



# IN SIGHT

*Helping you improve the quality of your personal & professional life.*

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## SEVEN “S’s” FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress management is really about lifestyles. It is not something you can decide to do the morning of a stressful day and expect it to work. It involves choices that must be made early and practiced daily. Consider the following seven “S’s” as stress management training for lawyers.

1) *Sleep*. Get the right amount for you – on a daily basis. A tired mind and body are poor allies in stressful situations.

2) *Sustenance*. Treat your body like a friend. Eat well. Exercise daily. Learn some stretching techniques to help you relax. Avoid relying on the “false” stress reducers like alcohol, caffeine, or nicotine. When you experience illness or distress, get help.

3) *Solitude*. All of us need some time alone; some people need a lot, some only a little. But it’s not the amount of time you spend alone that matters but what you do with that time. Use this time to refill your emotional reserves; to give your mind a chance to quiet down and rest. The more you can learn (through meditation, relaxation, restful activity, recreation) to quiet your internal chatter about what you did, should have done, have yet to do, or should do, the more effective will be your solitude.

4) *Sharing*. Just as solitude is important, so is sharing your thoughts, your emotions, your hopes, your fears, your life, and your stress with someone else. Learn how to interact with others, particularly your family and close friends, as a genuine, present human being. Converse *with* them, don’t interrogate. Practice listening to someone else and really try to understand what they are saying. Find people you trust enough to share your failures with, as well as your victories. Your life is stressful enough without trying to do it all alone.

5) *Silliness*. Don’t take yourself so seriously. It doesn’t matter how big and important you are, or would like to be. Laugh at yourself – it will improve your health. At least once a week, do something fun that involves no competition. Nothing relieves stress and tension better than a good laugh. Try to laugh a dozen times a day.

6) *Spirituality*. Spirituality doesn’t necessarily mean religion. Find what works for you, and then pay attention to it. If a particular religion or spiritual practice works for you, put it into action in your life. If getting out in nature is a spiritual experience for you, go regularly. Whatever you choose, let it give you some perspective on your life. A strong sense of spirituality can also provide you with guidance and direction, helping to reduce anxiety, worry, and guilt.

7) *Schedule*. Make stress management a part of your life. Schedule time for all of the other “S’s.” The less time and energy you have to devote to simply trying to find the time, the more likely you can do things like exercise, play, or enjoy some solitude.

Stress management is important to your clients, your colleagues, your family, but most of all to you. Practicing law is inefficient, ineffective, and just plain not fun if you are “stressed out.” Managing stress takes commitment. The time and energy you devote to it is an investment in yourself.

No one can manage your stress for you. No one but you can make the practice of law any more or less stressful for you. You alone have the power. Call the OAAP for assistance with developing your stress management program.

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