

June

In-Service Training

“Job Management Skills”

A. Stress Management

1. Identification of Causes of Stress

Stress is a daily component of our lives. Learning to manage stress is essential, not only to be effective in the workplace, but also to protect your health.

Stress is often viewed negatively. It occurs from too much work, unrealistic deadlines, and financial pressures. Stress is also triggered by some of life’s happiest moments such as getting married, having a baby, buying a home, or starting a new job. These events are often associated with positive outcomes, yet because they are meaningful, they require a lot of personal energy and investment. In these situations, stress acts as a motivator.

When the stress level is manageable or when we have developed effective coping mechanisms, the impact of stress on our lives is minimal. Unfortunately, we do not always recognize the degree of impact. In addition to “feeling out of control” in our lives, unmanageable levels of stress may actually cause or exacerbate new or already existing problems in totally unrelated areas such as relationship difficulties, financial concerns, and work-related problems.

Stress is like getting ready to hit a baseball and wearing a blindfold to hit the ball.

- **Components of Stress**

The research shows that some stress is good. Stress “revs up” the body thanks to naturally-occurring performance-enhancing chemicals like adrenalin and cortisol, hormones that get us prepared for emergency action. This gives a person a rush of strength to handle an emergency (“fight or flight”). It also heightens ability to fight “tigers” in the short term.

However, if severe stress is allowed to go unchecked in the longer term, performance will ultimately decline. Not only that, that constant bombardment by stress related chemicals and stimulation will weaken a person's body. And ultimately that leads to degenerating health. In extreme cases, it can cause psychological problems such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Cumulative Stress Disorder.

- **Causes and Effects of Stress**

When stress becomes too much to handle, it can have an effect on physical health. The table on the next page describes what happens when a person experiences too much stress. These are common signs and symptoms that are indicators of stress, to include:

- Crying
- Depression
- No Energy
- Not Sleeping
- Stomach Pains
- Anxiety

What Happens When You are Stressed?

	Normal: You are relaxed	You are under some pressure	You feel a lot of acute pressure	There is chronic pressure>stress
Brain	Blood supply normal	Blood supply up	Thinks more clearly	Headaches or migraines, tremors and nervous tics
Mood	Happy	Serious	Increased Concentration	Anxiety, loss of sense of humor, cry, rage, difficulty sleeping
Saliva	Normal	Reduced	Reduced	Dry mouth, lump in throat
Muscles	Blood supply normal	Blood supply up	Improved performance	Muscular tension and pain
Heart	Normal rate and blood pressure	Increased rate and blood pressure	Improved Performance	Hypertension and chest pains
Lungs	Normal Respiration	Increased respiration rate	Improved performance	Coughs and asthma
Stomach	Normal blood supply and acid secretion	Reduced blood supply and acid secretion	Reduced blood supply reduces digestion	Ulcers due to heartburn and indigestion stomach pain
Bowels	Normal blood supply and bowel activity	Reduced blood supply and increased bowel activity	Reduced blood supply reduces digestion	Abdominal pain and diarrhea
Bladder	Normal	Frequent urination	Frequent urination due to increased nervous stimulation	Frequent urination, prostatic symptoms
Sexual Organs	(male) Normal.	(m) Impotence	Decreased blood	Men: Impotence

	(Female) Normal periods etc	(decreased blood supply) (f) irregular periods	supply	Women: Menstrual disorder
Skin	Healthy	Decreased blood supply- dry skin	Decreased blood supply	Dryness and rashes
Biochemistry	Normal: Oxygen consumed, glucose and fats released	Oxygen consumption up, glucose and fats consumption up	More energy immediately available	Rapid tiredness. No energy

2. Coping Strategies

There are a number of techniques that help you deal with stress. Specific actions and relaxation exercises are suggested below. Unhealthy coping strategies include drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes. These mask the problems and only delay finding a solution and implementing an action plan.

If you find that the individual or family you are assisting is having any of the symptoms listed above, report your observations to your supervisor. If you find you are having any of these symptoms, try to identify the reason or cause of the stress. Then develop an action plan to manage the stress.

3. Taking Action

Reason for Stress	Action to Take
Unrealistic Expectations	Set Realistic goals
Negative thinking	Consciously choose to think positively. Think of the positives in your life.
Feeling of being out of control	Act- Do not react- Make an Action Plan
Someone else setting limits for you- being domineering	Understand what you are responsible for. Evaluate and then take the appropriate action. Be assertive (refer to assertive communication)
Not feeling confident of what you are doing	For job relate- talk to your supervisor for direction- take advantage of in-service—Ask questions(This is referred to as professional growth)— <u>All</u> employers would rather you ask questions than handling the aftermath of mistakes For personal advice—Seek out a valued friend, clergy, or counselor

Feeling overwhelmed	ASK FOR HELP Make a plan to break up the task into smaller pieces
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Necessary components of effective stress management include:

- Strong social support
- Diet
- Relaxation Techniques
- Positive Self-talk
- Effective Communication
- Exercise
- Rest
- Realistic Expectations
- Time-Management

4. Relaxation Techniques

a. Deep Control Breathing

Take a deep breath of air through the nose and slowly release the air through your mouth. Good air in, stressed air out.

Get in a comfortable position. You can do this either sitting or lying down. When lying down put your hand on your stomach, take a deep breath through your nose and then let it out through your mouth. Let your hand feel your abdomen go up and down while taking the deep breaths.

You can do this while sitting in traffic, on hold on the phone, watching TV at commercial time, etc.

b. Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Get in a comfortable position. If possible lay down. Let your whole body relax gradually.
- Breathe slowly through your nose. Feel the cool air as you breathe in and out. Let your awareness turn away from your daily cares and concerns. Close your

eyes and let your awareness turn inward to the physical sensations of your body.

- Tighten the muscles of your face. Feel the tension in your face. Hold for ten seconds. Release. Feel the tension flow outward.
- Tighten your eyebrows by squeezing them. Feel the tension by your eyebrows. Hold for ten seconds. Release and feel the tension flow outward.
- Clench your jaw tight. Feel the tension in your jaw. Hold for ten seconds. Release. Feel your jaw drop. Allow your jaw to drop.
- Squeeze your neck muscles and hold for ten seconds. Release. Feel the tension leave your neck. You feel relaxed. You are relaxed.
- Take a deep breath and hold. Feel the tension in your chest from holding your breath. Exhale and feel the tension leave your body. Repeat.
- Tighten your fists or your arms. Feel the muscle tension. Hold for ten seconds. Release and feel the tension travel down your arms.
- Open your fingers on your hands and feel the tension slip out from your fingers. You are feeling so relaxed. You are relaxed.
- Stretch and tighten your toes. Hold. Release. Feel the tension leave your toes.
- Squeeze your legs together and feel the tension in your legs. Hold for ten seconds. Release and feel the tension leave your body. You feel relaxed. You are relaxed.
- Breathe in through your nose and slowly say, "I am", exhale through your mouth and say, "Relaxed"

c. Autogenic Imagery

You can use the autogenic exercise in several different positions. This is useful if you are at the office or in a meeting. Sit in an armchair with your head, back, and arms in a comfortable, supportive position. Sit as relaxed as possible. If you are at home lie down with your head supported, legs about eight inches apart, toes pointed slightly outward, and arms resting comfortably at the side of your body without touching it. If at home close your eyes. Let your mind be like a quiet pool, with no thoughts rippling the surface.

Simply say these phrases to yourself: Repeat each phrase slowly three to four times.

My head is heavy and calm

My face is warm and relaxed

My eyelids are heavy and warm

My jaw is heavy and relaxed

My shoulders are heavy and warm

My right hand is heavy and warm

My left hand is heavy and warm

My chest is heavy and relaxed

*My abdomen is soft and warm
My right leg is heavy and warm
My left leg is heavy and warm
My breathing is calm and regular
My heartbeat is calm and regular
My stomach is calm and relaxed
My body feels quiet and comfortable
My mind is quiet and refreshed
I am relaxed and refreshed*

Be creative in using your own symbols for how your body can heal itself

d. Guided Imagery

Guided Imagery is fun to do. Go to your happy place, your own private happy place. *I am relaxed!* If you are on the beach:

It is a perfect day at the beach
The sand is warm
You can feel the gentle breeze caress your face
Feel the gentle warmth of the sun all over your body
You can even feel the warm sand run through your fingers
Can you hear the waves gently lapping onto the shore?
You can see the water as if there were diamonds sparkling.

As you look at the ocean you see the endless horizon.
This is real. This is real. This is real.
I am relaxed. I am relaxed. I am relaxed.
Focus on your special place and feel every aspect of your happy place.

5. In Summary

There are many benefits of being able to manage stress:

- Look forward to getting up in the morning
- Have more energy.- Feel less burdened
- Start the day with positive attitude
- Be able to make better decisions

Remember to practice your favorite relaxation technique on a regular basis: Doing your favorite relaxation technique is like working out at the gym to build more muscle. You need to do it regularly.

B. Time Management

1. Importance of Time Management

It is a given that when providing assistance, it is very important to work smarter. That is to prioritize tasks and try to plan ahead so that you will have time for those unforeseen emergencies.

If you spend too much of your time responding to immediate problems, you might be moving into the danger zone of high stress levels and possible burn-out. People whose lives seem always to be at the mercy of circumstances are usually those who wait for things to happen, and then react to them. People who seem more on top of things are usually those who see things coming, and act in good time to guard against them (or benefit from them).

Do not neglect activities just because they are not urgent, otherwise they soon will be (e.g. putting off getting gas until the last minute and then not being able to find a gas station) You should aim to schedule at least half your time planning ahead, leaving the rest of your time available for reactive and maintenance tasks (e.g. keeping things running smoothly) as well as unexpected interruptions, which may occur anyway. An example is deciding what you will wear the next day and laying it out the night before, cutting down the last minute rush in the morning.

Remember, one of the biggest robbers of time is procrastination. You need to develop the skill of not putting off unpleasant tasks until later because later can become URGENT!

2. Prioritizing Duties

Before you can develop a work schedule you should make a list of all the tasks that need to be done. Prioritize your daily tasks list by assigning a value (A, B, or C) to each item on the list. Place an “A” next to the items that Must be done. Place a “B” next to any task that is important and should be done. That is, after all the “A” tasks are completed, and you have time, you would work on the “B” items. Finally, write a “C” next to any tasks that is less important and could be done later. That is, after the “A” and “B” tasks have been completed, you’ll do the “C” tasks.

Category A- Must be done: Activities include those that possibly affect the health and safety of the consumer. Examples would be bathing for an individual who is incontinent or washing soiled bed linens.

Category B- Important and should be done: Category B activities allow you to plan ahead but can wait until A tasks are done. Care must be taken because Category B can quickly become Category A. Examples would be grocery shopping for needed staples and shampooing hair for a family outing.

Category C- Less Important and could be done: Activities in this category can be done when the A and B tasks are done. Examples would be rearranging dresser drawers or polishing silverware.

You may even want to prioritize further by giving a numerical value to each item on the list. In other words, determine which “A” task is most important and label it “A-1”, and so on. Do the same for “B” and “C” tasks.

3. Developing Work Schedules

Procedures for developing and implementing a work schedule:

1. Establish a time for planning the beginning of a shift for each week
2. Enter all fixed activities in your schedule (e.g. the consumer has an assigned wash time in the community laundry of Wednesday mornings)
3. Use the list that you developed above to identify and prioritize all the tasks you have to complete.
4. Complete your schedule by transferring the items on your priority tasks sheet to your schedule. Put the “A” items first, followed by the “B” items, and finally as many of the “C” items you think you can accomplish
5. Each evening check your schedule for the next day and make modifications as needed (e.g., changes in appointments, unexpected assignments or unusual demands on time).
6. Try to combine activities—Use the “Two-fer” concept and let dishes soak while you are washing clothes.

7. **Make room for Entertainment and relaxation for both you and the consumer.** Plan fun activities in your priority list.

As you plan the schedule for the consumer make sure you plan time for yourself. Use these same tips to schedule tasks for your personal life. Make room for entertainment and relaxation.

Make sure you have time to sleep and eat properly. Sleep is often an activity (or lack of activity) that DCWs use as their time management “bank”. When they need a few extra hours for activities or work, they withdraw a few hours of sleep. Doing this makes you tired, less productive, stressed out and burned out.

REMEMBER THAT FLEXIBILITY IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT

But you need to contact the supervisor if:

1. The consumer is piling too many tasks on the DCW (being unreasonable with expectations)
2. The DCW is being asked to do something that is not on the care/support plan.

C. Boundaries

Direct care professionals have professional standards. You also know your role as DCW and the importance of following the care plan or support plan for the consumer. Review the roles and responsibilities of DCWs and professional standards in the first section of this manual. All of these guide your work and behavior.

- **Roles and Responsibilities:** Understand your duties. Know how to do your job, learn policies and procedures.
- **Professional Standards:** Behavior and attitude that show respect and get respect back. This includes honesty, reliability, respect for privacy and cultural differences. It also means that you always strive to do the best job possible.
- **Boundaries:** Set limits to personal involvement, feelings, and sharing of personal information. Having boundaries is part of maintaining professional standards.

1. Personal and Professional Boundaries

- **Professional Boundaries** are guidelines for DCWs at work. They describe how to speak and react to the consumer and family members. This can include the use of first and last names, participation at family events, and sharing personal information.
- **Personal Boundaries** are about your own expectations. How do you want to be addressed and treated? Often the professional and personal boundaries overlap.

2. Knowing Your Personal Boundaries

There are many ways to define boundaries. Dr. Vicki Rachner describes them as fences around your body and soul (1). Boundaries are the lines that define your own personal space. “Crossing the line” means violating a personal boundary. Here is another way to say it:

Knowing

- Where you end and somebody else begins
- What you’re responsible for and what not
- What is your need and what is somebody else’s need (2)

If you want people to treat the way you want to be treated, you need to tell them about your boundaries.

- Identify your boundaries: How do you want people to speak to you? What behaviors are acceptable? Will you tolerate people raising their voices or making jokes?
- Tell people what your boundaries are: Learn to say no. Tell people how to treat you. Using an assertive communication style. Remind yourself how you want to be treated, for example, that you are a mature person and professional caregiver.
- Enforce your boundaries: Don’t let others invade your space. Don’t let them make you uncomfortable. Tell them in a polite and assertive way when they cross the line.

3. Guidelines for Professional Boundaries

Sharing personal information:

- Share personal information only if you think it may help the individual.
- Don’t talk about your own problems; the consumer may start worrying about your problems.

Personal Relationships:

- As a DCW you are in the person’s home as a professional, not as a friend.
- Do not tell sexually oriented stories or jokes. Don’t flirt.

- Don't use terms like "honey" or "sweetie". They can be disrespectful and they can create the impression that you are showing a personal interest.
- Maintain professional demeanor when you witness the consumer's disability, pain, or personal problems. If you feel yourself getting emotional or worried personally, speak to your supervisor or seek guidance from another trusted individual.

Touch

- Use touch sparingly. When you provide personal care, be respectful of the other person's modesty and sense of privacy.
- Don't assume that people like to be hugged.
- Don't let consumers touch you in a way that makes you feel uncomfortable.

Personal Appearance:

- Choose clothing that makes a professional impression. Clothing should be neat and not too casual or revealing.
- Choose personal hygiene products (make-up, cologne, aftershave) carefully. Keep your hair and nails groomed without appearing flashy. Limited jewelry.

Gifts and Favors:

- Follow your agency's policies on gifts. Report offers to large gifts to your supervisor.
- Don't use the consumers personal items (clothing, telephone, etc.) for your personal use.
- Don't ask for a loan of money, car, or other items.
- Don't buy or sell items from or to your consumer.

Work Schedule:

- Stick to your scheduled work time. You should be on time, and you should be expected to leave on time, unless the consumer cannot be left alone.
- If you spend unscheduled time with the individual, boundaries may be crossed. If the person needs more assistance, tell your supervisor. If you feel you want to stay, you may be crossing the line between work and personal relationship.
- Don't feel guilty for leaving when your work is done.

Secrets and Confidential Information

- Don't share information about your agency or co-workers. Don't express frustration about your job.
- Do not keep personal or professional secrets with a consumer.

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the previous page, and complete the**

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