

Tessa Stress Transcription

D Come in. Hi Tessa, nice to see you.

P I feel a bit stupid actually. I came to see Dr Romberg last week because I have broken out in a rash on my face which I got a few years ago. They said it was related to stress. When I came in last week Dr Romberg asked if I wanted to try the cream instead of the antibiotics. I said yes. It has dried the bits out on my face but it is just spreading around. I'm sorry for crying.

D You're obviously very upset Tessa

P I know it is down to stress.

D Can you tell me bit more about that?

P I am having a lot of problems at work. It's just getting a bit much for me.

D How long has all that been going on?

P Quite a while. I have just been brushing it to one side. I can't afford to take time off. I had a few months a year ago when my sister was diagnosed with terminal cancer. I am getting a lot of anxiety and panic attacks.

D Tackling that will probably help with the skin on your face wouldn't it. What worked last time when things were difficult for you?

P Last time it was all about my sister, I got antibiotics and was referred to a counsellor. Which helped massively. I had some time off work too. I feel silly saying I need time out. I am a 45 year old woman, I shouldn't be like this.

D Are you getting any other support at the moment?

P My husband has been great, but obviously with the feeling depressed, it is taking its toll on him. I need time out.

D Who else is at home with you?

P Just my husband.

D What's your job?

P I am just a machinist. Just a bog-standard job.

D How are you managing with the work?

P Fine. I've been there 9 years, I just go in. Its never been great but I need the money.

D Work colleagues?

P They have been great too. They are starting to feel the pressure from work.

D Is there anyway we can relieve the pressures of work?

P I just need time out.

D A fit note or a sick note?

P Sick note.

D It's all about your stress and your mood and your skin. Is there anything else you need to talk about today?

P I just need to get myself sorted and back on track.

D Can I double check there's nothing else important going on? Has your weight been okay?

P No well, because of the problems at work I feel physically sick. I feel sick when I go to work, I don't even eat in work. Sometimes I binge eat. I go to bed then get up pretending to my husband that there's nothing wrong. I feel like I am spiralling down again.

D So we need to get on top of that spiral. Anything else spiralling out of control? Drinking habits? Any other habits I should know about? Are you a smoker? Drug user? Cocaine or cannabis?

P No

D Alcohol isn't an issue for you?

P No. Im so sorry.

D Just to get a better feel for where things are at with your mood: How happy do you feel? If 10 was a perfect happy and 0 would be so bad that you would kill yourself today, where would you be on that scale?

P 4

D Okay. No thoughts of harming yourself? (A shake of her head signals "no".)

Is anxiety a problem for you?

P Yeah

D Has that always been the case? Or just now?

P Just. I think because I have said I am looking for another job they have been really nasty with me.

D Why are you looking for a new job?

P I can't physically put myself through that every day, it is not worth it.

D The work isn't a problem though?

P No, the work isn't.

D That's the management?

P There's bullying between the girls. I feel victimised when I need to ask for time out. It's just not nice.

D Prospects?

P I think I have got another job.

D Let's give you a bit of time off.

P Please.

D It sounded like counselling was helpful for you? Talking therapies can be helpful in these circumstances. Would you contemplate that again?

P I would. It makes you feel so weak.

D If you talk to other people about stress and weakness it can help. In my own opinion I think it is more common to have vulnerabilities than not and to feel stressed at times It's better to seek help for it rather than not. It is a mature and sensible thing to do, not a weak thing to do. It worked last time didn't it?

P I wouldn't have got through it if it wasn't for the counselling. The lady I had was really good.

D There are other treatments. But I'm not thinking that that is necessary for now. If you wanted something to lift your mood we could maybe think about a tablet. I think talking therapies would be the right thing for you at the moment. Have any other approaches helped you in the past? Some find exercise and a healthy diet helpful.

P That's the thing. I have a dog, I walk every morning and every afternoon. I used to love my walks but now I am cutting them short. They say exercise is the best thing. I am cutting my walks short because I can't be bothered with anything.

D Okay.

P I have no interest in anything.

D Well that's part of the problem. I think it would be helpful for me to see you again soon. How long shall I give you off? A couple of weeks? If you are feeling worse and desperate then call me. For the moment would you be happy to talk to a therapist?

P Yeah.

D That is their phone number. There are a range of approaches that might work for you. Some people like to turn away from the spiral of negative thoughts and look at a more positive behaviours and positive thoughts. You are probably feeling negative about activities and eating. But if we can turn you back towards the positive habits, do the positive things, even though you don't feel like it, which is the walking. Avoid starving yourself and eat healthily. Eating regularly will help too. Something called CBT might be best for you. That stands for Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. That helps you to look at positive spirals rather than negative spirals. Does that sound sensible?

P Yeah.

D You can come and see me in a couple of weeks to see how you are. I will give you a sick note for 2 weeks. Anything else we have missed? Anything else that you want clarifying?

P What about this around my face?

D It seems pretty dry at the moment. I think that could be due to the treatment you are using. It looks like a stress related eczema. Have you got a moisturiser you can use?

P Yeah.

D Pop a bit of that on. If it's getting worse or not getting better by the next time I see you, we'll have another look at it. If we can tackle the stress then it should go away. So I will put down on your sick note work related stress. Yeah?

P Will work not be funny about that?

D What would you like me to put on it? I will just put stress if you want?

P Yeah.

D At a later date I can put work related stress. You might want to talk to a union rep. If you change your mind let me know. Make an appointment to see me in a couple of weeks time. Do you prefer to see me face-to-face? If not you can arrange a telephone appointment with myself.

P Okay. So do I just send this to work?

D Yep, send that to work. We will support you through this. If things are getting drastic let me know.

P Okay thank you. Sorry.

D That okay. Try to make your behaviours a bit more positive. Exercise and regular eating. Healthy eating. You know what that means don't you? Let's talk again next time.

P Thank you.

D You're welcome. Any time.