



Stress and Transplant

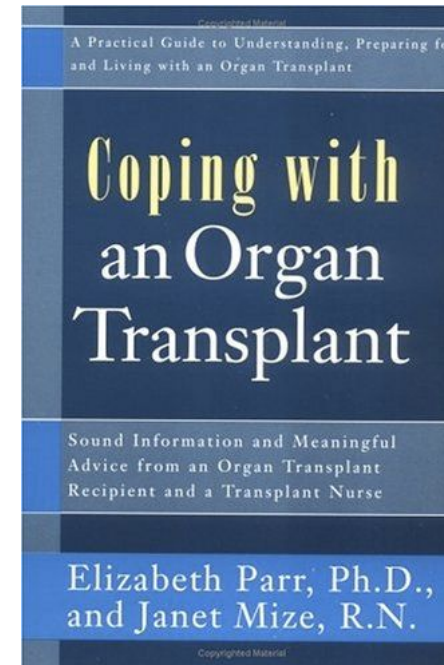
STRESS, TRAUMA AND THE TRANSPLANT PROCESS – WHAT YOU CAN SAY,
RESOURCES TO SHARE AND MORE

What is Stress?

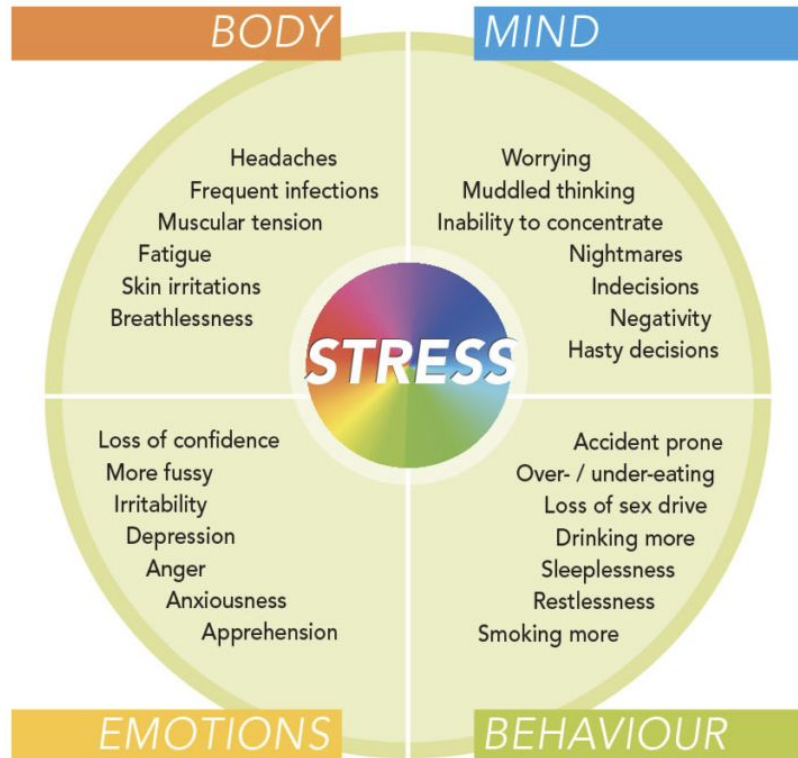
- ▶ “Stress is our body’s response to pressure. Many different situations or life events can cause stress. It is often triggered when we experience something new, unexpected or that threatens our sense of self, or when we feel we have little control over a situation. We all deal with stress differently. Our ability to cope can depend on our genetics, early life events, personality and social and economic circumstances.” Mental Health Foundation, UK
- ▶ “Trauma is not the bad things that happen to you but what happens inside of you because of it” Gabor Mate

STRESS and Transplant

- ▶ “Learning that you must prepare yourself mentally and emotionally for a radical surgical procedure, while you are still trying to cope with the chronic effects of an end-stage organ disease is a lot to contend with- your ability to cope will be tried in this process. In fact, ones’ ability to cope emotionally with transplant has shown to have positive effects not only on the patient’s mental health but also their physical health and graft survival rate. Research has demonstrated that these skills can be learned by patients and that pre-transplant is the ideal time to acquire these skills for optimal benefit. ” (Parr & Mize,2001, p. 42)

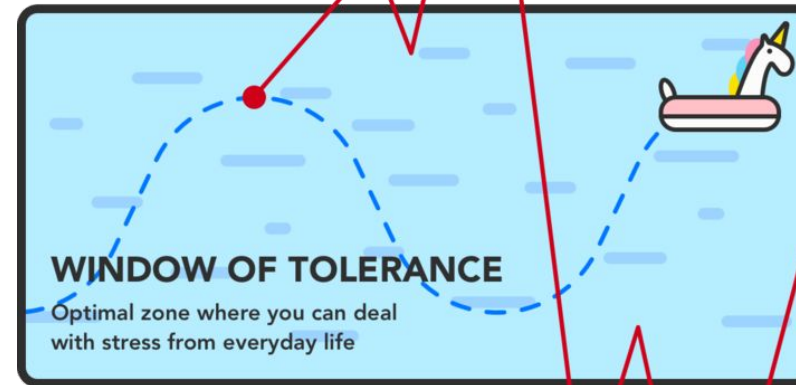


Why and How?



HYPERAROUSAL

Excessive activation/energy in the form of fight/flight responses



HYPOAROUSAL

Freeze response, emotionally flat, lack of energy and response

- SMOOTH SAILING
- DYSREGULATION
- FIGHT/FLIGHT/FREEZE

Types of Transplant related stress

- ❖ MEDICAL
- ❖ SYSTEMIC
- ❖ SOCIAL
- ❖ EMOTIONAL
- ❖ EXISTENTIAL

Pre – Transplant stress examples

Prolonged hospital stays

Diminished energy
Cognitive impairments
Role transition

Financing the transplant
Time off of work

False alarms or “dry runs”
Being passed over on the list

Loss of control

Anxiety

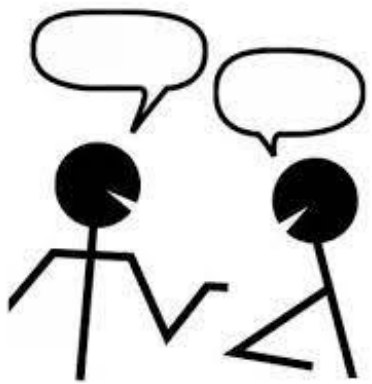
Fear

Guilt

Depression

Sexual dysfunction

TIPS for managing stress



Mental Fitness Tips from Canadian Mental Health Association

- ▶ Daydream – Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a dream location. Breathe slowly and deeply. Whether it's a beach, a mountaintop, a hushed forest or a favourite room from your past, let the comforting environment wrap you in a sensation of peace and tranquility.
- ▶ "Collect" positive emotional moments – Make it a point to recall times when you have experienced pleasure, comfort, tenderness, confidence, or other positive emotions.
- ▶ Learn ways to cope with negative thoughts – Negative thoughts can be insistent and loud. Learn to interrupt them. Don't try to block them (that never works), but don't let them take over. Try distracting yourself or comforting yourself, if you can't solve the problem right away.
- ▶ Do one thing at a time – For example, when you are out for a walk or spending time with friends, turn off your cell phone and stop making that mental "to do" list. Take in all the sights, sounds and smells you encounter.
- ▶ Exercise – Regular physical activity improves psychological well-being and can reduce depression and anxiety. Joining an exercise group or a gym can also reduce loneliness, since it connects you with a new set of people sharing a common goal.
- ▶ Enjoy hobbies – Taking up a hobby brings balance to your life by allowing you to do something you enjoy because you want to do it, free of the pressure of everyday tasks. It also keeps your brain active.
- ▶ Set personal goals – Goals don't have to be ambitious. You might decide to finish that book you started three years ago; to take a walk around the block every day; to learn to knit or play bridge; to call your friends instead of waiting for the phone to ring. Whatever goal you set, reaching it will build confidence and a sense of satisfaction.
- ▶ Keep a journal (or even talk to the wall!) – Expressing yourself after a stressful day can help you gain perspective, release tension and even boost your body's resistance to illness.
- ▶ Share humour – Life often gets too serious, so when you hear or see something that makes you smile or laugh, share it with someone you know. A little humour can go a long way to keeping us mentally fit!
- ▶ Volunteer – Volunteering is called the "win-win" activity because helping others makes us feel good about ourselves. At the same time, it widens our social network, provides us with new learning experiences and can bring balance to our lives.
- ▶ Treat yourself well – Cook yourself a good meal. Have a bubble bath. See a movie. Call a friend or relative you haven't talked to in ages. Sit on a park bench and breathe in the fragrance of flowers and grass. Whatever it is, do it just for you

What can or should you say?

We can normalize stress and share some of our own stories/examples

We can share resources and encourage individuals to connect to their renal social worker, transplant social worker or someone in their community

Talking helps, encourage individuals to connect with others

Bring up self care, what they already do, what you have done

As we say on our website --- knowledge is power – encourage them to learn what they can and ask questions

CURIOSITY



COMPASSION



CONNECTION

Does it matter?

Chronic Patients Desire More Support

70% of patients with a chronic condition want more resources or clarity to help manage their disease.

91% of patients say they need help managing their disease.



Source: Strengthening Chronic Care: Patient Engagement Strategies for Better Management of Chronic Conditions

Chronic Disease Weighs Heavily on Patients

26% of patients experience physical exhaustion after being diagnosed with a chronic condition.

24% of patients feel angry upon being diagnosed with a chronic condition.

23% of patients have difficulty sleeping after receiving a chronic disease diagnosis.



Source: Strengthening Chronic Care: Patient Engagement Strategies for Better Management of Chronic Conditions

Chronic Care Knowledge Impacts Patient Confidence

3x Patients who feel less knowledgeable about managing their chronic condition are more than **three times as likely** as those who feel more knowledgeable to rate their ability to manage their condition as fair or poor.



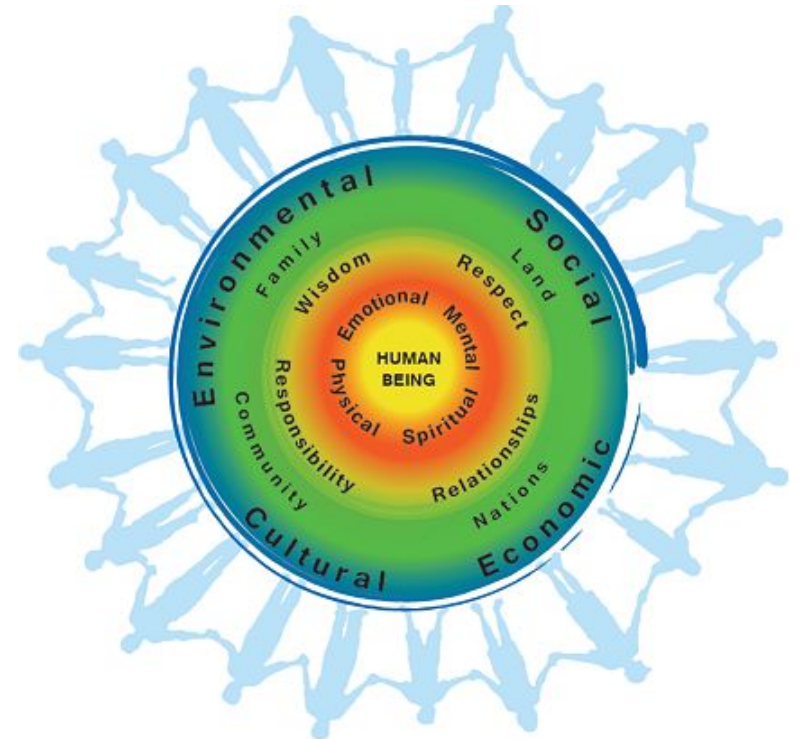
Source: Strengthening Chronic Care: Patient Engagement Strategies for Better Management of Chronic Conditions

West Healthcare Study 2017

Indigenous Sovereignty and Ways of Healing

TRC Call to action #22

We call upon those who can effect change within the Canadian health care system to recognize the value of Aboriginal healing practices and use them in the treatment of Aboriginal patients in collaboration with Aboriginal healers and elders where requested by Aboriginal patients



RESOURCES

- ▶ Regarding stress and coping: there are some great information sheets around anxiety, depression and some great guides around coping with transplant, waiting for transplant, illness and mental health – I have a pdf with the links to those documents
- ▶ *With stress related to systems issues like: access to health care, transportation, discrimination/racism, insurance, access to housing, access to nutritious food, workplace accommodations, disability rights/supports - reach out to social worker or refer to your local communities guide to social services and community supports - most cities have one. Also consider Indigenous Health Centres and Friendship Centres for supports and services and for accommodation and disability rights the Ontario Human Rights Commission.*

Contact

- ▶ Reminder: I am not an expert. I am a recipient and TAP ambassador, but I am a social worker and have spent time collecting resources around this topic and very willing to share and answer questions. If I don't know I can research or direct you somewhere.
- ▶ Feel free to contact me lindenh@transplantambassadors.ca