Melting into the Floor Outline

Point out that many college students attempt to deal with stress by attempting to ignore it and hoping it doesn’t exceed their innate ability to handle OR by responding to it AFTER it has become problematic.

Today were going to learn practical skills that can be employed to lower overall stress levels before, during, and even after they may become noticeable. Introduce idea of relaxation as a set of skills that can be easily learned and replicated.

Ask people if they’ve ever learned ways to relax when stressed

Ask participants how they relax

Today were going to experience three of the most effective ways of relaxing our bodies and minds via three different relaxation skills that can be used individually to relax, but when combined, provide a powerful means for relieving stress. They are:

Physical relaxation skills

Breathing for relaxation skills

Using audio scripts to relax (guided relaxation /progressive relaxation/ progressive muscle relaxation)

1.)Physical skills

Ask, “How do you know when you are stressed? What do you notice physically or behaviorally?” Discuss and educate based on responses.

Introduce “60 second tension tamers” as quick and effective means for dealing with stress physically that can easily be used anywhere b/c brief and simple to replicate.

Do series of tension tamers. Recommend a “top down” or “bottom up” process that focuses on specific muscle groups and ensures you relax most muscle groups.

2.) Breathing for relaxtion

Have participants pair up. Ask one person from each pair to be the “observer” and the other to be the “demonstrator”. Tell the demonstrator that they are going to take their best full breath, while the observer notices and reports back to the group what the breath looked like to them, i.e. how hands placed on abdomen and chest moved, what they heard, saw, noticed. May have to prompt people to take a full breath more than once for observers. Based on feedback from observers, talk about what a “good” breath looks like and demonstrate. Talk about how people breathe when nervous and stressed and how little we actually pay attention to how we breathe through course of day.

From the belly more than the chest

Hand on abdomen rises before hand on chest

Stomach comes out not in

Shoulders low and relaxed

Breath in through nose for count of 4, hold for count of 2, exhale for count of 6 through nose or mouth in a controlled fashion, etc…

Avoid fast rapid breathing/hyperventilation

Natural, slow, even, pace

Have participants practice and tell them they will get handout on proper breathing for relaxation

3.) Relaxation audio script

Ask all to take a yoga mat and find space on floor. Recommend shoes off. For those unable to lay down, tell them they may do this part seated in a chair in a relaxed posture. Explain process may feel unusual and mind may wander at times, but if lose focus, return to listening to script.

Turn on white noise machine

Play audio script (14-15 min)

Process experience after

Encourage participants to enjoy how feeling now, but to think about how they can incorporate relaxation into their daily lives using skills they learned today.