

Stress Management and  
Prevention Program  
Resource Guide

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# Unit 1: The Nature of Stress

## Information to Remember:

**Key Learning Point:** The four holistic components of the wellness paradigm are described as mental, physical, emotional and spiritual. These four components of well-being are integrated, in balance and in harmony for best health. Seaward goes on to posit, “the whole is greater than the sum of its parts”. Seaward, B., (2018).

**Key Learning Point:** Believing in this posit wholeheartedly, knowing mindfulness practices (Stahl and Goldstein, 2010) when consistently applied to daily life, impacts and supports the healthy integration or the whole of the four wellness paradigms. Another way of looking at this, is when one of the paradigms is out of balance, the others will also be impacted and possibly go out of balance as well.

**Key Learning Point:** The emotional tenant is described by Seaward as “the ability to feel and express the full range of human emotions and to control these feelings, not be controlled by them”. The mental tenant is “the ability to gather, process, recall and communicate information”. The physical component is described as “the optimal functioning of the bodies physiological systems” such as respiratory, skeletal, cardiovascular, digestive and reproductive. The spiritual balance is described as “The state of mature higher consciousness derived from insightful relationships with oneself and others” (Seaward, 2018).

## Self-Assessment Exercise:

See separate file for a wellness visual representing the four wellness areas from my point of view. The visual mandala presents the equal impact of all four areas and the interaction or connection for balancing these areas for optimum health and well-being. It is my understanding of this connection that creates or designs the overlap of the equal size of the four paradigm circles and portrays the overlapping center of the four circles as the wellness tenants in balance.

## Journal Writing:

### Unit One Journal Writing – How Stressed Are You?

The template chart below is from the Stahl, B. and Goldstein, E., A Mindfulness based Stress Reduction Workbook, page 12 (2010).

Situation	Start	Midway	End

**First situation -**

**Second situation -**

**Third situation -**

**Forth Situation –**

**Fifth situation –**

**Sixth situation –**

**Seventh situation –**

**Eighth situation –**

**Ninth situation –**

**Tenth situation –**

## Unit 2: The Physiology of Stress

### Information to Remember:

**Key Learning Point:** Stress can be defined as a “state of anxiety” that exists when “events and responsibilities exceed a person’s ability to cope” with situations, whether the situations are real or imagined. Eastern tradition may describe stress as the “absence of inner peace”. The body under chronic stress overtime results in a “series of physiological responses and adaptations” (Seaward 2018).

**Key Learning Point:** Neuroscience is described as the study of the nervous system, its structure and how it works. Our thoughts and emotions are viewed as being interconnected with the physical processes of the body. Therefore, our thoughts and emotions leading to stress are contributing factors affecting many health and illnesses beyond the psychiatric illness (Stahl, B. and Goldstein, E 2010). Stahl and Goldstein expand the neuroscience discussion to include the study of negative affect of stress on our physiological systems, such as the immunity, digestion, circulatory and respiratory. Given this impact on our body’s vital systems, it can be understood that stress and negative emotions bring on diseases and illnesses related to these system inefficiencies.

**Key Learning Point:** Prior to neuroscience becoming a more formally studied discipline, our brains were thought to be formed upon our birth and maturation process and remain relatively static at that point (Stahl, B. and Goldstein, E 2010). After the development of functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), scientists began to study brain patterns and changes based on various behaviors such as mindfulness meditation, food nutrition and other lifestyle improvements (Amen, D. M.D. 2013). Upon the discovery of the brain improvements from these changes, the term neuroplasticity has been used to describe the ability to alter the brain after adult maturity. This term means our brains have the ability to grow and develop new neural pathways or “fix” unhealthy areas at the cellular level. This is important to know because of the impact of stress and the brain related to memory and other ailments. We now know we can make changes and reduce, eliminate or prevent many issues related to ill brain patterns. (Seaward, 2018).

### Self-Assessment Exercise:

Health professionals have estimated the extent of stress related disease and illnesses to be between 70 to 85 percent of all diseases. This gives a perspective on the importance of stress reduction techniques, processes and education. Part of this education places importance on knowing what types

of diseases are affected by chronic, prolonged stress on the body. Diseases caused by stress impact to the central nervous system, include asthma, tension and migraine headaches, jaw issues, gastrointestinal and cardiovascular diseases. Illnesses such as the common cold and flu, allergies, rheumatoid arthritis, gastrointestinal disorders and even cancer can result from a compromised immune system related to long-term chronic stress. (Seaward 2018).

## **Journal Writing:**

Unit Two Journal Writing - Explore: How is stress or anxiety affecting your life?

The questions below are based on Mindful Exploration in Chapter Two of *A Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Workbook*, Stahl, B and Goldstein, E. PhDs (2010). The authors suggest taking time to reflect on each question and write whatever comes up.

**How is stress or anxiety about people affecting your life?**

**How is stress or anxiety about work affecting your life?**

**How is stress or anxiety about school affecting your life?**

**How is stress or anxiety about the world affecting your life?**

**How is stress or anxiety about food and eating habits affecting your life?**

**How is stress or anxiety about sleep and sleeplessness affecting your life?**

**How is stress or anxiety about exercise or lack of physical activity affecting your life?**



## Unit 3: Psychology of Stress

### Information to Remember:

**Key Learning Point:** At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many years after the Tibetan wisdom philosophy discussed the mind and stress, the study became known as the discipline of psychology. This discipline studies the mind and its relationship to personalities, emotions, perceptions and human behaviors. Psychology has resulted in theorists, mostly psychologists and psychiatrists, presenting their beliefs, research and client or patient experiences about the mind and stress. Theorists such as Freud, Jung, Frankl, Maslow and more recently, Kobler-Ross, Dyer, and Seligman have made their unique mark into the discipline of psychology (Seaward 2018).

**Key Learning Point:** These theorists have a goal in common and that is to help mankind lead fulfilling lives by dealing with emotional problems. Maslow and Seligman take a positive approach rather than treating stress and anxiety and related behaviors as a problem. With the exception of Freud and to a certain extent Maslow, the theorists have the common root of change as happening through self-awareness requiring mindfulness and present moment focus. Essentially, although the theorists each have their own specialty, the change process is rooted in deep self-awareness to improve our mental and emotional states (Seaward 2018).

**Key Learning Point:** Brene Brown describes fear as being related to shame and vulnerability. She states these two emotions prevent us from experiencing happiness, joy and purpose in life. It is from this point of view, dealing with fear can be approached. Learning to be vulnerable and having self-esteem that dissolves shame will reduce and eliminate irrational fear (Seaward 2018).

### Self-Assessment Exercise:

The topics included in this unit assignment deal with reducing stress to live healthier lives. That includes understanding the theorists and their recommendations for dealing with emotional and mental health concerns. This includes dealing with fear and how mindfulness plays a part in resolving fear. All of our life deals with communication styles and working on effective, mindful communication which ultimately results in less long-term stress. We live in a time of rapid communication leading to stress. The more we work to deal with managing our bad stress, the healthier our life span will be for humankind.

## Journal Writing:

### Unit Three Journal Writing - Bringing the Eight Attitudes of Mindfulness into Your Life

The Five-Minute Mindful Breathing and Bringing the Eight Attitudes of Mindfulness into Your Life are learned from Stahl, B and Goldstein, E (2013). YouTube has many short breathing meditations. Find one that appeals to you. You can enjoy using a focused breathing such as Andrew Weil's YouTube 4-7-8 Breathing Technique (See [https://youtu.be/\\_-C\\_VNM1Vd0](https://youtu.be/_-C_VNM1Vd0)) to go into meditation or to fall asleep. It is so healthy to go from doing to being for just a few minutes. The awareness of our breath is so fundamental for relaxing and being in the present moment, this is a must do for anyone who does not yet have a formal mediation practice.

The eight attitudes or perhaps also referred to as “quality of awareness” for practicing mindfulness create a specific focus to be able to concentrate and be more aware of how to be mindful. The process of “in the moment mindfulness” takes practice. Practice the suggested focus of eight attitudes throughout the week. Being a health and wellness coach requires working the various programs. I suggest to my clients, this being one of them.

**Beginner's mind** – At times, we can look at nature as if seeing it for the first time. Just yesterday I was walking outside and came upon a father holding his less than a year-old son. He held him up to the touch of a large tree and the baby was putting his hands on the bark looking at it with amazement. Now that is a beginner's mind for sure. I wish I had taken a photo of this as it struck me as so insightful for the father to give his son this experience, perhaps for the first time. I am practicing this looking at my 93-year old neighbor's beautiful flowers she takes such pride in nourishing. Putting my eyes up to the colors and texture of the flower blooms is a true mindfulness experience of a fresh look at flowers in bloom (See photos page 11/12).

**Nonjudgement** – This attitude can be the most difficult one to master. Our work life may be filled with judgements. Knowing the difference between being helpful and being judgmental is important. Avoid labels of good or bad. Exercising patience may take non-judgement. When finding yourself impatient, say “relax” and take on nonjudgmental thoughts and feelings.

**Acknowledgement** - Being aware of things as they are, perhaps acknowledging and then discerning when this awareness can be viewed as something that could benefit from action. The serenity prayer comes to mind, that is accepting and knowing where change is possible. As an

example, many people are spread thin and it is best to know and acknowledge this. Effort is “is as it is”. Know this and acknowledge it.

**Nonstriving** – Being able to avoid grasping or movement away from the situation in the present. In life and in business, we strive to achieve goals. Put this in perspective; the term “attachment” comes to mind. We can focus on goals and avoid unhealthy attachment such as anger if we are not meeting our goals. Let it go, do not grasp to be right.

**Equanimity** – Being open to change with insight and compassion is important to the mindfulness, life long journey. Webster describes equanimity as “evenness of mind especially under stress. I like this simple definition. Finding the compassion during times of stress is a sign of maturity and mindfulness.

**Letting Be** – Practicing no need to try and “let go” is interesting. We can ask the question, how do we let go of a situation when we are trying not to let go. It is this type of question that is beneficial in a mindfulness group. Being able to discuss and express our ideas and get input from a coach or facilitator and other participants is a form of learning mindfulness concepts. “Letting Be” is a good one to discuss with others.

**Self-reliance** – knowing what is true and untrue has an important awareness in our current times of constant turmoil in our government. I find it important to be informed without the daily distraction. It takes a bit of reading and a small amount of cable TV to determine what is true and untrue. This applies to local issues such as business, family and friends. We must work on discerning the quality of awareness of nonjudgement and self-reliance. Perhaps intuition comes into play here.

**Self-compassion** – Many people have a serious problem with this concept, especially in their 20s and 30s. It’s common for people to think they are not good enough. This is a learned habit of self-care.

Learning about the above eight attitudes is a beneficial informal practice. Being able to write about this each day based on experiences, keeps the mindfulness learning part of daily living. It is best, in my view to keep a journal and write about an experience each day to keep the focus on this practice. In the five-day timeframe clients notice a change in awareness. Daily journal recording with Chopra, D.’s Seven Spiritual Laws of Success is also beneficial. I suggest this to my clients who are

inclined to work on mindfulness as part of their health and wellness. A wellness journal is important to this life long process.

#### REFERENCES

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Weil, A. M.D. (2017). Andrew Weil 4-7-8 Breathing Technique. Retrieved from

[https://youtu.be/-C\\_VNM1Vd0](https://youtu.be/-C_VNM1Vd0)



**The beginner's Mind** The ginger plant which also has blooms is amazing



Bird of paradise has turned the blooms to seed pods. A pineapple in bloom, watch it grow



## Unit 4: Personality Traits and the Human Spirituality

### Information to Remember:

**Key Learning Point:** Having high self-esteem is associated with a stress-resistant personality trait required to manage stress (Seaward 2018). Self-esteem is described as self-respect, self-value, and self-love. Self-esteem is regarded as the ability to have the inner resources to bounce back or be resilient when stressful situations are encountered. Seaward so strongly believes in the concept of developing high self-esteem to manage stress, he refers to it as a daily practice and compares it to eating and teeth brushing. (Seaward, 2018).

**Key Learning Point:** There are three pillars of human spirituality affecting individual stress management (Seaward 2018). In Seaward's article, *The Ego and the Soul* (n.d.), he describes every stressor as dealing with "relationships, values, and/or meaningful purpose in life" and refers to human spirituality and stress as "partners in the dance of life". (Seaward, 2018).

**Key Learning Point:** All of health and wellness improvement work depends upon a person's ability to change. Prochaska's Stage of Change Model was developed after he spent years studying the human change process. His six Stages of Change Model (Precontemplation, Contemplation, Discovery, Action, Maintenance and Relapse) has been mastered and is known as a "premier model for behavior modification". In particular this model is known for its focus on addictive behaviors and it includes relapse stage six as part of the process. (Seaward 2018).

### Self-Assessment Exercise:

The topics included in this unit deal with stress and its related attributes. This includes how high self-esteem drives the ability to handle stress. The interaction of relationships, values and life's purpose (The three Pillars of Spirituality) is a primary contributor to healthy spirituality and managing stress. All of our life deals with the maturing process of managing stress. Knowing how to manage change can also give us self-esteem and solid stress management over our life span.

## Journal Writing:

### Unit Four Journal Writing Assignment - **Explore: Identifying Emotions in the Body**

Explore: Identifying Emotions in the Body is learned from Stahl, B and Goldstein, E (2010, pages 74 through 77). This informal practice is intended to bring more awareness to our emotions and the physical sensations in our body associated with the emotions. It can also increase our ability to work with ourselves and others in extending our reference to feelings and emotional descriptions. Bold your emotional words related to within the groups of seven positive and negative emotions in the list below. Write about events in an effort to bring about the sensations in your body.

**FEAR:** apprehension, anxiety, distress, edginess, jumpiness, nervousness, panic, tenseness, uneasiness, worry, fright, feeling overwhelmed.

**CONFUSION:** bewildered, uncertain, puzzled, mystified, perplexed, chaotic, foggy, or unaware.

**ANGER:** aggravation, agitation, annoyance, destructiveness, disgust, envy, frustration, irritation, grouchiness, grumpiness, rage.

This emotion may include a lack of patience. Impatience is described by Seaward (2018, Page 149) and his references as related to anger. He specifically states, impatience can fester into “free-floating hostility” or mismanaged anger.

**SADNESS:** alienation, anguish, despair, disappointment, gloom, grief, hopelessness, insecurity, loneliness, misery, unhappiness, rejection.

I have a long-time friend who was fond of saying, “you can’t help the way you feel”. While I know we can be mindful and avoid rumination and negative thoughts, we can still feel strongly the emotion of sadness. We can also feel joy that lifts our hearts sadness.

**SHAME:** guilt, embarrassment, humiliation, invalidation, regret, remorse, mortification.

**LOVE:** affection, arousal, attraction, caring, compassion, desire, fondness, infatuation, kindness, liking, longing, warmth, sympathy, sentimentality.

**JOY:** amusement, bliss, contentment, eagerness, elation, enjoyment, enthusiasm, excitement, exhilaration, hope, optimism, pleasure, satisfaction.

I feel we should have a goal in life to experience joy. We all need to believe in our life purpose and have passion for it. At the same time, it is so important to balance our thoughts and the emotions in our body through joy. In my mind this includes having a good sense of humor and being around friends and family who have this. When we are amused and content in an experience, our bodies can feel alive.

My review of this exercise is that it gives a person more ability to be introspective and in touch with their emotions. It develops an awareness of the importance and the emotional language we sometimes avoid using in our day to day lives. Taking the time to write about our emotions can bring on feelings of mindfulness and present moment awareness. It is more solid to write down and select actual emotional feeling terms for our events or my situations. It is interesting to see two of the seven primary emotions are the uncomfortable emotions as described by Stahl (2018 page 74). Just joy and love are listed as the good feeling emotions. I like to see a balance as the comfortable emotions are as

important to nourish as monitoring and reducing the uncomfortable emotions. I worked with small business owners in group settings. I created a program in 2014 from my various readings and The Emotional Scale is one of tools in the program (see next page). When I introduced this tool to the group, the participants began to use the term, “stay above the line”. This meant they would focus on staying in “contentment” or above, that is in the beneficial, good emotions state. The first 16 emotions are the good feeling emotions from joy to contentment. Beginning with boredom they diminish from there and below to non-beneficial.

#### References

- Seaward, B. (2018). *Managing stress: Principles and strategies for health and well-being*. Burlington, MA: Jones & Bartlett Learning.
- Stahl, B., & Goldstein, E. (2010). *A mindfulness-based stress reduction workbook*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc.





## Unit 5: Dealing with Stress: Coping Strategies

### Information to Remember:

**Key Learning Point:** Prochaska’s six stages of change model as noted in Unit Four are important to teach clients about their own change. It provides them with a basis to understand where they are in the model and can move them forward if they are goal oriented to work on the next stage of their own change (Seaward, 2018).

**Key Learning Point:** The six stages of change can be used when advising a client to change their diet in order to have it be more nutritional and including having less of the foods that promote stress. Additionally, it can be used for a client who could benefit from a physical exercise program but has not yet accepted it is necessary. The change starts with the denial or precontemplation phase and requires good background and knowledge transfer to assist a client in making the decision to move to contemplation, determination, and action.

**Key Learning Point:** Seaward describes our human ability to manage our thoughts as the “Choice to choose our thoughts”. He describes this concept as the reason Frankl was able to survive the concentration camp. He found meaning in his experience and this gave him the ability to choose his attitude. This is a lesson we can all learn from because it is our thoughts that lead to our emotions and lead to our best actions if managed properly Seaward, 2018).

### Self-Assessment Exercise:

Using the RAIN concept below also as described on page 116, Stahl, B. 2010 as applied to the one-arm stretch yoga pose, page 123. Please complete this RAIN exercise to any yoga or movement pose you are comfortable in performing.

**R** – Recognize when a strong emotion is present.

**A** – Allow or acknowledge it is there.

**I** – Investigate the body, mind and thoughts.

**N** – Non-identify with whatever is there. Stahl describes this step as “loosening the grip of your own mind traps

## **Journal Writing:**

The instructions are to walk back and forth for approximately one to two lengths of our body for ten minutes. As described, “the point is to arrive in the present moment with each step”. This is a succinct description in that it is clear the goal is to focus on the steps (“lifting, moving, placing”) for the ten minutes of exercise time. Slowing down to “develop a careful awareness of the body” is another way the meditation is described (Stahl 2013). As with most meditative, mindfulness work, it is important to be in the frame of mind and know what we want to accomplish. Stahl (2010) notes, the concept is to use this walking meditation practice throughout our days and it can be modified depending on the circumstances. This practice in my view is a healthy mindfulness practice and journaling about it creates a thoughtful mindset.

In summary, the walking meditation is another exercise for focusing on mindfulness. In this case it is on our body motion and remaining focused on that to “relieve” the mind of the chatter and the many things on our to do lists of the day. I also feel it is good to mix it up, that is, to do various types of meditations such as, body scan, eyes closed non-thinking, breathing and nature.

### **Creating Pennsylvania Mountain, Meditative Walking Path**



## Unit 6: Relaxation Techniques 1: Breathing, Meditation, and Mental Imagery

### Information to Remember:

**Key Learning Point:** Diaphragmatic breathing according to Seaward (2018) is described as “unequivocally” the easiest method or best way to initiate relaxation. Seaward defines diaphragmatic breathing as the inhale and exhale from the lower stomach or diaphragm. The majority of our American population has learned a shallow breathing (Seaward, 2018).

**Key Learning Point:** The belly breathing is stated to decrease sympathetic response. In other words, the shallow, upper chest breathing creates a sympathetic response or an increase in tension and stress. Being in the parasympathetic response state is beneficial to relaxation and stress reduction because it brings about homeostasis which balances the body physiologically to a “complete state of calmness or rest”. The health markers such as blood pressure, heart rate and oxygen capacity measurements are proof of the health improvement of belly breathing (Seaward 2018).

**Key Learning Point:** Dr. Weil M.D. who practices eastern traditions such as breathing, yoga and meditation with his patients, states the four-seven-eight count breathing exercise gets more favorable responses from patients than any other teachings he uses. He describes it as the best anti-anxiety technique. In fact, he states if he is asked to provide just one tip for healthier living it would be “to learn how to breathe correctly” (Dr. Weil, A. 1999).

### Self-Assessment Exercise:

There are three key steps to practicing diaphragmic breathing. Once this is learned it is important to know that belly breathing can become second nature. Step One - Setting the stage or being comfortable can start with loose fitting clothing, lying down on your back for best positioning, although a seated position with feet flat of the floor can be used depending on the individual’s environment. For either position have your eyes closed. When you are learning the technique place your hands on your stomach to feel the abdominal area rise and fall with the inhale and exhale of breath. In beginning stage two, set the stage by having an environment of silence of electronic devises and human interaction. The second stage is to proactively concentrate on the

deep belly breath. The focused breathing, similar to other types of meditation, is conscious attention on the awareness of the breath. For abdominal breathing the most important point is to focus on the exhaling from the belly area, pausing and then focusing on the inhale down into the lower part of the belly area. Step three uses visualization as a “partner” in the relaxation process of diaphragmatic breathing (Seaward 2018).

### **Journal Writing:** Unit Six Journal Writing Assignment -Explore body-mind happiness

The “Explore: Is Your Body-Mind Happy?” is described on pages 151 through 153 in Stahl, B and Goldstein, E (2010). The instructions are to be mindful of how you interact with yourself. Do you send unkind messages to yourself or water seeds of suffering? Record day to day resentments when encountering difficult people and bring an open heart to that person. Why might the person be unkind? In my view this is a powerful step to improving self-esteem. Stahl states “awareness and compassion set you free” (Stahl 2010). You can begin to be **Mindful of how you interact with yourself.**

In addition to Thich Nhat Hanh’s “Seeds of suffering” quote, he also, in *Touching Peace* (1992) describes “watering the seeds of happiness” (page 118). I feel it is as important to concentrate on the seeds of happiness as it is to concentrate on the seeds of suffering. Hanh describes the suffering (the wave) as being necessary to have happiness (the water or nirvana), that is, to know both for best results. He emphasizes not waiting until there is no suffering to experience happiness. Use the words “cancel cancel” when noticing yourself in the moment of ruminating thoughts of suffering. This focusses on **watering the seeds of comfort and happiness and not dwell on the seeds of suffering.**

Certainly, as with any writing or journaling on the subject of thoughts and feelings is therapeutic. It is a good idea to work out some of our feelings by writing them down.

References: Stahl, B., & Goldstein, E. (2010). *A mindfulness-based stress reduction workbook*. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger Publications, Inc. Hanh, T. N. (1992). *Touching Peace, Practicing the Art of Mindful Living*. Published by Parallax Press.



## Unit 7: Nutrition and Stress

### Information to Remember:

**Key Learning Point:** Seaward states to nourish our mind, body and spirit, “we need to make choices about what we put in our mouth”. I have heard an MD refer to managing lifestyle, stress and nutrition as “Living as if you intend to last”. Both of these premises assume an individual knows “what” to put in their mouth or “how” to live as though they intend to last.

**Key Learning Point:** Everyone’s body reacts differently to foods. It can be noted in general, certain foods cause stress in the mind and body. Too much caffeine, fats, salt, sugar, alcohol and simple carbohydrates are stress inducer foods (Seaward 2018).

**Key Learning Point:** Becoming aware of habitual patterns that are not good for us can be discerned with a focused practice of seated meditation. The Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction Workbook Stahl, 2010 provides a DVD of three durations, 15, 30- and 45-minute meditations. They deepen the practice because they specifically change focus from the breath, then body sensations, sound or hearing, thoughts and then emotions. Overtime, with a beginner’s mind and not expecting a notable outcome, daily practice will deepen the focus of present moment awareness in all of life. Stahl refers to this as “Choiceless Awareness”. YouTube has many durations and best meditations practices for all experiences.

### Self-Assessment Exercise:

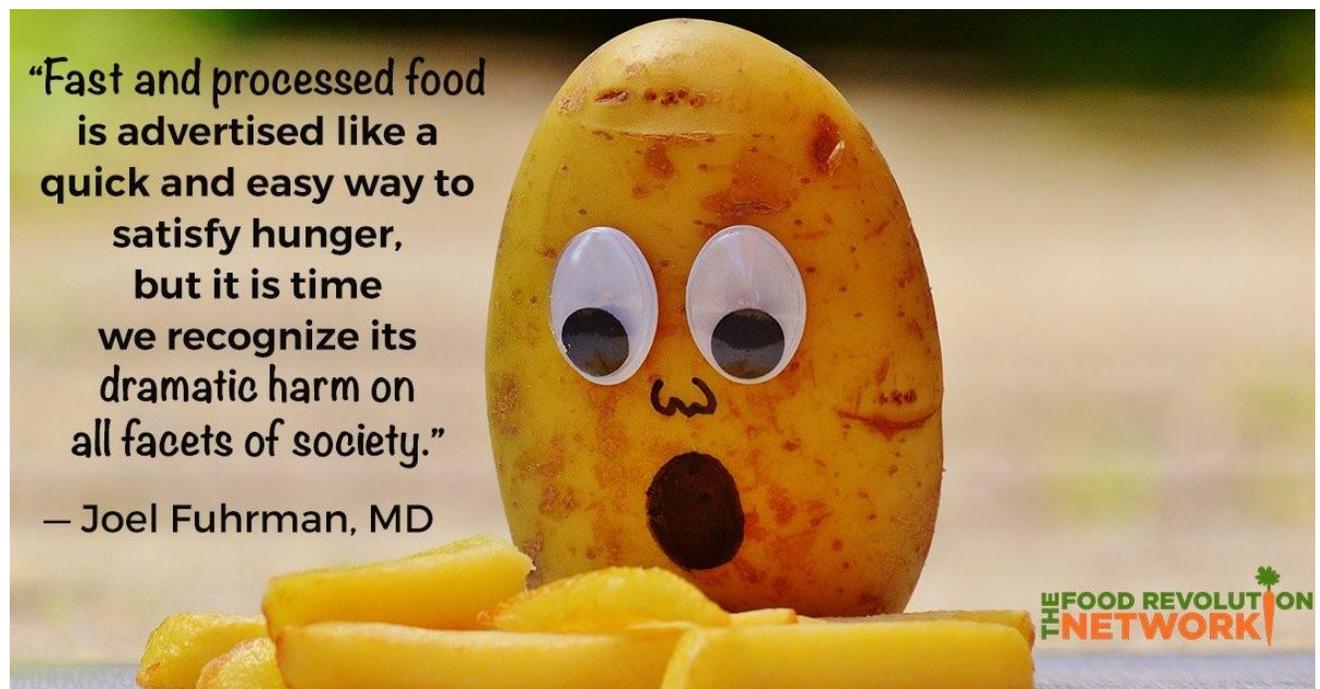
Seaward relates stress-related food factors to four dominos which can be used as a teaching tool for understanding the threats of stress.

Seaward lists **domino one** as stress depleting the vitamins and minerals in the body. This is because of the physiology of the body under stress. The fight or flight stress reaction uses energy in the body and that depletes minerals and vitamins. As minerals such as copper, iron, zinc, magnesium and chromium are depleted the immune system is compromised as well (Seaward 2018).

**Domino two** conveys, as stress depletes nutrients (domino one) our eating lifestyle of the Standard American Diet (SAD), void of nutrients, continues to add to the depletion of nutrients and thus adds to stress. Dr. Fuhrman, J. (2017) as noted in The Food Revolution Network, states, “Fast Food and processed food is advertised like a quick and easy way to satisfy hunger, it is time we recognize its dramatic harm on all facets of society”. Certainly, harm includes chronic disease and obesity which all move the “domino” of stress.

**Domino three** could be viewed as a companion to two in that certain foods (many related to junk food and fast food of the SAD) also add to the sympathetic nervous system triggering an imbalance of homeostasis and promotion of stress. Foods such as too much coffee and salt, almost any added sugar, simple starches and alcohol, most notably move domino three to on-going harder effects on our stress load.

**Domino four** also related to two and three includes the effects of toxins in our food supply largely caused from the non-organic or pesticide laden industrialized farming including GMOs. The best way I know to avoid this is to eat real food, that is fresh and choose organic wisely based on those foods that are higher in pesticides according to the Environmental Working Group (2020).



## Unit 8: Physical Exercise and Activity

### Information to Remember:

**Key Learning Point:** The overall purpose of a business health and wellness program is to have a healthier workforce through a conscientious focus on stress management education and exercises. According to The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) programs of this type can “improve health risks and improve the quality of life for American workers”. Concentrating on a stress management program is a key component of any health and wellness program because according to Seaward (2018) as cited by the American Institute of Stress, 43% of Americans suffer adverse health consequences of stress and 80% of all visits to primary care physicians are for stress-related health issues.

**Key Learning Point:** Some experts believe up to 75 to 80% of all diseases and illnesses are related to stress. Stress is being linked to various causes of death including heart disease, cancer, lung disease, accidents and suicides (Seaward 2018). Given this compelling data it is prudent for all American businesses to “protect” their workforce and provide programs to educate their employees in managing their stress.

**Key Learning Point:** A workforce stress management program can include topics such as an Overview of stress management and benefits, Conscious Breathing, Benefits of physical exercise, Mindfulness and meditation. Additionally, Food as nutrition reduces stress, Interpersonal and loving kindness mindfulness, Brain health, Wellness pillars, a Culture of wellness, and Pets heal stress. When employees engage in a comprehensive stress management program, they become more productive, more engaged in their work, have less absenteeism and lower health care costs. The benefits to employees can be life changing. Reducing chronic, stress-related diseases as well as anxiety, anger and better sleep and interpersonal relationships are an immense program result. The impact on employees and their friends and family is priceless.

### Self-Assessment Exercises:

A workforce program will undoubtedly yield measurable business results well beyond the cost of the program. The goals are to have healthier, happier and more engaged employees for whom stress management becomes intuitive. This makes the business a fun place to work. This can also be used as a recruiting tool because talented people want to work where the business has a noticeable interest in the wellness of their employees. This program will catch on with other businesses as “workforce wellness spreads” far and wide.

## Journal Writing:

### Unit Eight Journal – Explore: Creating Connection

“Explore: Creating Connection” is described in Chapter nine, interpersonal mindfulness, pages 161 through 163 in Stahl, B and Goldstein, E (2010). The specific formal practice and reflective journal refers to a visioning or imagining a conversation with a person we care about with a focus on the quality of the relationship. The “pretend” interaction is completed after reading the description of each six qualities and then one by one, the focus of each is reflected upon.

**OPENNESS:** Using the analogy of one slice of the pie as representative of each other’s perspective is a thoughtful image to use when being open to the opinion of others.

**EMPATHY:** Open up to the thoughts and feelings of others. Write about your imagined of actual event results

**COMPASSION:** Being able to combine the empathy and ease to the suffering of others.

**LOVING-KINDNESS:** Envision the for others until it is second nature.

**SYMPATHETIC JOY:** Truly be joyful for others.

**EQUANIMITY:** “A quality of wisdom, and evenness and steadiness of mind that comprehends the nature of change”.

In Summary, this exercise can put one in a position to develop the qualities that drive healthy relationships. Relationships are a primary factor in having a life of wellness and they are worthy of being worked on and developed to the fullest extent. “Creating Connection” is also a great teaching tool for a business’s wellness program or one-on-one health and wellness coaching.

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## Unit 9: Applying Stress: Critical Issues for Management and Prevention to your Professional Life

### Information to Remember:

**Key Learning Point:** It is a common issue to hear about professional and personal situations where the perception of being wronged by another results in anger. Anger brings on negative, ruminating thoughts. Negative attitudes, resentment and holding a grudge are all emotions that can cause toxic thoughts and the inability to process or manage stress. Learning how to find the inner ability to forgive a person or professional organization you feel have treated you unfairly is a primary coping skill in managing stress (Seaward 2018).

**Key Learning Point:** The process of forgiveness can be compared to the stages of grief (Seaward 2018 and Simon and Simon). Some people are so dug in to resentment they are in denial (stage one) about their grudge holding or that they were wronged. Seaward goes on the state getting to the integration stage or letting go to forgiveness requires “unconditional love toward yourself and others”. Forgiveness as an effective coping skill is described as diluting or releasing toxic thoughts. Many people are not aware how toxic thoughts impact their ability to manage the stress in their lives. This is an education process for those open to dealing with their anger, resentment and grudge holding (Seaward, 2018).

**Key Learning Point:** Creating our own stress management program or even with the assistance of a wellness coach is a very individual process. It takes inner resources, awareness and a strong desire for personal growth to truly make change in stress management copying skills. Seaward has six suggestions for building our own program. They are spending quiet time in self-exploration, awareness of our emotional barometer (perhaps similar to The Emotional Scale, Journal Unit Four, unconditional love and self-esteem, nurturing creativity, balancing the wellbeing components of emotional, mental and spiritual energies and being childlike in curiosity and imagination (Seaward 2018).

# Additional Information

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