



WELLNESS PROMOTION

Identifying, Understanding and Managing Work/Home Balance

Basic Stress Concepts

- Stress is universal
- Perception is a common source of stress
- Stress may come from bad habits and negative feelings
- Stress is not all bad
- Too much stress can be disastrous
- The line between too much stress and too little stress is difficult to distinguish
- Healthful stress levels vary from person to person
- Know your signals of stress overload.
- **Listen to:**
 - Your body
 - Your feelings
 - Your spirit
 - Your relationships

Adapted from: Kicking Your Stress Habits

Whole Person Press



COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

1. **All-or-Nothing Thinking:** You see things in black-and-white categories. If your performance falls short of perfect, you see yourself as a total failure.
2. **Over-Generalization:** You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.
3. **Mental Filter:** You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that discolors the entire beaker of water.
4. **Disqualifying the Positive:** You reject positive experiences by insisting they “don’t count” for some reason or other. In this way you can maintain a negative belief that is contradicted by your everyday experiences.
5. **Jumping to Conclusions:** You make a negative interpretation even though there are no definite facts that convincingly support your conclusion.
 - a. *Mind reading:* You arbitrarily conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you, and you don’t bother to check this out.
 - b. *The Fortune Teller Error:* You anticipate that things will turn out badly, and you feel convinced that your prediction is an already-established fact.
6. **Magnification (Catastrophizing) or Minimization:** You exaggerate the importance of things (such as your goof-up or someone else’s achievement), or you inappropriately shrink things until they appear tiny (your own desirable qualities or the other fellow’s imperfections). This is also called the “binocular trick.”
7. **Emotional Reasoning:** You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: “I feel it; therefore, it must be true.”
8. **Should Statements:** You try to motivate yourself with “shoulds” and “shouldn’ts” as if you had to be whipped and punished before you could be expected to do anything. “Musts” and “oughts” are also offenders. The emotional consequence is guilt. When you direct “should” statements toward others, you feel anger, frustration, and resentment.
9. **Labeling and Mislabeled:** This is an extreme form of overgeneralization. Instead of describing your error, you attach a negative label to yourself; “I’m a loser.” When someone else’s behavior rubs you the wrong way, you may attach a negative label to him: “He’s a loser.” Mislabeled involves describing an event with language that is highly colored and emotionally loaded.
10. **Personalization:** You see yourself as the cause of some negative external event which in fact you were not primarily responsible for.



HOW'S YOUR BALANCE?

Place a checkmark on the line next to each statement below that you would say is true about you.

- I work more than forty hours a week.
- I exercise fewer than three times per week.
- I live on the edge financially.
- I have great conflict in some work relationships.
- I drink more than one caffeinated beverage per day.
- I'd like more quality time with my family.
- I need more space in my home.
- Emotional issues often get in my way.
- I have outstanding bills and paperwork.
- People always depend on me in a pinch.
- I abuse alcohol and/or drugs.
- I have strained personal relationships.
- My work environment impedes productivity.
- I engage in a fun activity fewer than two times a week.
- I wish for more satisfying work.
- I have more than my share of problems.
- I over promise my time and what I can accomplish.
- I am self-conscious about my appearance.



STRESS EXHAUSTION SYMPTOMS

Check the symptoms of stress exhaustion you have noticed lately in yourself.

PHYSICAL

- Appetite change
- Headaches
- Muscle tension
- Fatigue
- Sleep change
- Weight change
- Colds
- Heart disease
- Digestive upsets, ulcers
- Pounding heart
- Accident prone
- Teeth grinding
- Rashes
- Restlessness
- High blood pressure
- Cancer
- Increased alcohol, drug, tobacco use

SPIRITUAL

- Emptiness
- Loss of meaning
- Doubt
- Unforgiving
- Martyrdom
- Looking for magic
- Loss of direction
- Needing to "prove" self
- Cynicism
- Apathy
- Lack of self-love/acceptance

EMOTIONAL

- Anxiety
- Frustration
- The "blues"
- Mood swings
- Bad temper
- Nightmares
- Crying spells
- Irritability
- "No one cares"
- Depression
- Nervous laugh
- Worrying
- Easily discouraged
- Little joy
- Numbness

MENTAL

- Forgetfulness
- Dull senses
- Poor concentration
- Low productivity
- Negative attitude
- Confusion
- Lethargy
- Whirling thoughts
- No new ideas
- Boredom
- Spacing out
- Negative self-talk

RELATIONAL

- Isolation
- Intolerance
- Loneliness
- Lashing out
- Hiding
- Clamming up
- Lowered sex drive
- Nagging
- Distrust
- Fewer contacts with friends
- Lack of intimacy
- Using people
- Judgmental



PLUGGING IN SUGGESTIONS

PHYSICAL

Exercise regularly – 15-20 minutes of vigorous exercise per day 3x/week is recommended. Jogging, walking, swimming, tennis or any form of exercise can be helpful. Check with your doctor if you have not exercised in some time.

Relaxation techniques – take 10 minutes to sit quietly and alternate between tensing and relaxing your muscles. There are many others to choose from also.

Eat sensibly – avoid high intake of fat, cholesterol, sugar and salt. Choose more high fiber foods, fresh fruit and vegetables.

Follow sensible drinking habits – avoid self-medication. Alcohol is a sedative and can become habit forming.

Stop smoking – persons who stop smoking immediately begin to reduce their risk of developing heart disease and cancer.

Think healthy – take time to develop healthful safety habits that make you feel good and keep you safe.

RELATIONSHIP

Develop friendships – we need relationships for our health. Our fulfillment is giving to our friends and allowing them to give to us. Give compliments. Accept compliments.

Reach out – No one knows our needs unless we let them know. Take the risk and reach out.

Express your emotions – so much energy is used to “bottle up” feelings. Think about how much you “free up” by expressing your feelings to people you care for and trust – write.

Join a group – we all need to belong and groups can provide a feeling of belonging. It’s a place where we can accept ourselves and accept others.

INTELLECTUAL

Work on your fears – take a course or get more information that may help you overcome your fears. Facing your fears is half the battle.

Develop your sense of humor – learn to laugh at yourself and with life. Find humor in things. Life is serious enough as it is.

Accept yourself – none of us is perfect. Learn how to love and care for yourself in the same way you do for others around you. You are important.

You are what you think – you will follow your most predominant positive or negative thoughts. Be aware of what those are. You can change these to more positive thoughts. They are, after all, your thoughts.

Develop your creative side – take a class, read, challenge yourself with a hobby.

SPIRITUAL

Listen to the inner you – take time to nourish your spiritual needs and replenish yourself. This can be through actions such as prayer, meditation, confession, worship, fellowship, and reflection.

Taking time for you – taking time makes “me” feel whole.

Spend time in nature – take walks, go camping, get in touch with something larger than you.

Music – listen to music which stimulates alpha waves.

Do whatever -- connects you with your inner self, your spiritual self.

Proven Stress Reducers

1. **Get up fifteen minutes earlier in the morning.** The inevitable morning mishaps will be less stressful.

2. **Prepare for the morning the evening before.** Set the breakfast table, make lunches, put out the clothes you plan to wear, etc.

3. Don't rely on your memory. Write down appointment times, when to pick up the laundry, when library books are due, etc. "The pale ink is better than the retentive memory." – Old Chinese Proverb.

4. Do nothing that after being done leads you to tell a lie.

5. Make duplicates of all keys. Bury a house key in a secret spot in the garden and carry a duplicate car key in your wallet apart from your key ring.

6. Practice preventive maintenance. Your car, appliances, home and relationships will be less likely to break down/fall apart "at the worst possible moment."

7. Eliminate (or restrict) the amount of caffeine in your diet.

8. Procrastination is stressful. Whatever you want to do tomorrow, do it today; whatever you want to do today, do it now.

9. Plan ahead. Don't let the gas tank get below one-quarter full, keep a well stocked "emergency shelf" of home staples, don't wait until you're down to your last bus token or postage stamp to buy more, etc.

10. **Don't put up with something that doesn't work right. If your alarm clock, wallet, shoelaces, windshield wipers — whatever— are constant aggravation, get them fixed or get new ones.**

11. Allow 15 minutes of extra time to get to appointments. Plan to arrive at an airport one hour before domestic departures.

12. Be prepared to wait. A paperback can make a wait in a post office line almost pleasant.

13. Always set up a contingency plan "just in case." ("If for some reason either of us is delayed, here's what we'll do...") kind of

thing. Or, "If we get split up in the shopping center, here's where we'll meet."

14. Relax your standards. The world will not end if the grass doesn't get mowed this weekend, if the sheets have to be changed on Sunday instead of Saturday, etc.

Unplug your phone. Want to take a long bath, meditate, sleep or read without interruption? Drum up the courage to temporarily disconnect.

15. Pollyanna-Power! For every one thing that goes wrong, there are probably 10 or 50 or 100 blessings. Count 'em!

16. Ask questions. Taking a few moments to repeat back directions, what someone expects of you, etc., can save hours. (The old "The hurrieder I go, the behinder I get," idea.)

17. Say "No!" Saying 'no' to extra projects, social activities, and invitations you know you don't have time or energy for takes practice, self respect, and a belief that everyone, every day needs quiet time to

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relax and to be alone.

18. Unplug your phone. Want to take a long bath, meditate, sleep or read without interruption? Drum up the courage to temporarily disconnect. (The possibility of there being a terrible emergency in the next hour or so is almost nil.)

19. Turn "needs" into preferences. Our basic

Eliminate destructive self-talk: "I'm too old to..." "I'm too fat to..." etc.

physical needs translate into food and water and keeping warm. Everything else is a preference. Don't get attached to preferences.

20. Simplify, simplify, simplify.

21. Make friends with non-worriers. Nothing can get you into the habit of worrying faster than associating with chronic worrywarts.

22. Take a hot bath or shower (or a cold one, in summertime) to relieve tension.

23. Wear earplugs. If you need to find quiet at home but junior must practice piano, pop in some earplugs (available in any drugstore), and smile.

24. Get enough sleep. If necessary, use an alarm clock to remind you to go to bed.

25. Create order out of chaos. Organize your home and workspace so that you always know exactly where things are. Put things away where they belong and you won't have to go through the stress of losing things.

26. When feeling stressed, most people tend to breathe in short shallow breaths. When you breathe like this, stale air is not expelled, oxidation of the tissues is incomplete and muscle tension frequently results.

Check your breathing through-out the day, and before, during and after high-pressure situations. If you find your stomach muscles are knotted and your breathing is shallow, relax all your muscles and take several deep, slow breaths. Note how, when you're relaxed, both your abdomen and chest expand when you breathe.

27. Writing your thoughts and feelings down (in a journal, or on paper to be thrown away) can help you clarify things and can give you a renewed perspective.

28. Try the following yoga technique whenever you feel the need to relax: inhale deeply through your nose to the count of eight. Then, with lips puckered, exhale very slowly through your mouth to the count of 16, or for as long as you can. Concentrate on the long sighing sound and feel the tension dissolve. Repeat 10 times.

29. Inoculate yourself against a feared event. Just as a vaccine containing a virus can protect you from illness, if you expose



yourself to one or more of the dreaded aspects of an experience beforehand, you often can mitigate your fears.

Example: Before speaking in public, take time to go over every part of the experience in your mind. Imagine what you'll wear, what the audience will look like, how you will present your talk, what the questions will be and how you will answer them, etc. Visualize the experience the way you would have it be.

You'll likely find that when the time comes to make the actual presentation, it will be "old hat" and much of your anxiety will have fled.

30. When the stress of having to get a job done gets in the way of getting the job done, diversion—a voluntary change in activity and/or environment—may be just what you need.
31. Get up and stretch periodically if your job requires that you sit for extended periods.
32. One of the most obvious ways to avoid unnecessary stress is to select an environment (work, home, leisure) which is in line with your personal needs and desires. If you hate desk jobs, don't accept a job that requires that you sit at a desk all day. If you hate to talk politics, don't associate with people who love to talk politics, etc.
33. Learn to live one day at a time.
34. Everyday, do something you really enjoy.
35. Add an ounce of love to everything you do.
36. Talk it out. Discussing your problems with a trusted friend can help clear your mind

of confusion so you can concentrate on problem solving.

37. Do something for somebody else.
38. Focus on understanding rather than on being understood, on loving rather than on being loved.
39. Do something that will improve your appearance. Looking better can help you feel better.
40. Schedule a realistic day. Avoid the tendency to schedule back-to-back appointments; allow time between appointments for a breathing spell.
41. Become more flexible. Some things are worth not doing perfectly and some issues are well to compromise upon.
42. Eliminate destructive self-talk: "I'm too old to..." "I'm too fat to..." etc.
43. Use your weekend time for a change of pace. If your workweek is slow and patterned, make sure there is action and time for spontaneity built into your weekends. If your workweek is fast paced and full of people and deadlines, seek peace and solitude during the days off. Feel as if you aren't accomplishing anything tangible at work? Tackle a job on the weekend that you can finish to your satisfaction.
44. "Worry about the pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves." That's another way of saying: take care of the todays as best you can and the yesterdays and the tomorrows will take care of themselves.
45. Do one thing at a time. When you are with someone, be with that person and with no

one or nothing else. When you are busy with a project, concentrate on doing *that* project and forget about everything else you have to do.

46. Allow yourself time – everyday—for privacy, quiet, and introspection.
47. If an especially "unpleasant" task faces you, do it early in the day and get it over with. Then the rest of your day will be free of anxiety.
48. Learn to delegate responsibility to capable others.
49. Don't forget to take a lunch break. Try to get away from your desk or work area in body *and* mind, even if it's just for 15 to 20 minutes.
50. Forget about counting to 10. Count to 1,000 before doing something or saying anything that could make matters worse.
51. Have a forgiving view of events and people. Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world.
52. Have an optimistic view of the world. Believe that most people are doing the best they can.



ATTITUDE

A = Accept the fact that this is the life you have chosen. This is the job you have chosen. No one forced you into this situation. You are where you are, who you are and doing what you have chosen to do. You are a total summation of all of your choices.

If you can't accept those facts then...

T = Take action. Make the changes necessary. What about your job (or your life) do you like? Be honest in that evaluation. Does the bad really outweigh the good?

What changes can you initiate that will help you to...

T = Take pride in what you do. You bring a uniqueness, a special gift to this world that only you can provide. Make a list of all your qualities. Focus on the special things that you do that are not required in your job. But you do them anyway.

Then...

I = Identify the things that require change. Perhaps your attitude toward life or a particular part of your work is poor because it is boring or repetitive. Make a list of those things and ask yourself, "How can I do this differently?"

Then...

T = Talk to others about your concerns. Sit down with your co-workers and ask them to evaluate your work in that area. Be open to suggestions. Talk to family and friends about how they perceive you. Talk about your concerns and desires to change. You may find that the help and support you need is abundant. Just knowing that you have help, will begin a transformation in your attitude toward the challenges you have set for yourself.

But...

U = Ultimately the burden is on your shoulders. You choose the attitude you have. No one can do it for you. You can either continue to moan and groan about the things you don't like or do something about it.

To begin...

D = Develop a plan. Set goals. Commit yourself to a date when all will be completed. Then work backwards. If in a month you want to reach your goals then break them down to what you will accomplish each week and then each day. At the end of each day, celebrate and reward yourself for whatever you accomplished.

And do it with...

E = Enthusiasm. My attitude toward what I do for a living shows. Anything done with enthusiasm draws attention and support.

"Human beings can alter their lives by altering their attitude"