

MANAGING

YOUR

STRESS

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Session Agenda

1. Overview of Session
2. Quiz: What Do You Know About Stress?
3. What is Stress?-- Definitions
4. Common Stress Symptoms--Physical and Psychological
5. Checklist of Effective Strategies for Coping with Stress
6. Exploration, Discussion, and Practice of Stress Management Strategies
7. Conclusions

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT STRESS?

INDICATE WHETHER YOU BELIEVE EACH OF THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS IS TRUE OR FALSE.

- ___ 1. STRESS PLAYS A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN DETERMINING OUR PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND OUR LONGEVITY.
- ___ 2. STRESS EXISTS OVER OUR ENTIRE LIFE-SPAN, FROM BIRTH TO DEATH, AND IS AN INTEGRAL PART OF LIFE.
- ___ 3. STRESSORS MAY BE PHYSICAL OR PSYCHOLOGICAL, INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL, POSITIVE OR NEGATIVE.
- ___ 4. THE BIOLOGICAL RESPONSES TO ALL STRESSORS ARE SIMILAR AND AFFECT THE ENTIRE BODY.
- ___ 5. BEHAVIORAL RESPONSES TO STRESS INCLUDE FIGHT, FLIGHT, OR FREEZING.
- ___ 6. STRESS IS ONLY HARMFUL IF COPING IS INEFFECTIVE (DISTRESS), I.E., SOME STRESS CAN ACTUALLY BE BENEFICIAL (EUSTRESS).
- ___ 7. STRESS IS CLOSELY LINKED TO PSYCHOSOMATIC ILLNESS OR MENTAL ILLNESSES OR BOTH.
- ___ 8. THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL EFFECTS OF STRESSORS ARE NOT ALWAYS IMMEDIATE--THEY CAN APPEAR UP TO TWO YEARS AFTER A TRAUMA.
- ___ 9. STRESS SUPPRESSES THE IMMUNE SYSTEM AND INCREASES OUR VULNERABILITY TO ALL ILLNESSES FROM MINOR ILLS TO LIFE-THREATENING DISEASES.
- ___ 10. BELIEVING YOU HAVE CONTROL OVER YOUR LIFE, BEING COMMITTED TO GOALS AND VALUES, AND SEEING PROBLEMS AS CHALLENGES ARE ALL CRITICAL ELEMENTS IN EFFECTIVE COPING.
- ___ 11. LIFE-STYLE AND PERSONALITY TRAITS (E.G., TYPE A PERSONALITY OR BEING AN OPTIMIST) CAN PREDISPOSE OR PREVENT HARMFUL EFFECTS OF STRESS.
12. ASSERTIVE COPING SKILLS CAN BE LEARNED TO REDUCE STRESS AND THE HARMFUL CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS REGARDLESS OF HOW STRESSFUL THE LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES.
- ___ 13. THE DISTRESS OF AN OVERWHELMING TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE CAN KILL SOMEONE EVEN IF THEY ARE IN GOOD HEALTH.
- ___ 14. IF YOU HAVE NO SYMPTOMS OF STRESS, YOU ARE NOT EXPERIENCING SERIOUS STRESS.

TOTAL TRUE _____ TOTAL FALSE _____

WHAT IS STRESS?

DEFINITION:

YOUR BODY'S REACTION TO ANY DEMAND OR THREAT.

* BODY:(ENTIRE BODY)

NERVOUS SYSTEM
 IMMUNE SYSTEM
 CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM
 GASTROINTESTINAL SYSTEM
 MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM
 RESPIRATORY SYSTEM
 SKIN

* REACTION: (COPING MECHANISMS)

RESPONSE) PHYSICAL (E.G., IMMUNE RESPONSE, ADRENAL
 PSYCHOLOGICAL
 ANGER) DEFENSIVE (E.G., DENIAL, RATIONALIZATION,
 ASSERTIVE (E.G., MEDITATION, EXERCISE)

* ANY:

INTERNAL (E.G., THOUGHTS, FEELINGS)
 EXTERNAL (E.G., NOISE, TRAUMATIC EVENT)
 POSITIVE (E.G., WINNING AN AWARD)
 NEGATIVE (E.G., LOSS OF LOVED ONE)

* DEMAND OR THREAT:

PHYSICAL (E.G., VIRUS, BACTERIA, INJURY, NOISE,
 EXTREME TEMPERATURE)
 PSYCHOLOGICAL
 FRUSTRATION (E.G., NOT GETTING A JOB)
 CONFLICT (E.G., DECIDING BETWEEN TWO JOBS)
 PRESSURE (E.G., DEADLINES)

COMMON STRESS SYMPTOMS--PHYSICAL

MINOR (SHORT-TERM)

ACHES/PAINS:BACKACHES, HEADACHES
 DIGESTIVE DISTURBANCES:INDIGESTION, NAUSEA, HYPERACIDITY,
 VOMITING
 EATING DISTURBANCES:LOSS OF APPETITE, OVEREATING
 ELIMINATIONDISTURBANCES:DIARRHEA,CONSTIPATION,FREQUENT
 URINATION
 FATIGUE
 HEART PALPITATIONS
 INFECTIONS: COLDS, INFLUENZA
 MOUTH DRYNESS
 MUSCULAR TENSION:TREMBLING, CRAMPS, NERVOUS TICS
 REPRODUCTIVE&SEXUALDISTURBANCES:IMPOTENCE,DECREASED
 LIBIDO,
 MENSTRUAL IRREGULARITIES
 RESPIRATORY DISTURBANCES: HYPERVENTILATION
 SKIN PROBLEMS:RASHES, HIVES, BLEMISHES
 SLEEPING DISTURBANCES (INSOMNIA, NIGHTMARES)
 SWEATING

MAJOR (LONG-TERM)

ARTHRITIS AND RHEUMATIC CONDITIONS
 BLOOD AND LYMPHATIC CONDITIONS:ANEMIA
 CANCER
 CARDIOVASCULAR DISORDERS:HYPERTENSION, HEART DISEASE
 DIABETES
 GASTROINTESTINAL DISORDERS: COLITIS, GASTRITIS, ULCERS,
 IRRITABLE BOWEL,
 SYNDROME
 MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS
 MUSCULOSKELETAL:MIGRAINE HEADACHES
 REPRODUCTIVE DISORDERS:INFERTILITY
 RESPIRATORY DISORDERS:ASTHMA
 SKIN DISORDERS:ALLERGIES, ALOPECIA, DERMATITIS, PSORIASIS,
 HERPES
 TUBERCULOSIS

COMMON STRESS SYMPTOMS--PSYCHOLOGICAL

MINOR

ACCIDENT PRONENESS
 AFFILIATION INCREASES
 ANGER, LOSS OF TEMPER
 ANXIETY (NERVOUSNESS)
 APATHY, LACK OF MOTIVATION, LOSS OF INTEREST
 CONCENTRATION PROBLEMS
 CRYING
 DAYDREAMING
 DECISION-MAKING PROBLEMS
 DEFENSIVE BEHAVIORS
 DEPRESSION
 DISORIENTATION, CONFUSION
 EXCITABILITY, JUMPINESS
 FORGETFULNESS
 HYPOCHONDRIASIS
 IRRITABILITY
 ISOLATION, WITHDRAWAL
 OBSESSIONS/COMPULSIONS, WORRY
 PARANOID THOUGHTS
 RESTLESSNESS, FIDGETING
 SUBSTANCE USE (SMOKING, DRINKING, TAKING PRESCRIBED OR
 ILLEGAL DRUGS)

MAJOR

AMNESIA
 ANXIETY DISORDERS (ANXIETY ATTACKS, OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE,
 PANIC ATTACKS, PHOBIAS)
 DEPRESSION OR MANIC-DEPRESSIVE DISORDERS
 DELUSIONS/HALLUCINATIONS
 PARANOIA
 POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER
 SCHIZOPHRENIA
 SUBSTANCE ABUSE (SMOKING, DRINKING, ABUSING PRESCRIBED
 OR ILLEGAL DRUGS)
 SUICIDE

CHECKLIST OF EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH STRESS

I. PHYSICAL LEVEL

1. LISTEN TO YOUR BODY. MONITOR AND AUDIT YOUR BODY FOR SIGNS OF PAIN, TENSION, DISCOMFORT, OR A CHANGE FROM NORMAL.
2. WHEN FEELING TENSE OR TIGHT, BREATHE DEEPLY AND SLOWLY, DO STRETCHING AND LOOSENING-UP EXERCISES. TAKE SHORT DIVERSIONARY BREAKS FROM STRESSFUL ACTIVITIES.
3. MAINTAIN A WELL-BALANCED DIET, REDUCING HIGH CALORIE, HIGH FAT "JUNK FOOD" IN FAVOR OF VEGETABLES, FRUITS, AND HIGH FIBER AND CARBOHYDRATES ALONG WITH PLENTY OF PURE WATER.
4. MAINTAIN AN EXERCISE PROGRAM AND REGULARLY ENGAGE IN VIGOROUS EXERCISE SUCH AS JOGGING, SWIMMING, WALKING, TENNIS, ETC. SEVERAL TIMES EACH WEEK.
5. REGULARLY PRACTICE MENTAL AND DEEP MUSCLE AND RELAXATION TECHNIQUES SUCH AS AUTOGENIC TRAINING, PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION, SELF-HYPNOSIS, MEDITATION, YOGA, BIOFEEDBACK, OR THERAPEUTIC MASSAGE.
6. ALLOW YOUR BODY TO USE ITS BUILT-IN STRESS RELIEVING MECHANISMS: CRYING, LAUGHING, SLEEPING/DREAMING, TALKING, REFLECTING.
7. REGULARLY ENGAGE IN RESTORATIVE, SELF-NURTURING, PLEASURABLE ACTIVITIES, E.G., BATHS, SHOWERS, NAPS, FAVORITE MEALS, NIGHTS OUT, MOVIES, CONCERTS, ETC.

II. COGNITIVE LEVEL

8. SET CLEAR SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM GOALS IN YOUR LIFE, PRIORITIZE THEM, AND REGULARLY MONITOR YOUR PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THEM.
9. USE MENTAL DISTRACTION, DIVERSION AND POSITIVE IMAGERY TECHNIQUES SUCH AS: THOUGHT STOPPING: YELL STOP! OUT LOUD OR IN YOUR MIND TO TERMINATE WORRYING; RETHINKING: SUBSTITUTE RATIONAL THOUGHTS FOR NEGATIVE EMOTIONAL REACTIONS OR THOUGHTS; MOMENTARY RELAXATION: APPLY DEEP MUSCLE RELAXATION JUST BEFORE A STRESSFUL EVENT; POSITIVE MENTAL REHEARSAL: WHILE RELAXED, VISUALIZE GOING THROUGH AN ENTIRE ANXIETY-PRODUCING EVENT SUCCESSFULLY; SYSTEMATIC DESENSITIZATION: DURING RELAXATION, GRADUALLY INTRODUCE THOUGHTS WHICH PRODUCE ANXIETY.

10. ACTIVELY SEEK TO LEARN ABOUT STRESS AND COPING STRATEGIES FROM NEWSPAPER AND MAGAZINE ARTICLES, BOOKS, TV, VIDEOS, WORKSHOPS, AND COURSES.
11. KEEP EVENTS AND REACTIONS IN PERSPECTIVE; ASK YOURSELF, "WILL I REMEMBER THIS AND WILL IT REALLY MATTER A MONTH, A YEAR, FIVE YEARS, OR TEN YEARS FROM NOW?"
12. EXAMINE THOUGHT PATTERNS FOR DISTORTED THINKING AND IRRATIONAL ASSUMPTIONS, E.G., ALL-OR-NONE THINKING, OVERGENERALIZATION, MENTAL FILTER, JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS, EMOTIONAL REASONING, LABELING, BLAMING.

III. *SOCIAL LEVEL*

13. USE A SUPPORT GROUP OF FRIENDS, FAMILY, RELATIVES, COWORKERS, OR PEOPLE WITH SIMILAR PROBLEMS (E.G. AA) WHO YOU CAN TALK TO ABOUT PROBLEMS.
14. COMPARTMENTALIZE THE STRESSFUL PARTS OF LIFE SO THAT WORK PROBLEMS DO NOT CARRY OVER TO FAMILY LIFE, AND FAMILY PROBLEMS DO NOT CARRY OVER TO WORK.
15. SET HEALTHY INTERPERSONAL BOUNDARIES. HAVE A HEALTHY, DETACHED CONCERN FOR OTHERS—EMPATHIZE WITH OTHERS BUT DO NOT TAKE ON THE BURDEN OF THEIR PROBLEMS.

IV. *BEHAVIORAL AND LIFE STYLE LEVEL*

16. ENGAGE IN A HOBBY OR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY (SINGING, PLAYING, OR LISTENING TO MUSIC; PLAYING WITH A PET) WHICH IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH ACTIVITIES WHICH CAUSE STRESS.
17. SCHEDULE PERIODIC BREAKS/VACATIONS WHICH REMOVE YOU FROM DAILY PRESSURES, FRUSTRATIONS, AND CONFLICTS, AND ALLOW YOU TO REGAIN PERSPECTIVE.
18. ASSESS AND MAKE CHANGES IN YOUR LIFE STYLE AND PERSONALITY TO DEVELOP MORE HARDINESS: COMMITMENT TO SELF, WORK, FAMILY, AND VALUES; SENSE OF PERSONAL CONTROL OVER YOUR LIFE; AND ABILITY TO SEE PROBLEMS AND CHANGE AS A CHALLENGE TO MASTER.
19. PUT YOUR FEELINGS ON PAPER BY KEEPING A JOURNAL OR DIARY; WRITE A LETTER TO A PERSON YOU'RE IN A CONFLICT WITH (YOU MIGHT OR MIGHT NOT ACTUALLY MAIL IT).
20. DURING PERIODS OF INTENSE STRESS OR IMMINENT BURNOUT, SEEK PROFESSIONAL COUNSELING OR PSYCHOTHERAPY.

V. SPIRITUAL LEVEL

21. MAKE DAILY AFFIRMATIONS, READ DAILY DEVOTIONAL MATERIALS, COLLECT OR WRITE POSITIVE NOTES TO YOURSELF AND POST THEM WHERE YOU CANNOT AVOID SEEING THEM.
22. HAVE A STRONG, WELL DEVELOPED VALUE SYSTEM TO USE AS THE BASIS OF DECISIONS.
23. EMBRACE THE STRENGTH THAT COMES FROM ACKNOWLEDGING A HIGHER POWER IN ONE'S LIFE.

CHECK YOUR DISTORTED ASSUMPTIONS

1. ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF...

- * I MUST BE PERFECT...
- * I AM TOTALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR OTHERS...
- * I MUST ALWAYS BE AVAILABLE...
- * I MUST MODEL MENTAL HEALTH...
- * I MUST BE LOVED, ADMIRER, OR SUPPORTED BY OTHERS...

2. ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT CLIENTS...

- * CLIENTS SHOULD BE DIFFERENT THAN THEY ARE...
- * ALL CLIENTS ARE SAME...

3. ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT HELPING...

- * CLIENTS SHOULD NOT BE RESISTANT TO CHANGE...
- * THE HELPER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CLIENT'S LIFE...

4. ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT WORLD...

- * ALL PEOPLE ARE LIKE MY CLIENTS...
- * ALL AGENCIES/ORGANIZATIONS ARE THE SAME...

KEEP HEALTHY PERSPECTIVE ON SELF, CLIENTS, PROCESS,

AND WORLD!!