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Tools for Work/Life/Leadership

Employees in medical settings need specific work/life skills. If you are a typical healthcare worker, you will absorb stress from at least these three areas:

- Your personal life
- Patients needing your assistance/expertise
- Patients' family members

To begin lowering your stress, try to acquire one or two stress management skills per week. Build your set of stress reduction skills over time. Here are three simple tips that can produce life- changing results:

1. Monitor your voice tone. How you speak to others will affect your own emotional well- being.

For example, talk to your spouse and children in assertive, but friendly, ways. Your goal is to gain more cooperation—while not making sensitive issues worse.

A nurse we'll call Vicky confesses she often yells at her teenage son for leaving dishes in the sink. "I sound like a terrorist," laughs Vicky. A better approach: Vicky needs to stay calm and voice a consequence if the dishes aren't done. For example, Vicky might tell her son, "If I come home to a sink full of dishes, you will be grounded on Saturday night."

2. Give better instructions. Enlist and empower others, when possible. This means you take the lead when problems arise by painting clear, workable options for others.

For example, if you're tired of your spouse never coming up with plans for fun, offer him or her some desirable choices. State that you'd like to see a certain movie or go to community theatre next time you're off from work.

Just complaining will probably get you nowhere. Some spouses are not gifted at planning recreation or fun. So, paint clear pictures of choice and ask your spouse to choose. This gives both you and your spouse some control.

3. Examine your support system of people. Fine- tune to strengthen your support. All people in your closest circle of life—friends, family, doctor, hairdresser, baby sitter, auto mechanic, co-workers— constitute support needed to run your life productively.

Consider this: Do you need to get a different doctor, hairdresser, or babysitter to make your personal life easier or more productive? Having undependable or inappropriate people in your support system can weaken your ability to have a quality life.

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