

STRIDE Workbook

Session 4

In this session, we will:

- ❖ Review your practice since our last session
- ❖ Learn helpful skills to manage your most distressing side effects or symptoms
- ❖ Learn strategies to communicate more effectively with your healthcare team
- ❖ Learn a relaxation technique called Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Managing Side Effects & Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Review

For practice, you completed the worry algorithm.

- *What action-oriented coping strategies did you use for controllable stressors?*
- *What emotion-oriented coping strategies did you use for uncontrollable stressors?*
- *Which relaxation exercise did you practice?*

Feel free to write down any related thoughts below:

Side Effects

It is very common to experience unpleasant side effects from hormonal therapy. Some side effects are less tolerable than others, and some may truly change how you live your life.

Please mark any side effects that you experience and how strongly they interfere with your ability to live as you would like to:

Side Effect:	None	Mild	Moderate	Severe
Joint pain				
Hot flashes (temperature changes)				
Headaches				
Worry, fear, nervousness				
Difficulty sleeping				
Mood swings or fluctuations in mood				
Changes in appetite				
Vaginal dryness				
Hair thinning				
Reduced interest in sex or discomfort				
Tired, lack of energy, fatigue				
Cramps				
Feeling down, sad, or blue				
Tearful or weepy				
Discharge				
Weight gain				
Feeling shaky				
Not feeling like myself				
Other: _____				

There are some steps you can take to lessen side effects, but often we cannot eliminate them. However, what we *can* change is how much the side effects interfere with your ability to function in everyday life, engage meaningfully in your world, and maintain the quality of life that you wish to have.

What has been helpful for you in managing side effects?

What do you do to lessen the side effects? Is that helpful?

Talking with your healthcare team:

Have you talked with your doctor or nurse about the side effects that you are struggling with? It may be talking about your concerns with your doctor and getting some more information.

- Write out your questions on a notecard or on a list on your phone or tablet that you bring with you to your next visit. Say to your doctor or nurse: "I have three things I want to ask about." This sets the expectation that you have three things you would like to cover; they are less likely to move on to something else before answering your questions and you are more likely to remember to ask all three questions.

- Bring a friend or family member with you to your appointment. This helps for two reasons. First, they can help make sure that you have asked all your questions. Second, they can help you remember what was said in the appointment. They may also hear things differently, so it helps to have another way of thinking about things.

Tips for effective communication (continued):

- To determine what you need and how to communicate with your doctor, nurse, or anyone, ask yourself the following questions:
- What are my **goals** for this conversation?
- How do I want this **relationship** to be after this conversation with this person?
- How do I want to **feel about myself** after this conversation?

Example: Effective Communication

- **Situation:** Speaking with clinician
- **Goals:** I want to learn better strategies, get a referral to acupuncture, or try medications to help with my pain
- **Relationship:** I want to have mutual respect with my clinician and towards our relationship
- **Myself:** I want to feel like I got my answers, and that I was respectful and confident

Try role-playing what you might say to your doctor and write out how you might say it (or vice versa) – maybe write-out what you might say and then practice with a friend.

Side Effect Management:

After you have talked to your doctor or nurse about your side effects, or explored medications, you may still have some lingering side effects that are difficult to manage. There are still some ways that you can help yourself by learning new techniques for each side effect.

Let's review them together so that you can start to build a toolbox for managing your most difficult side effects. These are broken up into sections, in which each section reviews several techniques for a specific side effect. See the page number for the side effect you want to get better at managing:

Body Image, Weight, Hair	78
Memory Difficulties and Concentration	81
Fatigue/Loss of Energy	84
Hot Flashes	91
Mood Swings, Sadness, or Nervousness	93
Joint Pain, Muscle Aches, & Headaches	98
Sexuality and Intimacy	102
Sleep	105

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive Muscle Relaxation, or PMR, is another type of active relaxation exercise that can be helpful in times of stress. During this relaxation, we will focus on 4 muscle groups, purposefully tensing the muscle, and then releasing and relaxing the muscle.

PMR is helpful for two reasons:

1. The active process of tensing the muscle creates a momentum when we release the tension (like a pendulum). For the state of tension we are in, we create an equal state of relaxation, therefore achieving a more relaxed state than we would if we shifted from a resting state to a relaxed state.
2. By creating tension and following it with relaxation, we increase our awareness of the contrast between these two states. Accentuating this difference makes us more aware of when we are tense, so we are more likely to recognize when we are holding tension throughout the day and be aware of a method for quickly letting go of that tension.

The four muscle groups are:

1. Hands forearms, and biceps: hold arms at a 45-degree angle and make fists.
2. Face and neck- raise eyebrows, squint eyes, wrinkle nose, bit down lightly, pull back corners of mouth, and pull head slightly down to chin.
3. Chest, shoulders, upper back, abdomen- take a deep breath, hold it in, pull back the shoulders.
4. Thighs, calves, feet – Lift your feet off of the floor, flex slightly, and turn toes inward.

Tips for PMR:

- Get in a comfortable position, lying or sitting
 - The goal is to be tense but not so hard that you cause pain or cramping.
 - When you relax, immediately relax your muscles, rather than slowly letting go
 - Like the other active relaxation exercises, this takes practice. The more you practice, the easier it will become to relax.
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Let's get started:

Close your eyes and start to bring awareness to your breath, as you inhale...and exhale...

Begin to bring your awareness to the muscles in your hands, forearms, and biceps. Hold your arms out in front of you with your elbow bent to make an L shape, make a fist, and tense the muscles NOW.

Squeeze the muscles in your arm...continue to breathe as you notice the tension building in these muscles...hold...tighten, 3...2...1...and RELAX...letting all the tension go...focusing on these muscles as they just relax completely.

Notice the difference between tension and relaxation. Noticing what it feels like as you let all the tension go...and relaxation flows into these muscles. Enjoy this feeling of relaxation.

Now, shift the focus to the muscles of your face and neck. Raise your eyebrows, scrunch your nose, pull back the corners of your mouth, gently bite down, slightly move the chin towards your throat, and tense the muscles NOW.

Squeeze the muscles in your face, neck, and throat...continue to breathe as you notice the tension building in these muscles...hold...tighten, 3...2...1...and RELAX...letting all the tension go...focusing on these muscles as they just relax completely.

Notice the difference between tension and relaxation. Noticing what it feels like as you let all the tension go...and relaxation flows into these muscles. Enjoy this feeling of relaxation.

Begin to bring awareness to the muscles of your chest, shoulders, and back. Gently pull your shoulders up to touch your ears and at the same time pull your shoulder blades back behind you, puff out your chest, and slightly arch your back (use caution), and tense your muscles NOW.

Squeeze the muscles in your shoulders, chest, and back...continue to breathe as you notice the tension building in these muscles...hold...tighten, 3...2...1...and RELAX...letting all the tension go...focusing on these muscles as they just relax completely.

Notice the difference between tension and relaxation. Noticing what it feels like as you let all the tension go...and relaxation flows into these muscles. Enjoy this feeling of relaxation.

Now, shift the focus to the muscles of your thighs, calves, and feet. Gently lift your legs slightly off the ground, flex your feet, point your toes inward towards each other and tense your muscles NOW.

Squeeze the muscles in your thighs, calves, and feet...continue to breathe as you notice the tension building in these muscles...hold...tighten, 3...2...1...and RELAX...letting all the tension go...focusing on these muscles as they just relax completely.

Notice the difference between tension and relaxation.

Noticing what it feels like as you let all the tension go...and relaxation flows into these muscles.

Enjoy this feeling of relaxation.

As we come to the end of this relaxation, take a moment to wiggle your toes and fingers, tilt your head side to side, and when you are ready, take a deep breath, and open your eyes.

Exercise 4.1: Session 4 Home Practice

1. Create your toolkit.

Which skills will you use when you are experiencing side effects?

Diaphragmatic Breathing	Massage
Progressive Muscle Relaxation	Acupuncture
Mini relaxation exercise	Talk to medical care team
Acceptance exercise	Pleasurable activity
Mindfulness practice	Distraction
Cognitive reframing and adaptive thinking	Modify environmental triggers
Physical activity	Seek social support
Focus on sleep habits	Optimize nutritional intake
Activity pacing	Modify an enjoyable activity

2. Sometimes we choose ways to cope without realizing that it might make us feel better in the moment but in the long term may cause additional challenges or make things worse.

Do you notice yourself engaging in any habits that might not work so well in the end?

Researching on the internet/googling	Procrastinating
Ruminating/perseverating (thinking about something over and over again)	Avoidance
Drinking	Shutting down / shutting off emotions
Smoking	Over-eating
Drugs	Laying in bed for long periods of time

3. Remember to practice Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR), diaphragmatic breathing, or mindfulness body scan for 5-10 minutes each day.

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