Stress Buster: Using Cognitive-Behavioral Skills to Allay Anxiety & Depression

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Staying well and calm in the midst of the COVID-19 storm
Evidence-based tactics that work!

Partners: College of Nursing, Buckeye Wellness, YP4H, OSU Health Plan, Office of Human Resources, Employee Assistance Program and Office of Student Life
COVID-19 is Triggering Stress/Anxiety & Depression
You are Not Alone; Others Feel This Way Too

- Feelings of despair
- Fear for loved ones
- Decreases job security
- Increases loneliness
- Mindset switch from “thrusting” to “survival”

- Triggers feelings of hopelessness
- Increases anxiety
- Decreases financial security
- Promotes social withdrawal
- Disturbs sleep
Too Much Stress, Anxiety or Depressive Symptoms Can Interfere with Your Functioning

This is the point where you need some help.  
*Do not hesitate to ask for it!*

Contact our Employee Assistance Program (800) 678-6265 or Our Student Counseling and Consultative Center (614) 292-5766
A Stress and Anxiety Pandemic is Happening with COVID-19
A Group Who Sees the Silver Lining of the COVID-19 Epidemic
COPE with COVID

C ontrol the things that you can, not the things you can’t
O pen up and share your feelings
P ractice daily stress reduction tactics, including physical activity
E ngage in mindfulness; be here now; worry will not help!

C ount your blessings daily
O rterturn negative thoughts to positive
V olunteer to help others
I dentify helpful supports and resources
D o your part to prevent spread of the virus

- Bern Melnyk
Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy/Skills Building is the Best First Line Evidence-based Treatment for Stress, Anxiety and Depression

The thinking/feeling/behaving triangle
Active Components of Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy

- Reducing negative thoughts (cognitive restructuring)
- Increasing pleasurable activities (behavioral activation)
- Improving assertiveness and problem-solving skills
  (homework assignments/skills building activities)
Common Cognitive Distortions

**Automatic Thoughts**

- **All or Nothing Thinking** – “Anything less than an A is not acceptable.”
- **Mind Reading** – “She doesn’t think I am smart or competent.” “He doesn’t like me.”
- **Overgeneralization/labeling** – “I’m stupid” - in response to one poor grade on a report or a mistake at work. “I am a loser.” “I can’t do anything right.”
- **Mental Filter** – only seeing the negative: “I got nine out of 10 answers right but I can’t believe I didn’t know the right answer to that one question- I always manage to flub up on something!”
- **Catastrophizing or Minimizing** – “I got a D on this test, I’m going to fail out of school; I’ll never get a decent job.”
- **“Should” and “Must” Statements** – “I should be a better parent or student.”
- **Personalization** – “He changed the date of the party intentionally so I can’t come.” “We lost the game; its all my fault.”
The Cognitive Distortions of George Costanza on Seinfeld
In CBT, We Teach the ABCs

STRESSOR (Antecedent or Activator event)

↓

NEGATIVE THOUGHT TO STOP (Belief)

↓

REPLACE THE NEGATIVE WITH A POSITIVE THOUGHT

↓

POSITIVE EMOTION & BEHAVIOR (Consequence)
Write Down an Example of Your Own Automatic Negative Thoughts

Think back to a recent time when you felt anxious, depressed, or angry

- What was the trigger/Activator? (you probably couldn’t control that)
- Your automatic thought/Belief?
- Your feeling? (emotional Consequence)
- Your general way of behaving when you feel that way? (behavioral Consequence)
- How could you have stopped the negative thought and turned it around to feel better?
Catching Your Automatic Negative Thoughts

• When you notice your mood has changed or intensified, or is going in a negative direction or you are noticing bodily sensations associated with negative emotions, ask:

What was just going through my mind?
Is this thought really true?
Is this thinking helpful?
Do I have evidence to back this up?
Thought Stopping Skills

• Visualize a stop sign

• Rubber band on the wrist/ snap

• Visualize watching the negative image on TV and change the channel

• Use imagery skills to switch to a pleasant image
Program Your Brain with Positive Thoughts

Positive Thoughts IN → Positive Thoughts OUT
Practice Positive Self Talk
10x Every Morning and 10x Every Night

• I’m going to stay calm
• I am healthy and strong
• This won’t last forever
Read 5 Minutes in a Positive Thinking Book
Every Morning and Every Night
Problem Solving Skills

• What is the problem?
• What are the possible causes of the problem?
• What are 2-3 solutions to the problem?
• Pick the best one and ACT on it!
Mindfulness Integrated CBT
Learn to Stay “In the Present Moment”

*The Present* by Spencer Johnson is a great book to help
Sync your breathing with this

Deep Breathing: See go.osu.edu/justbreathe
Mindfulness and guided meditation
Premium now free for healthcare providers through the end of the year.
https://www.headspace.com/health-covid-19

Stress Management Apps

Available to all benefits eligible OSU employees
• Daily 5 min sessions
• Mindfulness
• Sleep
• Emotional Intelligence and more

Cleveland Clinic Stress Free Now
• Day and Night Mindful Breath
• Guided Imagery
• Mindfulness of Being
• Loving Kindness Meditation
• Mountain Meditation

Sanvello (free version available)
• Mood Tracker
• Guided self-help paths
• Meditation Tools
Positive Thinking Statements

• Think about two negative automatic thoughts/cognitive distortions that you often have

• Write down 2 positive self-statements and place them where you can see them every day

• Say them 10x every morning and 10x every night for the next week
Changing Negative to Positive Thinking Takes 30 to 60 Days of Consistent Practice
CBT Skills Building: Put the ABCs into Practice

Identify 2 situations in the past week of how negative thinking affected how you felt and how you behaved; then, write down how you could have changed your thinking to feel better and act differently.

• Describe the situation you were in and the trigger (Activator) that started you thinking in a negative way.
• What did you think? (Belief/thought)
• How did you feel? (Emotional Consequence)
• How did you act or behave? (Behavioral Consequence)
• How could you have changed what you thought so that you would have felt better or acted differently?
Mental Health Strategies Video Series

https://ccs.osu.edu/mental-health-strategies-video-series/
Let’s Maintain Hope
Rainbows Follow Rain

go.osu.edu/copingwithcovid19
Thank You
Office of the Chief Wellness Officer and Buckeye Wellness

We appreciate your feedback!

Please complete a brief survey following this presentation:
go.osu.edu/CalmandWellSurvey
Next week

April 15th, 12:30 - 1:00 pm

Staying Physically Active While at Home: Tips and Tricks

Kathleen Hatch, Bonnie Wilhelm & Brenda Buffington

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