

“Thinking Differently”

A critical aspect of Smart Stress Management is “Thinking Differently.”

When we think of situations, events, people and places that contribute to, or are a source of stress, we often have emotional reactions that become obstacles to forming an effective response to perceived stressors. Our thoughts, or what we tell ourselves, create the negative or positive feelings that we have about a situation. This is why different people may have completely different reactions to the exact same situation. What we think is often processed via “self-talk”, which unfortunately, can be in conflict with reality and actually increase our distress. This prevents smart stress management and focusing on the need for self-care.

The Employee Service Program (ESP) online Systematic Stress Management Program has several modules to help manage stress, including an excellent module on “Thinking Differently.” Thinking differently helps us to *choose to be in control*, and feel more empowered to cope effectively with whatever life throws our way. This module looks at managing self-talk or thought habits that are self-defeating or result in unwanted distress. It explains how you can distract yourself from having thoughts that are more stressful than you prefer.

For more information on the ESP online Systematic Stress Management Program, or to schedule an individual consultation with an ESP Counselor to better understand “thinking differently” techniques and develop a personalized self-care plan, please contact ESP at 517-373-7630 (Lansing area); 313-456-4020 (Detroit area), or 800-521-1377. ESP also invites you to visit our website at www.michigan.gov/esp.