

Make the Connection:

Mind / Body Relaxation



Learning Objectives

- Understanding the connection between stress and the fight/flight response
- Learn techniques for mindfulness meditation
- Understand the connection between thinking, feelings and stress
- Recognize, challenge and change your own thinking distortions

Learning Objectives

- With stress management skills, find
 - *Relief of stress related physical symptoms*
 - *Relief of anxiety*
 - *Freedom from compulsive worrying, self-criticism and negative thought*
 - *Increase in concentration, awareness, energy, self-acceptance and inner peace*
 - *Enhancement of healing processes*

Physical Symptoms of Stress

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------|
| ▪ Sweaty palms | ▪ Headaches |
| ▪ Restlessness | ▪ Back pain |
| ▪ Trouble sleeping | ▪ Indigestion |
| ▪ Tiredness | ▪ Stomach aches |
| ▪ Dizziness | ▪ Racing heart |
| ▪ Ringing in ears | ▪ Tight neck, shoulders |

Behavioral Symptoms of Stress

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| ▪ Smoke excessively | ▪ Compulsive eating |
| ▪ Grind teeth at night | ▪ Thoughts of running away |
| ▪ Trouble thinking clearly | ▪ Critical of others |
| ▪ Too much alcohol | ▪ Can't seem to get things done |
| ▪ Forgetful | ▪ Compulsive gum chewing |
| ▪ Can't make decisions | |
| ▪ Bossiness | |

Emotional Symptoms of Stress

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ▪ Nervous, anxious | ▪ Unhappy for no reason |
| ▪ Angry | ▪ Powerless to change things |
| ▪ Crying | ▪ Easily upset |
| ▪ Lonely | ▪ Bored- no meaning to things |
| ▪ Can't stop worrying | ▪ Overwhelmed with pressure |
| ▪ On edge-ready to explode | |
| ▪ Can't laugh | |

Body Responses

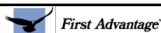


Psychological Changes	With the Fight/Flight Response	With Relaxation Response
Metabolism	Increases	Decreases
Heart Rate	Increases	Decreases
Blood Pressure	Increases	Decreases
Breathing Rate	Increases	Decreases
Muscle Tension	Increases	Decreases

The greatest revolution of our time is the knowledge that human beings, by changing the inner attitudes of their minds, can transform the outer aspects of their lives.

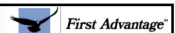
- William James

The Process of Cognitive Restructuring



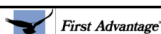
- Uncover underlying, negative automatic thoughts
- Identify the distorted attitudes, assumptions and beliefs that underlie those thoughts
- Challenge the distorted attitudes, assumptions and beliefs
- Choose the effective way to cope with the situation

Challenging Cognitive Distortions



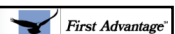
- All or nothing thinking
- Overgeneralization
- Mental filter
- Disqualifying the positive
- Jumping to conclusions
- Magnification and minimization
- Emotional reasoning
- Labeling and mislabeling
- Should statements

Challenging Cognitive Distortions



Situation	Emotions	Automatic Thoughts	Cognitive Distortions	Rational Response
Event leading to the unpleasant emotion	Specify: sad, anxious, angry, etc.	Thoughts accompanying the emotion	Distortions present in each thought	Rational response to the automatic thought

Creating Affirmations



- Select a part of your life that is causing you stress
- Decide what you want to happen or how you would like to feel in that situation
- Make up a first person statement that articulates this goal. "I have a relaxed body and focused mind" or "I can feel confident in my work"
- Repeat this saying often during the day, perhaps before or after meditation

EAP Services



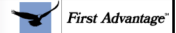
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The Relaxation Response



Procedure:

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position;
2. Close your eyes;
3. Deeply relax all your muscles, (including the stomach which should not be in). Begin at your feet and progress up to your face. Keep them relaxed;
4. Breathe through your nose normally. Become aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say the word "ONE" silently to yourself. For example, breathe IN...OUT, "ONE"; IN ... OUT, "ONE"; etc. Breathe easily and naturally;

Adapted from Benson, M. The Relaxation Response, WM Morrow & Co., New York (1976).

The Relaxation Response



Procedure:

5. Continue for 10 to 20 minutes. You may open your eyes to check the time, but do not use an alarm. When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes, at first with your eyes closed and later with your eyes opened. Do not stand up for a few minutes;
6. Do not worry about whether you are successful in achieving a deep level of relaxation. Maintain a passive attitude and permit relaxation to occur at its own pace. When distracting thoughts occur, try to ignore them by not dwelling on them and return to repeating "ONE". With practice, the response should come with little effort. Practice the technique once or twice daily, but not within two hours of any meal, since the digestive processes seem to interfere with the elicitation of the Relaxation Response.

Adapted from Benson, M. The Relaxation Response, WM Morrow & Co., New York (1976).