

## **Brief Outline of the Structured Approach to One-on-One Consultation To Healthcare Staff:**

### **The Acute Stress Intervention**

- Open the one-on-one consultation session
  - Introduce yourself
  - Ask about the individual
    - *“Are there any details about your personal or professional situation that would be helpful for me to know? Again, this information is confidential.”*
  - Outline what the structure of the session will be:
    - Review of current situation and areas of difficulty
    - Review of range of common symptoms/experiences individuals can have in highly distressing situations
    - Identify strategies to turn the volume down on those reactions/symptoms
- Check in
  - Ask/explore with the individual how they’re doing in general
  - Ask what their areas of greatest difficulty are
- Provide brief psycho-education on impact of high levels of stress
  - Review of goal of starting with psychoeducation:
    - Understanding the impact of high levels of stress on minds and bodies helps to:
      - Identify best strategies for addressing stress reactions
      - Bring stress reactions under greater control
  - Provide brief psychoeducation:
    - High stress levels lead to:
    - Higher levels of physical symptoms
    - Reduction of ability to use thinking as a way to calm ourselves and take control
    - Changes in the way we’re feeling in our bodies and thoughts
    - Magnifies our sense of loss of control and helplessness.
- Introduce and administer the Acute Stress Disorder Scale (or the ASDS)
  - Goal:
    - To help the individual to:
      - Find words/clearly describe details of their experience of symptoms
      - Increase self-observing capacity of their own reactions
      - Re-establish a process of ordering their thinking
      - Identify/target specific symptoms that might benefit from coping strategies (i.e. somatic symptoms, thoughts, emotions, behaviors)

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at the Yale Child Study Center

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- After completing the ASD scale, notice the following:
  - Are there symptoms that cluster together?
  - (i.e. do intrusive thoughts impact issues with sleep?)
  - Are there symptoms that are happening very frequently?
  - What are the different broad areas of functioning that are most impacted by symptoms (at work, at home, sleeping, relationships, etc.)?
- **Next steps:**
  - **Focus in on symptoms that were endorsed in the ASDs that are most frequent or most impactful**
  - **Introduce specific coping strategies that would specifically help to decrease these symptoms/reactions**
- Discuss routines of daily life (Review with all individuals. Reviewing routines of daily life is a first place to start because they can have a significant impact more broadly, in terms of vulnerability to specific symptoms that individuals may be endorsing.)
  - Goal:
    - To re-assert order and predictability in daily life in order to help begin the process of taking greater control of stress reactions
  - Assess specific ways in which previous routines in daily life have been disrupted/changed
  - Review how establishing/re-establishing daily routines can help increase sense of control
  - Review of ways to create a sense of routine during this time
  - Where possible, establish approximate blocks of times on a daily basis for:
    - Meal time
    - Bed time
    - Family/friend time (whether in person or virtually)
    - Decompression time / taking as full a break as possible; “checking out”
- Discuss Basics of Sleep Hygiene (review if sleep issues were endorsed)
  - Goal:
    - Sleep routines help to:
      - Re-set the body clock
      - Help ensure better sleep
      - Reduce vulnerability to stress reactions
      - Interrupt cycle of stress reactions
  - Review basics of sleep hygiene

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- Introduce coping strategies
  - Goal:
    - **Focus in on symptoms that were endorsed in the ASDS that are most frequent or most impactful**
    - **Introduce and review specific coping strategies that will specifically help to decrease these symptoms/reactions**
  - Example coping strategies
    - Focused Breathing
      - Examples of symptoms that focused breathing is a useful strategy for:
        - Physical symptoms (i.e. heart pounding, shallow breathing)
        - Feelings of anxiety
    - Guided Imagery
      - Examples of symptoms that guided imagery is a useful strategy to:
        - Address intrusive, repetitive disturbing thoughts and images
    - Challenging Unhelpful Thoughts
      - Self-critical thoughts
      - Thinking too far ahead, imagining the worst thoughts
    - Progressive Muscle Relaxation
    - Social Connectedness and Helpful Considerations
- Arrange for Follow-Up Session
  - Predict structure of follow up session
  - Schedule an appointment in one week to review levels of stress reactions endorsed by the individual.
  - Indicate your availability for contact earlier in the week if the individual continue to experience high levels of distress

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