Ease the stress

facilitator guidebook

*“It’s not stress that kills us, it is our reaction to it.” – Hans Selye*

Dear *Ease the Stress* Program Facilitator,

Welcome to *Ease the Stress*, a multi-session, stress-resilience program powered by Masterpiece. This program is structured to explore how different stressors and reactions impact overall health and wellbeing. Topics include physical response stressors, chronic stress cycle, depression, positive emotions, impact on relationships and creating a calm space.

To begin, we ask that you take a few minutes to review this Facilitator Guidebook from start to finish. You will find helpful instructions to prepare for each session, such as what materials and equipment you will need, as well as suggestions for creatively enhancing this program based on individual needs and interests.

Masterpiece recognizes that information on the topic of stress is constantly evolving. Because of this, there is a great deal of information and opinions that can make it hard to evaluate fact from fiction. Masterpiece is committed to providing you with up-to-date research-based guidelines and recommendations from credible sources.

At the end of the program, we would appreciate your feedback as well as the participants. Please complete the [Facilitator Feedback](https://forms.office.com/r/cmLfPruXMm)  form and send a request to the participants. Below is an email draft you can use:

*“Thank you for participating in* ***Ease the Stress****, a stress resilience program powered by Masterpiece. Masterpiece would greatly appreciate your feedback on the content and materials of the program to continue to improve the offerings they provide our community. Please click on this link:* [*Participant Feedback*](https://forms.office.com/r/9CkyD9TMqY) *to provide your feedback. It should take you approximately four minutes.”*

**On behalf of your Masterpiece Team, welcome to *Ease the Stress*!**

# Preparing for Ease the Stress

**What You Will Need:**

* A strong Internet connection (if streaming)
* A projector and large screen or TV screen
* Audio hookup for computer (to viewing source)

**Before each session:**

* Review the appropriate section(s) of the Facilitator Guidebook, participant handout packets, and PowerPoint presentations.
  + Speaker’s notes are included in the notes section of the PowerPoint for each session. Read through the text several times to familiarize yourself with the content. All text in bracketed italics are detailed instructions provided for you, the facilitator.
  + The PowerPoint slides with animations will prompt you to click through the slide information using [CLICK] in the speaker notes.
  + All statements and questions italicized without brackets are designed to encourage audience participation. When the italicized instructions state that you ask a question, pose the question(s) to your participants.
  + For small groups, participants can answer out loud to the entire group. For groups of 10 or more, consider asking participants to discuss the questions in groups of two, then request a few examples to keep the sessions to 45 minutes.
* Set up audio/visual equipment and chairs in a way that invites discussion. Prepare the suggested materials and make them available ahead of time.
* Each session in this Facilitator Guidebook has a “Supportive Resources and Ideas” section. This section provides optional activities and videos that you can add to the session or schedule for a different day (between sessions or at the end of the program). You may also choose not to use the additional resources.

# 1st Session: Stress and Your Body

**Objectives/Overview:**

* Discover the physical response to stress
* Identify the chronic stress cycle and its consequences
* Review physical health coping strategies

**Materials:**

* A copy of the following for each participant:
  + Pre-program questionnaire
  + 1st Session Handout Packet

**Supportive Resources and Ideas:**

* Schedule an additional session focused on Body Scan Meditation, which is a technique to engage the body’s relaxation response. The [Beginner's Body Scan Meditation](https://www.mindful.org/beginners-body-scan-meditation/) article includes a 30-minute audio recording as well as benefits and steps to complete a body scan.
* **TED Talk:** [Beating Stress is Easier Than You Think](https://youtu.be/zDlz5N6DXuE)  (17 minutes)
  + **Discussion Questions:**
    - Can stress enhance your overall state of being?
    - Outside of S.E.E. (Sleep, Eat, Exercise), what other resources do you use to deal with stress?
* Documentary: [The Earthing Movie: The Remarkable Science of Grounding](https://vimeo.com/372697864) *is a feature-length documentary directed by Sundance Award-Winning filmmakers Josh and Rebecca Tickell based on their viral short film entitled 'Down To Earth.' The film reveals the scientific phenomenon of how we can heal our bodies by doing the simplest thing that a person can do…standing barefoot on the earth.*
* Ask for volunteers to lead walking groups at different times of the day to encourage people to move more!
* Schedule a barefoot Tai-Chi or chair yoga class outside.

# 2nd Session: Stressors and Creating Calm

**Objectives/Overview:**

* Discover four types of stressors that impact health
* Explore meditation and time in nature as coping strategies
* Identify next steps that are important to you and your growth

**Materials:**

* A copy of the following for each participant:
  + 2nd Session Handout Packet
  + Materials for planting succulents
    - Succulents
    - A container with a drainage hole
    - Mesh tape or drainage screen (squares of drywall tape are best)
    - Succulent Soil
    - Shovel
  + Access to audio to play a recording of a meditation

Succulent planting activity: This session includes a succulent planting activity. Gather materials ahead of time and plan what materials may need to be shared (shovels) during the activity. Determine how the time of the session will be impacted based on the materials that are available and adjust as necessary. Additional instructions are included in the handout packets.

**Supportive Resources and Ideas:**

* Organize a hike out in nature to encourage time spent in nature as a coping strategy.
* Offer coaching sessions to support residents in setting goals based on desired lifestyle growth.
* Explore additional Masterpiece meditations at https://www.spreaker.com/show/masterpiece-living

Note to facilitator: This session includes a self-reflection which is based on coaching concepts. Learn more about coaching on the Masterpiece website.

# 3rd Session: Stressful Thoughts and Positivity

**Objectives/Overview:**

* Discuss how our thoughts affect stress levels
* Discover happiness strategies from Positive Psychology
* Practice a positivity-building meditation

**Materials:**

* A copy of the following for each participant:
  + 3rd Session Handout Packet

**Supportive Resources and Ideas:**

* Take the FREE **Science of Well-Being** Yale University Coursera course (either as a group or individually): <https://bit.ly/3yzltUC> (4-week Course)
* Try Part 2 of the **Master-PEACE Circle Meditation for Cultivating Positive Emotions**: <https://bit.ly/3jvj0Gw> (14-min. Meditation)
* Watch an insightful video with Barbara Fredrickson, **Positive Emotions Open Our Mind:** <https://bit.ly/38s1CMD> (8-min. Video)

# 4th Session: Stress and Relationships

**Objectives/Overview:**

* Identify social stressors
* Recognize daily activities that may increase stress (multi-tasking, etc.)
* Learn about practices to help lower social stress

**Materials:**

* A copy of the following for each participant:
  + 4th Session Handout Packet
  + Post-Program Questionnaire

**Supportive Resources and Ideas:**

* Consider a stand-alone session on Meaning and Purpose to view and discuss this video by Victor Strecher, **Life on Purpose: How Living for What Matters Changes Everything** (26 minutes) <https://www.ted.com/talks/victor_strecher_life_on_purpose_how_living_for_what_matters_changes_everything>
* Refer those interested in exploring more about meaning and purpose to this FREE course from Coursera (Named 4th best online course in the world by Inc. Magazine). **Finding Purpose and Meaning in Life: Living for What Matters Most** by Victor Strecher, PhD, University of Michigan. <https://www.coursera.org/>
* Watch a brief video by cognitive psychologist and neuroscientist Daniel Levitin: **Multitasking is a Myth and to Attempt It Comes at a Neurobiological Cost** (2:45 minutes) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iM4u-7Z5URk>