



Diabetes Education

Behavioral health professionals recommend different ways to cope with stress depending on what's causing the stress. The first step is to determine what's causing the stress and select from the following coping strategies and HOW to BEST resolve it.



Stress Busters:

The first thing to realize is that having stress is a normal part of everyday life. The difference is that stress can RAISE your blood sugar if it isn't properly controlled.

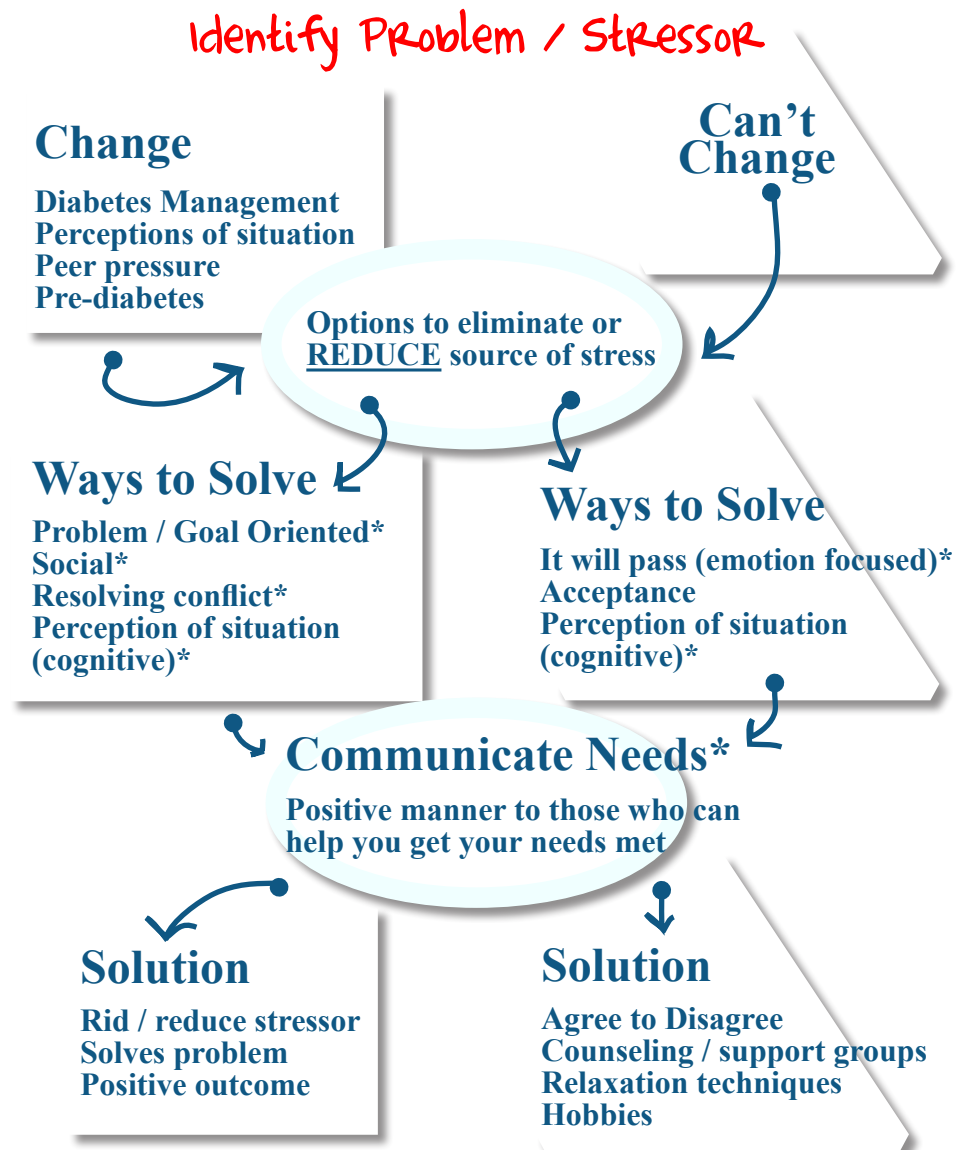
Learning to cope with the day to day management of diabetes by improving these skills may help you achieve better metabolic control and IMPROVE quality of life.

Problems that **CAN BE** changed will be solved differently from those that **CAN NOT** be changed; such as having diabetes.

* See following pages for descriptions

Stress Busters

Stress Busters Flowchart:



- Problems that can be changed or solved
- △ Problems that can't be changed
- Steps apply to both problems that can and can't be changed

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Stress Busters

I Just Can't Take It! Here Are Ways to Cope:

1. Identify Problem or Cause of Stressor strategies seek to find a solution to a specific problem. The individual determines if the situation can or cannot be changed. This will determine if the cause of the stress is solvable.

Example: I am concerned with how I am going to *INCREASE* my physical activity. This person starts off slow deciding to walk 15 minutes a day, 5 days a week.



2. What are MY Options?

Problem-oriented coping strategies seek to find a solution to a specific problem.

Emotion-focused coping is most useful when the person determines that nothing can be done to change the event or the source of what is causing the stress. Or the person may assess that the cause of the stress is temporary and will eventually resolve itself.

Example: This person realizes that with the new diagnosis of diabetes, she realizes that she can **ELIMINATE** the risk of developing complications if she takes care of herself.

Cognitive behavior modification. This technique helps a person to reflect on how he or she thinks and then responds to situations. The person is then taught to examine if the thoughts are based on fact or assumption.

Cognitive Behavior Modification is Composed of 3 Steps:

- • **J** Recognition of thoughts and feelings
- • **J** Problem-solving
- • **J** Guided self-dialogue

Know Your ABC's of Diabetes:

(Reach Your GOALS)

A ✓ EVERY 3-6 MONTHS
• **A1c:** Below 7%

B ✓ EVERY VISIT
• **Blood Pressure:**
Below 130/80mmHg

C ✓ ONCE A YEAR
• **Cholesterol:**
LDL: Below 100mg/dL
HDL: Above 40mg/dL
for Men & Above
50mg/dL for Women

○ **Blood Glucose Targets:**
• Fasting, 90-130mg/dL
• 2 Hours after eating,
Less Than 180mg/dL

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I Just Can't Take It! Here Are Ways to Cope (cont.):

Once the thoughts are examined, the next step is to problem-solve. The third step is teaching the person to use thoughts to help follow through on the decision made in the previous step.

Writing down your thoughts for each step is a useful way to identify the problem, finding the possible solution and following through on the solution.

Example: Someone who is newly diagnosed with diabetes may be frightened by the possibility of severe hypoglycemia. Sometimes this fear is out of proportion to the likelihood of its occurrence. This person can be shown that this reaction is an exaggeration then taught to change their thinking about the likelihood of a severe hypoglycemic event happening. This eliminates the barrier to striving for better metabolic control.

Social problem-solving is designed to **HELP** a person who is faced with peer pressure. Social problem-solving is a process by which an individual is taught to think through the process of having a problem and reaching a decision. All possible outcomes of a situation and the possible consequences of their decisions are discussed.

Six Major Problem-Solving Steps:

- ✓ Identify the problem
- ✓ Determine goals
- ✓ Generate alternative solutions
- ✓ Examine consequences
- ✓ Choose the solution
- ✓ Evaluate the outcome

Example: This person's lunch companions pressure him to eat unhealthy. This person determines that his health is *MORE* important and he feels better when he eats healthy. So the next time he goes out to eat with these people, he will stick to his healthy food choices, and tell them that he simply is going to do this.

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Stress Busters:

Any of these techniques will help you find a solution to what might be causing the stressful situation. Often this will lead to better management of your diabetes that will ultimately **IMPROVE** the quality of your life.

Stress Busters

I Just Can't Take It! Here Are Ways to Cope (cont.):

3. Communication skills training. Solving a problem starts with communicating it effectively. Once the problem is identified you want it presented in a way that is clear, appropriate, and constructive. One example is that often, patients believe that they need to develop long-winded explanations about testing, when often, a simple “I have diabetes and this tests my blood sugar level” is enough.

Example: Being assertive allows one to communicate in ways that are direct, honest, and appropriate. This skill can also be used to help with assuring that one's needs are met.

4. Conflict resolution. This skill is helpful to *RESOLVE* conflict in a positive manner that results in positive outcomes for all parties involved in the conflict. The first step is in understanding this skill that in any conflict, both parties can win and that each and every conflict should be approached in this manner. The steps focus on clear communication and problem-solving.

Example: Spouses who are having difficulty negotiating various aspects of diabetes management can be taught to resolve these conflicts in this manner.

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