

Stress Buster - Five Sessions

Week One - (What is Stress?)

The first session looks at causes of stress, symptoms of stress and how they affect us. It covers an explanation of how this very common problem is fuelled and is kept going once it starts. Another aim of the session is to tackle myths about stress. We cover ways we can identify our own personal stress cycles and identify our goals. We also look at techniques which can be helpful to start managing our stress, understanding what is happening to us and why.

Week Two - (Managing our Body)

This session builds your understanding of the physical effects of stress on the body and what can be done to control those effects. It looks at how stress impacts anxiety and mood, e.g. the role of the Fight/Flight survival response, and how this in-turn can lead to avoidance. We also look at panic and panic attacks, and explain why these happen. Evidence-based strategies to combat stress, are introduced, such as Progressive Muscle Relaxation and Controlled Breathing. The session also looks at how lifestyle factors (exercise, food, alcohol, caffeine) can affect stress levels in the body.

Week Three - (Managing our Thoughts)

In this session we look at the impact stress has on our thoughts, and how we can become prone to negative thinking, worry, and rumination. We explore how thoughts can help create and maintain stress and we propose how we can manage this by using 'The 5 big thought challenges'. We introduce key skills to manage worry and solve problems, and break up periods of unhelpful rumination.

Week Four - (Managing our Behaviour)

We look at how stress can affect our actions, and focus on common stress behaviours such as avoidance, procrastination and using safety behaviours. We provide techniques to help reduce these actions, including graded exposure therapy.

Week Five - (Managing our Behaviour)

We then focus on our interpersonal relationships and how stress can change this, and introduce ideas around managing our anger and communicating assertively. Finally, we look at sleeping well, an important factor in stress management.