Cardiac Rehabilitation Stress Management

UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA
HEART INSTITUTE

INSTITUT DE CARDIOLOGIE
DE L'UNIVERSITÉ D'OTTAWA

Session 6: Coping Styles and Wrap-Up

Outline for Today:

- ➢ Review the homework
- ➢ Discuss approach and avoidance coping
- ➢ Brief relaxation exercise
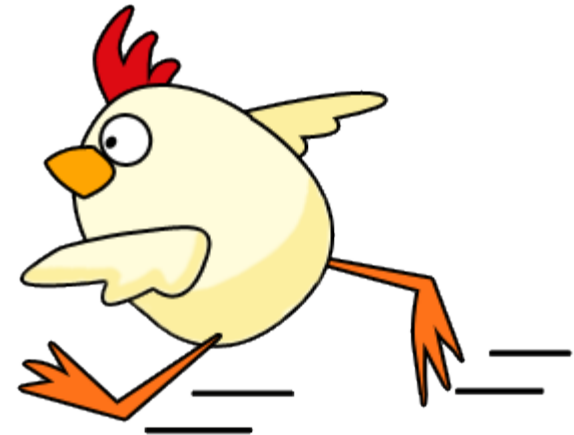- ➢ Wrap Up
- ➢ Evaluation

Review

- ➢ Any thoughts, feelings, reactions from the last session?

- ➢ Feedback on the communication handouts

- ➢ Were you able to identify when you were passive, aggressive, P-A, or assertive this week?

- ➢ Mindfulness exercises?

Approach or Avoidance?

Most people cope with too much stress by either avoiding the situation or approaching the problem

Avoiders and Approachers

➢ **Avoiders** wish the problem would be away, try to withdraw from it or get away from it all, and attempt to block out stress

➢ **Approachers** may worry and fret but try to get the situations resolved. They may ask questions as much as possible, get upset in situations they can't control, and work hard to push themselves

➢ Neither style is right or wrong. A mix of these styles is often the best approach.

(Dis)Advantages of Avoiding Stress

Advantages:

➤ Many situations are resolved on their own

➤ May work well for stressful events of short duration (e.g., relative visiting for the weekend)

Disadvantages:

➤ Some can't be ignored (e.g., $, death of love one)

➤ May be unprepared to deal with a major crisis

➤ Unaware of symptoms of stress (physical)

Advantages:

➢ Taking action makes us feel in control

➢ May handle stress better over the long haul

➢ More aware of stress symptoms

Disadvantages:

➢ Get upset and angry in difficult situations

➢ Working hard and continue pushing can lead to burn out for the person and people around them

Stress – 3 Courses of Action

➢ In any stressful situation, there are 3 courses of action:

1) Avoid

2) Alter

3) Adapt

➢ The goal of SMT is to use an action that is appropriate for the situation

Avoid

*Try to recognize if the situation is one in which
you can avoid needless stress*

Examples:

➢ Noisy places

➢ Hot or cold temperatures

➢ Unnecessary changes (make a decision and stick to it)

➢ Someone who constantly aggravates you

➢ Leave for a destination earlier to avoid traffic

➢ Walk away from a stressful situation (and come back with a clear mind)

➢ Discussing a particular topic (e.g., politics)

Alter

If you can't avoid the situation, maybe you could alter or change it in some way to create a more positive outcome. This takes advanced planning.

Examples:

➢ Wear earplugs or headphones to block out noise

➢ Dress appropriately to deal with extreme temperatures

➢ Alter your route to avoid traffic

➢ Alter your goals to be more realistic

➢ Set up a schedule to better manage time

➢ Delegate authority and responsibility to others when possible

➢ Learn to say "no"

➢ Break down tasks into smaller steps

➢ Establish routines

Adapt

If you can't avoid or alter the situation, then you need to adapt how you think, feel or act.
The change is from within you.

Can you change your thinking?

➢ Forgive a mistake or apologize for one

➢ Talk to yourself ("I can remain calm")

➢ Be less competitive with yourself and others

➢ Be less perfectionistic

➢ Think of stress as an opportunity or challenge

➢ Think of positive things in your life (what are you grateful for?)

➢ Consider if this worth getting upset over?

➢ Consider if it will be important in the future (how important will this be in a year/5 years?)

Adapt

Can you change your actions or feelings?

- ➢ Practice relaxation techniques
- ➢ Use visualization to create a positive outcome
- ➢ Exercise to reduce stress
- ➢ Laugh or sing
- ➢ Talk to someone you trust; share your feelings opening
- ➢ Seek information
- ➢ Count to 10 before responding
- ➢ Slow down and do one thing at a time
- ➢ Don't make matters worse by smoking, drinking too much or overeating

Relaxation Exercise

- ➢ This is an introduction to SMT…continue practicing

- ➢ Complete the SMT module for a refresher when needed

- ➢ Program evaluation
  - ➢ Email link with satisfaction survey

Change is a process,
not an event

Just keep working at it
one step at a time

Thank you for participating!