**Stress and Mental Wellness Seminar:**   
Dr Evelyn Montanez • James Rodriguez

Self Care is not a cliché it’s a necessity. It involves planning in times likes this and other stressful times. There is no one-size-fits-all

1. Importance of Self Care
   1. Vital to well being
      1. Puts you in the drivers Seat
      2. Helps you handle upcoming stressors
      3. Taking care of yourself \*is\* taking care of your loved ones
      4. Increases productivity in your personal life and work
2. Human Stress response
   1. Types of Stress
      1. Positive stress – brief increases in heart rates and stress hormone levels – useful in goal directed behavior
      2. Tolerable Stress – Serious, temporary stress responses with more chronic activation of stress hormones
      3. Toxic Stress - Prolonged activation of the stress response in the absence of protective relationships. Can result in serious long-term health and mental health outcomes.
   2. Our bodies are wired to handle short term stress. Chromic stress impacts the health and immune system. It’s linked to heart disease, obesity, migraines, depressions and sleep issues. Increases production of cortisol and adrenaline. Impairs your ability to think clearly and make good decisions.
      1. Stomach issues
      2. HBP, high blood sugar
      3. Fertility probz, low sex drive
   3. Things that get in the way
      1. Beliefs
         1. It must be earned
         2. Hardship is my fate
         3. All or nothing
         4. Expensive
         5. One-size-fits-all
      2. Old habits
      3. Power of Thoughts
         1. Won’t make a difference
         2. There’s always tomorrow
         3. **I don’t have time for it**
   4. The Power of Words
      1. Our culture is so driven by negative thoughts
         1. Ex: reporters highlight 20% chance of rain before 80% chance of sun
      2. Society is prone to negative communication, despite it’s counter productivity.
         1. Ratio of 9 neg to 1 pos
         2. Takes 30 seconds to put someone down
         3. On the contrary takes 7 compliments to overcome a single negative criticism (higher numbers for anxious peeps)
         4. We are often more self-critical than self affirming
3. 3Rs to Managing Stressful Situations
   1. Reflect
      1. ID what you are feeling
         1. What are you thinking?
         2. What are you physically feeling?
         3. Label emotions
         4. Does its intensity match the situation?
      2. Practice compassion
         1. Acknowledge feelings, thoughts: being aware is a good start. Doesn’t mean you have to fix it all
         2. We are all novices in managing changes brought on by this pandemic
         3. We all learn new skill sets at our own pace.
         4. Practice for ourselves and for others
      3. Two Side of the Coin
         1. Allow self to hear both sides (be wary of the prosecutor within
   2. Reframe – take a second look
      1. Ask yourself
         1. On a scale of 1-10, how serious is this problem (10= house on fire)
         2. Am I creating a flood out of a cup of water?
         3. Will I remember this in six months?
         4. What is the silver lining –
            1. What can I learn from this?
            2. How can I have a positive impact on this situation?
      2. What I control vs what I cannot?
         1. EX: The virus, the cure, other people’s behavior, what other people think and feel
         2. No one can hijack my space. I control my behavior, feelings, and thoughts.
         3. Determine what you can control/influence
         4. Know the difference between worrying and problem solving
         5. Identify fears actual vs fantasized
   3. Regulate
      1. Check your pulse – pause and step away before reacting (30 seconds) can be more proactive vs reactive
      2. Catch your mental replay
         1. Press pause/stop on mental replay of stressful events so you can let it go.
      3. SWAT IT and LET IT G O
         1. Say out loud or write to self-distressing thoughts with the intent to let it go vs hold on to it.
      4. Use the Door Mat
         1. Before entering work or home, leave thoughts you think can hijack your well being at the door.
      5. Engage the senses – music, scents, candles, lighting
      6. Laugh - watch or read something that makes you laugh – especially before bed
      7. Don’t get caught in Twisters – i.e. the drama of others
   4. Basic Care
      1. Hydrate – enough water?
      2. Fuel Your Brain
      3. Sleep – getting enough hours?
      4. Move Your Body –
      5. Set your self-care activity to match available time.
   5. Tapping – sends signals to the stress centers of the brain
      1. [www.TheTappingSolution.com](http://www.TheTappingSolution.com)
      2. Increases endorphins
      3. Halts fight or flight response
4. Connecting to Work
   1. Promoting Satisfaction of Decrease work stress
      1. What is your why?
      2. What do I do well?
      3. Rewarding moments>
      4. Folks I am glad to have met
      5. Compliments received
      6. What skills am I developing/heightening?
      7. What are things I like about work?
   2. Attitudes can shift the culture
      1. Unhelpful attitudes
         1. If I talk about stress, my supervisor may think I’m not cut out for this
         2. I have to show my effectiveness regardless of my stress
         3. We all just need to suck it up and move on
         4. It’s best to keep my stress to myself
      2. Helpful attitudes
         1. It is because I am good at my job that it affects me
         2. I have to take time to take care of myself to be effective
         3. Ups and downs are part of this work and life
         4. I’m feeling stressed, who can I best reach out to?
   3. Power of Relationships
      1. Positive relationships help to balance the stress one is experiencing
         1. What are you doing to build relationships?
         2. Are you expanding your support networks?
         3. Do you have friends you can speak with about how work affects you?
      2. Colleagues
         1. Can help listen and provide support
         2. Can see you struggling and let you check in
      3. Supervisors can
         1. Help process challenges and develop self-care plans
   4. Workload management
      1. Made self-care part of the discussion in teams
      2. Vary the most taxing tasks with less taxing
      3. List your tasks and include mental fitness breaks
      4. Limit distractions – multi-tasking is draining to the brain
      5. Use methods such as cross training – train other staff in different parts of your job to cover when you’re gone
5. Self-Care Planning
   1. What do you want to
      1. Keep doing
      2. Start Doing
      3. Stop Doing
   2. Then pick one thing
      1. Current strategy or practice
      2. New Strategy or Practice
      3. Barriers to change
      4. How will you address these barriers?
   3. Tips to make self care a habit