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CHAPTER 1:
DESIGNING A STRESS MASTERY PROGRAM
CHAPTER 1:
DESIGNING A STRESS MASTERY PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

Our program is called STRESSMASTER™ because the name, more than any other, connotes the ideas and values we believe are associated with effective living. Balance plus positive energy is key to stressmastery. To us, stressmastery means empowerment, life commitment, self-responsibility and a feeling that even though everything is falling apart...'I am in control'. The core of our stressmastery training is to move the individual from approaching life passively, or from merely coping, to actively becoming engaged in "stressor resolution"!

This manual is designed to assisting you design, improve or expand your stress management program. The Stress Management Questionnaire (SMQ) is central to this goal. Before designing or re-designing your stress management program, evaluate your skills, knowledge and talents as they pertain to conducting a stress management program. Determine your strengths, as well as your weaknesses, in such areas as training and communication skills, clarity and knowledge of program goals, expectations for program participants, end results desired, time and resources available, knowledge and skills of stress management theory and practice and knowledge of modern learning theory and self-change models.

Successful stressmastery programs usually involve a needs assessment of the group or organization. Once established, you will be better able to meet the needs of the organization or company. Pay particular attention to current “hot” areas within the group or company and build in examples to reflect your knowledge of the issues and concerns in the work place.

Increasing your knowledge of stress management theory is the first step to delivering a quality program. However, as psychologists have long known, there is a often a gap between knowledge and performance. Simply knowing what to do and, then, doing it are two very different issues. While knowledge of what to change is certainly necessary, it is not sufficient for self-change. Something else is needed; e.g., the motivation to change. It is important to know as much as possible about stress management, stress theory and practice before commencing your program. Ultimately, it is crucial to know how to facilitate desired knowledge, behavior, and attitude change in each person. Use this manual as a template or guide to help you help others to make the change needed to become more stress resilient.
Stress, stress management and stress theory are linked and evolving concepts. Trainers should be very familiar with the current books and concepts on stress theory. The following chapters deal with our interpretation of the concept of stress and stressmastery. Other resources on stress can be found at your library, bookstore or, of course, the Internet.

Following is some general information, values, orientation and focus that may assist you in our programs. We have found in our Stressmastery programs that it is important to help participants understand that stress is a learned response to stressor situations. And, more importantly, that they can do something about how they respond to stressors.

As a learned response, what is learned can be unlearned or a new attitude or behavior learned to replace an inappropriate stress response. We focus on teaching that the stress response is the result of how each of us has been programed (learned) to interpret, perceive and respond to life stressors. But...taking responsibility for dealing how one responds to those stressors, both at work and home, is essential to decreasing negative and potentially damaging stress reactions. This is called “Being on the Road to Stressmastery”.

Stressmastery is based on the principles of “cognitive” psychology and more recently the concept of Mindfulness. However, other many other approaches, philosophies and concepts are employed throughout. We believe that the best stressmastery programs incorporate one’s own philosophy and approach, coupled with a good understanding of the stressmastery concepts and principles.

Some nontraditional stress management areas come from the business world and many of these content areas are very fruitful for use in stressmastery programs. Some areas to consider are management theory, communication skills, time management, and team building. If you are not familiar with these areas, you might begin to learn more about them and, as appropriate, consider adding selective topics to your training arsenal. In the business world, a considerable amount of stress is often created when employees are deficient in these areas. Because of the size and extensiveness of these topics, this manual will not focus specifically on these areas in any great detail. Abundant resources exist in your local library or bookstore.

Each STRESSMASTER program incorporates much of the latest developments in stress theory relating to psychological hardiness and the stress resistant personality theory. The concept of psychological hardiness has been developed from research on the relationship between personality factors and behavioral styles on health.
Stress Management Questionnaire (SMQ)

Following is a brief discussion of the Stress Management Questionnaire (SMQ) as it pertains to stress management programs. Greater detail will be found in later Chapters. As you know, change occurs when we know and understand on what behaviors and attitudes to focus. Therefore, self-assessment, whether formally through assessment tools or informally through introspection and self-evaluation, is central to helping one make the changes necessary for successful living.

The Stress Management Questionnaire (SMQ) is the stress self-assessment tool used in our programs. Developed by Dr. James Petersen in 1976, the SMQ is based on years of research and applied use by professionals throughout the world. The SMQ is now the cornerstone of our stressmastery programs. We encourage you to integrate the SMQ into your program as it will help guide participants to a better understanding of oneself. Ultimately, the SMQ can facilitate positive behavior and attitude change.

The SMQ is not a psychological test; it is a mirror of how we are currently dealing, or not dealing, with life’s stressors. It is but a general index of the stress one is experiencing and how well he or she is mastering personal stressors at this time! The SMQ is designed to help individuals better understand the nature of stress and the role stress plays in one’s life. Given the use of the information provided, facilitated by good coaching from trainers or other mental health professionals, each person can become better equipped to improve the way they actually respond to life’s stressors.

Background. In 1980, as a result of a grant from the National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety (NIOSH), the SMQ went through a year long validation process. Seven key stressmastery scales were identified as indicators of negative stress effects. These seven key scales called the 7 STRESS WARNING or “Risk” SIGNS comprised the core SMQ scales. Subsequently, four additional scales were added; i.e., Stressor Scales (Life Events & Hassles) and Stress Effects (Physical & Emotional).

The SMQ help over 600,000 people to identify their stress warning signs and learn how to master stress on a daily basis. The SMQ is a self-assessment and educational tool that can help people to live a less stressed life. Following are the 11 SMQ Scales and additional information about the SMQ.
SMQ SCALES

STRESS WARNING SIGNS
Hostility/Anger
Perfectionism
Negative Mood
Time Orientation
Tension
Under-Achievement
Disappointment

STRESSOR SCALES
Major Life Events
Hassles

STRESS EFFECTS SCALES
Life Work Satisfaction
Physical Effects

The SMQ consists of two main parts; the SMQ - Participant and the SMQ Companion Forms. First, the SMQ - Participant Form is divided into five parts:

Assessment
Profile
Interpretive Guide
Contract for Change
Resources

After completing the questionnaire, each person scores and profiles his or her results using an easy-to-understand graphing process found in the PROFILE SECTION (pp 9-12). of the SMQ. Each scale score is then compared to the norm group and, if one is used, data from the SMQ - Companion Form.
Stressmastery Guide

The STRESSMASTERY GUIDE is included in the SMQ Participant Form and contains key information about each scale. The Guide is also available as PDF or in Print for use with the Online SMQ. The Guide is used to assist the learner to better understand themselves, how they are currently mastering stress and what to do about stress problems---should they occur. This Guide also provides detailed information and suggestions about effective stressmastery strategies and techniques. Each person can then develop a self-change program based on the information from the SMQ.

SMQ PRINT FORMS

There are two forms of the print version of the SMQ. The main one is the SMQ - Participant Form. The second, optional form, is the SMQ - Companion Form.

SMQ Participant Form - In order to fully understand the SMQ, we suggest you complete the SMQ Participant Form prior to conducting your stressmastery program. Study it carefully. Thorough familiarity with this instrument is crucial to the successful use of the SMQ with program participants. The SMQ - Participant Form is typically completed by the training program participant. However, in a wellness clinic, EAP program or other counseling session, the SMQ can be given as best determine by the counselor.

SMQ Companion Form - The Companion Form can be completed “about the participant” by a spouse, family member, co-worker, or close friend, thus giving a unique “second opinion” of the person. This information can be very helpful by providing the participant with another point of view of how he or she is mastering stress. The SMQ Companion Form may be taken home, completed in private, and then scored and discussed later in the group or individually.
SMQ Score Card

Another component of the SMQ is the SMQ Score Card. The **SMQ SCORE CARD** is located in two places; i.e., at the end of the SMQ Printed Booklet and in Chapter 10 of this manual. The Score Card will assist participants to record how well they think they are mastering stress for each SMQ area. Essentially, the score card is an important feedback tool and is used as part of a stressmastery program. After each SMQ area is presented and discussed in your program, participants should “score” themselves using the **Score Card** on that particular area.

In subsequent chapters, you will be guided as to when to use the **Score Card** with the participants. One approach is to ask participants to evaluate themselves only after an area is presented. Review the **SCORE CARD** and have it ready for use later. Take a look at the Score Card. Note, on the left side of the **Score Card** you will see the three major stress risk areas:

- **7 STRESS WARNING SIGNS**
- **STRESSORS**
- **STRESS EFFECTS**

Across the top of the Score Card are three areas:

- **YOUR GUESS ABOUT YOURSELF**
- **SCORES FROM YOUR SMQ**
- **SCORES FROM COMPANION’S SMQ**

Each of these areas is completed by participants in order to provide a perspective of a) their **intuitive** view of themselves (Your Guess About Yourself), b) an **objective** view (Scores From Your SMQ) and c) an **alternative** point of view (Scored from the Companion’s SMQ). The purpose of the **SMQ SCORE CARD** is to help participants decide on what areas they want to focus.

As participants go through the program, even before they have actually scored their SMQs, their first task will be to make a **guess** as to where they think they “stand” in each of the areas. This “forces” them to think about each areas. They should not be asked to guess until after they have been given a better understanding of the concept being presented such as Anger, Perfectionism, etc. Only ask participants to make their guess after presenting information on each SMQ area. Then, once participants have scored their own SMQ and, if available, the **SMQ Companion Form**, they can enter into the scores (High, Medium or Low) in places provided.

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It is human nature not to change. Yet, we have found that making a commitment to oneself can be an important step toward ultimate change and maintenance of that change. The SMQ SCORE CARD can be found in Chapter 10 or page 31 of the SMQ Participant Form. Please take a moment to review the Contract for Change. This tool can help participants develop a personal commitment to making one change in their behavior or attitude that will improve how they master stress. You may want to have each person complete the entire contract for change at the end of the program.
Integrating The SMQ Into Your Program

In general, there are many ways to use the SMQ in your stress management program. The most common way is to present and score it during the course of the program. Administration time for the actual questionnaire is about 10-15 minutes depending on the size, motivation, and level of functioning of your group. Scoring the SMQ should take about 10-15 minutes. After the administration and scoring of the SMQ, the balance of the program is devoted to integrating the information from this manual and the SMQ into your paradigm so that participants will be able to use the information in their daily lives.

Alternatively, the SMQ can be completed prior to the program. Now, you will have two choices. First, you can have them complete the SMQ but not score it. Or, you can save time and have them complete and score the SMQ prior to the program. There are pros and cons for each approach.

The disadvantage to having participants complete the SMQ prior to the program is that those who forget their questionnaires will have to retake them during the program. This can interrupt the flow of the program. We prefer to administer and score the SMQ during the program. By so doing, everyone will be “on the same page” and there will be no interruption in program flow.

If you give the SMQ to program participants prior to the program, provide clear instructions to score or not score, as the case may be, before attending the program. We like to lead the person through the various areas, so we almost always hand out and complete the SMQ in the program. However, if you do want them to do the assessment before coming in, you can One seal off the Scoring and Interpretive Section a small round sticky tab, found in Staples or Office Max, over the Scoring and Interpretation sections of the SMQ. Just instruct the participants to answer the questions but do not break the tab until the program. Not only does this create a heightened sense of interest, but it promotes a stronger level of involvement from the participants.

Note, if the SMQ - Companion Form is also used, instruct the participants to not review or look at the responses from their companion until the program. In your written instructions to the companion, ask the companion to put his or her name on the form and then place the completed SMQ in a sealed envelope. The envelope can then be given to the participant to bring to the program.
Establishing Program Goals and Objectives.

“Fail to Plan, Plan to Fail”

It is essential to establish clear participant goals and objectives before you start developing program content. Without clear goals and objectives, it is very easy to let your program proceed in a random or unwanted direction. The end result will be a program which does not meet the needs of your group or yourself.

GOALS

Before you can develop specific objectives, establish a clear set of goals for your program. Goals are global targets toward which you will be focusing your energies and program activities. They should be measurable and behavioral. If you cannot see a goal when it is completed, it is not a goal.

For each program goal, there will be several objectives. Likewise, for each objective, there will be several activities. The following section will help you to articulate your goals and objectives. Ultimately your goals should be specific to helping each person become better STRESSMASTER. The most effective goals are simple statements that measurable outcomes.
STRESSMASTERY GOALS

1. ______________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

2. ______________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

3. ______________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

4. ______________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

5. ______________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

6. ______________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

7. ______________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

8. ______________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
For each program goal, establish several specific objectives that will lead to the successful completion of each goal. When your objectives are met, the goal is achieved. Following are some objectives which have been used in our programs.

At the end of the program, participants will be able to...

...understand the basic concepts of stress, stress management and stress management theory and will gain an understanding of the concept of Psychological Hardiness and the Stressmastery.

...understand how well they are mastering stress by completing and scoring the SMQ.

...identify and develop a plan to work on key stressors in their work and home environment.

...understand the relationship between stressors and stress response.

...know the importance of practicing good stress management as part of maintaining and improving the quality of their life.

...know and use at least four positive stress management techniques in their daily work and home lives.

...know how to access the key stress management resources in the company and community.

...set reasonable goals for practicing and using one of the techniques or ideas presented.

Use the following OBJECTIVES WORKSHEET to guide you in your design efforts.
## PROGRAM OBJECTIVES WORKSHEET
(Copy this sheet as needed)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOAL # ____</th>
<th>____________________________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective #1:</td>
<td>____________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective #2:</td>
<td>____________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective #3:</td>
<td>____________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective #4:</td>
<td>____________________________________________</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective #5:</td>
<td>____________________________________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective #6:</td>
<td>____________________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
There are a wide variety of program goals and objectives that one could set. However, before presenting specific program outlines one might follow in a stressmastery program, the following is a presentation of some of the implications of overall program structure for a program.

Program balance refers to being diversified and not relying solely on only one form of training. Avoid having too much lecture and not enough experiential learning or AV presentations in a program. Effective stressmastery training programs have some balance based upon the needs of the group. One of the biggest mistakes made is to focus on just one style of program process. An example would be a program that is primarily experiential in nature; i.e., one that uses Autogenics, deep relaxation, deep breathing, and self-hypnosis to the exclusion of other types of training processes.

While such experiential programs can be interesting and valuable, they may tend to miss a crucial element of stress management; i.e., helping people to take responsibility for how they think and behave. Changing thinking, attitudinal and behavioral patterns should be a part of a comprehensive stress program.

Consider mixing experiential exercises with discussion and paper-and-pencil activities. Start with an exercise at the very beginning of the program and then move to some discussion, followed by a self-exploration activity such as completing the Stress Management Questionnaire. After this cycle, conduct another exercise followed by discussion or some other type of activity.

Along with program balance, consider the appropriateness of offering different types of content. If you only have a short period of time available, then be careful to target the content to the specific needs of the group. Since you only have a limited amount of time to make your presentation, it is easy to get off-track and windup not meeting the needs of the group. A quick needs assessment can insure a well presented short program.

When dealing with a homogeneous group, such as all first line supervisors or executives, it is easy to gear the program to meet their unique needs and desires. A program for supervisors, for example, can focus on the unique pressures they face. Likewise program for senior managers can focus on ways to communicate more effectively with staff and junior managers.
Needs Assessment

Regardless of the diversity of the group, the value of a thorough needs assessment prior to the program is usually very importance. If possible, consider conducting a needs assessment of the managers, supervisors and staff prior even starting to designing your program. Perhaps you can do a survey/interviews of the group or department. Not only will you learn where the stressors are within the organization, you will build a rapport and trust with the various employees and managers. If this is your first time working with this group, or if you have had limited contact, a needs assessment builds trust and will help to improve your program.

Spend the time necessary to talk with employees and pay particular attention to those individuals that are likely to participate in the program. Find out the hot issues, concerns, and challenges facing them. Look for themes or trends in what is told to you. However, never presume you know what is actually causing the organizational stress. Likewise, it is not advisable to take sides with any of the employees on emotional issues presented. Ask them what they want to see in the program and put some of the content and suggestions into your design.

Program length is usually dictated by stress need, time and budget. However, except for motivational lectures, a minimum length program is typically four hours in length. Research has shown that the more effective programs run between 12 and 16 hours. If your primary goal is education and attitude change oriented, then a four to hour program will work fine. Do not expect everyone to make big changes. Small changes are best and, in fact, most likely to occur in short programs. If you want to obtain more substantial change, consider a 12 or 16 hour program conducted over four or six weeks, respectively. Each week the program could last about two hours and could be designed to build upon personal “homework” experience.

Short and Long Programs

It is usually better in short programs to demonstrate only one, or possibly, two physical stress reduction techniques. Focus on helping participants gain some awareness of stress concepts and theory and, through the SMQ, a better understanding of their personal stressmastery skills. Additionally, present only one or two STRESSMASTER strategies in depth. Other strategies and approaches can and should be discussed, but focus most of your time on just one.
LONGER PROGRAMS

When designing longer programs, the focus can be expanded to include more stress reduction exercises and experiences. Stressmastery is a combination of learning how to respond to life’s hassles and stressors, as well as finding ways to bring stress levels down. However, we do not recommend that stressmastery programs become only deep breathing, Autogenics, and yoga exercises. These are excellent techniques, and should be incorporated in to most stressmastery programs. Yet, they are only one part of total stressmastery program. Calming techniques such deep breathing, Autogenics, yoga or meditation are excellent and a necessary part of every stressmastery program, yet they remain still only a part of a total program. As you will recall, stressmastery is about retraining how we react to stressors, not just reducing stress after it has occurred.

Expectations

One of the goals of most stress management programs is to engage participants in two or three physical stress reduction techniques such as deep breathing, meditation or progressive realization in order to familiarize them with the purpose and intent of each. With this knowledge, they can choose to develop their expertise in any of these areas at a later date. Our Basic Stressmastery programs are not designed to make participants “experts” in these areas, but to show various ways of bringing stress levels down. Participants’ expectations for any program should be kept to a realistic level since few people can develop stressmastery skills in a four to eight hour stress management program. Therefore, set expectations to a realistic level.

When using physical stress reduction techniques, trainers should become proficient in each stress reduction techniques that will be used in the program. Train with persons experienced in the techniques you desire learn and practice your presentation skill extensively. The primary way to develop the skill of delivering a good experiential program is to learn and practice each exercise many times with feedback from a coach person. We recommend becoming proficient in each technique employed. However, if you are not trained in a given area such as mediation, bring in a local expert for those sessions.

Not all facilitators area trained, for example, in Yoga or Tai Chi. Find a good Yoga or mediation professional and asked that they come in at the proper time to showcase their approach. Ask them to hand out their business cards so that interested participants may contact him or her at later date for more training. They will be love the referrals.
Another key area that we add to longer stressmastery programs is a component on how to deal with organizational and managerial stress. Chapter 8 focuses on managerial and corporate issues and concepts in greater depth.

Most executives and managers need to recognize that they are in large part the source or cause of the employee stress and distress. Managers can be extremely powerful stressors! As a stressor, their behavior toward others should be examined and, if necessary, moderated. Managers should become aware of and recognize that the cost of employee and organizational stress and dis-stress is expensive and damaging to the individual as well as the financial and morale condition of the organization. Many companies use stress management to help individuals within the organization to master stress, but it is important to look at the role of managers and supervisors, also.

While stress management programs are necessary to help each person master stress on a personal level, it is unrealistic to assume that changing the employee is the only thing that need to be done. The other side of the issue is the change required at the organizational level. Throughout stressmastery programs we work to help the individual change who wants to make a change, but we are always alert to ways to improve the functioning of the total organization.

In the following pages you will find some general outlines for stressmastery programs. Use them, as needed, to design your own stressmastery program. These are only guides. If you have a program in place that reflects your philosophy and approach to stress management, the SMQ can easily be integrated. As you will learn, the SMQ is based on modern stress management theory and practice and, as such, has universal appeal.

How many psychologists does it take to change a light bulb?
One...but the light bulb must really want to change.”
STRESS MANAGEMENT: BECOMING PSYCHOLOGICALLY HARDY

Ice Breaker Exercise - e.g. Stress Bingo

PART I: THE PROGRAM

A. OVERVIEW OF THE SESSION

a. Introductions
b. Review of Goals and Objectives of the Session
c. Moving toward Psychological Hardiness
d. Answer Questions and Set Expectations

PART II: ABOUT STRESS AND YOU

A. THE NATURE OF STRESS

a. Stress Definitions
b. Stress Metaphors/similes
c. Stress: TIGER or LAMB!
d. Stress Distress

B. ADMINISTER THE STRESS MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRES
C. STRESS REDUCER #1: DEEP BREATHING
D. STRESSORS, STRESS RESPONSE AND STRESS EFFECTS

1. STRESSORS - What are they?
   a. External vs Internal
   b. Major Events vs Daily Hassles
   c. What are Your Stressors?
2. STRESS RESPONSE

   a. Fight or Flight Response
   b. How Do You Respond to Stress?

3. STRESS EFFECTS

   a. Physiological Effects
   b. Emotional Effects
   c. What are Your Effects of Stress?

PART III: STRESS WARNING SIGNS & SELF ASSESSMENT

A. RED FLAGS: 7 STRESS WARNING SIGNS
B. SCORING THE STRESS MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRES (SMQs)
C. INTERPRETING THE STRESS MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRES (SMQs)

(Limit presentation of this material to the remaining time available)

PART IV: STRESSMASTERY

A. STRESS REDUCER #2: AUTOGENICS
B. STRESS MANAGEMENT: 4 EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES
C. BECOMING PSYCHOLOGICALLY HARDY
D. CONTRACT FOR CHANGE: MAKING A PERSONAL COMMITMENT

Focus your efforts on those aspects of the program that you identify as most important for your group!
STRESS MANAGEMENT: BECOMING A STRESSMASTER

Icebreaker Exercises

PART I: THE PROGRAM

A. OVERVIEW OF THE SESSION
   a. Introductions and Icebreaker Exercise
   b. Review of Goals and Objectives of the Session
   c. Moving toward Stressmastery
   d. Answer questions and set expectations

PART II: ABOUT STRESS AND YOU

A. THE NATURE OF STRESS
   a. Stress Definitions
   b. Stress Metaphors/similes
   c. Stress: TIGER or LAMB!
   d. Stress Or Distress

B. ADMINISTER THE STRESS MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRES

C. STRESS REDUCER #1: Example: DEEP BREATHING

D. STRESSORS, STRESS RESPONSE AND STRESS EFFECTS

   1. STRESSORS
      a. External vs Internal
      b. Major Events vs Daily Hassles
      c. What are Your Stressors?

   2. STRESS RESPONSE
      a. Fight or Flight Response
      b. How Do You Respond to Stress?
3. STRESS EFFECTS
   a. Physiological Effects
   b. Emotional Effects
   c. What are Your Effects of Stress?

E. STRESS BREAK

PART III: STRESS WARNING SIGNS & SELF ASSESSMENT

A. RED FLAGS: 7 STRESS WARNING SIGNS
B. SCORING THE STRESS MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRES (SMQs)
C. INTERPRETING THE STRESS MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRES (SMQs)
D. STRESS REDUCER EXERCISE #2 - Example: YOGA or MEDITATION

PART IV: STRESS MANAGEMENT

A. STRESS MANAGEMENT: 4 EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES -PART I
B. STRESS REDUCER #3: Example: AUTOGENICS
C. BREAK
D. STRESS MANAGEMENT: PART II
E. BECOMING PSYCHOLOGICALLY HARDY
F. CONTRACT FOR CHANGE: MAKING A PERSONAL COMMITMENT
G. STRESS RESOURCES
“MASTERING STRESS: KEYS TO RESILIENCE”

NOTE: In many programs that last at least a day, it is a good idea to bring in massage therapists to do “10 minute tune-ups”. They will do this at no cost to you since they will be looking to get referrals and business from helping out. In general, most of the people doing mediation, yoga, Tai Chi and other specific stress reduction techniques will do so for the marketing benefit alone. However, you may want to compensate those that do a major portion of the workshop. Choice is up to you.

Agenda

7:00 - 8:00 Optional Tai Chi in the Garden (All welcome to arrive early and Experience Tai Chi by a master. Start the day off right.

8:00 – 8:30 Check In - Coffee/Juice/Fruit

8:30 – 8:40 Tune Up Presentation #1 – Stretch, Deep Breathing Exercise Alternative: Do an Ice Breaking Exercise of Your Choice in addition or as a replacement

8:40 – 9:00 Stressmastery What is Stressmastery and Psychologically Hardiness.

9:00 – 10:00 What is Stress? How does stress affect you? Stress Theory as it pertains to a particular population for example, teachers, managers, nurses, etc. Last 15 minutes devoted to a group discussion of the unique Stressors affecting nurses.

10:00 – 10:05 Stress Break - Deep Breathing Exercise or select another type of exercise with which you are familiar

10:05– 10:20 Break Coffee/Juice (During each break, offer massages or reflexology experiences)
10:20 – 11:30 Reducing Stress - Meditation – Learn how to use Meditation to prepare for the day and keep stress levels low

11:30-12:00 7 Stress Warning Signs - Intro to the SMQ – Focus: The 7 Stress Warning Signs from the SMQ

12:00-1:00 Lunch is Served - Provide a Key Note speaker if desired

1:00 – 1:05 Energy Pickup - Provide an Energy Exercise such as Stretch and Movement. After lunch, participants need to be re-energized.

1:05– 2:05 SMQ Feedback - Continuation of the previous session on the SMQ and Handout of each person’s SMQ Report - Note you can spend as much time as you like on the report but generally, the report is often taken home and personally evaluated. If you are seeking new clients, we suggest setting up an appointment to go over the report and discuss personal issues on a 1:1 basis.

2:05 – 3:20 Mastering Stress - How to master stress at work. Presentation and group discussion of the ABC Model of Cognitive/Behavioral Intervention Plus the 4 Steps to Stressmastery Note: if you have an approach of philosophy on how to master stress, please integrate into the program at this point. Adjust time as necessary.

3:20 – 3:35 Break Coffee/Juice (During each break, offer massages or reflexology experiences)

3:35 – 4:15 Small Groups - Break out into small groups to tackle two or three stress problems at work and to develop strategies to master

4:15 -4:40 Feedback from Small group report to large group


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Following are examples of some of the types of content that has been used in our Stressmastery programs. Much of the details for each area comes later in this manual and can be adopted as needed.

- The 3 key principles of stress theory you should know.
- The 7 major stress risk indicators and what to do about them
- 11 Stressors you can change and how to change them.
- The 4 strategies Stressmasters use to master stress and when to use them.
- The 3 personality characteristics of psychologically hardy people.
- Highly successful approaches to Stressmastery.

The heart of STRESSMASTERS is the Stress Management Questionnaire (SMQ™). Each person will complete, score and interpret their personal Stressmaster Profile during the course of our program. Prior to the Program, each person complete Stress Management Questionnaire (SMQ) via the Internet. At the workshop, each person will be provided with his or her own copy of the results along with the Interpretive Guide. By taking the SMQ participants gain important insights about how well they are mastering life’s stressors at this time.

Stress Reduction Programs

There are many ways to reduce stress. Some of the more common ones are...

MEDITATION - How to calming your inner stress to increase focus and success
MINDFULNESS - How to live in the moment or “now”
YOGA - How to bringing your body into balanced both physically and mentally
DEEP RELAXATION - How to reduce body tension and high stress level
EXERCISE - Simple exercises to burn away the negative effects of stress hormones
DIET AND NUTRITION - Foods that can boost mood, stress vitamins and more.
AROMATHERAPY - How scents can influence mood
TAI CHI - How to integrate a 2000 year old method for centering ourselves each day.
SELF-HYPNOSIS - How to reprogram your mind to master stress on a daily basis
CHAPTER 2: ABOUT STRESS
CHAPTER 2:
ABOUT STRESS

Following are the core components of the STRESSMASTER™ STRESS MANAGEMENT PROGRAM. This chapter showcases the how to present stress management programs for small to large corporations and what is valuable information and experiential exercises.

Effective stress management programs tend cover the material which follows along with experiential exercises to help one to lower and reduce stress. As you design your program, consider varying the order and content to reflect your skills and knowledge as well as the needs of the group.

About Ice Breakers

Most trainers have a few ice breaker exercises which they can call upon to “warm” the group and get discussion going. If your program is going to be longer than four (4) hours, you should spend at least 15 minutes getting to know your group and doing an ice breaker exercise. Shorter programs should only take about 5 to 10 minutes.

Introduce yourself and have the group identify who they are and where they are from. If you have a “ice breaker” you use, now is a good time to warm up the group.

Now, that you have their attention and interest, review the goals and objectives of the program so that they can know what to expect. Go over the major topics of the program, what they will be doing, learning and experiencing. Plus, what they can expect to gain from the program.

PSYCHOLOGICAL HARDINESS and STRESSMASTERY.

Stressmastery is about becoming Psychological Hardy. Stressmastery is a path, goal or “trek” toward which many people what to go. Stressmastery is all about psychological “mental” strength and resiliency. Our program is designed to guide each person in developing an awareness of how to “Walk the Path of Stressmastery”.

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Following are some key areas and ideas you might want to incorporate into your program. In general, you might make the following points...

- STRESSMASTERS function better, think more clearly, feel better, probably live longer, and are more relaxed about life’s challenges and problems than the vast majority of people worldwide. If you do not think you are handling your personal life stressors as well as you would like to handle them, then this program can help.

- Emphasize that later in the session you will be exposed in greater detail to the core concepts of Psychological Hardiness, and what personality factors differentiate survivors from non-survivors. For now, consider whether becoming more stress resistant is what you want for yourself. If it is, then I think this program will prove valuable for you. At the conclusion you will know the THREE C’s of PSYCHOLOGICAL HARDINESS. The three C’s relate to three (3) personality attributes which Psychologically Hardy people seem to posses more than those who are not as hardy.

- Ask if anyone has any questions, concerns, or special needs that should be addressed in the next four hours! Discuss each area as appropriate.

**DEFINE STRESS**

Suggest to the group that stress can be defined in many ways and from many points of view. Ask participants to give you their definition of stress. Invite several different definitions and reinforce (recognize) the person for offering his or her suggestions. Ask the group to define stress. Use questions like these to promote discussion.

- What is your perception of stress?
- How do you define it?
- What does it look like?
- How does it feel?
- How do you know when you are under excessive stressors?
- How do you know when others are experiencing stress?
After hearing from the group, present each of the following after they have shared their view of stress with you.

“STRESS OCCURS WHEN WE EXPERIENCE A SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WHAT WE EXPECT AND WHAT THE WORLD GIVES US!”

“STRESS IS THE RESULT OF A REACTION TO A STRESSOR!”

“STRESS IS A STATE OF IMBALANCE OR DISEQUILIBRIUM WITHIN OUR BODY!”

“STRESS IS A RESPONSE OF THE BODY TO A THREAT. THIS RESPONSE IS THE FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE!”

Point out that stress is a response or reaction to a stressor. Stress is a state of imbalance within us...physically and emotionally. Stress is the fight or flight reaction. Stress is often a problem of unrealistic expectations!
We use a Metaphor/Simile Exercise to get people thinking about stress. Metaphors have a way of revealing the underlying approach people take to stress. Some are very negative and reveals the person is not doing well and really needs the program or, possibly, help from a professional. Other people come up with metaphors that are more hopeful and positive.

Exercise - Have the participants write a metaphor or simile that expresses how they perceive and think about stress and to help others to “see” what stress means to each other. If one can draw, then they can even show their metaphor pictorially.

Examples of Metaphors

“Stress is like a Fire that sucks all the energy from me”

“Stress is energizing and like a tank of gas...gets me going.”

“Stress is a knife that slices through me, whenever I think of my boss standing over me”

Whatever comes mind, write it down. There are no right or wrong answers. Tell them to have some fun with these but also to try to represent how they see stress. Recommend that they think about stress in terms...SIGHT - SOUND - SMELL - TOUCH. These can be written down on “butcher paper” and posted around the room. Assign someone to do the writing. Keep them up during the workshop if space permits.

Ask for volunteers to share their metaphors or similes with the group. Point out that...

• Stress is very individualistic.
• Stress can be perceived in different sensory areas ..taste, sight, sound...etc.
• Stress can be both positively or negatively viewed.
• Metaphors and similes are ways to make an abstract idea more real.

These metaphors are very close to representing our perceptions, and they should be taken as important indicators of how we view our own personal stress.
IF A METAPHOR IS VERY NEGATIVE, CHALLENGE THEM TO TRY AND SEE THEIR STRESS IN A MORE POSITIVE WAY.

Discuss how stress can be one of the best or worst things that ever happened to them. It can be their friend or foe. Ask the group to think about ways in which stress is both their FRIEND (Good) and FOE (Bad) and to give some examples of Good and Bad stress. Get some group discussion going before continuing.

GOOD STRESS

Start with Good Stress and write down their ideas on the flip chart. You can use the following as a guide to providing them with feedback and add whatever you feel is appropriate. Point out that, however one looks at it, stress is a part of life. Without stress, nothing would happen; cities would not be built; businesses would not be established; and, people would not be able to defend themselves against intruders or natural disasters.

Stress can be our friend and of great value. Some feel that stress is the spice of life. However, stress in proper amounts lifts spirits, enriches lives, optimizes health, and improves creativity; however, too little or too much stress can be a problem for most of us!

• MOBILIZES US AND PREPARES US TO PERFORM WELL.

• ENABLES US TO ACHIEVE OPTIMUM PERFORMANCE.

• FEELS GOOD AND RESULTS IN A HEALTHY STATE OF MIND AND BEING.

• PRODUCES OPTIMUM HEALTH.

• ENHANCES CREATIVITY.

Point out that without excessive or chronic stress, people would live more healthy and satisfying lives, with less disease, illness and have longer lives. Overall, the quality of live is improved.
HARMFUL STRESS

Ask the group to identify when stress can be harmful and in what ways. Point out that excessive stress, or Distress, can damage immune systems thereby allowing for the increased possibility of illness and disease to spread.

In addition, with too much stress, performance decreases and accidents increase. One of the most common ways to deal with this stress is to take various substances or chemicals to “self-medicate” our stress. Chemicals used include: alcohol, cocaine, nicotine, caffeine, antidepressants, mood elevators, and tranquilizers.

Following are some examples of “BAD or HARMFUL STRESS”. Present some or all of these after the group has shared with you some of their ideas.

- PRODUCES POOR PERFORMANCE AND INCREASES ERRORS.
- FEELS BAD AND CREATES FEELINGS OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION.
- RESULTS IN THE BREAKDOWN OF THE BODY AND DISEASE.
- IS DESTRUCTIVE AND DAMAGING TO OURSELVES AND OTHERS.
- HINDERS OR REDUCES CREATIVITY.

Expand on this area. Ask, what else does “bad stress” cause? It is important that each person learns to identify whether stress is “good” or “bad” for themselves. No one can tell another if stress is good or bad for them. Only the person him or herself.
GENERAL ADAPTATION SYNDROME (GAS)

According to Selye, this is our early warning sign that we need to manage stress better. Build on the concept of “bad” stress by presenting the concept of...STRESS vs DISTRESS and use Hans Selye’s General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS):

ALARM

RESISTANCE

EXHAUSTION

PHASE ONE: The ALARM REACTION. During this phase the body prepares itself to defend against the stressor (physical or emotional).

PHASE TWO: The body moves into an active RESISTANCE PHASE where it fights to keep the body in balance. This can be a long, protracted phase often covering months or years in chronic stress situations.

PHASE THREE: If the stressors don’t go away, the individual does not stow dwelling on a problem, or the person does not learn positive stress management techniques, the EXHAUSTION PHASE can set in and the body may begin to break down. In the most severe case, chronic illnesses and early death can occur. Summary of Harmful Stress

• DISTRESS is reaching the exhaustion phase. It is at this time when people, actually all animals, begin to fail physically.

• COPING occurs most effectively at the RESISTANCE phase.

• PHYSICAL and EMOTIONAL signs begin to occur when RESISTANCE begins to break down and not work as effectively.

• EMPHASIZE that the stress response is a very normal reaction and should be understood and managed but not avoided.
CHAPTER 3:
STRESSORS, STRESS RESPONSE & STRESS EFFECTS
CHAPTER 3:
STRESSORS, STRESS RESPONSE &
STRESS EFFECTS

Define and discuss the three (3) important components of STRESS THEORY. After a brief overview of each of the areas below, we recommend you present and discuss each of the following areas in greater detail.

STRESSORS

Ask the group if they can tell you what STRESSORS are. If they can give you a reasonable definition, then proceed. If they cannot define what STRESSORS are, then give them the definition below.

Have each person write down some of the stressors they experience at work, home and with friends. These can be put on flip chart or white board when the are shared with the larger group.

As an alternative, you can simply have group openly share and discuss their stressors. As facilitator, simply write down the stressors as they are produced on the board.

In group discussion, you can use the analogy that anything can be a stressor; for example, a pencil is normally not a Stressor. However, a RED PENCIL in the hands of an examiner or in the grasp of an upset person who is attempting to hurt you, it immediately becomes a strong, negative stressor.
WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF EXTERNAL STRESSORS.

Following are some of the responses you are likely to get:

- SOMEONE YELLING OR SCREAMING AT YOU
- RUNNING OVER YOUR CHILD’S BIKE
- DEATH OF A ONE
- DIVORCE OR MARRIAGE
- NOT FINDING THINGS YOU NEED
- TOO MUCH NOISE
- TOO COLD OR HOT

What other external stressors can you or the group identify? Go as long as necessary to get the group to expand on these. Key points...

- **STRESSORS** are events, people or thoughts that we PERCEIVE are in some way threatening to us.

- **STRESSORS** are very personal to each of us, and it is a mistake to assume that what is a stressor for one person is automatically a stressor for someone else.

**Explain The Two Main Types of Stressors**

Take the group a little deeper into understanding Stressors. We have divided stressors into two categories of Stressors: External and Internal Stressors. It is important for each participant to be able to know and identify where the stressor is coming from and that our thinking and thoughts are as much a stressor as loss of a job or running out of gas on the freeway.

Each of these two areas are assessed via the Stress Management Questionnaire so that when they get their results, they will be familiar with the concept.
On a flip chart or PowerPoint, write the following:

#1 - EXTERNAL STRESSORS

A) HASSLES
B) MAJOR LIFE EVENTS

#2 - INTERNAL STRESSORS

A) THOUGHTS
B) PERCEPTIONS

EXTERNAL STRESSORS

HASSLES - THE CHANGEABLE ONES

Point out that some External Stressors such as Hassles are “outside of our bodies” and may be prevented or at least highly influenced to not repeat themselves. External stressors can be modified by people taking action to cause them not to reoccur. Since little in life is directly controllable in our lives, suggest to the group that they avoid thinking that we can really control life events or even other’s behavior without skilled intervention. When you get into the Strategies for Mastering Stress section, we will present several ways to cause Stressors to not to be repeated.

Share some examples of preventable Hassles are such being late for an appointment, loosing files and reports, financial loss due to overspending, car breakdown due to not taking care of your car, worry about failing, etc.

The key is that these stressors are called Hassles because they are largely under our potential influence and can be altered or changed. We can, with good communication, be changed or prevented.

Ask the group to identify some Hassles over which they believe they have some influence or control in there lives. Have them focus on work related Hassles if this is a stressmastery program in a work environment or, if it is a more public workshop, you should include family and social Hassles. See the section in the STRESS MANAGEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE called Events or Concerns for more ideas on hassles.
MAJOR LIFE EVENTS-THE UNCHANGEABLE ONES!!

Ask the group to tell you the difference between HASSLES and MAJOR LIFE EVENTS. After they have given you their answer, point out that in contrast to Hassles, some stressors are virtually not modifiable and cannot be prevented or changed. These stressors happen for reasons often not related to each of us. They are called MAJOR LIFE EVENTS because they are of major stress impact and are mostly totally out of our control. Most of these will not be work related except for events such as loss of employment, demotion or salary reduction.

Find out what types of stressors are unchangeable? Some examples to use include: illness, marriage of your children, divorce, death, financial problems. See the Section in the Stress Management Questionnaire called LIFE EVENTS for additional ideas.

Ask the group to write down on their work sheets some examples of MAJOR LIFE EVENTS. Have them share these with the group. In many cases, these stressors are not likely to repeat themselves because of their unique nature. Ask the group to think about the degree to which they have some influence or “control” over these events or situations.

Key Concepts:

• Hassles are often more critical to stress than major life events?
  ASK: Why might this be so?

• Internal stressors are thoughts. Thoughts are one of the few things we have direct control over, even though it doesn’t seem like we have control.

• Major life events are best dealt with through a process of acceptance.
INTERNAL STRESSORS

EXAMPLES OF INTERNAL STRESSORS:

• WORRY ABOUT A FUTURE INTERACTION
• DWELLING ON A PAST EVENT
• EXAGGERATING A NEGATIVE PERSONAL ATTRIBUTE
• THINKING ABOUT ONLY NEGATIVE THINGS
• FEAR OF (Anything goes here)
• OVERWORKING A TASK IN YOUR MIND

Ask the group...

Can you expand on these?
Which of these two areas is under our direct control? Why?
What does this suggest for stress management?
What do we tend to do to control our EXTERNAL STRESSORS?“

Key Concepts:

• INTERNAL STRESSORS (thoughts) are more under our control than are external stressors.

• EXTERNAL STRESSORS (people/events) are clearly more difficult to change. We do not control...We influence others to change.

• Knowing the difference between these two types of Stressors is very important because we tend to forget that thoughts are really more under our control than people or events.
EXERCISE:
WHAT ARE YOUR STRESSORS?

The goal of this exercise to have each member of the group gain a better understanding of stressors unique to each. Clarify that this exercise is designed to help them identity specific stressors at work and to help them to determine the degree to which they have some control or influence over these stressors. It is also important to identify which stressors are common and which ones are unique and one of a kind.

Divide the group into smaller groups of 5-6 people and ask them to discuss the types of Stressors each member is or has experienced recently. Restrict the stressors to the world of work to make the discussion meaningful to each.

EACH PERSON SHOULD IDENTIFY AT LEAST TWO (2) STRESSORS THAT PERTAIN TO THEM AND THEIR WORLD OF WORK.

Ask them to not use any names or situations which are confidential or which relate to some one present. Have them write down the STRESSORS in the place provided. Then have the group talk about each stressor, why it is a stressor to him or her and whether or not the STRESSORS are:

- MAJOR LIFE EVENTS OR HASSLES
- CHANGEABLE OR UNCHANGEABLE
- INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL OR BOTH

Ask the group to create some suggestions for what to do about one or two of the more important and changeable or modifiable stressors. After about 15 minutes, bring the group together and have someone from each group report back.

Upon returning, have one member from each group report on the stressors identified in their group and have each one write down on the flip chart their stressors, and whether or not they are:

- MAJOR LIFE EVENTS OR HASSLES
- CHANGEABLE OR UNCHANGEABLE
- INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL OR BOTH

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Ask for the potential solutions to these stressor challenges. **Key Concepts:**

- When you feel stressed, look at the stressor and determine if you change it. If you can have a positive impact, then take action.

- For every HASSLE there is a solution! It may be to ignore it, flow with it or flee from it. You may even have some influence over its recurrence.

- The primary stress management tool for MAJOR LIFE EVENTS is to Let Go, Accept and Move On as soon as it feels right to do so.

**√ STRESSMASTER™ SCORE CARD - STRESSORS**

Hand the group turn to the STRESS MANAGEMENT SCORE CARD which can be found in Chapter 10. The Score Card is also at the end of the SMQ, if you are using the Print Version of the SMQ.

While this is an optional component of our programs, it is useful as an educational as well as a self-assessment tool. The Score Card can be copied prior to the workshop or seminar and included in the packet of material provided or simply hand out as appropriate. We use the Score Card after each section of the SMQ as a tool to bring awareness to the area or topic being discussed as it pertains to each participant's life. Have the group complete the SCORE CARD after each area has been presented and discussed.

Have the group only rate themselves under the category called **STRESS RISK AREA “YOUR GUESS”**. In this case, they will only be filling out the area under Stressors. The other areas or columns will be completed later on in the program.

Review the concept of the score card with them and note that this is a way for them to see more clearly those STRESSOR areas that are most challenging to him or her at this time. Point out that HIGH or HIGH RISK is the more negative end of the rating scale and that throughout the program they will gradually complete the SCORE CARD for each of the areas covered with this scale.
Inform the group that they are to look at the area called STRESSORS. Based upon what they know about stressors at this time, ask them to rate the degree to which each of the stressor areas is a “risk” or “problem” for them. Emphasize that you understand this is an educated guess, but give it their best shot.

First, they should evaluate the area of MAJOR LIFE EVENTS. Ask them to select and circle either HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW Risk. This is their “gut” feeling about whether they have many, some, or few MAJOR LIFE EVENTS in their life at this time.

Second, they should rate the area called CONCERNS or HASSLES. Likewise, they should determine if they have many, some or few CONCERNS (HASSLES) at this time. When this section is completed, have them put the SCORE CARD aside until later. ASK them not to score any other area at this time.
The second area to focus on is the concept of the Stress Response. As with Stressors, this is a good group discussion activity but can be done individually, if desired. If you are planning on writing down the Stressors, Stress Response and/or Stress Effects on a flip chart, then you can prepare in advance each of the sheets with one or two examples to get the group thinking.

Ask the group to tell what they think is a STRESS RESPONSE and have them share with the group. In particular, it is helpful to get the group to explain how they respond to stressors in their life. After they have given some ideas, and you have written them on the flip chart, point out that a STRESS RESPONSE is a both a physical or body response to a stressor, however, it is also a mental or perceptual response that one has. It may be PHYSICAL or EMOTIONAL in nature. As they present each of their ideas or thoughts, write them on the flip chart.

Here are two concepts that you can share with the group:

- **STRESS RESPONSE** is an immediate response to a STRESSOR and is not an illness or disease. Some people think a headache is Stress Response. We prefer to think of the physical or emotional problems as the long term Stress Effects.

- Participants will often confuse the two, so after a few people have said things like headaches, diarrhea, etc., clarify for them the difference. A headache is an immediate STRESS RESPONSE; a STRESS EFFECT is a long term (from hours to years) consequence of chronic stress.

**STRESS RESPONSE: THE FIGHT, FLIGHT OR FREEZE RESPONSE**

Point out that stress is not “OUT THERE”! Stress is within us. When we talk about stress we usually mean the Stress Response. Some call it the FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE. [GRAPHIC ON SLIDE, OVERHEAD OR FLIP CHART IS HELPFUL). Use some examples such as the classic analogy that cave men had only two options when it came to dealing with life threatening stressors such as bears, lions and saber tooth tigers. TO FIGHT OR FLEE!
Ask the group: “What two responses are likely when we are confronted with a real life threatening situation?” ANSWER: To flee or fight. This is why we have an emergency (stress!) response mechanism. Without it, we, and all other animals, would have perished thousands of years ago.

Reiterate that the value of the Stress Response as being necessary, beneficial and critical to survival; however, in today’s world it has become a challenge for many. When does the stress response get us into trouble today?”

Key Concepts:

- **We rarely fight or flee anything any more. We FIGHT traffic, people, loosing things, late appointments, angry bosses, staff or management who are unskilled, and perceived self-failures.**

- **We know we are under stress because we “feel” something!** However, we usually talk about stress when we do not like this feeling.

- **STRESS is not something roaming about our world like some wanton warrior. STRESS exists within us, it is part of our life. Stress is a RESPONSE TO A STRESSOR. The response puts our bodies out of balance or, out of equilibrium.**

- **STRESS is a strong physical reaction. Our perception of events (stressors) produces the stress response within our bodies.**

Ask how does their body respond to stress? Steer them away from discussion of STRESS EFFECTS. Most people understand that stress causes the body to break down. However, it is important to make clear that we are talking about normal body reaction to stress.

Request that they tell you how their body responds to stress. Suggest that they jot down in their workbook some of the ways people respond to stress. It is important for them to realize that everyone has a system of the body that is more reactive to stress than other systems.
Point Out that the Stress Response is a very specific bodily reaction. Using an overhead showing how the body responds to stress. Emphasize that with minor changes this is the way we all respond to treats. Also, remind the group that few threats are really life threatening. Differentiate between the short term and long term response to stress.

EXAMPLES OF THE SHORT TERM STRESS RESPONSE

- SHORT TERM STRESS RESPONSE ON INTERNAL ORGANS
- ADRENALINE INCREASES
- LIVER PRODUCES GLUCOSE TO ENERGIZE BODY
- INCREASED MUSCLE TENSION
- INCREASED HEART RATE
- DECREASED IMMUNE RESPONSE
- INCREASE OXYGEN USE THROUGH SHALLOW RAPID RESPIRATION
- DECREASE OR INCREASE IN STOMACH ACIDS
- INCREASE IN BLOOD PRESSURE
- DRY MOUTH
- SWEATY HANDS

√ STRESS MANAGEMENT SCORE CARD - STRESS RESPONSE

Ask participants to take out their Score Cards and complete the section on STRESS RESPONSE. Only have them score themselves for this topic under Your Guess.
After Stressor and Stress Responses, we turn our attention to Stress Effects. At this point the group should be tuned-in to the three main stress theory concepts. Ask the group for some examples of long term consequences of stress or distress. They should be able to give you some STRESS EFFECTS at this point.

The following exercise is designed to help them identify specific STRESSORS, STRESS RESPONSES, and STRESS EFFECTS in their lives or the lives of co-workers and loved ones. As before, we suggest writing their ideas on the flip chart.

Here is a Key Concept to share with the group:

STRESS EFFECTS are more serious and have greater long term physical implications than the STRESS RESPONSE. The latter being a more normal reaction to current life events, while the former may be the result of prolong stress reactions. Keep in mind that the consequences of long term STRESS are both physical and emotional in nature.

Point out that when stress is experienced, it is, in part, filtered by our perceptions, expectations and mental attitude. Encourage the group to full grasp the fact that stress responses and the long term effects of stress are avoidable and that each one of us must take responsibility for how we react to our personal stressors. The first step is to understand clearly the nature of Stressors they encounter on a daily basis. The better they understand what Stressors are, the more capable they will become at choosing how to respond to them.

In the following section, each of the above concepts is discussed in greater detail. The main thrust of this section is to provide the group to understand more completely each of these key concepts.
EXERCISE - HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT YOU?

Use the following to guide you in presenting and discussing the ways stress affects people differentially. Then, ASK them to give examples of how people demonstrate the long term effects of stress.

SUGGEST that as the group discusses these consequences, they should indicate on their work sheets in the section called HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT YOU which ones are most potentially damaging for them. As they provide ideas, WRITE them on a flip chart. SOME possible answers have been provided in each area. ASK them to write in responses as they are presented in the appropriate places. USE THE FOLLOWING COMMON EXAMPLES OF STRESS EFFECTS AFTER THEY HAVE PRESENTED SOME TO THE GROUP:

STRESS EFFECTS-PHYSICAL

- ASTHMA FLARE-UPS
- CARDIOVASCULAR PROBLEMS
- HEADACHES, BACK OR NECK PAIN
- INSOMNIA
- INDIGESTION
- CONSTIPATION OR DIARRHEA & ULCERS
- COLDS AND FLU
- ACNE OR SKIN PROBLEMS
- Others???

STRESS EFFECTS- EMOTIONAL

- DEPRESSION - NOT JUST BURNOUT AND FEELING DOWN
- FEARS, WORRY & ANXIETY
- ANGER, FRUSTRATION & INTOLERANCE
- OBSESIONS AND COMPULSIONS
- DESIRE TO RUN AWAY
- Others???
STRESS EFFECTS-BEHAVIORAL

- RUSHING AROUND
- ACCIDENTS AND ERRORS
- EATING, TALKING OR MOVING FAST
- DRUG, ALCOHOL USE
- AVOIDANCE OF RESPONSIBILITIES
- SMOKING
- BITING FINGER NAILS, PULLING HAIR
- OVEREATING OR UNDER EATING
- Others???

√ STRESS MANAGEMENT SCORE CARD - STRESS EFFECTS

Ask the participants to take out their STRESS MANAGEMENT SCORE CARDS and complete the section on STRESS EFFECTS.

FIRST, ask them to rate the degree to which stress is having a negative influence on their bodies at this time on the GENERAL STRESS EFFECTS SCALE.

REMIND them that it is their perception of the extent to which they are experiencing negative, physical effects of stress that is important right now.

SECOND, have each person rate the degree to which they feel that stress is affecting them in their LIFE & WORK SATISFACTION (the emotional consequence of stress). Again, have them rate themselves HIGH, MEDIUM or LOW in terms of how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with their emotional reactions to stress in this area.
CHAPTER 4: SEVEN STRESS WARNING SIGNS
CHAPTER 4: SEVEN STRESS WARNING SIGNS

STRESS WARNING SIGNS

In this section, we will discuss the key information about 7 Stress Warning Signs identified by the research of Dr. James Petersen and Harry Lawrence, MSW. While there are 7 stress warning signs in our research, we recognize that there are many ways warning signs one might observe in a given person. However, we feel these warning signs are some of the more important ones to observe and assess.

If you have not already done so, it would be a good time to take the SMQ yourself. Also, there is key information in Chapter 5 that will help you to understand the SMQ and how to use it in your program. There are many ways to integrate the SMQ. You can have the participants complete the SMQ or during the program. When a person takes the SMQ has a direct impact on how you present the following information.

Clearly, stress is a result of how we think and behave on a daily basis. These thoughts and their outward expressions are reflections or mirrors of how well we are mastering the stressors that impinge on us each and every day. These seven (7) scales are measured by the both the Print and On-line Version of the SMQ.

Clarify that although the SMQ assesses 11 separate areas, the following seven (7) are the most important areas measured by the SMQ. Based upon research, for most of the scales discussed in the following section, THE HIGHER ONE SCORES ON EACH OF THESE SMQ SCALES, THE GREATER THE RISK OF ONE HAVING OR DEVELOPING PHYSICAL OR HEALTH RELATED PROBLEMS.

Inform the group that these seven (7) “warning signs” are very important because they can help them to see, not just that they may be on the “verge” of having significant stress related problems, but, more importantly, they can point a direction for positive change.
Emphasize that before they take a look at how they scored on the SMQ, it is helpful to preview these areas. These “warning signs” are presented below. The higher one scores on each of these scales, the greater the “risk” of one developing some of the physical and emotional problems discussed above. As you present the following, if the participants already have the SMQ in their hands, have them read the definitions from their SMQ PROFILE. If you will be having them complete the SMQ during this session, simply present the following.

**HOSTILITY/ANGER (HO) SCALE**

**THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT ANGER**

**ANGER** (For more details, see page 12 of SMQ or page 7 of the Stressmastery Guide)

- is the main sign or signal that someone is under stress or distress.

- is behavior designed with the intent to control others and their behavior.

- is the result of frustration when one does not get what is expected, wanted, or demanded.

- is more destructive than constructive. Anger is one of the most destructive aspects in relationships.

- can be both ACTIVE and PASSIVE in nature. Anger can be expressed directly through what is commonly called ACTIVE AGGRESSION where someone does or says something to cause pain or discomfort in someone else.

- when used indirectly, is called PASSIVE AGGRESSION. Indifference, stubbornness, pouting, and “blocking” someone are forms of passive aggression and anger. Passive aggression can be just as damaging to a relationship as active aggression.

- is the behavior research has shown to be the most closely linked to coronary heart disease than any other personality factor.

- is basically a fear response, in most circumstances.
ANGER is perhaps the most commonly experienced emotion. Certainly it is the one we see most in our contemporary world. There are a few things that you should know about ANGER.

If you see yourself in the following descriptions, don’t be alarmed, but be aware that ANGER, HOSTILITY and INTOLERANCE are the personality factors most frequently associated with cardiovascular disease, including heart attack.

So, why does ANGER occur? Anger is one way we try to control our world and the people in it. In its most common form: ANGER IS AN ATTEMPT TO CONTROL OTHERS OR OURSELVES.

Whether one is a “time bomb” or just an exploding “rocket”, ANGER is the most potentially damaging emotion! Researchers have found that people who are ANGRY much of the time have a greater chance of cardiovascular and other related problems than the more TOLERANT and ACCEPTING person. It is an important behavioral indicator of ineffective and maladaptive stress management.

Why do we use anger to control ourselves? When anger is expressed inward, it is our attempt to change those behaviors we don’t like in ourselves. For example, we use inwardly expressed anger when we say things like: “YOU DUMMY, WHY DID YOU DO THAT”, or “HOW COULD I HAVE EVER SAID THAT! WHAT MADE ME SAY THAT TO HER. YOU IDIOT!”

Self punishment is a very popular human mental activity. It does work some of the time, but most often it just makes us feel bad about ourselves. Most of the time it gives us the feeling that we’re doing something to correct an error in our behavior; however, we often just continue along with our old habits.

Of course, every office, home or play situation is a mecca for examples of how we use anger to control others. We yell at our children, talk down to our secretaries, and berate our fellow competitors when they screw up. ANGER IS EVERYWHERE! In business, 25% of all managers believe that anger is an effective and appropriate management strategy!

POINT OUT that anger is our attempt to control others to get them to do what we want them to do or stop doing what they are now doing. Some examples of this include: a manager yelling at an employee who comes in late all the time, your spouse glaring at you when you don’t express your appreciation for what was done.
ASK THE GROUP FOR EXAMPLES.

RECALL for the group that STRESS OCCURS WHEN OUR EXPECTATIONS ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM WHAT THE WORLD GIVES US. When our expectations are not fulfilled, ANGER is a by-product. ASK WHY THIS MIGHT BE SO!

ASK if they can you give me some examples of ACTIVE AGGRESSION and, also, PASSIVE AGGRESSION OR ANGER.

POINT OUT that in general, the HIGHER one scores on the SMQ ANGER SCALE, the greater the chance of having a physical problem compared to people who score LOWER.

CLOSE by pointing out that a fear is behind most anger. ASK what this fear might be. WAIT for a few suggestions. The fear is: LOOSING CONTROL. Anger is designed to get what one wants through demands, shouts, avoidance, or, even hitting the person..

√ STRESSMASTER SCORE CARD: ANGER/HOSTILITY
PERFECTIONISM (PE) SCALE

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT PERFECTIONISM (For more details, see the SMQ - Participant Form or Stressmaster Guide)

• is not the same as excellence or doing things very well.

• is often based on a belief that unless “I am perfect, I am NOT OK”.

• is an intense competition with oneself—a need to be something which is not possible at the moment.

• like anger, is one of the strongest behavioral predictors of coronary heart disease and other physical problems.

• is a very important STRESS "risk" factor that should be taken seriously.

Perfectionism, in the extreme, is an obsession. It is a drive to make sure that every thing has its place, that one is completely organized or that tasks are worked or overworked. The motto: “a place for everything and everything in its place”, fits many of the people who score high on this scale.

ASK: Why not? What is the difference between a perfectionists and one who strives for excellence? Responses will vary; however, perfectionists do things out of FEAR and anxiety while the person who strives for excellence does so out of the JOY of doing something well.

ASK the group if anyone can see why FEAR plays an important role in producing perfectionistic behavior. PERFECTIONISTS believe that they can’t be happy nor enjoy life, because things (they?) are not perfect. What fear or concern underlies this drive? ANSWER: FEAR OF FAILURE.

√ STRESSMASTER SCORE CARD - PERFECTIONISM
THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT EXCESSIVE TIME ORIENTATION

EXCESSIVE TIME ORIENTATION  (For more details see the SMQ or Stressmastery Guide)

• is often called time sickness and is a stress indicator!

• is being “married” to the clock and trying to do too many things at one time.

• is a “sin” of modern times. By doing things too fast or doing too much at one time, we reduce our effectiveness.

• does not produce better results. Instead, trying to work too fast usually results in errors. Remember the adage: “The hurrier I go, the be-hinder I get.”

• is a result of a basic fear; the fear is either of being rejected or failing.

• reflects people living in the future and not the “here and now”. They seldom notice the roses along the path of life, since their eyes are always on the goal and not on the process of life.

Pushing ourselves to always meet deadlines, to constantly be on time, even when being on time is not necessary, places tremendous stress on the body. Some clear time-lines are necessary; however, deadlines can be better managed and doing multiple things at one time rarely produces quality.

ASK: Does anyone see themselves as an excessively time oriented person? If so, what kinds of things do they rush through or how do they show it? How does rushing around, doing too many things at the same time and trying to always please others by never being late translate from a fear of rejection? The need to please means that, if we don’t live up to what we think others expect of us, we may not be loved and may even be rejected. Ask the group if it is beneficial to stop and take a closer look at what life is all about. If so, why? You might ask the group if anyone feels guilty when they just do nothing. If so, why?

√ STRESSMASTER SCORE CARD - Time Orientation
THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT DISAPPOINTMENT

EXCESSIVE DISAPPOINTMENT - (For more details, see the SMQ or the Stressmastery Guide)

• according to research, Disappointment has BEEN SHOWN TO HAVE the highest CORRELATION WITH negative stress effects, according to the research.

• is a result of expectations which are not being met by the world. These expectations or hopes are either TOO HIGH or INAPPROPRIATE for the person or situation.

• produces a chronic stress response when people carry Disappointment with them for prolonged periods of time.

• is frequently experienced As a result of faulty or irrational Thinking. ONE may believe ONESELF to be thinking quite rationally when, in fact, the thinking and assumptions about what one expects are quite irrational.

• is a basic problem in all stress. However, for some people, being very disappointed for prolonged periods of time can lead to chronic stress conditions.

Remind the group of one of the basic definitions of stress; i.e., stress occurs when there is a difference between what we expect and what the world gives us. Remind them that when stress occurs, the body fights and resists the stressor; however, after prolonged continuation of the stressor (real or in our minds) the body systems begin to break down.

ASK: What can we do to reduce frequent disappointment? ANSWER: Either get the world to meet our expectations or change our expectations. ASK: Which is easier? ANSWER: Usually, we have to change our expectations. However, with good, positive communication skills we can frequently get people to change somewhat to meet our wants and needs.

√ STRESSMASTER SCORE CARD - DISAPPOINTMENT
BURNOUT (BR) SCALE

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT BURNOUT

BURNOUT (For more details, see the SMQ or the Stressmastery Guide)...

• is having feelings and thoughts of being down. It is an emotional state that predominates in a person's life.

• is a sign that stress is beginning to have detrimental affect on a person. This is a sign that should be taken seriously and should lead to positive action.

• is a stress warning sign that stress may be persisting for too long a period of time.

• is a result of not seeing the positive in life or work situation. One's mental filter is seeing only the problems and not the challenges of life.

• is closely linked to depression, but is not actually a clinical or chronic depressive condition. In some respects, Negative Mood can be viewed as a relatively short term reaction to significant negative life events.

Ask the group... Can you think of any behavioral signs that negative mood is occurring?

ANSWER: People experiencing Burnout move slower than usual, do not laugh at themselves, are tearful, and tend to have downcast eyes.

The goal of this program is not to deal with clinical depression. If someone feels very depressed, they can talk with you later about some resources they might go to for help. Negative Mood, in this context, is more akin to burnout that it is to major depression. Some BURNOUT is normal and cannot, and perhaps should not, be avoided.

Ask when should we begin to take BURNOUT seriously and begin to do something about it?

ANSWER: When both the length of time one is feeling down is long and the intensity of the down feelings is high. Most BURNOUT is the result of faulty thinking. For example, not being able to see the positive in a situation or having to always see what is wrong with yourself or your situation.
UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT (UA) SCALE

THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT

UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT (For more details, see the SMQ or the Stressmastery Guide)

• is directly related to our interpretation of how well one is doing.

• is often reflected in excessively high personal standards. One may actually be doing many things, however, one does not “feel” or “think” they are achieving much.

• is a clear stress attitude and behavior, and it is a part of personal self-disappointment. Whereas, Disappointment is largely related to others not meeting our expectations; it is disappointment with SELF.

• is a result of perceiving and possibly actually not accomplishing what one sets out to do. IT IS being frustrated because one sees they are not achieving to their “ideal” level.

Point out that UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT is a relative stress concept. It does not matter how much one is actually achieving in life; what’s important is the perception of how well one is doing.

ASK if anyone ever feels like they are not accomplishing very much? Is it at home and/or work? What might be the reason for this?

One answer is our society teaches us never to be satisfied. Our culture reinforces doing more, setting new goals, never sitting still. Some of this is good and good things result; however, excessive self-disappointment can be very damaging to our physical and emotional self.

√ STRESSMASTER SCORE CARD - UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT
THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT EXCESSIVE TENSION

EXCESSIVE TENSION (For more details, see the SMQ or the Stressmastery Guide)

• is the result of carrying physical and emotional tension around with us on a daily basis.

• is not being relaxed physically or mentally.

• is not taking time to do things which relax us like listening to music, sitting quietly with friends or by oneself, or taking a slow and enjoyable walk.

• is often a reflection of physical pains and aches in the various muscle groups.

• can often be seen when one does not take time for oneself
• can result in: Poor decision making, Reduced physical energy, Increased errors, Burnout attitude, Lower quality of work, Difficulty concentrating

Find out from the group...What are some of the warning signs that one is likely to see in chronically tense people? Allow the group to give you some of the various physical signs of tension.

ASK if anyone feels guilty when just sitting and doing nothing. POINT OUT: Even the word “nothing” connotes a low esteem of being restful and at ease. Our culture disdains self-indulgent, easygoing people. There are specific words in our vocabulary that have negative connotations for relaxation. ASK: Can you think of some? Here are some frequent answers: IDLE, LAZY, SELFISH, INEPT, TIME WASTER. Tense people rarely take lunch breaks, sit down and read a book for pleasure, or just take a walk.

√ STRESSMASTER SCORE CARD - TENSION
CHAPTER 5:
STRESS ASSESSMENT
Become familiar with both the SMQ-PARTICIPANT and COMPANION FORMS. It is important to complete the SMQ PARTICIPANT FORM and have your spouse, partner or close friend complete the SMQ-COMPANION FORM. The more you are familiar with the SMQ, the better you will be able to integrate and use it in your program. Score and analyze your results. Pay particular attention to the scales and the meaning of each scale as found in the SMQ. Complete and use the SMQ SCORE CARD as you progress through the SMQ.

At the program, ask the participants to take out their completed SMQ PARTICIPANT and COMPANION FORMS. You should walk them through the instructions for scoring the PARTICIPANT FORM and have them score and plot each of their own scale scores as directed.

Note! If someone does not have a completed COMPANION FORM at this time, then simply have the person score their PARTICIPANT FORM. Point out that they can have the SMQ COMPANION FORM completed at a later time and then hand score it at home. After scoring the PARTICIPANT FORM and if they have a completed COMPANION FORM, have them score the COMPANION FORM at this time.

If they do not have a copy of the SMQ COMPANION FORM, be sure to give them one to take home. Emphasize that the person completing it should know them very well. For example, they should select their spouse, very close friend, or “significant other” to complete the COMPANION FORM.

Point out that this “second opinion” from the COMPANION FORM is very valuable and will aid them in seeing how others view how well they are mastering their personal stress at this time.

Next, have the participants complete the STRESS MANAGEMENT SCORE CARD with data from both their SMQ as well as their COMPANION’S SMQ. Use an overhead or flip chart to show the following INTERPRETATION GUIDE:
IF SCORES ARE...

40 AND LOWER = LOW to MEDIUM LOW “STRESS RISK”
41-59 = MEDIUM “STRESS RISK”
60 AND HIGHER = MEDIUM HIGH TO HIGH “STRESS RISK”

The Stressmastery Guide contains information about what to do if one scores high on any of the SMQ scales. In addition, the “INTERPRETING THE SMQ” in the SMQ PROFILE will assist one to more completely understand the meaning of “risk”. REVIEW each of the topics discussed in that section.

THE GOAL AT THIS POINT IS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS TO CHALLENGE THEMSELVES TO DO SOMETHING POSITIVE ABOUT A HIGH SCORE ON ONE OF THE SCALES. ALSO, REMIND THEM THIS IS NOT A COUNSELING PROGRAM. IF ANYONE FEELS THE NEED TO CONSULT A PROFESSIONAL, THEY SHOULD CONTACT THE INSTRUCTOR AFTERWARD, CONSULT A LOCAL PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGIST OR COUNSELOR, OR TALK WITH THEIR MANAGER AND/OR SPOUSE OR CLOSE FRIEND.

If the participants do not have many high scores, and some will not, then the following section will be helpful to you as your work with your group. First, a review of the 11 SMQ Scales follows:
THE SMQ SCALES

• STRESS WARNING SIGNS
  ANGER (HOSTILITY)
  PERFECTIONISM
  TIME ORIENTATION
  NEGATIVE MOOD
  UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT
  DISAPPOINTMENT
  TENSION

• STRESS EFFECTS
  PHYSICAL PROBLEMS (GENERAL STRESS EFFECTS)
  SATISFACTION (LIFE/WORK)

• STRESSORS
  LIFE PROBLEMS (MAJOR LIFE STRESSORS)
  DAILY HASSLES

The SMQ PROFILE describes the importance of stress “risk” factors. Following is a detailed discussion of how to interpret the scores obtained from the SMQ.

There are two important points to be made. First, “risk” refers to the probability that a high scorer on one or more of the scales will develop physical or other problems as a result of either too much or too little stress or, also, because of inappropriate stress mastery techniques. A “high risk” score may mean a greater chance of having or developing physical problems than a “low risk” score.

Second, “risk” means one is experiencing significant life or work dissatisfactions or possibly an adjustment reaction to current life situations or problems. In essence, the QUALITY OF LIFE may not be what one wants or expects it to be. Consequently, significant stress is experienced. This may be so, partly because of the stressors in one’s life, but possibly also because one may not be handling stress very well.

WHEN STRESS IS SEVER OR CHRONIC, ALWAYS RECOMMEND THAT THEY SHOULD GET PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
Interpreting the SMQ Scale Scores

The SMQ Participant Form contains summary information that should guide a person in dealing with each area assessed.

First, suggest to the participants that they review the information provided by the SMQ & Guide. As they review their scores, each person should ask him or herself if they are more concerned about the effects of stress on their health or on their general emotional well being. Then, once they have a sense for WHY they want to make a change in how they manage stress, they will be more motivated to do something positive about it. The following material are some of the most Frequently Asked Questions about the SMQ. Use this as a guid to helping each person understand and apply the knowledge gained.

FAQ #1
I DID NOT SCORE HIGH ON A SCALE, BUT I STILL THINK STRESS IS A PROBLEM FOR ME. SHOULD I BE UNCONCERNED?

One should not assume that because scores for any or all scales did not fall into the “high” risk area that he or she should not be concerned. For example, some people may be in a transition from a medium score (say on “Anger”) to a higher score. This transition may mean that in the future a problem could occur. Suggest that each person determine to the best of his or her abilities if there may be a negative trend for each scale.

If you and those in your world have noticed an increase in a given area, then, even if it is in the MEDIUM RISK AREA, take it seriously and do something to moderate or bring that area down.

FAQ #2
I HAD NO HIGH SCALE SCORES. MOST OF MY SCORES WERE IN THE MEDIUM RANGE. HOW SHOULD I INTERPRET MY PROFILE?

Suggest that he/she take a closer look at his or her scores on the individual SMQ items for each scale. If someone scored in the 4 or 5 area on a give questionnaire item, then these, or behaviors similar to these, are the behaviors on which to focus. Persons with mostly MEDIUM SMQ scale scores are at greater “risk” than those with LOW scores. Each person should be the judge. Challenge them: “Are you feeling that these areas are or are “becoming” a problem for you?” If so, point out that this is all the more reason to take control of your life and do something positive.
If not, and you, your family, and/or friends do not see a personal challenge at this time, then “keep an eye” on your life situation and act accordingly.

In addition, suggest that each person review how did their Companion respond to the specific question or questions under evaluation. Ask, “did he or she give a score HIGH score (4 or 5) when you scored yourself LOW? If so, what is he or she seeing that you are not, if anything?”

FAQ #3
I HAVE NO CONTROL OVER SOME OF THESE AREAS. WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT?

No one is an island! If someone needs assistance in managing stress and they can’t do it themselves, then suggest that they seek the guidance of a psychologist, counselor, or other mental professional in your area.

Test to see if the person is in distress and needs immediate assistance. Sometimes people “cry for help” by stating they simply cannot do it. This is also a time to make the point that, ultimately, it is up to each of us to make a difference and to put the burden on to others will not solve the core problem.

Have them call the local psychological or counseling association in your area if you feel there appears to be no way they will make the changes needed.

FAQ #4
MY HIGH SCORES ARE IN THE STRESSORS AREA. WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?

There are two STRESSORS AREAS - MAJOR LIFE EVENTS and HASSLES.

If one scored HIGH in the LIFE EVENTS AREA, the recourse is limited to learn how to accept what already is. It is well know that MAJOR LIFE STRESSORS are pretty much out of our control. A death cannot be changed and once a person has had a financial loss, he or she can only change what is happening now. The past is “water under the bridge.” In some cases (e.g., loss of job, death of a loved one), ones recourse is to simply move on with life and to be reassure that we will be OK. If someone had many major stressors in their life, then perhaps reducing the number of changes one is making is a good idea.
Suggest that each person consider delaying, at least for a little while, any major moves or changes in one’s life. When things calm down, and they will, one might begin to make some changes. Timing is critically important. A trained counselor might be of great help.

Hassles are stressors over which we have some influence. Certainly we have more influence over daily hassles than major life events. As will be shown in the next Chapter, each of us can choose to stop evaluating events in our life as hassles or stressors and begin to view these stressors as CHALLENGES rather than MAJOR PROBLEMS. This ability and desire to change how we appraise and evaluate stressors is a major hallmark of STRESSMASTERS.

Second, it is fortunate that each of us can change these hassle situations much more readily than MAJOR LIFE EVENTS. Suggest that each person identify which hassles are most critical and which are easiest to deal with--right now!

For example, ask them to determine whether better time management, communication skills, or delegation can improve one’s situation. If someone is disorganized and is constantly having trouble finding things, suggest that he or she take a personal management or time management course.

With hassles, something can always be done to improve a situation. Most hassles can be solved or improved through basic logic and common sense techniques.

**FAQ #5**

**I HAVE HIGH SCORES ON THE STRESS EFFECTS SCALES. WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT THESE?**

There are two areas under the STRESS EFFECTS AREA; i.e., GENERAL STRESS EFFECTS and LIFE WORK SATISFACTION. HIGH scores on the GENERAL STRESS EFFECTS and LIFE WORK SATISFACTION scales indicate there is a strong chance that stress is having a negative affect on one’s body and, possibly, one’s mental attitude about his or her life.

Chances are, one or two systems of your body are beginning to feel the affects of stress. Suggest that each person who has scored high in these areas use the information as a motivation to learn better ways of developing more effective stress mastery skills and attitudes.
For example, when the body begins to breakdown, try adding more rest and relaxation. Develop better deep relaxation skills. Take more time out for yourself and push yourself a bit less than usual. When the body gives you pain, discomfort, or illness, it is telling us something. Listening to what is being said to us by our bodies is one of the great healing techniques. Perhaps it is saying STOP, SLOW DOWN AND LET ME RECOVER.

If one scored HIGH on THE LIFE WORK SATISFACTION SCALE, suggest that the person go back and identify on which questions he or she gave themselves a 4 or 5 score. They probably already know where the source of dissatisfaction lies, but this exercise helps them to pinpoint the specific areas.

This scale, and the items contained therein, more clearly point one in the direction he or she needs to go in order to make an improvement in the quality of one’s life.

High scores in this area indicate the consequence of stress is reflected in how happy or satisfied we are with our lives at this time. Only we, individually, or perhaps some assistance from a counselor or close friend, can sort out and decide what needs to be done to improve one’s level of life satisfaction.

If it is a work related problem, then working with one’s manager is very important to its resolution. If it is a family or personal area, then counseling may be appropriate. Likewise, if one is dissatisfied with one’s career or job choice, then career counseling or further education in a new area may be appropriate.
INTERPRETING THE COMPANION’S SMQ SCORES

If they had another person complete the Companion SMQ (e.g., spouse, colleague or close friend) then the following will help you to interpret his or her scores. If they did not have someone complete the Companion SMQ, you may skip this section.

#1 - DISCUSS THE RESULTS

Have them discuss the results from both of the SMQs with their companion. One of the purposes of the Companion SMQ is to obtain a “second opinion” about how well someone is mastering stress. This is not easy. Most of us are resistant to feedback. However, the Companion SMQ provides an opportunity to learn how someone who knows the person well, perceives his or her stress related behaviors. This independent view is very helpful to developing a better understanding of oneself.

#2 - EVALUATE OVERALL AND INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES

Recommend that each person look at each SMQ scale score (High, Medium, Low) and openly discuss how each of they responded to the questionnaire items. Use the Detailed Stress Report when using the Online SMQ. They need not agree on how they responded and that there is no need to try and defend how one responded to any given item. It’s only an opinion, but it could have value to the person.

Stressmastery is not an absolute behavior and there are no right or wrong answers. Most of us change our behaviors in different environments. For example, we often respond differently to stressors. So, if there are differences in the overall scores or on specific questionnaire items, recommend that they accept these differences in perception.

The person maybe exhibiting different sets of stress related behaviors in different environments. For example, some people “appear” calm at work. However, these same individuals may be inwardly angry at self or others. Barred from expressing angry statements or behaviors, such individuals carry home these feelings and thoughts. Occasionally, at home, they become intolerable of those around them. Common stress behaviors include screaming or punishing children or spouses.
Conversely, such individuals may become withdrawn and depressed (negative mood). Your task is to determine if there is a problem for you and, if so, in identify the areas where these problems become apparent. Once a problem has been identified, take appropriate action to solve it.

#3 - PAY ATTENTION TO SIMILAR SCORES AND RESPONSES

If a companion scored a scale similarly (e.g., High, Medium, or Low) this may mean that both are viewing one’s stressmastery skills in the same way. In essence, there is validation of how one is actually responding to the SMQ items.

However, if this person does not observe the respondent in other settings, such as work or home, then be alert to the fact that one may be altering their stress related behaviors from one setting to another. Because this person may not know how the respondent is behaving in those environments, it is possible for to assume, perhaps incorrectly, that the responses to the SMQ apply in all environments. Ask them “Do you behave differently at work, play, and home?”

#4 - PLAN AND TAKE ACTION

Through discussion and inward thought, identify the critical areas for improvement. Ask the participant if the companion to help them achieve your personal stressmastery goals by providing feedback and assistance. If problems are troublesome, obtain professional assistance. Change is difficult, so suggest that they don’t do too much at one time. To pick an area to work on, ask the participants to do the following:

**Step 1: Compare your and your companion’s SMQ results as indicated on the STRESSMASTER SCORE CARD™.**

After reviewing the material on the previous pages, ask participants if their guess was the same or different from either their or their companion’s SMQ scores. What might be the reason’s their companion or friend gave them the scores that they did? Encourage each person to remain open minded until they are finished with the program. If there are differences, provide some insight as per the previous section. Do not feel that you have to explain major differences between the scores on either of the SMQs. The goal is to get participants to THINK about how they might be handling stress at this time. Don’t try to determine which one is correct. Let the participants make decisions about their own stress.
Step 2: Select one area on which to work.

Ask the participants, either individually or in small groups, to begin to work through and identify the one area on which they will focus. Emphasize the importance of being self-motivated and encourage each person to choose an area in which they can be successful. As change is very difficult for most people, it is important and essential to get some early successes going.

Step 3: Have the participants turn to the CONTRACT FOR CHANGE

Review with the participants the need to make a commitment to change. Emphasize that without commitment, change becomes almost impossible. While resistance often precedes change, encourage them to fill out this form with the intent that they will actually do something to improve their stress management abilities. Read the introduction on the STRESS MANAGEMENT SCORE CARD with them.

Step 4: Complete steps 1-3 on the CONTRACT FOR CHANGE FORM.

Suggestion: Have each person find a “buddy” or partner, either in the group or at home, to help them stay on the change plan as identified on their Score Card. Point out that...

LIFE-STYLE CHANGE IS POSSIBLE
BUT IT IS FRAUGHT WITH OBSTACLES AND CHALLENGES.

ONE SHOULD EXPECT DIFFICULTIES AND WORK TO OVERCOME THESE BARRIERS TO SUCCESS.

Perseverance, will pay off! However, have a specific goal toward which one is heading is critically important. The SMQ and SCORE CARD are designed to help give a sense of direction. Since there are many directions one can take, use these tools to begin the process. Finally, suggest that each person reward and praise him or herself for even the smallest progress made. “Baby Steps” are more important than “Giant Steps”! Avoid dwelling on failures.

In the following section on How to Manage Stress, several key approaches and techniques will be discussed and described that will help one to see how to become an effective STRESSMASTER!
CHAPTER 6:
INTREPRETING HIGH SMQ SCORES
CHAPTER 6: INTERPRETING HIGH SMQ SCORES

MASTERING HOSTILITY AND ANGER

THINGS TO DO

BUILD YOUR OWN SELF ESTEEM - A positive and healthy self worth or self esteem is vital to resisting the use of anger in your life. Self esteem is increased when you look to the good within you and not to the bad or flawed.

DEAL WITH YOUR FEAR - Flow with your fears. If you feel that you are loosing control of a situation, consciously recognize what your fear is and flow with it. Do not fight anxiety and fear. It only makes it worse.

PRACTICE LETTING GO - Letting go is the opposite of trying. It is not something that our culture or society teaches. However, a letting go attitude is the best buffer against excessive anger and stress. To let go, follow this simple procedure . .

When you notice the anger, say to yourself . . .

- I can let go and it’s OK!
- Letting go does not mean “out of control”
- I can let go and still feel “in control”
- Letting go will make me feel better and that will make the situation better
- I don’t need anger to make me feel good
- I don’t need anger to change this situation
- I am not an angry person.

PREPARE YOURSELF, WARN YOURSELF - When do you become angry? With whom are you angry? What circumstances are most typical for you to express your anger?
Write down when you express anger outwardly or inwardly toward yourself. Become aware of these circumstances, and mentally prepare yourself for when you are exposed to them.

**SET REALISTIC GOALS** - Promises rarely change behavior, and if you are an angry person much of the time, you will be pretty angry with yourself if you do not succeed.

Set realistic goals and tell yourself that you are making progress when you do reduce your anger. Do this even if you are making only occasional strides. To change your behavior, and then your feelings, begin changing your thinking.

**BECOME PHILOSOPHICAL** - An angry or hurtful word spoken cannot be taken back. An act against us is done and over with. Anger directed at another due to your hurt only comes back to haunt you. Letting go is the best approach.

**AVOID SHOULD’S, MUST’S, AND OUGHT’S** - If you set tight boundaries for yourself by constantly saying the “should” word, then expect more frustration and anger. Common should’s, must’s and ought’s

- “I should be more loving.”
- “When I walk in the office, people should say hello to me.”
- “When I gave that assignment, he should have completed it right away”.
- “I should love my parents.”
- “He must give me respect. After all, I’m his elder.”
LETTING GO OF PERFECTIONISM

THINGS TO KNOW

KNOW THE DIFFERENCE: PERFECTIONISM IS NOT EXCELLENCE

- Perfectionism is a negative force. One is perfectionistic out of fear; the fear of FAILURE.

- Excellence is doing things for the joy of doing a job well. Fear plays a minor role in people who strive for excellence.

SET REALISTIC EXPECTATIONS

- Most perfectionists try to do too much at one time. They set extremely high and unrealistic goals for themselves and others.

- Setting high goals is not the problem. Setting goals that no one, not even yourself can reach is SELF DESTRUCTIVE.

- Evaluate your expectations. First, evaluate your expectations for yourself. Ask yourself if you are trying to do too much, for too many! Then, determine if you expect too much from others, particularly those around you.

- ADJUST EXPECTATIONS FOR YOURSELF OR OTHERS, IF THEY ARE UNREALISTIC.

DEAL WITH YOUR FEAR OF FAILURE

- If you scored high on this scale there is an excellent chance that you are a PERFECTIONIST and probably quite aware of this trait. Since there are fears of failure which propel the PERFECTIONIST forward, it is important that you ask yourself: “What’s the worst thing that could happen if I didn’t do everything just perfect?”
• Leave some unimportant things undone or perhaps not as “perfect” as you would normally.

• Distinguish between the essential and unessential things in life. Some things need to be done very well; however, other things can be left a little less than you would like it!

• Face your fear, if there is one, and accept yourself with open arms! Failure is not an absolute term, it is relative to you and your ideals and values.

TAKE TIME FOR YOU AND YOUR PERSONAL NEEDS

• Many PERFECTIONISTS do not know what their true needs are nor how to go about meeting them. Learn that your needs are very important and that the PERFECTIONISTIC drive that you have may only be the voice or a parent saying “It’s not good enough! Do it better!”

• Learn the art of letting go! There is a time to put the pen down, the brush in its holder, or the dust mop in the closet.
EXCESSIVE TIME URGENCY

THINGS TO KNOW

BECOME AWARE THAT YOU CREATE TIME PRESSURE

- Recognize that you can make TIME your enemy or your friend. If time is your friend, then you take on a more relaxed approach to work and play. If it is your enemy, then you see time being drained from you.

- Excessive time urgency is a fabrication of your mind. Everyone has some time urgency, deadlines and pressure to get things done; however, if you are not enjoying doing ten things at one time and feel overwhelmed with each day’s task, then look at how you are viewing the world around you.

WATCH THOSE EXPECTATIONS

- Expectations to do more and more are at the root of EXCESSIVE TIME URGENCY. Determine if you are trying to do more than you are reasonably capable of doing. Everyone has limitations—even you!

DO YOU HAVE A FEAR OF FAILURE OR REJECTION?

- Fear of Failure? Perhaps you can’t see it in yourself; however, many people operating in the HURRY SICKNESS MODE have an intense fear of failing or being rejected.

- If you must make all appointments exactly on time, you are trying to please others more than taking care of yourself. Rushing through traffic to get to an appointment for which you will be a few minutes late may be a result of fearing the other person’s rejection.

- Don’t mistake the value for timeliness for EXCESSIVE TIME URGENCY. Not slowing down and doing things at “break neck speed” is not the same as doing a reasonable job to be on time in most circumstances.

TO LIVE MORE RELAXED, FOLLOW SOME OF THESE SUGGESTIONS
• Keep work time and play time separate. Often work has more time urgency requirements than play time. Often we generalize our time urgency of going to a social gathering as though it were a meeting of the board of directors.

• Practice doing some things slowly. Not all tasks and jobs need to be done quickly.

• When with people, listen more than you talk. Someone once said that we never learn anything when we are talking. By listening we are learning to slow down.

• Take a child’s view of the world. Talk with children at their level. Get down to the floor if necessary.
THINGS TO KNOW

SHIFT YOUR EXPECTATIONS

• Expectations play a critical role in DISAPPOINTMENT. There are two (2) critically important aspects of expectations; i.e., expectations can be TOO HIGH or TOO UNREALISTIC.

• Determine if your disappointment is specific to one person or situation or to almost all aspects of your life. This will help you to focus your efforts.

• Ask yourself or others if your expectations are realistic or unrealistic, too high, or too difficult.

REDIRECT YOUR THINKING

• Expectations are thoughts, and thoughts are internal behavior. You have some control over your thoughts.

• Redirect your thinking away from the over concern with those people or events that do not meet your expectations and hopes. If someone consistently cannot give you what you want or demand, then at some point it is in your interest to accept the person “as is”.

• Stop thinking obsessively. Sometimes we get so preoccupied with a person who does not meet our needs that we become obsessed with what that person does not do for us or what he or she does to us.

• Use thought stopping techniques. Force yourself to stop thinking obsessively about a person or situation. Constantly remind yourself to...

ACCEPT THOSE THINGS WHICH CAN’T OR WON’T CHANGE AND CHANGE THOSE THINGS WHICH CAN BE CHANGED!
COMMUNICATE MORE EFFECTIVELY

• We have little control over others; however, fortunately we have some influence. Most of our problems with DISAPPOINTMENT can be handled with better communication with others.

• Better communication skills are required if you are to reduce high levels of DISAPPOINTMENT. One of the most effective communication skills is to listen more effectively and to ask to meet our needs in more constructive ways.

• RESTATE what you hear from people. Many problems in expectations can be reduced or eliminated by simply restating what you expect in different words.

• Ask others to RESTATE what they think you said. For example, to your employee you might ask: “John, would you tell me what you heard me say so that we are both clear on what I want!” Simple, but powerful.
OVERCOMING UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT

THINGS TO DO

FACT OR FANTASY

- UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT means to perceive that you have accomplished much less than you had expected. Determine if there is a sound basis for your UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT.

- Did you really miss the mark? Did you truly fail at what you set out to do? Evaluate the situation very carefully. Most people come very close to succeeding but miss the “mark” by only a little. Yet, they say that they failed.

- If your UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT is a FACT then look at what you are expecting from yourself. Is it realistic and possible, or are you setting yourself up for failure?

- Setting unrealistically high expectations for yourself is a sure way to always be disappointed in yourself. The result: low self esteem.

SCALE DOWN SELF EXPECTATIONS

- If your UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT is due to unrealistic expectations, then scale down what you expect of yourself.

- Develop more realistic expectations for yourself. If you are a sales person and you made $15,000 last year then don’t expect $50,000 this year. Set your sights on a more realistic $20,000.

- REALISTIC GOALS WILL RESULT IN MORE SUCCESS AND BETTER FEELINGS ABOUT YOURSELF.
BECOME A BETTER PLANNER

- If your UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT is the result of poor planning, inadequate organization or other “controllable” factors, then take steps to improve yourself.

- Seek assistance from those who know how to plan and be organized. Learn better time management skills. Develop a better organization for yourself and office.

BECOME MORE POSITIVE

- Some UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT may be due to mild or severe depression. If you have severe depression, then seek professional help. UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT can be reversed with assistance from a trained psychologist or counselor.

- Review the section called THE ART OF FEELING GOOD which follows. Ultimately, you will need to change your expectations about some aspects of your life in order to feel better.
THINGS TO DO

YOU CAN CHANGE HOW YOU FEEL BY CHANGING HOW YOU THINK

• FEELINGS FOLLOW THOUGHT AND BEHAVIOR CHANGE. IT IS A FALLACY THAT YOU MUST FEEL GOOD FIRST AND THEN YOU WILL DO SOMETHING. DO SOMETHING FIRST AND YOUR FEELINGS WILL FOLLOW.

• Your feelings are very important to you. Recognize that you have more control over your feelings than perhaps you realize.

• Moods can be changed or elevated without, necessarily, drugs.

• There are two primary ways to change how you feel; CHANGE YOUR BEHAVIOR and CHANGE YOUR THINKING.

CHANGE YOUR BEHAVIOR (GET GOING)

• When we are feeling down and have a negative mood, there is often little we want to do. However, professionals and psychologically hardy people know that the solution lies in ACTION not inaction.

• While you may not want to do much—DO SOMETHING! ANYTHING! Take a walk, ride a bike, visit a friend, read a book, work on some art, help someone else in need or whatever you feel you can do. BUT DON’T DO NOTHING.

CHANGE YOUR THINKING (STOP DWELLING)

• FEELING CHANGE ALSO FOLLOWS THINKING CHANGE. WHEN YOU GET A CHANGE IN YOUR THINKING, YOU WILL ALSO GET A CHANGE IN HOW YOU FEEL. There are some typical patterns of thinking that can get you into trouble. Some of the most common ones are presented below:
EXTREMIST THINKING - Everything is all bad or lousy.

STOMPING ON POSITIVE - Not seeing or looking for the silver lining in a situation or person. Nothing is all bad.

DWELLING ON NEGATIVE - You filter in only the dark, negative aspects of life. Becoming obsessed with negative, you are rendering yourself virtually a slave to your negative thinking.

ESP THINKING - You know exactly how others feel about you and it is not good. Some call this CRYSTAL BALL READING.

OVERGENERALIZING - One, two or three things happen to you that are not good, and everything is going to “pot”.

CHANGE IRRATIONAL THOUGHTS

- Recognize which of the above is the cause of your NEGATIVE MOOD and focus on positive and constructive ways to change your thinking.

- Extreme forms of thinking, such as above, are IRRATIONAL THOUGHTS. As such, they are inaccurate perceptions of your reality.

- If there is no foundation in reality, then you must take control of the source of your NEGATIVE MOOD; your negative SELF TALK!
HOW TO REDUCE TENSION

THINGS TO DO

TAKE TIME FOR YOU!

• If you scored high on this scale, chances are you are a very tense individual. You may not be aware of it; however, your inability to relax will eventually take its toll on you.

• Are you giving too much to others to take time out for you? Do you feel guilty when you relax and do something enjoyable for yourself?

• If you want more time to feel good about yourself, then do some of the following

SMELL THE FLOWERS...

• GO TO LUNCH AND DON'T RUSH! Take a long lunch break at least three (3) times a week. Don't do business. Be a friend to someone. Read a novel over a cup of tea.

• WALK EVERY DAY! Walk by yourself or with a friend.

• EXERCISE MORE! Join an aerobics class, go to the gym, ride a bike, hike on weekends, go to a fitness resort or jog with friends.

• LEARN DEEP RELAXATION SKILLS! Take a class in YOGA, IMAGERY TRAINING, PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION or AUTOGENICS.

• LISTEN TO RELAXATION TAPE AND MUSIC! Tapes are an excellent way to learn how to let go and relax. Whatever form of music you like can be appropriate to letting go and relaxing. New Age music and some classical music are particularly appropriate for this.
CHAPTER 7:
STRESSMASTERY STRATEGIES
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STRESSMASTERY STRATEGIES

There are four (4) primary stress management strategies we have found useful to help individuals master stress. Of course, there are other approaches to learning how to feel good in tense times. We encourage the integration of each professional’s philosophy and counseling/training. This section is designed to present each of them in some detail. Depending upon your goals and objectives, you should elect to cover those that are most relevant to your group’s needs. Using either flip charts or overhead transparencies present the following two statements. STATE that they reflect the “heart” of good stress management.

“WE ARE NOT DISTURBED BY EVENTS
BUT, RATHER, BY OUR
INTERPRETATION OF EVENTS”

“GRANT ME THE ABILITY TO ACCEPT THOSE
THINGS WHICH I CANNOT CHANGE, CHANGE
THOSE THING WHICH I CAN, AND HAVE THE
WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE”

What implications do these concepts have for stressmastery? See what the group thinks and, if time permits, write down their ideas. If it is true that we experience stress when our expectations are not consistently fulfilled, then WHERE DOES GOOD STRESS MANAGEMENT start? POINT OUT STRESS starts and ends with our perceptions and thoughts. If this is so, then what are two (2) basic strategies in stress management one should master? After some discussion, present the following points:

CHANGE THOUGHTS

CAUSE or INFLUENCE OUR STRESSORS TO CHANGE

STRESSMASTERY is an attitude and a way of actively looking at the world. Of course, bad things happen to us every day of our lives. And, yet, some people do well with these bad things, while others do not do so well.
Find out from the group if they know why...

...some people handle financial loss by jumping off a building, while the next guy shrugs it off and says, “OH, WELL, EASY COME, EASY GO?”

...some people cope better with irate bosses and demanding administrators than others?

...some divorced people pick up the pieces and move on while others remain depressed for some time?

...when the death of a loved one occurs, some people rebound faster than others even though they loved the person?

...when delays occur, paper work is backed up and there doesn’t seem to be enough time for anything, one person can leave work, go home and never think about the undone tasks, while another person carries the burden home, worries about it all night and comes to work the next day tired and anxious?

THERE ARE FOUR BASIC STRATEGIES WE CAN DO TO MANAGE STRESS MORE EFFECTIVELY. EACH OF THESE WILL BE PRESENTED NEXT. ALSO, POINT OUT THAT EVERY ONE HAS SOME ABILITY IN EACH OF THESE AREAS. The point is not that this is new information, but rather that they need to be doing more of these positive and productive techniques.

GROUP DISCUSSION: HOW DO YOU MANAGE YOUR STRESS?

If time permits, have the participants answer the question: HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH YOUR STRESS?

They need not break into small groups. Simply ask them to take a few minutes to write down the answers. Spend a few minutes discussing these. Suggest that if they don’t do anything of a positive nature now, then this exercise is even more important for them. TELL them to write in ideas for later review and use. Before going on, review the four (4) strategies for managing stress.
MOST of the material which follows is almost exactly the same as in the Participant’s Workbook. DISCUSS EACH OF THESE STRATEGIES in detail. BEGIN WITH...

Interpreting The Companion’s SMQ Scores

POINT OUT that it is a mistake to think you control many of the STRESSORS which happen to you each day. Once you experience a STRESSOR, it cannot be reversed or prevented. It may, however, be prevented from occurring in the future or its duration may be changed now. Can you, for example, control a financial loss, divorce, angry customer, disgruntled coworker, or death of a loved one, once the STRESSOR has occurred?

Explain that in most cases the answer is NO! Although usually infrequent, major life stressors are powerful and potentially capable of producing severe stress and even illness. More importantly, many major life events are commonly UNCHANGEABLE. Acceptance is often the best way to master them. But, sometimes, you can influence the course or future of a STRESSOR. For example, a financial loss can be prevented in the future. One way would be to borrow less money or spend less. Divorce might be avoided if you learn to communicate better and more openly.

TO CHANGE A STRESSOR, DO THE FOLLOWING:

DETERMINE IF THE STRESSOR IS UNDER YOUR INFLUENCE (NOT CONTROL)?

IF NO, THEN FOLLOW THE STRATEGIES 2-4 BELOW.
IF YES, THEN ANSWER THE NEXT QUESTION.

IS THERE ANYTHING YOU CAN DO NOW OR IN THE NEAR FUTURE TO REDUCE OR MODIFY THE STRESSOR? IF NO, THEN GO TO STRATEGIES 2-4 BELOW.

IF YES, THEN IF THE APPROACH YOU WANT TO USE IS POSITIVE AND IS BASED UPON GOOD COMMUNICATION, THEN PROCEED. WORK TOWARD A REDUCTION IN THE STRESSOR. IF YOUR APPROACH IS NEGATIVE (E.G., USE OF ANGER, DEMANDS, GUILT OR SARCASM), THEN GO TO STRATEGY 2 BELOW.
MAKE CLEAR THAT THESE NEGATIVE TECHNIQUES ARE TO BE AVOIDED!

GROUP DISCUSSION EXAMPLES

Depending on the time, discuss two (2) or three (3) of these with the group. Use these later in STRATEGIES 2-4. When discussing these, don’t let the group get too involved in any area. Determine if the STRESSOR can be altered and what, if anything, might be done.

Many of these STRESSORS or STRESSOR SITUATIONS have the potential of being modified. However, if the group determines that they cannot, under any circumstances influence these STRESSORS, then point out that STRATEGIES 2-4 must then come into play. Note: Add any situation you feel is appropriate.

EXAMPLE #1: YOUR MANAGER SITS ON PROJECTS

STRESSOR: Your manager, who has been with the company for a long time, frequently sits on projects. Then, at the last minute, he gives you the project to do.

CONSEQUENCE: You get your projects late and then get the “bums rush” to get it to the client.

MODIFY THE STRESSOR: Using good communication skills, work with your boss and the client to keep on top of the situation. Be a gentle reminder to your boss to get you the necessary information.

DISCUSS THE GROUP’S SOLUTIONS. IF THE STRESSOR CANNOT BE MODIFIED, THEN STRATEGIES 2-4 BECOME APPROPRIATE.
EXAMPLE #2: YOUR PROJECTS ARE ALWAYS LATE

STRESSOR:
Your jobs are always late. Your boss gives you plenty of time, yet you take on more jobs than are necessary, work long hours and find that you are not getting the jobs done.

CONSEQUENCE: ________________________
You get down on yourself and lament the fact that you can’t seem to get it together. You tell yourself that you will never make Senior Manager.

MODIFY THE STRESSOR:
You are the STRESSOR! WHAT DO YOU DO TO MODIFY THE STRESSOR?

DISCUSS THE GROUP’S SOLUTIONS. IF THE STRESSOR CANNOT BE MODIFIED, THEN STRATEGIES 2-4 BECOME APPROPRIATE.

FOLLOWING ARE OTHER STRESSOR EXAMPLES THAT COULD BE EXPLORED

STRESSOR #1

YOU HAVE TWO MANAGERS GIVING YOU ASSIGNMENTS. BOTH WANT THEM COMPLETED YESTERDAY! YOU BOUNCE BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN THEM. YOU WANT TO MOVE UP THE CORPORATE LADDER, BUT YOU FEEL YOU ALSO MUST ACCEPT WHAT IS GIVEN.

STRESSOR #2

YOU HAVE A MANAGER WHO ALWAYS WANTS HER JOBS DONE EARLY, EVEN THOUGH THE CLIENT DOESN’T NEED IT FOR SOME TIME.

STRESSOR #3

RECENTLY, YOU HAVE NOT BEEN RECEIVING THE AMOUNT OF ASSIGNMENTS YOU HAD PREVIOUSLY RECEIVED. YOU FEAR THAT THIS IS INTENTIONAL AND THAT FOR SOME UNKNOWN REASON YOU ARE BEING “BYPASSED”. YOU ARE WORRIED YOU’LL LOOSE YOUR JOB.
STRESSOR #4

YOU HAVE A MANAGER WHO DOESN'T GIVE YOU GOOD PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK. YOU ARE WORRIED THAT MAYBE HE THINKS YOU ARE NOT DOING A GOOD JOB. YOU WORRY ABOUT IT CONSTANTLY. YOUR SLEEP IS IMPAIRED.

STRESSOR #5

YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY GETTING IN EIGHT (8) BILLABLE HOURS PER DAY. YOU'VE BEEN TOLD THIS IS ESSENTIAL, YET YOU CAN'T SEEM TO MAKE IT HAPPEN. YOU FEAR THAT YOUR REVIEWS WILL BE BAD.

STRESSOR #6

YOU'VE HAD GOOD REVIEWS AND YOU THINK YOU CAN MAKE IT IN THE ORGANIZATION. YET, YOU PUT IN LONGER HOURS THAN NECESSARY AND YOUR HOME LIFE IS BEGINNING TO SUFFER. YOU FEEL THAT YOU MUST PUT IN THE EXTRATIME TO SHOW "THEM" THAT YOU ARE QUALITY MATERIAL. YOUR HEALTH IS BEGINNING TO SUFFER.

STRESSOR #7

YOU'VE GOT 4 DIFFERENT MANAGERS TRYING TO GIVE YOU WORK TO DO ASPA. YOU DO AN ABOVE AVERAGE JOB AND EVERYONE KNOWS THAT IF YOU GET AN ASSIGNMENT YOU'LL GET IT DONE. YOU ACCEPT EVERYTHING THAT COMES YOUR WAY.
ADD ANY THAT YOU OR THE GROUP THINK ARE APPROPRIATE. GUIDELINES FOR GROUP DISCUSSION ASK, WHO OR WHAT IS THE STRESSOR? THEN, ASK, CAN I CHANGE THAT STRESSOR IN SOME WAY?

IF YES, THEN WHAT?

1

2

3

4

5

IN NO, THEN CONSIDER FOLLOWING STRATEGIES 2-4.
Strategy # 2 - REMOVE YOURSELF FROM YOUR STRESSORS

Before saying OH GOOD! I’LL JUST QUIT, MOVE OUT OR RUN AWAY, consider that this is often a last alternative for most people. Nevertheless, GETTING AWAY from STRESSORS (negative people or work/living situations) for a short time period may be an alternative to consider. Keep in mind, if you use this to punish the person you may contribute to an escalation in tensions.

Being “passive aggressive” by disappearing or leaving a situation can easily be a two-edged sword. But, it the stressors are temporary, and you may be able at some later date to cause change in the STRESSOR or STRESSOR SITUATION, let the person know you need some time alone and that he/she should give you some space. The removal of yourself from a bad or anxious situation is called AVOIDANCE. We can learn to avoid much of life and, in some circumstances, avoidance is a perfectly appropriate approach.

Unfortunately, AVOIDANCE will reinforce your anxiety reduction, because when you get away from the noxious situation, your anxiety drops. Running or not facing a stressor is, consequently, a reinforced pattern of behavior. In many circumstances this is not very effective.

GROUP DISCUSSION EXERCISE

Briefly go BACK over the stressor situations in STRATEGY 1 and ask the group if any are amenable to STRATEGY 2. ASK WHY OR WHY NOT. Ask if anyone has a problem with this approach? If so, how would they do as an alternative. ASK the group what are their favorite or typical avoidance techniques? Get a discussion going on what people typically do when they want to avoid noxious stressors, how it helps them, what it does to the other person and if, in reality, this is a good or bad way to handle the situation.

SOME EXAMPLES...

• Take an early vacation to rethink your situation.
• Take a walk around the block two, three or four times to allow yourself to calm down and feel better. Then go back and talk with the person with whom you have a challenge.
• Shut the door at work.
• Take a different route to the office.
• Sleep, daydream or fantasize.
• Come to work early; leave early or late.
STRATEGY #3: CHANGE YOUR THINKING

Sounds too easy to be true. But, this is exactly what Stressmasters and PSYCHOLOGICALLY HARDY people do. So can you. Let’s see how. Point out to the group...DID YOU KNOW THAT...

“HOW YOU FEEL IS A RESULT OF... WHAT YOU ARE THINKING!”

Dale Carnegie knew it when he said:

“IF YOU WANT TO BE ENTHUSIASTIC... THEN ACT ENTHUSIASTIC”

Let’s face it, if you can’t change your STRESSORS, and getting away from them is not possible or desirable, then YOU MUST CHANGE HOW YOU THINK ABOUT THOSE STRESSORS.

Of course you don’t have to change your thinking or thoughts about a stressor; however, if you don’t change how you look at a bad or negative person or situation, then anticipate making a lot of people miserable (including yourself). Unfortunately, too many people elect not to not find more effective ways of thinking and, therefore, put themselves in a very bad situation. These individuals find themselves constantly complaining or worrying and seem to get no where... fast! ‘Both you and the people around you suffer from this approach.

CHANGING HOW YOU THINK ABOUT STRESSORS, CHANGES HOW YOU RESPOND

FEELINGS AND ACTIONS - What and how we think about things (stressors, possible future life events, etc.) can create tremendous stress. Unfortunately, what you think about a STRESSOR or STRESSOR SITUATION can be a pattern or typical way you think about much of the world. While this pattern may seem perfectly rational and appropriate to you, it can be the major source of your stress.

PATTERNS OF THINKING THAT RESULT IN STRESS ON A REGULAR BASIS ARE CALLED FAULTY THINKING OR IRRATIONAL THINKING STYLES..
FAULTY THINKING or IRRATIONAL THINKING can be dangerous to your health! One thing you can do, even now, is determine if you have a tendency to think in one of the following, OFTEN VERY IRRATIONAL, styles of thinking.

IMPORTANT:

A thinking style is considered irrational if it creates stress when there little evidence to justify how you are perceiving (thinking) about yourself or others. So, if you can’t change your STRESSOR, or the effort to change your STRESSOR is too great or too risky at this time, what is left is to evaluate and change irrational or faulty thinking.

It is important to determine if there is any foundation for a thought. If you are correct in your assumptions, then you at least will know how to respond to it. For example, if you have very good reason to believe that one of your managers is determined to “push you out”, then you can deal with a real situation.

However, if you have a tendency to see only the negative in situations, then you must be careful with the assumptions you make when stressors come your way. Chances are you are over reacting to a situation.
GROUP EXERCISE: ASSESSING IRRATIONAL THINKING

Following is a group exercise to help you identify faulty thinking styles. Read the list of FAULTY THINKING STYLES, and CHECK THE ONES that you tend to do most often.

1. TUNNEL VISION [   ] √ IF THIS IS YOU!
The person with tunnel vision filters out positive aspects of a person or situation and focuses on just the negative. For example, you...

   • focus on a single detail to the exclusion of all others.
   • tend to become obsessed with a single failure or less than perfect response.
   • ignore others attempts to show you the complete picture.
   • can only see what’s wrong with yourself.

2. SHOULDS [   ] √ IF THIS IS YOU!
Your life is ruled by shoulds. People should know better. He should treat me more lovingly. Your a “should-a-holic”.For example, you...

   • act as though your spouse or friend SHOULD be more considerate and do nice things for you.
   • get upset when you make mistakes and tell yourself that you SHOULD know better!
   • use such words as SHOULD, OUGHT TO, MUST much of the time with yourself and others.
   • dwell on such things as I should have known better, I should have been more loving, you should be home by 5:30 every night, etc.

3. I’M RIGHT [   ] √ IF THIS IS YOU!
You must always be right, and you rarely acknowledge that you don’t know something. When the world is out of sync with your views and beliefs, you don’t change because to do so would mean you would have to admit to your limitations.

For example, you...

   • are always on the defensive around people.
   • find that you must constantly battle with others to win your point of view.
   • sometimes even know you’re wrong but you can’t admit it.
4. MIND READING [ ] √ IF THIS IS YOU!

You are the crystal ball for the world; you know how others think and what motivates them. You have explanations for everything. For example, you...

• believe you know how people feel or think toward you or others.
• make judgments about motives for why people do things.
• use your point of view to evaluate everything.

5. SEEING THE WORST [ ] √ IF THIS IS YOU!

The word catastrophe best describes this person’s point of view. One mistake, one error or one unfulfilled expectation and EVERYTHING is going wrong and will go wrong. For example, you...

• notice or hear about a problem and start “what if’s”: “What if tragedy strikes?”
• your late
• you get divorced
• you have an accident
• go for an interview and don’t get a job offer.

6. SELF-ORIENTED VIEW [ ] √ IF THIS IS YOU!

You think that everything people do or say is related to you. You view the world from only your point of view, and you find it difficult to see another’s point of view. For example, you...

• constantly compare yourself to others, trying to determine who’s smarter, better looking, more athletic, etc.
• feel rejected when you go into a meeting, and someone does not attend to you.
• judge the world by how people react to you. Your worth is based upon how others treat you.
7. BLACK AND WHITE THINKING [ ] √ IF THIS IS YOU!

Things are black or white, good or bad. You have to be perfect or you’re a failure. There is no middle ground. For example, you...

• are accused by others as never seeing the “middle ground”.
• don’t allow for mistakes in yourself or others.
• say bad things about yourself when you make an error.
• don’t allow for much gray areas.

8. OVERGENERALIZATION [ ] √ IF THIS IS YOU!

Jumping to a conclusion with minimal facts is the modus operandi for this person. Overgeneralization means simply making very large and general conclusions based upon often a single piece of news or rumor. For example, you...

• expect that a bad situation will repeat itself over and over, just because it happened once.
• use words like NEVER, ALWAYS, NO ONE, or other absolutes based upon one or two occurrences.

9. YOU OWE ME! [ ] √ IF THIS IS YOU!

You feel that life, or people for that matter, owe you something for all of your hard work or for what you do for them. You may simply expect that because you believe you are always doing the right thing, others should also do so. For example, you...

• expect that people follow the same set of rules you follow.
• can’t understand why someone would treat you a certain way when you have done so much for them.
Discuss the following with the group: Another way to look at faulty thinking styles is to look at specific words you might use. How you talk to yourself is a part of faulty thinking. See if you use an excessive amount of SELF-DESTRUCTIVE thinking.

ASK the participants to look at the words below, and for each pair, put a check in the box that is most like them. Reinforce the point that how we feel is a result of what we think. Initially, the words they select on the negative side should be their primary focus of attention.

**What is Your Thinking Style?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NEGATIVE TALK</th>
<th>POSITIVE TALK</th>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] Blaming</td>
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<td>Confident</td>
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<td>[ ] Can't Do</td>
<td>Can Do</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] What if (and then a catastrophe).</td>
<td>What then</td>
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<td>[ ] Conditional</td>
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<td>[ ] Scattered</td>
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<td>[ ] Out of control</td>
<td>In control</td>
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<tr>
<td>[ ] Future fears</td>
<td>Present actions</td>
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HOW TO CHANGE NEGATIVE SELF TALK

Provide the participants with the following four (4) steps to changing negative self-talk.

IDENTIFY YOUR THOUGHTS

If you are dealing with a specific situation right now in your work situation, then write down your thoughts about the person or situation; i.e., STRESSOR. Pick a stressor that you feel you cannot change at this time through STEP 1. Identify what SELF-DESTRUCTIVE SELF-TALK IS GOING ON...

DETERMINE IF YOUR THOUGHTS ARE “FAULTY”

Ask the participants if their beliefs or thinking have a basis in reality. If so, what is that reality?

The next step is to determine if your thinking is, in fact, faulty. For example, if your supervisor has excluded you from a couple of meetings, and you think she is angry or upset with you, then ask yourself: “WHAT EVIDENCE DO I HAVE THAT THIS IS SO?”

If there is no evidence, then you are probably engaging in MIND READING, and you need to talk with your supervisor or manager about the situation. If you have some evidence, your belief may be accurate; however, you still need to talk with him or her to make certain you have correctly evaluated the situation. Most people fail to take this important step.

Explain that it’s important when “stressed out” about a specific stressor situation to see if you are correct in your assumptions. TESTING REALITY is a very important step in this process.

CHANGE YOUR “SELF-TALK”

Point out that thinking is mental behavior and, as such, is learned. Thinking is often self-talk that each of us has learned over the years. While most of our thoughts seem automatic, have more control over your own personal thoughts than we realize.
RELATE THE FOLLOWING:

When confronted by a STRESSOR that you cannot change right now, it is critically important that you move into a more POSITIVE and CONSTRUCTIVE SELF-TALK mode. Following is an example of how to PREPARE FOR OR REACT TO A STRESSOR SITUATION: This is you talking to you:

“Why worry? Worry is not what I need to do. I will not be helping myself by worrying about a situation I can control. I can handle it. If she really wants me to leave the company, I will survive. I’ve proven to myself that I’m good at what I do. Others will want me!! I could be wrong about her wanting me out. I will take a PROACTIVE tact and discuss my progress with her. Maybe I have misread the situation. After all, I’ve gotten good reviews, and I don’t have a problem with others in the office.”

If reality is not what you want, like or hope for, then, if reality won’t change, you MUST make the change.

REWARD YOURSELF FOR DOING SOMETHING POSITIVE

POINT OUT AND DISCUSS WITH THE GROUP THE FOLLOWING:

It is important to acknowledge that you were able to redirect your thinking and move from a negative view to a positive view. Focusing on solving rather than complaining is crucial. When you make progress, reinforce the effort.

If you are naturally hard and demanding on yourself, then seeing even a small change in your thinking will not come easy to you and “patting yourself on the back” will be a challenge. But try to do it anyway. The results will amaze you.
STRATEGY 4: REDUCE THE EFFECTS OF STRESS

Strategy 4 is what most people try to do to reduce the negative effects of stress. This approach is designed to bring down high levels of stress, reduce or eliminate feelings of anxiety and fear and promote relaxation. This Strategy does not change the stressors in our lives but does help to change our thinking and thought processes.

It is helpful to discuss each of these, as well as others that will be brought up, in the group setting. Following are some of the areas the group might mention. Write their ideas along with the following on the flip chart or overhead.

- AUTGENICS
- DEEP BREATHING
- PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION
- YOGA
- MEDITATION
- HYPNOSIS
- TAKING A BATH
- MASSAGE
- TAI CHI
- AROMA THERAPY
- WALKING and HIKING
- RACQUETBALL, TENNIS, GOLF, ETC.
- PRAYER
- HAVING A DAILY QUIET TIME

After discussing these and others, ask the participants which ones will you use to reduce your stress in the next day or two.
DEEP (DIAPHRAGMATIC) BREATHING EXERCISE

Deep or Diaphragmatic Breathing is designed to increase your resistance to stress. Under stress, it is quite natural to breathe shallow (called Chest Breathing). However, such breathing reduces the amount of oxygen that reaches our blood system and we experience such consequences as: headaches, tension, muscle fatigue, etc.

PRESENT to the participants the DEEP (DIAPHRAGMATIC) BREATHING EXERCISE for QUICK tension reduction. Demonstrate the following deep breathing exercise at this point. Be sure you are familiar with the following technique before attempting it with the class.

Review the following:

1. Loosen collars or belts, if they are constrictive.

2. Use a sitting position and place hands limply on thighs. Spine should be straight but not rigid.

3. Close your eyes and place hand loosely on stomach. Put your hand on your stomach the first few times you practice on your own.

4. Now, INHALE DEEPLY through the nose and allow the abdomen to expand. Count to 10. When breathing in, the hand resting on your abdomen should rise and fall with ease because the lungs will be completely filled with air.

5. Now, EXHALE COMPLETELY by expelling air slowly through your mouth. Pull your abdomen toward the spine to force out air. Think of the abdomen like a bellows going out first and then in.

6. Repeat this pattern for about five (5) minutes. Go slowly so that you do not become light headed. Practice several times each day.
AUTOGENICS

If you have not done Autogenic Exercises, you should become familiar with the technique. The way we use Autogenics is different from the way it is used in clinical settings. This is a very abbreviated version, but very useful for people with good imaginations and in touch with their bodies.

Tell the group that before they start this exercise at the office or at home, they should follow a few basic procedures. You can read each of the following (they are also in the PARTICIPANT’S GUIDE) with the group:

1. SHUT OFF MOST LIGHTS AND CLOSE DOORS. ELIMINATE AS MUCH EXTRANEOUS NOISE AS POSSIBLE. HOLD ALL CALLS AND ASK NOT TO BE DISTURBED!

Now, at this time, turn down the lights and shut doors. If necessary, put a sign on the door that a deep relaxation exercise is in process and DO NOT ENTER.

At work, they should ask their assistant or coworkers to answer all calls or take messages. Discuss with your coworkers that you will need 10-15 uninterrupted minutes. Encourage them to support you in this program.

2. MAINTAIN A PASSIVE ATTITUDE.

Accept all incoming feelings and sensations without expectation or trying to control them. Passive concentration is not “TUNING OUT”, but rather, it is allowing yourself to remain alert in an open and receptive manner. A passive attitude is essentially a letting go and not “trying” approach, kind of like just focusing on feelings and sensations. This is a difficult concept to explain. It is better experienced.

3. SIT IN AN ARMCHAIR WITH YOUR HEAD, BACK AND ARMS COMFORTABLY SUPPORTED. LET GO AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE.

At the office, you can lie down on the floor or use a couch. Put a pillow under your head for support.
4. SCAN YOUR BODY FOR TENSION AND LET GO OF ANY TENSION IN THOSE AREAS.

When scanning your body, focus on areas of discomfort and pain. If pain is intense, then one should sit up or find a comfortable position.

5. CLOSE YOUR EYES.

Discuss the concept of Autogenics with the participants while they are relaxed and with their eyes open. Share with them that Autogenics is a combination of two (2) programs that facilitate symptom removal, deep relaxation, a feeling of letting go, and a sense of inner direction.

IF ANYONE DESIRES TO LEARN THIS TECHNIQUE IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THEY HAVE PROFESSIONAL GUIDANCE. IF ONE HAS ANY SERIOUS PHYSICAL OR EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS, THEY SHOULD CONSULT THEIR PHYSICIAN BEFORE ENGAGING IN AN EXTENDED AUTOGENIC PROGRAM. IN PARTICULAR, PEOPLE WITH HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, DIABETES, HYPOGLYCEMIA OR HEART CONDITIONS ARE ADVISED TO COORDINATE AN AUTOGENIC PROGRAM WITH THEIR PHYSICIAN.

Autogenics can result in significant blood pressure changes, mostly decreases, as well as changes in our body systems. With practice, you will learn how to create feelings of heaviness, warmth and deep relaxation. While learning this technique, you may experience feelings of tingling, stiffness or anxiety. In deep relaxation, you may get some muscle twitching. These experiences are usually transitory, and we suggest that you just go with them. If these feelings persist, stop the program and seek guidance from a licensed or psychologist or physician.

Do the exercises three (3) to four (4) times a day. Each exercise should last about 5-10 minutes. A three month time-line is necessary to really learn the AUTOGENICS TECHNIQUE. Do not expect instant results. With continued practice, you will be able to reduce your overall stress levels with this technique and will feel better physically and emotionally.
Present the following instructions to the group.

Close your eyes and repeat the phrases below to yourself very slowly. Allow about 15 seconds between each time you say the phrase.

Repeat each phrase about two (2) or three (3) times before going on to the next phase. Sometimes it is helpful to visualize your arms and legs with weights on them, as lead weights, or like sand bags. In the warmth exercise, you can add visualizations such as warm water surrounding your arms and hands, the warmth of the sun or any similar visualization.

Refer to this handout several times before you memorize the phrases. Don’t worry about saying the phrases perfectly. It is the order that is important. Have someone you know read the phrases very slowly for the first week. You can do the same for him or her. NOW, WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED, SLOWLY REPEAT THE FOLLOWING (allow 10 to 15 seconds between each phrase):

Begin with...
MY RIGHT ARM IS HEAVY
MY RIGHT HAND IS HEAVY
MY RIGHT ARM AND HAND ARE HEAVY, HEAVY & RELAXED
MY LEFT ARM IS HEAVY
MY LEFT ARM AND HAND ARE HEAVY, HEAVY & RELAXED.
BOTH OF MY ARMS ARE HEAVY, RELAXED AND COMFORTABLE

Then...
MY RIGHT LEG IS HEAVY
MY RIGHT LEG AND FOOT ARE HEAVY
MY RIGHT THIGH, CALF AND FOOT ARE HEAVY, RELAXED AND COMFORTABLE
MY LEFT LEG IS HEAVY
MY LEFT LEG AND FOOT ARE HEAVY
MY LEFT THIGH, CALF AND FOOT ARE HEAVY, RELAXED AND COMFORTABLE
BOTH OF MY LEGS ARE HEAVY
BOTH OF MY THIGHS, CALVES AND FEET ARE HEAVY AND RELAXED
LEAD into THE WARMTH EXERCISE by saying: “For the next few minutes, just focus on your breathing and any sensations of heaviness. Any unwanted thoughts that come into your mind should be accepted and then, like letting go of a leaf in the wind, let it go.” SAY: “And now the WARMTH EXERCISE.” REMEMBER THE GOAL IS TO GO SLOWLY.

REPEAT THE FOLLOWING SLOWLY:

Begin with...
- WARMTH IS FLOWING INTO MY RIGHT ARM AND HAND
- WARMTH IS FLOWING DOWN MY RIGHT ARM AND INTO MY RIGHT HAND
- MY RIGHT HAND IS WARM AND HEAVY
- WARMTH IS FLOWING INTO MY LEFT ARM AND HAND
- WARMTH IS FLOWING DOWN MY LEFT ARM AND INTO MY LEFT HAND
- MY LEFT HAND IS WARM AND HEAVY
- BOTH MY ARMS ARE HEAVY AND WARM
- MY HANDS ARE WARM, RELAXED AND WARM

Begin with...
- MY MIND IS CALM AND QUIET
- MY BODY IS RELAXED AND WARM, AND MY MIND IS SERENE
- CALM, MY MIND IS CALM AND QUIET
- I AM RELAXED, AND MY MIND IS CALM

Coming out of the exercise:

At the conclusion of each exercise, say to yourself: “Energy is flowing into my body. I am relaxed, refreshed and alert.” Now, slowly open your eyes. Stretch. WAIT A FEW MOMENTS AND THEN DISCUSS THE EXPERIENCE: How did you feel? Did anyone feel sensations of HEAVINESS? WHERE? WARMTH? WHERE? Overall, how do you feel?

Some people will experience deep relaxation, while others may experience very little of anything. Some overly stressed people have great difficulty letting go of thoughts and tension. REASSURE THEM THAT THIS IS NORMAL, AND GIVE IT AT LEAST A WEEK TO SEE SOME RESULTS. For some, this will be the first time they will have done anything like this. It is important to let them know that this is a skill that requires practice and continued “letting go”. The more they practice, the better they will become at reducing high levels of stress.
NOTE: IF ANYONE IS VERY UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THIS EXERCISE, THEY CAN OPEN THEIR EYES OR, IF NECESSARY, GO OUTSIDE. ON RARE OCCASIONS SOMEONE WILL NOT FEEL TOO COMFORTABLE DOING THIS PROGRAM; DON'T PUSH THEM INTO IT. YOU MAY WANT TO DISCUSS HOW THEY FELT AFTER THE PROGRAM.

PSYCHOLOGICAL HARDINESS

Researchers at the University of Chicago have found through extensive research that some people function better, have less illnesses and physical problems, even when under tremendous stress. These people have been identified as having Psychologically Hardy Personalities.

The research is conclusive and points to the fact that Psychological Hardiness is an important goal toward which we could realistically aspire. In fact, this stress management program is focused on helping each participant to learn the essential techniques used by the Psychologically Hardy Person.

There are three (3) characteristics of Psychologically Hardy people. These characteristics are specific attitudes toward life and how one responds to and approaches stressors. Suggest that if someone does not possess some of these attitudes to the degree that they want, they may want to make this an additional goal.

CHALLENGE

People who are Psychologically Hardy are challenge, not problem, oriented. The concept of challenge is based upon the fundamental belief that CHANGE, and not STABILITY, is the mode of life. Psychologically Hardy people view events and people that do not meet their expectations, not as a problem, but as an opportunity and CHALLENGE!

As can be seen, if we expect change, we can take on a positive attitude of anticipation and view life as a process of accepting the challenges which are given to us. Conversely, if we do not expect things to change, when change does come we are unprepared and thrown off guard. As such, change becomes a real problem and chronic stress results.
Commitment

Psychologically Hardy people are committed to actively taking on the challenges which life gives them. These “hardy” people are deeply involved in both work and family life. Many are very community minded and are involved in helping others. Committed people have a sense of meaning and purpose to their lives. These committed, dedicated and involved personalities have a built in protection against stress.

Control

It has already been said that “we control no one, but have an influence over everyone”. The “hardy” personality has a sense of control, not over the occurrence of stressors, but of their reaction to stressors. A sense of control is not seeing that we must control the world around us. To take such an attitude will only result in even more stress as we try to control something that cannot be controlled.

A sense of control is simply an internal belief that we can control our internal responses to stressors even if our stressors are extreme. This inner control often comes from a strong belief and faith in ourselves, a God or high being. Whatever the source of this inner control, it is the ability to positively evaluate even difficult situations which makes some people more Psychologically Hardy than others.

“If you can’t fight it or flee from it, then ...
Flow with it!!”

Instruct the participants to complete STEPS 4-7 of the CONTRACT FOR CHANGE. Emphasize, again, that this if for their own use. Also emphasize that for further assistance for the areas of the SMQ on which they scored high, they should review the information in Appendix B of the PARTICIPANT’S GUIDE. After they have completed the contract for change, present the following closing comments about psychological hardiness.
CHAPTER 8:
MANAGERS AND STRESS
CHAPTER 8: MANAGERS AND STRESS

“Over 25% of managers surveyed believe that Anger is an appropriate form of management!”

This chapter is designed to be used with managers and supervisors with at least two (2) or more subordinates. You can use the material in any order you want; however, the following is the suggested order. If you want to use these exercises, you may copy them from your manual.

Many managers either do not believe or are not aware of the cost or consequence of stress in the work place. However, the cost is substantial in both human and economic terms.

GOAL: The goal of this exercise is to guide the managers and senior executives to realize the tremendous cost associated with “uncontrolled” stress in the work place. The format suggested is one of discussion, with flip charts or overheads listing the major costs.

Lead a group discussion on the cost of stress to employers. The cost or consequence of stress to individuals may be the same or very different. Ask the group the following:

1. What is the cost of losing a quality manager or partner because job stress is too great?

2. What is the cost of losing a client or customer because of a stressed employee who didn’t perform to standard?

3. What is the cost of one employee who is disgruntled and stressed to the work productivity of his or her coworkers? Here are some to consider...

   Accidents
   Lower Productivity
   Increased employee theft, sabotage & vandalism
   Low employee morale
   Job turnover
   Poor manager-employee relations
   Others...to be determined by group

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PRESENT TO THE GROUP AND DISCUSS THE IMPLICATIONS FOR YOUR SPECIFIC WORK AREA.

THE HIGH COST OF EMPLOYEE STRESS

• In a recent national survey, 75% percent of workers say their job causes them stress.

• In another study, fifty percent of workers surveyed, about 40,000 individuals, reported experiencing “a lot” or “moderate” stress during the previous two (2) week period.

• One stress expert has identified an increase in both the frequency and duration of stress with little or no chance for people to bounce back.

• Eleven to fifteen percent of all occupational disease claims are related to stress and job pressures.

• Stress claims are the principle occupational injury of white collar and service employees.

• Stress is consistently in the top five (5) most commonly cited problems in the American work force.

• There has been a thirty percent increase of employee stress claims.

• Fifteen percent of all employees have serious personal problems and most of these interfere with job performance and effectiveness.

• Substance abuse is on the increase, and it is well established that most people use alcohol and drugs as a means of coping with life stress.
FINANCIAL COST OF STRESS

• Stress costs employers billions of dollars each year. An estimated $150 billion each year can be linked to stress and the inability of people to manage their stress more effectively. According to a New York Times article, the estimate of the cost of stress has been put as high as $200 billion.

• The American Medical Association stated to Congress that one half the cost of medical services can be attributed to life-styles (including stress) that are unhealthy or nonproductive.

DISCUSS AND HAVE THE GROUP DEFINE OTHER FINANCIAL COSTS OF STRESS

LIFE THREATENING COSTS OF STRESS

It is possible that the ultimate result of prolonged stress is death. Recall that Joe Westbecker, using an AK 47 assault rifle, killed many of his coworkers and then himself in a fit of anger on Thursday, September 14, 1989. Joe was a disgruntled and “stressed” employee because he lost his disability benefits. Ask the group if they can identify recent public tragedies that were stress induced.

IDENTIFYING ORGANIZATIONAL STRESSORS

Ask the group what are the major sources of corporate stress facing your company or companies like yours. It is often helpful to have corporate executives and managers, particularly mid-level managers and above, gain a better understanding of the company or department stressors. Copy and hand out the exercise that follows. Read the instructions. After the allotted time, have each group put on flip charts their findings. Using a discussion format, ask the group the following...

• Which of these do you have control over?
• Which do you not have any control over?
• To what extend do employees have any control over these stressors?
• Which ones are avoidable? Or, unavoidable?
• Pick several of key interest to the group and discuss what could be done to minimize the negative impact on employees.

Discuss why these stressors are likely to cause stress and distress in employees.

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MAJOR CORPORATE STRESSORS EXERCISE

SMALL GROUP
TIME: 15 MINUTES
GOAL: TO IDENTIFY ORGANIZATIONAL STRESSORS

1. 

2. 

3. 

4. 

5. 

6. 

7. 

8. 

9. 

10. 

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Most major corporate stressors are not under the control of the vast majority of employees. Few employees have a sense about why these stressors cause so many problems. Even managers and senior executives often don’t see the consequences of these. Communication and good corporate management are essential to the mental health of the company and to productivity. Managers and senior executives should take positive, proactive steps to reduce the negative impact of these stressors.
RECOGNIZING EMPLOYEE DISTRESS

Recognizing stressful situations and people experiencing significant stress or distress is critically important to a company. The cost of stress, if presented, will be well known to the managers present. However, it is a good time to reiterate some of the consequences of distressed employees.

The following exercise is intended to sharpen each manager’s eye toward early warning signs of stress. Since they will already have had an exposure to the 7 WARNING SIGNS OF STRESS as measured by the SMQ, they should have a beginning understanding of what to look for.

Ask participants to read the instructions and think about specific situations they have seen which might have been “early warning signs” of employee stress.

GOAL: To develop a strategy for early recognition of stress in staff at each person’s office.

EMPLOYEE “AT RISK” BEHAVIORS - Obvious

- EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM
- DECREASE IN BILLABLE HOURS, DECREASE IN SALES
- AVOIDANCE OF MANAGER OR OTHERS IN THE OFFICE
- ISOLATION
- ANGER/AGGRESSION OUTBREAKS
- THREATS
- DURING OR AFTER HOUR DRUG (ALCOHOL) USE
- NOT TAKING ANY BREAKS
- WORKS CONSTANTLY
EMPLOYEE “AT RISK” BEHAVIORS - Subtle

- CAUSTIC or DEGRADING REMARKS
- PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR
  - Blocking Other’s Progress
  - Loosing things
  - Playing innocent when guilty of something
- BEING LATE ROUTINELY FOR CLIENT MEETINGS OR STAFF MEETINGS
- CONTINUOUS AVOIDANCE OF OFFICE FUNCTIONS
- INCREASED MEDICAL USE BY SELF OR FAMILY
- LONGER THAN USUAL LUNCHES OR BREAKS
- LOSS OF CONCENTRATION
- SIMPLE ERRORS IN WORK

Ask what managers should be on the look out for in employees as well as vendors or suppliers. Here are some possible answers...

SUDDEN SHIFTS IN BEHAVIOR OR ATTITUDE

He always dressed nice, now he doesn’t.
She was always on time; now she’s always late.
He usually took lunch breaks; now he doesn’t.
She looks terrible with face break outs, poor complexion; overweight.
He’s been loosing weight steadily.
Reports of family discord.
HOW TO RECOGNIZE EMPLOYEE STRESS AND DISTRESS EXERCISE

SMALL GROUP ACTIVITY
TIME: 20 MINUTES
GOAL: TO LEARN HOW TO RECOGNIZE DISTRESS IN YOUR OFFICE

Think about current or past situations in your office, or in other offices where you have worked, and recall people who were under DISTRESS.

WHAT were the specific behaviors they engaged in which might have been early warning signs that they were in emotional trouble.

WRITE down as many early warning signs that you can remember or think of in the space below.

1. _________________________________________________________________________
2. _________________________________________________________________________
3. _________________________________________________________________________
4. _________________________________________________________________________
5. _________________________________________________________________________
6. _________________________________________________________________________
7. _________________________________________________________________________
8. _________________________________________________________________________
9. _________________________________________________________________________
The following exercise is designed to help managers and supervisors identify the things they might do or might have done to cause unnecessary stress in their staff and employees.

GOAL: To help each person recognize the things that cause employees to experience unnecessary and debilitating stress and to take some responsibility for being a part of the “stress equation”. Form small groups and hand out the following exercise. Read the instructions to each person. Have them put their responses on flip charts and discuss some of the following:

1. Which ones are most common in your office or company?
2. Which ones are most unavoidable?
3. Which ones are most damaging to productivity?
4. Which ones do you have control over?

Ask each person to make a commitment to reduce, stop or change a certain pattern of behavior or stressors over which they have some influence.

MANAGERS AS STRESSORS

Let’s start out by saying that causing stress or being a stressor is inherent in the role of a manager or owner. However, the goal should be to Optimize Stress in employees to promote good and beneficial behavior.

While, managers are the major source of stress for employees and staff, it is difficult being a manager because one must walk a fine line between creating the right amount of stress and falling into unproductive and highly disruptive distress. Many managers can walk that line, many cannot and, consequently, they, not the employee, become the “fly in the ointment”. The result is an increase in errors and low productivity. If your program is for managers and executives, use the exercise which follows, called MANAGER AS STRESSOR, to help them to understand the role they play in creating stress.

However, if this program is for staff and supervisors, modify the activity to meet their needs. For example, you can ask them to put themselves in the “shoes” of a manager and answer as thought they were a manager or owner. A key point is how managers can create optimal and positive stress -- not distress - in their employees. After the group has presented and discussed their findings, present and discuss the results.
GROUP ACTIVITY
TIME: 20-30 Minutes
GOAL: TO LEARN HOW A MANAGER CAN BE A STRESSOR

The goal of stress management is not to eliminate stress or stressors but, rather, to optimize stress. People work best, are more productive and make fewer errors when stress is optimized. Too little stress and nothing happens; too much stress and errors and problems increase.

LIST below several ways a manager can be an EXCESSIVE or UNNECESSARY source of stress to staff or employees. Feel free to include yourself or think of others you may know, but do NOT IDENTIFY the person or indicate who or she is.

This exercise is designed to be helpful to you as well as others. Use behavioral terms. Be specific.

I CAN BE A SOURCE OF STRESS WHEN I...

1. _________________________________________________________________________

2. _________________________________________________________________________

3. _________________________________________________________________________

4. _________________________________________________________________________

5. _________________________________________________________________________

6. _________________________________________________________________________

7. _________________________________________________________________________
A manager can be a stressor by...

• NOT MASTERING YOUR OWN STRESS (STRESS CARRIER)
• USING UNCLEAR COMMUNICATION TO STAFF
• NOT LISTENING (HEARING) WHAT STAFF HAVE TO SAY
• NOT DEALING WITH STAFF CONFLICTS
• CONSTANTLY CHANGING DECISIONS & OBJECTIVES
• CREATING ROLE AMBIGUITY
• TALKING AT AND NOT WITH STAFF
• PLAYING FAVORITES
• NOT SHOWING CONCERN FOR STAFF
• GIVING MIXED MESSAGES
• NOT ATTENDING TO THE PERSON BUT ONLY THE BOTTOM LINE
• NOT DELEGATING OR PARTIAL DELEGATION
  (GIVING RESPONSIBILITY BUT NOT AUTHORITY)
• NOT SUPPORTING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
• DIFFERENTIAL SUPPORTING OF POLICIES
• WORK OVERLOAD WORK UNDER LOAD
• NOT BEING AROUND -ABSENTEE LEADERSHIP
• UNREALISTIC AND UNNECESSARILY TIGHT DEADLINES
• CONFUSED OR NONEXISTENT DAILY PRIORITIES
• NOT INFORMING STAFF OF MAJOR CHANGES
• NOT EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES (THEY FEEL HELPLESS)
• KEEPING AN EMPLOYEE WHO SHOULD BE LET GO
• FIRING A GOOD EMPLOYEE FOR THE WRONG REASON
• SEXUAL HARASSMENT OR HAVING AN OFFICE AFFAIR
• AUTHORITATIVE AND DOMINEERING ATTITUDE
• OVERLY CRITICAL MANAGEMENT STYLE
• TOO MUCH A PEOPLE PLEASER-AFRAID TO SAY IT LIKE IT IS
Solutions for excessive stress are necessary in order to increase quality of work life, productivity and job satisfaction. The key is to Optimize Stress. As the leading cause of employee complaints, learning how to walk the line between creating too much stress and too little stress is critically important.

By now your group should begin to recognize that the problem of excessive stress is a problem and it is costly. Both companies and managers cause stress, and while we want employees to be good stressmasters, many do not have this ability or attitude. Programs are needed to promote a balance.

Suggest that the group take some responsibility for reducing stress and learning how to master the art of creating positive and optimal stress levels. Reinforce the concept that stressmastery is a two way street. Both company and individual must work together to produce optimal and effective stress levels.

Remind the group that companies can no longer consider employees commodities which can be tossed out at will. Not only is it cost prohibitive it is in humane. It is to the financial advantage of employers to try to retain, promote, train and enhance employees so that both the individual and corporate needs are met.

Use the following exercise called, PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO CHANGE, to identify and modify one or two specific behaviors that, when they return to the office, will help to increase productivity and job satisfaction.
KEY OBJECTIVES TO KEEPING STRESS OPTIMIZED

All companies and organizations should be aware that keeping stress within bounds and stressors to a reasonable level is central to a smooth operation and improved productivity. Stressmaster has identified six objectives to focus on; these are:

**Influence** The sense of influence relates to how much an employee has to say about various aspects of his or her work environment.

**Resources** The feeling that one has resources and support from one’s team, co-workers, and management allows for a sense of satisfaction and reduces stress.

**Connection** The connection or relationship one has others is central to optimal stress. Each person has a need to be connected in a positive and low conflict way.

**Pressure** The work environment includes people and the physical world in which the person works and functions. Being aware of his includes issues such as demanding schedules, amount of work, work schedules and the work environment.

**Function** What function and role a person plays in the company must be clear and well defined. Functions should be non-conflicting with others and their roles and responsibilities

**Change** Change causes stress and when change occurs management should plan for and execute an employee sensitive change program.

These Key Objectives when properly addressed through frequent and consistent communication via individual, group, written and verbal communication will go far to helping to optimize stress for improved work satisfaction and work productivity.
A COMMITMENT TO CHANGE EXERCISE

GROUP ACTIVITY
TIME: 15 Minutes
GOAL: COMMITTING TO CHANGE

Before change, comes resistance. We often want others to make the change; after all, it seems easier. By now, you have a sense for the things which you as a manager do that causes unnecessary stress for your staff. Based upon all that you have experienced so far, what change will you make?

I AGREE TO DO THE FOLLOWING TO OPTIMIZE STRESS IN MY OFFICE...

1. _________________________________________________________________________

2. _________________________________________________________________________

3. _________________________________________________________________________

4. _________________________________________________________________________

5. _________________________________________________________________________

6. _________________________________________________________________________

7. _________________________________________________________________________
WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU SPOT EXTREME STRESS

Effective managers and supervisors need to know how to recognize and help stressed employees cope more effectively with. As has been shown, an overly stressed employee either produce less work or the quality of the work suffers.

Have a group discussion about what each person does when they have a troubled and stressed employee. They have already discussed and learned about how to identify a stressed employee. Now, what happens when that person begins to slip and cause problems. Do you cut the strings and let her or him go or do you work with the person to help him become a stressmaster. Encourage the managers to share their strategies and approaches. Ask the group the following:

• What techniques do you use, if any, to help a stressed staff person?

• Do you feel comfortable talking with a staff person about personal or office stress? If not---why not?

Focus on simple counseling skills such as the following. You may want to put these on a flip chart or overhead as the group talks about them.

ACTIVE LISTENING

Reflect their feelings to let a person know you understand their distress; for example, “Mary, you appear to be stressed and frustrated at the amount of work. I can image the anxiety you must be feeling.”

Restate what they have said to let someone know you have been listening and have a sense of appreciation of their thoughts; for example, “Tom, I believe you are telling me that your coworker takes all the credit for your team’s work. Is that correct?”

Just listen and avoid just telling the person what you think they should do. Most people resent being told what to do. Active listening is as simple as saying: Hum, OK, I see, I understand. Sometimes, just letting people talk is more difficult than giving advice. You are not in the Advice Business. It is our nature to “tell” people what you think the solution may be. After hearing and agreeing with it, they continue merrily along as though your suggestion never existed. Just listening takes practice, but the results may be better than you can imagine.

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EMPATHY

Show your empathy with a person in distress. You may not agree with what they are saying, but you can empathize with their discomfort. Simply say, “I can see why you feel the way you do,” or “I can appreciate where you’re coming from. Most people do want not answers when they complain or share the stress they are under. What they typically want is to simply be heard, listened to and understood. Then, once trust has been built, they may begin to take your advice.

ENCOURAGEMENT

Give encouragement and support their efforts and progress, even if the progress is not as great as you would like to be. Baby steps, not giant leaps, are what gets people to their goals. For example, “I can see, Joe, that you’re improving on reports. Keep up the good work.” Praise is more powerful and effective than punishment! Punishing behavior may stop it from occurring for a while, but may not tell the person what TO DO. Praise informs the individual of what is being done correctly.

There are many resources available in this area. If you are unfamiliar with this topic, go to the library or bookstore and pick up a book on the topic of Active Listening. The book “One Minute Manager” is an excellent source of how give corrective feedback.
CHAPTER 9: RESOURCES
CHAPTER 9: RESOURCES


Davis, Ph.D., Martha, Eshelman, M.S.W., Elizabeth, and McKay, Ph.D., Matthew. *Stress Management and Stress Reduction Workbook. (3Rd Edition)*. New Harbinger, 1988


Hanson, R. W. and Geber, K. E. *Coping with Chronic Pain*. Guilford, 1990.


CHAPTER 10:
SCORE CARD & CONTRACT FORM
CHAPTER 10:
SCORE CARD & CONTRACT FORM

There are two important tools that trainers, coaches, and counselors can use in their programs. One is the STRESSMASTER SCORE CARD® while the other is the COMMITMENT TO CHANGE FORM.

The STRESSMASTER SCORE CARD® can be used to provide deeper insight on what areas one might want to focus for personal development and change. There are three (3) sections to the Score Card; YOUR BEST GUESS, HOW A COMPANION SCORED YOU and HOW ONE ACTUALLY SCORED on the SMQ. You may copy and use it in your training program as needed.

The Score Card creates a deeper interest, self-introspection and a “second” opinion about how one might answer the questions on the SMQ. It creates interest because it challenges one to think about their own behaviors, how stress affects them and the role that stressors play into their lives.

It creates introspection because it encourages one to think deeper about his or her behavior, how stress can affect us and what kind of stressors might exist. To answer the questions

It creates a “second” opinion by allowing someone close to the person to give an different and perhaps more objective point of view. Sometimes they agree; at other times there is a big difference. All of this helps one to clarify how and to what degree stress may be affecting us.

There are many ways to use the Score Card and you are encouraged to use it in anyway that works for you and your trainees or clients. Following is one approach to consider:

Using The Score Card in a Stress Mastery Training Program or Coaching Session.

In the previous chapters it was suggested that you have individuals score each area after that area is presented. This usually happens in the course of a formal stress mastery program. However, the Score Card can be used in other ways. For example, you can administer the SMQ prior to your stress mastery program or stress coaching session. But, before you give feedback to each person from their actual SMQ, whether in a training program or in a coaching/counseling session, you can create stronger interest by challenging (in a positive way) one to think about the scales before delving into each one.
Step 1 - Participant or Client

Give them the short description of each scale (see page 136 for SMQ Scale Descriptions) and then ask them to complete the section on the Score Card called YOUR BEST GUESS. Ask each person to rate themselves on each scale as best they can. This will give the person time to think about how stress can affect him or her and establish a baseline for comparison. The SMQ Scale Description page can be copied and provided to the participant and/or companion to use as a guide.

Step 2 - Companion

Ask the participant or client to take home the Score Card and the SMQ Scale Descriptions and give to a person who knows the person the best or very well. This person is called The Companion. Also provide an envelop (large of small) to the participant or client with the following instructions:

“Give the Score Card and Scale Descriptions to someone who knows you really well such as a spouse, close friend or co-worker you trust. This person is called Your Companion and ask Your Companion to rate you on each of the 11 SMQ scales. Ask the person to read the description and think how YOU might score this area. Then the Companion circles the area (HIGH to LOW) for each scale in the section called “HOW YOUR COMPANION VIEW YOU.” When completed, put the completed Score Card into the envelop, seal it and give back to you in the seal envelop. Inform the person that it is important to bring the envelop to the next training session or program but not open it. They do not need to put their name on the envelop but the name of the participant or client should be on it to be sure that it is not mixed up with other envelops.

Step 3 - At The Program

In a Stress Mastery training program, set up a time for each person to take their Results from the SMQ, either from the Stress Profile or the Stress Report, and circle the score for each scale under the section called “SCORES FROM YOUR SMQ”. Use the same Score Card where the person also indicated his or her “BEST GUESS”. So, now the person has two views; one his/her BEST GUESS and SCORES FROM YOUR SMQ which is how he/she answered the questions.
The next step is to open the envelop from the Companion and put those circled areas for each scale on the Score Card. At the conclusion of this exercise, the participant or client will have three views of the person to think about.

**Step 4 - Interpretation in Stress Mastery Training Program**

The use and interpretation of the Score Card varies. In a stress mastery program, each person should highlight those area where there is a difference between the Companion and the participant or client’s score.

Questions to ask are:
1. What does this mean that the Companion scored me higher or lower or the same?
2. Is this an area of concern.
3. What can I do to improve my stress levels.
4. What are the implications for me, my family and co-workers or friends?

In a small group session, each person should be encouraged to share with their group how they scored each area and how the scores may have varied between the Best Guess and Companion’s view. The task is to clarify the “best” answer where there are discrepancies between the Companion and the actual SMQ scores. Generally, there is a lively discussion amount the small group on each area. Then, each person should choose one or two areas for change and to share their findings with the larger group.

**Step 5 - Interpretation in Stress Coaching Session**

In a coaching or counseling program, the same procedure would occur, however, there the coach or counselor will be the sounding board for each area and probe with the person the importance of each area and what to do about it.
The **SCORE CARD** is designed to guide you in your self assessment process and will assist you to determine what, if any, areas are most in need of change. The concept behind the Card is to get three points of view so that you can identify the most important areas on which to focus your attention for change.

For each area, **circle** the value (High to Low) based upon a) Your Best Guess, b) What Your Companion thinks and c) Scores from your actual SMQ.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRESS WARNING SIGNS</th>
<th>YOUR BEST GUESS</th>
<th>HOW YOUR COMPANION VIEWS YOU</th>
<th>SCORES FROM YOUR SMQ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRESS</th>
<th>PHYSICAL SIGNS</th>
<th>LIFE/WORK SATISFACTION</th>
<th>STRESSORS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

NAME: ___________________________ GROUP: _______________ COMPANY: _______________ DATE: __________
SMQ SCALE DESCRIPTIONS

Following is a short description of each of the 11 SMQ Scales. The more that one agrees with the scale description the HIGHER the Scale Score. If you are using this to rate yourself or someone you know at their request using the Stressmaster Score Card, then score them High to Low based on your perception. Generally, if you agree that you or the person you know is very much like the description, give a score of Med-High to High. If not, then choose a lower score like Medium, Med-Low or Low.

HOSTILITY/ANGER SCALE

The Hostility/Anger Scale (HO) scale assesses the degree to which someone is experiencing frustration and anger at this time in his or her life. Indicators of Hostility and Anger are irritability, focus on the incompetencies of others, impatience and verbal or physical expressions of anger toward others and expressions of frustration at other’s behavior.

PERFECTIONISM SCALE

The Perfectionism Scale (PE) assesses the degree to which someone shows more than normal demands for excellence. Perfectionists demonstrate a strong demand for no errors from those around them whether at work or home, are irritated with the mistakes of others, overwork a task to try and make it perfect, demonstrate that they are a perfectionist in what they do at all times and do not delegate tasks because they don’t trust others to do it as well.

TIME-URGENCY SCALE

The Time-Urgency Scale assesses the degree to which someone is frequently in a great rush to move faster, work harder and do more in less time. Generally, a time urgent person is always eating fast, moving and walking rapidly and always is in a hurry. These individuals tend to talk fast and hurry the speech of others and have a strong sense of “clock watching”. The inability to slow down is a hallmark of these individuals.

DISAPPOINTMENT SCALE

The Disappointment Scale assesses the level of personal disappointment with others and their job or home life. Individuals how are frequently disappointed think and talk about getting out of their job or life situation, feel that they are not appreciated for their work or effort, talk about people who are or have disappointed them and express discouragement, in general.

BURNOUT SCALE

The Burnout Scale assesses the degree to which a person shows or talks about being sad or unhappy. These individuals tend to have a “thin skin” and cannot laugh at themselves. They also show that they are unenthusiastic and talk pessimistically about their life, work or relationships.
UNDER-ACHIEVEMENT SCALE

The Under-Achievement Scale assesses the degree to which a person is feeling that he or she is not achieving very much and talks about how hard it is to accomplish much, even if they are by all objective standards doing quite well. This scale looks at the feeling and outward expression that things take too long to accomplish and that what they do is rather pointless.

TENSION SCALE

The Tension Scale assesses the degree to which someone is able to relax and take time for themselves. People who score high on this scale have a high level of physical and emotional tension in their bodies. They rarely take time to relax and take time for themselves. When they take breaks, they are short and lunches are avoided or done rapidly. They are always on the go and work late and on weekends. Their leisure time on weekends is almost none existent.

PHYSICAL STRESS EFFECTS SCALE

The Physical Stress Effects Scale assesses the possible effect of intense or prolonged stress on the body. Typical physical signs of stress include: indigestion, fast pulse, bowel disturbances, constipation, diarrhea, headaches, back aches, and other health issues.

LIFE/WORK SATISFACTION SCALE

The Life/Work Satisfaction Scale assesses the degree of satisfaction that a person has with his or her work, job or live in general. People who score high on this scale are unhappy with career choice, current job, co-workers, level of income, supervisors and managers and amount of work.

STRESSORS: MAJOR LIFE EVENTS SCALE

The Stressors Scale looks at how many major life events have occurred in the past year that are largely unavoidable. People score high on this scale when they have many life events that include death of a loved one, financial loss, divorce, separation, injuries, loss of job, retirement, legal problems and other events that are mostly out of the control of the individual.

STRESSORS: HASSLE SCALE

The Hassles assesses the amount of daily hassles and challenges one faces each day many of which could be avoided. Hassles are not major life events; they are the common irritations that one perceives such as challenges of a new job or career, concerns about weight, lack of money, conflicts with spouse or friends, difficulties with employees or co-workers, too many responsibilities, vehicle repairs and being delayed in traffic.
COMMITMENT TO CHANGE

This is your personal commitment to making a positive change toward Stressmastery. Review the Stress Warning Signs section and select ONE area to work on. By completing this contract you are agreeing that this area is in need of change and that you will do something about it.

STEP 1: SELECT THE RISK AREA TO WORK ON -

If you scored HIGH or MEDIUM on any of the Seven Stress Warning Sign Scales, it is recommended that you focus on the one area of greatest concern to you at this time. Other areas can be worked on, but it is better to make small changes in a critical area than to attempt to do too many things. The key to effective change is to get some initial positive results.

STEP 2: IDENTIFY WHAT YOU WILL CHANGE - Following are the behaviors, thoughts, or attitudes that I will change (be positive):

1. 
2. 
3. 

STEP 3: WHAT WILL PREVENT YOU FROM BEING SUCCESSFUL? - Some barriers are: other people, things, attitudes, lack of knowledge, lack of commitment, etc.:

1. 
2. 
3. 

STEP 4: I WILL DO THE FOLLOWING TO OVERCOME THESE BARRIERS:

1. 
2. 
3. 

STEP 5: ASSESS YOUR COMMITMENT:
My level of commitment to change is (circle one): HIGH MED LOW

STEP 6: TIME ALLOCATION:
I will allow myself _____ months to achieve a reasonable level of success.

STEP 7: COMMITMENT TO CHANGE:
I COMMIT to accomplish this goal! Sign:______________________________________________

STEP 8: BE ACCOUNTABLE. I will give permission to__________________________ to help hold me accountable for this change.

IMPORTANT
Copy and share this contract with another person as soon as possible. Post on your refrigerator, bathroom mirror, or office wall! Let others help you to be accountable for your change.