NATIONAL REGISTER
OF HEALTH SERVICE PSYCHOLOGISTS
General Stress

JEFF REITER, PhD, ABPP
Lead Psychologist, Swedish Medical Group
Life Is Stressful!

- **Presentations**: Often complaint is somatic
- Pts report **variety of life problems** when asked
- **When high levels of stress continue over long periods of time**, negative impact on sleep, relationships, mental and physical health
Stress Assessment

• Identify sources of stress—amenable to problem solving, or in the “accept” category
• Assess magnitude of stress (How big of a problem is X, 1 “not a problem”, 10 “a very big problem?”)
• Assess attempts to reduce or resolve stress. Is strategy avoidant or approach-based? Does strategy move the patient forward in life?
• Identify the skill deficits
• Clarify past experience of traumatizing events
• Clarify patient interest in learning new skills
• Identify learning methods most engaging for patient
Stress Interventions

• Teach to skill deficits (e.g., relaxation, personal assertion, mindfulness)
  • Refer to PC classes
  • Stress Management Class
  • Mindfulness and Brain Training Class
  • Life Path Class
  • Relaxation Workshop

• Use handouts or recommend self-help books or apps

• Assistant with problem solving identified triggering situation

• Teach self-compassion exercises

• Introduce idea of positive emotion lifestyle (ways to create positive emotion spirals throughout the day)
Promote Calm and Ease

• Among Patients
  • Invite self-referral through exam room posters (Want to “train your brain to be calm in a busy word?”)
  • Provide patient pamphlets in waiting areas—1-page guides to peaceful moments, restoring breath, etc.

• Among Providers
  • Provide brief half-page summaries of the evidence of brief mindfulness and self-compassion exercises on the brain
  • Offer trainings for the PCMH team informed by ACT (see Life Effectiveness Training, Spirited Primary Care) to enhance resilience to work stress
Family Health Interventions

- **Build skills**—one same-day visit at a time or in a series
- **Couples**—communication, Caring Days, problem-solving
- **Families**—family meetings, family outings, mindful meals
- **Parents**—Positive parenting skills, 1:1, workshops
- **Parents of children with special needs**—ACT, adapted parenting interventions
Family Health Promotion

• Make family health a target by offering on-going classes that promote family health

• Co-teach workshops with other members of the PCMH team

• Clinic health fair focus on families

• Routine BH involvement with most vulnerable