Stress Management for CYPCs and Youth
Objectives

Upon completion of this training, you will be able to complete the following:

- Understand what stress is
- Identify stress as it relates to Child and Youth Program events
- Identify general strategies for coping with stress
- Review recommendations for reducing stress at Child and Youth Program events
Understanding Stress

What is stress?
Stress is a feeling that's created when we react to particular events. It's the body's way of rising to a challenge and preparing to meet a tough situation with focus, strength, stamina, and heightened alertness.

What is a stressor?
Anything that causes you to have a stress response; the cause is different for each person.
Common Daily Stressors

- Noise
- Crowds
- Rudeness of others
- Time pressure/not enough time
- Difficulties with commuting
- Things breaking (at home, the car, etc.)
- Excessive emails/phone calls leading up to event
- Speaking to an audience
- Organizing & executing numerous events in a short time frame
- Being away from your family
- Monthly reporting
Symptoms of Stress

- Fatigue
- Headache
- Eating too much or too little
- Dry mouth
- Rashes, hives, itchiness

- Talking fast
- Worried or anxious
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Cranky, angry, hostile, impatient
- Difficulty seeing the humor in things
What is the effect on the body during stress?

- Adrenaline and cortisol are released
- Heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing increase
- Perspiration increase
- Thinking improves, senses become sharper
- Muscle tension
- Sugars and fats enter blood for quick energy
- Immunity is inhibited
Consequences of long-term stress

- Cardiovascular damage
- Harder to un-stress when no stressors
- More likely to be fatigued
- More vulnerable to diseases
- Problems with memory and thinking
- Sleep problems
- Weight gain/loss
- Gastrointestinal problems more likely
Burnout

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed and unable to meet constant demands.

Burnout reduces your productivity and saps your energy, leaving you feeling increasingly helpless, hopeless, cynical, and resentful. Eventually, you may feel like you have nothing more to give.
Causes of Burnout

Work-related cause of burnout
- Feeling like you have little or no control over your work
- Lack of recognition or rewards for good work
- Unclear or overly demanding job expectations
- Doing work that’s monotonous or unchallenging or unrewarding
- Working in a chaotic or high-pressure environment

Lifestyle causes of burnout
- Working too much, without enough time for relaxing and socializing
- Being expected to be too many things to too many people
- Taking on too many responsibilities, without enough help from others
- Not getting enough sleep
- Lack of close, supportive relationships

Personality traits can contribute to burnout
- Perfectionist tendencies; nothing is ever good enough
- Pessimistic view of yourself and the world
- The need to be in control; reluctance to delegate to others
- High-achieving, Type A personality

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Burnout effects in CYP

- Inconsistency and poor care for child and youth participants
- Poor management of volunteers
- Psychological cost to other volunteers and other staff members; may result in low morale
- May result in dehumanization or depersonalization, emotional exhaustion, and lower levels of personal accomplishment
Warning signs and symptoms burnout

Physical signs and symptoms of burnout
- Feeling tired and drained most of the time
- Lowered immunity, feeling sick a lot
- Frequent headaches, back pain, muscle aches
- Change in appetite or sleep habits

Emotional signs and symptoms of burnout
- Sense of failure and self-doubt
- Feeling helpless, trapped, and defeated
- Detachment, feeling alone in the world
- Loss of motivation
- Increasingly cynical and negative outlook
- Decreased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment

Behavioral signs and symptoms of burnout
- Withdrawing from responsibilities
- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastinating, taking longer to get things done
- Using food, drugs, or alcohol to cope
- Taking out your frustrations on others
- Skipping work or coming in late and leaving early

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Stress vs. Burnout

- Burnout may be the result of unrelenting stress, but is not the same as too much stress.

- Typically, stress involves too many pressures that demand too much of you physically and psychologically.

- Burnout means feeling empty, devoid of motivation, and beyond caring

While you’re usually aware of being under a lot of stress, you don’t always notice burnout when it happens
## Stress vs. Burnout

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress</th>
<th>Burnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Characterized by overengagement</td>
<td>Characterized by disengagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotions are overreactive</td>
<td>Emotions are blunted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Produces urgency and hyperactivity</td>
<td>Produces helplessness and hopelessness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss of energy</td>
<td>Loss of motivation, ideals, and hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leads to anxiety disorders</td>
<td>Leads to detachment and depression</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary damage is physical</td>
<td>Primary damage is emotional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May kill you prematurely</td>
<td>May make life seem not worth living</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Stress and Burnout in Ministry*
Dealing with Burnout

One can deal with burnout by utilizing the “Three Rs” approach.

- Recognize: Watch for the warning signs of burnout
- Reverse: Undo the damage by managing stress and seeking support
- Resilience: Build your resilience to stress by taking care of your physical and emotional health
General Strategies for Coping with Stress and Preventing Burnout

- Prioritizing and organizing

- Changing thoughts/mood/behavior

- Self care
Prioritizing and Organizing

- Create a balanced schedule (work and personal)
- Don’t over-commit yourself
- Try to leave earlier for work, meetings, events
- Plan regular breaks
- Prioritize tasks
- Break projects into small steps
- Delegate responsibility
- Be willing to compromise
Behavior, Mood, Thoughts
All 3 affect one another

Behavior

Mood

Thoughts

A change in one can lead to changes in the others

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Behavior, Mood, Thoughts cont.

- Realize when you are stressed
- Stay connected to your internal emotional experiences
- Eliminate self-defeating behaviors
Self Care

- **Sleep:** A lack of sleep can leave you vulnerable to even more stress. Know your required amount of sleep that allows you to function at 100%. The average hours of sleep for adults is between 7-9 hours.

- **Diet:** Low blood sugar can make you feel anxious and irritable, while eating too much can make you lethargic. Eating small but frequent meals can help maintain even levels of blood sugar, keep your energy up, stay focused, and avoid mood swings.

- **Exercise:** Regular exercise is a powerful stress reliever. For maximum stress relief, try to get at least 30 minutes of heart-pounding activity on most days.

- **Self time:** All work and no play is a recipe for burnout. Finding a balance between work and personal time can be difficult at times. As with other work commitments, schedule your personal time daily to enjoy activities that you find relaxing such as social activities and solitary pursuits.
Stress in Children and Youth

- Everyone is affected by stress, including children and youth!
- Stress in children and youth has escalated in recent years due to being exposed to multiple stressors such as:
  - Breakdown in family and neighborhoods
  - Negative television and other media
  - Lack of positive role models
  - Unsafe environments
  - Inadequate housing and nutrition
  - Exposure to war and terrorism
Cause of C&Y Stress

- **School:** Stress in school is often over academia issues in the middle and high school years.

- **Home:** Home is a place where children want to be secure. Therefore, lack of structure, changes in the home environment, and confusing expectations can be very stressful.

- **Peers:** Peer relationships are very important to middle and high schoolers. Fitting in or being popular has powerful effects on youth.
Symptoms of Stress in C&Y

Young Children
- Irritability
- Difficulty getting to sleep or staying asleep
- Nightmares
- Toileting or eating difficulties
- Headaches

Older children
- Attention seeking behaviors
- Mood changes
- Anger
- Aggression
- Avoidance of activities
- Physical complaints (headache, upset stomach)

Teens
- Keep to themselves
- Unwilling to participate in activities
- Change in commitment to school, work, volunteerism
- Anxiety
What can you do to help reduces stress at events?

- Child and Youth Professionals have a powerful influence on children and youth within their programs.
- Ensure your behavior and mood is positive.
- Respond to problems in a positive manner.
- Avoid global personalization responses (“She’s a bad girl, these disturbed kids) rather focus on the inappropriate behavior (“5 youth are not in their seats).
- Explain what is expected and why before beginning an event/activity – group norms as well as code of conduct.
- Allow time for questions after instruction - debrief.
- Ensure training activities provide a chance for youth to be physically active.
- Incorporate icebreakers in all events.
- Identify the staff and volunteers that will be working event/activity we in advance of the start date(s).
- Allow appropriate downtime during all day events/camps.
- Provide nutritious snacks and meals.
Additional Information

- For additional information on stress and burnout, visit the below websites:
  - American Heart Association [http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/StressManagement/StressManagement_UCM_001082_SubHomePage.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/GettingHealthy/StressManagement/StressManagement_UCM_001082_SubHomePage.jsp)
As evidence of completion of this course, you will need to complete the short assessment tool provided. To access the assessment, please click on the link below:

Click here to begin your assessment: https://www.classmarker.com/online-test/start/?quiz=fgm525ead5ab9fb4

Please Note: Following completion of the assessment, please print out the results and write the name of the course next to your score. Then, scan the document and email the results page to your RAPM. This will serve as your documentation of completion.
You have now completed the Stress Management module. Congratulations!