

# Stress?

It depends on your point of view!

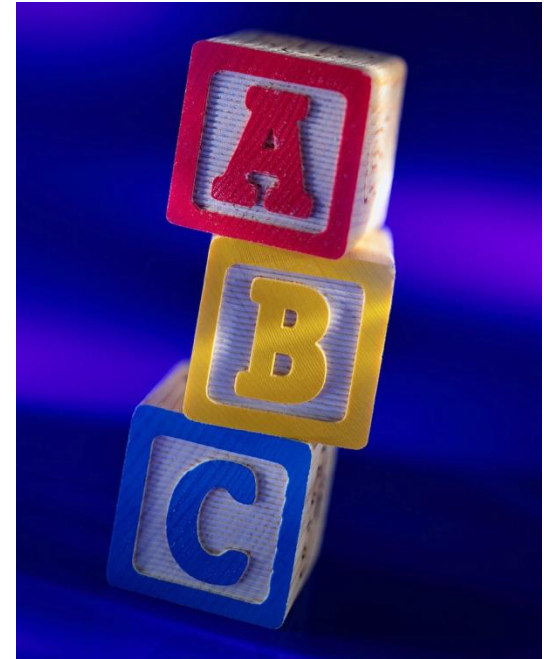


# Today's objectives

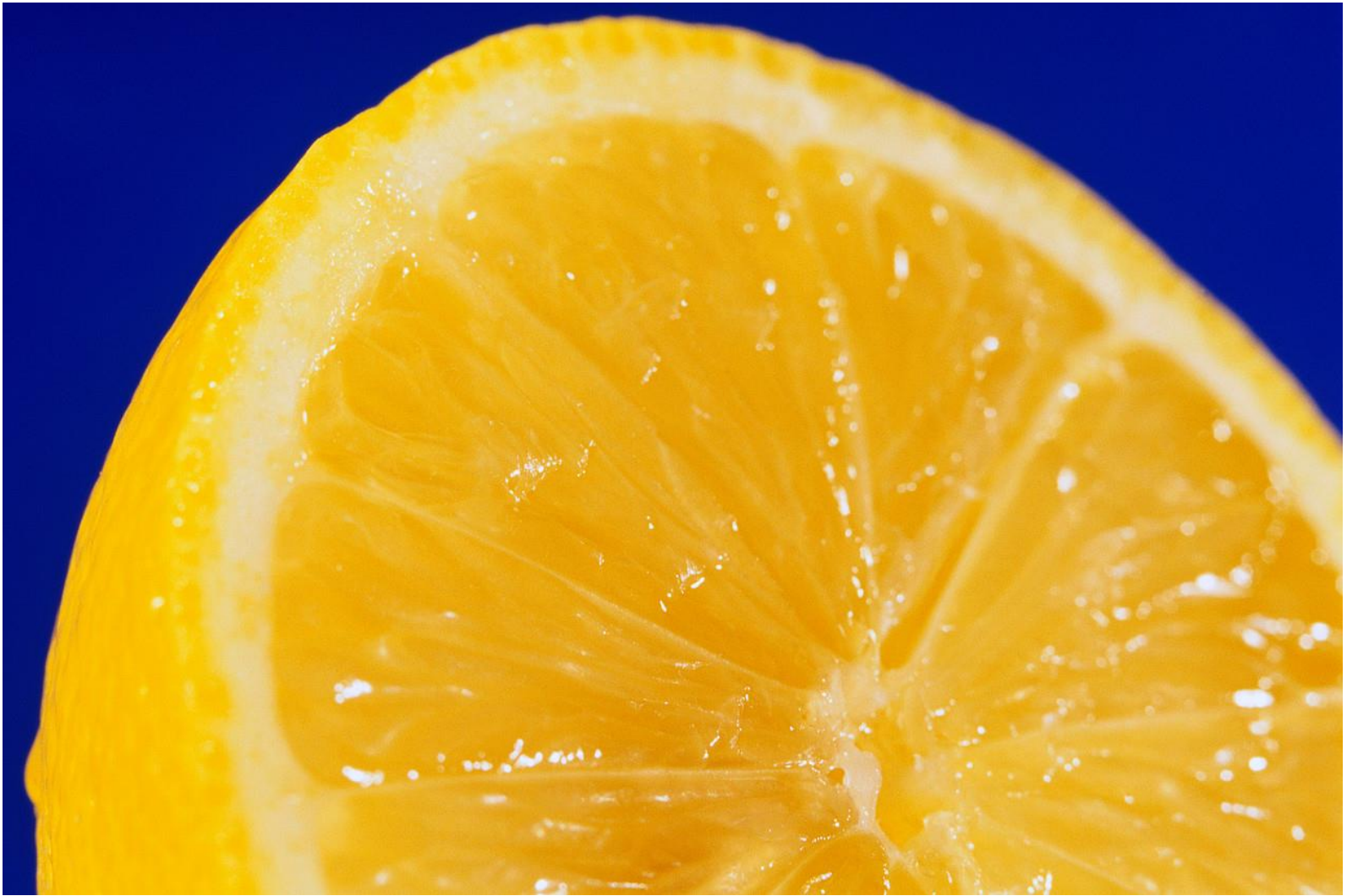
- Understand the role of the mind and perspective in stress
- Discover four ways to tame self-defeating thinking trends
- Practice a reframing technique
- Create a personal affirmation
- Practice a mind taming meditation

# AAAabc's of stress management

- **A**void the stressor
- **A**dapt the stressor
- **A**ccept the stressor by
  - **B**uilding resistance or
  - **C***hanging your perception*



— *Tubesing & Tubesing*



*The power of the mind –*  
*Lemon meditation*



# Self- talk & perspective

*Thriving under pressure results, at least in part, from positive habits related to perspective, attitude and **self talk**.*



## Characteristics of Resilient People

- Awareness
- Perseverance
- Internal Locus of Control
- Optimism
- Support
- Sense of Humor
- **Perspective**

# How do you talk to yourself?

- What are the recurring themes in your self talk?
- Is your self talk helpful or hurtful?
- Does your self talk increase your stress levels?
  - Cognitive distortion
  - Psychic tension
  - Toxic thinking
  - Whispers of sabotage
  - “Stinkin’ Thinkin’”

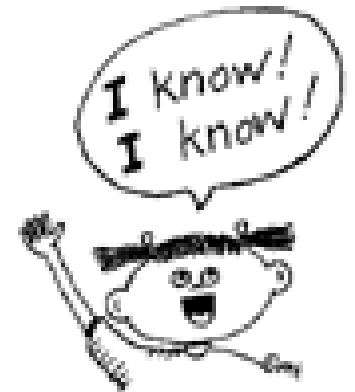


# Self- talk

- Fact: Thoughts, emotions and behaviors all influence each other.
- People have a continuous stream of thoughts going through their heads
- Fact: People often unknowingly undermine themselves through negative, self-defeating thinking.
- Fact: People can learn to reframe their thinking to be more positive, realistic and helpful.

# Examples

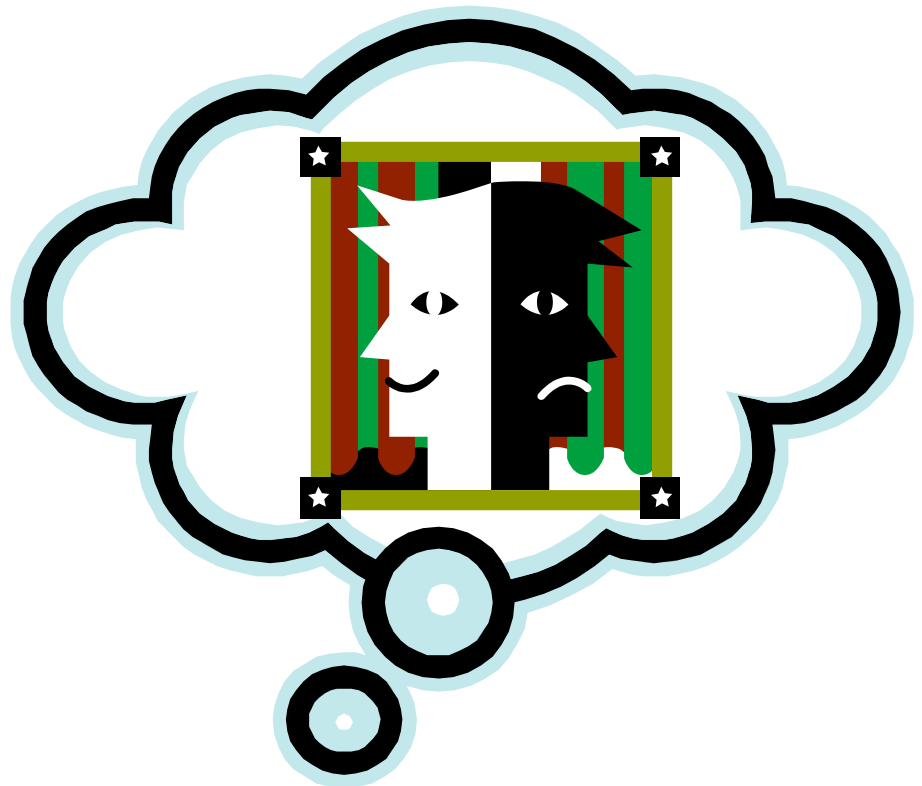
- I'll never be able to change
- I blew my whole plan (after a brief lapse) – I'm a total failure
- Why bother? I'll never \_\_\_\_ (finish the project, get the job, raise, recognition, etc.)
- I'm so \_\_\_\_ (lazy, old, stupid, etc.)
- I'll make a fool out of myself in front of my colleagues
- *More?*





# Ways to change (tame) self-talk

- Thought stopping
- Reframing
- Affirmations
- Meditation



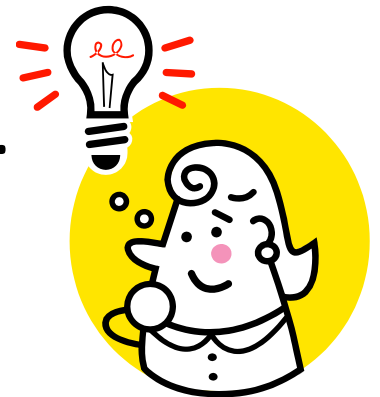
## Reframing thoughts:

*A way to change your self-talk, your perspective and your stress levels*

- Identify stressful, automatic thoughts
- Recognize the connections between thoughts, feelings and behaviors
- Identify and challenge distorted thoughts and attitudes
- Substitute more realistic and positive thoughts

# Steps to reframing

- Become aware of your thoughts.
- Identify recurring stressful thinking trends
- Recognize what situations trigger these thoughts
- Understand your thought-emotion-behavior connections
- Rationally analyze the thoughts.
- Create more realistic, helpful thoughts.
- Practice and be patient.



Reframing thoughts  
is not the same as  
“positive thinking”

# Reframing example #1

- **Situation:** A student employee (or project team member) doesn't do what they said they would (follow through on a work task)
- **Automatic thoughts:**
  - I'm not respectable
  - Now I have to do all this work myself
  - I'm going to get in trouble over this
  - Now they (other student employees) are all going to do this (not follow through with their work)
  - I'm not good enough
  - It's a plot against me!
- **Resulting emotions:**
  - Unhappy
  - Angry
  - Overwhelmed
  - Anxious
  - Frustrated
  - Disappointed
- **Analysis of automatic thoughts:**
  - This is actually not true
  - There may be some truth in parts of it
  - I'm exaggerating
  - This has happened before – what can I do to resolve this?
  - I am putting control/ power into others' hands
- **Reframed thoughts**
  - This is inconvenient, but not terrible
  - I can figure out why this happened and how to prevent it in the future
  - I can create solutions
- **Resulting emotions**
  - Empowered
  - Annoyed
  - "Smirk"

# Reframing example #2

- **Situation:** You are trying to establish a new physical activity routine. You are having difficulty finding enough time to exercise, and are not doing it.
- **Automatic thoughts**
  - I'm lazy
  - I should be able to do this
  - I'll never do it
- **Resulting emotions**
  - Frustrated
  - Exhausted
- **Resulting actions**
  - Stay in bed
  - Give up
- **Analysis and reframing**
  - This is not true
  - I am not lazy
  - I actually do have a lot going on in my life – this is a barrier to my being physically active
  - I am beginning a new habit – slips are normal
  - I can look at how I spend my time
  - I can plan ahead and problem solve my barriers
- **Resulting emotions**
  - Neutral
  - In-control
  - Confident
  - Interested
  - Visualize success
  - Hopeful
  - Excited

# Reframe these situations

(Identify a negative response and how to reframe it)

- You made a mistake
- *You don't understand part of the instructions or feedback you got*
- You are planning a family reunion
- *Your hair cut didn't turn out the way you expected*
- You disagree with someone important
- You don't get a job you interview for and really wanted
- You leave an interview and don't feel you did very well
- *Others?*



# Practice

- Write down a stressful automatic thought that increases stress or hinders you from attaining a goal
- Analyze that thought. Is it true? Realistic? Helpful? How might the thought be distorted?
- How has listening to, accepting this thought as truth affected your stress levels? Your overall wellness? Your work-life?
- Reframe the thought - create an alternative to replace the old thought with when it arises

# Affirmations

- ***Affirmation*** (L. affirmo) - The ability to think positively about oneself, about others and the world: to feel/accept one's own worth and the worth of others; assertiveness in feeling, confirming and expressing one's values.
- Positive statements used to
  - counteract negative automatic thoughts
  - build self-esteem and self –confidence
  - reinforce and achieve one's goals
- Well tried and successful techniques
  - used by astronauts, athletes and businesses and others
  - simulate a situation and find solutions.

# Creating affirmations

- Use “ I” sentences
- Phrase affirmations in the present tense
- Phrase affirmations in a positive light
  - NO: I will not procrastinate anymore
  - YES: I set priorities and manage my time well
- Keep affirmations simple and direct
- Create affirmations that feel right to you
- Practice one or two affirmations at a time
- Repeat your affirmations often
- Try to believe your affirmations
- Include a reinforcing visualization

# When & how to use affirmations

- Use them when reframing negative automatic thoughts
- Repeat them during relaxation exercises
- Contemplate them during meditation
- Write and post them where you will see them

# Thought Stopping

*When you notice a negative automatic thought ...*

- Say “STOP!” to yourself
  - **Or** visualize a large stop sign
  - **Or** use the rubber band snap
- Follow with a statement such as
  - “I erase that thought”
- Immediately replace with your reframed thought or affirmation

# Meditation

- Is a relaxed yet focused state
- Is NOT zoning out
- Helps build awareness of self defeating thoughts
- Helps you see things more clearly
- Helps you learn to tune out distractions
- Helps you learn to concentrate
- Helps you let go of things you can't control

# Thank you for attending!

<http://www.campusrec.illinois.edu:16080/wellnesscenter>

**Hours:** M – F: 8:30 am – 5:00 PM

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