

# ***Stress Management***

*HR010*

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## **Description**

This course will instruct you on how to recognize stress and give you effective tips to cope with and eliminate stress.

## ***Chapter 1 – Getting Started***

This chapter contains the following page titles:

- About the Authors
- Introduction
- Objectives

## **About the Authors**

### **Sara Laures**

#### **Vice President, VGM Education**

Sara Laures is vice president for VGM Education, a division of VGM Group, Inc. Sara began her career with the company in 1998 as patient care coordinator with Homelink. In 2002 she became that division's training coordinator, during which time she instructed and managed a four-week Stress Management program for associates and implemented a Mentor Program for new associates. She became Manager of Training & Development for Homelink in 2002, developing curriculum and training using a multimedia approach for more than 200 associates.

In 2003 Sara became director of education for VGM Education, which was then a service under VGM & Associates. In this role, Sara led the creation of educational programs for home medical equipment, rehabilitation, and respiratory providers and designed, implemented, and directed eight educational tracks offered at the annual Heartland Conference.

As division vice president since 2008, Sara oversees daily operations of the division including leading the combined team of VGMU Online Learning and CE Solutions associates; directing curriculum development; implementing course design and development; coordinating education for Heartland



Conference; and maintaining relationships with the internal and external partners, clients, and members of the division and VGM Group, Inc.

**Jason Sadler**  
**Supervisor, Patient Services**  
**VGM-Homelink**

Jason Sadler has been with VGM-Homelink, VGM Group, Inc.'s managed care division, since 1997. He is currently vice president of operations, where he oversees more than 400 employees.

His department receives more than 1,000 referrals and 4,500 total telephone calls per day. Homelink processes more than 2,000 bills and 900 dealer checks per day. Jason assists case managers in the facilitation of their workload, helping to make their jobs easier while working with local VGM members where their clients reside. Jason believes in establishing a partnership with customers where interactions can occur, not just transactions. He saves both providers and case managers time and money and is available to help resolve any problems that may arise.

Jason is a graduate of the University of Northern Iowa with a degree in business administration.

**Dorothy de Souza Guedes**  
**Technical writer and editor**  
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Dorothy de Souza Guedes is a technical writer for VGM Education. She was a journalist and communications specialist before joining VGM in 2015. Dorothy strives to research and include the most up-to-date information when writing or editing course content for VGMU. She is interested in how adults learn and retain information. She enjoys the challenge of presenting complicated content in an easy-to-understand format to better ensure learner comprehension.

She is a graduate of Mundelein College (Loyola University Chicago) with a degree in Communications - Public Relations. She also holds an associate degree in Paralegal Studies and a certificate in Web Development & Design from Kirkwood Community College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.



## Course content note:

This course is based on James E. Porter's *The ABCs of Cognitive Restructuring for Managing Stress: Leader's Guide*, published by Audio Vision in 2000. Sara Laures and Jason Sadler used Porter's guide as the basis for staff stress prevention training at VGM Homelink. The course they created was then adapted for use by all VGMU members.

## Introduction



Many stress management programs focus on physical techniques for reducing stress like meditation, exercise, and muscle relaxation.

This course will introduce you to a new way of managing stress called **cognitive restructuring**. Cognitive restructuring helps you mentally reduce stress by teaching you how the way you think about events contributes to every stressful event you experience. In other words, you can control your stress by determining what bothers you – and what doesn't (Porter, Session I: Thinking About Stress, 2000, p. 1). Although cognitive restructuring can be used in all aspects of your life, this course will primarily discuss techniques to improve workplace stress.

## Objectives

After completing this module, you should be able to do the following:

1. State how *awfulizer* statements can lead to stress and demonstrate how to combat them with rational alternatives.
2. Define how stress is actually a pattern that can be easily recognized.
3. State effective measures you can take to handle certain emotions, such as fear, and how to handle stress.
4. Understand some health consequences of untreated stress.



## Chapter 2 – Creating Stress

Chapter 2 contains the following page titles:



- Stressors vs. Stress
- Sources of Stress
- Early Warning Signs of Job Stress
- Stress, Health, and Productivity
- Reorganize the Way You See the World
- Self-Talk
- I Should/I Must
- The Awfulizer
- Feeling Upset is Normal

## **Stressors vs. Stress**

In this chapter, we'll look at how we create stress in our lives. To begin, let's look at the difference between **stressors** and **stress**.

*Stressors* are triggering events and circumstances that cause you to feel stressed, such as a flat tire or traffic jam on the way to work, or dealing with an angry customer or computer issues after you arrive at work.

*Stress* is what you often feel after you've come in contact with a stressor, such as anxiety, tension, or frustration. Stress is also your body's reaction to things like headaches, muscle tension, or stomachaches.

## **Sources of Stress**

The American Psychological Association surveyed more than 3,000 American adults in August 2014 and asked what the most significant sources of stress were. Respondents answered:

1. Money.  
64 percent listed this as a somewhat significant or very significant stressor.
2. Work.  
60 percent listed this as a somewhat significant or very significant stressor.
3. The economy.  
50 percent listed this as a somewhat significant or very significant stressor.
4. Personal health concerns.  
45 percent listed this as a somewhat significant or very significant stressor.
5. Relationships.



44 percent listed this as a somewhat significant or very significant stressor.

6. Health problems affecting my family.

43 percent listed this as a somewhat significant or very significant stressor.

(Stress in America: Paying with Our Health [PDF document], 2015)

## Early Warning Signs of Job Stress

Stress should be taken seriously because it can affect your personal life, work performance, and perhaps most importantly, your health.

Early warning signs of job stress can include:

- headache
- upset stomach
- sleep disturbances
- difficulty in concentrating
- short temper
- low job satisfaction
- low morale

(Stress ... At Work, 2014)

## Stress, Health, and Productivity

Untreated stress can have serious consequences on your health. According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (**NIOSH**), research has shown that untreated work stress can lead to the following:

- cardiovascular disease
- musculoskeletal disorders
- psychological disorders (e.g., depression, burnout)
- workplace injury
- suicide, cancer, ulcers, and impaired immune function

(Stress ... At Work, 2014)

Studies show that a stressful workplace can lead to increased absenteeism, tardiness, and workers intent to quit their jobs. The Bureau of Labor Statistics found that workers who took time off from work because of stress, anxiety, or a related disorder were off work for about 20 days.



But there is hope. A study found that after a stress prevention program was implemented in a 700-bed hospital, medication errors declined by 50 percent. Another study noted a 70 percent decrease in malpractice claims in 22 hospitals that implemented stress prevention activities. (Stress ... At Work, 2014)

## Reorganize the Way You See the World



When we perceive the world in a negative way, we get upset. When we are upset, we can make a big deal out of a minor incident. Cognitive restructuring empowers you to recognize your negative thinking and to correct your thoughts.

Most people believe that outside forces they can't control cause stress. But Eastern European scientist Hans Selye, who is credited with identifying and discovering stress, disagreed. Selye said stress is your body's *reaction* to demands placed on it. Stress isn't what happens to you, it's how you *react* to it. We can't control what happens to us – but we can learn to control our reactions.

## Self-Talk

Self-talk is an extension of re-thinking and can be positive or negative. Negative self-talk causes stress in our own mind. We get stressed out even before an event takes place. (Porter, Session I: Thinking About Stress, 2000)

What should we do to change negative self-talk? Imagine you have been asked to learn a new skill at work. You may tell yourself "I will make mistakes, and I hate making mistakes." Then continue with "This is going to be difficult, and I don't think I can learn it." If that's the conversation you're having with yourself, how likely is it you'll be ready to learn?

## I Should/I Must

At the heart of our reactions to stress are the words *should* or *must*. Should or must statements lead to irrational thinking (Porter, Session I: Thinking About Stress, 2000). For example, we may become annoyed with our employer.

Our thoughts might be:



- The boss does this all the time.
- She's such a jerk.
- Why didn't she bring this project to me earlier?

The underlying should/must statements might be:

- She should treat me fairly.
- She shouldn't ask me things at the last minute.
- She should care about me more than he does.

## The Awfulizer

Who are awfulizers? Awfulizers are people who expect the worst possible outcomes. Exaggerated overstatements define an awfulizer. (Porter, Session I: Thinking About Stress, 2000)

Awfulizers turn disappointment into disaster. When an awfulizer believes their behavior is awful, they also believe they should not have acted the way they did. The problem is, focusing on how awfully you behaved won't leave you with energy to find a solution. (Ross, The Good News About Bad Behavior, n.d.)

Here are some statements made by an awfulizer and their rational alternatives:

Awfulizer Statement	Rational Alternative
This bump on my skin is probably cancer.	This bump could be nothing, but I should get it checked.
I just know the dentist is going to find a cavity at my next checkup.	I haven't had a cavity in three years.
I'll never get a raise.	I've received raises before.
There's always a traffic jam when I have an important appointment.	Last week I got to an appointment on time with no traffic problems.
This repair is going to cost a fortune.	Repairs don't always cost a lot of money.



## Feeling Upset is Normal

Self-talk, should/must statements, and awfulizer statements are examples of irrational thinking which makes us perceive the world in a negative way, affecting our thinking.

It is important to remember that when you feel upset, it's okay. It's normal, even healthy, to get upset and frustrated in certain situations. Why? Because these frustrations can motivate you to make changes so that the same thing does not happen again. The key is to try to avoid making yourself overly upset.

The most important lesson you should learn from this course is that when a stressful situation arises, step back, observe what is happening, and try to put the event into perspective.

## Chapter 3 – Eliminating Stress

Chapter 3 contains the following page titles:

- Pattern of Stress
- $A + B = C$
- Cognitive Restructuring vs Positive Thinking
- Short-Circuiting Stress
- D Stands for Dispute
- What is Irrational?
- Short Circuit the Connection
- Steps to Eliminate Stress

### Pattern of Stress

In Chapter 2 we talked about how your thinking can create stress. In this chapter, we'll talk about how your thinking can eliminate it.

We usually experience stress in the following pattern:

- First comes the event that triggers stress.
- Second are your thoughts about the event.
- Third is your reaction to the event.



## A + B = C

A + B = C		
Activating Event	Belief	Consequence

This equation tells us that what we think about a situation determines how we feel.

- **A** is an event, a situation.
- **B** is what you believe about the event, your thoughts.
- **C** is what you feel as the result of the event plus what you believe about it, your experience.

### Example:

- **A** is the computer crash.
- **B** is your thought that "it will take forever to restore your document."
- **C** is that you feel frustrated.

(Porter, Session III: Handling Emotions, 2000, p. 3)

## Cognitive Restructuring vs. Positive Thinking

In the ABC model, A does not cause C, B causes C (Ross, What is REBT?, n.d.). Cognitive thinking is about changing **B** -- your belief about the event. With positive thinking, you ignore reality and make up a fairy tale at this point.

With cognitive restructuring, you're not trying to put a positive spin on negative events, you're just trying to clarify your distorted thinking.

Why is this important? Your cloudy, muddled, inaccurate thinking may be contributing to, if not causing, your feelings of stress. Applying different thoughts to the same situation leads to a different experience. (Porter, Session II: Knowing Your ABCs, 2000, p. 9)

"Negative, irrational thoughts will cause us to feel one way and pragmatic, rational thoughts will cause us to feel another way" (Porter, Session II: Knowing Your ABCs, 2000, p. 3).



## Short-Circuiting Stress

Try the following ways to short-circuit your stress:

1. Find the good in a bad situation.
2. Control your inner dialogue.
3. Avoid the blame game.
4. Shift your focus forward, to the future.
5. Keep your stress in perspective.

Think of a humorous example of someone who did not keep their stress in perspective. For example, the Stamps.com television commercial in which a man says, "There's nothing worse than going to the post office and waiting in line." *Nothing* is worse than waiting in line to buy stamps? Really?

Now imagine explaining a current stressful work situation to someone and starting the story with, "There's nothing worse than..." Seems a bit silly, doesn't it?

## D Stands for Dispute

In addition to the five tips for short-circuiting stress, there is another tip: dispute your thinking.

Challenge your thinking by asking yourself:

- How accurate are my thoughts about this?
- Can my thoughts about this be proven?
- Are my thoughts about this true in every case or in just some cases?

## What is Irrational?

Dr. Albert Ellis founded Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy (REBT) in the 1950s as a type of psychotherapy and developed the ABC equation. Ellis said an idea is irrational if:

1. It distorts reality.
2. It is illogical.
3. It prevents you from reaching your goals.
4. It leads to unhealthy emotions.
5. It leads to self-defeating behavior.

(Ross, What is Irrational?, n.d.)



## Short Circuit the Connection

Remember  $A + B = C$ ? (**A**ctivating Event + **B**elief = **C**onsequence)

Your response to an **activating event** is not automatic. You can decide not to get upset. Frustrating events won't always bother you -- unless you let them.

Mentally, you can short-circuit the connection between your mind and your emotions ( $A$  doesn't always =  $C$ ). It just takes practice.

## Steps to Eliminate Stress

Remember these tips to eliminating stress.

- **A + B = C**, where **A**ctivating Event + **B**elief = **C**onsequence
- Short-circuit your belief (**B**) by disputing your irrational beliefs.
- Change your *must* statements to *preference* statements.

Try to use mental techniques to help keep your stress in check:

- Using humor
- Counting to 10
- Deep breathing

The key is to find a method that works best for you and use it at every opportunity.

## Chapter 4 – Handling Emotions

Chapter 4 contains the following page titles:

- Handling Everyday Problems
- Emotions
- Anger
- Progression of Anger
- Understanding the Process
- Short-Circuit Your Anger
- Rational and Irrational Fear
- Irrational Fears



- Getting Over Our Fears
- Frustration
- Keep Frustrations in Check
- Responding to Activating Events
- Waking Up on the Right Side of the Bed

## Handling Everyday Problems

In the previous chapter, we talked about how your thinking can reduce stress. In this chapter, we will cover the use of cognitive restructuring to handle everyday problems.

This will not only help you handle your own emotions, it will help you understand how these problems affect your coworkers, friends, and other important people in your life.

## Emotions



Emotions often play a prominent role in the work place. Understanding emotional intelligence has helped the corporate world recognize that **emotional quotient (EQ)** -- how well you handle your emotions -- is as important as intelligence quotient (**IQ**) in determining your future success as an employee. (Porter, Session III: Handling Emotions, 2000, p. 3)

Everyone has suffered from emotional problems at work or at home – or both. But here’s the good news: the same cognitive techniques that help you cope with stress can also help you cope with anger, frustration, and fear. Disputing faulty beliefs is as important for controlling emotions as it is for controlling stress. (Porter, Session III: Handling Emotions, 2000)

Our goal is to introduce you to life-enhancing techniques that you can use daily.

## Anger

Anger may be a common emotion. However, cognitive psychologists believe it’s not productive to express your anger to get what you want (Porter, Session III: Handling Emotions, 2000, p. 6).



People who have difficulty controlling their anger often have problems with:

- Ulcers
- Hypertension
- Heart disease
- Broken equipment
- Broken relationships

(Porter, Session III: Handling Emotions, 2000, p. 7)

A recent study showed that people who are angry most of the time die at a much earlier age than those who aren't. People may not receive a promotion or may get fired if they express anger at work. Marriages break up, people get thrown in jail, and crimes are committed often because people don't know how to manage their anger.

## Progression of Anger

The book, *Overcoming Frustration and Anger*, analyzes the process we all go through when we get angry. If we can control our thinking at certain points during the anger process, we can stop it in mid-stream. The process is broken down into six levels as illustrated below.

Level	Explanation
<b>Level 1:</b> I want something.	We all want millions of things. The list goes on and on.
<b>Level 2:</b> I didn't get what I want and I'm frustrated.	Of the many things we wish for, only the smallest fraction of our wishes ever come true.
<b>Level 3:</b> It's awful not to get what I want.	Your irrational belief that you must get what you want drives your displeasure.
<b>Level 4:</b> You shouldn't frustrate me. I must have my way.	At this point, you are turning your wish into a demand. You are being the angry dictator.
<b>Level 5:</b> You are a bad person for frustrating me.	You judge an entire person based on a single act. You won't loan me your car; therefore you are a bad person.



**Level 6:** Bad people ought to be punished.

If you do reach this point, your desire for revenge becomes all-consuming.

Adapted from James E. Porter, (2000). Session III: Handling Emotions. In J.E. Porter, *The ABCs of Cognitive Restructuring for Managing Stress: Leader's Guide* (pp. 12-15). Norwalk, CT: Audio Vision.

## Understanding the Anger Process

**Levels 1 and 2** - "I want something" and, "I didn't get what I want."  
There's not much we can do about these. We're always going to want things. It's normal, even when we feel frustrated for not getting what we want.

**Level 3** - "It's terrible not to get what I want."  
You feel mildly frustrated, and that's normal. The key is to not exaggerate the importance of your frustration. This is the step where we should short-circuit the process that leads to anger and stress.

**Level 4** - "You shouldn't frustrate me. I must have my way."  
Your mild frustration has turned into a moderate level of frustration. Your wishes are now turning into demands. At this point, you feel you must absolutely have your way.

**Level 5** - "You are a bad person for frustrating me."  
A big mistake people make when they are this angry is to judge a person solely based on the single act of frustrating you. This level of anger can eat away at your emotions and ruin relationships.

**Level 6** - "Bad people ought to be punished."  
It's important to note that not everyone gets to this level of anger. If someone gets to this point of anger, it can consume their every thought and increase the desire for revenge. This level of anger can be extremely difficult to let go of.

## Short-Circuit Your Anger

You can short-circuit anger by assuming another person had a good reason for doing what they did. This helps because it puts your mind at ease and encourages the other person to discuss it.



Here's another anger tip: when you feel yourself getting angry with someone, ask yourself this question: "Have I ever done to someone else what this person is doing to me?"

You'll be surprised how quickly your anger will diminish when you can admit to yourself: "If I were in their shoes, I might have done the same thing." (Porter, Session III: Handling Emotions, 2000, p. 19)

## Rational and Irrational Fear

Rational fears keep us alive. They protect us from falling off a cliff, stepping out in front of traffic, or getting too close to wild animals.

Our built-in capacity to experience fear allows us to take precautions. Human beings have evolved: we once experienced mostly physical threats but those have mostly been replaced by mentally threatening attacks. (Porter, Session III: Handling Emotions, 2000, p. 21)



Remember the Stress in America Survey? Only 10 percent of respondents listed personal safety as a top stressor (Stress in America: Paying with Our Health [PDF document], 2015). Most of the top 10 concerns involved money, work, and relationships – all more mentally threatening than physically threatening.

## Irrational Fears

In contrast to rational fears, irrational fears prevent us from living normal lives. We avoid situations that we are afraid of. Because we hold things in our mind, we can obsess about dangers we may never encounter.

Although the following irrational fears have no physical risks attached to them, many of us suffer from them anyway:

- Public speaking
- Job interviews
- Trying something new
- Meeting new people
- Going to the doctor/dentist



You've likely heard that many people fear public speaking more than death. That's not a rational fear, is it?

## Getting Over Our Fears

Tackle any fear in three easy steps:

**Step 1:** Familiarize yourself with the activity you fear, without actually participating in it. Watch a video, read a book on the subject, or learn from someone.

**Step 2:** Explore your fear in a controlled environment where mistakes cost you nothing. For example, try rock climbing at an indoor facility with mats. Or explore your fear of heights from inside a building with doors and windows rather than being outdoors with nothing but a railing between you and the abyss you fear.

**Step 3:** Try it out under controlled circumstances, where the cost of making mistakes is minimized. Find a way to participate in the feared activity in an abbreviated way that will almost guarantee success on your first attempt. Practice a sales pitch on your roommate before you try it on a new customer, for example.

(Porter, Session III: Handling Emotions, 2000, pp. 28-29)

It's not likely the actual amount of danger that fuels your fears, but, rather, the lack of familiarity with the feared activity that is the true source of your distress.

## Frustration

Although anger and frustration seem to go hand-in-hand, therapists believe you can handle a healthy dose of frustration without automatically getting angry. However, some people have trouble tolerating frustration. They get angry automatically because they believe they can't stand being frustrated. The people suffer from **low frustration tolerance (LFT)**.

People with LFT often have troubles with:

- Procrastination
- Addictions



- Thrill-seeking
- Dieting
- Staying in long-term relationships

(Porter, Session III: Handling Emotions, 2000, pp. 34-35)

## **Keep Frustrations in Check**

Most frustrations are the result of minor events. It's amazing that frustrations upset us at all. We often don't even remember it the next day.

The next time you feel frustrated; counter your irrational self-talk with rational disputes.

- Take a closer look at the situation.
- Ask yourself: "Is the activity bothering me, or is it the belief that life shouldn't be frustrating that's bothering me?"

Remember nothing great is ever achieved without frustration: great kids, great vacations, great jobs, and great goals all go hand-in-hand with a great deal of frustration.

Think of the last time you went through the process of learning a new work skill, new version of computer software – or even how to use the latest fancy copier installed in your office. With time and practice, you learned what you needed to complete the task, use the software, or make double-sided, full-color copies without a second thought.

## **Responding to Activating Events**

In the past, the events that triggered these emotions might have seemed beyond your power to control. But, now you know that the very same techniques you learned for handling stress can help you cope with any emotion you experience.

An activating event is simply an event that triggers an emotional consequence, whether it's anger, fear, or frustration.

The key is to alter your thoughts and beliefs about the activating events to prevent that negative consequence.

## **Waking Up on the Right Side of the Bed**



Some research suggests that to have a good work day you need to change your thoughts and beliefs – and your mood – at the beginning of the workday.

Does a person who arrives in a good mood experience work events differently than a coworker who is in a bad mood? Researchers from University of Pennsylvania and The Ohio State University studied whether start-of-workday mood affected how call center employees perceived interactions with customers and how the employee felt about the workday after those events.

What the researchers found was that a good mood at the start of the workday not only helped employees experience interactions with customers in a more positive light but also contributed to their work performance. (Nancy P. Rothbard, 2011)

Think about a recent good day you had at work: did you arrive at work in a good mood?

## ***Chapter 5 – Enhancing Your Skills***

Chapter 5 contains the following page titles:

- Methods to Balance Life Stress
- Regain Control
- Deep Breathing
- Remove Yourself from the Stressor
- Switch Tasks
- Stretch
- Seek Social Support
- Seek Others' Opinions
- Unconditional Acceptance

### **Methods to Balance Life Stress**

In the last four chapters, you've learned several cognitive methods for managing stress. In this chapter, you're going to learn new methods that can enhance or replace those cognitive methods:

- Deep breathing
- Mindfulness



- Unconditional acceptance
- Forceful disputing

## **Regain Control**

When your emotions run high, regain control and try these tips:

- Deep breathing
- Remove yourself from the stressor
- Do something different
- Stretch
- Seek social support/get help
- Practice mindfulness
- Unconditional acceptance

## **Deep Breathing**

When we get stressed, we tend to exhibit shallow breathing. Therefore, to relax we should breathe deeply.

When we're stressed we take short breaths, which equals about a half pint of air. But when we breathe abdominally -- deep breathing -- we move eight to 10 times the amount of oxygen into our lungs as we would a typical chest breath. (Porter, Session IV: Enhancing Your Skills, 2000, pp. 17-18)

There are many types of deep-breathing exercises – including those designed for children. The American Institute of Stress recommends abdominal breathing 20 to 30 minutes each day to reduce stress. This type of breathing increases oxygen to the brain and stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system to promote calmness. (Marksberry, 2012)

## **Remove Yourself from the Stressor**

Are you stressed? Give yourself a break.

- Go for a walk around the parking lot.
- Walk to the other side of the building.

You'll likely return in a better frame of mind and with a fresh perspective on the problem.



## Switch Tasks

If you can't walk away from your work at the moment, perhaps you can work on a different task or different aspect of the task at hand. Anything that creates a change of pace will help refresh your mind.

Examples:

- Organize your work area.
- Work on an easier project.
- Spend five minutes reading and responding to email.

## Stretch

A good way to relieve stress is to exercise. Your human resources office may have information about workplace stretching. You can do some stretches at your desk in a few seconds.

The National Institutes of Health (**NIH**) lists exercises and stretches for workers. Some suggested musculoskeletal exercises include:

Executive stretch

- While sitting, lock hands behind head.
- Bring elbows back as far as possible.
- Inhale deeply while leaning back and stretching.
- Hold for 20 seconds.
- Exhale and relax.
- Repeat one time.

Shoulder shrug

- Slowly bring shoulders up to the ears and hold for approximately three seconds.
- Rotate shoulders back and down.
- Repeat 10 times.

(Employee Health & Safety: Ergonomics -- Exercises and Stretches, n.d.)



## Seek Social Support

Social support is good for your health. Use someone in your life -- friend, mentor, or relative -- that can help you sort out your muddled thinking.

Studies have shown:

- That married men live longer than single men.
- That women with breast cancer who joined a support group lived significantly longer than those who didn't.

(Porter, Session IV: Enhancing Your Skills, 2000, p. 21)



## Seek Others' Opinions

Another person with a fresh perspective can sometimes quickly solve the problem; don't be afraid to ask for help no matter the situation.

Possible stressful work situations:

- Accounts won't balance
- Car has a flat tire
- Computer isn't working
- You can't find the answer to a customer question

Chances are, no matter the problem, someone you work with has the solution. Just reach out!

## Unconditional Acceptance

Unconditional acceptance of yourself and others is a secret weapon against stress: it's the voice of reason. Be kind to yourself and others no matter how badly you or they stumble. And don't judge yourself or anyone else on the basis of any one event.

Give yourself and those around you a little wiggle room by accepting the fact that you and they are fallible human beings prone to making mistakes. The power of unconditional acceptance can make you more at ease, more self-confident, and more willing to take risks.

(Porter, Session IV: Enhancing Your Skills, 2000, p. 25)



## Chapter 6 - Conclusion

This chapter contains the following page title:

- Summary

### Summary

In this course we talked about different ways to enhance your cognitive restructuring skills for helping you keep your thinking on track. These included:

- Getting control of your emotions
- Practicing deep breathing
- Seeking social support
- Unconditional acceptance

You are responsible for your own stress. Remember the following equation?

$$\mathbf{A + B = C}$$

The **A**ctivating Event + **B**elief = The **C**onsequence

- **A** is an event.
- **B** is what you believe about the event.
- **C** is what you feel as the result of the event plus what you believe about it.

That may seem simplistic, but putting into practice some of the suggestions in this course will help you to better manage stress. Give it a try.

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