Session 9: Putting it all together

The Course Summarized

Readings
Session 9: The course summarized

SUMMARY READING:

Goal of this session: The goal of this session is to finally combine your awareness of your time urgency and perfectionism along with your four reactions, to the specific skills we have taught you. Look at the diagram on the workbook on the application or website for session 9. You can see a summary of your hooks, your reactions and the techniques we have taught you that go with each stress component. This diagram of your stress is what is ultimately going to guide you along your management of stress. It shows how stress is broken up into its four components, and then how the course has looked at all four components in detail. Recognizing the four reactions is very important and you can probably do this automatically by now. Using the skills to change it will take some time and some practice. In order to ultimately get this process to be automatic, you need to practice the skills.

On the website / mobile app for session 9 – you will be able to click on any hook listed under My Hooks and the cycle for that specific hook will appear on the cycle. You are then able to see how you reacted to that hook and you can then have a look at the management technique for each reaction, namely:

- PlannedBehavioural Management
- Planned Self Talk and Thinking Management
- Planned Physiological Management

Remember that if you get stuck on a specific hook any time in the future, simply go back to session 1 again and add in the hook, and complete the hook for the first eight sessions. This can also be done on the blank sheet in the workbook where the summary cycle is neatly placed on one page. Thus, fill the hook in; note if it may be unpredictable, predictable, real, perfectionistic or time urgent. Fill in each typical reaction to the hook, that is, your self-talk, your distortion: is it personalizing or scarcity; and then write in your specific physiological or physical reaction and your typical behavioural reaction which is simplified into passive, assertive or aggressive behaviour. This is finally followed by look at the skills-related sessions from session 4 to session 8, and the management skills to manage each response.

Once you’ve done that, you will be able to decide which block of the four components you want to manage with a specific hook. You may, for example, try to bring in the relaxation exercise by thinking “calm and restful” when you feel physically stressed. If the hook is still bothering you, perhaps you need to also focus on your self-talk and identify the distortion you may be using. The management techniques involves then challenging that distortion in terms of what you learned in session 6.
Once you have practised the management of your stress in terms of the simple diagram enough times, it will become automatic. But this takes some time. Be patient in trying to manage your hooks.

**VERY IMPORTANT:**
Each session has to be open for a *minimum* of 7 days before you are allowed to move to the next session.

There is a motivational 1-minute video clip per day, and you simply need to estimate your hooktime.

- Look at the summary of your stress, as well as individual hooks and their summary
- You can always refer back to this session on your lifetime TUPS website/mobile app as this is a summary of all you have done in the course
DETAILED READING:

This session will prove to be the most difficult part of this entire course, but also the most comprehensive in terms of putting everything together in a flow diagram. This diagram conceptualizes the manner in which our thought processes occur and eliminate each skill in trying to master the hook. In this session, you will not only have to utilize your knowledge of the components of time urgency perfectionism (TUP) stress in your life, but also combine the components individually with techniques that would manage each component of stress.

![TUP Stress Cycle Summarized](image)

This is a summary of all the previous sessions and skills taught.

- 90% of your stress is Self-Induced or TUP stress
- 90% of hooks repeat themselves
- 90% of hooks will be managed practically by the cycle below by implementing the techniques learned in sessions 4-8
- Start with Step 1. If unsuccessful, move onto Step 2 and so on
- Ultimately you will identify where your weaknesses lie and with time, be able to implement that skill instead of having to exhaust all skills
- This comes with practice
1. Identify the specific hook. If it is unpredictable, ask yourself if you could have made it predictable and avoided it entirely. This will help with future encounters with the hook.

2. If the hook is time urgent or perfectionist, use the cycle above to manage the hook. A self-induced hook implies you can manage it with the skills taught.

3. Do you feel physically tense? If so, implement the relaxation technique, deep breathing exercise or visualization.

4. Self-talk and irrational thinking is most people’s weakness. Use the skills to ask yourself the three questions, and change your thinking to a more rational manner of thinking.

5. If you still remain stressed, then establish if assertive behavior will assist.

**THIS IS A PROCESS OF ELIMINATION AND IT WILL BECOME HABIT IN THE FUTURE.**

---

**A practical example**

A colleague that you report to at work e-mails you on a Friday afternoon at 15h00. He requires you to produce a document that would take at least four hours. He needs this document for a business meeting Friday evening. This colleague did a lot for your career advancement in this company. However, you also promised your spouse - whose birthday it is – that you would celebrate this occasion with a supper for the whole family at a favourite restaurant at 19h00.

What do you do?

You go into a blind panic! You think “my job and my marriage are both in trouble. I can’t not do my work because nobody else can. If I’m not home by 18h00, my spouse will be sure that I’m not even interested in her birthday.”

How could this scenario be changed by your knowledge of the course?
1. **What is the hook in this situation? Was it predictable or unpredictable?**

The hook is being on time to produce the document and to attend the birthday at the restaurant. This hook – clash of the deadline with birthday plans - was not predictable so you were unable to plan for, and ultimately, avoid it. But ask yourself: can I make it predictable for the future? Does this particular colleague always send unpredictable deadlines? Is a Friday night bad for a family celebration?

2. **Is this a time urgent, real or perfectionistic hook?**

The hook is both time urgent – the deadline- and perfectionistic- letting your spouse down. It is not real such as having a flight to catch at 19h00.

3. **Identify Behavioural Reaction, Self-Talk, Thinking Reaction and Physical Tension**
The above is a similar representation of the stress cycle that you will see in session 5 and session 9 on the mobile application. This is the process that you will eventually learn – with practice – each time you feel stressed. Once you can identify each reaction, you then look at the corresponding solutions.

So what solutions can I implement?

By looking at the diagrams, you will see the process that happened to arrive at correct solutions. An important point to remember is that you do not need to be able to perfectly apply all four solutions. Usually it only takes the management of one reaction to change the process of the stress cycle. Most people first challenge their thinking when they are stressed. They ask themselves if they are thinking logically or rationally? They question whether or not they are personalising. If they can recognize that they are distorting their thinking, they will usually change their behavioural reaction. The easiest level to intervene on first, when you are stressed, is to challenge your thinking. If the stress still remains, look at your behaviour, and finally, at your physical reaction. In this scenario, you will need to approach either your colleague or your wife. You would put into practice the mini relaxation exercise, and implement your assertiveness skills by either asking your colleague for an extension or by using warmth, congruence and empathy with your spouse.
For the next week, apply the above to problems that will arise for you. Bear in mind that you must not be perfectionistic by wanting to manage all the problems or time urgent by achieving a solution immediately.

Also, don’t attempt to be time urgent in fixing up every problem you are confronted with. Prioritize your hooks and demands, and deal with the most pressing of the hooks, one at a time. As you gain mastery over one hook, it will have an impact on the solution of future hooks. Gradually you will learn to use those necessary skills that will cause you to become less time urgent and perfectionistic. Remember, don’t underestimate the value of small victories. All together, they constitute winning any war.

But what if the hook is real?

With real hooks, the stress exists outside of us. It is externally induced and even a relaxed person would stress about this. For example, if you and your wife are heading for a divorce and there are ultimatums, then possibly this is real. If the deadline dictates your performance appraisal and thus, your income, it might be real.
When the hook is real, identify your self-talk and take it to its worst extreme. For example: “my marriage will suffer irreversibly if I miss the birthday dinner.” Then implement a solution such as having to be assertive with your colleague. You might realize in this process that you are in fact distorting your thinking, or you will have to outweigh the costs and benefits of letting one of the parties down. Thus, implement a solution.