

Becoming Aware of Worry and Stress



Becoming Aware

- ❖ Worry/stress has three types of symptoms:
 - Physical
 - Thoughts
 - Behaviors

Physical

❖ How your body reacts to worry/stress

- Muscle tension
- Rapid pulse
- Butterflies in stomach



Chest Tightness



Unexplained Sweating



Dry Mouth



Nausea or Stomachaches



Weight Loss or Gain

Thoughts

❖ Common areas of worry:

- Health
- Finances
- Family/friends



Unwanted Thoughts



Fret about Friends/Family



Concerned about Aging

Behaviors

Actions you take to reduce worry/stress:

❖ Avoidance

- Avoidance of activities
- Procrastination



Putting Things Off

❖ Doing too much

- Checking
- Smoking
- Asking for reassurance



Avoiding People/Places

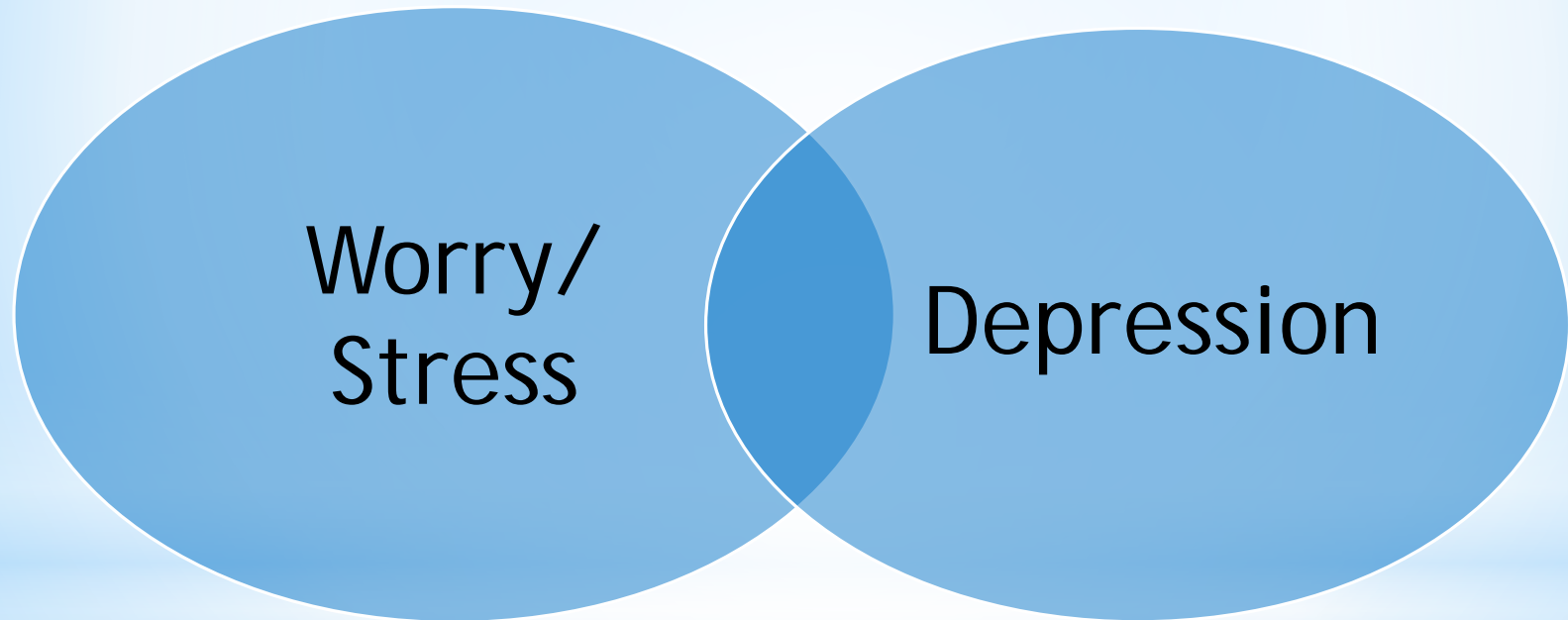


Worry/Stress can be a Problem When...

- ❖ It's too frequent.
- ❖ It's too intense.
- ❖ It continues past a frightening situation.
- ❖ You can't control it.
- ❖ It prevents you from reaching goals or living life.
- ❖ When has worry/stress been a problem for you?



Worry/Stress vs. Depression



Worry/Stress vs. Depression

❖ Worry/stress

- Feeling afraid or worried about things you want to do
- Feeling stressed
- Focusing on the future
- Tending to feel on edge

❖ Depression

- Losing interest in things you used to enjoy
- Feeling hopeless and sad
- Focusing on the past
- Tending to feel slow, sluggish

Reducing Worry/Stress

- ❖ Talk to your doctor.
- ❖ Talk to a counselor.
- ❖ Learn skills to cope with worry/stress.

Benefits and Obstacles in Reducing Worry/Stress

- ❖ What **benefits** might you get from reducing worry/stress?
- ❖ What **obstacles** might you face in trying to reduce worry/stress?

Future Workshops

❖ Deep Breathing

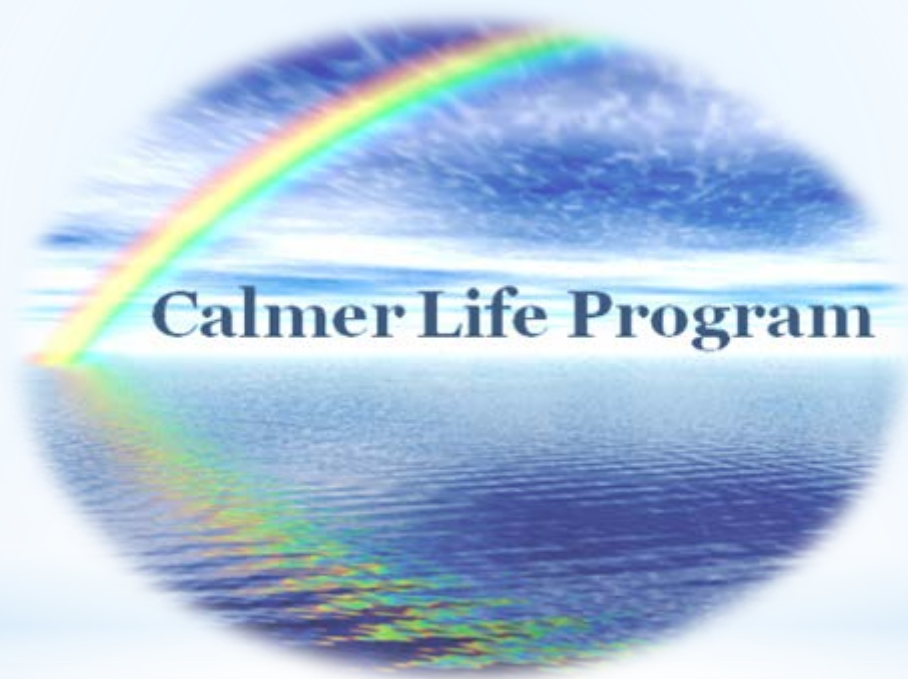
- Learn breathing exercises that can help you relax.

❖ Thought Stopping

- Learn how to stop unwanted thoughts to reduce your worry and stress.

❖ Calming Statements

- Learn helpful statements, and create your own to manage stress and worry.



Deep Breathing

Worry and Stress

- ❖ All of us have some worry and stress in our lives.
- ❖ What are your sources of worry and stress?
- ❖ Worry and stress can be:
 - Negative thoughts
 - Physical symptoms
 - Behavior symptoms



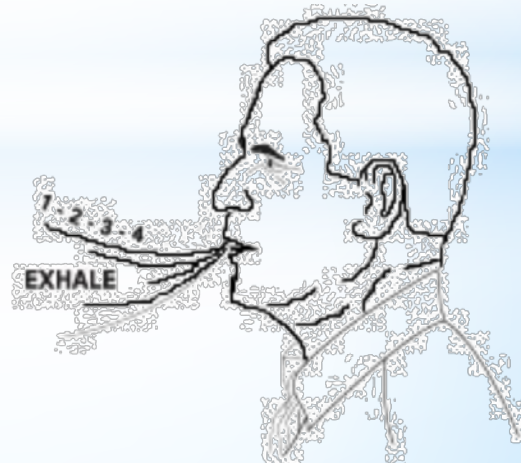
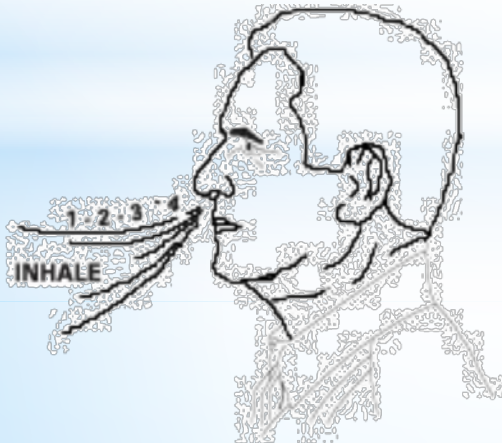
Deep Breathing Can Help

- ❖ When you're worried, your breathing becomes rapid and shallow.
- ❖ Rapid and shallow breaths can make you feel dizzy, lightheaded, and even more worried.
- ❖ Changing the way you breathe can make your mind and body more "relaxed."

Two Key Features

1. Take slow, even, deep breaths.

- Inhale through your nose to the count of four.
- Exhale through your mouth to the count of four.
- Do not pause at the top of each breath.



Two Key Features

2. Breathe through your diaphragm, not your chest.

- Place one hand on your stomach.
- Place the other hand on your chest.
- The hand on your stomach should move in and out as you breathe.
- The hand on your chest should stay still.





Using Religion/Spirituality to Enhance Relaxation

- ❖ Spiritual relaxation can also help.
- ❖ You can visualize any religious image or word over and over again as you take slow, even, and deep breaths.



Let's Practice

1. Sit comfortably in a chair with your feet uncrossed.
2. Close your eyes.
3. Place one hand on your stomach and place the other hand on your chest.
4. Now, inhale through your nose to the count of four, and exhale through your mouth to the count of four.
5. As you exhale, purse your lips.
6. Remember to take slow, even, deep breaths and breathe through your diaphragm.
7. If you have a religious or spiritual image or word that makes you relaxed, you can visualize your image or word over and over again.





Instructions For Practice

- ❖ Choose a regular time to practice each day for 10-15 minutes.
- ❖ Remember, the more you practice, the easier it will be to use this tool.
- ❖ Once you feel comfortable with this skill, you can use it when you are in a situation that makes you worried or stressed.





Future Workshops

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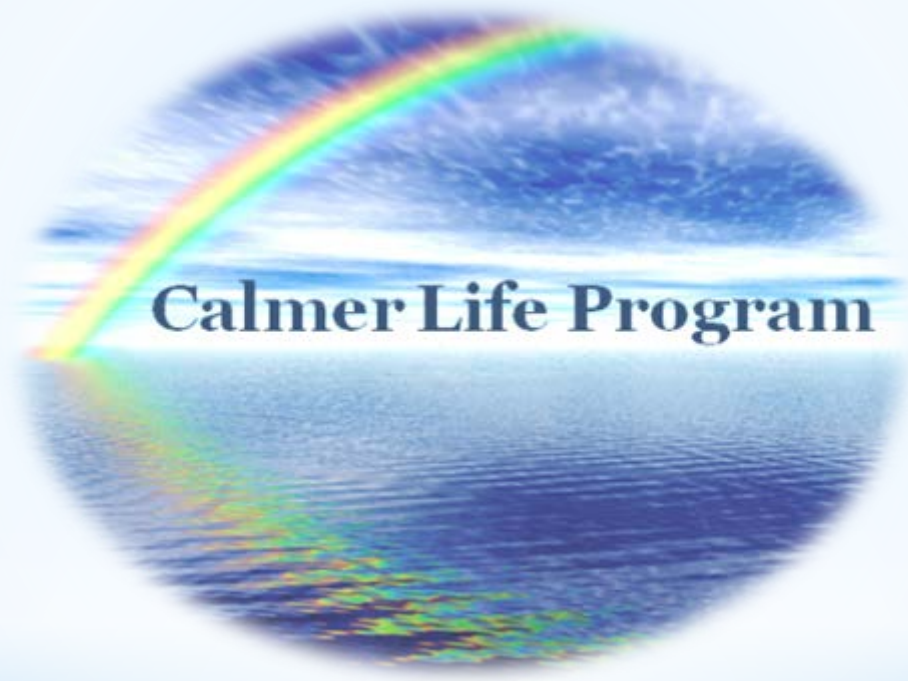
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Thought Stopping

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Thought Stopping Can Help

- ❖ Use thoughts or images as cues to stop worry and stress thoughts.
- ❖ This helps you redirect your attention.





Thought Stopping Steps

1. Be aware of worry or stress thoughts.
This helps challenge anxiety-related thoughts.



Thought Stopping Steps

2. Tell yourself “STOP!” (silently or loudly) when you experience worry/stressful thoughts.





Thought Stopping Steps

3. Direct your attention towards other things.

- Focus on what you see in the room, what you hear, or smell.
- You can also focus your attention on doing other activities, such as meditation or prayer.



Instructions for Practice

1. Picture yourself in the worry/stress situation.
2. Tell yourself to “STOP!,” and picture a stop sign.
3. Then focus your attention on what’s around you.



Future Workshops

❖ Deep Breathing

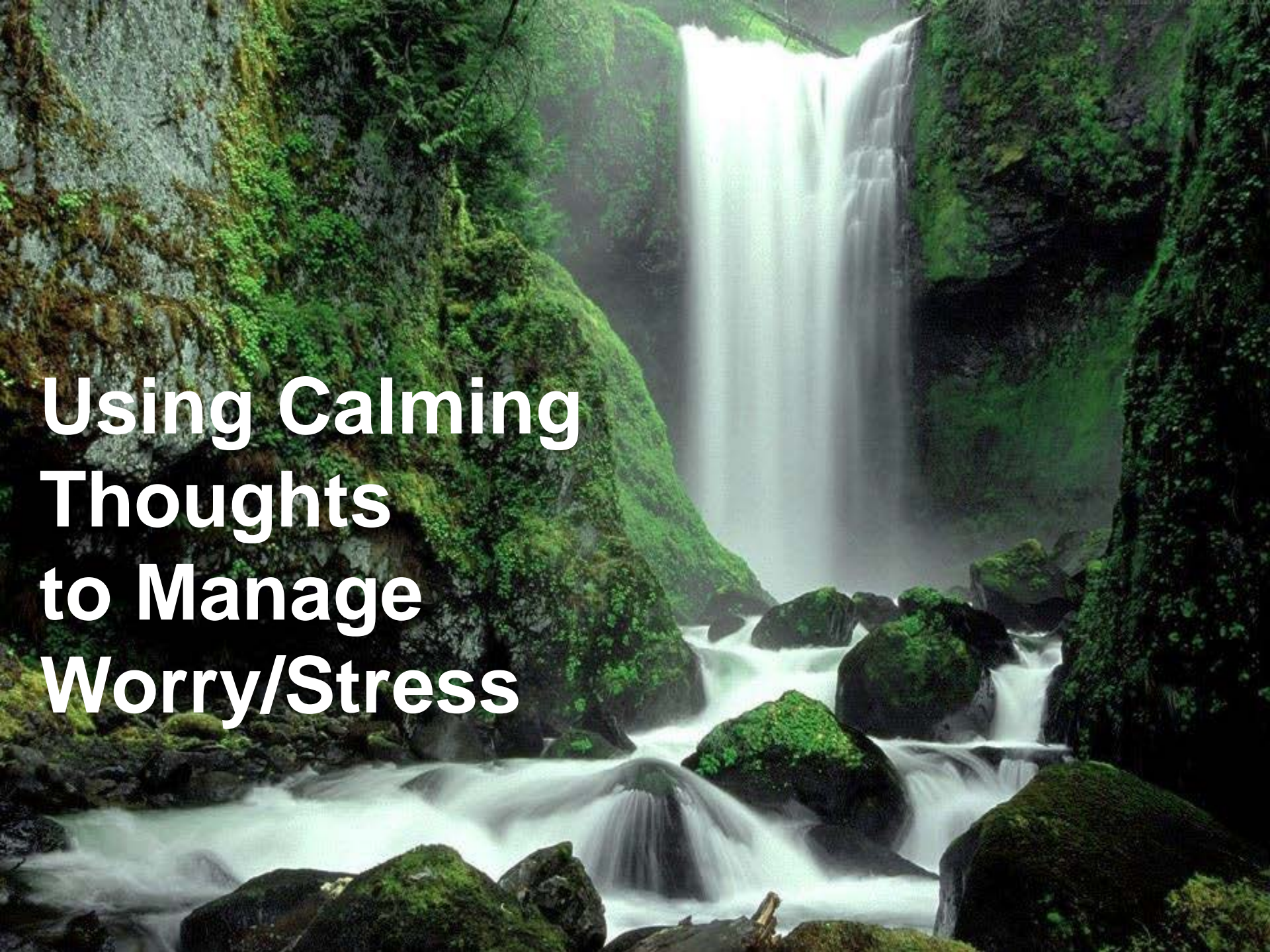
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Using Calming Thoughts to Manage Worry/Stress



Calming Thought

- ❖ A Calming Thought is a statement that you make to yourself that helps to decrease your worry and stress about certain situations or to see them in a new way.
- ❖ The goal is to help you realize that you are able to manage things.





Calming Thought Examples:

- ❖ *“If I take it one step at a time, I can meet this challenge.”*
- ❖ *“Even if I make mistakes, it will be okay.”*
- ❖ *“It’s not the worst thing in the world.”*

Religious/Spiritual Calming Thoughts



- ❖ Some people include religion and/or spirituality in their calming thoughts to help them.
- ❖ The idea that you are not alone and can depend on something greater than yourself can help reduce worry and stress.



Religious/Spiritual Calming Thought Examples:

- ❖ *“I can do what I need to do, with ____’s help.”*
- ❖ *“____ will never give me more than I can handle.”*
- ❖ *“I am thankful for this opportunity to grow.”*



Now it's your turn...

- ❖ Think of a stressful situation.
- ❖ Now think of a Calming Statement.
- ❖ Say the statement out loud.
- ❖ Take a deep breath and exhale.
- ❖ Repeat.
- ❖ PRACTICE on your own!



Practice
Makes
Progress



Tips!

Easy ways to include into your daily life:

- ❖ Don't be afraid to say these out loud!
- ❖ Record thoughts on tape.
- ❖ Write favorite ones on note cards.

Questions/Comments?

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