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# ***Cardiac Rehabilitation Stress Management***



## ***Session 3: Signs and Sources of Stress***



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# *Outline for Today:*

- Review the homework
- Common obstacles to relaxation practice
- Signs and sources of stress
- Visualization exercises





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# *Review*

- Any thoughts, feelings, reactions from the last session?
  - Homework
    - Which was your favorite breathing exercise?
    - How often did you do the relaxation?
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# *Common Obstacles to Relaxation*

- I don't have the time to relax – prioritizing
  - I don't have any place to relax – create a space
  - The exercises are slow and boring – this is a signal that you need time to slow down. You are likely pushing too hard.
  - I feel more anxiety when I try to relax – it is common to realize how stressed you are when you make an effort to relax. Start with shorter periods of relaxation and work your way up.
  - Others?
-



# *What are the signs of stress?*

- Stress can creep up on you
- It even feels normal
- You may not notice until it takes a heavy toll
- Need to be aware of the common warning signs
- 4 categories:
  - 1) Physical
  - 2) Behavioural
  - 3) Cognitive
  - 4) Emotional





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# ***Signs of stress - Physical***

**TIRED...**



**...SO TIRED!!**



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# *Signs of Stress - Physical*

- Fatigue
  - Aches and pains (e.g., headaches, sore back or neck)
  - Diarrhea or constipation
  - Dizziness
  - Chest pain
  - Rapid heart rate
  - Sweating
  - Loss of sex drive
  - Frequent colds
  - Skin irritations
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# ***Signs of stress - Behavioral***







# ***Signs of Stress - Behavioral***

- Eating more or less
  - Sleeping too much or too little
  - Withdrawing from others
  - Avoiding things, procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
  - Using alcohol, cigarettes or drugs to relax
  - Nail biting
  - Lack of exercise or excessive exercise
  - Aggressive behavior (e.g., yell more, driving fast)
  - Disorganized
-



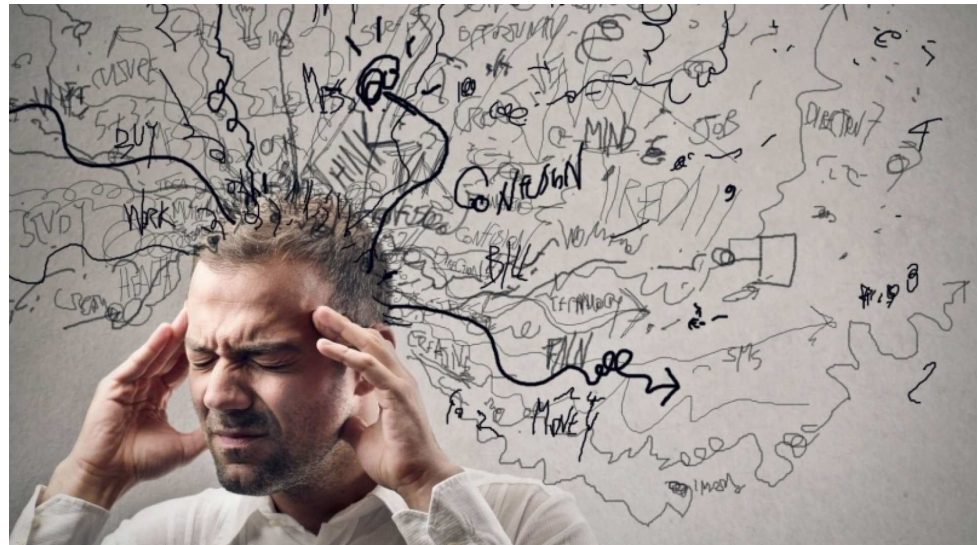
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# ***Signs of stress - Cognitive***



## Signs of Stress - Cognitive

- Difficulty concentrating
- Memory problems
- Not thinking things through, poor judgement
- Seeing or hearing the negative only
- Racing thoughts







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# ***Signs of stress - Emotional***





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# ***Signs of Stress - Emotional***

- Depression or general unhappiness
- Anxiety, feelings nervous or being “on edge”
- Constant worrying
- Irritability or anger
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Loneliness





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# ***What are the sources of stress?***

- Triggers are different for different people







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# Sources of stress



- Daily hassles
- Major life changes
- Environmental
- Physical
- Social
- Psychological







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# ***What causes YOUR stress?***





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# ***What influences stress tolerance?***

- It is important to know your limits
- The amount of stress that can be tolerated differs from person to person

## Factors that influence stress tolerance:

- Support network
  - Sense of control
  - Attitude and outlook
-



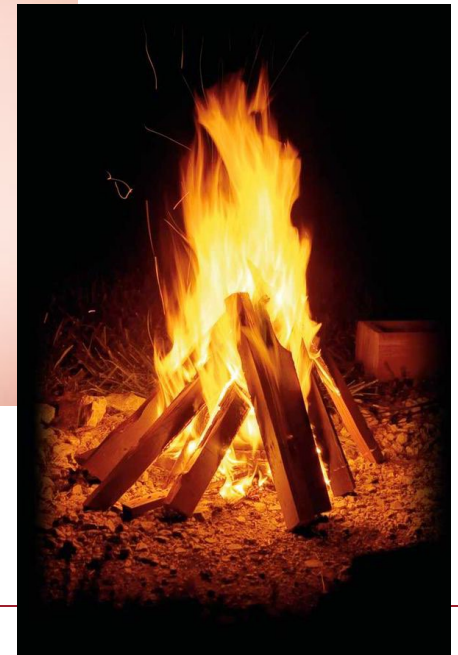
# *Visualization*

- Creating a scene in your mind
  - Very effective when used with deep breathing exercises
  - After a few minutes of deep breathing, create a picture in your mind of a scene in which you are perfectly relaxed (e.g., beach, forest, glowing fire).
  - This is not daydreaming. It is simply giving your mind a rest.
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# *Visualization*







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# Homework

- Track your stressful situations (stress record)
- Pay attention to how you react to stress
- Practice relaxation exercises

