

## Slide 1: Address Your Stress

## Slide 2: Identifying Stress

- What causes stress in your life?
- What makes you feel off balance?
- How do you know you are stressed?
- What do you do to cope or deal with stress?

## Slide 3: Objectives

- Identify when stress impacts well-being.
- Identify strategies and techniques to address stress.

## Slide 4: Stress

- Response we have when life challenges seem greater than our ability to handle them
- Stressors can have a negative impact on our bodies, minds, and emotions

## Slide 5: Real and Perceived Stressors

- Whether stressors are real or perceived, they can still disrupt balance
- This class focuses on how we perceive what is happening to us
- Perceived stress is subjective and reflects our appraisal of a situation

## Slide 6: Good Stress

- Moderate stress can keep us sharp, alert, and energized
- Too much stress can be harmful for our well-being

## Slide 7: Cascade of Responses

The stress response involves multiple reactions in the body. Our body changes when we are exposed to stressors that we do not think we can handle. What might surprise you is how big of an impact stress can have on the body. Prolonged stress, real or perceived, wears us down. Repeated exposure to stress makes us more vulnerable to colds, flu, and other sicknesses. It also can diminish our energy. When we are under stress, our ability to recall information over time may decrease, we are more likely to have negative moods, and our daily chores may seem more difficult to handle.

## Slide 8: Stress Busting Strategies

- Journal about your stress and worry
- Take the perspective of a detached observer
- Develop a gratitude practice
- Focus on the present
- Do a physical activity
- Talk to a friend
- Look for something potentially positive in the situation
- Slow down your breathing
- Relax your body

- Do something good for someone else

## Slide 9: Guided Imagery

- Stress management technique
- Allows for the use of imagination to create a sense of relaxation in the body and mind

## Slide 10: Guided Imagery Steps

To use guided imagery, find a comfortable position, relax, and concentrate on your breathing. Make sure you keep an open attitude. Then, think of a visual theme, such as a beach, forest, or your family, and allow your mind to develop the image using all of your senses. In guided imagery, you create calming and relaxing images in your mind. The key is to see the images in great detail and notice everything about them. Choose images that are personally meaningful, positive, and detailed enough to engage your mind and body. Use your senses to be creative in the details. You can practice guided imagery almost anywhere.

## Slide 11: Countering Stressful Thoughts

- You can become very good at controlling negative thoughts

## Slide 12: Recognizing Stressful Thoughts

- All-or-nothing thinking: Everything is either black or white, always or never, perfect or failure
- Overgeneralization: Expecting one negative experience to hold true forever
- Diminishing the positive: Not counting positive experiences
- Jumping to conclusions: Making quick conclusions without considering the evidence
- Catastrophizing: Expecting the worst case scenario
- Should/Shouldn't thinking: Holding strict standards that no one can live up to
- Labeling: Labeling yourself based on self-perceived shortcomings
- Personalization: Taking responsibility for things you cannot control

## Slide 13: Keep a Thought Record

- To better control our worry, we need to understand it
- A Thought Record allows us to keep track of our negative and worrisome thoughts

## Slide 14: Learn About Your Thoughts

- The alternative to negative and worrisome thoughts begins with relying on evidence and not emotion
- Do not just accept worry, but question it

## Slide 15: Counter Your Stressful Thoughts

This is an example of a Thought Record. Under the column labeled “Date/Time” it says 3/17/20, 5:30pm - the date and time the stressful thought began to occur. The second column states the situation that caused the stressful thought. For example, my husband is late. In the third column, record the stressful thought that comes to mind. For example, my husband is late; therefore, he must have been in an accident (perceived stressor). In column four, rate the stressful thought and label the emotion. For example, this situation scored as an eight, and the emotion was labeled as worry. This rating was based on a 10-point scale in which one represents the lowest amount of worry, and 10 represents the highest. In the fifth column, record minimizers, which are items that can help counter stressful thoughts. For example, minimizers for husband being late include the following: he is a good driver, rush hour traffic, stopped at the store, stuck in a meeting, he has been late before, and dinner is late anyway. The sixth column is used to re-rate the amount of worry after determining minimizers to counter the stressful thought. In this example, the amount of worry dropped from an eight to a five.

## Slide 16: Review of Objectives

- Identify when stress impacts well-being.
- Identify strategies and techniques to address stress.

## Slide 17: Review of Key Points

- Practice coping strategies and relaxation techniques to help you manage stress
- Not all techniques work for everyone
  - Find one that you like and works for you
- Seek help if stress becomes beyond your ability to cope

## Slide 18: Address Your Stress