

What can I do to deal with Occupational Stress...?

Isn't it ironic that **we fight for our clients** to add balance to their lives, are great at giving our clients advice about it, but often struggle to achieve it ourselves?

What can you do? Here are some strategies that can remind you what to do. The list is not exhaustive, and is a compilation of several strategies or approaches that are most commonly cited in literature.

1 **Track your stressors** – Or if you can't track yet another thing, just be aware of them. This will take you only a moment – like when you pull up to a Dairy Queen drive -thru, (like I did last week), and think to yourself – why am I needing to do this? If you are so inclined, keep a journal for a week or two to identify which situations create the most stress and how you respond to them. Do I run to the bathroom, do I want to eat, do I need a glass of wine (or two) at the end of the day to take the edge off?

2 **Develop healthy responses** – We know this – take a moment, take a deep breath, think through this, use all that CBT that you know and learned in about every report you have written or read– when you realize that going for a short walk makes you feel better, you may be more inclined to do this more often. And see above – Dairy Queen was not a healthy response...

3 **Establish boundaries** – What does this mean? Make some rules about usage of your electronic devices, work hours at home at night or on the weekend, taking work to the cottage, taking messages from work outside of work hours etc. Stick to them.

4 **Take time to recharge** – Everybody has a happy place, a walk by the lake, the chair on the porch, a gym or a yoga studio. Figure out what your happy place is. And take time to recharge there.

5 **Learn how to relax** – This may be obvious, but you have to give yourself permission once you are in your happy place, to relax there. We all know the benefits of mindfulness and relaxation, or visualization and deep breathing. Use it when you need to during the day to manage your stress, but don't forget to do it when you are supposed to be recharging.

6 **Get some support** – If you say you can't do this, you are not alone. A cardiologist colleague of mine says his waiting room is filled at his Saturday morning clinic with Type-A executives who don't have time to come to see him during the week. Do not wait for the reality check...

One final thing...Have a great summer, take some time for yourself, recharge, reflect and remember this...Nobody said on their deathbed, *"I wish I had spent more time at the office."*

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