



6 Things You Should Know About Stress

Everyone feels stressed from time to time, but what is stress? How does it affect your overall health? And what can you do to manage your stress?

Stress is how Your brain and body respond to real or imagined dangers/threats or other life events.

Stress can affect your health. It is important to pay attention to how you deal with minor and major stressors, so you can manage it without letting it control you or know when to seek help.

Here are six things you should know about stress

1. Stress affects everyone



Modern life is full of hassles, deadlines, frustrations, and demands. For many people, stress is so commonplace that it has become a way of life. Everyone experiences stress from time to time. There are different types of stress - all of which carry physical and mental health risks. A stressor may be a one-time or short-term Occurrence, or it can happen repeatedly over a long time. Some people may cope with stress more effectively and recover from stressful events more quickly than others. Learning how to cope with it's effects is some thing that everyone needs to master for their own physical and psychological wellbeing.

2. Not every Stress is bad

Stress is an unavoidable consequence of modern living and isn't always bad. In non-life-threatening situations, stress helps to motivate people, influences creativity and even energizes people. This is called Eustress (e.g. when someone needs to take a test or an interview for a new job).

3. Long Term stress can harm your health

The stress response is the body's way of protecting you. When working properly, it helps you stay focused, energetic, and alert. In emergency situations, stress can save your life – giving you extra strength to defend yourself, for example, spurring you to slam on the brakes to avoid an accident. In small doses, stress can help you perform under pressure and motivate you to do your best. But when you're constantly running in emergency mode, your mind and body pay the price. Because the source of long-term stress is more constant than acute stress, the body never receives a clear signal to return to normal functioning. With chronic stress, those same lifesaving reactions in the body can disturb the immune, digestive, cardio vascular, sleep, and reproductive systems.



4. Common Stressors are;



Internal Factors	External Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifestyle Choices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major Life Events
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative Self-talk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical Environment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mind Traps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational Rules
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stressful Personality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily Hazzles

5. Signs and Symptoms of Stress Overload



Physical Symptoms	Behavioural Symptoms
• Headaches, migraine, stomach aches	• Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
• Nausea, dizziness, Trembling, Sweaty palms	• Loss of appetite or over eating
• Stomach ulcers	• Nervous habits (e.g.nail biting, pacing), Easily distracted
• Chest pain, rapid heartbeat	• Sleep disruption
• Muscle tension, Chronic fatigue	• Acting in a defensive, aggressive or impulsive manner
• Diarrhea or constipation	• Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
Cognitive Symptoms	Emotional Symptoms
• Memory problems	• Irritability or short temper
• Inability to concentrate	• Agitation, inability to relax
• Inability to make decisions	• Feeling overwhelmed
• Poor judgment	• Excessive worry or moody
• Seeing only the negative	• Feeling inadequate
• Anxious or racing thoughts	• Sadness, fear



6. There are ways to Manage Stress

Stress management involves understanding the psychology behind or that is causing the stress and finding strategies to deal with, reduce, or eliminate the stress. Here are some tips that may help you cope with stress:

◆ Stress management strategy #1: Avoid unnecessary stress

Learn how to say “no”, Avoid people who stress you out, Take control of your environment, Avoid hot-button topics, Be more organized, Pare down your to-do list

◆ Stress management strategy #2: Alter the situation

If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Express your feelings instead of bottling them up, Be willing to compromise, Be more assertive, Manage your time better

◆ Stress management strategy #3: Adapt to the stressor

If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. Reframe problems, Look at the bigger picture, Adjust your standards, Focus on the positive, Adjust your attitude

◆ Stress management strategy 4: Accept the things you can't change

Some sources of stress are unavoidable. Don't try to control the uncontrollable, Look for the upside, Share your feelings, Learn to forgive

◆ Stress management strategy #5: Make time for fun and relaxation

If you regularly make time for fun and relaxation, you'll be in a better place to handle life's stressors when they inevitably come.

◆ Stress management strategy #6: Adopt a healthy lifestyle

You can increase your resistance to stress by strengthening your physical health.

◆ Seek help if needed

The consequences of stress can cause specific disorders in both mind and body. If you feel overwhelmed by stress, ask for help from a health professional. For more information, please contact OUSL Counselling Unit.



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