

Stress coping Strategies

Don't over-commit

If the demands are exceeding your capacity you need to learn to assert yourself, to say “no”, or at least “not now” and give a clear indication of when a job will be done (and put it on your to-do list).

Don't try to do everything – when you try to do everything something will lose out, something will not be done properly or given enough time. So when you know you're already working at capacity and can't realistically take on any more, you must not agree to anything else. There are many reasons why you might say yes, even when you know something is going to be difficult to fit in – maybe you're trying to impress or please someone or just not offend them. But if you agree to something and then fall short how impressed or pleased are they going to be?

Learn to be assertive. Assertiveness doesn't mean acting aggressively to get your own way. It means acting with confidence, acting fairly, respecting the other person and understanding what you are asking for, or expecting of the other person. In the case of telling someone their job can't be done immediately, you have to remember that you can't please everyone all the time and in general people will accept that they have to wait if they are told straightaway. People don't like waiting when they weren't expecting to have to wait!

You have to take your own capabilities into consideration, and **you** have a good idea of how much time things will take to do and how much you have to do. You mustn't feel threatened by requests or feel you need to apologise all the time. You must stand up for yourself.

Some people are naturally more assertive than others but if you tend not to be assertive it's a skill you **can** learn.