

Don't Tell Her to Relax: The Damaging Effects of Dismissing and Minimizing Women's Stress

As women, we've all heard it before: "Don't worry, just relax." It's a common response from partners, friends, and even healthcare providers when we're feeling stressed. But as well-intentioned as this advice may seem, it can actually be incredibly invalidating and dismissive.



Don't Tell Her to Relax: 22 Ways to Support Your Infertile Loved One Through Diagnosis, Treatment, and

Beyond by David Arp

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Telling a woman to relax implies that her stress is not valid or serious. It suggests that she's overreacting or that she needs to "calm down." This can be especially hurtful if she's experiencing significant stress or trauma.

Invalidating women's stress can have a number of negative consequences, including:

- Increased feelings of stress and anxiety

- Difficulty coping with stress
- Feeling isolated and alone
- Loss of trust in others
- Physical health problems

So what can we do instead of telling women to relax? Here are some alternative, supportive responses that can help them manage stress effectively:

- **Acknowledge her feelings.** Let her know that you understand how she's feeling and that her stress is valid.
- **Listen to her without judgment.** Allow her to express her feelings without interrupting or trying to fix her problems.
- **Offer practical help.** If possible, offer to help her with tasks that are causing her stress, such as childcare or housework.
- **Encourage her to take care of herself.** Remind her that it's important to take time for herself to relax and de-stress.
- **Connect her with resources.** If she's struggling to cope with stress on her own, help her find a therapist or counselor who can provide support.

Telling a woman to relax is not helpful and can actually be harmful. Instead, offer her support and understanding, and help her find healthy ways to manage her stress.

Additional tips for supporting women who are stressed

- Be patient and understanding. It can take time for women to recover from stress and trauma.
- Don't pressure her to talk about her feelings if she's not ready.
- Respect her boundaries. If she needs some space, give it to her.
- Encourage her to seek professional help if she's struggling to cope with stress on her own.

By offering support and understanding, we can help women manage stress effectively and improve their overall well-being.



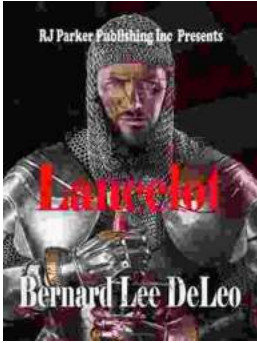
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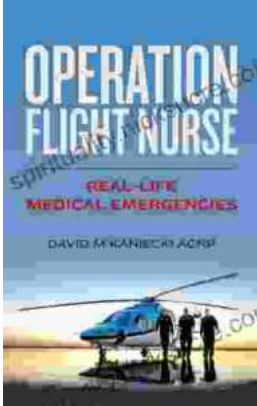
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