

Stress Management Case Assignment (Answer)

CASE #1 ANSWER:

Stress management should be the number one focus for D.G., as it is affecting her ability to maintain healthy diet and lifestyle habits while working at her internship. Discuss the benefits of various mind-body activities (meditation, yoga, deep breathing) and collaborate with D.G. to find a practice she can implement on a daily basis. Remind D.G. that these practices can be as little as 10 to 20 minutes per day. Encourage the scheduling of these practices in her calendar so that they become part of her weekly or daily routine. Note that D.G. identifies as a Christian and that prayer time was a prior important habit; work with D.G. to find a consistent time during the day to implement that behavior, and discuss options for making it more practical (e.g., turning it into a journal exercise, finding online devotionals to follow, reading a spiritually focused book on a daily basis). Along with stress management, discuss the need for consistent, balanced meals to support energy levels and deeper sleep. Look for ways to simplify diet so that healthy eating is less stressful. Assess pre-bed rituals and suggest strategies for reducing blue light exposure after dinner (approximately two hours before bed) to improve sleep quality and optimize circadian rhythms, since the HPA axis and circadian rhythm are intertwined and have the ability to profoundly impact one another. Discuss social support, and brainstorm ways that D.G. can increase positive, supportive social interactions both during the week and on weekends. Examples include calling friends/family in the evening, volunteering on weekends, participating in a faith-based activity on weekends, and joining a running club on nights or weekends. The key is to help D.G. discover what works best for her preferences and schedule and implement a regular routine that reduces the experience of stress on a daily basis.