



STRESS MANAGEMENT



MANAGING MY STRESS WORKSHOP - 2021

BY

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Workshop Aims

The aim of this workshop is to:

- Identify the sources of stress in life.
- Practice the 4A's of stress management.
- Connect to others.
- Make time for fun and relaxation.



Stress Management

- **Effective stress management helps you:**
 - To break the hold stress has over you so you can be happier, healthier, and more productive
 - To balance life with time for studies or work, relationships, relaxation, and fun
 - To hold up under pressure and meet challenges head on.

1. IDENTIFY SOURCES OF STRESS IN LIFE

- Stress management starts with identifying the sources of stress in your life
- Identifying sources of stress is not as easy as A,B,C.

- Factors contributing to everyday stress:
 - ❖ Thoughts
 - ❖ Feelings
 - ❖ Behavior

- **Major stressors in life:**
 - ❖ Changing courses or jobs
 - ❖ Moving from one residence to another
 - ❖ Family matters

IDENTIFY THE SOURCES OF STRESS IN LIFE

- To identify your true sources of stress, look closely at your attitude, habits, and excuses by asking:
 - ❖ Do I explain away stress as temporary even though I can't remember the last time I took a breather? (example, I have a million of things going on right now).
 - ❖ Do I define stress as an integral part of school work or home life? (example, things are really crazy around here).
 - ❖ Do I define stress a part of my personality? (example, I have a lot of nervous energy).
 - ❖ Do I blame stress on other people?.

2. PRACTICE THE 4A's OF STRESS MANAGEMENT

- Stress is an automatic response from your nervous system which are caused by predictable stressors such as
 - ❖ Your commute to work or school
 - ❖ A meeting with your boss or lecturer
 - ❖ Family gatherings
- **Two ways to deal with predictable stressors:**
 - ❖ Change the situation
 - ❖ Change your reaction
- When deciding which way to choose, consider the following four **A's**:
 - ❖ *Avoid* unnecessary stress
 - ❖ *Alter* the situation
 - ❖ *Adapt* to the stressor
 - ❖ *Accept* the things you can't change

2.1 AVOID UNNECESSARY STRESS

- It is not always healthy to avoid a stressful situation that needs to be addressed
- To avoid unnecessary stress and eliminate a number of stressors in your life:
 - ❖ **learn how to say “no”** – Whether in your personal or professional life, know your limits and stick to them. Taking more than you can handle is a surefire for stress
 - ❖ **Avoid people who stress you out** – If someone constantly causes stress in your life, limit the amount of time you spend with that person or end the relationship
 - ❖ **Take control of your environment** – If the morning news make you anxious, turn off your tv and social media
 - ❖ **Pare down your to-do list** – Analyse your schedule, responsibilities, and tasks. If you have a lot on your plate, drop tasks that are not truly necessary to the bottom of your list

2.2 ALTER THE SITUATION

- If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it by:
 - ❖ changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life
- Stressful situation can be altered in three ways:
 - ❖ **Express your feelings instead of bottling them up** – if you have an exam or EMA to study for your chatty roommate just got home, say upfront that you only have 10 minutes to chat
 - ❖ **Be willing to compromise** – when you ask someone to change their behavior, be willing to do the same. If you both are willing to bend at least a little, you will have a good opportunity of finding a happy middle ground
 - ❖ **Create a balance schedule** – try to find a balance between school work and social life, daily responsibilities and downtime

2.3 ADAPT THE STRESSOR

- You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude
- Four ways to adapt to the stressor:
 - ❖ **Reframe problems** – view situations from a more positive perspective. Rather than fuming about failing a test, look at the situation as opportunity to pause and regroup
 - ❖ **Look at the bigger picture** – ask yourself how important the situation will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your energy and time on important things
 - ❖ **Adjust your standards** – Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Instead, set reasonable standard for yourself and others, and learn to be okay with “good enough”.
 - ❖ **Practice gratitude** – when stress is getting you down, take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life. This simple way can help you keep things in perspective.

2.4 ACCEPT THE THINGS YOU CAN'T CHANGE

- The best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are.
- You can't prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession.
- Four ways to accept uncontrollable situations:
 - ❖ **Do not try to control the uncontrollable** – Many things in life are beyond our control, particularly the behavior of other people.
 - ❖ **Look for the upside** – when facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth. If your own poor choices contributed to a stressful situation, reflect on them and learn from your mistakes.
 - ❖ **Learn to forgive** – accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes. Free yourself from negative energy by forgiving and moving on.
 - ❖ **Share your feelings** – expressing what you are going through can be quite cathartic (purifying) even if there is nothing you can do to change the stressful situation.

3. CONNECT TO OTHERS



- There is nothing more calming than spending quality time with another person that makes you feel safe laugh, and understood.
- Make it a point to connect regularly with family and friends.
- Always keep in mind that the people you to talk to do not have to be able to solve your stress, they simply need to be good listeners.
- It is not always realistic to have a person close by to lean on when you feel overwhelmed by stress, but building and maintaining a network close friends you can improve your resilience to life stressors.

3.1 TIPS FOR RELATIONSHIPS

- Reach out to your classmate.
- Reach out to a colleague at work.
- Have lunch or coffee with a friend, or classmate.
- Call or email an old friend.
- Go for a walk with a workout buddy or classmate.
- Schedule a monthly dinner.
- Meet new people by volunteering on a programme (e.g how2buddy or how2nmu).

4. MAKE TIME FOR FUN AND RELAXATION

- **Set aside leisure time** – Include rest and relaxation in your daily schedule. This is your time to take a break from all your responsibilities and recharge your energy.
- **Do something you enjoy everyday** – make time for activities that bring you joy, whether cleaning and playing favorite music, cooking, or working on your bike or fixing something.
- **Keep your sense of humor** – This includes the ability to laugh at yourself.
- **Take up a relaxation practice** – relaxation techniques such as yoga, meditation, and deep breathing activate the body's relaxation response. As you learn and practice these techniques, your stress levels will decrease and your mind and body will become more calm and centered.

THANK YOU

