

## STRESS AND HOW TO COPE WITH IT



**Stress** is a term which brings to our mind lot of negative emotions, thoughts and experiences. Simply speaking "Stress" is a synonym of the word "pressure" or "tension". It is important to understand that all stress is not negative. Certain stresses can have positive implications. In fact an optimum level of stress is required for us to perform.

Stress taking capacity of a person varies from situation to situation. For example an individual may be very comfortable while giving an examination; on the other hand the same person may be very jittery in the sports field.

Also different people have different level of stress taking capacity. For example one individual may be very confident while facing and speaking to a crowd on the stage, where as another person have a great stage fright and start sweating and trembling on the idea of going on the stage to face and address the crowd.

### Causes of stress

Stress can come from outside sources- e.g.

- Family Stressors- Parenting Style, Family Income, Siblings, Separated /Single parent, losses
- School Stressors -Homework, Grades, Tests, Project work, Teacher, Peer group
- Health Stressors - Weight, Height, Physical Appearance, Chronic Diseases, Disabilities , Puberty/ Maturity
- Social Stressors- Peer group pressures, relationship difficulties, Friends, Fashion, Bullying, Face book, Finances, Love life, Leadership position
- Extracurricular Stressors- Sports, Theatre, Clubs, Leader, Drama, Speech

Stress can also come from within oneself-e.g.

- The way a person see oneself in relation to the outside world
- Feeling and taking responsibilities
- Sudden loss of beloved ones
- Feeling of guilt
- Career choice
- Future
- Coping/social skills

### Symptoms of stress

The common symptoms that may be experienced during stress:-

#### **Cognitive Symptoms (Mental action/process)**

- Memory related problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor judgement

- Seeing only the negative
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Constant worrying

#### **Emotional Symptoms**

- Moodiness
- Irritability or being short tempered
- Agitation and obstinacy
- Anger and aggression
- Inability to relax
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Sense of loneliness
- Isolation
- Depression
- General unhappiness/guilt feeling
- Inability to do anything

#### **Physical Symptoms**

- Dryness in mouth
- Sweating palms
- Feeling of excessive tiredness/fatigue
- Uneasiness
- Aches and pains/gritting of teeth
- Stomach upset, diarrhoea or constipation
- Difficulty in breathing
- Frequent Urination
- Nausea/Dizziness
- Tight muscles that may cause pain and trembling
- Rapid heartbeat
- Change in blood pressure
- Chest pain
- Frequent cold

#### **Some other symptoms (Behavioural)**

- Eating more or Less than usual
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating oneself from others
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits e.g. nail biting, racing thoughts
- Avoiding any type of work/facing problems
- Taking out stress on others e.g. lashing out, angry outbursts
- Physical violence
- Too much worrying
- Losing confidence

People's tolerance of stress varies. A situation that is intolerable to one person may be stimulating to another. What is important is that if stress is affecting our day to day working, it need to be managed.

In today's world, we can neither solve all our problems nor escape from them; we have to learn to minimize their effects i.e. we need to learn "HOW TO MANAGE STRESS". The important point is that you can learn to recognize your own responses to stress and develop skills to deal with it.

**Stress Management is an ongoing process and can be learned.**

Let us learn to improve stress tolerance level

**\* ATTITUDE**

1. Positive attitude
2. Optimism – hopeful and expecting the best
3. Faith that "I can do it"
4. Confidence
5. No superstition – be scientific and logical
6. Know your strengths and weaknesses
7. Learning from mistakes
8. Love yourself
9. Be happy
10. Faith in goodness of humanity
11. Ask for help whenever needed – No one is self-sufficient

**\* BALANCED AND NUTRICIOUS DIET**

**\* REDUCE THE INTAKE OF TEA AND COFFEE**

**\* CULTIVATE HOBBIES**

**\* MEDITATION**

**\* RELAXATION EXERCISES AND SPORTS**

**\* ENJOY HUMOUR**

**\* MASSAGE THERAPY**

**\* BE SOCIABLE**

**\* USE SELF HELP TECHNIQUES**

**\* CONSULT EXPERTS LIKE DOCTOR/COUNSELLOR ETC.**

**\* BE ORGANISED AND SYSTEMATIC**

**\* PRIORTIZE YOUR WORK**

**\* BE STRONG**

**\* TAKE A BREAK FROM STRESSFUL SITUATION/SITUATIONS**

**\* DISCUSS YOUR PROBLEM WITH SOMEONE ON WHOM YOU CAN RELY**

**\* LISTEN TO MUSIC**

**\* DON'T EXPECT TO BE PERFECT**

**\* COUNT YOUR BLESSING**

**\* DO NOT ALWAYS TRY TO COMPETE WITH OTHERS BECAUSE ALL OF US ARE DIFFERENT**

**\* BUILD A NETWORK OF FRIEND**

#### 4“A” FOR CONTROLLING STRESS

- ❖ **ACKNOWLEDGE:** Accept the fact that you have a problem and you are under stress. Accepting the problem will help you look for solutions.
- ❖ **APPRECIATE:** Every experience teaches us something even if it a negative one. All our experiences at present will help us to lead a better life in future.
- ❖ **ALTER:** Look for alternatives and options to handle your difficulty situation because every situation can be handled in different ways.
- ❖ **AVOID:** Any situation or person that causes unnecessary stress in you should be avoided. Stress can be momentary so do not let it affect your behaviour.

By adopting the above mentioned techniques one can reduce the stress to the minimum level .

**A smile brings a feeling of happiness and relieves stress!**

