


Week 7 – Coping with Stress



Coping with Stress

Week 7 – Eight Weeks to Wellness
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Stress is Part of Living

- Everyone who is alive experiences stress at times.
- The goal is:
 - Not to avoid all stress,
 - And to keep stress within manageable limits.

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The purpose of this presentation is ...

- To help you better understand stress,
- To recognize when stress is becoming excessive or destructive in your life,
- To learn how to relieve stress in your life,
- To learn coping techniques to reduce your stress load.

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Excess Stress in Life

- Excess stress can manifest itself in many ways
 - Worry
 - Anxiety
 - Hostility / Frustration
 - Depression
 - Illness
 - Decreased productivity
 - Tension

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Signals of Stress

How many stress signals do you have?

- [] Minor problems can seem overwhelming.
- [] I feel nervous and worry about many things.
- [] I can't stop thinking about my problems.
- [] I feel frustrated or angry much of the time.
- [] I feel tense much of the time.
- [] I sometimes find it hard to go to sleep.
- [] I often feel tired and have little energy.

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Symptoms of Stress

Symptoms	Related Diseases
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headaches• Backache• Sleep disturbances• Fatigue• Anxiety• Worry• "Burn-out"• Low productivity• Apathy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Frequent colds or flu• Digestive upsets• Depression• Cancer• Asthma• High blood pressure• Heart disease• Stroke

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Understanding Stress

- Stress is additive.
 - The body's response to stress is the sum of all the stressful situations it is exposed to.
- The goal is to manage, not avoid stress.
 - Keep stress within manageable limits and use it to your advantage when possible.
- Stress is not "Out There" — It is "In Here".
 - Stress is our response to situations as we perceive them.
 - We have control over our response to life events.

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A Stress Model

Stressor (Initiator) → Your Response → Coping Skills

Coping Skills branches into:


- Eustress** (Productive, Beneficial)
- Distress** (Nonproductive, Destructive)

Conflict	Inherited traits	Communication
Change	Experience	Self-talk
Work demands	Attitude	Relaxation
Loss	Self-image	Support systems
		Health practices

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Sources of Stress

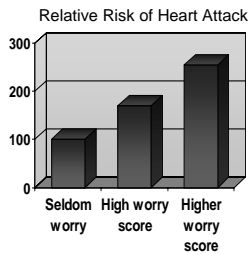
- Daily hassles
- Change
- The environment
- Work/Career
- Finances
- Relationships
- Conflict between people (inter-personal)
- Internal conflicts (intra-personal)



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Worry and Heart Health

- A study of 1,759 people for 13.7 years looked at worry and heart disease.
- Researchers found increased risks for heart attacks in people with increased levels of worry, particularly over financial issues and health concerns.



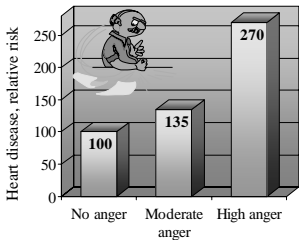
Circulation, February 18, 1997

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Hostility and Heart Health

Duke University studied anger and heart disease in 12,986 people. Those who scored high in anger had 2.7 times as much heart disease six years later.

People with moderate anger developed 35% more heart disease than those scoring low in anger or hostility.



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Excessive Stress & Worry Can Lead to Anxiety Attacks

- Almost everybody feels anxiety and panic occasionally. Some symptoms ...
 - Your head pounds
 - You sweat
 - You get hot flashes or feel very cold
 - You have trouble breathing
 - You tremble, feel dizzy, and tingling
 - You feel nauseous
 - You feel out of control

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Anxiety Assessment

- Do you often feel nervous and jittery?
- Are you often unable to relax?
- Do you constantly worry?
- Do you feel shortness of breath when stressed?
- Are you fearful in social situations?
- Do you often feel trapped or confined?
- Is your stomach often upset?
- Do you often have thoughts you can't stop?
- Do you relive traumatic experiences from the past?

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Coping With Anxiety

- Try to identify trigger situations (what leads to an attack)
 - Call a friend when you feel an attack coming
 - Avoid trigger situations when possible
 - Relax or go for a walk with a friend
- Join a support group
- Get a medical exam
- Take medications if prescribed
- See a counselor

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Coping Strategies — Two Common Approaches

Negative


- Denial, pretend all is OK
- Drugs, sleeping pills, tranquilizers, aspirin
- Binge eating, drinking
- Indulging — staying up late, sleeping in, wasting time
- Passivity/Procrastination
- Worry, imagine the worst
- Self pity, emotions control you

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Positive

- Take responsibility/control
- Set priorities/delegates
- Limit demands (says "No")
- Take one thing at a time
- Balance stress with relaxation response
- Take care of health: adequate rest, physical activity, regular meals
- Strengthen support system



10 ways
to beat stress
before it beats
you

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1. Adopt a Healthy Lifestyle

- Poor health habits add to your stress load (smoking, skipped meals, late hours, etc.).
- A healthy lifestyle guards against the damaging effects of stress and increases your resistance to stress.

Healthy Lifestyle

- Get adequate rest
- Be physically active daily
- Eat regular, healthy meals
- Avoid smoking, drugs, and alcohol
- Take time to relax and do something fun daily
- Spend quality time with friends and family

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Balance Your Life

- Be active
- Eat well
- Get your rest
- Be social
- Be careful
- Get regular exams
- Avoid anything harmful
- Be grateful
- Be helpful
- Forgive others
- Enjoy life!



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2. Don't Over-commit

Feeling overwhelmed?

- Limit demands — say **no** unless you really want to take on a new task.
- Set priorities — complete important tasks first; do the rest if there is time.
- Delegate — for example, get everyone you live with to share household chores.



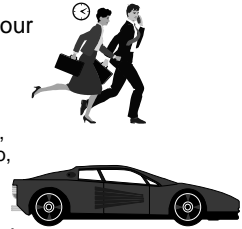
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3. Simplify Your Life

Feeling stressed out?

- Look for ways to simplify your life. This may include:
 - Cutting back on time commitments,
 - Letting go of material things, and dropping the second job,
 - Living within your means or even below your means.
- Peace of mind may be worth more than a new car or home.



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4. Master One Big Change at a Time

- Try to avoid too much change in your life all at once.
- When going through a major life event, try to keep other changes that are within your control to a minimum.
- Spend more time with family, friends, and your support group.

Major Life Events

- Starting a new job
- Marriage
- Divorce
- Buying a new home
- Stopping smoking
- Death of a loved one
- Serious illness

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5. Learn to Relax

- Relaxation is the antidote for stress.
 - Take frequent short breaks throughout the day.
 - If feeling uptight, practice slow, deep breathing.
 - Practice progressive relaxation.
 - Use visual imagery.
 - Take a vacation.
- Plan time to relax and have fun every day.



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The 15 Second Mini-Break

When you feel yourself becoming annoyed or uptight, try this 15-second mini-break.



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- Step 1
Eyes closed, remember a pleasant memory
- Step 2
Smile within, using your mouth and eye muscles
- Step 3
Take a slow, deep breath and relax your whole body
- Step 4
Take another deep breath and move into a positive, productive attitude

Break the Stress Response with Relaxation



- Take a warm bath
- Listen to favorite music
- Hike in the woods
- Watch a funny movie
- Phone a friend
- Eat out
- Take a nap
- Play with your children
- Enjoy a sunset
- Write in your diary
- Walk/play with your pet
- Meditate
- Pray
- Trim the roses
- Read a good book
- Enjoy a hobby
- Sit in the sunshine
- Get a massage

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6. Be Physically Active

- Physical activity helps relieve stress by:
 - Relieving pent-up emotions.
 - Relaxing the muscles.
 - Improving sleep.
 - Releasing endorphins, the body's natural way to feel better.
 - Distracting you from problems.
 - Improving mood.
 - Improving resistance to stress.



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Walk Every Day

"When the weather will permit, all who can possibly do so ought to walk in the open air every day, summer and winter. A walk, even in the winter, would be more beneficial to the health than all the medicine the doctor may prescribe."

E.G.White, *Counsels on Health*, p. 52



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7. Be Good to Yourself

- Listen to your self-talk:
 - Are you telling yourself how great you are?
 - Or, are you putting yourself down?
- Acknowledge your successes and accomplishments; focus on your good qualities.
- Look for ways to build your self-esteem.
- Don't be your own worst enemy by being overcritical and putting yourself down.
- Make changes where needed, but also learn to accept yourself as you are.



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8. Feed Your Emotional Life

- Everyone needs love to survive and cope with life.
- People with many social support systems handle stress and crisis better than people without support.
- Invest time in developing loving and supporting relationships.
- Don't isolate yourself.
- Belong to a caring church or other support group.



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9. Resolve Conflicts

- If something is bothering you, don't just stew about it, take action to resolve it.
- In resolving conflicts between people, try:
 - Reflective listening ... let him or her know you understand their point of view.
 - Describe your position ... I feel, I need, I think.
 - Explore alternatives ... there is usually a mutually acceptable solution if you take time to find it.



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To Improve Communication ...

- Choose a good time and place to discuss issues.
- Plan what you want to say.
- Start with what you agree on.
- Don't discount or reject the ideas of others.
- Never use name calling, blame, or personal attacks; stick to the issues.
- Respect others' views, even if they are different from your own.

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10. Keep Balance in Your Life

- Balance:
 - work with recreation,
 - weariness with rest,
 - disappointment with hope,
 - sadness with humor,
 - worry with trust,
 - stress with relaxation,
 - doubt with optimism,
 - excitement with quiet times,
 - loneliness with friendship,
 - rush with serenity,
 - clutter with order,
 - unsightly with beauty,
 - fear with peace.



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Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to
accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.

Reinhold Niebuhr

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Plan Quiet Times of Refreshing every Day

Study, meditate,
pray, rejuvenate
your mind and spirit.



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Those who wait on the Lord will find new strength. They will fly high on wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary. They will walk and not faint. Is. 40:31

In Summary . . .

- Learn to laugh at yourself and life.
- Develop good friends.
- Have hope for the future.
- Look for the best in everyone.
- Use positive self-talk, don't put yourself down.
- Plan time to relax daily.
- Take time to have fun.
- Take time for yourself.
- Learn to accept yourself as you are.
- Replace guilt with forgiveness and trust.
- Maintain a positive outlook — be optimistic.

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Stress Quiz - Review

1. T F Stress can be beneficial or destructive.
2. T F Stress is caused by difficult people and difficult situations.
3. T F Depression is an attitude problem.
4. Name two health behaviors that may help prevent depression: _____ and _____.
5. Three effective strategies when feeling overwhelmed are _____, _____, or _____.
6. T F Change, even good changes, can be stressful.
7. The best antidote for stress is _____.
8. T F Physical activity is a good stress releaser.
9. T F Isolating yourself is a good way to deal with stress.
10. Two positive ways to resolve conflicts are ___ and ___.

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