

“Coping With Stress ”

Mini “Help Yourself” Program

Dr. John Garlock, LPC, LMFT, LCDC, CEAP

Robert Knapick, MA, LMFT

Email: jagvw@earthlink.net

**This Program Is Intended As A Self Help
Program And Is Not Intended To Be
A Therapy Program Nor Is It
Intended To Replace
Therapy Services**



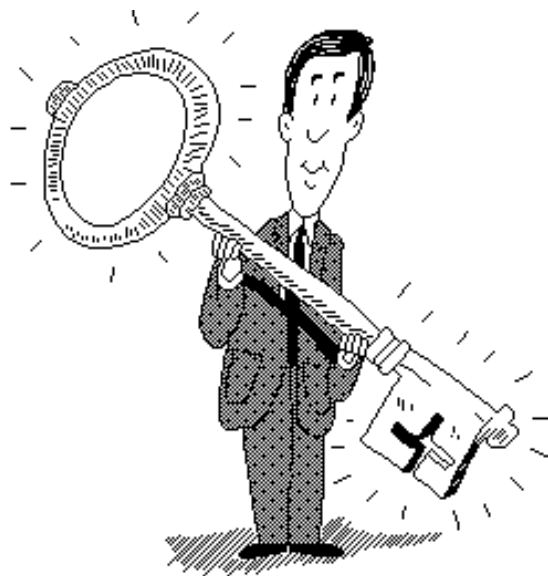
INTRODUCTION

Mini “Help Yourself” Program

Page 1

WELCOME TO COPING WITH STRESS...

The purpose of this mini program is to provide you with the needed tools to reduce stress in your life. It will be very important that you practice each of the skills on a regular basis during the program at home. Each page will cover some very important skills ranging from defining stress to learning how to manage it. This is a hands on “How To” approach that you can print out and use



It's Time to Find Your Key to Relaxation!

Program Outline

Mini “Help Yourself” Program

Page 2

I. Bill of Rights: As a Human Being, I have the right:

- 1) to be considered as a mature adult.
- 2) To have my needs equally important to others.

II. Understanding Stress

- a. What is Stress?
- b. What Triggers Stress?
- c. When is Stress Harmful?

III. Proper Relaxation Skills

- a. What Relaxation is not.
- b. Effects of Relaxation.
- c. Relaxation Skills.
- d. Body and Mind Relaxation.

IV. Personal Intervention Program Worksheets

WHAT IS STRESS

Mini “Help Yourself” Program

Page 3

Stress is your body's response to any unusual demand (such as a threat, a challenge, etc.). Whether the demand is real or imagined, outside the body or within, your body will react to it with a number of common characteristics, called the stress response, or just plain stress. In general, lifesaving body functions speed up, and non-essential functions slow down.

WHAT TRIGGERS STRESS?

The unusual demand, which causes you to adapt or change, is called a stressor. We said that a stressor may be real or imagined. For instance, the boss passes Joe in the hall without giving his customary greeting. Joe worries that he has done something wrong. In reality, the boss is preoccupied with an argument with his wife. In this case, it isn't a real disturbance, but Joe's perception which results in the classic response called stress. Let's consider some of the common stressors. As we do, ask yourself which of these disturb you, and which can you control.

WORK OR SCHOOL

- ☹ Unreasonable deadlines, competition, work overload
- ☹ Boredom, lack of fulfillment in work and life
- ☹ Performance grading, fear of failing, fear of new demands
- ☹ Unclear or constantly changing tasks
- ☹ Superiors that are nonsupportive or habitually critical

FAMILY

- ☹ Parents
- ☹ Spouse
- ☹ Upheavals, friction
- ☹ In-Laws
- ☹ Ex-spouses
- ☹ School and Work problems



What Pressure?

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Page 4

- ☹ Increased pressure, from others, or self, to achieve and gain material wealth
- ☹ Personal health
- ☹ Being overweight or underweight
- ☹ Exposure to conflicting values on TV., newspapers, etc.
- ☹ Inflation, stress, low salary
- ☹ Increased mobility
- ☹ Changing or uncertain male-female roles
- ☹ Decline in organized religion, leading to unclear values
- ☹ Personality shortcoming
- ☹ Personal image

In short, almost any life situation that requires change or adaptation can be considered a stressor. Even pleasant events, like promotions, vacations, or marriage, are stressors since they require many adjustments.

Stress is not necessarily bad. In fact, it has been called the spice of life that helps us grow and develop. A life with no stress is not only impossible, but would be quite boring. After all, who wants a life of "no runs, no hits and no errors"?



Do You Ever Feel Anxious at Work?

WHEN IS STRESS HARMFUL?

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Page 5

In days of old, our ancestors quickly resolved stress by fighting or running away or by physically working it off. In today's world it is very hard for us to fight or run away from those stresses when it has to do with traffic or things beyond our control. If we do decide to take matters into our own hands we find ourselves out of a job because we put our foot through the computer. Today is not like yesteryear, when we could put our sword through what ever problem we might have. Even when we do overcome a particular problem, there seems to be ten more produced. And before one stressor is resolved, another may present itself. So stress becomes prolonged and builds up. Our ability to cope soon becomes exhausted.

Without a physical release or a break, the wear and tear of stress can result in physical or emotional illness, especially where we are most vulnerable. The following are some illnesses that have been associated with excess stress:

HEART DISEASE	ASTHMA	DIARRHEA	ARTHRITIS
HIGH BLOOD	CONSTIPATION	COLITIS	HAY FEVER
PRESSURE	DIABETES	STRESS	OBESITY
ULCERS	INSOMNIA	ANXIETY	BACKACHES
HEADACHES	ULCERS	RASHES	ALCOHOLISM

These illnesses are known as psychosomatic illnesses, meaning the mind (psyche) influences the body (soma). A psychosomatic illness is not just imaginary, or in the head. Rather, it is a real illness in which the mind either causes the illness, aggravates the symptoms, or slows recovery. Most experts believe that 50 -75% of all illnesses are psychosomatic.

Even though stress is something observed in the body, doctors know that the mind and body can not be separated. What effects one affects the other. For example, some people develop a habit of worrying. Prolonged, unreasonable worry and anxiety can trigger and maintain the stress response. Muscle tension from stress can in turn make the person feel even more anxious. Now an unhealthy psychosomatic cycle can be formed. A person may become depressed, and seek comfort in drugs, as his physical health slips away more and more stress is created.

WHEN IS STRESS HARMFUL? CONTINUED

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Page 6

Health and performance peak when the amount of stress is optimal. Psychosomatic illnesses, however, occur more frequently when there is too much or too little stress. For example, the pressure from work overload is an obvious stressor. However, job boredom is also a stressor. You may feel frustrated when you are not fulfilling your potential or when you are not able to use your skills.

What is the optimal amount of stress? This is different for each of us. Some thrive on challenges and long hours; others like a slower pace. Each of us must find the level of stress that is best for us.

WARNING SIGNS

Here are some warning signs that may suggest an unsuitable amount of stress in a person's life:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> tense muscles | <input type="checkbox"/> inability to think clearly or concentrate; racing thoughts |
| <input type="checkbox"/> irritability, edginess | <input type="checkbox"/> overpowering desire to cry or run away |
| <input type="checkbox"/> inability to relax | <input type="checkbox"/> increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs |
| <input type="checkbox"/> pounding or racing heart | <input type="checkbox"/> weight gain or loss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> losing the joy of life | <input type="checkbox"/> itching or hives |
| <input type="checkbox"/> nightmares | <input type="checkbox"/> worrying |
| <input type="checkbox"/> change in appetite | <input type="checkbox"/> stress |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Too much caffeine | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> hyperventilation | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> loss of sleep | |



Do You Have Any Warning Signs?

HOLMES STRESS SCALE

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Page 7

List points for events which you experienced within the past six months or are experiencing.

Points	Event	Scale of Impact
_____	DEATH OF SPOUSE	100
_____	DIVORCE	73
_____	MARITAL SEPARATION	65
_____	JAIL TERM	63
_____	DEATH OF CLOSE FAMILY MEMBER	63
_____	PERSONAL INJURY OR ILLNESS	53
_____	MARRIAGE	50
_____	FIRED AT WORK	47
_____	MARITAL RECONCILIATION	45
_____	RETIREMENT	45
_____	CHANGE IN HEALTH OF FAMILY MEMBER	44
_____	PREGNANCY	40
_____	SEX DIFFICULTIES	39
_____	GAIN OF NEW FAMILY MEMBER	39
_____	BUSINESS READJUSTMENT	39
_____	CHANGE IN FINANCIAL STATE	38
_____	DEATH OF A CLOSE FRIEND	37
_____	CHANGE TO DIFFERENT LINE OF WORK	36
_____	CHANGE IN # OF ARGUMENTS IN FAMILY	35
_____	MORTGAGE OVER \$30,000	31
_____	FORECLOSURE OF MORTGAGE OR LOAN	30
_____	CHANGE IN RESPONSIBILITIES AT WORK	29
_____	TROUBLE WITH In-Laws	29
_____	OUTSTANDING PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT	28
_____	SPOUSE BEGINS OR STOPS WORK	26
_____	BEGIN OR END SCHOOL	26
_____	CHANGE IN LIVING CONDITIONS	25
_____	REVISION OF PERSONAL HABITS	24
_____	TROUBLE WITH BOSS	23
_____	CHANGE IN WORK HOURS OR CONDITIONS	20
_____	CHANGE IN RESIDENCE	20
_____	CHANGE IN SCHOOLS	20
_____	CHANGE IN RECREATION	19
_____	CHANGE IN CHURCH ACTIVITIES	19
_____	CHANGE IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES	18
_____	MORTGAGE OR LOAN LESS THAN \$10,000	17
_____	CHANGE IN SLEEPING HABITS	16
_____	CHANGE IN # OF FAMILY OUTINGS	15
_____	CHANGE IN EATING HABITS	15
_____	VACATION	13
_____	MINOR VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW	12
_____	MAJOR HOLIDAYS	11

_____ TOTAL POINTS

Persons who have total points of 300 or more have an 80% higher chance of developing a major illness than those below 300. If you have a high score it just means that you have been experiencing considerable stress and likely need to make immediate changes in your life.

Look at the Feelings Lists that follow this page and write down the pleasant and negative feelings you are feeling. See if you have more pleasant than negative feelings. If not, you will want to change that so that you are having more pleasant feelings than negative ones.

FEELINGS LIST

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

PLEASANT FEELINGS

ADMIRER	DEDICATED	JUST	RECEPTIVE
ADORABLE	DEVOTED	KIND	RELIABLE
AFFECTIONATE	EASY-GOING	KINDLY	RESPECTFUL
AGREEABLE	EMPHATIC	KIND-HEARTED	RESPONSIBLE
ALTRUISTIC	FAIR	LENIENT	SENSITIVE
AMIALE	FAITHFUL	LOVABLE	SYMPATHETIC
BENEVOLENT	FORGIVABLE	LOVING	SWEET
BENIGN	FRIENDLY	MELLOW	TENDER
BIG-HEARTED	GENEROUS	MILD	THOUGHTFUL
BROTHERLY	GENUINE	MORAL	TOLERANT
CARING	GIVING	NEIGHBORLY	TRUSTFUL
CHARITABLE	GOOD	NICE	TRUSTWORTHY
CHRISTIAN	GOOD-HUMORED	OBLIGING	UNDERSTANDING
COMFORTING	GOOD-NATURED	OPEN	UNSELFISH
CONFIDENT	HELPFUL	OPTIMISTIC	WARM
CORDIAL	HONEST	PATIENT	WARM-HEARTED
COURTEOUS	INTERESTED	PLEASANT	WELL-MEANING
CONSIDERATE	HUMANE	REASONABLE	WISE
AMUSED	EXALTED	HUMOROUS	SERENE
AT EASE	EXCELLENT	INSPIRED	SPLENDID
BLISSFUL	EXCITED	IN-HIGH SPIRITS	SUPERB
CHEERFUL	FINE	JOVIAL	TERRIFIC
COMICAL	FANTASTIC	JOYFUL	THRILLED
CONTENTED	FIT	JUBILANT	TREMENDOUS
DELIGHTED	GAY	MAGNIFICENT	TRIUMPHANT
ECSTATIC	GLORIOUS	MAJESTIC	TURNED ON
ELATED	GOOD	MARVELOUS	VIVACIOUS
ENCHANTED	GRAND	OVERJOYED	WITTY
ENTHUSIASTIC	GLAD	PLEASED	WONDERFUL
SATISFIED	GREAT	PROUD	HAPPY
ABLE	DURABLE	INFLUENTIAL	SPIRITED
ADEQUATE	DYNAMIC	INTENSE	STABLE
ASSURED	EFFECTIVE	LION-HEARTED	STOUTHEARTED
AUTHORITATIVE	ENERGETIC	MANLY	STRONG
BOLD	FEARLESS	MIGHTY	SURE
BRAVE	FIRM	POWERFUL	TOUGH
CAPABLE	FORCEFUL	ROBUST	VIRILE
COMPETENT	GALLANT	SECURE	WELL EQUIPPED
COURAGEOUS	HEALTHY	SHARP	SELF-CONFIDENT
DARING	HEROIC	SELF-RELIANT	SKILLFUL
DETERMINED	IMPORTANT	ONE WITH SELF	WELL PUT TOGETHER

Count the number of pleasant feelings you are having and record it here _____.

UNPLEASANT FEELINGS

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

DEPRESSED	DESPISED	HORRIBLE	PATHETIC
ABANDONED	DESPONDENT	HUMILIATED	PITIFUL
ALIEN	DESTROYED	HURT	REBUKED
ALIENATED	DISCARDED	IN THE DUMPS	REGRETFUL
ALONE	DISCOURAGED	JILTED	REPRIMANDED
ANIMATE	DISFAVORED	KAPUT	REJECTED
AWFUL	DISMAL	LEFT OUT	ROTTEN
BATTERED	DONE FOR	LOATHED	RUINED
BELOW PAR	DOWN CAST	LONELY	RUN DOWN
BLUE	DOWN HEARTED	LOUSY	SAD
BURNED	DOWN TRODDEN	LOW	STRANDED
CAST OFF	DREADFUL	LONESOME	TEARFUL
CHEAPENED	ESTRANGED	MISERABLE	TERRIBLE
CRUSHED	EXCLUDED	MISHANDLED	UNHAPPY
DEBASED	FORLORN	MOODY	VALUELESS
DEFEATED	FORSAKEN	MOURNFUL	UNLOVED
DEGRADED	GLOOMY	OBSOLETE	WASHED UP
DEMOLISHED	GLUM	OSTRACIZED	WHIPPED
DEPRESSED	GRIM	OUT OF SORTS	WORTHLESS
DESOLATE	HATED	MISTREATED	REBUKED
DESPAIR	HOPELESS	OVERLOOKED	WRECKED
AFFLICTED	DISPLEASED	LOST	SWAMPED
ACCUSED	DISSATISFIED	NAUSEATED	THE PLAYTHING OF
AT THE FEET OF	DISTRUSTFUL	OFFENDED	THE PUPPET OF
AT THE MERCY OF	DISTURBED	PAINED	TORMENTED
AWARD	DOUBTFUL	PERPLEXED	TOUCHED
BAFFLED	FOOLISH	PUZZLED	UNGAINLY
BEWILDERED	FUTILE	RIDICULOUS	UNLUCKY
BLAME	GRIEF	SICKENED	UNPOPULAR
CLUMSY	HELPLESS	SILLY	UNSATISFIED
CONFUSED	HINDERED	SKEPTICAL	UNSURE
CONTAINED	IMPAIRED	SPEECHLESS	DISLIKED
DISGUSTED	IMPATIENT	STRAINED	IMPRISONED
AFRAID	FEARFUL	JITTERY	SHY
AGITATED	FIDGETY	JUMPY	STRAINED
ALARMED	FRIGHTENED	NERVOUS	TENSE
APPREHENSIVE	HORRIFIED	ON THE EDGE	TERRIFIED
BASHFUL	ILL AT EASE	OVERWHELMED	TERROR-STRICKEN
DESPERATE	INSECURE	RESTLESS	UNCOMFORTABLE
DREAD	INTIMIDATED	SCARED	UNEASY
EMBARRASSED	JEALOUS	SHAKY	WORRYING

Count the number of unpleasant feelings you are having and record it here _____.

UNPLEASANT FEELINGS

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

ABUSED	DIMINISHED	MALIGNED	SCOFFED AT
BELITTLED	DISCREDITED	MINIMIZED	SCORED
CARPED AT	DISDAINED	MOCKED	SHAME
CAVILED AT	DISPARAGED	NEGLECTED	SLANDERED
CENSURED	DISGRACED	SLIGHTED	UNSERIOUSLY TAKEN
CRITICIZED	HUMILIATED	OVERLOOKED	THOUGHT NOTHING OF
DEFAMED	IGNORED	POKED FUN AT	UNDERESTIMATED
DEPRECIATED	JEERED	POOH-POOHED	UNDERRATED
DERIDED	LAUGHED AT	RIDICULED	ROASTED
ANEMIC	FLIMSY	INSECURE	UNABLE
BROKEN	FRAGILE	INSUFFICIENT	UNARMED
BROKEN DOWN	FRAIL	LAME	UNCERTAIN
CHICKEN	FAKE	MAIMED	HARMLESS
COWARDLY	HELPLESS	MEEK	UNFIT
CRIPPLED	IMPOTENT	MOUSY	UNIMPORTANT
DEBILITATED	INADEQUATE	PARALYZED	UNBOUNDED
DEFECTIVE	INCAPABLE	POWERLESS	UNSUBSTANTIATED
DEFICIENT	INDEFENSIBLE	PUNY	USELESS
DEMORALIZED	INEFFECTIVE	SHAKEN	VULNERABLE
DISABLED	INEPT	SMALL	WEAK
EXHAUSTED	INFERIOR	STRENGTHLESS	WEAK-HEARTED
FEEBLE	INFIRM	TRIVIAL	ZAPPED
AGITATED	ANTAGONISTIC	BITING	CALLOUS
AGGRAVATED	ARROGANT	BLOODTHIRSTY	COLD-HEARTED
AGGRESSIVE	AUSTERE	BLUNT	COMBATIVE
ANGRY	BAD-TEMPERED	BULLYING	CANTANKEROUS
ANNOYED	CONTRARY	COOL	HARD-HEARTED
CORROSIVE	HARSH	MEAN	RUTHLESS
CRANKY	HATEFUL	MURDEROUS	SADISTIC
CROSS	HEARTLESS	NASTY	SAVAGE
CRITICAL	HELLISH	OBSTINATE	SEVERE
CRUEL	HIDEOUS	OPPOSED	SPITEFUL
DEADLY	HOSTILE	OPPRESSIVE	STERN
DICTATORIAL	HYPERCRITICAL	OUTRAGED	STORMY
DISAGREEABLE	ILL-TEMPERED	PERTURBED	UNFEELING
DISCONTENTED	IMPATIENT	POISONOUS	UNFRIENDLY
DOGMATIC	INCONSIDERATE	PREJUDICED	UNMERCIFUL
ENRAGED	INHUMAN	PUSHY	UNRULY
UNHAPPY	INTOLERABLE	RECKLESS	VICIOUS
GRUESOME	IRRITATED	REVENGEFUL	VIOLENT
HARD	MAD	ROUGH	WRATHFUL

Count the number of pleasant feelings you are having and record it here _____.
If there are more unpleasant feelings than pleasant work to change that positively.

Rational Thinking: Managing Stress By Getting a Handle on Automatic Thoughts

Stress is a frequently cited problem in many peoples lives at one time or another. While people with stress are often intelligent, energetic, and imaginative, they have difficulty developing the skills needed to work with others, such as organization, follow-through, and social finesse. People having stress have likely received much criticism from others and have had difficulty in many settings by the time they reach adulthood. Stress can result from this lengthy struggle with frustration and failure.

The National Institute of Mental Health estimates that 50 percent of the population experience stress at some point in life. Stress is highly treatable. There are new, effective medications, and extensive research has shown that behavior therapy is a powerful technique for alleviating stress.

In the 1960s Aaron Beck pioneered a form of behavior therapy that deals specifically with the problem of stress. Dr. Beck noted that it is often your thoughts that trigger stress related feelings. How you interpret events determines how you feel about them. If you interpret your boss’s stiff “Hello” as a sign of annoyance at your late report, you will feel anxious. If you interpret it as his usual absentmindedness, you will feel neutral.

Dr. Beck noted that people jump to a conclusion, and that provokes emotions. Because the interpretations are quick in coming, he called them *automatic thoughts*. He noted, too, that these thoughts are sometimes just a flash of memory related to an experience. Automatic thoughts are ingrained, based on past experience, quick, and sometimes abbreviated to just a visual memory.

It has been my professional experience that people’s thoughts lead to the creation of their feelings and moods and actions. If I wake up and say to myself, “I am going to have a bad day because it is raining” then I am going to have a bad day because it is raining. If I say to myself, “What’s the use, why even try” I will not get much accomplished, will I? Be careful about what you think because it usually comes true. So...our thoughts can dictate our moods and actions and, for this reason, it is important for you to know how all of this works because it is highly likely that it is happening to you today. Dr. Garlock utilizes cognitive behavioral therapy often in the treatment of stress and mood disorders. Contact him today at: jagvw@earthlink.net or call him at (281) 444-2678 to learn more about the cognitive treatment of stress related disorders. Call today!

Cognitive Distortions and Their Role in Stress

Automatic thoughts are also called cognitive distortions. These are statements you make to yourself that distort your emotions and experiences. Because they are automatic, you rarely notice or examine them. You accept them as truths. Although they are based on experience, it is false to extend them to the present without first examining their validity. The following are distortions that can occur when you have stress and mood difficulties.

Filtering

Filtering is the process of putting your experiences through a mental strainer that separates only the negative aspects.

Nigel works hard at his job as a photographer. His stress problems are not a handicap in his work because he can be constantly on the go and he can use his visual imagination. Nigel’s boss is “all business.” He met Nigel at the studio one morning and gave him two important assignments for the day. He told Nigel to be sure to have them in on time. Nigel left brooding over his boss’s admonition to “have them in on time.” He felt he was being criticized and it was unfair. He got stressed over all of these things. Nigel isolated this one statement and put it through a filter of injustice, leaving him angry for the day.

We each select filters based on our personal history. If you are stressed, you will filter out elements of loss in your experiences. People who are fearful will see danger in what they encounter. What is filtered may be real, but it’s a distortion of the total experience because it’s only *one* aspect of what happened. Nigel did not see that he had been given two important assignments, which would suggest trust on his boss’s part. Nigel could have left the studio feeling pretty proud.

Catastrophizing

Linking your present situation to a disastrous conclusion is catastrophizing. You feel that the worst outcome will befall you. If you have a cold, you worry that it will turn into pneumonia. If you run out of gas on the highway you’re sure you’ll be hijacked—even killed. People with stress are susceptible to catastrophizing since they often feel that doom is just around the corner. Also, because of their active imaginations, they can dream up the most amazing outcomes for ordinary situations.

Catastrophizing takes a lot of time and energy that could otherwise be used to deal with the original situation. Catastrophizing also creates negative emotions, usually anxiety. Once generated, anxiety is associated with the current situation and then may recur automatically in the future.

Overgeneralization

Overgeneralization involves drawing a conclusion from one experience and extending this conclusion to all future experiences. For example, if you’ve had an unsuccessful interview and conclude you’re a failure at interviewing and you’ll never get a job, you’re over generalizing. The result of one interview cannot determine how well you’ll do in the future. Even if you have had several unsuccessful interviews, your future has *not* been determined. All these interviews are independent of one another.

Similar conclusions, such as, “No one will ever go out with me,” “I’ll never get into grad school,” “I’ll always be in this rut of a job,” and “Everything goes wrong for me,” are gross overgeneralizations. Overgeneralizations result in a narrowing of your life experiences. As you conclude that failure is inevitable, you’re less likely to challenge yourself.

Labeling

Being labeled is a common experience for someone with stress. Stress itself is, of course, a label. Not everyone using the term understands that it is a collection of behaviors that can be used skillfully or destructively. Rather, the emphasis is on “deficit” and “disorder.” You are certainly familiar with other labels, such as lazy, disorganized, immature. You know the hurt feelings that these words cause. You know that hurt usually leads to anger and eventually more stress.

Unfortunately, being labeled does not immunize you from using labels yourself. If you are breaking up with your boyfriend and refer to him as a “loser,” you’re engaging in the distortion of labeling. You are focusing on one or a few aspects of his character that displease you and using them to define him as a person. The result of labeling is that it distances you from the person. You can then more easily justify angry, aggressive behavior toward this person.

Mind Reading

Feeling that you just “know” how someone feels or will act is a form of projection called mind reading. You draw quick conclusions about others based on your feelings rather than real information.

Lois sat nervously across from her boss at the weekly staff meeting. She noted that he only made brief eye contact with her. Later he didn’t support her suggestion to shorten the performance appraisal form. She concluded that he was not happy with her work and he wanted to fire her. The truth was, he had just come from a meeting with his boss and was preoccupied with his own job security.

In mind reading you know how you would feel about a situation and assume that others feel the same way you do. If you are annoyed when someone spills coffee in a restaurant, you feel that anyone else would feel annoyed as well. The problem with mind reading is that you will then act according to your beliefs about others’ feelings or values. You may make yourself look pretty irrational by making up for something no one else perceived to be a problem.

Shoulds

“Shoulds” are statements that you make to yourself about how the world ought to be.

You have ideas, experiences, values that indicate to you right from wrong. The problem comes when you apply these imperatives to day-to-day situations, and those who fail your expectations are wrong or bad. For example, you feel that your wife should know when you’ve had a bad day and need some time alone. When she does not, you feel that she is selfish and demanding. Or, you are cut off in traffic by a young man driving a sports car. Your blood boils as you say, He shouldn’t get away with that. He’s a punk and should be run off the road.” Obeying traffic laws is a good idea, but not everyone does. Your level of anger for his violation is extreme under the circumstances.

Shoulds can also be turned inward. You may have a number of rules for your own behavior. You may feel that you should be able to talk your way into any sale you want. Again, the problem with shoulds is the condemnation that comes with not meeting the standard. You feel that you’re a weakling if you give in to not feeling well or that you’re a failure when you can’t close every sale you want. Shoulds are rigid and demanding. Psychologist Karen Horey calls them the tyranny of the shoulds.” These immutable, fixed beliefs keep you from flexible thinking and evaluation of yourself and others based on all of the present circumstances.

Personalization

Personalization is the belief that everything around you somehow relates to what you’ve done or said. If the cashier at the supermarket has a critical look on his face, you feel that he is judging you in some way You don’t stop to think that maybe he’s preoccupied with some thought of his own. Or, if your boss gives a speech about increasing productivity you’re sure he’s talking about you and that he’s really looking to fire you. Personalization also makes you responsible for the well-being of others. If your son is sad, you feel that you must have let him down in some way.

Comparing yourself to others is another aspect of personalization. You are on the lookout for the abilities of others and compare their success to yours. You see others’ ability to play tennis, sing, write, converse, and you feel that your talent is less. These comparisons are a constant search to establish your own value as a person. Occasionally you may feel that you are the better-looking, smarter, happier person, but the success rarely lasts. You begin comparing yourself to others again and inevitably find others better off than you.

Polarized Thinking

Judging your experiences as either black or white, good or bad, is the essence of polarized thinking. You are not seeing the shades of gray.

Rose has experienced a lot of loss in her life. She finds it hard to trust people. When Rose’s husband becomes preoccupied with a personal project, she feels abandoned and resentful. She sees her husband at these times as selfish and incompetent. He’s a bad husband. She also feels that she must be pretty lousy as a wife if he’s so uninterested in her.

Rose is judging herself and her husband in black-and-white terms. Either he’s a good husband or a bad husband. Similarly, she is either a good or bad wife.

Polarized thinking is critical and harsh. It’s brittle, too. There is no room for mistakes. If you fail, you must be a failure. You’re either brilliant or stupid, clever or a klutz. Because your experiences are anchored at the extremes, your emotions and your moods will swing between the poles. You experience a lot of mood variability and energy highs and lows due to stressors.

Fairness

Fairness is something we all would like to be part of human relations. But people don’t always agree on what is fair. The fallacy of fairness involves determining for yourself what is fair in a relationship and expecting others to share the same view. This fallacy is often expressed in “if, then” statements. “She knows I have stress. She shouldn’t expect me to be on time.” “If we were a real family, they would come over on Sundays.” “If they wanted me to stay, they would give me a raise.”

A related fallacy of fairness involves setting a quid pro quo—but without letting others know the deal. For example, since you did all the cooking tonight, you feel that others should know to do the cleanup. Or, since you’ve been working extra hours to help with the new ad campaign, you should get your choice of vacation weeks. When others do not know your private agenda, you are likely to end up feeling let down. Without an open understanding, there is no agreement.

Control

The fallacy of control has two forms. **In the first, you feel that others control your destiny. In the second, you feel that you are able to control the lives of others.**

Feeling controlled by others or outside forces is a cause for discouragement. When you believe that outcomes are determined by others, rather than your talent or hard work, you may give up before you try. Fallacies of control by others are a major contributor to procrastination. For example, if you believe that East Coast schools won’t consider Midwestern applicants, you

have an excuse not to try. The second type of control fallacy is that you can control the lives, behavior, and/or feelings of others. You are then responsible for their outcomes. This much responsibility can be a real burden. Living with someone who procrastinates sometimes results in this type of thinking. You feel that it is somehow your responsibility, your duty, to get them to change their ways, to get moving, and to do what’s right. This is a fallacy. You cannot control another’s behavior or feelings. Even when the person agrees with you and does what you ask, it’s a result of that person’s decision. Stress can come with disagreement at times.

Ten Fallacies of Thinking

Here is a summary of the ten cognitive distortions:

- Filtering: You see only the negative aspects of an experience; you disregard positive and neutral aspects.
- Catastrophizing: You can see eventual disaster in any everyday experience.
- Overgeneralization: You extrapolate from one or a few experiences to all future experiences.
- Labeling: You use a word or a phrase to define an entire person.
- Mind reading: You make quick decisions about what others think without actual evidence.
- Shoulds: You have a set of rules for the behavior of others and yourself. When the rules are broken, you feel angry and judge the violation as bad
- Personalization: You feel that all events around you somehow reflect on you. You feel responsible for the well-being of others.
- Polarized thinking: You see your experiences in black-and-white terms. You are either good or bad, smart or dumb, and so on.
- Fairness: You have a standard of fairness that others must follow. You always have hidden agreements about what others should do for you to reward your efforts.
- Control: You feel that others make decisions for you and that you cannot control your life. Or, you feel that you must control the thoughts, feelings, and actions of others.

You may have recognized yourself in one or more of the ten styles of distorted thinking. You will notice that you practice some styles more than others. Becoming familiar with all ten of the styles is useful. As you come to recognize them easily, you’ll be in a better place to stop them before they cause you real emotional pain. They contribute to stress.

Now, you will be given information about how to correct these distorted thinking styles which result from stress. This will provide you with the information you need to identify your thought distortions and to then work on correcting them so they do not contribute to your stress and mood difficulties.

Now that you are beginning to understand how you create your own stress through your own thoughts and feelings and actions. We have choices about how we react to the stresses of daily living. You can receive more information about stress and how to manage it by emailing Dr. Garlock at jagvw@earthlink.net or calling Dr. Garlock at (281) 444-2678 for more information and services. We look forward to hearing from you soon!

Rational Responses to the Ten Fallacies of Thinking

Here is a summary of the ten cognitive distortions and how to combat them:

- Filtering: Identify your personal filter. Look for evidence contrary to filtered experience.
- Catastrophizing: Think of other, safe outcomes to your situation.
- Overgeneralization: Ask, “Where’s the evidence?” Avoid using words such as *always*, *never*, *only*, and *everyone*.
- Labeling: Actively look for aspects of the person or situation that do not fit the label. Use labels to describe a specific situation only
- Mind reading: Ask for clarification.
- Shoulds: Keep in mind that others have different experiences and may have different values. Replace “should” statements with “I want or wish” statements.
- Personalization: Let others be responsible for their feelings. Avoid comparing yourself to others.
- Polarized thinking: Learn to see shades of gray And learn to be comfortable with these shades. Quantify your observations to put them in perspective.
- Fairness: Learn to see fairness as a preference for a way of acting.
- Control: Take responsibility for your choices. Let others be responsible for their decisions.

Mini “Help Yourself” Program

A TIME FOR EVERYTHING

In nature, with *its* laws and unchanging cycles, there is a time for everything, a wonderful and comforting predictability. While each of us may say we’d like Indian summer to last all the way through March, wouldn’t our confidence in nature be a bit shaken if, just one year, nature decided to be “flexible”, “hang loose, and veer from the schedule as originally planned? Stress happens anytime!

The course of any single human life isn’t nearly so predictable as nature’s seasons. Fortunately, however, we can plan our lives in terms of major *goals*. We can also prepare to make certain changes in our lives, but “Life Planning” can be difficult work. It requires setting personal as well as professional priorities, and we may experience stress as we try to manage all of the various factors.

A professional counselor can help us sort through the confusion and/or complexity frequently involved our life stress. Whether an employee will be laid off and faced with setting long-term personal and professional goals or a 30 year old wants to change careers, the stress may seem overwhelming. A counselor can help by talking to the employee about his or her feelings and confusion. The 60 year old employee who must begin to plan for retirement but has mixed emotions about this major change in his life may also benefit by talking with a counselor. If you would like assistance in setting goals and/or coping with stress, please call Dr. John Garlock at (281) 444-2678 or send an email to Dr. Garlock at jagvw@earthlink.net and he will respond to you immediately.

RELAXATION SKILLS

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Relaxation is the opposite of stress. Relaxation means that the mind and body are calm. As the mind and body remain in a calm state of reduced arousal, they become refreshed and restored.

Although sleep is essential, even sleep is not pure relaxation. In sleep we alternate between periods of deep rest and dreams, our minds are extremely active. Emotionally charged dreams or fretful sleep can cause us to wake up even more tired than when we went to sleep.

Very effective restoring is done at an even keel, while awake. Although you may not reach the deepest level of rest possible in sleep, the fact that you can steadily remain at a level of reduced arousal can be more refreshing than sleep.

The aim of relaxation, then is to free yourself from stressors long enough to refresh and restore your mind and body.

RELAXATION IS NOT...

Relaxation does not mean that the mind becomes dull, or ceases to function. Rather, the mind is focused and alert during relaxation. Mental clarity and greater concentration result from periods of relaxation. Relaxation is not leisure and recreation. As we discussed, these require adaptation. Although these can be useful and satisfying distractions from the world's stressors, relaxation goes beyond distraction from stressors.

Relaxation is not tranquilizing drugs (alcohol, valium, sleeping pills, etc.). These depress or impair the brain or nervous system, making people less responsive to their surroundings. Relaxation calms the body and mind, but without clouding the senses. In fact, studies show that people who daily practice relaxation actually react quicker to stressors, and recover more quickly than those who do not practice relaxation.

Relaxation in no way decreases productivity. In fact, the reverse is true. Relaxation increases work efficiency because energy is not uselessly wasted. Relaxation does not depend on adopting a new lifestyle or philosophy. Relaxation only requires a few minutes once or twice a day, and an attitude of calm. Like physical exercise, relaxation exercises begin with just a few minutes a day and work up to perhaps 10 - 20 minutes a day. They can be done anytime (except after meals, when digestion interferes with relaxation), and are especially effective after physical activity.

EFFECTS OF RELAXATION

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Page 11

Research has shown that people who practice relaxation do not get stressed under pressure. They learn to calm unnecessary electrical activity in the brain. As they practice, they become conditioned to remain relaxed throughout the day (The centers in the brain that cause relaxation actually learn to predominate over the unnecessary activity.). Relaxation training also calms areas in the brain that control thinking and emotions, so that responses to stressors are calmer. People who get so excited they cannot think straight, need to calm down first so they can respond appropriately.

Because the mind and body are closely connected, relaxation can be achieved in two ways. First, the body can be relaxed, and the mind will follow. Progressive muscle relaxation, yoga, massage, and biofeedback are examples of this approach. Second, the mind can be relaxed and the body will follow. Meditation, suggestions visualizing peaceful scenes, and soft music are examples of this approach. When relaxation does occur, the racing of the mind and body ceases. The heart rate goes down, muscle tension decreases, and disease symptoms may lessen.

Initially, you may learn relaxation skills to prevent disease. However, as you practice, you may discover a number of positive psychological results. You might find that you feel more in control and happier. The person who is in control can work efficiently, but also can choose to deeply relax when it is appropriate. In addition, relaxation seems to access the parts of the brain where creative thoughts originate. You might remember attacking a problem for hours without finding a solution. Then as you relaxed and "let go" your mind seemed to assemble the pieces of the puzzle and present a solution.

Perhaps this occurred at night in bed, in the bathtub, or on vacation. On the contrary, people who can only work doggedly, and can't seem to let the mind spin free occasionally, get creative insights and hunches less frequently. In spending a few minutes in relaxation, people momentarily stop striving to control and organize their surroundings. They just uncritically observe and enjoy it. People who do this find themselves learning to appreciate and enjoy the beauties of life more. The enjoyment and pleasures that this brings usually improves work productivity and efficiency, but a true relaxation break is even more effective.

Relaxation training often creates a profound serenity, a feeling of calm and joy. Try it! The benefits might surprise you. A good plan is to try each skill for a week or more to find the ones that best suit you.

RELAXATION SKILLS

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

The skills for relaxation have been broken into two categories 1) Body relaxation and 2) Mind relaxation. It is important that you follow the few simple rules before you start to learn how to relax.

RULES TO FOLLOW

- 1 Practice the slow techniques of self relaxation for five to seven days.
2. Practice at least once every day without skipping a day.
3. Do not try to speed up the process of relaxation until you have mastered the technique slowly for five days.
4. If you do not achieve immediate results, do not become discouraged. Each time you practice, it will be easier.
5. Do not practice in the same position more than twice consecutively.
6. Change hours of practice sessions.
7. If you are interrupted during a practice session, always take a moment to "count yourself awake".



This Relaxation Stuff Is Great!!!

BODY RELAXATION

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Jacobson, in "YOU MUST RELAX", persuasively maintains that physical-relaxation techniques provide an excellent way to break the cycle of fear, worry, and tension. Observing that physiological tests "indicates that when you maintain or recall anything, you tense muscles somewhere, as if you were actually looking or speaking or doing something". He counsels that the individual should learn to observe the muscular sensations that accompany negative thoughts. Jacobson claims that by relaxing these muscular tensions, ability to maintain the negative psychological state is diminished.

BREATHING

A good place to start is with a simple, yet very effective skill that uses breathing to relax. Breath control is perhaps the oldest known stress-reduction skill, and is common to almost all relaxation skills.

The type of breathing used in relaxation is called diaphragmatic breathing (the diaphragm is the muscle below the lungs; it drops down against the stomach when you breath in, and raises when you breathe out). In diaphragmatic breathing, the stomach seems to inflate when you breath in, and deflate when you breathe out.

There is essentially not movement in the chest or shoulders. The diaphragmatic breath gets air into the lower parts of the lungs, where air sacs are densest, so more oxygen gets into the blood with less effort. It is also thought that this type of breathing stimulates the vagus nerve, a major nerve in the body, which relaxes the body when activated.

Slowly and easily take a deep breath, filling the bottom of your lungs as well as the top. As you breathe in, whisper the syllable "re". Pause for a moment, then breathe out, whispering the syllable "lax". Don't force the air in and out of your lungs; let it flow slowly and naturally: Re-e-e-e (pause) La-a-a-a-x (pause).

Deep muscle relaxation prepares the individual to sleep - "perchance to dream"- or, if mental alertness is retained, to imagine more vivid and spontaneous visual fantasies than can usually be obtained with normal muscle tones.

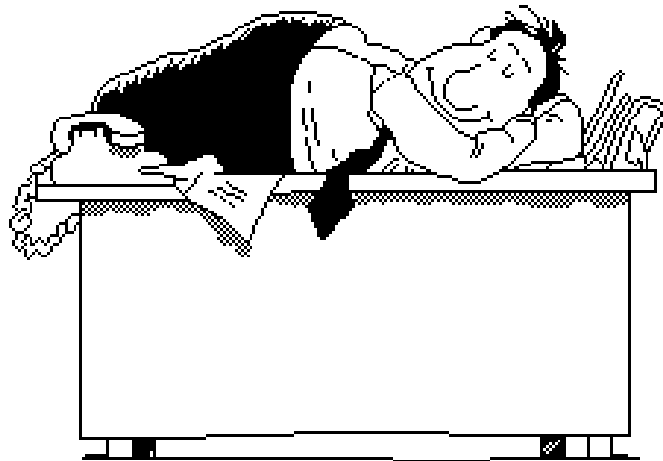


I Think I'm Stressed Out!!!

DEEP MUSCLE RELAXATION Mini "Help Yourself" Program

1. Lie down in a comfortable and quiet place.
2. Systematically
 - (a) tense a specific muscle group
 - (b) study the feeling of tension,
 - (c) relax, studying the feeling of letting go. (the slash (/) indicates a pause)
3. Clench fists / flex wrists / hands to shoulders, flex biceps / shrug shoulders (touch ears) / wrinkle forehead up / frown / close eyes tight / push tongue against roof of mouth / press lips together / take deep breath, then breath out / suck stomach way in / tense stomach muscles / tense buttocks / lift legs, tensing calves / curl toes down, tensing arches.

Review each activity above, letting go tension in each muscle group even more. Feel the peaceful, positive feeling that accompanies deep relaxation.



Try Not To Be Too Obvious!!!

PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Page 14

Find a comfortable place to lie down or sit down. Remove any constricting clothes or shoes. Make sure that there will be no interruptions, distractions, or noise. Now, relax your body by repeating these words in your mind...

FEET... RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
ANKLES...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
KNEES...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
THIGHS...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
HIPS...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
BASE OF SPINE...RELAX...RELAX...
STOMACH AREA...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
AREA OF THE LEFT LUNG...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
AREA OF THE RIGHT LUNG...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
LEFT SHOULDER...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
RIGHT SHOULDER...RELAX... RELAX...RELAX...
LEFT ARM... RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
RIGHT ARM...RELAX... RELAX...RELAX...
NECK MUSCLES... RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
FACIAL MUSCLES...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
FROM THE SCALP TO THE TOES...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...
RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...RELAX...

After injecting your suggestion, you slowly start counting from sixty to zero without stopping. Upon reaching zero, you should slowly start counting from one to ten; give yourself suggestions that on the count of ten you will awaken feeling fine and completely refreshed.



A Few Minutes a Day Relaxing, Can Put You on Top of The World!!!

MIND RELAXATION

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

One of the best supported concepts in psychology is this: ***WE FEEL AND BEHAVE ACCORDING TO THE IMAGES AND THOUGHTS IN OUR MINDS.***

Thus, as we imagine a peaceful relaxing scene, our bodies and minds relax.

To do this, get in a comfortable position, close your eyes and relax your body. Take a few deep breaths, then imagine the sensations of one of your favorite scenes (sounds, smells, feelings, colors, textures, and sights).

IMAGERY

Take a comfortable position, close your eyes. Take 3 diaphragmatic breaths as you let go of the day's tension. Relax your body from toe to head.

Imagine yourself walking along a quiet wooded brook, on a warm spring day...you begin to walk away from the brook out of the woods into a lush green meadow... after a few steps you pause, and leave your worries behind... you continue to walk out into the meadow where you recognize little bunnies hopping through a beautiful carpet of spring flowers...next to the brightly colored flowers you notice a field full of bright green clover, with an occasional dandelion... the flowers are dancing as a gentle wind flows through the field... the soft breeze blowing over your skin soothes and relaxes you... as you feel relaxed you lay down in the field to absorb the heat from the sun... as you look up you begin to make animal shapes from the clouds...you see an elephant, a dog, a clown, a heart, and a bird...just topping the trees you see a beautiful hot air balloon with magnificent colors... you sit up and wave to the pilot... and he waves back...a few birds circle lazily in the sky as the balloon leaves... other birds are singing in the trees... you are peaceful and happy... all is right with the world...

Stay here for a few moments. This is your safe place, and you can return here to rest each day if you wish. You can feel happy, relaxed, and confident when you leave your safe place to continue your day's activities.

Now move your hands, your arms, your legs, and begin to hear the sounds around you. You can slowly open your eyes and begin to see the new world around you.

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Personal Stress Management Worksheet Page 1

Date: _____ Name: _____

Welcome to the Self Contracting portion of our mini "Help Yourself" Program. We hope that you have gotten useful information that you can apply in your daily living and are now ready to focus on how to start to implement a program of personal coping with stress. The next two pages are designed to assist you to focus on what you want to change and to provide you with a vehicle for coping and managing stress. Please print out these forms and use them whenever you like.

BARRIERS TO SELF CHANGE (What is getting in the way of your coping with the stress and the problems you are facing? For example, a lack of energy, a lack of drive, a lack of resources to change, you do not know what to do so you do nothing, you do not have the time to change, you do not have the money to change, etc. Identify some of the stressors and the stress that you are currently experiencing. List them:

SUPPORTS TO SELF CHANGE (What is supporting your efforts for self change and to manage the stress that you are experiencing right now? For example, do family and friends help you cope and deal with the stress now; do you read self help books and materials to get support, do you go to support programs such as 12 step groups and self help groups at church or in your community, etc. Do you get therapeutic massages to decrease stress? List these support activities that you do and plan on increasing them as needed:

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Personal Stress Management Worksheet Page 2

What would you like to try that might help you get motivated and moving towards change and managing the stress and what are you afraid to try because you might fail or create a problem?

What has been your experience in the past when you have tried to change or modify your behavior? Did you succeed or did you not accomplish your behavioral goals when managing your stress? List the positive things you did when you were successful before:

List the things that you did before which did not work which got in the way of your personal coping with stress and the problems you were trying to address:

What are you willing to do this time that is positive and will lead to change and improved coping with your stress?
What things should you not do which have negatively impacted you in the past when you tried to manage stress in the past?

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Personal Stress Management Worksheet Page 3

Increasing Pleasurable Activities And Coping Skills

Use the following questions together with the list of pleasurable activities, to assist in coming up with your own ways of having more fun and of coping with your stress and your problems.

What types of things have you enjoyed learning and accomplishing?

What activities bring you a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction and feeling of accomplishment ? Do they help you when you are feeling stressed?

What have you enjoyed doing alone?

What have you enjoyed doing with others?

What types of things are you willing to do to manage your stress?

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Personal Stress Management Worksheet Page 4

Self And Partner Coping Assistance Exercise

We soon discover that we can either work together to make it through stressful and difficult periods, or we can fail to support each other, or even turn on each other during times of stress and problems and loss which makes the adjustment process considerably more difficult. You have choices about how you want to handle the problems that you are experiencing and this worksheet will help you to better understand the process that you use to cope with the difficulties in your life. Stress can be overcome with help! Fill out the statements on this page independently and then share your responses with your partner, if you have one, and work on it yourself or you can work together to complete the next page if you have a partner in your life.

Complete independently without assistance from your partner:

2. . A. When I am coping with problems, I tend to:

1.B. When my partner is coping with problems, he/she tends to:

2. . A. My partner could help me when I'm trying to cope with stress by:

2.B. I could help myself when I am coping with stress by:

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Personal Stress Management Worksheet Page 5

Date: _____ Name: _____

Goal: _____

Self Contracting Agreement

I understand that in order to overcome the difficulties that I am presently having and to resolve the stress that I am having I now must complete: I must decide on what action I want to take and then take the action that I agree to take. I understand that doing nothing will keep me where I am now and I want to change and grow and overcome the problems that I am facing today. I agree to contract with myself in order to help myself grow and develop and overcome the issues that I am facing which are interfering with my ability to cope and to manage my own life and to find the happiness and joy that I deserve. In order to accomplish this change, I agree to take the actions listed below and to give myself the best possible opportunity to be successful in overcoming my present stress issues.

PLEASE WRITE ALL INFORMATION IN CONCRETE BEHAVIORAL TERMS SO THAT YOU CAN MEASURE YOUR SUCCESS AND OUTCOME.

I agree to complete the following activities in order to meet the goal listed above:

Outcome measure(s) of success (How I know I will be accomplishing my goal):

When I achieve success level (How will I know I have been successful):

If I do not achieve success (What do I need to change to be successful in the future):

Mini "Help Yourself" Program

Personal Stress Management Worksheet Continued Page 6

What are my consequences I assign to myself for being unsuccessful and not achieving my personal goals and problem resolution? What will motivate me in the future to "get the job done" for myself. What will get my attention and help motivate me to change the behaviors that are getting in the way of success? What will keep me working to reduce my stress?

REMEMBER: To be successful in overcoming the stress that you are having you must complete a contract that you believe in and want to keep. It can even be a daily contract to give you structure for your daily activities. The goal of "Feeling better" must be broken down into concrete steps such as going out of the house, attending a support meeting, going to a movie with a friend, reading supportive literature daily, etc. Do not try to fix too much at one time. **KEEP IT SIMPLE!**

The goals you set must be related to the difficulties you are having that keep you from being happy and fulfilled and successful. Also, please understand that these goals can change from day to day as you change from day to day. Coping with your stress leads to change and you should be able to identify the changes you are seeking as well as how you will know when you have met your goals. If you have difficulty with this contracting process, email Dr. Garlock at jagvw@earthlink.net and he will assist you via email.

Signed: _____ Witnessed: _____ Date: _____

Problem Solving Tool
Thinking Yourself Back To Reality Exercise:
A Way Of Managing Disrupting And Interfering And Defocusing Thoughts

Thought or Feeling that I am having which is a problem:

What is NOT true about my problematic thought or feeling?

What's the worst thing that could happen in this situation?

How likely is that to happen in this situation?

How awful is the worst thing that could possibly happen?

How could I learn from this experience'?

What thoughts and actions would help me cope with this situation?

What can I do to counter doubt, anxiety and depressed thoughts/feelings?

What can I do not to repeat this problem situation again?

PERSONAL HABIT BREAKING PROGRAM

STEP ONE: IDENTIFY THE NEGATIVE HABIT BEHAVIOR

You can't break a habit unless you know when and why you perform it. Track down your negative habit triggers and fears:
I _____ (fill in your negative habit), when _____ (fill in your habit trigger), because _____ (fill in your reason).

STEP TWO: EVALUATE THE RISKS AND BENEFITS OF YOUR NEGATIVE HABIT

Your habit offers you short-term pleasure or relieves your stress (benefit), which is why you've held on to it for so long. But, your bad habit also holds you back or undermines your health in some way (risk). Understand the push-and-pull nature of your negative habit and set the balance in favor of the long-term benefits of change:

If I stop _____ (fill in name of habit), I'll _____

STEP THREE: PREPARE FOR POSITIVE CHANGE

Create an environment conducive to the changes you want to make in your life. Remove temptations and stress. The biggest physical obstacles in my daily surroundings to breaking my negative habit include:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

Add good habit reinforcers. The biggest physical assets in my daily surrounding to help me develop good habit behavior include:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____

STEP FOUR: JUST DO IT! TRY OUT THE HABIT CHANGE PROGRAM!

You're ready to take action and do the hard work to break your negative habit. Worried about a relapse? Learn how to "purge the urge" and overcome your negative habit:

I can't help returning to this bad habit when _____

I'm best at avoiding this bad habit when _____

State your commitment to breaking your bad habit by writing a positive affirmation

Personal statement or slogan you can use as your personal mantra against relapse:

Use the Daily Habit Log on the next page to help you get a fix on the how, why, when, and where of your personal bad habits. At the end of the week, take a good look at the information you've recorded and see what clues it reveals about your negative habit and why you do it. Good luck!

Mini “Help Yourself” Program

MINI “HELP YOURSELF” PROGRAM SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Now that you have read through the program and, hopefully, started a new program of self change and increased personal coping, I want to personally thank you for taking the time and interest in yourself and in my program. I have spent long and countless hours developing these programs so that they will help you to find the resolution to your concerns. The goal of this program is to assist you to cope with the issues that you are experiencing and to help you find common sense solutions that will increase your happiness and well being.

This program is a mini version of our programs located for sale in our Self Help Bookstore. In addition, even more assistance is available should you decide that you would like to receive my services to help you to fully and effectively resolve the issues that you are presently experiencing. It is often difficult to make the first step to obtain assistance whether it is reading and completing this program or whether it is making the telephone call or writing the email to me. Either way, help is rewarding and confidential and you can be amazed at how much better you will feel when you do not have to suffer in silence any longer.

I would like to invite you to view my practice newsletter at the following url:

www.frnewsletter.com

This newsletter is written with you in mind and I would appreciate your feedback and contribution to it.

Please also take time to go to the homepage of this web site listed below on the link and to visit the “Site Map” on the side bar and learn more about me, my practice and the services that I have to offer you and your loved ones. Whatever your concern might be, I will have helped someone to resolve it in the past and I am ready to help you. The url to the web site “Site Map” is

www.helptochange.com/sitemap.htm

This web site visit and mini program activity may be your first introduction to self help and to my practice. Please acquaint yourself with the information contained in the web site. Please also read my Resume/Vita which outlines all of my degrees, education and qualifications and certifications and professional experience.

You will notice that it is possible to schedule an appointment with me via email, to complete new client forms either electronically or by fax or in person and you can complete the appropriate intake forms electronically or by fax or in person so that you can be ready to initiate services in my practice without delay or paperwork snafus.

I hope that the program that you have just viewed has helped you and hopefully resolved whatever concerns you might have. If you decide to contact me, please feel free to do so.

Dr. John Garlock, LPC, LMFT, LCDC, CEAP

Email Address- jagvw@earthlink.net

Telephone Number- (281) 444-2678

Fax Number- (281) 444-0368

Primary Office Address:

14300 Cornerstone Village Drive
Suite 227
Houston, Texas 77014

