

 **NATIONAL CENTER ON**
Early Childhood Health and Wellness



Taking Care of Ourselves Addressing Our Own Wellness

26th NIHSDA Management Training Conference
Neal Horen, PhD
June 9, 2016

School readiness begins with health!

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**26th NIHSDA Management Training
Conference**
Neal Horen, PhD , Georgetown University
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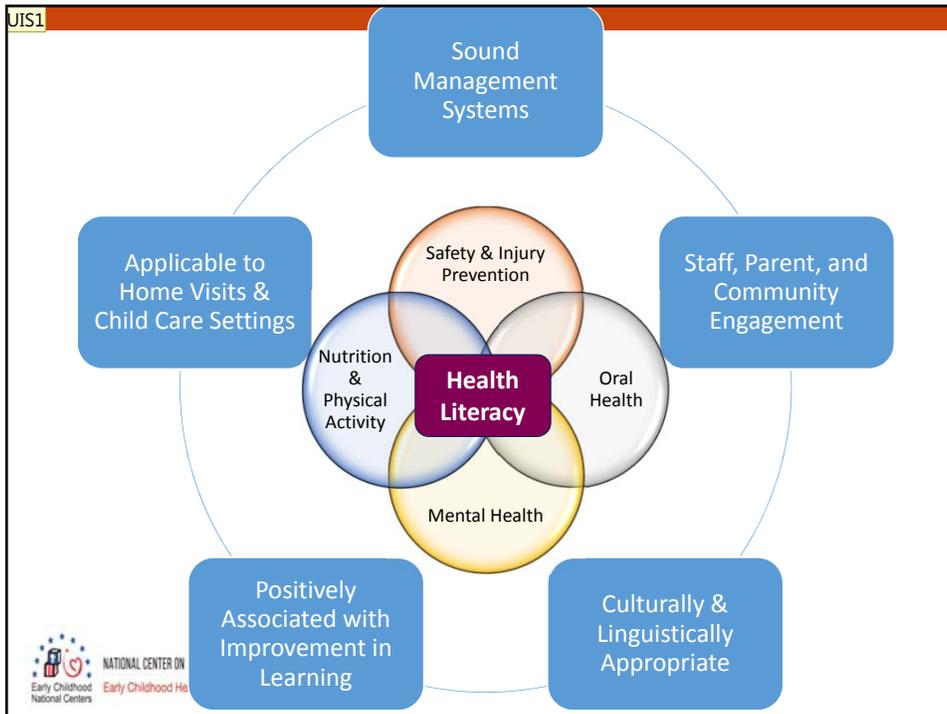
National Center on Early Childhood Health & Wellness

Our Goal:

Fostering a Culture of Health and Wellness for Children, Families, Staff, and Communities

Our Foundation:

School Readiness Begins with Health!



Slide 4

UIS1

NEED TO EDIT

University Information Services, 4/15/2016

National Center on Early Childhood Health & Wellness Partners

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- Education Development Center, Inc.
- Center for Child and Human Development at Georgetown University
- National Maternal and Child Oral Health Resource Center at Georgetown University
- UCLA Health Care Institute at the UCLA Anderson School of Management



Balancing Your Wellness Wheel



Resources: SHIFT Resources NWMISSOURI UNIVERSITY Source:
<http://www.nwmissouri.edu/wellness/PDF/shift/BalancingYourWellness.pdf>



Think of Your Experience With **FLAT TIRES**



A Flat Tire...

Makes it difficult to steer straight

Makes the ride bumpy and shaky

Makes steering difficult

Causes a wreck

Causes you not to reach your destination

Health Matters!

THE IRONY:

At a time when employers want people who are healthier, thinner, faster, younger, and less stressed, the general population is becoming less healthy, fatter, slower, older, and more stressed!

Wellness is caring for the 'whole' person - physically, mentally, socially, and emotionally. It's about being productive, feeling good physically and emotionally, and interacting in a positive way with people and the environment.



Staff Wellness...



Objectives for Today

➤ Goals:

- Participants will be able to identify six components of staff wellness
- Participants will be able to articulate why staff wellness is important
- Participants will leave with practical tips to improve their OWN wellness
- Participants should leave with practical tips to improve wellness IN programs.

➤ Key Focus areas

- Understanding and Learning to Manage Stress & Depression
- Eating Healthy, Staying Active!



Wellness... What does it mean to you?



Wellness



What is Wellness?

- A conscious, self-directed and evolving process of achieving full potential.
- Multi-dimensional and holistic, encompassing lifestyle, mental and spiritual well-being, and the environment.
- Positive and affirming

Wellness is an active process. It requires awareness and directed, thoughtful attention to the choices we make.

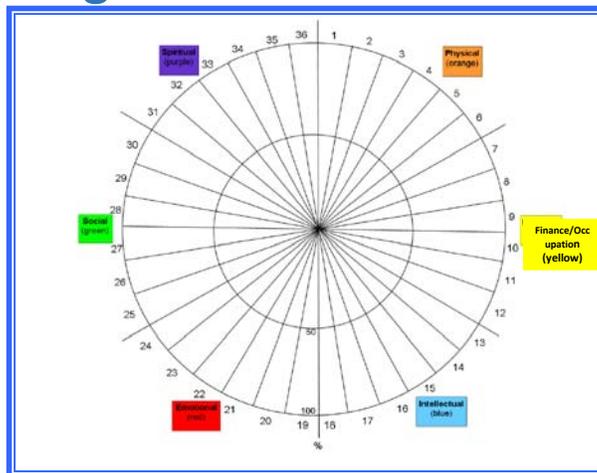
The National Wellness Institute. http://www.nationalwellness.org/index.php?id_tier=2&id_c=26
 Retrieved December 14, 2012.

Today's workplace is impacted by

- A larger number of workers with sedentary lifestyles and fast food habits potentially resulting in increased use of health services at an earlier age
- The Baby Boomers coming of age, experiencing more health needs and increasing use of health care services
- The Graying of America—people are living longer, utilizing more health care
- Workplace stress is at its highest level and getting higher; stress is a contributing factor/cause of many life illnesses
- Hospital and pharmaceutical costs are rising
- The Obesity Epidemic is at a national all time high; obesity often results from poor nutrition and inactivity



Balancing Your Wellness Wheel



Source: <http://www.nwmissouri.edu/wellness/PDF/shift/BalancingYourWellness.pdf>



Dimension One

Physical Wellness

A perception and expectation of physical health

- Exercising regularly
- Eating properly
- Getting regular physical check-ups
- Avoiding the use of tobacco or illicit drugs



Dimension Two

Financial/Occupational Wellness

Your outlook on your work and career

- Finding satisfaction and worth in your work
- Ensuring your work environment and relationships are comfortable
- Finding ways to improve at work through skill development and active learning
- Ability to make choices that foster positive attitudes toward work and your co-workers will enhance your personal and professional satisfaction and promote lifelong learning
- Requires knowing enough about yourself to choose a rewarding and fulfilling occupation consistent with your personal interests, values and beliefs

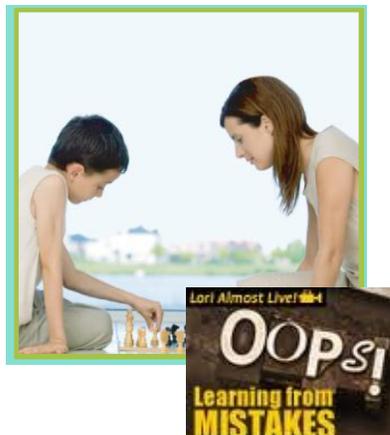


Dimension Three

Intellectual Wellness

The perception of being internally energized by an optimal amount of intellectually stimulating activity

- Learning because you want to – not because you are told to. Doing the work assigned.
- Learning through varied experiences – reading, writing, sharing and exploration
- Observing what is around you
- Listening
- Finding applications for material learned in the classroom
- Staying current with world affairs/news
- Questioning
- Exposing yourself to new experiences (e.g. arts, theater)



Dimension Four

Emotional Wellness

Possession of a secure self-identity and a positive sense of self-regard; also the ability to cope with and/or improve unpleasant mood states.

- Keeping a positive attitude
- Being sensitive to your feelings and the feelings of others
- Learning to cope with stress
- Being realistic about your expectations and time
- Taking responsibility for your own behavior
- Dealing with your personal and financial issues realistically
- Viewing challenges as opportunities rather than obstacles
- Functioning independently but knowing when you need to ask for help



Dimension Five

Social Wellness

a perception of having support available from family, friends, or co-workers in times of need and a perception of being a valued support provider.

- Being comfortable with and liking yourself as a person
- Interacting easily with people of different ages, backgrounds, races, lifestyles
- Contributing time and energy to the community
- Communicating your feelings
- Developing friendships
- Recognizing a need for “fun” time in your life
- Budgeting and balancing your time to include both responsibilities and relaxation



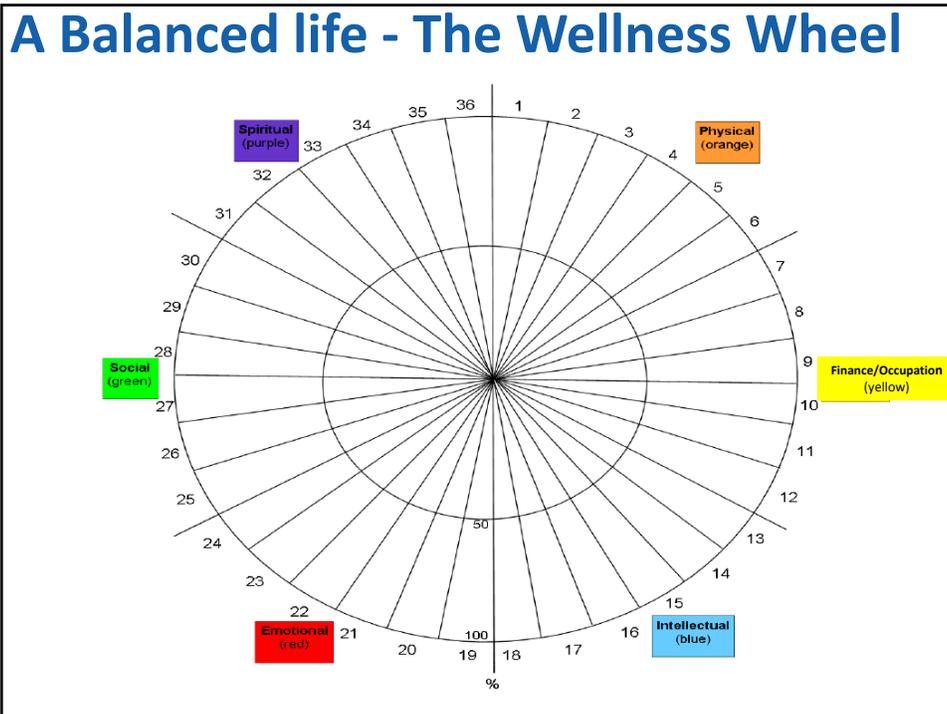
Dimension Six

SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

A positive perception of meaning and purpose in life

- Being open to different cultures and religions
- Giving your time to volunteer or participate in community service activities
- Spending time defining personal values and ethics and making decisions that complement them
- Spending time alone in personal reflection
- Participating in spiritual activities
- Participating in activities that protect the environment
- Caring about the welfare of others and acting out of that care





Activity Instructions

- Read each statement;
- Fill in the corresponding pie-shaped section of the wheel to the degree you are achieving this:
- For example, question #1 is:
"I eat a balanced nutritional diet";
- If you feel you are doing this 100% of the time, color in all of section 1. If you do this 60% of the time, color 60% of the section.
- Complete this for all 36 sections of the wheel.

The Physical Section: **ORANGE**

1. I eat a balanced nutritional diet.
2. I exercise at least 3 times per week.
3. I choose to abstain from sex or sex is enjoyable and I practice safe sex.
4. I do not use alcohol or use in moderation, am a non-smoker and avoid street drugs.
5. I am generally free from illness.
6. I am a reasonable weight for my height.



The Finance/Occupation Section: **YELLOW**

7. I have a solid balance between saving for the future and spending for the present.
8. My beliefs/values surrounding money are harmonious with my behavior.
9. What I am doing with work/school has purpose.
10. I use money positively, e.g., little or no gambling or excessive massing of goods.
11. I have a balance between work/school and the other areas of my life.



12. I have financial plans for the future.

The Intellectual Section: BLUE

13. I have specific intellectual goals, e.g., learning a new skill, a specific major.
14. I pursue mentally stimulating interests or hobbies.
15. I am generally satisfied with my education plan/vocation.
16. I have positive thoughts (a low degree of negativity and cynicism).
17. I would describe myself as a life long learner.
18. I commit time and energy to professional and self-development.



The Emotional Section: RED

19. I have a sense of fun and laughter.
20. I am able to feel and label my feelings.
21. I express my feelings appropriately.
22. I have a sense of control in my life and I am able to adapt to change.
23. I am able to comfort or console myself when I am troubled.
24. Others would describe me as emotionally stable.



The Social Section: GREEN

25. I am able to resolve conflicts in all areas of my life.
26. I am aware of the feelings of others and can respond appropriately.
27. I have at least three people with whom I have a close trusting relationship.
28. I am aware of and able to set and respect my own and others boundaries.
29. I have satisfying social interaction with others.
30. I have a sense of belonging/not being isolated.



The Spiritual Section: PURPLE

31. I practice meditation, pray or engage in some type of growth practice.
32. I have a general sense of serenity.
33. I have faith in a higher power.
34. I have a sense of meaning and purpose in my life.
35. I trust others and am able to forgive others and myself and let go.
36. Principles/ethics/morals provide guides for my life.



Reflection – Action Planning Guide

- Remember:
 - Each person is unique
 - There is no “right” or “wrong” wheel
 - Responses will vary depending on age and stage of life
- Consider the wheel when you have created as a source of feedback.
- Feedback is something we can choose to use or ignore.



Reflection –

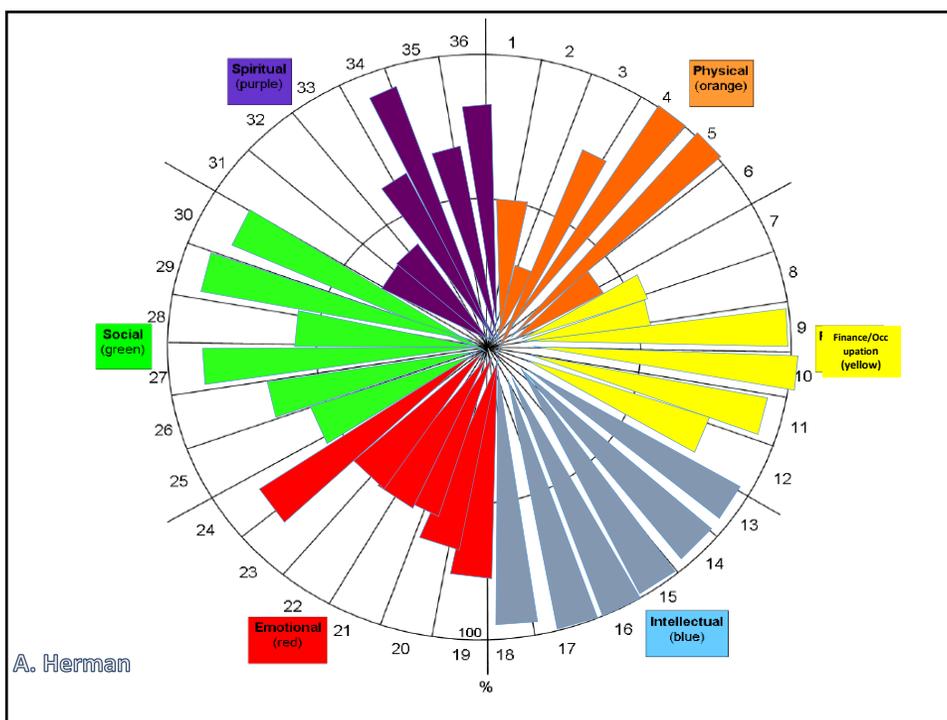
- Which section of your wheel has the most color?
- Which section of your wheel has the least color?
- If this is not the first time you have filled out this assessment, how has the wheel changed? To what do you attribute the changes?



Goal-Setting

- As a result of doing this assessment, I intend to improve my life balance by...
- My first step will be...
- I will share my plans with _____ and will ask for their support by saying, "_____."
- I will review my progress on _____.
(date)

Source: <http://www.nwmissouri.edu/wellness/PDF/shift/BalancingYourWellness.pdf>



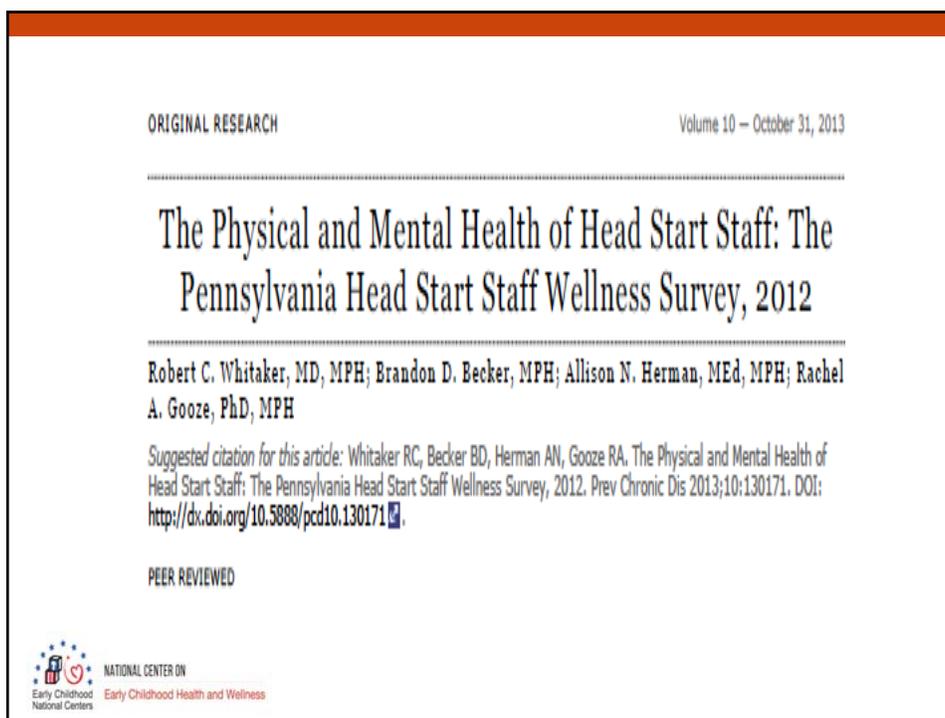


Table 2. Prevalence of Health Indicators Among Pennsylvania Head Start Staff Survey Participants (N = 2,122) in 2012 and a National Reference Population in 2011^a

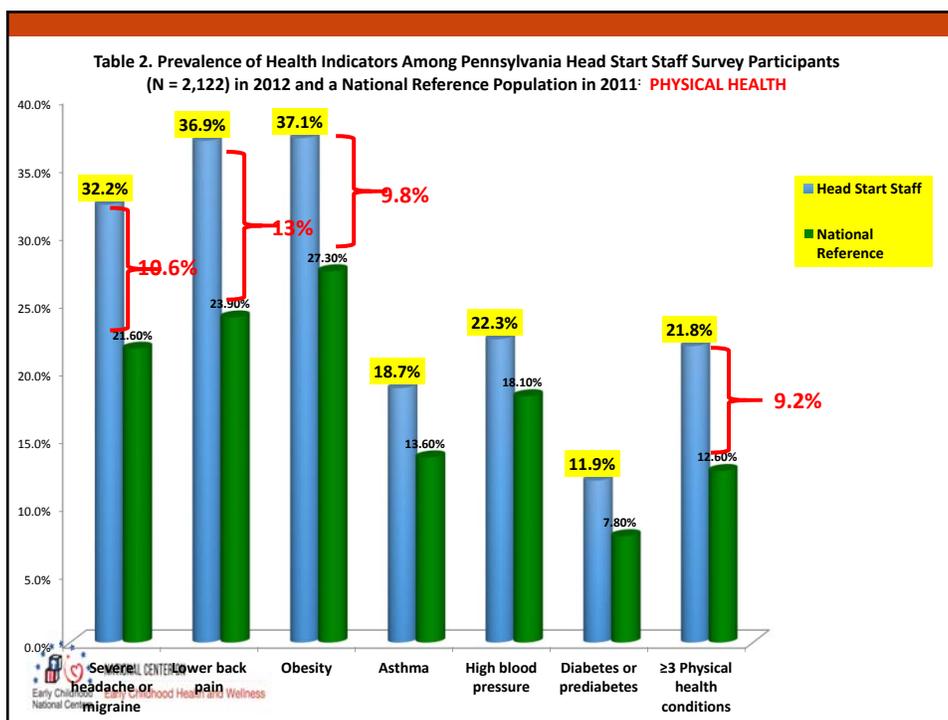
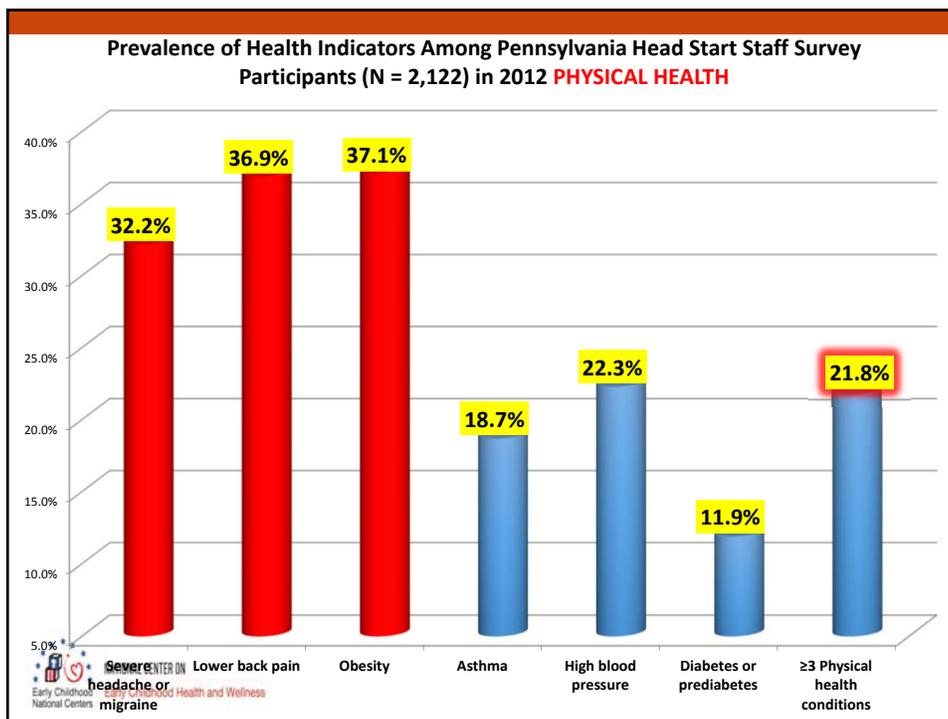
Health Indicator	Head Start Staff, % (95% CI)	National Reference, % (95% CI)	Difference, % (95% CI)
Physical health			
Severe headache or migraine	32.2 (30.2–34.2)	21.6 (20.4–22.8)	10.6 (8.3–12.9)
Lower back pain	36.9 (34.9–40.0)	23.9 (22.6–25.1)	13.0 (10.6–15.4)
Obesity	37.1 (34.9–39.3)	27.3 (26.0–28.6)	9.8 (7.3–12.3)
Asthma	18.7 (17.0–20.3)	13.6 (12.5–14.7)	5.0 (3.1–7.0)
High blood pressure	22.3 (20.5–24.0)	18.1 (17.0–19.2)	4.1 (2.0–6.2)
Diabetes or prediabetes	11.9 (10.5–13.3)	7.8 (7.1–8.6)	4.1 (2.5–5.6)
≥3 Physical health conditions	21.8 (20.0–23.6)	12.6 (11.7–13.5)	9.2 (7.3–11.2)
Mental health			
Depression diagnosed by health professional	23.5 (21.7–25.3)	17.6 (17.1–18.0)	5.9 (4.0–7.8)
Health-related quality of life			
Fair or poor health status	14.6 (13.1–16.1)	5.1 (4.5–5.6)	9.5 (7.9–11.1)
Frequent physically unhealthy days (≥14 d/mo)	10.1 (8.8–11.4)	5.9 (5.6–6.1)	4.2 (2.9–5.5)
Frequent mentally unhealthy days (≥14 d/mo)	18.0 (16.4–19.7)	9.5 (9.2–9.8)	8.5 (6.8–10.2)
Frequent physically or mentally unhealthy days (≥14 d/mo)	28.3 (26.3–30.2)	14.5 (14.1–14.9)	13.7 (11.8–15.7)
Work absences due to illness (≥10 d/y)	8.6 (7.4–9.8)	7.4 (6.7–8.2)	1.2 (–0.2 to 2.6)
Health care access			
Has personal doctor	96.5 (95.7–97.3)	86.4 (86.0–86.8)	10.1 (9.2–11.0)
Has health insurance	96.4 (95.6–97.2)	89.5 (88.8–90.3)	6.9 (5.8–8.0)
Has visited dentist in last 12 months	76.4 (74.6–78.3)	76.2 (75.0–77.5)	0.2 (–2.0 to 2.4)

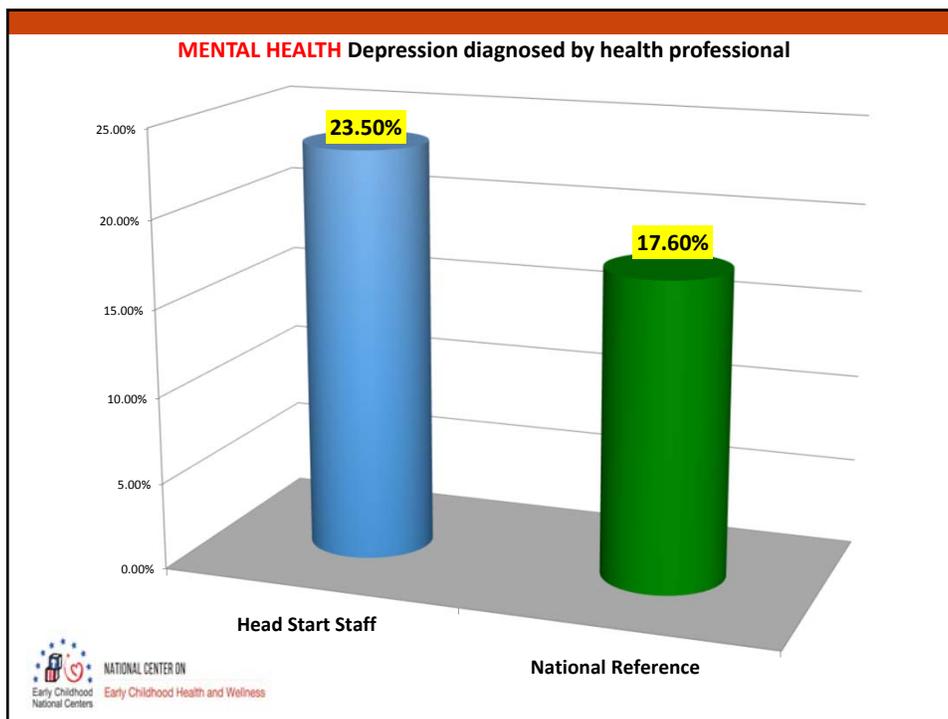


Slide 36

- 1 I am wondering if in the end we want to use these slides as is, make them a handout? There is a lot of information and perhaps there is a way to make these into a one page infographic?

Neal M Horen, 1/23/2014





Staff Wellness

- a measure of status in each of the dimensions of health
- the key to unlocking an individual's full potential

Wellness is an **active process**. It requires awareness and directed, thoughtful attention to the choices we make.

Time for a paradigm shift:

Good health is out of my control

shift to → I can make choices to improve my wellness!

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Introduction and Rationale

- Providing care to young children is an intense and demanding job.
- Parents and teachers are under pressure to meet the demands of running a household/classroom, personal concerns, and responding to the child/children in their care.
- 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 the child/children in your care.



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



Overview and Learning Objectives

Part 1: Understanding Stress

- Understand the definition of stress
- Identify common sources of stress
- Describe your personal sources and signs of stress

Part 2: My Role in Stress Creation and Reduction

- Recognize the link between thoughts, behavior, and emotion
- Recognize the role of “control” in stress creation and reduction
- Understand your personal role in stress creation and reduction

Part 3: My Individualized Action Plan

- Identify and practice techniques to lessen your level of stress at home and work
- Create your Individualized Action Plan for managing stress



Part 1 – Understanding Stress

Learning Objectives:

- Revisit the definition of stress
- Identify common sources of stress
- Describe your personal sources and signs of stress
- Activity: Warm-up - One of my favorite “stress busters”
- Activity: Knowing your stressors and signs of stress

School readiness begins with health!

One of My “Stress Busters”



In pairs,

- Think about a time when you were stressed and you found a way to manage your reaction and feelings.
- Turn to your neighbor and finish this sentence:
“One of the best things I have done recently for myself when I am feeling stressed is.....”

Be prepared to share with the large group

Definition of Stress

- Stress:
 - Is a physical, mental or emotional response to events that causes bodily or mental tension
 - Comes from a situation or a thought that makes you feel frustrated, nervous, anxious or angry
 - Can be a good thing
 - Can also be harmful
- Harmful Stress:
This is the kind of stress that would be helpful to limit and learn to manage in a healthy way

Common Sources of Parent Stress

Tension with child care provider/co-workers	Too much to do and no time to keep up
Having no time for yourself	Too few additional caregivers
Environmental issues- noise, lack of space, disorganized, etc.	Children need things immediately
Personal concerns – family, financial, health, etc.	Having few/no opportunities for personal development
Lack of clear communication with family	Feeling like you have little control over your own decisions



Common Sources of Provider Stress

Tension with parents/co-workers	Too much work to do and not enough time
Feeling unable to make use of your skills and abilities	Too many children per caregiver
Environmental issues- noise, lack of space, disorganized, etc.	Children need things immediately
Personal concerns – family, financial, health, etc.	Having few/no opportunities for professional development or advancement
Lack of clear communication with co-workers/supervisors/others in authority	Feeling like you have little control over how you perform your job



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

Activity 1: Knowing Your Sources and Signs of Stress



In pairs or small groups:

Turn to the first page of your **Taking Care of Ourselves** booklet and discuss the following questions:

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

Be prepared to report back to the group

Part 2 – My Role in Stress Creation and Reduction

- Learning Objectives:
 - Revisit the link between thoughts, behavior, and emotion
 - Recognize the role of “control” in stress creation and reduction
 - Understand your personal role in stress creation and reduction
 - Activity: Everyday ways of taking care of myself
 - Activity: Keeping a stress log



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!
- There are common unhelpful patterns of thinking



Unhelpful Patterns of Thinking

All or Nothing Thinking

Overgeneralization

Jumping to Conclusions

Filtering out the Positive

Emotional Reasoning

Catastrophizing

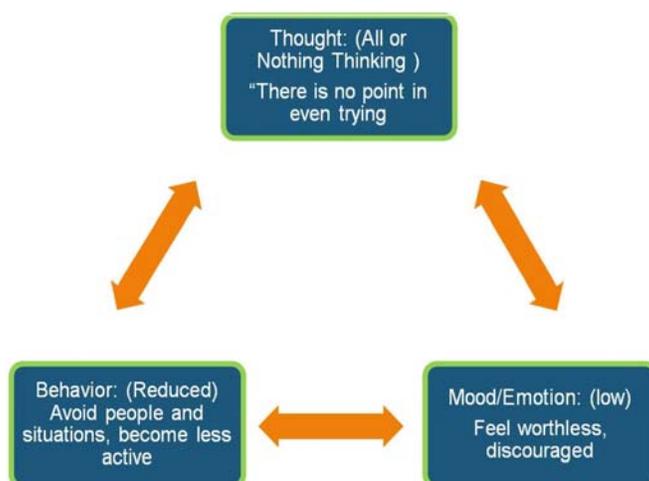
Should Statements

Personalization

(Beck, 1995; Burns, 1989)



Thought-Behavior-Emotion Cycle



The Role of Control in Stress Reduction

Focus on

what is in your control

- Examples of areas in your control:
 - Your ability to prioritize work & personal obligations
 - Your reactions to events and people
 - Your thoughts
- Focusing on areas in your control results in:
 - Feeling empowered
 - Feeling relief

Put aside

what is out of your control

- Examples of areas outside of your control:
 - How people respond to you
 - Other people's feelings
- Focusing on areas outside of your control results in:
 - Feeling hopeless
 - Feeling anxious
 - Feeling STRESSED



Our Personal Role in Stress Reduction

- Recognize that thoughts impact your behavior and emotions
- “Talk Back” to your unhelpful thoughts ([see handout](#))
- Focus on what is in your control versus out of your control
- Keep a flexible and revolving door approach to the types of activities or strategies you choose to reduce stress



Strategies to Reduce Stress

- What is a coping strategy?
 - Process of managing stressful situations
 - Deliberate and planned approach
 - Goal: reduce, tolerate, or minimize stress
 - Individualized
- Create a coping strategy toolbox
 - A real or imaginary “box” collecting coping strategies that are successful for you

Every Day Strategies to Reduce Stress

- Eat a well- balanced diet; drink fluids low in sugar, calories, and caffeine; have healthy snacks; and drink water!
- Sleep well
- Exercise: any activity that you find enjoyable
- Create time each day to decompress
- Talk with friends, peers, avoid gossip and hurtful conversations
- Write in a journal
- Pair enjoyable activities or tasks with less enjoyable activities or tasks
- Reward yourself for a job well done

Activity 2: Every Day Ways of Taking Care of Myself



Individually,
Turn to the second page of your
Taking Care of Ourselves booklet and:

- Read each section's tips for taking care of yourself while caring for young children
- Check those that best fit for you
- Select one or two ways of taking care of yourself that you want to try during the next week.

Be prepared to share the one/two that you've chosen with the group

Using a Stress Log

- **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



Activity 3: Keeping a Stress Log



National Centers

Keeping a Stress Log

There are a number of step 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



Part 3 – My Individualized Plan

Learning Objectives:

- Identify strategies and practice techniques to reduce your level of stress at home and at work
- Create your individualized action plan for managing stress
- Activity: *Revisiting* Keeping A Stress Log
- Activity: Practice stress reduction
- Activity: Practice effective communication
- Activity: My Individualized Action Plan

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Activity 3: Keeping a Stress Log

Revisiting 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

Strategies to Reduce Stress

- What is a coping strategy?
 - Process of managing stressful situations
 - Deliberate and planned approach
 - Goal: reduce, tolerate, or minimize stress
 - Individualized
- Create a coping strategy toolbox
 - A real or imaginary “box” collecting coping strategies that are successful for you
 - Have you done this?

Relaxation Techniques

Controlled or Deep Breathing

- Simple, but effective! Can be done any time anywhere
- Controlled breathing helps us to calm down
- To keep thoughts calm and relaxed while breathing, introduce the words “calm” or “relax” while breathing out
- Imagine your other thoughts floating away in a balloon



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



Activity 4: Stress Reduction Technique Practice

- Controlled or Deep Breathing
- Progressive Relaxation

For more practice in these techniques, as well as Visual Imagery, with recorded audio guidance go to the ECMHC website -

<http://www.ecmhc.org/relaxation.html>



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Mental Techniques

Thought Stopping

- Helps break the cognitive distortion cycle
- Gets you back on track
- Key: Notice your thoughts, use a trigger word to stop the thought
- Replace with a more helpful thought
- Example: "There is no point in trying"

STOP!

"This situation could be easier if I first talked with..."


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Mental Techniques

Positive Self-Statements

- Introduce repetitive positive and motivating statements into your day and in reaction to your thoughts
- Examples of positive statements:
 - I am smart! I work hard! I always do my best.
- Examples of positive thought replacements:
 - Instead of: “ I need to be perfect or I fail.”
 - *Replace with: “ I did a great job learning this new curriculum!”*



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
- Instead of:
 - Speaker: I finally finished all of my work.
 - 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
- Describes changes in the future as “next steps” rather than criticism
- Ends with praise or encouragement
- Example of effective feedback as a “praise sandwich”:
 - Nice job speaking right at eye level with Jacey.
 - Next time, you might think about using a softer voice.
 - I really liked how you gave her a high five at the end.



Activity 5: Effective Communication Practice

Working in pairs,

- Read your assigned scenario
- Briefly discuss what is happening in the scenario
- Make a “praise sandwich” to give effective feedback that fits the scenario

Be prepared to share your message with the large group



Review of Learning Objectives

Part 1: Understanding Stress

- Understand the definition of stress
- Identify common sources of stress
- Describe your personal sources and signs of stress

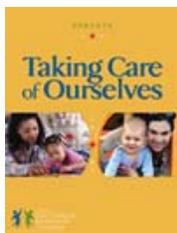
Part 2: My Role in Stress Creation and Reduction

- Recognize the link between thoughts, behavior, and emotion
- Recognize the role of "control" in stress creation and reduction
- Understand your personal role in stress creation and reduction

Part 3: My Individualized Action Plan

- Identify and practice techniques to lessen your level of stress at home and work
- Create your Individualized Action Plan for managing stress

Activity 6: My Individualized Action Plan



Individually,

Turn to the last page of your **Taking Care of Ourselves** booklet and take a few minutes to develop your own action plan for future stressful situations

Example:

- When [**my stressor**] (child whines) & I begin to feel [**sign of stress**] (tension), I will [**technique used**] (use positive self statements)."

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)
- https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/NCH_Presentation_Evaluation_2013

Thank you for your feedback!



Creating Your Own

Google



Components of a Successful Plan for Staff Wellness



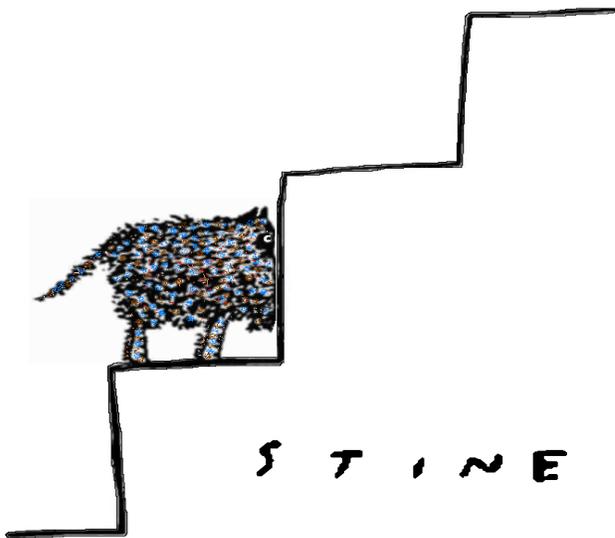
Examples from Other Programs



Gathering the Seeds of a Plan



Face to Face With
the second step.



For More Information, Please Contact:

Deitra Nealy-Shane

dln39@Georgetown.edu



National Center on Health Contact Information

Toll-Free: [888-227-5125](tel:888-227-5125)

Email: nchinfo@aap.org

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





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)

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

Taking Care of Yourself



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



- 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

Developing an Individualized Action Plan

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.

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**] _____
_____.

A Balanced Life – The Wellness Wheel

