Life stressors occur everyday of our lives. We are not immune from these stressors so we need to be able cope with it and have tools that will help us get through the problem. Stressors can include unpredictable life changes, financial pressures, or even marital discord to say the least. Coping with these stressors usually involves adjustment as well as tolerating negative events or realities while attempting to preserve a positive self-image and emotional equilibrium. The process may be acute, such as moving to another house or it can be longitudinal in duration, such as chronic pain/illness. With all this, psychological stress usually increases and the outcome usually entails negative life changes. However, these stressors can be managed.
How to cope with stress in resident training programs

While in residency, stressors will occur whether it is related to patient care or juggling your own personal life. Here at UCLA Med-Peds, we understand this and support our residents in attaining help if stressors become unmanageable and overwhelming. We strongly believe in ensuring patient safety and the emotional well being of our residents. Our Program Director, meets with our residents twice annually to discuss residency performance as well as any residency stressors and is readily available to all our residents if a negative life event occurs. Our Program Coordinator is also available to help our residents attain help and can direct our residents to the resources they require. Also, in order to decrease the anxiety of residency, at the beginning of residency, our interns are assigned a big sib, who is a R2 resident that helps our interns get acclimated to our environment as well as someone to go to for help or attain advice. Residency life can be overwhelming and exhausting at times and so we want all our residents to feel comfortable and encourage them to voice their opinions to make residency life a good experience.

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Video on Sleep Deprivation & Countermeasures by Dr. Alon
Having a healthy & fulfilling residency experience

Evaluating your overall lifestyle is pertinent to your emotional well being. Engaging in stress-reducing activities can be a helpful tool to coping with stressors. Examples include:

- Getting enough good quality sleep
- Eating a well-balanced diet
- Exercising on a regular basis
- Taking brief rest periods during the day to relax
- Taking vacations away from home and work
- Engaging in pleasurable or fun activities every day
- Practicing relaxation exercises such as yoga, prayer, meditation, or progressive muscle relaxation
- Avoiding use of caffeine and alcohol

Some common coping strategies

- Lowering your expectations
- Asking others to help or assist you
- Taking responsibility for the situation
- Engaging in problem solving
- Maintaining emotionally supportive relationships
- Expressing distressing emotions
- Challenging previously held beliefs that are no longer adaptive
- Distancing yourself from the source of stress