

**ADDRESSING PARENTING AND CHILD STRESS: THREE WORKSHOPS FOR
PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN**

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this project to my family. Without their support, love, patience, sacrifice, and understanding this project would have never been possible.

To my husband J.P., I appreciate you more than any words can do justice. Without your enduring love, support, and unending belief in me, this project would not be possible.

To my children Ryan, Charlie, and Emmerson: I am forever grateful for the joy and happiness that each of you brings me. Your curiosity, kindness, willingness to take risks, and wonderment for all creatures has taught me more than any textbook. You are my inspiration.

To my parents: Thank you for your support, belief in me, help with watching the kids, and for driving them to all of their activities. Without your help and support, I could never be where I am today.

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I would also like to thank the Lord, for helping me find my own path.

Abstract

The intent of this project is to inform others about stress, parental stress, and highlight the negative consequences of stress on children by directly providing information to parents of infant and preschool children in the form of a psychoeducational workshop. Given that the early years of life have many critical periods of development and that during these years children are especially vulnerable to the exposure of stress, early intervention to reduce the damage from stress is of high importance. This project is comprised of two parts. Part 1 includes a literature review that guides and provides in-depth information to support Part 2 of this project. Part 2 of the project is a standalone manual for three workshops that counsellors and facilitators can use to educate parents about the impact of stress on children and equip them to recognize and reduce the impact of stress on themselves and their children. The workshop manual includes three comprehensive lesson plans, handouts, activities, and detailed facilitator instructions. The three workshops are titled *Stress Management for Adults*, *The Effects of Stress on Children*, and *Nurturing Ourselves and Our Children*. These workshops may be presented to parents independently or as a series. The last chapter of this project identifies the strengths, limitations, and areas of future research related to helping parents manage their stress and the stress of their preschool children.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter outlines the project intent and rationale, format, provides a glossary defining key terms used throughout the project, and a statement of personal interest. To provide a context for this information, the chapter begins by presenting a brief overview of the project.

Project Overview

The rationale for this project can be summarized by calling upon the words of Deater-Deckard (2004), who posited, “Either it is by design or not, addressing parenting stress is a key part of most clinical interventions that are designed to produce improvements in children’s emotional, behavioral, cognitive, or physical outcomes” (p. 159). The reasons for this project are to educate parents about the impact of stress on preschool children and families, and equip this client group to recognize and reduce the negative impact of stress on young children and families. Part 1 of this project provides a comprehensive literature review to offer theoretical and applied support for the core content in the three proposed psychoeducational workshops.

The manual and material for the workshops form Part 2 of this project. The workshops were designed to teach parents about the impacts of stress on adults and children and explain how prolonged exposure to stressful events can have potential lifelong consequences for children. Additionally, the workshops will provide counsellors with tools that will support parents in managing stress and reducing the impact stress can have on their children. The workshops have a very specific target audience: parents of children between the ages of 0 and 5, who are interested in helping themselves and their young ones manage life stress in healthy productive ways. The target audience was

selected for three reasons. The first reason is that children within this age range have an increased vulnerability to the negative consequences of stress (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005). The second reason is that children within this age range also have the potential to reverse the negative consequences of stress (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005). Finally, the third reason is that parents who are stressed are not as responsive to their children's needs; therefore, supporting parents to reduce their stress could potentially increase their parenting abilities (Creasey & Reese, 1996).

I designed each workshop to be facilitated by a trained health professional such as a registered nurse, registered psychologist, or a registered social worker. The workshops have been structured to run for 150 minutes. Part 1 was designed to supplement and facilitate a solid understanding of the workshop materials. I strongly suggest that the reader reviews the limitations of the project, which are identified in Chapter 5, before hosting this type of workshop.

Project Format

The first portion of the project consists of five chapters, a reference section, and an appendices section. This chapter provides an introduction, overview, and the rationale for the entire project. In Chapter 2 I present a literature review that will provide foundational information that supplements material found in the workshop manual (Appendix A); the literature review will explain and justify the need for educational workshops for parents that address the negative consequences of stress. Chapter 3 explains the methods used for Part 1 and Part 2 of this project. Chapter 4 contains a preamble to the workshop intended to provide theoretical and applied support for Part 2

of this project, which is a workshop manual (see Appendix A). Chapter 4 also provides an explanation and support for the workshop manuals' tools, activities, and group approach used to address stress for parents. Finally, Chapter 5 is a synthesis of the project and includes a discussion about the strengths and limitations of the literature review and workshop manual, cautions and limitations of the workshop manual, and areas of future research.

The second portion of the project, Part 2, is the workshop manual. This manual is intended to be a standalone document that includes a cover page, table of contents, and a statement of understanding. References for the appendix items are included in Part 2 of this project, as Part 2 is intended to be a standalone document; therefore, references for Part 2 of this project have not been integrated into Part 1. Part 2 of the project includes three comprehensive lesson plans, facilitator notes, handouts, activities for participants, and a participant evaluation form (Appendices A and B).

Statement of Personal Interest

Children have always been a large part of my life. As a young person, my parents were foster parents to a number of children over the years. My mother was a dayhome provider, babysitting children between the ages of 0 and 6 in our home. After graduating from the University of Calgary with a degree in social work, I began working as a child protection worker for the Alberta Government. It was at this time that I became increasingly aware of the impact of adverse childhood experiences and stress on parents, children, and youth. The experience of working with children and families fuelled my desire to better understand how these experiences influence children and what might be done to reduce the negative impact of these experiences. Finally, I have had firsthand

experience parenting three children who at one time were all under the age of 5. I hope to offer an applied resource for parents because I recognize that I could have benefited from a workshop that provided information about stress when my children were young.

In 2011 and 2012, I attended the Early Brain and Biological Development, a Symposium in Science offered through the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative (Alberta Family Wellness Initiative, 2012a, 2012b). This increased my knowledge of the consequences of stress on children and families and the importance of early intervention, inspiring me to communicate this information to parents. After attending the symposium, I became curious about the resources available for parenting stress, and I was surprised to find that few resources currently exist. This further fuelled my desire to create a resource that would benefit parents and share the knowledge that I learned. The potential to reduce or reverse the consequences of stress in children's lives and to improve not only their current but also their future quality of life led the direction of this project.

I also wanted to create a resource for counsellors that would be easy to use at little to no cost, which could potentially increase the number of professionals and families who have access to resources, thereby having a positive effect on children, parents, and their families. It is my hope that in the future there might be opportunity to run pilot studies to determine the efficacy and effect of these workshops for children, parents, and their families.

Glossary

This section includes a selection of key terms and definitions that are used throughout this project. Each definition is substantiated by the literature.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are a number of different experiences including abuse, neglect, and household dysfunction that are experienced from infancy through to adolescence. These events, such as parental divorce, parental mental health problems, poverty, emotional and physical abuse and neglect, and household substance abuse, have been linked to increased risk of chronic disease, mental health problems, addictions, obesity, behaviour problems, and suicide in adulthood (Middlebrooks & Audage, 2008).

Allostatic load is the accumulated effect that stress has on the body. Allostatic load “is the term used to describe cumulative physiological wear and tear that results from repeated efforts to adapt to stressors over time” (Glover, Stuber, & Poland, 2006, p. 191).

Brain architecture are the building processes that include personal experiences, interactions with the environment, and nutrition, which together shape and build structures in the brain that are important and necessary foundations for development, cognitive functioning, and social and emotional functioning (National Scientific Council, 2005).

Chronic stress is a stress response that is initiated by long-term and unrelenting exposure to acute stressors. This exposure can be to the same acute stressor or to a number of different acute stressors that happen on a continual basis (Lupien, 2012).

Daily hassles are day-to-day events that cause distress or annoyance. Examples of daily hassles include interruptions, work-related issues, driving in heavy traffic, relationship difficulties, finances, and deadlines (Creasy, & Reese, 1996).

Parenting stress “refers to difficulties or demands experienced in the parenting role” (Dunning, & Giallo, 2012, p. 147). Examples of parenting stress include “managing children’s behaviour, establishing and maintaining family routines, and engaging daily care-giving tasks” (Dunning, & Giallo, 2012, p. 147).

Positive stress is the result of exposure to stressors that are considered to be a normal part of everyday life, such as a child spilling milk or an adult misplacing the car keys. These stressors are short in duration and allow for the stress response to recover from activation (Middlebrooks & Audage, 2008).

Stress is an experience that individuals have when a real or perceived threat to wellbeing is detected; it includes activation of the stress response system. Stress encompasses both absolute stress (i.e., a threat to a person’s survival) and relative stress, in which a person’s interpretation of an event activates the stress response system (Lupien, 2012).

A *stressor* is any event that an individual perceives as a threat and that initiates the stress response system (Rabin, 2005). An individual must perceive something as a threat and the stress response system must be activated for the event to be considered a stressor; therefore, a stressor for one individual may not be a stressor for another (Rabin, 2005).

Tolerable stress refers to stress that could have damaging effects on the body, but generally occur for briefer periods, allowing for the body to recover and reverse potentially harmful effects of exposure to stress (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005). Examples of tolerable stress include divorce, having a sick child who is hospitalized, or having a child diagnosed with a disability.

Toxic stress refers to stressful events that are chronic, uncontrollable, and/or are experienced without having access to support from others. Toxic stress tends to provoke stress responses that have the potential to alter brain architecture (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter I describe the purpose and format of this project. I present a description of Part 1 of this project, which provides information about the project, and Part 2 (Appendix A), which is the workshop manual. In addition, in this chapter I present definitions of key terms that are used throughout Part 1 and Part 2 of this project. Chapter 1 also presents the purpose of this project, which is to provide a foundation to the workshop manual (Appendix A). In the next chapter (Chapter 2) I share information gathered through a literature review. Chapter 2 provides detailed information about stress, the consequences of stress, and information about how stress affects parents and children.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The intent of this chapter is to address, in considerable detail, the content presented in the proposed workshops found in Appendix A. This chapter is organized around three core themes related to stress. These themes are apparent in the workshops. The first theme to be reviewed provides an overview of stress and the body's stress response system, which is the focus of Workshop 1. The second theme focuses on parental stress, specifically the types of stressors that parents commonly encounter, which is the basis of Workshop 1, but is also included in both Workshops 2 and 3. The final theme focuses on the how stress can affect children; this material is required, as it supports the content addressed in both Workshops 2 and 3.

An Overview of Stress

Hans Selye, a Canadian physician, is recognized for introducing the academic world to the notion of stress and how exposure to stress can influence the physiological systems of the body and is "considered to be the 'father' of the field of stress research" (Taylor & Sirosis, 2012, p. 156). Today, there appears to be a surge of research investigating the effects of stress on the brain and how stress can impact the immune function of the body. Researchers are also investigating the consequences of chronic long-term stressors on child development, such as Vincent Felitti's and Robert Anda's ACE studies (Anda et al., 2006; Felitti & Anda, 2010; Felitti et al., 1998). Some of the consequences that can result from exposure to toxic and chronic stress and ACEs include mental health problems, behaviour issues, changes to the brain architecture, and chronic health issues (Anda et al., 2006).

A common misconception of stress is that only traumatic life-altering events can cause stress for individuals (Lupien, 2012). Stressors and the impact of the stressors can range on a continuum from mild to very severe, such as trauma. Stressors are very subjective experiences (Rabin, 2005). For example, parents might perceive stress when their child is not invited to participate in after-school activities with other children, yet another parent may not deem that event as a stressor. For children, stressors can include, but are not limited to, separation from parents, witnessing adults argue, exposure to new stimuli (e.g., animals and loud noises), and being cared for by adults who are unresponsive or mistuned to the physical or emotional needs of the children.

The stress response system. The stress response system includes a series of biochemical, physiological, and psychological responses that together shift the body's state of arousal in preparation for responding to real or perceived threats or stressors with the sole intention to adapting to the stressor to ultimately avoid death (Folkow, 2006). The stress response contains a host of automatic responses that includes the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, and the serotonin systems of the body (Folkow, 2006). Together these systems are activated by the presence of corticotrophin-releasing hormone (CRH) that has a central role in initiating a cascade of changes on the biochemical level (Romeo & McEwen, 2006), which can result in physiological and behavioural responses to the presence of stress (Smith & Vale, 2006). When a person is presented with stressors and threats a number of systems including the sympathetic nervous system (SNS), the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS), and endocrine systems assist with the regulation of homeostasis (Smith &

Vale, 2006). Each system has a specific purpose in the regulation of the body (McEwen, 2007, 2008; Smith & Vale, 2006).

The SNS is important in the activation of the stress response system. When an individual is exposed to a stressor, the SNS initiates a number of physiological changes, such as an increased heart rate, increased respiration, and release of hormones such as noradrenaline, further stimulating the stress response system (Ising & Holsboer, 2006). The PNS is intended to down-regulate the activation of the SNS, aiding the body to return to homeostasis by reducing respiration and slowing the heart rate (McEwen, 2007, 2008).

When the brain first detects a threat or stressor, such as when a child is separated from a parent, the hypothalamus, which is part of the autonomic nervous system (ANS), responsible for regulating different homeostatic processes such as heart rate, hormone production, temperature control, and breathing, alerts the pituitary to the presence of a threat (Miguad et al., 2010). The hypothalamus alerts the pituitary through the secretion of CRH, which then signals the pituitary to release adrenocorticotrophic hormone, stimulating the adrenal cortex on the adrenal glands (Romeo & McEwen, 2006). The adrenal glands are located above the kidneys, and when stimulated by adrenocorticotrophic hormone they secrete glucocorticoids (e.g., cortisol), norepinephrine, and epinephrine into the blood stream (Olsson & Sapolsky, 2006). The role of epinephrine and norepinephrine is to stimulate the SNS, initiating the different stress responses (i.e., fight, flight, and freeze), which will be explained next (DeBellis, 2010). For the child who is not able to see a parent, the child's hypothalamus sends a flood of chemicals to the pituitary gland, alerting the adrenal glands, which may result in the child screaming and

protesting the separation (i.e., fight), shutting down and no longer protesting (i.e., freeze), or running away or chasing after the parents (i.e., flee).

The glucocorticoids (cortisol) released by the adrenal glands are also important to the regulation of the stress response, as they alert the PNS to become activated.

Glucocorticoids (cortisol) accumulate in the blood over approximately 25 minutes (Gunnar & Quevedo, 2007). As cortisol accumulates, it travels through the blood stream to the brain signalling the paraventricular nucleus located in the hypothalamus, to stop production of the CRH, thereby terminating the stress response (Gunnar & Quevedo, 2007), stimulating the activation of the PNS, thereby counteracting the SNS activation of the stress response (McEwen, 2008). Applying this to the example of a child facing separation from his or her parents, one might notice that the child welcomes the soothing of the daycare provider about 25 minutes after the parents leave—the child might stop crying because the child’s hypothalamus would receive a signal to halt production of CRH (activating the PNS), slowing the child’s stress. When the child begins to feel safe the stress response slows, and the child might eventually engage with other adults and children.

Fight, flight, and freeze stress responses. Dr. Peter Levine (as cited in Heller, 2004) described the fight, flight, and freeze responses and created the theory of somatic experiencing, which focuses on the body’s automatic, unconscious response to trauma. These responses result from a flood of stress hormones and the activation of the body’s SNS (DeBellis, 2010). Each of these responses causes different types of reactions to stress.

Fight response. This response entails a person actively defending with words or actions to reach a state of perceived safety and reduce the threat of the situation (Taylor et al., 2000). Both the fight and the flight responses include activation of the stress response via the ANS, which helps prepare the body to manage the threat by preparing the energy needed to respond (Lupien, 2012). Activation of the SNS, slows digestion, increases available energy (glucose), and redirects blood flow to the muscles to prepare to either fight or flee (Lupien, 2012). An example of this response could be a child who spills her milk; in this situation the parent may perceive this as a stressor, activating the parent's ANS. The parent may respond by fighting, in this case yelling at the child. The parent's yelling may activate the child's ANS, and the child might respond by fleeing, in this case running from the room.

Flight response. The flight response is explained as escaping or fleeing a situation that is considered a threat (Lupien, 2012). This response is activated in the same way that the fight response is activated, via the ANS and SNS as reviewed in the previous section discussing fight response. For instance, a preschool child playing on the playground with other children gets pushed by one of the children during a game of tag. The child that was pushed might perceive this as a negative stressor, activating the ANS. This child might respond by running into the school (i.e., fleeing the game).

Freeze response. Bracha (2004) described the freeze response as hyper-vigilance and an increased awareness of the individual's surroundings, yet a person in this state may feel unable to move. "Specifically, freezing—or tonic immobility—may overwhelm other competing action tendencies. For example, when fleeing or aggressive responses are likely to be ineffective, a freeze response may take place" (Schmidt, Richey,

Zvolensky, & Maner, 2008, p. 293). The freeze response is sometimes described as an inability to move or respond, but is suggested as a viable option when the fight or flight responses are ineffective (Schmidt et al., 2008).

Some clients, such as parents, may describe the freeze state as if they are living in a fog, whereas other parents might describe it as difficulty with sleeping because they are immobilized by a fear of something terrible happening to their child. For example, a younger sibling takes a toy from an older sibling, activating the older sibling's ANS. The older sibling then hits the younger sibling, responding to this stressful situation by fighting. Being hit activates the younger sibling's ANS, and this child responds by freezing, taking no action, and appears to stare into space.

Consequences of stress. The impact of stress accumulates throughout the lifespan, which increases an individual's allostatic load, thereby increasing the risk of other negative consequences from stress. These consequences are extensive and can be summarized as impacting three major areas of human functioning: (a) decrease in body function (e.g., chronic disease); (b) brain impairment (such as slow recall of facts, difficulty learning new information), which is often labelled as stress impacting the brain architecture, and (c) reduced emotional stability such as clinical depression, anxiety, decreased ability to form attachments, and behavioural difficulties (Chrousos, 2009; Lupien, 2012; Taylor, 2006). In this section I examine each of these major areas in more detail and provide an explanation of allostatic load.

Allostatic load. Prolonged and repeated exposure to stress takes a cumulative effect on the body adding to an individual's allostatic load (Lupien, 2012; Romeo & McEwen, 2006). Over time, the repeated activation of the stress response system without

opportunity to recover and return to homeostasis, which occurs when the PNS is activated, increases the allostatic load. Accumulation of the allostatic load, especially during early childhood, can initiate changes to the brain architecture (Chrousos, 2009), which can alter the way the body responds to stress (Teicher et al., 2010).

Chronic disease. Identification and early intervention of stress in children's lives could potentially reduce the risk of future chronic disease such as heart disease, obesity, and diabetes, by halting, and potentially reversing the changes to brain architecture and lowering the allostatic load (Romeo & McEwen, 2006). Eriksen and Ursin (2006) noted that ongoing activation of the stress response system, which increases the allostatic load, in addition to genetic predisposition and environmental factors contributes to the presence of chronic disease. Individuals who have chronic disease are at increased risk of premature mortality, reduced quality of life, and increased risk of depression (Taylor & Sirois, 2012).

Although both children and adults are at risk of negative consequences to the body from the presence of stress, the consequences of exposure to chronic and toxic stress is much greater for children because their bodies and brains are still growing and developing, making their organs much more vulnerable to the negative impacts of stress (Lupien, 2012). One of the ways that stress impacts the body is related to the release of hormones and neurotransmitters when the stress response system is activated (Chrousos, 2009; McEwen, 2008). For example, the presence of glucocorticoids, such as cortisol, can interfere with the function of the digestive system, which can impact the intake and absorption of different macronutrients, leading to nutritional deficiency (Chrousos, 2009; Dandona, Alijada, Chaudhuri, & Ghanim, 2006; McEwen, 2008). Children with

nutritional deficiencies are at higher risk of having disruptions to physical growth and development, problems with cognitive functioning, and immune system depletion (Black, 2003; Chrousos, 2009).

Another body system that is vulnerable to the consequences of stress is the immune system. The immune system serves an important function in the body's ability to resist and fight off infection and initiates neurogenic inflammatory responses such as nausea, fatigue, and low-mood (Chrousos, 2009). The presence of stress hormones inflames the immune system, which can increase the symptoms of disorders already present or can lead to disorders such as lupus, fibromyalgia, chronic fatigue syndrome, and Graves' disease (Chrousos, 2009).

Brain architecture. Brain architecture is susceptible to changes from the presence of chronic and frequent exposure to stress, especially during infancy, early childhood, and adolescence (Lupien, 2012; Teicher et al., 2010). Lupien, McEwen, Gunnar, and Heim (2009) stated, "Besides slowing down the development of the brain during the time of adversity, leading to reduced brain volumes in adulthood, stress in early life could modify the developmental trajectory of the brain" (p. 441). Trajectory of the brain refers to the development of grey and white matter in different regions of the brain, and the progression and pattern of development towards maturation within these regions (Pechtel & Pizzagalli, 2011).

The presence of stress hormones interferes with the normal function of the brain by flooding receptors in different structures of the brain with an overload of hormones such as cortisol, reducing the ability of the structures to receive other neurotransmitters and hormones that are necessary for optimal functioning (McEwen, 2007). This flooding

is problematic because it can alter and interfere with the trajectory of the brain, resulting in changes to the architecture of the brain (Pechtel & Pizzagalli, 2011).

The consequences of stress on a person's brain can be specific to a particular region of the brain (Teicher et al., 2010). Susceptibility and vulnerability to stress varies depending on the region of the brain (Teicher et al., 2010). The regions of the brain that are most vulnerable are those that have a greater number of receptors to the stress hormones released when the SNS is activated, such as the hippocampus and the amygdala (Pechtel & Pizzagalli, 2011). To provide insight into how the trajectory of the brain changes, the upcoming section will explore regions of the brain that are vulnerable to the presence of chronic stress such as the prefrontal cortex, hippocampus, and amygdala.

Prefrontal cortex. The prefrontal cortex is an area of the brain that assists with decision making, higher-level thinking, emotional regulation, problem solving, and some forms of memory (Liston, McEwen, & Casey, 2009). This region of the brain is especially vulnerable to stress, because of the long developmental trajectory, meaning that it develops over a long period of time, and the high number of glucocorticoid receptors, which can increase the number of opportunities for potential exposure to stress hormones and, therefore, changes to brain architecture (Pechtel & Pizzagalli, 2011). Glucocorticoid hormones released during the stress response bind to areas of the developing prefrontal cortex, which can alter the brain trajectory (Pechtel & Pizzagalli, 2011), potentially changing the architecture of the brain.

Liston, McEwen, and Casey (2009) investigated the impact of stress on the prefrontal cortex by studying functional magnetic resonance imaging of 20 healthy adults before and after exposure to psychosocial stress, which was measured using Cohen's

perceived stress scale. Liston et al. (2009) noted a 33% reduction to the dendritic arborization and density in the medial prefrontal cortex. In other words, when these adults were exposed to a short-term stressor, their ability to shift attention (part of dendritic arborization) was impaired (Liston et al., 2009). Thus, when under stress, adults may have difficulty shifting attention and may experience delays in directing their focus. However, Liston et al. (2009) also found that reversing the impact on the prefrontal cortex from exposure to stress was possible. When the short-term psychosocial stressor, such as the pressure from writing an exam, was absent for a period of one month, the brain could start to repair itself (Liston et al., 2009). The damage to the prefrontal cortex, caused by acute short-term psychosocial stress (writing an exam) could be restored through neurogenesis, thereby restoring dendritic connections (Liston et al., 2009).

Impairment of the prefrontal cortex can create a host of difficulties for individuals, including difficulties focusing attention, impulsivity control, difficulties managing emotions, and increased risk for mental illness such as depression, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, and anxiety (Liston et al., 2009). For example, a parent who has an impairment in the prefrontal cortex, such as fewer connections and a lower volume in a critical area, may be more emotionally labile or may have difficulties remembering important events. In a young child, an impairment in the prefrontal cortex may result in the child being easily frustrated and tearful, as the area of the prefrontal cortex that is responsible for mood regulation might have been altered by the presence of stress hormones, affecting the child's emotional regulation.

Amygdala. Research is showing that exposure to toxic or chronic stress in early childhood has the potential to alter the amygdala (DeBellis, 2010). The amygdala is a region of the brain that has a role in the regulation of fear, anxiety, and aggression (McEwen, 2007); it is an integral part of the stress response system influencing the fight, flight, and freeze responses (DeBellis, 2010). Individual response to stress and threat can be changed when the amygdala region of the brain has been altered from activation of the PNS (Lupien et al., 2009). One of the changes that can result from exposure to chronic stress is an enlargement of the amygdala that results from an increase in the dendritic arborization to this region of the brain (Lupien et al., 2009).

The amygdala's response to the presence of stress can be altered, implying a hyper-arousal to the presence of stress hormones such as epinephrine and norepinephrine and an amplified response to the presence of stressors, increased anxiety and aggression (McEwen, 2007). This may be evident in adults or children who have a heightened startle effect, a decreased interest in exploring their environment, and increase aggression (Holzel et al., 2010). For example, children with an enlarged amygdala may be easily frightened by loud noises and stimuli from their environment compared to other children with an amygdala in the normal range. These children may also have difficulty focusing attention resulting from a state of hyper-arousal due to the presence of potential threats and stressors.

Hippocampus. Another area of the brain that is vulnerable to stress is the hippocampal region of the brain (Teicher et al., 2010). This region of the brain contributes to the activation of the PNS, which counters the SNS's activation of the stress response (Smith & Vale, 2006). Teicher et al.'s (2010) research found that exposure to

stress during the early years can cause up to a 16% reduction in the hippocampal volume. Whenever volume decreases it implies impaired functioning. For example, Teicher et al. (2010) found that a decreased hippocampal volume in adults is correlated with an increased risk of posttraumatic stress disorder. Teicher et al. (2010) theorized that a decreased volume of the hippocampus creates an increased vulnerability to traumatic events and stresses in adult.

The hippocampus region of the brain also helps with the regulation of food intake (McEwen, 2007), memory storage, retrieval, and behavioural inhibition (Teicher, Samson, Tomoda, Ashy, & Andersen, 2006). The presence of stress hormones can create lesions on the hippocampus, which result in a decreased ability to regulate weight and often increased food intake (McEwen, 2007). For example, a parent may show these symptoms by having chronic anxiety or by forgetting important appointments. Whereas children might exhibit symptoms by demonstrating impulsive behaviours and having difficulties with delayed gratification, such as waiting a short period of time to have double the reward.

Stress hormones can alter regions of the brain such as the amygdala, hippocampus, hypothalamus, and prefrontal cortex, which are important in the regulation of emotion, eliciting behavioural responses, and the regulation of fear and anxiety. These alterations to the brain architecture from the presence of stress hormones increases the risk of mental health problems.

Mental health. Mental health and psychological wellbeing are vulnerable to the effects of chronic and toxic stress as well as to exposures to trauma (Chrousos, 2009). Although differences in susceptibility to stress change throughout a person's lifetime,

exposure to chronic unrelenting stress and multiple different stressors can increase a person's vulnerability or compound already existing mental health disorders.

Some of the mental health disorders that have been linked to continued activation of the stress response system in children and adults include anxiety disorders, depression, eating disorders, addiction, and posttraumatic stress disorder (Chrousos, 2009). Although there are a number of mental health consequences that can result from exposure to stress, this paper focuses on depression and anxiety because of the higher frequency of these disorders in the general population, with depression having a 4.7% yearly frequency and anxiety have between a 4.8–12.0% yearly frequency in Canada (Government of Canada, 2006).

Depression. Depression has been referred to in the literature as a stress-related disorder and has been linked to exposure to chronic stress (Ekman & Arnetz, 2006). Exposure to chronic stress can impair the ability of the hippocampus to utilize available serotonin, which is important in the regulation of mood (Ekman & Arnetz, 2006). “Chronic stress has been shown to generate an explicit downregulation of these serotonin receptors in the hippocampus” (Ekman & Arnetz, 2006, p. 207). The presence of depression or anxiety can lead to a decreased quality of life (Ekman & Arnetz, 2006; Taylor & Sirois, 2012) and interfere with a parent's ability to connect with and care for their children (Bureau, Martin, & Lyons-Ruth, 2010).

Anxiety. Activation of the SNS initiates a host of responses, one of which is anxiety. Alterations to regions of the brain such as the amygdala and the hippocampus can result in an increased risk of ongoing and chronic anxiety because these regions of the brain are no longer as effective in regulating the activation of the ANS, including the

SNS and PNS (McEwen, Eiland, Hunter, & Miller, 2012). McEwen et al. (2012) provided a possible explanation for the presence of anxiety, suggesting that the presence of long-term and chronic stress can continually activate the anxiety response generated from the presence of stress hormones and activation of the SNS. This can become problematic, as it can lead to inflammation of the immune system, potentially contributing to chronic disease such as chronic fatigue syndrome, lupus, and fibromyalgia (Chrousos, 2009). There are many negative consequences to the presence of stress. However, the consequences of stress can be reduced by the presence of healthy coping strategies (Holen, Lervåg, Waaktaar, & Ystgaard, 2012).

Coping. Coping can influence the regulation of the body's stress response system, as effective coping can include down-regulating negative emotions (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Negative emotions can influence activation of the stress response (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Coping strategies are often initiated in situations that have the potential to be appraised as stressful and when the internal emotional climate of a person is high, usually resulting in intense negative emotions (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004). Essentially, coping refers to "the thoughts and behaviors used to manage the internal and external demands of situations that are appraised as stressful" (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004, p. 745). A person who is able to cope effectively with an event by problem solving and using soothing self-talk would perceive an event as less of a stressor (which reflects better coping) when compared to another person who magnifies the problem and has a pessimistic self-talk style. Healthy coping strategies can serve to reduce the negative consequences of stress and improve an individual's overall wellbeing (Holen et al., 2012).

Summary of the stress response system. The ubiquitous nature of stress and the potential for negative ramifications upon the health and wellbeing of all individuals makes stress difficult to ignore. Many key issues in healthcare such as chronic disease, mental health, changes to brain architecture and function, quality of life, as well as changes and potential impairments to the stress response system are a result of exposure to chronic stress (Anda et al., 2006). The following suggestion by Romeo and McEwen (2006) is directly related to one of the intentions of this project: these authors suggested that parents be taught how to help their young ones manage stress during the early years of life, because of the vulnerability of the brain and susceptibility to changes from exposure to chronic and toxic stress. It is during these early and critical years of development that stress has the greatest potential to cause lifelong and irreversible damage to the brain (Centre on the Developing Child at Harvard University, 2010). Parents have the potential to influence development during these early years. The changes that can happen to the brain can potentially be a permanent alteration; however, with early intervention and remediation of the stress, and having a parent form positive relationships with his or her children, there is the potential to reverse or halt negative changes to the brain architecture (Romeo & McEwen, 2006). Treatments that address stress in people's lives can potentially help reduce or reverse the impact of stress on the brain (Middlebrooks & Audage, 2008).

Parental Stress and Stressors

This section of the literature review addresses the major focus of this project: parental stress and stressors and stress in childhood. Although there are a number of different areas that could be explored on parental stress and stressors, in this chapter I

devote attention to three core themes that are actively addressed and processed in the proposed stress management workshops (Appendix A).

The first theme, which is one of the focuses in Workshop 2, found in Appendix A, describes how stress can negatively affect parents' ability to meet the psychosocial needs of their children. The second theme explored in this section focuses on daily hassles and how these can influence parents' stress level. This theme is apparent in Workshops 1 and 2. The third and final theme, which is explored Workshops 1 and 3, examines how parenting support and social support influence parenting stress.

Workshop theme 1: Impact of stress on parenting. This workshop theme addresses Deater-Deckard's (2004) observation that "Stressful life circumstances and individual differences can operate to constrain parents' opportunities to enjoy and be effective in their caregiving roles" (p. 74). These stressful life circumstances, as they relate to this project, can influence the ability of parents to offer quality care to their children (Creasey & Reese, 1996). For example, parents who are not managing well with their stressors may have difficulty regulating their emotions. This inability may interfere with the formation of the parent-child bond because parents may not be consistently available emotionally or physically for the child (McClowry et al., 2000). Further, parents who are coping poorly may become emotionally labile and could respond unpredictably to their children (Deater-Deckard, 2004). Children who have a parent with an inconsistent parenting style and a pattern of unreliability are at an increased risk of consequences, including behavioural problems in preschool, proneness to aggression, difficulties with regulating emotion (Coplan, Bowker, & Cooper, 2003), and difficulties with adjustment in school (Deater-Deckard, 2004).

When stressed, parents may not have the energy or focus to attune to their child's needs. Therefore, children may also be impacted by their parents' stress (McClowry et al., 2000). For example, children may exhibit difficulties with their social and emotional development and emotional regulation (Deater-Deckard, 2004). When children's social competence decreases significantly, parental stress increases (Coplan et al., 2003). This can increase the difficulties that children experience in school, potentially impairing the child's ability to form healthy social relationships (Coplan et al., 2003).

Supporting parents in managing their stress indirectly helps parents to meet the emotional and physical needs of their children, because it seems logical to assume that parents who are less stressed are more attuned and better able to respond to the needs of their children (McClowry et al., 2000). The proposed workshop found in Appendix A addresses this theme by introducing participants to the impacts of stress on parenting. The workshop will provide participants with an explanation of how parenting stress can interfere with a parent's ability to care for their child. Additionally, Workshops 1 and 3 will provide parents with strategies that can improve their ability to manage stress.

Workshop theme 2: Daily hassles. Another major theme in the proposed workshop found in Appendix A focuses on daily parenting hassles. Parents' experience an increase in the symptoms of psychological distress with the presence of both daily parenting and daily life hassles (Creasy & Reese, 1996). Creasy and Reese (1996) found a positive correlation between the experience of daily parenting hassles and overall psychological stress experience, noting that the frequency and number of daily hassles contributed to the amount of psychological stress experienced by parents.

When parents feel stressed, their children may become increasingly emotionally reactive. This may suggest that a child's temperament (negative affect, emotional reactivity, and inattention) can be influenced and exacerbated by a parent's stress, but can also influence and contribute to the level of stress a parent is experiencing, which may potentially be bidirectional (Coplan et al., 2003).

The proposed workshop addresses this theme by inviting participants to explore how the stress that they are experiencing is connected to their role as a parent. Coplan et al. (2003) suggested increasing parental awareness of how parents' stress can result in negative consequences for their children as one way to reduce the circular pattern of stress in relation to parenting and its impact on children. In the proposed workshop, parents will be guided through an activity that provides them with the opportunity to identify what they find stressful and provided with tools and strategies to help manage stressors in their lives. Further, Workshop 2 provides parents with tools to support their children who are experiencing stress, which can serve to lower their child's stress level and potentially decrease their stress level. As Deater-Deckard (2004) explained, "Parents and children influence each other and their relationships via bi-directional parent and child effects" (p. 114). This may suggest that both parent and child behaviours influence one another.

Workshop theme 3: Parenting, social support, and parenting stress. Social support and relationships with others are factors that act as buffers, reducing the overall impact of stress and lowering stress levels (Taylor, 2006). Bonds, Gondoli, Sturge-Apple, and Salem (2002) examined how general social support and parenting support influenced optimal parenting, using two comparison groups: parents reporting high

parental stress and parents who noted being psychologically distressed. The relationship between optimal parenting and parenting support was indirectly related to parenting stress, and not psychological distress (Bonds et al., 2002). In other words, the study found the presence of parenting support for mothers, especially in a group format, could serve to reduce parental stress and enhance optimal parenting (Bonds et al., 2002).

Parents who are under high amounts of stress appear to have different responses to the presence of social support. Fathers differ from mothers, in that the presence of social support for fathers measures no real difference in parenting when compared to mothers who appear to improve their parenting ability with the presence of social support (Deater-Deckard, 2004). Providing and increasing parenting support to mothers has been suggested as having the potential to improve the lives of both parents and children (Bonds et al., 2002). Researchers suggested community resources that provide parents with support via education and training within a group setting as one way to reduce parenting stress and improve parenting skills (Bonds et al., 2002; Singer, Ethridge, & Aldana, 2007).

The proposed workshop addresses this theme by exploring the role of social support as a way to reduce overall stress levels. For example, the proposed workshop includes activities that incorporate social interaction, and the workshops are structured into a group format to create a social environment that could potentially provide an opportunity to build social connections among participants.

Summary of parental stress and stressors. Parental stress is a barrier that can reduce the ability of parents to form a caring and loving relationship with their children (McClowry et al., 2000). Supporting parents to cope and manage their stress not only

helps the parents but it also helps their children. Parents' ability to meet their child's emotional, psychological, and physical needs can be greatly impacted by the stress that a parent or caregiver is experiencing. Understanding how parents' stress can affect their ability to meet their children's needs is important, as it provides health care professionals with an understanding of how to support parents who are caring for young children. Reduced stress levels increase a parent's ability to care for and meet the needs of his or her children, thereby helping to reduce challenging behaviours; therefore, parents' level of stress appears to benefit not only parents, but also children. Providing tools and resources to parents to help them manage and cope with their own stress can potentially decrease the level of stress that parents are experiencing, thereby potentially increasing their ability to be responsive to their child's emotional, psychological, and physical needs. This was one of the reasons for the creation of the proposed workshop.

Stress in Childhood

This section of the literature review explores three core themes of stress in children, as these themes are addressed in the proposed workshop. The first theme focuses on children's increased vulnerability. Theme two closely examines childhood stress. The last theme centres on various protective factors for children. These three themes were selected based on the consequence of stress on children, as reviewed in the first section of Chapter 2, which outlined a number of negative consequences associated with the presence of chronic and toxic stress. Children are especially vulnerable to the consequences discussed, such as changes to the brain architecture mental health disorders, alterations to the stress response system, and chronic disease (Chrousos, 2009).

This section on stress in childhood does not repeat information already discussed in earlier sections.

Theme 1: Increased vulnerability. Children's vulnerability to stress increases the risk of alterations to the stress response system (Teicher et al., 2010), potentially resulting in lifelong hypersensitivity to stressors (Gunnar, Herrera, & Hostinar, 2009). The malleability of children's brains increases their vulnerability, but also provides opportunity to reduce and potentially reverse the consequences of exposure to chronic and toxic stress (Chrousos, 2009; Lupien, 2012; Middlebrooks & Audage, 2008). Further, since children's brains are still developing, stress can interfere with normal growth and development of the brain (Lupien, 2012). For example, ample research has demonstrated that a child who has been exposed to stress can experience changes in the architecture of the brain. Felitti and Anda (2010) found a positive relationship between the number of extreme stressors experienced in childhood and the risk of negative consequences from stress.

Persons who had experienced four or more categories of childhood exposure, compared to those who had experienced none, had 4- to 12-fold increased health risks for alcoholism, drug abuse, depression, and suicide attempt; a 2- to 4-fold increase in smoking, poor self-rated health, > or = 50 sexual intercourse partners, and sexually transmitted disease; and 1.4- to 1.6-fold increase in physical inactivity and severe obesity. (Felitti et al., 1998, para. 3)

Although children are vulnerable to stress, they are also resilient, and because of this, there is opportunity to reduce, and potentially reverse the negative impact of stress. The presence of supportive and caring relationships has the potential to reduce the overall

impact of stress, lowering the allostatic load, and potentially reducing the risk of lifelong consequences (Romeo & McEwen, 2006). Specific consequences of stress that can be reversed include changes to the architecture of the brain. For example, neurogenesis, which is the formation of cells in the brain, can restore some of the hippocampal volume during periods of time when there is no exposure to chronic and toxic stress (Lucassen et al., 2010).

In the workshop, parents will be coached and instructed on ways to reduce their child's stress. For example, parents will be provided with a number of activities that they can do together with their children that can help build healthy coping skills.

Theme 2: Childhood stress. Stress in childhood can take many different forms. Some of the stressors discussed in the literature include parental divorce, moving to new location, new schools, abandonment by parents, family circumstances (e.g., parental physical or mental health illness), and lack of warm and supportive caregivers (Honig, 2010). A theme in these listings of stressors is the child's inability to influence external agents to reduce the impact or change their stressors. The presence of caring and supportive adults is necessary to support children, reduce the presence of stressors, and diminish the risks associated with exposure to stress. Honig (2010) stated, "Relationships with loving, intimate persons are crucial for preventing stress and for ameliorating risk factors that stress young children" (p. 3). The proposed workshop adheres to Honig's statement and emphasizes the importance of building healthy coping strategies through educating parents about the important role they have in helping their children develop healthy coping strategies.

The signs and symptoms of stress in children can vary with the age of the child. Some responses that young children might have include regression to an earlier stage of development, difficulties sleeping, daydreaming, externalizing behaviours, and somatic complaints (Honig, 2010). Teachers may observe a stressed child having difficulties focusing on classroom tasks, responding to peers with aggression, or having difficulties with changes to the expected classroom routine. In addition, the child may also have physical complaints such as a sore stomach or a headache. Recall that many of these symptoms can be due to the stress response being chronically activated, thus flooding the body with hormones that keep the SNS activated. This state of activation has been shown to produce a heightened startle response, increased aggression, and increase fear and worry (Coplan, Bowker, & Cooper, 2003).

In the workshop parents will be educated on the signs and symptoms that could indicate a child is experiencing moderate to high amounts of stress. Parents who are themselves experiencing high amounts of stress are likely to be less attuned and responsive to the emotional and physical needs of their children (McClowry et al., 2000). Supporting parents to manage their own stress could help to increase their ability to meet the emotional and physical needs of their children (McClowry et al., 2000), thereby increasing protective factors that buffer the impact of stress for their children.

Theme 3: Protective factors for children. Protective factors can assist with reducing the potentially negative consequences of stress. Protective factors, such as positive emotion, to be described next, may help individuals shift, adapt, and cope with stress (Ong, Bergemen, Bisconti, & Wallace, 2006). Other factors, such as a child having a loving and caring relationship with their parents, can also help to protect children from

the consequences of stress (Gunnar et al., 2009). Although there are a number of protective factors that could be discussed, this paper discusses two protective factors that are utilized in the workshop manual (Appendix A)—positive emotions and relationships.

Positive emotions. The presence of positive emotions (e.g., enthusiasm, cheerfulness, satisfaction, inspirational, and relaxed to name a few) has been found to increase the recovery from stressful experiences, as was evidenced in Ong et al.'s (2006) research. In their research Ong et al. (2006) found evidence that the presence of positive emotions can mediate recovery from stress for adults. Understanding how these positive emotions can aid in recovery from stress will provide valuable information and help parents develop a coping strategy that parents might be able to utilize during times of stress to improve recovery. A child's emotional competence can be influenced by a parent's emotional display or modelling of different emotions, which includes tolerating different emotions and expressing these emotions in constructive ways (Denham, Mitchell-Copeland, Strandberg, Auerbach, & Blair, 1997). Denham et al. (1997) found that children whose parents had modelled positive emotions, especially during difficult times, had a better understanding of emotions and increased social and emotional competence in preschool. Parents who can provide support to their children through secure relationships can help to model healthy ways for their children to manage stress (Gunnar et al., 2009).

Relationships. When children are faced with stressful situations and negative emotions, having a caring and secure relationship with a parent can help reduce the effects of stress (Gunnar et al., 2009). For example, children who are able to express negative emotions and distress and receive assistance and support from their parent to

help them manage the emotions and feelings experience a potential reduction in or are buffered from the activation of the stress response system (Gunnar et al., 2009). These relationships serve to not only help model healthy stress-management strategies to children (Gunnar et al., 2009), but also serve to protect children from the consequences of stress (Honig, 2010; McClowry et al., 2000; Middlebrooks & Audage, 2008).

In the workshop found in Appendix A parents will be educated on the different ways they can reduce the potential damaging effects of stress on their children. For example, in Workshop 2 parents will learn to recognize when their children are stressed, and be provided with a number of activities they can do together with their children to reduce the impact of stress and foster their relationship.

Summary of stress in childhood. Children are at increased vulnerability to the negative consequences of stress (Lupien, 2012). Stress experienced in childhood has the potential to lead to lifelong consequences, such as chronic disease, mental health disorders, and alterations to the stress response system (Felitti & Anda, 2010; Gunnar et al., 2009; Middlebrooks & Audage, 2008). The presence of protective factors such as positive emotions and supportive and caring relationships can help to reduce and potentially reverse the effects of stress on the brain and the body.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a review of stress literature that included information on stress and the consequences of stress, how stress affects parents, and stress in childhood. Understanding the consequences of stress emphasizes the importance of addressing stress to reduce and potentially eliminate these consequences for children and their families. Given that children are especially vulnerable to the presence of chronic and toxic stress,

supporting parents to reduce the impact of stress can potentially improve the lives of both children and families. Having resources, such as the proposed workshop, to help educate and support parents to recognize and respond to signs that their children are experiencing stress, as Gunnar et al. (2009) suggested, is one way to reduce potential mental health issues in children. The next chapter will discuss the methods used to create this project.

Chapter 3: Methods

This chapter describes the process undertaken to gather information for Part 1 of this project and explains how this information has been used to inform the construction of the workshop manual (Appendix A). Research was focused on a variety of subjects related to stress, parenting, and children. Specifically, I focused on research that informed the three core themes of the literature review—the basics of stress and the stress response system, parental stress and stressors, stress as it relates to children—and research that demonstrated support for various techniques that are used in the workshop manual, which will be discussed in Chapter 4 of this project. In this chapter a list of search terms and search engines used is discussed. Lastly, ethical considerations that I adhered to in the development of this project are discussed.

Research Focus

The primary focus of the research undertaken for this project is related to stress and the connection to parenting, how stress affects children, and the potential negative consequences for children. Many of the different topics that were researched such as the impact of parents' stress in daily life hassles date back as far as the 1980s. Research specific to stress was found to date back as far as the 1950's, as some of the foundational research on stress is related to the work of Selye (Taylor & Sirois, 2012), which took place in the 1950's. However, research about a syndrome describing what is now called stress dates back as far as the 1930's (Selye, 1976). As the author of this project, I was open to a variety of sources that served as foundational research that could be used to inform this project. As a result, research prior to 2002 has been included in this project.

Information was gathered from a variety of different sources, including primary sources such as research articles, secondary sources such as review articles or books, and other types of articles and information that were available on the World Wide Web, such as gray literature, resource materials, and position papers. Primary sources such as research articles were used to provide an empirical basis that was used to support and provide evidence for explanations used in this project.

Research Process

I completed the literature review by conducting searches through various databases using the Internet. A variety of search terms were used to locate research and information that could be used to inform the completion of this project. Search terms that were used included but were not limited to: stress, impacts of stress, stress and children, parenting daily hassles, parenting stress index, stress reduction, coping with stress, parenting stress, types of stress, stress management, stress management for children, and stress management for adults. The following databases were used to conduct these searches: ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, CINAHL via EbscoHost, PsychINFO via obits, and PubMed.

During the process of conducting research for this project I discovered three programs on stress titled *Kids Have Stress Too!* (Psychology Foundation of Canada, n.d.). The Psychology Foundation of Canada (n.d.) programs feature some similarities and consistencies with this project. However, a key difference noted was that the Psychology Foundation of Canada (n.d.) programs focus on educating parents and caregivers about recognizing and reducing stress for children, whereas the proposed workshop (Appendix A) focuses on reducing parents' stress in addition to educating parents about reducing

child stress. A second key difference is that the Psychology Foundation of Canada (n.d.) programs have a target audience of both parents and caregivers of children from 2.5 to 9 years of age, whereas the proposed workshop does not include caregivers as the target audience and includes parents of children aged 0 to 5. A third difference that was noted is that the Psychology Foundation of Canada (n.d.) offers a program for students in grades 1-3, whereas the proposed workshop only offers workshops to parents, and does not include any education to children.

Ethical Considerations

Since no human subjects were used in the data collection for this project, approval by the University of Lethbridge Human Subject Research Committee was not required. As the author of this project, I have adhered to *the Canadian Code of Ethics for Psychologists* (Canadian Psychological Association, 2000) when conducting research; I have also adhered to the publication standards set out in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (American Psychological Association, 2010). For Part 2 of this project the workshop manual (Appendix A), I have used creative liberties and expression (e.g., use of copyright-free pictures, freedoms regarding heading placements, use of different sized fonts, styles, and colours). Although creative expression was used for the Part 2 of this project, editorial standards were still followed.

Chapter Summary

This chapter focussed on the research process and methods that were used to assist with completing this project. This chapter also included a discussion on the ethical considerations that were taken into account to complete this project.

Chapter 4 will include a review of the literature that serves to build a deeper understanding, support for, and reasoning behind the inclusion of various exercises and tools in the workshop manual (Appendix A) of this project. Chapter 4 will focus on research that has been conducted on various tools, techniques, and approaches used to help manage stress and improve coping for both parents and children.

Chapter 4: Workshop Manual Preamble

This chapter serves as a preamble to the workshop manual (Appendix A). In this chapter I review research that examined the effects of different approaches to stress management for parents and children, providing support for the approach and tools used in the workshop manual (Appendix A). A multicomponent training (MCT) approach utilizes more than one type of intervention or technique. The approaches that have been incorporated into the workshop manual include utilizing cognitive behavioural techniques (CBT), coping skills training, self-care, mindfulness, and relaxation techniques. The purpose of the workshop is to educate parents about stress, specifically the potential consequences of stress, and to (a) build parents' ability to cope and manage their own stress, (b) increase their skills and knowledge about how to reduce the impact of stress on their children, and (c) increase their children's repertoire of skills to manage stress in a healthy way.

Rationale for Using a Workshop Delivery

The goal of this project was to create a free resource that could benefit counsellors and the clients whom they serve and could be delivered in a cost-efficient manner. This is not a therapy group because the emphasis is on psychoeducational delivery of material and not on in-depth processing of people's psychosocial needs and psychological issues. However, participants will be encouraged to access psychological services if the need arises.

The workshops are open to the public as a general forum of knowledge. Since these workshops are open and not therapy based, the need for screening of participants is

not required. However, any preparation work of screening and orientation meetings remains an option for those who deliver this workshop.

Workshop Framework

The stress management literature supported the use of an MCT, in addition to CBT and behavioural parent training (BPT) to help people learn to reduce their stress. Singer, Ethridge, and Aldana's (2007) meta-analysis pertaining to stress management and parents was relevant to this research. Singer et al.'s meta-analysis included 17 different studies that evaluated the effectiveness of different interventions that were sorted into four categories of interventions: family systems interventions, MCT, BPT, and CBT. Singer et al. (2007) reviewed the efficacy of different group interventions for parents of children with disabilities aimed at reducing stress, psychological distress, and depression, focusing specifically on the impact of different interventions on parental stress and emotional distress. A combined 920 parents participated in the various studies included in the meta-analysis, most of whom had children under the age of 6 (Singer et al., 2007). The MCT approach was found to be the most effective approach to help parents reduce both stress and distress when compared to approaches that utilized only CBT or BPT (Singer et al., 2007). Hence, the MCT approach was adopted for the proposed workshops.

Workshop Interventions

The proposed workshop (Appendix A) utilizes a number of interventions and approaches to educate and inform parents about the consequences of stress and ways of managing stress. Some of these interventions include the identification of stress, coping skills training, social support, physical activity, CBT, and mindfulness. These

interventions and approaches are explained in greater detail in this chapter, and examples of how these interventions are used in the proposed workshop are also provided.

Identifying stress. Knowing what is at the root of stress can enable people to take steps towards addressing what might be causing their stress (Lupien, 2012). Thus, identifying stress is included as an activity in the proposed workshop. This type of activity was used in one of the studies included in Singer et al.'s (2007) meta-analysis, mentioned earlier in this chapter. An example of an activity that helps parents to identify their stress is included in Workshop 1, Handout 8 (Appendix A). This activity is designed to help build parents' awareness of how they respond to stress. Also included in Workshop 1 is an activity that helps educate parents about different sources of stress (Workshop 1, Handout 6, found in Appendix A). Given that stress is a subjective experience, these activities will assist parents in identifying their own experiences of stress.

Coping skills training. The use of coping skills training is effective at reducing parental distress (Singer et al., 2007). Being able to cope with stress and distress requires the use of effective strategies that help to lower overall stress and distress (Deater-Deckard, 2004). There is a wide range of coping strategies that can be utilized; however, not all individuals have a wide repertoire of strategies to draw from (Deater-Deckard, 2004). Supported by Deater-Deckard's (2004) work, this workshop will help parents build coping skills. For example in Workshop 3 (Appendix A), the activity presented in Handout 6 helps the participant build a list of coping strategies.

Social support. The presence of supportive individuals can provide a buffer against the consequences of stress (Lupien, 2012). The presence of social support for

parents may reduce the impact of daily hassles and lower overall stress (Deater-Deckard, 2004). One way that the proposed workshop (Appendix A) will provide social support is through the group format. The group format is intended to bring together parents with children of similar ages, providing the potential for peer support. The workshop also utilizes social support as a coping skill. For example, in Workshop 1, the exercise in Handout 10 builds social support in the form of a walk-and-talk activity. This exercise incorporates the use of physical activity, which Salmon (2001) suggested has the potential to reduce stress.

Physical activity. One of the benefits of physical activity is that it can improve overall health and fitness, but another benefit is that it can also potentially lower the impact of stress on the body (Salmon, 2001). Physical activity also has the potential to reverse neurodegeneration (damage) of the hippocampus, which is caused by factors such as diabetes (Cotman, Berchtold, & Christie, 2007) and stress (Teicher et al., 2010). Cotman et al. (2007) found that exercise can help increase the plasticity of the hippocampus, which could help with neurogenesis of the hippocampus, potentially reversing damage already present. The benefits of physical activity not only help to support overall health and wellbeing, it can also serve to reduce the impact of stress and holds potential to reduce the damaging effects of stress on the hippocampus. Given the benefits of physical activity, the proposed workshop includes a number of activities that encourage physical activity (Appendix A). In addition to the walk-and-talk activity (found in Workshop 1, Handout 10,) other activities incorporate the use of physical activity. For example, in Workshop 3 the family first aid kit (found in Handout 6) includes a number of activities for parents and children that incorporate physical activity.

Cognitive behavioural techniques. Interventions that use CBT have been effective at reducing parental distress and overall stress (Singer et al., 2007). In their meta-analysis, Singer et al. (2007) found that CBT was effective at reducing parental stress; however, these researchers also found that using CBT alone was not as effective as using an MCT approach. Deater-Deckard (2004) suggested that CBT be used as a possible intervention for parents with high amounts of stress.

Some examples of CBT that Deater-Deckard (2004) suggested included organizing and planning strategies to manage stress. The workshop manual (Appendix A) includes a number of activities that help parents to organize different strategies. For example, in Workshop 2, Handout 8 is a sheet of various activities that parents can do with their children. Another activity included in the workshop manual is a weekly planner that helps parents plan self-care activities each week (see Workshop 1, Handout 11). These are examples of activities that have been included in the workshop manual that utilize a CBT in combination with other activities.

Mindfulness. Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) is a method of stress reduction that incorporates awareness of body sensations, breathing and posture, of thoughts and cognitions (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009). Research has demonstrated that MBSR can be effective with a variety of populations, including those with chronic health conditions, mental illness, and generally healthy individuals (Chiesa & Serretti, 2009). In their meta-analysis, Chiesa and Serretti (2009) examined the effects of MBSR on healthy individuals and found evidence that supported the use of MBSR in healthy populations, noting that it facilitates a reduction in stress and also reduces thought rumination. The proposed workshop manual in Appendix A incorporates an MBSR activity in Workshop

1 in Handout 9, which is a breathing exercise. The exercise is intended to help bring awareness to the individual's breathing and internal state, including thoughts, feelings, and sensations. The incorporation of this activity is intended to lower stress in parents, which has been linked to improvements in the parent's ability to be attuned to the physical and emotional needs of their children (McClowry et al., 2000).

A number of strategies and approaches can be used when working with parents to reduce the negative consequences of stress. The approach used in this project is an MCT that utilizes a combination of techniques and strategies. The different strategies and techniques that are employed in the workshop manual (Appendix A) have the potential to empower parents to better manage their stress and reduce the potential consequences of stress on their children.

Chapter Summary

This chapter focussed on the MCT approach and the different techniques that were utilized within the workshop manual (Appendix A). This chapter explored how an MCT approach has been used with parents to reduce stress, was found to be effective, and is considered to be an evidence-based approach. "The multicomponent interventions also meet standards for evidence-based treatments at least with middle class mothers and in the short term" (Singer et al., 2007, p. 366). This chapter also provided support for the different interventions and approaches that are included in the workshop manual. The following chapter will provide a synthesis of the project, listing the strengths, limitations, and suggested directions for future research.

Chapter 5: Synthesis

This chapter discusses the strengths and limitations of the literature review and project manual (Appendix A). This chapter also discusses considerations for future research and development.

Strengths

One strength of the literature review was the utilization of current literature. Many of the sources included in the literature review have been published in the last 10 years. In addition, a number of sources were used to identify the consequences of stress and to establish the efficacy of the tools and techniques used within the workshop. The evidence found in the literature also influenced the content of the workshop manual (Appendix A), as the workshop was based on what was demonstrated in the literature as being successful at reducing stress in parents.

The project manual (Appendix A) also includes a number of strengths. It is based on an MCT approach. Singer et al.'s (2007) meta-analysis suggested that an MCT training approach received empirical support (see Chapter 4). In addition, the manual offers facilitators flexibility in the use of the material. The topics, materials, sequence, length, and activities are all open for adaptation by facilitators to meet the needs of the client group that they serve. A further strength is that literature reviewed in Chapters 2 and 4 guide the topics and activities.

Limitations of the Literature Review and Workshop Manual

This workshop manual (Appendix A) and the Part 1 of the project have a number of limitations that should be reviewed. Some of the limitations include lack of research on the efficacy of the project, limits regarding the intended audience, and cultural

considerations. The limitations of the workshop have been provided so that users of the workshop manual make an informed choice to use some or all of the workshop material and to adapt the material as needed.

Research on the efficacy of the project. One of the limitations of the project is that the workshop manual (Appendix A) has not been implemented; therefore, no data have been collected. The validity of the workshop cannot be determined until a series of empirical evaluations of the workshop have been completed.

Limits on the intended audience. The intended audience for the proposed workshop includes parents with children between the ages of 0 and 5, who are typically able to function well in a group setting, and who are able to read and write at a Grade-8 level. Consideration has not been given for populations outside of this intended audience, such as caregivers other than parents, parents with children outside of the intended age range, and those who have learning disabilities or difficulty regulating their moods (e.g., those with anxieties, depression, etc.). Although populations outside of the intended audience may benefit from the material, the material has not been adapted for use with other populations.

Cultural considerations. The majority of articles that were used to inform the creation of the project manual were based on research that included a large population of middle class Caucasian adults. Although some articles included consideration of minority ethnic and cultural groups, it cannot be said with certainty that this workshop will be applicable to people outside of middle class Caucasian culture.

Expert consultation. One of the limitations of the project and proposed workshop is that experts on stress and parenting have not been consulted or provided

opportunity to review the material. Without expert review and feedback, I as the author of this project, am unable to provide confirmation that experts would support the proposed workshops.

Consultation with target audience. The content of the proposed workshop was created without consultation with parents. Therefore, it is difficult to say that the proposed workshop meets the needs and interests of parents. For example, parents may want more time with the content or may prefer to have a number of workshops that are of shorter duration.

Considerations for Future Research and Development

There are several opportunities for future research and development. One area of future research includes the evaluation of the workshop. I suggest that qualitative feedback from experts, facilitators, and clients be gathered to assess the short- and long-term impacts of the workshop. To determine if the workshop is effective at reducing parenting stress, I suggest the outcomes of the workshop be measured using validated tools that measure parenting stress in the short and long term. I also suggest that research be conducted to determine if the format of the workshop is an effective method for delivering the content. For example, the size of the group, the length of the workshop, and the timing of workshops should be examined to determine the format that would be most effective at achieving the intended outcomes of the workshop. A fourth area for future research includes evaluating facilitator qualities such as education, experience, and training that contribute to achievement of the intended workshop outcomes. A fifth suggestion for further research includes evaluating the impact of the workshop on other children in the home, such as evaluating the parent–child relationship of children born

after participation in the workshop or older siblings who are outside of the intended age range for children. A sixth and last suggestion is to complete a controlled research study that would isolate different variables in the workshop to determine which are most effective at reducing parental stress, and the potential negative consequences of stress on children.

Chapter Summary

The intent of this project is twofold: the first intention is to provide parents with education and information about the consequences of stress on children, and the second intention is to equip parents with tools to identify stress and reduce the negative impacts on themselves and their children. Chapter 1 provided an introduction and rationale for the project and included a glossary of terms that were used throughout the project. Chapter 2 was a literature review that focused on three core themes related to stress—the stress response system, parental stress and stressors, and stress in childhood. Chapter 3 provided information about the methods used to create this project. Chapter 4 provided a preamble to the workshop manual found in Appendix A and linked the literature to the materials in the manual. Finally, Chapter 5 provided a synthesis of the first five chapters, outlining the strengths and limitations of the project and areas for future research. Following this chapter is a list of references used for Part 1 of this project, followed by Part 2 (Appendix A) of this project, which is the standalone workshop manual.

Closing Remarks

The intention for the proposed workshop (Appendix A) is to help reduce the negative consequences of stress on children and families. I hope that this project enables parents to connect with others so that they do not feel alone in the stress that they

experience as a parent. The process of completing this project has been a long and difficult journey that has required that I find discipline, patience, and self-compassion that I did not know I had. Perhaps these emotional reactions are similar to what my target audience may also experience in the challenge of raising young children.

There were times when I did not believe that I would ever finish the project, requiring me to reach out to others for needed support and encouragement to persevere. Again, the need for social support strengthened my conviction that this material should be offered in a group setting in which the participants can seek and secure additional support when under stress.

This project marks one of the final requirements towards the completion of my graduate degree, getting me one-step closer to my goal of becoming a counsellor. As I look back on my life—my journey—and what brought me to where I am today, I am grateful for all of the lessons that I learned along the way. This project was not only a journey in and of itself, it was part of a larger journey, as it has helped to fulfill one of the requirements for completing my degree.

When I entered graduate school, I made a decision early on to complete a project. As the time came closer for me to begin this work, I began to wonder if I would ever accomplish what I had set out to do. A quote by Lao Tzu (as cited in SearchQuotes, 2013) can summarize my path: “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step” (para. 1). This project has been a journey of a thousand miles, for me. Each step I have taken has helped me get closer to my goal of completing my project and becoming a counsellor.

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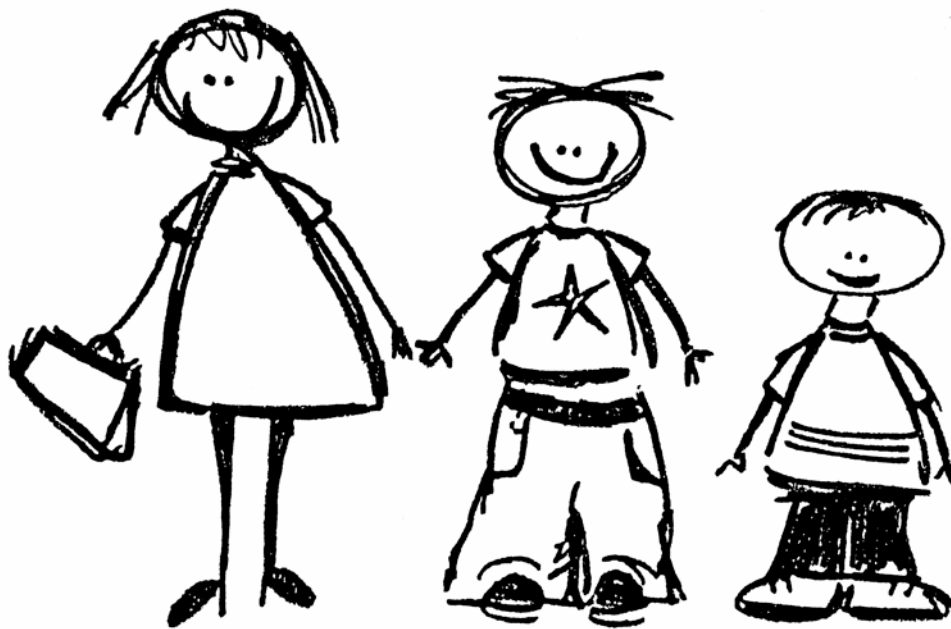
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Appendix A:

ADDRESSING PARENTING AND CHILD STRESS:

THREE WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Workshop Manual



Note. All images in this manual are from Microsoft Clip Art; Microsoft allows customers to use clip art for personal, educational, and non-profit applications.

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ADDRESSING PARENTING AND CHILD STRESS: THREE WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Workshop Manual for Facilitators

Getting Started

Purpose:

This workshop manual was created for use by counsellors and other health professionals who work with families that might benefit from education and resources about stress and stress management. This workshop manual is intended to educate parents about the potential negative consequences of stress on themselves and on children up to age five. This workshop manual will also provide tools that participants can use to help address stress in their lives as well as their children's lives. This workshop manual contains three workshop session plans, including agendas with imbedded facilitator notes, handouts with activities and descriptions, video links, and a session evaluation form (Appendix B).

Note. This preamble closely followed the format and structure of *Stress-Reducing Brain Exercises: A Psychoeducational Workshop for First-Year Postsecondary Students* (Master's project), by M. Bruce, 2012, AB, Canada: University of Lethbridge. Copyright 2012 by M. Bruce. Adapted with permission.

Facilitator Instructions for Use:

This workshop manual is intended to be used as a guide and as an example of one model that might be used to present the workshop materials. Workshop facilitators may choose to incorporate additional material or modify the handouts and activities that are included in this manual. Facilitators are encouraged to use their professional judgment when adapting and modifying the material included in this manual. It is expected that facilitators will adhere to their professional code of ethics when planning and offering the workshop.

Workshop facilitators are strongly recommended to read Chapters 1 through 5 found in Part 1 of this project (Tone, 2013). Part 1 of the project is intended to supplement and facilitate understanding of the workshop material.

Minimum Facilitator Qualifications:

Workshop facilitators should have a bachelor's degree and be a member of a regulated health profession that has a code of ethics. For example, in Alberta, the facilitator's profession should be listed in the Alberta Health Professions Act released in 2000.

Workshop Format:

The three workshops can each be presented as an independent workshop, or they can be presented together as a series of three workshops. Should the workshop facilitator choose to combine the workshops into one block of time (e.g., 5 hours), the facilitator will not need to include the welcome and introduction section and previous workshop review handouts included in each workshop agenda. Workshop facilitators can modify and adapt the material to meet the clients' needs, or incorporate the content of the workshops as part of therapeutic or psychoeducational group. Due to the format of the

workshops, there are no specific recommendations regarding registration. It is suggested that enrolment remain open and not be restricted to original participants if the facilitator chooses to present the workshops independently from each other.

It is recommended that there be a minimum of 6 participants to run a workshop. This minimum is suggested to help facilitate conversation and provide opportunity for participants to interact with a variety of people. The workshop should be limited to a maximum of 10 participants to ensure that there is ample time and opportunity for dialogue. If the facilitator wants to invite more people to the workshop, then modifications to the lesson plan will be necessary, such as extending the workshop from 2.5 hours to 3 hours.

The workshop is intended to be a place that is inviting, safe, and flexible for participants. Likewise, it is hoped participants will be encouraged to attend the workshops, even if they must arrive late and leave early, as it is recognized that adults (parents) lead busy lives, and taking the time to attend this workshop (or a small portion of a workshop), can be a taxing experience. Should participants arrive late, it is suggested that they be provided the handout that outlines the workshop guidelines related to privacy.

Workshop Length:

Each workshop was created to be 2.5 hours in length and includes one 10-minute break during the workshop. This time frame is suggested because it is manageable for parents with young children; however, facilitators are welcome to adapt the length of the workshop to best meet the needs of their clientele.

Considerations and Limitations:

Facilitators should inform workshop participants that these workshops are not intended to be used in place of therapy, but instead can be used to supplement education and information that might not be provided within individual or group therapy. For additional information on the strengths and limitations of this workshop, please refer to Chapter 5, located in Part 1 of this project.

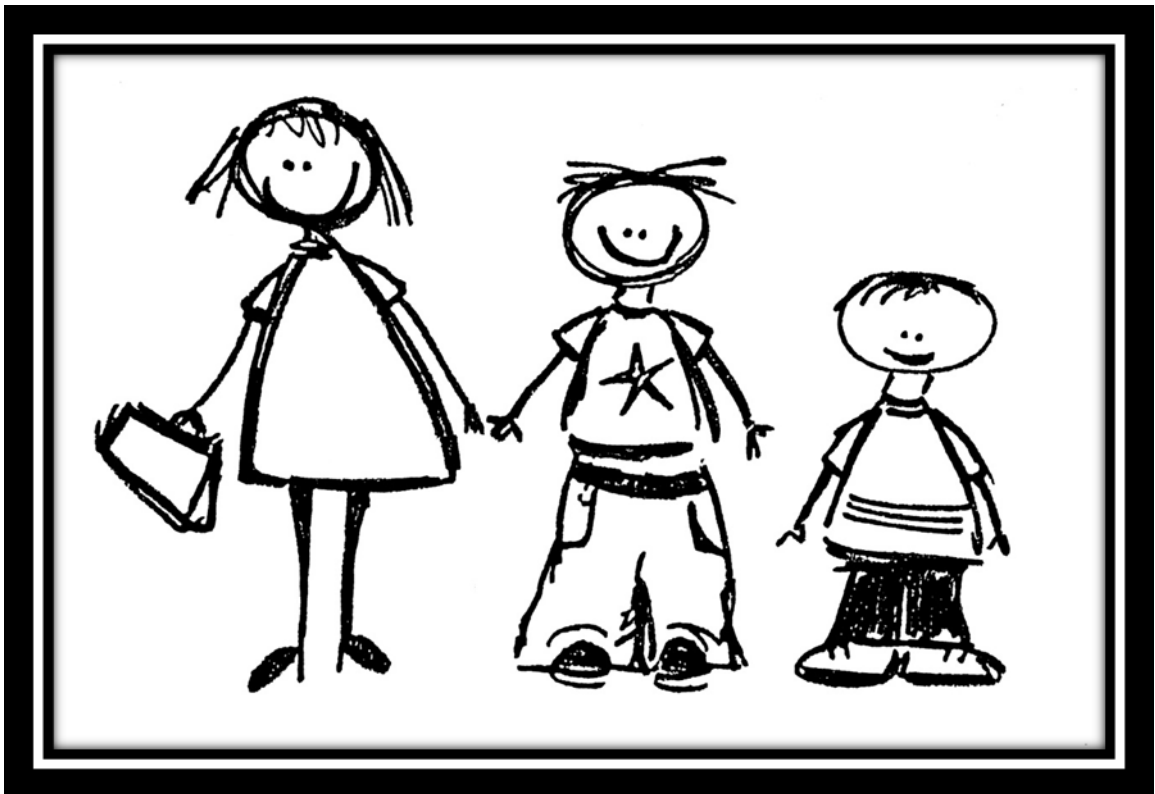
Copyright Statement:

As the author of this project, I waive my copyrights to the material included in project. Individuals are free to use, adapt, and build on the materials and information as they desire. However, I ask that any individuals who utilize this project or manual, in portions or in its entirety, appropriately credit me as the author.

Tone, D. M. (2013). *Addressing parenting and child stress: Three workshops for parents of preschool children* (Unpublished master's project). University of Lethbridge, AB, Canada.

In Text: (Tone, 2013).

Workshop 1: Stress Management for Adults



Workshop 1: Stress Management for Adults

Workshop Objectives:

1. To introduce participants to one another, outline the structure of the workshop, and provide the workshop outcomes to the participants.
2. To provide participants with information about stress, sources of stress, the effects of stress on the body, and increase individual awareness of personal stress levels.
3. To provide participants with information about what might help to reduce stress levels and provide tools that can be used to reduce their stress.

Workshop Outcomes:

To inform the participants about the goals of today's workshop, the following statements can be written on a board, read aloud, or distributed as a handout.

1. Understand what stress is.
2. Learn how to recognize stress.
3. Learn tools to reduce stress.

Reminders for Facilitators:

1. Please note participant limits that are discussed in the *Workshop Format* portion of this manual and in Chapter 5.
2. Review in advance with the participants the limits and cautions associated with this workshop.
3. Please note that the material included in this manual can be modified, as this is only a suggested workshop plan.

4. This workshop may not be suitable for all audiences. It is encouraged facilitators exercise professional judgment regarding participants' abilities, culture, and specific needs.

Audience:

The intended audience for this workshop includes parents of children between the ages of zero through five.

Length of Workshop:

The workshop was created to be 2.5 hours in length, and include one 10-minute break during the workshop.

Materials Required:

- Flip Chart
- Computer
- Projector
- Projection Screen
- Flip Chart Marker
- Name Cards
- Markers and Pens
- Handouts
- Speakers
- Envelope for Workshop Feedback Sheets

Suggested Considerations:

1. Depending on the format of the workshop, facilitators may want to consider providing participants with a handout of local resources. This handout is located in Workshop 3, Handout 8: Local Resources. Please note that the Local Resources Handout included in this manual is provided as an example. Please ensure that a list of local resources is created for participants or that an already existing list is available for participants.

2. Workshop facilitators may want to consider providing on-site childcare during the lecture. Providing childcare could reduce the need for parents to seek after-hours care for their children and can reduce the potential financial cost of childcare.
3. Consider providing participants light refreshments such as tea, water, and coffee.

Pre-Workshop Preparation:

1. Review Chapters 2, 4, and 5 of Part 1 of this project. These chapters will provide the workshop facilitator with the foundational knowledge and background information that this workshop is based on.
2. Review the agenda and facilitator notes included in the agenda.
3. Book a venue and confirm that the room is available.
4. Confirm that there is the minimum number of participants needed to run the workshop.
5. Review workshop cautions and limitations with participants prior to the workshop.
6. Arrange the room with tables and chairs for participants. The ideal room set-up is in the shape of a horseshoe, with two people per table. The horseshoe should face towards the projector screen.
7. Have the workshop evaluation and attendance sheet (if required) prepared and ready.
8. Ensure that handouts and materials are prepared and that there are enough copies for each participant.

Workshop 1: Stress Management for Adults - Agenda

Time (minutes)	Agenda Items (Objectives, Tasks, and Facilitator Notes)
<p style="text-align: center;">30 (prior to workshop)</p>	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Welcome: Task 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test all of your electronic equipment. Have a back-up plan in case equipment fails (e.g., paper copies of slides and handouts). • Place an information package at each of the seats. This limits interruptions of needing to pass out materials during the workshop. • As participants enter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Warmly greet participants. ○ Optional: Ask participants to sign in (this might not be necessary but some organizations or presenters may choose to have participants sign in). ○ Invite participants to choose a seat when they are ready. Ask each participant to write his or her name on the name card, fold the card in half, and place it facing the rest of the room. (Suggestion: Include different coloured felt pens and stickers, sometimes participants like to personalize their name card.) ○ Optional: Ask participants to help themselves to refreshments before the class begins.
<p style="text-align: center;">12</p>	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Introductions: Task 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Introduce yourself as the presenter:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitators share their names, experience related to offering this type of workshop, and one favourite family memory (to briefly role model how to share personal information). • <u>Participant Introduction:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask participants to divide into pairs of their choosing. If there are an odd number of participants then create one group of three. ○ Inform the participants they have 4 minutes to introduce themselves to each other, 2 minutes each, by answering the following questions: What is your name? Who are the children in your life? What is one of your cherished family memories involving the children? <p>*Important Note: To help participants remember the</p>

	<p>questions post them on a flip chart or put them up on a PowerPoint slide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In addition, tell participants that they will be asked to share their partner's name and very briefly one thing they learned about their partner when they return to the group. *Important Note: Ask that participants to only share what they have permission to share about their partner. ○ Call "switch" in 2 minutes to ensure each partner has time to answer the questions. ○ Announce that the participants now have 1 minute to check in with their partner about what is okay to share with the larger group and then return to the larger group. ○ After 1 minute, gather participants back in the large group. Allow for another minute for the transition from pair to the larger group. ○ Once the participants come together the facilitator could comment, <i>"It was great to hear the verbal activity in the room, as this workshop is about talking!"</i> ○ Ask participants to introduce their partner to the group: Share their partner's name and one thing that they learned about their partner in a brief manner. Start with a volunteer and move around the room clockwise (i.e., structured round). This should take 1 minute per participant. ○ Conclude with a summary and transitional comment, for example: <i>"Isn't it wonderful to think of positive things about our family—many, many cherished stories. Thank you for sharing. I selected this opening exercise as this is one of the stress-management tools we will be discussing in our time together, because recalling happy memories can give our stress alarm system a mini vacation. You can take a time out for a memory vacation anytime you want!"</i>
5	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Housekeeping and Guidelines: Task 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Housekeeping:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Orient the participants to the building (e.g., washrooms, location of paper, pens etc.). ○ Inform participants that the workshop will start and end on time. ○ Welcoming spirit – you might want to share the following: <i>"If you need to arrive late or leave early, please do, as we are all adults and understand we have lives outside this workshop. Please come or leave as quietly as possible. And, please come, even if you are late as you will be welcomed, as we understand how hard it is to get to places on time with a family. Please come."</i> ○ Optional: Remind participants about refreshments, if available. • <u>Workshop Guidelines:</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce the guidelines to participants. You may want to share the following: <i>“To make the workshop and our time here a place of respect, we will take a minute to review a few guidelines, and I would like to invite you to let me know if you are okay with these guidelines, or if there might be guidelines that are missing.”</i> ○ Draw attention to the Workshop Guidelines in Handout 1. ○ Review these with participants, and ask them if they would like to add any guidelines of their own. If there are additions, consult the larger group to see if everyone is okay with this item. If the larger group is not, find a way to compromise or examine the underlying intent of the request to see if an existing guideline needs more elaboration. <p>*Important Note: To help discussion of the guidelines post them on a flip chart, or put them up on a PowerPoint slide. Add participants’ additions to the guidelines to the flip chart or PowerPoint.</p>
10	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Workshop Outcomes: Task 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Workshop Outcomes:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce participants to the objectives of today’s workshop. Draw attention to the Workshop Outcomes in Handout 2. You might want to introduce the workshop outcomes as follows: <i>“Now that we have gotten to know each other a little better, and we have established our guidelines, I would like to take a few minutes to share the outcomes for today’s workshop, that brought you here today:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand what stress is. 2. Learn how to recognize stress. 3. Learn tools to reduce stress.” ○ Present an overview of how these outcomes will be met during the workshop. You may want to share the following: <i>“Some of the tasks and activities that we will be doing today are to meet our first outcome—understanding more about stress, learning how not all stress is bad, and learning more about the different sources of stress. To meet outcome 2 we will be learning how to recognize and increase our awareness of our own stress. To meet outcome 3, we will be learning about different ways that we can reduce the level of stress that we experience.”</i> ○ Inform participants that after Outcome 1, there will be a 10-minute break for socializing, and after Outcome 3 there will be a closing summary. At that point anonymous feedback forms will be provided to participants; these forms are to be filled out at the end of the workshop.

20	<p>Workshop Objective 2 (Workshop Outcome 1)</p> <p>What is Stress: Task 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Characteristics of Stress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask participants, “<i>What is stress in relation to caregiving?</i>” ○ Begin this segment of the agenda by asking participants the following question: “<i>What does it mean to you when they hear someone say they are ‘stressed’?</i>” Give a minute for this brainstorming session. While participants are brainstorming, the facilitator should remain quiet, except to provide encouragement to the group to continue sharing. After about 1-minute, recognize the groups’ participation. For example, the facilitator could state: “<i>Wow! It was great to hear the groups thoughts about what it means to be stressed.</i>” ○ To conclude this discussion, ask the group what “jumped out” at them when they were listening to others share what it meant to them to be stressed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Important Note: If the conversation is stalling, ask participants if something they heard might have surprised them, or if maybe, something stood out as how they also viewed stress. • <u>Video:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce CRM Learning’s <i>Managing Stress - Fight or Flight Clip</i> video clip (posted online in April 2011) to explain stress: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7S_BB7R8NMU&feature=related ○ This short video clip will inform participants about how the body responds to stress, and it will provide very high-level information about stress reduction. You might want to introduce the video as follows: “<i>We are now going to watch a short clip about how our bodies respond to stress. After the video, we will take a few minutes to see how our own ideas fit with what we learn in the video.</i>” ○ After the video clip has finished playing, ask participants to spend the next few minutes sharing what stood out for them from the video. ○ On a flip chart write down the themes that participants share. ○ During this time the facilitator should allow the participants to share, providing encouragement to them, and clarifying themes and ideas, as they are recorded on the flip chart. ○ The facilitator should thank the participants for their contributions and shift the focus to finding the key links between what they learned in the video and what they brainstormed together as a group. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Important Note: The facilitator should try to connect the following themes to what participants have shared: Novelty,
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	<p>Unpredictability, Threat to your ego, and Sense of Low Control. Direct participants to Handout 3 —What is Stress? This handout will provide a summary of important information on stress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To conclude this task, introduce the participants to Task 2. You might want to consider saying the following: <i>“Wow, it is amazing to hear how much we already knew about stress. Now we will move on to learn more about how stress is a necessary part of our lives, and that not all stress is bad.”</i>
10	<p>Workshop Objective 2 (Workshop Outcome 1) (Optional Activity – Time permitting)</p> <p>Not all Stress is Bad: Task 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Stress is Necessary:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Direct participants to Handout 4—Some Stress is Necessary. Ask a volunteer to read aloud some or all of the sections. After reading each section, allow participants a minute to reflect on what has been shared. Some questions to help facilitate the reflection might include: <i>“Is what you just read surprising? Have you thought about some of the positive aspects of stress, or how it can at times be beneficial?”</i> <p>*Important Note: You will not need to ask all of these questions, but it might be necessary to ask one, and ask the participants to reflect for a minute before moving on to the next task. This task is intended to allow participants time to reflect and think about stress in a different way. The time allotted is 3 minutes, so it is important to remain mindful of time constraints.</p> • <u>Change:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stress results from any change you must adapt to, ranging from the negative extreme of actual physical danger to the exhilaration of falling in love or achieving some long-desired success. • <u>Motivation:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not all stress is bad. Some stress is positive and helps provide the necessary motivation for people to achieve their goals, such as enrolling your child in preschool or taking children to the dentist. • <u>Health:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stress can have a negative impact on a person’s health. If people are exposed to stress for long periods of time, without rest, the stress becomes unhealthy or <i>Toxic Stress</i>.

10	<p>Workshop Objective 2 (Workshop Outcome 1)</p> <p>The Different Types: Task 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Three Types of Stress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Direct the participants to Handout 5 — The Three Types of Stress. This handout will provide participants with information on the three types of stress that are referred to during this workshop, and subsequent workshops: positive, tolerable, and toxic stress. Work through this handout with participants and explain the three different types of stress by providing examples of different types of situations that might best fit into one of the categories discussed. You might want to consider the following examples that draw on the information in the handouts when explaining this information to participants: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <u>1. Positive Stress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This stress refers to moderate, short-lived stress responses, such as brief increases in heart rate or mild changes in the body's stress hormone levels. - This kind of stress is a normal part of life, and learning to adjust to it is an essential feature of healthy development. - Events that provoke positive stress responses tend to be those that you can learn to control and manage well with the support of others and are those which occur against the backdrop of generally safe, warm, and positive relationships. - The challenge of choosing the right school for your child, choosing a childcare provider, dealing with frustration, entering a new setting, or overcoming a fear can be positive stressors if an individual has the support needed to develop a sense of mastery. <u>2. Tolerable Stress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - This stress involves stress responses that could affect brain architecture but generally occur for briefer periods that allow time for the brain to recover, thereby reversing potentially harmful effects (see Chapter 2 for more information). - One of the critical ingredients that make stressful events tolerable rather than toxic is the presence of supportive people who create safe environments that help us to cope with and recover from major adverse experiences (e.g., your child is sick and hospitalized, divorce, your child is diagnosed with a disability). - In some circumstances, tolerable stress can have positive effects, but it can also become toxic in the absence of supportive relationships. - Prolonged exposure to tolerable stress without rest from the physiological responses can result in fatigue of the stress response system and turn tolerable stress into toxic stress.
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	<p><u>3. Toxic Stress:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refers to strong, frequent, or prolonged activation of the body's alarm system (see Chapter 2, for more information). - Stressful events that are chronic, uncontrollable, and/or experienced without having access to support from others tends to provoke toxic stress responses. - Studies indicate that such stress responses can have an adverse impact on brain architecture. In the extreme, such as in cases of severe, chronic abuse, toxic stress may result in the development of a smaller brain. - Adults who have had exposure to toxic stress during development can have different physiological responses to stress compared to those exposed to normal levels of stress. - Less extreme exposure to toxic stress can change the stress system so that it responds at lower thresholds to events that might not be stressful to others, thereby increasing the risk of stress-related physical and mental illness.
10	<p>Workshop Objective 2 (Workshop Outcome 1)</p> <p>Sources of Stress: Task 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>The Four Sources of Stress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draw Participants attention to Handout 6 — The Four Sources of Stress. This handout will provide participants with information on the four sources of stress, and provide them with examples that could be helpful for them when working on Workshop Objective 2 — Recognizing Stress. ○ Briefly review the four sources of stress in Handout 6 with participants. Ask participants to take 1 minute to reflect on the different sources of stress, marking the different sources with a star or a check mark if they are a current form of stress in their lives. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Environment: The environment bombards people with demands to which they must adjust: people must endure weather, noise, traffic, and air pollution. - Social: Demands for people's time and attention, such as kids play dates, competing priorities, work-family conflict, family conflict, and the loss of loved ones. - Physiological: Physiological stresses, such as the rapid growth of adolescence, the changes that result from pregnancy and childbirth, stress, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, and inadequate sleep (i.e., having a baby awake all night), and illness, all tax the body. - Thoughts: The brain interprets complex changes in the environment and body and determines when to turn on the "stress response." How you interpret and label your present

	<p>experience and what you predict for your future can serve either to relax or stress you. For example, thinking, “My child is crying because he is hurt,” versus, “My child is crying to annoy me.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Listing stresses can be a very normalizing experience for clients, as it allows them to hear they are not alone in living with these types of stressors. Encourage participants to identify with the themes presented. However, to respect time constraints, facilitators may wish to consider limiting the sharing of stories (content), and may instead choose to link comments and stress the themes are very common. ○ After about 1 minute, inform participants that this information will be used after the break when the group will shift focus to learning how to recognize different sources of stress in their lives. ○ Let the participants know that there will be a 10-minute socializing and stretch break.
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>10-Minute Socializing Break:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Notify participants 1 minute prior to resuming the session. ○ Allow 1-2 minutes for the group to reassemble.
10	<p>Workshop Objective 2 (Workshop Outcome 2) Recognizing Stress: Task 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Stressors and Stress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draw participants’ attention to Handout 7 — Stressors and Stress and Handout 8 — The Body’s Alarm System. ○ Ask participants to take 3 minutes to review the information on the handouts. ○ After about 2 minutes, debrief both handouts with participants. Ask the participants to share what stood out for them from this handout. If discussion is stalled, consider asking, “<i>Were you surprised to learn that stress is not the same for everyone?</i>” ○ Inform participants that during this next segment of the workshop, we are going to work on our ability to recognize our own responses to stress, which could help us to turn down our body’s stress alarm. This segment of the workshop will help to achieve Workshop Outcome 2.
20–25	<p>Workshop Objective 2 (Workshop Outcome 2) Recognizing Stress: Task 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Defining Our Stress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask participants to take read through Handout 9 — My Stress Response Chart. ○ Explain to participants that we will be using this activity to

recognize our own responses to stress. You may want to consider the following when explaining this to participants: *“We now have a better understanding of what stress is, and how it can impact us both positively and negatively. Many parents feel stress—stress is normal. We will now focus on how to build our own self-awareness and how to recognize our own individual responses to stress. Being able to recognize our own responses to stress can help to inform us that we need to be aware and respond to what our body is trying to tell us.”*

- Explain that the rating 1 means low family-related stress, since there is no such thing as no stress, and 5 is the most distress you have ever felt as a result of managing the family or being a parent. You may wish to consider sharing the following statement to explain why this activity is focussed on parenting: *“You may find that this discussion about stress related to parenting generalizes to other areas of your life. This is very true and valid. For the purpose of our time together we are going to focus on one source of stress... that is, parenting.”*
- Provide participants with time to create their own stress scale using the rating scale discussed, that will help them to self-define their own response to stress.
- Some questions that you might want to post on a flip chart to help them think about stress are: (5 minutes)
 - Where do you hold the stress in your body?
 - How does your body respond to stress?
 - As a parent what events do you find the least stressful?
 - What events are the most stressful?
 - What types of emotions do you feel in stressful situations?
 - How do you act when faced with a stressful situation?
- Have participants self-rate their stress today. Remind participants that their answers will remain private—they do not have to share this information.
- Ask if any participants would like to share some of the signs of stress that they experience. Again, remind participants that sharing is optional, and that they do not need to share how they rated their own stress level today.
- Closing activity: Ask participants to turn to their introductory partner and share how hearing others talk about their stress signs might have been helpful to them.
- Summary and transition: You may want to consider saying the following: *“Now that we have a better understanding of our own stress scale and how our body responds to stress, we will begin to shift our focus to learn more about stress reduction, and how we might lower the body’s stress alarm.”*

10–15	<p>Workshop Objective 3 (Workshop Outcome 3)</p> <p>Reducing Stress: Task 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Discussion about Stress Reduction:</u> • Possible statements to use: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stress management involves finding the right types and amounts of stress, given your individual personality, priorities, and life situation, so that you can maximize your performance and quality of life. ○ By using tools such as relaxation techniques, people can learn to turn down their alarm system. When the alarm system is down, people can cope more effectively with stress. This will also increase the possibility of having more positive or stimulating challenges, pleasure, and excitement in life. ○ Review Handout 10 — Basic Stress-Management Ideas with participants. Share that participants can increase their ability to deal with stress by integrating into their everyday lives positive activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Solving challenging problems. - Exercising regularly, such as going for walks or playing catch with the kids. - Using relaxation techniques that allow people to take some deep breaths, dropping their shoulders so they are not crowding the person’s ears. - Staying in touch with healthy friends and family, as research has shown that positive and healthy relationships help to lower overall stress. - Engaging in thinking that helps to find the positive and to challenge thoughts that make people feel bad or hopeless (i.e., encourage optimistic and rational thinking). - Humour and play are activities that get people breathing, thinking happy thoughts, and laughing. Research indicates that laughter can reduce stress and improve mood. ○ Have participants turn to a partner (or if short on time, do this by themselves) and have them rank the basic stress-management ideas in order of most appealing to least appealing to try. ○ After approximately 4 minutes, remind participants that Workshop 3 will provide additional tools to reduce stress. The focus of Workshop 1 was to identify and process what stress is like in their lives. ○ You may want to consider saying the following: <i>“Now that we have had a brief chance to look at some basic stress-management ideas, we are going to take the next 20 minutes to test out an idea.”</i>
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20	<p>Workshop Objective 3 (Workshop Outcome 3)</p> <p>Reducing Stress: Task 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Stress-Reduction Activity:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inform the participants that 3 additional stress-management tools will be introduced that they could implement tomorrow if they wanted! ○ Explain to participants because of the limited amount of time that they can choose one of the following activities to focus on during the next 15 minutes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Activity 1: Mindful Breath Count (see Handout 11). - Activity 2: Walk and Talk with one of the other participants (see Handout 12). - Activity 3: Weekly Planning Activity to help organize and plan the week, allowing participants to “schedule” time for self-care (Handout 13). ○ Allow for a few minutes of set up and organization ○ After 15 minutes, ask participants to come back together as a group. You may want to consider stating: <i>“It was great to see everyone having a chance to try one of the stress-management ideas. We are now approaching the end of our time for Workshop 1. Next we will take a few minutes to share feedback about our time together, and fill in the workshop evaluation.”</i>
10	<p>Closing and Debrief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask each person to provide a brief answer to the following: <i>“One thing I am going to spend more time thinking or doing this week to understand or tackle my stress will be _____.”</i> Post this question on the flip chart. • Remind participants that they have a right to pass — they do not have to share. • Start with a volunteer and move around the room clockwise (structured round—this should take 30 seconds per participant). • Thank participants for participating in the workshop, and provide a brief overview of the following 2 workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Workshop 2 – The Effects of Stress on Children will focus on how stress might impact children differently from adults and some of the potential consequences of stress for children. ○ Workshop 3 – Nurturing Ourselves and Our Children will focus on how to nurture ourselves and our children, finding joy, and when nurturing is not enough, how to access outside resources. This workshop also provides an overview of some local resources available to participants.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distribute the feedback form (Appendix B) and ask participants to place the anonymous form in the envelope at the front of the room. Remind participants that, even if they choose to not fill in a form, they should still place their blank feedback form in the envelope.
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Post Workshop Tasks:

- Collect the feedback sheets.
- Clean the room as required.
- Complete and required paperwork (e.g., attendance, sign-up sheets, etc.).
- Read and reflect on the feedback sheets received.
- Make notes of what went well and what might need to be improved upon for the next session.
- If necessary, debrief this experience with a colleague or supervisor.

Handout 1: Workshop Guidelines

By Danielle Tone (2013)

Keep the Privacy: Many stories, thoughts, and ideas will be shared in the workshop. Please respect those who choose to share by not revealing the name or hints to the identity of anyone in this workshop. It is important you share what you are learning, as this often helps transfer material into long-term memory, but you need to share this information without ever revealing who you learned it from. As a counsellor, I have a legal obligation to get help for a person under the age of 18 or a dependent adult who is being seriously harmed, or if someone is unable to keep themselves safe from danger. This is not a therapy class, so I will not be keeping session notes.

You have the Right to Pass: If you do not want to share information with the group, you have the right to pass.

Being Heard: Everyone's contribution to the group discussion is important. You have a right to be heard. To help everyone feel heard, it is best not to talk when someone else is speaking.

Breaks: If you need a break, or if you need to arrive late or leave early, please do so. We recognize that everyone has busy lives. Please come in or exit as quietly as possible and attempt to not disturb the rest of the group.

Cell Phones Shhhhhh: Please keep all devices on silent or vibrate settings. To avoid disrupting the group, please take your phone calls in the hallway.

Handout 2: Workshop Outcomes

Addressing the Negative Consequences of Stress:

A Workshop for Parents of Children Zero-Five

Welcome to Workshop 1: Stress Management for Adults. This workshop is part of a series of 3 workshops that have different outcomes.

These are the Outcomes for Workshop 1:

1. Understand what stress is.
2. Learn how to recognize stress.
3. Learn tools to reduce stress.

Handout 3: What is Stress?

Stress can sometimes drive a person nuts. So, here are the N.U.T.S. and bolts of stress.

Novelty: Is this a new situation? Is this something that is unfamiliar? When situations are new or unfamiliar it can activate the body's stress response system, which acts as an alarm system for your body. This means that a new situation can signal your body to be on alert.

Unpredictability: Is this experience unexpected or was it difficult to anticipate? When situations are unexpected, surprising, or difficult to anticipate, it can activate our body's stress response system. An example of an unexpected situation is finding out that your child is sick when you have a huge work deadline and do not have anyone to look after your child.

Threat to your ego: Does this situation threaten your sense of self or self-esteem? When situations threaten our sense of self or our self-esteem, our body interprets this just as it would a threat of physical injury. For example, if someone told you they thought you were a bad parent, this accusation could hurt your sense of self or impact your self-esteem.

Sense of Low Control: Have you ever felt like you lacked control of a situation? Have you ever been in a situation in which you had little to no control over the outcome? When we lack control or when we think that we do not have control over a situation, our body's stress alarm can be activated. For example, it is your child's birthday and you need to buy a cake and gifts; however, you won't get paid until next week.

Note. The material in this handout was adapted from *Well Stressed: Manage Stress Before it Turns Toxic*, by S. Lupien, 2012, Mississauga, Canada: John Wiley & Sons.

Handout 4: Some Stress is Necessary

Did you know that having some stress in your life is necessary? Although too much stress that goes on for long periods is unhealthy and can have a negative impact on our health, some stress helps us to achieve goals and make changes.

Change

Stress results from any change you must adapt to, ranging from the negative extreme of actual physical danger to the exhilaration of giving birth or travelling across the country for the first time with your newborn to visit your relatives.

Motivation

Not all stress is bad. Some stress is positive and helps provide the necessary motivation for people to achieve their goals, such as working extra hours at Christmas or going back to work after maternity leave.

Health

Stress can have a negative impact on our health; if people are exposed to stress for long periods of time, without rest and recovery they experience *Toxic Stress*, which is bad for their health.

Note. The material in this handout was adapted from *The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook* (5th ed.), by M. Davis, S. Eshelman, & M. McKay, 2008, Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications and from "From Psychological Stress to the Emotions: A History of Changing Outlooks," by R. Lazarus, 1993, *Annual Reviews Psychology*, 44, pp. 1–22.
doi:10.1146/annurev.ps.44.020193.000245

Handout 5: The Three Types of Stress

Positive Stress:

- This kind of stress is a normal part of life, and learning to adjust to it is an essential feature of healthy development. Some examples include the challenge of choosing the right school for your child, choosing a childcare provider, dealing with frustration, entering a new setting, or overcoming a fear such as talking to the daycare worker about a concern you have. These can be positive stressors if an individual has the support needed to develop a sense of mastery.
- Events that provoke positive stress responses tend to be those that you can learn to control and manage well with the support of others, and those that occur against the backdrop of generally safe, warm, and positive relationships.

Tolerable Stress:

- This kind of stress could have damaging effects on the body, but generally occurs for briefer periods. This allows time for the body to recover and reverse potentially harmful effects. An example of tolerable stress may be that your child is sick and hospitalized for a short period of time.
- One of the critical ingredients that make stressful events tolerable rather than toxic is the presence of supportive people who create safe environments that help us to cope with and recover from major adverse experiences (e.g., your child is sick and hospitalized, divorce, your child is diagnosed with a disability).

Toxic Stress:

- Stressful events that are chronic, uncontrollable, and/or experienced without having access to support from others tends to provoke toxic stress responses. Examples of toxic stress include living in poverty, not having enough to eat, and witnessing or experiencing physical violence.
- Studies indicate that such stress responses can have an adverse impact on brain architecture. In the extreme, such as in cases of severe, chronic abuse, toxic stress may result in the development of a smaller brain in children, in difficulties with concentration and memory problems, and an increase the risk of changes to the stress response system.

Note. Material in this handout was adapted from *Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain* (Working paper #3), by the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005. Retrieved from http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/download_file/-/view/469/

Handout 6: The Four Sources of Stress

Environment: Your "space" bombards you with stressors that you must adjust to; you must endure weather, noise, traffic, and air pollution.

Social: Demands for your time and attention, such as working and still needing be involved with your children lives and attending their school and sport events, having time with your partner and friends, and handling conflicts with people you care about.

Thoughts: Your brain interprets complex changes in your environment and body and determines when to turn on the "stress response." How you interpret, label, and predict stressors will serve to relax or stress you. For example, thinking, "My child is crying because they are hurt or need something" versus, "My child is crying to annoy me."

Physiological: The rapid growth of adolescence, the changes that result from pregnancy and childbirth, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, inadequate sleep (e.g., your baby is up all night), and illness all tax the body.

Handout 7: Stressors and Stress

What is a Stressor

Stressors are events or experiences that:

- You see as threatening to your wellbeing.
- Turn on your alarm or stress reactions.
- Are personal—a stressor for one individual may not be a stressor for another (Rabin, 2005).

What is a Stress

Stress is how your body and mind react AFTER the stressor (or event).

Am I Stressed? Or, do I just have lots of stressors?

It could be both. You might feel “stressed” with only one stressor, or you might have many stressors and not feel stressed.

Being “stressed” is the response after experiencing one or more stressors. How you respond and cope with stressors in your life can influence the level or amount of stress that experienced (Lupien, 2012).

Rabin, B. (2005). Stressor-induced alteration of health across the life span: There's more to it than immunology. *Journal of Clinical and Applied Immunology Reviews*, 5, 207–224.
doi:10.1016/j.cair.2005.03.001

Lupien, S. (2012). *Well stressed: Manage stress before it turns toxic*. Mississauga, Canada: Wiley.

Handout 8: The Body's Alarm System (Fight and Flight)

What happens when we perceive an event as a stressor?



We observe or experience an event (e.g., our child is hurt).



The brain interprets this as threatening.

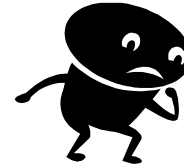


The brain then sends chemical messages that activate the body's alarm system.

Our body and our brain respond by preparing to respond to the experience (e.g., digestion of food slows down and blood flows to muscles so they are ready to respond).



Our heart rate and breathing increase.



We focus our attention on the event or experience. Preparing to respond.



One way people respond is by fighting, using words or actions!



Another way people respond is by fleeing (i.e., flight)—by avoiding something or running away.

Note. This handout was based on information on the Stress Response System, located in Chapter 2 of this project.

Handout 9: My Stress Response Chart

Here are some questions to help you define your stress:

- Where do you hold the stress in your body?
- How does your body respond to stress?
- What events do you find the least stressful?
- What events are the most stressful?
- What types of emotions do you feel in stressful situations?
- What do you do that helps and hinders you when you are faced with a stressful situation?

On this chart, fill in the blanks to indicate what are your lowest to highest stressors

1) - Lowest stressors:

2)

3) - Average stressors

4)

5) - Highest Stressors

Handout 10: Basic Stress-Management Ideas

Rank these basic stress-management ideas on a scale from 1-6. With 1 being the one you like best, and 6 being the one you like the least.

Solving challenging problems.

Exercising regularly, such as going for walks or playing catch with the kids.

Using relaxation techniques that allow you to take some deep breaths and drop your shoulders so they are not crowding your ears.

Staying in touch with supportive friends and family, as research has shown that positive and healthy relationships help to lower overall stress.

Engaging in thinking that helps you find the positive and challenging the thoughts that make you feel bad or hopeless—optimistic and rational thinking.

Humour and play are activities that get you breathing, thinking happy thoughts, and help you laugh. Research indicates that laughter can reduce stress and improve mood.

Handout 11: Mindful Breath Count

Did you know that when your mind wanders, like when you worry or plan, it can make it difficult for you to let go of the stresses in your life?

Mindfully (being aware) counting your breaths is a way to help you focus your mind on your breathing, making it harder for your mind to wander to situations or distractions around you.

People often lose track of their breathing during this exercise. If you do lose track your breathing, just start over, and begin counting again.

Practising this will help you tune out distractions, help your body turn off the stress alarm, and focus on relaxation and breathing.

Steps:

1. Practise this exercise sitting up to enhance mindful awareness. Once you are experienced in the technique you can use it in bed as a technique to help you fall asleep.
2. Use slow deep breathing, aiming to move your belly button on each inhale.
3. As you are breathing, choose one of these 3 options as you are inhaling and exhaling:

Option 1	Option 2	Option 3
Exhale - say, "One." Exhale - say, "Two." Exhale - say, "Three." Exhale - say, "Four." Repeat	Exhale - say, "This too shall pass." Exhale - say, "This too shall pass." Exhale - say, "This too shall pass." Exhale - say, "This too shall pass."	Visualize the surf coming in to the beach and slowly leaving the beach. Inhale - see the surf come in. Exhale - see the surf leave.

4. As thoughts enter your consciousness or as your mind goes blank, simply observe the thoughts or the blankness without judgement or expectation, and then return to counting your breaths.
5. If you lose track of your count, simply start over again at one.
6. **Optional:** If you like, you can label each of your thoughts, feelings, and sensations as they arise. Say to yourself, "Thought," "Feeling," or "Sensation," and then return to counting your breaths. You can make up your own labels, but keep it simple. The purpose of labelling is to increase your objectivity and emotional distance from potentially charged material.
7. Continue counting your exhalations in sets of four for as long as you feel comfortable.

Handout 12: Walk and Talk

The Planned Walk and Talk

This is where you plan an opportunity to visit with a friend and take a walk. Choose an activity (such as a walk) instead of an activity that distracts you from getting a listening ear from a buddy, such as going to the movies, going shopping, or ordering take out.

Another idea could be to walk from a planned location to someplace where you can carry on the conversation, like a local coffee shop.

Topics for Conversation

When going on a Walk and Talk, you can talk about whatever interests you the most. If you are going on a Walk and Talk with someone you just met, some ideas could include:

1. Talking about your family and recalling situations that bring a 'warm fuzzy' feeling (a topic that will turn down your alarm system).
2. A positive moment about your latest good and happy vacation (a topic that will turn down or turn off your alarm system).
3. What you enjoy doing in your spare time (a topic that will turn down or turn off your alarm system).

Health Benefits of Improved Emotional Ties

Physical activity is not the only benefit of the Walk and Talk. Another great benefit is that is an opportunity to build stronger social ties and closer relationships with others. Positive relationships and physical activity are two ways to reduce and manage stress. A benefit of the Walk and Talk activity is that it combines two known ways to reduce and manage stress.

Note. Material for this handout was based on *Walk and Talk: Exercise and Mood Enhancement for Busy People*, by N. Tracy, 2008. Retrieved from <http://voices.yahoo.com/walk-talk-exercise-mood-enhancement-busy-2304527.html?cat=51>

Handout 13: Weekly Planning

The objective of this activity is to look at your week in advance to plan and schedule in time for self-care, just as you would book a dentist appointment. Each day of the week is an opportunity to take a little bit of time to take care of you. Even 5-10 minutes engaged in activities YOU ENJOY can help reduce stress levels!

Week Day	What I have scheduled to complete today	When/where I can fit in some self-care	What I plan to do during this time for my self-care
Sunday			
Monday			
Tuesday			
Wednesday			
Thursday			
Friday			
Saturday			

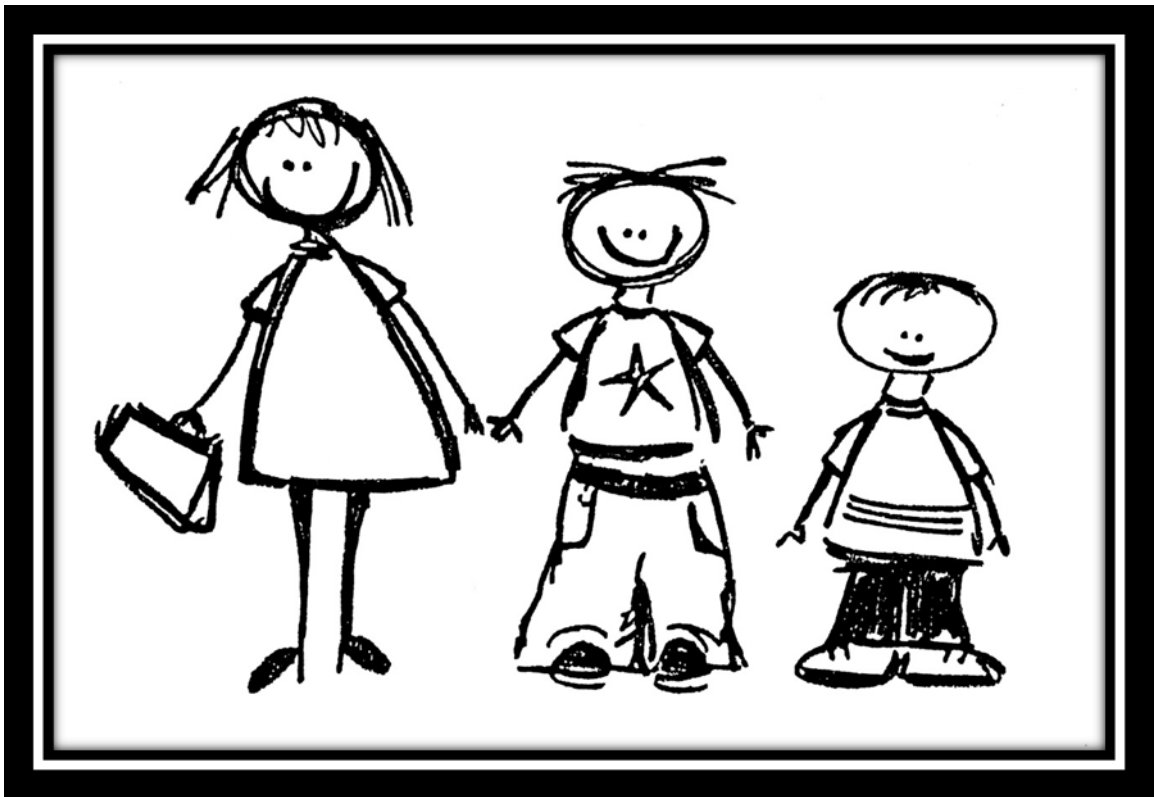
Reflection:

What I enjoyed most this week: _____

What I want to do again: _____

What I would do different: _____

Workshop 2: The Effects of Stress on Children



Workshop 2: The Effects of Stress on Children

Workshop Objectives:

1. To introduce participants to one another, outline the structure of the workshop, review the content of Workshop 1, and provide the workshop outcomes to the participants.
2. To provide participants with information about stress and how it can affect children differently from adults, how parental stress can affect children, and how to recognize when children are experiencing unhealthy (or toxic) stress.
3. To provide participants with information about what might help to reduce and lower their children's stress levels and provide ideas that can be used to foster their relationship with their children.

Workshop Outcomes:

To inform the participants about the goals of today's workshop, the following statements can be written on a board, read aloud, or distributed as a handout.

1. Understand how stress affects children.
2. Recognize when children are experiencing unhealthy (or toxic) stress.
3. Parents will be provided with two different activities that they can do with their children that can help foster their relationship.

Reminders for Facilitators:

1. Please note participant limits that are discussed in the *Workshop Format* portion of this manual and in Chapter 5.
2. Review in advance with the participants the limits and cautions associated with this workshop.
3. Please note that the material included in this manual can be modified, as this is only a suggested workshop plan.

4. This workshop may not be suitable for all audiences. It is encouraged that facilitators exercise professional judgment regarding participants' abilities, culture, and specific needs.

Audience:

The intended audience for this workshop includes parents of children between the ages of zero through five.

Length of Workshop:

The workshop was created to be 2.5 hours in length and includes one 10-minute break during the workshop.

Materials Required:

- Flip Chart
- Computer
- Projector
- Projection Screen
- Flip Chart Marker
- Name Cards
- Markers and Pens
- Handouts
- Speakers
- Envelope for Workshop Feedback Sheets

Suggested Considerations:

1. Depending on the format of the workshop, facilitators may want to consider providing participants with a handout of local resources. This handout is located in Workshop 3, Handout 8: Local Resources. Please note that Handout 8 included in this manual is provided as an example. Please ensure that a list of local resources is created for participants or that an already existing list is available for participants.

2. Workshop facilitators may want to consider providing on-site childcare during the lecture. Providing childcare could reduce the need for parents and caregivers to seek after hours care for their children and can reduce the potential financial cost of childcare.
3. Consider providing participants light refreshments such as tea, water, and coffee.

Pre-Workshop Preparation:

1. Review Chapters 2, 4, and 5 of Part 1 of this project. These chapters will provide the workshop facilitator with the foundational knowledge and background information that this workshop is based on.
2. Review the agenda and facilitator notes included in the agenda.
3. Book a venue and confirm that the room is available.
4. Confirm that there is the minimum number of participants needed to run the workshop.
5. Review workshop cautions and limitations with participants prior to the workshop.
6. Arrange the room with tables and chairs for participants. The ideal room set-up is in the shape of a horseshoe, with two people per table. The horseshoe should face towards the projector screen.
7. Have the workshop evaluation and attendance sheet (if required) prepared and ready.
8. Ensure handouts and materials (e.g., Handout 8) are prepared and that there are enough copies for each participant.

Workshop 2: The Effects of Stress on Children - Agenda

Time (minutes)	Agenda Items (Objectives, Tasks, and Facilitator Notes)
30	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Welcome: Task 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test all of your electronic equipment. Have a back-up plan in case equipment fails (e.g., paper copies of slides and handouts). • Place an information package at each of the seats. This limits interruptions of needing to pass out materials during the workshop. • As participants enter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Warmly greet participants. ○ Optional: Ask participants to sign in (this might not be necessary but some organizations or presenters may choose to have participants sign in). ○ Invite participants to choose a seat when they are ready. Ask each participant to write his or her name on the name card, fold the card in half, and place it facing the rest of the room. (Suggestion: Include different coloured felt pens and stickers, sometimes participants like to personalize their name card.) ○ Optional: Ask participants to help themselves to refreshments before the class begins.
20	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Introductions: Task 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Introduce Yourself as the Presenter:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitators should include their name, experience related to offering this type of workshop, the children in your life so the participants know you have lived experience, and one of your favourite healthy ways you cope with stress (to briefly role model how to share personal information). • <u>Participant Introduction:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask participants divide into pairs of their choosing. If there are an odd number of participants then create one group of three. ○ Inform the participants they have 4 minutes to introduce themselves to each other, 2 minutes each, by answering the following questions: What is your name? Who are the children in

	<p>your life? What is one way that your family copes positively with stress?</p> <p>*Important Note: To help participants remember the questions post them on a flip chart or put them up on a PowerPoint slide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In addition, tell participants that they will be asked to share their partner's name and very briefly one thing they learned about their partner when they return to the group. <p>*Important Note: Ask that participants only share what they have permission to share about their partner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Call "switch" in 2 minutes to ensure each partner has time to answer the questions. ○ Announce that the participants now have 1 minute to check in with their partner about what is okay to share with the larger group and then return to the larger group. ○ After 1 minute, gather participants back in the large group. Allow for another minute for the transition from pair to the larger group. ○ Once the participants come together, the facilitator could comment, <i>"It was great to hear the verbal activity in the room, as this workshop is about talking!"</i> ○ Ask participants to introduce their partner to the group: Share their partner's name, and one thing that they learned about their partner in a brief manner. Start with a volunteer and move around the room clockwise (i.e., structured round). This should take 1 minute per participant. ○ Conclude with a summary and transitional comment, for example: <i>"Isn't it wonderful to think of all of the positive ways we are already coping with stress. Thank you for sharing. I selected this opening exercise because today we will be learning about ways that we, as parents, can support our children to positively cope with stress."</i>
5	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Housekeeping and Guidelines: Task 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Housekeeping:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Orient the participants to the building (e.g., washrooms, location of paper, pens etc.). ○ Inform participants that the workshop will start and end on time. ○ Welcoming spirit – you might want to share the following: <i>"If you need to arrive late or leave early, please do as we are all adults and understand we have lives outside this workshop. Please come or leave as quietly as possible. And, please come, even if you are late. You will be welcomed, as we understand how hard it is to get to places on time with a family. Please come."</i> ○ Optional: Remind participants about refreshments, if available.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Workshop Guidelines:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce the guidelines to participants. You may want to share the following: <i>“To make the workshop and our time here a place of respect, we will take a minute to review a few guidelines, and I would like to invite you to let me know if you are okay with these guidelines, or if there might be guidelines that are missing.”</i> ○ Draw attention to the Workshop Guidelines in Handout 1. ○ Review these with participants, and ask them if they would like to add any guidelines of their own. If there are additions, consult the larger group to see if everyone is okay with this item. If the larger group is not, find a way to compromise or examine the underlying intent of the request to see if an existing guideline needs more elaboration. <p>*Important Note: To help discussion of the guidelines post them on a flip chart, or put them up on a PowerPoint slide. Add participants’ additions to the guidelines to the flip chart or PowerPoint.</p>
13	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Quick Review of Workshop 1: Task 4 For those that attended workshop one:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Overview</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What were key points that resonated with participants who attended the first workshops? ○ Highlights from Workshop 1 (see Handout 2). ○ Ask participants what stood out the most for them. ○ Allow 5 minutes for discussion per point. ○ What tools were used, and how did they work for them? ○ Provide a summary of tools from workshop 1 (see Handout 3). ○ Ask participants how the tools worked for them, which ones did they like best? ○ Allow 5 minutes for discussion. ○ Close the discussion with a summary of what was shared, and thank the participants for their willingness to share.
10	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Workshop Outcomes: Task 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Workshop Outcomes:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce participants to the objectives of today’s workshop. Draw attention to the Workshop Outcomes provided in Handout 4. The facilitator might want to introduce the objectives as follows: <i>“Now that we have gotten to know each other a little better, and we have</i>

	<p><i>established our guidelines, I would like to take a few minutes to share the outcomes for today's workshop:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand how stress affects young children (0-5 years of age). 2. Recognize when young children are experiencing unhealthy (or toxic) stress. 3. Parents will be provided with two different activities that they can do with their children that can help foster their relationship. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Present an overview of how these outcomes will be met during the workshop. The facilitator may want to share the following: <i>"Some of the tasks and activities that we will be doing today to meet our first outcome include understanding how stress affects children, and learning about the consequences of toxic stress on children. To meet the second outcome, we will be learning how to recognize when babies up to children five years of age are experiencing stress, and how children might communicate their stress to us. In addition, to meet the third outcome, we will be learning about different ways that we can reduce the level of stress that our children experience, as well as the level of stress that we ourselves experience."</i> ○ Inform participants that after Outcome 1 there will be a 10-minute break for socializing, and after Outcome 3 there will be a closing summary. At that point feedback forms will be provided to participants; these anonymous forms are to be filled out at the end of the workshop.
20	<p>Objective 2 (Workshop Outcome 1)</p> <p>Understanding how Stress Affects Children: Task 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>How Stress Might Impact Children Differently From Adults</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce the Alberta Innovates – Health Solutions video (released in May 2011) that helps to explain how stress can affect babies to children up to age 5. This short video clip will inform participants about how the how children in this age range can be affected by prolonged exposure to chronic stress and toxic stress. You might want to introduce the video as follows: <i>"We are now going to watch a short clip about how stress affects very young children. After the video, we will take a few minutes to see how our own ideas fit with what we learn in the video"</i>: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ha2JcEdzLis&feature=relmfu ○ After playing the video clip, ask participants to spend the next few minutes sharing what stood out for them in that video. Sample debriefing questions might include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>What nugget in this video stands out for you as being</i>

	<p><i>useful?</i></p> <p>2. <i>Why do you think this video was shown?</i></p> <p>3. <i>What was not addressed in the video that you think should have been?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ On a flip chart write down the themes that participants share. ○ During this time the facilitator should allow the participants to share, providing encouragement to them, and clarifying themes and ideas as they are recorded on the flip chart. ○ The facilitator should thank the participants for their contributions and shift the focus to finding the key links between what they learned in the video and what they brainstormed together as a group. <p>*Important Note: The facilitator should try to connect the following key themes to those shared by participants: Brain Architecture, Early Experiences, and Positive Early Relationships. Direct participants to Handout 5 — Stress Affects Kids. This handout will provide a summary of important information about stress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ To conclude this task, introduce the participants to Task 2. You might want to consider saying the following: <i>“Now that we have learned about how stress and early life experiences can affect children’s development, we will learn why it is important that we, as parents, learn to manage our own unhealthy stress.”</i>
15	<p>Objective 2 (Workshop Outcome 1)</p> <p>Understanding how Stress Affects Young Children: Task 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Parental Stress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ During this task the connection is made between managing one’s own stress as a parent to how stress can affect one’s children. The facilitator might want to consider using the following statement to introduce this section of the agenda to the participants: <i>“In the video we learned about the importance of meeting our young children’s needs. We learned that our positive relationships with our children can buffer many of the negative consequences that can result from exposure to toxic stress. In the first workshop we learned about how to recognize and manage our own stress, which is important, not only for taking care of our own health, but also for being able to ensure that we can meet the needs of our children.”</i> ○ Refer participants to Handout 6 — How Stress Affects Parenting. ○ Ask participants to take about 1 minute to review the handout, and after about 1 minute, discuss the handout with the participants. ○ When discussing the handout, ask participants if anything stood out for them, if they agree with the handout, or if they think that

	<p>something might be missing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ After about 3-4 minutes of discussion, thank the participants for their participation. Inform participants that there will be a 10-minute break.
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>10-Minute Socializing Break:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Notify participants 1 minute prior to resuming the session. ○ Allow 1-2 minutes for the group to reassemble. ○ During the break it is suggested that the facilitator begin setting up stations for the activities listed in Handout 8 — Fostering Our Relationships.
20	<p>Objective 2 (Workshop Outcome 2)</p> <p>Understanding how Stress Affects Children: Task 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Recognizing When Children are Experiencing Stress:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In this section the facilitator will provide information to the participants about how to recognize when their young children are experiencing stress. To introduce this task the facilitator might want to consider saying the following: <i>“In Workshop 1 we learned how to better recognize our own stress as adults. In today’s workshop we learned that stress could have some lifelong impacts on a child’s development. In this next video we will learn more about how children experience stress.”</i> ○ Using the link below, play the Psychology Foundation of Canada video (released in March 2012). Stop the video at 3:06: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L1IbuoXfBNU ○ After the video, ask participants to share how they recognize when their children are experiencing stress. Some helpful questions to guide this discussion could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>How does your child behave when they are in stress inducing situations?</i> - <i>If your child talks, do they use words to describe when they are experiencing stress?</i> - <i>Do you notice that in certain situations that your child seems to be more stressed than in other situations?</i> ○ On a flip chart write down the themes that participants share. ○ During the brainstorming time, the facilitator should allow the participants to share, providing encouragement to them, and clarifying themes and ideas as the themes are recorded on the flip chart. ○ After about 3-5 minutes of discussion, thank participants for their participation. Draw participants’ attention to Handout 7 —

	<p>Recognizing When Children are Stressed. As the facilitator, make connections between the ideas that participants shared during brainstorming to the information included on Handout 7. Ask participants to add some of their own ideas in the blank spaces provided on the handout.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ After participants have finished adding some of their own ways to recognize when their children are stressed, ask if there is any information that surprised them or ask if there was an “a-ha” moment for them. ○ Provide participants 1-2 minutes to share. If there is no sharing move on to the next agenda item.
30	<p>Objective 3 (Workshop Outcome 3) Fostering our Relationship with our Children: Task 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During this task the facilitator will connect all of the information that has been learned so far in this workshop. • The facilitator can introduce this task by informing participants that these final activities will help us to meet Workshop Outcome 3. • Draw participants’ attention to Handout 8 — Fostering Our Relationships: Activity Ideas. Inform participants there are a number of activities stations set up around the room. These stations have different activities, which are also listed on Handout 8. During the next 20 minutes participants are encourage to visit at least 2 different stations. Inform participants that you will let them know when 5 minutes has passed, but they do not need to change stations every 5 minutes. <p>*Important Note: The facilitator should have at least 4 different stations for participants to choose from. It is important to note to participants that Handout 8 includes additional activities that they might want to try on their own.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post the exercise parameters on a flip chart at the front of the room. • During this exercise the facilitator can circulate in the room, interacting with participants and answering questions as needed. • After 20 minutes call the participants back to the group. • Debrief the different activities with the participants. The following questions might help to facilitate discussion with the participants. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Which activities do you think you might use with your children?</i> ○ <i>Which activities did you find the most interesting or least interesting?</i> • Close the discussion after 3-4 minutes and move on to the next

	agenda item.
5	<p>Closing and Debrief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to share with the group one thing that they will spend more time thinking about or doing this week to better understand or tackle their stress. • Post the following on a flip chart to make what they have been asked to share easy to remember: <i>One thing I am going to do this week with my kids to help reduce stress for everyone in my family is _____.</i> • Let participants know that they have a right to pass, and that they do not have to share. Start with a volunteer and move around the room clockwise (i.e., structured round). This should take 30 seconds per participant. • After this is finished, thank participants for their participation in the workshop. Provide a brief overview of Workshop 3 – Nurturing Ourselves and Our Children: Workshop 3 – Nurturing Ourselves and Nurturing our Children will focus on how to nurture ourselves and our children, finding joy, and when nurturing is not enough, when to access outside resources, and overview of some local resources that are available to participants. • Ask participants to fill in the feedback form (Appendix B) and place it in the envelope at the front of the room. Inform participants that these feedback forms are intended to be anonymous, and even if they choose to not fill in a form, they should still place their feedback form in the envelope.

Post Workshop Tasks:

- Collect the feedback sheets.
- Clean the room as required.
- Complete and required paperwork (e.g., attendance, sign-up sheets, etc.).
- Read and reflect on the feedback sheets received.
- Make notes of what went well and what might need to be improved upon for next time.
- If necessary, debrief this experience with a colleague or supervisor.

Handout 1: Workshop Guidelines

By Danielle Tone (2013)

Keep the Privacy: Many stories, thoughts, and ideas will be shared in the workshop. Please respect those who choose to share by not revealing the name or hints to the identity of anyone in this workshop. It is important you share what you are learning, as this often helps transfer material into long-term memory, but you need to share this information without ever revealing who you learned it from. As a counsellor, I have a legal obligation to get help for a person under the age of 18 or a dependent adult who is being seriously harmed, or if someone is unable to keep themselves safe from danger. This is not a therapy class, so I will not be keeping session notes.

You have the Right to Pass: If you do not want to share information with the group, you have the right to pass.

Being Heard: Everyone's contribution to the group discussion is important. You have a right to be heard. To help everyone feel heard, it is best not to talk when someone else is speaking.

Breaks: If you need a break, or if you need to arrive late or leave early, please do so. We recognize that everyone has busy lives. Please come in or exit as quietly as possible and attempt to not disturb the rest of the group.

Cell Phones Shhhhhh: Please keep all devices on silent or vibrate settings. To avoid disrupting the group, please take your phone calls in the hallway.

Handout 2: Highlights from Workshop 1

Summary Sheet from Workshop 1: The Four Sources of stress:

Environment: Your "space" bombards you with demands to adjust to; you must endure weather, noise, traffic, and air pollution

Social: Demands for your time and attention, such as working and still needing be involved with your children's lives, attending children's school and sport events, having time with your partner and friends, and handling conflicts with people you care about.

Thoughts: Your brain interprets complex changes in your environment and body and determines when to turn on the "stress response." How you interpret, label, and predict stress can serve to relax or stress you. For example, thinking, "My child is crying because he is hurt or need something," versus, "My child is crying to annoy me."

Physiological: The rapid growth of adolescence, the changes that result from pregnancy and childbirth, lack of exercise, poor nutrition, and inadequate sleep (e.g., having a baby that is up all night), and illness, all tax the body.

Note. Material for this handout was adapted from *The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook* (5th ed.), by M. Davis, S. Eshelman, & M. McKay, 2008, Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

Handout 2: Highlights from Workshop 1

Summary Sheet from Workshop 1: The Three Types of Stress

Tolerable Stress: In some circumstances tolerable stress can have positive effects, but it can also become toxic in the absence of supportive relationships. Prolonged exposure to tolerable stress without rest for the body to recover from the physiological responses can result in fatigue of the stress response system and turn tolerable stress into toxic stress.

One of the critical ingredients that make stressful events tolerable rather than toxic is the presence of supportive people who create safe environments that help us to cope with and recover from major adverse experiences (e.g., your child is sick and hospitalized, divorce, your child is diagnosed with a disability).

Positive Stress: This kind of stress is a normal part of life, and learning to adjust to it is an essential feature of healthy development. The challenge of choosing the right school for your child, choosing a childcare provider, dealing with frustration, entering a new setting, or overcoming a fear can be positive stressors if an individual has the support needed to develop a sense of mastery.

Toxic Stress: Stressful events that are chronic, uncontrollable, and/or experienced without having access to support from others tends to provoke these types of toxic stress responses. Examples of toxic stress include poverty and witnessing domestic violence.

Note. Material for this handout was adapted from *Excessive Stress Disrupts the Architecture of the Developing Brain* (Working paper #3), by the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2005. Retrieved from http://developingchild.harvard.edu/index.php/download_file/-/view/469/

Handout 3: Summary Sheet of Tools from Workshop 1

Defining Our Stress

Being able to recognize our own response to stress can help to inform us that something is wrong—we might need to respond to what our body is trying to tell us. This activity gives you the opportunity to define your own stress to increase your understanding of how you experience stress and your awareness of when you are experiencing stress. The goal of this activity is to be able to recognize your current level of stress. Lowering your stress just one level can help reduce the negative impacts!

Health Benefits of the Walk and Talk

Positive relationships and physical activity are two ways to reduce and manage stress. Physical activity is not the only benefit of the Walk and Talk Activity. Another great benefit is the opportunity to build stronger social ties and closer relationships with others. A benefit of the Walk and Talk is that it combines two known ways to reduce and manage stress.

Mindful Breath Count

Did you know that when your mind wanders, like when you notice noises or when you start to worry or plan, it can make it difficult for you to let go of the stresses in your life?

Mindfully counting your breaths is a way to focus your mind on your breathing, making it harder for your mind to wander to the distractions around you.

Weekly Planning

The objective of this activity is to look at your week in advance and plan and schedule in time for self-care, just as you would book a dentist appointment. Each day of the week is an opportunity to take a little bit of time to take care of you. Even 10 minutes can help to reduce your stress levels!

Handout 4: Workshop Outcomes

Addressing the Negative Consequences of Stress:

A Workshop for Parents of Children Zero-Five

Welcome to Workshop 2: The Effects of Stress on Young Children. This workshop is part of a series of 3 different workshops that have different outcomes.

These are the Outcomes for Workshop 2:

1. Understand how stress affects young children (0-5 years of age).
2. Recognize when young children are experiencing unhealthy (toxic) stress.
3. Parents are provided with two different activities that they can do with their children to help foster their relationship.

Handout 5: Stress Affects Kids

Brain Architecture: The way that the brain is developed.

Common Sources of Stress for Children 0-5 Years

New Situations

Being Bullied

Being Rushed (e.g., rushed mornings)

Separation from Parents

Fighting or Disagreements at Home (with parents or siblings)

Early Experiences: These are the experiences that children have before they age of five. These experiences have a great impact on a child's brain architecture.

Did You Know?

High levels of stress in young children can lead to behaviour problems.

Stress can make getting along with others difficult.

It can interfere with your child's ability to learn and develop.

It can interfere with school performance.

It can increase the risk of illness.

Positive Early Relationships are relationships children develop with their parents, and caregivers that meet their needs. These relationships include nurturing responsive caregivers, new healthy positive experiences, and limited exposure to stress by ensuring children have enough food to eat and proper clothes to wear (e.g., a warm winter coat).

Note. Material for this handout was adapted from *Kids Have Stress Too!® Ideas, Tips and Strategies for Parents of Preschoolers*, by the Psychology Foundation of Canada, n.d. Retrieved from http://www.psychologyfoundation.org/pdf/KHST_Booklet_for_Parents.pdf

Handout 6: How Stress Affects Parenting

Did you know that our ability to parent and nurture our children can be impacted by how well we are able to manage our own stress? The better we are able to reduce and prevent stress, the better we are able parent. Although it is impossible to have absolutely no stress, it is possible to make tiny changes in how you respond to stress so the people around you, including your children, are not going to experience the impact of your stress.

Parents who experience high levels of stress can have a reduced ability to meet their young children's needs. Unhealthy stress may cause the following:

- Decreased patience
- Increased frustration and anger
- Decreased ability to recognize when children are distressed
- Difficulty responding to your children's needs
- Decreased satisfaction with parenting
- Decreased belief in your ability to parent
- A reduction in the child's overall wellbeing

Note. Materials for this handout were adapted from *Parenting Skills and Parenting Stress* by the BC Council for Families, 2011. Retrieved from <http://www.bccf.ca/all/resources/parenting-skills-and-parenting-stress—how-do-mothers-and-fathers-compare>

Handout 7: Recognizing When Children are Stressed

We can help our kids by helping them to develop healthy coping and stress-management techniques, but sometimes without knowing if they are experiencing stress, it can be hard for parents to support their children when they might need extra love, support, and reassurance.

Recognizing the signs that children are experiencing stress can alert parents that their child might need some help to lower their stress level.

Some of the signs that your young child might be more stressed than they can manage include:

PRESCHOOL AND TODDLERS	ELEMENTARY-AGED CHILDREN
Anxiety and appearing nervous Loss of interest in food Difficulty sleeping (e.g., nightmares) Not wanting to be separated from parents or caregivers Increased temper tantrums Withdrawal or not responding to parents (e.g., an infant might smile less)	Leary of others or decreased trust in others Complaining of headaches or stomach aches Feeling unloved Having no appetite Having trouble sleeping Needing to urinate frequently A loss of interest in friends A loss of interest in school Losing interest in favourite activities Unsure and concerned or worried about the future

Below is some space where you can add some of the signs you notice.

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Note. Material for this handout was adapted from *Action Set: Stress Management: Helping Your Child With Stress*, by HealthLinkBC, 2012. Retrieved from <http://www.healthlinkbc.ca/kb/content/actionset/aba5971.html#aba5972>

Handout 8:

Fostering

OR
R
: Activity

Blowing
Bubbles

Taking deep breaths, like when you are blowing bubbles, can be a great way to relieve stress. This is a great opportunity for parents to teach kids how to breathe deeply, by taking deep breaths, and then slowly blowing it out.

Ideas

List all the
Positives

Take turns naming all the positives about your child and your life together. For example “I think you are a great singer,” or “You are so great at kicking the soccer ball.”

Just Be
There for
Them

Just take time to “be there.” Be present with your children. If they are sad, hold them and comfort them. If they are happy, share in their happiness. Other ideas include cuddling them to sleep, reading stories, and playing games like “peek-a-boo.”

Tickle Backs
and Pictures

As part of your bedtime routine, you might want to “tickle” your child’s back or draw pictures on their back and have them “guess” at what you are drawing. This can help to relax your child and can be another way for you to spend a few extra moments together.

Naming
your
Feelings

Take turns making different feeling faces. Each person takes a turn guessing the other persons feelings. For example a great big grin, means happy or a pouty lip means sad.

Paper
Collages

Use your old magazines and create collages with your child. Some themes could include: things I like to do, places I want to go, and things that make me happy. Ripping pages is just fine – don’t worry about using scissors. Ripping paper is another way to manage stress!

Note. Material for this handout was adapted from *Kids Have Stress Too!® Ideas, Tips and Strategies for Parents of Preschoolers* by the Psychology Foundation of Canada, n.d. Retrieved from http://www.psychologyfoundation.org/pdf/KHST_Booklet_for_Parents.pdf and *Stress Reduction Activities for Students* by the Virginia School and Aged Child Program, 2008. Retrieved from <http://www.vsacca.org/pdf/2008Presentations/LawmanStressReductionActivities.pdf>

Handout 8: Station Set-up Guide (Facilitator Handout)

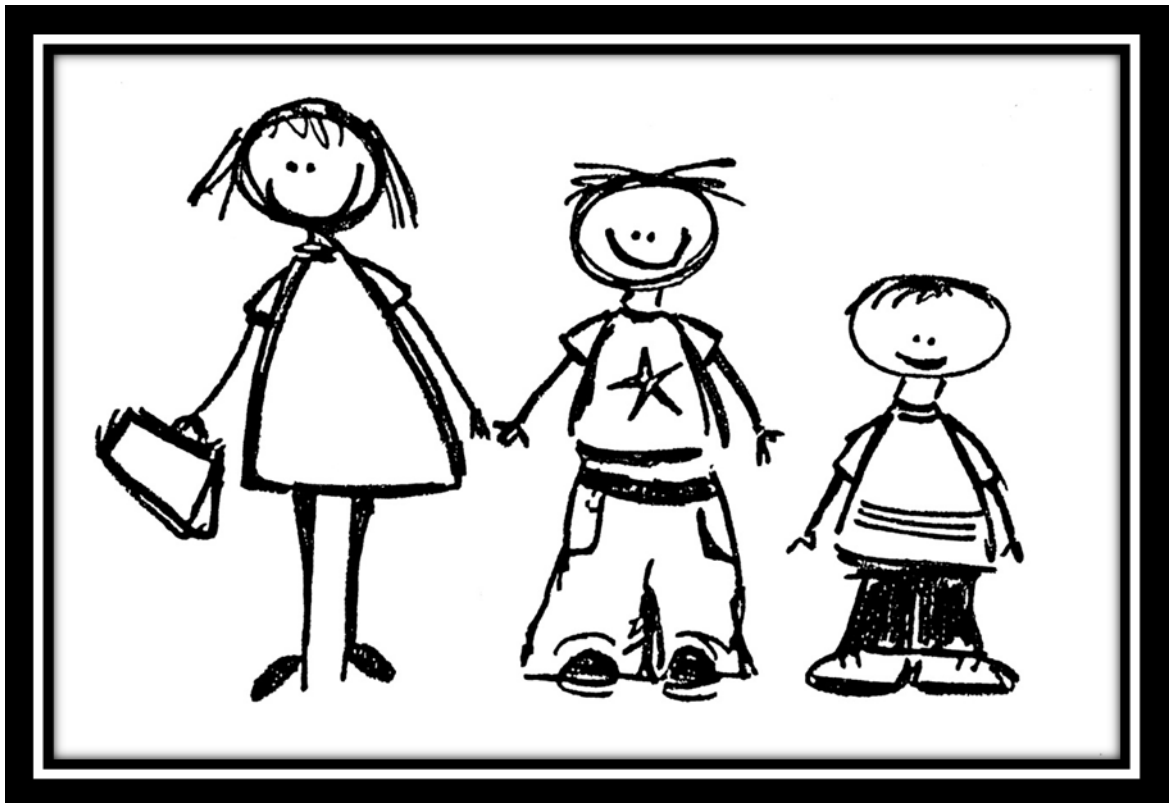
Some of the activities on Handout 8 are easier to set-up as station activities.

Some Examples of Stations:

- Have a few different bubble wands and bubble mixture that parents can play with at one station.
- Have a number of pictures or photos of different faces and emotions. On the back of the photo or picture write the emotion. Have parents look at the picture and try to guess the emotion, and then look at the back of the picture to find the answer.
- Create a station with some paper so the parents can take time to write a list of positives comments about their children. Perhaps include markers and different coloured paper for them to choose from. This could provide parents with an opportunity to reflect and think about positive comments that they could share with their child.
- Have magazines, glue, scissors, markers, and paper for parents to make their own collage. Ask them to choose one

of the suggested themes on Handout 8 or to create a new theme that would be meaningful to them.

Workshop 3: Nurturing Ourselves and Our Children



Workshop 3: Nurturing Ourselves and Our Children

Workshop Objectives:

1. To introduce participants to one another, outline the structure of the workshop, review the content of Workshop 2, and provide the workshop outcomes to the participants.
2. To provide participants with information about the connection between stress management and self-care and the importance of building healthy stress-management habits at an early age.
3. To provide participants with information and tools that can be used as part of an individual or a family stress-management plan, provide participants with knowledge to recognize when nurturing and self-care are not enough, and provide participants with a list of local resources that can be accessed when nurturing is not enough.

Workshop Outcomes:

The following are outcomes for participants. Although each of these outcomes is covered in the Workshop Objectives, those objectives also contain objectives for facilitators. These outcomes will be used in the workshop to inform participants about what they should expect to have as an outcome from attending this workshop.

1. Understand stress management and the connection to self-care.
2. Learn the importance of developing healthy stress-management habits at an early age.
3. Learn tools that can be used as part of an individual or family stress-management plan.
4. Receive a list of local resources for individuals and families who need support.

Reminders for Facilitators:

1. Please note participant limits that are discussed in the *Workshop Format* portion of this manual and in Chapter 5.
2. Review in advance with the participants the limits and cautions associated with this workshop.
3. Please note that the material included in this manual can be modified, as this is only a suggested workshop plan.
4. This workshop may not be suitable for all audiences. It is encouraged that facilitators exercise professional judgment regarding participants' abilities, culture, and specific needs.
5. Please note that Handout 8 — Local Resources included in this manual is provided as an example. Please ensure that a list of local resources is created for participants or that an already existing list is available for participants.

Audience:

The intended audience for this workshop is parents of children between the ages of zero through five.

Length of Workshop:

The workshop was created to be 2.5 hours in length and includes one 10-minute break during the workshop.

Materials Required:

- Flip Chart
- Computer
- Projector
- Projection Screen
- Flip Chart Marker
- Name Cards
- Markers and Pens
- First Aid Kit Cut-Outs (for Handout 6 activity)
- Glue or Tape
- Handouts
- Speakers
- Envelope for Workshop Feedback Sheets

Suggested Considerations:

1. Workshop facilitators may want to consider providing on-site childcare during the lecture. Providing childcare could reduce the need for parents and caregivers to seek after hours care for their children and can reduce the potential financial cost of childcare.
2. Consider providing participants light refreshments such as tea, water, and coffee.

Pre-Workshop Preparation:

1. Review Chapters 2, 4, and 5 of Part 1 of this project. These chapters will provide the workshop facilitator with the foundational knowledge and background information that this workshop is based on.
2. Review agenda and facilitator notes included in the agenda.
3. Book a venue and confirm that the room is available.
4. Confirm that there is the minimum number of participants needed to run the workshop.
5. Review workshop cautions and limitations with participants prior to the workshop.

6. Arrange the room with tables and chairs for participants. The ideal room set-up is in the shape of a horseshoe, with two people per table. The horseshoe should face towards the projector screen.
7. Have the workshop evaluation and attendance sheet (if required) prepared and ready.
8. Ensure handouts and materials (e.g., Handout 8—Local Resources) are prepared and that there are enough copies for each participant.

Workshop 3: Nurturing Ourselves and Our Children - Agenda

Time (minutes)	Agenda Items (Objectives, Tasks, and Facilitator Notes)
<p>30–60 minutes</p> <p>Prior to workshop</p>	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Welcome: Task 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test all of your electronic equipment. Have a back-up plan in case equipment fails (e.g., paper copies of slides and handouts). • Prepare materials for Handout 6 — Stress Management First Aid Kit. It is suggested that the facilitator use cardstock to create a cut-out in the shape of a first aid box. The cut-out box should be large enough to paste all of the cut-outs included in Handout 6. *Important Note: This activity will require scissors, glue or tape, and coloured pens, pencils, and markers. • Place an information package at each of the seats. This limits interruptions of needing to pass out materials during the workshop. • As participants enter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Warmly greet participants ○ Optional: Ask participants to sign in (this might not be necessary but some organizations or presenters may choose to have participants sign in). ○ Invite participants to choose a seat when they are ready. Ask each participant to write his or her name on the name card, fold the card in half, and place it facing the rest of the room. (Suggestion: Include different coloured felt pens and stickers, sometimes participants might like to personalize their name card.) ○ Optional: Ask participants to help themselves to refreshments before the class begins.
<p>20</p>	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Introductions: Task 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Introduce Yourself as the Presenter:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facilitators should include their name, experience related to offering this type of workshop, and share one example of what you do to help reduce your stress (to briefly role model how to share personal information). • <u>Participant Introduction:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have participants divide into pairs of their choosing. If there are

	<p>an odd number of participants then create one group of three.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inform the participants they have 4 minutes to introduce themselves to each other, 2 minutes each, by answering the following questions: What is your name? Who are the children in your life? What is one thing you are doing to reduce your parenting stress? <p>*Important Note: To help participants remember the questions post them on a flip chart or put them up on a PowerPoint slide.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In addition, tell participants that they will be asked to share their partner's name and very briefly one thing they learned about their partner when they return to the group. <p>*Important Note: Ask that participants to only share what they have permission to share about their partner.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Call "switch" in 2 minutes to ensure each partner has time to answer the questions. ○ Announce that the participants now have 1 minute to check in with their partner about what is okay to share with the larger group and then return to the larger group. ○ After 1 minute, gather participants back in the large group. Allow for another minute for the transition from pair to the larger group. ○ Once the participants come together the facilitator could comment, <i>"It was great to hear the verbal activity in the room, as this workshop is about talking!"</i> ○ Ask participants to introduce their partner to the group: Share their partner's name, and one thing that they learned about their partner. Start with a volunteer and move around the room clockwise (i.e., structured round). This should take about 1 minute per participant. ○ Conclude with a summary and transitional comment, for example: <i>"Isn't it great to think of all of the different ways we are already coping with stress as caregivers. Thank you for sharing. I selected this opening exercise because today we will be learning about ways that we as parents can support our children to positively cope with stress, helping to nurture ourselves and our children."</i>
5	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Housekeeping and Guidelines: Task 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Housekeeping:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Orient the participants to the building (e.g., washrooms, location of paper, pens etc.). ○ Inform participants that the workshop will start and end on time.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Welcoming spirit – you might want to share the following: <i>“If you need to arrive late or leave early, please do as we are all adults and understand we have lives outside this workshop. Please come or leave as quietly as possible. And, please come, even if you are late. You will be welcomed, as we understand how hard it is to get to places on time with a family. Please come.”</i> ○ Optional: Remind them about refreshments if available. • <u>Workshop Guidelines:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce the guidelines to participants. You may want to share the following: <i>“To make the workshop and our time here a place of respect, we will take a minute to review a few guidelines, and I would like to invite you to let me know if you are okay with these guidelines, or if there might be guidelines that are missing.”</i> ○ Draw attention to the Workshop Guidelines in Handout 1. ○ Review these with participants, and ask them if they would like to add any guidelines of their own. If there are additions, consult the larger group to see if everyone is okay with this item. If the larger group is not, find a way to compromise or examine the underlying intent of the request to see if an existing guideline needs more elaboration. <p>*Important Note: To help discussion of the guidelines post them on a flip chart, or put them up on a PowerPoint slide. Add participants’ additions to the guidelines to flip chart or PowerPoint.</p>
15	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Quick Review of Workshop 2: Task 4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Overview</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ What were key points that resonated with participants who attended the second workshop? ○ Review highlights from Workshop 2 (see Handout 2). ○ Ask participants what stood out the most for them. ○ Allow 1-2 minutes for discussion. ○ Close the discussion with a summary of what was shared, and thank the participants for their willingness to share.
5	<p>Workshop Objective 1</p> <p>Workshop Outcomes: Task 5</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Workshop Outcomes:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Introduce participants to the objectives of today’s workshop. ○ Draw attention to the Workshop Outcomes in Handout 3. The facilitator might want to introduce the outcomes as follows: <i>“Now</i>

	<p><i>that we have gotten to know each other a little better, and we have established our guidelines, I would like to take a few minutes to share the outcomes for today's workshop":</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Understand stress management and the connection to self-care.</i> <i>2. Learn the importance of developing healthy stress-management habits at an early age.</i> <i>3. Learn tools that can be used as part of an individual or family stress-management plan.</i> <i>4. Receive a list of local resources for individuals and families who need support and/or want to learn more ways to turn off their alarm system.</i>
10	<p>Objective 2 (Workshop Outcome 1) Stress Management and Self-care: Task 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Self-Care and Stress Management:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explain the connection between self-care and stress management, as well as some of the differences between them. ○ Direct participants to Handout 4 — Similarities and Differences of Self-Care and Stress Management. Ask participants to review the handout for about 2 minutes and then ask that they take note of the similarities between self-care and stress management. ○ After about 1 minute draw the attention of the group, and ask participants what stuck out for them about self-care and stress management. ○ As participants share feedback record their ideas on a flip chart at the front of the room. ○ After about 2 minutes, end the discussion by briefly summarizing the participants' ideas ask if there is anything that they notice that might be different between stress management and self-care. ○ After about 1 minute of sharing, acknowledge what the participants have shared, and explain, if needed, that self-care can be a form of stress management and that taking care of oneself can help to prevent stress and manage stress before it becomes unhealthy, resulting in consequences for our health.
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>10-Minute Socializing Break:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Notify participants 1 minute prior to resuming the session. ○ Allow 1-2 minutes for the group to reassemble.

15

Objective 2 (Workshop Outcome 2)**Managing Stress: Task 2**

- Building Healthy Stress-Management Habits:
 - Introduce the importance of early healthy habit formation to the participants. To help with the introduction to this topic, the facilitator may want to refer participants to Handout 5 — Building Healthy Stress-Management Habits. You might want to consider saying, *“This handout is provided so as thoughts and ideas come to mind while watching the videos, or during the discussion, you have space to record them.”*
 - Using the link below, play Dr. Charles Sophy’s video *Childhood Habits: What is a Childhood “Habit”?* (posted online in June 2011):
http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xgg501_childhood-habits-what-is-a-childhood-habit_lifestyle#.UOvI2o5dX8s
 - After the video, ask participants to share what stood out for them from this video. Allow 2-3 minutes for discussion.
 - Using the link below, play the Parent Action for Healthy Kids video (posted online in September 2011):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SmWH3uolxEs>
 - Ask participants to share what stood out for them from this video. You may wish to consider asking, *“Was anyone surprised to learn that habits formed in childhood were so important to lifelong health?”* Allow 1-2 minutes for discussion.
 - Engage in a dialogue with participants about habit formation. The facilitator may want to consider saying: *“If you are like me, you likely have some habits that you have already developed. For example, I always need to go to the bathroom before going on a long car trip – I am not sure if this is actually a biological drive or just a routine (habit) I feel I must follow. So what type of healthy stress-management habits are you already teaching your children?”*
 - Allow 3-5 minutes for discussion, writing participants thoughts on a flip chart while they are discussing.
 - To conclude this task, introduce the participants to the next objective and task. You might want to consider saying the following: *“Now that we have learned about habit formation, we will focus our attention on some possible stress-management habits we might want to start using with our family.”*

30	<p>Objective 3 (Workshop Outcome 3)</p> <p>Building Resources: Task 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Building a Family Tool Kit:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Explain to participants that the group will work together to build a “Family First Aid Kit” to build healthy stress-management habits. ○ Draw participants’ attention to Handout 6 — Stress Management First Aid Kit. ○ Provide each participant with a first aid kit cut-out. On the cut-out, separate the kit into 4 quadrants, one for each source of stress: Environment, Physiological, Thoughts, and Social (refer participants to Workshop 1 – Handout 6). ○ Using Handout 6 — Stress Management First Aid Kit, ask participants to fill in the spaces provided with different healthy habits that can be used to help cope and manage stress from each of the four sources. ○ Ask participants to share different ways that families already cope with stress. If participants are stuck, the facilitator could provide an example, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reading bedtime stories - Going for a walk after supper - Having a dance off in the kitchen - Going for a hike - Playing at the park - Building a fort out of blankets - Playing hide and go seek - Looking at pictures of happy memories - Playing a game of peek-a-boo with babies
25	<p>Objective 3 (Workshop Outcome 3)</p> <p>Building Resources: Task 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>When Nurturing is not Enough:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ When introducing the topic to the participants it is important to make sure that the facilitator acknowledges that sometimes we need to rely on others when we are having difficulties. The facilitator may want to consider saying the following when introducing this topic: <i>“Sometimes when we are feeling overwhelmed we are able to cope because our supports, like family and friends, can help us, and sometimes we can use different tools like the ones that we have learned throughout these three workshops. However, sometimes even with our</i>

	<p><i>supports and tools we have, we still feel overwhelmed and are unable to cope. This is a sign that you might need to talk with someone like your doctor or a counsellor.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ask participants to share some ways that they might know that more support is needed. ○ As the participants are sharing, the facilitator can write their ideas on a flip chart at the front of the room. ○ After about 3-5 minutes end the discussion, and direct the participants to Handout 7 — When Nurturing is Not Enough. Ask participants to add any of the ideas that were shared today to the handout. ○ Once participants are finished writing, move on to the next agenda item.
5	<p>Objective 3 (Workshop Outcome 4)</p> <p>Building Resources: Task 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Local Resources for Families:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Draw the participants' attention to Handout 8 — Local Resources. ○ The facilitator should treat Handout 8 as an example of what might be considered when creating a list of local resources. As all communities have different local resources, this list includes only examples and suggestions of what the facilitator might consider when creating a local list for participants. <p>*Important Note: Do not provide the example information included in this manual to the participants unless it is applicable to your location. Please create a list or use an already existing list of local resources to provide to the participants.</p>
8	<p>Closing and Debrief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to share with the group one thing that they will spend more time thinking about or doing this upcoming week to better understand or tackle their stress. • On a flip chart post the question: “<i>What is one healthy stress-management habit that I would like to help role model for my children _____.</i>” • Let participants know that they have a right to pass and that they do not have to share information with the group. Start with a volunteer and move around the room clockwise (i.e., structured round). This should take 30 seconds per participant.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ask participants to fill in the feedback form (found in Appendix B) and place it in the envelope at the front of the room. Inform participants that feedback forms are anonymous; even if they choose to not fill in a form, they should still place their feedback form in the envelope.
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Post Workshop Tasks:

- Collect the feedback sheets.
- Clean the room as required.
- Complete and required paperwork (e.g., attendance, sign-up sheets, etc.).
- Read and reflect on the feedback sheets received.
- Make notes of what went well, and what might need to be improved upon for next time.
- If necessary, debrief this experience with a colleague or supervisor.



Handout 1: Workshop Guidelines

By Danielle Tone (2013)

Keep the Privacy: Many stories, thoughts, and ideas will be shared in the workshop. Please respect those who choose to share by not revealing the name or hints to the identity of anyone in this workshop. It is important you share what you are learning as this often helps transfer material into long-term memory, but you need to share this information without ever revealing who you learned it from. As a counsellor, I have a legal obligation to get help for a person under the age of 18 or a dependent adult who is being seriously harmed, or if someone is unable to keep themselves safe from danger. This is not a therapy class, so I will not be keeping session notes.

You have the Right to Pass: If you do not want to share information with the group, you have the right to pass.

Being Heard: Everyone's contribution to the group discussion is important. You have a right to be heard. To help everyone feel heard, it is best not to talk when someone else is speaking.

Breaks: If you need a break, or if you need to arrive late or leave early, please do so. We recognize that everyone has busy lives. Please come in or exit as quietly as possible and attempt to not disturb the rest of the group.

Cell Phones Shhhhhh: Please keep all devices on silent or vibrate settings. To avoid disrupting the group, please take your phone calls in the hallway.

Handout 2: Highlights from Workshop 2

Stress Affects Kids: Did you know that babies and young children experience stress? It is important to know that stress can sometimes be more harmful for children than for adults. Information about how stress can affect children was discussed in Workshop 2.

Recognizing When Children Are Stressed: Stress can sometimes look different for children than it would for adults. In Workshop 2 we learned more about how to recognize when children might be showing some signs of stress.

How Stress Affects Parenting: High levels of stress that go unaddressed can sometimes reduce the quality of parenting. Stress reactions can make it hard to respond calmly to parenting challenges; stress can also make it difficult to respond to the emotional needs of our children.

Fostering Our Relationship: Activity Ideas: Positive healthy relationships with parents and caregivers can help to reduce the negative consequences of stress on children. A list of different activities was provided in Workshop 2 that could be used to help foster relationships and lower stress levels.

Handout 3: Workshop Outcomes

Addressing the Negative Consequences of Stress:

A Workshop for Parents of Children Ages Zero-Five

Welcome to Workshop 3: Nurturing Ourselves and Nurturing Our Children. This workshop is part of a series of 3 workshops that have different outcomes.

These are the Outcomes for Workshop 3:

1. Understand stress management and the connection to self-care.
2. Learn the importance of developing healthy stress-management habits at an early age.
3. Learn tools that can be used as part of an individual or family stress-management plan.
4. Receive a list of local resources for individuals and families who need support.

Handout 4: Similarities and Differences of Self-Care and Stress Management

These are the similarities between Self-Care and Stress Management:

Similarities:

- Can help us to relax
- Could be something that brings us joy
- Can help to increase our ability to cope
- Can help us to feel better about ourselves
- Can help us recharge our batteries and manage daily life

These are the differences between Self-Care and Stress management:

Differences:

- Self-care can be preventative
- Stress management is sometimes reactive
- Self-care can be part of our daily routines
- Stress management can sometimes require extra support and self-care

Handout 5: Building Healthy Stress-Management Habits

This sheet can be used to fill in helpful information from the workshop about developing healthy habits!

Did you know that healthy habits formed in childhood could help to support and build a foundation for healthy stress management as adolescents and adults.

Did you know that parents can help teach children healthy stress-management habits through role modelling? What are some healthy stress management habits you are already teaching your children?

Handout 6: Stress Management First Aid Kit



Handout 8: Local Resources¹

The following list of resources and professionals have compiled in no particular order. This list includes resources that I have been told are helpful. I am not suggesting that these resources are right for you. It is important that you ensure that these resources are a good fit for you and that you are aware of your rights when you access any resources.

When you can't get your alarm system down and you are bursting with anger or are a danger to yourself or others:

- **Call 911 if you can't keep yourself safe or are a threat to others**
- **Go to the hospital emergency room if you can't stay safe:**
960 - 19 Street S. (take a taxi or call 911)
- **Go to your doctor's office or to a walk-in clinic. Do not leave the clinic until you have seen the doctor. Stay in the waiting room!**

When you need to vent or debrief as part of your stress-management plan, you might want to try these 24/7 resources:

- Distress Line of Southern Alberta: 403-327-7905
- Call the Lethbridge Crisis Team at 403-381-1116 (hours are 7 am to 1 am) to vent, release, and get support
- Call the Kids Help Line (24 hours): 1-800-668-6868 (this is a national toll-free number accessible across Canada)

If you would like some hands-on training to deal with parenting issues, you want to learn how to turn down your alarm reaction, or you'd like to

¹ This handout closely followed the format, structure, and content of *Dawn's Informal List of Referrals for Counselling* (Unpublished document), by D. L. McBride, 2012, AB, Canada: University of Lethbridge. Adapted with permission.

work on family or couple issues, here are some counselling centres and resources that may be useful to you:

Counselling Services:

- **Associates Counselling - offer a sliding scale: 403-381-6000**
- **Crossroads Counselling - offer a sliding scale: 403-327-7080**
- **Community Adult Mental Health (Alberta Health Services):
403-381-5260**
- **Community Child Mental Health (Alberta Health Services):
403-381-5278**
- **Lethbridge Family Services - offer a sliding scale: 403-327-5724**
- **Family Centre - offers free counselling: 403-327-5724**

Personal Supports (Please list your personal supports here):

- _____
- _____

You Should Know Your Rights²: Counsellors should use a friendly yet l-o-n-g document that will provide you with information about important ethical practices such as: (a) what information is recorded in your session notes and when you can see your file, (b) how long your file is kept, (c) what code of ethics the counsellor adheres to, (d) dual relationships will not occur during/after therapy, (e) what your counsellor will or will not keep private about you, (f) where your file is kept and who has access to it, (g) where to file complaints if your counsellor behaves unethically, (h) risks/benefits to treatment as well as alterative treatment options, and (i) you will not be put on any mailing lists without your permission, etc. **Remember: You are hiring a counsellor, you are the boss – know your rights!**

² This information is from *Dawn's Informal List of Referrals for Counselling* (Unpublished document), D. L. McBride, 2012, AB, Canada: University of Lethbridge. Adapted with permission.

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Appendix B: Workshop Evaluation Form

Date: _____

Workshop: #1 (adults) #2 (children) #3 (tools)
(circle one number)

1. I found today's workshop a good use of my time

- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

2. The facilitator was knowledgeable about the workshop material

- Disagree
- Somewhat Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

3. What I liked most about today's workshop was:

4. What could make this a better workshop is:

5. The length of today's workshop was:
- Too Short
 - Too Long
 - Just Right
6. Attending this workshop helped me to learn:
- About the consequences of stress
 - Stress-management tools
 - How children are affected by stress
 - How to recognize stress
 - How to better help my child cope with stress

Note. Some questions on this form have been adapted with permission from *Stress-Reducing Brain Exercises: A Psychoeducational Workshop For First-Year Postsecondary Students* (Master's project), by M. Bruce, 2012, AB, Canada: University of Lethbridge. Copyright 2012 by M. Bruce.