

Skills and Tools for Stress Management & Mental Health

Preceptor Module Seven

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SESSION SEVEN OUTLINE

I. Learning to identify, ask about, and explore sources of stress and sources of strength

- Adding two questions to your history

II. Writing a “Sources of Strength Plan”

III. Stress management skills for MAs and patients

- Identifying “Specific Stress Management and Strengthening Skills”

IV. Stress Management/Renewal Activity: Talisman

V. Sharing your work

I. Sources of Stress and Sources of Strength

Add two questions to the medical history

- What are your sources of stress?
- What are your sources of strength?

II. Sources of Strength Plan

- Ask a person (patient or staff), “What are or have been your sources of strength over the years?”
- If the person doesn’t understand the phrase “sources of strength,” explain that sources of strength are those activities or behaviors that nourish their spirit, help them face challenges, and give them peace of mind.
- You can provide a list of examples of possible sources of strength so that the client understands what you mean.

II. Sources of Strength Plan

- Taking hot baths
- Playing soccer
- Hiking
- Singing
- Reading
- Going for long walks
- Dancing
- Woodworking
- Lunch/Time with friends
- Playing with grandchildren
- Yoga
- Watching old movies
- Baking Cookies
- Painting
- Faith, or prayer



II. Sources of Strength Plan

Make sure clients choose the words that feel right for them. It is important to be supportive of how the person/patient prays or observes their faith. This is always a delicate issue, and must be approached carefully. For some people, a person's spiritual life may be an important aspect of their health and wellbeing.

II. Sources of Strength Plan

- Once a person chooses words that describe their sources of strength, write a plan for them.
- It is important to add a realistic time frame and frequency to each goal.
- For example, you might write:
Long walk by the beach once a month.
- If the person suggests a certain frequency, once a week, or once a day, make sure that this is an achievable goal.

Sources of Strength Plan

1. Long walk once a week.
2. Read science fiction or fantasy novel 15-30 minutes once or twice a week at night.
3. Dance in living room with children twice a week.

II. Sources of Strength Plan

- This written plan can be placed on the person's refrigerator or kept in the person's wallet.
- It is good to follow up with the patient to see how they are doing.
- Explain to patients the importance of boosting their quality of life, their spirit and their sense of well-being by doing things that are good for them and that they like.

Sources of Strength Plan

Write a Sources of Strength Plan for yourself.

Sources of Strength

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

III. Stress Management Skills

Other stress management skills include:

- Mindfulness
- Meditation
- Visualization (imagine a favorite healing color)
- Walking
- Washing dishes
- Dancing
- Exercising
- Martial Arts (Tai Chi)
- Yoga
- Art
- Music/Singing/Playing an Instrument/Listening
- Faith
- Massage
- Acupuncture
- Time with friends and family
- Social support
- Quiet time
- Reading



IV. Stress Management Activity: Making a Talisman

A **talisman** is a small item that can be a reminder of our sources of strength. It can be a keychain, bracelet, necklace, or small string of beads.

Making a Talisman

Tools/Supplies

- Packages of letter beads, plastic beads of different colors, which are small and have a large hole
- Variety of other beads
- Ribbon, string “ladder” ribbon, simple black ribbon, or cord for stringing the beads
- Scissors
- Clasps, or if no clasps are available, the two ends of the string can be tied in a bow
- Have a couple of needles and scotch tape on hand if needed

Making a Talisman

- Think about words that are sources of strength, such as names of children, spouse, friends or words that are important, meaningful or give us strength (wonder, joy, courage, wisdom, strength, faith, dance, song, music, sports, etc.)
- Choose a string or ribbon and cut a length that is long enough for your purpose (keychain, bracelet, or necklace)
- Tie a simple knot at one end or tape the end to the table so that as you string beads, they do not all fall off
- String the letter and other beads in a pattern of your choice, including words, phrases, or names that represent sources of strength
- Add a simple clasp to each end, or tie in a bow

V. Sharing Your Work

- After completing your talisman, share what you have done, explaining the words you used and your process in selecting them
- Talk about your talisman, what it represents, what words you chose, what colors, where you will keep it, and how you will use it
- Review your Sources of Strength Plan and mention one or two activities that you will do in the near future to strengthen yourself in mind, body, and spirit.

RESOURCES

- *Creative Visualization* by Shakti Gawain, Whatever Publishing
- *A Man's Search for Meaning* by Victor Frankl, Washington Square Press
- *Being Peace*, by Thich Nhat Hanh, Parallax Press
- *Voices of our Ancestors*, Dhanyu Ywahoo, Shambala Press
- *Listening to Nature*, by Joseph Cornell, Dawn Publications



Review and Next Steps

- What skills have you been practicing?
- What are some of the key things you have learned?
- How do these relate to you personally, your work, and your career in the health care field?

SESSION SEVEN SUMMARY

- Two Questions Added to Patient History
 - “Sources of Strength Plan”
 - Stress Management Skills
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- What are three specific things you learned?
 - What are your next steps based on this session?
 - Reflect, identify, and write these down.

Summary for Preceptor

- Sources of Strength Plan
- Stress Management Skills
- Making a Talisman
- Sharing
- Reflection
- Next Steps