Stress Management and Coping Skills

1. Time Management – getting it all done
   Do you manage your time, or does your time manage you?
   Do your time commitments reflect your goals and values?

2. Healthy Lifestyle – self-care
   Are you taking care of your physical health?
   Mind and Body are connected!!
   Pay attention to:
   - Nutrition
   - Exercise
   - Sleep

3. Social and Emotional Support – we don’t have to do it alone
   Talk to a friend or co-worker
   Talk to a supportive family member
   Have a good cry
   Talk to a professional

4. Healthy Thinking – need a check-up?
   Sometimes our thoughts and perceptions add to our stress
   - Are your thoughts/perceptions rational? Realistic?
   - Do you believe you have to be perfect? That everyone has to like you?
   - Do you think your worth as a human being depends on your achievement?
   - Do you think things are hopeless? Beyond your control?

5. Relaxation Exercises – getting a sense of balance
   - deep breathing
   - progressive relaxation
   - autogenics
   - visualization

6. Develop your own stress busters!
   Make a list of 20-30 things you love to do – that you enjoy. Include things that take a few minutes and some that take a few hours…some you can do alone, and some you would do with others…some that cost no money, and some that may cost a little.

   When you are feeling out of balance, select an item from the list and

   DO IT!

The activities and suggestions presented in this handout have been adapted from The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook, New Harbinger Publications, Inc. 1995.
ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, VALUES AND PRIORITIES

Think about the different parts of your life and identify your various roles (e.g., student, parent, employee, son or daughter...). Next, graph each role into the circle below so that the size of each slice of the wheel represents the relative time invested in each life role at the present time.

Roles/Responsibilities List
From the lists you developed, identify your top values and priorities. Any surprises?
Evaluating your goals:

1. Is this a goal that you really want to devote a lot of time and energy to accomplish?
2. Is this goal consistent with your highest values?
3. Is this goal achievable?
4. Is this goal positive? (moving toward something, not away)
5. Are your goals in balance? Are all of your life areas represented? Do you have both short-term and long-term goals?

Developing Balance

Go back and take a look at your Roles and Responsibilities circle... Many times when we feel stressed and “out of balance” it is because we are spending too little time on the things that are most important to us – and too much time doing things that are of less importance. That is, our time investment is not in line with our values and goals. How might you adjust the way you spend your time to be more consistent with your values and goals? Spending just a little time on those things that we value can make us feel more ”in balance” and generally more satisfied with life.

Values, goals, and personal roles change over time. And, the relative importance of the six dimensions of wellness may shift with time as well. It is important to be aware of those changes and to adjust life commitments accordingly. Balance is a continuous process!

Putting Values and Goals into Action

- Post written copies of your values and goals.
- Set daily goals in accordance with long, medium, and short-term goals.
- Learn to say NO – based on your values/goals.
- Set aside several periods each day for quiet time (relax, catch your breath).
- Attend to all dimensions of wellness.
- Don’t waste time on decisions that are equally attractive or inconsequential.

Saying “NO”

- Assess the request: Do you have the desire and the bandwidth to help?
- Be straightforward: Be honest about why you are saying no
- Offer a lifeline: Are there small ways you can be helpful to the project?
- Don’t be mean, but don’t be too nice: Strive for a neutral “no”
- Adjust your expectations: You can’t please everyone; The other person’s reaction may be frustration and not personal
- Practice saying “no” out loud — eventually it will become easier!!