

**【Directions】** Read the text below to prepare for the interview and the writing test.

- 1) You will be asked to answer questions and to write an essay based on this text.
- 2) You can take notes in this booklet and bring them with you so that you can refer to your notes during the interview and while you are writing your essay.

While stress is an automatic response from your nervous system, some stressors\* arise at predictable times: your commute to work, a meeting with your boss, or family gatherings, for example. When handling such predictable stressors, you can either change the situation or change your reaction. When deciding which option to choose in any given scenario, it's helpful to think of the four A's: avoid, alter, adapt, or accept.

The four A's – Avoid, Alter, Adapt & Accept

**Avoid unnecessary stress**

It's not healthy to avoid a stressful situation that needs to be addressed, but you may be surprised by the number of stressors in your life that you can eliminate.

Learn how to say “no.” Know your limits and stick to them. Whether in your personal or professional life, taking on more than you can handle is a surefire recipe\* for stress. Distinguish between the “shoulds” and the “musts” and, when possible, say “no” to taking on too much.

Avoid people who stress you out. If someone consistently causes stress in your life, limit the amount of time you spend with that person, or end the relationship.

Take control of your environment. If the evening news makes you anxious, turn off the TV. If traffic makes you tense, take a longer but less-traveled route. If going to the market is an unpleasant chore, do your grocery shopping online.

Pare down\* your to-do list. Analyze your schedule, responsibilities, and daily tasks. If you've got too much on your plate, drop tasks that aren't truly necessary to the bottom of the list or eliminate them entirely.

**Alter the situation**

If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Often, this involves changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life.

**Express your feelings instead of bottling them up\*.** If something or someone is bothering you, be more assertive\* and communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. If you've got an exam to study for and your chatty roommate just got home, say up front that you only have five minutes to talk. If you don't voice your feelings, resentment will build and the stress will increase.

**Be willing to compromise.** When you ask someone to change their behavior, be willing to do the same. If you both are willing to bend at least a little, you'll have a good chance of finding a happy middle ground.

**Create a balanced schedule.** All work and no play is a recipe for burnout. Try to find a balance between work and family life, social activities and solitary\* pursuits, daily responsibilities and downtime.

**Adapt to the stressor**

If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

**Reframe problems.** Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Rather than fuming\* about a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to pause and regroup, listen to your favorite radio station, or enjoy some alone time.

**Look at the big picture.** Take perspective of the stressful situation. Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.

**Adjust your standards.** Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others, and learn to be okay with "good enough."

**Practice gratitude.** When stress is getting you down, take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life, including your own positive qualities and gifts. This simple strategy can help you keep things in perspective.

**Accept the things you can't change**

Some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can't prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it's easier than railing against\* a situation you can't change.

**Don't try to control the uncontrollable.** Many things in life are beyond our control, particularly the behavior of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems.

**Look for the upside.** When facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth. If your own poor choices contributed to a stressful situation, reflect on them and learn from your mistakes.

**Learn to forgive.** Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes. Let go of anger and resentments. Free yourself from negative energy by forgiving and moving on.

**Share your feelings.** Expressing what you're going through can be very cathartic\*, even if there's nothing you can do to alter the stressful situation. Talk to a trusted friend or make an appointment with a therapist.

**【出典】**

“Stress Management”, Lawrence Robinson, Melinda Smith, M.A., and Robert Segal, M.A., Last updated: November 2021, HelpGuide, <https://www.helpguide.org/articles/stress/stress-management.htm>

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\*stressors: causes of stress

\*a surefire recipe: a successful method

\*pare down: cut down

\*bottling them up: hiding them

\*assertive: confident

\*solitary: being alone

\*fuming: very angry

\*railing against: criticizing angrily

\*cathartic: 精神浄化作用がある、カタルシスの