
MANAGING STRESS IN THE CHILD CARE ENVIRONMENT

OVERVIEW OF TRAINING SESSION

Below is an overview of the topics covered in this session.

Estimated Time	Topic	Training Technique
10-15 minutes prior to session ¹	Registration	-----
5 minutes	Introductions/Icebreaker: Stress Reduction BINGO	large group
5 minutes	Overview of Training Session and Objectives	slides/overheads
5 minutes	Opening: <i>Dealing with Stress Quiz</i>	small group
10 minutes	Presentation: Stress and the Child Care Provider	slides/overheads
10 minutes	Activity: Stress Management Assessment	individual
10 minutes	Presentation: Ways to Reduce Stress	slides/overheads
5 minutes	Closing: Relaxation Minute	individual
5 minutes	Learning Assessment: <i>Dealing with Stress Quiz</i> Review	small group
5 minutes	Evaluation of Trainer	individual
Estimated Total Time: Approximately 1 hour ²		

¹ Not included in total time.

² Add additional time if group guidelines and/or group facilitation methods need to be addressed at the beginning of the session, or if you decide to include any additional activities. For more information, see NTI's *Building Curriculum Development and Training Skills* Training Module.

TRAINER'S OUTLINE

Introductions/Icebreaker: Stress Reduction BINGO

Time	10 minutes
Training Technique	Large group
Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One "Stress Reduction BINGO" handout for each participant• One pencil or pen for each participant• A small prize for the winner (optional)
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Slide 1 (title slide) should be displayed as participants enter the training room.• Show slide 2 (name slide) as you introduce yourself.• Show slide 3. Direct the participants to find the BINGO sheet in their participant's packet.• Have participants introduce themselves to each other and find someone who fits each square of the BINGO sheet.• To win, the participant must have a complete row of names across, down, or diagonally. Winner calls out "BINGO."• Consider asking the winner to tell the group who in the room fit the boxes in the winning row. If the game goes quickly, you may want to allow the group to continue until two or three people have won BINGO.
Talking Points	<p>BINGO</p> <p>Let's start by stretching our legs and getting to know one another. Please stand up with your Stress Reduction BINGO sheet. Notice that each square on the BINGO sheet is filled with an action or quality related to reducing stress. As you move through the room, introduce yourself to other people and try to find someone who fits the description in one of the BINGO squares. When you find a match, fill in the person's name on the blank space. When you get 5 in a row, call out "BINGO."</p>
For More Information	See NTI's <i>Building Curriculum Development and Training Skills</i> Training Module for ideas about introductions and icebreaker activities.
Notes	

Overview of Training Session and Objectives

Time	5 minutes
Training Technique	Slides/overheads
Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Flip chart sheet with Overview of Training Session written on it• Flip chart sheet with Training Objectives written on it
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct participants' attention to the posted Overview of Training Session.• Show slide 4.
Talking Points	<p>Training Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let's look briefly at the Overview of today's training session. This is how we'll be spending our time together today.• I've planned today's training around 3 main training objectives. This is what I'd like you to be able to do by the end of our time together. The training objectives that I have for today are:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Understand sources of stress in the child care environment○ Identify workplace interventions to decrease stress for child care staff○ List at least 5 ways to reduce and/or manage stress outside the workplace
For More Information	See NTI's <i>Building Curriculum Development and Training Skills</i> Training Module to learn more about training objectives.
Notes	

Opening: *Dealing with Stress* Quiz

Time	5 minutes
Training Technique	Small group
Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One large flip-chart sheet for each small group• Markers
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show slide 5.• Divide the participants into small groups of 4 to 5 individuals each. Ask them to move so that they can sit and work with their group. Each group should choose a recorder and reporter.• Give each group a flip chart sheet and a marker.• Tell participants that they are going to take a short quiz about stress. They should work with the other members of their group to decide which of the multiple-choice answers is correct. The recorder should write the answers for their group on the flip chart sheet.• Read each of the quiz questions aloud. Give the participants a short time to decide on the answer.• Inform the group that you will review the correct answers at the end of the session. For now, have each group post their answers on a wall in the room.
Talking Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We're going break into small groups to take a short quiz about stress. Once you are sitting with your group, please choose a recorder (to write your group's answers on the flip chart sheet) and a reporter (to share your answers at the end).• We'll look back at our answers at the end of the session.
For More Information	
Notes	

Presentation: Stress and the Child Care Provider

Time	15 minutes
Training Technique	Slides/overheads
Supplies	
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slides 6 to 10.
Talking Points	<p>Stress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stress can be a significant concern for child care staff, especially because it affects their health and safety and influences the quality of the care they are able to provide. A child care provider that is experiencing a lot of stress may not be able to respond to children in a nurturing and supportive manner. <p><i>[Consider asking participants to share their ideas about factors that create stress for child care staff now. If there are fewer than 20 people in attendance, you may decide to write these on a flip chart sheet at the front of the room.]</i></p> <p>Sources of Stress</p> <p>Several sources of occupational stress for child care staff have been well documented.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff/Child Ratio: Studies have shown that in facilities with high staff/child ratios, the staff like their jobs less; have less interaction with children, parents and other staff; and were more likely to endorse practices harmful to children, such as compulsory naps and use of tranquilizers for hyperactive children (Maslach and Pines, 1977; Turk, Meeks, and Turk, 1982). • Number of Hours Working with Children: Staff who work longer hours directly with children versus staff who divide time between direct work with children and other non-child work are likely to have more negative attitudes toward children, feel less happy on the job, approve of compulsory naps, and have negative feelings after the end of the work day (Maslach and Pines, 1977). • Break Time: In facilities where break times (non-child related work) are not available, staff have reported increased negative feelings about the facility and less ability to influence their work environment. After work, they reported feeling more impatient, more irritable, more strained, more upset and more psychologically distant (Maslach and Pines, 1977). • Program Structure: Staff in non-structured facilities are less cheerful, tolerant, and alert, and more moody and irritable at the end of the day. ‘Open non-structured facilities’ are those where arrival and departure times of children vary, activities are flexible and spontaneous, all of the children have free access to all parts of the facility, and all of the teachers share coverage of all parts of the facility (Maslach and Pines, 1977).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff Meetings: Staff meetings are a time when staff can join together in seeking solutions to anxiety causing problems (Aronson, 2001). Staff meetings provide staff the opportunity to socialize informally, give each other support, confer about problems with children and parents, clarify goals for themselves and the facility, and exert direct influence on the policies of the center (Maslach and Pines, 1977). Without staff meetings, child care staff miss out on these opportunities. • Lack of Social Support: Caregivers who perceive little social support reported higher levels of stress (Kontos and Riessen, 1993). • Controlling Children’s Behavior: Kaiser et al. (1993) examined the relative stressfulness of various child care activities for teachers of 4-year-old children. They found that nurturing children and working with parents were the most enjoyable and least stressful tasks, while toileting supervision was the least enjoyable, and controlling children’s behavior was the most stressful activity in child care. • Relationships with Co-Workers/Parents: As with any job, working with other adults can be stressful. <p>Other sources of stress have been less well documented, but may contribute to occupational stress in the child care environment. They are</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unpredictable change • High level of responsibility for children’s welfare • Inadequate professional support and recognition • Inadequate salaries and benefits • Lack of clear job expectations and methods of evaluation • Noise/activity level
<p>For More Information</p>	<p>See NTI’s <i>Promoting the Health and Safety of Child Care Staff</i> Module.</p>
<p>Notes</p>	

<p>Talking Points</p>	<p>Workplace Interventions to Decrease Stress The following interventions have been shown to decrease stress among child care staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limiting responsibility – Making staff responsible only for the children in a particular room. (For example, in rooms that are age specific, i.e., infant rooms, toddler rooms, etc.) • Assigning toys and materials to a specific room. • Setting arrival and departure times to a fixed schedule. • Assigning volunteers to a specific room. <p>Workplace Interventions to Decrease Stress (Proposed) Other proposed workplace interventions for reducing staff stress include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written job descriptions and personnel policies to insure staff clarity about their responsibilities • Regular staff meetings so that members can share feelings and concerns and feel supported by supervisors and colleagues • Involvement of staff in program decisions so that they feel control over their work environment • Regularly scheduled trained volunteers to assist during the busiest times of the day so staff can take breaks or provide individual attention to children • Someone always on call so staff members who feel overwhelmed by the demands of the job can take a break from the children • A pleasant, comfortable place with adult-size furniture for staff to use on breaks so that their time away from the children is relaxing • Regularly scheduled exercise breaks for staff, such as a 10 minute walk twice a day (Aronson, 2001; Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina, 2000)
<p>For More Information</p>	<p>See NTI's <i>Promoting the Health and Safety of Child Care Staff</i> Module.</p>
<p>Notes</p>	

Activity: Stress Management Assessment

Time	5 minutes
Training Technique	Individual
Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• One copy of the <i>Stress Management Assessment</i> for each participant
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show slide 11.• Ask participant's to find the <i>Stress Management Assessment</i> handout in their Participant's Packets.• Inform participants that they have 5 minutes to complete the assessment on their own.
Talking Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Please find the <i>Stress Management Assessment</i> handout in your Participant's Packet. Take a few minutes to complete the assessment on your own before we come back together. Keep in mind that the purpose of informal stress tests such as this is not to make a diagnosis. Rather, the purpose is to alert you to the level of stress you may experience and assist you in finding and maintaining a level of stress that is comfortable.• How did you feel about your <i>Stress Management Assessment</i> results? Were they what you expected they would be?• If you are feeling more stress than is comfortable for you, there are some things you can do to reduce your stress level. The next handout in your Participant's Packet includes a list of things that you can do to reduce stress.
For More Information	
Notes	

Presentation: Ways to Reduce or Manage Stress

Time	15 minutes
Training Technique	Slides/overheads
Supplies	
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slides 12 to 18.
Talking Points	<p>Ways to Reduce Stress</p> <p>There are a lot of things you can do to help reduce stress in your life. Let's look at a few possibilities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unplug and Eliminate the Constant Chatter - That means setting aside time each day to turn off the TV, turn off the radio, and power down the computer. We're hit with a constant barrage of hype, bad news, "urgent" messages, and flickering lights. Unplug and try to enjoy simple silence. 2. Follow a Healthy Diet - Try to reduce, as much as possible, highly-processed foods, caffeine, and sugar. Try replacing coffee with tea, get your requirements of fruits and veggies, and eat sensible portions at meals. 3. Do Something You Enjoy - Be sure to dedicate time each day to spend with your family or working on a hobby that interests you. Doing this will bring greater balance and calm into your life and help you get through a particularly tough day on the job. Doing things you enjoy is an antidote to stress. 4. Spend Time with a Pet - Studies have shown that stress levels decrease when we spend time with animals. There is something about the affection of a puppy or the purring of a cat that soothes us. People feel happier. If you don't currently have a pet, consider getting one. 5. Get Enough Sleep - Getting enough sleep is a very important component to stress reduction. Not everyone requires the same amount of sleep, however experts believe that getting less than seven or eight hours each night is detrimental to most people. Yet in our hectic lives, sleep is often the first thing we sacrifice. The body and the mind both need adequate sleep to wake fully rested ready to start the next day. Try to get to bed at a reasonable time and be sure to sleep on a comfortable mattress. A little "white noise" also does wonders for creating a peaceful sleep. 6. Learn to Meditate or Practice Yoga - Meditation has been practiced for centuries as a way to boost the spirit and defend against the stress of life. Consider adding meditation or yoga to your regular routine. Find some quiet time, dim the lights, close your eyes and focus on your breathing. Slowly take in deep breaths, holding each one for a second, then releasing. 7. Be Sure to Get Enough Exercise - Stress creates tension that can be relieved with a little exercise. Not only does exercise help you get out pent-up energy and stay loose, but it also triggers the release of endorphins--brain chemicals that counteract the negative effects of stress. 8. Listen to Relaxing Music - Music is a natural mood-setter. Put on some

	<p>relaxing music and your mind will respond by becoming more calm. Listen to whatever you prefer, whether it is classical, jazz, or laid-back contemporary songs.</p> <p>9. Treat Yourself to a Vacation - Every now and then you just need to give yourself a break--take yourself out of your routine and do something fun.</p> <p>10. Make a Bold Change - You may ultimately come to the conclusion that a drastic change must be made in your life if you're ever going to reduce your stress levels.</p> <p>(Adapted from www.10spot.net)</p> <p>Managing Stress at Work There are some things that child care staff can do to improve their ability to manage stress in the child care environment (Aronson 2001; Mayer, 2002). They might:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize: Identify tasks that are most important and take care of those first. • Set limits: Don't take on others' problems. • Assert yourself: Enforce written program policies. • Use appropriate resources: Recommend community resources to parents when appropriate. Don't try to solve all children's issues alone. • Maximize job satisfaction: Structure the day to include as many benefits and enjoyable tasks as possible. Even five minutes of an enjoyable activity can improve morale. • Sustain yourself: Make your own well-being a high priority during the work day. • Get support: Identify other child care staff with whom work issues can be discussed. Share concerns and ideas. • Laugh: Laughter is good medicine.
<p>For More Information</p>	<p>See NTI's <i>Promoting the Health and Safety of Child Care Staff</i> Module.</p>
<p>Notes</p>	

<p>Talking Points</p>	<p>Depression</p> <p>New research shows that people who work in personal care and services -- such as child care workers -- are more likely to report feeling depressed. Depression is common and treatable. The first steps are recognizing the signs and seeking help. People with major depression may experience five or more of the following depression symptoms for at least two weeks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Persistent sadness, pessimism ○ Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness, or hopelessness ○ Loss of interest or pleasure in usual activities, including sex ○ Difficulty concentrating and complaints of poor memory ○ Worsening of coexisting chronic disease, such as rheumatoid arthritis or diabetes ○ Insomnia or oversleeping ○ Weight gain or loss ○ Fatigue, lack of energy ○ Anxiety, agitation, irritability ○ Thoughts of suicide or death ○ Slow speech; slow movements ○ Headache, stomachache, and digestive problems <p>If you think you might be depressed, consider seeking help. Share your feelings with your primary care provider.</p>
<p>For More Information</p>	<p>See NTI's <i>Promoting the Health and Safety of Child Care Staff</i> Module.</p>
<p>Notes</p>	

Closing: Relaxation Minute

Time	5 minutes
Training Technique	Individual
Supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A small DVD player and a copy of the DVD A Time for Relaxation, Vol. 1: Guided Relaxation Techniques for Wellness by Beth Freschi (2010) (available on amazon.com) OR another guided relaxation DVD of your choice
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show slide 19.• Let participants know that they are going to spend a few minutes listening to a guided relaxation recording. They don't have to do anything except listen to the recording.• Ask participants to find a comfortable position and close their eyes. Begin the recording. After a few minutes, turn off the recording and ask participants to open their eyes. Ask them to share their thoughts about using a guided relaxation recording.
Talking Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• We're going to take about 5 minutes to listen to a guided relaxation recording. Find a comfortable position. You could sit or lay on the floor or just sit back in your chair. You can close your eyes. I'll start the recording now.• Gently open your eyes. What did you think? How do you feel now compared to before we listened to the recording? Would you consider trying something like this at home? Would you recommend it to child care providers that you work with?• If this particular recording didn't appeal to you, there are many other guided relaxation recordings available online and in large music and book stores.
For More Information	
Notes	

Learning Assessment: Quiz Review

Time	5 minutes
Training Technique	Small group
Supplies	
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show slide 20.• Have participants return to sitting with their small groups.• Read each of the quiz questions one at a time. After each question, have the group reporter share the answer their group wrote down earlier. Then ask if the group still agrees that this is the best answer. Next, share the correct answer.
Talking Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Let's look back at the quiz we took earlier to see if we still agree with the answers we chose before the presentation.
For More Information	
Notes	

Evaluation

Time	5 minutes
Training Technique	Individual
Supplies	
Instructions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show slide 21.• Ask participants to complete the "Evaluation of Trainer Form" at this time.• Inform participants that the evaluations are anonymous.• Explain that the evaluation results provide you with information about the effectiveness of the training and that information collected from the evaluation will be used to improve the training.• Allow participants 5 minutes to complete the evaluation.• Collect forms.
Talking Points	Please take a few minutes to complete an evaluation form. Evaluation results are anonymous. Thanks for your participation and attention today!
For More Information	
Notes	

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SAMPLE

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Title

Participant's Packet