DF 316
Stress Management

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COURSE OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course are to enable participants to:

- Explain what stress is.
- Examine the impact of stress.
- Identify unhealthy responses to stress.
- Identify healthy responses to stress.
- Develop a personal action plan for managing stress on and off the job.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for this training includes all FEMA staff.

CONTENTS

This course includes the following sections:

- Welcome
- Course Overview
- Introduction
- UNIT 1 – Defining Stress
- UNIT 2 – Response to Stress
- UNIT 3 – Dealing with Stress
- Summary

APPROXIMATE TIME

3 hours

PREPARING

Use the following checklist to help you prepare for this course:

Supplies and Equipment

- Visuals 1 through 25 (Prepare the visuals, if necessary.)
- Overhead projector with screen, laptop computer with projector.
- Note cards
- Chart paper, easels, and markers
- Masking tape
- Name cards
- Pens, pencils, and note paper

Setup

Before class, the instructor needs 4 or more (depending on size of class) easel pages. Each sheet should identify one work stressor from the following list: too much work, changing priorities, unclear directions, disorganization, not enough time, too many meetings, and untrained staff. Post these sheets around the room, taping the bottom of the sheet up to cover the text until time for the activity.

Handout Materials

- Handout 1 – How Stress Resistant Are You?
- Handout 2 – Individual Stress Assessment
- Handout 3 – Anatomy of the Alarm Stage: Fight or Flight?
- Handout 4 – Self-Care Suggestions
- Handout 5 – Individual Action Plan
- Handout 6 – Course Evaluation

NUMBER OF INSTRUCTORS

One or two instructors may be used to teach this course.

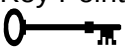
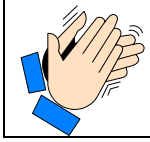
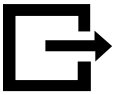
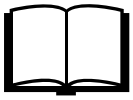
INSTRUCTOR QUALIFICATIONS

Instructors should have training or experience in **Psychology**, **Counseling**, or **Mental Health Services**, as well as previous experience working at a JFO. This course should be taught by instructors with previous disaster field experience. If you are inexperienced, request an experienced instructor to co-instruct the first session with you.

COURSE CONTENT

Instructors delivering these course materials should ensure that the course objectives are delivered in their entirety in order to have the course completion recorded in the Automated Deployment Database (ADD). Additional material may be added, based on the need of the audience to enhance the understanding of the subject matter.

ICONS

Overhead Projector	Projector	videotape	Easel	Key Point 	Instructor Note	Check List / Evaluation form	Graduation / Diplomas
Thank You! / Good Job! 	Activity	Discussion Question	Summary Transition 	Participant Manual 	Time Saving Tip	Participant Handout	

WELCOME

Visual 1

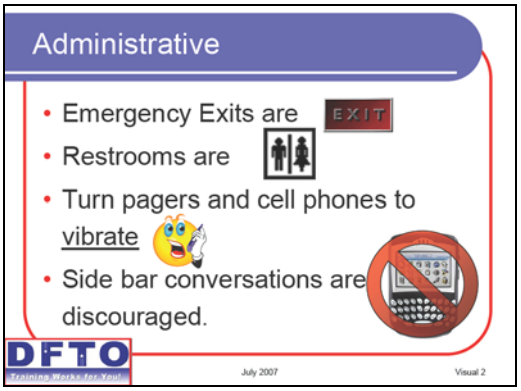
Begin by welcoming the class.

- Introduce yourself

Visual 2

Review class rules and safety items:

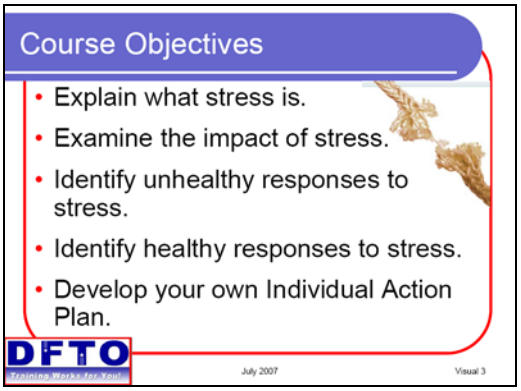
- Fire exits
- Restrooms
- Turn pagers and cell phones to vibrate.



COURSE OVERVIEW

Visual 3

Begin by reviewing the following objectives



- Explain what stress is.

  (Objective 1, page 11)
- Examine the impact of stress

  (Objective 2, pages 18 and 19)
- Identify unhealthy responses to stress

  (Objective 3, page 21)
- Identify healthy responses to stress.

  (Objective 4, page 21)
- Develop your own Individual Action Plan to help you deal with stress on and off the job.

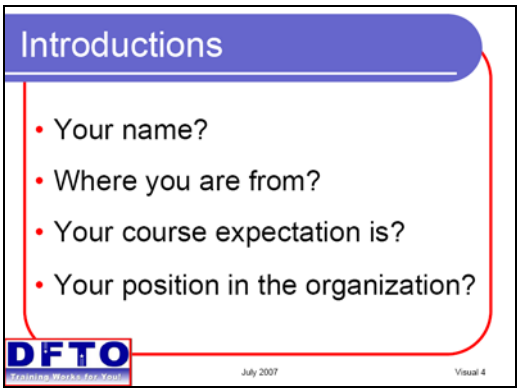
  (Objective 5, page 25)

INTRODUCTIONS

Visual 4

Ask participants to introduce themselves.

- Name?
- Where they are from?
- Course expectations?
- Position in the organization?



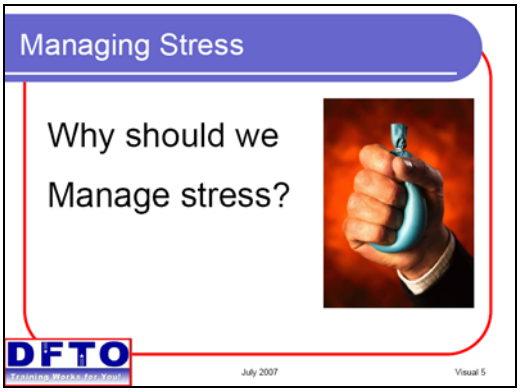
Handout 1

Refer participants to Handout 1, titled:
"How Stress-Resistant Are You?"

Allow 10 minutes to complete the assessment. Have participants tally their scores according to the scoring system at the bottom of the assessment.

Inform them that the test is for their information only and their assessment will not be scored for the course.

Visual 5



Activity 1

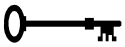
Divide class into groups.

Allow each group 3 minutes to answer the question:

Why should we manage stress?

Have each group share their answers with the class.

Display answers on easel paper.



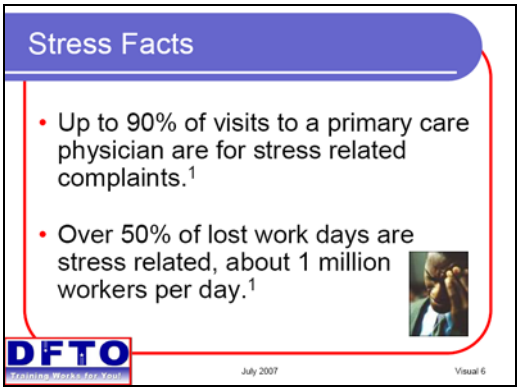
If not covered by class:

- Stress is real
- Some people are more susceptible to stress and it its effects than others.
- Know your stress threshold.
- Coping mechanisms exist
- Stress effects our work
- Stress impacts our relationships with others

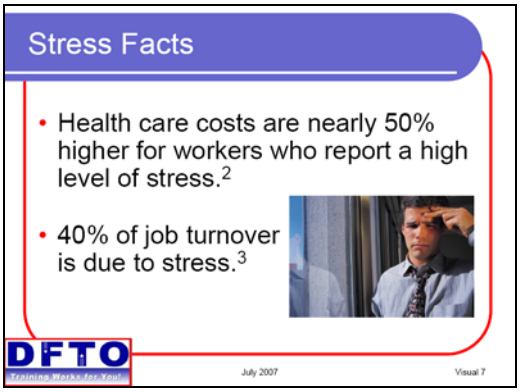
Learning Check Question #8

Visual 6

Share the following info with the class to emphasize the impact of stress on workers.



Visual 7



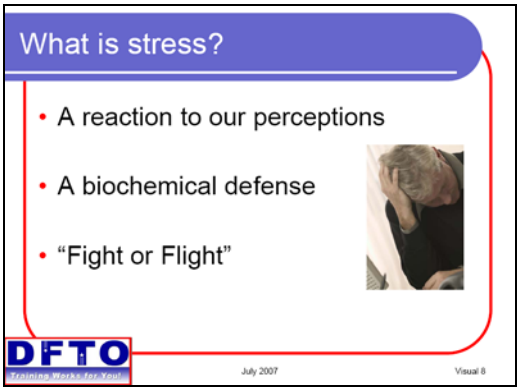
- Up to 90% of all visits to primary care physicians are for stress-related complaints. [1]
- Over 50% of lost work days are stress related which keeps about 1 million people per day from attending work. [1]
- Health care expenditures are nearly 50% greater for workers who report high levels of stress. [2]
- 40% of job turnover is due to stress. [3]

1. Occupational Health and Safety news and the National Council on compensation Insurance (U.S.A.)
2. Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine
3. American Institute of Stress

Discuss the fact that we all experience stress in our lives and we each have our own methods for handling it. Some people thrive on stress and often create much of the stress in their lives while others can easily be overtaken by stress.

DEFINING STRESS

Visual 8



Define stress.

- Stress is a result of our individual **reactions** to an event. Our reactions will vary and are directly related to our perceptions of the particular event. Individual values, attitudes, and life experiences determine our perceptions.

  (Objective 1), Learning Check Questions 1 and 2

  Stress is a mobilization of the body's **defenses**, an ancient biochemical survival mechanism that allows humans to adapt to hostile or 'perceived' threatening events. It is commonly known as the **"fight or flight"** response.

- Stress is a physical, mental and emotional reaction to an internal and/or external (stimulus) event.
- Stress gone unattended, unrecognized and /or unresolved has a variety of negative short and long term impacts on the health, attitudes and relationships of people.
- There are healthy and unhealthy responses to stress, that we will discuss.
- It is a good idea to have a proposed action plan to help you manage stress in your life.

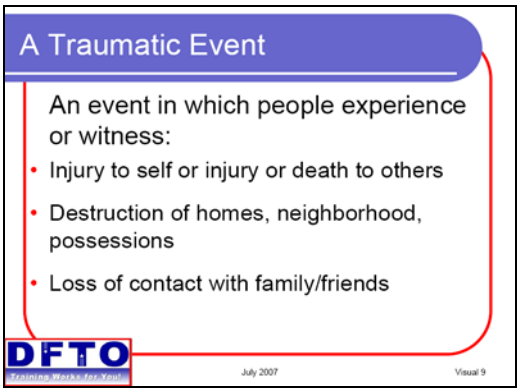
  Learning Check Question 3

Handout 2

Refer participants to Handout 2, titled:
"Individual Stress Assessment."

Participants may complete this activity on their own time to help them identify their stressors within the workplace. With the results of their assessments, they may better understand what causes their stress and how to suppress it.

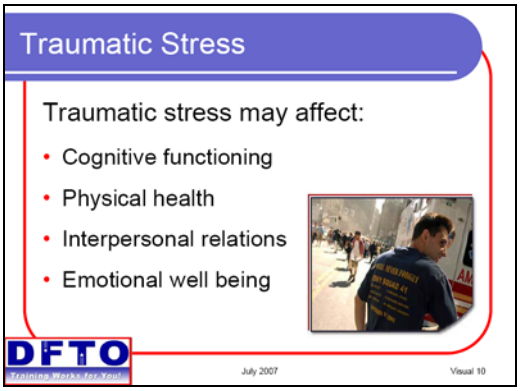
Visual 9



Explain the following key points:

- In addition to common work related stress, each of us can be impacted by a traumatic crisis in the JFO even if we are not the immediate recipients.
- Nobody who sees a disaster is unaffected by it.

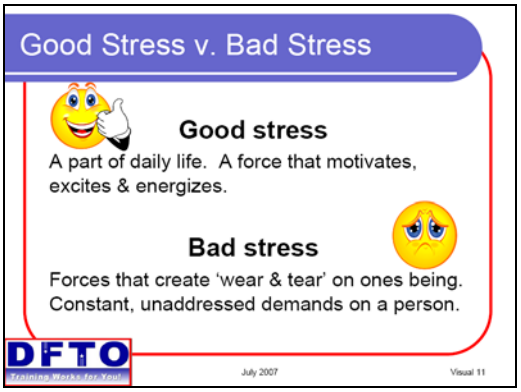
Visual 10



Explain the following key points:

- Traumatic stress will affect us if we don't take steps to mitigate the impact of the event.
- Our mental capacity may falter, our physical well being may weaken, and our relations with others may be affected.
- Pay close attention to your body's signals to rest or take a break.
  Learning Check Question #7

Visual 11



Explain the following key points:

- Stress is not always bad.
- We need stress to motivate us.
- It is important to be able to recognize the difference between good and bad stress.
- Unaddressed, chronic bad stress will cause physical and/or psychological consequences.

Learning Check Question 5

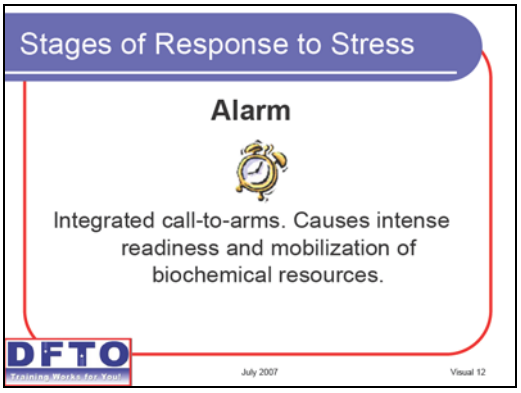
Ask participants to explain the differences and give examples.

Note their answers on easel paper.

Ask participants what reactions they may experience that help them identify stress as good or bad.

RESPONSE TO STRESS

Visual 12



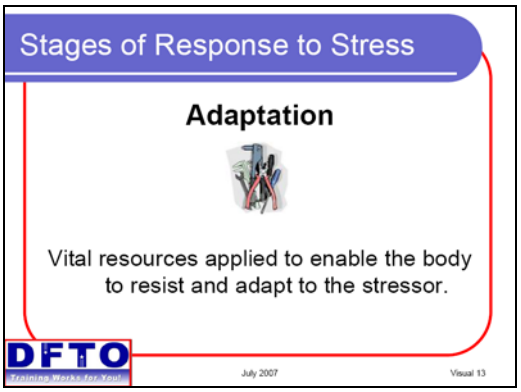
Anatomy of the Alarm Stage: "Fight or Flight."

Immediate biological reactions as the body prepares handle the perceived stress:

- Stored sugar and fats put into the bloodstream to provide fuel for quick energy.
- The rate of breathing increases to provide more oxygen.
- Red blood cells flood the bloodstream, carrying more oxygen to the muscles of the limbs and the brain.
- The heart speeds up and blood pressure soars, insuring sufficient blood supply to needed areas.
- Blood clotting mechanisms are activated to protect against injury.

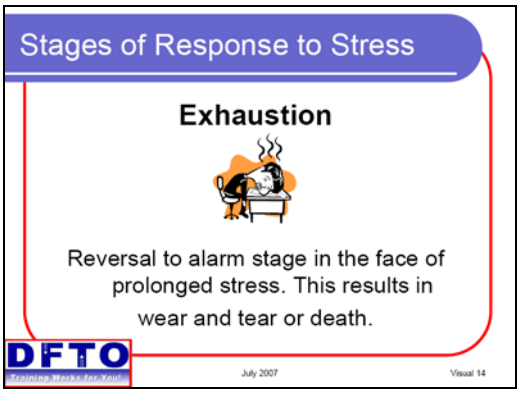
- Muscles tense in preparation for strenuous action.
- Digestion ceases, so blood may be diverted to muscles and brain.
- Perspiration and salivation increase.
- Triggered by the pituitary gland, the endocrine system steps up hormone production.
- Bowel and bladder muscles loosen.
- Adrenalin pours into the system.
- The pupils dilate allowing more light to enter the eye.

Visual 13



Adaptation occurs when we call upon our own physical resources to cope with the stress.

Visual 14

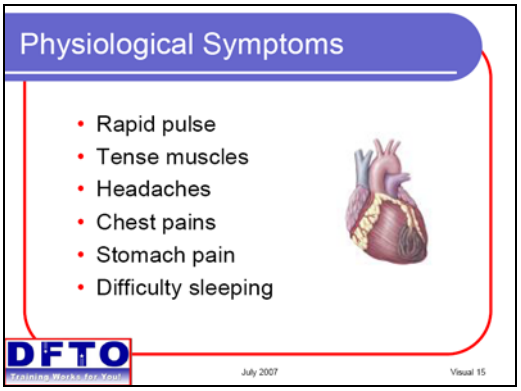


Exhaustion occurs when a person does not or cannot call for the healthy coping mechanism.

It does not need to reach this stage. There are resources available to help people.

The Department of Homeland Security Management Directive System MD # 3060.1 titled “Employee Assistance Program” and MD 3062 titled “Traumatic Incident Management Program” may be referenced for additional guidance

Visual 15



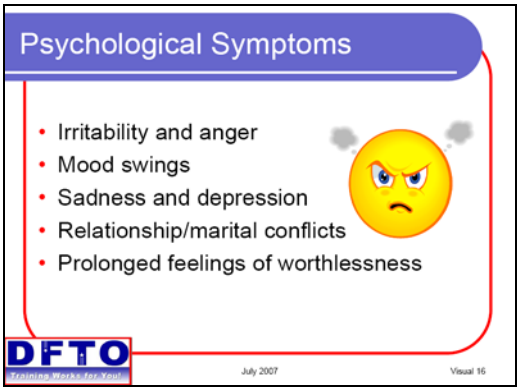
Identify the following *physiological* symptoms of long term stress.

(Objective 2)

Ask if anyone has experienced any of these (or other) physiological symptoms. Answers may include:

- Nausea
- Indigestion
- Anxiousness
- Dry mouth
- Increased alcohol, drug, caffeine usage
- Insomnia or nightmares
- Fatigue and low energy

Visual 16



Explain the following key points:

- Each person will respond differently to stress.
  Learning Check Question 6
- Symptoms may not appear immediately.
- Stay in-tuned with your body in order to be aware of symptoms.
- If stress continues, the body will wear down and may cause illnesses such as: asthma, diabetes, headaches, ulcers, cancer.

  (Objective 2)

Ask participants to name other psychological symptoms of stress. Answers may include:

- Self-blame, blaming others
- Isolation, withdrawal
- Feeling helpless
- Feeling stunned, numb, or overwhelmed
- Poor concentration
- Memory problems

Explain the following key points:

- Each of our responses differs, but is real to each of us.
- It is the chronic stress state that weakens our physical and emotional resistance.
- "Fight or Flight" is a natural response, but we are not meant to be in that mode for extended periods of time.
- **Suggest** that participants watch for these symptoms in themselves, their colleagues, and their customers.

DEALING WITH STRESS

Visual 17

Stay in tune with your body, mind, emotions and relationships in order to be aware of your symptoms.

Ask participants to brainstorm a list of ways to reduce stress outside of the workplace.

Record their answers on easel paper and **facilitate** discussion.

Visual 18

Facilitate a discussion about unhealthy responses to stress.

Objective 3, Learning Check Question 4

Visual 19

Explain the following key points:

- These are basic tips, but they are valid and useful ideas.
- Implementing these suggestions in a disaster environment may not be easy.
- Make a commitment to take care of yourself.

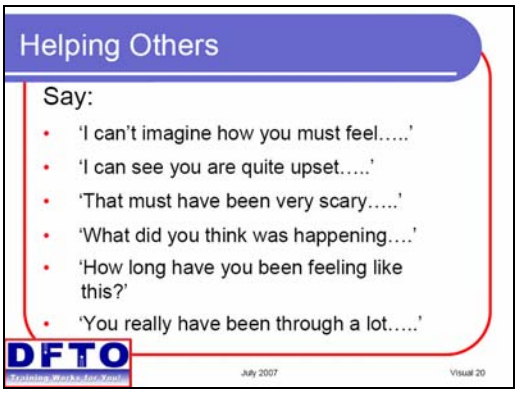
  Objective 4

"Self-Care Suggestions"

- Get physical exercise & alternate with relaxation.
- Structure your time – keep busy.
- You are normal and having normal reactions – Remember that!
- Talk to people – Tell "your story."
- Be wary of numbing the pain with over use of drugs or alcohol.
- Reach out – participate in support groups or other helpful resources.
- Maintain as normal a schedule as possible.
- Spend time with others, particularly family members (if you can) and friends
- Help your co-workers by sharing feelings and checking out how they are doing.
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten and share your feelings with others – occasionally.
- Don't take other people's reactions or responses personally.
- Keep a journal; write your way through those sleepless hours.
- Do things that feel good to you and accept that you might feel some "Survivor's Guilt."
- Realize those around you are also under stress.
- Watch for what might be considered more serious symptoms.
- Do make as many daily decisions as possible to help feel in control of your life.
- Don't make any big life changes.
- Get whatever kind of rest you can….take breaks, however small.
- Recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are normal. Don't try to fight them.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals – even if you don't feel like it.
- Honor your own pace at which you process the trauma.
- Be kind to yourself and those around you.
- Create a healing environment.

Visual 20

Identify the following as suggestions to use when encouraging an individual to talk.



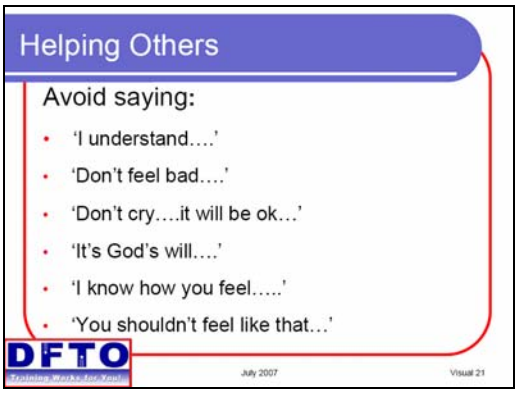
Explain the following key points:

- These suggestions apply to a person who is directly or indirectly affected by a traumatic event or is just stressed out from their job.
- It is important for a person to talk about their feelings in order to heal and reduce the stress.
- You should try to create an atmosphere of trust and safety. The person wants to know that you will not judge them or be critical of their experiences.
- You do not have to agree with personal opinions. Just listen to them.

Each person's perception is their own reality. Every person experiences an event differently; therefore, no one has a right or wrong reaction.

Visual 21

Tell participants to avoid saying the following:



Ask participants why these responses would be inappropriate.

Explain the following key points:

- These phrases tend to minimize and negate the other person's experience.
- The goal is to listen. Do not judge, criticize, or negate someone's experiences.
- You cannot know how they feel, even if you've been through a similar disaster or event.
- Everyone's experience is specific to their own life.
- Remain neutral and be supportive while the person talks.

Visual 22

Handout 5

Refer participants to handout 5, titled:
"Individual Action Plan"

Allow participants 10 minutes to complete the activity.

Ask participants to find a partner and share their plans for 10-15 minutes.

(Objective 5)

Ask participants:

- What will be the most difficult part of implementing their plan?
- What are some suggestions for overcoming come these challenges?

Encourage participants to find a support buddy and remain confident and persistent in their efforts.

Remind participants that it takes time, patience, consistency, and determination to change your own behavior.

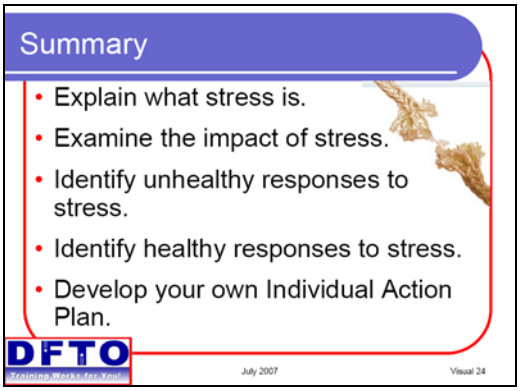
Visual 23

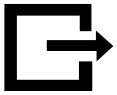
Explain the following key points:

- If unable to cope, these phone numbers will connect participants with the Employee Assistance Program for professional help.
- You must take care of yourself first.

SUMMARY

Visual 24





Summary

Ask participants to answer the following review questions:

- What is stress?
- What are the symptoms of stress?
- Name healthy responses to stress.
- How do you help others who are stressed?

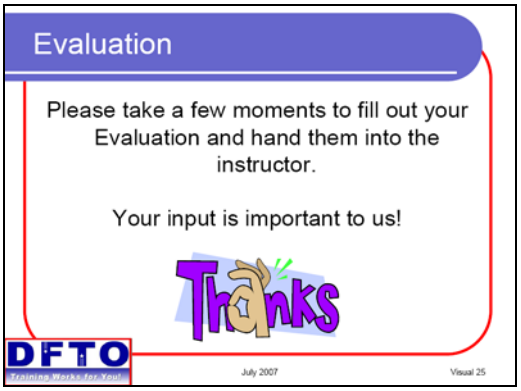
Copy and Distribute the Learning Check to the participants.

Ask the participants to complete the Learning Check, they will have 15 minutes.

Correct the Learning Check as a group, ensuring that the participants have the correct answers to the questions.

Ask the participants to complete the course evaluation form

Visual 25



Thank the participants and the instructional staff.

HOW STRESS-RESISTANT ARE YOU?
Handout #1

Date_____

Directions: Treating a score of '1' as something that is almost always true and '5' as something that is never true about your stress reactions, circle the appropriate response for each of the following questions:

1. I eat at least one hot balanced meal a day.
   Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

2. I get seven to eight hours of sleep at least four nights a week.
   Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

3. I give and receive affection regularly.
   Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

4. I have at least one relative within 50 miles of home on whom I can rely.
   Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

5. I exercise until I perspire at least twice weekly.
   Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

6. I limit myself to less than half a pack of cigarettes a day.
   Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

7. I take fewer than five alcoholic drinks a week.
   Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

8. I am the appropriate weight for my height and build.
   Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

9. My income covers my basic expenses.
   Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

10. I get my strength from my religious beliefs.
    Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

HOW STRESS-RESISTANT ARE YOU?
Handout #1 (continued)

11. I regularly attend social activities.
    Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

12. I have a network of close friends and acquaintances.
    Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

13. I have one or more friend to confide in about personal matters.
    Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

14. I am in good health, including eyesight, hearing, teeth.
    Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

15. I am able to speak openly about my feelings when angry or worried.
    Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

16. I discuss domestic problems (chores, money) with members of my household.
    Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

17. I have fun at least once a week.
    Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

18. I can organize my time effectively.
    Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

19. I drink fewer than three cups of coffee or other caffeine drinks a day.
    Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

20. I take some quiet time for myself during the day.
    Always 1 2 3 4 5 Never

Score your stress level:

20-45	You have excellent resistance to stress.
46-55	You are somewhat vulnerable to stress.
56-100	You are seriously vulnerable to stress.

INDIVIDUAL STRESS ASSESSMENT
Handout #2

1. **What things cause stress for you at work?**

2. **How do you know when you are feeling stressed**?

3. **How do you deal with your stress?**

"ANATOMY OF THE ALARM STAGE: FIGHT OR FLIGHT."
Handout #3

Immediate biological reactions as the body prepares handle the perceived stress:

- Stored sugar and fats put into the bloodstream to provide fuel for quick energy.
- The rate of breathing increases to provide more oxygen.
- Red blood cells flood the bloodstream, carrying more oxygen to the muscles of the limbs and the brain.
- The heart speeds up and blood pressure soars, insuring sufficient blood supply to needed areas.
- Blood clotting mechanisms are activated to protect against injury.
- Muscles tense in preparation for strenuous action.
- Digestion ceases, so blood may be diverted to muscles and brain.
- Perspiration and salivation increase.
- Triggered by the pituitary gland, the endocrine system steps up hormone production.
- Bowel and bladder muscles loosen.
- Adrenalin pours into the system.
- The pupils dilate allowing more light to enter the eye.

SELF-CARE SUGGESTIONS
Handout #4

- Get physical exercise & alternate with relaxation.
- Structure your time – keep busy.
- You are normal and having normal reactions – Remember that!
- Talk to people – Tell “your story.”
- Be wary of numbing the pain with over use of drugs or alcohol.
- Reach out – participate in support groups or other helpful resources.
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- Spend time with others, particularly family members (if you can) and friends
- Help your co-workers by sharing feelings and checking out how they are doing.
- Give yourself permission to feel rotten and share your feelings with others – occasionally.
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- Realize those around you are also under stress.
- Watch for what might be considered more serious symptoms.
- Do make as many daily decisions as possible to help feel in control of your life.
- Don’t make any big life changes.

SELF-CARE SUGGESTIONS
Handout #4
(continued)

- Get whatever kind of rest you can….take breaks, however small.
- Recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks are normal. Don't try to fight them.
- Eat well-balanced and regular meals – even if you don't feel like it.
- Honor your own pace at which you process the trauma.
- Be kind to yourself and those around you.
- Create a healing environment.

INDIVIDUAL ACTION PLAN
Handout #5

Identify four specific actions you plan to take to reduce stress in your life:

1.

2.

3.

4.

Learning Check

1. Stress is a result of our individual _____to an event.

2. Our reactions will vary and are directly related to our perceptions of the particular event. What determines our perceptions?

   a. Individual values
   b. Life experiences
   c. Attitudes
   d. Only a and b
   e. All of the above

3. It is a good idea to have a proposed action plan to help you manage stress in your life.

   TRUE **FALSE**

4. Keeping emotions or feelings bottled up inside is a way of coping with stress.

   TRUE **FALSE**

5. _____,_____will cause physical and/or psychological consequences.

6. Everyone should manage stress the same way?

   TRUE **FALSE**

7. In a work setting, one way of coping is to take a break?

   TRUE **FALSE**

Learning Check

8. Be aware of one's own limitations can help determine the best way to cope with a variety of situation.

TRUE **FALSE**

9. What program is available to us? _____ _____ _____

10. All stress is bad.

TRUE **FALSE**

Learning Check
Answer Key

1. Stress is a result of our individual **reactions** to an event. Page 11

2. Our reactions will vary and are directly related to our perceptions of the particular event. What determines our perceptions?

   a. Individual values
   b. Life experiences
   c. Attitudes
   d. Only a and b
   e. **All of the above** Page 11

3. It is a good idea to have a proposed action plan to help you manage stress in your life.

   TRUE Page 11 FALSE

4. Keeping emotions or feelings bottled up inside is a way of coping with stress.

   TRUE **FALSE** Page 21

5. **Unaddressed, chronic bad stress** will cause physical and/or psychological consequences. Page 14

6. Everyone should manage stress the same way?

   TRUE **FALSE** Page 19

7. In a work setting, one way of coping is to take a break?

   TRUE Page 13 FALSE

Learning Check
Answer Key

8. Be aware of one's own limitations can help determine the best way to cope with a variety of situation.

   TRUE Page 9 FALSE

9. What program is available to us? **EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM** Page 26

10. All stress is bad.

    TRUE **FALSE** Page 14

Please take a moment to complete the following items. Your input may help to improve future training sessions. Thank you!

Date of Course _____

Name of Instructor(s) _____ **Disaster Number** _____

1. The instructor was knowledgeable and well-prepared.

___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree

Comments: _____
_____

2. The instructor provided time for questions and review and encouraged group participation.

___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree

Comments: _____
_____

3. The instructor related the material to disaster work and used FEMA-related examples.

___Strongly Agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly Disagree

Comments: _____
_____

4. Based on your Requestor/Supervisor/Program Manager's expectations from this course, will you be able to meet or exceed them? Why? Or why not?

_____
_____
_____

5. Overall, how would you rate this course.

___Excellent ___Very Good ___Good __Adequate __Poor

6. Please list additional training that would benefit your JFO work or benefit the JFO workforce in general.

_____
_____
_____