Stress is a normal part of life; in fact, people need a certain amount of stress in order to function at high levels. However, there is a fine balance between “good stress” and “bad stress.” 51.8% of University of Iowa students experience greater than average stress levels (NCHA, 2016).

**Spiritual wellness** recognizes our search for meaning, purpose, and hope in life. Discover what spirituality means for you and how it can play an important role in your life. Your answers to these questions may provide clues to enhance your own spiritual well-being:

- What gives your life meaning and purpose?
- What gives you hope?
- How do you get through tough times? Where have you found comfort?
- If you belong to a religious community, how are you connected to this group?
- Describe a time when you experienced a sense of awe.
- Describe a time when you felt comfortable and that all was right with the world.

**Try these quickie relaxers to beat stress in a flash!**

- **“Re-Lax” Breathing:** Breathe slowly and steadily for 5-10 minutes, silently saying “re” as you inhale and “lax” as you exhale.
- **Self-Massage:** Use your fingertips to massage your facial muscles, neck, shoulders, arms, or hands.
- **Six Second Quieting Response:** Draw a long, deep breath. Hold for 2-3 seconds. Exhale slowly and completely, letting your jaw and shoulders drop and feeling the relaxation flow into your arms and hands.
- **Mountain Breathing:** Take a slow, deep breath in through your nose while counting to 4. Hold for 2-3 counts then exhale forcefully through your mouth for 4.
- **Walking Meditation:** Start walking until you hit your normal, comfortable stride. Establish a pattern of always taking a certain number of steps and then breathing in, taking the same number of steps, then breathing out.
- **Isometric Arm Reliever:** Pull or push for a few seconds with each hand against a desk, doorway, or another immovable object. Relax for a few seconds and repeat several times.

**Stress Symptoms**

**Physical:**
- Lack of focus/concentration
- Sleep disturbance
- Sweaty palms
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Anxiety

**Behavioral:**
- Difficulty communicating
- Over- or under-eating
- Compulsive behaviors
- Increased caffeine use
- Irritability