

# Activity Plan



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## STRESS LESS: PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR ANXIETY AND WELL-BEING

NAME OF THE ACTIVITY:

### OVERVIEW

THIS SESSION FOCUSES ON MANAGING STRESS AND ANXIETY THROUGH CONTINUOUS SELF-AWARENESS AND PROACTIVE EFFORTS. PARTICIPANTS WILL LEARN TO RECOGNIZE THEIR STRESSORS, ADOPT COPING MECHANISMS, SEEK SOCIAL SUPPORT, AND BUILD HEALTHY HABITS TO ENHANCE EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE AND PREVENT OVERWHELMING STRESS.

### OBJECTIVES:

- DEVELOP SELF-AWARENESS AROUND STRESS AND ANXIETY.
- INTRODUCE COPING MECHANISMS LIKE MINDFULNESS, PHYSICAL ACTIVITY, AND RELAXATION TECHNIQUES.
- ENCOURAGE SEEKING SUPPORT FROM FRIENDS, FAMILY, OR PROFESSIONALS.
- BUILD AND MAINTAIN HEALTHY HABITS SUCH AS STRUCTURED ROUTINES, GRATITUDE, AND GOAL-SETTING TO PREVENT CHRONIC STRESS AND ANXIETY.

### GROUP SIZE:

10-30 PARTICIPANTS

### TARGET GROUP:

INDIVIDUALS BETWEEN AGES OF 18-30 THAT EXPERIENCING STRESS AND ANXIETY, INCLUDING PROFESSIONALS, STUDENTS, OR COMMUNITY GROUPS.

### MATERIALS:

- NOTEBOOKS OR JOURNALS FOR PARTICIPANT REFLECTION
- PENS (ACC TO PAX NUMBER)

### THEMES ADDRESSED:

- STRESS AND ANXIETY MANAGEMENT
- EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE
- MINDFULNESS AND RELAXATION TECHNIQUES
- BUILDING HEALTHY HABITS AND ROUTINES

### RESOURCES:

- WHITEBOARD OR FLIP CHART & MARKERS (5)
- HANDOUTS OR WORKSHEETS ON COPING MECHANISMS AND SELF-CARE STRATEGIES
- RELAXATION OR MINDFULNESS AUDIO FOR EXERCISES
- STRESS-RELIEF TOOLS (E.G., STRESS BALLS, BREATHING EXERCISE CARDS)

#### SOURCES USED

EVIDENCE-BASED THERAPIES – CBT, DBT, ACT, MINDFULNESS, PSYCHODYNAMIC, AND SOLUTION-FOCUSED TECHNIQUES.

REPUTABLE GUIDELINES – APA, NIMH, WHO, AND PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH.

### COMPLEXITY AND TIME:

BASIC TO INTERMEDIATE, ADAPTABLE FOR DIFFERENT LEVELS OF EXPERIENCE WITH STRESS MANAGEMENT.

60-90 MINUTES, DEPENDING ON THE LENGTH OF ACTIVITIES AND GROUP DISCUSSIONS.

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## INSTRUCTIONS

### 1. FACILITATE A DISCUSSION ON RECOGNIZING PERSONAL STRESSORS AND THEIR IMPACT ON MENTAL HEALTH (20 MINUTES)

- ICEBREAKER ACTIVITY: ASK PARTICIPANTS TO SHARE ONE COMMON STRESSOR THEY FACE IN THEIR DAILY LIFE. WRITE THEM ON A WHITEBOARD OR FLIP CHART.
- STRESS MAPPING EXERCISE: HAVE PARTICIPANTS DRAW A "STRESS MAP" WHERE THEY LIST THEIR TOP STRESSORS AND THEIR EMOTIONAL/PHYSICAL REACTIONS TO EACH ONE.
- GROUP REFLECTION: DISCUSS HOW DIFFERENT STRESSORS IMPACT MENTAL HEALTH AND ASK:
  - HOW DOES STRESS SHOW UP IN YOUR BODY AND MIND?
  - WHAT SITUATIONS MAKE YOUR STRESS WORSE?
- PERSONAL REFLECTION: GIVE PARTICIPANTS 5 MINUTES TO JOURNAL ABOUT A RECENT STRESSFUL EXPERIENCE AND HOW THEY HANDLED IT.

### 2. TEACH TECHNIQUES SUCH AS MINDFULNESS, RELAXATION PRACTICES, AND THE BENEFITS OF PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)

- GUIDED MINDFULNESS EXERCISE: LEAD A 5-MINUTE BREATHING EXERCISE OR A SHORT BODY SCAN MEDITATION TO HELP PARTICIPANTS EXPERIENCE MINDFULNESS FIRSTHAND.
- STRETCH & MOVE: INTRODUCE SIMPLE PHYSICAL EXERCISES, SUCH AS STRETCHING OR A SHORT WALK, TO SHOW THE BENEFITS OF MOVEMENT IN STRESS RELIEF.
- RELAXATION DEMO: TEACH A QUICK RELAXATION TECHNIQUE LIKE PROGRESSIVE MUSCLE RELAXATION OR VISUALIZATION. ASK PARTICIPANTS HOW THEY FEEL BEFORE AND AFTER THE ACTIVITY.
- GROUP DISCUSSION: ASK PARTICIPANTS:
  - WHICH OF THESE TECHNIQUES DO YOU ALREADY USE?
  - WHICH ONE DO YOU THINK WOULD HELP YOU THE MOST IN DAILY LIFE?

## INSTRUCTIONS

### 3. LEAD A GROUP DISCUSSION ON THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT AND HOW TO REACH OUT FOR HELP (15 MINUTES)

STORY SHARING: ASK PARTICIPANTS TO THINK OF A TIME WHEN TALKING TO SOMEONE HELPED THEM FEEL BETTER. LET VOLUNTEERS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES.

SUPPORT NETWORK MAPPING: HAVE PARTICIPANTS DRAW A SMALL DIAGRAM OF THEIR PERSONAL SUPPORT SYSTEM (FRIENDS, FAMILY, COLLEAGUES, THERAPISTS, ETC.).

ROLE-PLAYING ACTIVITY: PAIR PARTICIPANTS AND GIVE THEM DIFFERENT SCENARIOS (E.G., ASKING A FRIEND FOR SUPPORT, SETTING BOUNDARIES, EXPRESSING STRESS). THEY TAKE TURNS PRACTICING HOW TO COMMUNICATE THEIR NEEDS.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- WHY DO WE SOMETIMES HESITATE TO ASK FOR HELP?
- WHAT ARE SOME BARRIERS TO SEEKING SOCIAL SUPPORT?
- HOW CAN WE BUILD STRONGER SUPPORT SYSTEMS?

### 4. GUIDE PARTICIPANTS IN CREATING DAILY ROUTINES, PRACTICING GRATITUDE, AND SETTING REALISTIC GOALS TO REDUCE STRESS (15 MINUTES)

MORNING & EVENING ROUTINE EXERCISE: ASK PARTICIPANTS TO CREATE A SIMPLE MORNING OR EVENING ROUTINE THAT INCLUDES STRESS-REDUCING ACTIVITIES (E.G., MEDITATION, STRETCHING, JOURNALING).

GRATITUDE JOURNALING: HAVE PARTICIPANTS WRITE DOWN THREE THINGS THEY ARE GRATEFUL FOR AND REFLECT ON HOW THIS PRACTICE CAN SHIFT THEIR MINDSET.

SMART GOALS ACTIVITY: TEACH THE SMART GOAL-SETTING METHOD (SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ACHIEVABLE, RELEVANT, TIME-BOUND). HAVE EACH PARTICIPANT SET ONE SMALL GOAL RELATED TO STRESS MANAGEMENT.

PAIR & SHARE: LET PARTICIPANTS PAIR UP AND DISCUSS THEIR CHOSEN GOALS TO GAIN MOTIVATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY.

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## DEBRIEFING AND EVALUATION:

### 1. REFLECTION ON COPING STRATEGIES LEARNED

WHAT IS ONE COPING STRATEGY FROM TODAY'S SESSION THAT RESONATED WITH YOU THE MOST? WHY?

HAVE YOU USED ANY OF THESE STRATEGIES BEFORE? IF SO, HOW EFFECTIVE WERE THEY FOR YOU? WERE THERE ANY STRATEGIES THAT FELT NEW OR CHALLENGING?

WHICH TECHNIQUES DO YOU THINK WOULD BE THE EASIEST TO IMPLEMENT IN YOUR DAILY LIFE? WHICH ONES MIGHT BE HARDER?

### 2. PLANNING FOR DAILY LIFE APPLICATION

HOW DO YOU PLAN TO INCORPORATE THESE STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES INTO YOUR DAILY ROUTINE?

WHAT SMALL CHANGE CAN YOU MAKE THIS WEEK TO BETTER MANAGE STRESS AND ANXIETY?

HOW CAN YOU REMIND YOURSELF TO USE THESE TECHNIQUES WHEN FACING A STRESSFUL SITUATION?

WHO IN YOUR LIFE CAN SUPPORT YOU IN MAINTAINING THESE HABITS?

### 3. FEEDBACK ON THE SESSION'S EFFECTIVENESS

WHAT WAS THE MOST VALUABLE PART OF TODAY'S SESSION?

DID YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE PARTICIPATING IN DISCUSSIONS AND ACTIVITIES? WHY OR WHY NOT?

WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU ANTICIPATE WHEN APPLYING THESE STRATEGIES IN REAL LIFE?

IS THERE ANY TOPIC OR STRATEGY YOU WISH WE HAD COVERED MORE IN-DEPTH?

ON A SCALE OF 1-10, HOW CONFIDENT DO YOU FEEL IN USING THESE TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE STRESS? WHAT WOULD HELP INCREASE THAT CONFIDENCE?

## TIPS FOR FACILITATOR

- 1. CREATE AN OPEN, SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR SHARING EXPERIENCES
- 2. BE SENSITIVE TO PERSONAL DISCLOSURES AND ENSURE PARTICIPANTS FEEL SAFE
- 3. OFFER PRACTICAL EXAMPLES AND REAL-LIFE APPLICATIONS OF EACH TECHNIQUE
- 4. ADAPT THE PACE AND COMPLEXITY BASED ON THE PARTICIPANTS' ENGAGEMENT AND NEEDS

## FOLLOW UP

- RECOMMEND THAT PARTICIPANTS TRACK THEIR PROGRESS IN MANAGING STRESS THROUGH JOURNALS OR APPS.
- PROVIDE RESOURCES SUCH AS MINDFULNESS APPS, SELF-HELP BOOKS, OR LOCAL SUPPORT GROUPS.
- ORGANIZE FOLLOW-UP SESSIONS TO CHECK IN ON PARTICIPANTS' STRESS LEVELS AND THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COPING STRATEGIES.