



Turning Anxiety & Stress into Action Webinar Transcript 12/2024

Welcome to the webinar *Turning Anxiety & Stress into Action*. Thank you for being here today. I appreciate your time and your willingness to invest in yourself. Today, I'll provide as much value as possible in the next hour. There will be no selling, and this session is completely free. At the end, I'll ask if you're interested in exploring the tools and techniques I'll share today in further detail and how they might apply to your situation. If that's okay with everyone, please type "yes" in the chat.

I'll also send out the recording and resources, including slides and worksheets, within seven days. If you didn't sign up for yourself or are using a name different from the one you registered with, please use the chat's direct message option to send me your name and email address to ensure you receive the resources.

If possible, I encourage you to turn on your video to help you stay focused and present. Also, closing any tabs or social media that might distract you will help you make the most of this time together.

Overview of Today's Webinar

We'll discuss:

- What stress is and how it impacts your body and mind.
- The role of the nervous system in stress and anxiety.
- Techniques to manage stress, including body-up and head-down approaches.
- Practical exercises you can use immediately to reduce stress and anxiety.

What is Stress?

Stress triggers the "fight or flight" response. In prehistoric times, this response helped humans survive life-threatening situations, such as encountering predators. While life-threatening dangers are rare today, our brains react to modern stressors—work deadlines, financial pressures, or interpersonal conflicts—in the same way.

Stress can be classified into two types:

- **Acute Stress:** Short-term stress that goes away quickly.
- **Chronic Stress:** Persistent stress lasting over extended periods, which can lead to serious health issues like heart disease, depression, or anxiety disorders.

Interestingly, short-term stress can be beneficial by increasing alertness and productivity. However, chronic stress often leads to negative outcomes, including burnout.

Is All Stress Bad?

Not all stress is harmful.

- **Eustress:** Positive stress that energizes and motivates you.
- **Distress:** Negative stress that leads to exhaustion, decreased productivity, and emotional strain.

The key is finding the right balance. Too little stress can lead to inactivity, while too much stress can cause burnout.

The Nervous System's Role

The nervous system has two key components:

1. **Sympathetic Nervous System:** Activates the "fight or flight" response, increasing heart rate, blood pressure, and energy.
2. **Parasympathetic Nervous System:** Activates the "rest and digest" response, returning the body to a calm state.

Unfortunately, the brain doesn't distinguish between a bear attack and a stressful email. This can lead to unnecessary activation of the fight-or-flight response.

Chronic activation of the sympathetic nervous system can cause symptoms like anxiety, digestive problems, and sleep disturbances.

Managing Emotions

Did you know emotions only last 90 seconds? According to Dr. Jill Taylor, the biochemical response to a trigger naturally dissipates in just 90 seconds. However, we often prolong these emotions by ruminating on the cause. Redirecting your thoughts can allow emotions to fade naturally.

Stress Management Techniques

Body-Up Approaches

These techniques begin with the physical body to influence your emotional state:

- **Deep Breathing:** Activates the parasympathetic nervous system, signaling safety to your brain.
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Helps release physical tension.
- **Exercise:** Burns excess energy created by the fight-or-flight response.

Exercise: Box Breathing

1. Inhale for 4 counts.
 2. Hold for 4 counts.
 3. Exhale for 4 counts.
 4. Hold for 4 counts.
- Repeat at least three times.
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Grounding Techniques

Grounding involves focusing on your physical senses to interrupt stressful thoughts.

Exercise: 5-4-3-2-1

- Identify **5 items** you see.
 - Touch **4 surfaces**.
 - Listen for **3 sounds**.
 - Smell **2 things**.
 - Taste **1 thing** (if available).
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Head-Down Approaches

These methods use reasoning to change your thought patterns:

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**: Helps reframe negative thoughts.
- **Meditation**: Encourages mindfulness and kindness.
- **Journaling**: Processes emotions and creates clarity.

Reframing Example

Turn anxiety into excitement by telling yourself, "I am excited," rather than "I am anxious." Both emotions have similar physical symptoms, and reframing can shift your mindset.

Steps to Reframe

1. Identify the source of stress.
2. Acknowledge your feelings.
3. Challenge negative thoughts.
4. Find the silver lining.

5. Develop an action plan.
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Word Association and Stress

The words we use to describe situations can greatly influence how we perceive them. Negative words reinforce stress, while positive words shift our mindset and improve our response.

Exercise: Word Association

Take a moment to write down the first thought that comes to mind for each of the following prompts:

- Work is...
- My relationships are...
- My future is...

Reflection Steps:

1. Look at the word associations you wrote. What feeling or emotion does each thought provoke?
2. Is this how you *want* to feel?
3. Choose a new word or phrase that reflects how you'd like to view the situation.
4. Cross out the old thought and write down the new one.

For example, instead of "Work is stressful and exhausting," you might replace it with "Work is challenging and an opportunity to grow."

Repeat the new phrase 3-5 times daily as a positive affirmation. Over time, this shifts your subconscious reaction to the situation.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Can these techniques help with chronic stress or are they mainly for acute stress?

These techniques work for both acute and chronic stress. Body-up techniques like deep breathing provide immediate relief, while head-down approaches like reframing can reduce your overall stress response over time. Chronic stress may require consistent practice and sometimes changes in your environment, such as leaving a toxic workplace or addressing unhealthy relationships. Some situations are stressful to one person and not another. Changing your perception of the situation so it is not stressful can sometimes be achieved through reframing.

2. How quickly can I activate the parasympathetic nervous system?

Techniques like box breathing, grounding, and naming your emotions can quickly activate the parasympathetic nervous system. Changing your environment, such as stepping outside or into another room, can also be effective.

3. How can I apply stress management techniques in everyday situations?

Start with a body-up approach, like deep breathing or grounding, to calm yourself in the moment. Then, use head-down approaches like reframing or journaling to address the root cause of stress. The key is to acknowledge the emotion immediately and take action before it spirals.

4. How often should I practice grounding exercises or deep breathing?

You'll see immediate results if you practice these exercises as soon as stress arises. However, building a daily habit—such as practicing these techniques every morning—will help you manage stress more effectively over time. Regular practice creates a natural response, so you can apply these tools more easily in high-stress moments.

5. Will the peripheral vision technique work in a high-stress work environment?

The peripheral vision technique may take time to show results. It's most effective when practiced regularly, such as every morning, as part of a stress management routine. Over time, it can help reduce your overall stress levels and improve your ability to stay calm in high-stress environments.

Final Thoughts

I want to thank you for taking the time to join me for this webinar. I hope the tools and techniques I've shared today will help you better manage stress and anxiety. Remember, these strategies require consistent practice, but they can make a significant difference in your well-being.

As a reminder:

- You'll receive the recording, slides, worksheets, and additional resources via email within the next seven days.
- If you're interested in exploring how these tools can be applied to your unique challenges and goals, I'd love to offer you a free one-on-one virtual discovery session.

In this session, we'll:

1. Discuss the challenges you're facing.
2. Clarify your goals.
3. Identify tools and techniques to help you move forward.

If you're interested in scheduling a discovery session, please type "yes" in the chat, and I'll follow up via email. If you're not interested, type "no."

Thank you again for being here. I'll stay on for a few minutes to answer any additional questions or speak with anyone who'd like to schedule a session now. I appreciate your time, and I look forward to helping you turn anxiety and stress into action!

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