

# FEMINA

Inclusion of Women in the Cultural & Creative Sector

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## Blended Training Program: Inclusion and Diversity within Cultural and Creative Sector (CCS)



*Erasmus+ Programme, Key Action 2: Partnerships for Cooperation, Small-Scale Partnership*

**‘Femina - Inclusion of Women in the Cultural and Creative Sector’**

Blended Training Program:

Inclusion and Diversity within Cultural and Creative Sector (CCS)

# Stress Management in the Cultural and Creative Sector

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## About Femina

'Femina – Inclusion of Women in the Cultural and Creative Sector' (2022-1-LU01-KA210-VET-000081625) is a collaborative project funded by Erasmus+ that aims to promote the participation of women in the cultural and creative sector. The project involves two partners, Luxembourg Creative Lab a.s.b.l. and Budakov Films Ltd., who have extensive experience working with creative individuals on various projects and initiatives. During our recruitment and freelancer search, we have identified specific groups of women within the cultural and creative sector:

- Women with creative backgrounds who are currently not employed in the same field but have the potential to contribute their skills and expertise.
- Women who may lack confidence in their digital skills, despite being actively involved in the cultural and creative sector.
- Women who are currently employed but aspire to embark on an entrepreneurial or freelance path within the cultural and creative sector.

By identifying and addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by these sub-segments of women, the project aims to foster inclusivity, support their professional development, and empower them to thrive in the cultural and creative field.

## Unit 1: The good, the bad and the ugly stress

*Tags:* stress, motivation, eustress, focus, burnout, mental health

## Unit 1 – Introduction

*The stress response, also known as the "fight-or-flight" response, is an innate survival mechanism that helped our ancestors deal with immediate threats. When faced with a perceived threat, the body releases stress hormones (such as adrenaline and cortisol), which prepare the body for action.*

*The stress response is not inherently evil and debilitating. The change in your brain chemistry will trigger a physiological change that increases everything from mental alertness and energy, to raw physical strength.*

*While the stress response is crucial in emergency situations, prolonged activation or chronic stress can have negative consequences on physical and mental health. In this we will discuss the good, the bad and ugly side of this natural reaction and we will see how we could harness its potential.*

### 1.1. What is actually happening to your body when you are stressed

Stress can have both psychological and physiological effects on women. While some of the symptoms of stress are not-gender specific, women may be more prone to experiencing feelings of guilt, self-doubt, or perfectionism, which can impact their emotional well-being. It's crucial to address the psychological impact of stress and provide guidance on building confidence, managing self-doubt, and fostering a positive mindset.

Physiologically, stress can manifest in physical symptoms that may be more prevalent in women, such as headaches, digestive issues, or hormonal imbalances. Therefore, promoting self-care practices that specifically address women's well-being is vital.



*Image 1 – Headaches are a common symptom of stress. Source: drexel.edu*

When you experience stress, your body responds by increasing your heart rate and blood pressure, causing rapid and shallow breathing, and creating muscle tension. You become more alert, with heightened senses, and may start sweating. Stress can also affect your digestive system, weaken your immune system, disrupt your sleep patterns, and impact your emotions and cognitive function.

It is important to acknowledge the specific stressors that women in entrepreneurial roles may face. Balancing multiple roles, such as running a business, managing a household, and caring for family members, can create significant stress.

Furthermore, women may encounter gender bias and stereotypes in the business world, leading to additional challenges and pressures. If, in your experience as a female entrepreneur you have encountered such stressors, you are certainly aware of how unpleasant dealing with them may be.

## 1.2. Is there such a thing as good stress

While it may sound counter-intuitive, there is a concept known as "good stress" or "eustress." Eustress refers to a positive form of stress that can be motivating, exciting, and stimulating. Unlike negative stress (distress), which overwhelms and negatively impacts well-being, eustress can have beneficial effects on performance and personal growth.

However, there is no set rule for inducing the so-called positive stress. What may be a cause for eustress for one person can be distressing for another. It depends on individual perceptions, coping mechanisms and personal circumstances.

It's important to recognize your limits and prioritize self-care to manage stress effectively, regardless of whether it is perceived as positive or negative.

Having said that – experiencing positive stress can have one or multiple of the following benefits.

- **Motivation and focus**

Eustress can provide a sense of motivation and focus, helping you meet deadlines, accomplish tasks, and achieve goals. It can serve as a driving force to push you out of your comfort zone and take on new challenges.

To learn more about maintaining your motivation in a highly competitive environment such as the cultural and creative sector, review Module 7: Motivation for additional details.

- **Performance enhancement**

In certain situations, experiencing moderate levels of stress can enhance cognitive function, memory, and creativity. It can improve alertness, problem-solving abilities, and concentration, leading to increased productivity and performance.

- **Sense of fulfilment**

Overcoming challenges and experiencing eustress can provide a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. It can boost self-confidence, self-esteem, and personal growth, as you expand your capabilities and achieve positive outcomes.

- **Excitement and engagement**

Eustress often accompanies exciting or thrilling events, such as starting a new project, pursuing a passion, or participating in activities you enjoy. It can generate a sense of enthusiasm and engagement, making the experience more enjoyable.

To induce positive stress in your life, you could try some tried and test techniques. First of all, establishing goals that are challenging but still within your reach can create a sense of excitement and motivation. These goals should push you out of your comfort zone and provide an opportunity for growth and achievement.

Furthermore, you could embrace new opportunities and expand your professional expertise. You are encouraged to attend conferences, workshops, and even online learning programs, which can generate eustress by creating a sense of excitement and anticipation for growth and acquiring new skills. In a way, your decision to enroll in FEMINA could be perceived as a source of eustress, as you are actively being exposed to new ideas and concepts, which you must learn. You are also aware of the fact that modules are followed by tests, which can be perceived as a stressor.

However, considering that you have taken the time away from your busy schedule as an entrepreneur to continue working on this course, you likely stand to gain new skills. If you adopt the right mindset, it will help you get through the course, while improving your alertness.

### 1.3. The ugly side of stress

As a female entrepreneur, prolonged exposure to excessive stress can have several negative consequences for you, including impaired decision making and reduced creativity. As woman –

stress may impact your body in an adverse manner, which is notably different than what men face.

For example, women tend to be more emotionally expressive and may experience higher levels of emotional distress due to stress. This is also true of artistic people, so women working in the cultural and creative sector may be particularly prone to the effects of stress. Although it is conjecture, you need not be the test subject to prove it. Stress can manifest as heightened feelings of anxiety, worry, or rumination, which can further exacerbate the impact of stress on your overall well-being.

Furthermore, women have higher rates of certain health conditions, such as autoimmune disorders, depression, and anxiety, which are known to be influenced negatively by stress. The combination of stress and these underlying health conditions can create a more significant burden on women's physical and mental health.

Some of the more specific conditions that can be induced by prolonged exposure to stress include but are not limited to:

- **Burnout**

Juggling multiple responsibilities and the demands of running your business can increase the risk of burnout. Prolonged stress can lead to exhaustion, reduced motivation, and a decline in productivity, impacting your overall well-being.

- **Physical health issues**

Chronic stress can take a toll on your physical health. It may contribute to the development or worsening of various health conditions, such as cardiovascular problems, weakened immune function, digestive disorders, and hormonal imbalances. These health issues can affect your ability to effectively manage your business and personal life.

- **Mental health challenges**

Prolonged exposure to stress can negatively impact your mental health. You may experience increased levels of anxiety, depression, and mood disorders. The constant pressure, uncertainty, and challenges associated with running a business can contribute to feelings of overwhelm, self-doubt, and imposter syndrome.

Chronic stress can impair your cognitive function, including memory, concentration, and decision-making abilities. This can hinder your ability to make clear and strategic choices, potentially impacting the success and growth of your business.

Stress can hinder your creativity and innovation, essential aspects of entrepreneurial success. When constantly under stress, it can be challenging to think outside the box, generate new ideas, and adapt to changing market trends.

In turn this can have financial implications for your business. Decreased productivity, impaired decision-making, and strained relationships can all impact your financial stability and growth, which will generate more stress in the future. If left unchecked, this will become a vicious cycle that can ruin your career. This is why it is imperative to find ways to counteract negative stress.

## Key Takeaways

- Physiologically, stress can manifest in physical symptoms that may be more prevalent in women, such as headaches, digestive issues, or hormonal imbalances. Therefore, promoting self-care practices that specifically address women's well-being is vital.
- What may be a cause for eustress for one person can be distressing for another. It depends on individual perceptions, coping mechanisms and personal circumstances.
- Chronic stress can impair your ability to manage your business and lead to financial instability, which in turn generates more stress.

## Recommendations for Further Reading

Stress can decrease your motivation for work. However, stressors can be mitigated with some of the same techniques that can be used to improve motivation. View [Module 7: Motivation for Female Entrepreneurs](#) for more information.

### References for Unit 1:

**Sapolsky, R. M. (2004).** Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers. Holt Paperbacks.

**McGonigal, K. (2016).** The Upside of Stress: Why Stress Is Good for You, and How to Get Good at It. Avery.

## Unit 2: Tips and tricks for reducing stress

*Tags: time-management, routine, breaks, working space*

### Unit 2 - Introduction

*Understanding and managing stress is important for your physical and mental health, as well as your overall well-being. By implementing stress reduction techniques, you can improve your productivity, enhance your relationships, maintain a healthy work-life balance, and experience a higher quality of life. Prioritizing stress management is an investment in your long-term health, happiness and success.*

*However, doing that is easier said than done. Simply working less is often a luxury entrepreneurs cannot afford. Women in particular face other challenges if they must take care of their families. Reducing stress requires conscious efforts and improved time management skills in order to be successful.*

*In the following unit we will explore some options to do just that.*

### 2.1. Finding time

Finding time for stress management techniques can be challenging for women entrepreneurs who balance multiple responsibilities at work and in their personal lives. To prioritize stress management, schedule dedicated time in your calendar as non-negotiable appointments. Identify small pockets of time throughout the day for practices like deep breathing or mindfulness.

Time pockets may not be obvious to you, while you are engaged in your busy routine, but if you look hard enough you would be surprised to find many of them. Here are some examples you might have overlooked.

#### - Morning routine

Take advantage of the time when you wake up to incorporate stress management practices. It could be as simple as spending a few minutes doing deep breathing exercises, practicing gratitude, or setting positive intentions for the day. Alternatively, you can take a few moments to engage in creative rituals like journaling, sketching, or listening to music that fuels your creativity. Something as simple as this may give you a surprising edge in the competitive world of the cultural and creative sector.

#### - Creative breaks

Instead of immediately moving from one task to another, take short breaks to recharge. Use these moments to engage in stress-relieving activities such as stretching, going for a short walk, or listening to calming music. You can also integrate short creative breaks between tasks to

recharge your energy. If, for example, you are an artist, you can use these moments to engage in activities that stimulate your creativity, such as experimenting with art supplies.

- Commutes as a time for reflection

If you have a commute, transform it into a time of creative reflection. Tune into inspiring podcasts, listen to music that sparks your imagination, or simply observe the world around you. Embrace these moments as opportunities for creative ideation and self-expression. Additionally, you could practice mindfulness or deep breathing, or even use guided meditation apps to relax and center yourself before or after a busy workday.

- **Lunchtime breaks**

Instead of viewing lunch breaks as mere fueling sessions, see them as opportunities for creative exploration. Step away from your workspace and engage in activities like, brainstorming new ideas. Allow yourself to be inspired by the world around you.

Sparing time is difficult for entrepreneurs, but having a lunchtime break helps in the long term. It might be tempting to skip lunch, or eat something quickly when you are busy, so that you can focus on your work. However, this is a very bad idea in the long term – you will be less productive, less creative and less focused in the afternoon, if you have not had a proper meal.

Consider relaxing at lunchtime as an investment which will pay for itself by being more productive later.

- **Create a working space**

Establish working rituals and spaces that facilitate creative expression and promote relaxation. For example, you create a dedicated space for working in home or at your office and have other spaces dedicated to rest. Moving from one place to another will help you unwind if need be. Establish some form of ritual that goes along with the change of spaces. This is also important for motivation and we discuss it in detail in Module 7.

- **Evening wind-down**

Prioritize winding down before bedtime to promote better sleep and manage stress. Create an evening routine that includes activities like reading a book, taking a warm bath, practicing gentle stretching or yoga, or journaling to release any remaining tension from the day.

Stay away from your digital devices at least an hour before going to bed. Blue light emitted from the screen could trick your brain into thinking that it is earlier in the day and disrupt your sleep cycle. Not having enough sleep is certainly going to increase your stress levels.

## 2.2. Physical activities for relaxation

Not all ways of managing stress revolve around winding down and doing less. If your stress is derived from cognitive work, which is often the case in the cultural and creative sector, engaging your body in activities might be a good way to make yourself feel better.

Physical activity is important for women as it promotes physical health, mental well-being, empowerment and social connections.

It helps women develop confidence, body awareness, and valuable life skills. Engaging in sports fosters further a positive body image, creates opportunities for personal growth and establishes lifelong habits of physical activity for improved long-term health. Of course, as an entrepreneur, you cannot allocate as much time as a professional athlete would, but there are less demanding alternatives that can help you. We can explore some of them:

- **Walking or Nature Hikes**

A leisurely walk in nature or going on hikes can be calming and help clear the mind. Being outdoors, surrounded by natural beauty, can provide a sense of tranquility and relaxation.

- **Yoga**

Yoga combines gentle movements, stretching, and deep breathing, making it an ideal practice for relaxation. It promotes physical and mental well-being, increases flexibility, and reduces stress. Restorative or Yin yoga, in particular, focuses on relaxation and rejuvenation. Yoga has become popular in recent years as a stress mitigation strategy and some corporations have even organized yoga events for their employees. Perhaps you could integrate this with your business model as well and practice something with your coworkers and employees.

- **Tai Chi**

Tai Chi is a gentle martial art that involves slow and deliberate movements combined with deep breathing. It promotes relaxation, balance and mindfulness. Practicing Tai Chi can help release physical and mental tension. In recent years there has been increased interest towards various eastern practices as ways of mitigating stress. While practicing martial arts may sound counter-intuitive, this type of physical exercise is known to decrease stress.

- **Pilates**

Pilates is a low-impact exercise method that emphasizes core strength, flexibility, and body awareness. Additionally, Pilates promotes mind-body connection, stress reduction, and overall physical well-being. Its emphasis on controlled movements and precise alignment appeals to women seeking a low-impact yet effective exercise routine. Pilates classes and studios specifically cater to women, offering a supportive and empowering environment for them to engage in this form of exercise.

- **Swimming**

Swimming is not only a great cardiovascular workout but also a soothing activity that can promote relaxation. The rhythmic motions of swimming combined with the buoyancy of water can help alleviate stress and tension. Additionally, it is an effective calorie-burning exercise that can contribute to weight management. Swimming increases metabolism, burns calories, and helps maintain a healthy body weight.

- **Mindful Movement Practices**

Practices, including Qigong, Feldenkrais, and the Alexander Technique, offer women alternative approaches to relaxation and stress management. They involve gentle and deliberate movements combined with mindfulness, breath awareness, and body connection. By engaging in these practices, women can release tension, enhance body awareness, and promote a sense of relaxation and well-being.



Image 2 – Mindful movement techniques in Qigong. Source: totalgymdirect.com

It's important to note that the benefits of physical activity are not limited to a specific gender. Both women and men can derive advantages from participating in sports. However, for women, being fit can offer additional advantages such as empowerment, body acceptance and breaking gender stereotypes. It's crucial to create inclusive environments that support and encourage women's participation in sports at all levels in a company. Start with yourself as a business-owner and expand it to coworkers and employees.

### 2.3. Managing stress with self-care routines

Self-care routines should be tailored to individual preferences and needs. What works for one woman may not work for another, so it's important to explore and discover what self-care activities resonate best with you. Regularly incorporating self-care practices into daily routines can help you effectively manage stress, enhance well-being, and lead a more balanced and fulfilling life. This in turn will enable you to be a better manager and excel at your business.

Self-care has many aspects – it is both physical and emotional and has to be viewed as a holistic approach to be effective.

### 2.3.1. Physical self-care

To begin with the physical aspect of self-care, you could consider paying more attention to your dietary habits. Aim to consume a balanced diet that includes whole foods, fruits, vegetables, lean proteins, and healthy fats. Stay hydrated by drinking enough water throughout the day.

The recommended daily water intake can vary depending on various factors such as age, sex, activity level, and overall health. However, a commonly cited guideline is to drink about 8 glasses of water per day, which is equivalent to approximately 2 liters. Avoid excessive consumption of processed foods, sugary snacks, and caffeine, as they can negatively impact your energy levels and overall well-being. Women working in the cultural and creative sector, as well as in other non-physically demanding jobs may be at a higher risk of getting overweight, which has numerous health risks.

It is always a good idea to prioritize your health by scheduling regular check-ups, screenings, and preventive healthcare appointments. Regular visits to healthcare professionals allow for early detection and prevention of potential health issues. Stay up to date with vaccinations, screenings, and recommended health maintenance practices to ensure optimal physical well-being.

Once per year is an optimal frequency for doing routine check-ups, unless your doctor has explicitly prescribed otherwise, or you have a condition that requires regular monitoring at a different intervals of time. CEOs of large corporations are often obliged by employment contract to monitor their health with regular visits to a physician. While an upstart entrepreneur or a

freelancer in the cultural and creative industries is unlikely to have such legal obligations, they are indicative of the importance.

Staying healthy and fit will save you considerable time and stress in the long run. Disregarding your body to work more will only lead to more stress and less productivity due to its side effects.

### 2.3.2. Mental self-care

A critical and often overlooked aspect of mental self-care is getting enough restorative sleep. Establish a consistent sleep routine, create a sleep-friendly environment, and aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night. Sufficient sleep improves cognitive function, memory, focus, and decision-making abilities. A well-rested mind is more alert, creative, and able to problem-solve effectively.

Practicing self-compassion is essential for women in managing stress. This involves treating oneself with kindness, understanding, and acceptance. You should avoid self-criticism and practice self-care without guilt or judgment. Engaging in activities that promote self-love, such as positive affirmations, self-reflection, or engaging in hobbies that bring joy, can foster a compassionate mindset. We discuss positive affirmation and how they are different from mere wishful thinking in greater detail in Module 7: Motivation.

Last, but not least in terms of importance, nurturing social connections is crucial for women's overall well-being and stress management. Building a support network of friends, family, or like-minded individuals can provide emotional support, companionship, and a sense of belonging. Engaging in social activities, joining clubs or groups, or participating in hobbies that involve interaction with others can help foster meaningful connections and reduce stress.

To learn more about the various options you have for networking – review the contents of Module 5: Networking for Female Entrepreneurs.

## Key Takeaways

- Physical activity not only helps women develop confidence, body awareness and valuable life skills, but also fosters further a positive body image, creates opportunities for personal growth and stress management.
- To prioritize stress management, schedule dedicated time in your calendar as non-negotiable appointments. Identify small pockets of time throughout the day for practices like deep breathing or mindfulness.
- Practicing self-compassion is essential for women in managing stress. This involves treating oneself with kindness, understanding, and acceptance.

## Recommendations for Further Reading

To learn more about the various options you have for networking – review the contents of Module 5: Networking for Female Entrepreneurs.

We discuss positive affirmation and how they are different from mere wishful thinking in greater detail in Module 7: Motivation.

## References for Unit 2:

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## Unit 3: Building confidence as a counterpoint to stress

*Tags: confidence, empowerment, appearance, skincare, outfits, business*

### Unit 3 – Introduction

*Confidence enables businesswomen to develop resilience in the face of stress. When you believe in your abilities and trust yourself, you're better equipped to handle challenges and setbacks. Your confidence allows you to bounce back from stressful situations, learn from them, and move forward with determination.*

*Being more confident is a skill that you can acquire. There are certain things you could do in your routine, appearance and demeanor that will help you project it to others. While the “fake it until you make it” approach may not always be scientifically sound, in terms of confidence it is actually a good starting point.*

*In this unit we will explore some ways to present yourself as more confident.*

### 3.1. How to look confident

By consciously adopting positive posture and body language, you project an image of confidence and assertiveness. Your upright stance, open body language, and attentive expressions create an aura of self-assuredness, making a positive impact on how others perceive you as a confident businesswoman.

There are a few tips which you can employ to your advantage:

- **Stand tall**

Maintain an upright posture, keeping your spine straight and your shoulders back. Avoid slouching or hunching forward, as it can convey a lack of confidence. Standing tall not only makes you physically taller, but it also gives you an air of confidence and self-assuredness.

- **Open body language**

Keep your body language open and relaxed. Avoid crossing your arms or legs, as it can create a barrier and make you appear closed off. Instead, let your arms hang naturally by your sides or use purposeful gestures when appropriate. Keeping your body open and receptive signals approachability and confidence.

- **Head held high**

Hold your head up with confidence. Avoid excessive tilting or lowering your head, as it can give the impression of submissiveness or lack of assertiveness. Keeping your head level and slightly tilted forward demonstrates attentiveness and engagement.

### - Facial expressions

Be mindful of your facial expressions, as they can convey your confidence and emotions. Maintain a pleasant and approachable expression, with a relaxed and genuine smile when appropriate. Avoid frowning or displaying signs of stress or tension, as it can undermine your confident appearance.

### - Eye contact

Establish and maintain eye contact during conversations and interactions. Direct eye contact shows that you are engaged, attentive, and confident. However, remember to strike a balance and avoid staring excessively, as it can make others uncomfortable. Maintain natural and respectful eye contact to foster meaningful connections.



*Image 3 – High power pose vs. low power pose. Source: [blog.elixxier.com](https://blog.elixxier.com)*

In image 3 you can clearly see the difference between the positions. The image on the left depicts a woman projecting confidence merely by keeping her back straight, shoulders back and making eye-contact. Crossing the legs is a typical feminine gesture and is not necessarily considered to be “closed” body language. This is further reinforced by the asymmetric position of the legs.

The image on the right is much more defensive in nature, because the depicted woman keeps both her hands in front of her body. Obviously, outfits matter too, but being the cultural and creative sector, you do not need to always adhere to the business formal attire. If you want to learn more about the different styles of business outfits, review Module 6: Leading like a female entrepreneur.

Having a confidence boost from your appearance can help mitigate stress as well and we will discuss this aspect of your outfit in this unit.

### 3.2. How to dress to impress

Your choice of attire plays a significant role in projecting a confident and professional image. Familiarize yourself with the dress code expectations in your industry. Different professions and workplaces may have specific guidelines regarding appropriate attire. Dressing in a manner that aligns with industry standards shows that you understand the expectations and are serious about your professional image.

The cultural and creative sector may be more liberal than most and will allow you greater flexibility. Still some basic rules apply. Choose clothing that fits you well and flatters your body shape. Ill-fitting or baggy clothes can give the impression of sloppiness or lack of attention to detail. Conversely, overly tight or revealing outfits may be distracting or inappropriate in professional settings. Select clothing that enhances your natural features and allows you to move comfortably.

By practicing your confidence, you can reduce stress by fostering healthier relationships, avoiding unnecessary obligations and prioritizing your well-being.

Pay attention to grooming details to complete your confident appearance. Ensure your hair is well-groomed, and your makeup, if applicable, is tastefully done. Choose accessories that complement your outfit without being overpowering or distracting. Keep in mind that simplicity and elegance often make a strong and professional statement.

Remember that being assertive allows you to communicate effectively, set boundaries, make empowered decisions, resolve conflicts, advocate for yourself, and maintain control over your own life.

## Key Takeaways

- “Fake it until you make it” is a good approach when it comes to projecting confidence. There is evidence to suggest that acting confident actually makes you more confident.

- By practicing your confidence, you can reduce stress by fostering healthier relationships, avoiding unnecessary obligations and prioritizing your well-being.

## Recommendations for Further Reading

If you want to learn more about the different styles of business outfits, review Module 6: Leading like a female entrepreneur.

### References for Unit 3:

**Murphy, J. (2011).** Assertiveness: How to Stand Up for Yourself and Still Win the Respect of Others. McGraw-Hill Education.

**Harris, R. (2011).** *The Confidence Gap: A Guide to Overcoming Fear and Self-Doubt.* Trumpeter.


**Storoni, M. (2017).** Stress-Proof: The Scientific Solution to Protect Your Brain and Body--and Be More Resilient Every Day. TarcherPerigee.

**Hanks, J. A. (2016).** *The Assertiveness Guide for Women: How to Communicate Your Needs, Set Healthy Boundaries, and Transform Your Relationships.* New Harbinger Publications.

## Good Practices

**Anna Wantoch-Rekowski:** To effectively manage stress, it's important to prioritize self-care



 **Spryly** Anna Wantoch-Rekowski is the owner of the social media agency spryly. Since June 2021, I have been transforming companies' online presences into true success stories. As an expert on social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn and TikTok, she mainly helps hospitality and local business clients maximize their reach and effectively engage their target audience.

We use customized strategies and creative content to increase our clients' visibility, grow their follower counts and improve their brand awareness. After working in the industry myself in the past, I understand the needs and challenges of the hospitality and local business industry and use my gained expertise to successfully position clients in the digital space.

The world of social media is constantly changing, and we stay on top of the latest trends and best practices. At spryly, we focus on providing individual support to our clients, because their success is our success.

### How important is it to manage to deal with stress?

As a business owner, managing stress is crucial, especially in the creative field where clients often have tight deadlines. Stress can have a significant impact on your well-being and the success of your business.

To effectively manage stress, it's important to prioritize self-care. Take regular breaks, practice relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation, and engage in activities that bring you joy and rejuvenation. Delegate tasks whenever possible to lighten your workload and avoid burnout.

Setting realistic expectations with clients and communicating openly about deadlines can also help alleviate stress. Prioritize tasks, create a schedule, and break larger projects into smaller,

manageable tasks. Remember to celebrate achievements and milestones along the way, as this can boost motivation and reduce stress.

**Have you encountered any gender-based biases towards your work, when presenting your portfolio?**

No, I haven't encountered any gender-based biases towards my work when presenting my portfolio. Potential clients are mostly just surprised by my age rather than my gender. Being a woman entrepreneur and working for myself is becoming more common and accepted in today's society.

In terms of skills, I have acquired a wide range of abilities that are not exclusive to any gender. Success in entrepreneurship relies on qualities such as creativity, leadership, problem-solving, and determination, which are not limited to one gender or the other. I have honed these skills through experience, continuous learning, and surrounding myself with a supportive network.

Gender should never be a determining factor in evaluating someone's capabilities or potential as an entrepreneur. I believe in breaking stereotypes and empowering individuals to pursue their passions, regardless of societal expectations.

**Do you have a website and/or professional social media accounts and how do you engage with the online audience?**

Yes, as a business owner, I understand the importance of having a strong online presence. I have a website ([www.spryly.de](http://www.spryly.de)) that is currently being rebranded but will be online soon. Additionally, I maintain professional social media accounts on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

Engaging with the online audience is crucial for building relationships and establishing credibility. I strive to be responsive to questions and comments from my audience, as it shows that I value their input and am committed to providing excellent customer service. I actively participate in discussions, share valuable content, and provide updates on my work and services.

Being present in the online world is vital for a freelancer as it helps to attract potential clients, showcase expertise, and stay connected with industry trends. It allows me to reach a wider audience, build a reputation, and foster trust with my target market. By actively engaging with the online community, I can establish myself as a reliable and knowledgeable professional in my field.

## Tips & Recommendations

- Physically, stress can lead to various symptoms that may be more commonly experienced by women, including headaches, digestive problems, and hormonal imbalances. Thus, it is crucial to emphasize self-care practices that specifically address women's well-being.
- What might be a source of positive stress (eustress) for one person can be distressing for another, depending on their individual perceptions, coping mechanisms, and personal circumstances.
- Prolonged stress can hinder your ability to effectively manage your business and can even lead to financial instability, creating a cycle of increased stress.
- Engaging in physical activity not only helps women build confidence, body awareness, and important life skills but also contributes to cultivating a positive body image, personal growth, and effective stress management.
- To prioritize stress management, make dedicated time slots in your schedule that are non-negotiable. Additionally, identify small pockets of time throughout the day to practice deep breathing or mindfulness.
- Practicing self-compassion is essential for women in stress management. This involves treating oneself with kindness, understanding, and acceptance.
- Adopting the "fake it until you make it" approach can be beneficial in projecting confidence. Research suggests that acting confident can actually increase one's genuine confidence over time.
- By consistently practicing confidence, you can reduce stress by fostering healthier relationships, avoiding unnecessary commitments, and placing a greater emphasis on your well-being.

## Glossary

**Assertiveness** - The ability to express thoughts, needs, and boundaries in a clear, respectful, and confident manner. Being assertive can help manage stress by effectively communicating and setting limits.

**Boundaries** - Personal limits and guidelines that individuals establish to protect their physical, emotional, and mental well-being. Setting boundaries helps maintain a healthy work-life balance and reduce stress.

**Coping mechanisms** - Strategies or techniques used to deal with stress and its effects, which can vary from person to person.

**Distress** - Negative stress that exceeds an individual's ability to cope, leading to feelings of overwhelm, anxiety, and potential negative health effects.

**Eustress** - Positive stress that can motivate and energize individuals, leading to increased productivity and a sense of accomplishment.

**Mindfulness** - The practice of being fully present and aware of the present moment, without judgment. Mindfulness techniques, such as meditation or deep breathing, can help reduce stress and enhance well-being.

**Resilience** - The ability to adapt and bounce back from adversity or stressful situations, maintaining emotional well-being and functioning effectively.

**Relaxation techniques** - Activities or practices designed to induce a state of relaxation, such as deep breathing exercises, progressive muscle relaxation, or guided imagery.

**Stress** - The body's response to external or internal pressures or demands, resulting in physical, mental, or emotional strain.

**Self-care** - Practices and activities that prioritize one's physical, mental, and emotional well-being, helping to reduce stress and maintain balance in life.

**Self-compassion** - Treating oneself with kindness, understanding, and acceptance, especially during times of stress or difficulty. Self-compassion involves being supportive and nurturing towards oneself.

**Time management** - Strategies and skills used to effectively prioritize tasks, allocate time for various activities, and reduce feelings of overwhelm or stress related to time constraints.

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### Check Your Knowledge (Multiple Choice with one correct answer)

1. Which of the following is NOT a physiological symptom of stress that may be more prevalent in women?

- a) Frequent headaches
- b) Digestive issues
- c) Hormonal imbalances
- d) Forgetfulness

**2. What is the term used to describe a positive form of stress that can be motivating, exciting, and stimulating?**

- a) Eustress
- b) Distress
- c) Beneficial stress
- d) Motivational stress

**3. What is the definition of burnout, a potential consequence of prolonged exposure to excessive stress?**

- a) A state of extreme fatigue and exhaustion accompanied by reduced motivation and productivity
- b) A syndrome defined by thinking that you are undeserving of your achievements.
- c) A momentary decline in physical strength
- d) A heightened state of creativity and innovation

**4. What are some examples of stress management techniques that can be implemented throughout the day?**

- a) Working longer hours and taking fewer breaks.
- b) Ignoring the need for relaxation and mindfulness.
- c) Incorporating deep breathing exercises and mindfulness practices. (correct)
- d) Skipping lunch breaks to focus more on work.

**5. Which of the following is a technique aimed at reducing stress?**

- a) Engaging in constructive self-criticism and judgment.
- b) Avoiding sleeping in the afternoon.
- c) Practicing self-compassion.
- d) Disconnecting from the emotional states of clients.

### 6. Why is it important to establish a consistent sleep routine for mental self-care?

- a) It helps in managing physical health and weight.
- b) It promotes cognitive function, memory, and decision-making abilities.
- c) It fosters social connections and a sense of belonging.

- d) It reduces stress through activities like positive affirmations and self-reflection.

**7. Which of the following activities is recommended as a way to wind down before bedtime and manage stress?**

- a) Going for a nature hike.
- b) Engaging in creative breaks.
- c) Practicing Tai Chi.
- d) Reading a book or practicing gentle stretching.

**8. What is one tip for projecting confidence through body language?**

- a) Slouch or hunch forward to show that you're listening.
- b) Cross your arms and legs to protect yourself.
- c) Maintain an upright posture and open body language.
- d) Avoid eye contact to demonstrate superiority.

**9. Why is it important to familiarize yourself with the dress code expectations in your industry?**

- a) It allows you to project a confident and professional image.
- b) It helps you foster healthier relationships with your romantic partner.
- c) It enables you to communicate effectively and resolve conflicts.
- d) It promotes simplicity and elegance in your appearance.

### 10. What does being assertive allow you to do?

- a) Communicate effectively and set boundaries.
- b) Choose clothing that flatters your body shape.
- c) Demonstrate physical strength.
- d) Work less, thus minimize the stressor you encounter.