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Health

Taking Care of Ourselves: Stress Reduction Workshop

Introduction and Rationale

- Providing care to young children is an intense and demanding job.
- Stress is natural and can be inevitable, but stress can take a toll on your health and effectiveness as a parent or provider.
- Stress doesn't just effect you, it also impacts your relationships with children in your care and with coworkers.




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Introduction and Rationale

Research shows that:

- Caregivers who are stressed find it more difficult to offer praise, nurturance, and the structure that young children need.
- Caregivers who are stressed are more likely to use harsh discipline.
- Children whose caregivers are under high stress tend to have more challenging behavior
- Small changes can make BIG differences in stress



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Overview and Learning Objectives

1. **Define:** What is Stress?
2. **Identify:** Your Response to Stress:
Feeding the Fire or Cooling it Down?
3. **Develop:** Next Steps
 - a. For me
 - b. For my program



Definition of Stress

Stress:

- Is a physical, mental or emotional response to events that causes bodily or mental tension



Common Symptoms of Stress

Cognitive:	Emotional:
Memory problems Inability to concentrate Continuous worry Racing thoughts	Feeling down Feeling overwhelmed Irritability (short temper) Inability to relax
Physical:	Behavioral:
Excessive perspiration Chest pains/ elevated heart Frequent colds/illness Nausea, dizziness or headaches	Increase /decrease appetite Nervous habits Difficulty/irregular sleeping Excessive use of alcohol, cigarettes or drugs



Reflection Activity:

Knowing Your
Sources and Signs
of Stress



Think about the following questions:

- What are my sources of stress?
- How do I know when I am experiencing stress?
- What are my stress reactions?

The Link Between
Thoughts, Behavior, and Emotion

Your thoughts impact your behavior:

- Stress comes from our perception of the situation
- Technically, the actual situation is not stressful, our perceptions MAKE IT stressful
- Sometimes we are right, sometimes we are wrong!



Patterns of Thinking that FEED the Fire




- All-or-Nothing
- Filtering Out the Positive
- Overgeneralization
- Jumping to Conclusions
- Catastrophizing
- Emotional Reasoning
- "Should" Statements
- Personalization



(Beck, 1995; Burns, 1989)

The Role of Control in Stress Reduction


Focus on what is in your control	Put aside what is out of your control
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examples of areas in your control:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Your ability to prioritize work & personal obligations• Your reactions to events and people• Your thoughts	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Examples of areas outside of your control:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How people respond to you• Other people's feelings



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The Role of Control in Stress Reduction

Focus on what is in your control	Put aside what is out of your control
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling empowered• Feeling relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Results:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feeling hopeless• Feeling anxious• Feeling STRESSED



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Cooling My Fire

- Recognize that thoughts impact your behavior and emotions
- Focus on what is in your control versus out of your control
- Keep a list of activities to help you reduce stress

Strategies to Reduce Stress

- Coping Strategies
 - Ways to manage stressful situations
 - Deliberate and planned approach
 - Goal: reduce, tolerate, or minimize stress
 - Individualized



Strategies to Reduce Stress

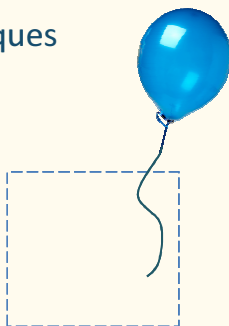
- Create a consistent routine
- Practice effective communication
- Establish “Me Time”
- Practice specific stress reduction techniques
- Express your feelings



Relaxation Techniques

Controlled, Deep Breathing

- Use a calming word
- Use “belly breaths”
- Imagine your other thoughts floating away in a balloon
- Try “square breathing”



Relaxation Techniques

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Useful for relaxing the muscles when they feel tight because of emotional stress
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation provides the most optimal relaxation
 - Chair Technique
 - Standing Technique
- Key: tensing a group of muscles, hold in a state of extreme tension for a few seconds, relax the muscles



Positive Self-Talk



I'm good enough...
I'm smart enough...
And doggone-it,
people like me!

Cooling the Fire of Others



Communication Techniques

Active Listening

- Builds relationships and sends a message of respect for the thoughts and experiences of others.
- Involves listening to the content of the conversation as well as feelings and non-verbal cues within the message
- Example:
 - Speaker: *I finally finished all of my paperwork.*
 - Listener: *Oh good, now you can help clean up.*
 - Active Listener: *You must feel relieved, that was a lot of work.*



Communication Techniques

Effective Feedback

- Is fact-based observation of what is going well
 - *That was really effective, when you were speaking right at eye level with Jacey.*
- Describes changes in the future as “next steps” rather than criticism
 - *Next time, you might try about using a softer voice.*
- Follow proposed changes with praise or encouragement
 - *I really liked how you gave her a high five at the end.*



Writing and Reflecting

Using a Stress Log

- Helps identify and understand your stress experiences
- Builds awareness of how you react to stress
- Reveals common themes or circumstances associated with your experience of and reaction to stress
- Informs your next steps in learning how to manage stress based on your strengths and challenges



STAFF ACTIVITY

Keeping a Stress Log

There are a number of steps for keeping and making use of a stress log



- **Record** your stressors within a time period and rate your stress response
- **Review** the types of stressors you experienced, your response, their frequency, and any common themes
- **Note Next Steps** including your strengths, challenges, and plans to improve how you will manage stress in next steps and your Individualized Action Plan

Create a Personal Action Plan

When [my stressor]
and I begin to feel [sign of stress],
I will [stress reducing technique].



Next Steps

1. What will you do to work on your own stress reduction?
2. What will you do to help staff reduce their stress?



Resources and Evaluation

Center for Early Childhood Mental Health
Consultation www.ecmhc.org

- Taking Care of Ourselves booklets
- A Dozen Posters to Manage Stress
- Guided Relaxation Exercises (English/Spanish)



National Center on Health Contact Information

Toll-Free: 888-227-5125

Email: nchinfo@aap.org


Website: <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/health/center>



Take time for BREAKS every day!

<i>Breathe</i>	ACTIVITY
<i>Reflect</i> <i>Boat</i>	<i>Kindness</i>
<i>Escapes</i>	Snacks





S Soften your face

O Open your chest

F Float down your shoulders

T Take a Deep Breath

Rationale: Research indicates that stress is directly linked to heart disease, diabetes, depression, and anxiety, among others.

Using strategies such as SOFT will help you manage your stress responses in a healthy way.

Other relaxation tips:

- Put stressful thoughts “in a bubble” on the tip of your finger and blow them away.
- Think about where you “feel” your stress: is it in your shoulders? Your stomach? Your temples? Focus on SOFTening that area.
- Use “square breathing.”
- Blow bubbles.
- Take a bubble bath.
- Use progressive muscle relaxation techniques.
- Try daily quiet time or meditation.



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M *Make*

O *Opportunities for*

V *Vigorous*

E *Exercise*



Rationale: Research has shown that elevating the heart rate helps keep the heart healthy, reduces the risk of obesity, improves muscle tone and balance, speeds metabolism, and increases energy levels.

Remembering to MOVE each day will help keep your heart healthy and your body fit.

Ideas to MOVE more each day and avoid “sitting disease”:

- Take a brisk walk during your break
- Take the stairs instead of the elevator
- Instead of having a meeting in the conference room, take the meeting for a walk
- Dance while cooking or cleaning
- Put on music while you’re getting ready in the morning, instead of the news. You’ll be more likely to dance than stand or sit still.
- Take a dance break at work
- Use an app on your smartphone to track steps or minutes of activity
- Enlist a buddy to motivate each other

FLEX'M

Flexibility

Leads to

EXcellent

Mobility



Rationale: Flexibility is key for ensuring safe movement, keeping muscles healthy, and staying active.

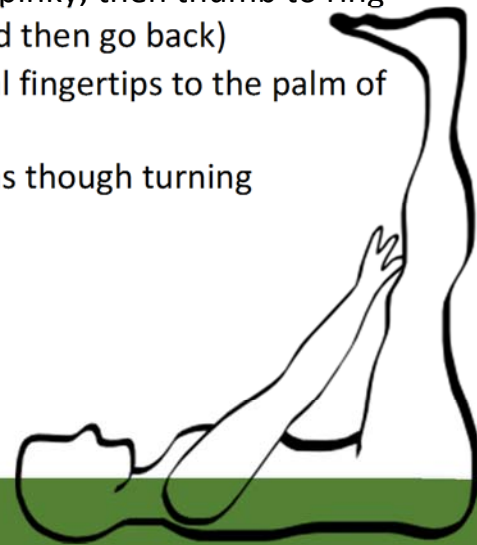
Using FLEX'M techniques will help you to keep moving and reduce risk of injury.

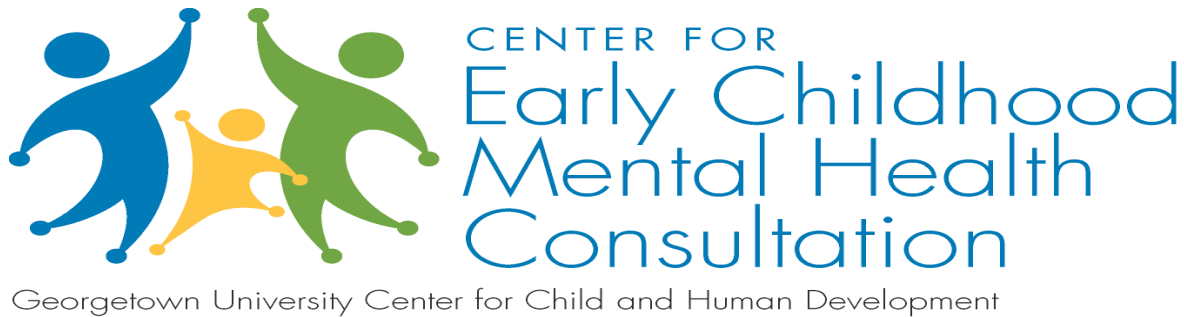
Ideas to FLEX'M:

- "Searching eagle" (arms outstretched, twisting trunk)
- "Climb the ladder" (arms stretched above head, alternate hand reaching)
- "Squish oranges" (alternate heel lifts)
- "Cat/Dog stretches" (down on all 4's, arch back up, then drop stomach toward ground)
- "Duck walk" (alternate lifting toes)
- "Holding beach balls" (arms uplifted and hands open as if lightly juggling beach balls above the head)
- "Catch, shake, release lightening bugs" (grasp imaginary lightening bugs all around you, shake them lightly, then release by flicking fingers)
- "Finger touches" (both hands simultaneously, touch thumb to pinky, then thumb to ring finger, then thumb to middle finger, then thumb to pointer and then go back)
- "Creepy crawlies" (both hands simultaneously, touch individual fingertips to the palm of the hand)
- "Turning doorknobs" (arms outstretched to sides, turn wrists as though turning doorknob, raise and lower arms slowly while turning wrists)



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Talk Back To Your Unhelpful Thoughts

Stress comes from our perception of the situation. Technically, the actual situation is not stressful; it is our PERCEPTION that makes it stressful. Here are some common unhelpful patterns of thinking that we all make as well as ways you can think about challenging these thoughts.

All-or Nothing Thinking: You see things in black-and-white categories. If your actions aren't perfect then they are seen as a failure.

Challenge: Instead of thinking in an "either-or" way, try to think in shades of gray. Evaluate the situation on a scale of 0-10. Think again about partial success and reevaluate, on a scale of 0-10.

Filtering out the Positive: You focus in on one thing that went wrong and filter out the positive events that occurred.

Challenge: Try to be as kind to yourself as you would be with a friend. Review the day's events and focus on all of the positive things that went right. For every negative thing you think of, try to also focus on one positive thing.

Overgeneralization: You see a single negative situation as never-ending and a "forever" pattern.

Challenge: Remind yourself that a single negative event (or even multiple occasions) doesn't mean it will truly last forever. Think of a specific time when a single negative experience did not have a long lasting outcome.

Jumping to Conclusions: You make a negative interpretation even though you don't have all of the facts.

Challenge: Ask yourself, “Do I really know this to be true?” If no, focus on the things that you do know are true and which pieces of information you still need to make a realistic assessment.

Catastrophizing: You negatively exaggerate the importance of things.

Challenge: Try to take the event for what it is and do not let your mind go astray.

Emotional Reasoning: You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are. “I feel it, therefore it *MUST* be true.”

Challenge: Seek out the opinions of trusted friends or family to evaluate whether your thoughts are accurate.

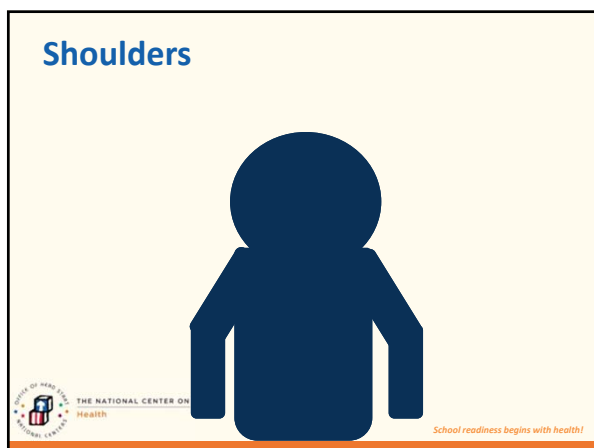
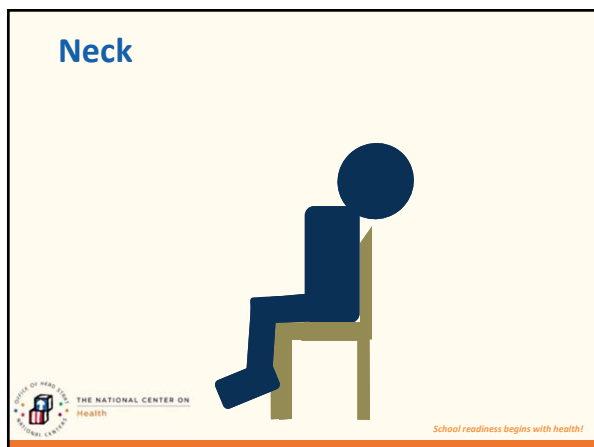
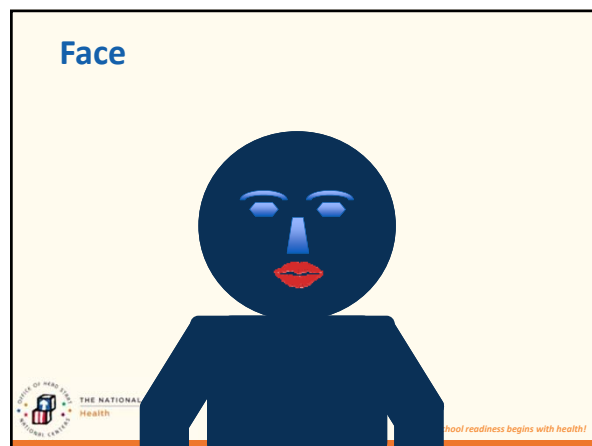
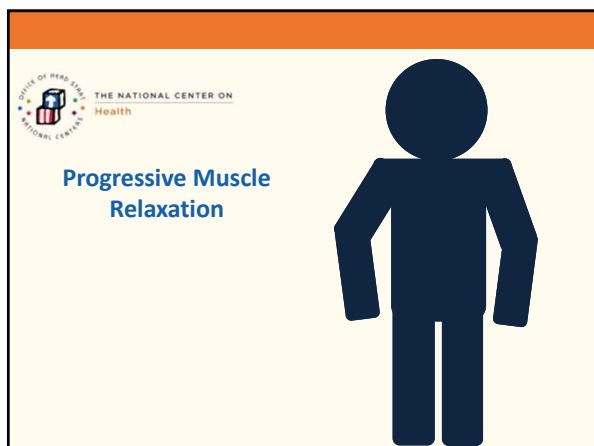
Should Statements: You try to motivate yourself by saying, “I should or shouldn’t” do something.

Challenge: Think about the advantages and disadvantages of your thoughts, feelings and or behaviors. Are you gaining anything from your thoughts or feelings? Discuss with a friend or family member to determine the accuracy of your thoughts.

Personalization: You see yourself as the cause of a negative event for which you were not entirely responsible.

Challenge: Carefully evaluate the situation to figure out if you really have any responsibility for the results. Identify other, outside factors that may be impacting the outcome.

(Burns, D.D 1989)



Fingers



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School readiness begins with health!

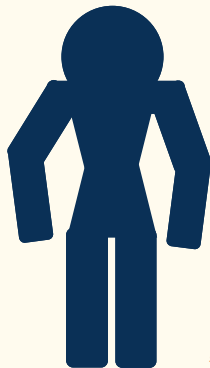
Hands



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School readiness begins with health!

Stomach



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Back



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School readiness begins with health!

Legs



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School readiness begins with health!

Feet Toes



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School readiness begins with health!

Keeping a Stress Log

Keeping a stress log helps you to identify sources of stress, your reactions, and how you manage your response. Making the most of keeping a log involves:

- Recording stress-related information over a period of time,
- Reviewing the information you gather, and
- Identifying strengths, challenges, and next steps to improve how you manage stress.

Ultimately, this process will help you to manage stress and take care of yourself.



STEP 1: RECORDING STRESS RELATED INFORMATION: Review the guide/example below to understand how to record your stress experiences. Use the following page (and additional copies) to create your personal stress log.

Date/ Time	Stress/Event	My Response: Thoughts/Feelings/Actions	Rate My Response 1-3
GUIDE Indicate date and time	Describe the stress/event. Include enough information to provide a picture of what happened, who was involved, etc.	Describe your thoughts/feelings/actions related to the stress/event. Include enough information to provide a picture of what happened, who was involved, the steps you took to manage stress, what happened next etc.	Rate how you handled the stress (1- Not too well; 2-OK; 3 –well)
EXAMPLE Monday 8 AM	When I arrived at the Head Start Center, I was unexpectedly asked to do drop-off duty. This meant that I was not going to be able to do the paperwork I had planned to do before the children arrived and the full day began.	I was already feeling pressure to get to my paperwork, and this last minute change made me more anxious and frustrated. I thought - Why me? Can't someone else do it? I always seem to have to pick up when someone else has dropped the ball. So, I just held in my feelings, slammed my paperwork on my desk, and marched to the driveway – fuming, trying to welcome the children with a smile.	1

Date/ Time	Stress/Event	My Response: Thoughts/Feelings/Actions	Rate My Response 1-3

MAKE ADDITIONAL COPIES AS NEEDED

STEP 2: REVIEW THE INFORMATION YOU GATHER: Review your complete stress log and list the types of stressors you experienced and your responses to stress. Examine this information and note any common themes.

Types of Stressors	Frequency
EXAMPLE: Paperwork and extra, unexpected demands on my time	1

My Stress Responses	Frequency
EXAMPLE: Anxiety, frustration, Holding feelings inside	1

MY MOST COMMON STRESSORS ARE: _____

MY MOST COMMON STRESS RESPONSES ARE: _____

STEP 3: MY STRENGTHS, CHALLENGES, AND NEXT STEPS: All of us experience challenges in managing stress. When we are stressed, it is difficult to see our own strengths and how well we are coping. By looking at both your strengths and challenges that emerge from your stress log information, you can plan next steps for improving how you manage stress and take care of yourself.

- **MY STRENGTHS:** What I did well in managing stress
EXAMPLE: I did not let my feelings of worry and anger interfere with warmly greeting the children during drop-off.
- **MY CHALLENGES:** What are my challenges in managing stress
EXAMPLE: Holding my feelings inside is not healthy for me.
- **NEXT STEPS:** What I might include in my Individualized Action Plan
EXAMPLE: I would like to learn to take a deep breath to calm myself and communicate with my supervisor about my feelings and how to manage my paper work to do my job well.

PROVIDERS



Taking Care of Ourselves



CENTER FOR
Early Childhood
Mental Health
Consultation

Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development

Activity 1



Common Signs and Symptoms of Stress

COGNITIVE

- Memory problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Continuous worrying
- Racing thoughts

EMOTIONAL

- Feeling down
- Feeling overwhelmed
- High level of irritability (short temper)
- Inability to relax

PHYSICAL

- Excessive perspiration
- Chest pains/elevated heart rate
- Frequent colds or illness
- Nausea, dizziness or headaches

BEHAVIORAL

- Increase or decrease in appetite
- Nervous habits (nail biting)
- Difficulty sleeping or irregular sleep patterns
- Using alcohol, cigarettes or drugs to relax

Knowing Your Stressors and the Signs of Stress

When you are stressed, it is easy to react before even realizing you have reached a point of stress. In order for caregivers to successfully reduce their levels of stress and the impact it has on themselves and the children they care for, they must first recognize their stressors or “primary pressure points”.

In the spaces provided, answer the following questions:

What is stress?

What causes me stress?

How do I know when I’ve reached a point of stress?

Activity 2

Sometimes you can make choices about how you spend your time that will actually prevent or reduce stress in your life. Here you will find suggestions for strategies that can help you avoid stress or cope with stress. If you take care of yourself, you will be in a better position to take care of others!



The quality of infant relationships is heavily dependent upon the caregiver's physical and mental well-being, and shapes the basis for all future relationships.

Taking Care of Yourself

Caring for Infants

- ☐ Communicate with other care providers to learn new ideas and strategies.
 - Exchanging ideas with others in your field can keep your work fresh and exciting. They may have implemented something you haven't tried before (like massaging babies' arms and legs after naptime).
 - You could have a monthly activity (like a book club or potluck dinner) where you and other care providers can come together to talk about things that have worked for you as well as challenges you've faced.

- ☐ Make sure to maintain your physical health by eating well and exercising. Caring for infants requires strength and endurance.

– **What are some exercises you can do to keep healthy?**

List them here:

- ☐ Another part of maintaining physical health is eating well.
 - **What do you usually eat for breakfast?** List some healthy options here:

- **How about lunch options that you can make and bring to work?** List some ideas here:

- **What can you eat for snacks that you can prepare and transport easily?** List some options here:

Activity 2



Stress is a physical, mental or emotional response to events that cause bodily or mental tension.

Taking Care of Yourself

- A healthy dinner can be one of the most challenging meals in a busy family. **What are some ideas that you can use to make sure your dinners are healthy?**

- ☐ Infants take cues from those around them, so your mood is very important. If you are feeling stressed or upset, ask a colleague to cover you so you can take a short break (if possible) to take a mental break.
- ☐ To keep your stress level down, make sure to create time in your day to relax. This might be a bath when you get home from work, a walk to the store, or a nap.
- ☐ To minimize possible stress during feeding time, make sure you are familiar with each infant's eating patterns and preferences. Communicate regularly with parents to make sure everyone is on the same page.
 - Communicate often with mothers who are breastfeeding so that you have comfortable ways for them to provide expressed milk for baby. Also, make sure breastfeeding mothers have a place to feed baby comfortably within the program. This can help to make feeding a more positive experience for everyone.
- ☐ Naptime can be a source of stress for you and the infants you care for. If an infant is having trouble falling asleep, here are a few suggestions you can try:
 - Walk around with baby, creating a slight rocking motion.
 - Introduce some quiet, soothing music or white noise.
 - Make sure there are no direct lights in baby's eyes and that there are minimal distractions in the room (like conversations between adults, other children playing in the sleeping area).
 - Try feeding baby about a half hour before naptime. This can help baby feel tired.
 - If baby's trouble continues, see if there is some discomfort like teething, asthma, allergies, or other health issues. Talking to parents can be helpful here.

Caring for Toddlers

- ☐ Toddlers are very mobile! Keeping up with them requires that you maintain your physical health.
 - **Are there certain types of exercise you enjoy the most?** You'll see the best results if you're not dreading the activity. List exercise opportunities that you can fit in to your daily schedule:

Activity 2



Providing care to young children is an intense and demanding job. It can become increasingly difficult when combined with relationship, financial or other stressful concerns.

Taking Care of Yourself

CARING FOR TODDLERS CONTINUED

- ☐ Eating healthy meals will boost your energy. Try to get lots of protein (fish, chicken, beans and cheese) and good carbohydrates (multigrain bread, nuts) as well as fruits and vegetables.
- ☐ Snacking on healthy foods throughout the day will help you feel energized and ready to take care of your toddlers.
- ☐ Becoming familiarized with your toddlers' eating habits and preferences will minimize stress during meal times. Maintain communication with parents to learn about allergies, special preferences, etc.
- ☐ To help ensure an easy transition to naptime, develop a routine so that your toddlers know what to expect. If a toddler is having trouble settling down, here are some ideas to try:
 - Look for signs that child is not feeling well in general (i.e., a lingering ear infection, running a light fever, etc.)
 - Plan lunch or snack time to occur about a half hour before naptime. This can help toddlers feel ready to rest.
 - Make sure to minimize noise and distractions.
 - If toddler continues to resist, provide a quiet alternative (like a one on one book reading) and make sure to communicate this to parent.
- ☐ Try to surround yourself with others who understand what you do. Sharing your ideas with other care providers (and listening to theirs) can be rewarding.
 - You can have a caregiver supper club, where you and several other providers come together for a potluck once a month and share the joys and challenges of caring for young children.
- ☐ Relax as much as possible when you are not at work. Engaging in activities you love will help you feel ready to provide the best care for your toddlers.
- ☐ Try to maintain a balance between work and home life.
 - Talking about your day with your family can help them understand your work.
 - Dedicate time in your day to spending quality time with those you love. This may seem obvious, but it will keep you upbeat and ready for another workday.
- ☐ It's ok to feel overwhelmed. If you find yourself getting angry or upset, take some calming breaths. If this doesn't work, excuse yourself (if possible) to take a short break.

Activity 3

Learning to manage stress in a healthy way may not come naturally. When starting any new behavior, it is important to develop a strategy for using it ahead of time in order to increase the chances of using the new behavior successfully. Make a plan for change. Think about one thing that causes you stress and one sign you know you are stressed. Then list a technique you will use for dealing with your stress in a healthy way.

Developing an Individualized Action Plan

For Example:

When [**my stressor**] *(the baby cries for longer than 5 minutes)* and I begin to feel [**sign of stress**] *(my heart race)*, I will [**technique to use**] *(breathe deeply to calm down)*.

My Individualized Action Plan

When [**my stressor**] _____ and I
begin to feel [**sign of stress**] _____,
I will [**technique to use**] _____
_____.

When [**my stressor**] _____ and I
begin to feel [**sign of stress**] _____,
I will [**technique to use**] _____
_____.

When [**my stressor**] _____ and I
begin to feel [**sign of stress**] _____,
I will [**technique to use**] _____
_____.

When [**my stressor**] _____ and I
begin to feel [**sign of stress**] _____,
I will [**technique to use**] _____
_____.

Tips For Offering Healthier Options and Physical Activity at Workplace Meetings and Events

Easy access to healthier foods, beverages, and physical activity at work encourages healthier lifestyles among employees. Workplace practices and policies that support such access can make it much easier and more convenient for employees to choose healthier foods and engage in physical activity throughout their work day. Below are tips and resources for increasing healthier food and drink options at worksite meetings, parties, conferences, and events and for offering physical activity opportunities for employees throughout the work day.

Consuming a diet rich in nutrient-dense foods and beverages while maintaining a healthy weight through calorie balance and regular physical activity has been shown to contribute to a reduction in overweight and obesity and lower the risk of chronic diseases, including heart disease, some cancers, stroke, and diabetes.^{1,2} In 2011-2012, the prevalence of obesity in the United States was 33.5% among adult men and 36.1% among adult women.³

The Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010 and the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans provide guidance on dietary patterns and physical activity levels that promote health and help prevent the effects of lifestyle-related chronic diseases.



Offer Healthier Food and Beverages at Workplace Meetings and Events

The following are tips on what you can do to encourage healthier food and beverage choices at workplace meetings, conferences, parties and other events:

1. Offer a colorful variety of fruit and vegetables.

- Ensure at least half of all food served is fruits and vegetables prepared and served without high amounts of added fats, sugars, or sodium (salt).
- Offer beans and legumes (e.g., black beans, chick peas) as vegetable-based protein sources.
- Display fruit and vegetables attractively and prominently. When served buffet style, place these foods near the front of the line to encourage their selection.
- Offer seasonal, local, or regional produce when available.
- Learn 10 tips to help you eat more [fruits](#) and [vegetables](#).

2. Offer 100% whole-grain products in a variety of forms.

- Offer whole-grain breads, rolls, and tortillas. Offer whole-grain pasta, brown rice, quinoa, and other whole grains as part of healthful salads and mixed dishes and casseroles.
- Offer whole-grain breakfast options such as oatmeal.
- Offer whole grain crackers and chips.
- Learn 10 tips to help you eat [whole grains](#).

3. Offer smaller portion sizes and prepare food in ways that reduce added calories.

- If offering meat, fish, or poultry serve portions 3 ounces or smaller.
- Offer meat, fish, or poultry prepared in healthier ways such as baked, broiled, steamed, or grilled.
- Offer cheeses in small portions (1/2 inch squares or smaller).
- Consider adding meat, fish, or poultry to stews, soups, salad, and mixed dishes as to [reduce protein portion sizes](#).

4. Do not offer foods that contain industrially produced (or artificial) trans-fatty acids.

- Check labels to ensure products have 0 grams of trans fats.
- Offer foods labeled as having 0 grams of trans fat and avoid offering foods with “partially hydrogenated” oils in the ingredient list.
- Limit foods that contain solid fats such as butter, which contains saturated fat, and partially hydrogenated oils, which contain synthetic trans fats.

5. Offer foods that are reduced or low in salt and sodium.

- Offer foods flavored with spices and herbs instead of salt.
- If purchasing packaged items, choose those labeled “low sodium” or “reduced sodium.”
- Offer meal items with less than 480 mg of sodium per serving.
- Learn 10 tips to help you cut back [salt and sodium](#).

6. Offer healthier condiments served on the side in small portions.

- Encourage condiments and dressings that contain healthful oils recommended by the Dietary Guidelines, 2010.
- Try to provide naturally low-fat condiments (e.g. mustard) and smaller portions of full fat dressings.
- Offer fat-free or low-fat dairy products for coffee and tea.

Remember to make half your plate fruit and vegetables.



7. Offer snacks that are low in calories and high in nutrients.

- Focus on nutrient-dense foods and beverages.
- Include healthier snack options such as fruit, vegetables, raw or dry-roasted nuts and seeds with low or no added salt or sugar, and 100% whole grain chips and healthy dips (salsas, guacamole or bean dips).
- Offer individual snack food items with less than 230 mg of sodium per serving.

8. Limit sweet treats

- Offer a selection of apples, bananas, pears, and other fruit individually, as a fruit salad, or added in desserts to reduce or replace added sugar.
- Offer frozen 100% juice bars or sorbets instead of high-calorie desserts.
- Only offer whole grain and low-sugar baked products.
- Only offer low-fat or non-fat yogurt, either plain or with fruit or healthful additions, minimizing added sugar.
- Offer smaller size or “mini” desserts to limit calories.

9. Discourage the practice of “Dumping” or leaving leftovers of less healthy foods (like Halloween candy or birthday cake) in common areas.

10. Offer water and low-calorie beverages.

- Always offer water as a beverage.
- Offer drinks with no more than 40 calories per 12 ounce serving— include water with lemon, unsweetened coffee or tea, plain seltzer, or seltzer with a splash of 100% juice.
- Provide 12 oz. or smaller beverage cups.
- Provide pitchers and cups for drinking water throughout the event or party.

Active Workplace Practices

Offering opportunities for physical activity in your worksites can help employees get some of their daily physical activity goals and requirements met for the day. Below are tips for how you can add opportunities at work that might encourage increased physical activity among your employees.

1. Make physical activity an easy choice at work.

- Encourage casual dress so participants can comfortably engage in activities.
- Allow flexible schedules to encourage physical activity during lunch breaks or other breaks throughout the day.
- Identify and mark walking routes indoors and outdoors.
- Encourage use of stairwells. Place signs at the elevator directing people to the stairs, and make stairwells more appealing for use (consider music, lighting, cleanliness, and safety).
- Promote alternative commuting (biking, walking and public transportation).
- Provide exercise facilities, with lockers for change of clothes and showers, or partner with community organizations for reduced rates for your employees (e.g., YMCA).
- Encourage a variety of activities that are appropriate for people of all physical abilities.
- Provide guidance on activities that can be completed while sitting (i.e., desk exercises) or in a small area (i.e., walking in place).



2. Build physical activity into daily meetings.

- Include activity breaks in meeting agendas for longer meetings. Take moments to stand and stretch after sitting for an extended time.
- Organize walking meetings for small groups. Choose a safe route and keep a brisk walking pace for at least 10 minutes.

3. Build physical activity into conferences.

- Consider conference locations where participants can easily and safely walk to places of interest and have easy access to locations for activity during breaks.
- If feasible, choose a conference facility that includes a fitness center, an outdoor green space, or a room with space to move around and stretch.
- Consider asking someone to lead physical activity breaks (can be a guest or coworker).
- Try activities like standing for every other topic, stretching to music, or icebreakers that encourage people to move around.
- Make meeting space easy for people who prefer to stand instead of sit.
- Organize physical activity opportunities in mornings or afternoons, such as group walks or low-impact fitness classes.
- Provide participants with maps of the area showing safe walking and running routes, trails, or local fitness centers.



4. Ask employees or meeting participants what activities they like, and cater to the group.

- Survey employees on what makes conferences, meetings, and the office environment more supportive of physical activity.
- Encourage feedback about activities to incorporate into meetings.
- Consider convening a worksite committee on physical activity and/or workplace wellness.

Resources

Healthy Eating:

- Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010
- USDA Choose MyPlate
- USDA's Ten Tips Nutrition Series
- Health and Sustainability Guidelines for Federal Concessions and Vending Operations

Physical Activity:

- 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans
- Be Active Your Way Steps to Wellness: A Guide to Implementing the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans in the Workplace
- Short Physical Activity Breaks
- CDC Stairwell to Better Health

Additional Resources on Healthy Meetings Guidelines:

- Network for a Healthy California
- NY State Guidelines for a Healthy Meeting
- Washington State Energize Your Meetings
- King County, Washington State Healthy Food Choices for Meetings
- Thurston County, Washington State—Healthy Workplace Toolkit:
- Eat Smart North Carolina
- American Cancer Society—Meeting Well:
- National Alliance for Nutrition and Activity, Healthy Meeting Toolkit
- Walking Meetings

References

1. US Department of Agriculture, US Department of Health and Human Services. *Dietary Guidelines for Americans, 2010, 7th Edition*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office; 2010.
2. US Department of Health and Human Services. *2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans*. Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office; 2008.
3. Cynthia L. Ogden, Margaret D. Carroll, Brian K Kit, Katherine M. Flegal. Prevalence of childhood and adult obesity in the United States, 2011–2012. *JAMA*. 2014;311(8): 806–814. doi:10.1001/jama.2014.732.



Take 5 and....Make Your Heart Happy!



Walking meetings – studies show creativity increases after and during walks



Dance parties – find time during the day to put on some music and move! Examples: clean up dance parties, set up for lunch dance parties, conga line to get in line



High Knees – march or jog in place lifting your knees as high as you can. Walking stairs during lunch or during a break works great, too!



Hokey Pokey – It's not just for kids and is a great way to get moving!



Chicken Dance - put chicken dance on over the loud speaker and do the chicken dance where ever you are.



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Take 5 and...Give Yourself a Hand



Webbed Spaces – spread your fingers out wide



Bear Claws – make your hands like claws and pretend to scratch down a tree



Finger Flicks – picture something sticky on your finger and try to flick it off. Do this for each finger.



Creepy Crawlies – turn your hands up and imagine you have something on the heel of your hand and crawl your fingers up to try and touch it



Stir the pot – use your thumbs like a spoon and make circles to stir the soup in the pot



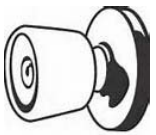
Take 5 and...Stretch it Out



Squishing Oranges – stand with your feet flat on the ground, lift each heel up and pretend you are squishing an orange as you press your heel down



Hands up! – raise your hands above your head and slowly wave your arms from side to side like you are a tree blowing in the wind



Turning Doorknobs – reach your arms out in front of you and grab imaginary doorknobs. Twist your whole arm to open the door.



Shoulder Rolls – stand up straight and roll your shoulders forward and back slowly



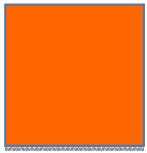
Be a Chair – stand up and hold on to the back of a chair balance if needed, and pretend to sit in an imaginary chair



Take 5 and...Relax



SOFT – Soften face, Open the chest/heart, Float the shoulders down, Take a deep breath



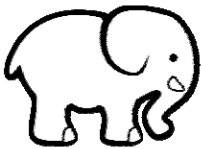
Square breathing - – imagine a square, breathe in across the top of the square, out along the side of the square until you've completed the shape



Visual Vacation – close your eyes, imagine yourself in your favorite vacation spot or a place you always wanted to go.



Incredible Hulk to Ragdoll – squish your face and tighten your body like you are as angry as the Hulk, now slowly relax until you feel like a ragdoll



Elephant Trunk - bend over and move your arms like an elephant



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