



# How to be a **less-stressed LEADER**

In today's complex and rapidly changing health care environment, stress management has become a must-have leadership skill. As a leader, you have more control over your stress levels at work than you might think. There are four personal strategies you can use to be a less-stressed leader and model healthy behaviors for your team:

- » Respond productively to stress in the moment
- » Clarify your priorities
- » Advocate for yourself
- » Build supportive relationships

## RESPOND PRODUCTIVELY TO STRESS IN THE MOMENT

Stress is contagious...

**30%**

People who experience "secondhand stress" from others' stress

...but so is wellness

**20%**

Increase in well-being when people's colleagues have healthy stress habits



**IDENTIFY** how you respond to stress

What's your stress tendency?

### Avoidance

Tendency to distract yourself from your stressors and procrastinate

### Complaint

Tendency to externalize your stress and negative emotions onto others

### Obsession

Tendency to focus all of your time and energy on your stressors

### Self-doubt

Tendency to internalize your stress and blame yourself

and practice a **HEALTHIER STRESS** response



Avoidance → **Engage more** with your stressors



Complaint → Get an **objective** view of your stressors



Obsession → **Take breaks** from your stressors



Self-doubt → Give yourself the **benefit of the doubt** when stressed

## CLARIFY YOUR PRIORITIES

Identify your **TOP THREE** priorities at work



What counts as a priority?

- **Directly supports** a strategic initiative or business need
- Is **top-of-license** for your level and skill set
- Can be significantly **advanced** in the **next month**

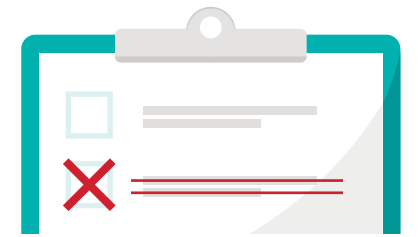
Narrow your **TO-DO LIST**



**Defer:** Reschedule tasks to a later date on your calendar



**Delegate:** Hand off tasks to a colleague or a different team



**Eliminate:** Cross off tasks from your to-do list entirely

**CONFIRM** with a leader

- **Pressure test** what your priorities are
- **Agree** on what you can de-prioritize



Define your **PERSONAL** priorities

Block **DEDICATED TIME** for each of your priorities

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
8 <sup>AM</sup>	Dedicated work blocks for business priorities				
9	Department leadership meeting	Meeting with Matt	Work on staffing report	Candidate interview	Call with David
10	Meeting with HR	Budget committee		Meeting with Rachel	All staff meeting
11					
12 <sup>PM</sup>	Lunch with mentor	Contract review		Roundup	
1	Meeting with Steve	Work on service plan	Program evaluation meeting		Prepare for budget presentation
2	Team talk		Meeting with Francis		Budget presentation
3		Revise budget	Project review	Meeting with Paul	Pro-bono project
4	Roundup		Time for personal priorities		Outreach meeting
5	Facilities training			Baseball game	

## ADVOCATE FOR YOURSELF

Ask for **HELP**



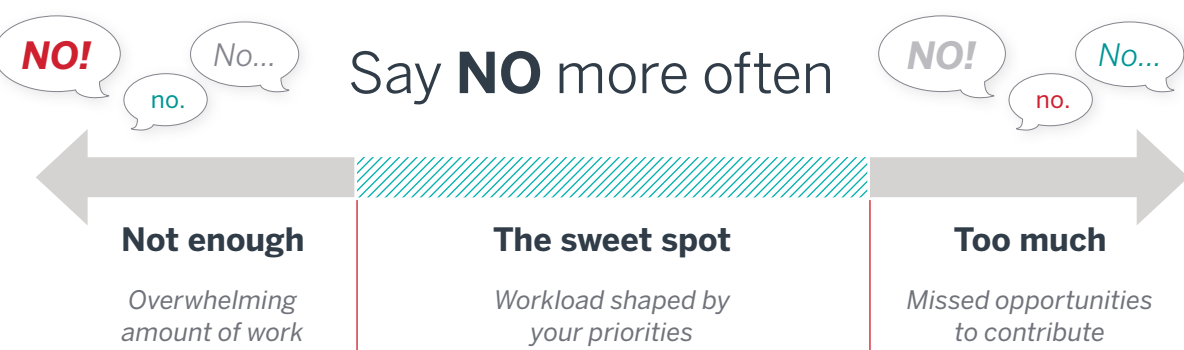
What type of support do you need?

- Material** → Staff, money, technology, templates, collaboration
- Informational** → Expertise, facts/information, feedback, training, buy-in
- Emotional** → Listening, productive venting, humor, perspective, advice

## BUILD SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

Create a personal **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

- Peer leaders in **other departments**
- People with **different expertise** than you
- Senior leaders and **mentors**
- People with **similar goals** as you



- Practice POSITIVE venting**
- Create an **appropriate forum**  
Agree on a specific time and place—with the appropriate people—to get stress off your chest
  - Set a **time limit**  
Restrict the amount of time you and your colleagues vent—and try not to go over time
  - Focus on **solutions**  
Reserve time at the end to brainstorm some potential solutions—end on a positive note