

MANAGING DAILY STRESS

A MENTAL HEALTH WORKSHOP

FACILITATED BY: Jamie Laframboise & Madalina Prostean Student Occupational Therapists



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INTRODUCTION

About us About this workshop Group norms

SETTING INTENTIONS

WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress Acute vs. chronic stress Stress's impact on our bodies, minds, and actions

STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Your strategies Grounding strategies Cognitive strategies

SUMMARY AND Q&A

INTRODUCTION

The Facilitators

Jamie & Madalina, Student Occupational Therapists University of Toronto

Supervisors: Beth Cruchley (Registered OT) & Amedeo Patuelli (AoL Community Manager)

The Workshop

The purpose of today's workshop is to learn some <u>SIMPLE</u> and <u>PRACTICAL</u> strategies that you can use to tackle stressful situations in your daily life

This workshop is not diagnostic and this is not a processing group

GROUP NORMS

Zoom etiquette:

- <u>Mics off</u> throughout presentation
- <u>Cameras on/off</u> your choice!
- Technical difficulties
- Opportunities for participation:
 - Raise hand and we'll turn on your mic
 - Type in <u>chat box</u> to whole group or privately to facilitators
- <u>Dedicated Q&A</u> at the end, but if you have quick clarifying questions, type in the chat!
- Materials pen & paper or phone/laptop app

• Slides

- Privacy & confidentiality:
 - Keep what people share within this group

Respecting others

- Use <u>respectful language</u>
- Listen when people are speaking

SETTING INTENTIONS

Take a moment to think about:

> why you signed up for this workshop & what you hope to get out of it

> 1-3 stressful situations you'd like to better manage

REFLECT & SHARE

WHAT IS STRESS?



The **body's physical, mental, and emotional reactions to** any **change** that requires an adjustment or response.

Stress is a **normal** part of life and can occur to **positive or negative changes** in your environment, your body, and your thoughts.

ACUTE

The "positive" stress

Fight or flight response - the body's stress response built into the autonomic nervous system

In cases of emergency, this response is activated to keep us alert, motivated, and ready to avoid danger

CHRONIC

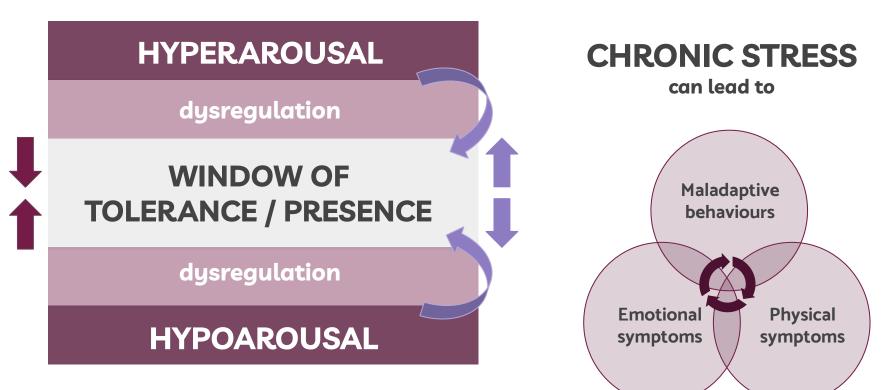
The "negative" stress

Prolonged activation of the stress response occurs when we face continuous challenges without relief or relaxation between stressors and leads to a condition called distress

Causes wear and tear on our bodies and our minds

(Cleveland Clinic, 2015)

HYPERAROUSAL 🕉	You feel EXTREMELY anxious, angry and out of control. Thoughts racing → FIGHT/FLIGHT RESPONSE	
dysregulation	You start to feel agitated. Maybe anxious, revved up, angry. You feel uncomfortable but not out of control.	
WINDOW OF TOLERANCE / PRESENCE This is where you feel just right. You feel balanced, calm, and able to think.	Optimal level of arousal - Able to deal with stressors & problem solve effectively	
dysregulation	You start to feel overwhelmed. You may feel like you're shutting down, maybe lose track of time You feel uncomfortable but not out of control.	
HYPOAROUSAL 🔆	You feel sluggish, heavy and numb, emotionally & physically. You may feel depressed & exhausted → FREEZE RESPONSE	



Maladaptive behaviours keep body in a stressed state, outside the window of presence, rather than helping the body to relax. This further keeps the window of tolerance narrow and can trap the distressed person in a dysregulated cycle while they attempt to cope.

STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

YOUR STRATEGIES

What strategies do you use to manage stress?

REFLECT

& SHARE

Strategies that help bring us back into the window of tolerance so we can start using cognitive strategies to manage our thoughts related to stress/stressful situations

GROUNDING STRATEGIES

COGNITIVE STRATEGIES

Strategies that help us to change our thinking around the events that cause us stress

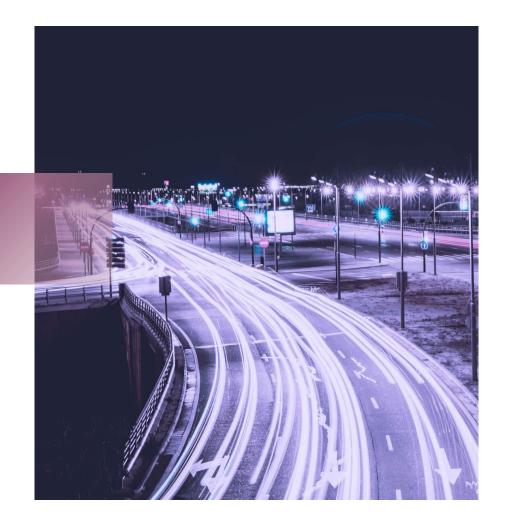
TIPP Skills - Grounding Strategies

Four grounding strategies from dialectical behaviour therapy that are used to influence your body chemistry to:

- 1) Reduce the emotion-related physiological reactions (e.g., heart rate) and behavioural responses (e.g., avoidance, withdrawal, risky behaviours) that occur during distress)
- 2) Bring you back into your window where you can think more logically

Temperature*	Lower your body temperature (e.g., splash very cold water on your face, put ice on yourself, stand outside in cool weather, stand in front of the open fridge, etc.)	
Intense exercise*	Exercise causes the brain to release endorphins, the "feel-good" neurotransmitters (e.g., running on the spot, jumping, etc.)	
Paced breathing	Deep breathing tells your brain to calm down and relax. In turn, your brain tells your muscles to relax (e.g., belly / diaphragmatic breathing, square breathing, 4-7-8 breathing, etc.)	
P aired muscle relaxation**	Systematically holding and releasing tension in each muscle group allows you to become aware of and release areas where you're holding stress in your body	
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*Consult with a health care professional before doing this exercise if you have a cardiovascular (heart) disease that isn't currently well managed *If you have chronic pain, visualize holding/releasing tension



TIPP ACTIVITY

Paced Breathing

Belly Breathing*

Sit in a comfortable position and put one hand on your stomach and one on your chest.

-Breathe deeply in through your nose, letting your belly push your hand out. Your chest should not move much.

-Breathe out through pursed lips like you are whistling. Feel the hand on your belly go in and use it to push all the air out.

-Repeat this until you feel calm, Taking your time with each breath.

4-7-8 Breathing

Sit or lie down and put one hand on your belly and one on your chest.

-Breathe deeply and slowly in through your nose as you count from 1 to 4.

-Hold your breath and silently count from 1 to 7.

-Breathe out completely as you count from 1 to 8.

-Repeat until you feel calm.

* Belly breathing is the foundation for other more complex breathing methods*

(Cleveland Clinic, 2018; Weil, 2010)

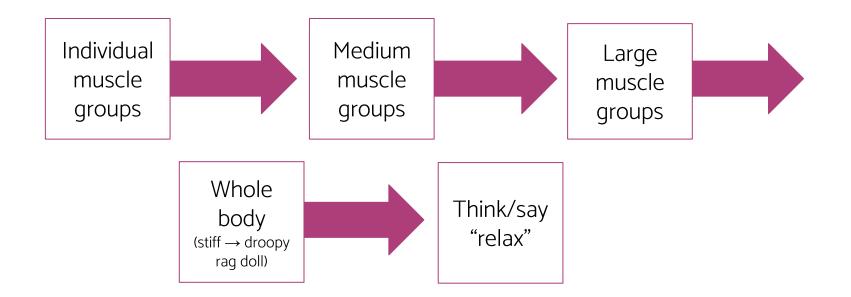
Paired Muscle Relaxation

Sit or lie in a comfortable position, close your eyes, and take a few deep breaths.

For each muscle group:

Tense the muscles as you inhale for 5 seconds.
Then say "relax" in your mind as you exhale and release the tension
Take a few deep breaths as you notice the sensation that comes after your muscles relax.
Then, move to the next muscle group.

Hands/wrists: make a fist with both hands and bend wrist backwards Lower/upper arms: make a fist with both hands and bend arms up to touch your shoulders.		Large
<u>Shoulders:</u> pull shoulders to ears		
Forehead: pull eyebrows close together, wrinkling forehead Eyes: shut eyes tightly Nose/upper cheeks: scrunch nose. bring upper lip/cheeks towards eyes.	Medium	Large
<u>Lips/lower face:</u> press lips together and bring corners of lips toward ears. <u>Tongue/mouth:</u> teeth together. push tongue against roof of mouth.	Medium	
Neck: push head back into chair, floor, or bed. or push chin to chest.		Large
<u>Chest:</u> take a deep breath and hold. <u>Back:</u> arch back and pinch shoulder blades together.	Medium	
<u>Stomach:</u> contract core tightly <u>Buttocks:</u> squeeze together tightly	Medium	Large
<u>Upper legs/thighs:</u> legs out. tense quads and hamstrings. <u>Calves:</u> legs out. point toes down <u>Ankles:</u> legs out. point toes together. heels out. toes curled under.	Medium	



Start with individual muscle groups. Practice 3-4 times a day, while being sure to say "relax" in your mind on the release/exhale. Slowly progress until you have trained yourself to relax your entire body just by thinking/saying "relax"

How was that for you?

REFLECT & SHARE

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

A + B = C

ACTIVATING EVENT - situation

BELIEF - interpretation of the event (thoughts)

CONSEQUENCE - reaction/response to the event (feelings & behaviours)

Example

A = flat tire

B = "This is worst. I can't handle this."C = Feel overwhelmed, maybe hit the tire in frustration. Sit on curb, head in hands

OR

B = "This isn't the best, but I know I can handle this. I have a solution"C = Deep breath, stay calm, call CAA

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING STRATEGIES

PAUSE &

- 1. Look for the good in a bad situation
- 2. Control your inner dialogue positive & constructive
- 3. Avoid the blame game
- 4. Shift your focus forward from problem to solution
- 5. Keep your problems in perspective temporary & pay attention to the good

BONUS

+ Look for humor in the situation



COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING ACTIVITY

LET'S TACKLE THE 'B' in A + B = C

SELECT ACTIVATING EVENT:

APPLY STRATEGIES: 1. Look for the good in a bad situation 1. 2. Control your inner dialogue 2. 3. Avoid the blame game 3. Shift focus forward - find solution 4. 4. Keep your problems in perspective 5. 5. BONUS Look for humor in the situation +

HOW DO YOU RESPOND (feeling & action):

LET'S TACKLE THE 'B' in A + B = C

SELECT ACTIVATING EVENT: Flat tire

APPLY STRATEGIES:

- 1. Look for the good in a bad situation
- 2. Control your inner dialogue
- 3. Avoid the blame game
- 4. Shift focus forward find solution
- 5. Keep your problems in perspective

BONUS

+ Look for humor in the situation

HOW DO YOU RESPOND (feeling & action):

- 1. Get some alone time while waiting for CAA
- 2. "This isn't the best, but I know what to do. It's going to be okay"
- **3.** "This isn't anyone's fault. You couldn't have predicted or prevented this. Things happen."
- 4. Decide to call CAA
- 5. "After today, this will no longer be an issue. I knew what to do & I'm safe "
- 🛨 🛛 🎵 "I've got a flat tire. Oh how did this transpire" 🎵

Take a deep breath, feel calm, follow through on identified solution & call CAA

SUMMARY

WHAT IS STRESS?

> Definition
> Window of Tolerance/ Presence
> Acute vs. Chronic Stress
> The Impacts of Chronic Stress
> A + B = C Model

STRESS MANAGEMENT TOOLKIT

- > Your existing strategies> Grounding strategies
 - > Temperature
 - > Intense Exercise
 - > Paced Breathing
 - > Paired Muscle Relaxation
- > Cognitive strategies
 - > Look for the good in the bad
 > Control inner dialogue
 > Avoid the blame game
 > Shift your focus forward
 > Keep your problems in perspective
 - + Use humor

Other Grounding Strategies

- Therapist Aid Handout
- <u>Creating Personal Calm</u> Worksheet

Learn more about Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

- <u>Centre for Clinical Interventions</u> free mental health self-help workbooks
- <u>getselfhelp</u> free CBT strategies & worksheets
- Mind Beacon free CBT service funding by the Government of Ontario digital + some 1:1 support

Learn more about Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT)

- <u>nowmattersnow</u> simple DBT skills
- Paired Muscle Relaxation <u>Step by Step Video</u>

Mental Health Resources for Coping through COVID

- <u>takecare19</u> accessible & inclusive mental health resources & services
- heretohelp mental health & substance use information you can trust

Youth Mental Health Resources

mindyourmind - wellness resources for youth 14 to 29

Warm Lines

- Mood Disorders Association of Ontario (MDAO) 416-486-8046 / 9:30am 5 pm / M-F
- Warm Line (Progress Place) 416 960-9276 / 8pm to midnight / 7 days/week
- Krasman Centre Warm Line (peer support) 1-888-777-0979 / 24 hours/day

Distress Lines

- Distress Centres of Greater Toronto Call 416-408-4357, Text 45645
- <u>Gerstein Centre Crisis Line</u> 416-929-5200 or 416-929-0149

QUESTIONS

THANK YOU!

Thank you all for attending - we hope you've learned something valuable that you can use to help manage the demands of your daily lives! Thank you Beth, Amo, and Jed for your continued support getting this workshop running!

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