

Coping With Stress

Caring Network Workshop

January 10th, 2015

Guelph, Ontario

Sources of Stress

- Stress comes from all of our experiences, both good and bad. Our bodies actually *need* stress in order to function. If we did not feel any stress, we would not be alive!
- Jesus said, “Through much tribulation [Gk.thlipsis = pressure, stress!] you will enter the Kingdom”

Stressed Out!

- Stress becomes a problem when we are not sure how to handle an event or a situation. Then worry sets in and we feel “stressed,” or even “stressed out!”
- The Apostle Paul said, “I was so utterly, unbearably crushed that I despaired of life itself” (1 Cor. 1)

The Stress Response

- Stage 1 – Mobilizing Energy
- Stage 2 – Consuming Energy Stores
- Stage 3 – Draining Energy Stores

Stage 1 – Mobilizing Energy

- At first, your body releases adrenaline, your heart beats faster, and you start to breathe more quickly. Both good and bad events can start this reaction: the night before your wedding or the day you lose your job.

Stage 2 – Consuming Energy Stores

- If, for some reason, you do not escape from the first stage, your body begins to release stored sugars and fats from its resources. At this stage, you will feel driven, pressured and tired. You may drink more coffee, smoke more, and drink more alcohol than is good for you. You may also experience anxiety, memory loss, catch colds and get the flu more often than normal

Stage 3 – Draining Energy Stores

- If you do not resolve your stress problems, the body's need for energy will become greater than its ability to produce it, and you will become chronically stressed. At this stage, you may experience insomnia, errors in judgment and personality changes. You may also develop a serious illness, such as heart disease, ulcers, or mental illness

Burnout!

- increased frustration, impatience, anger towards others, increased boredom, lack of focus, increased fatigue, decreased motivation, lack of fulfilment
- depersonalisation, emotional exhaustion, and lack of feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment
- depression and thoughts of suicide

Coping with Stress

- Identify your problems
- Solve your problems
- Talk about your problems
- Learn about stress management
- Reduce tension
- Take your mind off your problems
- Practice self care

Self care

- S – Seek social and work support
- E – Engage in rest, relaxation, recreation, and reflection
- L – Let go of anger, guilt, and anxiety
- F – Feel and accept emotions and uncertainty
- C – Commit to taking care of yourself daily
- A – Allow yourself to experience love, joy, pride, peace, beauty, and wonder
- R – Respond to your physical, emotional, spiritual, cultural and work-related needs
- E – Enjoy Life!

Self Care does NOT equal Selfish!

- “The healthier and happier we are, the more we are able to give of ourselves to others” (Pearly Daniel)
- Remember, the heart pumps blood to itself before the rest of the body!
- Attach your own breathing mask before attending to others!
- “Love your neighbour as you do yourself”

Preventing Stress Build Up

- Make decisions
- Avoid putting things off
- Do the unpleasant task first!
- Delegate
- Give yourself a mental break
- Take vacations
- Pay attention to self care

Self Care Assessment

- Physical Self Care
- Psychological Self Care
- Emotional Self Care
- Spiritual Self Care
- Workplace or Professional Self Care
- Balance (Saakvitne & Pearlman, 1996)

Ten Simple Things

- Exercise more – 7 minutes might be enough
- Sleep more – you will be less sensitive to negative emotions
- Move closer to work – a short commute is worth more than a big house
- Spend time with friends and family
- Go outside – happiness is maximized at 13.9°C
- Help others – 100 hours a year is the magical number
- Practice smiling – it can alleviate pain
- Plan a trip – but don't take one
- Meditate – rewire your brain for happiness
- Practice gratitude – increase both happiness and life satisfaction

Getting Older makes You Happier

- Older people tend to focus on and remember happier situations more and negative ones less 😊
- As people age, they seek out situations that will lift their moods 😊
- Older adults learn to let go of loss and disappointment over unachieved goals, and aim towards greater wellbeing 😊

Using Mindfulness

- Mindfulness = being present in the moment
- Jesus said, "Take no thought for tomorrow"
- Dwelling on the past = Depression
- Worrying about the future = Anxiety
- Paul said, "In everything, at all times, I have learned how to be content"

Breathing Techniques

- Focusing on the breath
- Deepening the breath
- Observing your breath as you walk
- Following your breath through your body
- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Alternate nostril breathing
- Pursed lip breathing

Mindfulness & Meditation

- Use your senses – 15 minute meditation
- Mindful awareness while lying in bed
- Mindful awareness while moving
- Mindful awareness while walking
- Mindful awareness while listening
- “Be Still and Know that I am God” (PTL 11)

Sleep

“Sleep that knits up the ravell’d sleeve of care,
The death of each day’s life, sore labour’s bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature’s second course,
Chief nourisher in life’s feast” (Macbeth, 2.2.46-51)

- Sweet refreshment for the labourer
Ecclesiastes 5:12
- A by-product of man’s adherence to God’s wisdom and
- An antidote to anxiety Proverbs 3:24

Sleep Hygiene

- Go to bed at the same time each night
- Wake up at the same time each morning
- Engage in quiet, non-stimulating activity before bed
- If you can't sleep after 20-30 minutes, get out of bed and do relaxing activity again
- Develop rituals that help you relax before bed
- Keep a regular schedule
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, nicotine and vigorous exercise before bed
- Make your bedroom a restful place
- Practice psychological sleep techniques

He gives sleep to his beloved

(Psalm 127:2)

- Sleep Hygiene Worksheet
- God says, “Don’t worry, I’ll take the night shift!”
- Sing a lullaby
 - “When at night I go to sleep”
(Humperdinck)

Where to Get Help

Canadian Mental Health Association:

www.cmha.ca

Mental Health Helpline:

1-866-531-2600 www.mentalhealthhelpline.ca

Centre for Addictions and Mental Health:

www.camh.ca

Information/tools for stress/anxiety:

www.mindyourmind.ca