Improving Emotional Health & Wellbeing

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AGENDA

1. Self Care
   • Warning Signs (Know how your brain works)
   • Stressors (Life Stressor Inventory)
   • Resiliency
   • Coping

2. Helping Others
   • ICU
   • Communication

3. Helping Others – Workplace
   • Warning Signs (Know more about how their brain works)
   • Talking Wellness
   • Preparing to Talk
   • Supervisor’s Follow Up

4. Questions?
How ya doin?
Self-Care

Warning Signs Checklist

- Eating or sleeping too much or too little
- Pulling away from people and usual activities
- Having low or no energy
- Feeling irritable or annoyed more than usual, or all the time
- Having unexplained aches & pains
- Feeling helpless or hopeless
- Feeling sad or anxious
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Increase in alcohol/drug consumption
- Having thoughts about death, suicide, or hurting yourself or others
- Not being able to do daily tasks like taking care of your children or getting to work
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, angry, upset, worried, or scared
# Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale & Associated Health Risks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stressor</th>
<th>LCU</th>
<th>Stressor</th>
<th>LCU</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Death of a spouse</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>23. Child leaving home</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Divorce</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>24. Trouble with in-laws</td>
<td>29</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Marital separation</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>25. Outstanding personal achievement</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Imprisonment</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>26. Spouse starts or stops work</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Death of a close family member</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>27. Beginning or end school</td>
<td>26</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Personal injury or illness</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>28. Change in living conditions</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Marriage</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>29. Revision of personal habits</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Dismissal from work</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>30. Trouble with boss</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Marital reconciliation</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>31. Change in work hours or conditions</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Retirement</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>32. Change in residence</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Change in health of family member</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>33. Change in schools</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Pregnancy</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34. Change in recreation</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Sexual difficulties</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>35. Change in church activities</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Gain a new family member</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>36. Change in social activities</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Business readjustment</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>37. Minor mortgage or loan</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Change in financial state</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38. Change in sleeping habits</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Death of a close friend</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>39. Change number of family reunions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Change to different line of work</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40. Change in eating habits</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Change in frequency of arguments</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41. Vacation</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Major mortgage</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>42. Major Holiday</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Foreclosure of mortgage or loan</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43. Minor violation of law</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>22. Change in responsibilities at work</td>
<td>29</td>
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**Risk of health issues within 24 months:**
- Score 300 or higher = 80%
- Score 150 to 299 = 50%
- Below 50 = Low risk
What can ya do? Become Resilient!

“The ability to withstand, recover, and grow in the face of stressors and changing demands”
Highly Resilient People...

- Are flexible
- Adapt to new circumstances quickly
- Thrive in constant change
- *Expect* to bounce back and feel confident they will
- Create good out of circumstances others see as bad
- Avoid the victim reaction
  - Victim thinking keeps people feeling helpless and places responsibility on others for making life better
- Handle their feelings in healthy ways
  - Allow feelings of grief, anger, loss and confusion when hurt and distressed, but they don’t let it become a permanent feeling state
Balance in Life

- Physical - nutrition, exercise & appropriate health care
- Intellectual - keeping our brains active and intellect expanding
- Financial - a person’s satisfaction with current financial situation
- Environmental - being and feeling safe, clean air, food, water
- Spiritual - having meaning, purpose, & a sense of peace
- Social - healthy relationships & concern for humankind
- Occupational - participating in activities that reflect personal values, interests & beliefs, including employment
- Emotional - ability to express feelings and cope with challenges
Self-Care

Coping

- Breathing exercises
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)
  - PTSD
  - Brain Function
  - Tension Trigger Identification
- Positive Psychology/Gratitude Journal
Helping Others
**WHAT IS ICU?**

ICU: An awareness campaign to improve emotional health.

Just as people with a physical injury or illness may require help through an Intensive Care Unit, so people in distress or with a psychological/emotional injury or illness may require help from one another through the three steps of Identify, Connect, and Understand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Health</th>
<th>“I See You”</th>
<th>ICU Steps to Improve Emotional Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intensive</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Identify the signs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Care</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>Connect with the person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>Understand the way forward together</td>
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ICU thus becomes “I See You.”
Communication for Interpersonal Interactions

• Talking:
  “I” Statements to reduce defensiveness

• Listening:
  “Mirroring” for increased trust and mutual understanding
“I” Statements

• Avoiding “You”!
• Format – “I feel _emotional word_ when _explanation_.”
• Results:
  • Reduced defensiveness -
    Focus is _not_ on your interpretation of what the other person said or did
  • Increased understanding
    Focus is on _your_ feelings and experiences
Mirroring: Reflecting Feelings & Content

• Relationships are about trust, helping someone feel heard or understood is crucial
• Mirroring helps validate others experiences as you reflect the feelings that are driving behavior
• It allows them to see themselves reflected in a new light and make new interpretations
• This mirror helps them better understand their self and their situation
Helping Others

At Work!
What untreated—or poorly treated—emotional distress or mental illness can look like in **work performance and productivity**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptoms of distress</th>
<th>Signs that affect work productivity</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sleep problems</td>
<td>Lower quality work, lateness to work</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of concentration</td>
<td>Procrastination, more accidents on the job</td>
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<tr>
<td>Slowed thoughts</td>
<td>Indecision or trouble making decisions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aches and pains</td>
<td>Trips to the doctor, increased healthcare costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgetfulness</td>
<td>Poor quality work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-medication</td>
<td>Missed deadlines, absenteeism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Irritability or tearfulness</td>
<td>Poor relationships with coworkers, boss, or clients</td>
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<tr>
<td>Low motivation or morale</td>
<td>Presenteeism</td>
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Talking Wellness at the Office

Do’s:
Depending on your relationship, you might approach your concern as a workplace performance or conduct issue.
Raise the possibility of asking for accommodations if needed.
Provide information about benefits such as an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or referral to community services.
Set a time to meet again.

Don’ts:
Don’t offer a pep talk.
Don’t be accusatory.
Don’t say “I’ve been there” unless you have been there. You may not understand or relate to a mental illness, but that shouldn’t stop you from offering help.
Don’t try to give a name to the underlying issue. Even if you suspect a particular illness or problem, focus on how the employee’s behaviour is concerning you and how you want to help them improve.
If you learn that a specific illness is causing the behaviour, don’t ask what “caused” the illness. Focus on solutions.
ICU PROGRAM – Understand the way forward together

Prepare for the Talk!

- Review any resources available to an employee who is in distress. Have this information at hand when you meet with the person. (Appendix)
- Think about how you can use your social skills to help make the person feel safe and comfortable. If they’re dealing with a problem, you’ll want to minimize their stress – not contribute to it. In addressing the issues be honest, upfront, professional and caring in your approach.
- Think about the person’s strong points and contributions that they have made. It’s important to talk about the ways they are valued before raising areas of concern.
- Consider open questions that will encourage them to request support or accommodation. At the same time, remember that your job is not to probe into someone’s personal life, to diagnose a problem, or to act as their counselor. Be prepared for the possibility that, while you may be opening a door to offer help, they may choose not to walk through the doorway.
- Keep checking in with them, they may change their mind!
Supervisor Follow-Up

- Keep your notes on the meeting in a secure location.
- If the employee puts in a request for workplace accommodation you will need to know:
  - If there are any functional limitations that could affect the person’s ability to carry out the essential duties of their job.
  - What accommodations would enable them to continue to do their job effectively.
- Be sure you and the employee understand the reasonable accommodation policies.
- If the employee’s performance has not improved by the time you meet again after the designated period, and there has been no request for accommodation or leave, it might be time to consider disciplinary action.
Improving Emotional Health & Wellbeing

“And will you succeed? Yes! You will indeed! (98 and \(\frac{3}{4}\) percent guaranteed.)”

Dr. Seuss (1990)
End

Questions?
Appendix
Resources

- Employee Assistance Program
- Reasonable Accommodation
- Employee's health insurer
- Primary care doctor
- 911
- Emergency room
- Psychologists/Psychiatrists
- Social workers, counselors, and other mental health professionals
- MentalHealth.gov – provides U.S. government information and resources on mental health [https://www.mentalhealth.gov/](https://www.mentalhealth.gov/)
- Mental Health Treatment Facility Locator [https://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov/](https://www.findtreatment.samhsa.gov/)
- Disaster Distress Helpline – Call 1-800-985-5990 or text “TalkWithUs” to 66746 to get help and support 24/7
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Behavioral Health Disaster Response Mobile App [https://store.samhsa.gov/product/PEP13-DKAPP-1](https://store.samhsa.gov/product/PEP13-DKAPP-1)
Self-Help: Dealing with perceived lack of control

• Helplessness is the conviction that forces over which we have no control determine our behavior.

• Challenge your belief system:
  – Helpless victim? Internal/External locus of control
  – Irrational, self-defeating thoughts?

• Actions
  – Behave more forcefully
  – Make choices
  – Assert yourselves
  – Remember the areas of your life where you are in charge

• Goal – Personal empowerment, increase your sense of resourcefulness to counter feelings of helplessness!
Open Questions

• Don’t say “How’s your health?” say “How can we help you do your job?”
• Don’t say “You seem depressed”, say “You’re not your usual self”
• Don’t say “Snap out of it”, say “Do you want to talk about it?”
• Don’t say “Think positive”, rather say “It’s always okay to ask for help”
• Don’t say “I know exactly what your going through”, say “It’s hard for me to understand exactly what you’re going through, but I can see it’s really distressing for you”
References


National Center for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Psychological First Aid Online https://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/continuing_ed/psych_firstaid_training.asp


