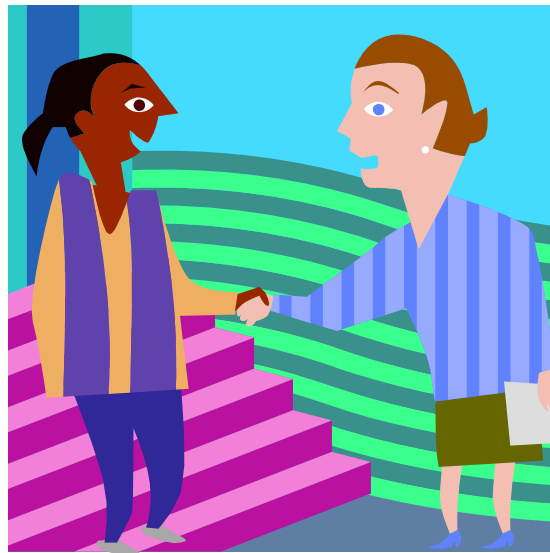


PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR CHILDCARE PROVIDERS: MANAGING STRESS IN THE CHILDCARE SETTING

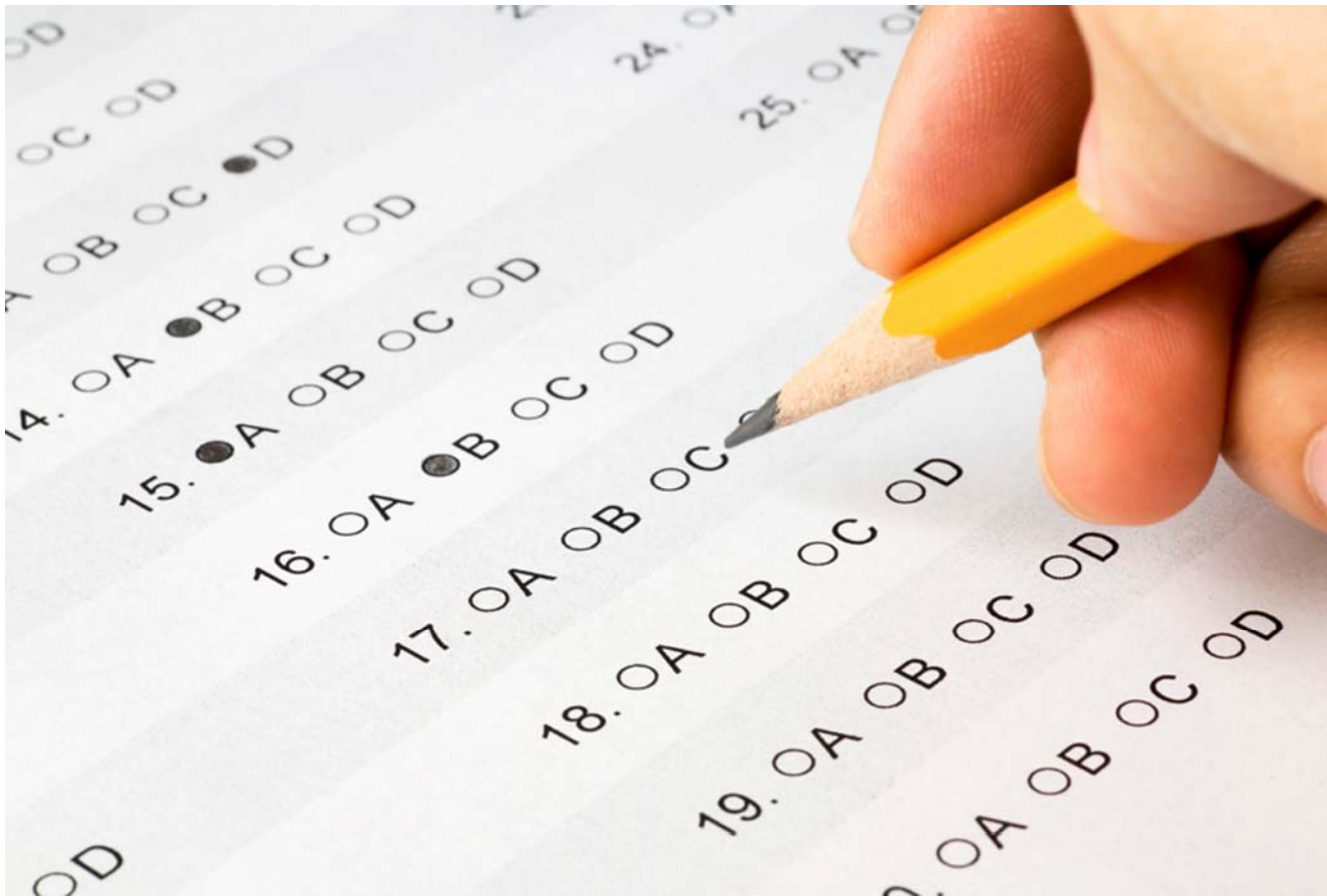
By: Heidi Radunovich and Rachel Dorman

Introductions

- Who am I and who are you?

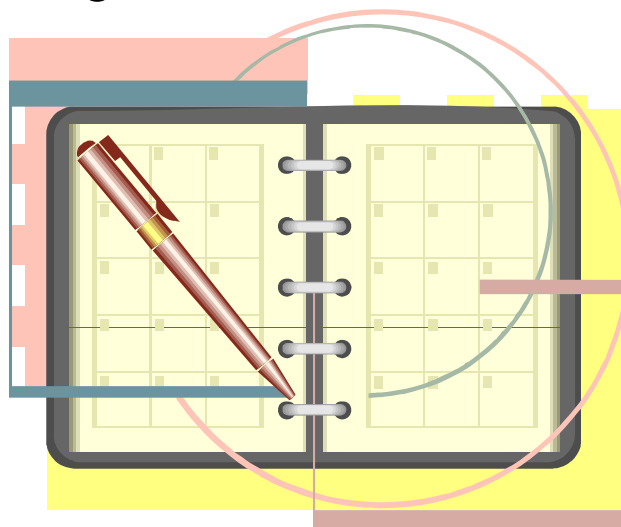


Pre-test



Agenda

- Understanding stress
- Stress related to childcare
- General strategies for coping with stress
- Recommendations for reducing stress in the childcare setting

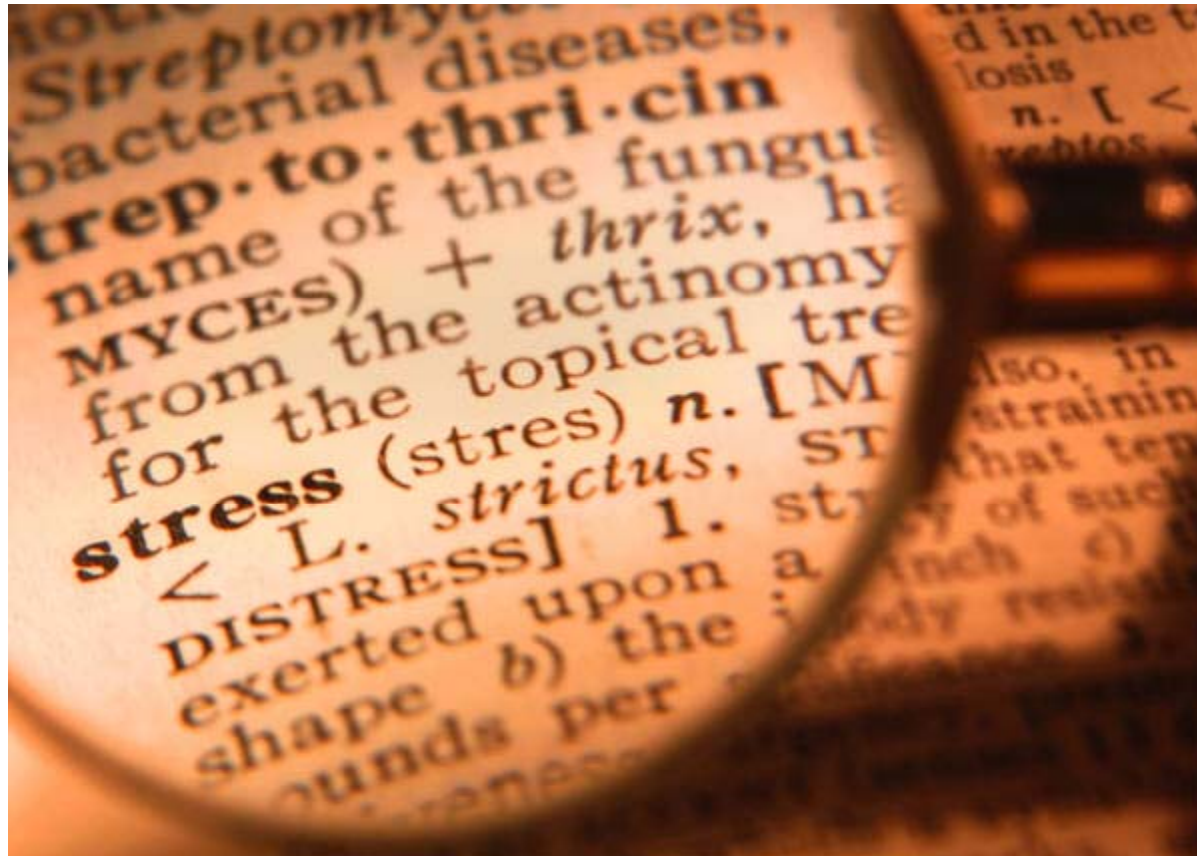




Understanding Stress

What is a stressor?

- Anything that causes you to have a stress response and what causes that is different for each person.



Types of stressors

- Physical stressors



- Mental/Emotional stressors



Common Daily Stressors



- Noise
- Crowds
- Rudeness of others
- Time pressure/Not enough time
- Money worries
- Difficulties with commuting
- Things breaking (at home, the car, etc.)
- More responsibility than we can handle
- Fights with family, friends, co-workers
- Speaking to an audience

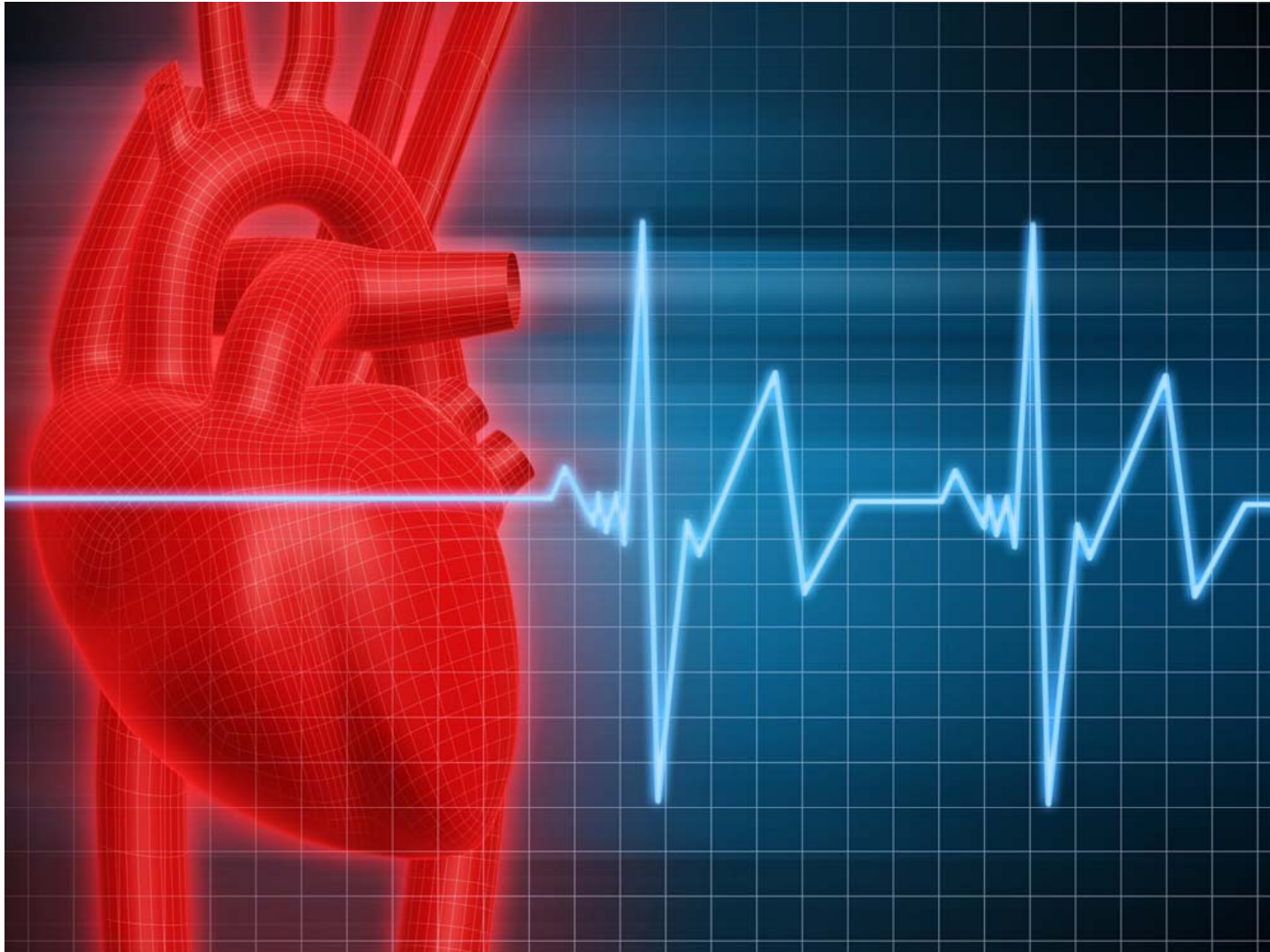
Major Life Events



Activity 1 – Identifying Stressors



What is the effect on the body during stress?



What is the effect on the body during stress?

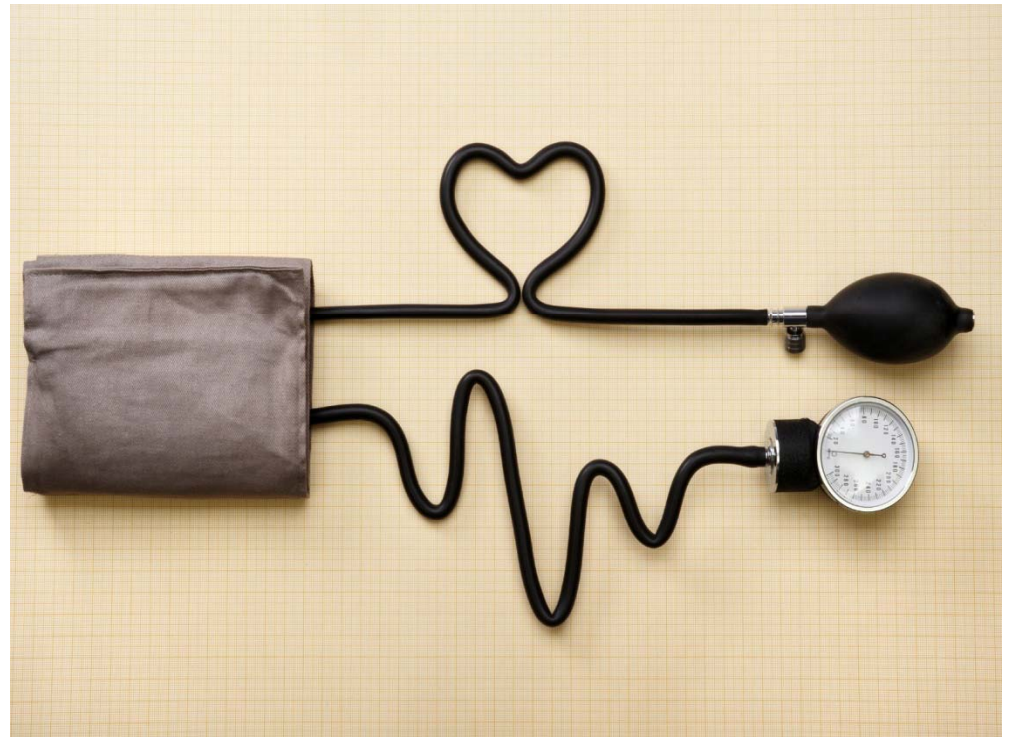
- Adrenaline and cortisol are released
- Heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing increase
- Sugars and fats enter blood for quick energy
- Long-term bodily projects put on hold (digestion, growth, reproduction, etc.)
- Immunity is inhibited
- Thinking improves, senses become sharper
- Perspiration increases
- Muscles tense
- Chemicals released to clot blood fast
- Blunting of physical pain
- Pupils dilate

For women

- “Tend and befriend” response
 - ▣ Oxytocin
 - ▣ Endogenous opioid peptides



Consequences of long-term stress



Consequences of long-term stress



- Cardiovascular damage
- Harder to unstress when no stressors
- More likely to be fatigued
- Muscle reduction
- Problems with reproduction
- Higher incidence of Type I diabetes
- Weight gain/loss
- Gastrointestinal problems more likely
- More vulnerable to diseases
- Problems with memory and thinking
- Sleep problems

Is it my fault?

- Some people are just predisposed to feeling stressed!

- Biology

- Environment



Symptoms of Stress

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Heart racing/rapid pulse/palpitations
- Rapid, shallow breathing
- Muscle tension and aches
- Shaking, tremors, twitches, tics
- Stomach discomfort and digestive problems
- Dry mouth
- Grinding teeth
- Talking fast
- Sweaty hands/feet
- Rashes, hives, itchiness



Symptoms of Stress

- ❑ Nervous habits
- ❑ Eating too much or too little
- ❑ Loss of interest in sex
- ❑ Problems sleeping
- ❑ Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs
- ❑ Cranky, angry, hostile, impatient
- ❑ Worried or anxious
- ❑ Panicky
- ❑ Difficulty concentrating, problems with memory
- ❑ Feeling overwhelmed
- ❑ Difficulty seeing the humor in things



Activity 2 - Symptoms of Stress



Quick stretch break!

- Now let's take a 5 minute stretch break





Stress Related to Childcare

Stressors in Childcare

- Unsupportive Work Conditions
 - ▣ Low wages and minimal benefits
 - ▣ Challenging environment
 - ▣ Long hours
 - ▣ Costs of insurance and licensing
 - ▣ Low Control or Poor Program Structure



More Stressors in Childcare

- Work Relationships
 - ▣ Lack of social support (esp. family childcare)
 - ▣ Competitive or unsupportive relationships with peers

- Client Interactions
 - ▣ Large child to childcare provider ratios
 - ▣ Broad age ranges
 - ▣ Discipline problems
 - ▣ Parent interactions



Stressors in Childcare



- External Factors
 - ▣ Day to day stressors (stress outside the workplace)
- Role Ambiguity
 - ▣ No specific job description
 - ▣ Unclear performance evaluations
 - ▣ Having to manage two or more separate roles
- Lack of Social Support
 - ▣ Perceiving little to no support from family, friends, colleagues, supervisors, or community
- No upward mobility or promotion

Results of Stress in Childcare

- ❑ Lowered Sense of Personal Accomplishment
- ❑ Lowered Attitude towards Job
- ❑ Exhaustion
- ❑ Depersonalization
- ❑ Lack of Commitment
- ❑ Lowered Job Satisfaction
- ❑ High turnover rates



Burnout



Burnout

- Dangers of Burnout
 - ▣ Loss of training and experience to the childcare center
 - ▣ Inconsistency and poor care for the children
 - ▣ Psychological costs to the other childcare providers; may result in lower morale.
 - ▣ Greater absenteeism and turnover



Why stress important in childcare?

- Can lower job satisfaction
- Can result in a lack of job commitment
- Can impact how well children are taken care of
- Can impact the consistency of care for children if providers quit, call in sick frequently
- Stress can result in dehumanization or depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and lowered levels of personal accomplishment

High turnover!!!

- The rate of turnover at childcare centers is extremely high
- The rate of turnover for family daycares is even higher



Importance for the children



- Research supports that having a consistent, warm relationship with a childcare provider provides great benefits to children
- Adjusting to losses of childcare providers is detrimental to children
- Having a well-adjusted provider develop a longer-term relationship with a child leads to positive outcomes (academic, social, emotional)
- Childcare providers who are unhappy, overwhelmed or burnt-out provide poorer care

Childcare Provider's Voice



- The feeling of not having input is a significant predictor of burnout
- Centers that have meetings for staff to have input were more positively evaluated; meetings were related to increased job satisfaction
- Staff meetings provide more socialization among staff members, buffer against emotional exhaustion, and can be related to team building
- Staff's ability to freely take a break and allow another worker to take on their responsibility was found to be important in preventing burnout
-

Child to Worker Ratio

- Child to worker ratio was found to be a significant predictor of burnout
- This ratio was found to greatly impact working conditions and how staff felt about their job
- Decreasing the number of children per staff was an aid to a happier childcare environment



Special note: Family Daycare

- Special stressors:
 - ▣ Isolation
 - ▣ Blurry boundaries (work/home; friends/work)
 - ▣ Payment, pick up on time
 - ▣ Role confusion: own children needs vs. those of others
- Greatest risk of quitting 1st year and when own kids ready to start school (if also kids at home)
- Turnover is even higher in family care than center care
- Quitting even more detrimental to kids in care: new provider AND new environment



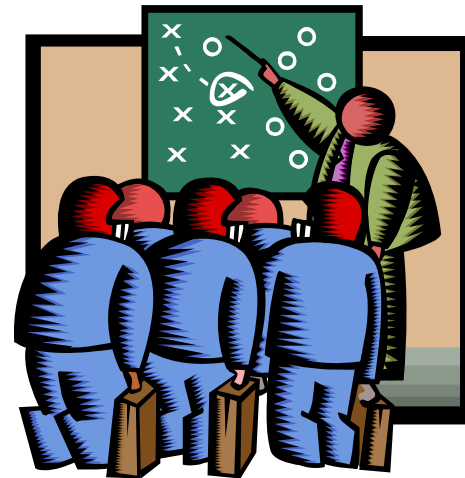
General Strategies for Coping with Stress

Activity 3 – Stress Coping Strategies



Strategies for Coping with Stress

- Changing behaviors/becoming organized
- Changing thoughts/mood/behavior
- Self care
- Specific Techniques
 - ▣ Physical
 - ▣ Mental

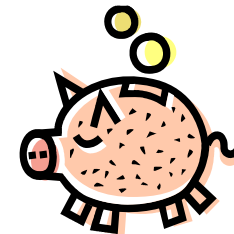


Organization/Behavior change

- Disorganization!



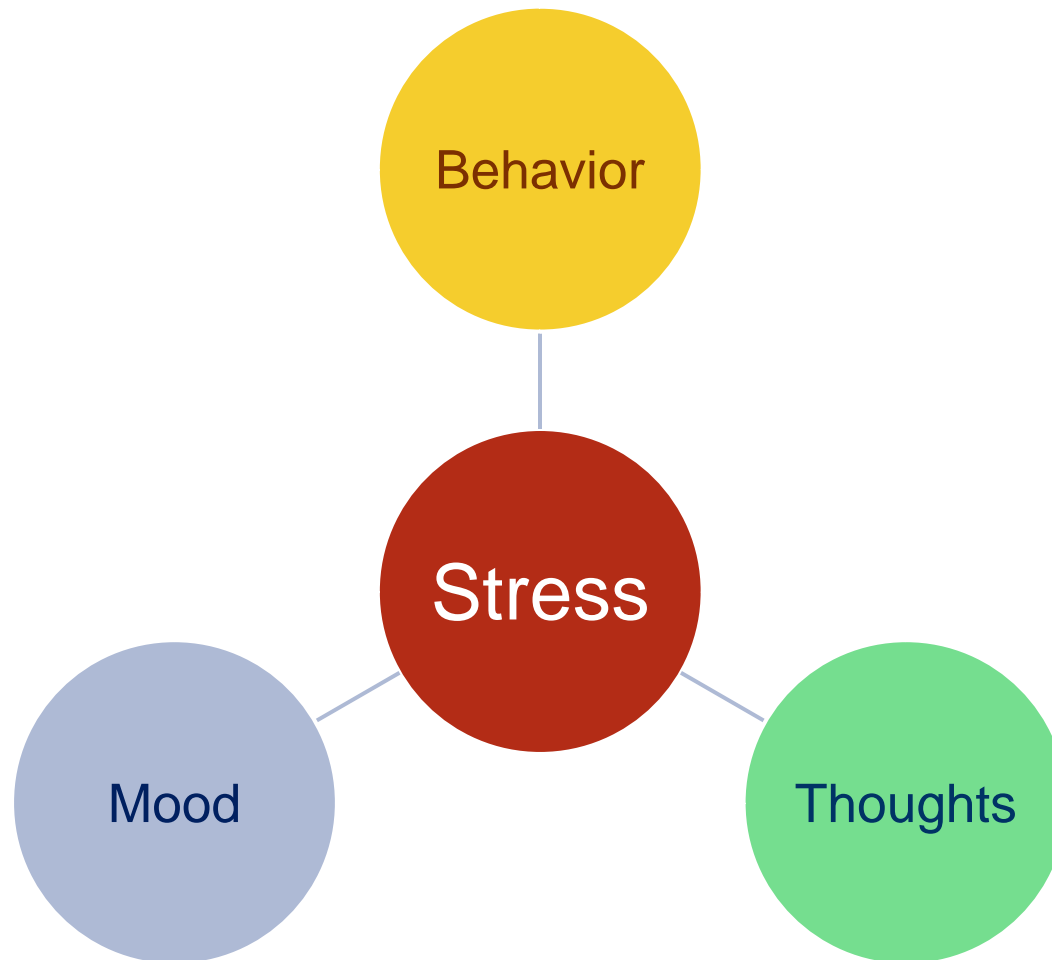
- Financial Stress



- Other specific behavior changes can reduce stress

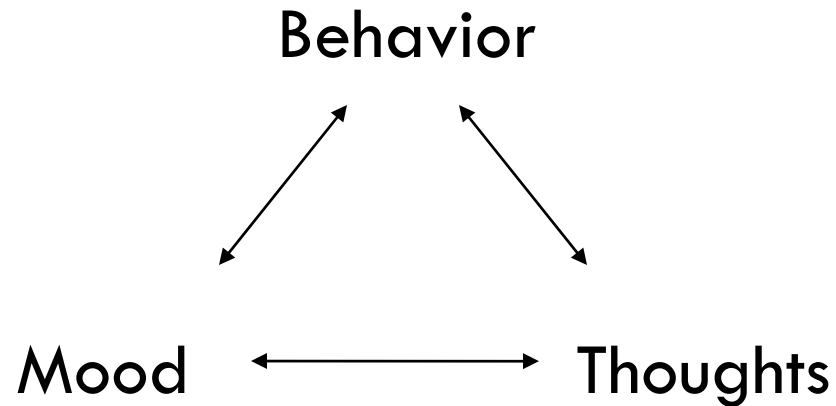


Thoughts, feelings/mood and behavior



Thoughts, feelings/mood and behavior

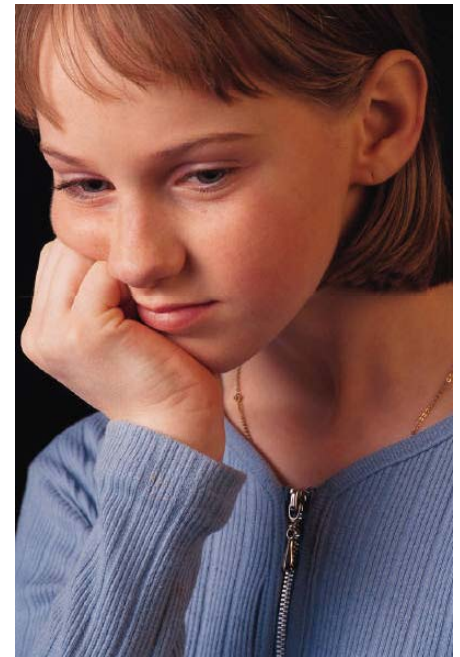
- All 3 affect one another!



- A change in one can lead to changes in the others

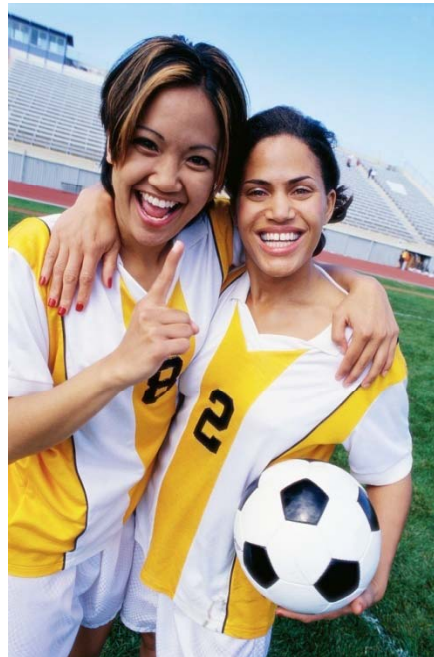
Thoughts

- Changes to our way of thinking or perceiving a situation can affect our mood and behavior.
- Can you think of any examples?



Mood/Feelings

- How can changing our mood/feelings change our thoughts and behaviors?



Behavior

- What changes in your behavior can have an impact on your thoughts and mood/emotions?



Let's take a short break!



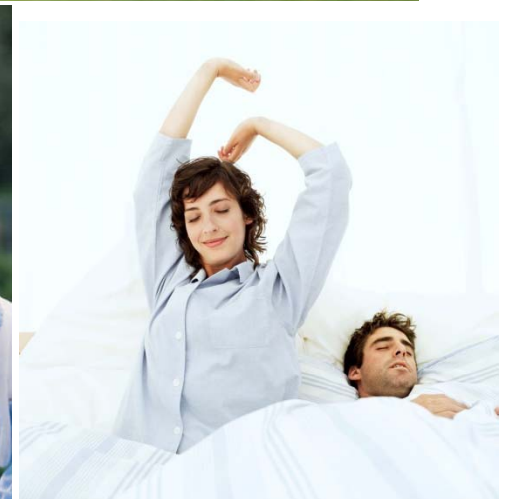
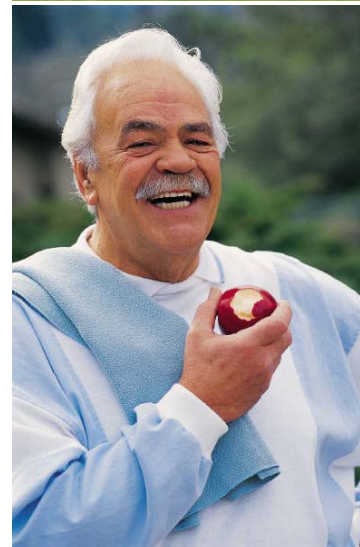
Self-Care

1. Sleep

2. Eating/drinking

3. Exercise

4. Self time



Specific Techniques

- Physical techniques
 - Massage
 - Breathing techniques
 - Heat
 - Medication
 - Biofeedback
 - Progressive Muscle Relaxation



Specific Techniques

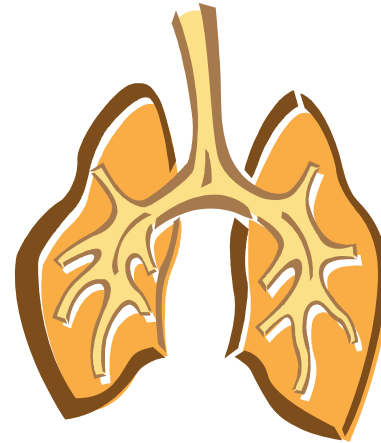
□ Mental

- Autogenic/Visualization
- Meditation/Yoga
- Music, relaxing sounds
- Hobbies/distraction
- Social support
- Spirituality/Prayer
- Changing your self-talk/therapy
- Journaling problems and solutions

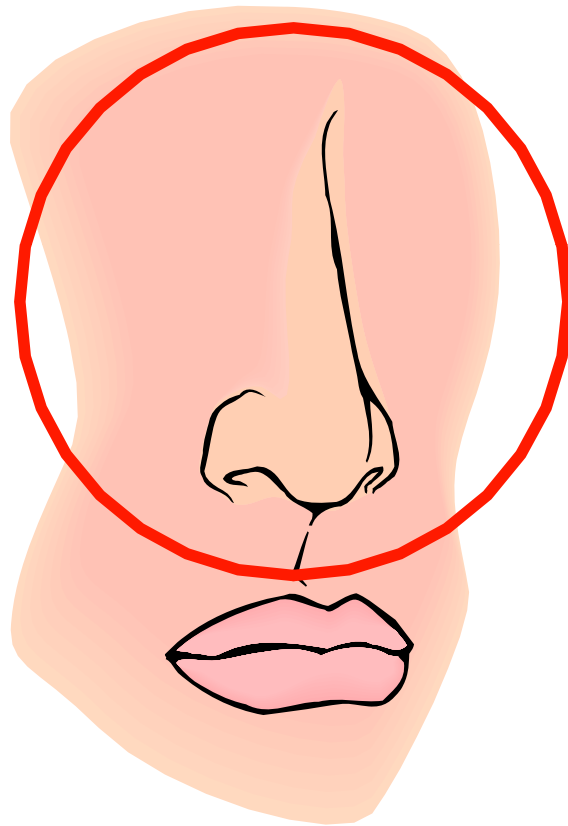


Breathing techniques

- What are they?
- How do they work?



Breathing Exercise



The Nose

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- What is it?
- How does it work?



Visualization



Autogenic Relaxation



Let's take a quick stretch break!



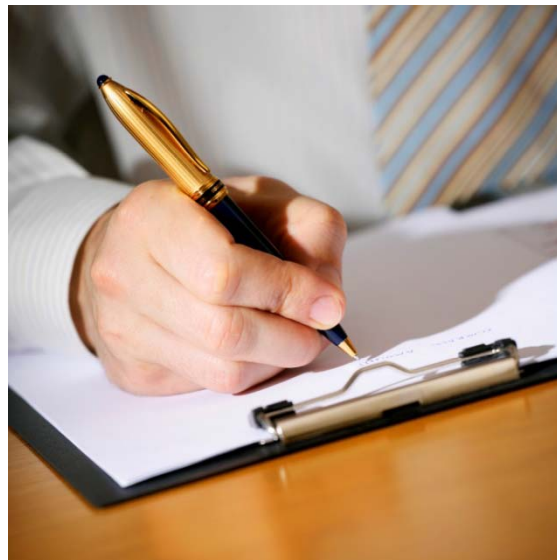
Rules for PMR, visualization, and autogenic relaxation



- Wear loose, comfortable clothes
- Lie down, or get into a comfortable position
- Do at a place/time when you will not be distracted or interrupted.
- Make sure the room is a comfortable temperature
- It helps to dim the lights
- Begin by taking some deep breaths and letting out any current tension

Note on using relaxation methods

- Exercises should ideally be done twice daily. This will help you master them, and allow for daily relaxation.
- DO NOT use these exercises while driving or in another situation in which concentration is necessary.



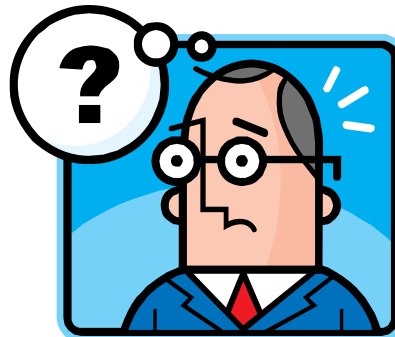
Activity 4 - Creating a Stress Management Plan!

- Think about the strategies that may work best for you
- Set short and long term goals
- Make a plan for how and when you will use the strategies



Do you need more?

- Sometimes working one on one with a psychotherapist can help
- Some people with extreme stress or distress may want to consider medication, and should consult with their physician about options

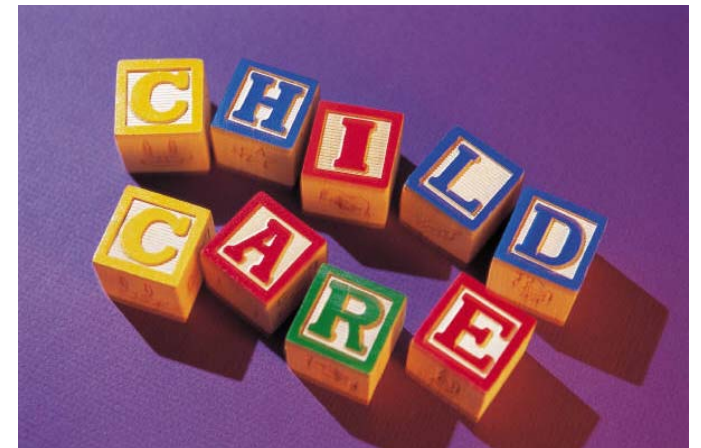




Recommendations for Reducing Stress Related to the Childcare Setting

What childcare centers can do

- Clarify roles and expectations
- Work to enhance sense of community
- Help workers feel valued
- Allow some freedom in schedule
- Encourage input
- Encourage breaks and vacations
- Provide positive feedback
- Create incentives for teamwork
- Reasonable child to staff ratios
- Reasonable hours



What childcare providers can do



- Take breaks!
- Take vacations!
- Speak up appropriately (boss, parents, coworkers)
- Use thoughts to manage work stress:
 - ▣ Question perceptions of the child/situation
- Use general stress management techniques
 - ▣ Handle out of work stressors
 - ▣ Breathing techniques work well in the moment
 - ▣ Practicing techniques often enhances effectiveness

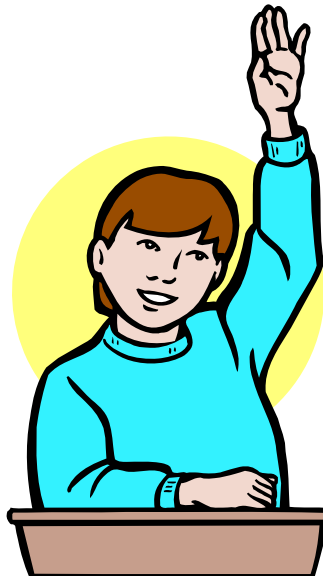
What childcare providers can do

- Work towards positive relationships with coworkers and supervisors
- Build current relationships with friends and family by making time and planning enjoyable activities
- Increase social support with others through community groups, support groups, exercise groups, or religious groups

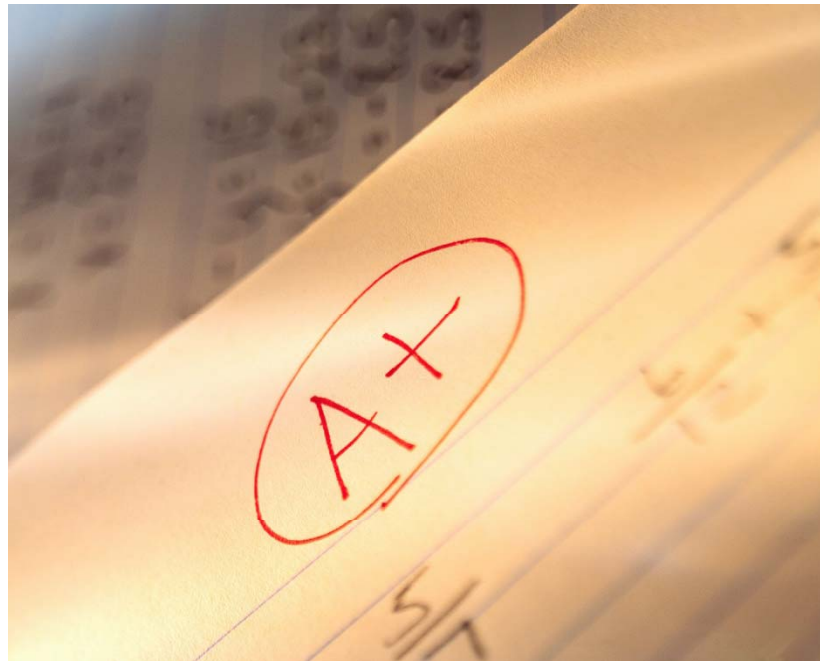


Questions?

- Do you have any remaining questions before we finish up?



Post-test



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