



# Stress is Stressful:

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## HOW WORKING IN COMPLIANCE CAN SKEW OUR NORMS

### HCCA 2019 MANAGED CARE CONFERENCE SESSION 503

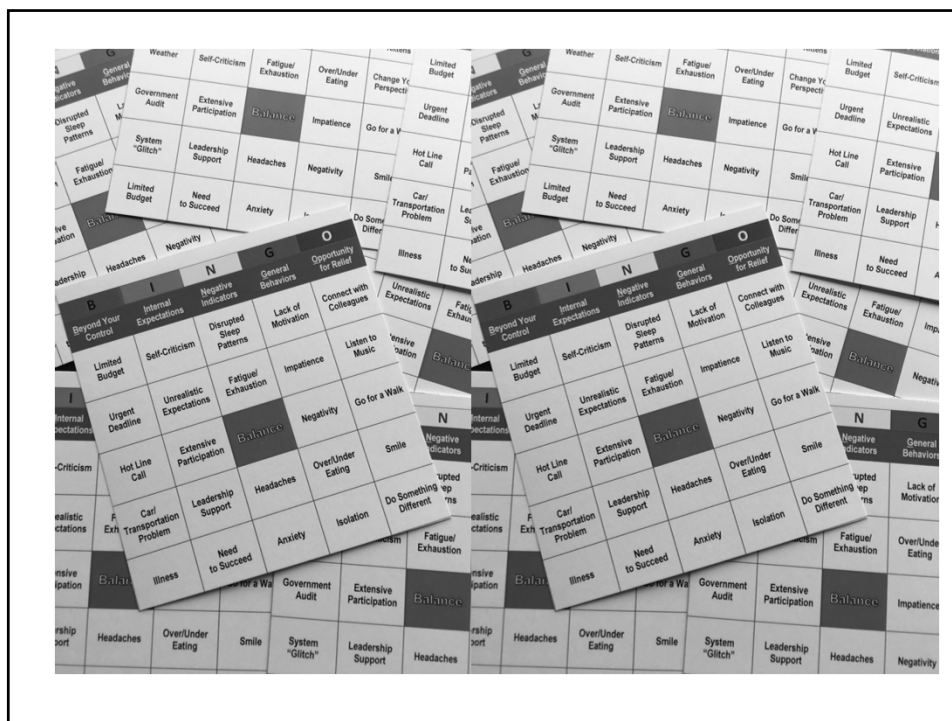
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## Introductions +

A little about me, a little about her,  
a little about you  
and a little about the session.

Disclosure: We, independently and jointly, have no actual or potential conflicts of interest; nor do we have any actual or potential conflicts of commitment in regards to this presentation.



## Definitions

The following will be the working definitions for this presentation:

- ◆ **Compliance** /kəm'plāns/ *noun*  
The act or process of following a rule, regulation, standard, and/or policy that is imposed by government agencies and/or your organization. (it's what we do)
- ◆ **Coping** /kōpiNG/ *verb*  
Learned skill(s) that serve the purpose of investing in ones' own personal and interpersonal wellness. (dealing successfully with a difficult situation or job)
- ◆ **Relaxation** /rē-'lak-'sā-shən/ *noun*  
The act unwind, reduce tension; purposeful or at leisure.

The all knowing Google search is our resource for these and all definitions found in this presentation

## Overview

- ◆ Recognize (and acknowledge) that working in the compliance field is incredibly challenging.
- ◆ Share key strategies to identify and interpret work-tasks, the work environment, and the impact on self.
- ◆ Interpret internal/external signs of becoming and/or being stressed.
- ◆ Identify stress relief concepts and techniques.
- ◆ Revitalize your compliance "mission" to strengthen your health plan's compliance program

◆ Directly from the Managed Care Compliance brochure

## So...what?



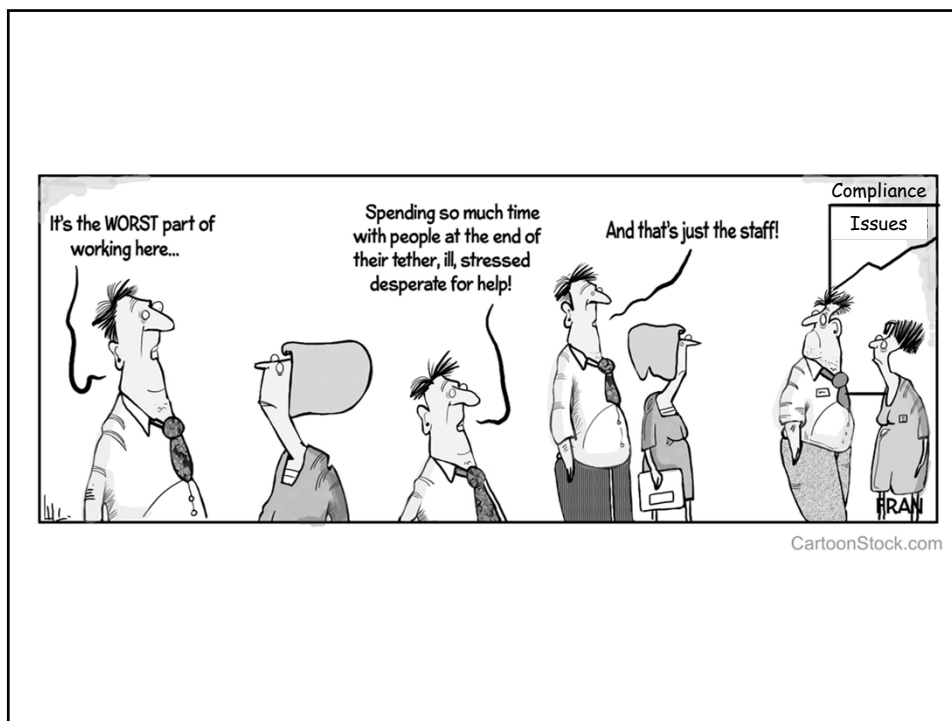
Courtesy of Open Clip Art

- ◆ Why is **stress** a big deal?
  - Are you **stressed** about **stress**?
  - << *Why are you here?* >>

Perhaps because working in Compliance...can be

***Stressful***

- ◆ Norms shift > major events become "mundane" or "routine"
- ◆ Urgent deadlines loom continually, government requests, funding changes – *disorder becomes a baseline*



## Roles and Scopes

- ◇ Different roles have different scopes
  - Investigator, clinical auditor, internal auditor, financial analyst, information technology, compliance officer, privacy officer, security officer, CFO, CEO, Board member, etc.
- ◇ Productivity and perceptions
  - What makes up an average “workload”?
  - Who decides this?
  - Is it universal?
- ◇ How can these perceptions impact us?
  - In our work product? In our productivity? In our behaviors?



- ◇ What strengths does your role provide?
  - To your organization as a whole, to the members/ patients, providers, shareholders, government?  
*(directly or indirectly)*
  - To the interactions you have within your team, throughout the organization, and off-site?
- ◇ What barriers does your role provide?
  - Directly and indirectly?
- ◇ Can your role impact your personal life?
  - Can it provide strengths and/or barriers? If so, what/how?

## Livin' the Compliance Life

- ◇ What's a day look like?
  - What do you do?
    - What is your workflow?
      - What does it **look** like?
      - What does it **feel** like?
- ◇ What's a **good** day?
- ◇ What's a **bad** day?

# WHO ACTUALLY "RELAXES"?

What *IS* relaxing...?

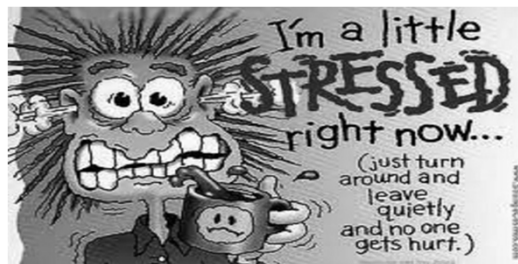
## Why Should I Relax?

Stress /stres/ *noun*

\* A state of mental or emotional strain or tension resulting from adverse or very demanding circumstances.

Stress /stres/ *verb*

\* subject to pressure or tension.  
\* cause mental or emotional strain or tension in.



## What IS *Stress*?

◇ What does *stress* look like?



◇ What does *stress* feel like?



◇ What causes you to be *stressed*?



## Effects of *Stress*

### Physical


- Higher risk for cardiovascular disease, hypertension
- Stomach &/or skin issues
- Musculoskeletal pain
- Decreased energy
- Headaches/Migraines
- Decreased libido
- Clenched jaw/teeth grinding
- Disturbed sleep pattern
- Disturbed appetite
- Higher susceptibility for infections

### Psychological


- Increased likelihood for depression &/or anxiety
- Decreased motivation
- Becoming easily agitated
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Low self-esteem
- Isolating
- Increased guilt & worry
- Racing thoughts
- Forgetfulness
- Difficulty focusing



Here are ways in which some key body systems react.



- 1 NERVOUS SYSTEM**  
When stressed — physically or psychologically — the body suddenly shifts its energy resources to fighting off the perceived threat. In what is known as the "fight or flight" response, the sympathetic nervous system signals the adrenal glands to release adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones make the heart beat faster, raise blood pressure, change the digestive process and boost glucose levels in the bloodstream. Once the crisis passes, body systems usually return to normal.
- 2 MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM**  
Under stress, muscles tense up. The contraction of muscles for extended periods can trigger tension headaches, migraines and various musculoskeletal conditions.
- 3 RESPIRATORY SYSTEM**  
Stress can make you breathe harder and cause rapid breathing — or hyperventilation — which can bring on panic attacks in some people.
- 4 CARDIOVASCULAR SYSTEM**  
Acute stress — stress that is momentary, such as being stuck in traffic — causes an increase in heart rate and stronger contractions of the heart muscle. Blood vessels that direct blood to the large muscles and to the heart dilate, increasing the amount of blood pumped to these parts of the body. Repeated episodes of acute stress can cause inflammation in the coronary arteries, thought to lead to heart attack.
- 5 ENDOCRINE SYSTEM**  
**Adrenal glands:**  
When the body is stressed, the brain sends signals from the hypothalamus, causing the adrenal cortex to produce cortisol and the adrenal medulla to produce epinephrine — sometimes called the "stress hormones."  
**Liver:**  
When cortisol and epinephrine are released, the liver produces more glucose, a blood sugar that would give you the energy for "fight or flight" in an emergency.
- 6 GASTROINTESTINAL SYSTEM**  
**Esophagus:**  
Stress may prompt you to eat much more or much less than you usually do. If you eat more or different foods or increase your use of tobacco or alcohol, you may experience heartburn, or acid reflux.  
**Stomach:**  
Your stomach can react with "butterflies" or even nausea or pain. You may vomit if the stress is severe enough.  
**Roads:**  
Stress can affect digestion and which nutrients your intestines absorb. It can also affect how quickly food moves through your body. You may find that you have either diarrhea or constipation.
- 7 REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM**  
In men, excess amounts of cortisol, produced under stress, can affect the normal functioning of the reproductive system. Chronic stress can impair testosterone and sperm production and cause impotence.  
In women, stress can cause absent or irregular menstrual cycles or more painful periods. It can also reduce sexual desire.

 <https://www.stress.org/stress-effects/>

# CONTROL

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We all want it, we all have it, but sometimes we have to let it go

## Control During the Uncontrollable

- ◆ What is outside of our control during a crisis, emergent event, or last minute change?
- ◆ What can we control during a crisis?
- ◆ How do I control the uncontrollable?

## Remember: Everyone Carries Baggage



- ◆ In each situation we bring our experiences
  - Experience = Baggage
  - Baggage can be  **and** baggage can be 
- ◆ Awareness is 
  - Self-awareness and situational awareness
  - What is within our control
  - What is outside of our control
- ◆ Consider how “baggage” can impact a team’s response



## COPING

***Stress*** is a given, but there are ways to ease the strain

## State of Mind

Being empathetic and maintaining awareness make for a great foundation; but our mindsets also play a big part in our coping.

- ◆ Think of a positive mindset/ attitude like bug spray.



☛ *It's a great defense for most of the bugs, but there's always a mosquito or two that will still bite you. (It's also not permanent)*

**Translated:** Having a positive attitude isn't "the" answer, it is part of the answer. Being **positive** will help stress feel more manageable, even if you still need to manage the stress you feel.

## Mindset

- ◆ Your state of mind impacts your position, productivity, and highly likely, the people around you
  - ☛ *If I'm having a so-so, or bad day because of traffic, how can that make any difference in my response to a crisis?*



## Don't Brush it Off

- ◆ ***Stress*** is ***stressful***, talk to someone about it
  - ☛ *Send an email to a compliance colleague*
  - ☛ *Pick up the phone call a friend*
  - ☛ *Talk face-to-face with family instead of texting*
- ◆ It feels good and helps us to feel connected and understood



## Be Aware

- ◇ Utilize “quick” coping skills
  - ☛ *Breathe on a square technique*
  - ☛ *“I can’t even: counter-balance technique*
  - ☛ *Step out of the environment*
    - ☛ *Get up from your desk and walk*  
*(farther than the rest room)*
- ◇ These are suggestions, considerations, and starting points. Nothing is set in stone – find what works for you
  - ☛ *Don’t be discouraged, it can take “trial and error” but stick with it! It’s worth it in the long run*

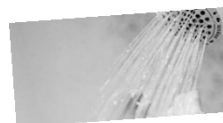
## Down Time

- ◇ Schedule “me” time
  - ☛ *Ideally it should be daily*
  - ☛ *Even if it is 5 minutes in the morning - eat breakfast; sit quietly; watch the sunrise (or enjoy the darkness); breathe; meditate; pray; read; or just sit.*



## Consider...

- ◆ You can even find extra time in your shower routine, make it a few minutes longer to take your time, or just relax and take some deep breaths.
  - ✦ *Hot showers (96-106 degrees Fahrenheit) can improve circulation which acts as an anti-inflammatory; get some inexpensive lavender oil or lavender scented shower items increase these benefits.*



## Final Thoughts

- ◆ Strengthen yourself so you can revitalize your personal compliance "mission."
- ◆ Maintain awareness, empathy, and arm ourselves with coping skills.
- ◆ Stress keeps us in a particular frame of mind until we allow ourselves to either release some need for control or allow ourselves time to cope.



# Thank you!

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