

# Dancing Away Stress

## AAHPERD 2011, Wendy Guess, PhD, CSH

### *Life is a Performance...* *Is Yours Choreographed?*

Join the crusade for culturally-based rhythmic activities that will give you the ACTIVE approach to the fun side of stress relief!

#### Outline for the workshop:

1. Stress & Circle of Balance (20\ min)
2. Wise Style - worksheets/activities (40 min)  
10 minute break
3. Empowered Style - " " (40 min)
4. Expressive Style - " " (40 min)  
10 minute break
5. Creative Style - " " (40 min)
6. Inspired Style - " " (40 min)

*"If you can't get rid of the skeleton in your closet, you'd best teach it to dance." - George Bernard Shaw*

#### So You Think You Are Stressed?

On the TV show "So You Think You Can Dance" - Choreographer and dancers work together to put together a strong performance in a variety of style to survive on show.... So What's a Choreographer?

#### Step One -What Is Impacting Your Life's Dance?

What are your **Rituals & Forecasts**?

Stress causes equilibrium to feel off-balance  
The result? **I've Got Two Left Feet!**

Fight or Flight Response kicks in and increases: heart rate, blood pressure, muscular tension, mental fragmentation, irritability and/or depression. Are Your Rituals Out of Balance?

#### Major Sources of Chronic Stress

1. \_\_\_ Commuting\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_ Environmental Chaos\_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_

#### Step Two – What's Your Stress Dance?

Mastering Your Stress means recognizing stressors. What makes you feel out of balance or stressed?

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Do you have any other options?

It's not the stressor – it's our reaction that creates imbalance. Hollywood's version of reacting?

Shrek \_\_\_\_\_

Cops \_\_\_\_\_

Doctors \_\_\_\_\_

See a pattern? Any other options? \_\_\_\_\_

#### Step Three - Start Choreographing!

Want more energy? Engage in activities that reduce stress and provide meaningful balance.

\_\_\_\_\_ and Follow

Give and \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ and save

It takes \_\_\_\_\_ to dance through life with dignity and grace.

#### The Circle of Balance

1. **Wisdom** practical & useable experiential knowledge

2. **Empowerment** –

confidence to take charge of health and wealth

3. **Expression** – social skills, speaking one's truth

4. **Creativity** – designing, thinking, producing or making something unique to you.

5. **Inspiration** – filling up the "cup" of your soul



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**Ready to Dance Away Your Stress?**

To Be....Or Not To Be - Dancing

**What Is Your Performance Style?**

We each have styles we prefer

***Pictures = 1K words***

***Dance = 1 million words***

**First activity – Who do you know?**

**FOXTROT - Get Wise! Nurture Your Knowledge**

(India, N. America)

**1. Creating your own *ACTIVATION***

- A. Start with a Motivation. This can be a short phrase that sets the “theme” for your performance of the day
- B. Then set the Motivation in action with movement.

**2. Hook up - Cross one hand over the other, interlace the fingers. Then fold your hands in toward you, placing them near your heart. Pull the elbows closer together.**

**3. Chaos Release – get a drink, walk, breathe, take a mental break! For at least 5 minutes....  
So, now’s a good time!**

**SALSA - Get Empowered! - Nurture Your Health**

(Caribbean, Africa)

**1. La Vida Pasion –**

- A. Select music that moves you
- B. Move  
It’s that simple.

**2. Waka Waka –**

Chorus: hands together, move right, left, right, left, up twice and out.

Verses – add a fun movement like clapping, shimmy, walking, etc.

**3. Upgrade your fuel – eat more foods that enhance your performance!**

- Açai and berries
- Barley
- Green foods (leafy veggies, kelp)
- Seeds, Sprouts
- Herbs

**TANGO - Get Expressive! Nurture Your Social Skills**  
(S America, Pacific Island)

1. Thank You Game – in a circle, one person gives a compliment to the next person, who says only Thank you....then continue around the circle.
2. Samoan Claps – focus game  
When arm goes to side – clap with fingers  
When arm goes down – clap palms


**SWING - Get Creative! Nurture Your Innovation**

(N America, Europe)

1. I love to laugh!!!! Enough said! ☺
2. Make up a spin exercise –  
lift one arm and usher through
3. Sport moves dance
  - A. Pick some sports moves
  - B. Design 8-16 cts of action depicting each card
  - C. Put it to a variety of music for a fun dance

**WALTZ - Get Inspired! Nurture Your Soul**

(Near & Middle East)

1.  ...To Self
2. Ma Navu –
  - A. Step R front, side, grapevine and close
  - B. Step R back, L back, R front, 2 step twd Right
3. Stress Re-boot – guided visualization to release the tension in the muscles
  - A. Practice deep breathing 4 cts in, 4 cts out
  - B. Visualize tension in muscle group
  - C. Visualize tension melting away on exhale
  - D. Move through body, one section at a time with visualization and breathing.

**Live Balanced!**  
**With AbunDANCE**

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Share your own Dancing Away Stress activities and  
I'll put them on my websites and book.