

Hartman's
In-Service Education SourceBook Series



Success Over Stress



Success Over

STRESS

Contributor

**Lorraine T. Parker, D.C.
Albuquerque, New Mexico**

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Edward G. Dudley-Robey, DSD
President
The Robey Group
Sherman Oaks, CA

Lorinda A. Ferland, RN
Staff Development Consultant to Long Term Care
Alameda, CA

Carroll Patten, RN
Staff Development Coordinator
Clyde, OH

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NOTICE TO THE READER

Though the guidelines contained in this text are based on consultations with health care professionals, they should not be considered absolute recommendations. The instructor and readers should follow employer, local, state, and federal guidelines concerning health care practices. These guidelines change, and it is the reader's responsibility to be aware of these changes and of the policies and procedures of her or his health care facility/agency.

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CREDITS

Contributor: Lorraine T. Parker
Development Editor: Celia McIntire
Composition & Design: John W. Davis
Illustration: Thaddeus Castillo

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As unpleasant as stress may seem, it is a necessary part of our lives. Our bodies have evolved around physical demands that may seem primitive to us now. Eat or be eaten, fight or be beaten. Today, most of our physical demands are met without much physical effort on our part. Food, shelter, and protection from enemies are generally not an everyday problem for us.

However, the defenses we have developed to deal with the physical pressures of survival have not gone away. They are still in operation, which means our bodies are still responding in chemical, physical, and mental ways to the everyday stresses of life. Heart rate goes up, breathing becomes shallower, adrenaline is pumped into the blood, digestion stops, muscles tense for action, and we are left with a body poised to fight or run -- and no way of doing it.

This stress reaction can have a noticeable impact on our lives, and the way we deal with stress has a lot to do with how good we feel about ourselves and everyone around us.

By the end of this in-service, participants should have a good idea of what stress is, how it affects their bodies, and what positive coping skills will empower them to manage the stress in their lives. There are no written assessments for this in-service (we thought they would be too stressful!), but there are plenty of activities that allow participants to explore the stress in their own lives and find new ways of dealing with it.

The lesson plans are organized by learning objectives. Each learning objective includes lecture guidelines, learning activities, and ideas for teaching. We also

provide handouts and transparency masters to use as tools during your presentation. You may choose to use some or all of these tools and ideas while teaching this in-service.

To use the transparency masters, convert them to acetates for use with an overhead projector. If overhead projection is not convenient in your presentation area, copy the information from the transparency masters onto a chalk board or flip chart.

To use handouts, photocopy the number needed for your group. Consider using different colors of paper to organize the different handouts or to make some stand out. Limited permission is granted to photocopy the handouts for use at the site originally purchasing this in-service. Photocopying other parts of this in-service, including the lesson plan, is expressly prohibited.

Because the in-service covers a lot of material, you may wish to divide your presentation into more than one in-service.

At the back of this SourceBook are some additional resources on stress management that can be ordered from various agencies and organizations.

We hope you find this in-service helpful. And as always, we welcome your comments and suggestions.

Happy Teaching!

Success Over Stress

Learning Objectives

At the completion of this program participants will be able to do the following:

1. Describe the stress reaction and how it affects the body.
2. Discuss hidden stressors, signs of over-stress, and symptoms of burnout.
3. Discuss the benefits of a good diet, evaluate your own diet, and make one simple diet change.
4. Discuss the benefits of regular exercise, find your Target Heart Rate, and learn stretching exercises to relieve tension.
5. Discuss the benefits of humor and explore new ways of coping with stress using humor.
6. Integrate positive coping skills and relaxation techniques into your life to manage stress.

Introduction and Self Assessment

Estimated Time: 10 Minutes

Tools: Handout Intro-1 Note-Taking Worksheet (pg.32)
Transparency Intro-1 Discussion Time (pg.34)
Transparency Intro-2 What You Should Know About Stress (pg.35)
Transparency Intro-3 Headlines on Stress (pg.36)

Learning Activity: Lecture and Discussion

Distribute Handout Intro-1 Note-Taking Worksheet Participants should use this handout to take notes during the in-service. Tell them to keep it handy, as they will be referring to it later on.

Display Transparency Intro-1 Discussion Time Discuss each of the statements on this transparency. Do participants agree with them? Why? Do they disagree and why?

Explain the overall purpose of the workshop and review the learning objectives. Encourage everyone to relax and enjoy themselves. They will be learning new skills to manage the stress in their lives and improve their overall health and well-being.

Alternative Learning Activity: Group Discussion - Breaking the Ice

Have each participant find a partner and share with this person a stressful situation that is affecting his or her life right now. Ask each person in turn to introduce his or her partner (as needed) and describe that person's stressful situation.

The goal of this exercise is to encourage participants to voice concerns and openly provide feedback. It will also give you an idea of what types of situations the participants perceive as stressful. Throughout this in-service, challenge participants to think of other stressful situations in their lives. Record these examples on a chalk board or flip chart so that everyone can see them.

Learning Activity: Lecture and Discussion

Display Transparency Intro-2 What You Should Know About Stress. Stress cannot be avoided. No matter what you do or what happens to you, your body demands the necessary energy required to maintain life, to resist diseases, and to adapt to constantly changing situations.

Even if you are fully relaxed and asleep, you are under some stress. For example:

- your heart is still pumping
- intestines are digesting your dinner
- muscles are moving your chest so you can breathe

Some stress is a good thing; it can motivate us to finish a job, deal with an emergency, or defend against disease or danger. So the key is not to avoid stress, but rather learn to cope with stress effectively. To do this, we must learn more about how stress affects us and then adjust our lifestyles accordingly.

Display
Transparency Intro-3
Headlines on Stress

- Researchers find link between colds and emotional stress. (Am. Journal of Nursing, July 1995)
- High stress weakens immune function. (Cancer Weekly Plus, March 10, 1997)
- Constant stress may kill nerve cells. (Business Week, August 10, 1996)
- Stress can lead to high blood pressure and heart attacks. (Newsweek, February 17, 1997)
- All work and no play can drive you crazy! (Consumer Reports on Health, February 1997)
- Life's small pleasures aid immune system. (The New York Times, May 11, 1994)
- Relaxation method may aid health. (The New York Times, August 7, 1996)
- Fight the effects of stress by eating nutritious meals. (Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service, May 27, 1994)

As this transparency shows, stress is in the news all the time. Everyone seems to be concerned about the bad effects of too much stress and how to counteract them.

Many of the studies on stress have found a correlation between frequency of illness and high levels of stress. But high levels of stress do not necessarily mean constantly getting sick. Some people cope with stress in positive ways while others respond negatively to stressful situations.

Ask for reactions and/or comments and lead a brief discussion about why it would be important to manage stress in your life.

Emphasize that stress that is not handled well can disrupt your life in many ways, including physical ailments, shortened lifespan, and emotional and mental problems.

Describe the stress reaction and how it affects the body

Estimated Time: 20-25 Minutes

Tools: Handout 1-1 The Stress Reaction (pg.37)
Transparency 1-1 Fight or Flight (pg.38)
Transparency 1-2 Stress Related Illnesses (pg.39)
Transparency 1-3 What is Stress? (pg.40)
Transparency 1-4 What Stresses You Out? (pg.41)
Transparency 1-5 How Does the Body React to Stress? (pg.42)

Learning Activity: Lecture and Discussion

Ask participants to look at Handout Intro-1 Note-Taking Worksheet. In the space provided, have them list all the week's work and non-work encounters that stressed them out. Tell them to keep this list handy as the in-service continues.

Distribute
Handout 1-1
The Stress Reaction
and
Display
Transparency 1-1
Fight or Flight

The Stress Reaction is **always** the same. It is an adaptive reaction also called the "fight or flight response," which is a popular description first coined in 1932 by a psychologist named Walter Cannon.

The Stress Reaction creates energy and takes place every time an **external stressor** occurs. The reaction is a response that we inherited from our ancestors who had to fight to protect themselves or flee to prevent being dinner for a large animal. This, however, has all changed and people usually do not have to physically "fight or flee." Instead, the body is all geared up with no place to go.

Display
Transparency 1-2
Stress Related Illnesses

The Stress Reaction has become a way of life. All of this internalized energy can actually suppress the immune system and contribute to many stress-related health problems, such as:

- heart disease
- hypertension
- common colds and flu
- nutritional deficiencies
- stomach problems
- muscle tension
- weakness and fatigue