Decrease Stress; Increase Success!
Developed and Presented by Raelene Ostberg, M.Ed.

Objectives:
- Define stress
- Learn how our brains and thinking impact our responses to stressful situations
- Discover practical methods to reduce stress, foster joy, and increase success both personally and professionally

Main Points:
- You can increase joy and decrease stress by balancing demands and resources, having a plan, concentrating on the positive meaning
- We have a finite amount of time and energy
- Our energy is most effective in the present moment
- We can train our brain over time to decrease stress and increase joy

Stress defined:
“Stress is when the demands on your body, or your expectations of those demands, exceed your ability to handle them.” Megan Gunner, U of M

*Stress is negative when:
- Demands and resources are imbalanced
- Feel a lack of control
- Experience lacks meaning

*Avoid negative stress:
- Balance demands and resources
- Have a plan and do things that help you feel in control
- Concentrate on the positive meaning
Amit Sood, MD, Mayo Clinic “Stress-free Living.”

Stress hormone in the body - Stress is cumulative and our response changes depending on the amount of stress hormone that has accumulated in our bodies.
*Idea is to bring stress back down before you flip your lid!

I experience stress when:
- I am around people for long periods of time
- I am alone for many hours in a day
- I sit for long periods of time
- There are too few activities in a day
- I experience surprises
- I am being rushed, pushed, or hurried
- I am forced to make quick decisions
- I am given too many directions at once
- Directions given are unclear
- My expectations are not met
- I do too many activities in a day
- I get interrupted several times
- I do not get enough quiet time
- I am told “no”
- Rules are inconsistent or keep changing
- I am not given a choice
- I do not get enough adult contact
- I have a long list of things to do
- I am forced to quit before I am finished
- Those around me experience intense emotions
- I do not get enough down time
- There is a lack of routine
- Things get off schedule
- When I am uncomfortable physically
- There is a change of plans
- Other people get angry or yell

Adapted from: http://csefel.vanderbilt.edu/resources/training_preschool.html

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Your stress level is impacted by:
- Temperament
- Development
- External and internal stressors
- Trusting relationship
- Genetics
- Choices we make
- Sense of control
- *How we think

Two thinking modes:
**Default Mode**
- Wandering Mind*, internal focus while planning, problem-solving, worrying, evaluating
- Driven by past regrets (black holes) and future worries (focused on past and/or future)

**Focused Mode**
- What is novel, pleasurable, and meaningful in the external world (focused on present)

Mental Break
What is sticking with you? What do you want to remember?

Any questions?

**Stress Tips:**
1) Take time to decompress
2) “Catch” negative thoughts and reframe
3) Compartmentalize
4) Focus on what you can control
5) Grow compassion and empathy
6) Enjoy the moment
7) Give kind attention
8) Increase positive thoughts

= More joy and less “bad” stress
= Increased satisfaction and appreciation for the time you do have

**Stress Tips #1 – Take time to decompress**
*Identify what actually helps you calm and relax and do it and regular intervals

**Stress Tip #2 – “Catch” negative thoughts and reframe**
1) Recognize a negative thought  
2) “Catch it”  
3) Insert an constructive thought

“Develop a personal “stress-less” mantra

**Reframing Exercise**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>First Thought</th>
<th>New Thought</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I did something wrong</td>
<td>That person is asking for help and understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I did not have so much do.</td>
<td>I am so thankful I get to work. I am lucky I am so needed!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am missing out on something.</td>
<td>I am exactly where I am supposed to be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I wish I was not so busy!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why do I always get stuck with this?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He is so stubborn!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“She is so clingy!?”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Stress Tip #3 – Compartmentalize: Keep things “boxed” until the time is right
- Put work, home, technology, and connection time in “boxes”. Work on and open only one box at a time. Fully attend to what is in that box.
- Combine “boxes” when you can do two things well at the same time. (Hint: This is rare.)

Stress Tip #4 – Focus on what you can control

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you control?</th>
<th>What does the other person control?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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Stress Tip #5 – Grow compassion and empathy
- Avoid the “Fast Track”
- “Attend” longer and “interpret” less
- Make up “stories” that put the situation and other person in the most compassionate and positive light

Stress Tip #7 – Give kind attention
- Express gratitude (from the heart, be specific, send in multiple ways, do not wait)
- Connect with others

Stress Tip #8 – Increase positive thoughts
- Celebrate what you do/did well
- Limit media exposure – and exposure to negative perspectives
- Ask yourself, “Will it matter 5 years from now?” If the answer is “no”, let it go
- Remember, “It will be alright.”
- Avoid negative perspectives
- Send time with positive thinkers

“Yesterday is gone. Tomorrow has not yet come. We have only today. Let us begin.” Mother Teresa

I can reduce stress by:
- 

I can increase joy by:
- 

My hopes? When you have a choice, you choose to relax, enjoy, play, dream, help, and love – MORE!”