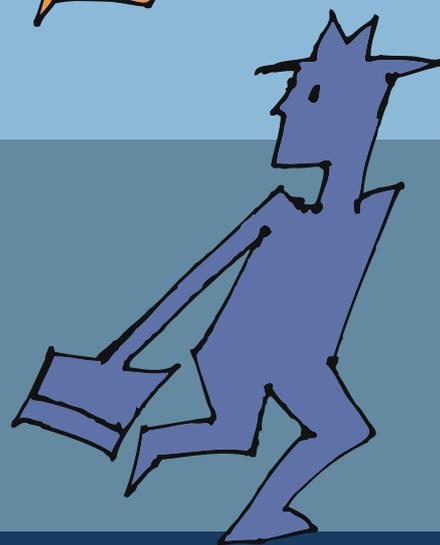
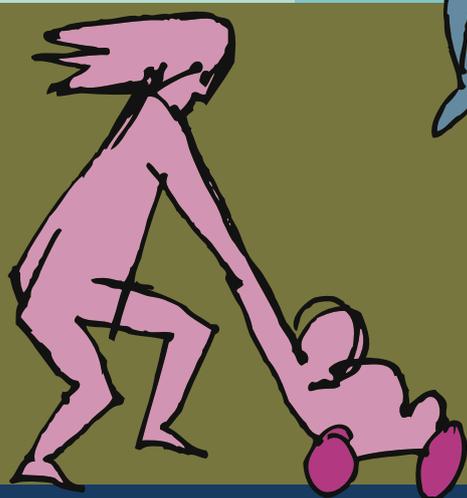
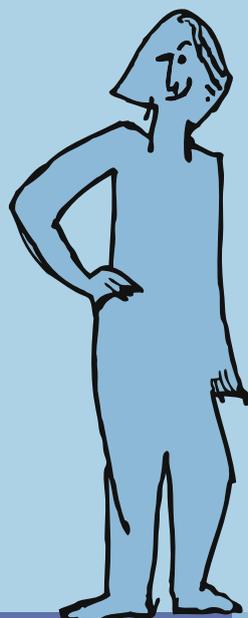
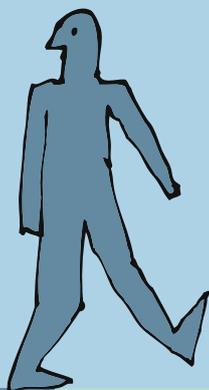


STRESS MANAGEMENT WORKBOOK 1



WHAT IS STRESS?

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What is Stress?

The aim of these Wellbeing workshops is to help you learn more about stress and the steps which can be taken to help reduce the impact it can have on your life if left unchecked.

What to expect at a workshop

- The workshops are like lectures, there are **no** group discussions or people having to speak out in front of the group
- If anyone is looking for more support than education on Stress Management there are contact numbers at the back of each workbook, where One to One support can be sought
- There are four workshops in total each lasting two hours
- You will be given a workbook for each workshop with some exercises
- There will be time during the workshop to consider the exercises; however, it may be that you find it more useful to complete the exercises when you get home and have time to really think about your answers. We strongly suggest, to get the most from these workshops, that you do read the workbooks when you get home
- Trainers may invite participants to give an example of stress but you don't need to speak out if you don't want to; it's a general invitation to the whole group not to any individual
- Monitoring information we gather cannot identify you and is simply for us to ensure we are reaching people

If you have any questions please either write this down on a post-it (provided) and stick it on the board for us to read, or you can approach one of the presenters or their colleague directly



In Session 1 we will look at:

- What stress is
- What causes stress
- How stress affects you
- What keeps stress going
- About lifestyle changes that can help, and
- First steps to dealing with stress

In weeks 2 and 3, we will look at how your **behaviour** and the way you **think** can contribute to feeling stressed; and in week 4 we will look at **problem solving** skills to help you cope better.

To start though, it would be good to have a look at how life is for you just now, the following exercise may be useful to help you do that.



* Exercise 1 *

How is life just now?

On the scale below where would you rate your quality of life this week?

0 _____ 10

As **bad** as it could possibly be

As **good** as it could possibly be

What is happening in your life that might be contributing to you feeling this way? Record **the positive** as well as **the negative** as it may be that you feel okay just now:

A 3D white figure is holding a sign, positioned in the bottom right corner of the dotted box.



* Exercise 2 *

**Where would you need to be on the scale,
for your quality of life to be good enough?**

0 _____ 10

As **bad** as it could possibly be

As **good** as it could possibly be

What would you be doing differently that would tell you that you had reached this point?



What is Stress?

Facts

- ✓ Stress is something we all experience
- ✓ It is a normal reaction
- ✓ It happens to us all in situations we find stressful - at times of threat and uncertainty, or when we have taken on too much
- ✓ Stress can be useful and can improve our performance e.g. a footballer before a match; going for a job interview or speaking in public

Fiction - common misunderstandings about stress

- ✗ Stress and anxiety are signs of mental illness
- ✗ If you're stressed you should know what's causing it
- ✗ Stress only affects weak people

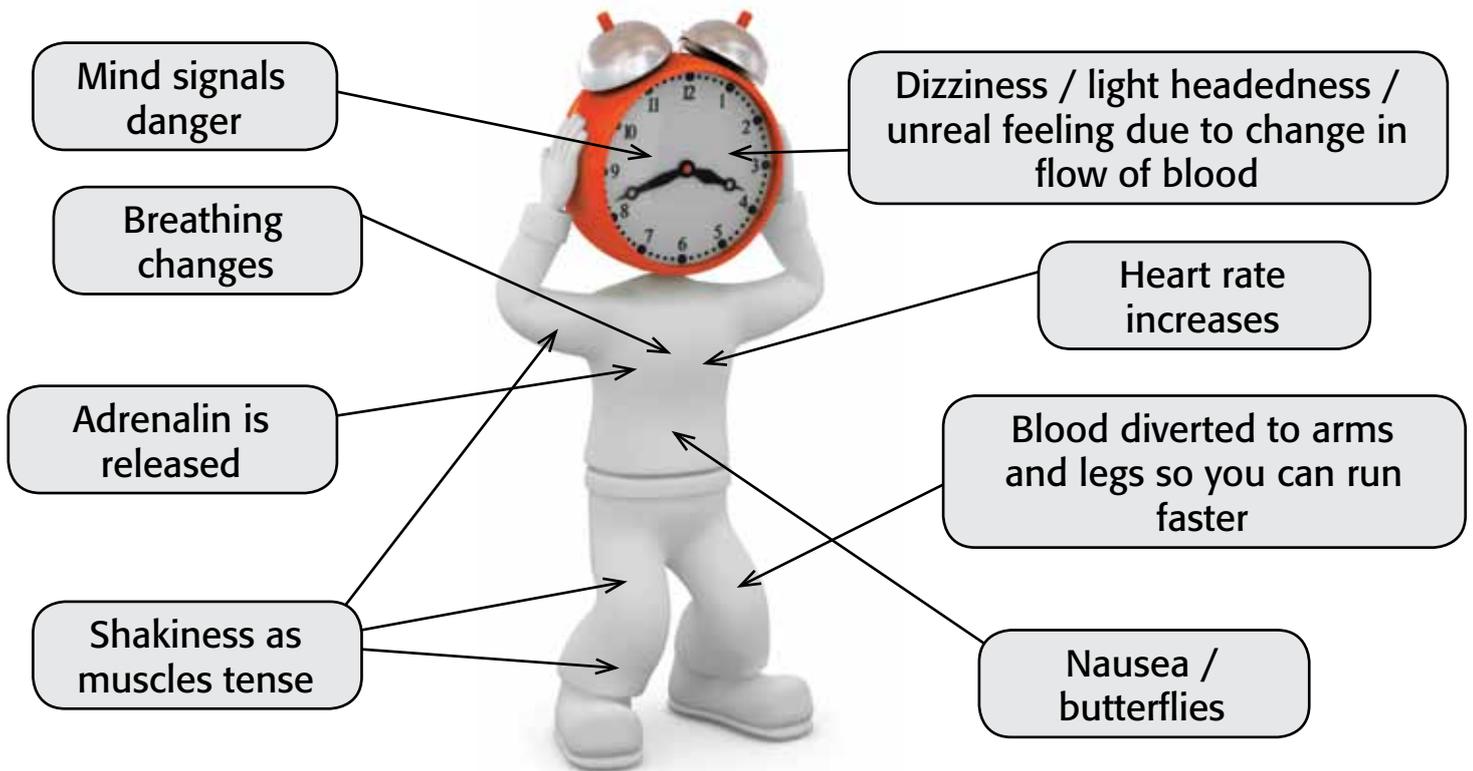
When we view what is happening to us as a threat or if we find it difficult to cope with uncertainty, then stress can be a normal response. Think of someone who is afraid of flying:

- They think that the flight will be awful or even catastrophic
- They have threatening images running through their head and begin to feel stressed as a result
- They sometimes begin to feel sick, shaky and tense
- The combination of how they think, how they feel and their body's response can feel uncomfortable or overwhelming and very often, they find it easier to avoid flying
- This reaction is unhelpful

Nevertheless other stress reactions can be helpful

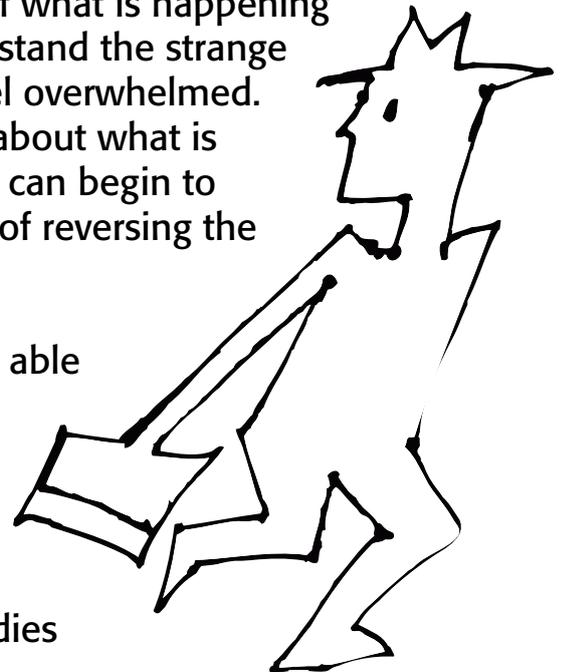
- You have a deadline
- You feel your body react with tension but this drives you to get the job done rather than avoid it
- This response is helpful

The Fight or Flight Response



Most often when feeling stressed we are unaware of what is happening and can feel more stressed because we don't understand the strange sensations we feel in our bodies. We can quickly feel overwhelmed. By taking a step back and becoming more **curious** about what is happening both in our bodies and in our minds, we can begin to recognise the signs of stress sooner and learn ways of reversing the feeling of being overwhelmed.

When we are experiencing stress sometimes we are able to notice where we feel it in our bodies. Most often people describe a sensation of butterflies in their stomach, shortness of breath, a tingling feeling in their fingers, a need to go to the loo and tension in their head and neck areas. These are normal responses and are only a few ways in which our bodies respond to stress.



As humans, we respond to stress as all other animals do. Think of a leopard padding along quietly.



It hears a noise. How does it then react?

Spine lengthens and stiffens to speed escape – blood directed to back and front legs to be stronger when fighting.

Neck muscles engorge with blood to steady its head and protect its spine while allowing it to focus better.



Heart rate will increase to speed up the redirection of blood to where it is needed most when under threat.

Freeze on the spot.

This is a **completely normal stress response** which you may recognise when feeling stressed. It is also known as the **FLIGHT OR FIGHT RESPONSE**. The freeze response commonly occurs when in shock or experiencing extreme stress. These reactions are also known as the adrenaline response.



The fight or flight response can also arise from a psychological threat. The way we look at and understand what is happening around us influences how we react to it. We may be sitting at home worrying about our gas bill or the argument we had earlier in the day. Sitting at home we are under no threat but our body will still respond owing to the way we are thinking. We would describe this as unhelpful as, sitting in your chair at home, there is no physical threat in that moment.

Stress is a normal reaction and you can learn ways of controlling it.



What Contributes to Stress?

ANYTHING CAN CAUSE US STRESS! It depends on how we look at the situation and our understanding of what is happening.

The things that contribute to our stress can fall into two categories, internal stressors and external stressors.

Internal Stressors – There can be things going on inside us that cause us stress e.g. telling yourself you aren't good enough. These things can often be within our control so we can change them, e.g. appreciating when you do something well.

External Stressors – There are also things going in the world around us which can cause stress e.g. redundancy at work, noisy neighbours. Often we may have less control, however we can sometimes take steps to reduce this e.g. look for another job. Here are some other examples:

INTERNAL STRESSORS	EXTERNAL STRESSORS
LIFESTYLE CHOICE	PHYSICAL ENVIROMENT
NEGATIVE SELF-TALK	SOCIAL
MIND TRAPS	ORGANISATIONAL RULES
STRESSFUL PERSONALITY	MAJOR LIFE EVENTS
	DAILY HASSLES

Mind Traps: Unrealistic expectations, taking things personally, all-or-nothing thinking, exaggerating.

Negative Self Talk: Pessimism, self-criticism, over-analysing.

Lifestyle Choices: Intake of caffeine, tobacco, and other drugs, lack of sleep, overloading schedule.



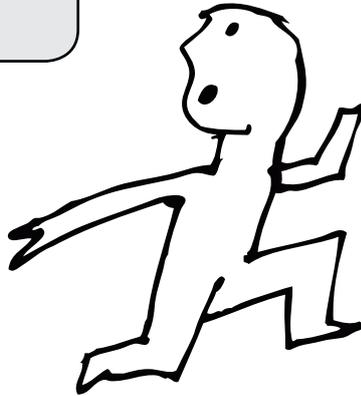
Stressful Personality Type: Perfectionist, workaholic, people pleaser.

EXTERNAL STRESSORS

Daily Hassles: e.g. commuting, losing your keys, car breaking down.

Physical Environment: e.g. noise, heat, confinement.

Organisational Rules: e.g. deadlines, bureaucracy, rules and regulations.



Social: (interactions with other people) e.g. when someone else is rude, bossy, aggressive or doesn't listen to you. Conflict in relationships with children or spouse. Feeling isolated and / or excluded.

Major Life Events: e.g. marriage, divorce, a death, loss of job or new baby.

INTERNAL STRESSORS

Factors which can influence our internal and external stressors include:

- Our personality – who we are
- Learning
- How we respond to life events
- How we look after ourselves e.g. making time to relax, getting exercise
- How we talk to ourselves when facing stress – e.g. mountains out of molehills



Stress and Learning

There are things throughout our lives which can cause us stress. We learn from past experiences either helpful or unhelpful coping skills. Unhelpful coping skills can stay with us until we challenge them and develop more helpful ways of coping.

Examples of major life events which can cause stress are:

- Leaving school
- Death of someone close
- End of a relationship
- Moving house
- Becoming a parent/children leaving home
- Moving or losing a job
- Ill health or the ill health of someone close



Healthy coping strategies can help us move through this time in our life e.g. looking after yourself, sharing how you feel, making time to relax.

Unhealthy coping strategies may make us feel even worse, e.g. self-medicating with alcohol, not eating, smoking too much, drinking caffeine – all worsen the body's response to stress.





* Exercise 3 *

Use this space to take a moment to reflect about anything in your life – now or in the past – that might have caused you stress.

Using the boxes below record were these stressors internal or external?



INTERNAL STRESSORS

EXTERNAL STRESSORS



Now think back to one life event that you have experienced in the past that you were able to manage well (watch out for your negative self-talk when doing this exercise as it may blind you to your many successes):

What did you do that allowed you to manage the situation?

A small 3D white figure holding a sign, positioned in the bottom right corner of the dotted box.

What would others see you doing that told them you were managing it?

A small 3D white figure holding a sign, positioned in the bottom right corner of the dotted box.

How Can Stress Become a Problem?

Stress is very unhelpful when:

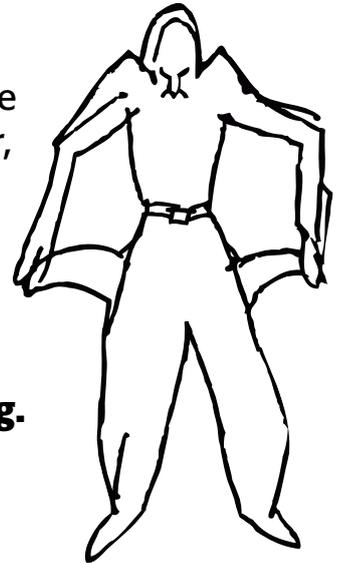
- It occurs repeatedly
- There is no threat
- It goes on long after the threat is over

Stress is very unhelpful when it restricts our life. The earlier example of avoiding flying highlights how stress can lead us to avoidance (Session 2 focuses on unhelpful behaviour). Long term unemployment can be so stressful that we no longer believe we will ever work again.



Stress is very unhelpful when it affects our performance, as when dealing with difficult teenagers, trying to finish work by a deadline or dealing with the Job Centre when unemployed. The fight or flight response kicks in and our ability to focus, concentrate and speak clearly can be affected.

Stress is very unhelpful when you start to worry about your body's reactions to stress. Sometimes we do recognise tension and bodily sensations when feeling stressed. However, we might not recognise this as a normal stress response and start to imagine the worst e.g. "I'm having a heart attack". The more we can recognise the normal stress response the less likely we are to worry about it.



Stress is very unhelpful when it is severe and long lasting. The longer we feel stressed the more likely we are to begin to avoid the situation or people we identify with as causing the stress.

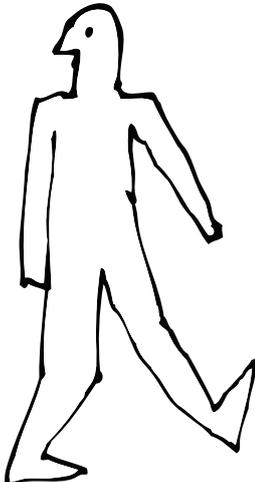


REMEMBER

Stress is a very common problem and it consists of a lot of emotions and feelings. The longer you ignore it the bigger a problem it may become

How Stress Can Affect You

Stress affects us in 4 ways:

<p>THE WAY OUR BODY WORKS</p> 	<p>THE WAY WE BEHAVE</p> 
<p>THE WAY WE THINK</p> 	<p>THE WAY WE FEEL</p> 

By understanding how stress affects us, we can learn to recognise the signs and try to deal with them before feeling overwhelmed. Start to be curious about what makes you tick without judging yourself. Notice:

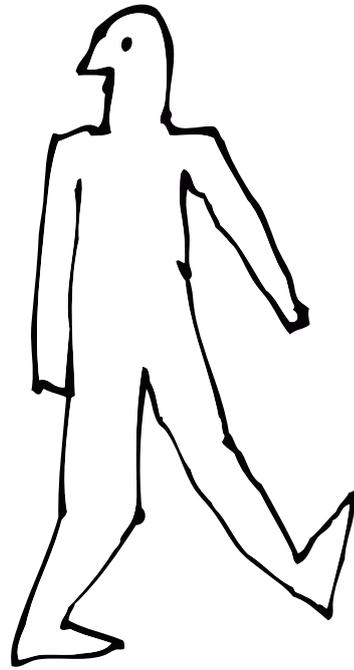
- How you behave in situations
- How you feel about situations
- What you think of situations and
- How your body responds in situations

Our Body

When stressed our bodies become tense and ready for action (fight or flight), or we can feel slowed down and struggle to get through the day.

Typical **physical symptoms of stress** include:

- Breathlessness
- Heart racing / palpitations
- Dry mouth
- Dizziness or light headedness
- Shakiness
- Sickness
- Wobbly legs and arms
- Tense muscles
- Feeling hot and cold
- Flushing or sweating
- Headaches
- Indigestion
- Poor concentration
- Tired a lot
- Unable to sleep



The more we can recognise these symptoms the sooner we can respond in a more helpful manner.

What physical symptoms do you experience when under stress?

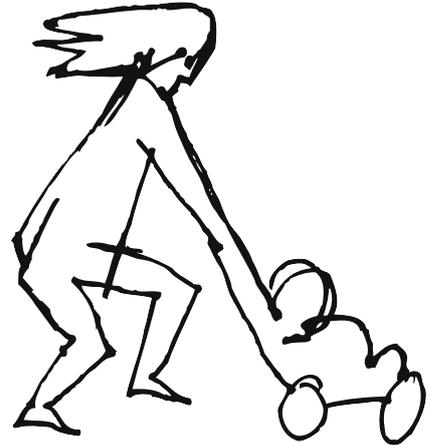


Our Behaviour

Stress affects how we behave and what we do in response to stressful events.

Typical behaviours when under stress:

- Stop looking after yourself (poor diet and appearance)
- Biting nails, teeth grinding and pulling hair out
- Avoiding things we find stressful
- Putting things off
- Start drinking or smoking more
- Trying to do too many things
- Being over-concerned with safety
- Unable to sit still
- Having arguments with other people
- Hesitating
- Talking more quickly



If we notice that we are behaving this way then we could start to do something to reverse the effects of stress.

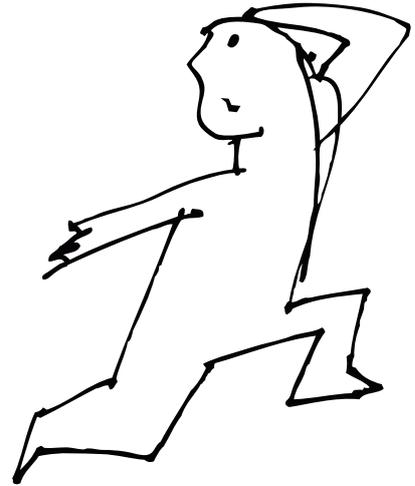
What behaviours are you aware of when you feel stressed?



Our Thoughts

Typical thoughts that go through your head when you are feeling stressed:

- I can't cope
- I'm useless
- They're all looking at me
- They think I'm stupid
- I just want to get out of here
- They all know I can't cope
- What's the point in trying?
- Things never go right for me
- There must be something wrong with me



The way we look at and understand events is largely responsible for how we feel about it. Stress is often driven by how we think in a stressful situation.

What thoughts go through your mind when you are feeling stressed?



Our Feelings

Typical feelings when you are feeling stressed includes:

- Sad
- Irritable
- Angry
- Fed up
- Anxious
- Panicky
- Little interest in anything
- No enthusiasm or motivation
- Dislike yourself
- Feeling flat or low
- Easily upset
- Insecure
- Hopeless

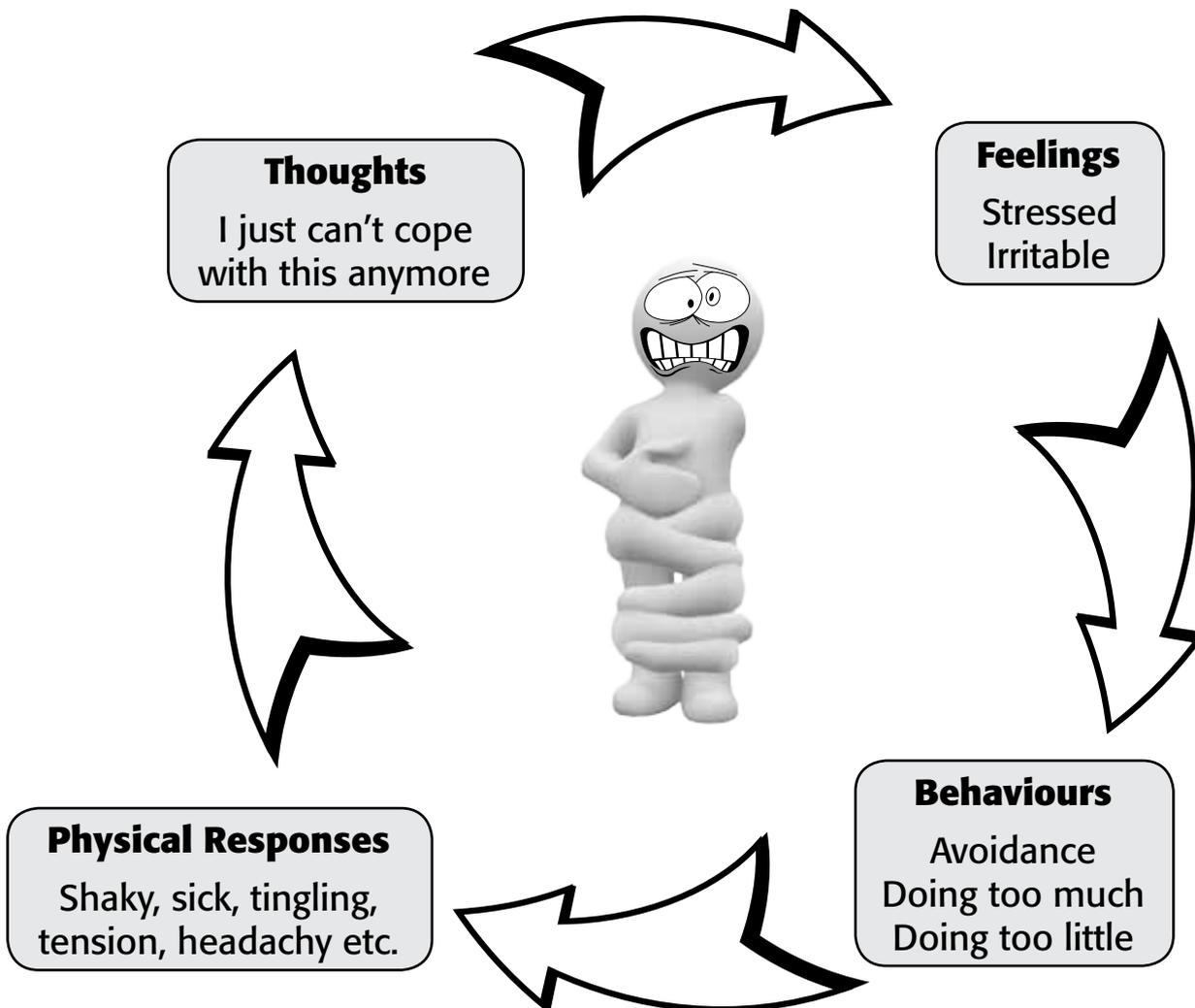


These are but a few of the emotional responses we might feel when stressed.

What other emotions do you recognise in yourself when stressed?



What keeps it going? The Vicious Cycle of Stress



This cycle illustrates the relationship between our thinking, our feelings, our body's responses and our behaviour in a particular situation. Repeated experiences of stress in similar situations maintains our stress and the cycle is further maintained by our thoughts, our feelings, our physical responses and our behaviour. Throughout these workshops we will learn ways of breaking this cycle and reducing our stress as a result.



* Exercise 4 *

**Think about the last time you were
feeling a little bit stressed.**

**NOT THE MOST EXTREMELY STRESSFUL SITUATION YOU HAVE
EXPERIENCED JUST ONE WHERE YOU FELT A LITTLE STRESSED**

SITUATION – what was going on around you?



THOUGHTS – what was going through your head at that time?



FEELINGS – how were you feeling?

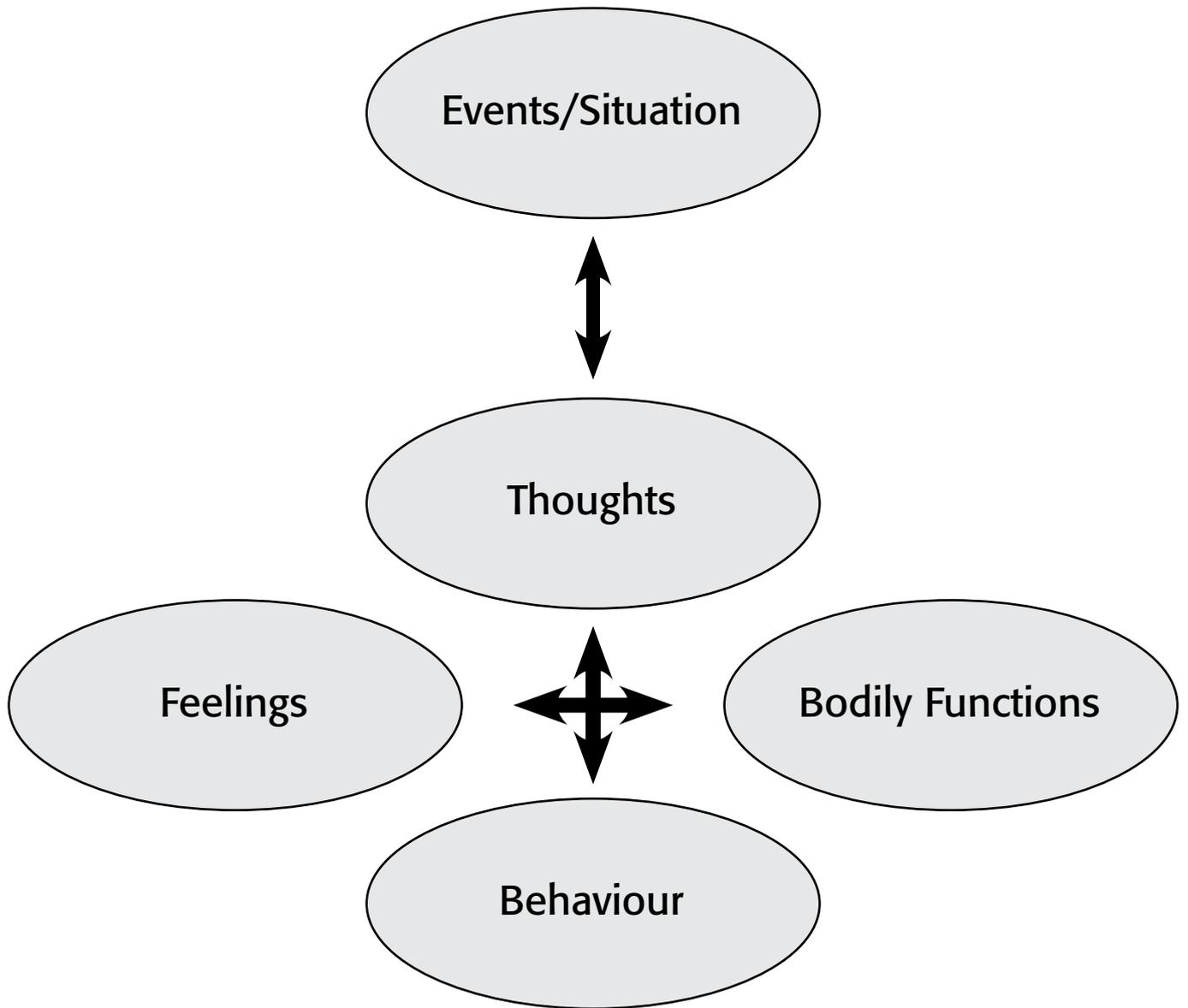


BEHAVIOUR – what did you do in response?



BODY Response – did you notice any tension, shakiness, sickness etc?





- Stress affects us in 4 ways
- Stress is a normal reaction that we all experience – fight or flight
- A vicious circle keeps stress going
- We all respond differently according to our personality and circumstances at the time



Steps to Dealing with Stress

Tackle Stress One Step at a Time

Lifestyle changes that can help with stress



Healthy Living - Diet

The way we feel physically, affects how able we are to cope with stress. Physical wellbeing is closely linked to emotional wellbeing. Quite often when we are stressed we do not eat regularly or we eat snack food which isn't always good for us.

Tips for a healthy diet include:

- Avoid drinks which are high in sugar or caffeine
- Eat five fruit and vegetables a day
- Drink plenty of water
- Have regular meals or healthy snacks and do not miss out on breakfast



Healthy Living – Exercise

It is a fact that exercise improves our mood by working off tension and boredom. By scheduling time for exercise you are making time for yourself and it can be a way of:

- Meeting new people
- Broadening your activities
- Reducing physical tension and thereby improving your sleep



Remember to:

- Choose something you enjoy!
- Build exercise into your weekly routine and reward yourself for managing to exercise
- Try not to allow anything to disrupt your new routine
- Buy a pedometer and become aware of how active you are, aim for 10,000 steps a day

N.B. Consult your GP before changing your exercise regime.



Becoming more physically active could be especially helpful if your routine has been changed e.g. loss of employment – being able to focus on a rewarding self-determined goal like increasing your physical fitness will increase the feeling of control you have over your time – as well as the other benefits to your health, energy levels and appearance.

Healthy Living – Sleep

Too much or too little sleep affects how we feel when we wake up and how we feel throughout the day. We all have different requirements for sleep as well as different sleep habits so bear in mind what you need and what suits you. If you're not feeling refreshed when you wake up ask yourself why? A lot of people find it difficult to sleep when stressed, some are disturbed by their dreams and waken suddenly through the night or earlier than normal.

Tips which aid better sleep include:

- Relaxing before going to bed to help you to unwind
- Avoid alcohol or caffeine in the evenings
- Try to switch off your worries by writing them down
- Schedule a time the next day when you will tackle the things that are worrying you, don't focus on them when you are trying to sleep
- Try to avoid discussing worries with your partner when in bed together
- General sleep hygiene rules:
 - Keep your bedroom tidy and fresh
 - Try to avoid watching TV in bed
 - If you notice you're tossing and turning, get up and do something relaxing before returning to bed
 - Be aware of your thinking – don't use the time of being awake to worry about not sleeping
 - This is your time for rest – do what you find relaxes you and encourages sleep



Healthy Living – Cigarettes and Alcohol

Alcohol is a stimulant which makes falling asleep and reducing stress harder to do. If you do drink alcohol, then bear in mind the recommended weekly limits of 21 units for men and 14 units for women.



Drinking too much can damage your physical and emotional health in the short and long term. As well as affecting your weight, looks and sleep, heavy drinking can lead to a wide range of medical conditions including high blood pressure, liver disease, strokes, cancers and brain damage.

The NHS recommends:

- Men should not regularly drink more than 3-4 units a day
- Women should not regularly drink more than 2-3 units a day

'Regularly' means drinking these amounts every day or most days of the week



If you smoke, seek help in quitting or cutting down. Your GP can give you advice about this.

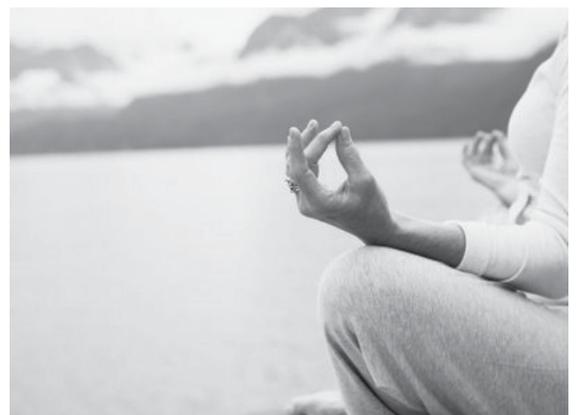
First Steps to Controlling Your Stress

One of the simplest and most effective things we can learn to do to control stress is to control over breathing

Controlling Over-Breathing

Look out for the early warning signs of over-breathing:

- Tightness in the chest
- Difficulty getting your breath
- Breathing rapidly



When we have too much air in our lungs it can actually feel as though we can't get a breath in when in fact the opposite is true. Use these First Steps to keep it under control:

First Steps

- Slow down
- Breathe out, really emptying the lungs
- Place one hand on your chest, one on your stomach
- Repeat a helpful word to yourself e.g. "relax", "slow", "calm"
- Breathe in through your nose counting 1... 2... 3... slowly
- You may notice your belly expand on the in-breath
- Breathe out through your mouth counting 1... 2... 3... slowly
- Aim for about 10-12 breaths per minute



Relaxation

Relaxation is a physical skill where we learn how to recognise and release physical and mental tension. It is a habit where we develop routines that work with us rather than against us. It is a way of giving ourselves time out to unwind with rest and recreation. Relaxation is also an attitude where we take things calmly and in our stride.

We first need to recognise that we are stressed. Remember the vicious cycle of stress? When we notice that we are thinking or behaving unhelpfully, or when we notice the body's response to stress then we can try to do something which relaxes us thereby breaking the cycle of stress.

There are many different forms of relaxation from:

- Simply taking time out
- Sitting comfortably and controlling our breath
- Engaging in yoga and other relaxing techniques

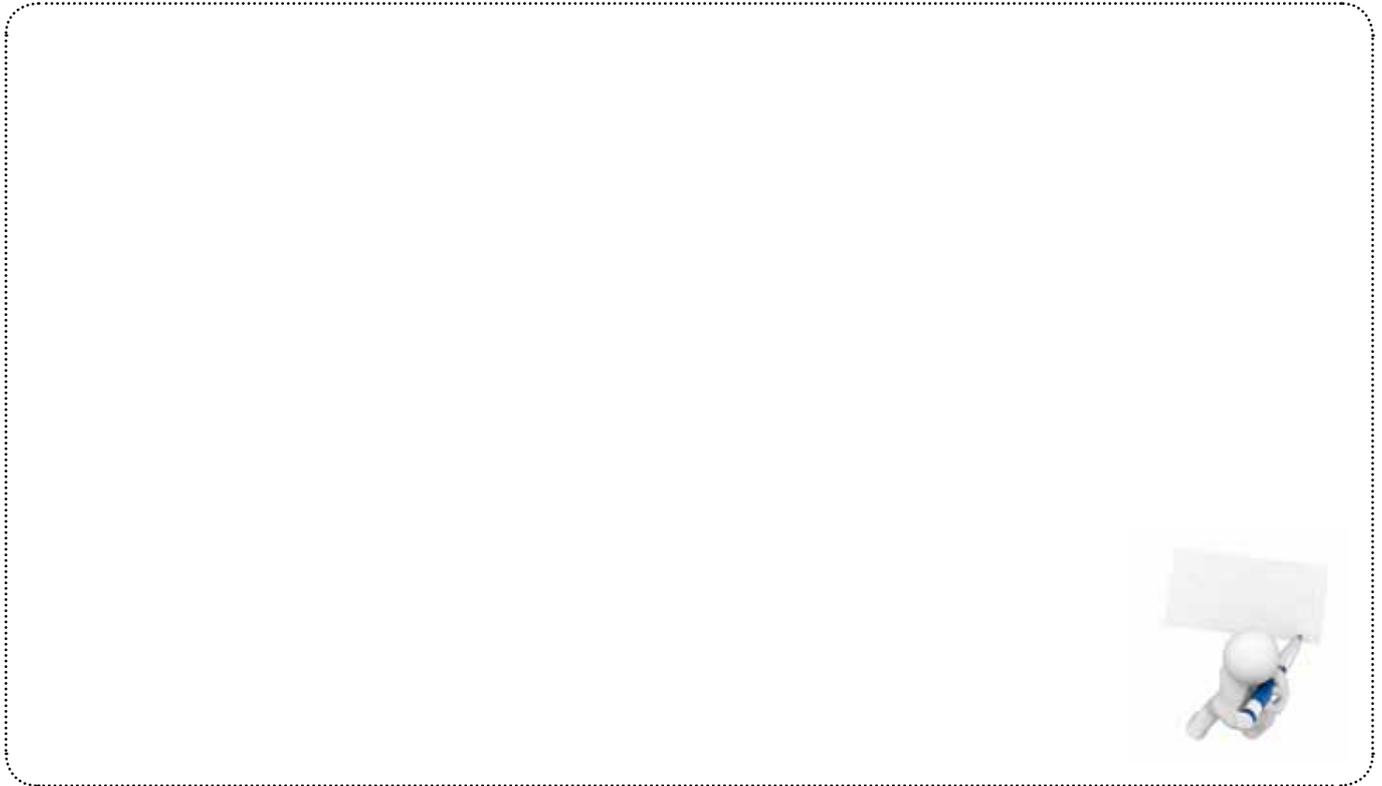


It may be useful to vary your relaxation activity. Watching TV or reading may be very helpful for you – but also may not be the best activity for you to teach your body how to relax, so also try breathing, visualisation or muscular relaxation.

* Exercise 5 *

Types of Relaxation

Take a few minutes to think about the ways you relax at the moment. If you don't take time to relax, think about what stops you from taking time out and how you could create 'me' time?



Things I do now to relax:

What stops me from taking time to myself to relax?

Internal barriers	How they could be overcome	External barriers	How they could be overcome

Some forms of relaxation which you may like to try:

- Yoga
- Various types of meditation
- Visualisation
- Progressive muscular relaxation
- Mindful breathing
- Reading, watching a film, listening to music
- Meeting a friend for a chat



Why is muscular relaxation helpful?

Relaxation can help to release tension caused by prolonged stress or anxiety. Muscular relaxation slows down the systems in the body which speed up when we feel stressed.

10 Tips to Help You Relax

1. Get as comfy as you can before you start. Wear loose clothes and take off your shoes. Make sure the room is warm. If you can, take the phone off the hook. Make sure no one comes in the room while you are having this time to relax. If they want to join in from the start then that is fine.
2. Using a relaxation CD is a good idea. To get used to it, play it when you are feeling fairly calm. You will be able to concentrate better. This will let you pick up the skill more quickly. Don't worry at first if you get distracted by worrying thoughts, don't give up, it will take practice to learn. However, the more you practice relaxation the easier you will find it to control your inner self talk and the calmer and more in control you will feel
3. As with learning any skill, practise makes perfect. So do something each day which helps you relax. Try and build it into a routine perhaps use the same time each day.
4. Don't worry about how well or badly you are doing. Most people find that their mind wanders during the first few weeks. This is normal. As you get used to it, this will improve. Let relaxation come in its own time. Don't try to rush it and, when the feeling comes, enjoy it.
5. Practise slowing down your breathing to about 10-12 breaths per minute at various times of the day. Use the seconds hand on your watch. This will help you keep your body calm right across the day.
6. Progressive Muscle Relaxation can leave you feeling nicely drowsy. Some people fall asleep. If you are one of them, don't worry but bear in mind that you are learning a skill. So you will get more out of it if you can stay awake. If you need to be alert after using it, e.g. for driving, make sure that you feel fully on the ball before setting off.
7. You may find that when you tense your muscles, you hold your breath. Don't worry; most people do this at the start. Try to keep the muscle tensing and breathing control separate.
8. Keep a diary and check your progress as the days go by.
9. It's a good idea to use a relaxation CD on a regular basis until you find you can relax well.
10. A CD is included as part of this workshop. However, perhaps try other CDs to have a variety of choice.

(Adapted from Dr Jim White's Steps Programme)

SUPPORT NETWORK

When feeling stressed we sometimes alienate ourselves from other people, at a time when we would really benefit from speaking to others about how you feel. If we do not manage to speak to others we can feel terribly alone in our stress.



Speaking to others can help you to make practical decisions about what you are trying to deal with, speaking about how you feel can also help to reduce your stress.

Your Support Network

Make a note of the people who are around you and think about what support is available to you.

WHO IS AROUND YOU?

WHO CAN YOU TALK TO?

WHO CAN YOU GET EMOTIONAL / PRACTICAL HELP FROM?

HOW CAN OTHERS TELL HOW YOU ARE FEELING?

WHO ELSE COULD YOU LOOK TO FOR SUPPORT BEYOND THE CURRENT SUPPORT?

If you have answered nobody to the above questions then please consider the list of resources you have been given along with this workbook.

Things to Try

- Over the next week try to notice when you feel stressed. What is the situation – who are you with? What are you doing? Where are you?
- Are there similar situations where you don't feel stressed? When you are coping well? What are you and others around you doing differently?
- When you use your breathing control or relaxation – make a note of how it went. Was it helpful?
- Explore what opportunities there are to maybe get out and meet more people. You could become a volunteer, join a club, attend a local community event, take a night class at college, go to the library and use the computer to look for events or clubs which you are interested in e.g. local camera club, art group, writers group etc.

Good luck and hope to see you at
Session 2 - Behaviour and Stress



Thanks for coming!

DELIVERED IN PARTNERSHIP BY

COPE

COPE offer a professional confidential service to individuals aged 16 and over experiencing mental or emotional distress. Due to demand we are beginning to deliver in other locations full details are on the website

www.cope-scotland.org

or phone 0141 944 5490

or visit 20 Drumchapel Rd G15 6QE.

Lifelink

Lifelink works with young people and adults, offering a range of support to deal with stress, personal problems and emotional distress. The service is free and confidential and offered in various locations throughout Glasgow, please see most up to date info on our website www.Lifelink.org.uk or call 0141 552 4434.

(Lifelink is the trading name for Royston Stress Centre. A registered Scottish charity No. SC025643)

Primary Care Mental Health Team

We are an NHS service, offering help to adults experiencing common psychological problems, like stress, anxiety and depression. We offer different kinds of help, including courses, groups, and one-to-one therapies. The service has no upper age limit. The teams are based in Partick and Woodside, but we see clients in a range of venues throughout West Glasgow.

For people with GPs in West Glasgow, you can ring and make an appointment on 0141 232 9279. For people with GPs in Woodside and Maryhill, you can see your GP and ask for a referral.

If you would like to know more about up and coming workshops or services near you, which could help you manage stress, please make contact with any of these agencies.

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