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Rethinking Daily Routines to Reduce Stress

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Rethinking Daily Routines to Reduce Stress

Jessi Andricks, MS, CCC-SLP
Stress Management Coach
Disclosures

- Financial: compensation for this webinar, provide other online webinars, courses and coaching services.
- Non-Financial: presenter at conferences and conventions

Learning Outcomes

After this course, participants will be able to:

- Identify current struggles and strategies for managing daily stress.
- Describe alternatives to multi-tasking.
- Identify 3 types of transitions/routines to use in a daily schedule.


Introduction and Background

- Graduated in 2008
- Worked for 3+ years with increasing stress in various settings
- Left field in 2012
  - Let go of license and CCC
- Pursued other interests and wellness
  - Yoga and Meditation
  - Mindful/Mind-Body Fitness
  - Integrative Health and Wellness Coaching
- Returned to SLP in 2016
  - Part-time in teletherapy
- Started blog, presenting and offering courses 2017-present

Introduction to Daily Stress and Current Strategies

- Most days/jobs are not set up to help you thrive and feel balanced in both daily and work life.
- Workers try to find ways to create more balance and feel more stressed instead.
- Current Strategies:
  - Multi-tasking
  - Time Management/Schedules
  - Planning/Prepping
Introduction to Daily Stress and Current Strategies

- What can you do instead?
  - Reduce stress around current struggles by rethinking the current strategies.

- Things to explore:
  - No Multi-Tasking
  - Rethink Schedule/Time Management
  - Routines and Transitions

Current Daily Habits and Routines

- Most of the current practices and schedules do not set us up for success and can increase stress:
  - Waking up and rushing
  - Seeing students/patients non-stop
  - Little to no breaks
  - Paperwork piling up
  - Working late/early or from home
  - Not enough sleep, movement, self-care, etc

*All of these can contribute to chronic stress and burnout
Multi-Tasking: The Breakdown

- Why you do it
- What it really is
- What to do instead

Multi-Tasking: Why you do it

- Definition: the performance of multiple tasks at one time, Merriam Webster
- Translation: doing more than one thing at a time to improve your work, often to find more balance in your time
  - It will increase productivity
  - It will make you more efficient
  - It will make you better able to handle more work
  - It is necessary to do your work
Multi-Tasking: What it really is

- Multi-tasking is really Task-Switching:
  - Multi-tasking is really switching from task to task
  - Creates more stress
  - Brain cannot focus on more than one thing at a time
  - Causes depletion and mental exhaustion
  - Reduces efficiency and productivity (physical and mental causes)

Why are you Multi-Tasking?

- Only way you are taught to work
- Skeptical that other things will work
- Uncomfortable about change
- Not sure what else to do
What to do Instead of Multi-Tasking:

- Strategies to Use:
  - Batching your work
  - Reduce email and social media
  - Take breaks

Batching Your Work

- Definitions:
  - Task batching is a time management system that maximizes concentration, productivity, creativity, and mental sharpness while minimizing distraction, stress, and fatigue.
    - Via https://brainsoverblonde.com/task-batching/
  - a simple time-management productivity hack that allows you to take advantage of your full concentration by grouping a bunch of similar activities together and doing them all at the same time.
    - Via https://www.brazen.com/blog/archive/career-growth/productivity-hack-work-more-efficiently-by-batching-your-time/
Batching Your Work

- **Explanation:**
  - Batching your work is a way of grouping similar tasks for a set amount of time, so you are able to use similar parts of your brain, which increases efficiency and focus, as well as reducing the amount of time on each task, while decreasing your mental fatigue, overall stress, and time to complete each task.
  - Basically - it boosts efficiency and productivity, while reducing fatigue and therefore stress.

How to Batch Your Work

- **Group similar tasks into chunks of time**
  - Pick alike tasks or tasks that build upon each other
  - Work on multiple things that are similar
  - Complete multiple sets of one task (ex: write several progress reports or evals, plan several artic sessions, write 4 blog posts, upload 5 new TpT products, etc)

- **Pick times to work on specific projects**
  - Work for allotted amount of time
  - If smaller task, work until finished
  - If bigger task or project, work for a set amount of time
Emails and Social Media

- Some of the biggest time-suckers of your day
  - Notifications all day
  - Feel need to reply instantly
  - Causes multi-tasking/task-switching
  - Can distract from current tasks
    - Take up more time
    - Start a new project/task
  - Need to be batched

Emails and Social Media

- Need to “batch” these into your day to cut back on the amount of inefficient time spent on them.
  - Stop constant or mindless checking
    - Have email closed instead of open
    - Opt out of notifications and alerts
    - Use apps to block at certain times or for chunks of time
  - Schedule in times
    - Have specific times, and time limits, to check social media
    - Have specific times to check and respond to emails
      - Morning/midday/end of day
      - Many tasks are completed or solved before you respond
Take Breaks

- Breaks help your brain to recover and recharge, which leads to better focus, efficiency and productivity.
  - Schedule in breaks after completing task or finishing set time frame for work
  - Opt for a break after every task or every 90 minutes
  - Give brain time to rest before moving on to new task

Time Management and Scheduling

- Most follow "typical" schedule:
  - Someone else’s schedule
  - Packing in patients/students

- Current Time Management Strategies:
  - Trying to fit in the most work into the day
  - Filling every moment of time with a task
  - Scheduling every time slot in the day
  - Maximize working time vs down time
  - “Pushing” to hustle all day
Time Management and Scheduling

- Look at Energy Levels to Rethink your Schedule and Management of Time:
  - Energy Levels are one of the most important things to consider when planning out your day and schedule
  - Not matching them can create more stress
- Build in Breaks:
  - Plan breaks to allow your brain and body to recharge
  - Overall improvement in efficiency of work and enjoyment

Energy Levels for Scheduling

- High Energy Levels:
  - Plan for sessions with students and clients
  - Good for higher energy or high demanding groups
  - Better for face-to-face or more physically/mentally exhausting sessions
- Low Energy Levels:
  - Plan for lower key activities or groups
  - Great for paperwork and more slower paced, solo work
  - Planning sessions or breaks
Build in Breaks

- Recharge your brain and body
- Take large or small breaks
- The 90-Minute Break

Breaks: Recharge Brain and Body

- Give yourself a "rest" to decrease exhaustion and stress/tension
- Build up energy levels again
- Improve focus and efficiency
- Reduces errors in work
Breaks: Large or Small Breaks

- Amount of time depends on your needs, schedule and energy during the day
- Breaks for hydration, restroom, stretching, etc
- Breaks with NO work or task planned
- Break for lunch - no work

Breaks: The 90 Minute Break

- Chunk day into batches
- Easy to remember and plan for
- Gives you small amounts of time in day to recharge
Scheduling Your Day

- Instead of focusing on time management and maximizing your schedule, focus on these:
  - Start and End times
  - Breaks needed (larger and smaller)
  - Energy Levels during the day - plan sessions, paperwork, meetings, etc around those times
  - Reach out if support is needed

Planning and Prepping: Add more stress

- Used to reduce stress and help stay organized with work and daily life, but over planning and prepping can take away from things that reduce stress:
  - Can add more work, rather than decrease work
  - Leads to working on weekends, breaks or at home
  - Constant organizing vs connecting
  - Less time away from work, physically and mentally
- Shift from prepping and planning to transitions and routines:
  - Self-Care infused into your day with and for less stress
What is Self-Care?

- Definition: Checking in with yourself to become aware of what you need and are feeling so you can be of better service to yourself and others.

- Explanation: Recharging and tuning in so you can show up as your “best” self.

- One of the tools of Stress Management:
  - Reduce overall stress because taking care of own needs
  - Routines and Transitions are a type of Self-Care infused into your daily routine

Importance of Routines and Transitions

- Reduces and helps manage overall stress
  - Makes self-care part of the daily routine
  - More effective at managing stress long-term than planning/prepping
  - Reduces the stress around it
  - Makes it more routine and automatic
  - Helps you to let go of the stress
Transition: End of Work Day

- Breaks up your day between work and home:
  - Use at end of work day
  - Small routine (or big) that you can follow most days
  - Gives brain a transition between work and home
  - Let go of stress and leave work at work

Transition

- Examples:
  - Movement: yoga class, walk or hike outside, gym class
  - Coffee or tea break
  - Call to a friend or loved one
  - Listen to a podcast or music
Morning Routine

- Motivation and Intention for the Day
  - Low intensity to wake up
  - Can be energizing
  - Time in the mornings/wake up early
  - 5 minutes or more

- Beyond “getting ready” for work that day
- Examples:
  - Journal
  - Tea or coffee
  - Meditation
  - Movement: stretch, walk
Evening Routine

- Focus on releasing tension from the day to help relax and restore:
  - Reduce stress from the day
    - Release physical tension
    - Reduce mental chatter and fatigue
    - Improve sleep
  - 5 minutes or more
  - Low intensity and calming

Evening Routine

- Not about prepping for tomorrow: more than “getting ready” for work the next day
- Examples:
  - Meditation
  - Gentle, low energy exercise
    - Stretching
    - Walk
    - Restorative or gentle yoga
  - Journaling
  - Solo activity
    - Reading
    - Cup of tea
Other Considerations

- “Fueling” Your day
  - (Healthy) Eating
  - Hydration
  - Sleep

- Autopilot
  - Going through day automatically
  - Awareness of potential stress triggers
  - Notice reaction and thoughts

Questions?

- For more information and resources:
  - Jessiandricks.com/slp-toolbox-sign-up
  - Email: jessi@jessiandricks.com
  - SLP Stress Management Podcast
  - @jessiandricks on Instagram

- Thank you!
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