

Dealing with stress ... Alter, Avoid or Accept???

When you are feeling the effects of stress, you can deal with it in three different ways: Alter It, Accept It or Avoid It. The strategy you choose depends on how you view the situation.

Altering: Involves removing the source of stress by changing something about the situation. Improving communication skills, settling differences, planning your time differently, or asking for help are ways to alter a situation.

Avoiding: Ignoring the issue may be the best solution at times. However, be careful that you are not sweeping it under the rug only to have it resurface in a much bigger form. Avoidance might work for the small stuff that gets us all worked up. For example, if you know the grocery store is always busy on Friday nights, you may choose a time early in the morning. Avoiding stress may also involve saying “no” at times.

Accepting: Many problems are out of your control. The only option may be to accept them and try to increase your capacity to tolerate stress. Exercising, eating well and learning methods of relaxation can help with this. Change your perception of a situation by using humour, positive self-talk, or seeing it as a learning experience. This can help you redefine a situation so that it is seen as less stress provoking.

Now that you are familiar with the 3 A's (alter, avoid and accept), go back and look at the sources of stress you identified in the previous activity. Which “A” would you use with each issue?

	Alter	Avoid	Accept	Action
At Work				
At Home				
In Relationships With Others				
With Myself				

Take steps towards dealing with the stress in your life! In planning your course of action, do not forget to use family and friends who could help you in accomplishing your goals.

As for the future...

You will be your children’s greatest role model. Showing them positive ways to deal with life’s situations is probably one of the greatest gifts you will ever give them.