Managing Job Stress

CI 005 - Consultation

By

Adrienne Barna and Linda Manning

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MANAGING JOB STRESS
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Goals:
1. To become aware of what stress is and how it can be managed.
2. To identify participants' current job stresses and coping styles.
3. To identify ways of managing job stress.
4. To identify an individual plan of action for managing stress.
5. To learn basic relaxation skills.

Target Population: Staff working in university offices. With some changes, could be used for faculty.

Time: Two hours

Overview:
1. Stress is defined by short lecture.
2. Participants examine individual sources of job stress.
3. Techniques for managing job stress are reviewed.
4. Participants identify an action plan for managing their job stress.
5. Participants learn basic relaxation skills.

Outline:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minutes</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>A. Introduce group members and leaders if group is small; otherwise, just introduce leaders.</td>
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<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>B. Definition of stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>C. Participants work in small groups to identify specific stressors on their jobs (these examples will be used by leaders throughout workshop)</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>D. Brief overview of how stress can be managed</td>
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1. Change the situation
2. Change self
3. Accept stress level and use de-stressor skills to counteract
## MANAGING JOB STRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Minutes</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II. 2</td>
<td>Self-Monitoring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Help participants learn to monitor own stress level by following process:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Collect data</td>
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<td>2. Decide if stress is too high</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Take action to lower stress</td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Guided-imagery exercise: Have participants imagine self first in relaxed, &quot;feeling-good&quot; state and second in stressed state</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>C. Participants complete self-monitoring worksheet</td>
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<tr>
<td>III. 30</td>
<td>Managing Job Stress (many of these taken from Greenberg, Coping with Job Stress, 1980)</td>
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<tr>
<td>A. Several techniques for managing stress are identified</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>B. Participants in small groups identify an action plan for stress management on the job</td>
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<tr>
<td>IV. 15</td>
<td>Relaxation Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. 10</td>
<td>Summary and Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Materials:** Transparencies and overhead projector; newsprint and markers for small groups; handouts as described in here.
Description of Content

I. Introduction

A. What is stress?

1. A response to a stimulus or event

2. Stress has three components or parts
   a. Body reactions
   b. Feelings
   c. Behaviors

3. More accurate to say stress is a reaction to our interpretation of an event

4. What we think about an event will influence whether and how we will respond (example: a long, thin object across the path is responded to differently if an individual sees it as a snake or as a garden hose!)

5. Stress is with us always and is not necessarily negative

6. We need an optimum level of stress to function at our best
   a. Function less well when there is either too little or too much stress
   b. Individuals are different and their optimum level of stress is different
   c. Some people thrive on more stress than others

7. Examples of reactions to stress balance and imbalance (a transparency or chart is good here)
   a. Too little stress
      1) Body reactions -- relaxed
      2) Feelings -- bored
      3) Behaviors -- sluggish - may be sloppy due to lack of concentration
   b. Optimum stress
      1) Body reactions -- alert, ready
      2) Feelings -- involved, excited, confident
      3) Behaviors -- efficient, effective
c. Too much stress

1) Body reactions -- tense muscles, sweaty palms, etc.
2) Feelings -- anxious, panicky, overwhelmed
3) Behaviors -- scattered, inefficient, paralyzed, destructive

d. Too much stress—uncorrected over a long period of time

1) Body reactions -- heart disease, ulcers, stroke, high blood pressure, etc.
2) Feelings -- irritability, cynicism, lose touch with feelings
3) Behaviors -- poor performance, "taking it out on others"

8. Stressors are everywhere

a. Environment -- extreme weather, pollution, noise, traffic, crowding, etc.

b. Home -- relationship difficulties, demands, responsibilities, children, financial problems, illness, etc.

9. Workshop deals with job-related stressors, but it is important to realize that the more stress you experience "out there," the less you can tolerate on the job.

B. In small groups, participants identify stressors for self and specific to job. These are listed on newsprint and then shared with entire group.

C. What Can You Do About Stress? (Use a transparency)

1. Change the situation (Example: direct negotiation with boss, co-workers, etc., for office partitions). Ask for other examples from their stressors.

2. Change yourself: Remember that stress is a response to your interpretation of an event or stimulus—if you can change your interpretation, you may reduce stress. (Example: "I have to be perfect -- can't ever make a mistake" or "Every student/parent I deal with has to leave the interaction feeling satisfied and good.")

3. Accept the level of stress and use "destressor" skills to feel better and minimize negative consequences.

D. Workshop deals with 2. and 3. above. One above is more system change.
II. Self-Monitoring for Stress Level

A. How Do You Know When You Are Experiencing Stress?

1. Not always easy

   a. Usually a slow, not rapid, rise in stress -- so you accommodate without being aware -- "it sneaks up on you"

   b. As stress goes up, your intellectual awareness drops

   c. We tend to fool ourselves by defending against stressful feelings -- do this to bolster self-esteem

2. Need to engage in Self-Monitoring Process

   a. Collect data

      1) From self (check out own body reactions, feelings, behaviors)
      2) From others -- since we can fool ourselves

   b. Decide if stress is too high

   c. Take action to lower stress to more reasonable productive levels

B. Guided-Imagery Exercise

1. Have participants do following:

   a. Imagine yourself when feeling good -- set a mental picture of yourself

   b. How does your body feel? (relaxed, coordinated, no pain)

   c. How are you feeling? (excited, relaxed, calm, pleasant, active, confident)

   d. Imagine yourself when feeling bad -- or stressful -- get a mental picture.

   e. How does your body feel? (tense, head and neck pains, indigestion, etc.)

   f. How are you feeling? (angry, dissatisfied, restless, confused, unsure, overwhelmed, helpless, etc.)

   g. How do you behave? (wasted action, irritable, put others down, work quality down)
C. Participants fill out "Self-Monitoring Process" worksheet to identify body, feeling, and behavior cues identified at acceptable and high-stress levels in guided-imagery exercises.

III. How to Manage Stress (Most from Greenberg, Coping with Job Stress, 1980.)

A. Several techniques or actions can be used to deal with stress. These can result in significant changes in self.

1. Some of these are done when already stressed.

2. Others are preventive and can be done now in anticipation of stress.

B. Goals of section

1. Review some actions

2. Begin to develop personal action plan which will be followed up next week.

3. Remember, it is a choice -- individuals find some options more appealing personally and/or more appropriate to their job. Not all suggestions will work in all situations.

C. Specific ways to break stress pattern

1. **Large Muscle Activity (LMA)**

   a. Stress prepares the body to move (flight or fight response), so moving reduces stress.

   b. Examples

      1) **Walk** -- don't talk

         a) Walk in the office, down the hall, outside

         b) Walk before getting angry at someone; otherwise, the response may be too strong

      2) **Exercise** -- jumping jacks, toe touches, push-ups, jump rope, jog

      3) **Stretch** -- stand up and stretch

      4) **Isometric exercises** -- squeeze, not move, muscles; do these at your desk

      5) **Smaller Muscle Activity** -- wiggle toes, fidget, doodle, handspring
2. **Do-Nut**

   a. Can be used to deal with anger

   b. Anger is cover-up of painful feelings -- causes much stress (example: anger covers rejection, nonappreciation, inadequacy, loss of love, control, power, confusion, feeling insignificant, embarrassed, poorly treated, insecure, guilty)

   c. Use do-nut to reduce anger

      1) Decide to be less angry in general or in a specific situation or relationship

      2) Decide to use do-nut

      3) When angry with boss, co-worker, client, family, bring emotional temperature down by movement or another technique so you are thinking more rationally

      4) Look for the pain and hurt underneath

      5) At next occurrence, use 1-4 to reduce, not prevent, anger, i.e., look for pain/hurt you feel underneath rather than focusing on anger

      6) Remember this will need to be repeated a few times

   d. Other uses of do-nut in stress management

      1) Use to open communication beyond anger -- let other person know of hurt

         a) In doing this, there is a risk of being vulnerable with someone who evaluates you, but most people find the concern is too strong and such a step opens some new ways of communicating.

         b) If you do get "I-don't-care" response, remember the other person is probably hurting also; put your hurt aside for a minute and help them with theirs (angry student, boss).

      2) If someone is angry at you, use do-nut to remind you that they hurt underneath. This helps prevent you from becoming defensive and counterattacking.
3. **Talk to Others**

   a. This means not talking to find agreement with your point or to put others down, but talking about your feelings and to find ways to deal with the situation.

   b. Identify who you can talk to and who you can listen to (example: family, friends, colleagues).

4. **Slow Down**

   a. Questions to ask yourself (use a transparency or handout):

      1) Do you find that you automatically speed up when there is more work to be done?

      2) Do you feel that the only way you will get all your work accomplished is to hurry it up and to work faster?

      3) Or do you find that you work best with the pressure of a deadline hanging over your head? Is it more exciting that way, being busy and stimulated?

      4) Do you work fast because you are convinced it is part of your job, necessary for your competence, or required for your success?

      5) Do you often find yourself doing (or trying to do) two or three things at once? Is it exciting to have several persons trying to get your attention at the same time?

      6) Do you feel that there is never enough time to get it all done?

      7) Are you the kind of person who speeds up almost all the time, hurries to get it done, to accomplish it, to get rid of it? Do you feel there is always something else waiting to be done, in fact, a long list of things?

   b. If you answer yes to these questions, it will be very difficult to accept the idea of slowing down.

   c. We are socialized that speed is an important value:

      "Fast = Efficient = Best"

   d. Rushing gets you to the goal but you do not enjoy the process and do not check the quality.
e. Rushing also adds to stress/anger. Begin to see small failures around us, e.g., people who do not understand or follow directions; people who ask questions, disagree; people who move slower or attend to their own thing rather than us.

f. Benefits of slowing down:
   1) Increase quality of performance
   2) Enjoy the experience
   3) Enable others to enjoy you more
   4) Increase productivity
   5) Decrease stress

g. Important to assess expectations of self and those we perceive others have for us to do the job well. Need to identify what is realistic. In some offices on campus, such as financial aid and admissions, the individual cannot control the amount of work received in the office. If they judge their competency by how caught up they are, they are likely to feel like a failure. Thus, check for realistic expectations.

h. How to slow down
   1) Decide to change, e.g., "Rushing = Waste = Too High Stress"
   2) Choose one activity and slow down in it; turn negatives into positives; look for enjoyment in activity, not in getting finished.
   3) Accept idea that plural activities are time wasting, uncreative. Do one activity at a time and give your total self.
   4) Give a message to self: "What counts is not if I get there first, but if I get there at all;" "It's not win or lose, but whether I enjoy it;" "Not speed, but distance."
   5) Deliberately seek some quiet activities and make an effort to enjoy them.
   6) Stage a 10-minute mini-slow at work: look out the window, go for a walk, do relaxation/stretch/breathing exercises, think about other
person's point of view, listen rather than tell in stressful situation.

5. **Muscle Relaxation** -- progressive relaxation, yoga, massage, biofeedback, meditation, self-hypnosis

6. **Pleasurable Goodies**
   a. Find something you enjoy and take time for it. This depends upon the individual and there are many possibilities.
   b. Examples: music, poetry, laughter, prayer, spending money, rest, rituals/traditions.

7. **Support Group** -- find a group at work, in the family, or friends to give you emotional support.

8. **Change Attitudes**
   a. Helps you to feel like you are taking some power for self.
   b. Accept situation rather than fighting it, and it becomes less stressful.
   c. Self-talk -- give yourself realistic message.
   d. Be positive and avoid catastrophizing.
   e. Learn to tolerate and forgive.

9. **Take Care of Yourself**
   a. Many of us are socialized to be most uncomfortable when we think of caring for ourselves, yet would not think of neglecting the job.
   b. Paradox on the job: When we need to take time to care for self is when less time is available.
   c. Frequently brought up with the message, "Don't enjoy yourself until work is done." Feel guilty if we do enjoy ourselves before other responsibilities.
   d. Take time for self, not socializing with colleagues at break.
   e. Monitor yourself and see when you need nurturance, renewal, change of pace.
f. Aids to ridding self of guilt over self-nurturing.

1) Recognize we all need time for self-care; reassure those around you if needed that you are not rejecting them or goofing off.

2) Remember the purpose is to be a better employee, spouse, parent, etc. Ask for feedback: Are you doing a better job, more patient, understanding?

3) Schedule time for yourself; it will not just be given.

4) Learn to be assertive.

5) If you do neglect yourself, monitor the results and try again.

10. Seek Solitude

a. This is especially important in "people jobs" where others continually ask something of you.

b. Use time alone to reflect, evaluate, contemplate, fantasize, set priorities.

c. Decide when -- early morning, breaks, time traveling to and from work, lunch, late nights, etc. It depends on your schedule.

11. Me-Act (Mini-vacation)

a. Two requirements of "Me-Act"

1) Alone

2) No specific goals

b. Especially hard for working mothers, single parents, workaholics, who feel many responsibilities

c. 

![Diagram]

SELF

Re-act (Bombarded by others)

SELF

Me-Act (You in control)
d. Examples: loafing, browsing, playing, wandering.

e. Balance me-acts with social releases.

12. **Attend to Health and Exercise**

a. Practice moderation

b. Reduce risk of heart disease (weight, smoking, blood pressure, high cholesterol, etc.)

c. Avoid the "baddies" -- tobacco, alcohol, food, caffeine, sugar, tranquilizers, other drugs

d. Office exercises such as stretching, walking, isometrics

13. **Assess Competitiveness in Self and Environment**

a. Are you setting high goals and standards for yourself? Expecting to be the best?

b. Minimizing competition

1) How much competition is needed for the job? Is it "survival of the fittest"?

2) If the job is competitive, try to live noncompetitively in other areas.

14. **Identify Personal Strengths**

a. In low-stress times, identify strengths and use them to get through high stress.

b. Assemble a positive commendation file; savor it when stressed.

c. Assemble a positive trait list, especially before evaluations. (Remember: the better you feel toward self, the better you feel to the world.)

d. Become less dependent on others for approval or disapproval. Identify own criteria for doing a good job. Hear feedback, but do not depend on it.

e. Develop an ability to change, learn, renew self, and to be flexible.

1) Listen to someone who is excited about work; it is contagious.
2) Take a course on something you have wanted to do.
3) Make a new friend.
4) Find something positive or interesting in someone you cannot stand at work.
5) At work, find new ways to do old things.
6) Travel.
7) Try to understand boss's feelings.
8) Dream, fantasize.
9) Eat new foods.
10) Do something you have been afraid of.

15. Reassess Your Code of Behavior

a. Are you striving to be the ideal employee?
   1) Get along well with others
   2) Never flustered, stressed, emotional, vulnerable, angry
   3) Never hurt
   4) No problems
   5) No need for others

b. If so, it is impossible, though admirable, to be "super-worker."

c. Redo code: Set limits so you do not fear failure. Examples:
   1) Honesty
   2) Not hurting others
   3) Trusting self
   4) Taking time for self
   5) Do not have to be first
   6) Take time to communicate
7) Consider other's viewpoint
8) Golden Rule -- How would I want to be treated?

16. **Diversify Investments:** Do not put all your eggs in one basket; spread your energies to work, family, friends, hobbies, etc.

17. **Discuss Stress:** With a family member, friend, co-worker.

D. Use the "Stress Management Techniques" worksheet to develop an action plan for stress management. Have participants work in small groups to review sheets and identify some personal steps to take.

IV. **Relaxation Exercise**

Begin by getting as comfortable as you can. Settle back comfortably. Just try to let go of all the tension in your body. Now take in a deep breath. Breathe right in and hold it (five-second pause). And now exhale. Just let the air out quite automatically, and feel a calmer feeling beginning to develop. Now just carry on breathing normally, and just concentrate on feeling heavy all over in a pleasant way. Study your own body heaviness. This should give you a calm and reassuring feeling all over (ten-second pause). Now let us work on tension and relaxation contrasts. Try to ease every muscle in your body. Every muscle: your jaws, tighten your eyes, your shoulder muscles, your arms, chest, back, stomach, legs, every part just tensing and tensing. Feel the tension all over your body tighter and tighter -- tensing everywhere, and now let it go, just stop tensing and relax. Try to feel this wave of calm that comes over you as you stop tensing like that. A definite wave of calm (ten-second pause).

Now I want you to notice the contrast between the slight tensions that are there when your eyes are open and the disappearance of these surface tensions as you close your eyes. So while relaxing the rest of your body, just open your eyes and feel the surface tensions which will disappear when you close your eyes. Now close your eyes, and feel the greater
degree of relaxation with your eyes closed (ten-second pause). All right, let us get back to the breathing. Keep your eyes closed, and take a deep, deep breath and hold it. Now relax the rest of your body as well as you can, and notice the tension from holding your breath. Study the tension. Now let out your breath, and feel the deepening relaxation -- just go with it beautifully relaxing now. Breathe normally, and just feel the relaxation flowing into your forehead and scalp. Think of each part as I call it out -- just relaxing -- just letting go, easing up, eyes and nose, facial muscles. You might feel a tingling sensation as the relaxation flows in. You might have a warm sensation. Whatever you feel, I want you to notice it and enjoy it to the fullest as the relaxation now spreads very beautifully into the face, into the lips, jaws, tongue, and mouth so that your lips are slightly parted as the jaw muscles relax further and further. The throat and neck relaxing (five-second pause), shoulders and upper back relaxing, further and further. Feel the relaxation flowing into your arms and to the very tips of your fingers (five-second pause). Feel the relaxation in your chest as you breathe regularly and easily. The relaxation spreads even under your armpits and down your sides, right into the stomach area. The relaxation becomes more and more obvious as you do nothing but just give way to the pleasant, serene emotions which fill you as you let go more and more. Feel the relaxation -- stomach and lower back all the way through in a warm, penetrating, wavy, calm and down your hips, buttocks, and thighs to the very, very tips of your toes. The waves of relaxation just travel down your calves to your ankles and toes. Feel relaxed from head to toe. Each time you practice this you should find a deeper level of relaxation being achieved -- a deeper serenity and calm, a good, calm feeling.
Now to increase the feelings of relaxation at this point, what I want you to do is just keep on relaxing and each time you exhale, each time you breathe out for the next minute, I want you to think the word relax to yourself. Just think the word relax as you breathe out. Now just do that for the next minute (one-minute pause). Okay, just feel that deeper relaxation and carry on relaxing. You should feel a deeper, deeper feeling of relaxation. To even further increase the benefits, I want you to feel the emotional calm, those tranquil and serene feelings which tend to cover you all over inside and out, a feeling of safe security, a calm indifference -- these are the feelings which relaxation will enable you to capture more and more effectively each time you practice a relaxation sequence. Relaxation will let you arrive at feeling a quiet inner confidence -- a good feeling about yourself (five-second pause). Now once more feel the heavy sensations that accompany relaxation as your muscles switch off so that you feel in good contact with your environment, nicely together, the heavy, good feeling of feeling yourself calm and secure and very, very tranquil and serene.

Now we can deepen the relaxation still further by just using some very special stimulus words. Let's use the words calm and serene. What I would like you to do is to think these words to yourself ten times or so. Don't bother to count. Approximately ten times just say to yourself calm and serene and then feel the deepening -- ever, ever deepening -- waves of relaxation as you feel so much more calm and serene. Now you just do that; take your time, think of the words and feel the sensations over and over (pause of about one minute). Good.
Now I am going to count backward from five to one. At the count of one I would like you to open your eyes, just kind of stretch and yawn. Okay, now counting backward: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Open your eyes. Now just stretch and kind of yawn and then slowly get up.

V. Summary

A. Covered general principles of stress, self-monitoring, and techniques.
B. Others to look at in dealing with stress.
   1. Skills such as assertion, decision making.
   2. Values clarification, e.g., does value to express anger conflict with value to be liked by all?

REFERENCES


A recent report by the Southern California Medical Association pointed out that proper weight control and physical fitness cannot be attained by dieting alone. A particular problem is faced by the manager who spends most of his or her day behind a desk. Too many of these people fail to realize that calories can be burned off by the hundreds by engaging in strenuous exercises that are common for office workers.

The following list of calorie-burning activities is followed by the number of calories per hour that may be used:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Calories</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beating around the bush</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jogging your memory</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping to conclusions</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climbing the walls</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swallowing your pride</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passing the buck</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grasping at straws</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beating your own drum</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Throwing your weight around (depending on weight)</td>
<td>50-300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dragging your heels</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pushing your luck</td>
<td>250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making mountains out of molehills</td>
<td>500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hitting the nail on the head</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spinning your wheels</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flying off the handle</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turning the other cheek</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wading through paperwork</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bending over backwards</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jumping on the bandwagon</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balancing the books</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beating your head against the wall</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patting yourself on the back</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sticking your neck out</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racing against time</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Running around in circles</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chewing nails</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eating crow</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fishing for compliments</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tooting your own horn</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Climbing the ladder of success</td>
<td>750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pulling out the stoppers</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding fuel to the fire</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pouring salt on the wound</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wrapping it all up at day's end</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Courtesy of the Postal Inspector's Newsletter

From: Greenberg. *Coping with Job Stress*, 1980
SELF-MONITORING PROCESS

I. Collect Data
   A. From self
   B. From others

II. Decide if Stress Level is Too High

III. Take Action to Lower Stress

DATA WORKSHEET

FEELING GOOD - ACCEPTABLE LEVEL OF STRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BODY REACTIONS</th>
<th>FEELINGS</th>
<th>BEHAVIORS</th>
</tr>
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</table>

FEELING BAD - STRESS LEVEL TOO HIGH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BODY REACTIONS</th>
<th>FEELINGS</th>
<th>BEHAVIORS</th>
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</table>
STRESS REDUCERS APPRAISAL INVENTORY

How do you currently reduce stress and tension? Listed below are many of the common stress reducers. Indicate with an X on each scale how often you employ the particular stress reducer to lower tension when you experience stress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>very</th>
<th>often</th>
<th>rarely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Food</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sleep</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Alcohol</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>4. Sex</td>
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<td>5. Sports/physical activity</td>
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<td>6. Anger</td>
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<td>7. Quiet time/meditation</td>
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<td>8. Hobbies</td>
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<td>9. Drugs</td>
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<td>10. Talking with others</td>
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<td>11. Daydreaming</td>
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<td>12. Music</td>
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<td>13. Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Other</td>
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Now go back and indicate on each scale by using a "✓" mark to what extent you would like to be employing each stress reducer.

Prepared by the staff of the U.T. Counseling-Psychological Services Center.
STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

The following techniques are useful to managing stress levels. In developing an action plan, individuals will find these vary in their appeal and in their relevance to personal situations. Try to choose those which would be useful and of interest to you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TECHNIQUES</th>
<th>ACTION PLAN</th>
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| **1. Large Muscle Activity:** Stress prepares the body to move so take action to reduce the stress. Take a walk inside or outside, exercise, stretch, do isometric exercises, engage in smaller muscle activity such as wiggling your toes, doodling, use a handspring. | **1. At work, what physical activity can I use?**

What kind of muscle activity do I or can I do regularly? |
| **2. Use the Do-Nut:** Remember anger is a cover-up of painful feelings. When you're angry, rather than explode, intervene to bring the stress down and then look for the pain and hurt underneath. When someone is angry with you, remember the Do-Nut. Rather than becoming defensive and counterattacking, look for their pain and hurt, listen and empathize. | **2. My underlying hurt feelings are:**

My coworkers are likely to have these underlying hurt feelings: |
| **3. Talk to Others:** Identify a family member, friend or colleague who will listen to you and understand. Talk with them. Don't just find someone who will agree with your point or collude in putting others down. This only reinforces your stress. | **3. I should talk more with:** |
4. **Slow Down:** Society tends to emphasize that speed equals efficiency. However, research shows accuracy and enjoyment drop with increased speed. Speed gets the goal accomplished but the cost is less enjoyment, poorer quality and increased stress. Slowing down increases performance, quality and enjoyment while reducing stress.

5. **Muscle Relaxation:** Learn relaxation skills such as progressive relaxation, yoga, massage, biofeedback, meditation, self-hypnosis. Practice the skill so you'll have it available in times of stress.

6. **Seek Pleasurable Goodies:** Find out what hobbies and activities you enjoy. Engage in them, especially during stress times.

7. **Change Your Attitude:** Recognize when you're catastrophizing and focusing on the negative. Try to be more positive. Check to see if you have control over the situation. If you don't, accepting the situation as it is can reduce the stress. Be more realistic in self-talk. Learn to tolerate and to forgive.

4. I want to slow down while doing the following activity (check the effects):

5. I would like to learn the following relaxation skills:
   - Progressive Relaxation
   - Meditation
   - Yoga
   - Biofeedback
   - Massage
   - Self-hypnosis

6. Some pleasurable goodies I can use to reduce stress are:
   - Music
   - Family/Friend Traditions
   - Laughter
   - Buying
   - Poetry
   - Play
   - Art
   - Rest
   - Apologizing to
   - Hot Bath
   - Hugging
   - Crying
   - When to begin
   - Other

7. Areas where I tend to catastrophize and emphasize the negative include:

More positive ways to look at these areas include:
8. Take Care of Yourself: Most of us are uncomfortable when we think of caring for ourselves, but we wouldn't think of neglecting our jobs. Thus, in times of stress we frequently forget ourselves and plunge into the job when we need self-care most. Take time for yourself -- instead of socializing on a break, spend time alone. Schedule the time -- others won't just give it.

9. Seek Solitude: This is especially important if the job involves considerable contact with people. Time alone to reflect, evaluate, set priorities, contemplate and fantasize is important. Take lunch alone, seek solitude early in the morning, late at night, when traveling to and from work.

10. Do a Me-Act: Me-acts are mini-vacations with two requirements -- do it alone and have no specific goals. Learn to loaf, browse, play, wander. Balance me-acts with social releases.

11. Attend to Health and Nutrition: Get exercise, eat well. Avoid the "Baddies" (tobacco, alcohol, food, caffeine, sugar, drugs).

12. Minimize Competition: Assess if you work in a competitive job. Do you compete with others? With your own high goals and standards? If you are unable to reduce the competition, try to live non-competitively in other areas in your life.

8. Some special things I can do to take care of myself include:

The times to be sure to take care of myself are:

9. When and where I can seek solitude:

10. I can do the following "Me-Acts" (browsing, loafing, puttering, wandering, etc.):

11. I can reduce the following "baddies":

I can improve my nutrition by:

12. I want to reduce my competition -- where?
13. Identify Personal Strengths: In a time of low stress, identify your strengths. Use this list to help you through high stress. Make up a trait list. Become less dependent on others for approval or disapproval. Learn ways to change and renew yourself.

14. Re-assess Code of Behavior: Decide if you're trying to be the ideal employee, friend, family member. Recognize what the ideal is and that this is probably impossible. Develop a new behavior code. Set realistic limits so you don't fear failure. Instead of trying to get along well with everyone, to never have problems or needs for others, to never be vulnerable, stressed, or angry, try to take time for yourself, to communicate, to consider the other person's viewpoint. Learn to be honest, and that you don't have to be first.

15. Diversify Investments: Spread your energies to work, family, friends, hobbies. Don't put all the eggs in one basket or burn-out becomes a possibility.