

# Stress Bingo

for Adults

## RESOURCES NEEDED

Group facilitator  
8" x 10" STRESS BINGO cards (16)  
5 sets of "Calling" cards  
BINGO chips  
*How to Minimize Stress* handouts as needed  
Small prizes (journal, relaxation tape, healthy food treat, etc.)

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of the group, participants will be able to:

- Define stress
- Identify at least 4 personal stressors
- Identify at least 4 symptoms of stress
- Discuss the consequences of stress upon their lives
- Identify at least 4 ways in which to reduce stress

## TIME NEEDED

45-60 minutes

## INTRODUCTION

- 1 Introduce players to concept that STRESS BINGO combines learning with active group participation. Discuss that the purpose of the game is to learn about stress and its effects.
- 2 Offer a general informative introduction, as group needs, defining stress, stressors, stress symptoms and ways to relieve stress.

**STRESS** is any change you must adapt to. This can include "happy" events as well as "sad" events. There are two kinds of stressors: external and internal. Stress is usually generated by our perceptions of events.

**EXTERNAL STRESSORS** occur outside of oneself

Examples include:

- Weather, Environment, Noise
- Pressures caused by expectations of others
- Major life changes (e.g., death or ending of a relationship)

**INTERNAL STRESSORS** occur within oneself

- The mental pressure you put on yourself and the way you react to external stress
- Lifestyle choices (caffeine, not enough sleep, etc.)
- Unrealistic expectations, being hard on yourself, negative thinking, all-or-nothing thinking

**SYMPTOMS OF STRESS:** when our bodies perceive a stressor, it goes into a “fight or flight” mode. Our hearts beat faster, muscles tense, blood pressure increases, extremities get cold as blood is shunted toward the center of the body, pupils dilate, vision sharpens and hearing becomes more acute. There can also be emotional or behavioral symptoms of stress, such as a hyper-startle response, hyper-vigilant behavior, angry outburst or loss of sense of humor. All these changes produce wear and tear on the body and can lead to illness.

**STRESS RELIEVERS:** the relaxation response is the opposite of the Alarm Response in that it provides respite from stressors. It normalizes the physical, mental and emotional processes.

- 3** Explain that the game is divided into 5 sections as already discussed:

EXTERNAL STRESSORS	B
INTERNAL STRESSORS	I
PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS	N
EMOTION / BEHAVIOR	G
STRESS RELIEVERS	O

## PLAY

- 1** Distribute BINGO chips and one 8" x 10" STRESS BINGO card to each player.  
Shuffle “Calling” cards together.
- 2** Group facilitator draws a “Calling” card, reads it aloud and places it face up on the table.  
If a participant has that “term” on his/her card, s/he covers it with a BINGO chip. Each “Called” card is an opportunity for teaching and discussion.
- 3** Winners may be ...
- The first person who gets a BINGO going horizontal, vertical, or as an X.
  - The first player to cover a pre-agreed-upon pattern of squares (e.g., a letter “T,” “L,” two horizontal lines, 4 in any corner-postage stamp, 4 in every corner, etc.)
  - Any two BINGOS on the same card-after the first BINGO, players leave previously “Called” cards marked and continue.
  - A complete coverall for the grand prize. Again, players leave their previously “Called” cards marked and the game continues on for the coverall. The first player to completely cover his/her card is the winner!
- Vary group play according to group attention span, needs, enthusiasm, etc.
- 4** Distribute **HOW TO MINIMIZE STRESS** Handouts if desired for reinforcement of material covered.
- 5** Wrap up by summarizing each of the main themes. Process making sure each participant met learning objectives.
- 6** Offer motivational prizes to winners!

# How to Minimize Stress

***There are many ways to relieve stress.  
Here are a few ideas to get you on your way . . .***

## **1** Recognize what can be changed:

- a. What things can be avoided or eliminated?
  - b. How can you reduce the intensity? (manage them over a period of time, instead of on a daily/weekly basis?)
  - c. Shorten the exposure to stress (take a break, talk to a friend).
  - d. Reduce your social obligations.
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## **2** Reduce the intensity of emotional reactions to stress:

- a. Are you expecting to please everybody?
  - b. Are you over-reacting and viewing things as absolutely critical and urgent? (Work at adopting more moderate views; perceive stress as something that can be coped with and not something that is overpowering.)
  - c. See problems as opportunities.
  - d. Refute negative thoughts.
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## **3** Learn to moderate physical reactions to stress:

- a. Slow, deep breathing returns heart rate and respirations to normal.
  - b. Relaxation techniques reduce muscular tension:  
Stretching, exercising, progressive muscular relaxation, guided imagery, journal writing.
  - c. Gently massage sore, tightened muscles.
  - d. Close eyes for a few moments to collect your thoughts.
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## **4** Build your physical reserves:

- a. Exercise 3-4 times per week.
  - b. Diet (eat well-balanced, nutritious meals).
  - c. Avoid nicotine and excessive caffeine.
  - d. Sleep (try to keep a consistent schedule).
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## **5** Maintain your emotional reserves:

- a. Maintain supportive relationships.
  - b. Pursue goals that are important to you.
  - c. Expect some frustrations, failures and sorrows.
  - d. Be a friend to yourself (be kind and gentle to yourself).
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