

Stress Management and Mindfulness

with Hanna Cleaver and Rose Ritchie

Auckland, New Zealand - Lia Goijarts and Felicity Cairns - April 27, 2019

It was wonderful that the event was intergenerational, with many young men and women coming to hear about stress management. The WFWP NZ President, Felicity Cairns introduced the speakers, Hanna Cleaver and Rose Ritchie. Hanna is a trained lawyer and studied Yoga in the USA while travelling abroad. She met Rose in the law office where they worked.



Rose, Felicity & Hannah



Hannah Cleaver

Hanna began by talking about stress as a young person. The exam stress she experienced in Year 12 was consuming. “No one teaches you how to deal with stress, and everyone wants less stress in their lives”, Hannah shared. Stress is a personal response to a stressor. FOMO, (fear of missing out), is a big amongst the young generation.



Participants

Hanna talked about her love of skydiving, but it would make her anxious months before the jump. It helps to analyse the stress and ask oneself if the fear is rational. How many fatalities have there been with skydiving? Are you telling yourself stories or untruths about skydiving?

Public speaking is also terrifying for many people. Notice how stress makes you feel! Stress sits in your body as a physical and psychological emotional response.

Healthy ways to respond to stress are:

1. Look after yourself physically. Eat well.
2. Take practical steps to sleep better.
3. Limit coffee intake

4. Exercise
5. Get out in nature
6. Light a candle. The stress evaporates while you hold the candle
7. Breathe. Notice your natural breathing. Expand the lower belly with a deep breath and exhale through the chest three times
8. Keep a gratitude jar and write down three things that you feel grateful for every night
9. Stop labelling things as good or bad. Events in themselves, without ending, could be good or bad. It is better to have an attitude of acceptance. She gave examples of good and bad events such as, a person breaking a leg, which seems bad, but good if it results in missing conscription for the war. Sometimes clouds have a silver lining.

Mindfulness is about feeling fully present, rather than pottering along absentmindedly. Meditation may seem useless, but it is a slow burner, or like cleaning a dusty house. Meditate for half an hour a day. Meditate with a mantra so that the mind doesn't travel everywhere. Breathing alternately through the nostrils is good.

The attendees then closed their eyes for several minutes while Hanna played music and spoke words to help us focus on our breathing, to eliminate all thoughts from our mind. The session created a feeling of oneness with the body.



Meditation session

Rose then spoke about the essential oils that she had brought along to show everyone. Essential oils are taken from the rind and bark of the plant. They will give immunity against harmful elements. Stress affects the organs of the body. We, as humans are created to function as a whole. Essential oils affect your brain and get into your blood stream. Stress affects the gut and the cardiovascular system, so if you exercise, the cardiovascular system will help you to deal with stress better. Good food and supplements help run the body at optimum. Massages are good. Linolal oil relaxes. Put pillows under your back and put your head back to relax as well. Rose also recommended throwing away the "to do" list to get it out of your head. While the fight or flight mode can help pump the adrenaline to rescue us from risky situations, it is not good to be under that stress for prolonged periods. She asked us finally to think about what we were going to commit to, to help ourselves de-stress.



Rose Ritchie



Rose and Hannah

Felicity thanked Debra Taylor and Nita Wallis for knitting hats, booties and blankets for mothers who give birth at Middlemore Hospital. The Middlemore foundation also asked to donate a pair of new Pyjamas for children at Kidz First in June 2019.



Hats knitted by Debra



Debra showing new kids PJs to donate

The meeting concluded with afternoon tea and informal conversations.



Young women – Group Photo

Report compiled by Lia Goijarts and Felicity Cairns