



Mastering Stress and Boosting Resiliency: Session 13

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Today's Class

- Agenda
 - **Managing Anger**
 - VA AIMS Program
 - **Learning to Relax on Demand**
 - *Guided Exercise: Imagery - Country Road*

What is Stress Management?

- Stress Management Training = Enhancing skills to withstand adverse situations by directly addressing problems, improving emotional flexibility, increasing the sense of control, cultivating optimism, and possibly finding greater meaning in life
- Stress management training is NOT:
 - Just for “mentally weak people”
 - Helpful only if you are overwhelmed

Stress Management Training: 3-Month Series

- Build Stress Awareness
- Learn to Relax on Demand
- Identify and Change Unhelpful Thinking
- Build Coping Skills
 - Solving Problems
 - Managing Emotions & Acceptance
 - Making Sense and Meaning
 - Building on Your Strengths
- Improve Social Support
- Promote Lifestyle and Medication Treatments
 - Nutrition, Exercise, Medication Treatments

Best Time To Reverse Chronic Disease is NOW

- Our Mission: Comprehensive lifestyle changes, with the high aim of reversing hypertension, diabetes, and atherosclerotic heart disease
- Directly targets the factors that appear associated with higher risk of severe COVID-19
- Reverse chronic disease for today's threat (COVID-19), and for the long-term threat of premature death and disability

Anger Management

From the VA AIMS for Anger Management Program

Basics About Anger

- Anger is a feeling. Aggression is a behavior.
- You can feel angry without acting aggressively
- Anger and aggression are learned behaviors and can become habits
- Venting usually does not help (even if it feels good in a way at the time!)

When Is Anger a Problem?

- Anger is felt too intensely (disproportionate to the triggering event)
- Anger is experienced too often (e.g., anger is felt so often it is almost constant)
- Anger is expressed inappropriately (e.g., doing or saying things that you regret, being aggressive, regretting one's angry reactions later)

Consequences of Anger

- Getting physically hurt
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease
- Getting sick more often
- Pushing away loved ones
- Other fear or distrust you
- Feeling guilt, shame, regret
- Getting fired from a job, or getting into trouble at job
- Being arrested
- Being sued

Anger Triggers

- People asking rude questions or being nosy
- Inconsiderate neighbors
- Messy roommates
- People who don't pay you back money they owe
- People being loud in a place you think should be quiet
- Places that bring up bad memories
- Long waits in line
- Slow/erratic traffic, bad drivers
- Dangerous or uncomfortable work conditions
- Being wrongly accused
- Getting lost or being given wrong directions
- Being placed on hold on the phone
- Slow customer service
- COVID-19 screening at the hospital or clinic, being asked to wear a mask***

Anger Warning Signs

- Physical: Increased HR, faster breathing, face turns red, chest tightness, feel hot/flushed
- Behaviors: Clenched fists/jaw, pacing, slamming the door, hitting/kicking, yelling/screaming/raising voice
- Emotions: Afraid, hurt, guilty, ashamed, jealous
- Thoughts: examples - Interpreting others' actions as disrespectful/humiliating, seeing yourself as powerless or rejected, believing you should be in control, fantasizing about seeking revenge, imagining your spouse having an affair

The Aggression Cycle

- Phase 1: Escalation
 - Anger warning signs are present
- Phase 2: Explosion
 - You lose control and are verbally or physically aggressive
- Phase 3: Post-Explosion
 - Experience the negative consequences of the explosion, such as being fired from job, problems with family or friends, or feelings like guilt or shame

Tools

- Behavioral Tools

- Time Out
- Deep Breathing
- Muscle Relaxation

- Cognitive Tools

- Thought Stopping
- Distraction
- Change Your Perspective
- A-B-C-D Model

- Other Tools

- Grounding
- Inspiring Quotes
- Leisure Activities
- Recharge in Nature
- Get out of the house
- Mindfulness
- Positive imagery

- Effective Communication

- Assertive Communication style
- Conflict Resolution Model (5-step approach)

Anger Control Plan

- Step 1: Set Goals
- Step 2: High-Risk Triggers
- Step 3: Warning Signs - Watch Out!
- Step 4: Tools - What to do!

VA Resources for Anger

- Anger and Irritability Management Skills (AIMS) Online Training Program
- <https://www.veterantraining.va.gov/aims/>
- AIMS for Anger Management Mobile Phone App (Dept. Vet. Affairs)
- <https://mobile.va.gov/app/anger-and-irritability-management-skills-aims#:~:text=The%20AIMS%20app%20is%20based,to%20help%20manage%20angry%20reactions.>

Resources

Reminders for All

Seek Professional Help When Needed

- Seeking treatment from a professional can help:
 - Counseling (marital)
 - Psychotherapy
 - Psychiatric medication
- UC Davis Behavioral Health Center (Adult/EDAPT Clinic): (916)734-3574
- UC Davis Children's Behavioral Health Center: (916)734-3574
- Psychology Today Find a Therapist:
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>
- Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Find a Therapist: <http://www.findcbt.org/FAT/>
- Therapy Apps: Talkspace, BetterHelp, Regain - Couples Therapy

Hotlines

- **Friendship Line (Institute on Aging)**
 - Toll Free 800-971-0016
 - Friendship and support for older adults who may be lonely, isolated, grieving, depressed, or anxious
- **Services & Advocacy for LGBT Elders (SAGE) Hotline**
 - Toll Free 877-360-5428
 - Offer support without judgment, answer questions factually and confidentially
 - Provide info about community resources such as healthcare, transportation, counseling, legal services, and emotional support programs
 - Available in English and Spanish, in 180 languages
 - sageusa.org
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
 - 800-273-8255, or online chat
- **Veterans Crisis Line (confidential, 24/7)**
 - www.veteranscrisisline.net
 - 800-273-8255 (Press 1 at the prompt if you are a veteran)
 - Text 838255
 - Chat (connect online)
 - Support for deaf and hard of hearing: 800-799-4889

More Hotlines & Other Resources

- For Caregivers

- CaregiverAction.org, free hotline 855-227-3640. Lots of resources related to caregiving during COVID-19
- The Family Caregiver Alliance: 800-445-8106
- Alzheimer's Association: if you are caring for someone with Alzheimer's or any type of dementia, they can help (24/7 Helpline: 800-272-3900)

- Domestic Violence

- **WEAVE 24 Hour Support & Information Line: (916) 920-2952**
- **Counseling and Service Locations:**
 - **WEAVE Midtown Counseling Center**
1900 K Street
Sacramento, CA 95811
Phone: 916.448.2321
- **Other 24/7 Support Lines:**
National Domestic Violence Hotline 1.800.799.7233
National Sexual Assault Hotline 1.800.656.4673

Guided Imagery - Country Road

Today's Guided Relaxation

My challenge to you:

- What are at least 1-2 things you can do (from today's presentation, or your own ideas) to help you better manage stress, and/or help you be resilient moving forward?
- How can you use this time to make your life better, in some way?

Your Stress Management Plan

- What are my most common sources of stress (triggers)?
- What are the signs and symptoms I get when stressed?
- What are my helpful ways of coping?
- What are my unhelpful ways of coping?
- What problem or source of stress have I been avoiding dealing with? Is it time to deal with it more actively?
- What resource(s) could I turn to for help with this problem?
- What are 1-2 practices I could start doing, to help me cope better with stress?

Questions and Comments?