

## STRESS

Stress is the sum of the reactions that we give to the situations which challenge, restrict and defer us. The best way to cope with stress is to recognize what produces stress and to control it.

### Misconceptions about Stress

- We know and/or feel when we are under stress

Most of us experience the harmful effects of stress without recognizing it. Even if we don't experience worry or disappointment, stress may harm us and our relationships.

- Stress affects only those with a high life tempo.

A lot of ordinary people experience chronic stress and worry.

- The only way to reduce stress is to change the environment.

Stress is caused by our perception of life, not the life itself.

- Feelings cannot be controlled.

We can change our feelings by first changing our behaviors and thoughts.

Even though sources of stress vary among people, there are some commonalities. On the other hand, stress signals are the same for most people.

### Stress Signals

As the level of the stress we are experiencing increase, signals will also increase in terms of number and intensity.

**Emotional:** Anxiety, nervousness, distress, fear, shame.

**Cognitive:** Self-criticism, difficulty with concentration and decision-making, forgetfulness, thoughts about failure.

**Behavioral:** Stuttering or similar speech problems, aggressiveness, compressing teeth, increase or decrease in appetite

**Physical:** Muscle tension, hand sweating, headache, problems with neck and/or back, getting sick frequently, fatigue, accelerated breathing, increased heart beat, trembling.

### Stress Sources

What you see as a source of stress and the intensity of stress depend on your personality, perspective. The most important rule for coping with stress is to start with determining the sources.

#### What can I do to cope with stress?

- CHANGE HOW YOU THINK

How we feel depends on how we view life.

- TAKE A DEEP BREATH

Stress usually prevents us from taking deep breaths. When you feel tense, take deep breathes for 1 minute. Take in the breath through your nose and give out through your mouth.

- USE YOUR TIME WELL

One of the most important sources of stress is trying to do a lot of things simultaneously and being unable to plan time effectively. You should certainly plan what you will do.

- SOCIALIZE

Enhance your social activities and friends network. Spend time with people you like.

- KNOW HOW TO ENJOY

Create circumstances under which you may have fun, take pleasure.

- TALK

Express your feelings. Feelings that are not expressed and mounted up induce disappointment and stress.

- LAUGH

It is very important to have a sense of humor.

- STOP FOR 1 MINUTE WHEN YOU FEEL TENSE

Stop whatever you are doing and, for 1 minute, imagine yourself in a place that you would like to be in, you enjoy, and relaxes you.

- CARE ABOUT YOUR PHYSICAL COMFORT

Choose comfortable clothes and relaxing environments.

- MOVE

Physical activity is very efficient in preventing and coping with stress. Regularly perform your favorite sports.

- TAKE CARE OF YOUR HEALTH

Eat well, sleep well, rest enough.

- KNOW YOUR LIMITS

When you are confronted with a stressful situation, ask yourself: "Is this a problem that I have to solve?" and if you say no, stay away from that situation. Accept the situations that you have to accept.

- **SET REALISTIC GOALS**

Most of us set unrealistic goals and feel insufficient no matter what we achieve. Have goals that you can succeed at reaching.

- **YOU CAN'T ALWAYS BE RIGHT**

If you don't try to be understanding towards others, you will be disappointed and angry. Avoid criticizing others. Learn to praise other people for their features that you like. Don't forget to praise yourself.

- **AVOID UNNECESSARY COMPETITION**

Pushing yourself to win in all areas of life makes you unnecessarily tense and aggressive.

- **DON'T STOP YOURSELF FROM CRYING**

It is healthy to cry when you want to. If you feel like crying, cry.

- **SEE BEAUTIFUL THINGS AROUND YOU**

We have a tendency to think negative when we are under stress. Nevertheless, try to see pieces of beauty and happiness around you.

- **LEARN HOW TO RELAX. YOU MAY TRY RELAXATION TECHNIQUES AND MEDIATION.**

Stress is a part of our life; we can't imagine a life without it. If we learn how to cope with stress and seek help when we need, we can succeed in controlling it and have a healthier, longer and happier life.

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**For More Information**

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