



Different strategies for coping with Stress

KEYWORDS

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I. Introduction

Stress and strain are becoming the major causes of concern today. Most of the life style diseases are caused by stress either at work place or otherwise.

A generalized definition of stress is the wear and tear of our bodies experienced as we adjust to our continually changing environment, it has physical and emotional effects on us. Stress as a negative influence can result in feelings of distrust, rejection, anger and depression which in turn can lead to health problems such as headaches, upset stomachs, rashes, insomnia, ulcers, high blood pressures, heart diseases and strokes. With the death of a loved one, birth of a child, a new job or a new relationship, we experience stress as we readjust our lives. In so adjusting to different circumstances, stress will help or hinder us depending on how we react to it.

As per Morgan and King (1986) the stress is defined as an internal state which can be caused by physical demand on the body (diseased conditions, exercise, extremes of temperature and the like) or by environmental and social situations which are evaluated as potentially harmful, uncontrollable or exceeding our resources for coping. [1]

As per Hans Selye (1936) stress refers to non specific response of the body to any demand made upon it. [2]

According to Greenberg and Baron (2000) stress is multifaceted process that occurs in us in response to events that disrupt or threaten to disrupt our physical or psychological functioning. [3]

In psychology, coping is expending conscious effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems, and seeking to master, minimize or tolerate [stress](#) or [conflict](#). [4][5][6][7][8] By coping, we mean the degree to which the individuals are able to meet or master at least 3 kinds of challenges to their existence :

- 1) Direct challenges from the physical environment.
- 2) Challenges stemming from their physical environment.
- 3) Inter-personal challenges.

II RESEARCH ELABORATION: MECHANISMS TO COPE WITH STRESS Unhealthy ways of coping with stress

There are healthy as well as unhealthy ways of coping with stress. The unhealthy ways of coping with stress are:

- Smoking and/or drinking too much.

- Overeating or undereating.
- Sitting in front of TV or computers and not literally doing anything.
- Withdrawing from friends, family and social activities.
- Using pills or drugs to relax
- Sleeping too much
- Procrastinating.
- Losing temper, physical violence and lashing out at others.

Healthy ways of coping with stress

We must learn to cope with stress in healthier ways. The healthier ways are:

1. The first step in coping with stress is identifying the source of stress.
The sources of stress can be many. It is not very easy to identify one's stress sources, but for identification of your true sources of stress one has to look closely at one's habits, attitudes and behaviour. For coping with stress, one has to accept the responsibility for creating or maintaining it and has to understand himself that it is under one's control.
2. To avoid unnecessary stress one has to learn how to eliminate the number of stressors in one's life. He has to learn following:
 - a) One has to learn to say no firmly and politely in one's personal or professional life.
 - b) One must understand and know that he should avoid people who stress him out.
 - c) One should avoid those topics which triggers him like politics, religion, etc.
 - d) One should learn to take control of one's environment as much as possible by avoiding those things which make him anxious or worried.
3. If one can't avoid a stressful situation, he should change or alter the situation.
 - a) One should communicate and express one's feelings instead of bottling them up, and should learn to communicate in an open and respectful way.
 - b) One way to cope with stress is to be willing to compromise.
 - c) One should deal with problems as they come and try to be assertive.
 - d) Don't delay or procrastinate the problems and try to change poor time management.
4. One of the ways to cope with stress is to adapt to the stressor. One should learn to bring change in one's expect-

tations and attitudes.

- a) One should try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective.
- b) One should set reasonable standards for oneself and others and accept one's imperfections.

5. Some sources of stress are unavoidable. In such cases the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are.

- a) When one is facing major challenges, one should try to look at them as opportunities of personal growth.
- b) One should learn to express one's feeling whether with a therapist or a friend because this is very cathartic and alter the stress situations.
- c) Learn to forgive and forget, we all are humans and we make mistakes.

6. One can reduce stress in one's life by nurturing oneself and learning healthy ways to relax and recharge. This can be done by including rest and relaxation in one's daily schedule.

- a) Try to spend time with persons who are positive and who enhance positivity in you.
- b) Try to indulge oneself in leisure activities such as listening to music, watching films, etc.
- c) Don't let your sense of humour die and try to laugh at yourself too.

7. One way to cope with stress is by strengthening one's physical health.

- a) One should try to exercise regularly and have a healthy diet.
- b) Caffeine and sugar should be reduced to fight with stress.
- c) Alcohol, cigarettes and drugs may provide an escape from stress but the problems eventually become more

severe.

- d) Try to get enough sleep.

8. The other techniques which I have tried out myself are some relaxation techniques which are part Yoga techniques and part behavioural techniques. I've tried it out on jail inmates in Bhopal and some trainee officers in RCVP Noronha Academy of Administration; and a majority of them felt relaxed after trying out these techniques. Another stress buster is spirituality which is very fulfilling psychologically as one realises that one can leave his or her problems with God. Visiting temples, mosques, churches, dargahs, sat-sangs, etc. are great stress relievers.

III CONCLUSION

It is evident that stress in life is unavoidable, it cannot be eliminated, rather a healthy individual needs to learn ways to cope with his or her stresses and keep them under check so that they don't affect their normal lives. A sincere application of the above strategies helps us to cope up with stress and enables us to live a comparatively stress free life which in turn reduces chances of stress-related illnesses. However, it is wholly possible for a person to choose and select his own healthy stress-coping mechanisms from the ones listed in this paper.

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