
STRESS MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES



PROGRESSIVE RELAXATION

- The learning process of increasing relaxation to a new level is facilitated by progressive relaxation.
- This not only helps in managing the physical symptoms of stress like headaches and hypertension, but also reduces anxiety, irritability and depression.
- It is desirable to practice progressive relaxation exercise in a quiet room with no interruptions during the process.



DOs

Wear loose clothing.



Have back support



Give your body messages of appreciation for relaxation as you notice feelings going through your body



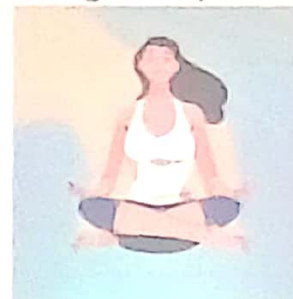
Quiet down. If tense thoughts enter the mind, allow them to pass out of your head



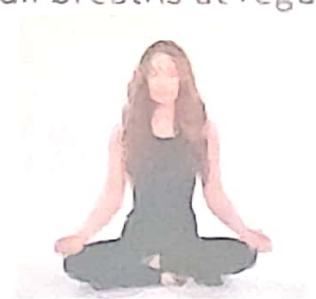
Go at your own pace and let go of your muscles as your body decides to give up tension



Stay alert and conscious while relaxing. Pay attention and note changes in your body



Stay aware of your breathing. Observe how much air you are taking in full breaths at regular rhythms



Put yourself in a position to fall asleep



Allow yourself to feel groggy or sleepy. (If you start feeling asleep open your eyes and sit up. When you are ready return to relaxation position)

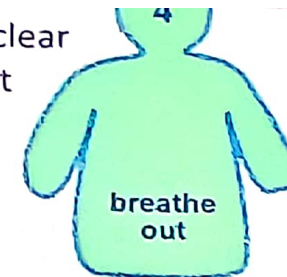


Think your way into tension. (If you cannot clear your mind, take a long deep breath and let it out slowly)

Expect yourself to relax all at once. Like any other physical exercise you must practice letting go step by step



Smoke before, during or after relaxation as it tightens lung tissues and blood vessels. Let your body breathe.



STEPS (SITTING POSTURE)

01. Please close your eyes and concentrate on the instructions.

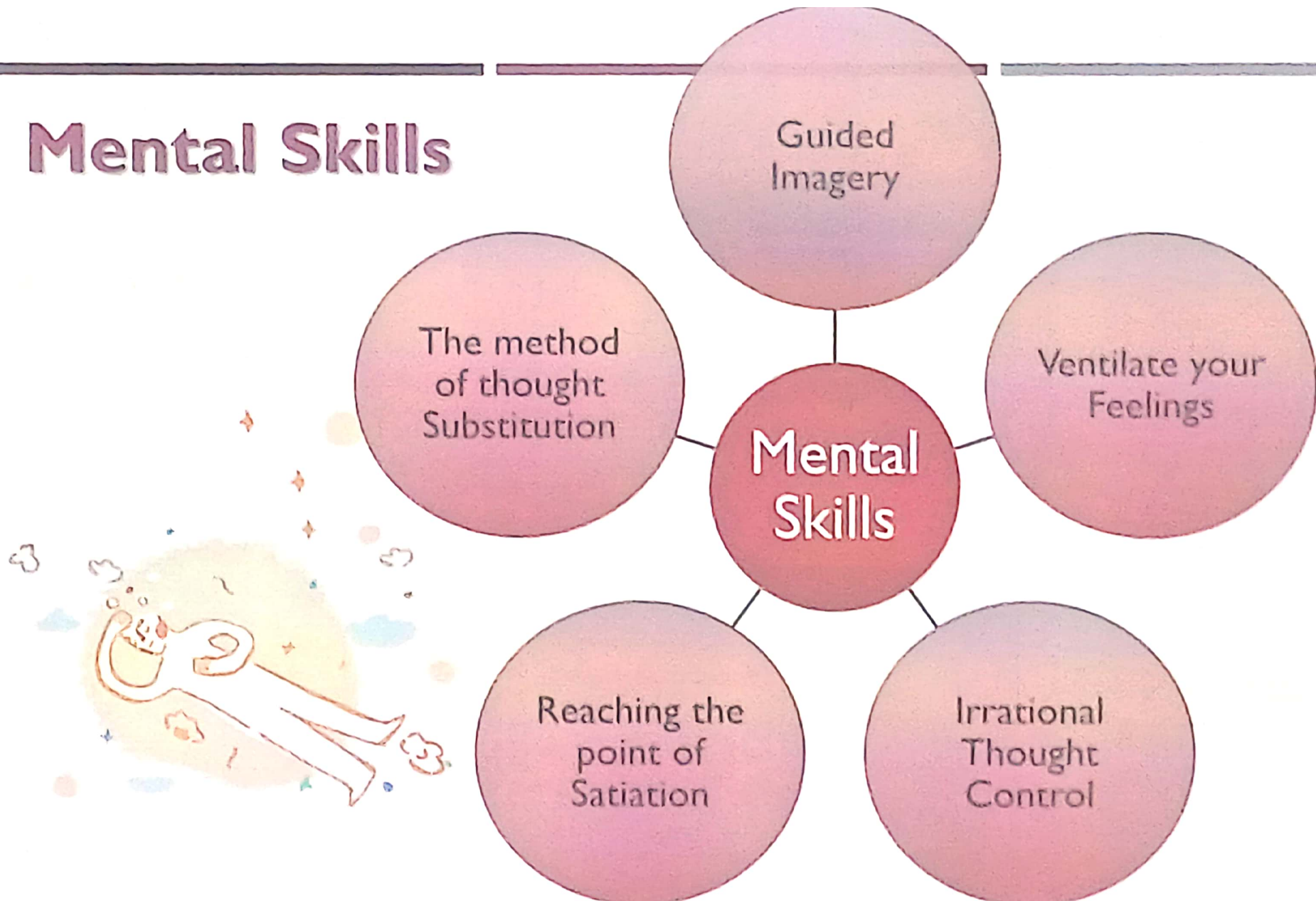
02. Now, tense your fists...Relax...Repeat it. Tense your fists...Relax.

03. Now, please extend your fingers...Relax...Repeat it. Extend your fingers again...Relax...

04. Now, do some exercises with eyes. Open your eyes as wide as possible and then look towards your right but without turning your head...Relax by getting back your eyes to the normal position...Again without turning your head look towards your right...Relax...



Mental Skills



GUIDED IMAGERY

- This is a technique wherein people are trained to visualize images that are pleasant and relaxing
- You may sit quietly and imagine:

The experience of pleasant solitude on the seashore,

The green trees and chirps of birds in a deep forest you visited in your childhood.

You can visualize the serene sunrise you enjoyed during boating on a calm river.

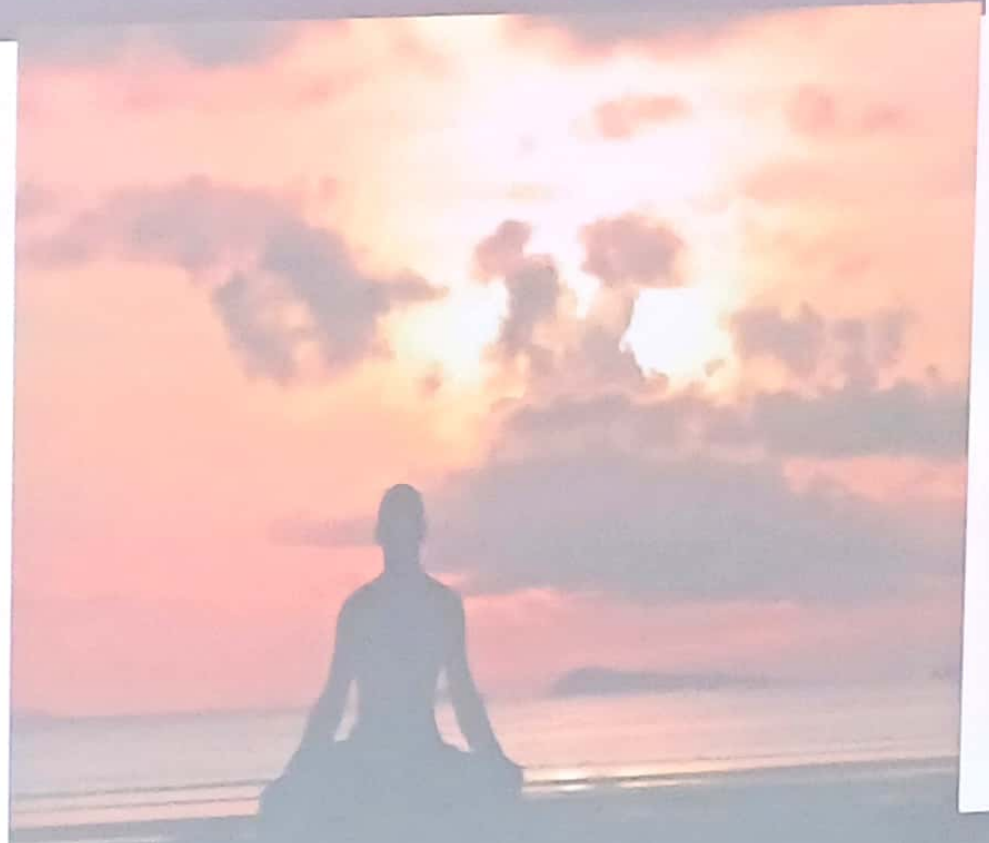
You can 'see' the tranquil water, feel the cold breeze, and feel the warmth of the sun from above.



- Thus you imagine not only the visuals of the place but also feel every sensation. Try to make the image as vivid as possible.
- When you recall such pleasant imagery, the associated pleasant feelings also come in automatically, soothing the mind from any tension or anxiety.
- Thus the experience of stress is substituted with the experience of quiet and peace.



- To use imagery to reduce stress, find a quiet place to sit without any distractions.
- Close your eyes and breathe deeply.
- Concentrate on the chosen relaxing image.
- It does not matter what that image is as long as you picture yourself in the image.

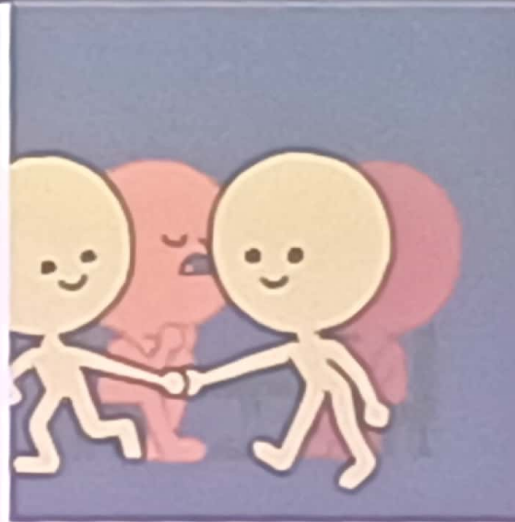


VENTILATE YOUR FEELINGS

- Most of the time the wrong choice of coping strategy can be traced to suppression of feelings.
- The feelings of anxiety and fear, if bottled up, will have the potential block which in turn would adversely affect the appraisal of the situation.
- Sometimes, the suppressed negative feelings may land you in appraising the situation in the most unrealistic and irrational fashion.
- Hence, it is very important that there is timely and adequate let-out for the negative feelings.

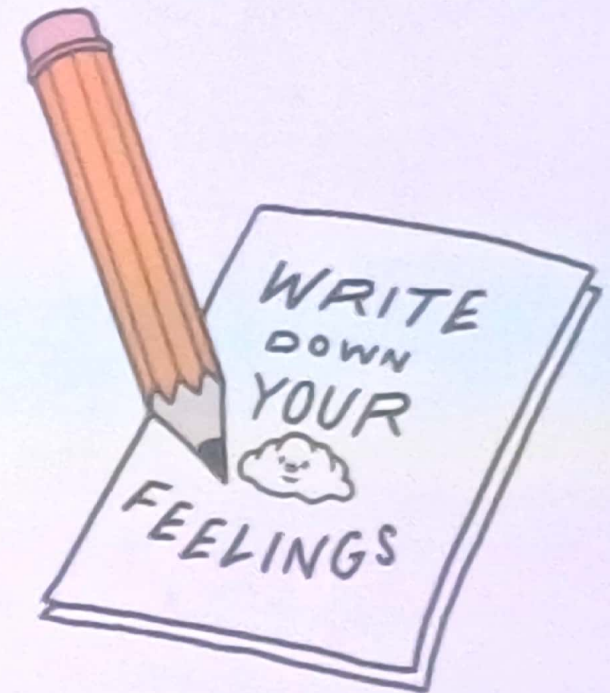


- In case you happen to be one of those highly private persons, who does not wish to or cannot confide in others, it is advisable to write down your feelings.
- Several studies have proved that writing down the feelings results in better coping.



VENTILATE FEELINGS ON A PAPER

- Write down your feelings, following the guidelines mentioned below for a better effect.
1. You must write it down in the form of narration of a story that has a beginning and an end.
 2. The writing has to be lucid and spontaneous as if you are telling someone about an event, incident or conflict.
 3. There need not be any editing between the feeling, thought and writing. You can allow the written paper to reflect all your feelings. There need not be any filtering or classification on silly ideas, mean feelings, and so on.



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 4. While writing down, if you are caught with a feeling that something you are writing is silly, you may mention so. Thus, transparency is the key word.



- Once you release all your feelings, if you feel that you are ready for a plan of action through choice of a strategy to cope, you may do so.
- You may find that while writing down the feelings and the event causing the feelings, you are already reappraising the situation.



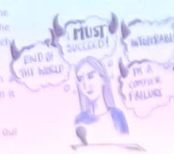
IRRATIONAL THOUGHT CONTROL

- It is often observed that we tend to build pressure from within.
- Our own thought process may sometimes be a source of stress, or it accentuates stress.
- Eg: when a student enters the exam hall and reads the questions, s/he finds the first question very tough. On seeing the difficulty level of the first question, s/he may quickly feel that it is a lost exam. Such conclusions are irrational.
- There may be occasions when you want to express your idea in a meeting, yet you restrain from doing so because you are afraid that it may be rejected. Such unrealistic fears may induce stress.



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- Such thoughts are action inhibitors. They adversely affect our psychological well-being.



iii. Prepare thoughts that are incompatible with the irrational thoughts and say them to yourself.

[Eg: if the irrational thought after reading the first question in the exam is 'Questions are tough; I am going to fail in this exam', then replace it with the thought, 'I may not be able to answer the first question. But let me read through the question paper. I have wide options in choosing the questions.'

If the inhibiting thought is, 'I will not speak out my idea; others may ridicule it', substitute it with a more practical thought, 'Let me share my idea; everyone may not like it, but there may be some who would give it a thought.' If nobody is around you may even say it aloud.)

