10

Implementing a Stress Reduction Plan

> ### STRESS MANAGEMENT PRINCIPLE
> Work on a plan; then the plan will work on you.

IMPORTANCE OF IMPLEMENTING A PLAN

Any intention—however noble it may be, any plan—however well conceived it may be, any desire—however chaste it may be, unless implemented cannot produce the necessary results. We need to implement our inten-tions, plans, and desires in order to obtain the necessary results. The purpose of this workbook is to provide prac-tical suggestions toward preventing, reducing, and managing the harmful and negative consequences of stress in our daily lives, thus enabling us to effectively manage changes that are an inevitable part of life. These practical suggestions, if not implemented in our lives, are meaningless. We need to make conscious efforts at integrating these suggestions into our daily activities. These efforts will foster positive health and promote our wellbeing.

The starting point in the process of implementation is to take stock of the resources that are available to us. In implementing a stress reduction plan, a prerequisite is to have self-motivation. Unless and until we are motivated to bring about change in our lives, nobody can force us to make that change. We need to be committed. We need to have faith in ourselves and the techniques that we are going to implement. We also need to be aware of what needs to be changed (Romas & Zenga, 2001).

Another prerequisite for success is the degree of changeability in what we intend to change in our behavior. This changeability varies from individual to individual and is person-specific. For example, applying relaxation techniques may be more changeable for some of us but difficult for others who have a more rigid lifestyle, or applying anxiety-coping techniques may be more changeable for some of us while others may find it more diffi-cult, and so on. From a practical point of view, we need to prioritize and put our efforts into those behavior patterns that are changeable and important (Green & Kreuter, 2005). We need to identify for ourselves, on our own, which behaviors are less changeable and which behaviors are more changeable, and which behaviors are more important and which behaviors are less important. The behaviors that are more important and more changeable need to be our first priority. Then, we need to alter behaviors that are more important but less changeable. After accomplishing these two sets of behaviors, we can tackle behaviors that are less important and more changeable. Behaviors that are less important and less changeable need to be ignored. This aspect is presented later in the chapter.

After having this requisite motivation and conditioning, we need to identify friends, coworkers, family members, associates, and others who can help us in our efforts to implement our stress reduction plan. We need to take them into confidence and share our plan. We need to solicit their support in helping us adhere to the plan. They will provide us with the necessary mental, emotional, and social support that will help keep us from deviating from our decisions. We also need to procure any special accessories or equipment required for imple-menting the desired set of behaviors. For example, for a cross-country skiing program, we need to have ski gear, appropriate clothing, conditioning, and a location.

We also need to make definitive time allocations for implementing our plan. This requirement will entail scheduling the activities for desired behaviors (as suggested in several worksheets throughout this workbook) into our daily plan, however busy we may be. We need to allocate regular blocks of time for implementing tech-niques for prevention, reduction, and management of stress.

Finally, we need to make this stress reduction plan fit into our overall scheme of life. To do so, we need to have clarity about where we want to be, or in other words—what our goal is. We also need to clearly know how we will achieve this goal, i.e., which objectives will lead us to that goal.

Such planning has been shown to improve our coping skills with everyday stressors as well as chronic stres-sors. Kleinke (2002) uses the basic framework of goal setting for coping with a myriad of situations such as fail-ure, loneliness, loss, aging, pain, illness, and injury. Hopefully, you will find these planning techniques very helpful.

STAGES OF CHANGE

In making a plan for changing stress-related behaviors, we need to understand that, when making this change, we progress through several stages. Since the 1980s, James Prochaska and his colleagues have developed a model popularly known as the "transtheoretical model" or the "stages of change model" to explain these stages system-atically (Prochaska, Redding, & Evers, 2015) (see Fig. 10.1). According to this model, with regard to any behavior, a person begins in precontemplation, or is not aware that he or she needs to make the change and has no inten-tion to change over the next 6 months. The second stage is contemplation, in which the person starts thinking about making a change regarding the behavior and wants to make the change within the next 6 months. The third stage is preparation, in which the person intends to take action within the next 30 days and has begun taking some behavioral steps in that direction. The fourth step is action, in which the person has initiated the changed behavior but has not done so continuously for 6 months. The final stage is maintenance, in which the person has been performing the desired behavior for more than 6 months continuously. After you have read this workbook, we are sure that you would have progressed to at least the contemplation or preparation stages and would be ready to enter into the action and maintenance stages concerning one or more specific areas of stress management.

The stages of change model has been applied to a variety of health behaviors in a number of settings (Sharma, 2017). This model has been useful in helping people change behaviors. The model also elaborates on the role of self-efficacy and decisional balance in initiation of behavior change. Self-efficacy is the behavior-specific confidence that a person has in his or her abilities to perform a given behavior at any moment. It can be built by performing the behavior in small steps. In this workbook, you have learned the small steps for stress management-related behaviors. You must apply these steps to gain mastery of the behavior slowly over
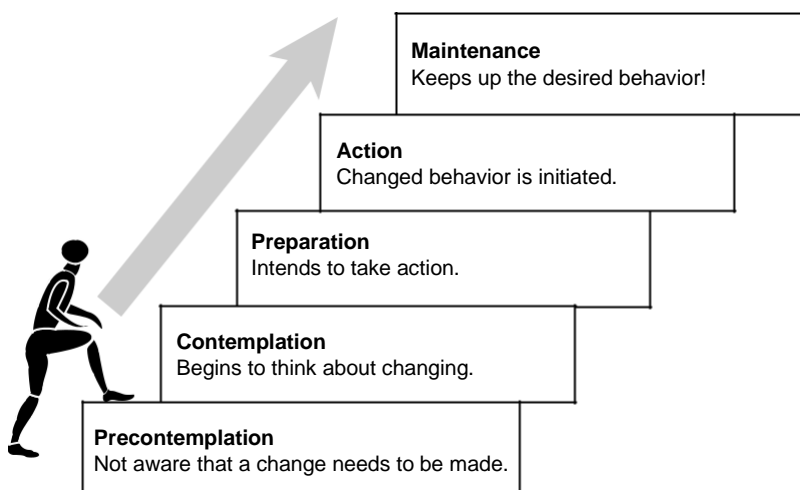

FIGURE 10.1 James Prochaska's stages of change model.

time. In developing self-efficacy, it is also essential to overcome temptations or urges to engage in a specific habit under difficult situations. Reducing stress, controlling cravings, and having positive social situations can achieve self-efficacy. The decisional balance is about having an understanding that the pros, or benefits, of changing outweigh the cons, or costs, of changing. Only when we are convinced that the pros of behavior change are more worthwhile than the cons will we initiate the behavior change. We should try to make a list of all the benefits of the change that we propose to make. With this understanding we are ready to develop our specific goals and objectives.

DETERMINING GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND TARGETS

Goal Setting

Goals are the total of projections of our long-term plans. Goals are an indication of what we want to accom-plish in our lives. Goals signify a mission, an ambition, a purpose, and overall aim in life. These goals are oftentimes broad in nature. We need to identify goals for ourselves in different spheres of life, namely per-sonal, professional, social, financial, and spiritual. An example of a personal goal could be achieving personal happiness and peace of mind; an example of a professional goal could be achieving a certain position within an organization; an example of a social goal could be marital contentment; an example of a financial goal could be establishing a solid savings plan; and an example of a spiritual goal could be achieving world peace. Attaining goals within these spheres is important from the perspective of deriving balance, harmony, and satisfaction in life. If any of these components are missing, then life will not be holistic, and thus, complete happiness will elude us. A person without goals is also likely to have greater stress in life because of undi-rected, aimless efforts.

Goal analysis or goal setting is a procedure useful in helping us describe the meaning of what we want to achieve in terms of attitude and understanding (Mager, 1972). The concept of setting goals implies that it is not necessarily important to achieve things in the "right way" but to do the "right things." An understanding of what these "right things" are for us is central to goal setting. The sense of direction in our activities is essentially an internally driven behavior. A number of theories have been presented to explain this behavior. One of the most popular theories in psychology, Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory on motivation (Maslow, 1954, 1962), identifies the following five levels of needs:

1. Physiological (food, clothing, shelter, sex, and so on);
2. Security and safety (protection from physical and emotional harm);
3. Love, affection, belonging, and social acceptance;
4. Self-esteem (internal factors such as self-respect, autonomy, and achievement; and external factors such as status, recognition, attention, and so on);
5. Self-actualization (to achieve one's maximum potential).

According to Maslow, a person progresses from lower-level needs, such as physiological and security and safety, to higher-level needs, such as self-esteem and self-actualization, during the course of one's lifetime. Maslow hypothesized that the ultimate goal in life for all human beings was to reach self-actualization. According to this theory, it is important to accomplish a lower level of need before proceeding to the next level.

However, later research led to a modification of this theory. Alderfer (1969) revised this concept and presented an ERG theory. ERG is an acronym of the words existence, relatedness, and growth. These are the three groups of core needs. Existence is concerned with basic material requirements (same as Maslow's physiological and safety needs); relatedness is similar to Maslow's love need and the external component of Maslow's self-esteem classifica-tion; and growth is similar to the internal self-esteem component and self-actualization of Maslow's theory. However, the key features that differentiate this ERG theory from Maslow's theory are: (1) more than one level of need may be operative at the same time, and (2) if gratification of a higher-level need is blocked, then the desire to satisfy a lower-level need is increased. The ERG theory has greater scientific validation (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

This basic understanding of motivation is important in enabling us to set our goals. We need to be conscious about the "level of need" operating within our mind at any time. We also need to understand that the ultimate goal in life is to achieve our maximum potential or self-actualization.

Establishing Objectives

Objectives can be defined as concerted, directed, and focused step-by-step efforts to achieve goals. Objectives are more precise than goals and represent smaller steps. Some of the attributes in establishing objectives are as follows:

- Precise (clear and not vague statements directed toward goal accomplishment);
- Made to include a determined timeframe (e.g., 1 month, 1 year);
- Realistic (accomplishable within available timeframe and resources);
- Sequenced (logical flow of steps leading to reaching the goal);
- Written (to enhance clarity and provide a documented record for future reference);
- Proactive (described by action verbs and self-driven);
- Measurable (changes can be monitored in concrete terms);
- Behaviorally oriented (imply specific behavior changes that need to be accomplished).

Example of an Objective

I will be able to identify one irrational belief responsible for causing my work-related anxiety, within the next week, and achieve proficiency in practicing progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), as evinced by a feeling of relaxation by my body, after 10 minutes of daily practice, performed after coming home from work.

This objective may appear to be slightly verbose, but we have attempted to explain most of the attributes within this example. While formulating objectives for ourselves, only we can be the best judge of the criteria that need inclusion and the criteria that can be excluded.

Deciding Targets

To achieve practical accomplishment of goals and objectives, we need to perform a number of day-to-day activities. Identifying these daily activities in advance is important in planning. This process is known as deciding targets. Targets are things you do every day to advance you toward your goal. An example of a target would be "I will, at 6:00 p.m., after returning from work, perform progressive muscle relaxation."

Now, with the help of Worksheet 10.1, you can set goals and establish objectives. Worksheet 10.2 has been designed to prioritize your objectives. Worksheet 10.3 will help you decide upon daily targets in order to prioritize objectives. Record your daily targets for different objectives either on photocopies of Worksheet 10.3 or a separate blank sheet of paper.

Thoughts for Reflection 10.1 will help you ponder some ideas to keep in mind before setting goals and establishing objectives. Box 10.1 presents some Eastern thoughts on obtaining results.

THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION 10.1 POINTS TO PONDER

Goal setting and establishing objectives . . .
. . . are not wishful thinking or daydreaming.
. . . are positive and proactive.
. . . are an individual activity that no one else can do for us.
. . . are not something to make us regret the past or worry about for the future.
. . . are a powerful tool for success in life.
. . . are an act of discipline.
. . . are effective for reducing stress, managing change, and promoting health.

BOX 10.1

EASTERN VIEWS ON OBTAINING RESULTS

Most of our stress is due to expecting specific results from our actions. We are not sure what results we will get, and this uncertainty is often a source of fear, anxi-ety, and other forms of stress. According to Eastern phi-losophy, results are bound to follow any action. This is the basic law of nature: the law of cause and effect. The uncertain nature of results is also mandatory. According to this theory, results depend on the following three aspects:

- Effort. No result can occur without an effort on our part. Effort is the first and foremost step toward obtaining results.
- Direction. If our effort lacks an appropriate direction, then we will not be able to obtain the necessary results. Therefore, having a direction, or focus, is important to achieving success in our effort.
- Unknown factor. Even after applying an effort in an appropriate direction, success sometimes does not come. Such failures are due to the unknown factor

that is operating in the universal system of law. Religious-minded people refer to this as God; scientists attribute it to probability and chance. Without being unduly concerned about the semantics, the basic fact remains that we need to acknowledge and accept this inherent phenomenon. We then need to strengthen our mind and not be upset if the results do not go our way.

The only aspects over which we have control are effort and direction. Having applied our effort and having done so in the right direction, we need to think no fur-ther. We need to develop an attitude of bearing what-ever the results may be. If they are good, we need to be thankful to the unknown; if they are not to our expecta-tion, we need to think about what went wrong, how we can rectify anything, if at all, and accept the result with fortitude and grace. If the result has been negative, we also need to think about changing our effort and direc-tion—i.e., the behavior—if it is faulty.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

Each of us has a set of social relationships. Some of these social relationships are merely people who we know casually. These relationships are called social networks. All members of the social network may or may not be helpful to us. However, some members are helpful to us and provide positive aid or assistance, especially during moments of crises. These members are known as social support (Holt-Lunstad & Uchino, 2015). Social support is a key factor that protects the individual from negative consequences of stress (Holt-Lunstad & Uchino, 2015). Social support is always perceived by the sender to be positive and is intended to help in modifying the thoughts and actions of the receiver. House (1981) has identified four kinds of social support: (1) emotional, which includes expressions of love, empathy, caring, and trust; (2) instrumental, which includes tangible aid or service; (3) informational, which includes advice, suggestions, and information; and (4) appraisal, which includes feedback for self-evaluation. These days a lot of college students and others are finding social support through interaction on social networking sites such as Facebook. In later years of college life, Facebook is particularly important in providing social support and well being to students (Kalpidou, Costin, & Morris, 2011). Worksheet 10.4 is designed for you to reflect on your sources of social support, and Worksheet 10.5 is about how to enhance the effectiveness of your social support. Take some time to reflect and complete these two worksheets before proceeding further.

FINDING THE BEST TECHNIQUES THAT SUIT YOUR GOALS

All of us are different entities in ourselves. Our personalities, biological constitution, behaviors, values, attitudes, and beliefs are unique. Likewise, our goals are also bound to be unique and personal. There may be a similarity of pattern in our attributes and goals with other individuals, but ultimately this set of attributes that each of us has is unique and specific in itself. Therefore, as we have seen, it is important to identify stress man-agement and reduction techniques that suit this uniqueness in our individuality and goals.

Worksheet 10.6 is designed to provide you with an opportunity to identify and practice stress management and reduction techniques that suit your goals and "fit" your own unique individuality. These techniques, if prac-ticed with regularity and commitment, are bound to produce beneficial results in achieving your goals.

Thoughts for Reflection 10.2 will help you reinforce a sense of commitment in order to keep up with the plan you decide upon.

THOUGHTS FOR REFLECTION 10.2 PROMISE TO MYSELF

Let me make a promise to myself, for my own good, that . . .
. . . I will make an effort to practice what I have learned.
. . . I will be disciplined and proactive in my approach.
. . . I will remain optimistic and positive about life.
. . . I will have faith in myself, my goals, and the techniques I have learned.
. . . I will be enthusiastic and implement my plans with zeal.
. . . I will wear a cheerful countenance at all times and greet everyone around me with a smile.
. . . I will bless everyone around me, even if they may appear to be my enemies.
. . . I will devote my time to self-improvement—so much so that I will have no time to find mistakes in others.
. . . I will have no unrealistic expectations from people and situations around me.
. . . I will try to understand more often than I try to be understood.
. . . I will not allow worry over the future to overpower me and past events to disturb my peace.
. . . I will be relaxed, happy, and content in my disposition with the present.

TOWARD A STRESS-FREE LIFE

This workbook has provided you with techniques for preventing, reducing, and managing stress in your life. It is never too late to implement and practice these techniques regularly to obtain beneficial results. These results can be maximized if you incorporate these techniques within your daily life at a young age. Therefore, you should enter into an agreement with yourself to attain regularity by implementing the stress reduction plan in your life. If you attain this regularity for a continuous period of at least 1 year, it will become fully etched within your lifestyle. To achieve this continuity, you may reward yourself periodically with some tangible, self-decided rewards or incentives. Worksheet 10.7 is designed to help you with this objective. Worksheet 10.8 introduces you to writing a self-diary for stress management.

Another helpful way to ensure this regularity is through social networking or building social support. Social networking also contributes to managing your stress directly. You need to identify a close group of people who are available for listening empathetically to your views and concerns, who can help clarify questions, and who are willing to challenge you to grow if and when needed. Associating with such people helps prevent, reduce, and manage stress in your life. Finally, we emphasize that by regularly practicing selected techniques identified through this workbook you can effectively manage your stress.

CHAPTER REVIEW

Summary Points

- Implementation of a plan is central for success.
- Self-motivation and degree of changeability are prerequisites for implementing a plan.
- The behaviors that are more important and more changeable deserve your first priority in implementation.
- You need to take stock of all your resources before you implement a plan. This process includes soliciting help from people close to you and obtaining necessary material resources.

- Goals are an indication of what you want to accomplish. They cover five different spheres of life: personal, professional, social, financial, and spiritual.
- Goal analysis or goal setting helps you describe the meaning of what you want to achieve in terms of attitude and understanding.
- Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory for motivation identifies five levels of needs: physiological, security, love, self-esteem, and self-actualization.
- Alderfer's ERG theory describes the core needs as existence, relatedness, and growth.
- Objectives can be defined as concerted, directed, and focused step-by-step efforts for achieving goals.
- Some attributes in establishing objectives include precision, a determined timeframe, and being realistic, sequenced, proactive, measurable, and behaviorally oriented.
- Deciding targets includes planning for the various day-to-day activities required in accomplishing goals and objectives.

- According to Eastern philosophy, success in any enterprise depends upon effort, direction, and an unknown factor.

- Regular practice of techniques described in this workbook will help you prevent, reduce, and manage your stress.

IMPORTANT TERMS DEFINED

Goal: A total of all projections or long-term plans. Goals signify an overall aim in life.

Objectives: A concerted, directed, and focused step-by-step effort to achieve a goal. Objectives are precise, include a timeframe, are realistic, are sequenced, use action verbs, and are measurable.

Social support: The positive aid, either tangible or intangible, that is exchanged through social relationships and interpersonal transactions.

Targets: Anything that a person does in everyday life to advance toward his or her goals.

WEBSITES TO EXPLORE

Goal Setting

www.about-goal-setting.com/
This website, from a private organization, is about goal setting.

- Visit this website and complete a 20-minute tutorial.

Social Anxiety Support Group

www.socialanxietysupport.com/
This website provides structured interactive forums and special programs to help those who suffer from social anxiety disorder (social phobia).

- Visit this website and peruse the cartoons or chat in one of the forums. Summarize your reactions.

Ten Steps to Getting What You Want in Life

www.gems4friends.com/goals/
This is the website of a private organization.

- Go through the 10 steps. Did this reflection make sense in your life?

WORKSHEET 10.1

Determining Goals and Objectives

Seek out a quiet place to complete this worksheet. Write out an optimum number of goals and objectives—that is, not have too few or too many of each. It is also important to write these out. You need to periodically reexamine, reassess, and redefine your goals and objectives.

DATE: _____

A. SETTING GOALS

Personal goal:

_____

_____

_____

Professional goal:

_____

_____

_____

Social goal:

_____

_____

_____

Financial goal:

_____

_____

_____

Spiritual goal:

_____

_____

_____

WORKSHEET 10.1

Determining Goals and Objectives *(cont'd)*

B. ESTABLISHING OBJECTIVES

Objectives for personal goals:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Objectives for professional goals:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Objectives for social goals:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(continued)

WORKSHEET 10.1

Determining Goals and Objectives *(cont'd)*

Objectives for financial goals:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Objectives for spiritual goals:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

WORKSHEET 10.2

Prioritizing Your Objectives

Now prioritize your objectives from all five-goal categories:

	More Important	Less Important
More Changeable		
Less Changeable		

WORKSHEET 10.3

Deciding Targets

Having prioritized your objectives, make a daily list of targets that will help you accomplish the objectives selected. Since this is a daily activity, you can practice on a blank sheet of paper or make photocopies of this worksheet for repeated use.

DAY AND DATE: _____

Time	Targets

WORKSHEET 10.4

Identifying Social Support

In each category write out the names (or initials, if you want to maintain confidentiality) of people who have helped you in the past during moments of crises.

A. Emotional Support: People Who Have Provided Love, Trust, Caring, or Empathy

Person	Support

B. Instrumental Support: People Who Have Provided Some Tangible Aid or Service

Person	Support

(continued)

WORKSHEET 10.4

Identifying Social Support *(cont'd)*

C. Informational Support: People Who Have Given Valuable Advice, Suggestions, and Information

Person	Support

D. Appraisal Support: People Who Have Given Useful Feedback for Self-Evaluation or Self-Reflection

Person	Support

WORKSHEET 10.5

Enhancing Effectiveness of Social Support

Reflect on the present sources of social support in your life based on Worksheet 10.4. In the space below, complete this reflection and make a plan on enhancing the effectiveness of each level of social support.

A. Emotional Support

Quantity: _____ Adequate   _____ Inadequate

Quality: _____ Satisfactory   _____ Not Satisfactory

How will you increase and enrich emotional support?

_____

_____

B. Instrumental Support

Quantity: _____ Adequate   _____ Inadequate

Quality: _____ Satisfactory   _____ Not Satisfactory

How will you increase and enrich instrumental support?

_____

_____

C. Informational Support

Quantity: _____ Adequate   _____ Inadequate

Quality: _____ Satisfactory   _____ Not Satisfactory

How will you increase and enrich informational support?

_____

_____

D. Appraisal Support

Quantity: _____ Adequate   _____ Inadequate

Quality: _____ Satisfactory   _____ Not Satisfactory

How will you increase and enrich appraisal support?

_____

_____

WORKSHEET 10.6

Stress Management and Reduction Techniques (SMART) Practice Log

The SMART Practice Log is designed to help you experience and practice selected techniques. Record information in the SMART Practice Log for at least one week or until you have gained sufficient practice with the desired techniques. The SMART Practice Log is an application tool.

You need to self-rate the techniques that you practice in terms of their *effectiveness*, *ease of application*, and *practical utility*. Rate these criteria on a scale of 1 to 5—that is, 1 is very low; 2 is low; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is high; and 5 is very high. You may want to use the abbreviation for not applicable (NA) if you have not had enough opportunity to try the technique. Each technique has been provided with its respective worksheet number, for ready reference.

Techniques	Worksheet No.	Effectiveness	Ease of Application	Practical Utility	Reasons
A. Relaxation Techniques					
Yogic breathing, or *pranayama*	3.1	_____	_____	_____	_____
Progressive muscle relaxation	3.2	_____	_____	_____	_____
Autogenic training	3.3	_____	_____	_____	_____
Visual imagery	3.4	_____	_____	_____	_____
Beginning meditation	3.5	_____	_____	_____	_____
B. Effective Communication					
Communication assessment	4.1	_____	_____	_____	_____
Situational communication	4.2	_____	_____	_____	_____
Assessing assertive behavior	4.3	_____	_____	_____	_____
Becoming assertive	4.4	_____	_____	_____	_____
E-mail communication	4.5	_____	_____	_____	_____
Social media stress	4.6	_____	_____	_____	_____

WORKSHEET 10.6

Stress Management and Reduction Techniques (SMART) Practice Log *(cont'd)*

Techniques	Worksheet No.	Effectiveness	Ease of Application	Practical Utility	Reasons
C. Anger Management					
Self-assessment	5.1	_____	_____	_____	_____
Managing anger	5.2	_____	_____	_____	_____
Learning active listening	5.3	_____	_____	_____	_____
Transforming anger	5.4	_____	_____	_____	_____
D. Coping with Anxiety					
Taylor manifest anxiety scale	6.1	_____	_____	_____	_____
RET	6.2	_____	_____	_____	_____
SKY	6.3	_____	_____	_____	_____
Gestalt therapy	6.4	_____	_____	_____	_____
Systematic desensitization	6.5	_____	_____	_____	_____
CBT	6.6	_____	_____	_____	_____
E. Eating Behavior for Healthy Lifestyles					
Enhancing awareness	7.1	_____	_____	_____	_____
Balanced diet plan	7.2	_____	_____	_____	_____
Change F & V	7.3	_____	_____	_____	_____

(continued)

WORKSHEET 10.6

Stress Management and Reduction Techniques (SMART) Practice Log *(cont'd)*

Techniques	Worksheet No.	Effectiveness	Ease of Application	Practical Utility	Reasons
F. Regular Physical Activity and Exercise					
Self-awareness	8.1	_____	_____	_____	_____
Target heart-raterange	8.2	_____	_____	_____	_____
Physical activity or exercise program	8.3	_____	_____	_____	_____
Change PA behavior	8.4	_____	_____	_____	_____
G. Time Management/ Financial Management					
Enhancing awareness of time	9.1	_____	_____	_____	_____
Practical steps	9.2	_____	_____	_____	_____
Financial status	9.3	_____	_____	_____	_____
Finances for life	9.4	_____	_____	_____	_____
H. Goals and Objectives					
Determining goals	10.1	_____	_____	_____	_____
Prioritizing objectives	10.2	_____	_____	_____	_____
Deciding targets	10.3	_____	_____	_____	_____
Identifying social support	10.4	_____	_____	_____	_____
Enhancing social support	10.5	_____	_____	_____	_____

WORKSHEET 10.7

Self-Agreement

I, _____ , hereby agree to practice selected techniques for stress management identified as beneficial and practical for me from the SMART Practice Log. I will not procrastinate the implementation of these techniques in my life. I will exercise regularity and self-discipline in implementing these techniques. I will periodically reward myself for this accomplishment. After attaining regularity for …

1 month, I will _____

_____ (reward)

_____

3 months, I will _____

_____ (reward)

_____

6 months, I will _____

_____ (reward)

_____

1 year, I will _____

_____ (reward)

_____

FEEDBACK ON WORKSHEETS 10.1   10.7

This worksheet has provided you with insight to determine techniques that best suit your individuality in terms of effectiveness, ease of applicability, and practical util-ity. You should also have discovered why some of the techniques are not successful for you. If these reasons are under your control, you can try to modify them. However, if these reasons are not under your control, you need to discover and practice other techniques that work. The key for success lies in consistency and deter-mination in practicing these techniques. These techni-ques are more helpful in preventing and reducing stress than in managing stress. Therefore, the younger you start and incorporate these techniques, the greater the benefit will be.

WORKSHEET 10.8

Writing a Self-diary for Stress Management

In this book we have learned how to identify stressors and how to apply a myriad of stress management techniques. You have successfully completed this workbook. We know that stressors are never going to end and we would need to continually apply the techniques learned in this workbook in our lives. So here is a tool to help you. From now onward you will apply what you learned in a simple self-diary. Every day when you go to bed, write about that day in your diary in the following format:

Day: _____

Stressor(s): _____

_____

_____

_____

Which technique(s) was used? _____

_____

_____

_____

Did I practice relaxation or meditation today? Can I do it now?

Let me sleep.

FEEDBACK ON WORKSHEET 10.8

Make it a daily habit to reflect on your day in terms of the stressors encountered and how you overcame those. Finish your day by practicing any one technique of relaxation or meditation before you sleep. Keep prac-ticing this ritual for a stress-free life.

References and Further Reading

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