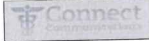


Dr Fiona Moir


**Good Mental Health and Wellbeing
CPC Seminar March 2014**

Connect Communications



www.connectcomm.co.nz
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& Medical Programme
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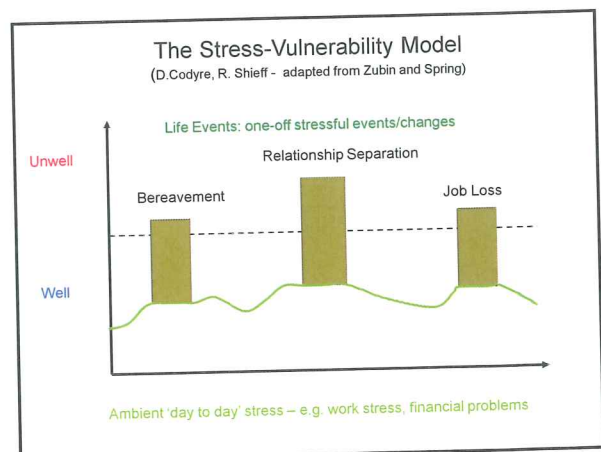
Session Outline

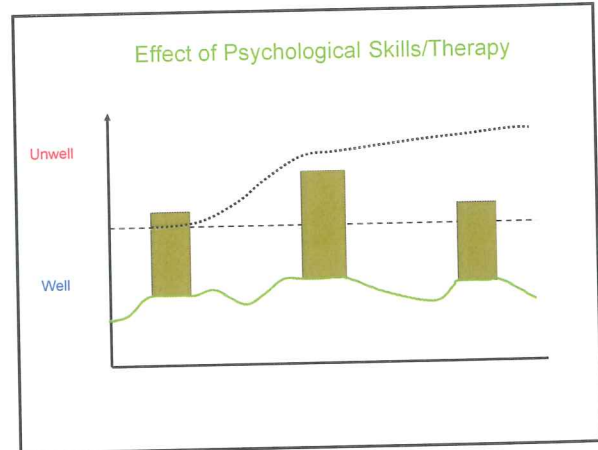
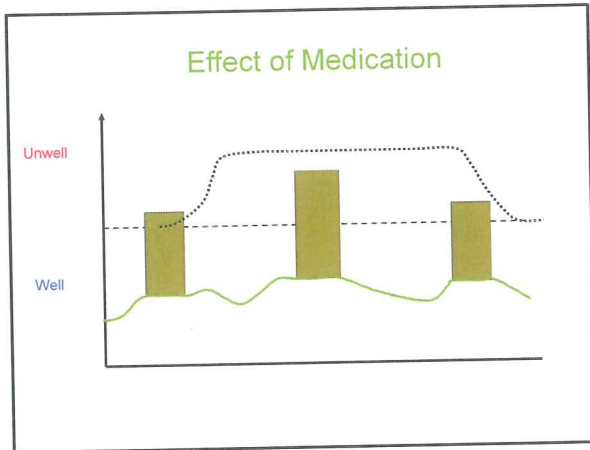
- Key concepts about stress and resilience
- Early warning signs of stress
- Prevention/management of stress
- The CALM website
- Communicating in stress and depression
- A few resources

What is Mental Health?

- The Stress-Vulnerability Model

Mental health at any point is determined by the interaction of vulnerability factors and current stress





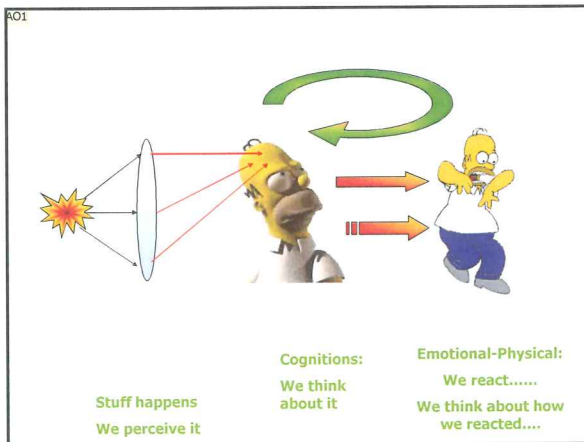
What is Stress?

(DIS)STRESS =

DEMANDS > OUR PERCEIVED ABILITY TO COPE

(GRAPH)

STRESS RESPONSE



Perceived Stress

Depends upon:

- love and caring received in childhood
- past experiences
- coping ability
- sense of personal control
- social support
- financial security
- educational level

- Perceived stress → physiological responses → illness
(Rahe 1999)

Stressors and Stress Response

- An event (*a stressor*) triggers an internal reaction (*stress response*) in three ways:
 - 1:Physiological
 - 2:Psychological
 - 3:Behavioural

Physiological response (physical)

- Triggered by a perceived threat
- Changes occur, initiated by the hypothalamus that act on the sympathetic & endocrine systems (adrenalin, cortisol)
- To prepare the body to act quickly (avoid danger and prevent injury)

Psychological Responses

- fear/anxiety/worry
- physical tension/agitation
- loss of pleasure
- sleep disturbance
- tearfulness
- intolerance/irritability
- loss of confidence
- concentration problems
- memory impairment

Behavioural Responses

- aggression
- avoidance
- time issues/procrastination
- withdrawal or hyper-social
- libido issues
- eating problems
- substance abuse
- over-spending

Psychological, Behavioural and Physical Effects: Your 'Smoke Alarms'

- Psychological (concentration, forgetful, indecisive, confidence, loss of pleasure and sense of humour, irritable, agitated, mood swings, tearful, fearful, worry)
- Behavioural (clumsy, procrastination, nail biting, inflexible, interrupt more, withdraw, changes in alcohol, eating, smoking & drug use, aggression, libido, over-spending)
- Physical (skin, sweating, heart rate, bowel, tiredness, sleep patterns, muscle tension, stomach acid)

Early Warning Signs and Action Plans

Stress Management:

Identify your 'smoke alarms'

- What are the early warning signs?
- Others may notice them first

- ...and have an action plan

Stigma

- Stress is not...

A failure or a weakness,
.....It is a message

HOW CAN WE REDUCE STRESS, DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY, AND INCREASE WELLBEING?

Be Self-Aware and do a Stress Review

Think of a past stressful event: which bit of it triggered feelings of anxiety and stress?

Think of on-going stressor:

- Do you see it as a challenge? If not - can you ditch it?
- Is it really your responsibility? Can you delegate it? If not - can you alter when or how you do it?

(Anne Williamson)

- Worry Bubbles

(Louise Webster)

Some Basics: Endorphin Producing Activity

- Half an hour a day



- Exercise
- Laughter
- Meditation boosts endorphins

What Else Can You Do?

- Self-awareness: know your 'Early Warning Signs'; help-seeking behaviour, time to reflect;
- Have interests outside of work/school
- Transition between work/school and home
- Strong support networks (professional and personal)
- Physical: eg, exercise, sleep, nutrition,
- Techniques: eg, mindfulness, progressive muscle relaxation,
- Organise and problem solve – active coping
- Positive thinking techniques: eg, gratitude
- Have fun

Prevention and Treatment

- Support, resilience, coping strategies and treatment for mental disorders are protective factors against suicide
- Resilience factors can be increased with training:
 - Optimism: associated with reduced stress-related illness
 - Active coping style: associated with lower levels of depression

Training for Prevention and Treatment

- People using stress management programmes:
 - less depression and anxiety
 - more positive coping skills
- A self-hypnosis/relaxation intervention: relieves symptoms of psychological distress and depression
- Self-help internet-based treatments:
 - effective for panic disorder
 - effective for mild to moderate depression

MINDFULNESS

MEANING IN LIFE

Having "a meaning in life" and paying attention to one's non-professional life has been reported to have protective effects against burnout in doctors.

Garfinkel, 2001

Meaning in Life

- Having a belief system that allows you to attribute meaning to misfortune or illness produces better psychological and physical outcomes.
- Meaning is not just about transforming suffering but also living a rewarding life:
(eg: achievement, intimacy, power and spirituality). Spirituality was most highly correlated with measures of wellbeing than any other. (Baumesister)

Meaning in Life and Being Connected

Being resilient. Balance a stressful job with:

- A sense of world order and human good
- Be aware of love and belongingness in your life
- Be aware of meaning/spirituality in your life

(Jill Benson 2007)

Protective factors

- Youth ,07 (9107 young people): spiritual beliefs are very important for 1/3 of students
- Family and peer connections are protective against depression

WHO Definition of Health

"Health" was defined as being:

"a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity"

(WHO, 1948)

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Positive Psychology: umbrella term

started early 1950's

- Positive emotions
- Positive characteristics and
- What enables them to flourish

Increasing Optimism and Hope

- Optimists are more specific:
"This book is useless"
- Pessimists generalise:
"All books are useless" ie, catastrophise

You can learn to recognise and then dispute
pessimistic thoughts

Some ideas from Dr Ann Williamson:

*Still in The Storm:
How to Manage Your
Stress and Achieve
Balance in Life* 2008



At Times of Anxiety

- Think of it as a 'message' – do something to feel more calm:
 - Anchor
 - Breathing
 - Write it in a 'worry book' (for 'worry time)- then physically move
 - Imagine the word 'calm' – dripping
 - Challenge beliefs – evidence?

At Worry Time

- Can I do anything about this? If not, then why worry about it?
- Is this actually my problem or someone else's?
- Will this still be important in a months time? A years time? 10 years time?

Or 3 drawer technique:

- relaxation first. worry on the desk: bottom drawer (someone else's problem), middle (nobody can do anything about), top drawer (I can change). Then look at top drawer stuff.

THE CALM WEBSITE:

BACKGROUND AND CONTENT

CALM Website (UoA) Acknowledgments

- *Co-authors: Dr Tony Fernando and Dr Shailesh Kumar*

*CALM website developers Pauline Cooper-loelu, Iain Doherty from The Learning Technology Unit,
Craig Housley and Wen-Chen Hol from The Centre for Flexible and Distance Learning, University of Auckland*

CALM

Computer Assisted Learning for the Mind

- Not too complicated
- Good information including links to other sites
- Audiofiles and practical exercises
- Mental health and wellbeing as well as illness

- Pilot for 5 weeks with medical students Sept 08; Open to public Dec 08

Welcome to the CALM Website: Computer Assisted Learning for the Mind.



Dr Fiona Moir, Dr Tony Fernando, Dr Shailesh Kumar

CALM Website Content

- Managing depression, anxiety, stress, alcohol and drugs
- Mental resilience: developing positive mind states: learning how to be happy
- Healthy Relationships

- Finding Meaning in Life

Audiofiles: Practical Techniques in Developing Positive Mind States

- *Gratitude*
- *Living Mindfully on a Daily Basis*
- *Developing Loving Kindness, Compassion and Forgiveness*
- *Guided Meditation on Loving Kindness or Kindly Awareness*

Audiofiles: Practical Techniques for Managing Stress

- *Guided Meditation on Mindfulness of the Breath*
- *Body Scanning*
- *Dealing With Stress (Developing a Coping Plan)*
- *Dealing With Stress (Taking Care of Your Person)*
- *Dealing With Stress (Pros and Cons Table)*
- *Dealing With Anger*
- *Preparing For Exams*
- *Meeting Deadlines*
- *Self Hypnosis*
- *Progressive Muscle Relaxation*

Other Audiofiles

- *Maintaining Healthy Relationships*
- *Finding Meaning in Our Day to Day Lives*
- *Finding Meaning After Adversity*
- *Finding Meaning in Life Through Religion (various)*

CALM WEBSITE FEEDBACK

CALM Feedback: Medical Students

- 80 students used the site in 5 weeks (about ¼)
- Didn't use it: 'too busy', 'I forgot', 'computers make me think of work', 'hippie nonsense'
- Did use it: 'calming and relaxing', 'thought-provoking, fantastic: made me feel less anxious', 'good for validating depression'

CALM: Who uses it?

- 28 475 visits from 95 countries
- 42% are returning visitors
- 58.91% 2 times 3,782.00
- 13.28% 3 times 1,539.00
- 5.40% 4 times 805.00
- 2.34% 26-50 times 736.00
- 2.58% 51-100 times 824.00
- 2.89% 101-200 times 839.00
- 2.95% 201+ times 490.00

World Feedback: The good...

'...the meditation exercises were so useful, the teaching pieces were long enough to be valuable yet brief enough for a busy person's schedule, finally the meaningful life section was wonderful and so respectful. This entire site is a precious gift to so many; may you have enduring success in sharing it with the world...'

Calgary, Alberta, Canada

And the not so good.....

- '...now it's fine if you want to pray to bronze-age sky gods, but people with emotional problems could actually do with some, you know, evidence-based solutions. This website approaches some of that, but gets lost at the end with all that patronising rubbish...'
- '...under religion - I think only 2 protestant groups is not enough...'
- '...promoting religion and volunteering as a means to finding meaning in life is highly unimaginative for an academic setting...'

Back to the positive (feedback sandwich)

"I am on call and am feeling slightly tortured by a seemingly uncontrollable barrage of calls from the Emergency Room. I just took a quick break and stumbled across CALM, and your 'finding meaning' audio file. You have no idea how pleasant it was to listen to this, faced with the many type A, goal-driven, blinkered people I work with.

"I am headed off next week for some mountaineering and to remind me of my 'purpose'. I absolutely plan to look through the whole CALM website before I go. Thank you so much!"

Boston, USA

Communication and Depression

COMMUNICATION TIPS

- Reflect feeling
- Empathy, empathy and more empathy
- Use verbal arrow technique if they are angry
- If hard to talk, do something with them at the same time

MESSAGES YOU WANT TO GET ACROSS

- I'm concerned and I would like to help you
- I'm not going to push you to talk if you don't want to
- I understand that you are feeling terrible
- I am available for you no matter how you feel

(Verbal and non-verbal communication)

"DON'T JUST DO SOMETHING – STAND THERE!"

Sometimes with a quiet "uncommunicative" person

- We don't have to have the answers
- We can just share the silence

(Who is "uncomfortable" with the silence?)

DOING SOMETHING

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY TECHNIQUES USED IN DEPRESSION

Interventions:

- Problem Solving – Stuck/Overwhelmed/Indecisive
- Activity Scheduling - Inactive
- Relaxation Techniques - Anxious
- Cognitive – Negative Thoughts

Strengths-based Approach

- When does the problem not occur?
- When is the problem less?
- What do they do already that helps them to feel better?
- What has been used as solutions to similar problems in the past?
- Look for exceptions: were there days/hours when they felt less depressed or calmer? Have there been times when things were easier? What was happening then?

Strengths-based Approach

(ie, validate their feelings and then help them to direct the attention to where they need to go)

Identity or Behaviour

- People can take on their emotional state as their identity

So you can talk about 'the depression' and 'the anxiety' to separate them from the persons emotional state

- Triangle: feelings, thoughts and behaviour
We can learn to interrupt this at any point. If they try doing something different – it can give them back a bit of control.

Mansion of Emotions (Petra King)

Goals, Change, Expectancy, Hope

- Enable them to help themselves rather than relying on you
- Encourage them to set goals
- New skills: "Try things out as an experiment"

INSTILLING A SENSE OF HOPE



World Champ Sand Sculpture
David Ducharane

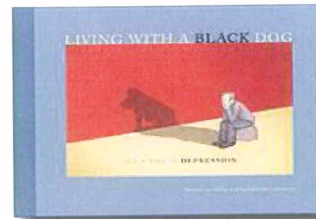
HOW MIGHT WE DO THAT?

- Help people to gain a sense of purpose and meaning (virtues and values for them)
- Enhance their skills – what do they do well?
- Clarify goals and objectives (concrete/tangible)
- Use positive approach – validate feelings and then move to solution focus
- Explore negative thoughts (find shades of grey)
- Challenge attention on negative thoughts

What Have We Covered?

- Stress and resilience
- Early warning signs
- Prevention/Intervention Basics
- Mindfulness
- Meaning in Life
- Optimistic thinking, gratitude
- Techniques to use for anxiety
- The CALM Website
- Communication

Living with a Black Dog: His Name is Depression



Living with a Black Dog: His Name is Depression
Matthew Jonstone (Andrews McMeel Publishing, LLC, \$9.95)

Websites

- CALM(Computer Assisted Learning for the Mind):
<http://www.calm.auckland.ac.nz>
- The Black Dog Institute:
<http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au>
- Martin Seligman: Authentic Happiness
<http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu>
- The Mental Health Foundation
<http://www.mentalhealth.org.nz>

and many more...

U-lifeline; Beyondblue; The Desk; U-Lifeline; Urge

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