

# Undress Your stress

## Materials:

1. Large amounts of clothes of all sizes (i.e. gloves, socks, scarves, pants, sweatshirts, shirts, winter coat, small jackets, tank tops, etc.)
2. Large labels. (Index cards might work well)
3. Several Boxes
4. Stress Relief toys (soft sounds cds, play-doe, bubbles, crayons and a small picture, origami paper and instructions, toothpicks, rubber bands)
5. Tape/clothes pins/pins (pick one)

## Introduction

1. Outline the purpose of the program  
The purpose of the program is to offer participants some simple and fun ways to relieve the stresses they encounter in their daily lives. Participants will identify the parts of their lives that cause stress, gain an understanding of how stress can impact daily activities, and brainstorm ideas and share ways to relieve stress. These ideas will then be related to the roles of the group (RA in this case).
2. Outline the program its self. What is involved? What is the basic idea of how things will run?

## Activity, “Undress your stress”

1. Separate the clothing into three piles, heavy, medium, and light clothing.
2. Two volunteers are chosen from the group of participants. It is explained to the group that volunteer A is a very stressed individual, while volunteer B has little stress in his/her life.
3. Ask the participants to begin by identifying small stressors in their everyday lives. As a stressor is called out, the facilitator writes the stressor on a label and attaches it to a “light” piece of clothing. Volunteer A is then asked to put on the piece of clothing. The next small stressor is announced and the facilitator adds another labeled piece of clothing for Volunteer A to wear. This process continues until the facilitator is satisfied that enough small stressors have been given. The entire process is then repeated for both medium and large stressors, using the “medium” and “heavy” clothing piles respectively.
4. While participants are calling out stressors, the facilitator uses the stressors called out to probe the following points.
  - a. What stressors are worth stressing about?
  - b. How does a person’s attitude play into stress?
  - c. Is stress healthy for some people? (the procrastinating paper writer)
  - d. What is the difference between good and bad stress?
  - e. What does it mean that Volunteer B is clothed, but isn’t having anything added – we all have/need stress; it will always be there.
5. When all clothes have been applied, volunteers A & B are each given the same activity to do. (ex. Hoola-hoop for as long as possible). In watching the activity,

participants are probed to understand that when you have stress in your life, even the most simple of activities can seem really hard! Once again, what is the significance of Volunteer B?

6. Participants are then asked for ways that Volunteer A can relieve some of the stressors. When participants have given two ways to reduce a particular stressor (clothing), that item of clothing is then removed. This process continues until all the additional clothing has been removed.

### **Small Group Activity**

1. Participants are asked to separate into small groups. Groups of five to six work best for this portion of the presentation.
2. Each group is given a box. (shoe boxes work wonders) Each box contains a number of things that could be used in reducing stress. The object of the cooperative groups is to think of as many creative ways to use the items in the box, as well as think of other creative ways to relieve stress.
3. When the groups have been given sufficient time, each group presents three to four ideas that it came up with. The ideas can be bounced around and more ideas can be generated in this way. It might be a good idea to have a white/black board or poster paper available to write down the group's ideas.
4. The participants are then informed that each member of the group may pick an item out of the box to keep as a reminder of creative stress relief.
5. Passive programming: Participants are given informational handouts that summarize ideas covered in the program.

### **Processing**

1. In large group setting, have participants discuss the following topics.
  - a. How does this program relate to the R.A. experience?
    - i. Do R.A.'s deal with added stresses. What are they?
    - ii. What recourses do R.A.'s have available to them for stress relief?
    - iii. How can R.A.'s help their residents when it comes to stress?
    - iv. How can R.A.'s effectively role model healthy stress relief practices?
  - b. Does anyone recognize stressors now that they hadn't realized were there before? What? How can they manage these stressors better?
  - c. Would we want a world without stress?
2. Evaluation:

Evaluation is used to get an idea of how effective the program was in meeting the needs of those involved. Also, evaluation can be used to gain a general perspective on how stressful the R.A. position is perceived as.