Understanding Stress

What Is Stress?
Stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the person’s ability to cope.

How Gender Affects Stress

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Social Differences</th>
<th>Biological Differences</th>
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Is All Stress Negative?

The Body’s Response to Stress

- Your heart pounds faster
- Your muscles tighten
- Your blood pressure rises
- Your breathing speeds up
- Your senses become sharper
- Your strength and stamina increase
- Your reaction time speeds up
- Your focus is enhanced
MODULE ONE

Symptoms of Stress

Mental Symptoms
- Memory problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor judgment
- Seeing only the negative
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Constant worrying

Emotional Symptoms
- Moodiness
- Irritability
- Inability to relax
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Sense of loneliness or isolation
- Depression or general unhappiness

Physical Symptoms
- Aches and pains
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Nausea, dizziness
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat
- Loss of sex drive
- Frequent colds

Behavioral Symptoms
- Eating more or less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastinating
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits
Identify the Sources of Stress

For a Person to Experience Stress They Must:

- Feel threatened by a situation
- Doubt their capabilities and resources are enough to meet the threat

Two Main Types of Stress

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<th>Acute Stress</th>
<th>Chronic Stress</th>
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<tr>
<td>Flight or fight response</td>
<td>Persistent stress</td>
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Know Your Stressors

Stressors are events or conditions in your surroundings that may trigger stress.

Top 10 issues that you personally are facing right now:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9. 
10.
Evaluate Your Reactions to Stress

Everyone responds to stress differently. Your responses to the demands of the world determine your stress level.

Common Unhealthy Reactions to Stress

- Pain
- Crying
- Overeating
- Depression
- Anger
- Negativity
- Agitation
- Alcohol, smoking, or drug use

Are You in Control of Your Stress, or Is It in Control of You?

- When you are agitated, do you know how to quickly calm yourself?
- Can you easily let go of your anger?
- Do you people who can help you calm down and feel better?
- When you go home at night, do you walk in the door feeling alert and relaxed?
- Are you able to recognize potentially stressful situations?
Stress Management Techniques

Stress Management skills do not come naturally. They are skills to be learned and practiced until you become able to manage your stress.

You may not be able to control all of the stressors that affect your life. But you can control the way you respond.

- Learn How to Relax
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Disarm Your Fears
- Change the Way You Think
- Change Your Focus
- Breathing Exercises
- Controlling Anger
- Learn to Respond Instead of React
- Assertive Communication
Stress Prevention
Know Yourself and Your Limitations

• Stress and Self-Sabotage
• Balance Your Lifestyle

• Time Management
• Cultivate a Supportive Circle

• Prioritizing
• Play Games

• Conflict Resolution Skills
• Just Say No