Developing grit and perseverance
- **Lesson 6:** P.E.R.M.A. – Pleasure, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, Attitude
- **Lesson 7:** Dealing with “life quakes” and crisis
- **Lesson 8:** Meaning and purpose – Reading *Man’s Search for Meaning*, journaling
- **Lesson 9:** Savoring positive emotions, reminiscence therapy, gratitude visit, guided imagery

Ultimately, you are the authority on you. Find your personal pathway to improved stress management.

Welcome aboard, please proceed to the self-reflection questions provided on the following page.

Print out this self-assessment, journal on these questions, or make notes in your planner/calendar or a lifestyle app. We recommend writing it down. However, some people will simply take note of their answer and keep it in their mind as they progress through the content.

Stress Management Self-Assessment

On a scale of 1 to 7, **1** being “I hate waking up every day” and **7** being “your best life,” write your score here: _____

Now look at the score and reflect. **Why did you score yourself at that level?** Just start writing. Just let it run.

Another useful question: **What would need to be different in order for you to give yourself a higher score?**

By all means, change the things you can change. However, remember **you can only change what you can control**. For example, you CANNOT make another person change. Therefore, Youturn Health provides stress management/resilience education and skill building, so that you can thrive DESPITE these toxic situations. It's the internal change process that is important, not the external conditions.

Internally: This is Where Profound Change Occurs

Move onto your INTERNAL change plan. This is where positive psychology, mindfulness and intentional living can change your life.

Go back to your score above.

On a scale of 1 to 7, **1 being “I hate waking up every day”** and **7 being “your best life,”** how would you rate yourself RIGHT NOW (today)? Write your score here: _____

- What would need to be different INTERNALLY in order for you to give yourself a higher score?
- What would need to be different about your day-to-day emotional experiences?
- What do you need to do differently to manage your internal response today?
- For example:
 - I would need to worry less about my kids.
 - I would need to have more fun.
 - I would need to become less frustrated with my co-workers.
 - Less agitated with customers.
 - Less anxious about “numbers.”
 - I would need to find a hobby.
 - I would need to get out more.

Now write it down:

Take note of any stress management, mental health, or resilience activities you already engage in (for example – I exercise daily, I see a therapist, etc.). You are already doing stress management. Use this as the beginning of your plan:

NOTE: Enter any action you are already taking or any action you already plan to take. This positive psychology series is designed to add action steps as you go. As you progress through each lesson, you will add new commitments to your action plan.

Now, please move forward to our self-paced education course and begin construction of your personalized stress management action plan.