



stresscontrol

Face your fears; be more active; watch what you drink

Step 1

Welcome to Stress Control

This handout will tell you all about the course

The course

'Stress Control' is a six session evening class. Each session lasts for 90 minutes. 'Stress Control' was devised by Jim White, a clinical psychologist in Glasgow, to help the large number of people who complained of stress and who were keen to learn how to tackle their problems themselves. Through research, the course has been improved over the years. 'Stress Control' is now being used both in this country and across the world. Courses are very popular so expect to find a lot of people at yours.

Attendance

Each session deals with a separate aspect of stress but as they all link together, it is crucial that you attend all six sessions. Each step is one piece of the jigsaw. Only by putting all the steps together will you get the full picture. You can see what happens in each session of the course later in this handout.

A fighting spirit

The course (and all the information you have been given) will teach you about stress and will give you the weapons to fight it. You should only come to the course if you are prepared to work hard. If you are looking for the miracle cure, you will be wasting your time - it doesn't exist. 'Stress Control' will show you how to go about tackling stress but, at the end of the day, it will take a lot of hard work on your part. It will be well worth it in the end.

The future

The aim of the course is to teach you new skills that can fight stress. Make sure you keep all the handouts you get so that, in the future, you can use the information to keep a grip on your stress. You will also be given various forms and a relaxation CD/tape when you attend the course.

Common questions about the course

Will I have to talk in front of other people?

NO. 'Stress Control' is *not* a group therapy. Not many people in this country would be happy to talk about their problems in front of others.

YOU WILL NOT BE ASKED TO DO SO

'Stress Control' is an evening class - all the seats face the front. The person teaching the course will stand at the front and teach you all about stress and how to tackle it. Your job is to pick up the new skills, to go off and work at what you have learned. You come back the next week, learn the next step until, after the six weeks, you will be in a good position to tackle your stress.

Will I have to write things on the course?

No. All you are asked to do is tick your name off on a register. This lets us know who has come to the class.

What if I meet someone I know?

You may do. Stress is a very common problem and hundreds of people do the course each year in Britain. Everyone is in the same boat. As we don't discuss personal problems, you don't get to know much about why others are coming. A few years ago, two sisters met on the course. They were both shocked at first. Then they saw how daft it was that they were both going through this alone when they could have been helping each other.

Will there be others on the course like me?

Stress affects people from all walks of life. Although no two people will have exactly the same problems, you will all have a lot in common. You will find it hard to relax, you will worry a great deal, you will have lost confidence and a sense of control. You may well be depressed by this. Life will just be a lot harder to cope with. All the people on the course know how awful stress feels.

Can I bring someone with me?

Yes. Bring them for a bit of support or for them to learn about stress. They may be under a lot of stress as well so they might be helped. They can also learn about the best ways to help you. The two of you can then fight it together.

What if I'm not better at the end of the course?

'Stress Control' is a training not a therapy course. This means that you will learn many new skills over the next few weeks but it is in the months after that the hard work takes place to master these skills. So work out your goals using the form in this pack, work hard and be patient.

What if I panic or make a fool of myself?

How often do you think you are going to make a fool of yourself and how often do you? It is a common fear but the course is very down to earth. You will be in control. If you have a pattern of panic in busy places, work out ways to cope with this - bring someone with you, sit at the back at the door for the first few sessions. Feel free to wonder out at any time and get a breath of fresh air.

What if I'm not clever enough to understand it?

'Stress Control' is straight-forward but there can be a problem with concentration. This is common with stress. That is why you get these handouts. Read through them at your own pace. It can help to read through, e.g. the section on panic the day after the panic class. This can help you remember what was said in the class. Feel free to repeat the course at any time if you feel you would pick it up better.

How many?????????

People are often surprised at the thought of so many people on each course. It just shows you how common stress is.

The six sessions of the course

Session 1: Learning about stress

In this session, we will look at the causes of stress and what keeps it going. We will look at the way it affects your thoughts, actions and body, explode the myths about stress. We will look at why stress affects people in different ways.

Session 2: Controlling your body

In this session, you will learn how to use relaxation. You will get a CD/tape to keep to let you practise at home. We also look at how exercise can help stress.

Session 3: Controlling your thoughts - Cognitive therapy

You will learn how stress affects your thinking and how your thinking then affects your thoughts. You will learn how to use your mind to control stress along with ways of nipping stress in the bud. We will look at ways of getting this under control.

Session 4: Controlling your actions - Behaviour therapy

You will learn ways of facing up to stress along with a very useful skill called 'Problem Solving'. These skills are then combined with what you learned in session 3 to create a powerful skill ('Cognitive-Behaviour therapy')

Session 5: Controlling panic

Learning about panic attacks and how to deal with them will be useful even for those who don't have panic as these work well with all kinds of stress. A video shows you how to do this.

Session 6: Controlling sleeping problems and controlling the future

In this session we will look at common sleep problems. Then we look at how to sleep better. This lets you recharge your batteries. This helps you fight stress. Finally, we will pull everything together and look at how to cope with the future.