

**G**roup guides participants in reducing stress and changing thinking. You will be asked to identify stress in four areas of your life (environment, behavior, physical condition, and thinking) and to map out a strategy to address each one. You will also be asked to identify problem patterns of thinking that are contributing to your emotional problems. For each problem pattern of thinking you identify you will be asked to decide if you want to change your thinking, and if so, then to develop a plan for change and work the plan.

## What we believe

1. We are more likely to be depressed/angry when we are overrun by stress: Volcano.
2. Our emotional responses to events (R) are determined by the thoughts (T) we have in relation to the events (E):  $E + T = R$ .
3. Much of our thinking is done subconsciously.
4. We can change our conscious and subconscious thinking.
5. We can control our anger/depression/anxiety by changing our thinking.

## Your Responsibilities

1. Decide on the behavior you want to develop.
2. Identify resistance to change and confront it.
3. Commit to developing the behavior you decide to adopt.
4. Make a plan for change and work the plan.
  - a. Plan for reducing stress
  - b. Plan for changing thinking that is blocking performance of desired behavior
5. Work between sessions
  - a. There are 168 hrs in a week. Group takes one hour. You must work on your plan during the remaining 167 hrs.
6. Focus on your behavior, not the behavior of others: TAKE RESPONSIBILITY.

## Group Responsibilities

1. Holds you accountable
2. Provides a place where you can receive feedback on what you are doing.
3. Gives you ideas for how to change

## Evidence-based Treatments for Depression

1. Cognitive restructuring
2. Improved interpersonal relations
3. Activity scheduling
4. Medication

## Overview of Session Topics

1. Definition of Depression/Anger/Anxiety
2. Role of Stress in Depression/Anger/Anxiety
  - a. We are more likely to be depressed/angry when we are overrun by stress: Volcano
  - b. Identify sources of stress from Environment, Behavior, and Physical Condition
  - c. Develop action plans to address each source of stress
3. Role of Thinking in Depression/Anger/Anxiety: Cognitive Model
  - a. Events plus Thoughts equals Response:  $E+T=R$ 
    - i. Therefore it is very important to manage our thinking.
  - b. Types of cognitive distortions (handouts on website)
  - c. Beliefs and expectations: hopeful vs. hopeless
  - d. Automatic thoughts, stuck points and core beliefs
    - i. Automatic thought: "I don't like math"
    - ii. Possible Core belief: "I'm too stupid to do math"
  - e. Effect of stress on thinking
    - i. Confusion, narrowed focus
  - f. We learned our beliefs and behaviors from our environment. Our task now is to adopt new beliefs and learn new behaviors.
4. Problem identification
  - a. ABC sheets
  - b. Third party input
  - c. Defining the desired behavior: how do you want to behave?
5. Owning the problem
  - a. Victim mentality: "they made me this way."
  - b. Confronting internal resistance: are you really ready to change?
    - i. Internal conflict: "punkish behavior," "suck-up behavior," etc.
    - ii. Unwillingness to let go: motives for not changing?
      1. Shows weakness?
      2. Fear of failure? Anger/depression/anxiety as an excuse?
6. Methods for Changing Thinking – facilitating good choices and changing automatic responses.
  - a. Meditation: "the jogging of mental fitness"
  - b. Challenge problem thinking with alternative thoughts
  - c. Imagery: mind can't tell different between what's real or vividly imagined
  - d. Mental rehearsal: practicing desired behavior in your head
  - e. Symbols, rituals, reminders; prepared alternative thoughts/responses
  - f. Anchoring – conditioning new responses
  - g. Desensitization
  - h. Leverage social support
  - i. other Categories of Interventions (see website).

### 7. Change Process

- a. Process-focused: judge yourself by whether you did the work
- b. Repetition: muscle memory; mission readiness
- c. SMART goal setting: Specific, Measurable, Action-oriented, Realistic, Timed