

# Hounslow IAPT

Stress Control: Face your Fears, Be More Active, Boost your Wellbeing

## **Welcome to Stress Control**

### **Pre-Course Information**

**This handout will tell you all about the  
Stress Control Course**

# Hounslow IAPT

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### What is Stress?

The most common form of stress is a mix of *anxiety* (tension, nerves) and *depression* (feeling flat, sad). It often comes with the following:

- Sleep problems
- Low self-esteem and confidence
- Panic feelings
- Anger
- Drinking too much

Just as everyone has blood pressure, everyone has stress. It's a normal part of life. There is no such thing as "no stress". We naturally move along this line from day to day, hour to hour, even minute by minute.



Small amounts of stress can be helpful, however stress becomes a problem when:

- We can't get rid of it, even if we try
- It comes and goes for no reason
- It starts to take over your life and affects the way we function

### Common signs of Stress

Anxiety	Depression	Low confidence
Sleep difficulties	Tearful	Overwhelmed
Worry (What if...?)	Feeling hopeless	Self-criticism
Feeling irritable	Avoiding/Withdrawing	Anger
Poor concentration	Tiredness	Drinking a lot

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### **The Course**

'Stress Control' is a 5 session evening class. Each session lasts for 90 minutes. 'Stress Control' was created by Jim White, a clinical psychologist in Glasgow, to help the large number of people who complained of stress and who were keen to learn how to tackle their problems themselves. Through research, the course has been improved over the years. 'Stress Control' is now being used across the UK and worldwide.

### **Attendance**

Each session deals with a separate aspect of stress but as they all link together, it's crucial that you attend all 5 sessions. Each step is one piece of your own personal jigsaw. Only by putting all the steps together will you get the full picture.

### **A fighting spirit**

The course (and all the information you have been given) will teach you about stress and will give you the weapons to fight it. You should only come to the course if you are prepared to work hard. If you are looking for the miracle cure, you will be wasting your time - it doesn't exist. 'Stress Control' will show you how to go about tackling stress but, at the end of the day, it will be down to you and your hard work that will make the lasting difference.

### **The future**

The aim of the course is to teach you new skills that can fight stress. Make sure you keep all the handouts given so that, in the future, you can use the information to prevent your stress from increasing. You will also be given a relaxation CD when you attend the course.

# Hounslow IAPT

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### The 5 Sessions...

#### **Stress, Medication and Values**

In this session, we will learn what stress looks like and how common it is. You will be finding out the cause of stress and what keeps it going through the vicious circle. We will also touch upon medication and the importance of values in your life.

#### **Stress and Your Body**

In this session, you will learn how stress affects our body. Sometimes anxiety can lead to us to feel overwhelming panic. Learning about panic and how to deal with it will be useful even for those who don't experience panic, as these strategies work well with all kinds of stress. We will also explore the effects of caffeine and the importance of exercise and relaxation in reducing stress.

#### **Stress and Your Thoughts**

You will learn how stress affects your thinking and how your thinking then affects your thoughts. You will learn how to use your mind to control stress along with ways of nipping stress in the bud. This will include looking at ways of getting this under control.

#### **Stress and Your Actions**

Stress can often lead to avoidance and withdrawal. We will learn ways to face up to stress with very useful skills such as 'Problem Solving' and 'Getting out of the safety zone'. We will also learn ways to become more active and assertive.

#### **Stress, Sleep and Your Future Wellbeing**

We will also explore tips for getting a good night's sleep. In this session we will look at wellbeing and ideas from positive psychology. We will also look at ways to control your future.

# Hounslow IAPT

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### Facts and Questions

#### **Will I have to talk in front of other people?**

**NO.** 'Stress Control' is not a group therapy. Not many people in this country would be happy to talk about their problems in front of others.

### **YOU WILL NOT BE ASKED TO DO SO**

'Stress Control' is a psycho-educational class - all the seats face the front. The person teaching the course will stand at the front and teach you all about stress and how to tackle it. Your job is to pick up the new skills, to go off and work at what you have learned. You come back the next week, learn the next step until, after the six weeks, you will be in a good position to tackle your stress.

#### **Will I have to write things on the course?**

No. You are asked to do is tick your name off on a register. This lets us know who has come to the class. You will be asked to complete a questionnaire each session which enables us to monitor your wellbeing and progress throughout the course. You will also be asked to indicate the dates that you are able to attend for further sessions.

#### **What if I meet someone I know?**

You may do. Stress is a very common problem and hundreds of people do the course each year in Britain. Everyone is in the same boat. As we don't discuss personal problems, you don't get to know much about why others are coming. A few years ago, two sisters met on the course. They were both shocked at first. Then

# Hounslow IAPT

## Stress Control: Face your Fears, Be More Active, Boost your Wellbeing

they saw how daft it was that they were both going through this alone when they could have been helping each other.

### **Will there be others on the course like me?**

Stress affects people from all walks of life. Although no two people will have exactly the same problems, you will all have a lot in common. You will find it hard to relax, you will worry a great deal, and you will have lost confidence and a sense of control. You may well be depressed by this. Life will just be a lot harder to cope with. All the people on the course know how awful stress feels.

### **Can I bring someone with me?**

We recognise that this may be a large step for you to take. You are more than welcome to bring a friend or family along for support. They can learn the best ways to tackle stress alongside you. They will have to register with the Hounslow IAPT service as well. They can do this by calling 0300 123 0739.

### **This is all new to me...**

When starting something new and unknown it is common to feel overwhelmed or nervous. You can always bring someone along or sit at the back. Also feel free to take time out of the class at any time to wander and get some fresh air.

### **What if I don't understand it?**

We understand that there may be barriers in your learning, such as poor concentration. This is why we have provided workbooks for each session. You can read through them in your own time, at your own pace. Also feel free to repeat the course at any time to refresh your skills.

# Hounslow IAPT

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### **What if I'm not better at the end of the course?**

Stress Control is not therapy, but a course that provides you with skills over a number of weeks. Each skill that you learn and master will be a piece of a large jigsaw that you can start using in your life. So work hard and be patient.

### **Is this course right for me?**

If you are unsure and you still feel you would like some form of support, please let us know. In most cases, we would book you in for a telephone appointment to discuss your needs and to help you make an informed decision about support.

### **How many people will be there?**

4 out of 10 us each year will experience stress. It is the most common reason for visits to the GP. Don't be surprised to find many people attending, as it shows just how common stress is.

### **Will there be refreshments provided?**

This is not a therapy group, but an education course. Therefore refreshments are not provided. We recommend bringing your own drinks or water with you.

*If you see yourself in this handout, then The Stress Control workshop is the right way for you to tackle your problems.*