

Mental Health Awareness Funda-mental Resilience

American Chamber of Commerce Guyana

CAITLIN VIEIRA BA., MA., MSC

What is Mental Health?

- ▶ **Mental health includes our:**
 - **Psychological well-being**
 - **Emotional well-being**
 - **Social well-being.**

Not just the absence of illness

What is Mental Illness?

- ▶ **Dysfunction in:**
 - **Thoughts**
 - **Feelings/mood**
 - **Behaviour**

How common is mental illness?

World Health Organization:

- 1 in 4 adults
- 1 in 5 children

GPHC: Guyana has

- 200,000

Drug Information Network (DIN)

- Guyanese start drinking alcohol at age.....?
- Marijuana/Weed use starts at age.....?

- ▶ However, very few actually receive treatment

Risk Factors for mental illness

▶ **Biological factors**

- Family history of mental health problems
- Pre natal damage
- Low levels of positive neurotransmitters

▶ **Psychological factors**

Life traumas/ abuse

▶ **Environmental**

- Social or cultural expectations
- Areas where there is high poverty or little access to health care

Stress

What is stress?

- ▶ Mental, physical or emotional pressure
- ▶ Affects thoughts, emotions and actions

Stress involves two things: the psychological perception of pressure and the body's response to it.

Eustress vs. Distress

Mind or body?

How to reduce stress?

- ▶ **Recognize your triggers**
- ▶ **Exercise**
- ▶ **Sleep**
- ▶ **Healthy Diet**
- ▶ **Meditation/ Breathing technique**
- ▶ **Time Management Strategies**
- ▶ **Healthy Coping Skills**

The four A's – Avoid, Alter, Adapt & Accept (stress management)

▶ **Avoid** unnecessary stress

- **Learn how to say NO!**

- Know your limits and stick to them. Whether in your personal or professional life, taking on more than you can handle is a sure fire recipe for stress. Distinguish between the “shoulds” and the “musts” and, when possible, say “no” to taking on too much

- **Avoid people or places who/ which stress you out – Take control of your environment**

If someone/ something consistently causes stress in your life, limit the amount of time you spend there or with that person, or end the relationship.

The four A's – Avoid, Alter, Adapt & Accept

► **Alter** the situation- if you cannot avoid, alter

- **Create personal boundaries**

Boundaries are the internal set of rules that we establish for ourselves. They outline what behaviors we will and won't accept, how much time and space we need from others, and what priorities we have

- **Express your feelings in a healthy manner.** If something or someone is bothering you, be more assertive and communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way.

- **Be willing to compromise.** When you ask someone to change their behavior, be willing to do the same. If you both are willing to bend at least a little, you'll have a good chance of finding a happy middle ground.

-be specific with problems/ solutions

- **Create a balanced schedule.** All work and no play is a recipe for burnout. Try to find a balance between work and family life, social activities and solitary pursuits, daily responsibilities and downtime

The four A's – Avoid, Alter, Adapt & Accept

► **Adapt to the stressor** - *If you can't change the stressor, change yourself.* *You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude*

- **Reframe problems.** Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Rather than fuming about a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to pause and regroup, listen to your favourite radio station, or enjoy some alone time.
- **Look at the big picture.** Take perspective of the stressful situation. Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.
- **Adjust your standards.** Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others.

The four A's – Avoid, Alter, Adapt & Accept

► **Accept** the things you can't change

- **Don't try to control the uncontrollable.** Many things in life are beyond our control, particularly the behaviour of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems

- **Learn to forgive.** Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes. Let go of anger and resentments. Free yourself from negative energy by forgiving and moving on

Thought Behaviour Process

Thought – Emotion – Behaviour

Emotions and behaviours are typically the focus

Most Important thing to note: FEELINGS ARE NOT FACTS!

- Emotional Reasoning

Types of Communication

Effective Communication	Verbal speech or other methods of relaying information that can get a point across
Passive	Accepting or allowing what happens or what others do, without active response or resistance
Aggressive	Ready or likely to attack or confront
Passive –Aggressive	Denoting a type of behavior or personality characteristic by indirect resistance to the demands of others and an avoidance of direct confrontation
Assertive	Having or showing a confident and forceful personality

Types of Communication

Types of Communication

Types of Communication				
	Aggressive	Passive	Passive Aggressive	Assertive
Verbal Communication Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demanding and threatening• Voice is loud	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Apologetic• Finding it difficult to take responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sarcastic• Indirectly aggressive• unreliable	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Medium pitch, speed and volume in voice• Emotionally expressive
Non-Verbal Communication Aspects	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Big and fast gestures• 'Bigger than' others posture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No eye contact• Tends to fidget	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Insincere smile• Pretends to be friendly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Open body posture• Appropriate eye contact

Sourced from O'Toole (2016a)

Healthy Communication/ Conflict Resolution

- ▶ Picking the right forum – where and how
- ▶ Listening Skills – body language and verbal check in – serious topics deserve serious attention
- ▶ Listen to understand, not respond
- ▶ NEVER assume “Are you saying/ do you mean?”
- ▶ NO interruptions or redirections
- ▶ You vs I statements

Use 'I' statements – This is avoiding the word 'You' at all costs, mainly saying 'I feel a certain way' rather than 'You made me feel this way'. This shows acknowledgment and ownership of feelings, ensuring the person does not become defensive.

Healthy Communication/ Conflict Resolution

- ▶ Acknowledgement of other people's opinion and feelings (you do not have to agree)
- ▶ Disagree respectfully
- ▶ No absolute language
- ▶ Feedback – verbal and non-verbal
- ▶ Compromise – 10 questions example
- ▶ No judgement

Personal responsibility is a strength, not a weakness

Body Language

Positive body language is when your movements and gestures show that you are engaged, interested, approachable, and open.

Examples

Positive Eye Contact – conveys attention

Good Posture - Conveys Confidence

Leaning in / Body faced towards speaker

Negative Body Language – shows that you are disengaged, uninterested and defensive

Rolled eyes

Folded arms / hands on the hip

Finger pointing

Overuse of arms

Healthy Alternatives to Anger

When faced with an angering situation

- ▶ **Assertiveness –**

Speaking forthrightly in a manner that is respectful of the other persons needs and rights. Stating your needs clearly and to the point. This ensures to not attack anyone in a way which can only make them defensive.

- ▶ **Walk away and Cool down-** If you feel you are not able to do the above, walking away to clear your head is the next alternative. Recognize that the situation has become volatile and unproductive
- ▶ **Relaxation-** reduce stress and tension- this involves using activities such as mindful mediation, 8-4-8 or guided imagery

Healthy Alternatives to Anger

- ▶ **Diversion – coping skills, goals – when anger builds, find activities that stop this build-up and focus the mind on more enjoyable activities.**
- ▶ **Self-talk – this involves taking the time to talk yourself out of the anger you are feeling. What messages are you telling yourself? Are they reasonable or constructive?**

When you are ready to deal with the issue again-

- ▶ **Use problem solving skills – this means calmly discussing or clarifying the problem and coming up with possible solutions**

Make pros and cons of each alternative solution –select the best for both parties . and way to avoid confrontation in the future. Make suggestions of positive and specific behaviour changes from both parties.

Calm down kit – based on your senses

Coping Skills

- ▶ How we deal with adversity
- ▶ Healthy Vs Unhealthy



Most Common Complaint?

Low motivation



► **Thank you!**

caitlinvieira@gmail.com