

### ***Tips for managing irritating events and situations***

The stress caused by irritating events and situations can be reduced or even eliminated before it occurs. By reducing some of the built up stress in our daily lives, we can better cope with what are often minor irritating events and situations that can impact on us in our everyday lives. The following tips can help to prevent negative feelings and bad reactions to irritating events and situations:

- Be realistic about what you can achieve in the time available so that you do not feel stressed about the errands and tasks that you might not have completed;
- Prioritise your day to ensure that at the end of the day you have completed those things that are most important;
- Schedule in some “buffer” time for catching up;
- Learn to politely but assertively say “no” to extra demands that you know will contribute to making you feel stressed;
- Learn to express yourself in a way that can help others to understand why some events and situations are irritating and consider whether there are things that can be done to change or avoid the situation occurring (e.g., asking to move location at an outdoor venue because someone nearby is smoking);
- Get an adequate amount of sleep so that you feel healthy and alert;
- Take time out for yourself;
- Learn a relaxation technique (e.g., meditation, yoga, tai chi);
- Include pleasant activities in your day such as socialising with friends and family;
- Maintain a healthy diet (enjoy healthy food, don’t over eat and have regular meal times);
- Plan alternative activities to those that make you feel stressed (e.g., schedule in a pleasant activity with your children to avoid the neighbours children coming over after school, catch an earlier train to work to avoid overcrowding; catch public transport to work rather than driving in heavy traffic).

Remember that we as individuals can impact on our stress levels. How we manage irritating events and situations can have a huge impact on how we experience our lives. Using strategies that reduce daily demands on our time, planning our day to avoid difficult situations and scheduling time to relax can assist in reducing overall stress. Learning to use assertive language to change the situation can take some effort and will require practice. However, learning to be assertive across different areas of your life can help lead to positive outcomes.

#### **Find a psychologist:**

The APS provides a free service for the general public, GPs and other health professionals who are seeking the advice and assistance of a qualified psychologist, online at [www.findapsychologist.org.au](http://www.findapsychologist.org.au) or call 1800 333 497.