MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS

Coping with Stress When Living with HS

Living with Hidradenitis Suppurativa (HS) can bring physicaldiscomfort,uncertainty,changesindaily routines, and emotional stress. You may not be able to control every flare or challenge, but small, intentional steps can help you care for your emotional well-being.

1. Notice Your Stress Signals

Stress can show up in different ways: feeling overwhelmed, tense, irritable, worried, exhausted, withdrawn, or unable to focus. Pay attention to what your mind and body are telling you. Recognizing stress is an important first step toward responding to it.

2. Give Yourself Permission to Pause

A difficult HS day may require you to adjust your plans. Rest is not wasted time. Consider what truly needs your attention today and what can wait. Making space for your body and emotions can help reduce the pressure to push through everything.

3. Try a Simple Grounding Pause

Pause. Place your feet on the floor if comfortable. Take a slow breath in and a longer breath out. Notice three things you can see, two things you can hear, and one physical sensation you can feel. Repeat the slow breathing for a few moments without trying to change how you feel.

4. Focus on What You Can Control

You may not be able to control when HS flares, but you can identify the next manageable step. That might mean changing your schedule, preparing questions for a healthcare visit, asking for help, choosing comfortable clothing, or setting a boundary when you need rest.

5. Stay Connected

Stress can make isolation feel easier, especially when you are in pain or do not feel understood. Consider reaching out to someone you trust, connecting with the HS community, or telling someone what kind of support would be most helpful.

6. Speak to Yourself with Compassion

Try replacing harsh self-talk with the same understanding you would offer someone you care about. A simple reminder can be: ***"This is a difficult day. I can take it one step at a time."***

7. Know When to Reach for Additional Support

If stress, sadness, anxiety, isolation, or difficulty coping is persistent or begins interfering with your daily life, consider talking with a licensed mental health professional or another qualified healthcare professional. Seeking support can be part of caring for your whole health.

MY STRESS CHECK-IN

Today I am feeling: _____
My body needs: _____
Emotionally, I need: _____
One thing I can let go of today: _____
One thing I can do for myself today: _____

Living with HS can be stressful. You do not have to solve everything today. Small moments of rest, connection, and self-care matter.

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This resource is for educational and wellness purposes only and is not a substitute for medical or mental health care. If you are in immediate danger or experiencing a mental health crisis in the United States, call or text 988 or call 911.