

MODULE 1.4

Stress Management

Module Purpose

To raise awareness of key stressors in our lives and how we can begin to minimise the impact of these to support the healing process. To understand the importance of the maladaptive stress response as a contributing and perpetuating factor of ME/CFS/FM.

To continue to raise awareness around long-standing, energy-depleting patterns that may be preventing us from cultivating a 'healing state'.

Key Points

- Discerning key stressors can assist us to tweak our lifestyles to optimise conditions for healing
- Understanding the difference between the 'stressed' vs 'healing' states helps us to discern when we need to calm the stress response in the body
- The application of daily healthy maintenance practices builds more time in a healing state
- Being your own best friend reduces stress in our life



- Illnesses such as ME/CFS/FM introduce many new stressors to your life
- Becoming aware of your major stressors gives you more control
- Look at the way you react to stressful situations. Learn to respond with greater awareness (mindfulness)
- We've spent time looking at ways to manage and/or reduce stress

- Find stress management/reduction strategies that work for you

Image Source: <http://www.wyndhamgardenguam.com/vacation-in-guam/pamper-yourself-and-relax-at-guam/>

Key Messages

- It's not so much what we are doing but the state we are in when we do what we do
- We can't push ourselves better, nor can we rest ourselves better. We instead have to find a third way and heal ourselves better—Alex Howard

Summary

We introduce our Stress Management module by discussing how it relates to ME/CFS/FM, followed by explaining the fight or flight response and the physical response this has in the body. A simple strategy of connecting with the breath is explained to help manage stress.

Identifying stressors is discussed in depth to help you identify where in your life you may be able to gain more control, and in turn, lower stress. We look at stress response symptoms, and stress management strategies for each ME/CFS/FM stage.

The activities contained in this module include identifying your stressors and filling out a stress activity sheet.