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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 looked at what stress is; recognized that it is a normal reaction that we all experience; what triggers a stress reaction and the first steps to dealing with it.
In Session 2 we will be looking at stress and how it affects the way we behave. You will have the opportunity to look at the following:

- The impact stress has on our behaviour – avoidance, under and over-activity
- Identifying the things you have been avoiding as a result of your stress levels
- How to combat avoidance and under activity
- Strategies to help when you do too much

* 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:
* 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 Keeps Stress Going?

Behaviour and Stress

When we experience stress, it is often caused by a number of things going on in our lives at the same time. As a result we can feel overwhelmed by the thought of tackling them all at once. We learned last week that the first stage in tackling stress is to do it one step at a time. Today our focus is on how to make effective changes to how we behave when dealing with stress.

Stress affects how we behave both in response to stressful events and also to events that wouldn’t normally cause us stress. We may have a tendency to avoid any situations which cause us stress or heightened emotion. Alternatively, we may start to do things more than we normally would (keeping ourselves busy to avoid what we are feeling), or to do things less.

To help you start to make effective changes to how you behave when dealing with stress, it would be helpful to look at how you behaved before you felt stressed and also how you behave just now. The following exercise will help you with these questions. Take your time and consider each one separately.
* Exercise 3 *

When you feel relaxed, or before you were stressed how do you spend your time?

How did you feel emotionally and physically?

What did you notice about people around you – did you respond differently to their behaviour?
* Exercise 4 *

**How does stress affect your behaviour?**

The following list shows the more common ways in which stress can affect our everyday behaviour. Some of these may be familiar to you or they may not reflect your own behaviour – both are ok.

- Stop socialising or meeting friends
- Stop answering the phone
- Stop doing hobbies
- Stop looking after yourself e.g. your diet or appearance changes
- Avoiding things
- Unable to sleep
- Start drinking more
- Trying to do too many things
- Being over concerned with safety
- Smoking more
- Unable to sit still
- Having arguments with other people
- Hesitating
- Talking more quickly

**How does stress affect what you do?**
Do you withdraw/do less – if so, in what way? What have you stopped doing?

Do you avoid – if so, what things do you avoid?

Do you rush around trying to do too much?
Avoidance

When human beings are under stress it is very common for us to deliberately avoid any situation that we know will increase how stressed we feel.

**FOR EXAMPLE** – you don’t want to admit you haven’t enough money to pay the bill or are scared to phone the company to discuss it or ask for help.

**RESULT** – we receive increasingly threatening letters and surcharges for late payments – which increases our stress levels. The refusal to accept the situation as it is causes the cycle of stress to continue.

**What is avoidance?**
Avoidance is a way of reducing our fears and anxieties by not facing up to or escaping from the situations we fear.

**Why do we do it?**

- We feel like or believe we are unable to cope with a situation/person
- Initially it can give immediate relief in situations that cause stress

However, avoidance can continue to grow, as we can gradually lose confidence in ourselves and our ability to cope in lots of situations.
Types of Avoidance

Simple avoidance

- Avoiding particular situations such as a supermarket or contact with dogs

Subtle avoidance

- Putting things off
- Not accepting a challenge to do anything out with our comfort zone
- Using others to hide behind or like a prop
- Doing things to make yourself feel safe e.g. sitting near the exits in cinemas
- Not asking friends to go out in case they say no

What Happens That Makes You Avoid?

Stressful Situation
Going Out to the Shops

Worrying Thoughts
Here we go - everyone will know I am stressed out
I am not going to be able to cope with this
I am going to have a panic attack

LEARN THAT ONLY WAY TO COPE IS TO AVOID

Changes in behaviour
Rushing around, dropping things
Leave the supermarket

Bodily Symptoms
Sweaty, heart racing, flushed,
palpitations, tingling,
light-headedness
What Does Avoidance do to You?

Avoiding situations that make you stressed
Do less and less

Worsens how you feel depressed / low

Reduces what you do leads to a more restricted life
Undermines your confidence
So we know that stress can cause us to avoid potentially stressful situations in our life. However, not only can stress make you avoid doing things, it can also affect the amount of activity you do. This can fall into two categories, under and over activity.

**Under Activity**

**What is under-activity?**

- When people feel stressed they often get tired easily and can’t be bothered doing things. They tend to give up their hobbies and things that give them pleasure
- If your response to stress is a lowering in your mood you may have a tendency to withdraw from activities and people around you
- Being under-active can then reduce your confidence and therefore you do even less

**What can under-activity do to you?**

Being under active can act to worsen or keep the feelings of stress and being low in mood going. Prolonged under-activity and lowered mood can lead to depression.

**What does Under-Activity Do to You?**

- Stop doing activities that you enjoy, i.e. Going Out with Friends, Reading, Doing Exercise, Taking the Kids Out.
- Not feeling good about yourself, thinking that you are not contributing / doing anything worthwhile, feeling worthless.
- Worsens how you feel Depressed / Low.
Over-Activity

The other extreme is feeling that we have to do everything and do it all the time. When we feel stressed our behaviour can increase the amount of work we do. We acknowledged last week that this can be a good thing, especially if we have a deadline to meet. However, when this over-activity is all the time, it can easily lead to burn out and exhaustion.

Typical over-activity behaviour, are you:

- Trying to do too much?
- Always rushing around?
- Doing too many things at the one time?
- Not relaxing / No time for you?

If you are over-active – ask yourself:

- Do I have to be doing something every minute of the day?
- Who or what am I doing this for?
- What’s the worst thing that will happen if I do not get this done today?

It’s important to note that under-activity and over-activity can also be seen as another way to avoid situations. For example by keeping busy we can easily avoid dealing with some emotional issues or that difficult conversation with a loved one.
* Exercise 5 *

Please collect your Activity Schedule

Use the workbook Activity Schedule to look at how you spent your time last week.

Mark P pleasure next to the things you enjoyed and A for the thing that gave you a sense of achievement.

How can you tackle avoidance and under-activity?

- Gradually try to face the situations you find difficult or plan activities that you have stopped doing
- The first time you face a difficult situation, it may take a long time for the anxiety to fade. The next time, it will not be so bad and will fade away the more you do this. The key is to persevere
- The first time you may feel tired or de-motivated when faced with a stressful situation, but your mood will improve if you are able to carry out your plan to completion and also acknowledge what steps you have achieved, no matter how small

Life at its best is a series of challenges. A big enough challenge will bring out strengths and abilities you never knew you had. Take on challenges and you will bring yourself to life

* Ralph S. Marston *

- Each time you face your fears your anxiety will be less severe, and drop off more quickly
- Similarly, the more you plan activities and fight the desire to withdraw the easier this will become and the more enjoyment/achievement you will experience
How to Combat Avoidance and Inactivity

There are 5 steps that will assist you in tackling your avoidance or inactivity.

**Step 1**
Make a list of things you have been avoiding/you have stopped doing.

**Step 2**
Choose which one to tackle first. List in order of difficulty and start with which one you will find the easiest to do.

**Step 3**
State clearly and specifically what it is you want to do.

**Step 4**
Plan the steps to carry it out.

**Step 5**
Do it and review it.

Let’s look at some examples and try it for ourselves. Here are two individuals, John and Rebecca, who are taking steps to combat avoidance and under activity.

Both John and Rebecca have been under a lot stress recently. As a result:

- John had some panic attacks in public places with a lot of people around and is now avoiding busy public places; this is having an impact on his social life
- Rebecca has slowly withdrawn from friends and family as her mood and confidence has been low
Step 1 - Make a list of the things you have been avoiding / stopped doing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John’s List</th>
<th>Rebecca’s List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Going into shops</td>
<td>Stopped going out with partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling by train</td>
<td>Stopped going to parents on a Sunday morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to cinema</td>
<td>Stopped going to gym with her friend Kate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOW IT’S YOUR TURN

Make a list of the things that you’ve been avoiding / stopped doing

Step 1. Look back at Exercise 2 which looked at things you might want to change about your activity levels – avoiding things; not doing much; doing too much. List the things you want to change here:
Step 2 - Choose which one to tackle first. Do this by arranging your list in order of difficulty and start with what you will find the easiest.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John’s List</th>
<th>Rebecca’s List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Going into shops</td>
<td>Going out with partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Going to cinemas</td>
<td>Going to parents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travelling by train</td>
<td>Going to gym with friend</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOW IT’S YOUR TURN
Which one are you going to tackle first?

Step 2. Choose which one to tackle first. Do this by arranging the list in order of difficulty and start with what you will find the easiest to tackle first:
Step 3 - State clearly and specifically what it is you want to do

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John’s List</th>
<th>Rebecca’s List</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I would like to go to my local shop and not rush around</td>
<td>I would like to start to spend time with my partner again and begin to talk to him again</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan a slow increase in going to the shops, going first with Carl to get just a few things</td>
<td>Probably best if it’s the cinema to begin with so we don’t have to talk much but at least we will be spending time together again &amp; I’m getting out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NOW IT’S YOUR TURN

Be specific about what it is you are going to do

Step 3. Decide clearly and specifically what you would like to be able to do

Give details about where, when and how you imagine yourself doing it:
### Step 4 - Plan the steps to carry it out

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>John’s Plan</th>
<th>Rebecca’s Plan</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phone Carl and arrange to go to the local shop tomorrow afternoon, it is quiet around 2pm.</td>
<td>Speak to partner and let him know that I want to start going out again – let him know that it will take time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buy a paper, this will not take long.</td>
<td>Organise mother to baby sit on Wednesday night at 7pm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will try to walk around at a slow pace.</td>
<td>Buy tickets in advance so can’t change my mind or speak to partner to ask him to pick them up on way home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I will practice relaxation before I leave the house. I can also check that I am breathing steadily and slowly when I am in the shop.</td>
<td>Make sure I have time to get ready and remind myself of the importance of seeing plan through.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**NOW IT’S YOUR TURN**

Write down the benefits of tackling this.

**Step 4. Plan the steps to carry this out.**
Again give specific details: dates, times, exactly what you will do – all the *when’s, where’s* and *how’s*. Write it here:
Step 5 - Do it and review

- What did you notice when you were carrying out the task you set yourself – how did you feel, what were you thinking etc?
- What did you do that helped it go well?
- What did others do that helped it go well?
- How did you feel after you carried out your plan?
- Was there anything you would do differently the next time?
- Acknowledge each step of your achievements, no matter how small

Make a note for how things went – what went well, what didn’t go so well, what you have gained from this experience and any ideas for future practice.

Write your notes here:

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Planning the next steps

- Plan and practice the first step in your plan (Step 4) until you can manage this without difficulty, then move on to planning your next goal
- In relation to avoidance do not move onto the next step until you have mastered the first and are no longer experiencing physical symptoms
Points to remember

- In relation to symptoms of depression some people will find that it takes time until they start to enjoy things again as much as they used to
- In relation to symptoms of anxiety some people will find that it takes time until their physical symptoms begin to fade. By practicing regularly your physical symptoms will pass
- Set yourself small, manageable goals, with a high chance of success. Take one small step at a time

After each step

- Acknowledge each step and give yourself a reward every time you complete each task
- Share your success with friends and family

So that’s us dealing with avoidance and under-activity. The other behavioural extreme that stress can cause is that we can become over-active – which can cause us additional stress.

How to Tackle Over-activity

Tips for dealing with over-activity

- Make a daily list (use activity diary in handout) to plan the week ahead
- Stick to one task at a time and see it through
- Make the amount of activity reasonable including time for rest and relaxation
- Set aside time for yourself and to do things you enjoy
- Remember you are not superhuman

Motivation
Remember, it will not be easy making changes particularly when you are stressed so it is important to try to work on your motivation levels. If you are feeling low or anxious then your motivation will already be low or you will probably be feeling very tired which will also affect your motivation.
Some questions to ask yourself:

- When were the times that you felt better about yourself – what were you doing?
- How did you spend your time?
- Did you have time for you?

Things to Try

- Try to use the stepped plan to tackle any of the following that causes you most difficulty:
  - Avoidance
  - Under-activity
  - Over-activity

- Notice how you feel differently when putting your plans into practice

- Notice how people around you behave – is it how you expect?

Good luck and hope to see you at Session 3 - Stress and Thoughts

Thanks for coming!
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.