

Using the Four A's For Stress Reduction in Pregnancy

You have the power to improve your life and your baby's life by committing yourself to stress reduction. Rather than becoming more anxious about stress, you can choose to think, "I have the power to reduce the risk of all of these things by taking care of myself. I can quiet my mind. I can take a few moments to do deep breathing. I can take a walk, do yoga, smile, and yawn (a significant stress-reducer). I have all the power. I can CHANGE MY MIND."

Focus on the opportunity you have during pregnancy to make change instead of the risks of being chronically stressed. Things that are proven to reduce stress are: optimism, supportive relationships, meditation, yoga, smiling, yawning, and deep breathing techniques.

You also can use the four A's of stress reduction - Avoid, Alter, Adapt and Accept.

Change the Situation

Avoid the stressor – This mean making changes to your environment to keep stress to a minimum. Are you spending a great deal of time with people who cause you stress? Are you participating in activities and events that make you feel stressed out? Learn to say "no" and avoid people and situations that stress you.

Alter the stressor – If you cannot avoid the stressor, how can you change it? Can you modify your hours at work? Can you manage your time better? Do you really need to vacuum the entire house every other day? See how you can team up with co-workers, friends, and family to lighten your load or do these activities with the people you love.

Change Your Reaction

Adapt to the stressor – How can you see the situation in a different way? Are you looking for the good in the situation or staying in a negative frame of mind? Talk about how the situation makes you feel with people you care about, such as your best friend, a counselor, or your spiritual support team. Change how you see things and put the situation in perspective.

Accept the stressor – Sometimes it is impossible to change what is happening or the impact a stressor has on your life. In this case, you can choose your reaction to the stressor even if you cannot change it. Letting go of the need to control the situation can be a big step to reducing stress. When you embrace acceptance, you are no longer in state of resistance and this leads to a more peaceful internal state. An excellent affirmation for acceptance is, "I accept this situation in my life and I trust that all things are working together for my highest good."

