Stress Awareness Month

Did you know that April 2022 is: STRESS AWARENESS Month? Winter is slowly winding down, this month we really need to focus on stress reduction and management, the NBSRT wellness team encourages you to give the challenges below a try and see personal improvements. Hey, spring is just around the corner. Here are another 5 challenges for the purpose of promoting the personal wellness of our membership. We are now in month 8 of 10 of our wellness challenges, please consider attempting as many of the below challenges or create your own. You are asked to keep a personal record and let us know how you are doing as you follow your 2021-22 wellness journey. Take care and take stock on how your wellness plan is going.

The activities below, invest 3 to 5 minutes of your time for each, you will be surprised how they may impact stress levels:

1. **Relax by Breathing**: Find a quiet and comfortable place/location to sit. Take in a slow and regular breath through your nose. Breathe out through your mouth slowly. Repeat this process a minimum of ten times. You can either keep your eyes open or closed. If comfortable, expand your breathing with deeper breaths. You should feel your shoulders relax and your thoughts clear.

2. **Relax by Visualizing**: Try this easy routine any time through-out the day: Find a quiet and comfortable place/location to sit. Think of your ideal place to relax (anywhere in the world). Think of all the details you would find there. Even smells, sounds and the feel of the place. Once you are there, close your eyes, slow down your breathing and stay for 3 to 5 minutes. When you are ready to return, open your eyes and take a deep cleaning breath.

3. **Relax your muscles**: Find a quiet and comfortable place/location to sit. Start by making a tight fist with one hand (squeeze). Hold for 5 seconds and slowly release. Open your fingers and open your hand fully. You can do this more than once per body part. Now, focus on another muscle group or body part - i.e. face, neck, shoulders, arms, and legs. Follow the same procedure - tighten the muscles - hold for a minimum of 5 seconds, slowly release. Remember not to hold your breath! Keep breathing throughout the process. You will be amazed at how you feel.

4. **Relax by counting**: Sit in your favourite chair, close your eyes, take a deep breath in, hold and release. Slowly count to 10. Open your eyes and observe your surroundings. If 10 does not work for you, try counting to 20. Focus on the numbers and only the counting.
5. **Relax by staying present:** Find a quiet and comfortable place/location to sit. Shift your awareness to observe your surroundings. Notice what you see, hear, smell, and feel. Keep focused for 3 to 5 minutes. Then close your eyes and attempt to identify what you observed.

**Bonus:** Welcome humour into your day - look at the events of your day through a funny lens. A good laugh goes a long way!

**Ongoing challenge:** *If you have not started this one, now is the time. *Take a photo of a landmark (tree, scenery, etc) on the same day each month for the next 6 months* send to us in June 2022 Good Luck with your wellness challenges. We are always looking for photos and your comments/thoughts. Stay connected!

Hey - identify the retired teachers in the photo - send to Garth and your name will be placed into a draw for a $10 gift card to Tim's - The photo is a few years old, but they still look great.

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