# Doing What Matters in Times of Stress:

An Illustrated Guide





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## **Preface**

Doing What Matters in Times of Stress is a WHO stress management guide for coping with adversity. This illustrated guide supports implementation of WHO's recommendation for stress management.

There are many causes of stress, including personal difficulties (e.g. conflict with loved ones, being alone, lack of income, worries about the future), problems at work (e.g. conflict with colleagues, an extremely demanding or insecure job) or major threats in your community (e.g. violence, disease, lack of economic opportunity).

This guide is for anyone who experiences stress, ranging from parents and other carers to health professionals working in dangerous situations. It is for both people who flee war, losing all they have, and well protected people living in communities at peace. Anyone living anywhere can experience high levels of stress.

Informed by available evidence and extensive field testing, the guide provides information and practical skills to help people cope with adversity. While the causes of adversity must be addressed, there is also a need to support people's mental health.

I hope that you will find this WHO guide useful, and that it helps all readers in their efforts to cope with stress.

Dévora Kestel

Director
Department of Mental Health and Substance Use
World Health Organization

# **Acknowledgements**

Doing What Matters in Times of Stress: An Illustrated Guide is a component of a forthcoming WHO stress management course, Self-Help Plus (SH+),<sup>1-2</sup> initiated by Mark van Ommeren (Mental Health Unit, Department of Mental Health and Substance Use, WHO) as part of the WHO Series on Low-Intensity Psychological Interventions.

### **Content creation**

Inspired by his previous work,<sup>3</sup> **Russ Harris** (Melbourne, Australia) created the content of SH+, including *Doing What Matters in Times of Stress: An Illustrated Guide*. This comprised both writing the text and making initial sketches to inform illustrations.

### **Project coordination and management**

**Kenneth Carswell** (WHO) (2015–2020) and **JoAnne Epping-Jordan** (Seattle, USA) (2014–2015) have managed the SH+ project, including the editing and design of this book.

### **Project development group** (alphabetical, with affiliations at time of contributions)

At different stages of this project, Teresa Au (WHO), Felicity Brown (WHO), Kenneth Carswell (WHO), JoAnne Epping-Jordan (Seattle, USA), Claudette Foley (Melbourne, Australia), Claudia Garcia-Moreno (WHO), Russ Harris (Melbourne, Australia), Cary Kogan (WHO) and Mark van Ommeren (WHO) contributed to the conceptualization and development of the SH+ project, including this book.

### Illustrations

Julie Smith (Melbourne, Australia) provided all illustrations and artwork.

### **Book production**

David Wilson (Oxford, United Kingdom) was responsible for text editing, and Alessandro Mannocchi (Rome, Italy) for graphic design.

### Narration of audio exercises

Sanio Odunseve (Lados Nideria) narrated the audio exercises that accompany the hook

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