

# 'Stress Control' Programme

6 week programme devised By Clinical Psychologist Dr. Jim White.

Programme facilitated by Galway University Hospital's Staff.

The six sessions cover a variety of topics:

Learning about stress; Controlling your body; Controlling your thoughts; Controlling your actions; Controlling panicky feelings; Getting a good night's sleep and maintaining wellbeing for the future.

## Stress Control – autumn 2018 Schedule, Galway

| Programme 1 |   |
|-------------|---|
| Venue:      | Clinical Sciences Building,<br>Large Lecture Theatre (1030),<br>University Hospital Galway. |
| Dates:      | Every Thursday morning,<br>October 11 <sup>th</sup> – November 15 <sup>th</sup> .           |
| Time:       | 10 am- 11.30 am.  |

| Programme 2 |  |
|-------------|--|
| Venue:      | Croi Heart and Stroke Centre,<br>Newcastle, Galway.  |
| Dates:      | Week 1: Monday 17 <sup>th</sup> September.<br>Week 2: Monday 24 <sup>th</sup> September.<br>Week 3: Monday 1 <sup>st</sup> October.<br>Week 4: Wednesday 10 <sup>th</sup> October.<br>Week 5: Monday 15 <sup>th</sup> October.<br>Week 6: Monday 22 <sup>nd</sup> October. |
| Time:       | 9.30 am- 11.00 am.   |



*Staff members and the general public are welcome to attend.*

***There is no need to book a place.***

*Participants are provided with workbooks and a relaxation CD to support the practice of strategies learnt during the programme.*

## A Brief outline of Stress Control Sessions

### **Week 1:** Information about Stress

Outlines what stress is and what it is not, the main signs, the vicious circles that keep it alive and how Stress Control works. A video of people talking about how stress affects them is shown.

### **Week 2:** Controlling our body

Focuses on tackling stress. Participants will learn how the body signs feed stress. The session looks at why we get stressed and how the body reacts to it. Participants will learn three skills – Breathing retraining, Exercise and Progressive relaxation and look at caffeine. There is a relaxation CD to take away.

### **Week 3:** Controlling your thoughts

This session focuses on how our thinking feeds stress. Participants are taught ways to “think your way out of stress” – first of all “building the foundation” – “wait a minute”, applying “The Big 5 Challenges” and, finally, a way to nip stress in the bud – “Breaking stress up”.

### **Week 4:** Controlling your actions

This session looks at how the way we act feeds stress. Participants will learn ways to face your fears and the skill “Problem Solving”. The session also looks at why some people, who seem to be doing all the right things, still don’t get over their stress. Participants are also taught how to overcome this (“Stepping out of your comfort zone”). These skills are really useful for building up self-confidence. Participants may also start to see the big picture in this session – seeing how all the skills they have learned so far fit together.

### **Week 5:** Controlling panicky feelings, getting a good night’s sleep

Panicky feelings are part and parcel of stress. This session teaches ways to control them using breathing to calm the body and, hence, the mind. Ways to prevent stress are also explored. The second part of the session focuses on sleeping tips and the skill of retraining your sleep for those who feel their sleep is poor.

### **Week 6:** Wellbeing, Pulling it all together and controlling your future

Wellbeing starts the final set of skills and session six teaches ways of staying on top of stress. Participants learn about Connect, Be Active, Keep Learning and Giving. Mindfulness is a useful skill to help you live more in the moments. Having goals, healthy eating and gratitude complete the wellbeing skills. Finally this session pulls together everything already learnt and looks at how to control your future.

## What is 'Stress Control'?

*Stress Control' is a six session class which teaches people to 'become their own therapist'. Each session lasts for 90 minutes (including a break). 'Stress Control' was devised by Dr Jim White, a Fellow of the British Psychological Society and the British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies and a Consultant Clinical Psychologist in Glasgow. The Programme aims to help large numbers of people who want to learn ways to prevent stress from becoming a problem or stopping it being a problem. Through published research, we know that the class works for people who already feel that stress is a problem and for those who feel they are coping at the moment and want to stay on top of stress in the future. 'Stress Control' is now used across the world. Stress Control combines Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Positive Psychology and Mindfulness.*

*Stress Control can be run for a large group and evaluations would suggest that this is a very profound aspect of the programme. Just being with the very many other people who experience stress is in itself a normalising experience which can be very helpful. The fact that participants are requested not to discuss their stress and that there is no audience discussion also helps to create a safer, less anxiety provoking experience.*

### ***A summary of the evidence base for Stress Control***

#### **Studies & Findings**

Working within the CBT tradition, since its earliest days, Stress Control has always been closely evaluated. Here is a summary of evidence to date;

#### **Pre - Post**

- A series of papers have shown that people who attend the class show highly significant change from Session 1 to Session 6, e.g. *White and Keenan, 1990, White et al, 1992, Wood et al, 2005, Joice and Mercer, 2010, Kellett et al, 2004*. An exception to this was *Kitchener, 2009* which did not show change.
- Studies that have looked at follow-up improvement have consistently shown that clients continued to improve 6 months after the class ended *White et al, 1995, White and Keenan-Ross, 1997, Kellett et al, 2007, Van Daele, 2013*.
- Studies focusing on satisfaction with the course studies found;
  - ❖ 94% rated the class as 'highly relevant ' to their needs
  - ❖ 96% of those attending would highly recommend the class to others
  - ❖ 91% report the booklets as 'excellent'
  - ❖ 92% report the amount of information to be 'just about right'
  - ❖ 94% report the level of skills taught to be 'just about right'
  - ❖ 78% practiced the skills learned on the course either 'most days' or 'every day'