

DRAFT

STRESS: MAKING THE MOST OF IT

**A PERSONALIZED GUIDE FOR CORRECTIONAL STAFF
DESCRIBING HOW STRESS CAN BE MANAGED EFFECTIVELY**

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YES NO

A. Do you ever feel like:

It will never stop raining?

You are caught in an avalanche?

You are juggling eggs and dropping them?

You can't do anything right?

B. Have you ever felt like:

A football player offside?

A barbershop quartet gone flat?

A dancer out of step?

An actor/acress forgetting his/her lines?

C. Have you:

Stopped laughing?

Stopped sleeping?

Stopped talking?

Stopped exercising?

If you are cut, do you bleed?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, this manual is for you.

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PREFACE

If you have turned to this page it is likely that

You are keenly interested in managing stress more effectively/efficiently;

You have a great deal of curiosity;

You are required by your supervisors to participate in training around stress issues; or

You picked up this document accidentally and arrived here by chance.

Whichever the case, if you decide to stick around, here is what you can expect:

A short course in personal stress management which is presented in a manual format useful for self-paced, self-instructional learning and/or group learning situations and which has been designed specifically for correctional personnel. This manual is a companion to another short course in stress management designed for supervisors and managers. That course is directed toward methods to create and maintain work environments which can support stress management efforts of correctional staff.

As you are too keenly aware, several factors make stress experiences of corrections personnel unique and special. Some of these factors are:

The volatile client population

Safety issues

Lack of clear outcomes

Lack of organizational support

Limited rewards.

This course in stress management will not change any of the above.

What it is meant to do is to help you, the person working in the corrections system, to achieve an increase in control, satisfaction, and energy in the face of the above list of stress provoking issues as well as many others. You can also expect a decrease in disorganization, distress, confusion and uncertainty. Stress does not have to be something that simply happens to you. It can be something which you can have some control over.

"There is no free lunch," is a notion very often related to economic issues. It can also be applied to the notion of managing stress. It costs each of us in many ways to cope with the pressures of our jobs, of family life, of living in a society. One of the overriding considerations of this course is directed to how a person can increase his resources to meet those costs.

Stress: Making the Most of It does not begin with the assumption that YOU, or any other reader, is currently in serious need of help. The information provided here is meant to help you now or sometime later in your life, or to help you help someone else whose resources are not sufficient to meet current stress related demands. The goal of the manual and any training associated with it is TO INCREASE YOUR POWER TO HELP YOURSELF AND OTHERS NOW OR WHENEVER YOU MAY NEED TO.

The objectives are:

TO INCREASE YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF STRESS;

TO INCREASE YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF HOW STRESS AFFECTS YOU;

TO INCREASE YOUR OPTIONS FOR DEALING WITH STRESS;

TO INCREASE YOUR RESOURCES FOR DEALING WITH STRESS.

The values that support the ideas in this manual are

1. **It is good to act on our own behalf (that is be proactive) whenever possible rather than only be reactive. (There are obviously times when we have no choice but to react.)**
2. **It is good to help others to do the same.**

The course is divided into six modules.

- A. **IDEAS ABOUT STRESS**
- B. **YOUR PERSONAL STRESS PROFILE**
- C. **TIPS AND TECHNIQUES**
- D. **MAKING A MATCH**
- E. **PUTTING IT TOGETHER**
- F. **YAH, BUT IT AIN' T WORKING**

Module A explores what stress looks like in general. Module B helps you describe what your own stress experiences look like and leads to a personal stress profile. Module C lists and explains several informal and formal options that are available as stress management techniques. Module D helps you decide which, if any, of the techniques presented in the previous module could be worth trying. Module E sets up a structured guide for practicing stress management. Module F completes the manual with a brief discussion regarding the problems of stress management, the difficulties of implementing stress management strategies (especially when new techniques are used), and the potential for stress management efforts to become particularly stressful events in themselves.

The material presented in this work can be seen as keys -- keys which will unlock doors leading to increases in awareness, understanding, and control of your stress experiences. Each key will open a door that is only the beginning to understanding some aspect of stress management. Stress management is a lifelong task that becomes more or less richer according to what we do with each experience. This manual provides a context, perspective, and focus that can help you sort out each new experience.

The manual also provides a place to make notes, record ideas, and add and store information about stress and its management. That is why it is presented to you in looseleaf fashion. That way you can copy articles, punch holes, and add them to the manual. You are encouraged to make notes in the manual and in some cases it is absolutely essential that you write on these pages in order to complete the exercises accurately and meaningfully.

ON TO MODULE A -----

MODULE A:
IDEAS ABOUT STRESS

"TAKE THIS JOB AND SHOVE IT!"

Have you ever said that? Felt like saying it? Felt like saying it, but denied it to yourself?

OR, HOW ABOUT

"TAKE THIS MARRIAGE AND SHOVE IT!"

OR

"TAKE THIS FRIENDSHIP AND SHOVE IT!"

Job, family, and friends (not necessarily in that order) are very important parts of our life. Each brings pressures which, together or separately, can make us feel like "shoving it." "Shoving it" can be done in many ways other than openly leaving a job or a relationship. In the case of a job, it can be accomplished through absenteeism, goldbricking, and chronic complaining to name but a few.

Avoidance, humor aimed at hurting, open displays of disinterest are ways of saying "shove it" in a relationship.

But is "shoving it" the best response for you? Does it achieve the outcome you are looking for? Does it bring you short term satisfaction and longterm dissatisfaction?

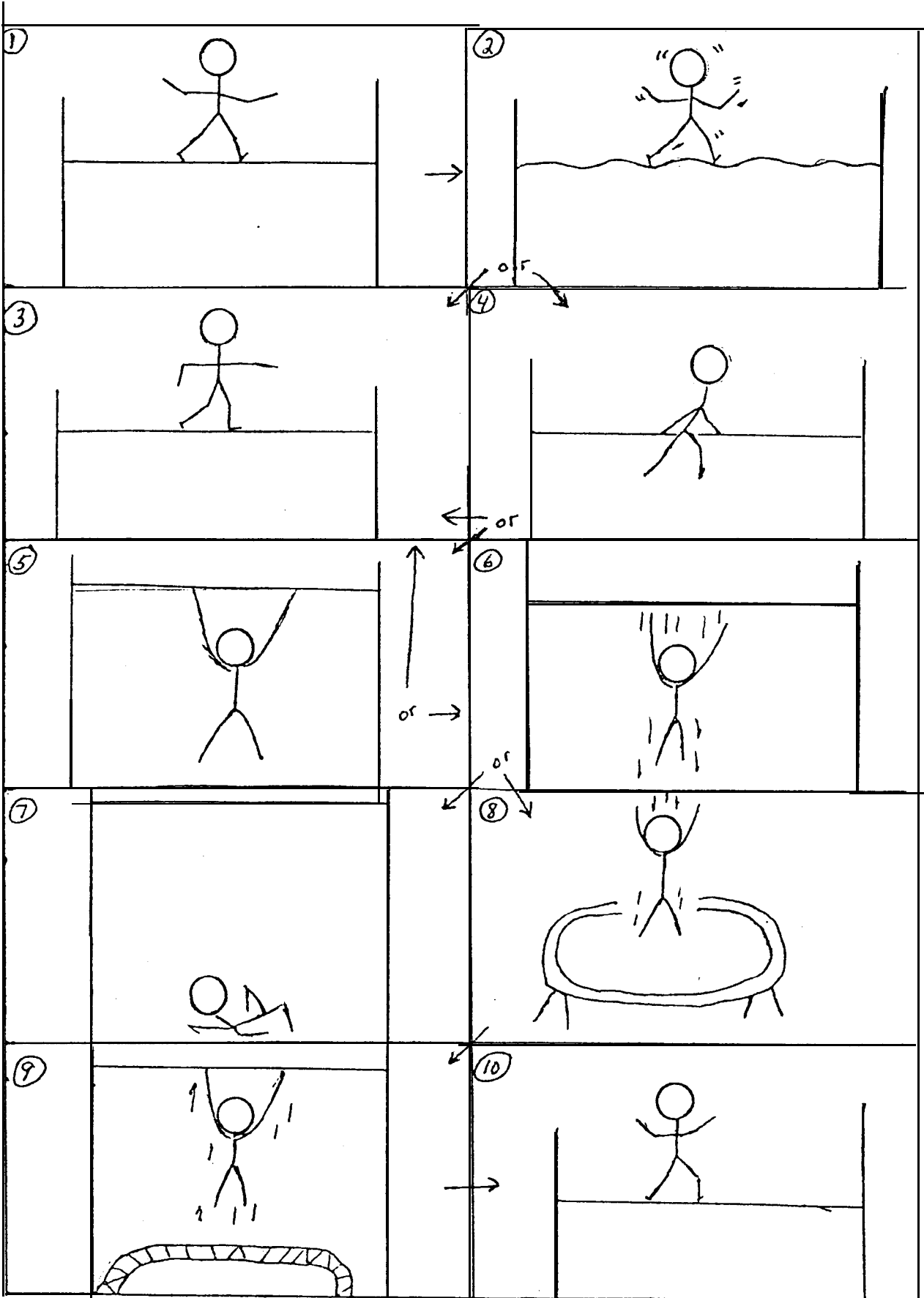
There are many other reactions to pressure besides those described above and many kinds of pressures. We can call that pressure "stress." Correctional Personnel are exposed to situations time and again, as well as on a constant basis, that can evoke a "shove it" response. Often the response is determined by a set of reaction patterns which have developed throughout a person's life experience. Some reaction patterns are not as useful and satisfaction producing as they might be.

"So What?" is a question that fits here. The answer is that a number of mild to serious emotional, behavioral, and physiological problems which could be labeled "distress" have been directly linked to reaction patterns to pressure or stress. When those reaction patterns have been adjusted there is evidence that the distress can be contained, reduced, or eliminated.

If that's true, how can someone adjust their reaction patterns and how do they know they should?

There are several indicators that a person should be adjusting his reaction patterns to stress and there are many ways one can make adjustments. This training manual will describe both indicators of distress and methods of managing stress. The intent of managing stress is to increase the potential for successful and satisfying experiences with pressures of all kinds. The place to start is with a better understanding of the idea of stress itself.

On the following page, you are going to see ten illustrations or frames. Look them over carefully. When you have finished looking at them consider a story for the pictures. There is a story page which follows the pictures. Take no more than a few minutes and write a story about an experience on your job, or with your family or with your friends using the ten pictures to illustrate your story. Keep your story simple. The author has attempted to do the same. His story will follow yours.



STORY PAGE

READER

FRAME

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

STORY PAGE

AUTHOR

FRAME

- 1 I was having a pretty good day.
- 2 Then I found out that Tom Andersen was being returned to my unit. I had just had him put in segregation two days ago. I felt a little nervous about it because he said he would get me for it.
- 3 But this happens with a lot of inmates and I shook it off.
- 4 I remember a couple of times though, when I first started the job, how it really bothered me. I got real uptight and sick to my stomach.
- 5 A couple of times I didn't want to come in to work.
- 6 I even took a couple of sick days.
- 7 For a while I thought I couldn't do anything. I lost all my confidence.
- 8 One of my friends who had been an officer for several years called me. He understood what was going on.
- 9 He encouraged me to keep trying.
- 10 Now I have pretty good control over these kinds of situations.

Now, look at your story and the author's. Hopefully, you now have two descriptions of a stress experience. If you don't, that's OK. The point of the illustrations is to demonstrate one way of looking at stress by describing a real life experience.

If we leave out the real life example, the frames could be described this way:

1. A person is in a state of balance.
2. That balance is disturbed by stressors, i.e., environmental factors or forces which make the person adjust his position somehow.
3. The person regains balance but not necessarily in the same position.
4. The person has not regained balance. He has slipped but is still in a good position to get back his balance.
5. The person has slipped even further and is in danger of hurting himself.
6. The person has lost his balance and his hold on the wire altogether.
7. The person crashes, severely hurting himself.
8. The person has received help.
9. The person is on his way to recovering his balance.
10. The person has once again achieved balance.

This sequence of illustrations is only one way which we could use to describe stress. We will explore others but continue to use the stickman drawings as a point of reference for many examples.

So far we have described stress, but have not defined it. We will do that now, with your help. While we are at it we will also define "stressors," "distress," "feelings," and "reactions." One way of defining something is to say what it is like. Let's do that now. You make up an analogy and then we will too.

To help you out, here are some examples taken from interviews with corrections personnel:

STRESS IS LIKE

the weather; everybody talks about it but nobody really knows what to do about it

rain; it rains on everybody and everything; it brings life and refreshment at one time and death and destruction at others

a sensation of varying degrees of electricity

the shock of warm feet hitting the cold floor in the morning.

YOUR STRESS ANALOGY GOES HERE:

STRESS IS LIKE _____

OUR ANALOGY GOES HERE:

STRESS IS LIKE

A new piece of music a band must play;

**a third down and long play that a football team must
make;**

a recipe for a four-course dinner

We got carried away and used three. As you can see our analogies are no better than yours, but they do have two things in common that should show up in our definition. First, the demands of stress are complex. Second, the response will have to mix and match several resources, talents, or ingredients.

Here are some definitions other correctional personnel have used regarding stress. Stress is

Pressure;

Constant and recurring demands to do things right;

**Knowing you have to do something but not knowing if or how
you can do it;**

Responsibility

**Considering these definitions and the above analogies, take a crack at
your own definition of stress.**

STRESS IS _____

Without suggesting ours is any better than yours, here is our definition of stress.

Stress is the natural condition of a constant and continuing variety of requests and demands made upon our physical and psychological resources which along the way continuously challenge who and what we think we are.

Definitions and analogies are useful when they help us understand and gain more power over a phenomenon like stress. They aren't very useful if they stop us from thinking. The analogies and definitions supplied by you and by us should not lead you to think that there is no more to learn about stress and, in particular, about its management. However, these analogies and definitions do lead us to consider the following notions:

natural

individual

personal

differentiated

reaction-provoking

competitive

perceptual

Stress is natural. It is part and parcel of being alive. In fact, some examiners of the phenomenon tell us that if you aren't experiencing stress, it is because you are dead. Since it is natural, it would appear that it is a futile effort and general waste of time to avoid stress. Yet we know that avoidance of certain of life's

situations can be very useful. It must be something other than stress that we should avoid, but something closely related to it. We'll talk more about avoidance later on. For now, our emphasis will be away from avoiding stress. Instead, we will begin to talk about stress management.

Stress is experienced by individuals. While there may be many experiences that are stressful for groups of persons, each person's stress experience is unique and wholly his/her own. Descriptions of stress can approximate your stress experience, but only you can come close to fully describing your own stress. Stress is individual.

Stress is personal. The demands that life makes on you receive meaning from your set of values, needs and goals. Furthermore, nobody else can have your stress. It belongs to you. Therefore, you can say that you own it. With ownership comes certain rights and responsibilities. One of the rights is to manage your stress. It is also one of the responsibilities.

Stress is differentiated. Stress does not always occur in predictable and consistent patterns. Demands are made on you in dramatic ways, e.g., the death of a loved one; in nagging ways, e.g., a physical disability; in clustered events, e.g., a flooding cell block when you already have a cold and you lost more than you should in a poker game the night before. Or some stress can be predictable and consistent, e.g., threat of bodily harm, boredom, little hope for success. One thing is certain, stress will always be there in combinations which may be what has led to one of Murphy's Laws, i.e., if something can go wrong, it will. These combinations make an everchanging set of demands on our ability to balance, requiring us to pay attention here one minute, there another minute, over there another minute, and all three places at the same time.

Stress is reaction-provoking. One reaction is to ignore the stress demand. This works well much of the time. However, some stress

demands are very strong and to deny or refuse to respond can take as much energy and effort as it would to react directly.

For example, we may feel a demand to cry about something, and we refuse to cry. Or we may feel a demand to strike out at someone, and we refuse to hit. Or we may have been passed over for a promotion, and we congratulate the person promoted rather than curse his good luck.

Stress is competitive. Each separate demand is grabbing for your attention and energy. How you react depends on a very complicated set of personal values, needs, goals, and capacity. One part of you says you ought to run and hide. Another part says you can't do that because "quitter" isn't in your vocabulary. Another part says, it doesn't matter anyway because you don't even know how to run and hide, but you wished you did.

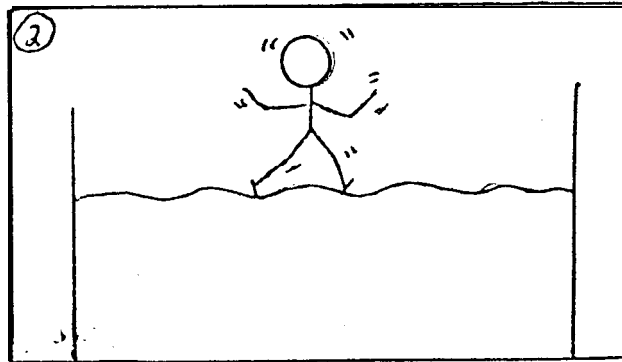
Finally, stress is perceptual. That is whatever it is that may be threatening to throw us off balance may affect us one way, one day and another way another day without changing itself. For example, we all know that there are some days we can handle verbal abuse better than we can on other days.

The above should help you with understanding stress. Four other definitions will provide you with more food for thought.

1. Stressors. We have talked about balance and those things which would throw you off balance. We can call those things "stressors." Stressors are factors which test who and what we think we are. They may come from our jobs, our family or social lives, our environment, or from within ourselves.

2. Distress, for the purposes of this manual, refers to stress experiences which have outcomes similar to frames four through seven of the illustrations. That is, the stress experience has resulted in a behavioral, emotional, or physiological problem
3. Feelings refers to the way we interpret the impact of stressors on ourselves. Does a stressor make us happy or sad, angry or pleased, confident or fearful?
4. Reactions are those first responses to stressors by which we attempt to regain our balance. These can be unthinking and can last a very long time. It is those reactions that are of a chronic, disabling nature that we are calling "distress."

Let's look at frame #2 again.



Stressors have moved the wire. Or the stickperson may have been thrown a brick, also a stressor. Or the stickperson began to lose his concentration, another type of stressor. The stickperson waves his arms- and tenses his leg muscles. These are first reactions to stress. If these reactions work well he regains his balance. If not he may slip and experience some distress, but he still hasn't lost his hold. Feelings became involved at the point he began to lose his balance. It was at that point that he interpreted the impact of the stressors as pushing him off balance.

ONE OTHER THING THAT NEEDS TO BE SAID ABOUT STRESS HERE IS THAT EVEN WITH THE COMPLEXITY AND PERVASIVE NATURE OF STRESS, WE TYPICALLY MANAGE IT WELL.

The problem with managing it well is twofold. First, we take it for granted. Often this leads us to thinking we are managing well when, in fact, we are not. Second, we tend to overuse things or resources that have worked well for us in the past and not pay attention to the signals that tell us we are running out of gas. Nevertheless, the point we want to make here is: Congratulations for all those occasions when you have managed stress well. But, if you haven't been as successful as you would like; if you want to act to ensure continued success; and/or, if you would like to help someone else manage his stress, stay with us.

By now, you have probably noticed that a frame or two is missing from the stickman illustrations. How does he get from frame two to frame three or four. What happens during that transition? It would be helpful to add a frame or a few at that point to explain the dynamics of stress management. Keep that in mind. After our discussion on stress management we'll try to come up with one or two more frames.

STRESS MANAGEMENT

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between stress management and problem solving. We may expect that if we manage our stress well, we will be solving all our problems. Stress managed well tends to increase our problem solving potential, and stress not managed well decreases that potential. But managing stress does not remove or resolve problems by itself.

Take job insecurity, for example. A person under stress may feel that she handles that stress well enough. One of the resources that is applied to the tension resulting from the stressful uncertainty about the job might be to drink alcohol. Drinking alcohol helps the person

relax. It deals directly with a stress reaction. The person is no more sure of maintaining job security through drinking. However, being able to relax helps her store up energies that would have been wasted on being tense. With that energy, she is able to perform the job's tasks well enough that, if the job position is maintained, she will be valued in that position; and, if the job disappears, the employee will be valued to the point she will be able to receive good recommendations and references to help in the pursuit of another job.

On the other hand, the resources of alcohol can be used in such a way as to drain other resources. The result is temporary relief of tension -- but with a burden of increased pressure to perform the job with fewer resources (e.g., not enough rest). The use of alcohol to manage a stress experience could create barriers to ever solving the job security problem

Some examples of stress well managed might help here.

1. Officer Jones was assigned to share a duty with Officer O'Reilly (could be share an office, share a shift, share dormitory or cell block responsibility, or team on a caseload). Jones reports to his superior officer that he can't stand O'Reilly. O'Reilly sets up situations with the (inmates, parolees, probationers) that puts Jones in a "lose face" situation. Jones' supervisor says "that's tough. There's nothing I can do about it now."

Jones goes home feeling very angry. When he arrives home, his child's bike is in the driveway blocking the entrance to the garage. Jones decides to run it over. On second thought, Jones decides to holler at the child. On third thought, Jones decides to call the child and have him move the bike. Jones then decides to take a walk around the block and to try to leave his problem with O'Reilly back at work.

The walk helps, and Jones is able to meet and greet his family in a much better mood and finds this refreshing until his wife announces that the furnace isn't working and the temperature is expected to get well below freezing this night. Well, that's a different set of problems anyway, and a different kind of stress. Should you expect to win them all?

2. Central office has just decided to disallow a differential in pay rates for work done. One of the few incentives you have is to offer more pay for more responsible work. You think you can demonstrate how effective this has been for motivating some of the inmates. Furthermore, you weren't asked for your opinion and it's clear you won't be. But you have to live with the problems. You feel angry, frustrated, betrayed, belittled, and used. You can't fight it, and there's no where to run. You decide "screw 'em I don't give a I'll do my job and nothing else." Then you throw darts at pictures of favorite central office personnel.

Afterwards you feel better. Throwing darts helped you bum off some of the steam you built up when you got angry. You're still upset, but you've decided not to let the anger and other people's poor decision making ruin your day. Spoil it some, but not ruin it.

In both of these cases, the problems that generated the stress experience were not solved, but the stress was managed in such a way as to maximize the control of the individual over his reactions and his resources.

In the first case, Jones could easily have taken out his problems with O'Reilly on his family. And in the second case the individual could have spent some time just going through the motions of the job to protect himself from the bad feelings he was having about the job.

Stress management is not designed to eliminate pain, fear or pleasure. It is designed to manage feelings which can lead to a loss of balance.

Stress management becomes important when our reactions to stressors do not get us back on track or do so at a cost we are not willing to pay. Reactions like apathy, anxiety, alienation, depression, hypochondria, absenteeism, isolation, clumsiness, alcohol abuse, overeating, increased blood pressure, irregular heartbeat, muscular tension, and overproduction of gastric juices can lead to severe social, psychological, and physiological imbalances with resulting consequences as serious as an unwanted divorce, suicide, or heart disease.

Not as serious, but certainly worth alleviating, are chronic and disabling headaches, backaches, stomach problems, diarrhea, and constipation. Insomnia, lack of energy, skin problems and general dissatisfaction with life have also been related to problems with stress.

We have focused in this module on general notions of stress. In the next module we will focus on your experience of stress. In the following module, Module B, we'll take a closer look at your stress experiences and whether or not adjustments in your management style would be of any use to you now or in the future.

REVIEW TASKS

- 1 Take some time here to think about:
 - a. the difference between being in balance and being off balance;
 - b. the difference between solving problems and managing stress;
 - c. the difference between your stress and someone else's.

- 2 Now think about someone you know who works in corrections. Think about a particularly stressful event for that person, anything from being afraid of being taken hostage to total frustration with having to deal with a particular inmate, parolee, or probationer.

3. Now answer these questions about the person in number 2:
 - a. Describe the stressful event(s).

 - b. How long in duration has the person been under this particular stress?

 - c. How did he feel about it?

 - d. How much did he think about it.

 - e. What reaction(s) did he have?

- f. **What action(s) did he take to help himself?**

 - g. **Do you think the person acted appropriately on his own behalf?**

 - h. **How do you think he felt about himself in terms of how he tried to manage his stress?**
4. **Previously, it was mentioned that the stickman illustrations were not complete. Describe what information could be displayed in a frame that would follow frame 2 but come before frames 3 and 4.**

MODULE B:

YOUR PERSONAL STRESS PROFILE

Your supervisor favors other staff members.

You have been given more work but no more help.

You perform well and are assigned more tasks. Your co-worker performs poorly and receives fewer tasks.* You feel punished for doing well. He was rewarded for goofing off.

You're afraid you won't be backed up by your co-workers in a confrontation with a client, a student, or an inmate.

The four situations above may or may not be a part of your stress experience. As we pointed out in Module A, the stress experience is personal, unique, and dependent upon your values, needs, goals, expectations and resources.

It is also historical and situational. It is historical in the sense that each stress experience receives some of its meaning and importance in relation to your accumulated experience. For example, in Module A, the author's story about the stick man noted that, with experience, the return to the unit of inmates who had been put in segregation became less threatening over time, thus reducing the impact of that stressful event.

It is situational in the sense that the same stressor has a different meaning in different circumstances. Holidays such as Christmas can be a stress experience that leaves us feeling exhausted but warm and comfortable one year and exhausted and depressed another year.

Expectations built out of our past history or circumstances like illness or separation can change the meaning of a stress experience even when the stressor does not change.

Stressors can change, too, however. They can change on their own, or we can change them. They can come and go, stay for long or short periods of time, be strong or weak. It is a combination of the nature of a stressor and the meaning we give to it that determines the degree to which we must be responsive. Understanding stressors and how they work is fundamental to understanding stress. Understanding your stressors is fundamental to managing your stress.

You can manage your stress a lot better if you have a personal stress profile (PSP). The PSP consists of an itemization of your stressors, your reactions to those stressors, your favorite and most useful stress management techniques, a description of the limitations of your current set of techniques, and an analysis of your resources. The PSP describes where you are most likely to get into extended disequilibrium and experience distress.

In this module we will concentrate on the identification, description, and reaction to several stressors which you find are important to you currently. We will do this, in part, by having you develop your own personal stress profile. As a start, your PSP should begin with a list of some of your significant stressors.

Consider the examples we have given in Module A and the four that introduce Module B. These are examples of events, conditions, or responsibilities which force you to pay some attention to them. In the space on the next page, list five such items that you are sure apply to you. They can be perceived by you as positive or negative stressors. A job promotion may be seen as a positive life event, yet have a great deal of stress related to it due to new sets of responsibilities.

Stressors: Event, Condition, or Responsibility

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Time is one of the resources we have which we can manage in many ways. Consider each of the stressors you have listed and write down in the following space how much time you spend thinking about the stressor. A lot, not much, very little?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

One by one, how do these stressors make you feel? Unhappy, sad, angry, frustrated, confused, fearful, pleased, joyful, exhilarated, warm tingly, excited, happy?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

How long and how often do these stressors make demands on you? Occasionally, often, frequently, regularly, constantly? For brief periods of time, varying lengths of time, currently, for a year, several years, as long as I can remember?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

How do you react to these stressors physically or psychologically? Backache, headache, high blood pressure? Withdrawal, anger at self or others, distrust, disinterest? Others? This list has a potential for being very long. Pick out the principal reactions you have to each stressor.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What do you do about the reactions you have listed above when they are uncomfortable or disturbing? Eat, sleep, drink, diet, exercise, skip work, avoid?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

How do you feel about how you handle your reactions? Consider the actions you take to control your reactions? Do they work? Do you do too much, too little, or just enough?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Overall, how do you feel you manage each of the stressors you have listed? Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, somewhat dissatisfied, very dissatisfied?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

You have picked five stressors to analyze in preparing your personal stress profile. The stressors you have chosen may have been stressors which you perceive as leading to positive and satisfying experiences or leading to negative experiences. More thought might produce stressors more important than your original list. To help with that, please review the 48 stressors below. Circle all that apply to you. Then from your group of circled items, pick five of equal or greater importance than the five you have already listed. Write those five and/or your original five in the chart on page 27. You can list up to ten. The more you list, the better the exercise will be.

STRESSORS

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Change in shift assignment | 24. Lack of recognition |
| 2. Major change in physical appearance | 25. Lack of input |
| 3. Change in vision/hearing | 26. Racial problems among peers |
| 4. Change in memory | 27. Racial problems between officers and inmates |
| 5. Change in physical activity | 28. Threat of physical violence |
| 6. Change in sexual behavior | 29. Verbal abuse |
| 7. Change in ability to take care of yourself | 30. Physical abuse |
| 8. Change in ability to control your own life | 31. Legal restraints |
| 9. Personal injury or illness | 32. Unclear policy and procedures |
| 10. Change in responsibilities at work | 33. Public pressure |
| 11. Change in working conditions | 34. Role ambiguity |
| 12. Retiring soon | 35. Lack of training |
| 33. Loss of drivers license | 36. Assignment patterns |
| 14. Major change in financial situation | 37. Breakdown in communications |
| 15. Promotion | 38. Too little authority to carry out job responsibilities |
| 16. Poor performance evaluation | 39. Uncontrollable and uncontrolled inmates |
| 17. Change in living situation | 40. Contradictory policies and procedures |
| 18. Change in amount of privacy | 41. Holidays |
| 19. Loss or long absence of spouse | 42. No measurable success |
| 20. Loss or long absence of family member | 43. Boredom |
| 21. A new friendship | 44. Lack of public support |
| 22. Conflicts or intense disagreements with people | 45. The expectations or attitudes of correctional personnel at my level or below me |

23. Job insecurity

**46. Supervisor's expectations
or attitudes**

**47. Inmate/client expectations
or attitudes**

**48. My own fear or anxiety in
a particular situation**

STRESSOR	TIME	FEELINGS	DURATION	FREQUENCY	REACTIONS	ACTIONS	JUDGMENTS	EVALUATIONS
1.	A lot	Happy	Brief	Often	Backache	Drink	Enough	Very happy
2.	Some	Unhappy	For a year	Occasionally	Headaches	Eat	Too little	Somewhat happy
3.	Not much	Sad	Several years	Frequently	Sweating	Nervousness	Too much	Don't pay attention to it
4.	Very little	Glad	Currently	Constantly	High blood pressure	Sleep	Bad timing	Somewhat unhappy
5.	Other (describe)	Frustrated	As long as I can remember	Regularly	Exhaustion	Rest	Good timing	Very unhappy
6.		Free	Other (describe)	Predictably	Colds	Skip work		Don't want to have to think about it
7.		Angry		Unexpectedly	No reaction	Late for work		
8.		Pleased		Other (describe)	Allergies	Argue		
9.		Confused			Nightmares	None		
10.		Certain			Withdrawal	Joke		
		Joyful			Nervousness	Drugs		
		Excited			Stomach disorder	Exercise		
		Warm			Hide	Recreation		
		Ambivalent			Distrust	Quiet time		
		Fearful			Dizziness	Talk with spouse/friends		
		Other (describe)			Disinterest	Talk with professional		
					Skin disorders	Avoidance		
					Difficulty breathing	Denial		
					Arthritis	Vacation		
					Other (describe)	Other (describe)		

You should have five to ten stressors listed on the chart. There are now eight tasks to perform in order to acquire insight into the meaning of those stressors to you. When you are finished with the eight tasks, a quick scan of the chart will produce a stress management status report for yourself.

For each stressor listed, follow each of the eight steps listed below. DON'T BE SURPRISED OR DISCOURAGED IF YOUR CHART HAS LINES RUNNING OVER, ALONGSIDE, AND THROUGH EACH OTHER. When you have completed all of the tasks associated with each of your listed stressors, you will have the beginnings of a personal stress profile that will help you decide whether or not you need to make any adjustments in your current stress management methods and several strong indicators how you can begin to make some positive adjustments.

Begin the eight tasks now:

- 1. For each stressor listed, draw a line from the stressor to the description in the adjacent column (headed "Time") which best describes the amount of time you spend thinking of that stressor. Then circle it.**
- 2. From the circle in the time column, draw a connecting line to the most fitting description in the "Feelings" column. If more than one feeling is important, draw more than one connecting line. Then circle the chosen descriptor(s).**
- 3. How long a stressor lasts is very important. Sometimes we forget that a particular stressor is time limited, and we don't take advantage of that information. The Stressor, the Time, and the Feelings columns are now connected. Extend the line(s) to the best entry in the "Duration" column. Circle the appropriate duration.**

4. **Another aspect of stressors is the frequency with which they occur. Those which are predictable and regular lend themselves to management techniques more easily than those which are unpredictable and unexpected. Connect the Duration column to the "Frequency" column and circle the most accurate frequency.**

5. **The reactions which are all part of the stress experience are too numerous to list here. The list under the "Reaction" column contains several that have been identified by other correctional personnel as stress reactions. Add your own (nail biting, sweating, daydreaming, crying, are a few more) if those already mentioned don't apply to you. Connect and circle.**

6. **What actions have you or do you take to manage the stress experience? Review your reactions to your stressors. What do you do about them? Like the reaction list, the "Action" list is nowhere near complete. You will probably have to add a few of your own. Connect and circle.**

7. **Judgment. Almost all of the actions that you could list are potentially useful or destructive. Make a judgment with regard to the action you take. Is it overused, underused, used just enough? Maybe it is used at the right time or wrong time. You can connect and circle more than one "Judgment" for each action.**

8. **Rate how you feel about the way you've handled or been handling each experience of stress. This is the critical evaluative stage that most of us don't pay enough attention to. Are you pleased or displeased, satisfied or dissatisfied? Does the way you manage your stress make you happy? Connect and circle.**

Answer the following questions from the information you provided on the chart.

- 1. In your Rating column, did you circle "unhappy" or "didn't want to think about it?"**
- 2. Under Judgment, did you circle "too much," "too little," or "bad timing?"**
- 3. Under Reaction, did you circle anything that you've come to accept as part of the job or something that "just comes with the territory," and therefore you feel your action is "enough" and you usually "don't pay attention to it?"**

If you answered no to these three questions, it is likely that you are not experiencing undue difficulty maintaining your balance in the face of the stressors you have listed.

IF YOU SAID YES TO ANY OF THE THREE, IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT YOU ARE TEETERING AND SHOULD ACT NOW TO REGAIN YOUR BALANCE BY MAKING ADJUSTMENTS IN YOUR STRESS MANAGEMENT BEHAVIORS AND PERFORMANCE.

The particular stressors which you have listed, your feelings about them their duration and frequency, and your reactions and actions will provide part of the information you need to make an informed choice about what you can do differently. The Personal Stress Profile acts as a diagnostic tool which tells you:

- 1) Yes, you currently have some stress management needs; and**
- 2) those needs are related to certain specific stressors under certain specific conditions;**

or

- 1) You are currently doing well, and**
- 2) keep up the good work.**

REVIEW TASKS

Read the following case study and answer the questions that accompany it.

- A. An organizational change in the data processing department generated subtle reporting line changes. Each staff person is responsible for a different aspect of data processing. The manager is responsible to the requests and directives of the Division, the legislature, and his department administrator.

Handling of an outside request for information that had previously been done by one staff person was now split between him and two others. This had not been made clear, and it was the first instance of this kind of request under the new pattern. The request fell between the cracks. When there was no response, the requesting person raised a ruckus.

The staff blamed each other. Loud and angry exchanges took place. The shouting matches, followed by sullen and threatening silences, occurred in the office of each of the staff and throughout the general area. The manager was quickly notified and moved to defuse the problem

Although the problem occurred one morning, it was not an isolated event. It was part of a pattern of miscommunications related to a shift in organizational structure. The three staff members had a history of getting along well before the change.

The manager felt helpless, overwhelmed, angry. Helpless because she didn't want the reorganization and it was forced on them. Overwhelmed because the department was under a heavy burden of deadlines for reports. Angry with herself for feeling helpless, with her staff for not being able to take care of themselves, with

her superiors for creating more problems with the reorganization, with the legislature for making demands without providing the resources, and with the general public for wanting only easy answers.

The manager was anxious, somewhat fearful of dealing with the staff. Her stomach knotted up. She thought about leaving for the day. Then she thought she would meet their anger with hers. She jumped to a series of conclusions, from firing them to their organizing a full-scale mutiny. Then she would lose her job.

"No, no, calm down." She thought "I'll take a minute to think." At this point, her blood pressure was up and her pulse rate very high. The manager called each of the staff and directed each one to organize his/her thoughts and meet with her in her office in fifteen minutes. She then took that time to calm herself down and let herself rest for a few moments before planning her strategy. The stressful event was not over, but the manager felt more in control now.

When the meeting occurred, the manager was still angry, but held it in. She accepted some responsibility for the mix-up in communications and laid some of the responsibility at the feet of the planners who failed to see these kinds of problems resulting from the reorganization. She did not make reference to what she perceived as childish behavior on the part of her staff. She received assurances from the three staff members that they could now work out the problem. She thanked them, dismissed them, and drank a bottle of Pepto-Bismol. She then talked about/complained about the problem with her co-managers, her husband, her bowling partner, and her dog.

1. **How would you describe the stressor?**

2. **Does the manager think about it a lot?**

3. **How does she feel about it?**

4. **Describe the duration and frequency of the stressor.**

5. **What reactions does the manager have?**

6. **What actions does she take?**

7. **Do you think they were appropriate?**

8. **Will she think they're appropriate?**

9. **How would you rate her stress management behavior?**

We asked ourselves the same questions. Here are our answers. We don't suggest ours are right and any that differ are wrong. We include them here for comparison and to stimulate thinking about stress management.

1. The stressor was conflict or disagreement for which the manager felt she was going to have to take responsibility.
2. She not only thinks about it a lot, she agonizes over it, before, during, and especially after the event.
3. She feels angry, resentful, unsure, helpless yet responsible.
4. The stressor appears occasionally and unpredictably. But from the manager's reaction and action, the stressor has meaning and makes demands on the manager continuously to greater or lesser degree and has been doing that for years.
5. The manager has a stomach ache, heightened blood pressure, nervousness. She wants to run away.
6. She uses quiet time to deal with her blood pressure as well as her need to run away. She structures the meeting to help her anxiety. She deliberately denies some of her own feelings (e.g., that her staff is acting childishly) so that the meeting will run more smoothly. She takes a drug to calm her stomach. She talks to her spouse and friends.
7. The actions themselves can be very useful and have probably worked very often. In this case, it does appear, however, that the manager may be overdoing a couple of her management techniques. Too much denial of her feelings or at least putting them on hold for too long can lead to an overuse of a drug. Furthermore, when those feelings are taken off hold, spouse and friends can be overwhelmed by them because they have been suppressed so long.

8. **The manager probably thinks that she is managing stress well and that it is not her management techniques that should be enhanced, but that these conflict and disagreement situations must go away. She even has a reputation for doing it well. But it is costing her a lot.**

9. **We would rate this manager as being very unhappy about her stress management behavior and also resentful that she has to think about it.**

Now, go on to Module C to find out if there is anything that the manager can do about handling this stress experience better.

MODULE C:

TIPS AND TECHNIQUES

Lately your friends have been telling you that you complain too much.

Every morning you feel sick right up to the time you leave for work.

You've been using more physical force with verbally abusive inmates than is really necessary.

Your running a tab at the tavern. You've never done that before.

If you have come here directly from Module B, you have had an opportunity to examine actions you take to manage stress and you have made judgments about their usefulness. You were able to identify and describe stress experiences that left you more or less dissatisfied.

If you discovered or recognized that some actions were not working for you (as in the above examples) the logical question becomes "What else can I do?"

If you had no problems, you may ask the same question in a preventative sense so that if a problem does occur you will have knowledge of alternative actions that can prevent a stress challenge from becoming a distressing experience.

"What else" is an exciting proposition. It can include more of the same, the same with some thoughtful twists, actions similar to what you're currently doing, and some very new and totally different behaviors. "What else" could be informal or formal, it could be something you used to do but forgot about, it could be something you've never thought of before.

This module is designed to expand your knowledge about ways to help yourself. There are many simple and straightforward actions a person can take but doesn't only because he never thought of them. There are also more complex activities that require substantial training and practice. These two kinds of actions will be explored here. The first kind makes up a set of informal, homespun, often intuitive, common sense tips for stress management. The second is a list with brief descriptions of more formal, technical and skill-based techniques.

The tips and techniques are not presented as necessarily being right or useful to you. They are for your consideration as possible alternatives to your current set of management behaviors. Both listings could be longer. The point is not to be complete, but expose you to possibilities which you may not have considered. You should understand that there are still other possibilities.

TIPS*

Job Related

1. **Do less! Resist too much overtime. "Super heroes" die young!**

2. **Do more, but do it differently! Give overtired parts of your mind and emotions a chance to rest. Let other parts work. Do different tasks on the job. Alternate paperwork with people-work; focus on different clients/residents, anything to avoid the routinized feeling that day after day you're going through the identical motions, as if you worked on an assembly line.**

3. **Don't get stuck on old problems. Sometimes sticking with a problem is not the answer, and it can be a form of self-punishment! Get away for a while; think about other things. You may well find that when you do come back to the job, you'll find renewed strength--and a solution generated subconsciously.**

4. **Expand your interests outside of work. Think differently about your job and how it fits into your total life. Don't define yourself entirely by your job, because when that starts to fall apart, your whole self-concept plummets. And in this line of work, we are naive and unrealistic if we expect that the job will be fulfilling 100 percent of the time.**

* This list of tips is based on a combination of collected insights garnered by Dr. Barbara Friedman of the Wisconsin Department of Health and Social Services, Division of Corrections, and Dr. Chris Dunning of the University of Wisconsin-Extension, Department of Governmental Affairs.

Develop new hobbies and interests. Get involved with new people or deliberately spend more time with old friends, even if you feel like you're forcing yourself to do it. The idea is to develop enough different sides of yourself so that when your job isn't as rewarding as you'd like it to be, at least you're getting some goodies from somewhere.

- 5. Get to know yourself better, especially the portion of yourself that relates to your job. Figure out what your surface and your deeper motivations are for wanting to work in corrections. What are you in this profession for? What do you get out of it? What are you not getting out of it that you expected you would? What underlies your degree and style of dedication? For example, are you motivated by a need to help others; a need for closeness with other people; a need for approval; a need to work off unconscious guilt; a need for power; a need to deny your own problems?**
- 6. Watch out for little fibs. "I'll snap out of it" or "It's them, not me" won't convince anybody--least of all yourself. It is much better to understand what's up. By bringing the problem out in the open you can often get rid of the little things that bug you!**
- 7. Pay continual attention to your own reactions to the clients/residents, and talk about this freely with carefully selected peers. Keep in touch with your own emotional needs. Share your self-doubts as well as your successes.**
- 8. Use your peers and colleagues for support, not just to ventilate, but to work as a group trying to figure out what you can do or change so you don't feel so helpless. Brainstorm up new solutions, share ones that have worked for you. This reduces your feeling of isolation, that you're**

alone with an overwhelming problem. It reinforces the feelings of "we-ness," that we're all in this often difficult situation together.

9. **Self-reinforcement** -- you can't depend on the system or on the residents for your rewards; systematically teach yourself to provide your own reinforcement. It can be material (buy yourself a new shirt or a hot fudge sundae for dealing with a difficult situation well) or verbal (tell yourself "hey, you did a nice job on that one!").
10. **Increase the level of praise floating around your work unit.** You and your coworkers must depend upon each other to reinforce each other. Recognize when you've done something well, or faced a tough situation; let the people you work with know it when you appreciate something they've done. This can get to be a pretty nice habit.
11. **Do something for someone else.** You may feel better about yourself once you've done a good turn for a friend. And this motivation will take your mind away from yourself.
12. **Give the other fellow a break.** Competition is contagious, but so is cooperation. When you become a little more flexible toward the other guy's desires, you very often make it easier for yourself. If he no longer feels you are a threat to him, he becomes much less of a threat to you.
13. **Laugh a lot.** Cultivate your sense of humor and use it on the job. Avoid the kind of sick humor that is easy to fall into in this line of work. It will just make you feel worse. The idea is to search to find the genuinely funny moments that pop up at odd times. Hang on to the good feelings, stretch them out, long after that moment is gone.

Focus on Family and Friends

1. **Don't be a nag. It won't relieve you, and it will make others miserable. When nagging your spouse, kids, friends, etc., aren't you really nagging yourself? The National Association of Mental Health thinks so: They say, "People who feel let down by the shortcomings (real or imagined) of those around them are really let down about themselves." So, if you get off their backs, you'll wind up getting off your own!**
2. **Share your problems with your family and friends but don't burden them with the responsibility for working out your problems. Don't give your spouse the impression she should somehow have the answers to your problems on the job.**
3. **"The Gilligan's Island Hour" -- get away from it all. Give yourself some personal decompression time between leaving work and facing the stimulation and pressure at home. The idea is to cut down on social stimulation for a brief time, float for a while, not have to respond to anyone. This could include sports, exercise, a beer after work (but don't abuse it), relaxation efforts while commuting, etc.**
4. **"Detached concern" -- this is the attitude we should all be working toward, caring about the clients and the job, but not so much that we start denying our own needs. Don't use so much energy at work that you haven't got any left for the folks you care about at home. It takes some heavy thinking to view the clients and our work this way. It's not easy, but it can be done -- and it helps.**

5. **Increase the level of praise floating around your home. Just as at work, you and your family have to depend upon each other to reinforce each other. Recognize when you have done something well, or faced a tough situation. Let the people you live with know when you appreciate something they've done.**

More Tips

1. **Don't hold problems inside yourself; talk is cheap (cheaper than a breakdown). Confide in someone you can trust (friend, spouse, doctor, or clergyman). You'll find that talking relieves strain -- and many times other people can help you to see what you can do about a problem. Because they are not as emotionally involved as you are, they may see things a little more clearly.**
2. **Figure out what things give your life meaning, make you feel fulfilled and satisfied. Determine which of these can or must be met at work and which can be met in the rest of your life. It might take a special effort and it might involve doing things differently from how you're doing them now. Be aware of the real danger of trying to get all your needs met at work.**
3. **Make the most of every bit of time away from the job. Use it calculatedly to recharge and refuel yourself. This includes lunch hours, work breaks, those moments when temporarily you are alone and the phone is quiet, as well as vacations and holidays. If necessary, it also includes sick days, leaves without pay, and mental health days.**

Deliberately plan family outings in advance so you can enjoy the anticipation as well as the actual event. Plan long and short trips, escape reading and movies, hobbies, sports, academic or vocational courses in the tech college or local adult education program

4. **Consider using a personal problem-solving strategy at times when you're facing so many problems big you feel overwhelmed.**

- a. **Identify the problem as clearly and specifically as possible. Break it down into the smallest parts. Sometimes several smaller problems are easier to manage than one big problem. Each one is handled with different strategies, mapping out plans for action and figuring out the actors you'll have to contend with;**
 - b. **Sort out what's in your power to change and what isn't;**
 - c. **Work on ways of accepting that which isn't in your power to change (e.g., heavy caseloads; very difficult residents) so you don't have to pay such a heavy price in worrying or being upset about them**
 - d. **Sort out what you really are responsible for and what you aren't (e.g., a resident's failure, your supervisor's behavior);**
 - e. **Refer back to (a) and actively figure out ways to approach those aspects of the problem you do have some control over.**
5. **Restructure your goals, downward if necessary. But do set goals! (Daily, weekly, yearly . . .) What do you want to accomplish by ?**
6. **Own up to your fears. Sometimes fear itself is what's fearful! Know how to find out? Con-front it! Admit it! We're all in the same boat. It is no disgrace to admit that at some time or other you have been afraid. Anyone who claims never to have known fear is trying to fool either himself or others.**

7. **Give in!** Not to temptations, but to other people. If you find that one of your problems is frequent quarrels with people, or that you often feel obstinate and defiant, remember that's the way frustrated children react. Stand your ground but with a grain of salt -- always remembering that just possibly you could turn out to be wrong. If you yield, others will too; and if you can work this out the result will be a relief from tension, along with a feeling of satisfaction.

8. **Give up the old shell game. Emerge!** To overcome a feeling of being left out, slighted, neglected, rejected, and all the other feelings of self-deprecation, go out and greet the world. Instead of sulking at home with old hurts for company, make yourself available to people. Make overtures. Don't just sit around waiting to be asked. But beware the opposite of withdrawal -- pushing forward on every occasion is a reverse evil -- it can lead to real rejection. There is a middle ground, but you have to be a little bit of a pioneer to find it.

9. **Perform vigorous physical exercise -- for short-term release of tension after a rotten day, and as a long-term health program -- anything that increases your energy level will help you deal more effectively with job stress and thereby combat burnout.**

Jogging, biking, swimming, skating, jumping rope, long walks, team sports are all good. The key is to do it regularly . . . and sensibly. Be considerate of your physical condition and age.

TECHNIQUES

Techniques for managing stress are different from tips because the techniques require more training and practice. In some cases a technique may also require sophisticated instruments and expert assistance. The techniques which are described here represent a few of many which are available to you. They are presented in order to stimulate your thinking toward trying something new, not because they are inherently better than any others.

The presentations seek only to make you aware of the techniques and some of their key features. We do not intend that the presentations will allow you to become proficient at any of the techniques which require development of new skills. References are provided -- you can go to them to learn more about any technique in which you are particularly interested.

These techniques are not necessarily directed toward the causes of stress; rather they are directed toward strengthening the capacity to manage stress more effectively.

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Relaxation techniques can include:

- 0 Meditation
- 0 Transcendental meditation
- 0 Benson's Relaxation Response
- 0 Yoga
- 0 Autogenic Training

o Progressive Muscle Relaxation

o Biofeedback

With so many ways of attacking tension you might think relaxation should be a snap. Or perhaps, it is because so many of us have so much difficulty relaxing that there are all these different techniques which focus on the same target. At any rate relaxation is a foundation technique to most stress management needs. A relaxed person is one who most closely approximates the posture of our stick man in the balanced position.

Meditation

Meditation is an exercise designed to corral and control your attention. The goal of controlling attention is the achievement of an altered state of consciousness in which the practitioner comes directly in touch with stimuli which ordinarily would first be processed through a screening and classification process. Concentration is a fundamental and essential feature of the meditative process which leads to deep relaxation.

There are numerous meditation schemes or forms. Transcendental Meditation (TM) is probably the best known and most widely practiced. TM has the potential to take you beyond wakeful experiences to a state of restfulness and renewal while at the same time achieving a heightened sense of alertness.

The technique for practicing TM calls for a Mantra (a monosyllabic word or sound). Repeating the mantra for twenty minutes, twice a day, morning and evening, under controlled conditions leads to the transcendental state. The mantra, which is chosen especially for the individual and is intended to be kept secret, is the critical and distinguishing characteristic of this form of meditation. (See references 2, 3, 4, 12, 13 at the end of this module.)

Another form of meditation which elicits the benefits of relaxation is Benson's "Relaxation Response." It requires less training and guidance than TM and can be practiced without a trainer.

The Relaxation Response* is a meditation/relaxation technique with four basic components (7):

1. A Quiet Environment - a place with few distractions.
2. A Mental Device - a sound, word or phrase repeated silently or aloud. The repetition of the word helps minimize distracting thoughts. Usually the eyes are closed or gazing steadily at an object. Attention to normal breathing rhythm enhances repetition of word or phrase.
3. A Passive Attitude - disregard distracting thoughts and attend to repetition of word. Don't worry about how well you are doing. Adopt a "let it happen" attitude. The passive attitude is the most important element in this technique. Distracting thoughts are to be expected; just return to repeating the word and disregarding the distractions.
4. A Comfortable Position - sit relaxed to reduce noticeable tension. Be comfortable.

The technique involves the following steps:

1. Sit quietly in a comfortable position.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Deeply relax all your muscles beginning at feet and progressing up to face. Keep them relaxed.

* From Benson, Herbert, M.D. The Relaxation Response. Morrow, 1975.

4. **Breathe through your nose. Be aware of your breathing. As you breathe out, say the word "One", silently to yourself. For example, breath IN . . . OUT, "One"; IN . . . OUT, "One", etc. Breathe easily and naturally.**
5. **Continue for 10 to 20 minutes. You may open your eyes to check the time, but do not use an alarm. When you finish, sit quietly for several minutes; at first with your eyes closed and later with your eyes open. Do not stand up for a few minutes.**
6. **Do not worry about whether you are successful in achieving a deep level of relaxation. Maintain a passive attitude and permit relaxation to occur at its own pace. When distracting thoughts occur, try to ignore them by not dwelling on them and return to repeating "One." Practice the technique once or twice daily, but not within two hours after any meal.**

Yoga, Autogenic Training, and Progressive Muscle Relaxation are three other approaches to achieving relaxation with a meditative format but with a greater involvement of muscles.

Yoga has a long history of decreasing stress through a combination of mental and physical activity. Yoga aims to unite the mind with the body in order to achieve an inner tranquility. Yoga involves various bodily postures with breathing exercises. In hatha yoga, there are a number of "positions" through which you can progress from simple to complex. Each position is designed to increase the mobility and suppleness of your entire body or a particular part of your body. This is done gradually and with measured bits of effort. Pain is not a feature of yoga as some have been led to believe. If pain is experienced in a particular position, it is a sound indicator that you are not ready for that position. You should stop and begin again with a slow progression to that position. (2, 3, 13)

Autogenic Training is a deep relaxation technique that combines specific exercises and autohypnosis. The exercises are designed to teach people to experience a generalized feeling of warmth throughout the body and a feeling of heaviness in the torso and limbs. These feelings would then result in less fatigue and tension. There are six stages of exercises involving the limbs, the heart, the respiratory system, the abdominal region and finally the forehead. After a few months of practice it is not unusual to be able to advance through all six steps in a matter of minutes. (2, 3)

Progressive Muscle Relaxation promotes the notion that by learning to relax muscles through directed exercises you can relax mentally as well. This technique is based on the concept that by first tensing a muscle and then releasing it, you can induce a more relaxed state in that muscle.

The practitioner begins with rhythmic deep breathing and thinks of a tranquil scene. Each time he exhales, he imagines tension is flowing out from his body. He then begins to direct his attention to the muscles of the right hand. He clenches his right hand for about seven seconds. He becomes aware of the tension in his hand and forearm. Now he relaxes completely and immediately -- not gradually. He notices the difference between the tense state and the relaxed state. He enjoys the relaxed state for thirty to forty seconds before clenching his fist again. Now he moves to his right bicep and repeats the cycle. The left fist and bicep are next followed by the forehead and the remaining major muscle groups from head to toe. (2, 3, 13)

Biofeedback is an example of a technique which requires not only training and practice but machinery as well. It is designed to provide the user with help in controlling the automatic functions of the autonomic nervous system, which we now know can be controlled with your mind. A biofeedback machine provides information on how much stress may be affecting a certain part of your body. Blood pressure, heart rate, brain wave activity, muscle tension, or sweating can all

be affected by stress. Each of these can be measured by a biofeedback machine which records the degree to which stress is affecting it. This measurement is usually fed back to you by a tone. The louder the tone, the more severe the reaction. The lower the tone, the less severe the reaction is. The user is trained to lower the activity of a function and thus reduce the impact of stress.

When used in stress-related problems, biofeedback is preferably supplemented by one or more of the relaxation techniques already described. The biofeedback machine helps you to control for specific functions and while it is well targeted for such disorders as hypertension, it is most effective as a stress management technique when integrated with other techniques. (1, 2, 8, 13)

PHYSICAL EXERCISE

When preparing for an athletic contest, the coach of one team will often identify the strengths of the opposing team and organize his game strategy to attack those strengths. Physical exercise is itself a stress. Using physical exercise to attack stress is similar to the coach's strategy.

Physical exercise is an important change of pace activity. It requires effort on some parts of your mind and body while at the same time allowing other parts rest. More important, in its proper application it develops cardiovascular fitness and all around physical stamina. When you consider that cardiovascular disease is a major killer in this country, you can appreciate how important physical exercise is.

The goals' of physical exercise are to improve the efficiency of the lungs, increase the supply of blood for carrying oxygen, lower blood pressure, create additional blood vessels, and strengthen the heart muscle. To do this, the exercise must be rhythmic and sustained for fifteen to twenty minutes; it must raise your heart rate by about two

thirds of normal; and the exercise must be performed a minimum of three times per week.

There are several cautions related to physical exercise which have been listed by Jere Yates in Managing Stress. (3)

1. Get a thorough physical examination, perhaps including an EKG stress test.
2. Take it easy; don't try to get in shape overnight.
3. Always warm up before beginning -- a minute or two should be sufficient.
4. Don't overexert yourself. Monitor your pulse and slow down if it goes up too much. Heed warning signs such as pain in the chest, breathlessness, dizziness and nausea.
5. Vigorous exercise is best done several times a week or not at all.
6. When finishing your exercise, gradually taper off by observing a five minute cooling-down period.
7. If your heart rate doesn't return to within 10 beats of your normal resting rate within 15 minutes after you stop exercising completely, reduce the vigor of your activity the next time.
8. Keep plenty of fluids in your body.
9. Don't exercise at all if you are ill.
10. If you jog, wear good shoes; try to jog on grass; and don't jog downhill because it's terribly hard on your knees.

11. After a heavy meal, wait two hours before exercising.

ASSERTIVENESS TRAINING

Inability of a person to express his feelings to others is often the root of distress and personal problems. Assertiveness training is designed to improve communication skills in order to more effectively pursue our interests, exploit opportunities, and to live more emotionally rewarding lives. The training begins by helping a person to specify the where, when, what, whom and how of a problem situation. Training goals are then targeted with a focus on new behaviors. The problem situation is then simulated using group members to role play significant participants in the problem. Particular attention is paid to eye contact, facial expression, voice tone and intensity, posture, ancillary body motion and speech content. The group provides feedback to the individual trainee with emphasis on positive feedback. The trainee is then directed to practice critical behavioral options in real-life situations. Group assessment and approval continues through subsequent sessions. (5, 13)

This module has introduced and briefly described many types and techniques for managing stress. No one of them can be seen as a cure all. No one of them may even be useful to your unique and personal stress experience. -Nevertheless, it is hoped that through this presentation you will have acquired some information that will help you increase your options and your potential to manage stress more effectively.

As a closing exercise to this module and in preparation for the next, please complete the following tasks.

List three tips and two techniques you now use.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

List three tips and two techniques you would like to try.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

List three tips and two techniques that you definitely will not try.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Think about the five you would like to try. Is there anything they have in common that you find appealing?

Think about the five you will not try. What is it about them that makes you not want to try them?

In the next module, we'll look at some ways to determine how to choose a new stress management technique.

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MODULE D:

MAKING A MATCH

In the previous three modules, we have moved from understanding stress, to understanding our own stress, to a consideration of a number of stress management options. Before we discuss steps to a practical application of stress management, we should briefly explore how we can make a match between our stress management needs and available stress management techniques.

Consider the following case:

An inmate in the House of Corrections has been assigned to "H" block, a detention area for inmates who have violated the institution's rules by physical or verbal abuse of officers or other inmates. The prisoner has refused to move. The correctional officers have given the inmate several options already which would allow him to save face while advancing to "H" block. They have now called for backup. It is beginning to look like they will have to physically deliver this inmate to his cell.

This incident occurred in the hearing room. There are other prisoners and guards witnessing the developments.

The inmate is now confronted by six officers. Two of the officers were assigned the task of moving the inmate to the restricted area as a result of a disciplinary hearing. The other four have arrived as backup. The inmate has just declared "There's no way you're going to move me, you"

The corrections officers all experience a series of feelings -- many of them the same, some unique. One officer feels a shooting sense of exhilaration. The confrontation has a certain amount of excitement about it. At the same time, the officer feels a sense of guilt. He feels he shouldn't take any pleasure in this.

When the inmate tells the officers that they can't move him, he offers them an interesting challenge. When he adds a few abusive terms, he touches off some self-righteous anger that allows guilt feelings to be overlooked.

The guards are now on alert. One officer feels his chest tighten, his pulse quicken; he begins to sweat, his body is poised to act. He is prepared to meet resistance with superior force. His energy is concentrated on the prisoner. That is when the prisoner says "C'mon, can't you guys take no joke?" and turns to walk toward "H" block.

What do you do with all that energy that has been brought to bear and focused on a threat of physical violence? Anger and relief compete with each other for your attention. The officers could provoke the inmate and thus achieve some release. They could be verbally abusive of the prisoner. They could escort him to his cell and then bounce him off the wall a few times. What would you do?

These backup officers looked at one another, shrugged their shoulders, and left. The two assigned to take the inmate to his cell did so. After they returned to their stations, one of them said to the other, That really got to me. I was ready to knock his @#*\$&& block off," he added as he slammed his fist into the wall. "There, now I feel a little better."

The above situation repeats itself several times a day, in several different places, at different degrees of intensity. It is a kind of tease. We do it to each other, our spouses, our supervisors, our clients. They do it to us. Sometimes it's intentional like in the example, and sometimes it is unintentional -- for example, false alarms around layoffs. No matter, we confront an impending life threatening or status threatening situation and our whole biological and psychological system responds. The most basic response according to some authors is a "fight" or "flight" response.

The fight/flight dichotomy is a useful tool for describing what happens when a person is confronted with a threat (or stressor). Basically, fight/flight is a built-in physiological and psychological response which assists an individual to escape or overcome a threat. It is the same response that brought man through life threatening situations where he was first in competition with nature, other animals, and then with himself.

However, as threats from nature became more controlled and threats from each other became more likely, rules were established which circumvented the natural response of fight or flight. Thus you have the situation above in which the corrections officers are constrained by formal guidelines and strictures from attacking the prisoner, and an even stronger set of informal rules prohibits them from fleeing the scene.

Take some time now and think about situations in which you would like to have attacked or fought but couldn't. Here are some that might help you get started.

When you were a child, your teacher insulted you.

You knew the right way to do something, but your supervisor pulled rank on you.

You just arrived at home after a bad day that included being berated by your boss and your spouse says "Take out the garbage."

Write some of your experiences with being prevented from fighting here:

Now think about the times you wanted to run away. Did kids ever laugh at you in school? Have you ever worried about being taken hostage? Did your family ever make so many demands on you you wanted to disappear?

Write some of your experiences with flight feelings here:

When you weren't able to fight or run, how did you feel? Frustrated, angry, about to blow up? Did your pulse quicken, heart beat faster, breathing come harder? What do you do for yourself at these times? Pretend it's not important? Drink? Kick the dog?

One thing you can be sure of is that you need to find a way to follow-up, in as natural and logical a way as possible, your biological and psychological response to fight or flight. The corrections officer in the example did this by letting off steam with his partner when they had reached a place where letting off steam would not lead to larger problems. Had he not found an outlet for all that pent up energy, he would become a likely candidate for problems such as headaches or stomach disorders. Here is where we can help each other a lot. If the officer's partner had tried to cap the letting off of steam, he would not be helping his partner but would be working against him. Finding ways to help each other, be it for spouses, partners, supervisors and staff, is a fundamentally sound approach to dealing with the fight/flight response.

The fight/flight response is one explanation of stress that can help us make useful judgments about the application of a stress management technique. We may decide added exercise of a competitive nature (e.g., tennis) or a transfer of energy (e.g., cutting logs) would be best for dealing with a fight response. On the other hand, swimming laps or walks in the forest may be more useful for a flight response. In any case, you should seek or choose an outlet that is, in your mind, a logical and natural outcome of the fight/flight response.

Fight/flight alone cannot explain enough about stress to be the sole guiding principle for selecting stress management techniques. In fact, one of the exciting aspects of all the attention stress is receiving is that there are so many

perspectives that can be brought to bear on the subject that new insights become available all the time.

Another framework for decisionmaking that we have found very useful, is Alan McLean's notion that stress symptoms arise from a complicated interaction of stressors with one's own individual vulnerability* and the work environment (or "context"). Dr. McLean has developed a survey which reveals some information regarding how well you know yourself, what the limits of your interests are, the variety of your reactions to stressors, your acceptance of other's values, and how active and productive you are. A second survey examines your job satisfaction in terms of the context of work. A third survey concentrates on particular stressors on the job. Scores from all three surveys lead to a composite picture of where you are on that particular day in relation to the identified sets of stressors. The output from the lists suggest directions you can take in managing stress that is related to personal vulnerability, context, or specific stressors.**

The notions of vulnerability, context, i.e., the work environment and stressor are useful anywhere, not only on the job. When you are making a decision about trying a new stress management technique or intensifying an old one, consider what your stress experience means in terms of the three aspects of this model.

* Vulnerability refers to a person's weaknesses in the face of particular stressors. For example, a person's slight physical stature may make physical confrontations more stress-provoking for that person than for the person with a large physical stature.

** See Work Stress. Alan McLean, M.D. Addison-Wesley. Reading, MA, 1979, pages 123-136.

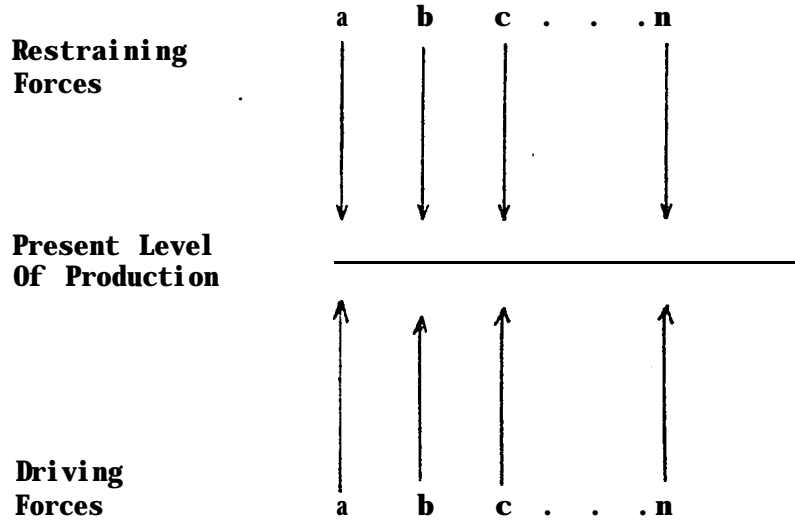
For example, the "Peter Principle" suggests that a person advances to a level of incompetency within organizations. Some people also refer to a "Paul Principle" which suggests that you do not have to advance at all to become incompetent. Your job and the organization around you can change in such a fashion that your skills and training become either obsolete or there is no opportunity to use them. You become particularly vulnerable. Your chances for changing the intensity of this stressor are slim because of your own pride in professionalism and the chance for changing the organization is even slimmer. You must, therefore, consider making yourself less vulnerable. One way may be to become more assertive and demand training support that is consistent with your new responsibilities.

If personal vulnerability isn't the principal problem (it has to be part of it though) but context is, you may choose a strategy that helps you leave job problems at the job. If it is more of a particular stressor, like one of your fellow officers, you may choose a strategy that gives you more energy to deal with that stressor when it is present and to let it rest when it isn't.

Another useful model that supports accurate allocation of stress management resources and the acquisition of new resources is Force Field Analysis. Force Field Analysis is a model of change which portrays behavior in an institution as a dynamic balance of forces working in opposite directions. Perhaps an example will help you see how this notion can be consistent with our definition of stress.

The production level of a work team in a factory is offered as an example of how force field analysis works. The team performance fluctuates within narrow limits above and below a certain number of units of production per day. The pattern is persistent because the forces that would tend to raise production are equal to the forces that would tend to decrease it.

The forces that could increase production are called Driving Forces (assuming that increased production is the desired outcome). Those that tend to inhibit increases are called Restraining Forces. The figure below illustrates the situation.



An example of a Driving Force might be the pressure of a supervisor on the work team to produce more. An example of a Restraining Force could be feelings of the work team that the product they are producing is not important.

The ideas of Driving and Restraining Forces can be applied to your own stress management techniques. If you have decided that you want to make an adjustment in your stress management style, it is useful to examine what it is that got you where you are and what it is that's keeping you there. This should be done before you try to adopt a new technique.

Experience suggests that increasing Driving Forces can get you some short-term gains but can cost you in the long run. The Restraining Forces will spring back as soon as you let up on the Driving Forces; or, the Restraining Forces may get stronger in response to the increased Driving Force. Sometimes new Restraining Forces appear. In short, what often results when you just increase Driving Forces is a situation with a whole lot more pressure, but no substantial movement. The increased pressure may become a time bomb just waiting to explode. On the other hand, just working on reducing the Restraining Forces may lead to no change. The best results occur if you pay attention to changing both Driving and Restraining Forces.

Let's say you are a parole officer and you want have an appointment to meet a parolee in his own home. On the way to the home, you remember the last time you met a parolee in his home. When you arrived, you were met at the door by one of his friends and told to "%*\$ &!@." You felt fear, anxiety, and uncertainty, not to mention a threat to your safety. When the person you came to see told you to come in and led you to the kitchen, it was through a group of more of his friends who struck belligerent postures and made threatening and abusive remarks. You became uptight, nervous, and cautious in your speech. These all added to your sense of risk.

When you left, you decided that this aspect of your job wasn't worth it. From now on, you would stay off "their" turf. The problem however, is that there are times when you must go into their territory and there are times when it is useful and helpful. What can you do about your stress reaction though? Clearly you are feeling a need for

flight. You are vulnerable. The context is especially troublesome. And the exposure to bad vibes is unnerving. What could somebody do about it?

**Talk it over with your supervisor;
Talk it over with fellow officers;
Become more assertive;
Avoid the situation altogether;
Build more controls into the situation;
Suppress any fearful thoughts;
Suppress any memories of a bad experience;
Quit your job.**

These are some of the things that could be done. Take a couple minutes and think of some other things that you could do in this circumstance to alleviate your stress or, if you can't alleviate it, cope with it. Add your ideas to the list.

Your state of anxiety may be the result of forces that say you must go into these situations to do your job, that risks are part and parcel of the job, and that the client cannot be served well any other way. Other forces are telling you that you are in danger, that you can't expose a weakness, and that you must not take too many precautions or you'll look like you're afraid.

These Forces, which for the most part reflect expectations and understandings of how we view ourselves, are not all negative. But they take on a negative cast when they prevent us from helping ourselves. They can restrict our arsenal of management techniques to those which we have always used and which are no longer working. At the same time they can prevent us from learning or acquiring new techniques. Thus, we can often end up overdoing a technique like suppressing our feelings of fear.

Any of the techniques or strategies listed above are available. However, they may or may not be useful; and, they may or may not be accessible. How then can you determine which techniques will be most useful and which will be most accessible?

A quick force field analysis can help you decide which strategies might be useful -- and how. Actually, three separate force field analyses can be performed: 1) An analysis of the forces driving your stress level up and those holding it under control; 2) an analysis of the usefulness of each alternative strategy (or combination of strategies) in modifying the stress situation (by increasing or decreasing the stress level's driving/restraining forces); and 3) an analysis of the accessibility of each strategy -- in terms of whether or not you could actually use it in the given circumstances.

First, look at the stress situation. What "level" are we concerned about? The level(s) of stress reaction! Which stress reactions? Fear! Anxiety! Uncertainty! Anger (with yourself, your job, your client, your supervisor, the situation, the world)! Frustration (at your lack of control, at feeling this way over and over)!

What are the driving forces? McLean's Vulnerability/Context/Stressor model can be helpful in analysing the forces involved. Principally, the driving forces are the stressors and any factors which affect the strength of the stressors. Remember to distinguish the stressors (causes) from the stress reactions (results).

The main stressor is simply the fact that you have to meet the parolee. The strength of this as a stressor is directly affected by the context in which it takes place. "Context" includes both the overall context of the job and the immediate context of the meeting (stressor). These contextual factors might include:

The specific location of the meeting;

The time of the meeting;

The presence/absence of others;

The attitudes and demeanor of others present;

The absence of any backup support;

Difficulty of escape in the event of trouble;

The frequency of exposure to this situation;

Censure if you don't go;

Policies and rules defining how you must do your job;

The attitudes and behavior of your supervisor or peers.

Whether these are regarded as additional stressors, or simply as factors affecting the basic stressor is not important. The main issue is that they all are (at least potentially) forces making the stress experience more intense and driving the level of stress reaction higher.

Similarly, the strength of the stressor or stress reactions can be affected by such personal vulnerability factors as:

Your level of self confidence;

Your physical size, strength and sex;

Your satisfaction/dissatisfaction with the level of control/noncontrol you have over the situation;

How you feel today;

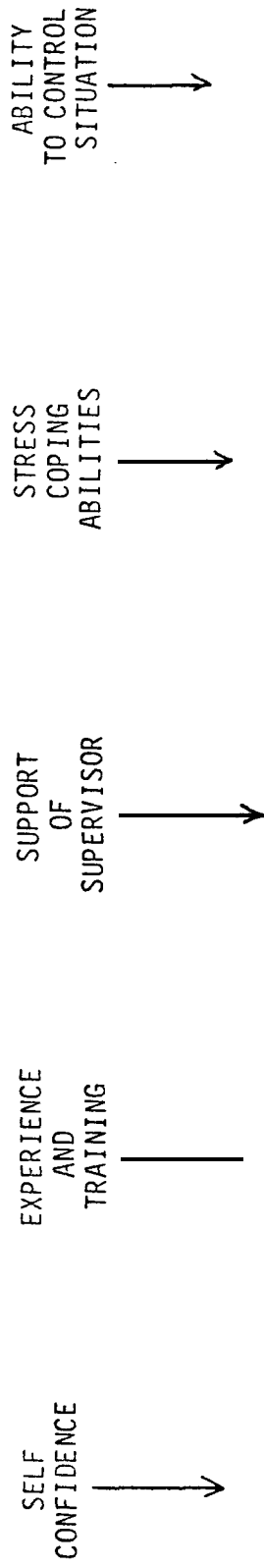
What happened at home this morning;

Your experience and training;

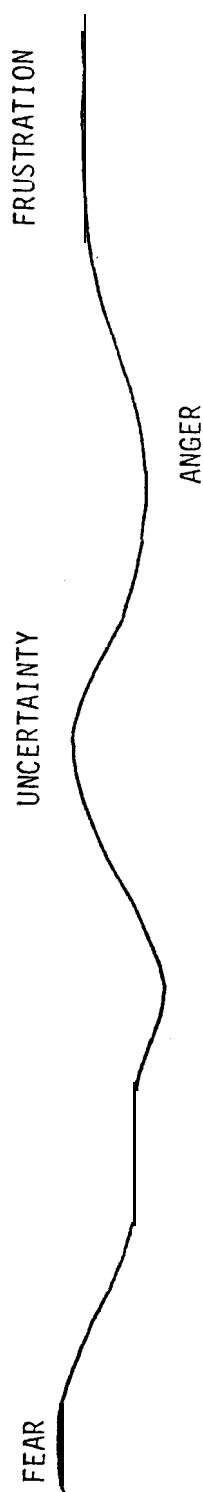
Your stress coping ability.

If we draw a picture, it will look something like the figure on the next page. Feel free to add (or delete) to this figure if you think of other forces.

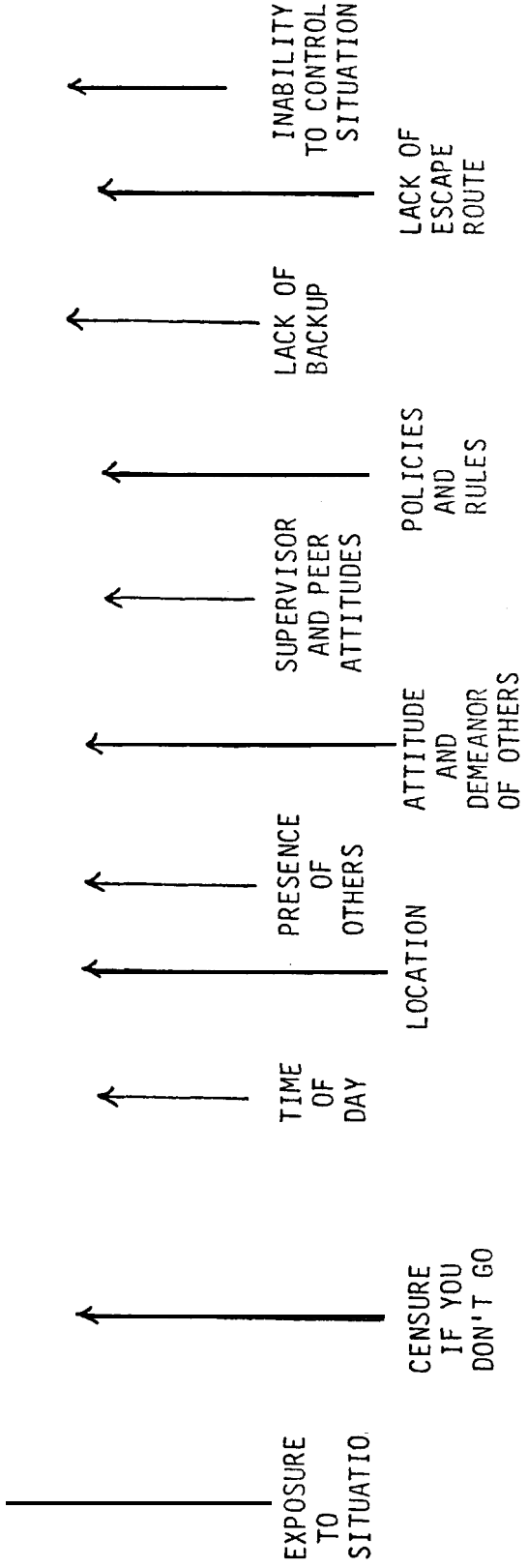
RESTRAINING FORCES



STRESS REACTION LEVELS



DRIVING FORCES



Now, consider the usefulness of each potential strategy. Again, force field analysis can help. What "level" are we concerned about? The level of usefulness of a particular stress management strategy!

What are the "forces" affecting the usefulness of that strategy? One way of answering this question is to consider how it affects each of the forces in the previous figure. A strategy's usefulness is increased if it helps hold the level of stress reaction down -- that is, if it increases the restraining forces or decreases the driving forces affecting the level of stress reaction. Conversely, a strategy's usefulness is reduced if it increases the stress reactions' driving forces or decreases the restraining forces.

Thus, we need to consider the effect of each of our potential strategies upon each of the forces in the "stress reaction" force diagram. This could get out of hand -- doing force diagrams for each force, ad infinitum. Actually, in practice, it can all be done a little less formally and rigorously than that. You can usually identify the least likely useful strategies very quickly with just a little thinking about them (It helps if this thinking is done with a force field analytic frame of mind.) Then the remaining strategies can be considered more carefully.

For our example, let's choose the strategy of avoiding the situation altogether. We have started a force diagram on the next page. Take a few minutes and add to it.

STRATEGY: AVOID THE SITUATION

RESTRAINING FORCES

POLICIES

I'LL LOOK AFRAID

PEER REACTIONS

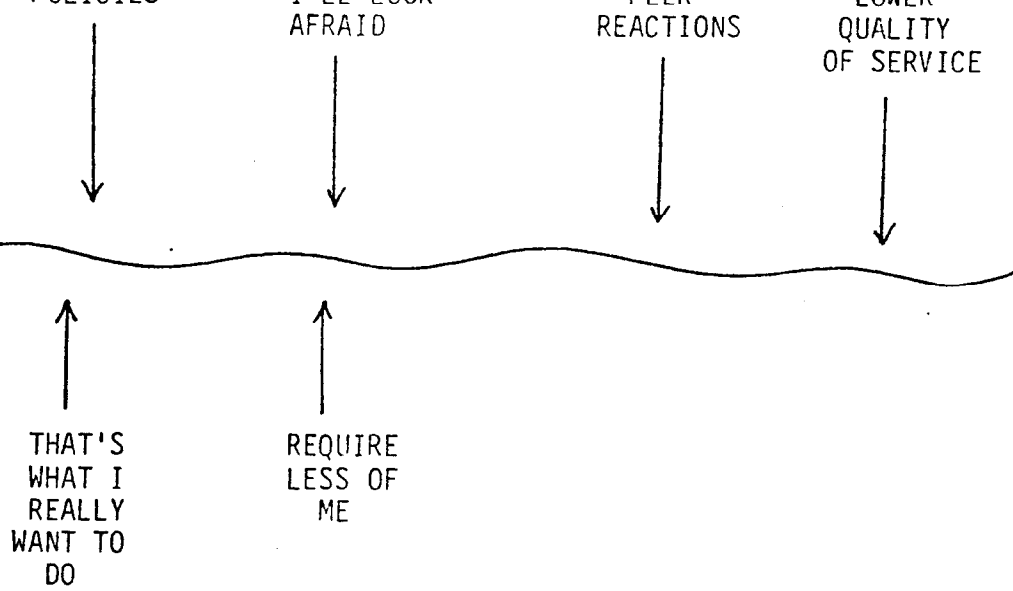
LOWER QUALITY OF SERVICE

USEFULNESS LEVEL

DRIVING FORCES

THAT'S WHAT I REALLY WANT TO DO

REQUIRE LESS OF ME

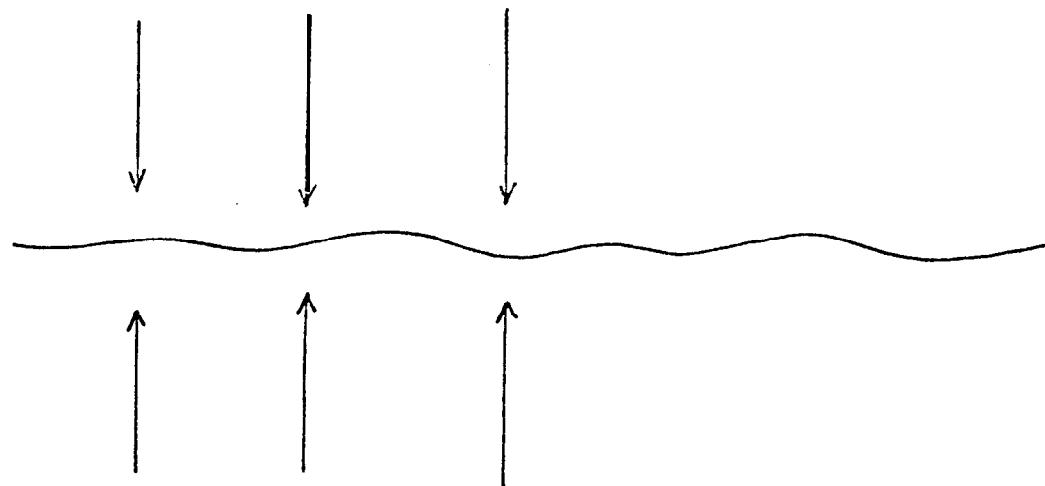


STRATEGY: _____

RESTRAINING FORCES

USEFULNESS LEVEL

DRIVING FORCES



Pick another strategy. Pick one you think would be useful. Do a force field analysis and draw a force diagram on the second chart on the previous page.

Well, does the strategy look like it would be useful? (We will assume the answer is "yes.")

The next step is to consider the accessibility of the useful strategies. Can you actually use them in your circumstances? On the next page, we have begun a force diagram to help answer this question. "Level" is the level of accessibility -- that is, high accessibility or low accessibility depending on whether you could actually use it in your particular circumstances.

We have indicated some forces. You should add or delete as you see fit. Then you have to decide about the relative strength of the forces and where the opposing forces will balance each other out. Is the equilibrium level indicating high accessibility or low accessibility?

RESTRAINING FORCES

EFFORT
IGNORANCE OF SKILL
CLIENT/
PEER/SUPERVISOR
PRESSURE
RULES
SELF
IMAGE
FAMILY/
FRIENDS
PRESSURE

LEVEL OF
STRATEGY'S
ACCESSIBILITY

NEED
USEFULNESS
PERCEIVED
BENEFITS
PEER/
SUPERVISOR
SUPPORT
FAMILY/
FRIENDS
SUPPORT
ACCESS & EASE
TO INCREASE
KNOWLEDGE/
SKILLS

DRIVING FORCES

That wraps up the example. This discussion on Force Field Analysis can be summed up by saying that knowing about techniques to help yourself is not enough. You also need to pay attention to what keeps you from trying certain techniques and that in itself will help you clear up the stress experience problems and improve the focus of your stress management efforts.

Summary Exercise:

Go back to the list of stress experiences that you felt you would like to improve upon.

A. Describe three of them in terms of your personal vulnerability, the context in which it occurs, and the intensity of the stressor involved.

1.

2.

3.

6. Describe each one in terms of a fight/flight response.

1 .

2.

3.

C. Pick a strategy for dealing with each that you feel most comfortable with.

1.

2.

3.

D. Now pick one strategy that you had previously listed as unavailable to you for each one. Or pick one that wasn't listed but you know you wouldn't be interested in.

Describe what Driving Forces prevent you from using that strategy.

Describe what Restraining Forces prevent you from using that strategy.

Consider how you might be able to adopt this technique in order to increase your arsenal of weapons against distress.

MODULE E:

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

"I just got dumped on by my supervisor for doing a good job. My reward is that I get to take Olson's caseload while he's in the hospital. Great! This will probably put me there soon, too. Besides that, I'm flunking this course I'm taking at night school. The prof has it in for anybody with any real life experience. One of my kids is in trouble at school again; another one is sick. Naturally, he's the one with the morning paper route. Then, on my way home from work, my car had a flat tire. I wanted to dynamite it."

By now, we know that stress is a complex and tricky issue to sort out. How it affects us and what we do about it can take many forms. Stress management techniques won't fix flat tires, but they may keep us from losing our cool and blowing up our cars.

Management is the key. In the earlier modules, we examined how we could tell if we had a stress management problem as well as how to describe the problem. We also looked at several formal and informal ways of dealing with stress. And if you read Module D, you will have noticed there are helpful guidelines to choosing the most appropriate technique when there are so many to choose from. In this module, we'll take the next step, i.e., putting it together and into practice. Actually we'll take seven steps. The seven-step plan consists of the following:

1. Use quiet time;
2. Fully describe the stress experience;
3. Place the stress experience in a larger context;
4. Assign ownership;
5. Assign and/or acquire resources;
6. Formulate a simple strategy;
7. Evaluate.

This plan assumes:

- A. You have some sense of the value of managing stress and controlling distress;**
- B. You have identified a stress experience that you have decided could be managed better;**
- C. You are not experiencing a crisis but you are concerned. For our purposes here, we mean that you are not out of control (crisis) and in need of intervention by others to help you regain or reestablish control.**

First we will describe the steps; then we will illustrate them with an example; then we will give you a chance to try the steps yourself. We'll begin with the description.

Let's look at each step.

1. Quiet Time

This is a paradoxical step. It is the easiest and it is the hardest. It doesn't ask much of you; yet so many of you are going to say that it is impossible to get quiet time. Perhaps that is testimony to how important it really is.

The quiet time we are speaking of here is not the same thing as meditation or relaxation exercises. It's good old daydreaming. Once you have identified a stress problem for yourself, give yourself a break. Be quiet. Think new thoughts. Set some time aside during which your attention is not focused. Let your mind wander. Let all kinds of thoughts float across your mental landscape. Let those thoughts have whatever feelings come with them

Do not use this time for planning. Do not set goals and objectives. Above all, do not try to solve any problems. If some solutions to problems come into your head, play with them. Do not commit to them . . . yet. If you commit to them, you will become focused. You will block out other ideas. The same thing happens if you use the time for planning and goal setting. You will cheat yourself out of some of your best ideas.

Quiet time should be a refreshing time. It should allow parts of your brain to rest while it turns on other parts. If you concentrate on the problem(s) that you're working on, it will get to be like chewing gum. You work the problem over and over in your head until it's sore, just like your jaw after chewing gum. It also gets very boring.

You can even combine your mental refreshment with physical refreshment. If you're cooped up inside all day, go for a walk or take a hike in the woods and daydream there. That exercise can get some muscles working that weren't before and allows others to relax.

Daydreaming doesn't have to take very long either. There are a lot of thoughts that would like to get your attention if you'd only give them a minute. But since we're all so busy, we block a lot of good ideas out. Actually, you can have this kind of quiet time while walking to the store, waiting for a bus, or taking a shower. It also doesn't matter if you get interrupted during it. Just relax with it. If someone wants your attention, give it to them. You can get back to your daydreaming again without losing anything.

Quiet time used this way is useful for several reasons:

- 0 It can be refreshing;**
- 0 It can provide us with new insights;**
- 0 It helps us be open to new possibilities;**
- 0 It helps to keep us from committing to a solution too soon.**

2. Full Description

This step, as with most of the rest, also requires some quiet time, but with a little more disciplined focus. It basically follows the skeletal outline of Module B, in terms of what the stressor is, under what conditions does it occur, and who is involved.

3. The Context

The next thing to do, once you're satisfied you have a good description, is to consider all of the other stress experiences you have that are important to you. If you are going to be a good stress manager, you need a good view of the whole picture. What other demands are being made on your resources now? Is this particular stress experience as important as all the others? How much energy should you be putting here when there are other needs as well.

Sometimes little things can be very upsetting, either because of the cumulative effects of all stressors or because we can't understand why we aren't handling the one little thing with ease. When this happens we blow it out of proportion compared to other things going on in our lives. It is a question of targeting our energies to get the most out of them. We may decide after looking at all of the demands on us that this particular stress experience must be dealt with and dealt with now. Or we could decide that several other stressors should be addressed first -- not because they are more important, but because we are more likely to be successful. And successes can build up our energy resources to the point where we can deal better with the stressor which we have chosen to avoid for the moment.

4. Ownership

How much of the stressor belongs to you? We already know that you own the stress reaction. But the stressor itself may be shared. Your own stress reaction may be lessened when you realize that a particular stressor is not fully your responsibility. Recognizing the degree to which you are or are not responsible for creating the stress situation is a key to understanding and accepting it. That recognition is also essential to developing any plans for managing the stress experience. YOU may or may not have much control over the stressor. If you don't have control don't waste your energies trying to change it. Adopt a strategy aimed at coping or changing the context. Also, recognize that your resources may not be adequate at the moment to meet all the demands of the stressor.

An example would help here. Let's say you are a probation officer and your caseload has not only increased but you have more clients who are mentally disturbed than you ever had before. Yet your department's expectations and your own professional standards have not changed in the face of dramatically increased demands. You are experiencing severe physical and psychological reactions. You have headaches and dizziness. You can't seem to shake a cold. You're feeling generally irritable. You're having trouble trusting anyone. You're tempted to cut corners but feel guilty about doing so. You spend many anxious moments worrying when you absolutely must cut corners.

The stress reaction is all yours and it is that reaction you have the most control over. The stressor, which is a combination of societal pressures and your own professional definition, is not all yours. Understanding that you are not responsible for the increase in caseload and that you are not responsible for your current limitations to serve so many mentally disturbed persons can help you understand what are reasonable expectations and measures of your professional self (i.e., how to rate your performance without either being too hard or too soft on yourself).

Part of the stress reaction is related to the conflict between who you think you want to be or ought to be versus the information you are receiving about who you are. This is true of nearly all stress experiences. In this case, you have accepted certain criteria which let you know you are professional and you are doing a good job. These worked in the past. The criteria included items such as "so many persons on probation were helped in these many ways." But you can no longer use those same measures because the size and nature of your caseload has changed substantially.

If you understand then that the stressor is really very different from what it used to be and that you have very little control over it, you can focus your energies toward what it means to act professionally given this new set of circumstances and begin to manage your stress better by understanding your limits as well as potential with regard to this stressor.

5. Resources

Now is the time to consider what it will take to produce a positive adjustment to your current stress management methods. Do you do more of what you were doing? Do you do what you were doing plus something new? Or do you eliminate for now old methods and replace them with new? And can you add or replace resources given your current set? Perhaps you will first have to acquire some new information or skills in order to use a new technique.

Remember, there are a lot of options available, but that doesn't make them accessible. You may have to change how you view yourself in order to access a technique that you now see would be useful. During your quiet time, you might play with how you could try some of the things you had thought you couldn't or wouldn't do. Very often we count on our friends and loved ones as resources. But we must remember that they experience stress too -- their own and what we bring them. So be considerate and don't

take them for granted. In fact, helping them with their stress can be a great help in managing your own.

6. Simple Strategy

This step is critical. A simple, straightforward strategy with small victories built into it is a good foundation for increasing your management potential. Review the Driving and Restraining Forces. Consider your own vulnerability and the context of the stressor. Then devise a plan that includes some behaviors you know you can be successful with and some that you aren't quite as sure about. Devise some efforts that will address the stress experience directly. For example, plan on cutting back on how much you drink after an argument with your spouse. At the same time, adopt a strategy that deals in a general way with your relationship with your spouse after work by purposefully engaging a decompression exercise after work. "Decompression exercise" is a term that is used to describe techniques for leaving work problems at work. If you do this, you will be able to share your work interests with your spouse but not make your spouse or family the brunt of any unresolved bad work experiences.

A simple strategy should also include some details. Don't simply tell yourself you will do better. Identify some specific goals, what it is you will do to attain them, how it is different from what you have been doing, when you will do it, where you will do it, and who you will do it with. Think about how the actions you have chosen to do will contribute to the outcome you desire. Set a starting time and begin.

7. Evaluation

Keep on top of how you're doing. Is what you're trying helping? How much? Are you giving it a fair chance? What is it costing you to manage this stress experience the way you are? Is it worth

it? Are there any hidden costs? Maybe it's working great for you but causing a lot of grief for friends and loved ones? Sometimes we can get so "into" a stress management technique that we don't notice what it does to some of our important relationships. Just as it is possible to find temporary relief in drinking or drugs that cost us greater distress in other parts of our lives, it is possible to overcommit to any of the stress management methods we have described. This results in a kind of goal displacement in which the means becomes the end.

Here is a sample case. See if you can walk through the seven steps with it.

You work in a community-based institution. The facility is understaffed. Turnover is severe. Every three or four weeks you become liable for an extended shift. You know it's going to happen, but you don't know when. When the captain tells you you have to stay on because someone has called in sick, you have no choice. After you have served your extra duty, you are incredibly relieved for three or four weeks when you know your turn has come up again. You resent that you can't make plans, that you never know in enough time to make proper arrangements. Why don't they hire adequate staff? You know that the person who called in sick really isn't. How come when you're up and you have an engagement, no one will ever swap extended duty time with you? You like your job, but you really hate this aspect of it. Actually, this part of the job may make you quit. Every time you come to work during that period when you might have to pull another shift, you're tense, angry, and irritable. The whole time you're there, you're expecting to be told that you have another eight to put in. You complain a lot about this to your fellow officers and supervisors.

1. **Quiet time --**

Where will you find it? What will you do with it?

You may be able to find some quiet time right before or right after work. Or you might have to make time available before or after work by getting up a little earlier or taking a little longer to get home. This is not the same as taking your work problems home with you in a negative sense. You are not going to try to solve any problems and you are not going to fret and fume over them. You will use the time to let ideas about the stress experience and any other ideas that want to wander in be entertained by you.

2. **Description**

How would you describe this stress experience?

You could describe this problem as predictable and recurring. It is something that you think a lot about and invades and pervades your whole day. You think about it on the way to work, at work, and after work. It leaves you feeling lousy, and you would like to do something about that lousy feeling. What you are doing about it now adds up to grouching a lot. People are tired of hearing you complain, just as you are tired of hearing them complain about it.

3. The Context

How does this stressor compare to others in your life?

Right now, this is the biggest pain in the neck you have. Other ones come and go, but this sucker hangs around constantly draining. Most things on your job you're prepared for. The threats of physical or verbal abuse you can get away from, but this extra shift business really bothers you because you can't make solid plans. Therefore, you feel you should really be able to get control of this problem you don't want to put this off to another time. you want to start work on it now.

4. Ownership

How much of this stressor belongs to you?

Not much. You can't do anything about the staff shortages here. When someone can't make it, you know there has to be coverage. You haven't been able to think of a fairer system. When your time comes, you know you have to do it and you know you won't walk out on it, but it aggravates the heck out of you.

5. Resources

What resources do you think you could use here?

Well, you used to have a good sense of humor, but that seems lost now. You suppose you could check around and see what some of the other officers do. You know some of them are just as dissatisfied with the policy as you are, but they don't seem to be as upset by it. You guess that could be called increasing your resources.

6. Simple Strategy

What one thing could you do to directly reduce your distress around this issue and what general thing could you do that would indirectly help you?

One thing you could do that would help reduce some of the distress you feel is to inform the persons that you have made appointments with during the risk period that you may not be able to meet them and explain why. Then you could have some arrangement that would let them know that if they haven't been contacted by a certain time to assume you couldn't make it. While doing the above, you will also remember that, in fact, you are required to pull this extra shift at most once every month and that it is as likely to occur on a day when you have nothing going as on one when you do.

A general technique that you could utilize that would have beneficial indirect effects would be to concentrate on your exercise routine and diet during that period of uncertainty. You have noticed that when you are anxious about the extra shift you cheat on your exercise, and when you are worrying you tend to eat a lot more junk. You will make an extra effort to be thorough with your exercise and you will remind myself to skip some of that junk food. You will replace it by drinking water occasionally instead of taking a soda, which usually leads to chips, which leads to a candy bar. You can see that constantly mulling over and over the possibility of doing that extra shift really wears you down. Keeping on top of your exercise routine and watching your junk food intake should help you keep your mind clear.

7. Evaluate

Pretend you've tried the first six steps. Describe how they've worked for you.

You tried this just the way the book suggested. Actually, you think you do most things this way already, but it's true you hadn't really dealt with this shift problem well. Anyway, the shift problem is still there. You still hate it. It still makes you angry. But you don't waste as much time on it as you used to. You feel you've done about as much as you can do to deal with it. Your friends and relatives are pretty understanding since you explained the problem. There have even been a couple of extra shifts that, while they surprised you, really didn't interfere with anything. You are also getting better at predicting their likelihood so you have been able to schedule a little better. You

don't cheat on your exercises because of the extra shift thing anymore and it doesn't cause you to eat any more junk food. You still cheat on your exercises though, but for other reasons. And you still eat a lot of junk food, but that's because you love it.

We tried to conclude this module with a happy ending. But we don't want to leave you with the impression that stress management is as easy as baking a pie with a seven-step recipe. So for some discussion on the pitfalls and pratfalls of stress management, you are welcome to move on to Module F.

MODULE F:

YA. BUT IT AIN'T WORKING

You have completed/this manual. You have faithfully and energetically attempted to manage your stress more efficiently and effectively. You have even tried some things you said you would never try. Not only that, but some of the people you value as family and friends think you have gotten a little screwy.

After all that, how come it isn't working better?

There are several reasons why you may not be managing your stress better . . . yet.

- 1. It may be important to you not to. You may be comfortable with your stress reactions because they are predictable and known. You have severe stomach disturbances when exposed to a particular stressor, but you use that reaction as a signal and guidepost to how you are doing. Some people prefer the beast they know to one they don't. Besides, your stomach problems have offered a convenient excuse for avoiding other things for years. People have accepted your problem, and they don't second-guess you. You've managed to avoid some crashingly boring parties that way.**
- 2. New behaviors take practice. Any new endeavor brings a period of clumsiness with it. Very often we don't give ourselves enough chance to get a handle on a new skill or new way of doing something. If it doesn't work perfectly the first time, throw it out. This can lead to a lot of shopping around among the myriad of possibilities for managing stress with none of them bringing you any satisfaction.**

Be patient. Let yourself make some mistakes. Keep your initial goals reasonable and attainable. Managing your stress perfectly is not a good goal and sets yourself up for failure. Look for small successes. Small things done consistently and well lay the foundation for success. So think small. Resist the temptation to buy into huge, elaborate, sophisticated systems that purport to explain everything.

3. Don't take shortcuts. Skipping steps can lead to a breakdown in your management technique. If you are aggressively attacking a stressor and applying huge driving forces but haven't paid any attention to the restraining forces or if you have directed your attention only to the stressor but have done nothing to decrease your own vulnerability, you decrease your potential for a successful outcome.
4. Stress management can be stress provoking. It may be stress management itself is the problem. After all, it is a pretty popular idea. Don't get caught up in the fad. You might think you are supposed to be managing stress better because everyone else seems to be. Forget that. Don't compare yourself and your stress with others.

Stress management techniques are all tools. They are not ends in themselves. Too much concentration on becoming a stress manager is boring and fatiguing. Don't set unrealistic expectations for yourself or for stress management potential. That is why daydreaming is so important. It can help us not to take ourselves or stress management too seriously.

Be patient. Keep trying. Be open minded. Seek help if you need it. Keep the faith . . . it will work. And if it doesn't, remember: You can always share the blame with us.