



Nourishment for a Lifestyle of Wellness

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How our perspective can help....

- Saint John Vianney Center is a Behavioral Health Center that serves Ministers of the Church.
- Serving the Church for 77 years with residential and outpatient care
- Many find themselves needing help with Self Care/Wellness
- Holistic approach to care
 - Spirit
 - Mind
 - Body
- Providing tools to live a holy, happy and healthy ministry
- “ Self Care is KEY!”

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Who takes care of You?

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What is Self Care?

- Any activity we deliberately do to take care of our spiritual, mental, physical and emotional health.
- A simple concept in theory, but often overlooked.
- Good self care is key to improved mood, reduced anxiety and to a good relationship with yourself and others.
- “Something that refuels us, rather than takes from us.”
- Self care is key to living a balanced life the Lord called you to.
- **Do you believe leadership and self care are not compatible?**

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Self care needs to be an ACTIVE choice

- Create a NO list (set your boundaries)...you can't be everything to everyone.
- Prayer
- Nutritious healthy meals (your fuel!)
- Get enough sleep
- Physical Activity/Exercise
- Medical Care
- Relaxation/Meditation
- Spend time with others, explore hobbies, interests, avoid loneliness
- Look for opportunities to laugh
- SELF CARE TAKES PRACTICE....

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You can't pour from an empty cup...

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Who provides support in your life?

Self care may mean graciously allowing others to help us with our burdens.

Self care is proven to prevent health issues.



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We know WHAT to do...so why don't we ??

What's holding us back?



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One of the most commonly cited sources of concern for Men Religious Leadership:



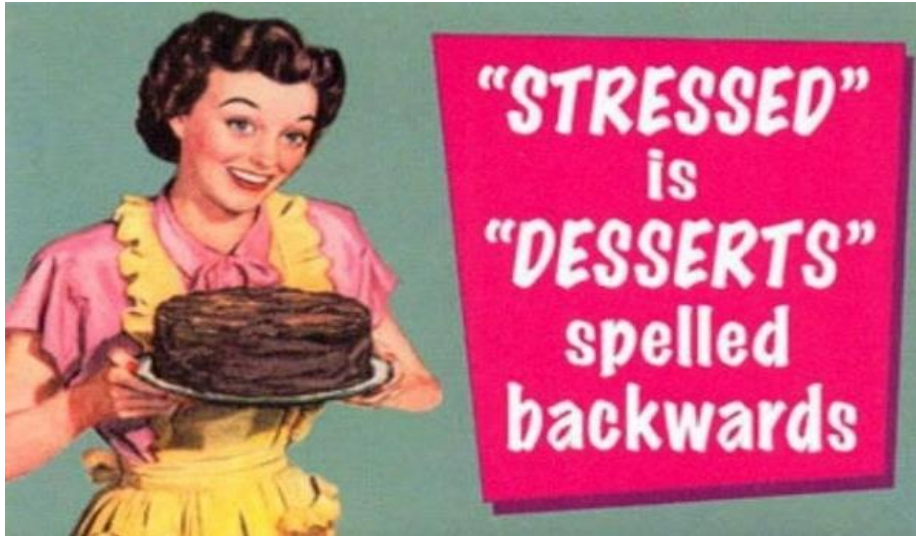
- Why?
 - What types of Stress?
 - What places you at risk?
 - What can we do about it?

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It is important to note that the way we perceive and manage stress matters a great deal.

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Stress

- Stress is a normal physical response to events that make you feel threatened or upset your balance in some way.
- It is the body's defense; a way of protecting you.
- Stress can be positive or negative



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Stress 101

What is healthy stress?

Stress is a normal and necessary part of life. Stress can be a good thing. The right amount, well managed, can make us feel alive, increase productivity, energy, creativity, and happiness.

- Examples:
- Rewarding ministry – being elected to leadership!
- Positive life transitions and changes
- Being ordained/final vows
- Taking a new assignment
- First Pastorate/leading a ministerial assignment

Perception of the event is important

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What is unhealthy stress?

Too much stress when poorly managed, can create:

- Boredom
- Fatigue
- Restlessness
- Irritability
- Depression

Too much stress and poor management can put you at risk for disease.

Examples: Death of loved one, too great a workload, trying to be everything to everyone, dysfunctional relationships & unresolved grief

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External Stressors

- ❖ **Pandemic – connections, financial**
- ❖ **Men Religious shortage and increasing demand**
- ❖ **Changing roles**
- ❖ **Investigations – historical and current**
- ❖ **Loss (of status, relevance, unprocessed losses)**
- ❖ **Isolation**
- ❖ **Community unrest**
- ❖ **Division in the Church**
- ❖ **Modern culture (counter cultural values)**

Changing Roles: Models of Leadership have changed.

*Loss is a major issue: Not the Church it was when I entered religious life
A deep desire for the “good old days”*

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Stress

Beyond a certain point, stress stops being helpful and starts causing major damage to:

- Your health
- Your mood
- Your productivity
- Your relationships
- Your quality of life

It becomes difficult to avoid.



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Stress

The dangerous thing about stress is how easily it can creep up on you:

- You get used to it
- It starts to feel familiar, normal even
- You don't notice how much it's affecting you, even as it takes a heavy toll

Stress affects the mind, body, and behavior in many ways.

Everyone experiences stress differently.

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Stress Doesn't Always Look Stressful

A simple driving analogy can best describe the three most common ways people respond when they're overwhelmed by stress:

Foot on the gas – An angry or agitated stress response. You're heated, keyed up, overly emotional, and unable to sit still.

Foot on the brake – A withdrawn or depressed stress response. You shut down, space out, and show very little energy or emotion.

Foot on both – A tense and frozen stress response. You "freeze" under pressure and can't do anything. You look paralyzed, but under the surface you're extremely agitated.

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Symptoms of Stress

- **Irritability**
- **Fatigue**
- **Obsessive thoughts**
- **Rumination**
- **Difficulty with concentration and focus**
- **Weakening prayer life**
- **Anxiety and depression**
- **Sleep changes**
- **Eating changes (too much, too little)**

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BEHAVIOR WARNING SIGNALS OF PROBLEMS WITH STRESS

- **Feeling tired and never really rested.**
- **Feeling disconnected from prayer or ministry.**
- **Arguing with others over minor things.**
- **Lack of patience. Lack of tolerance for others' mistakes and incompetence.**
- **Inability to feel relaxed.**
- **Constantly feeling under pressure because of ministry or personal life.**
- **Lack of desire or time to socialize.**
- **Not finding joy in ministry**
- **Absent-mindedness. Forgetting things.**
- **Feeling irritable and tired at the end of the day.**

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Effects of Stress

Long term exposure leads to major health problems and disrupts every system in the body:

- Blood pressure
- Immune system
- Increase risk of heart attack and stroke
- Speed up aging process
- Sleep disruption
- Obesity
- Depression
- Anxiety
- **Leads to poor decisions regarding health management**

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Reality for Men Religious Leadership

- Not permitted to have a bad day
- Always must be upbeat and positive
- Not affected by stressful situations
- Say No?...No way!
- Having all the answers
- Recognizing expectations
- Managing expectations

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How does living healthy manage stress?

- First, we need to define health...

The World Health Organization's *definition of Health:*

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

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**Living Healthy in mind,
body, and spirit leads to
Wellness**

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Reducing your risk

- Routine visits to the physician
 - Not “sick” visits
 - Return as the doctor directs you
- Routine visits to the dentist
- Early identification of medical issues lead to desirable outcomes
- Properly managing chronic physical health problems
- Specialists as needed
- Medication reconciliation

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Men: Stay Healthy

Get the Screenings You Need

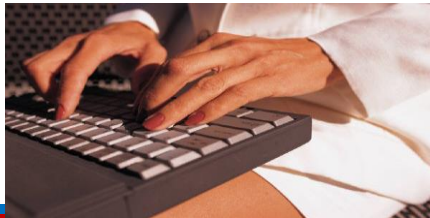
- **Colon Cancer.** If you are 75 or younger, get a screening test for colorectal cancer. Several different tests—for example, a stool test or a colonoscopy—can detect this cancer
- **Depression.** Your emotional health is as important as your physical health. Talk to your doctor or nurse about being screened for depression
- **Diabetes.** Get screened for diabetes (high blood sugar) with a blood test if you have high blood pressure or take medication for high blood pressure.
 - *Diabetes can cause problems with your heart, brain, eyes, feet, kidneys, nerves, and other body parts*
- **High Blood Cholesterol.** Have your blood cholesterol checked regularly with a blood test. High blood cholesterol increases your chance of heart disease, stroke, and poor circulation.
- **High Blood Pressure.** Have your blood pressure checked at least every 2 years. High blood pressure can cause strokes, heart attacks, kidney and eye problems, and heart failure.
- **Lung Cancer:** Talk to your doctor or nurse about getting screened for lung cancer if you smoke now or have quit within the past 15 years
- **Overweight and Obesity.** The best way to learn if you are overweight or obese is your BMI.

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Why do we need Physical Activity?

- Sedentary lifestyles count as a major risk factor in chronic illnesses such as heart disease, diabetes and osteoporosis.
- Sitting Disease is a real disease!



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Physical Activity

Physical Activity in any form can act as a stress reliever

Being active can:

- Boost your mood
- Act as a distraction
- Increase your resiliency to the ill effects of stress



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Physical Activity

- Pumps up your endorphins (your brain's feel-good neurotransmitters)
- "Meditation in motion" - helps you get away from the days stresses and concentrate
- Helps you get refocused - it's like a time out for grown ups
- Enhances mood
- Increases self-confidence
- Lowers symptoms of depression and anxiety
- Improves sleep - exercise offsets stress which leads to sleep disruption

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Physical Activity Research

Columbia University identified that 2.5 to 4.5 hours per week of exercise/activity leads to prevention of mental health disorders, primarily depression and anxiety.

- You don't have to be an elite athlete to be active
- Find something you enjoy doing
- Develop a plan
- Use the buddy system or groups
- Being accountable to others helps to stay motivated
- findings support: *"the notion that regular activity may lead to prevention of mental health disorders."*

Be reasonable – Consult your doctor if you wish to exercise seriously and are just starting out

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Physical Activity

Time Management:

- Make time every day to be active
- Set a goal each day and stick to it
- Low cost (pair of shoes, pedometer)
 - Built in your smart phone!
- Break up your activity into manageable times if needed (3- 10 min walks)

Any form of activity works:

- Get up and move
- Sports
- Gardening
- Walking definitely counts!



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Smoking & Alcohol

- Smoking is not a stress reliever, diet alternative, or energy producing option
 - It raises heart and blood pressure, reduces oxygen exchange without the positive effects of exercise
- Avoid Alcohol- though it may seem to help with stress
 - Long term effects compound or create new emotional and physical health issues

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Sleep Hygiene

Sleep is your body's chance to re-fuel, as well as your mind

- Know your needs, it varies from person to person
- Keep a regular sleep schedule
- When you get up, stay up
- Avoid naps - unless taking a power nap helps your routine
- Practice breathing/meditation techniques before bedtime
- Exercise in the morning
- Avoid caffeine and nicotine after dinner
- Avoid large meals after dinner - a light snack is ok
- Use bedroom for sleep only – read and watch TV elsewhere

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Nutrition

- **Eat Well**
 - Plan for 3 square meals a day.
 - Make breakfast a priority
 - Set a goal to eat 5 servings of fruits and veggies per day
 - Identify and maintain daily calorie totals
- **Fluid Maintenance**
 - Limit caffeine and sugary drinks
 - Avoid alcohol
 - Set a goal to consume 64 ounces of non-caloric beverages a day



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Prayer Life

- Leadership report one of the first things to diminish
- Spiritual direction is essential for leadership
- Prayer time needs to be non-negotiable
- Pruning your responsibilities to allow blossoming of your spirit

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Remember, Self Care is Not Selfish

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“But I’m in Leadership”...

Christ and self-care...

***“But He Himself would often slip away into the wilderness to pray”
(Luke 5:16)***

"Love your neighbor as yourself." (Mark 12:31)

God’s commandment is to love our neighbors as much as we love ourselves.

Loving yourself is not selfish.

It’s only selfish if you love yourself more than you love other people.

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Wellness

The state of being in good health, especially as an actively pursued goal.

An active process of becoming aware of and making choices toward a healthful and fulfilling life.

Not just free of illness but a dynamic process of change & growth.



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Resources

- **Built in Support for you:**
 - **SJVC's Men Religious Leadership Monthly Support Meetings:**
 - **Third Thursday of each month at 4:00 pm EST via Zoom**
 - **Email me to register**

- Leadership Portal – email me for access to valuable resources!

- Health and Wellness – videos, **podcasts**, print material
 - <https://www.sjvcenter.org/resources/>

- Call or email – **Confidential**
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