

Week Four: Reducing Vulnerability to Stress

Today's Agenda:

- Check-in
- Homework Review
- Staying Strong
- Sleep
- Accumulating Positives
- Pleasant Events
- Building Mastery
- Action Plan
- Reflections on the Workshop and Incorporating this into Daily Life

Today's Packet includes:

- Staying Strong
- Suggestions for Good Sleep
- Accumulating Positives
- Pleasant Events List
- Building Mastery
- Action Plan

Reducing Vulnerability:

Staying STRONG

How to reduce the risk of painful emotions controlling you.

Healthy habits are an important part of managing stress. You can't always control what stress you have, but you always have a choice about your behaviors. These habits help us have the resources we need to not let stress overwhelm us.

Remember to stay "STRONG"

Sleep as much as you need - not too much, not too little.

Take medications your doctor prescribes. When sick take care of yourself.

Resist using street drugs or alcohol.

Once a day, do something that gives you a feeling of being in control, mastering your world.

Nutrition - eat a balanced diet, don't over or under eat. Don't make decisions about food based upon your emotional state at the time (I'm too upset to eat). Keep your blood sugar balanced.

Get exercise - try to do 20 minutes a day. Research shows that exercise helps people improve their mood.

Suggestions for Good Sleep

1. **Sleep only as much as you need** to feel refreshed during the following day. Restricting your time in bed helps to deepen your sleep. Excessively long times in bed lead to fragmented and shallow sleep. Get up at your regular time the next day, no matter how little you slept.
2. **Get up at the same time each day, 7 days a week.** A regular wake time in the morning leads to regular times of sleep onset, and helps to set your "biological clock".
3. **Exercise regularly.** Schedule exercise times so that they do not occur within three hours of when you intend to go to bed. Exercise makes it easier to sleep and to sleep deeply.
4. **Make sure your bedroom is comfortable and free from light and noise.**
5. **Make sure that your bedroom is at a comfortable temperature during the night.**
6. **Eat regular meals and do not go to bed hungry.** A light snack at bedtime (especially carbohydrates) may help sleep, but avoid greasy or "heavy" foods.
7. **Avoid excessive liquids in the evening.**
8. **Cut down on all caffeine products.** Caffeinated beverages and foods (coffee, tea, cola, chocolate) can cause difficulty falling asleep, awakenings during the night, and shallow sleep. Even caffeine early in the day can disrupt nighttime sleep.
9. **Avoid alcohol, especially in the evening.**
10. **Smoking may disturb sleep. Nicotine is a stimulant.** Try not to smoke during the night when you have trouble falling asleep.
11. **Don't take your problems to bed.** Plan some time earlier in the evening for working on your problems or planning the next day's activities. Worrying may interfere with initiating sleep and produce shallow sleep.
12. **Train yourself to use the bedroom only for sleeping.** This will help condition your brain to see bed as the place for sleeping. Do not read, watch TV, or eat in bed.
13. **Do not TRY to fall asleep.** This only makes the problem worse. Instead, turn on the light, leave the bedroom, and do something different like reading a book. Don't engage in stimulating activity. Return to bed only when you are sleepy.
14. **Put the clock under the bed or turn it so that you can't see it.** Clock watching may lead to frustration, anger, and worry, which interfere with sleep.
15. **Avoid naps.** Staying awake during the day helps you to fall asleep at night.

Steps for Increasing Positive Experiences

Build Positive Experiences

Short Term: Do pleasant things that are possible NOW.

Make your own list of joyful experiences that you can have every day. Do at least one or two of these experiences MINDFULLY each day and record on your diary card.

Long Term: Make changes in your life so that positive events will occur more often.
Build a "life worth living."

- **Work toward goals: ACCUMULATE POSITIVES.**
Make a list of positive events you want.
List small steps toward goals.
Take first step.
- **ATTEND TO RELATIONSHIPS**
Repair old relationships.
Reach out for new relationships.
Work on current relationships.
- **AVOID AVOIDING. Avoid giving up.**

Be Mindful of Positive Experiences

- **FOCUS** attention on positive events that happen (even very small ones)!
- **REFOCUS** when your mind wanders to future worries, past regrets, current distractions and other thoughts while you PARTICIPATE mindfully in the joyful experience.
- **Make a list of things that interrupt enjoyment for you and be prepared to TURN the MIND** when these things appear.

Be Unmindful of Worries

DISTRACT from:

- Thinking about when the positive experience WILL END.**
- Thinking about whether you deserve this positive experience.**
- Thinking about how much more might be EXPECTED of you now.**

EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 16 (p. 1 of 3)

(Emotion Regulation Worksheets 9, 10, 13; pp. 293–295, 302)



Pleasant Events List

1. Working on my car
2. Planning a career
3. Getting out of (paying down) debt
4. Collecting things (baseball cards, coins, stamps, rocks, shells, etc.)
5. Going on vacation
6. Thinking how it will be when I finish school
7. Recycling old items
8. Going on a date
9. Relaxing
10. Going to or watching a movie
11. Jogging, walking
12. Thinking, "I have done a full day's work"
13. Listening to music
14. Thinking about past parties
15. Buying household gadgets
16. Lying in the sun
17. Planning a career change
18. Laughing
19. Thinking about past trips
20. Listening to other people
21. Reading magazines or newspapers
22. Engaging in hobbies (stamp collecting, model building, etc.)
23. Spending an evening with good friends
24. Planning a day's activities
25. Meeting new people
26. Remembering beautiful scenery
27. Saving money
28. Going home from work
29. Eating
30. Practicing karate, judo, yoga
31. Thinking about retirement
32. Repairing things around the house
33. Working on machinery (cars, boats, etc.)
34. Remembering the words and deeds of loving people
35. Wearing shocking clothes
36. Having quiet evenings
37. Taking care of my plants
38. Buying, selling stock
39. Going swimming
40. Doodling
41. Exercising
42. Collecting old things
43. Going to a party
44. Thinking about buying things
45. Playing golf
46. Playing soccer
47. Flying kites
48. Having discussions with friends
49. Having family get-togethers
50. Riding a bike or motorbike
51. Running track
52. Going camping
53. Singing around the house
54. Arranging flowers
55. Practicing religion (going to church, group praying, etc.)
56. Organizing tools
57. Going to the beach
58. Thinking, "I'm an OK person"
59. Having a day with nothing to do
60. Going to class reunions
61. Going skating, skateboarding, rollerblading
62. Going sailing or motorboating
63. Traveling or going on vacations
64. Painting
65. Doing something spontaneously
66. Doing needlepoint, crewel, etc.
67. Sleeping
68. Driving
69. Entertaining, giving parties
70. Going to clubs (garden clubs, Parents without Partners, etc.)
71. Thinking about getting married
72. Going hunting

(continued on next page)

Note. For adults or adolescents. Adapted from Linehan, M. M., Sharp, E., & Ivanoff, A. M. (1980, November). *The Adult Pleasant Events Schedule*. Paper presented at the meeting of the Association for Advancement of Behavior Therapy, New York. Adapted by permission of the authors.

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EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 16 (p. 2 of 3)

- 73. Singing with groups
- 74. Flirting
- 75. Playing musical instruments
- 76. Doing arts and crafts
- 77. Making a gift for someone
- 78. Buying/downloading music
- 79. Watching boxing, wrestling
- 80. Planning parties
- 81. Cooking
- 82. Going hiking
- 83. Writing (books, poems, articles)
- 84. Sewing
- 85. Buying clothes
- 86. Going out to dinner
- 87. Working
- 88. Discussing books; going to a book club
- 89. Sightseeing
- 90. Getting a manicure/pedicure or facial
- 91. Going to the beauty parlor
- 92. Early morning coffee and newspaper
- 93. Playing tennis
- 94. Kissing
- 95. Watching my children (play)
- 96. Thinking, "I have a lot more going for me than most people"
- 97. Going to plays and concerts
- 98. Daydreaming
- 99. Planning to go (back) to school
- 100. Thinking about sex
- 101. Going for a drive
- 102. Refinishing furniture
- 103. Watching TV
- 104. Making lists of tasks
- 105. Walking in the woods (or at the waterfront)
- 106. Buying gifts
- 107. Completing a task
- 108. Going to a spectator sport (auto racing, horse racing)
- 109. Teaching
- 110. Photography
- 111. Going fishing
- 112. Thinking about pleasant events
- 113. Staying on a diet
- 114. Playing with animals
- 115. Flying a plane
- 116. Reading fiction
- 117. Acting
- 118. Being alone
- 119. Writing diary entries or letters
- 120. Cleaning
- 121. Reading nonfiction
- 122. Taking children places
- 123. Dancing
- 124. Weightlifting
- 125. Going on a picnic
- 126. Thinking, "I did that pretty well," after doing something
- 127. Meditating, yoga
- 128. Having lunch with a friend
- 129. Going to the mountains
- 130. Playing hockey
- 131. Working with clay or pottery
- 132. Glass blowing
- 133. Going skiing
- 134. Dressing up
- 135. Reflecting on how I've improved
- 136. Buying small things for myself (perfume, golf balls, etc.)
- 137. Talking on the phone
- 138. Going to museums
- 139. Thinking religious thoughts
- 140. Lighting candles
- 141. White-water canoeing/rafting
- 142. Going bowling
- 143. Doing woodworking
- 144. Fantasizing about the future
- 145. Taking ballet/tap-dancing classes
- 146. Debating
- 147. Sitting in a sidewalk café
- 148. Having an aquarium
- 149. Participating in "living history" events
- 150. Knitting
- 151. Doing crossword puzzles
- 152. Shooting pool
- 153. Getting a massage
- 154. Saying, "I love you"
- 155. Playing catch, taking batting practice
- 156. Shooting baskets
- 157. Seeing and/or showing photos
- 158. Thinking about my good qualities
- 159. Solving riddles mentally
- 160. Having a political discussion
- 161. Buying books

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EMOTION REGULATION HANDOUT 16 (p. 3 of 3)

- 162. Taking a sauna or a steam bath
- 163. Checking out garage sales
- 164. Thinking about having a family
- 165. Thinking about happy moments in my childhood
- 166. Splurging
- 167. Going horseback riding
- 168. Doing something new
- 169. Working on jigsaw puzzles
- 170. Playing cards
- 171. Thinking, "I'm a person who can cope"
- 172. Taking a nap
- 173. Figuring out my favorite scent
- 174. Making a card and giving it to someone I care about
- 175. Instant-messaging/texting someone
- 176. Playing a board game (e.g., Monopoly, Life, Clue, Sorry)
- 177. Putting on my favorite piece of clothing
- 178. Making a smoothie and drinking it slowly
- 179. Putting on makeup
- 180. Thinking about a friend's good qualities
- 181. Completing something I feel great about
- 182. Surprising someone with a favor
- 183. Surfing the Internet
- 184. Playing video games
- 185. E-mailing friends
- 186. Going walking or sledding in a snowfall
- 187. Getting a haircut
- 188. Installing new software
- 189. Buying a CD or music on iTunes
- 190. Watching sports on TV
- 191. Taking care of my pets
- 192. Doing volunteer service
- 193. Watching stand-up comedy on YouTube
- 194. Working in my garden
- 195. Participating in a public performance (e.g., a flash mob)
- 196. Blogging
- 197. Fighting for a cause
- 198. Conducting experiments
- 199. Expressing my love to someone
- 200. Going on field trips, nature walks, exploring (hiking away from known routes, spelunking)
- 201. Gathering natural objects (wild foods or fruit, driftwood)
- 202. Going downtown or to a shopping mall
- 203. Going to a fair, carnival, circus, zoo, or amusement park
- 204. Going to the library
- 205. Joining or forming a band
- 206. Learning to do something new
- 207. Listening to the sounds of nature
- 208. Looking at the moon or stars
- 209. Outdoor work (cutting or chopping wood, farm work)
- 210. Playing organized sports (baseball, softball, football, Frisbee, handball, paddleball, squash, soccer, tennis, volleyball, etc.)
- 211. Playing in the sand, a stream, the grass; kicking leaves, pebbles, etc.
- 212. Protesting social, political, or environmental conditions
- 213. Reading cartoons or comics
- 214. Reading sacred works
- 215. Rearranging or redecorating my room or the house
- 216. Selling or trading something
- 217. Snowmobiling or riding a dune buggy/ATV
- 218. Social networking
- 219. Soaking in the bathtub
- 220. Learning or speaking a foreign language
- 221. Talking on the phone
- 222. Composing or arranging songs or music
- 223. Thrift store shopping
- 224. Using computers
- 225. Visiting people who are sick, shut in, or in trouble

Other: _____

Build Mastery

1. Plan on doing at least one thing each day to build a sense of accomplishment.

Example: _____

2. Plan for success, not failure.

- Do something difficult, but possible.

3. Gradually increase the difficulty over time.

- If the first task is too difficult, do something a little easier next time.

4. Look for a challenge.

- If the task is too *easy*, try something a little harder next time.

Stress Management Action Plan



Clues that I'm feeling stressed:

Physiological:

Cognitive:

Emotional:

Behavioral:

Coping strategies:

Body Based:

Mindfulness:

Challenging Thinking:



Reducing Vulnerability to Stress:

Sleep:

Staying 'STRONG':

Pleasant Activities:

Building Mastery:



