



Participant Guide

Strategies for Stress Relief



Overview

Stress is a fact of life for everyone. The responsibilities of modern living can be overwhelming. But it is possible to learn techniques and strategies to manage and relieve stress. In this webinar, we will talk about the symptoms of stress, how they manifest in day-to-day life, and ways to effectively manage stress. The goal of this webinar is to help every participant develop a willingness to employ at least one new strategy towards feeling better.

Agenda

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- What is Stress
- Physical & Emotional Symptoms
- Managing Stress
- What You Can & Can't Control
- Tips & Tricks
- Takeaways



Webinar Length: 1 Hour

*It's not stress that kills us,
it's our reaction to it*
— Hans Selye



What is Stress?

- A normal reaction to life's demands
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Body's natural defense
- Ranges from mild to extreme



Stress and Health

- **Daily stress** impacts health & wellbeing
- **Hardwired** to react to stress
- **Fight-or-flight mode** occurs when worried, frightened, or upset
- **Increased cortisol** caused by chronic stress



Physical Signs of Stress

- Low energy, exhaustion
- Headaches
- Tight shoulders/neck
- Gastrointestinal difficulties
- Sleep troubles
- Nightmares
- Disturbing dreams
- Clenching, grinding teeth
- Frequent colds, sickness
- Change in appetite
- Heartburn or nausea
- Elevated heart rate
- Sweating
- Aches & pains

[illegible]

Emotional Signs of Stress

- Irritability, anger
- Anxiety, restlessness
- Depression, sadness
- Feeling guilt, worry
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Loneliness, isolation
- Paranoia, fear
- Crying, tearfulness
- Lack of motivation or focus
- Addictions (drugs, alcohol, sex)
- Blaming others
- Difficulty making decisions
- Trouble learning new information
- Increased use OTC medication
- Lack of interest in activities

[illegible]

What to Do When Stressed

- **Recognize** you are stressed
- **Identify** trigger
- **Decide** how to ease your stress

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Where is Your Stress?

Take an Inventory

- ☐ Marriage/relationships
- ☐ Children
- ☐ Work/professional life
- ☐ Relationship to body/food/alcohol/drugs
- ☐ Major illness in family
- ☐ Recent loss or death
- ☐ Money
- ☐ General unhappiness with life



Build Your Stress Toolkit

Willingness

- What are you willing to do?
- What new behaviors do you want to try or think about?
 - Meditate every morning?
 - Sit quietly with eyes closed?



What Needs to Change?

Take an Inventory

- ☐ Improve self-care
- ☐ Have serious conversation with someone in your life
- ☐ Improve social life/hobbies
- ☐ Stop/curb unhelpful behavior
- ☐ See a professional



The Basics

Food, Exercise, Sleep

- Pillars of life
- First line of defense
- If stressed, focus on these basic elements of self-care



EXAMPLE - Exercise

Sustainable, Realistic Changes

- What are you willing to do to exercise more?
- Do you need ...
 - an accountability buddy?
 - a trainer?
 - help?
 - to see a doctor first?



EXAMPLE - Nutrition

Small changes = big impact

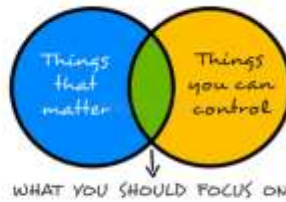
- What small change are you willing to make?
 - give up ONE food that is not good for you?
 - switch to water?



What Can You Control?

Only thing you can control is yourself

- What you say & do
- Effort you give to work & family
- How much you gossip
- Time spent on social media
- Whether or not you ask for help



What You Cannot Control

- Other people
- Most situations
- Other people's problems



Identify Your Fears

- What might happen?
- What is worst-case scenario?
- Are you replaying catastrophic outcomes in your head?



*I've had a lot of worries in
my life, most of which
never happened*

— Mark Twain



Ten Tips and Tricks

Ideas for Action

1. Prep for tomorrow
2. Put your phone away
3. Calm your breathing
4. Call a friend
5. Go outside
6. Go for a 10-minute walk
7. Drink some water
8. Get a massage
9. Plan a day out of town
10. Pet an animal



Consider ...

- Sometimes stress is more than just challenging circumstances.
- Make sure you're in good shape. See a doctor if you need to.
- If you think your stress is above normal, seek professional help.
- If having difficulties at work, consult HR, career coach, or therapist.

Reviews & Takeaways

- ☐ Identify why you're stressed
- ☐ What is your willingness to take action
- ☐ If not sure what to do, focus on basics: food, exercise, sleep
- ☐ Focus on small, incremental changes
- ☐ Focus on what you can control
- ☐ See a doctor or professional if you need to



Reducing Stress: Actionable Strategies



STRATEGY	BENEFIT
Exercise	Enhances mood and blunts the stress response. 30 minutes a day can decrease the risk of cardiovascular and metabolic disease.
Meditate	Daily meditation of 15-30 minutes assists in maintaining personal balance and is health enhancing.
Share your feelings	Good friendships, social networks, and supportive communities can allay stressful situations. Providing support to others can also alleviate our stress.
Be realistic	If you're overwhelmed, learn to say NO. Ask for help and explain why you need to set limits. Be ready to compromise.
Visualize	Use your imagination and picture yourself handling stressful situations effectively. See the successful outcome. Use visualization to create a mini vacation, which can provide a break from daily stressors.
Enjoy your hobbies	Find outlets that delight you and take time on a regular basis to enjoy them.
Live a healthy lifestyle	Good nutrition is vital to your health and wellbeing. Limit your alcohol and caffeine consumption. Get adequate rest, and balance work and play.
Be gentle with yourself and others	Be careful of criticism, and don't expect too much of yourself and others. Recognize your uniqueness and be willing to forgive yourself and others when errors occur.

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OurRelationship Online Program

Designed to uncover, understand, and solve relationship issues, at your own pace or guided by a program coach



Personal Coaching

Tailored, actionable strategies to achieve personal wellbeing and professional development goals



Financial Coaching

Money coach helps with money management, tax basics, investing, retirement planning, and building credit

Interested in learning new skills?

Our Relationship is an inclusive online resource that helps couples strengthen their connection, at their own pace or guided by a program coach.

Personal Coaching with a skilled coach includes actionable strategies to help you achieve personal wellbeing and professional development goals.

Financial Coaching. A Money Coach helps with topics like tax basics, money management, establishing credit, debt reduction, and more!

Questions? Comments

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