



## Strategies to Ease Stress

Dr Jeannie Higgins



### What is stress?

- Normal part of living
- Simply demands e.g. self, partner, children, other people, finances, nutrition, domestic (housework/garden)
- Not positive or negative
- No stress = dead

## What is distress?

- When events/ demands/people overwhelm our perceived ability or resources to cope (internal/external)
- Distress can be manifested in all levels of functioning i.e. bodily reactions, thoughts, feelings, behaviours and relationships
- Distress demonstrated in all areas i.e personal, social, work (paid &/or unpaid)



## Options for Response to Potential Distress

- Victim
- Perpetrator
- Passive/Numb bystander
- Active & Discerning Intervention



## Multiple & Competing Roles

- Own needs - physical, psychological & spiritual
- Supporting partner with gift of abundance
- Parenting Children
- Work demands (paid & unpaid)
- Extended family, friendships, neighbourhood & community

## Overall Prioritising


- You
- Your partner
- Children
- The rest





## Body Care

- Fundamental respect & reverence
- Sustained and sound body movement/ nutrition for physical and psychological well being
- Preventive health care: regular check-ups doctors and dentists
- Rest and rejuvenation
- Nurturing, pleasure & fun



## Managing Thoughts

- Self-compassion sequence
- Realistic expectations
- Differences between self-caring and selfishness
- No comparisons with others- ever!!!!!!

## Responding to Feelings

- You are not your feelings
- Feelings not right or wrong
- Source of important information
- Feelings are not facts
- Self-referencing & constructive expression
- Critical importance of safety, compassion and wisdom

## Helpful Behaviours

- Managing time effectively
- Active self-care checklist: rather than self-neglect or abuse
- Challenging addictions i.e. drugs/ alcohol, food, TV/ computer, unequal relationships, always doing, being perfect
- Being what you would like your children to become rather than self-sacrifice and the inadvertent creation of entitled, demanding and very insecure children

## Relationships

- Making time to be still (internal/ external) so can respond rather than simply react
- Really listen & communicate thoughts/feelings with responsible safe assertion rather than aggression or internalisation & then eruption or withdrawal
- Healthy boundaries resulting in real presence & time with self, partner, children, extended family, friends & others leading to genuine and deep intimacy



## Help-Seeking

- Use very thoughtful discernment and do reality check with those you trust &/or love you
- Goal is increased knowledge, resources independence and empowerment
- Careful of quick fix
- Thoroughly check credentials and track record from previous consumers

## Resources

- This presentation and list of specific resources at <http://www.higginspsych.com> follow links to Well Being Page and then to Life Planning heading
- Many other resources also available for free at this site and its links

## Contacts

- Email: [jeannie@higginspsych.com.au](mailto:jeannie@higginspsych.com.au)
- Websites
- <http://www.higginspsych.com>
- <http://www.higginspsych.com.au>
- <http://www.evolvewithtrauma.com>
- Blog : <http://evolvewithtrauma.blogspot.com>
- Phone: 02 62827240