

## Higher National Unit Specification

### General information for centres

**Unit title:** Managing Stress Through Exercise and Therapy

**Unit code:** DP2M 35

**Unit purpose:** This unit provides underpinning knowledge surrounding the causes and effects of stress on individuals and builds upon the treatment planning and practical skills of exercise and therapy professionals to enable them to provide a holistic approach to the management of stress and stress related disorders.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

1. Define 'stress' and describe common stress models.
2. Describe the impact of stress on personal, social and work place relationships.
3. Explain the basic rationale behind common stress management strategies.
4. Plan and deliver a stress management session using a therapeutic or exercise based technique.

**Credit points and level:** 1.5 HN Credit at SCQF level 8: (12 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8\*)

*\*SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

**Recommended prior knowledge and skills:** Candidates should have knowledge of the physiological systems of the body, namely homeostasis, structure and function of cv/respiratory, skeleto/muscular, digestive and nervous systems. As the main aim of the unit is the planning and delivery of either a therapy or exercise based stress management strategy, the candidate should have undergone recent education and training in a therapy or exercise discipline. A list of such specialisms appears in the support notes.

In addition, candidates should have good communication skills both orally and written. These can be evidenced either by the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications at minimum SCQF level 6 or written evidence of an equivalent level of study.

**Core skills:** There may be opportunities to gather evidence towards core skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of core skills or core skills components.

The unit does however provide opportunities to develop aspects of the following core skills:

**Communication:** evidenced and developed by candidate through both written and practical assessment instruments (oral) as well as peer discussion forums during class time.

**Problem solving:** Case studies

## **General information for centres (cont)**

**Context for delivery:** If this Unit is delivered as part of a group award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the group award to which it contributes. This unit is an option on the Fitness, Health and Exercise HNC/D group award and is best delivered in year two of the programme.

**Assessment:** Assessment for this unit will take the form of a holistic assessment log book with extended response questions for O1 ,2 and 3 and a practical stress management sessions with accompanying planning and case study entries. A multi media presentation could also be used for O3.

## Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

**Unit title:** Managing Stress through Exercise and Therapy

**Unit code:** DP2M 35

The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, knowledge and/or skills, and evidence requirements are mandatory.

(If you think holistic assessment is the best assessment strategy for the Unit and you wish to state *Knowledge and/or Skills* and *Evidence requirements* for the Unit as a whole, please add the following statement here: ‘Please refer to *Knowledge and/or skills for the Unit* and *Evidence requirements for the Unit* after the Outcomes.’)

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the knowledge and/or skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

### Outcome 1

Define ‘stress’ and describe common stress models

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ National and international definitions of stress
- ◆ Stress models
- ◆ Primary/secondary and tertiary intervention
- ◆ Psychopathology – physiology of stress response

#### EVIDENCE REQUIREMENTS

Candidates will need to provide written evidence to demonstrate knowledge of all of the elements listed under knowledge and/or skills. Candidates must provide :-

- at least one National and one International definition of stress
- a description of a minimum of three stress models
- an outline of at least one primary, one secondary and one tertiary interventions
- an explanation of the physiology of stress response

#### Assessment guidelines

This may be done in an extended response format.

### Outcome 2

Describe the impact of stress on personal, social and work place relationships

#### Knowledge and/or skills

- ◆ Internal and external causal factors of stress
- ◆ Physiological effects
- ◆ Psychological effects
- ◆ Legislation governing workplace stress

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Managing Stress through Exercise and Therapy

### **Evidence requirements**

Outcome 1 and 2 provide the opportunity to combine assessments.

Candidates will need to provide written evidence to demonstrate knowledge of all the elements listed under knowledge and/or skills.

Candidates must provide :-

- an identification and explanation of at least three internal and three external causal factors
- an identification and explanation of at least three physiological and three psychological effects of stress
- an outline of current legislation governing workplace stress.

### **Assessment guidelines**

This may be done in an extended response format or as a case study.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards**

**Unit title:** Managing Stress through Exercise and Therapy

### **Outcome 3**

Explain the basic rationale behind common stress management strategies and demonstrate self help physiological strategies.

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Behavioural strategies
- ◆ Physiological strategies
- ◆ Psychological strategies and concepts
- ◆ Cognitive strategies
- ◆ Self help breathing technique
- ◆ Self help progressive relaxation technique
- ◆ Efficacy of technique for stress conditions.

#### **Evidence requirements**

The candidate must be able to describe different treatment strategies by categories and outline the basic approaches to stress management that are currently in use in each strategy. The candidate should collect information on at least one treatment from each of the listed strategies and describe them in detail. A written submission of 500-750 words per technique to include underpinning theory and application in stress management is required.

Practical evidence of the ability to instruct both a basic breathing, and a progressive relaxation technique.

#### **Assessment guidelines**

The support notes contain a comprehensive list of therapies and intervention strategies.

There may be an opportunity to use a multi media style presentation such as PowerPoint.

An assessor checklist may be used to record practical evidence.

The candidate should be encouraged to select treatment strategies in which s/he has no formal experience or recognised qualifications.

## **Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)**

**Unit title:** Managing Stress through Exercise and Therapy

### **Outcome 4**

Plan and deliver a stress management session using a therapeutic or exercise based technique.

#### **Knowledge and/or skills**

- ◆ Treatment planning skills
- ◆ Stress management techniques
- ◆ Benefits of techniques
- ◆ Evaluation of treatment
- ◆ Aftercare and advice.

#### **Evidence requirements**

Practical evidence of a therapeutic or exercise based stress management technique applied on 3 separate occasions supported by written treatment plans and evaluations.

#### **Assessment guidelines**

The candidate will use skills and knowledge of a stress management technique for which they have current experience to devise and apply treatment plans, demonstrating on 3 occasions a developmental approach to client treatment. It is recommended that treatment relates to the same client.

The support notes contain a comprehensive list of therapies under the heading of physiological intervention techniques.

## **Administrative Information**

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|-----------------------------|--|
| <b>Unit code:</b>           | DP2M 35                                      |
| <b>Unit title:</b>          | Managing Stress through Exercise and Therapy |
| <b>Superclass category:</b> | HB   |
| <b>Date of publication:</b> | August 2005                                  |
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## Higher National Unit specification: support notes

### Unit title: Managing Stress through Exercise and Therapy

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 60 hours.

### Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

#### Outcome 1:

**Definitions of stress may include:** World Health Organisation (WHO), UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE), International Stress Management Association, International Labour Organisation (ILO)

**Models of stress** may include: General adaptation syndrome, Yerkes-Dodson, Cognitive/psychological models, process models.

**Primary intervention** may include: stress assessment, job and work design, workplace health promotion, 'personal time'.

**Secondary intervention** may include: identification of legal requirements re stress at work, implementation of stress management strategies, training staff to identify and report stress related issues, self help training, and workplace initiatives for managing stress.

**Tertiary intervention** strategies may include: workplace counselling, role of occupational health departments. GP referral, medication, therapy/exercise prescription, rehabilitation of staff post stress related illness.

**Physiology of stress responses** might include flight and fight responses, resistance/adaptation response, under/over arousal. Effects on renal, immune and endocrine production (adrenaline, noradrenaline, cortisol action, sweat/ urine production). Peripheral and Central Nervous System (CNS) Autonomic Nervous System (ANS), (parasympathetic and sympathetic function, nerve impulses/synapses and neurotransmitters).

**Main structural divisions of the brain and their function to include:** hypothalamus.

#### Outcome 2:

**Physiological effects could include:** diseases- cardio –respiratory, digestive, muscle /joint, infections, allergies, skin disorders, cancer. Behavioural –interrupted sleep patterns, alteration to eating habits and patterns, sexual function, substance use/abuse

**Psychological effects** could include emotional –depression, anxiety, phobias, obsessive traits, clinical stress disorder

**Causal factors** could include: changes in work patterns, changes in line manager, change in work environment, long term staff absences, increased demands, changes in remits, lifestyle related units.

**Legislation** to include UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

#### Outcome 3:

**Behavioural strategies** might include changes to sleep patterns, diet and nutrition modification.

**Physiological strategies** might include stretching, imagery, visualisation, autogenic training, breathing techniques, biofeedback, massage types, aromatherapy, reflexology, colour therapy, flotation tanks, exercise, Alexander technique, yoga, pilates, tai chi, muscular relaxation, meditation.



## Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

### Unit title: Managing Stress through Exercise and Therapy

**Psychological strategies** might include anger management anxiety management, problem-solving training, stress management/stress control, self-esteem, assertiveness training, improving emotional intelligence, spiritual, laughter and humour, love and support networks.

**Cognitive techniques** might include thinking errors and thinking skills (i.e. cognitive distortions), cognitive rehearsal, coping statements, challenging perceptions and belief, stress diary, stress thought records/forms, thought blocking/stopping, time management. emotional techniques might include feeling identification, emotional expression, empty chair, technique, shame attacking, risk management.

#### Outcome 4

**Therapeutic or exercise based techniques** might include stretching, imagery, visualisation, autogenic training, breathing techniques, biofeedback, massage types, aromatherapy, reflexology, colour therapy, flotation tanks, exercise classes or gym based training sessions, Alexander technique, yoga, pilates, tai chi, muscular relaxation, meditation.

### Guidance on the delivery and assessment of this Unit

Opportunities should be given to work both independently and in groups. Where possible, visits to stress clinics or therapy centres or the use of visiting lecturers should be used to broaden the experiential knowledge of treatment strategies under investigation. The use of ICT through internet searches should be encouraged.

#### Open learning

The underpinning knowledge base of this unit could be undertaken in a flexible, open manner. However, the practical assessment will require the candidate to be observed in a clinical environment and skills recorded on an assessor checklist.

### Candidates with additional support needs

This Unit specification is intended to ensure that there are no artificial barriers to learning or assessment. The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments or considering alternative Outcomes for Units. For information on these, please refer to the SQA document *Guidance on Special Assessment Arrangements for Candidates with Additional Support Needs* ([www.sqa.org.uk](http://www.sqa.org.uk)).

## General information for candidates

### Unit title: Managing Stress through Exercise and Therapy

This unit is designed to introduce you to stress theories and potential stress management strategies. The unit is aimed at candidates who currently practice in either a therapeutic or exercise based environment. You will be taught how to recognise symptoms of stress and apply your therapeutic and exercise prescription skills to the management and treatment of clients suffering the symptoms of stress.

Some useful references and contacts.

Cooper, C.L. (1998). *Theories of organisational stress*. Oxford. Oxford University Press

Gillen.T. (2000). *Assertiveness*. London. Hodder Headline

HSE (2001). *Tackling work –related stress: A manager’s guide to improving and monitoring employee health and well being*. Sudbury: HSE books

HSE (2003). *Real solutions, Real people; A manager’s guide to tackling work- related stress*. HSE books

Looker, T.and Gregson, O. (1997). *Teach Yourself Managing Stress*. London Hodder Headline

Thompson, M, Murphy. M. AND Straddling, S. (1998). *Meeting the Stress Challenge*. London Russell House

HMSO – [www.hmso.gov.uk/acts](http://www.hmso.gov.uk/acts)

Institute for Complementary Medicine. London (ICM) [www.icmedicine.co.uk](http://www.icmedicine.co.uk)

International Stress Management Association (ISM) [www.isma.org.uk](http://www.isma.org.uk)

World Health Organisation (WHO) [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)