

Stress Management- A Necessity



Commerce

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ABSTRACT

Stress is simply an indication within one's body that warns the person to identify and adjust his/ her perception of any situation. Stress, which is a response of body towards its environment, is actually caused by emotional disturbances. A person can get disturbed emotionally due to any among many reasons. When an emotion is suppressed for a period, it comes out in form of some physical ailment for example high blood pressure, ulcer, overactive thyroid, back pain, headache, neck pain, asthma, dry mouth, sweats, breathing heavily, muscle tensions, insomnia. Stress is a reality of everyday life. Work and non-work lives are prone to stress. Stress, if left untreated, can ruin an individual's health and life. It should be addressed and managed timely. The present paper is based on secondary sources of information. The paper aims at identifying the reasons and indicators of stress and then suggesting possible best methods of stress management.

Introduction

Stress is a part of everybody's life. Stress is body's physical, mental and chemical reactions to circumstances that strains or deforms. Stress is a natural human response to its environmental situations. There are emotions behind stress some of which are: fear, shame, guilt, anger, embarrassment, vulnerability, worry, invalidation and doubt. To a certain level stress act as a motivator (Eustress) but when stress is created by undesirable outcomes it becomes distress i.e. negative stress. Stress is the outcome of some emotion which is suppressed and often disguised by a physical ailment for example high blood pressure, ulcer, overactive thyroid, back pain, headache, neck pain, asthma, dry mouth, sweats, breathing heavily, muscle tensions, insomnia. Stress comes when some authentic feelings are denied for fear of judgment. People experience various forms of stress at home, work and in social gatherings. Stress is highly individualistic in nature. Personality is one factor which determines the way person handles stress. Easy going personalities are less vulnerable to stress.

Today's fast paced life style creates a great demand on one's emotions and resources. Statistics reveal that though 75-90% of doctor visits are for stress and anxiety related issues, many people don't take stress management seriously until they are on the verge of burnout or other stress related disease.

Stress is a reality of everyday life. Work and non-work lives are prone to stress. Work and non work life domains are closely related, so if one experiences stress at work, that will be carried over to home also, which will increase the sense of small distresses being experienced in the family and reverse is also true.

Stress Management

Stress management means to manage stress. To manage stress means to identify the reasons for stress in life and then to find out the best possible way out to control and eliminate the stress. A person can get stressed due to personal or work life circumstances. To manage stress he/she should find the reason behind it and then stress can be managed by eliminating or controlling those reasons. Sometimes stress comes due to certain reasons which are out of control, then the person has to honor his highest logical level i.e. his spirituality. Work life stress can be managed at individual level personally and organizational level by setting more clear goals, improved communication and participative decision making.

Sources of stress:

Individual stressors:

Stress comes when we resist what is in our life. Stress is concerned with constraints and demands. When we want for certain outcome which is uncertain and important for us, then

we become prone to stress. If it does not come true as per our wishes, then we resort to 'whyology' i.e. the obsession to know why things happen as they do. The result is emotional paralysis which keeps us stuck.

At individual level, one may be concerned about job security, career progress, career changes, economic problems, life traumas and life structure changes. Additional responsibilities of handling personal, social and cultural dilemmas of balancing work and family, discharging parenting duties, handling competition at work place and within family are sources of stress at individual level. In dual career families a lot of personal commitments are demanded from both of the spouses since both have to manage their career as well as family.

Indicators of stress at individual level

- Unusual fatigue
- Feeling weary, exhausted, drained and tired
- Trouble sleeping, stomach upsets and panic attacks
- Unexplained muscle tensions and headaches
- Impatience, irritability, depression and nervousness
- Intense desire to withdraw from friends and colleagues

Coping strategies:

Self assessment: To handle stress at personal level, it is imperative to conduct a frank introspection. Any of the indications mentioned above may be present. Reason for their presence may be any. To reduce and manage stress, one must honor his/her uniqueness and practice living life from an exciting and fascinated perspective.

Emotional integration: Emotions, thoughts and perspective of an individual are used to manage stress. Focusing on positive side and channelizing emotions towards the aim of human life will help manage stress. So positive encouragement and self talk are helpful in reducing stress.

Inner Anchoring: Stress can be managed through teachings of religious realisers. If the stress source is career related then one should develop high philosophy of life beyond his career only. Inner anchoring helps manage stress through:

Honoring highest logical level i. e. spirituality. One must expand his awareness of his spiritual connection with God. Take the time to hear His whisper.

Practicing control over disruptive emotions such as anger, rivalry, greed etc. Because controllable stresses causes are jealousy, competitive rivalry, greed, high ego, vindictiveness and unethical practices.

Consciously cultivating higher values such as compassion, gratitude, forbearance and contentment etc. because this will help mind to relax and thus reduce reasons causing stress.

Habitual transformation: As there is direct relationship between personal habits and perceived stress, one must adopt healthy habits like healthy nutrition, regular exercise, daily walk, conscious breathing, reconnection with sense of humor on daily basis and regular sleep and should avoid unhealthy lifestyle choices such as gambling, alcohol/drug abuse and abusive relationships.

Organizational stressors:

At organizational level, there are many factors which results in stress for persons such as nature of job, lack of autonomy, working conditions, workload, role conflict, role ambiguity, role overload, role erosion, organizational life cycle, leadership factors and structural factors. If the job is of routine, dull boring nature or involves frequent transfers or travelling, the employee is likely to experience stress. Working conditions where temperatures, noise are in routine, increase anxiety. Interdependence among tasks of employees results in stress whereas autonomy tends to lessen it. Working entire shift without break and overworking are the major sources of stress. Role ambiguity is another source of stress among employees which makes them uncertain about organizational objectives and their role to achieve them. When some functions which should properly belong to one's role are transferred to some other role, i.e. role erosion results in stress for him. Inconsistent performance appraisal and recognition processes are also stress booster for employees. On the broad base, organizational stress can be classified as:

Anticipatory stress: When an employee feels unsure about some of his status related responsibilities and worry about getting hacked for the same, i.e. he anticipates the future to be influencing and uncontrollable, he become prone to stress.

Encounter stress: Individual contacts are also a source of stress. Encounter stress is felt when an employee is to interact with clients and customers who may be in some kind of stress. Moreover if an employee is to answer the queries about any incident for which he could be responsible, he feels stress.

Situational stress: Situations, over which employees do not have any control, become the source of stress. Such situations may include loss of acceptance or change in status in an individual's group, conflict of interest etc. Besides, when an employee is made responsible for major mistakes before managerial personnel and his colleagues, he becomes prone to situational stress.

Time Stress: The fear of failing to do something important in time accentuates the tendency to be stressful. Due to shortage of time for meeting deadlines, employees feel trapped and dissatisfied about their status and thus stressful.

Indicators of stress at organizational level

- Lack of interest in work
- Feeling of indifference and boredom at workplace
- Too much anxious, depressive and irritable behavior
- Short temperament and mood swings

Employees look sad, worried and miserable and they avoid company of their colleagues, when they are under stress. It is imperative to find out the reasons for stress so as to devise best suited remedy to such stress. One of the interventions an organizer can make is to approach the stressed employees at the right time to address the sources of their stress and then to realize them how their stress is impacting their work and work environment. The organizer can discuss the impacts of stress at their personal front while ensuring that they are not being subjected to intimidation and humiliation. Once the sources of stress are identified and addressed, follow up is necessary to ensure that the employees are overcoming the stress.

Conclusion:

Stress is natural fact of life. To a certain extent it acts as motivator but as excess of everything is bad, excess stress if left untreated, can ruin an individual's health and life. It should be addressed and managed timely. Today one has many reasons to get stressed but it can be addressed well if he manages to be grateful to God for everything he has got and integrates himself with God. At organizational and individual level, stress can be managed through personality integration i.e. application of a six step process:

- Desire for integration
 - Acceptance of higher philosophy of life
 - Direction of emotions to God
 - Expression of inner divinity
 - Cultivation of higher tendencies
 - Practice of concentration
- (Swami Akhilanand)

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