

Improving Stress Hardiness

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What is Stress?

- The inability to cope with a threat (real or imagined) to one's well-being, which results in a series of responses and adaptations by the mind and body
- Occurs when the demands faced outweigh one's coping skills

Types of Stress

- Eustress
 - Good stress
- Internally generated stress
- Environmental stress
- Lifestyle and job stress
- Fatigue stress
- Survival stress

Common Symptoms of Unmanaged Stress

- **Physical**
 - Fatigue
 - Headaches
 - Insomnia
 - Muscle aches/stiffness
 - Especially neck, shoulders, lower back

Common Symptoms of Unmanaged Stress

- Heart palpitations
- Chest pains
- Abdominal cramps
- Nausea
- Trembling
- Cold extremities

Common Symptoms of Unmanaged Stress

- Flushing or sweating
- Frequent colds

Common Symptoms of Unmanaged Stress

- **Mental**
 - Decreased concentration
 - Decreased memory
 - Indecisiveness
 - Mind racing or going blank
 - Confusion
 - Loss of joy or humor

Common Symptoms of Unmanaged Stress

- **Emotional**
 - Anxiety/nervousness
 - Depression
 - Anger or frustration
 - Worry or fear
 - Irritability or impatience
 - Short-temperedness

Common Symptoms of Unmanaged Stress

- **Behavioral**
 - Fidgeting/pacing
 - Nervous habits
 - Nail-biting, foot-tapping, etc.
 - Increased eating, smoking, or drinking
 - Crying, yelling, or swearing

Common Symptoms of Unmanaged Stress

- Blaming
- Hitting or throwing things



"Hospital regulations. You gotta wear the straps while I read the bill."

The Good News...

- Managing stress will help:
 - Improve immune system functioning
 - Prevent illnesses like the common cold
 - Increase energy levels
 - Improve sleep quality

The Good News...

- Improve digestion
- Improve concentration
- And more

Stress Hardiness

What is Stress Hardiness?

- Some people are more resistant to stress and better able to cope with it than others
- Why?

What is Stress Hardiness?

- A study of Bell Telephone executives discovered the 3 C's of stress hardiness:
 - Commitment
 - Control
 - Challenge

Commitment

- Believing in the importance of what you are doing
- Having a purpose to life and involvement in family, work, community, friends, religious/philosophical beliefs, etc.
- Helps you find goodness and meaning in your life

Control

- Believing that you have some power to influence your situation
- Studies have shown that how much control you perceive you have over any stressor will influence how easy or difficult it will be for you to cope with it

Challenge

- How you perceive events that occur in your life
- Seeing difficulties as opportunities rather than threats
- Accepting that the only thing in life that is constant is change

Tips to Improve Your Stress Hardiness

Recognize What You Can and Cannot Change

- Can you change your stressor by avoiding or eliminating it completely?
- Can you shorten your exposure to the stressor?
- Can you reduce its intensity?

Develop Realistic Expectations

- Accept situations in which you have no control
- Be realistic in what you can accomplish compared to what you want to accomplish
- Shed the “Superman/woman” urge

Build Your Physical Reserves

- Eat well-balanced, nutritious meals
- Avoid alcohol, nicotine, excessive caffeine and the like
- Get enough rest and sleep, and keep a consistent sleep schedule
- Find enjoyable ways to exercise regularly

Maintain Your Emotional Reserve

- Do things you enjoy daily
- Find a new hobby
- Count your blessings
- Always be kind and gentle with yourself
- Live in the present
- Help others

Moderate Your Physical Reactions to Stress

- Learn and use relaxation and visualization techniques
- BREATHE!

Monitor Your Self-talk

- Go easy with criticism
- Don't “should” on yourself
- Change your perspective
- Think positively

Monitor Your Self-talk





Get Organized

- Simplify your life
- Use time management techniques
 - Plan ahead
 - Be OK with saying “No”
 - Cut big jobs down to size
 - Delegate
 - Don’t rely on your memory when stressed... make a list

Laugh!

- Find humor in stressors – even a disaster
- How does it help?
 - Releases endorphins
 - Decreases blood pressure and heart rate
 - Improves immune system functioning

Laugh!

- Children laugh over 300 times a day
 - Adults laugh only about 20 times a day

Why Buy Expensive Toys...

Talk to a Professional When Needed

WENT TO THERAPIST.
DINNER NAMED TO KITCHEN CEILING.

Commit to “Baby Steps”

- **What is the one thing that you can start doing differently today to reduce your stress?**
- **What is one new thing you can start doing today to reduce your stress?**