TAKING CHARGE OF STRESS

UCC- ALYSSA GOOD
BREATHE
Get quiet

UNPLUG

Learn meditation.

Take a bath or a shower.

Relaxing in a **warm bath** in the evenings is a great way to relax and prepare your body for sleep. Turn off the lights and place some candles around your bath to create a soothing atmosphere.

**Read** books that nourish the soul. Books containing positive affirmations, daily meditations or uplifting stories will help you to feel better and restore your belief that life can be good.

**Try aromatherapy.**

**Massage** is good for your body and soul. Studies show that experiencing touch from another person is healing in itself. Massage helps you to unwind, release physical tension and let go of emotional stress.
Find Your Bliss
Pursue your passion. Follow your bliss; devote your time and energy to something you care about. Choose a hobby or interest that stimulates and energizes you, something you can happily get lost in because you enjoy it so much.

Quit reading/watching the news. Especially at night before you go to bed. If you feel stressed reading about or listening to the news, avoid it. Bad news stories can make you feel worse.

Laughter is healing. Laughing is good for the soul and can boost your mood. Rent a comedy DVD, go see a funny film, read a book that will make you laugh.

Make your home your sanctuary. Make it a place where you can look around and see things that make you happy. You don't have to spend a lot of money; a few plants, colorful cushions and pictures on the walls can make your home a cozy place where you enjoy spending time.

Get a massage
Let it all out. Have a good cry; it can make you feel better. Tears are the blood of the soul, crying helps us to heal emotionally.

**Exercise.** Exercise is a well-known de-stressor. Endorphins released when you exercise improve your mood. Choose a form of exercise you enjoy, exercise needn't become another chore.

**Stroke a pet.**

**Listen to guided imagery or self-hypnosis** Choose guided imagery and self-hypnosis are designed to reduce stress.

**Try yoga.** Yoga is a form of mind, body and spirit exercise that can help you to build strength, increase bodily flexibility and soothe the mind. Calming breathing techniques and relaxation are key parts of a regular yoga practice.

**Eat healthily.** When you're healthy in body, you're healthy in mind. Eat foods that are high in lean protein like meat and fish, complex carbohydrates like wholegrain bread and pasta and remember to include plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables in your diet.
Today:
- Drink your coffee
- Stay focused & positive
- Don’t freak out
- Remember, stabbing people is wrong!
- Are you wearing pants?

LAUGH & DON’T TAKE YOURSELF SO SERIOUSLY
Get enough sleep. Burning the candle at both ends will leave you feeling exhausted and stressed out. Make sure you are getting enough sleep.

Talk things over. If you have problems on your mind that you just can't seem to resolve yourself, talk them over with a close friend or family member. Getting a different perspective or sound advice.

Take a walk. A 20-minute walk in the fresh air can help to blow the cobwebs away and improve your mood. If you walk briskly enough, this also counts as one of your weekly exercise sessions.

Get organized. Being organized can help you to feel more in control of your life. Plan ahead and prepare. Preparing the night before, for work or any other event, can reduce the risk of the stressful 'morning rush'.

Set realistic goals. Know what you want and then work out how you're going to get there. Don't set yourself up to fail, choose goals that you are easily achievable.
Help someone out, volunteer. Take the focus off yourself for a bit, do something kind for someone. Choose a cause that appeals to you, or help someone you care about who is also stressed out.
Listen to music. Choose music that energizes and inspires you; listen to your favorite tunes. Sing along as loud as you can if you like. Count your blessings.

Remember the good things you have in life, the people you care about, and your achievements.

Keep a journal. Writing your thoughts down can be healing, and keeping a journal can help you to identify the people and situations that are causing you stress.

Get creative. Art, handicrafts, poetry - accessing your creative side can help remind you of what's really important to you. Don't worry about being 'good at it' just enjoy the process of creating something.

Book a vacation. Plan a weekend away or a day trip out. The change of scenery will do you good.

Make a 'to do' list. If you feel overwhelmed by all you have to do each day, create a to do list. Put important, necessary tasks at the top and work your way through the list, ticking things off as you achieve them.
Plan things to look forward to

2 DAYS

UNTIL VACATION
Quit negative self talk. Stop running yourself down in your mind, negative self-talk disempowers you. You can achieve. And your life has meaning. Talk yourself up, remind yourself of all the things you can do successfully and of all the people who care.

Treat yourself. Every now and again treat yourself to something you like, it doesn’t have to be an expensive item. A new haircut, a mug of rich hot chocolate, a new app, or game can provide a temporary boost and lift your mood.

Pursue spirituality. Spiritual people are reported to experience less stress than those who have no spiritual beliefs. Go to church, learn Buddhist meditation, join a yoga group. Spirituality takes many forms - choose something that appeals to you.

Message yourself. Uplifting messages posted around your home can remind you to feel good about yourself. Fridge magnets or small posters containing positive message or affirmations can strengthen your resolve to remain positive.
Simplify your life. Keep things simple, you don't need more than one phone; you don't need a huge, bulging wardrobe of clothes you never wear. Simplify your life by only keeping items that you truly need or that bring you pleasure.
Schedule 'worry' time. Then draw a line under it. If you find yourself constantly worrying, set a 15-minute 'worry' time spot aside each day. Allow yourself to worry about your problems in this allocated time spot. Then stop. Distract your mind with activities.

Get a hug. From someone you love; your partner, your children, a grandparent - even a pet. Physical touch is good for the soul.

Practice acceptance. Know what you can and can't change. The actions of some people and certain situations are beyond your control. Learn to recognize when there is nothing you can do to change the way things are.

Take care of your appearance. Looking after your physical body by maintaining health and keeping your hair and skin clean and looking good can help you to feel better. Make the effort to boost your self-esteem.
**Procrastination causes stress.** As they say, don't put off what you can do today for tomorrow. Leaving things hanging in the air can cause stress. Try to do the things you have to do as soon as possible.

**Calendars and diaries.** Make use of calendars and diaries, so you can keep up with all you have to do and remember important events like birthdays. Many cell phones and computers have diary and calendar functions you can use.

**Know when to let go of someone or something.** Holding on to people or patterns of behavior that are no longer good for you can cause stress. Sometimes you just have to move on to feel better.

**Always take a lunch break.** Your body and mind need rest. Don't skip your lunch break at work and take regular breaks throughout your day. A break from work can reset your mind so that you'll perform well later on in the day.
You're not superman or superwoman. Nobody gets it right all the time. Being a perfectionist can be stressful. Do your best, go the extra mile when it counts, but know when enough's enough.
Try to be flexible. Having a rigid outlook on life is stressful because when things change, as they inevitably do, a rigid outlook makes it more difficult and scary to adapt. Try not to become set in your ways. Those who are open to new experiences keep their mind's active and are less likely to suffer from stress.

Take each day one day at a time. None of us can predict the future. Take each day as it comes and try not worry about things that haven't, or might never, happen.

Learn to be patient. Sometimes you have to wait in line. Don't let delays stress you out. Be prepared - carry a small book to read, play games on your cell phone. Use waiting time to relax. There's no point standing in line getting more and more worked up. Some things are beyond your control. Relax and go with the flow.
Visualize success.

Creative visualization is a technique where you imagine yourself in a positive way in the future. All you must do is lie down, relax and imagine yourself easily and effectively achieving any upcoming stressful goals.
Avoid toxic people. Moaners, people who bring you down consistently and subtly put you down. Let go of negative people and surround yourself with good friends and family members who have your best interests at heart.

Learn a new skill. Mastering a new skill can help boost your self-esteem.

Resolve conflicts by talking directly. If conflict is a source of stress for you, talk directly and rationally to the other person. Do your best to put your point of view across without emotion. That way you have done your best to solve the problem. If the other person won’t come halfway to meet you, then that’s their problem.

Arrange to spend time with friends. Spending time with the people you love can help you to relax, have fun and remind you of what is important in life.
Ask for help.

Sometimes you just must ask for help. If stress is overwhelming you, talk to a close family member, friend or your doctor. Call in favors, you can repay people in kind once you're feeling less stressed.
Spend time outdoors. Reconnect with nature. A walk in the park, countryside or on the beach can help relieve stress. Take time to notice the plants, trees, flowers and wildlife you see.

Manage your finances. Keep control of your finances and plan carefully. Do not spend what you haven't got. Learn to make do. Possessions generally bring fleeting happiness, financial debt can last a lifetime.

Learn to prioritize. Don't sweat the small stuff, as they say, and try not to let little things stress you out. See life as a journey not a final destination. If you can view your life as a journey, where you sometimes get diverted from the main path, you'll feel less stressed. You may not get from A to B in the way you plan. This isn't important, enjoying the ride along the way is much more fun.
Learn to forgive. Yourself and others. Blame and guilt are toxic, stressful emotions. Banish these emotions, learn to let go of past hurts or regrets. What's done is done and none of us can change the past.

Do unpleasant or less enjoyable tasks first. Get boring or unpleasant tasks over and done with early on in your day - you'll feel less stressed once you've completed them. Free-up time to do things that you enjoy later on in the day.

Create a vision/goals board. Give yourself things to look forward to and aim for. A board featuring pictures cut out from magazines that represent your goals can inspire you to keep at it if your mood is low.
Try biofeedback. Biofeedback is a technique you can learn to help you relax and manage stress effectively. Many doctors recommend it. Search the Internet to find a biofeedback practitioner in your area.

Eat foods that help to reduce stress. Oatmeal, wholegrain bread and pasta, oily fish, black tea, pistachio nuts, avocados and milk are some of the foods that help to combat stress.

Create win-win situations. If you're dealing with difficult people and are finding it stressful, try to create outcomes where everyone wins in some way.
Learn from your experiences - good and bad.
Don't mentally beat yourself up over past failings. Learn from them; work out how you will do things differently in the future. When you succeed, look at what you did to achieve your goal and then try to repeat those methods for future projects.