

Procrastination is, hands down, our favourite form of self-sabotage

Self-care is no longer optional



- We will always feel that we are too busy to make time for ourselves, but as the saying goes:
- **'If you don't make time for health, make time for illness'**
- Veterinary practitioners are at great risk of compassion fatigue because we continually give, are very busy and deal with emotionally charged cases on a daily basis.
- **Professionals who have hope are far better at offering it to others**

Understand the stress process: how and why it develops



- Automatic response, outside of our conscious control
- Beneficial to pre-historic ancestors for survival
- Physiological response has not changed since then
- Not appropriate for today's pressures and on a consistent basis
- Don't need to fight, freeze or flee, but to THINK and CHOOSE

The Positive Effects of Stress



- The right amount helps to motivate us
- A healthy amount increases our productivity
- Protracted stress provides an early alarm system
- On-going discomfort, exhaustion and pain can motivate us to change destructive habits

The Negative Effects of Stress



- **Sustained nor-adrenalin and adrenalin release**
 - Aggression or fear
 - Increased heart rate, blood pressure, muscle contraction
 - Decreased gut motility
 - Increased respiration, perspiration, restlessness
- **Increased Cortisone and Aldosterone release**
 - Increased blood pressure
 - Depressed immune system
 - Weight gain, Insulin resistance
- **Your body defines a new 'normal' and returns to this even at rest**
 - Irreversible structural changes
 - Hypertension, heart attacks, strokes, ulcers, asthma, anxiety disorders

Prevention and Recovery

- **Recognise the symptoms**
 - In the professional staff
 - In support staff too
- **Acknowledge the risk**
 - Be realistic in evaluating yourself
 - Take the ProQOL test regularly
- **Take care of yourself**
 - The oxygen mask approach



Dealing Positively with Pressure

- **Start living more consciously**
 - Healthy diet
 - Enough and quality sleep
 - Exercise
 - Engage in re-balancing activities
 - Soothe your senses daily



6 Stress Beaters

- Relax
- Review
- Refuse
- Resource
- Reframe
- Renew



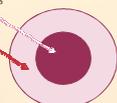
1. RELAX

- Consciously choose and engage in activities that **reverse** physiological damage
- Total body relaxation - neuro-muscular
 - Breathing
 - Sensory relaxation - visualisation
- At least once a day
- Meditation creates best results



2. REVIEW

- Assess your current pressure and stress levels
- Create personal standards and 'Life Rules'
- Curb your perfectionism
- **Circle of Influence vs Circle of Concern** (Stephen Covey)



The Serenity Prayer

I accept the things I cannot change
 I have the courage to change the things I can
 And I have the wisdom to know the difference

3. REFUSE

- Learning to say 'NO' appropriately
 - When it's something you don't need to do
 - When it's something you don't want to do
 - When it's something you'll do badly
 - When it's something others can do better
 - When it's someone else's issue to deal with

Also known as setting boundaries



4. RESOURCE

- Learn to ask for help and for the resources you need
- Stimulate your creativity
 - Relax
 - Access the right side of your brain through music, drawing, meditating, brainstorming, mind-mapping
 - Observe and listen to other people's effective approaches



5. REFRAME

- Decrease your internal demands by changing your perception
- Under stress, automatic and/or negative thoughts predominate
- Aim for a 2:1 or 3:1 ratio of positive:negative thoughts to remain healthy
- We are trained to think critically, to this aspect is especially difficult and important to master



Effects of positive thinking

- Increases well-being
- Reduces stress levels significantly
- Gives you more energy
 - Feel stronger
 - Can think more quickly and clearly
 - Less likely to suffer from burn-out (nurses study)
- Attracts good support and more resources



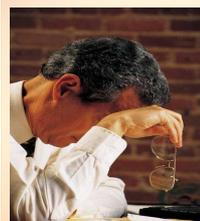
Positive thought for the day

When you feel that nobody loves you,
Nobody cares for you,
Everyone is ignoring you,
and people are jealous of you
You should really ask yourself...

Am I TOO sexy?



GEE Strategy for Reframing



Use this when you're feeling down or using too many negative absolutes
e.g *never, always, everyone, nothing, no-one, can't, must*

- Check:
 - Am I **G**eneralising
 - Am I **E**xaggerating
 - Am I **E**xcluding?

Generalising

- “Clients are so unbelievably rude these days. I’m sick of being polite all the time.”
- Reframed:
“ I had my fair share of unpleasant clients today. They are dealing with their issues and I’d rather focus on all the great clients I saw in between”

Exaggerating

- “ No-one ever helps out when the clients pile up in the waiting room. Why is there never any co-operation around here?”
- Reframed:
“Clients had to wait longer than usual today, which is not ideal. Were the other vets not aware of this, or was it a really busy afternoon for everyone?”

Excluding

- “This new anaesthetic protocol is a total waste of time. Who came up with this non-sense?”
- Reframed:
“ There are some really good ideas here. Perhaps we can modify the one area that might cause a delay during morning admissions.”

Reframing Strategies

- Challenge negative judgements
- Stop pre-emptive mind reading
- Replace worry with a constructive contingency plan
- Look for the learning gained from setbacks
- Approach conflict from a win-win view
- Accept the pressures you cannot change

Whether you
think you can,
or think you can't
-you're right.

Henry Ford

6. RENEW

- Do more of the things that renew and refresh your:
 - Spirit
 - Motivation
 - Sense of fun
 - Creativity
 - Curiosity
 - Interest in others
 - Enjoyment of challenge and adventure
- Make a list of these and schedule time for them



Life is not the way it's supposed to be.
It's the way it is.
The way we cope with it,
is what makes the difference.