

Capstone Essay

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LFCH 550: STRESS MANAGEMENT COACHING

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## MODULE 1

### THE STRESS QUOTIENT FORMULA

#### *Concept*

The Stress Quotient Formula is designed to help individuals identify the level of stress in each area of life. One adds together Stress Environment (work, relational, personal, and community) and Stress Events (Major and minor stressors), then multiplies the sum with Aggravators (e.g. cognitive behavior patterns, over-commitment, poor boundaries). Finally, this number is divided by the Fitness Factor (Hobbies, Enjoyable Activities, rest, and other self-care practices).

#### *Discussion*

Stress can feel overwhelming. In this state of mind, an individual may have irrational thinking. It can be confusing to identify the causes and how to manage it. A test like the Stress Quotient takes out the guesswork by bringing awareness to the areas of high stress.

We cannot manage what we do not measure. The Stress Quotient Formula is a good way to evaluate and measure different aspects of our life. Though one cannot entirely eliminate stress, one has the power to manage and reduce the level of stress. Once a person has identified the causes of stress, he or she can develop and implement a plan to manage it.

#### *Application*

The client will take the assessment to determine her Stress Quotient Formula. The first step is to pick out the top five stressors. From those five, the client will pick out one or two but work on one stressor at a time. Small changes create sustainable and lasting change. If the client

truly works the plan, she will notice the difference. At some point, I would have her retake the assessment to see how far she has come. Life will always have stress. It's good to continually evaluate the stressors in life.

## MODULE 2

### PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE BRAIN FUNCTIONING

#### *Concept*

In Dr. Daniel Amen's lecture on "Stress and Anxiety: Understanding the Brain-Body Connection," healthy brain functioning is important to reduce anxiety and manage stress. One of the steps to calm and help the brain work better is through prayer and meditation.

#### *Discussion*

God designed us to be in communion with Him, and prayer is the conduit of that communion. Prayer has various ingredients, such as: adoration, praise, gratitude, confession, forgiveness, petition, intercession, meditation, and listening (Long, et al., 1998). Each of these elements bring us peace of mind, heart, and spirit.

Part of the stress of our culture is overstimulation, excessive thinking, and negative thoughts. Breathing techniques are often a part of a prayer and meditation practice.

#### *Application*

I would talk with the client about her knowledge and experience with prayer in order to determine how much education is needed. We would talk about ingredients of prayer and practice prayer and breathing techniques within the sessions. At home, I would ask the client to

incorporate a daily or near-daily prayer and meditation practice, even if starting out at five to ten minutes.

## MODULE 3

### BALANCE, INTENTIONALITY, AND SIMPLICITY

#### *Concept*

One learning objective to the hurried woman syndrome is to develop a plan of action to achieve balance, intentionality, and simplicity in daily living.

#### *Discussion*

We are not meant to be scattered. We do not learn techniques for stress management so that we are able to handle more tasks or an excess of tasks. The amount of God-given energy and ability differs between individuals. Each person must ask the Holy Spirit for discernment and guidance about priorities and one's schedule. We must realize we are not God and must accept our limitations. Living with that understanding, we begin to craft a balanced, simplified, and intentional life that is honoring to God.

#### *Application*

The first thing I would do is brainstorm with a client about everything going on in a client's life – events, relationships, thoughts, feelings, desires, concerns, etc. We will organize those thoughts and ideas.

Individuals largely have problems with being hurried because of underlying beliefs. No one is going to simplify and come into balance without knowing his or her values and without adjusting some beliefs.

The client can identify one area to focus on and start to simplify. What is absolutely necessary, somewhat necessary, or not at all necessary? Once the client answers this question, we can create an action plan with short term and long term goals. Small daily actions will help propel the client into a more intentional, focused, balanced life that is not plagued by stress.

## MODULE 4

### TYPE B PLEASURE

#### *Concept*

Seeking the right sort of pleasure in life can be accomplished through Type B pleasures. The pace is easy-going and slow. One can do a physical activity outside such as riding a bike, taking a walk, playing a sport, or anything that connects one to nature. Other Type B pleasure include nurturing relationships with family and friends, which helps us sustain and build community support.

#### *Discussion*

Our culture is fast-paced, achievement and task-oriented. While we, as a culture, may see the value in regular rest, recreation, and quiet time, we have a difficult time incorporating it into our lives. Managing stress by engaging in Type B pleasures requires intentionality. These changes do not happen overnight.

Personally, I often have thought that I do not have time for Type B pleasures because I had so much to do. Truth is, when I have taken time for Type B pleasures, it has helped me reset my values and priorities in life. It makes me more efficient, focused, clear-minded and less stressed.

### *Application*

The client and I can talk about goals in each area of recreation, rest, and nurturing relationships. We would create goals of daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and yearly times to take for Type B pleasures. This plan would likely require money. We could talk about budgeting as well.

## MODULE 5

### EXPERIENCING REST THROUGH SHEPHERD CENTERDNESS

#### *Concept*

When we make the Lord our shepherd and walk with Christ daily, we experience rest. Psalm 23 gives reassurance, “The Lord is our shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures; he leads me beside still waters; he restores my soul. He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.” Matthew 11:28-29 tells us we can go to the Lord with our burdens and He will provide us rest. These verses point to the importance of solitude, silence, stillness, communion, and worship.

#### *Discussion*

We must allow the Lord to guide our steps and to abide in us. We must learn from him, surrender our lives and take upon his yoke. When we do so, we live with the understanding that the Lord has our life. When Christ is our shepherd, he is the Lord of our schedules, not other people or the pace of the culture. Our priorities are His priorities. There is a peace in putting Him at the center of our lives.

#### *Application*

The client and I could pick out key verses to guide her in living a shepherd-centered life. We could pray and meditate on these verses, and how do these verses look practically in her life. What does it mean to allow the Lord to lead her by still waters? What does it look like to place her burdens on the Lord? I would have her close her eyes and visualize as she meditates on these verses. This deepening of the scripture is a powerful tool to find rest and peace.

## Bibliography

Long, B., McMurry, D., and Partingto, D. *The Dunamis Project: The Power of Prayer*.

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