

Recovery Road

Join the journey!

Spring 2018

Five methods for reducing stress

By Anna Beckham, M.Ed., Licensed Professional Counselor

Stress is something we all experience. It can be a challenge to navigate through and to recognize positive stress from unhealthy stress. I am talking about the difference between stress that can spark one's ambition and internal motivation in contrast to the stress that is hard on the body and hinders one from achieving goals. The coping strategies I have listed below can be beneficial to use when you catch yourself experiencing unhealthy stress. Venture into these strategies and notice if there are some that are of interest to you.

Color breathing

This method seems to be helpful for people of all ages and can be practiced anytime. Breathe in for five seconds, and exhale for five seconds. Repeat your breath while thinking of a favorite color that reminds you of what you need, and inhale it in. Then, exhale a color that illustrates the feeling you want to release. For example, I may breathe in a golden yellow because to me that color symbolizes love,

peace, and warmth. Also, I may choose to exhale the color red that I associate with fear, sadness, or shame. Continue this repetition for as long as you need, or maybe continue until you notice your body slowing down.

Yoga

Yoga has demonstrated to be beneficial for the mind and body. Some forms of exercise can encourage a feeling of being outside of oneself by daydreaming, dissociating, thinking about the future, or thinking about the past. Nevertheless, I have not been to a yoga class where the instructor has not taken the time to attend to the breath. Focusing on the breath allows you to align with the present moment, as you cannot breathe in the past nor can you breathe in the future (Van der Kolk, 2014, p. 278).

Yoga can also facilitate an awareness and connection with one's body – an essential aspect of stress reduction. It can reduce stress as you listen by observing the physical sensations.

As you honor your body, you can create an awareness of hearing what your body has to say to you. Identifying the physical sensations and understanding how we emotionally feel can assist in regulating stress (Van der Kolk, 2014, p. 275).

Contact a devoted friend

External means of coping are just as important as coping internally. It is only human to need and to want to connect with others. I have seen the impact of how acknowledging feelings allows one to move through them.

Find a person in your life that will give you the space to honor what you are feeling. Communicate with that person what you need from them, whether you want them to hold space for you and listen with non-judgement, or maybe you call for problem solving. Honor whatever it is that you need. Give it language. Describe it. Empower it.

Music

Once you have honored your feelings by using your internal

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Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance of Oklahoma

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Five methods for reducing stress

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and/or external coping skills, you may find it useful to listen to music. Music is a powerful tool that can be used to change a mood and touch the soul. Because it is so powerful, it is important to listen to uplifting music when you are feeling sad. If you are feeling a negative emotion and you listen to music that also embodies negative emotion, it can influence you to feel worse. So be sure to listen to music that will contribute to you feeling the positivity and peace in your life.

Guided meditation

This can be valuable when riding the wave of intense feelings and can also be useful to try before sleeping. Guided meditations are easily accessible with phone and computer applications such as Calm and Headspace, or by searching for “guided meditation” on YouTube. This may help to calm the mind and the body by letting go of thoughts that trap us, and by focusing in on the here and now.

This article is intended for day to day use. If stress is impacting your life or these skills are not working for you, schedule an appointment with a therapist in your area. You can also call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or call OKC Heartline at 211 for assistance.

Reference

Van der Kolk, B.A. (2014). *The Body Keeps the Score Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma*. New York, NY: Penguin Books.

If you need help . . .

National Suicide Prevention
800-273-TALK (8255)

Emergency
911 Ask for a CIT Officer

OCARTA for Crisis
405-812-4580

OCARTA for Friendship
405-436-4082

Oklahoma County Crisis Intervention Center
405-522-1800

Heartline
211 Ask for help with emotional distress

Remember: Suicidal thoughts are temporary. Suicide is permanent. Don't give in to suicidal thoughts – you can overcome them.



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Support Alliance
Oklahoma

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dbsaok.org

Find us on Facebook @dbsaok

Our Mission

To provide hope, help, education, and support to improve the lives of people with mental health disorders.

We've been there. We can help.

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Hope *the foundation of mental health recovery*

By Mike Ehrmantrout

Mental health recovery is an exercise in hope. Hope—the earnest expectation of coming good. Hope is indispensable to our recovery. Hope can help us move away from the terror of defeat and despondency. It's not an abstract idea that makes no real difference in our recovery. It's the cornerstone upon which the entire recovery foundation is built. There can be no recovery without hope.

Despair on the other hand, is a hellish pit we can find ourselves in if we are not careful.

When a person experiences despair, all hope is lost. The positive attitude is gone. The good self-talk disappears. The despairing person feels like nothing matters. It's nearly impossible to convince this poor soul hope is possible again.

Recovery is hard work and needs hope

The truth is, recovery is hard work. I have to eat right, sleep right, think right, talk right, take my meds right, exercise right, keep all my doctor appointments, and educate myself and others about my illness. I have to avoid any and all things that would get in the way of my recovery. Worst of all, there's no guarantee these things will make me feel better. Recovery is not for the faint of heart. It takes courage, commitment and yes, an abundance of hope.

Relapse and failure in mental health recovery

But what happens when we do everything right in recovery and it just doesn't seem to be helping? This is a perilous place to find yourself in.

After all, you've done everything that all the experts said to do. You have worked very hard, but somehow your recovery has turned into relapse. You're discouraged and angry. This is when despair can set in.

It's hard to believe and accept you can recover again. Perhaps the biggest question we might ask ourselves is why? Why should I continue on this road to recovery when I've already experienced that it doesn't always work the way I need it to?

Hope says, "I believe there's a treatment out there for me. I believe if I don't give up, there's a good chance I will feel better in the future."

Despair says, "I will not make it. There's no point. Life is horrible and it will never be anything else."

If today you find yourself despairing and hopeless, I wish to offer some hope. I've been dealing with this illness for over 20 years. I've seen some amazing victories and some horrific defeats. I've embraced hope, and I've embraced despair to the point of a suicide attempt. Twenty years and I only recently found the correct medication at the correct dose to treat my depression.

Hope promises a future reward

The wonderful thing about hope is that it promises a future reward. What do you need to be rewarded with? Love? Acceptance? Understanding? A reduction of your pain? These things do exist, though, you may not have experienced them yet. You will never experience these

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We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone.

Ronald Reagan

Hope the foundation of mental health recovery

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wonderful aspects of life if you give in to despair.

If you've fallen into despair, please communicate this with someone you trust. Don't wait until your next therapy appointment. It's literally a matter of life and death. You must understand that there are many people who really do care about you and your situation. Find them. They do exist. Don't wait for them to find you.

The fact that you are reading this article probably shows you still have a glimmer of hope left. Sometimes, a little spark is all you need to start a huge fire.

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<https://www.healthyplace.com/blogs/recoveryfrommentalillness/2014/05/hope-the-foundation-of-mental-health-recovery>

Believe you can and you're halfway there.

Theodore Roosevelt

From the executive director

DBSA has started 2018 with a lot of activity.

We are represented at four monthly meetings, keeping us informed: OKRA, COA, PAC, and OBHA.

We have made Break the Stigma presentations at three Rotary Club meetings in Kingfisher, NW Oklahoma City, and Mustang.

We have participated at the Capitol to inform legislators about the need for more funding for mental health. These activities include two coffee chats and an OBHA-organized rally and a legislative luncheon at the Oklahoma History Museum. February 5th was the first day of the new legislative session.

We applied for and received a \$2,000 grant from the Zarrow Foundation.

We conducted two facilitator training classes.

We attended ODMHSAS's Prevention and Recovery conference.

We have started a support group at OKC's Homeless Alliance.

We have started a program to visit each of our support groups for a month. The group at Crossings Church was the first group.

We continue to support our 15 public support groups and nine in-patient groups.

We are very happy to have Mark Brennaman back as our Outreach Director.

Plans for 2018

Establish a support group in Tulsa and Enid.

Inform churches in Oklahoma about DBSA.

Start a LBGTQ support group.

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Recovery Road is the quarterly newsletter of DBSA of Oklahoma. We are seeking stories from those who have faced the stigma of mental illness and were able to rise above it. Please send your story to mark@dbsaok.org

From the executive director

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Our big Events include our Annual Picnic on June 30 and our Fourth Annual Gala Dinner on September 27.

We are very grateful for all of our facilitators, staff, board members, stakeholders, and volunteers who make all these activities possible.

New support groups

We are proud to announce the launch of a second Edmond peer support group at Seventh Day Adventist Church at 4701 E. Danforth Road. The group's first meeting is slated for Wednesday, April 18 at 7:00 pm. Van Stephens is the group facilitator and can be reached at 405-313-4378. Child care is available on site.

We have started a group that meets at Oklahoma City Homeless Alliance located at 1729 NW 3rd Street in Oklahoma City. The meeting takes place in The Classroom on Mondays at 10 am. The homeless population has been underserved, and now they have a place to give and get support.

Our efforts to launch a support group in Enid are showing progress. The First United Methodist Church of Enid has agreed to provide meeting space. We are currently looking for several people from Enid to agree to serve as facilitators. Contact Mark at mark@dbsaok.org if you'd like to be trained to lead as a volunteer support group facilitator.

What can I do?

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| D Donate | Encourage others to do the same. |
| B Break the stigma | Educate; increase awareness. Tell your story. |
| S Spread the word | DBSA is here, we can help. |
| A Advocate | Ask legislators to support mental health issues. |

We may encounter many defeats,
but we must not be defeated.

Maya Angelou

Calendar of events

Please mark these dates on your calendar

April

5, 12, 19, 26	Creative Expressions
5	OCARTA Day at Capitol
18	Summit
18	COA Day at Capitol
27	Movie Night

May

Mental Health Awareness Month

3, 10, 17, 24, 31	Creative Expressions
8	Board Meeting
12	Facilitator Training
25	Movie Night
26	Memorial Day Office Closed

June

7, 14, 21, 28	Creative Expressions
2	NAMI Walk
12	Board Meeting
20	Summit
29	Movie Night
30	DBSA Picnic



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405-254-3994

dbsaok.org

CONFIDENTIAL AND FREE PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

If you cannot reach the contact person please call 405-254-3994

To ensure you have the most up-to-date listing please visit dbsaok.org/support

Updated March 31, 2018

Ada

Compassion Outreach Center
1124 Craddock Rd
Monday 7:00 PM
Contact JR
405-331-0700

Bethany

Bethany Church of Christ
3301 N. Rockwell
Thursday 7:00 PM
Contact Iva 405-373-0059
Contact2 Cynthia 405-639-9623

Edmond

Edmond Public Library
10 S. Boulevard
Saturday 3:00 PM
Contact Charlie 405-745-3270
Contact 2 Sarah 405-254-3994

Starts April 18

Seventh Day Adventist Church
4701 E. Danforth Rd.
Wednesday 7:00 PM
Child care available
Contact Van 405-313-4378

Lawton – Southwest

Lawton Public Library
110 SW 4th St.
Monday 6:30
Contact Laura 580-536-1251
Contact 2 John 580-483-4942

Midwest City

Eastside Church of Christ
916 S. Douglas
Tuesday 6:30
Contact Dawn 405-464-5252
Contact 2 Diane 405-679-5214

Norman # 1

McFarlin Methodist Church, Rm. 229
419 S. University Blvd.
Thursday 7:00 PM
Contact Diane 405-503-1948
Contact 2 Ricky 405-625-4066

Norman # 2

McFarlin Methodist Church
419 S. University Blvd.
Monday 7:00 PM
Contact Ricky 405-625-4066
Contact 2 Diane 405-503-1948

Oklahoma City

Crossings Church
14600 N. Portland Ave.
Monday 6:30 PM
Contact Michael 405-254-3994

OKC Homeless Alliance
1729 NW 3rd Street
Monday 10:00 AM

Lottie House Drop In Center 1
1311 N. Lottie
Saturday 2:00 PM

Lottie House Drop In Center 2
1311 N. Lottie
Tuesday Noon
Contact Bianca 405-600-3074

OCARTA/OCCIC Drop In Center
2808 NW 31st St.
Tuesday 3:00 PM
Contact Tyler 405-436-4083
Contact 2 Brandi 405-848-7555

Oklahoma City

State Office
3000 United Founders Blvd., Ste. 104
Wednesday Noon
Contact Neil 405-368-5459

Shawnee

The Refuge
309 N. Pesotum
Thursday 5:30 PM
Contact James 405-464-3289

Stillwater

First Presbyterian Church
524 Duncan
Tuesday 6:30 PM
Contact Karen 405-624-1518
Contact 2 Bob 405-285-1233

Tahlequah

First Christian Church
2111 Mahaney Ave.
Thursday 7:00 PM
Contact Johnny 918-207-8366

Yukon

First Christian Church
601 Maple
Tuesday 7:00 PM
Contact Renee 405-209-7477
Contact2 Iva 405-373-0059

If there is not a group near you, please call us at 405-254-3994. We will work to create a support group in your community.

We've been there. We can help.

The phone numbers listed are personal numbers of DBSA volunteers.

Please be considerate of the time and day you call

These phone numbers are NOT crisis numbers. If you have an emergency call 911