

# Stress and Our Perceptions

Presented by  
CIGNA Employee Assistance Program



# Stress Colors The Way We Think And Feel

Stress may alter our thoughts and feelings about...

- Our problems
- Others
- The world
- Ourselves



# Who is Controlling Your Life?

The amount of control you believe you have over your life or certain events may affect how you respond to stressful situations

- Do you feel you are in control?
- Do you feel that outside forces control you?



# External Source of Control

- You don't feel like you have control over what happens to you
- You often feel stressed out
- You pay close attention to other people's opinions



# Internal Source of Control

- You feel like control comes from within
- You are able to cope with high pressure situations
- You do not often feel stressed
- You take responsibility for your actions
- You are not easily influenced by others
- You work best at your own pace



# Change Your Perception of Control

## Find a comfortable balance and let go of some control

- Don't try to control everything.
- Put things into perspective.
- Don't blame yourself for things you can't control.

## Tips for increasing control:

- Think about the impact of your behavior.
- Take responsibility.
- Think about your needs.
- Be assertive.



# Identify Negative Thoughts and Irrational Beliefs

- Holding pre-conceived notions
- Having an all or nothing attitude
- Making a big deal out of small issues



# Identify Negative Thoughts and Irrational Beliefs (cont.)

- Playing the blame game
- Focusing only on the negative
- Drawing emotional conclusions
- Believing nothing will “ever” work out



# Fighting back against negative thoughts

- Is there any evidence to support your beliefs?
- Could there be other explanations for the situation?
- Don't set unrealistic expectations
- Give yourself credit
- Don't make hasty judgments
- Replace negative thoughts with positive ones



# Fighting back against negative thoughts (cont.)

- Surround yourself with positive people
- Believe in yourself
- Use your imagination
- Smile until you mean it
- Be realistic
- Take care of yourself



# Techniques to help manage stress

- Paper-and-pencil problem-solving technique
  - Avoidable Stressors
- Impossible list technique
  - Unavoidable stressors



# Summary

Remember:  
We see things not as they are,  
but as we are



# Benefits of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- **Face to Face Sessions**
- **Confidential**
- **Prepaid**
- **Unlimited Telephonic consultation**
- **Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week**
- **Household benefit**
- **Work/Life Support such as eldercare, childcare and pet care.**
- **Financial Services**
- **Legal Services**



# References

1. Gayle Encyclopedia of Childhood and Adolescence. (1998). *Locus of Control*. Gale Research.
2. Palmer S, Cooper C, and Thomas K. (2003). *Creating a balance: Managing stress*. British Library Publishing.

