



## **Stress Management for Physicians and Health Care Personnel**

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Physicians, other health professionals and mental health professionals constantly give to others, often neglecting themselves. When this is unabated, the results are increased levels of stress leading to burnout and impairment. Prevention and self-care are therefore critical to maintain health.

Most wellness and stress management programs suggest important but simplistic lifestyle changes in areas such as nutrition and exercise. This program goes deeper, examining underlying factors for why such changes are hard to make, and ways to motivate change. It discusses negative coping strategies and “quick fixes,” and makes practical suggestions for healthier life-style choices. Overall it helps participants to know where they are on the wellness-burnout continuum, and how and when to seek help when attempting to care for themselves on their own no longer suffices.

**Seminar Goal:** Participants will put themselves on their own priority lists and take care of themselves, improving their professional/personal lives and relationships.

**Seminar Objectives:** At the end of the seminar, participants will be able to:

- *identify their personal sources of stress*
- *identify personality traits that may cause them stress*
- *identify personal negative coping strategies, including increased compulsive/addictive behaviors*
- *identify personal and professional beliefs that hamper self-care*
- *define stress, burnout and impairment and list at least signs and symptoms of each*
- *realize that “quick fixes” such as alcohol and drugs don’t work, and that long-term life-style changes are much more effective*
- *identify personal factors that make it difficult for them to change and two strategies to reverse this*
- *practice basic skills of one relaxation technique*
- *list 5 strategies they can use to reduce stress in their lives*
- *List 3 professional and support group resources for seeking help when basic stress management techniques no longer suffice*

**Seminar Topics:**

- *sources of increased risk of stress for health professionals in changing times*
- *physical, emotional and spiritual signs and symptoms of increased stress*
- *societal expectations of and unrealistic myths about physicians and health care professionals*
- *personality traits of physicians and health care professionals that contribute to stress*
- *how health professionals overall don’t seek psychological / addiction help when needed*
- *how and why physicians and health professionals avoid their own self-care*
- *professional and personal role conflicts*
- *negative coping strategies*
- *how stress and burnout lead to drug/alcohol use and other addictive behaviors, and the negative impact*
- *how stress and burnout lead to depression and higher rates of suicide among physicians*
- *factors that negatively affect one’s ability to change negative habits, and factors that motivate change*
- *healthier beliefs to adopt in order to facilitate better self-care*
- *stress management techniques, including ones that are physical, spiritual, behavioral and psychological*
- *in-class practice and instruction in relaxation and meditation techniques*
- *When to turn to support groups and professional help for stress-related problems*