Mind Over Travel

Managing Air Travel Stress

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Overview

Part I: Introduction to Air Travel Stress

Part II: Mind Over Travel: Five Principles of Emotionally Intelligent Air Travelers
OH NO!
MY MEETING RAN LATE, MY FLIGHT'S BEEN CANCELED, MY LUGGAGE IS IN ANCHORAGE--AND THIS TERMINAL DOESN'T HAVE A CLUB LOUNGE!
What is Air Travel Stress?

Propensity to have anxious, angry, and distrustful reactions to air travel experiences

(Bricker, 2005, Journal of Counseling Psychology)
### Air Travel Stress Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Definition</th>
<th>Sample Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Air Travel Anxiety</td>
<td>Anxious reactions to adverse air travel events</td>
<td>“My body feels tense if my flight is delayed”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Travel Anger</td>
<td>Angry reactions to other passengers</td>
<td>“I feel like screaming at passengers who bring aboard a lot of carry-on baggage.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Airline/Airport Distrust</td>
<td>Lack of trust that airline/airport will ensure comfort and security</td>
<td>“Current airport security measures deter hijackings or bombings” (Reverse Scored)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Components</td>
<td>Air Travel Stress</td>
<td>Fear of Flying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Triggers</strong></td>
<td>- Adverse events (e.g., delays)</td>
<td>- All stages of flying (from deciding to fly to landing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Other passengers’ behavior</td>
<td>- Sights, sounds, &amp; sensations of flying (e.g., engine noises, planes taking off)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Airline/airport personnel behavior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Thoughts</strong></td>
<td>- Fears of adverse air travel events (e.g., missing flight)</td>
<td>- Hypervigilance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Annoyance with other passengers</td>
<td>- Fears of: crashing, dying, panicking, heights, confinement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Distrust of airlines/airports</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Sensations</strong></td>
<td>- Heart rate increase</td>
<td>The same plus…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Trembling hands/legs</td>
<td>- Faint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Clenched jaw</td>
<td>- Numb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Muscle tension</td>
<td>- Short of breath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Hot or cold</td>
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### Prevalence of at Least Moderate Level
(US national sample of 3309 people age 12-78)

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<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>Air Travel Anxiety</td>
<td>16%</td>
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<td>Air Travel Anger</td>
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<td>Airline/Airport Distrust</td>
<td>32%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear of Flying: flight situations</td>
<td>9%</td>
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<td>Fear of Flying: anxiety symptoms</td>
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Odds of future flights

Baseline

7 weeks later

1) Air Travel Stress
2) Fear of Flying

Fly in the past 30 days?

-National Sample of 2382 People
-72% Retention Rate
-Surveyed on Data Collection Website
Percent *Reduction in Odds* of Future Flights

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<th>Fear of Flying: flight situations</th>
<th>49%*</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fear of Flying: anxiety symptoms</td>
<td>18%*</td>
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*p<.05*
Percent *Reduction in Odds* of Future Flights (Controlling for fear of flying)

<p>| | |</p>
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<td><strong>Air Travel Anxiety</strong></td>
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<tr>
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*p<.05; **p<.0001
Percent *Reduction in Odds* of Future Flights & Prevalence of at Least Moderate Level

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Summary on Air Travel Stress

- Multidimensional: anxiety, anger, and distrust
- Distinct from fear of flying
- Pervasive: Up to 1/3 in have it
- Important: Up to 1/3 are less willing to fly in the future
Needed Now

An air travel stress program that will:

1) Decrease this common problem
2) Increase peoples’ willingness to fly
Ideal features of such a program

• Science-based:
  (1) Latest knowledge about air travel stress
  (2) Cutting edge stress management program

• Accessible: Anyone can understand it

• Flexible: Can be given in various lengths and formats

• Wide Reach: Can be given on a broad scale
Mind Over Travel:
Five Principles of Emotionally Intelligent Air Travelers

(Based on: Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999, Guilford Press;
Bond & Bunce, 2000, Journal of Occupational Health Psychology)
Principle #1: Know your reactions
Principle #1: Know your reactions

• Take the Air Travel Stress Scale:
  – Look at highest scoring items
  – Look at highest scoring sub-scales
  – Focus on your key reactions

• Or, where at the airport and on the plane have you felt anxious, angry, and distrustful?
Principle #2: Remember why you fly
Principle #2: Remember why you fly

• Put your stress in perspective
• The purpose of your trip is what makes your stress worth having
• Write down why you are flying in 1-2 sentences
• Keep a photo of what this trip is about for you
Principle #3: Be willing to have your reactions
Our efforts to *avoid* our thoughts and feelings only give us *more* of these thoughts and feelings

(Belloch, Morillo, & Giménez, 2004, Behavior Research & Therapy)
Principle #3: Be willing to have your reactions

- Practice holding your breath for as long as possible
- Make room for whatever stress you feel
- Allow your stress to come along for the ride
Your “Stress Carry-on Bag”
Principle #4: Stay in the present
Principle #4: Stay in the present

For practice…

• When stressed, sit down for 5 minutes
• Notice the places and people around you
• Close your eyes and:
  1) Listen to the sounds around you
  2) Focus on the sensation of breathing in and out
Principle #5: Act assertively
Summary of Mind Over Travel

1) **K**now your reactions
2) **R**emember why you fly
3) **A**ct assertively
4) **B**e willing to have your reactions
5) **S**tay in the present

“**K.R.A.B.S.**”
Where to Present Mind Over Travel

• In-flight personal video (20 minutes)

• Airport video at gate areas (1 minute)

• Corporate training for employees who fly (25-100 minutes)

• Fear of flying treatment program (25-150 minutes)
Wish Stressed Air Travelers a Mindful Flight!
As part of Fear of Flying Treatment

1) Audience: Fearful flyers
2) Natural complement to fear of flying treatment programs
3) Cover each principle for 5 to 30 minutes (25 to 150 minutes total)
As part of Corporate Training for Employees who Fly

1) Audience: Beginners; seasoned travelers with stress
2) Offered to employees as online course or lunch-time seminar
3) Cover each principle for 5 to 20 minutes (25 to 100 minutes total)
In-flight personal video

1) Audience: passenger on a flight
2) Offered as a personally-selected program to watch
3) Cover all principles, except “willingness to have reactions”
4) Cover each principle for 5 minutes (20 minutes total)
Airport hold room video

1) Audience: Casual airport viewer
2) Focus mainly on “remember why you fly”
3) One minute video