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SELF CARE and HOPE

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Hope can be one of our most healing experiences when in times of uncertainty and stress. Stepping away from our fears to imagine a more positive path forward is an act of self-care and a way of setting our intentions to engage in creating a better future, according to Susan Krauss, Ph.D. The Director of the University of Oklahoma [Hope Research Center](#), [Dr. Chan Hellman](#), also believes that hope is critical for our wellbeing. He cites evidence that hope not only leads to better physical and psychological health, but also is a “a transformative agent and a functional way of thinking that can have great prospects for our life.” He believes that by hoping for things to go well in challenging times ahead of us, “we will have a role to play in that future pursuit.”

To read more about hope, go to

- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/fulfillment-at-any-age/202409/the-new-psychology-of-hope>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/more-than-a-feeling/202212/new-hope-for-the-hopeless>

Dr. Hellman has also published a book about hope called *Hope Rising: How the Science of HOPE Can Change Your Life*.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/friendship-20/202103/the-health-benefits-hope>

And to read an article about the healing benefits of meditation for finding hope and reducing stress, go to [Meditation, Hope, and Stress](#)

SELF CARE and UNCERTAINTY

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Living with uncertainty has become a way of life these days. Findings from APA's 2024 Stress in America survey highlight ways that uncertainty stresses us out. According to this survey, “a majority of adults reported the future of our nation, the economy, and the presidential election as significant sources of stress in their lives.” So how do we take care of ourselves when something new and stressful keeps coming out of left field?

A recent article in the American Psychologist offers the following steps to help you better face life's uncertainties.

- **Be kind to yourself.** Some people are better at dealing with uncertainties than others, so don't be too hard on yourself if your tolerance for unpredictability is lower than a friend's. Remind yourself that it might take time for the stressful situation to resolve and be patient with yourself in the meantime.
- **Reflect on past successes.** Chances are you've overcome stressful events in the past—and you survived! Give yourself credit. Reflect on what you did during that event that was helpful and what you might like to do differently this time.
- **Develop new skills.** When life is relatively calm, make a point to try things outside your comfort zone. From standing up to a difficult boss to trying a new sport, taking risks helps you develop confidence and skills that come in handy when life veers off course.
- **Limit exposure to news.** When we're stressed about something, it can be hard to look away. But compulsively checking the news only keeps you wound up. Try to limit your check-ins and avoid the news during vulnerable times of day, such as right before bedtime.
- **Avoid dwelling on things you can't control.** When uncertainty strikes, many people immediately imagine worst-case scenarios. Get out of the habit of ruminating on negative events.
- **Take your own advice.** Ask yourself: If a friend came to me with this worry, what would I tell them? Imagining your situation from the outside can often provide perspective and fresh ideas.
- **Engage in self-care.** Don't let stress derail your healthy routines. Make efforts to eat well, exercise, and get enough sleep. Many people find stress release in practices such as yoga and meditation.
- **Seek support from those you trust.** Many people isolate themselves when they're stressed or worried. But social support is important, so reach out to family and friends.
- **Control what you can.** Focus on the things that are within your control, even if it's as simple as weekly meal planning or laying out your clothes the night before a stressful day. Establish routines to give your days and weeks some comforting structure.
- **Ask for help.** If you're having trouble managing stress and coping with uncertainty on your own, ask for help. Psychologists are experts in helping people develop healthy ways to cope with stress. Find a psychologist in your area by using APA's Psychologist Locator Service.

To read more, go to <https://www.apa.org/topics/stress/uncertainty>

Continue to strive, Matadors, and stay tuned for more wellness-based content and resources from the CCRC.

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