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Stress Management Program





Stress Management Program

- ▶ Welcome
- ▶ Course Overview
 - What is stress and how it affects you
 - Stress during your time of recovery
 - Assertiveness
 - Dealing with difficult emotions/conflict/anger
 - Daily stress
 - Relaxation techniques



Don't Forget



- ▶ Change takes practice
and persistence
- It involves..
 - Reflecting on your own particular circumstances and beliefs
 - Learning about alternatives
 - Making choices
 - Developing skills
 - And making adjustments as you go
 - How does stress impact you?

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STRESS MODULE ONE





Module One

- Definition of Stress
- Stress Response Stages
- Daily Stress
- Cardiac Event Stress
- Coping Strategies
- Support Systems



Definition of Stress

What is it?

When we feel the demands of a situation are greater than the skills we have to deal with it, the situation is experienced as stressful.

Generally, it involves a change perceived as more than we can handle





Is All Stress Bad?

► Examples of Good Stress

- Making career choices
- Getting married
- Graduating
- Enjoying the company of others/celebrations and holidays

• Examples of Bad Stress

- Going through a loss
- Driving in Rush Hour
- Having conflict with family members
- Health problems
- Pain



Stress Response Stages

Stage One

Mobilization of Energy



Stage Two

Consumption of Energy

Stage Three

Exhaustion



Stage One – Mobilization of Energy

- Primary stress: Your body reacts to a sudden, frightening stressor, i.e. a near miss
- Secondary stress: deliberately entering a stressful situation, i.e. a job interview
- Symptoms include:
 - Increased heart rate
 - Breathing rapidly in short gasps
 - Cold sweat
 - “Butterflies” in your stomach/indigestion/lack of appetite
 - Feeling of dizziness or lightheaded



Stage Two – Consumption of Energy

If you can't get relief from stage one, your body will begin to release stored sugars and fats, consuming vital resources.

As a result, you may:

- Feel driven and under pressure
- Become exhausted to the point of fatigue
- Overeat or have no appetite
- Feel anxious or tense
- Have difficulty concentrating
- Suffer illnesses such as cold or flu
- Increase unhealthy habits, i.e. smoking, coffee drinking, alcohol consumption



Stage Three - Exhaustion

If your stress remains unresolved, it can become chronic.

Your body's need for energy resources is greater than its ability to produce them.

You could develop serious illnesses such as:

- Heart disease

- Stroke

- High blood pressure

- Mental illness (depression)

You may experience symptoms such as:

- Insomnia

- Errors in judgement

- Personality changes

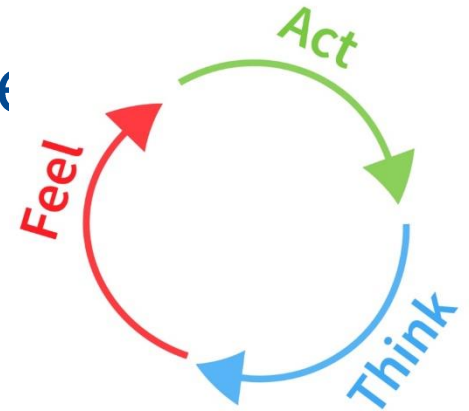


How does Stress affect me?

The way you think, i.e. negative thoughts

The way you feel, i.e. helplessness, sadness

The way you act, i.e. impatient, aggressive





Fight or Flight Response



How your nervous system responds to situations you feel are threatening or challenging

It prepares your body

- Heart rate and blood pressure are increased

- Body sweats

- Blood sugar is released

- Blood-clotting activity is increased

An example of Stage One Stress



What is Daily Stress?

The wear and tear you endure everyday

Proper identification of stressors will help you to decide if you need to change the way you cope with them





Where does daily stress come from?

Work

People you work with

Poor work environment

Variable job description

Hours of work



Where does daily stress come from?

Relationships

Who hasn't had stress in a close relationship? Example: discrimination or abuse

It is stressful when you do not have any friends or family in the community



Where does daily stress come from?

Poor Diet

Poor nutrition makes it hard to get through the day

Unhealthy weight and/or poor body image

Not knowing how to eat/cook/ or shop for healthy foods



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Where does daily stress come from?

Lack of sleep

Makes is more difficult to deal with day-to-day activities

Why might you not be getting enough sleep?

- Lack of activity

- Fear

- Anxiety

- Worry

- Too much rest during the day

- Pain or discomfort



Where does daily stress come from?

Environment

You may live in an area that causes you stress

How does it affect you?

Decrease sleep

Prevent you from travelling

Cause you to worry

Lack of local exercise options



Where does daily stress come from?

Financial pressures

Meeting monthly payments

Balancing bank accounts

Putting children through school

Being laid off

Costs of medications

Living beyond your means





Where does daily stress come from?

Being alone or not having time alone

How you spend your time and who you spend it with could be a source of stress





Where does daily stress come from?

Negative self-image

Your self-image is determined by the way that you see yourself not necessarily how others see you.

It is not always easy but it is possible to accept who you are.





Where does daily stress come from?

Chemical Substances

Chemicals in our environment that you may use either by choice, habit or necessity that affect your health

They may alter your ability to cope with day-to-day life and add stress

Even substances that are good for you, such as prescription medications, can be stressful





Where does daily stress come from?

Time pressures

- It can be stressful when trying to deal with the many time pressures we have and how we determine the importance of them
- The feeling that you have to do everything too quickly is not healthy. This causes you to live in a more stressful environment than necessary





Cardiac Event Stress

What causes this type of stress?

1. Diagnosis/hospitalization
2. Returning to your home
3. Returning to activities
4. Beginning to think about lifestyle changes
5. Accepting these changes
6. Making these changes happen
7. Understanding your limits



Coping Strategies

Create leisure time using the following steps:

- Plan for leisure
- Prioritize time to do something you enjoy
- Schedule your free time
- Allow time for interruptions
- Learn to say “NO”
- Don’t try to be “perfect”



Coping Strategies

Time Management, consisting of the following:

- Make a list of goals
- Pace yourself
- Do one thing at a time
- Learn to ask for help
- Learn to accept help

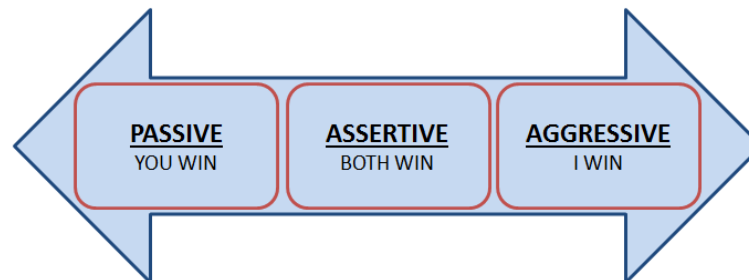




Coping Strategies

Practice assertiveness

- Assertiveness is a way of communicating in a direct and clear manner
- It is a healthy way to express difficult emotions & needs
- It is not the same as AGGRESSION





How do I become more assertive?

1. Focus on the **here and now**
2. Acknowledge the other person's position or feelings, i.e. become a better listener
3. Say in plain words how you feel
4. Say in plain words what you want



Support Systems

It is important to identify the supports in your life

A lack of social supports leads to

Feelings of isolation and loneliness

Increases risk of developing illnesses such as heart disease





How do you get the support you need?

- You need to ask
- Stay flexible
- Remember support comes in many forms
- It may be difficult to ask for help
- Friends and family may not know how to help



What type of support is helpful?

- Offers of meals
- Accept financial assistance
- Having a friend visit
- Assistance with appointments
- Help with household chores
- Someone to walk with



What should you tell your support people?

- Health condition or restrictions
- Anxieties, fears, needs
- Lifestyle changes
- When you are ready to get back to normal
- They are not responsible for your health



What is not helpful?

- Feeling overprotected
- Expecting too much from your recovery
- Pushing yourself before you are ready



How your support person/people may be feeling....

The task of providing care and support may bring on feelings of:

- Fear
- Helplessness
- Anxiety

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Difficult Emotions Module Two





Module Two Topics

- CONFLICT
- ANGER
- MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES



What is Conflict?

It is the feeling that you experience when you must choose one thing over another

It is internal or external



The situation could make you feel frustrated or angry



What are the ways to deal with conflict?

1. Avoidance
2. Accommodation
3. Domination
4. Compromise
5. Collaboration



1. Avoidance

The process of staying away from something or someone

Uses of Avoidance:

1. The issue is not important to you
2. Things won't turn out your way
3. The risk of harm is greater than the benefit
4. Cool down
5. Taking time
6. Others can resolve the conflict better than you.





2. Accommodation

A passive but cooperative act, the hope is that giving in will make the conflict go away.

Uses of Accommodation....

1. When you realize you are wrong
2. When the issue is more important to the other person
3. Competing will only make it worse
4. Importance of keeping the peace





3. Domination

- ▶ An assertive and non-cooperative act
- ▶ You will go to any lengths to win the conflict even if it means hurting others.
- ▶ Pursue your own needs
- ▶ Uses of Domination
 1. When a quick decision is important
 2. When important, unpopular decisions need to be made
 3. When someone's welfare is at stake
 4. Protecting yourself



4. Compromise



In between being assertive and cooperative

Finding a quick solution that satisfies both parties.

Uses of Compromising

1. Your goals are not important enough to cause disruption
2. Temporary agreement
3. When an agreement is required in a short period of time



5. Collaboration

Both assertive and a cooperative form of conflict resolution

Opposite of avoiding

Solution focused on similarities

This is the best way to resolve conflict!

Uses of Collaboration



Want a solution when both sets of concerns are important

Taking other people's opinions into consideration

Mixing ideas from people with different views



CONTROLLING ANGER





How do we deal with anger?

Express and Acknowledge it

It reduces the negative feelings

Suppress it

Hold it in and redirect to a positive (less effective way of managing anger)

Calm yourself down



Can you feel good about anger?

Makes you feel you have reduced stress

Hides emotional pain

Gets you attention

Helps to change others





Uncontrolled anger can affect...

Work relationships

Family relationships

Marriage

Friendships

Children



Uncontrolled anger can...

Hurt your health and physical well-being

Endanger you

Negatively effect you financially and spiritually

Reduce your self esteem



Coping With Anger

Deep breathing

Repeating a calming word

Imagery

Stretching





What can you do differently?

Use anger as a cue for problem solving

Change the way you think

Avoid words like “never” or “always” as these words are not associated with the “here and now”

Remember how you see things may not be the way it really is

Remember that change is possible



When you feel yourself becoming angry.....

Slow down and think through the response

Don't say the first thing that comes to mind

Think about what you want to say

Listen rather than talk

Take time to respond



Managing Anger

Change your environment – avoid or remove yourself from conflict where possible

Take time to think about your responses

Finding alternatives to manage conflicts

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RELAXATION TECHNIQUES MODULE THREE





Module Three

- Relaxation Techniques
- Coping Strategies
- Additional Resources



Relaxation

- Aromatherapy
- Massage
- Meditation
- Tai chi
- Yoga
- Positive Self-Talk
- Emergency Stress Stoppers
- Deep Breathing
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Visualization





Aromatherapy

- Use of essential oils that work on your senses of smell and touch
- Helps bring harmony through mind and body
- Used to treat common ailments and disease
- Do not treat yourself





Massage

Oldest method of healing

Used to relieve tired muscles

What is it?

stroking and rubbing of body to aid in healing and relaxation

How does it work?

Thought to help in the release of tension and trapped emotional issues

Helps stimulate circulation of blood, lymph, and nervous system.

Releases hormones which cause your whole body to feel well





Meditation

- Calms the mind
- Raises consciousness
- An excellent way to relieve stress, improves physical and mental health
- Proven that the mind can change the way your body functions
- Has a stronger physical effect on the body than just sleep or relaxation
- Heart rate and blood pressure are lowered



Tai Chi

- Like slow motion Kung Fu
- Originated in China
- Promotes strength internally, physically, mentally, and emotionally
- It is a slow and relaxed movement using breathing and relaxation techniques
- No restriction on who can use it
- Provides both stress management and gentle exercise that benefits the heart





Yoga

- Began in India
- Means “to join” or “to unite”
- Series of poses, postures, and breathing techniques
- Makes body strong and flexible
- Helps to deal with stress by quieting the mind





Positive Self-Talk

- One way to deal with stress
- Self-talk can be positive or negative
- Negative self-talk increases stress
- Positive self-talk helps you calm down and control stress
- With practice you can turn negative thoughts into positive ones



Positive Self-Talk

- I can get help if I need it
- **We** can work it out
- I won't let this problem get me down
- Things could be worse
- Some day I'll laugh about this



Emergency Stress Stoppers

- Help you deal with stress on the spot
 - Count to 10 before you speak
 - Take three to five deep breaths
 - Walk away from the stressful situation, and say you'll handle it later
 - Don't be afraid to say "I'm sorry"
 - Break down big problems into little ones
 - Smell a rose, hug a loved one, or smile at a stranger



Deep Breathing

1. Sit in a comfortable position with your feet on the floor and your hands in you lap
2. Close your eyes
3. Inhale and exhale slowly, focus on breathing slowly and deeply*
4. Continue to breath slowly for 10 mins or more
5. Try to take five to ten mins each day

*exhale longer than you inhale to promote relaxation



Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Focus on slowly tensing and then relaxing each muscle group
- Helps you to focus on the difference between muscle tension and relaxation
- Start at your toes and work your way up to your neck and head
- Tense your muscle for at least 5 seconds, then relax for 30 seconds
- Inhale as muscles are tensed and exhale as muscles are relaxed



Visualization

- Form mental images to take a journey to a peaceful, calming place or situation.
- Try to use as many senses as you can
- Sit in a quiet spot and loosen any tight clothing
- i.e. Being on the beach





In summary.....

Whatever activity you find relaxing can improve your health

Aim for 30 to 60 minutes a day of leisure time

Activity ideas:

Keep a journal

Garden

Photography

Knit

Collecting

Draw

Dance

Baking

Writing

Puzzles





Additional Resources

Canadian Mental Health Association

- <https://cmha.ca>

Heart and Stroke Foundation

- <https://www.heartandstroke.ca>