MQ Health Wellness Series

Practical Psychological Skills for Staying Well

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Agenda

01 Stress and Resilience

02 Five things that help (and examples)

03 Summary
Stress and Resilience
Stress

Definition
Stress is our response to physical or psychological demands (e.g., work, exercise, illness)
Introduction: About Stress

1. Some stress is healthy – we need a minimum amount of stress in our lives to stay motivated, active, and to pursue goals

2. Most of us are resilient and thrive under a moderate amount of stress

3. Too little or too much stress can result in people feeling distressed

4. Pandemics/lockdowns make us vulnerable to distress
Resilience

Definition
Resilience is our ability to tolerate and bounce back from adversity (too little or too much stress)
Introduction: About Resilience

1. People are naturally resilient

2. People who are resilient:
   a) Accept that life isn’t always easy
   b) Monitor their physical and psychological health
   c) Remain active and engaged
   d) Are adaptive
   e) Are honest with themselves
   f) Know when to reach out
   g) Remain (realistically) optimistic

3. Most of us strive to be resilient

4. Practical psychological skills can help ...
Practical Psychological Skills
Five key actions/skills are strongly related to psychological health. These are things we can all do, everyday.

Research shows that the more often you do these, the greater your life satisfaction and lower your symptoms (distress, anxiety, depression)

You don’t need to do all of them, but the more you do, and the more frequently you do them, the better you will feel

More about the five actions ....
Five Helpful Actions/Skills
1. Clear, Realistic Thinking

1. ‘Clear’ your thinking
   • Our thoughts affect how we feel and what we do
   • Our thoughts affect our expectations
   • When distressed – we become more negative about ourselves, the world and the future
   • Check your thinking and expectations
   • Challenge unrealistic and unhelpful thinking
   • Practice self-compassion

2. Examples (from MindSpot Users)
   • I have been turning off the news to clear my head
   • I am giving myself permission not to be “perfect”
   • I have started meditating to wind down
   • I am letting go of things I can’t change
   • I am now catching my self-critical thoughts (“I am not good/smart/skinny enough”)
   • I am reminding myself that I am doing the best I can

3. Key message: Keep your thinking clear and realistic
2. Meaningful Activities

1. **Meaningful activities**
   - Meaningful and fun activities give us satisfaction, joy and pleasure
   - We tend to stop doing these when distressed
   - What things stimulate and engage you?
   - What have you stopped doing?

2. **Examples (from MindSpot Users)**
   - I am now giving myself 2 evenings each week to read and relax
   - I am booking movie nights and not feeling guilty
   - My wife and I have a ‘home date’ night each week
   - I have started knitting and sewing (which I had stopped doing)
   - I am giving myself permission to re-charge each night by playing the piano while enjoying a glass of wine

3. **Key Message: Plan to do at least one enjoyable and relaxing thing each day**
3. Healthy Habits

1. Healthy habits
   - Habits and routines can support our physical and psychological health
   - These are things that you can do easily and automatically
   - How healthy/helpful are your habits?

2. Examples (from MindSpot Users)
   - I have started to keep a regular bedtime/waking routine (same time each day)
   - I did Dry July and am more aware of what I eat
   - I walk around the block when I start and finish work each day
   - When my phone rings or I get a video call, I take two deep breathes before answering

3. Key message: Help yourself to stay resilient by: a) Going to bed early 3 nights’ each week; b) Making one healthy meal each day
1. **Staying socially engaged**
   - Connections help us feel bonded, affirmed, valued and safe
   - Strong connections support our confidence and resilience
   - Are you sufficiently connected?

2. **Examples (from MindSpot Users)**
   - *I realised that I had been avoiding my family and friends. I am changing that now*
   - *I felt ashamed that I wasn’t coping. But I have now spoken openly with friends and family about how I’m feeling – and was amazed and humbled by their love*
   - *I reached out via SMS to someone I haven’t spoken to for years; I am now doing this with other friends and the response has been overwhelming. I realised I’m not alone*

3. **Key message: Aim to engage with members of your ‘tribe(s)’ at least 3 X week**
5. Goals/Plans

1. Goals and plans help us to:
   - Look beyond the present challenges and see a better future (hope and optimism)
   - Focus on what we can do to improve our future lives
   - What are your short/long term goals?

2. Examples (from MindSpot Users)
   - I am celebrating small wins and keeping realistic goals
   - I am taking small and easy practical steps to achieving things
   - I have begun to plan my days and include walking each day
   - I am thinking about what I want to achieve by the end of the week and the end of the year

3. Key message: Set basic daily and weekly goals
Summary
## Summary

1. Some stress is healthy, but not too much!

2. There are things we can do each day to stay psychologically healthy and resilient

3. Look after your psychological health by doing (and combining) the following at least 3 times each week:

   1. Be kind to yourself and stay calm
   2. Keep your thinking clear
   3. Keep doing things you enjoy
   4. Stay engaged with good people
   5. Keep your healthy routines
   6. Keep looking forward

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<th>1. Clear Thinking</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Allowed yourself to be less than perfect?</td>
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<td>2. Treated yourself with respect?</td>
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<td>3. Stopped yourself from thinking unhelpful or unrealistic thoughts?</td>
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<th>2. Meaningful Activities</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Done something satisfying and fun?</td>
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<td>2. Done something enjoyable?</td>
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<td>3. Spent time doing something you believed in?</td>
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<th>3. Healthy Habits</th>
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<td>1. Went to bed and woke up at a regular time?</td>
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<td>2. Kept a healthy daily routine?</td>
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<td>3. Prepared and ate a healthy meal?</td>
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<th>4. Social Connections</th>
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<td>1. Socialised with positive people?</td>
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<td>2. Had a meaningful conversation with someone?</td>
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<td>3. Talked about your day with a friend or family member?</td>
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<th>5. Goals &amp; Plans</th>
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<td>1. Set realistic and achievable goals?</td>
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<td>2. Did something to help you achieve your goals?</td>
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<td>3. Made a plan and stuck to it?</td>
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Words of Wisdom (from MindSpot Users)

1. My advice to give to someone else who is trying to make any change in their life is to not try to rush it at once, especially if it's a major change. Major change takes time.

2. Don't give up on change. Set backs happen, keep going

3. If you can’t do it yourself then get some help – there is plenty out there
Discussion and Questions
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THANK YOU

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