

A cartoon illustration of a man with a mustache and glasses, wearing a pink shirt, moving quickly to the right. He is surrounded by motion lines and a white wake, suggesting speed or urgency.

Managing stress

&

How is it different from anxiety?


Beth Robbins, Psy.D.

UVM Clinical Associate Professor of Psychiatry
and Clinical Director of the
Seneca Mood and Anxiety Disorders Clinic



What is the difference?

- * The line between stress and anxiety often gets blurred.
- * They share many of the same physical symptoms:
The similarities make them easy to confuse.
- * The main difference lies in the cause – while overlapping – they come from two different places.

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- * Anxiety comes from fear (or the lesser version of fear....worry). Fear of specific events or activities, or situations.
 - * Treating anxiety is a complex specialty and often involves exposure to feared situations coupled with strategies to calm and sooth the body while re-constructing our thoughts about feared situations. It is treatable and resolvable because it's within us.
 - * Stress....on the other hand.... Comes from outside of us.

* Stress stems from external situations and these... never go away!

* These are

our deadlines

our bills

picking up the kids



..... it's day to day life ... So... we should learn how to manage it ~



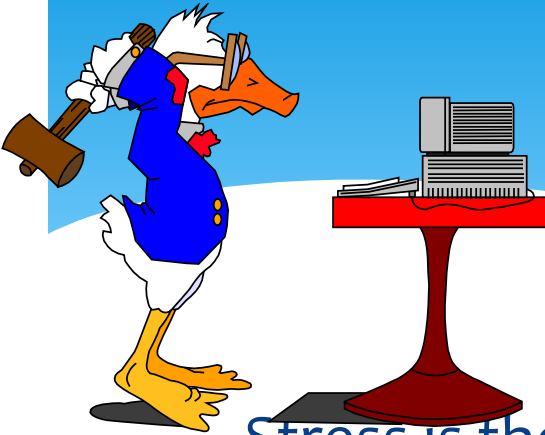
HELP ME!

WHAT IS STRESS ?

Stress is the reaction people have to excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them. It arises when they worry that they cannot cope.

I HATE YOU

WHAT IS STRESS ?



Stress is the “wear and tear” our minds and bodies experience as we attempt to cope with our continually changing environment

Stress occurs when the pressure is greater than the resources: $S=P>R$

Excessive, prolonged and unrelieved stress can have a harmful effect on mental, physical and spiritual health.

THE INDIVIDUAL

Everyone is different, with unique perceptions of, and reactions to, events. There is no single level of stress that is optimal for all people. Some are more sensitive biologically, it depends on experiences in childhood, the influence of teachers & parents – and one's internal resources and external tools to manage stress.



The positive side of stress

Stress can also have a positive effect, spurring motivation and awareness, providing the stimulation to cope with challenging situations or just to get necessary things done.

Stress also provides the sense of urgency and alertness needed for survival when confronting threatening situations.



TYPES OF STRESSORS

External Stress & Internal Stress

External Stress:

- * Physical Environment
- * Social Interaction
- * Organizational
- * Major Life Events
- * Daily Hassles

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

- * Noise
- * Bright Lights
- * Heat/cold
- * Confined Spaces
- * crowds
- * What else?

~ anything about where we are that places demand on our physical and emotional selves..... discomfort (mall, airports)
first world problems... what about the stress of poverty?



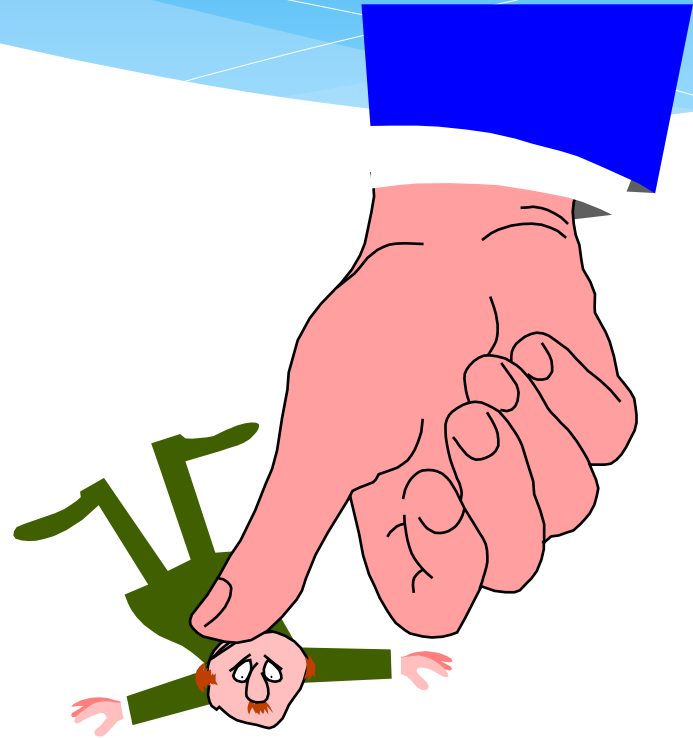
SOCIAL INTERACTION

- * Rudeness (strangers and friends and family alike)
grocery stores...
- * Bossiness
- * Aggressiveness by others (road rage....)
- * Bullying
- * Exclusion/rejection
- * Embarrassment
- * Criticism



ORGANIZATIONAL

- * Schedules
- * Power differentials
- * Rules
- * Regulations
- * Deadlines



Major Life Events

Death of a loved one

Divorce / separation

Imprisonment

Injury/illness (self / family)

Marriage/ engagement

Loss of job

Retirement

Pregnancy

Sexual Problems

Change in financial status

Change of job / work

Mortgage or loan

Foreclosure of mortgage/loan

Change in responsibilities

Moving house

Holidays

Minor violations of the law


DAILY HASSLES

- * Commuting
- * Misplacing things
- * Mechanical breakdowns
- * work
- * Family/child commitments
- * Cleaning/laundry/errands
- * chores
- * More.....



INTERNAL STRESSORS

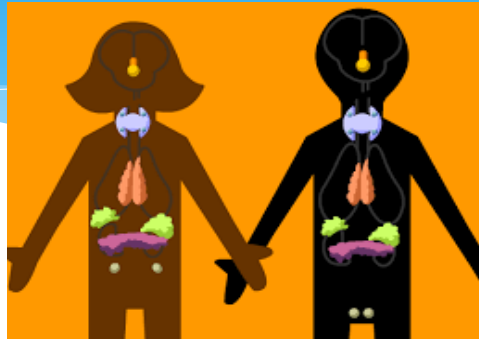
- * Negative self – talk
 - * “I’ll never be able to do this.”
 - * “I can’t handle this.”
- * Personality traits – perfectionist, critical, over-achiever etc
- * Distorted thinking - catastrophic, taking things personally, all or nothing thinking, jumping to conclusions, shoulds....
- * Lessons we’ve learned along the way - to push ourselves, self worth is based on how much we do or how well we do it. We Strive.....
- * Lifestyle choices (Caffeine, Alcohol, drugs, Lack of sleep, Overloaded schedule, Unbalanced (all work no play, all play no work), overspending.



Some stress we experience comes from how we think about these events. How we perceive and interpret life events. Often it's not the event itself, but how we interpret or make meaning of the event.

CBT (Cognitive Behavioral therapy) – The way we think effects how we feel and the way we think and feel effects how we behave and how we take care of ourselves.

Endocrine System



Our stress response begins above your shoulders. The **amygdala** (inside temporal lobe which processes emotional data) sends a “threat message” to the **hypothalamus** which in turn tells the sympathetic nervous system to protect you from attack.

Stress tells the hypothalamus to secrete **cortisol** and the adrenals to secrete **Adrenaline**.

This is the “Fight or Flight” response that prepares the body for immediate action.

NERVOUS SYSTEM RESPONSES

- * Increased pupil dilatation
- * Perspiration
- * Increased heart rate and blood pressure
- * Rapid breathing
- * Muscle tenseness
- * Increased mental alertness
- * Slows down digestion
- * Increased sweating, urination, temperature increase (controlled by pituitary)

ADAPTATION PHASE

If the source of stress persists, the body prepares for long-term protection, secreting hormones to increase blood sugar levels (cortisol). This phase is common and not necessarily harmful, but must include periods of relaxation and rest to counterbalance the stress response. Otherwise fatigue, poor sleep- wake cycles, poor concentration, irritability, moodiness, and lethargy result as the stress continues.

A cartoon illustration of a man in a brown suit and tie, looking stressed with a blue squiggle around his neck. He is holding a brown briefcase. Above him are several blue bubbles. To his right is a green fish. The background is a blue gradient with white wavy lines at the bottom.

I cant breathe.....

EXHAUSTION

In chronic stress situations, people enter the exhaustion phase: emotional, physical and mental resources suffer heavily, the body experiences 'adrenal exhaustion' leading to decreased stress tolerance, progressive mental and physical exhaustion and illness.

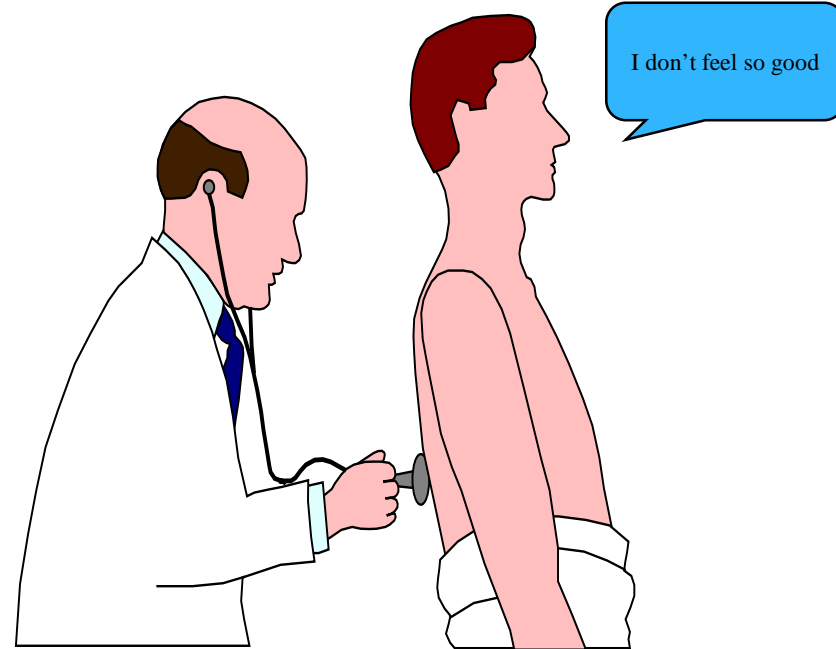
PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

- * Sleep pattern changes
- * Fatigue
- * Digestion changes
- * Loss of sex drive
- * Headaches
- * Aches and pains
- * Infections
- * Dizziness
- * Fainting
- * Sweating & trembling
- * Tingling hands & feet
- * Breathlessness
- * Palpitations
- * arrhythmia

STRESS RELATED ILLNESSES

Stress but has been related to such illnesses as:

- * Cardiovascular disease
- * Immune system disease
- * Asthma
- * Diabetes
- * Digestive disorders
- * Ulcers
- * Skin complaints - psoriasis
- * Headaches and migraines
- * Pre-menstrual syndrome
- * Depression



MENTAL/EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

What was I doing again?

- * Lack of concentration
- * Memory lapses
- * Difficulty in making decisions
- * Confusion
- * Disorientation
- * Panic attacks
- * Bouts of depression
- * Impatience
- * Fits of rage
- * Tearfulness
- * Deterioration of personal hygiene and appearance



BEHAVIORAL SYMPTOMS

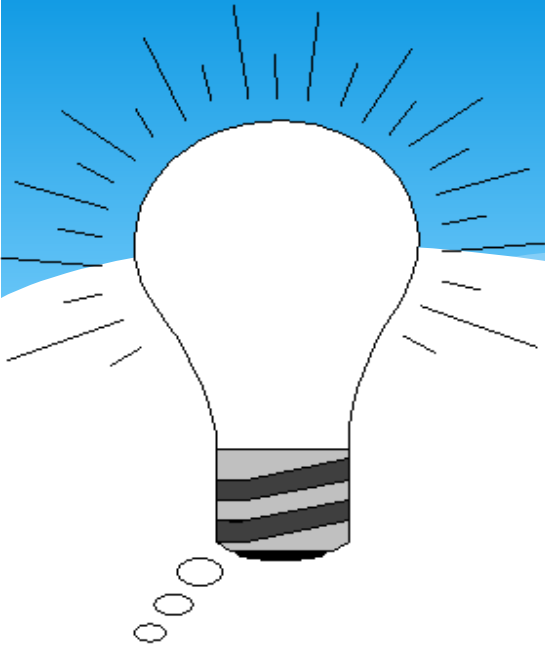
- * Appetite changes - too much or too little
- * Disordered eating- binging or restricting
- * Increased intake of alcohol & other drugs
- * Increased smoking
- * Restlessness
- * Fidgeting
- * Nail biting
- * Hypochondriasis





Once you recognize the problem..... What do you do?

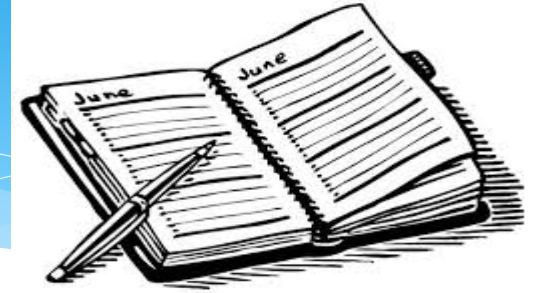
The most important point is to recognize the source(s)
of the stress.



- * Change your behavior
- * Change your thinking
- * Change your lifestyle

Change your Behavior

- * Be assertive
- * Get organized
- * Get support
- * Humor
- * Self-soothing and distraction



Change your Behavior

First: learn how to relax the body and mind

- * **Mindfulness:**

- * Affects the amount of activity in the amygdala. When the amygdala is relaxed, the para-sympathetic nervous system engages to counteract the stress response.
- * Heart rate lowers, breathing deepens and slows, body stops releasing cortisol and adrenaline into the bloodstream.
- * Over time mindfulness meditation actually thickens areas of the brain responsible for optimism, a sense of well-being and lessens the likelihood that the amygdala will over react when not necessary.



* **What is mindfulness?**

- * Mindfulness encompasses many practices ranging from breathing to meditation to walking to eating.
- * All involving the art of being in the present on purpose. Being present with intention in the here and now and there are many ways do this.
- * We all spend inordinate amounts of time worrying about the future and ruminating about the past (thus... setting our stress response in motion)



* **Benefits of mindfulness:**

- * Physical benefits of immediate de-stress/calm
- * Long term benefit of health and emotional well-being
- * Improved mood
- * Improved focus and concentration
- * Improved problem solving
- * Decreased emotional reactivity
- * Ability to make choices from your “wise mind” rather than from a place that’s overly emotional or overly rational.

Change Your Behavior Be Assertive

Assertiveness helps to manage stressful situations, and will, in time, help to reduce their frequency.

When we are not assertive we learn to feel helpless.
Feeling helpless creates stress.

Learned helplessness

Know Your Basic Rights

- 1) The right to express my feelings
- 2) The right to express opinions / beliefs
- 3) The right to say 'Yes/No' for yourself
- 4) Right to change your mind
- 5) Right to say 'I don't understand'
- 6) Right to be yourself, not acting for the benefit of others
- 7) The right to decline responsibility for other people's problems
- 8) The right to make reasonable requests of others
- 9) The right to set my own priorities
- 10) The right to be listened to, and taken seriously



Being Assertive



Being assertive involves standing up for your personal rights and expressing your thoughts, feelings and beliefs directly, honestly and spontaneously in ways that don't infringe the rights of others.

If everyone leaves the situation feeling good about themselves and others...assertiveness has been done well.

Benefits

- * Higher self-esteem
- * Less self-conscious
- * Less anxious
- * Manage stress more successfully
- * Appreciate yourself and others more easily
- * Feeling of self-control

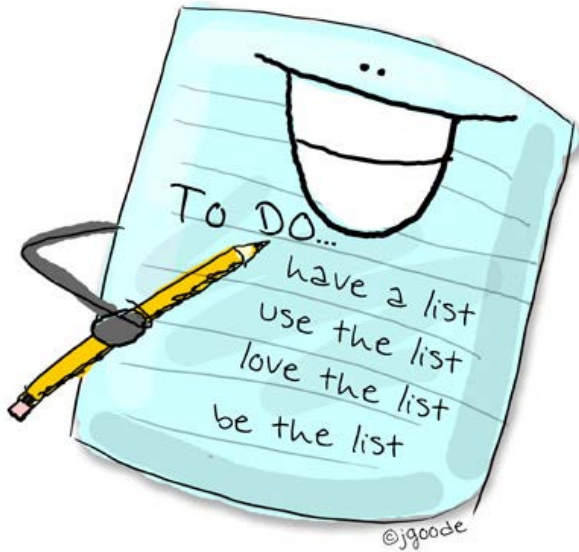


Change Your Behavior Get Organized



Poor organization is one of the most common causes of stress. Structured approaches offer security against 'out of the blue' problems. Prioritizing objectives, duties and activities makes them manageable and achievable. Don't overload your mind. Organization will help avoid personal and professional chaos.

Time Management



- * Make lists
- * Prioritize
- * Add some likes
- * Take things off the list
- * Delegate
- * Say no
- * Plan your day
- * Set achievable goals

Change Your behavior

Express self

‘A problem shared is a problem halved’

Develop a support network through friends or colleagues to talk with.

Writing....

Change Your Behavior

Seek out fun and Humor


Laughing

Short-term benefits

A good laugh has great short-term effects. When you start to laugh, it doesn't just lighten your load mentally, it actually induces physical changes in your body. Laughter can:

- * **Stimulate many organs.** Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs and muscles, and increases the endorphins that are released by your brain.




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- * **Activate and relieve your stress response.** A rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response and increases your heart rate and blood pressure. The result? A good, relaxed feeling.
 - * **Soothe tension.** Laughter can also stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, both of which help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.

- * **Long-term effects**

Laughter isn't just a quick pick-me-up, though. It's also good for you over the long haul. Laughter may:

- * **Improve your immune system.** Negative thoughts manifest into chemical reactions that can affect your body by bringing more stress into your system and decreasing your immunity. In contrast, positive thoughts actually release neuropeptides that help fight stress and potentially more-serious illnesses.
- * **Relieve pain.** Laughter may ease pain by causing the body to produce its own natural painkillers. Laughter may also break the pain-spasm cycle common to some muscle disorders.

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- * **Increase personal satisfaction.** Laughter can also make it easier to cope with difficult situations. It also helps you connect with other people.
 - * **Improve your mood.** Many people experience depression, sometimes due to chronic illnesses. Laughter can help lessen your depression and anxiety and make you feel happier.

Change Behavior

Self-soothing & Distraction

- * **Distract** attention from stressors (not full avoidance) but short vacations – filling short term memory with thoughts, images, and sensations counteractive to stress.
- * **Contributing** gets focus off own stress while increasing meaning and self-respect.
- * **Self-soothe** – with your senses.
- * **Finding meaning**
- * **Acceptance**

Change your Thinking reframing

Re-framing is a technique to change the way you look at things in order to feel better about them. There are many ways to interpret the same situation. Re-framing does not change the external reality, but helps you view things in a different light and less stressfully. Often a re-frame pulls away the distortions in our thinking and helps us see a more realistic view of what is going on around us. One that feels more balanced and less...stressful.

Change your Thinking Some More

Focus on the positives

Stress leaves us vulnerable to negative suggestion so focusing on the positives can help.

- * Focus on your strengths
- * Learn from the stress you are under. How will going through this help me develop?
- * Look for opportunities in the stress.
- * Seek out the positive - make a change.
- * What's not wrong?

Change Your Lifestyle



- * Diet/nutrition
- * Smoking & Alcohol
- * Exercise
- * Sleep
- * Leisure
- * Relaxation/rest
- * Build mastery
- * Treat physical illness

