Stress Management: Part 1 – Stress and Health

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What is stress?

“Stress arises when individuals perceive that they cannot adequately cope with the demands being made on them or with threats to their well-being.”

The Stress Process

- Threat
- Challenge
- Self-Efficacy Expectation
- Harm/Loss

What does this mean?

What can I do?

Stressful event or situation → Primary Appraisal → Secondary Appraisal → STRESS & COPING

Is all stress bad?

The Yerkes-Dodson Law

Performance

low  medium  high

Arousal

Author: Vaughan
### Common Life Stressors

- Death
- Divorce
- Loss of a job
- Starting a new job
- Finances
- Getting married
- Moving
- Chronic illness or injury
- Interpersonal conflict
- Taking care of an elderly or sick family member

### Work-Related Stressors

- Being unhappy in your job
- Having a heavy workload or too much responsibility
- Working long hours
- Unclear expectations or no say in decision-making
- Working in dangerous conditions
- Insecurity about advancement or risk of termination
- Having to give speeches in front of colleagues
- Facing discrimination or harassment
## Impact of Stress

- 60-80% of outpatient visits may be related to stress (Rosch, 1991; Avey, Matheny, Robbins, & Jacobson, 2003)

- Linked to all leading physical causes of death - heart disease, cancer, stroke (Cohen, Janicki-Deverts, & Miller, 2007)

- Associated with development of most major mental health problems – depression, PTSD, pathologic aging (Marin et al., 2011)

### Impact of Stress

- Affects fetal development & outcomes (Kinsella & Monk, 2009)

- Predicts negative health behaviors and relapses – smoking, alcohol abuse, illicit substance use, sleeplessness (Kassel, Paronis, Stroud, 2003; Herman, 2012; Ellis, et al., 2012)
**Primary Care: Stress Management Counseling**

- National study suggests that only 3% office visits included stress management counseling by primary care physicians (Nerurkar, 2012; *JAMA – Internal Medicine*)
- 42% report receiving no instruction regarding stress and health outcomes in medical education
- 76% lacked confidence in their ability to counsel patients about stress
- 49% indicated a lack of referral sources (Avey, Matheny, Robbins, & Jacobson, 2003)

**Do as I say…Not as I do…**

- 57% of outpatient medical clinic providers (physicians, residents, NP’s, and PA’s) report “rarely” or “never” practicing stress reduction techniques themselves
- Those who do practice use the following:
  - exercise (70%) - meditation (32%)
  - imagery (26%) - deep breathing (21%)
  - mindfulness (16%) - PMR (16%)

  (Avey, Matheny, Robbins, & Jacobson, 2003)
Stress Management: Part 1 – Stress and Health

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How does stress get under the skin?

- Fight or Flight responses: SAM activation
- HPA activation
- Allostatic load
Fight or Flight

Hypothalamic Pituitary Adrenal Axis

(Glaser & Kiecolt-Glaser, 2005)
**Allostatic Load**

(Juster, McEwen & Lupien, 2010)

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**Diseases and Illnesses Caused by Stress**

- Migraine Headaches
- Tension Headaches
- Allergies
- Common Cold and Influenza
- Bronchial Asthma
- Coronary Heart Disease
- Ulcers and Colitis
- Irritable Bowel Syndrome
- Rheumatoid Arthritis
- Cancer


Original image in the public domain - Author: Bouglé, Julien
Benefits of Stress Reduction

- Better concentration/focus
- More stable moods
- Improved communication/relationships
- Better physical health
- Increased sense of control of time and activity

References

Stress Management: Part 2 – Interventions

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Strategies that DO NOT work

- “Try to be more positive.”
- “Everything will be okay.”
- “Just stop worrying.”
  (i.e., Don’t worry, be happy.)
- Thought stopping (Wegner, 1994)
- Avoidance & numbing
  - Alcohol or drug use
  - Distraction & procrastination
- Anxiolytics
- 77% of the chronically anxious can improve with cognitive (thought) and behavioral (action) strategies

CDC/Debora Cartagena
Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)

- Structured, brief and time-limited therapy
- Focused on current behavior
- Empirically-supported to treat a range of clinical problems, including:
  - Anxiety disorders and insomnia
  - Depression
  - Eating disorders
  - Chronic pain

Butler, Chapman, Forman & Beck, 2006

Problem vs. Emotion-Focused Coping

1. **Is there a problem?**
   - Yes
   - No

2. **Can I change it?**
   - Yes
   - No

3. **Is now a good time to work on it?**
   - Yes
   - No

   - Problem-focused Coping
   - Emotion-focused Coping
**Problem-focused Coping**

- Problem-solving
- Getting organized
- Time-management
- Assertive communication to manage interpersonal stressors
- Obtaining instrumental social support

**Emotion-focused Coping**

- Distraction with pleasurable activities
- Talking with a friend
- Diaphragmatic breathing
- Relaxation
- Mindfulness
- Obtaining emotional support

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**Problem-Solving**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Define the problem.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td>Brainstorm solutions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 3</td>
<td>Weigh alternatives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Step 4</td>
<td>Select best alternative.</td>
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<td>Step 5</td>
<td>Implement strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 6</td>
<td>Monitor progress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 7</td>
<td>Go to Step 1 if needed.</td>
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Handout:
Time Management

• 168 hours in a week: Keep a time diary (Vanderkam, 2010)
  – How do you spend your time?
  – What things do you do that you are good at?
  – What things do others do better than you?
  – When do you tend to waste time?
  – What brings you meaning in life?
  – Is your time focused on what you value most (and are best at)?
    • Learn to say “no” and delegate

Other Tips for Managing Time

– Clarify and set “SMART” goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>• Specific</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>• Measurable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>• Achievable</td>
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<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>• Relevant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>• Time-based</td>
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– Monitor progress
– Celebrate successes and examine failures
Managing Email & Smartphone Stress

- Check email only at scheduled times
  - Start your day with the most stressful task
  - Save email checking for later in the day
  - Turn off audible alerts
- Have separate work and personal accounts
  - Remove yourself from listservs
- Block time to not answer your phone
  - Especially before bed!

Seek Social Support

- Who?
  - Family, friends, neighbors, clergy, professionals
- How close?

Author: Rhoda Baer
Monitor Expectations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotional Support</th>
<th>Practical Support</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Listens to your problems &amp; cares about your feelings</td>
<td>• Helps get things done (e.g., mow the lawn, babysitting, chores)</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Information Support</th>
<th>Companionship Support</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Gives advice or information</td>
<td>• Does things together with you for fun</td>
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Stress Management: Part 2 – Interventions

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Diaphragmatic Breathing

Teach Diaphragmatic Breathing

- Get into a comfortable position; eyes closed
- Place one hand on your chest, one hand on your abdomen
- Breathe in 1-2-3-4-5; breathing out 1-2-3-4-5
- Practice for 5 to 10 minutes
Progressive Muscle Relaxation

• Systematic tensing & relaxing of muscle groups (usually 14 or less)
• Produces relaxation response via:
  • ↑ awareness of muscle tension
  • Monitoring & ↓ muscle tension
• Taught by trained clinician
  • Practiced at home in 10-15 minutes daily

Benefits of PMR

• Decreased pain
• Improved sleep
• Increased energy/decreased fatigue
• Decreased perceived stress & anxiety
• Improved relaxation
• Decreased physiologic indices of stress
  • Lower heart rate & salivary cortisol

McCallie & Blum, 2006; Parlow & Jones, 2002
### Mindfulness

- Being fully aware in the present moment, non-judgmentally
  - Opposite of auto-pilot or multi-tasking
  - Allows us to be aware of actions and emotions
  - Increases our ability to prioritize, focus, and make life choices that are consistent with our values
- Associated with decreased stress and improved mental & physical health


### Practicing Mindfulness

- Mindfulness Meditation
  - Mindfulness of breath
- Body Scan
- Yoga
- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (Kabat-Zinn, 2003)
  - “Wherever you Go, There you Are: Mindfulness Meditation in Everyday Life” by Jon Kabat-Zinn
  - Mind the Moment (free online course) www.harvardpilgrim.org/mindfulness
**Not Enough Time?**

| Ask: “What is most stressful in your life right now?”  
| AND  
| Educate the patient about the importance/benefits of stress management  
| THEN  

1. Hire a psychologist to work as part of your multidisciplinary team  
2. Refer patients to a counselor for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy via:  
   - Employee Assistance Programs  
   - Ohio Psychological Association: www.ohpsych.org/referral/  
   - The internet: www.therapists.psychologytoday.com  
   - Community Mental Health Centers: mha.ohio.gov/  
3. Recommend classes in relaxation, mindfulness, or meditation:  
   - At Ohio State -  
     http://medicalcenter.osu.edu/patientcare/healthcare_services/integrative_medicine/clinical-services/Pages/Mind-Body-Therapies.aspx  
   - At local YMCA and health centers  
4. Recommend an online stress management workshop:  
   - http://hillsborough.ifas.ufl.edu/family_life/stress_management.shtml  

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**Do as I say….AND as I do…**
## References