

MasterStress

A professional resource for assessing and managing stress

Dr Roy Bailey

A Speechmark Book



MasterStress

A professional resource for assessing and managing stress

Dr Roy Bailey

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2010 by Speechmark Publishing Ltd

Published 2017 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Copyright © Roy Bailey, 2010

All rights reserved. The purchase of this copyright material confers the right on the purchasing institution to photocopy pages which bear the Photocopy icon and copyright line at the bottom of the page. No other parts of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library cataloguing in publication data

Bailey, Roy Victor

MasterStress : a professional resource for assessing and managing stress.

1. Stress management. 2. Stress (Psychology)—Testing.

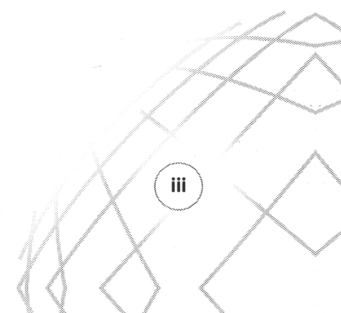
I. Title

616.9'8—dc22

ISBN 9780863887598 (pbk)

Contents

Introduction	1	18 Demands and coping profiling	83
Part 1 The knowledge base		19 Emotional reprocessing	87
The meaning of stress	5	20 Focusing	91
The <i>MasterStress</i> approach to stress regulation .	7	21 Progressive relaxation	92
The <i>MasterStress</i> model of stress regulation	7	22 Stress reduction spot	95
Competence to practise <i>MasterStress</i> activities	10	23 Meditating to manage stress	97
Part 2 <i>MasterStress</i> activities		24 The mind–body stretch	101
1 The meaning of stress	13	25 Feeding the wolf	104
2 Assessing stressful behaviour	16	26 Overcoming fear and anxiety	108
3 The TFB model of stressful behaviour	19	27 Controlling anger	118
4 Stress arousal	23	28 Coping networks	129
5 Stressful situations	27	29 Life events	131
6 Stress screening schedule	30	30 Stress control breathing	134
7 Are you stress-prone?	32	31 Benefits versus costs in coping	137
8 Stress management interviewing	36	32 Improving concentration	139
9 Visual coping	42	33 Controlling shyness	141
10 The art of reframing	48	34 Guiding decisions	144
11 Linguistic imperatives	52	35 Goal management for overcoming stress	147
12 The power of self-talk	55	36 Silencing stress	150
13 Stress rehearsal	59	37 Automatic thinking	152
14 Comeback coping	67	38 Thought control	154
15 SMART stress plans	72	39 Risk and drinking behaviour	156
16 The higher and lower self	76	40 Alcohol tracking	160
17 Job stress/satisfaction	80	References	163





Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Introduction

Who is this resource for?

MasterStress has been designed for busy practitioners who require a professional and practical resource to assist them in helping their clients to (1) understand stress, (2) identify stress, and (3) better manage the stress in their lives and their relationships.

How to use *MasterStress*

MasterStress is arranged in a format that is both easy to use and clear to follow. It is suitable for work with both individual clients and groups. Part 1 'The knowledge base' outlines definitions of stress and describes the *MasterStress* model of stress regulation. Practitioners can use this section to assist those people who prefer to have a conceptual understanding of stress and an appreciation of the underlying model of stress regulation before engaging with the *MasterStress* activities in Part 2.

Those clients who want to do something practical straight away to better understand and identify stress, and to manage their own stress, can miss out Part 1 and go straight on to the activities.

In Part 2 the purpose of each activity is outlined, the resources required are listed and there is a full explanation of how the activity should be conducted. Together the activities form a comprehensive set of stress assessment and stress management interventions that can be used with both individuals and groups.

Each activity can be used singly or in combination with others: for example, you could use a combination of activities that identify sources of stress and the stress experienced by a client or group of clients as a baseline before going

on to select one of the stress management interventions. After practising the interventions, you could then reassess the client or group by once again evaluating any sources of stress and the degree of stress they experience after the intervention. This is just one way in which you can use the *MasterStress* activities. However, you should feel free to experiment with different individual, or combinations of, activities that are most appropriate for the people with whom you work.

Materials

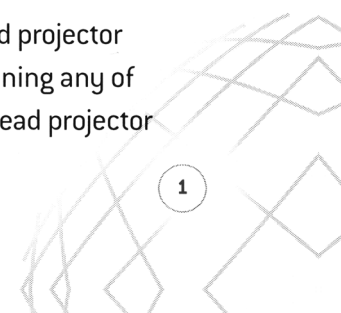
The *MasterStress* activities can be used in a range of ways to assist each client. Many professional psychologists, coaches, counsellors and therapists are likely to be using similar materials with their clients. For those already experienced in empowering clients to assess and better manage stress, it is useful to summarise the main types of materials that have been shown to contribute to client learning. Those new to the field should find using selected resources along with the *MasterStress* activities a helpful assistant in their work.

Marker pens and pencils

Keep plenty of pens and pencils available: marker pens, highlighter pens, gel pens and ballpoints. They are useful for emphasising learning points and may be needed at any time during an activity. Not having a supply of pens and pencils can make it difficult for the professional and the client to track and record their activities.

Overhead projector

Having ready access to an overhead projector is particularly helpful if you are running any of the activities with groups. An overhead projector



provides a focal point and serves to direct attention to any points you are making. Typically, overhead projectors are useful for bullet-pointing key issues such as definitions of stress, sources of threat and stress, and examples of adaptive and maladaptive coping.

Flip chart

Key issues can be listed on a flip chart. In addition, using a flip chart allows the professional to work in a highly flexible way with individuals and groups. Client concerns that are sometimes lost in discussion can be captured on a flip chart. Keeping a record on a flip chart avoids the potential loss of significant client information, and this is especially important over a series of sessions. The sensitive use of flip charts with the activities can nicely convey the character of clients' concerns about stress and their management of stress.

Notepads and personal journals

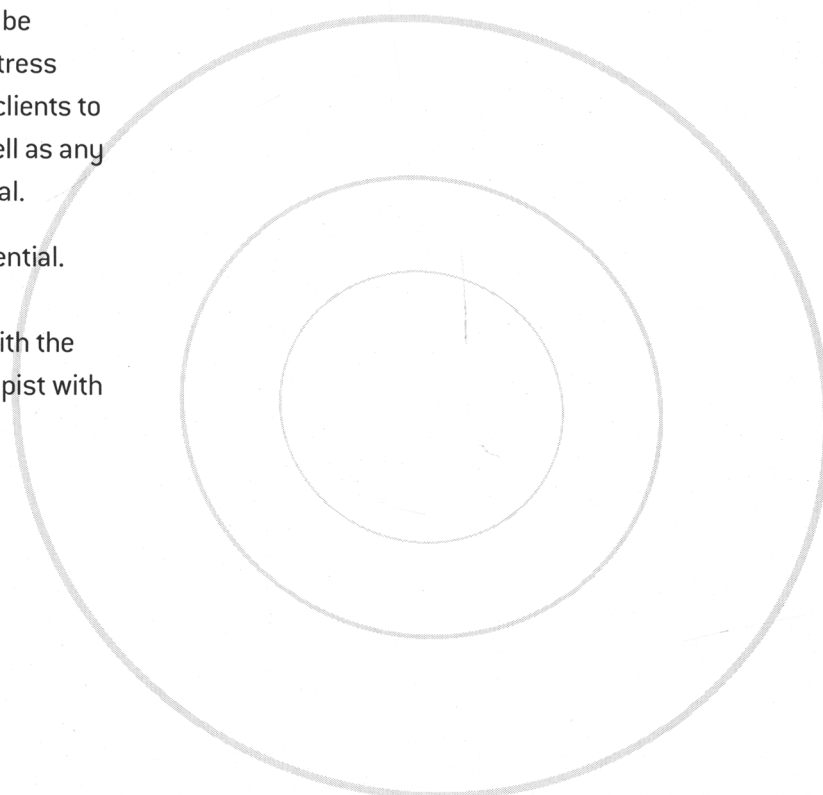
A notepad is useful to clients as a quick reference reminder of significant points that may be raised during a stress assessment or stress management activity. It is valuable for clients to have their own handwritten notes as well as any that may be provided by the professional.

Personal journals are, of course, confidential. However, clients may wish to share the information in their personal journals with the psychologist, counsellor, coach or therapist with whom they are working.

The use of notebooks and personal journals with clients is essential if you are working with a client over weeks or months as they will help to refresh the client's memory. They can also be used to monitor the progress clients are making over a period of time in better managing their stress.

Digital audio and computer technology

Clients may find it useful to use computer technology such as a laptop or an electronic notebook as an adjunct to the *MasterStress* activities. These can be enlisted to make quick notes and bullet points that can be referred to later and printed out or elaborated on. They can also be used as electronic personal learning journals. A great advantage of using a laptop or electronic notebook is that clients can follow up their *MasterStress* activities by visiting key websites such as www.speechmark.com and www.stresscabin.com for further ways of managing personal and relationship stress.



The background features a complex abstract design. It consists of several overlapping, semi-transparent gray rectangular and triangular shapes. Overlaid on these are several thick, dark gray lines that intersect to form a series of 'X' shapes and other geometric patterns. The overall effect is a layered, architectural composition.

Part 1 **The knowledge base**



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

The meaning of stress

Understanding stress provides us with the bedrock on which we can help people to identify stress and better manage and regulate the stress they may experience. A first step in this direction is being clear about what the concept of stress means. Defining it will make us aware of the assumptions we hold about stress and its management. Defining it also helps us to overcome confusions that might arise in our understanding of stress. By clarifying our understanding, we become clear about the way we explain the meaning of stress to the people and groups with whom we work.

Stress as a stimulus or external event

We have all experienced stress at some stage in our lives and this means that we all have an understanding of what it is. We have to qualify this, though. What we really mean is that we know what stress means *to us*. It follows from this that stress can mean different things to different people and, as a result, the concept of stress has given rise to a wide diversity of definitions. As practitioners helping people to understand, regulate and better manage their stress, we have to be clear about its meaning. The *Oxford Dictionary* (2005) defines stress as 'a state of mental or emotional strain resulting from adverse or demanding circumstances'. But stress has also been described as 'mental fatigue' (Bills, 1934), 'unusual demand' (Crawford, 1961), 'stressful situation' (Grinker & Spiegel, 1945), 'overload/underload' (Franklenhauser, 1976), 'stimulation underload' (Franklenhauser, 1974), 'role load', 'role conflict', 'role ambiguity' and 'role responsibility' (Kahn & Quinn, 1970). All of these definitions construe stress as something *external* to the person (or object); in short, stress is

thought to be 'out there'. Unfortunately for stimulus definitions of stress, not everything 'out there' is stressful for everyone.

Stress as a response

Some experts have proposed *response*-based definitions of stress, suggesting that stress is best understood to be the *response state* of 'the total organism under extenuating circumstances' and not the result of an event or events in the external environment (Appley & Trumbull, 1967). One attractive definition of stress incorporates the notion of homeostasis – the principle of balance and equilibrium – in maintaining fundamental psychological and physiological functions. Stress is considered to be the 'strenuous effort to maintain essential functions at a required level' (Ruff & Korchin, 1964). However, it is not clear what these essential functions are, or the assumed 'required level' for psychosocial and physiological balance to be maintained. Also, this view of stress is circular: claiming that stress is strenuous effort is not saying much more than that stress is stress. A similar criticism can be levelled at the endocrinologist Hans Selye, often regarded as the 'father of stress', who defined stress as the 'non-specific response of the body to any demand made on it' (Selye, 1956). For Selye, stress was always a response to a stressor. Stressors are 'out there' in the environment. Typical stressors could be burns, excessive heat or cold, frustration with others, marital disagreements, combat fatigue and trauma.

The interactional view of stress

In his later work Selye foresaw the coming of the interactional view of stress (Selye, 1975).

He noted that he was never inclined to define stress in terms of either stimulus or response; it arose as a result of an interaction. Richard Lazarus was the first psychologist to explicitly formulate that stress, and indeed coping, occurred as a result of individual cognitive transactions between the internal and external environments (Lazarus, 1966). Lazarus backed up his view of stress and coping with many experiments and provided an evidence-based approach to understanding them. The interactional view of stress and coping provides for a cognitive-behavioural model. It is cognitive because it contains the assumption that appraisal, thinking, memory and the meaning or significance of events for the individual experiencing them are the core mediators and causal agents in determining whether stress and coping occur. It is behavioural because it clearly incorporates how individuals go about trying to manage unwanted levels of personal stress.



The *MasterStress* approach to stress regulation

The approach to stress that I have developed takes the interactional understanding of stress and coping even further. In the *MasterStress* model, stress occurs when significant demands exceed the adaptive coping routines and skills adopted by the individual to regulate their emotions, thinking and behaviour. According to the model:

- 1 Stress occurs as a result of the interaction between a person and significant demands being made on them at any one time and over time.
- 2 Stress also assimilates the notion of coping.
- 3 This definition recognises that stress arises through difficulties in regulating our emotions and the demands made on us at any one time

and over time. Importantly, it is the meaning or significance demands have for us, and whether we have a coping strategy available to us, that determines whether stress occurs.

In this sense, our *MasterStress* definition of stress gives rise to a stress regulation model of stress and coping. In this model some stress is good for us, but too much mobilises us to cope and take action to stem stress or deal with demanding situations we may face. Clearly, excessive and prolonged or chronic stress is bad for us and our relationships, and can lead to emotional, mental and physical health problems, in some cases resulting in stress disorders and a serious breakdown in mental and physical health.

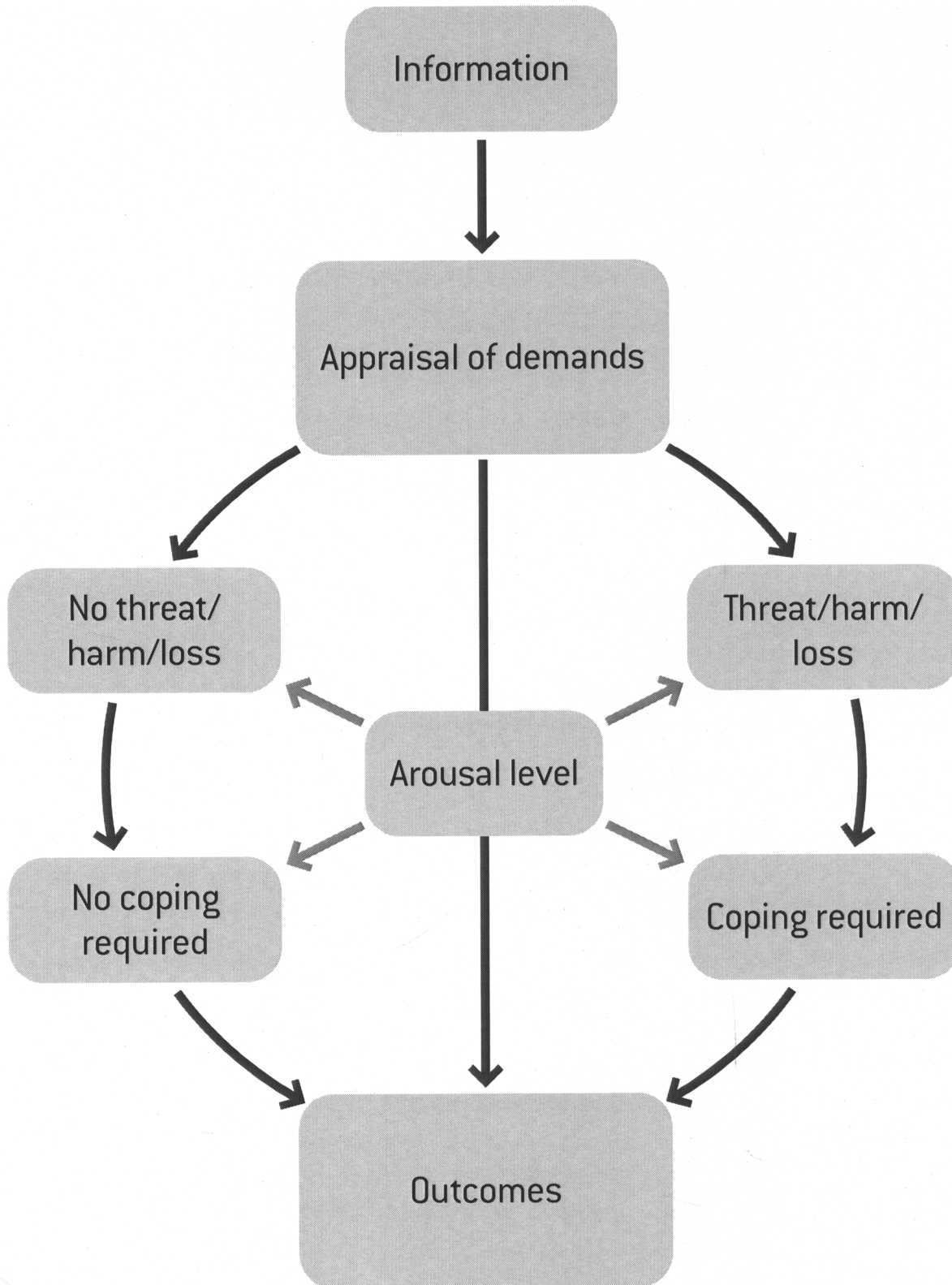
The *MasterStress* model of stress regulation

The *MasterStress* model of stress regulation shows us how, as individuals, we make appraisals about the internal and external demands that are being made on us at any one time and over time. This is done through our cognitive evaluation of events. In the language of the model, this involves our primary and secondary appraisals of demands. Primary appraisals are concerned with whether we evaluate the demands made on us as benign, threatening or involving some form of harm or loss to ourselves or significant others.

If we appraise the demands being made on us as harmless, we can decide not to engage in coping or stress management. On the other hand, if we regard significant demands as being actually or potentially harmful to us, we can initiate secondary appraisals as to what coping strategies and stress management we can put into practice. We can then reappraise and re-evaluate whether our attempts at stress management have been 'successful' and helpful, or harmful to others or ourselves. The *MasterStress* model of stress



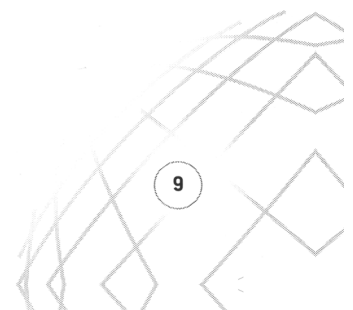
The *MasterStress* model of stress regulation



regulation does not guarantee that we will be free from the adverse effects of stress. Rather, it shows us how we can identify the sources of our stress and our coping choices, and how these can be changed if our coping and stress management lead to the removal of, or relief from, personal stress.

The model also accommodates the old adage that 'to err is human'. We cannot always be certain that we have adopted the best coping strategy or stress management, or put into practice the 'right' choice to overcome the stress we may experience. Indeed, we may try to master stress by choosing maladaptive coping such as engaging in excessive alcohol consumption or hard drugs. However, the whole purpose of our primary and secondary appraisals is to assist us in our efforts to identify and better regulate any personal stress associated with significant demands being made on us at any one time and over time.

The *MasterStress* model of stress regulation helps us to map out the potential as well as the actual deleterious effects stress can have on our mental, emotional and physical health, and how well we are doing at regulating it and managing ourselves and our relationships with others.

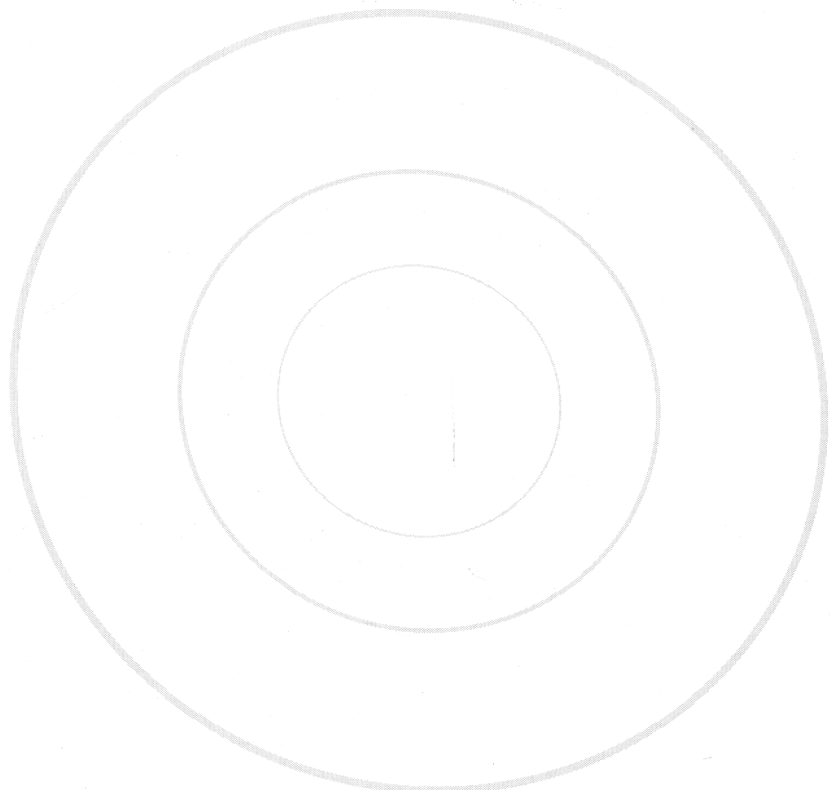


Competence to practise *MasterStress* activities

Qualified practitioner psychologists, counsellors and therapists who are already experienced and competent in assessing and applying stress management interventions with people will be familiar with the time involved in planning and carrying out stress management and therapeutic sessions. However, those newer to the field of understanding, assessing and managing stress in others will find that the *MasterStress* activities each take 30–50 minutes to complete.

The activities are flexible and can therefore usefully be combined with other therapeutic psychological interventions.

Consistent with best practice, I would advise anyone who is not experienced or qualified in understanding, assessing and managing stress to carry out the *MasterStress* activities under the supervision of an appropriate professional such as a registered practitioner psychologist.





Part 2 *MasterStress* activities



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>