

Workshop provides practical ways to build coping and stress management habits

AT A GLANCE

Learning to manage stress is an important skill for all to learn. This workshop provided over 200 people with coping and stress management strategies that improve overall health and well-being.

The Situation

We all experience stress. It can come in a variety of different ways. These include financial stress, familial stress, work stress, and general stress. A 2021 Gallup poll found that 40% of the world's population is less happy and more stressed than ever before. Stress, especially long-term stress, has a negative effect on our health. The Mayo Clinic reports that stress can cause physical, emotional, and behavioral issues such as headaches, muscle tension, fatigue, anxiety, memory problems, substance misuse, isolation and anger. It is important to learn to cope with and manage stress so that its effect on the body does not cause negative health and well-being.

Our Response

Starting in 2023, Extension educator Tasha Howard, Canyon County, developed a Coping and Stress Management workshop designed to help those working in healthcare roles to navigate stress. This workshop was designed to help participants learn about stress, understand what coping is, develop a goal of how they can manage their stress, and create an easy to implement stress management plan. In 2024 and 2025, this workshop was expanded on and provided to members of the community and those working in stressful



An image from Microsoft Images that represent stress in the workshop.

professions like members of the Idaho Association of Counties. To date, the training has been provided to 205 community members since 2023. The workshop has been taught as two, half-hour sessions during staff meetings as well as hour-long sessions, and hour and a half longer sessions. The workshop starts by discussing what stress really is, the different types of stress and how our bodies respond to stress. It then works through the different types of coping, how to use coping strategies, and identify the different coping techniques they currently use in their lives. Lastly, the workshop goes through setting goals and understanding what the “best self” looks like and using that to set a personalized stress management plan.

Program Outcomes

After the program, participants were asked to fill out a survey asking about their confidence, knowledge, intentions and the value of the program to their lives. Of the 205 community members, 94 filled out a survey.

Results from this survey showed positive experiences from participants. The results showed that most participants felt that learning about the types of coping skills was the most helpful. The second most helpful aspect was creating a stress management plan, and the third most helpful aspect was setting a goal and identifying their best selves. Additional results and feedback show a positive experience with the material presented.

- 82% of participants report that they intend to implement a tool, strategy, or practice presented during the coping and stress management workshop.
- 80% of participants report that they will change their behavior/management based on the information presented.
- 87% of participants reported that based on the information presented, their knowledge/awareness/ability to manage personal levels of stress have increased.

Many reported that they enjoyed learning about the various breathing techniques that are shared in the workshop. One participant noted that they enjoyed hands-on activities and group sharing to normalize the struggle, and another reported that creating stress management plans and putting something small into place each day to help reduce stress.

These results showcase the importance of learning about, identifying and creating a plan to manage stress. The fact that the majority of those who attended reported an intention to implement a skill, and changing behavior management based on what they learned shows that the workshop is effective. As stated earlier, stress left unmanaged can severely impact health and well-being. By providing this workshop, community members have been able to learn about coping, identify stressors, create a plan to navigate that stress and implement activities to reduce stress in their lives – creating better health habits for all who participated.

The workshop supports the economic well-being of individuals by helping them adopt healthier habits that can reduce stress-related costs and improve productivity. Participants who reported an assigned dollar value for the workshop said that the personal or family benefits range between \$1-\$500. This highlights the potential for long-term financial impact through improved stress management and overall health.

The Future

As this workshop continues to develop, the plan is to expand the presentation to be adapted to multiple types of audiences, including parents, caregivers, foster parents, businesses and more. Based on feedback from participants, the workshop will be adapted to incorporate more information on coping with difficult people and situations as well as training on physical behavior modifications that positively affect stress.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Tasha Howard, Extension Educator • University of Idaho Extension, Canyon County • 208-459-6003 • thoward@uidaho.edu

41-25-thoward-stress-workshop • 10/25