

Stress Management

Instructor Guide

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# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngPreface

*Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.*

***Chinese Proverb***

## What is Courseware?

MC900071138[1]Welcome to Corporate Training Materials, a completely new training experience!

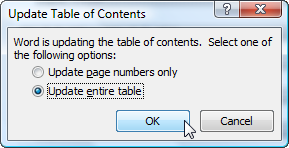
Our courseware packages offer you top-quality training materials that are customizable, user-friendly, educational, and fun. We provide your materials, materials for the student, PowerPoint slides, and a take-home reference sheet for the student. You simply need to prepare and train!

Best of all, our courseware packages are created in Microsoft Office and can be opened using any version of Word and PowerPoint. (Most other word processing and presentation programs support these formats, too.) This means that you can customize the content, add your logo, change the color scheme, and easily print and e-mail training materials.

## How Do I Customize My Course?

Customizing your course is easy. To edit text, just click and type as you would with any document. This is particularly convenient if you want to add customized statistics for your region, special examples for your participants’ industry, or additional information. You can, of course, also use all of your word processor’s other features, including text formatting and editing tools (such as cutting and pasting).

To remove modules, simply select the text and press Delete on your keyboard. Then, navigate to the Table of Contents, right-click, and click Update Field. You may see a dialog box; if so, click “Update entire table” and press OK.

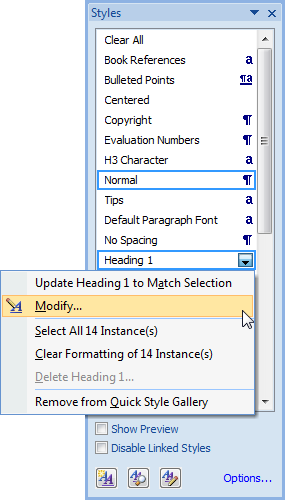


(You will also want to perform this step if you add modules or move them around.)

If you want to change the way text looks, you can format any piece of text any way you want. However, to make it easy, we have used styles so that you can update all the text at once.

If you are using Word 97 to 2003, start by clicking the Format menu followed by Styles and Formatting. In Word 2007 and 2010 under the Home tab, right-click on your chosen style and click Modify. That will then produce the Modify Style options window where you can set your preferred style options.

For example, if we wanted to change our Heading 1 style, used for Module Titles, this is what we would do:



Now, we can change our formatting and it will apply to all the headings in the document.

For more information on making Word work for you, please refer to Word 2007 or 2010 Essentials by Corporate Training Materials.

## Materials Required

All of our courses use flip chart paper and markers extensively. (If you prefer, you can use a whiteboard or chalkboard instead.)

We recommend that each participant have a copy of the Training Manual, and that you review each module before training to ensure you have any special materials required. Worksheets and handouts are included within a separate activities folder and can be reproduced and used where indicated. If you would like to save paper, these worksheets are easily transferrable to a flip chart paper format, instead of having individual worksheets.

We recommend these additional materials for all workshops:

* Laptop with projector, for PowerPoint slides
* Quick Reference Sheets for students to take home
* Timer or watch (separate from your laptop)
* Masking tape
* Blank paper

## Maximizing Your Training Power

We have just one more thing for you before you get started. Our company is built for trainers, by trainers, so we thought we would share some of our tips with you, to help you create an engaging, unforgettable experience for your participants.

* **Make it customized.** By tailoring each course to your participants, you will find that your results will increase a thousand-fold.
* Use examples, case studies, and stories that are relevant to the group.
* Identify whether your participants are strangers or whether they work together. Tailor your approach appropriately.
* Different people learn in different ways, so use different types of activities to balance it all out. (For example, some people learn by reading, while others learn by talking about it, while still others need a hands-on approach. For more information, we suggest Experiential Learning by David Kolb.)
* **Make it fun and interactive.** Most people do not enjoy sitting and listening to someone else talk for hours at a time. Make use of the tips in this book and your own experience to keep your participants engaged. Mix up the activities to include individual work, small group work, large group discussions, and mini-lectures.
* **Make it relevant.** Participants are much more receptive to learning if they understand why they are learning it and how they can apply it in their daily lives. Most importantly, they want to know how it will benefit them and make their lives easier. Take every opportunity to tie what you are teaching back to real life.
* **Keep an open mind.** Many trainers find that they learn something each time they teach a workshop. If you go into a training session with that attitude, you will find that there can be an amazing two-way flow of information between the trainer and trainees. Enjoy it, learn from it, and make the most of it in your workshops.

And now, time for the training!

# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngModule One: Getting Started

*When stress is at its highest, just know it can only go down.*

*Tom Rataj*

Welcome to the Stress Management workshop. Positive and negative stress is a constant influence on all of our lives. The trick is to maximize the positive stress and to minimize the negative stress. This workshop will give participants a three-option method for addressing any stressful situation, as well as a toolbox of personal skills, including using routines, relaxation techniques, and a stress log system.

## Housekeeping Items

Take a few moments to cover basic housekeeping items.

* If you need an opening or a way to introduce the participants to each other, utilize the Icebreakers folder to begin or between breaks during the day.
* Let participants know where they can find washrooms, break facilities, and fire exits.
* Ask participants to turn off their cell phones or at least turn them to vibrate. If they must take a call, request that they do it outside.
* Take this time to encourage the group to ask questions and make this an interactive workshop.
* Write the words Respect, Confidentiality, and Practice on a piece of flip chart paper and tape it to the wall. Explain to participants that in order to get the most out of this workshop, we must all work together, listen to each other, explore new ideas, and make mistakes. After all, that’s how we learn!

## The Parking Lot

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\MP321RS9\MC900057299[1].wmfExplain the concept of The Parking Lot to participants.

* The Parking Lot is a visible place where you will “park” ideas that arise which are not on the agenda, may be off topic, or are better addressed outside of the program.
* At the end of the session, we will review parked ideas and follow up, or make suggestions for your own investigation when you are back at work.

Suggestions for the trainer:

1. If you are working with a large group of participants, you may wish to nominate a recorder to park items as you are facilitating.
2. It’s a good idea to note the name of the contributor along with the parked item.
3. Items noted on the parking lot can be useful to you later as you plan future training sessions.

## Workshop Objectives

C:\Users\Kimmi\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\JVU559D0\MCj02934740000[1].wmfResearch has consistently demonstrated that when clear goals are associated with learning, it occurs more easily and rapidly. With that in mind, let’s review our goals for today.

At the end of this workshop, you should be able to:

* Identify the best approach to a stressful situation (Alter, Avoid, or Accept)
* Understand what lifestyle elements you can change to reduce stress
* Use routines to reduce stress
* Use environmental and physical relaxation techniques
* Better cope with major events
* Use a stress log to identify stressors and create a plan to reduce or eliminate them

## Pre-Assignment Review

The purpose of the Pre-Assignment is to get you thinking about the stress management strategies you are already using and where you would like to improve.

As a pre-assignment, you were asked to answer the following questions:

* On a scale of one to ten, rate your current stress level. (One is no stress at all, five is moderately stressed, and ten is on the verge of a nervous breakdown.)
* Where would you like your stress level to be?
* What are the major stressors in your life?
* What do you see as the major challenges to resolving your stress?
* What are you currently doing to manage and reduce stress? What would you like to be doing?

# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngModule Two: Understanding Stress

*Adopting the right attitude can convert a negative stress into a positive one.*

*Hans Selye*

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\FTRMPN7N\MC900054981[1].wmfTo begin, let’s look at what stress is. We’ll also explore how stress can be positive and negative, and we’ll look at the Triple A approach that will form the basis of this workshop.

## What is Stress?

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\OVV8IZ9R\MC900383238[1].wmfThe Random House Dictionary defines stress as, “physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension,” and, “a situation, occurrence, or factor causing this.” The word “stress” actually comes from a Latin word meaning, “distress.”

Stress can be difficult to pin down because it is a very individual thing. For me, public speaking is very stressful – but it may be one of your great joys in life. Remember this during this workshop: since stress is different for everyone, your approach must be personalized, too. Typically, we interpret stress as a negative thing, but it doesn’t have to be that way.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To give stress a definition. |
| **Topic Summary** | The Random House Dictionary defines stress as, “physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension,” and, “a situation, occurrence, or factor causing this.” The word “stress” actually comes from a Latin word meaning, “distress.” |
| **Materials Required** | * Flip chart paper * Markers |
| **Planning Checklist** | If you are going to do this activity in small groups, have several sets of flip chart paper and markers ready. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Brainstorm words, ideas, phrases, feelings, and actions related to stress. |
| **Delivery Tips** | This activity can be performed in large or small groups. |

## What is Eustress?

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\1JXY5E11\MC900198984[1].wmf“Eustress” means stress with a positive effect. It was coined by psychologist Richard Lazarus in 1974.

How can stress be positive, you ask? Think of the emotional strain caused by these positive events:

* Winning a race
* Being a new parent
* Riding a rollercoaster
* Watching a scary movie

In these situations, the physical, mental, or emotional strain actually produces positive emotions, rather than the negative emotions usually associated with stress. Without distress or eustress, life would be a pretty boring ride!

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand how stress can be a positive event. |
| **Topic Summary** | “Eustress” means stress with a positive effect. |
| **Materials Required** | * Flip chart paper * Markers |
| **Planning Checklist** | If you are going to do this activity in small groups, have several sets of flip chart paper and markers ready. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Ask participants to give some examples of eustress. Encourage personal disclosure where appropriate. |
| **Stories to Share** | If you are comfortable doing so, share some examples of eustress from your own life. |
| **Delivery Tips** | This activity can be performed in large or small groups. |

## Understanding the Triple A Approach

In this workshop, we will give you three main ways to approach stress. It is important to remember that you have a choice! You can choose to:

* **Alter** the situation or your approach to it.
* **Avoid** the situation.
* **Accept** the situation.

Before we explore this approach, however, let’s look at the foundation of a low-stress lifestyle.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To gain a broad overview of the approach discussed in Modules Four to Six. |
| **Topic Summary** | When faced with a stressful situation, you can choose to:   * Alter the situation or your approach to it. * Avoid the situation. * Accept the situation. |
| **Recommended Activity** | In a large group, discuss possible situations where each of these approaches might work. Remember, this is just a broad introduction. |
| **Stories to Share** | Peter G. Hanson, M.D., says, “Stress is simply the adaptation of our bodies and minds to change, and change is about the only constant left in the workplace.” |
| **Delivery Tips** | This activity can also be performed in small groups. |
| **Review Questions** | What is the difference between stress and eustress? |

# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngModule Three: Creating a Stress-Reducing Lifestyle

*Tension is who you think you should be. Relaxation is who you are.*

*Chinese Proverb*

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\3YJGCFYP\MC900020743[1].wmfTo begin, let’s explore the foundation of a positive, low-stress lifestyle. This foundation is made up of three building blocks: diet, sleep, and exercise. No stress reduction program will be successful in the long term unless you have this solid foundation.

## Eating Properly

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\3YJGCFYP\MC900441852[1].wmfFor many people, meals have become an afterthought, made up of fast food, and frozen items in boxes. Most adults know what they should eat – they just don’t eat it. In 2010, the Centers for Disease Control in the United States estimated that less than a quarter of adults get their recommended serving of fruits and vegetables each day.

Sticking to a healthy diet is a key part of managing stress. Giving your body the proper fuel will give you the energy you need to battle the harmful effects of stress. Remember, garbage in, garbage out!

Any changes in diet, sleep, and exercise must be lifestyle-oriented. There are no quick fixes. With this in mind, set small goals for yourself. Perhaps this week your goal will be to eat a piece of fruit every day. Or, perhaps you’ll swap out that lunchtime burger for a salad.

Remember that progress is very individual. Don’t expect yourself to start eating like an Olympic athlete as soon as you make the decision to improve your lifestyle. Celebrate each healthy choice: every time you say no to that bag of chips, every time you choose vegetables, every time you eat a smaller portion. Don’t be too hard on yourself when you make an unhealthy choice; just focus on doing better the next time.

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| **Estimated Time** | 5 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand how to incorporate healthy eating into your lifestyle. |
| **Topic Summary** | Eating properly and staying healthy is an important part of stress management. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Encourage participants to share their healthy lifestyle tips. |
| **Stories to Share** | The Centers for Disease control estimates that 30% of the United States population is obese. In 1980, that estimate was 15%.  More information is available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/trends.html>. |

## Exercising Regularly

C:\Users\Kimmi\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\Q4GVOAX1\MCj04399210000[1].wmfFinding time to take care of our bodies is another challenge many of us face. Exercise is an important part of stress reduction for many reasons, including:

* Exercise makes you stronger, and therefore more resilient to stress.
* Exercise helps clear your mind, reducing the harmful effects of stress.
* Exercise can help you work out the negative emotions that can result from stress, such as anger and frustration.
* Exercise can also give you time alone to think through stressful situations.

There are two main ways to approach exercise: thirty minutes per day, or three to five one-hour sessions per week. If possible, try to find some activities that you enjoy. If you are having trouble finding the time to exercise, try these tips.

* Take a walk at lunch.
* Walk or bike to or from work, if possible.
* Take the stairs instead of the elevator. (You will be surprised at how many extra calories you burn!)
* When watching television, use commercial breaks to do quick exercises, such as crunches, planks, or stretches.
* Stand when talking on the phone. (This will also help your muscles stretch and prevent muscle tension.)

Remember, diet, sleep, and exercise are all lifestyle changes. Start slowly, build your commitment steadily, stay positive and focused, and you’ve got a recipe for success!

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| **Estimated Time** | 5 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand how to incorporate regular exercise into your lifestyle. |
| **Topic Summary** | Exercise is important for stress reduction for many reasons. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Ask participants to share what kinds of exercise they take part in, and how they make time for it. |
| **Stories to Share** | There are 1,440 minutes in a day. Take 30 to exercise! |

## Sleeping Well

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\31B2RP17\MC900440522[1].wmfThe last building block of a healthy lifestyle is sleep. We know it is one more thing that you may not have time for. Trust us; you don’t have time not to sleep!

Here are some scary statistics taken from the 2010 Sleep in America poll (performed by the National Sleep Foundation, based in the United States).

* 43% of adults stated that they had a good night’s sleep almost every night. An additional 25% say that they get a good night’s sleep a few nights a week.
* The average person needs 7 hours and 18 minutes for a good night’s sleep, but receives only 6 hours and 40 minutes. That doesn’t sound like a big difference, but over the course of the year that’s about 230 hours of sleep debt!
* 28% of adults stated that sleepiness interfered with their daily activities at least a few days a month. 5% reported that it does so almost every day.
* About a quarter of adults have driven while drowsy.

Try these tips to help you get a good night’s sleep.

* Use your bed just for sleeping – not for reading, watching TV, working, etc. Likewise, try to sleep just in your bed, not on the couch or in the armchair.
* Make your bedroom a comfortable place, with curtains to keep light out, an appropriate amount of blankets, and no noise or distractions.
* Try to go to bed and get up around the same time each day.
* Have a routine before you go to bed. A cup of tea, a few stretches, a few moments of meditation, a warm bath, and quiet music are all great ways to relax.

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| **Estimated Time** | 20 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand the importance of getting the right amount of sleep each night. |
| **Topic Summary** | Sleep deprivation can exacerbate the causes of stress, and can cause many other lifestyle problems. |
| **Materials Required** | “Stand if You Can” checklist, provided below |
| **Planning Checklist** | Review the “Stand if You Can” checklist below. Add or remove items as appropriate for your group. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Ask participants to move to an open area and to sit in a circle. As you read each item, they should stand if the statement applies to them.   * Got more than seven hours sleep last night * Has insomnia * Ate a fruit or vegetable today * Eats fruits or vegetables every day * Plays sports * Does yoga * Exercises more than once a week * Enjoys exercising   After the exercise, discuss the informal poll results. What did participants learn? What changes would participants like to their lifestyle? |
| **Stories to Share** | Additional statistics about sleep are available at [www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org). |
| **Delivery Tips** | This activity can be done from participants’ desks as well, but we find getting participants up and moving gives them a nice break. |

# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngModule Four: Altering the Situation

*The greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another.*

*William James*

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\FTRMPN7N\MC900230406[1].wmfNow that we have the basic building blocks of a stress-reduced lifestyle, let’s talk about how we deal with stress.

We’ve heard the saying, “A leopard can’t change its spots,” but we’d like to disagree. When dealing with stress, there are often many ways in which you can change your approach or the situation to make it less stressful.

## The First A

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\ZKNEI80I\MC900204012[1].wmfAs we have mentioned, your first option when dealing with stress is to alter the situation or your approach to it.

You can alter your approach by:

* Thinking positively and having a positive attitude
* Improving specific skills that will help you manage the situation
* Doing something differently

Some examples:

* You always find going to the dentist stressful. You decide to think positively about it: “Well, if I get this over with, it will be done for a whole year.” You also decide to bring along some relaxing music to help you cope with the appointment.
* You find interacting with a particular co-worker stressful because they tend to be very aggressive. You decide to take some communication and assertiveness training.
* Traffic has become heavy on your morning commute. You decide to take a different route.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand how you can alter a situation or your attitude to manage stress. |
| **Topic Summary** | You can alter your approach by:   * Thinking positively and having a positive attitude * Improving specific skills that will help you manage the situation |
| **Materials Required** | * Flip chart paper * Markers |
| **Planning Checklist** | Have several sets of flip chart paper and markers ready. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Divide participants into groups of four to six. Ask them to brainstorm ways that they could alter stressful situations. |
| **Stories to Share** | Dennis and Wendy Mannering are famous for the quote, “Attitudes are contagious. Are yours worth catching?” |
| **Delivery Tips** | If your class is smaller than ten participants, you can perform this activity with the entire group. |

## Identifying Appropriate Situations

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\MP321RS9\MC900389058[1].wmfAltering the situation is one of the most effective steps you can take towards managing your stress. By taking control of the situation and changing it to be less stressful, you are putting the power back in your hands.

However, there are a few instances where altering the situation is not appropriate, including situations where:

* Altering the situation is not safe. (For example, you find wearing your seatbelt claustrophobic, so you don’t wear it.)
* Altering the situation means transferring the stress to someone else. (That’s just mean!)

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand when it is appropriate to alter a stressful situation. |
| **Topic Summary** | This is generally a good approach, unless altering the situation negatively impacts your health or safety, or transfers the stress to someone else. |
| **Materials Required** | Worksheet: The Triple A Approach |
| **Planning Checklist** | One copy of Worksheet One: The Triple A Approach per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Divide participants into pairs. Ask them to review the situations in Worksheet One and identify those that can be altered. |
| **Delivery Tips** | If there is time, bring the group back together, and discuss conclusions. Encourage participants to encourage multiple options for each scenario, as there are no “right” answers for this exercise.  Participants should stay in their pairs for the next topic. |

## Creating Effective Actions

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\MP321RS9\MC900237116[1].wmfThere are also some appropriate and inappropriate actions to consider when altering a situation. Make sure that the benefit will be worth the effort in the long term. For example, you may want to take a different route to avoid traffic, but if that route will take you 40 minutes out of your way and cause more stress, it may not be worth it.

Make sure that your actions are helpful and kind to all involved. Adding negativity to your life will not help reduce stress.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand what strategies participants can take to alter situations. |
| **Topic Summary** | Make sure that your actions are helpful and kind to all involved, and will be worth the effort in the long term. |
| **Materials Required** | Worksheet: The Triple A Approach |
| **Planning Checklist** | One copy of Worksheet One: The Triple A Approach per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Ask participants to look at the situations they chose to alter in the last topic and to identify some possible actions for each. |
| **Stories to Share** | Denis Waitley said, “There are two primary choices in life: to accept conditions as they exist, or accept the responsibility for changing them.” |
| **Delivery Tips** | If there is time, bring the group back together, and discuss suggested actions. |

# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngModule Five: Avoiding the Situation

*The activity of worrying keeps you immobilized.*

*Wayne Dwyer*

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\9MJXCRQW\MC900363458[1].wmfIn the previous module, we talked about taking power over the situation and changing it to make it less stressful. In this module, we will explore another way to take power over stressful situations: by avoiding them entirely.

## The Second A

The second A stands for Avoid. If drinking coffee gives you indigestion, and causes you stress and embarrassment at work, don’t drink coffee!

This A is all about identifying the things that you needlessly stress about, and how to remove those items from your life.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand how you can avoid a situation or your attitude to manage stress. |
| **Topic Summary** | This A is all about identifying the things that you needlessly stress about, and how to remove those items from your life. |
| **Materials Required** | * Flip chart paper * Markers |
| **Planning Checklist** | Have several sets of flip chart paper and markers ready. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Divide participants into groups of four to six. Ask them to brainstorm ways that they could avoid stressful situations. |
| **Delivery Tips** | This activity can also be performed in a large group. |
| **Review Questions** | What was the first A in our triple A approach? |

## Identifying Appropriate Situations

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\FZCJR17Y\MC900197841[1].wmfAvoiding the situation is appropriate if:

* Repercussions are non-existent or extremely minor
* Other people are not negatively impacted

Do not use this approach if:

* Avoiding will cause more stress in the long term than the short term (for example, avoiding the dentist or doctor’s office)
* Avoiding will transfer stress to someone else
* Avoiding will negatively impact your health and/or safety

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand when it is appropriate to avoid a situation. |
| **Topic Summary** | Avoiding the situation is appropriate if:   * Repercussions are non-existent or extremely minor * Other people are not negatively impacted |
| **Materials Required** | Worksheet: The Triple A Approach |
| **Planning Checklist** | One copy of Worksheet One: The Triple A Approach per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Divide participants into pairs. Ask them to review the situations in Worksheet One and identify those that can be avoided. |
| **Delivery Tips** | If there is time, bring the group back together, and discuss conclusions. Encourage participants to encourage multiple options for each scenario, as there are no “right” answers for this exercise. (We do suggest not avoiding your mother-in-law or your manager, however!)  Participants should stay in their pairs for the next topic. |

## Creating Effective Actions

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\1JXY5E11\MC900098035[1].wmfOne of the most powerful tools for avoiding a stressful situation is the Positive No. This tool enables you to say no in a way that maintains control over the situation, but does so in a constructive, assertive way.

The Positive No comes in several forms.

* Say no, followed by an honest explanation, such as, “I am uncomfortable doing that because…”
* Say no and then briefly clarify your reasoning without making excuses. This helps the listener to better understand your position. Example: “I can’t visit our neighbor right now because I promised Jenny I would take her to the playground.”
* Say no, and then give an alternative. Example: “I don’t have time today, but I could schedule it in for tomorrow morning.”
* Empathetically repeat the request in your own words, and then say no. Example: “I understand that you want everyone to partake in the roast beef supper, but I do not eat beef.”
* Provide an assertive refusal and repeat it no matter what the person says. This approach may be most appropriate with aggressive or manipulative people and can be an effective strategy to control your emotions. Example: “I understand how you feel, but I will not [or cannot]…” Remember to stay focused and not become sidetracked into responding to other issues.

Remember; only use this approach in appropriate situations, as discussed in the previous topic.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand what actions we can take when avoiding stressful situations. |
| **Topic Summary** | One of the most powerful tools for avoiding a stressful situation is the Positive No. This tool enables you to say no in a way that maintains control over the situation, but does so in a constructive, assertive way. |
| **Materials Required** | Worksheet: The Triple A Approach |
| **Planning Checklist** | One copy of Worksheet One: The Triple A Approach per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Ask participants to look at the situations they chose to avoid in the last topic and to identify some possible actions for each. If there is time, they should practice using the Positive No. |
| **Delivery Tips** | If there is time, bring the group back together and discuss suggested actions. |
| **Review Questions** | How does this A differ from the first A? |

# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngModule Six: Accepting the Situation

*When we change our perception, we gain control.*

*Greg Anderson*

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\39XQYYJK\MC900150051[1].wmfBenjamin Franklin once said, “In this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes.” Our final A will help us cope with those things that cannot be changed.

## The Third A

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\MP321RS9\MC900014211[1].wmfOur third A will help us deal with those things in life that just need to be done, even though they are unpleasant. Accepting the situation as it is, and being as positive as possible about it, is what this third A is all about. You can even use some of the principles from the first A to alter your attitude and make the situation a little less stressful!

Some examples include:

* Going to the dentist
* Taking a turn presenting a team project instead of passing it off to someone else
* Visiting a lonely neighbor who tends to be unpleasant

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand how you can accept a situation to manage stress. |
| **Topic Summary** | Accepting the situation as it is, and being as positive as possible about it, is what this third A is all about. |
| **Materials Required** | * Flip chart paper * Markers |
| **Planning Checklist** | Have several sets of flip chart paper and markers ready. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Divide participants into groups of four to six. Ask them to brainstorm ways that they could accept stressful situations. |
| **Delivery Tips** | If your class is smaller than ten participants, you can perform this activity with the entire group. |

## C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\MP321RS9\MC900303050[1].jpgIdentifying Appropriate Situations

Accepting the situation is appropriate when:

* The task must be done eventually
* Avoiding or altering it would cause undue stress to you or another person

Accepting the situation is not appropriate when:

* You are doing so just to please others
* Avoiding or altering it would reduce your stress more than accepting it
* You are accepting it because you feel you have no choice

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand what stressful situations should be accepted. |
| **Topic Summary** | Accepting the situation is appropriate when:   * The task must be done eventually * Avoiding or altering it would cause undue stress to you or another person |
| **Materials Required** | Worksheet: The Triple A Approach |
| **Planning Checklist** | One copy of Worksheet One: The Triple A Approach per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Divide participants into pairs. Ask them to review the situations in Worksheet One and identify those that can be accepted. |
| **Stories to Share** | Share the first part of the Serenity Prayer.  “God, Give us the grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed,  Courage to change the things which should be changed,  And the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.” |
| **Delivery Tips** | If there is time, bring the group back together and discuss conclusions.  Participants should stay in their pairs for the next topic. |

## Creating Effective Actions

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\1JXY5E11\MC900363474[1].wmfSome people feel that accepting stressful situations and living through them makes them powerless. This is not true. With this model, you are choosing to accept the situation rather than to alter or avoid it. Often, having that power of choice can reduce stress greatly.

Another tactic that can help you accept a situation is positive thinking, as discussed in the first A. Or, identify the benefits of accepting this situation. Earlier, we used the example of taking a turn presenting a team project instead of passing it off to someone else. If you went ahead and presented the team project, you could gain many things from it, including:

* Respect from managers and co-workers
* Self-respect
* More confidence and experience when speaking in public

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand what actions we can take when accepting stressful situations. |
| **Topic Summary** | Some people feel that accepting stressful situations and living through them makes them powerless. This is not true. |
| **Materials Required** | Worksheet: The Triple A Approach |
| **Planning Checklist** | One copy of Worksheet One: The Triple A Approach per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Ask participants to look at the situations they chose to accept in the last topic and to identify some possible actions for each. |
| **Delivery Tips** | If there is time, bring the group back together, and discuss suggested actions. |
| **Review Questions** | How does this A differ from the first two? How does it overlap? |

# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngModule Seven: Using Routines to Reduce Stress

*The better work men do is always done under stress and at great personal cost.*

*William Carlos Williams*

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\31B2RP17\MC900370224[1].wmfRoutines allow us to systematize the unchanging elements of our life, so that you can spend your energy on more worthwhile projects. By planning meals in advance, having a system for chores, and using to-do lists, you can run a more efficient environment and have fewer things to worry about.

## Planning Meals

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\9PDUOZYV\MC900353968[1].wmfHere are some ideas to make proper meals a part of your household.

* Take an hour on the weekend to plan meals, create a grocery list, and go shopping. Make sure to include anyone who lives in your household.
* In the grocery store, stay around the outer perimeter, where fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, and dairy are usually kept. Try to stay away from frozen and processed items.
* Take advantage of non-processed shortcuts, like pre-trimmed meat, salad kits, and pre-grated cheese.
* If you find it hard to keep fresh fruit in the house, try stocking up on frozen fruit.
* Try experimenting with slow cookers. They are inexpensive to purchase, use inexpensive ingredients, are easy to use, and they enable you to have supper ready as soon as you get home.
* Theme nights, like tacos or personal pizzas, are a great way to customize individual meals and encourage family members to try new things. Just remember to load up on the veggies and go easy on the dough and cheese.

By planning meals in advance, you’ll accomplish two things: you will reduce your stress during the week, as meals will be planned, and you will eat better and feel better!

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand how to incorporate healthy eating into your lifestyle. |
| **Topic Summary** | By planning meals in advance, you’ll accomplish two things: you will reduce your stress during the week and you will eat better and feel better! |
| **Materials Required** | * Flip chart paper * Markers |
| **Planning Checklist** | If you want groups to present their ideas, have several sets of flip chart paper and markers ready. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Divide participants into groups of six to eight. If possible, have each group sit in a circle. Ask each group member to take a turn sharing how meals are planned and prepared in their home. They can also share tips that they have heard but have not tried, and things that they tried that did not work. |
| **Stories to Share** | Benjamin Disraeli once said, “I am prepared for the worst but hope for the best.” |
| **Delivery Tips** | If there is time, have each group take notes and present their ideas to the larger group. |

## Organizing Chores

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\EOAYJ771\MC900230509[1].wmfIt’s also helpful to build routines around chores. Every person over the age of three in your household should help with chores. To make chores more palatable, we suggest that the household jointly make a list of things that need to be done, and then each person can choose a few tasks. Unpleasant tasks, like cleaning the bathroom, can be rotated.

Younger children can perform tasks like:

* Setting the table
* Making their bed
* Sorting laundry
* Feeding pets
* Preparing some parts of meals, like salad kits

Older children can help with tasks like:

* Helping to cook meals
* Helping younger children with their chores
* Loading and unloading the dishwasher
* Folding and putting away laundry

Having assigned tasks, and designated times to perform those tasks, will help you keep a clean, orderly household. In the end, it means there’s that much less to worry about.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand how having a system for chores can reduce stress. |
| **Materials Required** | * Flip chart paper (optional) * Markers (optional) |
| **Topic Summary** | Every person over the age of three in your household should help with chores. To make chores more palatable, we suggest that the household jointly make a list of things that need to be done, and then each person can choose a few tasks. Unpleasant tasks, like cleaning the bathroom, can be rotated. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Take a quick survey of the chores that participants enjoy and dislike. |
| **Stories to Share** | A 2004 study in the Journal of Marriage and Family estimated that women spend about 17.5 hours per week on housework, compared to 30 hours per week in 1960. Men were spending 10 hours per week on housework in 2004, double the 5 hours they spent in 1960. |
| **Delivery Tips** | If you like, record results on the flip chart and compile an informal poll. |

## Using a To-Do List

A to-do list is one of the most powerful life management tools that there is. Best of all, it is inexpensive and easy to use. It can be customized for home or work, and it can be used by individuals or families.

To manage household tasks, we suggest creating a Productivity Binder. At the front, place a calendar for the month. Next, place loose-leaf pages in the binder and label each with a date of the month. On each page, make a list of the things to be done that day and who is responsible for each item. Cross each item off when it is complete. Incomplete items can be transferred to the next day. The binder format makes it easy to keep your family calendar and to-do list in one spot, plus newsletters, reminders, flyers, and other important information.

At the back of the binder, you can keep calendars for subsequent months so that events and to-do items can be recorded as they come up. At the end of the month, simply remove the old calendar, and move the new calendar from the back of the book to the front.

Individuals can use this approach as well, although you may want to use a spiral notebook for portability.

We recommend keeping separate journals for work and home to maintain your optimum work/life balance.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To identify a way of organizing activities and to-do items for an individual and/or a family. |
| **Topic Summary** | For individuals, a Productivity Journal can help keep you organized. Families can use a Productivity Binder. |
| **Materials Required** | * Binders * Loose-leaf paper and calendar pages * Three hole punch * Craft supplies (glue, sparkles, markers, etc.) |
| **Planning Checklist** | Have one set of materials listed above per six to eight participants. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Divide participants into groups of six to eight. Give each group a set of materials as outlined above. Ask the group to create a family or individual to-do binder. Then, have each group present their binders to the class. |
| **Stories to Share** | 70% of professionals use a to-do list, but only 5% of them include wants with needs. Try including the things that you’d like to get done and see what happens. |
| **Delivery Tips** | Encourage groups to customize their binders and improve on the suggestions in the Student Training Manual. For a fun twist, play a game to choose which group member gets to take the binder home. One easy way is to find out whose birthday is closest to the current date. |

# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngModule Eight: Environmental Relaxation Techniques

*It's not stress that kills us; it is our reaction to it.*

*Hans Selye*

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\9MJXCRQW\MC900354281[1].wmfSo far, we have talked about how to create a stress-reducing lifestyle, and how to reduce the impact of stressful situations. Despite all these preventative steps, stress will still happen. When it does, it’s important to have some tools to keep cool.

## Finding a Sanctuary

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\OVV8IZ9R\MC900292206[1].wmfHave you ever wished that you could just escape to a personal paradise when things get tough? Perhaps you imagine a tropical beach, or a cozy campsite in the middle of the woods. Although escapism isn’t a good plan long-term, having a mental place to escape to and regroup can be a useful tool.

To create your personal sanctuary, start by thinking of your favorite place. It can be anywhere – a tropical island, a snowy mountain, an exotic jungle… wherever you feel most relaxed and safe.

Now, use your senses to capture all the elements of your sanctuary.

* What do you see?
* What does it smell like?
* What does it taste like? (For example, you may be able to taste the salt in the air by the ocean.)
* How does it make you feel?
* What textures do you associate with this place?
* What sounds would you hear?

Feel free to create a physical sanctuary by writing down your observations, drawing a picture, or even tucking away a physical piece of it (like a rock or leaf) in your desk.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand the importance of a personal sanctuary. |
| **Topic Summary** | Although escapism isn’t a good plan long-term, having a mental place to escape to and regroup isn’t a bad idea. |
| **Materials Required** | * Blank paper * Craft supplies (glue, sparkles, tape, markers, etc.) |
| **Planning Checklist** | Have plenty of craft supplies on hand. If possible, have participants sit around a table. Place supplies in a central location. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Have participants write down the elements of their sanctuary, draw a picture, or make a collage. |
| **Stories to Share** | Having your own personal space in your house can be an excellent sanity saver. If space is tight, designate a time where a particular room is all your own. |
| **Delivery Tips** | If there is time, have participants share their sanctuary creations with each other. |

## Using Music

C:\Users\Kimmi\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\TOZ56AO5\MCj04158080000[1].wmfMusic can also be a great soother for the soul. Experts believe that the rhythm has powerful effects on our bodies.

If you need to relax, try to listen to some calming music. Jazz, classical, and even nature sounds are great ways to transport you to another place and give you time to unwind and regroup after a stressful situation. Music with an upbeat tempo can help you get back in the groove and up your mood.

If you are musically inclined, playing an instrument and singing along can relieve a ton of physical and mental tension. (Even if you aren’t musically inclined, put on your favorite song and sing along! We guarantee it will make you feel better.)

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand the role of music in stress management. |
| **Topic Summary** | Music can be a great soother for the soul. Experts believe that the rhythm or beat has powerful effects on our bodies. There is even a story in the Bible about David playing his harp to heal King Saul’s troubles. |
| **Materials Required** | * CD or cassette player * Samples of music |
| **Planning Checklist** | Gather some samples of music with different emotional themes. Some suggestions:   * Calming: Mozart’s “Piano Concerto No. 21 in C Major,” Brahm’s Lullaby (formally known as “Wiegenlied: Guten Abend, Gute Nacht, Op. 49, No. 4”), or Bach’s “Jesu, Joy of Man’s Desiring.” * Uplifting: Handel’s “Water Music,” Mozart’s “Eine Kleine Nachtmusik,” or “Fanfare” by Paul Dukas. * The Solitudes collection by Dan Gibson offers music that includes nature sounds, classical music, and body rhythm entrainment. Although most discs are designed for sleep and relaxation, some focus on concentration and inspiration. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Play different samples of music. Encourage participants to close their eyes and focus on how the music makes them feel. |
| **Stories to Share** | Scientists believe that music has been around for at least 50,000 years and was a key part of many ancestral tribes. |
| **Delivery Tips** | Encourage participants to share their favorite types of music. |

## Seeing the Humor

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\9MJXCRQW\MC900435795[1].wmfHumor is another great stress reliever. It has been scientifically proven that a good belly laugh lowers blood pressure, reduces hormones created by stress, gives the immune system a boost, and creates a sense of well-being and happiness.

Remember these points when using humor as stress relief.

* Reading a funny story or joke can be a great way to make you laugh.
* Keeping a humorous calendar in your cubicle is a good way to have a laugh at hand, particularly if it’s the page-a-day type. Just make sure it’s appropriate and permitted in your office.
* Seeing the humor in a stressful situation can be difficult, but it can also help you put things in perspective. Try to imagine how the situation might appear from the outside, or how you might see it down the road.
* Sharing a laugh with friends and family is always a good pick-me-up. When sharing jokes at work, be sensitive to others, and make sure that what you’re sharing is appropriate.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand how humor can help us relieve stress. |
| **Topic Summary** | Humor is another great stress reliever. It has been scientifically proven that a good belly laugh lowers blood pressure, reduces hormones created by stress, gives the immune system a boost, and creates a sense of well-being and happiness. |
| **Materials Required** | Several quick jokes |
| **Planning Checklist** | Gather some appropriate jokes prior to the workshop. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Share some of your favorite jokes with the class. Encourage participants to share jokes as well. |
| **Stories to Share** | Jokes have been around since at least 1200 B.C. |
| **Delivery Tips** | Make sure your jokes are appropriate for your audience. If participants are going to share jokes, you may want to set some ground rules first. |

# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngModule Nine: Physical Relaxation Techniques

*Worry and stress affects the circulation, the heart, the glands, the whole nervous system, and profoundly affects heart action.*

*Charles Mayo*

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\31B2RP17\MC900412026[1].wmfStress can cause many physical side effects, including:

* Muscle tension
* Headaches
* High blood pressure
* Insomnia
* Depression

Obesity

* Digestive problems
* Increased susceptibility to illness
* Increased risk of heart attack and stroke

These effects increase the longer you are stressed, and the higher your stress level. Having some ways to reduce the effects of stress on our bodies and mind is important.

## Soothing Stretches

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\31B2RP17\MC900441878[1].wmfHaving some quick, easy stretches in your stress management toolbox will help you ease some of the physical tension caused by stress. In fact, these can (and should) be used several times a day to help prevent muscle tension and feelings of stress. Although these activities are not particularly strenuous, it’s always best to check with a doctor before trying any physical activity, especially if you have health problems.

**Neck Roll:** Let your chin hang down to your chest. Next, slowly roll your head to your left side, so that your left ear is near your left shoulder. Roll your head backwards and let your head hang as far back as is comfortable. Now, slowly roll your head to the right, so that your right ear is near your right shoulder. Continue rolling your head until your chin is once again hanging to your chest. Now, repeat the process, but go in the other direction (so that you begin by rolling your head to your right shoulder.)

**Shoulder Shrug:** Relax your shoulders. Slowly shrug towards the front of our body and upwards. Next, shrug your shoulders down towards the back of your body. When your shoulders are back in their natural position, relax, and then repeat the exercise in the opposite direction.

**Side Stretch:** Stand with your left hand on your left hip. Place your right hand straight out so that it is perpendicular to your body. Slowly stretch your right hand over your head, to the left, and bend to the left at the waist as far as is comfortable. Stretch for a moment, and then slowly return to the standing position. Repeat for the opposite side.

**Lumbar Stretch:** Stand and place both hands in the small of your back. Arch your back slowly, feeling the stretch. Repeat three times.

The key to these exercises is to do them slowly and regularly. They are also very effective when combined with deep breathing, which just happens to be our next topic!

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To learn how to perform simple stretches that will reduce physical tension. |
| **Topic Summary** | Having some quick, easy stretches in your stress management toolbox will help you ease some of the physical tension caused by stress. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Walk participants through some of the stretches outlined in the Student Training Manual. |
| **Stories to Share** | There are computer applications available that will pop up at a selected interval and provide stretches to perform. |
| **Delivery Tips** | Be sensitive to participants’ physical limitations. Allow participants to sit out if they choose.  Encourage participants to research other yoga stretches and add them to their repertoire. |

## Deep Breathing

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\3YJGCFYP\MC900339204[1].wmfDeep breathing is an excellent relaxation tool that can be adapted for almost any situation. It also has some physical benefits, including:

* Reduction in blood pressure
* Reduction in muscle tension
* Boost in metabolism
* Clearing of the mind
* Boost in endorphins (our natural painkillers)

The basic technique is just like it sounds: slowly breathe in through your nose, and then breathe out through your mouth. Try counting slowly as you do this. Each breath should take ten to twenty seconds. (You will be able to take longer breaths with practice.)

When you are in a stressful situation, it is easy to unobtrusively deep breathe to keep yourself cool. This will also help prevent some of the harmful physical effects of stress, since stress causes us to breathe faster, making our bodies work harder.

If you have a few moments to yourself, sit down, close your eyes, and spend a few minutes deep breathing. Deep breathing can also be used in conjunction with picturing your sanctuary or stretching.

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| **Estimated Time** | 5 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand the benefits and uses of deep breathing. |
| **Topic Summary** | The basic technique is just like it sounds: slowly breathing in through your nose, and then out through your mouth. Try counting slowly as you do this. Each breath should take ten to twenty seconds. (You will be able to take longer breaths with practice.) |
| **Recommended Activity** | Encourage participants to try this technique. Ensure that the room is quiet. Dim the lights if possible. |
| **Stories to Share** | Deep breathing is used for many applications, including relaxation, childbirth, vocal training, and homeopathy. |
| **Delivery Tips** | Encourage participants to really try this technique. Its effects become more pronounced the more you focus and the more you practice. |
| **Review Questions** | How might you incorporate deep breathing with stretching? |

## Tensing and Relaxing

Believe it or not, intentionally creating tension is a relaxation technique – as long as you remember to relax afterwards!

Try this: bunch your hands up into fists as tight as possible. Now, slowly let your fingers roll out, feeling the tension evaporate from your hands and fingers. Try it again, slower. For maximum effect, deep breathe while tensing and relaxing.

You can try this with almost any part of your body. Here are some examples:

* Scrunch your eyes up
* Curl your toes towards your shins
* Make a big frown and then smile
* Tense your abs as tight as you can

You can even purposely tense yourself from your toes all the way up to your head, and then relax from your head to your toes. Remember, the key is to go slowly, and deep breathe if possible while tensing and relaxing.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To learn how to purposefully tense and relax your muscles. |
| **Topic Summary** | Intentionally creating tension is actually a relaxation technique – as long as you remember to relax afterwards! |
| **Recommended Activity** | Have participants try tensing and relaxing their arms and legs. |
| **Delivery Tips** | Having a comfortable place for participants to sit can enhance the benefits of this activity. |

## Meditation

C:\Users\Kimmi\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\TOZ56AO5\MCj04399190000[1].wmfMeditation is the ancient art of moving your mind into a deeper state of awareness through relaxation. There are many forms of meditation, including religious and non-religious methods.

Most forms of meditation involve sitting or lying in a comfortable position and tensing and relaxing certain groups of muscles while deep breathing. Other forms focus simply on breathing and emptying one’s mind. We suggest doing some research on the Internet or at the local library to find information on the various methods, as they are far too diverse to cover here. You can also consult a yoga studio or your church.

Our challenge to you: Try meditating once a day for thirty days and see how it makes you feel!

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| **Estimated Time** | 5 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand the role that meditation plays in stress management. |
| **Topic Summary** | Meditation is the ancient art of moving your mind into a deeper state of awareness through relaxation. |
| **Materials Required** | Action Plans |
| **Planning Checklist** | One Action Plan per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Discuss the four techniques covered in this module. In a large group discussion, explore how participants can combine the techniques for different times and places and for individual needs. Encourage participants to write personal applications in their Action Plans. |
| **Stories to Share** | Some scriptures mentioning meditation go back 5,000 years. |
| **Delivery Tips** | This activity can also be performed in small groups. |

# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngModule Ten: Coping with Major Events

*Stress is like an iceberg. We can see one-eighth of it above, but what about what’s below?*

*Patrice O’Connor*

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\3YJGCFYP\MC900090071[1].wmfThe tools that we have discussed so far will help you manage and reduce stress in your everyday life. However, as you encounter stressful events, your toolbox will have to grow, too. This module will explore how to prepare for major stressful events, and what to do when those events happen.

## Establishing a Support System

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\39XQYYJK\MC900090662[1].wmfThe building blocks that we have discussed so far will help you survive a major stressful event. If you already have a minimal amount of stress and a low-stress lifestyle, you will be one step ahead of the game.

Maintaining a strong network of family and friends is also important. Keep in touch with your social support system even in good times. Remember, you can use the tools we’ve discussed in this workshop to help others through stressful situations.

In stressful times, strong bonds with family and friends will provide valuable support and resources. Take advantage of your support systems when times get tough, and be there for others when they need you. It’s an investment that will repay you many times over.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand the importance of a support system. |
| **Topic Summary** | In stressful times, strong bonds with family and friends will provide valuable support and resources. Take advantage of your support systems when times get tough, and be there for others when they need you. |
| **Materials Required** | Worksheet: Your Circle of Support |
| **Planning Checklist** | One copy of Worksheet: Your Circle of Support per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | * Ask participants to write their name in the center circle. * In the next circle, ask them to write the names of their immediate family, and friends that they see as family. * In the next circle, they should write the names of friends that they see regularly. * In the next circle, they can write the names of acquaintances. * The last circle should contain the names of people who are paid to be in their lives, like doctors, dentists, hairdressers, and therapists.   This activity can help participants identify strengths and weaknesses in their support system. It can also help them identify their personal priorities. |
| **Stories to Share** | Share the fable of the Ant and the Grasshopper.  One summer day, a Grasshopper was hopping about, chirping and singing to its heart's content. An Ant passed by, carrying a heavy ear of corn he was taking to the nest.  “"Why not come and chat with me,” said the Grasshopper, “Instead of toiling in that way?"  “I am helping to lay up food for the winter,” said the Ant. “I recommend you to do the same.”  “Why bother about winter?” said the Grasshopper. “We have plenty of food at present.”  But the Ant went on its way and continued its toil. When the winter came, the Grasshopper had no food and found itself dying of hunger, while it saw the ants distributing plenty corn and grain from the stores they had collected in the summer.  Then the Grasshopper knew: “It is best to prepare for the days of necessity.” |
| **Delivery Tips** | Respect confidentiality during this exercise. |

## Creating a Plan

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\9MJXCRQW\MC900237767[1].wmfWhen a stressful event arises (or if you anticipate a stressful event), creating a plan can give you a much-needed sense of control. With a plan, you can feel like you’re at least a little bit on top of things, and that you have power over the situation. Often, people find that making lists and planning (even if it’s for the short term) restores a bit of order and control to their life.

Things to think about include:

* How can I maintain a healthy lifestyle (with appropriate amounts of diet, sleep, and exercise) during this period?
* What changes will I need to make to my lifestyle?
* How will my routine help me during this period?
* How might my routine change?
* How can I use the triple A approach to handle this situation?
* What relaxation techniques might be appropriate?
* What support systems can I rely on?

Remember, stress is individual, and therefore your approach should be too. If you simply can’t find the time to exercise during this stressful period, for example, and can manage only a ten minute walk per day, accept that as your new routine. This is not the time for you to put additional pressure on yourself.

After the stressful event is over, try to return to your normal routine as soon as possible. This will help restore order to your life and return your stress levels to normal.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand how to plan for stressful events. |
| **Topic Summary** | When a stressful event arises (or if you anticipate a stressful event), creating a plan can give you a much-needed sense of control. |
| **Materials Required** | Worksheet: The Triple A Approach |
| **Planning Checklist** | One copy of Worksheet: The Triple A Approach per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Ask participants to pair up with someone that they have not yet worked with today. Then, ask them to look at their completed Worksheet One. Each pair should choose one action plan from each partner, and flesh it out using the guidelines discussed in this topic. |
| **Stories to Share** | One hour of planning can save up to 10 hours of doing! |
| **Delivery Tips** | If there is time, have participants share their action plans. |

## Knowing When to Seek Help

Despite your best efforts, some situations are just too stressful to handle on your own. It is never a bad idea to ask for professional help with stress. Having an objective third party to talk to and get feedback from can be an important part of your support system.

If you’re wondering where to find help, start at your workplace. Many employers offer confidential employee assistance programs. If your organization doesn’t offer these types of programs, look in the phone book for mental health services or hotlines in your area.

It makes sense that large events will cause large amounts of stress. However, several small stress-causing events that happen in close proximity can cause exponential amounts of stress. For example, imagine a month marked by these events: getting in a fender-bender, making a significant mistake at work, having an argument with your spouse, and coming down with a bad cold. You could probably cope with each individual event as it happened.

Now, imagine if all of these events happened in the space of a few days. Your stress level would be much higher, and you would probably find it far more difficult to cope. Think of the straw that broke the camel’s back.

Remember, different things are stressful to different people. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness; it is a mark of intelligence and strength.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand when to seek outside help, and what help is available. |
| **Topic Summary** | Having an objective third party to talk to and get feedback from can be an important part of your support system. If you’re wondering where to find help, start at your workplace. If your organization doesn’t offer this type of help, look in the phone book for mental health services or hotlines in your area. |
| **Materials Required** | List of support services in your area |
| **Planning Checklist** | Before the workshop, gather a list of hotlines and mental health services in your area. If you are presenting this workshop for a specific organization, gather information on the support programs that they offer. |
| **Recommended Activity** | Share the information that you have gathered. Encourage participants to add to the list. |
| **Stories to Share** | Remember, asking for help is never a sign of weakness. |
| **Delivery Tips** | Tread lightly with this topic. If participants share resources, do not ask where they obtained the information or how they are familiar with it.  You may want to provide the information that you have gathered as a handout. |

# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngModule Eleven: Our Challenge to You

*In times of great stress or adversity, it's always best to keep busy, to plow your anger and your energy into something positive.*

*Lee Iacocca*

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\MP321RS9\MC900070878[1].wmfWe have discussed many tools in this workshop, and we hope that our ideas have sparked some thoughts on how you can manage and reduce stress. However, it’s hard to know how to solve a problem if you don’t know what the problem really is! This module will explore how to use a stress log system to identify, reduce, and manage stressors.

## Creating a Stress Log

A stress log can help you identify your major stressors, and it can help you identify trends in those stressors. Identifying the cause of stress can help you reduce the number and impact of stressors in your life, and it can help you manage the stress that does occur.

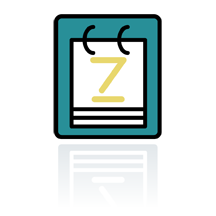
A basic stress log is pictured on the next page.

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| **What happened?** |
| **When did it happen?** |
| **Where did it happen?** |
| **How high was my stress level, on a scale of one to ten? (1=Not Stressed, 5=Moderately Stressed, 10=Close to a nervous breakdown)** |
| **How did I feel?** |
| **Why did this event cause me stress?** |
| **What did I do about it?** |
| **What would I like to do differently next time?** |

We suggest that you copy this form into a three-ring binder or a spiral notebook. You can modify this form to suit your needs, but we recommend keeping the basic fields intact, as it will help with the next steps.

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| **Estimated Time** | 5 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand how a stress log is structured. |
| **Topic Summary** | A stress log can help you identify your major stressors, and it can help you identify trends in those stressors. Identifying the cause of stress can help you reduce the number and impact of stressors in your life, and it can help you manage the stress that does occur. |
| **Materials Required** | Worksheet: Your Individual Stress Log |
| **Planning Checklist** | One copy of Worksheet: Your Individual Stress Log per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Provide participants with Worksheet Three, which contains a blank stress log. Ask participants to individually review the stress log and note any changes that they would like to make to the template. |
| **Delivery Tips** | Recommend that participants keep the basic items that we have included in the template. |

## Week One: Recording Events

The first stage of using a stress log is to gather information. For seven days, fill out your stress log each time you feel stressed or anxious. We also recommend writing a journal entry each night, summarizing the day and your stress-related feelings.

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| **Estimated Time** | 5 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand what to do with the stress log in the first week. |
| **Topic Summary** | For seven days, fill out your stress log each time you feel stressed or anxious. We also recommend writing a journal entry each night, summarizing the day and your stress-related feelings. |
| **Materials Required** | Worksheet: The Triple A Approach |
| **Planning Checklist** | One copy of Worksheet One: The Triple A Approach per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Ask participants to think of a stressful event that occurred within the last week and to complete the stress log. |
| **Delivery Tips** | If participants are comfortable with each other, and if there is time, ask the group to share some examples. |
| **Review Questions** | Remember, there are two basic kinds of stress: distress and eustress. |

## Week Two: Identifying Stressors and Creating a Plan

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\1JXY5E11\MC900363650[1].wmfWhen the first week is over, sit down with your journal and a blank piece of paper. First, take a moment to write down your overall stress level based on the one to ten scale used in your stress log.

Now, write down the events that caused the highest stress levels. Next, write down the events that caused stress most frequently. Finally, add events that you know are stressful but were not captured during the past week.

From this, identify your major stressors and create a plan for each. Some things to think about include:

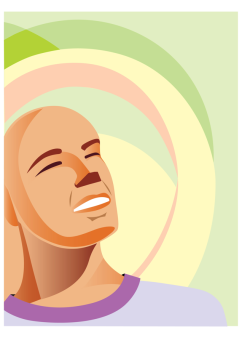
* Which A (Alter, Avoid, Accept) might be appropriate in dealing with this situation?
* How could lifestyle changes (in diet, sleep, exercise, routine, and organization) help alleviate this stress?
* What relaxation techniques could help me cope with this stress?
* What resources (such as support systems and outside help) can help me reduce this stressor?
* What will my final plan look like?

In order to be successful, your final stress management plan should set small, achievable goals that have a reasonable time frame for completion.

If you cannot think of a way to identify a particular stressor, try consulting friends and family. If you are really stuck for a plan, set it aside and review it later.

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| **Estimated Time** | 5 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand the second phase of the stress log. |
| **Topic Summary** | Write down the events that caused the highest stress levels. Next, write down the events that caused stress most frequently. Finally, add events that you know are stressful but were not captured during the past week. From this, identify your major stressors and create a plan for each. |
| **Materials Required** | Worksheet: Your Individual Stress Log |
| **Planning Checklist** | One copy of Worksheet: Your Individual Stress Log per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Have participants identify how often their chosen event occurs, and what its impact typically is. Then, have them create a draft plan for addressing this problem. |
| **Stories to Share** | The 80/20 rule, also known as Pareto’s Principle, states that 80% of your results come from only 20% of your actions. This means that 80% of your stress will come from 20% of your events. Keep this in mind when creating your stress management plan. |
| **Delivery Tips** | If participants are comfortable with each other, and if there is time, ask the group to share some examples. |

## Week Three: Creating New Habits

Now it’s time for the exciting part: putting your plan into action. Take one or two small parts of your stress management plan at a time and incorporate them into your life. Try each part for a week or two. If it works, make it a part of your lifestyle or stress management approach. If it doesn’t work, make a note of your efforts and move on. Continue incorporating new tools and habits into your lifestyle in this way.

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| **Estimated Time** | 5 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To understand the last phase in the stress log cycle. |
| **Topic Summary** | Take one or two small parts of your stress management plan at a time and incorporate them into your life. Try each part for a week or two. If it works, make it a part of your lifestyle or stress management approach. If it doesn’t work, make a note of your efforts and move on. Continue incorporating new tools and habits into your lifestyle in this way. |
| **Materials Required** | * Worksheet: Your Individual Stress Log * Action Plans |
| **Planning Checklist** | * One copy of Worksheet: Your Individual Stress Log per participant (completed) * One Action Plan per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Ask participants to note their next steps in their action plans. |
| **Stories to Share** | It takes about 20 to 30 days to establish a new habit. |

## Reviewing and Evaluating

C:\Users\Darren\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\Temporary Internet Files\Content.IE5\31B2RP17\MC900055154[1].wmfIn the beginning, we recommend reviewing your stress management plan weekly or bi-weekly. Think about these things.

* What was my stress level the last time I reviewed my plan?
* What is my stress level now?
* What has changed?
* What stressors have been added to my life?
* What stressors have been removed from my life?
* How should my plan change?
* What stress management techniques have been working for me? What techniques have not been working? How should my plan change?
* What is my plan for the next week?
* When will I review my plan again?

Once you have started to develop a good stress management strategy, you can reduce your review to once a month or less – whatever works for you. If you find your stress levels starting to rise, go back to week one and work through the process again.

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| **Estimated Time** | 10 minutes |
| **Topic Objective** | To identify ways of evaluating and reviewing your stress log. |
| **Topic Summary** | In the beginning, review your stress management plan weekly or bi-weekly. This can be reduced later. If you find your stress levels starting to rise, go back to week one and work through the process again. |
| **Materials Required** | Action Plans |
| **Planning Checklist** | One Action Plan per participant |
| **Recommended Activity** | Ask participants to identify a date for completing their first stress log cycle and a review date. |
| **Stories to Share** | 95% of the things that we fear will occur, do not occur. |
| **Delivery Tips** | If participants are comfortable with each other, encourage them to buddy up and follow up with each other after the workshop. You can also request a copy of participants’ action plans and follow up with them yourself. |

# US-Jaycees-logo-white-and-green.pngModule Twelve: Wrapping Up

*Sometimes when people are under stress, they hate to think, and it's the time when they most need to think.*

*Bill Clinton*

Although this workshop is coming to a close, we hope that your journey to improve your stress management skills is just beginning. Please take a moment to review and update your action plan. This will be a key tool to guide your progress in the days, weeks, months, and years to come. We wish you the best of luck on the rest of your travels!

## Words from the Wise

* **Description: MC900370486[1]Benjamin Franklin:** Do not anticipate trouble or worry about what may never happen.
* **Adabella Radici:** If your teeth are clenched and your fists are clenched, your lifespan is probably clenched.
* **Henry Kissinger:** There cannot be a stressful crisis next week. My schedule is already full.

## Parking Lot

Review the items on the parking lot. Some items may need one-to-one participant follow up. You may be able to clear other items up now. Follow-up workshops may even be appropriate.

## Action Plans and Evaluations

Do a quick round robin and ask everyone to share one thing that they learned today. Then, ask participants to make sure their action plans and evaluations are complete.

If possible, ask participants to buddy up and set up a follow-up system, so that they can check up on each other in the coming days, weeks, and months. If appropriate, provide your contact information in case they have any questions.