Stress Management for Students of Color

TI 085 - Thematic

By

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Theoretical Basis for the Group

Stress Management for Students of Color

This theme group aims to help students of color identify, reduce, and manage different types of stress. Most students encounter some level of stress stemming from academic, social, and interpersonal sources. Some research studies indicate that certain student groups, including students of color at predominantly white college campuses, often have to deal with additional stressors (Massey & Walfish, 2001; Vázquez & García-Vázquez, 1995). Therefore, this group will provide an environment that will allow students of color to discuss stressors unique to their lives, such as racial discrimination and acculturative stress. Psychosocial factors, such as race and culture, will also be considered when identifying culturally appropriate strategies for stress management.

Experiencing stress is common for college students as there are many competing demands in their lives, such as academics, social life, and financial stability. Stress occurs when someone feels that they cannot cope effectively with a situation within her/his normal range of coping skills. Stress can manifest itself physically, emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally. This manual will address how students can reduce and manage stress in these four ways in which they are impacted by stress. The following section outlines the change model used as the framework for the group sessions.

Change Model

Our change model consists of five phases. Every phase has its own objective and steps to reach that objective. These steps, however, can and should be adapted to the individual needs of the group. We consider each phase to be equally important in order to reach the overall goal of the change model: to teach group members how to manage and reduce their stress.

Phase I: Understanding Stress

The goal of Phase I is to educate group members on the different facets of stress. According to our change model, it is important for group members to fully understand the meaning of stress before trying to manage or reduce it. Thus, Phase I will define stress, identify the effects of stress, and distinguish the benefits of managing and/or reducing stress.
**Step 1: Defining Stress**

The first step in the change process is to establish a standard group definition on stress. By having a standard group definition it A. ensures that the members have a similar concept when referring to the word “stress”, and b) provides the group with a basic definition to refer to throughout all the sessions. The group members will first be invited to share their own definitions on stress, and then a standard definition will be agreed upon by all the group members. It is expected that the standard definition will be similar to the following: stress is experienced when someone feels that they cannot effectively cope with a situation.

After a standard group definition has been established, eustress will be differentiated from distress. Eustress refers to the “positive stress” that challenges and motivates people to accomplish their tasks and goals. On the other hand, distress refers to the “negative stress” that causes people to feel threatened, disappointed, depressed, and other negative emotions. The objective of this distinction is to illustrate to group members that not all stress has a negative influence on people, but that a certain amount of stress is actually beneficial.

**Step 2: Identifying the Effects of Stress**

After defining stress, group members will learn the negative impact that stress can have on the individual physically, emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally. In this regard, the group members will learn the minor consequences of experiencing stress for a short period of time (such as fatigue, irritability, shakiness) and the more serious consequences of experiencing stress for a longer period of time (such as increase risk for circulatory diseases, lowering the immune system).

**Step 3: Identify the Benefits of Managing/Reducing Stress**

Group members will also learn the benefits of managing and/or reducing stress, such as better mental and physical health, more energy, probably a longer life span, and many others. Group members will be asked to share what they would gain personally if they learned how to better manage and/or reduce their stress. This group activity should A. increase the group members’ motivation to participate in the treatment process, and b) establish a goal for their treatment process.
**Phase II: Recognizing When One is Stressed**

The objective of Phase II is to teach group members how to recognize when they are feeling stressed. Since stress can be experienced via many different symptoms (such as headaches, nausea, tiredness, etc.) it is often difficult to know when the symptoms are stress related. In order to reach this objective, group members will also learn how to recognize their various sources of stress and identify the degree of stress they feel toward their sources.

**Step 1: Symptoms of Stress**

The first step of Phase II is to identify the various ways in which stress can be experienced. The group members will discuss the common symptoms they experience when under stress. Group members will be challenged to differentiate when common stress symptoms such as anger and sadness are not stress related. By becoming proficient in identifying their stress symptoms, group members will be able to recognize when a stress reducing/managing technique needs to be implemented.

**Step 2: Identify Various Sources of Stress and Level of Stress**

Group members will be encouraged to discuss the various sources that trigger their stress. This technique will challenge group members to realize that there are many magnitudes of stressors in their lives from financial difficulty to noisy traffic. In addition, group members will learn how to measure the degree of stress that is elicited by their common stressors.

**Phase III: Learning the A-B-C. model**

The purpose of Phase III is to teach group members techniques on how to reduce and manage their stress. Albert Ellis’s model of emotional distress called the A-B-C. Model will be used to illustrate (A) how stress is elicited, and (b) how stress can be managed/reduced by modifying each level of the model. Thus, the first step of Phase III should be to thoroughly familiarize the group members to the A-B-C. Model. Then the group members will be shown various techniques on how to reduce/manage their stress at the various levels of the A-B-C. Model.

**Step 1: Learning the A-B-C. Model**

Group members will be taught how the activation of stress can be understood by using Ellis’s A-B-C. Model. According this model, all emotions, including stress, are first activated by an event. Then depending on the interpretation or meaning
the person attributes to the event, the individual experiences an emotion. Ellis
divided this model into three easy steps:

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A</strong></td>
<td>the <em>Activating</em> event or the potentially stressful situation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
<td>the <em>Belief</em> or the interpretation the person gives to the event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>C</strong></td>
<td>the emotional <em>Consequence</em> or stress that results from the beliefs or interpretations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Group members will be encouraged to thoroughly understand the A-B-C. Model
because it will be the base that is used to teach them how to reduce/manage their stress. In addition, it is also beneficial for group members to recognize that stress is not initiated suddenly, but that it is a process that unfolds at various steps and can be managed/reduced at these different steps.

**Step 2: Learning How to Change “C”**

Group members will first be taught how to manage their stress level. To this avail, they will be shown techniques that emphasize the importance of “turning off” stress by doing healthy stress relieving exercises. Some of the techniques that will be reviewed include yoga, mediation, exercise, diet, relaxation, progressive muscle relaxation, and imagery exercises. In addition, the group members will also be engaged to discuss the deconstructive ways of turning off stress that should be avoided such as abusing drugs and alcohol.

It is highly suggested that stress management techniques be introduced early in the group treatment. Group members are likely to be familiar with these techniques and thus more willing to engage in them. In addition, these techniques are likely to produce more immediate stress relieving results, which may motivate group members to continue in the treatment.

**Step 3: Learning How to Change “A”**

Group members will learn that the “A” level of the A-B-C. model can be changed in order to reduce stress. For example, group members will learn to identify their stressful sources in order to modify their environment to lessen or get rid of these
sources. To reach this goal, group members will learn techniques on time management, organization, and assertive skills to refuse additional tasks (when possible).

**Step 4: Learning How to Change “B”**

Following step 3, group members might realize that not all stress inducing agents can be modified or taken away because they are needed in order fulfill life’s daily chores. Thus, group members will then learn how to change the way they view those stressful events in order to make them more manageable. To achieve this objective, members will be taught cognitive restructuring techniques such as recognizing their automatic thoughts and correcting their Thinking Errors.

**Phase IV: Incorporating A-B-C. Model**

The purpose of Phase IV is to establish how group members can incorporate the A-B-C. model of reducing/managing stress into their lives. Although, in the previous sessions group members would have been asked to incorporate the different levels of the model into their lives, the upcoming sessions will allow them to gain a deeper understanding and greater practice.

**Step 1: Plan of Action**

Group members will be asked to write or draw a plan of action on how they can incorporate the A-B-C. model into the different stress areas of their lives (such as family, academic, financial difficulty). They will be asked to present their plan of action to the group and the members will be encouraged to make comments and suggestions.

**Step 2: Implement and Evaluate Plan of Action**

After the group members have designed and presented their plan of action, they will be asked to implement it into their daily lives. Then they will be asked to evaluate their plan of action and report to the group their progress. At this point, the group will be encouraged to make any suggestions or comments that could improve or facilitate the implementation of group members’ plans of action.
**Group Format**

This theme group is structured to be an 8– to 10–week psychotherapy group with weekly sessions lasting 1.5 hours. The sessions are designed to provide a model of change that will help group members with the change process of reducing and managing stress. Each session has a format that allows for the various needs of the group members. In the initial sessions, it is important for the co-leaders to establish rapport with the group members and create a sense of safety for the students to talk about sensitive topics, such as racial discrimination and acculturative stress. To this end, not only do co-leaders need to be sensitive to issues surrounding race, racism, and culture; they also need to be knowledgeable about structures of power and privilege that sustain racial and cultural inequities. In this way, co-leaders can validate and acknowledge members’ experiences with institutionalized and interpersonal discrimination without unjustly locating their maladaptive coping styles within the individual group member. Furthermore, co-leaders need to be aware of their own assumptions and prejudices that they may bring to the sessions.

Many sessions will include homework so that group members can practice applying the change model to their lives. The homework will be discussed at the beginning of the following session to assess for effectiveness. The basic change model will also be reviewed at the beginning of each session. Group expectations will be explained in the screening interview and will be reviewed in the first group session. All group members will read and sign the Group Expectations form (see Appendix A) as agreement to follow the guidelines for group membership. All group members will be encouraged to participate in group discussions and activities. The co-leaders will facilitate group dynamics by attending to both verbal and non-verbal indicators of group members’ comfort level. Activities for the group sessions will be at the individual, dyadic, and group level. These activities will likely include: didactic presentations; self-assessment; practice of change techniques; and group discussion and feedback regarding group activities, homework, and implementation of change plan.
Population

This theme group is appropriate for students of color who would like to reduce and/or manage stress in their lives. With regard to level of stress, group members should not have such a high level of stress that they are not able to perform daily functions. This group seeks to include those whose primary presenting problem is related to any kind of stress (but especially if it may be related to being a racial or ethnic minority on campus). For example, if the student feels like s/he does not fit in on campus because of his/her race or culture, this student would be an appropriate referral even if the term “stress” did not come up. In addition to stress management strategies, this group can also offer social support for students of color. This group is best suited for students who are comfortable being in a group specifically designed for students of color, open to different perspectives, and willing to consider exploring new coping strategies inside and outside group sessions.

Group Screening Interviews

In order to determine individuals’ appropriateness for this theme group, the two co-leaders will conduct individual screening interviews that will last about 30 minutes. The purpose of these interviews includes: (a) explaining the nature of the group; (b) determining individuals’ level of stress and types of coping responses; (c) assessing individuals’ readiness for change; (d) evaluating openness to different perspectives and comfort level of being in a group of students of color; and (e) assessing individuals’ appropriateness for the group (see Appendix A). The screening interview will also explain group expectations (see Appendix B). Additionally, the co-leaders will ask individuals to complete an initial stress symptoms scale (see Appendix C) for comparison at the end of the group sessions in order to determine if reduction in stress symptoms has occurred.
Overview of Group Sessions

Session One: Defining Stress and Its Effects on Group Members
Session Two: Recognizing the Role Stress Plays
Session Three: Introduction of a Change Model
Session Four: Changing Consequences
Session Five: How to Change Stressors
Session Six: Beliefs Systems as a Source of Change
Session Seven: Applying the Change Model
Session Eight: Termination

1 We recommend that the sessions be administered in this order; however, the order should modified to meet the needs of your group.
Session One: Defining Stress and Its Effects on Group Members

Session Goals:

1. Initiate the process of building group familiarity and trust.
2. Define stress and its effects on group members.
3. Identify the benefits of managing stress.

Agenda:

A. Opening
   - Review and sign group expectations sheet (see Appendix B)
   - Provide overview of the format of the group. This group addresses stress that most students encounter but also provides an environment for members to discuss stressors unique to students of color.

B. Introductions: Allow group members to introduce themselves briefly and to share with the group their current stressful situation(s).

C. Introduce the concept of stress through presentation and discussion:
   - **Discussion**: engage group members in defining stress.
   - **Co-leaders summarize for the group**:
     - What is stress? Distinguish between eustress (good stress) and distress (bad stress)
     - Function of stress – optimal level of stress for motivation
   - **Discussion and presentation**: What are the effects of stress?
     - Identify physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral effects (see Appendix D, E, & F)
     - Short-term/minor effects
     - Long-term effects
   - **Discussion**: Why is it important to deal with stress?

D. Identify goals: Have group members target the symptoms they would like to reduce.
Session Two: Recognizing the Role Stress Plays

Session Goals:

1. Review and discuss homework.
2. Continue establishing rapport and developing a safe environment for discussions related to race and culture.
3. Introduce group members how to recognize their own stress.
4. Identify various sources of stress (stressors).
5. Identify those stressors most impacting each individual.

Agenda:

A. Group processing: Discuss group members’ reactions to homework assignment and identified negative effects. Facilitate group members in a discussion on how to recognize when they are stressed and how to distinguish stress from negative emotions, such as anger or depression.

B. Individual activity: Group members will identify their sources of stress (stressors) and rate the level of stress associated with those various aspects in their life. (See Appendix G).

C. Group discussion: Co-leaders will guide members to discuss common sources of stress in their lives and also explore those that are unique to students of color. Time should be provided for group feedback given what they have learned thus far.
Session Three: Introduction of a Change Model

Session Goal:

Introduce Ellis’s A-B-C. model as a model of change.

Agenda:

A. Didactic: Introduce the group to Ellis’s model of emotional distress, “The A-B-C. Model.” (See Appendix H.)

B. Group Discussion: Discuss with group members that each level of the A-B-C. Model can be changed in order to reduce or manage stress. (See Appendix I.) Group members will be informed that at least three group sessions will be devoted to learning how to change each level of the A-B-C. Model.

C. Group Process: Allow group members to ask questions concerning the A-B-C. model. Encourage the group members to give examples of a stressful moment in their life and apply the A-B-C. model to their example.
Session Four: Changing Consequences

Session Goals:

1. Review A-B-C. model – highlighting “C.”
2. Identify constructive and deconstructive ways of coping with stress.

Agenda:

A. Review: Engage the group members to briefly review the A-B-C. model. Emphasize that the session will be devoted to changing “C.”

B. Group Discussion: When people think of stress management, they usually think of how to change “C.” Discuss with group members that sometimes it is impossible to either (a) change those situations that are causing them stress or (b) change the way they view those situations.

Explain or elicit from group members that when neither (a) nor (b) can be changed, the other alternative is to learn healthy ways to cope with the degree of stress they have to endure. Engage the group members in a discussion where they learn the importance of turning off their stress.

C. Didactic: Engage the group members in a discussion of constructive and deconstructive ways of coping with stress.

D. Group Activity: Engage the group in various imagery and progressive muscle relaxation exercises.

E. Homework: Group members should try at least two of the different stress coping techniques that were reviewed. (See Appendix J.)
Session Five: How to Change Stressors

Session Goals:

1. Review and discuss homework.
2. Review A-B-C model – highlighting “A” (activating event).
3. Identify activating events appropriate for possible change.
4. Introduce techniques on how to modify the environment to rid or lessen stressors.

Agenda:

A. Group Process: Review their homework on the two different stress management techniques that they used. Discuss with group members that outcome of using their respective management techniques.

B. Didactic: Co-leaders will review the A-B-C model and discuss how stress can be reduced at the “A” level by changing stressful activating events.

C. Group discussion: Members will review what their sources of stress are. Members will then identify what situations in their lives can be changed to reduce stress and determine which can be realistically changed.

D. Didactic: Introduce techniques for changing “activating event”

   • Time management (see Appendix K & L) – individual activity: fill out a weekly schedule; review with group for feedback in terms of feasibility
   • Organization – money, sleep schedule
   • Assertiveness in saying “no” to additional tasks
   • Group discussion: members will discuss other ways they can alter activating events that cause stress.

E. Dyadic activity: In dyads, members will practice saying “no” to requests for additional tasks in their lives.

F. Homework:

   • Members will implement their weekly schedule.
   • Members will also identify one situation to change at the “A” level and try it out.
Session Six: Belief Systems as a Source of Change

Session Goals:

1. Review homework and assess for stress reduction.
2. Review A-B-C model – highlighting “B.”
3. Introduce techniques on how to correct Thinking Errors.

Agenda:

A. Group Process: Review group members’ homework: 1) weekly schedule and 2) the stressful situation that they chose to change at the “A” level. Discuss with group members how they changed their stressful situation and the outcome.

B. Review: Engage group members to briefly review the mechanics of the A-B-C model. Emphasize that the session will be devoted to changing “B”.

C. Group Discussion: Co-leaders will discuss with group members that many situations that trigger our stress can not be changed. Thus, in these types of situations change can occur at the “B” level, where the meaning of the way we view the stressful situation is modified. Engage the group to discuss what Mark Twain meant by saying, “I am an old man and have known many troubles— but most of them never happened.” Co-leaders will gear the discussion to highlight that:

- Stress can be self-created
- The way people think can dictate the degree of stress that they feel
- Certain ways of thinking are more beneficial than others

D. Didactic:

Automatic Thoughts: Co-leader will discuss with group members the concept of automatic thoughts.

Thinking Errors: Co-leaders will discuss with group members the concept of Thinking Errors. Co-leaders should pass out the Thinking Error list (see Appendix M) and:

- Discuss the different types of thinking errors to insure that everyone understands them
- Encourage group members to identify the Thinking Errors that they use the most frequently.
Correcting Thinking Errors: Co-leaders will explain how Thinking Errors can be corrected (see Appendix N).

The importance of choosing ACCURATE thoughts: Discuss with group members that the thoughts that one chooses to interpret the stressful situation should be accurate. The goal of correcting Thinking Errors is not to get group members to think more positively (worse yet unrealistically!) but accurately. Group members should learn how to have an accurate perception about their situation so that they have an accurate emotional response. Use Appendix O on Perfectionism as an example to illustrate this point.

E. Group Processing: Allow group members to ask any questions that they may have on how to change their inaccurate thoughts. Direct group members to share some of their own inaccurate thoughts that made a situation more stressful and encourage the group to reconstruct the thought.

F. Homework: Group members should be assigned to (1) identify patterns of thinking errors, and (2) practice reconstructing at least 3 of their inaccurate thoughts that made them feel stress.
Session Seven: Applying the Change Model

Session Goals:

1. Review A-B-C model as a change model.
2. Group members draw up an action plan.
3. Group members apply change model to their own stressful situations.
4. Group members provide and receive group feedback about their plans.

Agenda:

A. Group Process: Review their homework on modifying 5 inaccurate thoughts that were making them feel stress. Discuss with group members the outcome of modifying the inaccurate thoughts.

B. Review: Engage the group members to briefly identify and explain the mechanics of the A-B-C model.

C. Group Activity: Give everyone a sheet of paper, markers, and crayons. Ask the group members to draw or write how they plan to implement the A-B-C model in their life. How will they deal with their stressors? At what level of the A-B-C model will they implement the change?

D. Group Process: Have the members share their plans with the group. Encourage group members to discuss and give feedback to each others’ plans.

E. Vignettes: Group leaders will read vignettes that encompass various stressful situations and ask the group members how they would deal with these situations. It is preferable if the vignettes illustrate stressful situations that students of color tend to encounter the most, such as racial discrimination, acculturative stress, etc.
Session Eight: Termination

Session Goals:

1. Review continued attempts at reducing and managing stress.
2. Discuss effectiveness of group.
3. Discuss group termination and appropriate referrals.

Agenda:

A. Group processing: Co-leaders should allow ample time for members to discuss continued attempts at reducing and managing stress as well as identify potential challenges to the process.

B. Termination activity: Members will complete the same Stress Symptoms Scale (see Appendix C) completed during the screening interview in order to compare with their initial stress level.

C. Group Discussion: Co-leaders should guide members to discuss effectiveness of group in terms of what worked and what could be changed or improved. Co-leaders should also direct members to discuss issues around termination, the change process, their sense of progress, etc. Finally, co-leaders should make available material and resources, including information regarding referrals.
Bibliography


# Appendices

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Appendix A: Structured Screening Interview Questions

A. Nature of the Group

- Introduce co-leaders
- Group day and time
- Group composition: 6-10 members
- Group likely to start in mid-February
- Semi-structured with activities; opportunities to provide and receive feedback
- Thematic: everyone will be working toward reducing and managing stress in their lives and provide support within the group; the group is also structured to provide a safe environment for students of color to discuss certain matters, such as racial discrimination or acculturative stress, specific to them as racial minorities on a predominantly white campus.
- Explain group expectations
- Goals for the pre-group interview (PGI): To get a sense of each potential group member and what s/he wants from the group; to allow each potential group member to inquire about the nature and format of the group.

B. Questions regarding how stress is impacting the individual

1. Could you please explain what has brought you to consider joining this group?
2. What is your current level of stress? How is it impacting your life?
3. What are the ways you use to deal with stress right now?

C. Additional questions assessing appropriateness of individual for the group

1. What would you like to get out of this group experience? What are your goals and expectations?
2. How open are you to making changes in your life right now?
3. How open are you to different perspectives? How do you feel about being part of a group for students of color?
4. How comfortable are you discussing your stressful situations with others?
5. How comfortable are you challenging or gently confronting others? Being challenged by others?

6. Have you made previous attempts at reducing or managing stress through therapeutic services? What was/was not effective?

7. Do you have any questions for us as co-leaders?


**Appendix B: Group Expectations**

As a member of this group I will make a commitment to…

- Maintain the **absolute** confidentiality of the group and its members
- Be honest with myself and others
- Actively share my thoughts and feelings with the group
- Keep an open mind
- Attend every session (unless I am too sick to come) and arrive on time; in addition, I will notify one of the group leaders in advance if I am unable to attend so that group members can know what has happened
- Attend at least three sessions before considering leaving the group, and tell the group in person if I am thinking about, or have decided to, leave the group
- Avoid any outside social contact with fellow group members

___________________________________

Signature and Date
Appendix C: Stress-Symptom Scale

This index gives you a measure of your stress level by looking at the number and the severity of your stress-related symptoms and behaviors. To use this measure, simply rate the frequency with which you’ve experienced each of the items listed below. Take the last two weeks as your time frame. Use this helpful rating scale:

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<th>0 = Never</th>
<th>1 = Sometimes</th>
<th>2 = Often</th>
<th>3 = Very often</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>___ Fatigue or tiredness</td>
<td>___ Feeling helpless or hopeless</td>
<td>___ Excessive drinking</td>
<td>___ Excessive smoking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Pounding heart</td>
<td>___ Excessive drinking</td>
<td>___ Excessive spending</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Rapid pulse</td>
<td>___ Excessive smoking</td>
<td>___ Excessive spending</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Increased perspiration</td>
<td>___ Excessive spending</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Rapid breathing</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Aching neck or shoulders</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Low back pain</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
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<td>___ Gritting teeth or clenching jaw</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Hives or skin rash</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Headaches</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Cold hands or feet</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Tightness in chest</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Nausea</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Diarrhea or constipation</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Stomach discomfort</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Nail biting</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Twitches or tics</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Difficulty swallowing or dry mouth</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Colds or flu</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
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<tr>
<td>___ Lack of energy</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>___ Over-eating</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
<td>___ Excessive drug or medication use</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

___ Total Stress Symptom Score

What your Stress-Symptom Scores mean

Your scores are compared with the scores of others who completed this scale. The higher your score, the more stress-symptoms you are reporting. A higher frequency and/or intensity of stress-related symptoms and behaviors is generally associated with higher levels of stress.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your Score</th>
<th>Your comparative rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-19</td>
<td>Lower than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-39</td>
<td>Average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-49</td>
<td>Moderately higher than average</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 and above</td>
<td>Much higher than average</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix D: Effects of Stress

Feeling (emotionally)

Thinking

Feeling (physically)

Doing
Appendix E: Stress Warning Signals

Do any seem familiar to you? Check the ones you experience when under stress. These are your stress warning signs.

Physical Symptoms

⇒ Headaches
⇒ Indigestion
⇒ Stomachaches
⇒ Sweaty palms
⇒ Sleep difficulties
⇒ Dizziness
⇒ Back pain
⇒ Tight neck, shoulders
⇒ Racing heart
⇒ Restlessness
⇒ Tiredness
⇒ Ringing in ears

Emotional Symptoms

⇒ Crying
⇒ Nervousness, anxiety
⇒ Boredom – no meaning to things
⇒ Edginess – ready to explode
⇒ Feeling powerless to change things
⇒ Overwhelming sense of pressure
⇒ Anger
⇒ Loneliness
⇒ Unhappiness for no reason
⇒ Easily upset

Behavioral Symptoms

⇒ Excessive smoking
⇒ Bossiness
⇒ Compulsive gum chewing
⇒ Attitude critical of others
⇒ Grinding of teeth at night
⇒ Overuse of alcohol
⇒ Compulsive eating
⇒ Inability to get things done

Cognitive Symptoms

⇒ Trouble thinking clearly
⇒ Forgetfulness
⇒ Lack of creativity
⇒ Memory loss
⇒ Inability to make decisions
⇒ Thoughts of running away
⇒ Constant worry
⇒ Loss of sense of humor

Appendix F: When I Experience Stress

When I experience stress ________________________________

______________________________________________________.

When I experience stress ________________________________

______________________________________________________.

When I experience stress ________________________________

______________________________________________________.

When I experience stress ________________________________

______________________________________________________.
Appendix G: Sources of Stress Inventory

How much do the following sources contribute to your experience of stress?

Circle Your Ratings for the Sources of Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sources of Stress</th>
<th>Ratings Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic demands (problems with faculty, class work, peer group)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus environment (e.g., fitting in, values conflict)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict with authority (deans, police, professors, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough friends</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflict with family (parents, siblings)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separation, conflict with partner or friends</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health of self</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health of parent, friend or other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequacy of living arrangements</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not enough money</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demands of job, work (balancing work and school)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racial or Ethnic Discrimination</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious/other cultural conflicts</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug and alcohol problems</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future planning, decision making</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weakness (e.g., dependency of/on partner or friend)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life transitions (moving, etc.)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss (death or separation from someone close)</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Appendix H: Understanding Your Stress is as Simple as A-B-C.

Understanding Your Stress is as Simple as A-B-C

“A” is the Activating event or the potentially stressful situation

“B” is the Belief the person has toward the event or interpretation the person gives to the event

“C” is the emotional Consequence or stress that results from the beliefs or the interpretations of “A”
Appendix I: Changing Your Stress is as Simple as A-B-C.

Changing Your Stress

is as Simple as A-B-C

A. Identify the sources of stress (the events) and modify your environment to get rid of or lessen these sources.

B. If you cannot change or eliminate your sources of stress then change the way you perceive them.

C. If you cannot change/eliminate your sources of stress and cannot change the way you view these sources of stress, then you can still manage your stress by doing techniques that will relax your body and quiet your mind.
Appendix J: Ahh…how relaxing!

1. Yoga—Through movement, breath, and body control, yoga exercises help to relax and release stress.

2. Meditation – By clearing or “defragging” your mind for 15 to 20 minutes a day, studies have shown that you can release stress.

3. Exercise and diet – The type of food you eat and how you eat can influence your stress level. It is not only important to eat food that is nutritious but it is also important to eat three meals a day. Also, be careful not to eat because you are stressed. Exercise goes a long way to release stress; it can decrease blood pressure, lower heart rate, and slow your breathing—all signs of reduced arousal and stress.

4. Relaxation – When doing your daily schedule it’s important to schedule in relaxation time so you can get away from your stress.

5. Pleasurable activities – Do things that you enjoy doing! Take a class you enjoy (informal classes; out-of-dept classes); mini-vacation; pursue hobbies—all these will give you some sort of pleasure and temporarily free you from your daily stress.

6. Social support – Becoming socially active! Join peer organizations such as cultural organizations, IM sports, professional organizations, etc… Find a mentor - he/she can be a peer or a professional. Get out and help the community, do some charity work.

7. Imagery exercises – “As seen in group”

8. Progressive muscle relaxation – “As seen in group”

9. ______ (put your own stress releasing exercise here)

10. ______ (put your own stress releasing exercise here)
Appendix K: Time Management Planning Suggestions

➢ Schedule fixed blocks of time first.
➢ Include time for errands.
➢ Schedule time for fun.
➢ Determine your priorities/clarify your goals.
➢ Set realistic goals.
➢ Allow flexibility in your schedule.
➢ Plan 2 hours of study for every hour in class.
➢ Schedule studying for times when you are fresh and alert.
➢ Use free time between classes for review.
➢ Break study/tasks into shorter segments.
➢ Take breaks between tasks.
➢ Learn to say, “No.”
➢ Delegate responsibilities.
➢ Anticipate deadlines.
➢ Set time limits for individual activities.
## Appendix L: Weekly Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
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Appendix M: Speed ≠ Accuracy

Automatic thoughts occur so rapidly (thus, the name automatic!) they are often inaccurate. Automatic thoughts are often poisoned by “Thinking Errors.” Below you will find a long list of Thinking Errors that are commonly found in people’s automatic thoughts.

CHECKLIST OF COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS*

1. All-or-nothing thinking: You look at things in absolute, black-and-white categories.

2. Overgeneralization: You view a negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat.

3. Mental filter: You dwell on the negatives and ignore the positives.

4. Discounting the positives: You insist that your accomplishments or positive qualities “don’t count.”

5. Jumping to conclusions: (A. Mind reading—you assume that people are reacting negatively to you when there’s no definite evidence for this; (B) Fortune—telling – you arbitrarily predict that things will turn out badly.

6. Magnification or minimization: You blow things way up—out of proportion or you shrink their importance inappropriately.

7. Emotional reasoning: You reason from how you feel: “I feel” like an idiot, so I really must be one.” Or “I don’t feel like doing this, so I’ll put it off.

8. “Should” statements: You criticize yourself or other people with “shoulds” or shouldn’ts.” “Musts,” “oughts,” and “have tos” are similar offenders.

9. Labeling: You identify with your shortcomings. Instead of saying “I made a mistake,” you tell yourself, “I’m a jerk,” or “a fool,” or “a loser.”
10. Personalization and blame: You blame yourself for something you weren’t entirely responsible for, or you blame other people and overlook ways that your own attitudes and behavior might contribute to a problem.

Appendix N: Correcting Your Thinking Errors

TEN WAYS TO UNTWIST YOUR THINKING*

1. **Identify the Distortion.** Write down your negative thoughts so you can see which of the ten cognitive distortions you’re involved in. This will make it easier to think about the problem in a more positive and realistic way.

2. **Examine the Evidence.** Instead of assuming that your negative thought is true, examine the actual evidence for it. For example, if you feel that you never do anything right, you could list several things you have done successfully.

3. **The Double-Standard Method:** Instead of putting yourself down in a harsh, condemning way, talk to yourself in the same compassionate way you would talk to a friend with a similar problem.

4. **The Experimental Technique:** Do an experiment to test the validity of your negative thought. For example, if, during an episode of panic, you become terrified that you’re about to die of a heart attack, you could jog or run up and down several flights of stairs. This will prove that your heart is healthy and strong.

5. **Thinking in Shades of Gray.** Although this method might sound drab, the effects can be illuminating. Instead of thinking about your problems in all-or-nothing extremes, evaluate things on a range from 0 to 100. When things don’t work out as well as you hoped, think about the experience as a partial success rather than a complete failure. See what you can learn from the situation.

6. **The Survey Method.** Ask people questions to find out if your thoughts and attitudes are realistic. For example, if you believe that public speaking anxiety is abnormal and shameful, ask several friends if they ever felt nervous before they gave a talk.

7. **Define Terms.** When you label yourself “inferior” or “a fool” or “a loser,” ask, “What is the definition of “a fool”? You will feel better when you see that there is no such thing as “a fool” or “a loser.”

8. **The Semantic Method.** Simply substitute language that is less colorful and emotionally loaded. This method is helpful for “should statements.” Instead of telling yourself “I shouldn’t have made that mistake,” you can say, “It would be better if I hadn’t made that mistake.”

9. **Re-Attribution.** Instead of automatically assuming that you are “bad” and blaming yourself entirely for a problem, think about the many factors that may have contributed to it. Focus on solving the problem instead of using up all your energy blaming yourself and feeling guilty.

10. **Cost-Benefit Analysis.** List the advantages and disadvantages of a feeling (like getting angry when your plane is late), a negative thought (like “No matter how hard I try, I always screw up”), or a behavior pattern (like overeating and lying around in bed when you’re depressed). You can also use the Cost-Benefit Analysis to modify a self-defeating belief such as, I must perfect.”

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# Appendix O: Perfectionism

## PERFECTIONISM VS. THE HEALTHY PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perfectionism</th>
<th>The healthy pursuit of excellence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. You are motivated by the fear of failure or by a sense of duty.</td>
<td>1. You are motivated by enthusiasm and you find the creative process exhilarating.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. You feel driven to be number one, but your accomplishments, however great, never seem to satisfy you.</td>
<td>2. Your efforts give you feelings of satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment, even if you aren’t always the “greatest.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. You feel you must earn your self-esteem. You think you must be very “special” or intelligent or successful to be loved and accepted by others.</td>
<td>3. You enjoy a sense of unconditional self-esteem. You do not feel you have to earn love and friendship by impressing people with your intelligence or your success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. You are terrified by failure. If you do not achieve an important goal, you feel like a failure as a human.</td>
<td>4. You are not afraid to fail because you realize that no one can be successful all the time. Although failure is disappointing, you see it as an opportunity for growth and learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. You think you must always be strong and in control of your emotions. You are reluctant to share vulnerable feelings like sadness, insecurity, or anger with others. You believe they would think less of you.</td>
<td>5. You’re not afraid of being vulnerable or sharing your feelings with people you care about. This makes you feel closer to them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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