Session 5

Management of Stress, Anxiety and Depression

➤ Stress and COPD
➤ Reactions to Stress: Fear, anxiety, panic and depression
➤ Impact of Anxiety and Depression
➤ Stress, Anxiety and Depression Management Strategies

Adapted from the “Living Well with COPD” program (2nd edition), Montreal Chest Institute, Canada for Pulmonary Rehabilitation Programmes in Northern Ireland – 2011.
Education Plan and Methods
Session Length: 30-45 minutes

• Introduction
• Working Phase
  1. Feedback from Learning Contract. Group Discussion
  2. Stress and COPD.
     2.1 Definitions of Stressors and Stress. Interactive Lecturing.
     2.2 Identification of participants’ life stressors. Group Discussion.
  4. The Impact of Anxiety and Depression in COPD.
     4.1 Presentation of the Anxiety-Breathlessness Cycle. Interactive Lecturing.
     4.2 Presentation of the Impact of Low Mood and Depression. Interactive Lecturing.
  5. Stress, Anxiety and Depression management strategies.
     5.1 Suggestions to cope with stress, anxiety and depression. Interactive Lecturing.
     5.2 Relaxation Techniques. Demonstration and Practice.

• Closing of the session

Appendices section:
Appendix 1: Additional information
  1. Case scenario: Reactions to stress
  2. Understanding the Anxiety reaction
  3. Case scenario: Reinforcement of participants’ understanding.

Human Resources

1. One health professional (recommended facilitator: clinical psychologist, occupational therapist)

Living Well with COPD™ for Pulmonary Rehabilitation

Resources

1. Information Booklet (Pages 35 to 39)
2. Key messages: COPD medications; Management of Stress, Anxiety and Depression
3. Educational Posters:
   • The Anxiety-Breathlessness Cycle
   • Impact of Low Mood and Depression in COPD
   • Positive Thinking
   • Deep Breathing Technique
4. Cue card: Inhaler technique
5. Resource table:
   • Information on local support groups

Additional Resources

1. Board / Flipchart

Environment

1. Use a quiet and comfortable room for 10 to 15 people. Ensure proper ventilation.
2. Place the chairs in a semi-circle around the board.

Adapted from the “Living Well with COPD” program (2nd edition), Montreal Chest Institute, Canada for Pulmonary Rehabilitation Programmes in Northern Ireland – 2011.
MANAGEMENT OF STRESS, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION
GROUP INTERVENTIONS FOR EACH PHASE OF THE SESSION

Introduction

• Presentation of the Facilitator.
• Outline the goals of this session.
• Review the key messages from the last session and link them to this session.

Working Phase – Educational Interventions

1. Feedback from learning contract

1.1 FEEDBACK FROM LEARNING CONTRACT

Present this section using Group Discussion

Use Attachment 1 (Key messages: COPD Medications) and Attachment 2 (Cue card: Inhaler technique) to support this section.

Evaluate whether participants had a chance to have their inhaler techniques verified by a health professional.

Suggested script for the Facilitator:
In the last session we looked at the different medications that may be prescribed for patients with COPD and the correct techniques for using your inhalers.

Suggested questions:
• Would anyone like their inhaler technique checked today?
• Has anyone noticed that they have started using their inhaler or nebuliser differently since the last session?

Provide the participants constructive feedback and reinforcement. Identify any participants that may require a one-to-one session with their GP and/or Practice Nurse to review their inhaler techniques.
2. Stress and COPD

2.1 DEFINITIONS OF STRESSORS AND STRESS

*Present this section in an Interactive Way*

Present to the participants the definitions of “stressors” and “stress”.

Suggested question:

- **Stressors** are events or situations in everyday life that require change.
- **Stress** refers to the physical and psychological reactions that a person experiences when faced with stressors.

2.2 IDENTIFICATION OF PARTICIPANTS’ LIFE STRESSORS

*Present this section using Group Discussion*

Explore the experiences of stress in the participants’ lives. Write on the board the examples of stressful situations provided by the participants. *Complete if needed using the list of “Life stressors” (Attachment 3).*

Suggested questions to foster discussion:

- What stressful situations do you have in your lives? Can you give us some examples?

**Note to the facilitator:**

- Try to involve all the participants in the discussion.
- Give personal examples to facilitate and encourage discussion.
- Normalise participants’ experiences.
- Underline individual differences and help the group to understand the variety of situations that may cause stress.
3. Reactions to stress: Fear, anxiety, panic and depression

3.1 UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT REACTIONS TO STRESS: FEAR, ANXIETY, PANIC ATTACKS AND DEPRESSION

Present to the participants the definitions of “fear”, “anxiety”, “panic attack”, “low mood and depression”.

Suggested script for the facilitator:

- **Fear** is a normal reaction to a present danger. Symptoms: increased heart rate, shallow, rapid breathing (which is similar to the shortness of breath of COPD), sweating and muscle tension.

- **Anxiety** is a reaction that involves worrying and anticipating stressful situations. Symptoms: The symptoms are similar to those of fear.

- **Panic attack** is an exaggerated, irrational and often sudden fear or anxiety reaction.

- **Low mood and depression** is a feeling of constant low mood and a marked loss of interest. Symptoms: feelings of sadness, low energy and feeling worthless.
4. The impact of anxiety and depression in COPD

4.1 PRESENTATION OF THE ANXIETY-BREATHLESSNESS CYCLE

Present this section in an Interactive Way

Use the poster “The Anxiety-Breathlessness Cycle” to support your teaching.

Revisit and explain the anxiety-breathlessness cycle in COPD. Focus on the role of anxiety in this vicious cycle.

Suggested script for the facilitator:

- The main symptom of COPD is shortness of breath.
- Shortness of breath can cause anxiety and even panic attacks.
- Anxiety makes you breathe faster, which increases your shortness of breath and as a result, you become more anxious.
- Many people with COPD choose to stop doing activities because they are afraid of becoming breathlessness.
- The less you do, the less you are in shape. You will experience more fatigue, shortness of breath and anxiety.
- This is the Anxiety-Breathlessness cycle.

When you have COPD, nothing will make shortness of breath go away completely. However, regularly practicing the techniques shown in this session will help you to cope with your anxiety and shortness of breath better.

4.2 PRESENTATION OF THE IMPACT OF LOW MOOD AND DEPRESSION IN COPD

Present this section in an Interactive Way

Use the poster “Impact of Low Mood and Depression in COPD” to support your teaching.

Explain the impact low mood and depression to participants.
Suggested script for the facilitator:

Like anxiety, **low mood and depression** can also result in a vicious cycle which has an impact on your breathing and your daily activities:

- Low mood and depression can leave you feeling very sad and unmotivated. You have less energy which can make you feel like doing fewer activities or hobbies.
- However, the less you do, the less you are in shape and with time you will experience fatigue and shortness of breath with even less activity.
- In turn this can add to your low mood and depression and you can feel even more sad and unmotivated.

Regularly practicing the techniques shown in this session will also help you to cope better with your low mood and depression. If you feel you would like to speak to someone about low mood and depression please speak to a member of the pulmonary rehabilitation team.

**Note to the facilitator:** Explain that people suffering from COPD are more susceptible to be afflicted by the stressors and that it is more important for them to understand and control the stressful situations in their lives (as much as possible).
5. Stress, Anxiety and Depression Management Strategies

5.1 SUGGESTIONS TO COPE WITH STRESS, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Present this section in an Interactive Way

5.1.1 Present to the participants some strategies to cope with stress, anxiety and depression. Write on the board examples of the strategies.

Suggested script for the facilitator:

There are a number of strategies you can use to manage reactions to stress:

1. **Do not worry about future events.** Anxious people tend to dwell constantly on possible negative outcomes and expect the worst. Try to stay focused on the present.

2. **Instead of worrying, plan your actions in advance.** You will be less anxious knowing that you are prepared to deal with stressful situations.

3. **Learn to relax and do things you enjoy.** Reserve room for pleasurable activities in your day. You can use the relaxation techniques that you will be learning in this session.

4. **Try to solve one problem at a time.** Trying to make too many changes at once will only make you anxious.

5. **Maintain a positive attitude.** Your mental health will improve along with your problem-solving ability. A negative outlook can block your ability to think clearly and prevent you from finding solutions to your problems.

6. **Maintain a healthy lifestyle.** You may not always feel like eating but taking small regular healthy meals can give you more energy to do the things you enjoy. Doing regular physical activity can help you become fitter and also make you feel better about yourself.

7. **If you feel uneasy, ask questions and find answers.** Do not hesitate to talk to the people close to you about your feelings and your condition.

8. **If you feel paralysed by your anxiety or depression do not hesitate to consult a health professional.** Working with a professional can help you develop better coping skills. If you wish to speak to a health professional let a member of the pulmonary rehabilitation team know.
5.1.2 Invite participants to discuss the strategies they already use and explore with them other possible strategies. Write on the board.

Suggested question:

• Besides these strategies, what else could you do to manage reactions to stress?

**Note to the facilitator:**

• Provide positive feedback to the answers given by the participants; comment on the suggestions which support compliance with the strategies suggested previously.

• Discuss how the participation in the pulmonary rehabilitation sessions is an important strategy.

5.1.3 Present to participants the role of patient support groups in COPD.

Suggested question:

• Has anyone heard of patient support groups for people with respiratory conditions?

• Does anyone know how you would get information about patient support groups in your local area?

Suggested script for the facilitator:

• Patient support groups are a great opportunity for patients with lung conditions to get together and receive support and advice. They provide patients with information and advice on living with and managing COPD, healthy living and other support services that are available. They help people with lung conditions to discuss and share experiences and ways of coping.

• If you would like to be referred to a patient support group speak to member of the pulmonary rehabilitation team.

**Note to the facilitator:** Refer participants to the resource table to get further information on patient support groups in their local area.
5.2 RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

Demonstration and Practice

Use the posters “Positive Thinking” and “Deep Breathing Technique” to support your teaching.

Explore with the participants the value of relaxation. Perform one of the relaxation exercises with the participants.

Suggested question:

- What do you do to relax?
- What do you think relaxation can do for you?

5.2.1 Perform a positive thinking exercise with the participants.

Suggested script for the facilitator:

- Positive thinking is a relaxation technique that uses the mind. However, if you find your mind constantly straying to negative thoughts and images, replacing them with positive thoughts and images can help. Thinking positive thoughts and images can help you maintain a positive attitude. Let’s see how it works:

Steps to follow:

1. Concentrate on a positive image: think of something, somewhere or someone that makes you happy.
2. Begin to relax.
3. Use all your senses (i.e. sight, sound, touch, taste and smell) to make your image seem more real. For example, if you are picturing yourself on a cruise, see the clear blue sky, the sparkling water and the wonderful scenery.
4. End this visualisation exercise by retaining your image.
5. Do these exercises once a day.

Repeat the steps as needed until the negative thoughts go away.

Have the participants practice the technique. Prompt them to close their eyes and picture a positive image. Allow 5 minutes in total for the activity. Talk them gently and slowly out of the relaxation technique when there is one minute left.

Points to remember:

- Take your time.
- Practice is the key to putting yourself in a more relaxed state.
5.2.2 Perform a deep breathing exercise with the participants.

Suggested technique for the facilitator:

- Deep breathing is a very simple method of relaxation, but it is very effective. It involves taking a number of deep breaths and relaxing your body further with each breath.

Steps to follow:

1. Put one hand on your tummy.
2. Breathe in deeply.
3. Feel your tummy move up and out. Your lungs are filling up with air.
4. Breathe out through your mouth while keeping your lips pursed (as if you were about to whistle).
5. Feel your tummy returning to its normal position.
6. Wait after each breath out until you are ready to take another deep breath.
7. After a few times, you will find your own rhythm. For example: one deep breath for 5 normal breaths.

If you start feeling dizzy, take a few normal breaths before starting again.

Have the participants practice the technique. Talk them through the steps of the technique. Provide them constructive feedback and reinforcement on the performance of the technique.

Note to the facilitator:

- Inform participants that there are other relaxation techniques available and if they wish to receive more information on them tell them to ask a member of the pulmonary rehabilitation team.

- As with any other technique, participants should be encouraged to practice these techniques on a regular basis (to master the techniques when everything is going well), so that they can use them efficiently when they are faced with a stressful situation.
6. Summary of the session and assessment of participants’ understanding and self-efficacy

6.1 SUMMARY OF THE SESSION AND ASSESSMENT OF PARTICIPANTS’ UNDERSTANDING AND SELF-EFFICACY

Present this section using Group Discussion

Evaluate participants’ understanding and self-efficacy to manage their anxiety and depression by using the strategies and techniques taught in this session. Use this opportunity to highlight the key messages from the session. Use Attachment 4 (Key messages: Management of Stress, Anxiety and Depression) to support your teaching.

Suggested questions:

- How confident are you that you can manage the low mood or depression sometimes associated with COPD?

- How confident are you that you can manage the anxiety and panic sometimes associated with COPD?

- How confident are you that you know how to get information about local patient support groups for people with respiratory conditions?

Suggested script for the facilitator:

- Reactions to stress include anxiety, panic, low mood and depression. There are strategies that can help to control these reactions.
  - Using relaxation and breathing techniques.
  - Maintain a positive attitude and try to solve one problem at a time.
  - Do not hesitate to ask for help or consult a health professional.

- You need to choose the strategy that works best for you.

- Support groups are a great opportunity for patients with lung conditions to get together and receive support and advice. If you would like to be referred to a support group speak to a member of the pulmonary rehabilitation team.

Note to the facilitator: Inform participants that the key messages from this session are summarised on their key messages sheet (attachment 4) and additional information can be found in their information booklets (Pages 35 to 39).

If participants feel confident managing their anxiety and depression by using the strategies and techniques taught in this session, ask them to continue to apply these strategies and techniques.

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If some participants do not feel confident managing their anxiety and depression using these strategies and techniques, ask them to speak to a member of the pulmonary rehabilitation team on an individual basis to investigate the reasons and reinforce the use of the strategies taught in this session.

Closing the session

- Answer the questions of the participants.
- **Learning contract:** Ask participants to practice the relaxation strategies taught at home.
- Evaluate the satisfaction of the participants with regards to the present session.
COPD Medications

Key Messages

- Take your medications regularly and as prescribed in order to manage and control your symptoms.

- Using your inhalers with the proper technique is very important to get the maximum benefit. Ask a member of the pulmonary rehabilitation team, your GP or your Practice Nurse to review your technique on a regular basis.

- If you feel your medications are not controlling your symptoms, speak to a member of the pulmonary rehabilitation team, your GP or your Practice Nurse.

- Make sure that your Action Plan is updated every time your medications have been changed.
Prevent your symptoms when exercising

If you become wheezy or very short of breath when doing your exercises, remember to take your short-acting bronchodilator (reliever) before the class.
### Attachment 3: Life Stressors - Examples

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stressors</th>
<th>Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAMILY CONFLICTS</strong></td>
<td>✓ Increase of arguments among family members</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Increase of non-resolved problems</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Family members with emotional issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Heavy alcohol drinking by one family member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MARITAL PROBLEMS</strong></td>
<td>✓ Divorce or separation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Extra-conjugal affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Partner with sexual difficulties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Sexual problems between spouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>JUSTICE PROBLEMS</strong></td>
<td>✓ Family members with legal / justice problems, jail, fugitives...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Violence or sexual abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FINANCIAL PROBLEMS</strong></td>
<td>✓ Reduced family budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Expenses related to illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Financial difficulties to meet the basic needs (food, rent, electricity, clothes, hygiene care, medical and dental bills)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Debts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Recipient of social welfare</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Buying or building a new house</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DISEASE AND CAREGIVER BURDEN</strong></td>
<td>✓ Caregiver burden/dependence on others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Chronic illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Disease progression and uncertainty regarding the future</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Inability to perform hobbies/activities</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Illness of another family member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Difficulties to access health services and resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LOSS</strong></td>
<td>✓ Death / Loss of a beloved one</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FAMILY TRANSITION (RETURN OR DEPARTURE OF A FAMILY MEMBER)</strong></td>
<td>✓ Return of a child to the family home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ New roommate</td>
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<td></td>
<td>✓ Child who leaves to get married</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WORK, HOME</strong></td>
<td>✓ Return to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Job Loss</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Retirement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Moving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>✓ Bad neighbourhood</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Management of Stress, Anxiety and Depression

Key Messages

- Reactions to stress include anxiety, panic, low mood and depression. There are strategies that can help to control these reactions.
  - Using relaxation and breathing techniques.
  - Maintain a positive attitude and try to solve one problem at a time.
  - Do not hesitate to ask for help or consult a health professional.

- You need to choose the strategy that works best for you.

- Support groups are a great opportunity for patients with lung conditions to get together and receive support and advice. If you would like to be referred to a support group speak to a member of the pulmonary rehabilitation team.
1. Case Scenario: Reactions to stress

1.1 UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT REACTIONS TO STRESS: FEAR, ANXIETY AND PANIC ATTACKS

Case Scenarios

1.1.2 Present the following two fictitious situations to the participants and ask questions in order to clarify the definitions of “Fear” and “Anxiety”.

Suggested Case Scenarios:

a) A man suffering from COPD suddenly becomes seriously ill and he is unable to breathe, he calls an ambulance to get to the hospital as soon as possible.

b) A woman suffering from COPD has had a very severe episode of shortness of breath during an outing to the park. She starts to avoid all outings.

Suggested questions to foster discussion:

• Which one of the examples corresponds to a fear reaction? What is the danger involved? Is the danger real?

• Which one of the examples corresponds to an anxiety reaction? Is there a real danger involved?

2. Understanding the Anxiety Reaction

2.1 UNDERSTANDING THE ANXIETY REACTION

Present this section in an Interactive Way

Invite the participants to talk about stressful situations that they have experienced and their impact in terms of thoughts, physical reactions and behaviours.
Suggested questions:

- What is the most important stressful situation that you are dealing with these days? Are you anxious about this situation?
- Do you have negative thoughts about this situation? If so, what are they?
- How does your body react when you are anxious? Describe your symptoms.
- What do you do when you are anxious (behaviours)?
- Can you think of other actions that would help you to better cope with this situation in the future?

Note to the facilitator:

- For some patients anxiety is experiencing an internal agitation that they are not able to relate to any negative image or stressful situation.
- The facilitator can suggest that in this case the patient should try to take a few moments to relax and evaluate the situations around him/her, in order to find the cause of the anxiety. Once the negative thought / stressful situation has been clearly identified, it is easier for the patient to deal with the situation using the strategies taught in this session.
3. Case Scenario:
Reinforcement of participants’ understanding

3.1 INTEGRATION OF STRATEGIES TO MANAGE AN AGGRAVATION OF SYMPTOMS DUE TO STRESS AND EMOTIONS

Case Scenarios

Reinforce comprehension of the action plan use by presenting a case scenario based on an aggravation of symptoms (exacerbation) due to stress / emotions. Let participants share their experiences with respect to emotions, symptoms and actions to be taken.

Suggested Case Scenarios:
You are under stress. You just had an unpleasant discussion with a family member.

Suggested questions to foster discussion:

- What emotions do you feel? Do you have negative thoughts about this situation?
- What symptoms do you feel?
- What should you do to manage the situation?
- Do you need to take medication to control your symptoms when you are under stress? If so, which medication and when do you take it?
- If shortness of breath persists, what should you do?

Note to the facilitator:

- Discuss each action proposed by the participants and question them about the expected effects of each one.
- Provide positive feedback to the answers given by the participants.
- Remark those suggestions supporting the compliance with the instructions given in the Action Plan.
MANAGEMENT OF STRESS,
ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION
NOTES

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Authors:

Northern Ireland:
B. O’Neill, PhD, BSc, MCSP • D. Cosgrove, PhD, BSc, MCSP • J. MacMahon, FRCP • J. M. Bradley, PhD, BSc, MCSP

Canada:
M. Lebel, RN, BSc • M. Sedeno, BEng, MM • D. Nault, RN, MSc • J. Bourbeau, MD, MSc, FRCP

Participating Institutions
University of Ulster, Northern Ireland
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Northern Ireland
Montreal Chest Institute, McGill University Health Center, Canada

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Original Authors (Montréal, Québec, Canada, 2006)
D. Nault, RN, MSc • M. Sedeno, BEng, MM • D. Melanson, BSW • J. Fortin, BSW • J. Bourbeau, MD, MSc, FRCP

Participating Institution
Montreal Chest Institute, McGill University Health Center, Canada

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