

DEALING WITH “SYSTEMS OVERLOAD”



When you're bombarded with lots of information, demands or emotions at the same time, it's like your brain shuts down. It's hard to solve problems or make good decisions. When that happens, try these ideas to “refresh” or “reboot” your thinking.



DON'T

try to remember all the steps in a task all at once. Break the steps down. Ask for instructions just one step at a time.



ORGANIZE

the pieces so you can see them more clearly. Then identify the one or two steps you need to focus on first. Set the others aside.



FIND

a place without distractions. This may mean going to a quiet place where it's easier to focus.



BRAINSTORM

with someone you trust about how you might sort out all the information and feelings. He or she may be able to offer an alternate perspective or just let you think out loud.



AVOID

“emotional triggers” that add to the stress and flood the system. These are different for everyone; know the people and situations that tend to upset you and avoid them when you can.



TALK

about what's going on inside your head — what you're thinking and feeling. This helps you make conscious decisions, rather than just running on autopilot.



PAUSE,

take deep breaths, take a break, slow down and get away from the action for a bit. Find ways to calm yourself, rather than just building up frustration or stress.



MOVE AROUND.

Getting heart rates up increases blood flow to the brain, and being active also reduces stress. Running, swimming, basketball, dance, martial arts, yoga or other physical activity can all help reboot your brainpower.



TURN OFF

television, video games, music or smartphones. The additional noise, beeps and images distract you, adding to information and stimulation overload.



TAKE

a bike ride, play music or a game, cook, or do some other activity that you enjoy. Relaxing can give your brain a chance to reboot and be ready to tackle the challenging tasks.