

# Developing a Stress Strategy: Stress Capstone Exercise

## Curriculum Summary/Workbook Contents

### Abstract

Using the book, Professionalism Under Stress by Dunn and Dyson as the principal reference, the seminar provides a comprehensive, disciplined approach to tackle stressors in a lasting manner. A series of assessment tools enable students to uncover their intense, normal, immediate, and prolonged stressors. They then prioritize them and use a triage technique to identify those stressors demanding the most attention. A response menu helps students develop a personalized stress strategy that leverages the positive stressors and mitigates the negative ones. When offered in an academic setting, the development of a stress strategy based on the seminar information and John Ustress example (taught in the seminar) can be given students as homework.

### Assumptions/Approach/Benefits

- Assumes attendees are “pragmatic optimists”
- Provides basic understanding of the impact of stress on adults
- Offers disciplined way to take action on the stress lessons in Professionalism Under Stress
- Views Stress as both positive and negative
- Takes comprehensive approach at expense of detail in any one area
- Considers immediate, prolonged, normal, and intense stress
- Provides flexibility to tailor individual stress strategies
- Participants gain experience at use of several tools to assess their priority stressors
- Help participants “be in the flow of living and not dragged along by the current” [Lipski]

### Course Segments

**Overview**—The session will begin with topics and lessons that lay a strategic foundation for the follow-on instruction on stress. Brief coverage of the stress cycle, adult learning, the strategy used to provide a comprehensive approach to a complex subject, and appropriate lessons from Professionalism Under Stress by Dunn and Dyson prepare attendees for instruction in developing their own stress strategy.

**Part One—John Ustress Case Study:** Provides an example of how to follow a 6 step capstone exercise sequence to complete a personal stress strategy. The subject of the example is a fictional character named John Ustress. Attendees are given his background, then walked through how he generates his responses using the capstone exercise approach. This demonstrates the breadth of the approach and facilitates an individual’s ability to complete the exercise themselves as homework (if an academic setting) or at their convenience.

**Part Two—Exercise Instructions:** Gives, clear, concise instructions in using the templates and response menus needed to complete the exercise.

**Part Three—Templates:** Removable templates so participants can make as many copies of each as needed to initially complete and later modify (as needed) their personal stress strategy.

**Appendices**—Provide added useful references and a tool to stimulate seminar discussion.