

Guidelines to Managing Stress

Many public broadcasting managers are anxious about the economic challenges facing them over the months ahead. How they have been conducting business in the past may not work in the future, and now more than ever they are being pulled in multiple directions. In most cases, the effect is doubly trying with station personnel already overworked and underfunded.

So how can one manager address all these pressures? How can she or he handle the situation?

Steps to dealing with stress:

- 1) **Take time to vent before thinking practically.** Talk with your friends and/or your support group about your frustrations, and let your anger out. Do NOT do this venting with staff.
- 2) **Reach out to other station managers and resource people for help.** Many times managers will isolate themselves, thinking this financial problem reflects poorly on their management style and business structure. Reach to others in spite of your insecurity and embarrassment and say, “I need help.”
- 3) **Be direct with staff about the challenges and the changes ahead.** Outline how the choices will be made. Don’t lie to them; be factual.
- 4) **Prioritize tasks.** Do the hard stuff first. Delaying a tough decision will only add to the stress. Get it over with and move on. Your stress factor will be reduced once the most difficult task is done.
- 5) **Take a timeout.** Get out of the office and walk. Hitting a tennis ball can be very therapeutic. Doing aerobic exercise, getting the heart rate elevated, can be a good release of negative energy. Finding a quiet place and listening to relaxing music can also be helpful.
- 6) **Have realistic expectations of yourself.** Yes, you can work longer hours, but there is a limit, and you cannot afford burnout. This is not a long-term strategy that will work.
- 7) **Perfection is draining.** Do not try to micromanage everything. Leave the small tasks for others, and focus your attention on the larger picture.
- 8) **Be positive.** Avoid the “nay sayers”. Learn to reward yourself for small accomplishments even if others do not.
- 9) **Get some sleep.** Lack of sleep can make you more vulnerable to stress.

Stress is not the same for everyone. We are all different, so what helps one person may not be effective with another. Be patient with yourself, remember that many issues improve over time.