

## **Session Fifteen:**



### **Relax For The Health Of It**

*In this session the participant will:*

1. Identify sources of stress that interfere with ability to change.
2. Demonstrate strategies to cope with stress.
3. Identify methods and recipes for quick meal preparation.
4. Practice relaxation exercise.

Checklist of Materials Needed													
Supporting Materials	<input type="checkbox"/> Fat Scans <input type="checkbox"/> Samples of frozen entrees <input type="checkbox"/> Relaxation tapes (optional)												
Food & Paper Supplies	<input type="checkbox"/> Beverages of choice (coffee, tea, juice) <input type="checkbox"/> Creamer, sugar, coffee stir sticks, optional <input type="checkbox"/> Paper supplies: plates, napkins, cold cups, hot cups (if needed) <input type="checkbox"/> Plastic forks or spoons <input type="checkbox"/> Serving utensils <input type="checkbox"/> Microwave oven available, if using frozen entrees <p><u>Food Tasting:</u> Serve samples of frozen entrees or other quick low-fat meal choices.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> If you choose different foods for the Food Tasting, emphasize quick low-fat recipes or frozen low-fat commercial entrees.</p>												
Participant Manual													
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## Session 15 Outline—Key Activities

Activity Type (Time)	Activity
Large Group Discussion (15 minutes)	<p data-bbox="764 495 1162 531"><b>Review of Home Activity</b></p> <p data-bbox="431 552 1446 588">◆ Discuss experiences using more beans and grains in meals and snacks.</p> <p data-bbox="431 646 496 682">Q/A:</p> <ul data-bbox="480 699 1422 873" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What new bean or grain foods did you try?</li> <li>- How did you make the new food more appealing to yourself (and others, if appropriate)?</li> <li>- What was your reaction to the new food?</li> </ul>
 <i>Notes</i>	<p data-bbox="854 1209 1065 1245"><b>New Material</b></p> <p data-bbox="431 1272 1325 1392">           ◆ Identify what stress means to the group.           <ul data-bbox="480 1314 870 1350" style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Participants define stress.</li> </ul>           ◆ Key point—participants identify personal definition of stress.         </p>
Large Group Discussion (10 minutes) 	

Large Group  
Discussion  
(15 minutes)



- ◆ Complete **Worksheet 15-1**.
  - Elicit stress responses—physical, emotional.
- ◆ Key point—participants recognize personal symptoms of stress.

Large Group  
Discussion  
(10 minutes)



- ◆ Identify ways WHI participation causes stress.
  - Extra time
  - Thinking about food
  - Acceptance by self and others
  - Feeling deprived
  - Change in routines
- ◆ Key point—participants identify causes of stress in WHI.

Large Group  
Discussion  
(20 minutes)



- ◆ Discuss coping skills (see page 4, Participant Manual).
  - Ideas currently used
  - Share new ideas
- ◆ (Optional) Participant identifies stressful situation and role plays coping skills.
- ◆ Key point—participants identify strategies to reduce stress.

Large Group  
Discussion  
(10 minutes)



- ◆ Share time-saving ideas to reduce stress in meal preparation.
  - Food preparation ideas (ingredients or cooking methods)
  - Quick frozen dinners or meals out
  - Quick recipe ideas
- ◆ Form small groups (3-4).
  - Use **Worksheet 15-2** and **Handout 15-5** to make an Emergency Meal plan.
  - Share ideas with large group.
- ◆ Key point—participants identify quick low-fat meals to use when feeling stressed.

Large Group  
Activity  
(10 minutes)



- ◆ Relaxation exercise.
  - Use one of scripts provided.
- ◆ Key point—participants practice relaxation technique.

### Summary

Large Group  
Discussion  
(10 minutes)

Discuss the issues and identify participants who need more help.

- ◆ Focus on ways to deal with the stress that interferes with progress.

Q/A:

- What relaxation methods do you feel comfortable using?
- What are some quick meals you can prepare when your are feeling stressed or rushed?



Large Group  
Discussion  
(8 minutes)



### Home Activity

- ◆ Assign two Fat Scans.
- ◆ Ask them to complete **Worksheet 15-3** at home. Answer questions.


### Food Tasting

Large Group  
Discussion  
(10 minutes)

- ◆ Emphasize quick low-fat meal ideas (commercial or homemade).
- ◆ Encourage discussion of food/recipe acceptability.

Total Time:  
118 minutes

## Session Fifteen: Relax For The Health Of It

Activity Type (Time)	Activity
<b>Large Group Discussion (15 minutes)</b> 	<b>REVIEW OF HOME ACTIVITY</b>
	<p>♦ <b>Discuss experiences using more beans and grains in meals and snacks.</b></p> <p><b>Q/A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>What new bean or grain foods did you try?</b></li> <li>- <b>How did you make the new food more appealing to yourself (and others, if appropriate)?</b></li> <li>- <b>What was your reaction to the new food?</b></li> </ul>
	<b>OVERVIEW OF SESSION</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The main topic of today's session is stress. We'll begin by talking about the symptoms of stress and some of the causes. The major part of the session will be spent discussing skills you can use to cope with stress. Ideas for quick meals will be reviewed and the session will end with a relaxation exercise.</li> </ul>

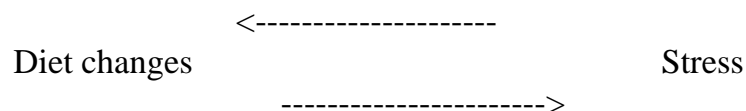
**NEW MATERIAL****What is Stress?****PURPOSE:** Introduce concept of stress.**Large Group  
Discussion  
(10 minutes)**

- ♦ **Identify what stress means to the group.**
  - **Participants define stress.**
- ♦ **Key point—participants identify personal definition of stress.**



Q/A:

- How do you define stress?
- All of us have experienced stress. Stress is tension or pressures that are a natural part of living our lives. Changes and events in our lives (getting married, illness, changing jobs) are major sources of stress. Pressures and tension from both good and bad changes can trigger stress. Most of us think that stress is bad.
- It can create physical symptoms like headaches, stomach aches, and muscle tension. It can also affect your thoughts and emotions causing irritability, worry, anger, and depression. Some people react to stress by overeating or drinking.
- Stress is different for different people. The same situation can be stressful for one person but not for another person. The amount of stress each person experiences depends on her understanding of the situation. Stress results from your belief that an event is dangerous, difficult or painful, and that you don't have the skills to cope with the situation.
- Why are we talking about stress in a nutrition program? Because eating habits often change when you are stressed. Also, changing your diet can be a source of stress.





**Large Group  
Discussion  
(15 minutes)**

**Symptoms of Stress**

**PURPOSE** Identify symptoms of stress.

♦ **Complete Worksheet 15-1.**

- **Elicit stress responses—physical, emotional.**

♦ **Key point—participants recognize personal symptoms of stress.**



*Group Nutritionist Note:* Encourage participants to include examples of physical, emotional and behavioral symptoms.

Physical: shortness of breath, pounding heart, muscle tension, headaches, upset stomach, clenching jaw, dizziness, trembling, diarrhea.

Emotional: irritability, anger, worry, inability to concentrate, negative attitudes, loneliness, depression.

Behavioral: overeating, loss of appetite, trouble sleeping, accident proneness, increased use of alcohol.

- Everyone has different reactions to stress. Take a few minutes to answer the questions on the stress questionnaire, **Worksheet 15-1**. We will be using these questions to guide our discussion during class. Think about the questions so you will be able to contribute to the group discussion.



Q/A:

- What are some of the ways you react to stress? (physical, emotional and behavioral)
- How do you change your eating habits when you are stressed?



*Group Nutritionist Note:* Encourage women to share ideas of changes in eating habits and possible solutions to prevent high-fat foods.

- Each of us responds differently to stress. The first step to dealing with stress in your own life is to recognize your symptoms. Once you have done this, you can identify what is causing it.

**Large Group  
Discussion  
(10 minutes)**

**Does the Women's Health Initiative Cause Stress?**

**PURPOSE:** Discuss the potential stressors of the WHI.

◆ **Identify ways WHI participation causes stress.**

- **Extra time**
- **Thinking about food**
- **Acceptance by self and others**
- **Feeling deprived**
- **Change in routines**

◆ **Key point—participants identify causes of stress in WHI.**

- As we discussed, stress can cause changes in your diet. Changing your diet can also be a source of stress. Now I'd like to discuss how your participation in the WHI has influenced the amount of stress you experience.



Q/A:

- How has participating in the WHI increased the amount of stress in your daily life?



*Group Nutritionist Note:*

- Extra time in food preparation, shopping and/or record keeping.
- Feeling deprived when you can't eat the food you like.
- Thinking about food more often.
- Acceptance of your dietary changes by yourself and people around you.
- Changes in your routines since joining the WHI.
- Uncomfortable participating in social activities.

**Large Group  
Discussion  
(20 minutes)**

**Stress Reduction**

**PURPOSE:** Identify coping strategies to use in stressful situations.


- ◆ **Discuss coping skills (see page 4 Participant Manual).**
  - **Ideas currently used**
  - **Share new ideas**
- ◆ **(Optional) Participant identifies stressful situation and role plays coping skills.**
- ◆ **Key point—participants identify strategies to reduce stress.**

- Look at the list of Stress Coping Skills listed on page 4 of your Session 15 materials. Let's review the skills you have already learned and see how well they help you reduce some stress created when you change eating behaviors.



**Q/A:**


- What methods do you use to handle stress right now?
- Which of these methods do you find most helpful in reducing stress in other areas of your life?
- There are many different ways to deal with stress. Sometimes communication skills can help you avoid stress by knowing when to be assertive and say "no," or ask for help. Time management and planning ahead skills can help you take control of your stress by organizing and prioritizing the things you need to do.
- At other times, it helps to change the way you set goals and the way you think about the things that need to be done. For example, by setting realistic goals and trying not to be perfect or accomplish everything at once, you are more likely to succeed. Usually you are less stressed when you are successful.

<p><b>Large Group Discussion (10 minutes)</b></p>	<p><b>Quick Meal Ideas</b></p> <p><b>PURPOSE:</b> Identify quick meals for use in periods of high stress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Share time-saving ideas to reduce stress in meal preparation.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Food preparation ideas (ingredients or cooking methods)</li> <li>• Quick frozen dinners or meals out</li> <li>• Quick recipe ideas</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Form small groups (3-4).</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use <b>Worksheet 15-2</b> and <b>Handout 15-5</b> to make an <b>Emergency Meal plan</b>.</li> <li>• Share ideas with large group.</li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Key point—participants identify quick low-fat meals to use when feeling stressed.</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequently, when you're feeling stressed you don't have the time or the desire to plan and cook nutritious meals. In Session 13, we talked about some of the ways you can save time in preparing meals.</li> </ul> <p> <b>Q/A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What time-saving methods have you tried?</li> <li>- Which methods do you like the best?</li> <li>- What kinds of foods do you prepared when you are feeling stressed?</li> <li>- What types of frozen dinners do you use (homemade or commercial)?</li> <li>• When you're feeling stressed, it's a good idea to have a stock of low-fat frozen entrees. You can either purchase them or make them ahead of time yourself. Think about keeping a stock of low-fat frozen dinners in your freezer, if you feel that fixing your own frozen dinner is too much work. There is a list of some good ones on <b>Handout 15-5</b>.</li> <li>• You can prepare home-made frozen meals by making a double recipe and freezing the leftovers. This can be a great way to have low fat food available for those hectic days when you're feeling stressed. There are some recipes provided in this session which freeze well.</li> <li>• There are also canned foods and packaged mixes that can be quickly prepared.</li> </ul>



## Q/A:

- How do you cope when you don't feel like cooking?
- What kinds of foods do you fix when you are stressed?
- Many people find it very helpful to have an emergency meal plan for those days when they are rushed and don't have time to cook. By planning ahead you may avoid the stress of having to think about what to prepare for your meal.
- We have discussed some ideas for quick meals. Think about what quick meals, frozen entrees and make ahead meals you could use. Write down some examples on **Worksheet 15-2**.
- Use **Worksheet 15-2** to make an Emergency Meal Plan.
- Share your ideas with your group for each category: quick meals, frozen entrees and make-ahead meals. If someone in your group has a great idea that you didn't think about, be sure to add it to your list.

<b>Large Group Activity (10 minutes)</b>	<b>Relaxation Techniques</b> <b>PURPOSE:</b> Practice a relaxation technique.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Relaxation exercise.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Use one of scripts provided.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>◆ <b>Key point—participants practice relaxation techniques.</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are times when you can't avoid or change the stress. During these times, relaxation techniques may help you deal with the physical and emotional symptoms of stress.</li> <li>• There are many different methods of relaxing. During our discussion _____ (Participant name) mentioned _____ (technique). Some other examples include: visualization, breathing, yoga, meditation, exercise and progressive relaxation. There is a brief description of these techniques and a list of books which describe them in more detail on pages 48 and 49 in the Resource section of your Participant Manual.</li> <li>• Using relaxation techniques can help you keep calm in a stressful situation and help you stay in control of your eating habits.</li> <li>• However, it takes practice to be able to use relaxation techniques. We are going to practice a relaxation exercise in class today. This exercise will take about 10-15 minutes. With practice, you can learn to relax in less time. There are four quicker relaxation exercises listed in your Participant Manual on page 5. Try practicing one of these or any other method you think will work for you. Some people listen to relaxation tapes but it is important that you choose a method that helps you stay in control, which you can use in any situation.</li> </ul>
	<p><i>Group Nutritionist Note:</i> Darken room, consider soft background music. You may use one of the scripts and lead the activity, or use audio tape.</p> <p>Speak at a normal volume, in a flat, almost monotonous tone. Your voice should be restful and not distracting. Speak slowly. When you wish to give special emphasis to an important word or instruction, simply say the words slower, drawing out the vowel sounds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Now I'm going to turn off the lights and lead you through a relaxation exercise.</li> </ul>

**Script Option #1:**

Relaxation Script: from The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook

- Close your eyes. Take a deep breath, way down into your belly. (Pause.) Let go and hear the air whoosh out through your lips. (Pause.) And when you're ready, take another deep breath. You can feel your belly rise slowly as the air comes in. Let it out with a whooshing sound, like the wind, as you blow through your lips. Each breath leaves you more and more relaxed. Each breath purifies and relaxes your whole body and mind.
- Take another deep breath down into your belly. See the tension leaving your body with the breath. Relax and enjoy the feeling of peace and calm that has spread throughout your body with each deep breath. Imagine one more breath coming in through the soles of your feet, pure and white. It is removing the last bit of tension from your body. As you exhale you feel your body clean and relaxed, deeply relaxed.
- Now, while keeping the rest of your body relaxed, clench your right fist, tighter and tighter. (Pause five seconds.) Now relax. Notice the contrast between a tight muscle and a loose one. Notice a pleasant sort of burning that occurs when the muscle relaxes. Now try to relax your arm even more. Let the chair hold your arm up as you let go of the last bit of muscular tension. Now tighten your left fist, tighter and tighter. (Pause five seconds.) Relax and enjoy the feeling of looseness in your left arm. Really give yourself a chance to feel a difference between tension and relaxation. (Pause.)
- Now turn your attention to your head and wrinkle up your forehead as tight as you can. (Pause five seconds.) Now relax and smooth it out. Let yourself imagine your entire forehead and scalp becoming smooth and relaxed. (Pause.) Now frown and notice the strain spreading throughout your forehead. Feel the tension and the tightness. (Pause.) Now let go, allow your brow to become smooth again. Notice the difference between tension and relaxation in your forehead. (Pause.) Now clench your jaw, bite hard, and notice the tension throughout your jaw. (Pause five seconds.) Relax your jaw. When the jaw is relaxed, your lips will begin to part. Really feel and appreciate the contrast between tension and relaxation in your jaw. Notice how it feels to relax your lips and tongue.
- Now shrug your shoulders. Keep the tension as you hunch your head down between your shoulders. (Pause five seconds.) Relax. Drop your

shoulders and feel the relaxation spreading through your neck, throat and shoulders. Feel how loose and easy your neck feels balanced on your shoulders.

- Give your entire body a chance to relax. Feel the comfort and the heaviness. Take a deep breath and let it fill your abdomen. (Pause.) Now exhale, letting the air out with a whooshing sound. Continue relaxing, letting your breath come freely and gently. Now, tighten your stomach and hold. Note the tension. (Pause five seconds.) Relax. Place your hand on your stomach. Breathe deeply into your belly, pushing your hand up. Hold. (Pause.) And relax. Feel the contrast with the tension as the air rushes out.
- Now concentrate on your back. Arch it very slightly, without straining. Focus on the tension in your lower back. Feel the tension. (Pause.) And then relax. Imagine loosening the lower back and pelvic muscles, feel yourself sinking deeper into the chair. Focus on letting go of all the tension in the muscles of your lower back and pelvis and abdomen. Feel yourself sinking heavier and heavier into the chair as your abdomen and back relax more and more deeply. (Pause.)
- Now tighten your buttocks and thighs. Hold the tension and notice how it feels. (Pause five seconds.) Relax and notice the contrast between tension and looseness. Really experience what it feels like to relax your buttocks and thighs. (Pause.) Now curl your toes downward, making your calves tense. Study the tension. (Pause five seconds.) Relax. Feel and enjoy the relaxation. (Pause.) Now bend your toes toward your face, creating tension in your shins. (Pause five seconds.) Relax again, enjoying the feeling of peace and heaviness that spreads everywhere in your legs.



*Group Nutritionist Note:* Let the women sit quietly for 2-5 minutes. Then gently bring them back, using a quiet and calm tone of voice. Ask the summary questions found on page 14.



**Script Option #2**Relaxation Script:

- Close your eyes. Take a minute to focus on each part of your body, from head to toes, checking for any spots or areas that are tense, and letting go of any tension or changing your position if needed. Keep your legs uncrossed, your hands resting gently in your lap, and your spine straight, using the chair for support. Your body should be upright and alert, but relaxed and without strain.
- Now focus your attention to any sounds you hear outside you, noting that some may stay and others may come and go.
- Now focus your attention on your breath. Let it come and go naturally, without slowing it down or speeding it up. Be aware as you breathe in that your breath brings you nourishment and contact from the outside, and that as you breathe out, this cleanses your body of anything it doesn't need and washes away all the tension as well.
- Now each time you breathe in, say the word "in" to yourself like a whisper inside of your mind, and each time you breathe out, say the word "out," like a whisper inside of your mind. Keep repeating the words to yourself each time you breathe in and out. When you find your mind wandering, or notice you haven't been repeating these words, gently bring your attention back to your breath and to the words, "in . . . out."



*Group Nutritionist Note:* Let a few minutes go by then gently break in with the following:

- Each time you notice a distraction, such as thoughts, feelings, sensations, images, just gently return your focus to your breath and the words "in . . . out." Imagine that the distractions are like leaves floating down a stream—they just keep floating on by, and the stream, like your breath, is always there, strong and flowing.
- Any time you find your mind wandering off, gently return your attention to your breath. These thoughts or feelings or sensations or images are like clouds floating across the sky. Notice that the clear blue sky is always there, no matter how clouded up it may look, just like your breath, always there, always nourishing you, beyond any distractions.




*Group Nutritionist Note:* A minute before you want to end the exercise, gently break in and begin to bring the participants back.

- Now, without opening your eyes, stop focusing on the words and your breathing, and shift your attention to any sounds you hear outside you. . . Now shift your attention to your body. Be aware of any sensations, or lack of them and notice your body sitting in the chair, your feet supported on the floor, your hands supported on your lap, your back supported by the chair. . . . Now visualize yourself in this room . . . and whenever you feel ready, allow your eyes to open gently, by themselves, and take a few moments to look around before moving very much or talking.



*Group Nutritionist Note:* Let the women sit quietly for 2 to 5 minutes. Then gently bring them back, using a quiet and calm tone of voice. Ask the summary questions found on page 19.

	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SUMMARY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let your body continue to relax as you open your eyes. You are calm and relaxed. Think about how you felt during this exercise and how you could practice this method on your own. Do you think it could help you in a stressful situation?</li> <li>• Learning how to cope with stress is important because stress can interfere with healthy eating habits. (Use the questions in the box below to encourage discussion.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Large Group Discussion</b> (10 minutes)</p> 	<p><b>Discuss the issues and identify participants who need more help.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Focus on ways to deal with the stress that interferes with progress.</b></li> </ul> <p><b>Q/A:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>What relaxation methods do you feel comfortable using?</b></li> <li>- <b>What are some quick meals you can prepare when your are feeling stressed or rushed?</b></li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>HOME ACTIVITY</b></p>
<p><b>Large Group Discussion</b> (8 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Assign two Fat Scans.</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Ask them to complete Worksheet 15-3 at home. Answer questions.</b></li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your goals for this month are to plan and prepare an Emergency Meal from <b>Worksheet 15-2</b>, to practice using a relaxation exercise, and to complete two Fat Scans.</li> <li>• Look over your quick meal ideas on <b>Worksheet 15-2</b>. Choose one idea to try and write it down on your Home Activity <b>Worksheet 15-3</b>.</li> <li>• Do you have the necessary ingredients to make this meal? Write down the foods you need to buy on your worksheet. You may need to check your freezer and pantry at home, and add foods to buy to your list.</li> </ul>
	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>FOOD TASTING</b></p>
<p><b>Large Group Discussion</b> (10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ <b>Emphasize quick low-fat meal ideas (commercial or homemade).</b></li> <li>◆ <b>Encourage discussion of food/recipe acceptability.</b></li> </ul>

## **Nutritionist Reference**

### **Stress Coping Skills**

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- Set realistic goals—Avoid trying to be perfect. Be patient with yourself. Review Session 3.
- Reach out to people—Don't withdraw into yourself. Use social support Review Sessions 4, 7, and 8.
- Learn to say no—Practice assertiveness, and say yes only to those activities that are important to you. Review Sessions 6 and 7.
- Use problem solving skills—Identify the problem causing stress, decide what you can do and take action. Review Session 10.
- Plan ahead to reduce the chance of problems. Review Session 12.
- Use positive self-talk—Maintain a positive attitude. Review Session 11.
- Use time management skills—Set priorities and delegate or don't do unessential tasks. Review Session 13.