

## STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES



Next time you are feeling anxious, try the **STOP** technique. **STOP** helps you come back to the present moment where you will be able to gain some perspective and respond to stress in a more helpful way. ***Remember, stress itself is not the problem – it's how we react to it!***

All you need is a couple minutes to practice **STOP** – you'll notice a big difference in how you're feeling. Here's what you need to do:

**S** = **S**top what you're doing right now and give yourself permission to take a break.

**T** = **T**ake a few deep breaths. Then just take a minute or two and focus on breathing normally. You can follow your breath by saying "in" when you breathe in and "out" when you breathe out.

**O** = **O**bserve your thoughts, emotions, and physical feelings. As you reflect on your thoughts, ***keep in mind that thoughts are not facts and they will pass as long as you don't engage in the story!*** Notice your emotions and name them. When you name an emotion, you take away some of its power which helps you become calmer. Also pay attention to your body. Do you have tense muscles that you can relax?

**P** = **P**roceed with doing something that will nurture and support you. Maybe take a walk, talk to a family member or friend, listen to music, do yoga, focus on your breathing, work out in the yard, or sit outside and listen to the birds – whatever helps you feel more centered and brings you comfort.