



Stress Management

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ABSTRACT

Stress management starts with identifying the sources of stress in your life. This isn't as easy as it sounds. Your true sources of stress aren't always obvious, and it's all too easy to overlook your own stress-inducing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. Sure, you may know that you're constantly worried about work deadlines. But maybe it's your procrastination, rather than the actual job demands, that leads to deadline stress. To identify your true sources of stress, look closely at your habits, attitude, and excuses. A Stress SWOT Analysis helps you to understand your unique position with respect to stress management. By looking at strengths, you ensure that you recognize all of the personal strengths, skills, resources and social networks that can help you manage stress.

Keywords : Definitions of Stress management, Effect of Stress, Stress Signals, Stress management strategy, Stress SWOT Analysis

Introduction:

'The way your body responds to the demands of your life style' i.e., the effects of wear and tear on your body. Most people think of stress as a mental state but it is in fact, very largely, a physical condition. When a person is subjected to a stress-producing effect known as stressor (a challenge, pressure, stimulus, external influence, etc.) it is registered in the brain. The brain gives various parts of the body instructions for a chain of reactions known as stress reaction or stress response. Different People can tolerate different levels of stress. Each person needs to work on their own stress control techniques according to their tolerance levels.

Definitions of Stress management:

A set of techniques used to help an individual cope more effectively with difficult situations in order to feel better emotionally, improve behavioral skills, and often to enhance feelings of control. Effect of Stress:

Positive effects of stress:

Stress is valuable under certain circumstances, e.g. sports, making speeches and taking examinations. The stress response puts people on their mettle, increase alertness, improves sight, strengthens muscles and reduces reaction times. The stress response increases our ability to stand and fight or turn and flee and to mobilize all our resources to achieve whatever we decide to do. Another positive is the zest that stress adds to life by stimulating the stress and the passions. Many people need challenge in their lives and would be unhappy without it. Stress only has a positive effect if it is not allowed to build up or feed on itself, i.e. if it can be worked off.

Negative effects of stress:

The negative effects of stress show particularly when a person allows stress to remain in the body, usually when a person allows stress to remain in the body, usually when there is no chance to take the necessary steps to release a stress response that is too strong or lasts too long.

The negative effects of stress show up in three ways in particular:

1. Unsuitable behavior
2. Lower energy and performance levels
3. Poorer health

Here are some examples of the negative effects of stress:

1. Unsuitable behavior

- Loser behavior • Bad smoking, eating and drinking habits
- More frequent mistakes • Less flexibility

2. Lower energy and performance levels

- Reduced concentration • Increased forgetfulness
- Poor judgment • Prone to feeling of tiredness

3. Poorer to health

- Heart and circulatory diseases • Ulcers
- Infectious diseases • Skin diseases

Stress Signals:

1. Physical

- Changes in breathing rhythm • Tense and aching muscles
- Headaches • Sweating
- Cold hands and feet • Changes in appetite
- Stomach problems, heartburn

2. Mental

- Lack of concentration • More frequent mistakes
- Forgetfulness/ Absentmindedness • Tendency to over-react
- Poorer judgement

3. Emotional

- Irritation / Short Temper • Nervousness
- Depression/Silence • Emotional outbursts/Crying

4. Behavioral

- Insomnia • Increased drinking and smoking
- Absenteeism • Clumsiness

Stress management strategy:

The Four A's

Change the situation: Change your reaction:

- Avoid the stressor. • Adapt to the stressor.
- Alter the stressor. • Accept the stressor.

1. Avoid unnecessary stress:

Not all stress can be avoided, and it's not healthy to avoid a situation that needs to be addressed. You may be surprised, however, by the number of stressors in your life that you can eliminate.

- **Learn how to say "no"** – Know your limits and stick to them. Whether in your personal or professional life, re-

fuse to accept added responsibilities when you're close to reaching them. Taking on more than you can handle is a surefire recipe for stress.

- **Avoid people who stress you out** – If someone consistently causes stress in your life and you can't turn the relationship around, limit the amount of time you spend with that person or end the relationship entirely.
- **Take control of your environment** – If the evening news makes you anxious, turn the TV off. If traffic's got you tense, take a longer but less-traveled route. If going to the market is an unpleasant chore, do your grocery shopping online.

2. Alter the situation

If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Figure out what you can do to change things so the problem doesn't present itself in the future.

- **Express your feelings instead of bottling them up.** If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. If you don't voice your feelings, resentment will build and the situation will likely remain the same.
- **Be willing to compromise.** When you ask someone to change their behavior, be willing to do the same. If you both are willing to bend at least a little, you'll have a good chance of finding a happy middle ground.
- **Be more assertive.** Don't take a backseat in your own life. Deal with problems head on, doing your best to anticipate and prevent them. If you've got an exam to study for and your chatty roommate just got home, say up front that you only have five minutes to talk.
- **Manage your time better.** Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you're stretched too thin and running behind, it's hard to stay calm and focused. But if you plan ahead and make sure you don't overextend yourself, you can alter the amount of stress you're under.

3. Adapt to the stressor

If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

- **Reframe problems.** Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Rather than fuming about a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to pause and regroup, listen to your favorite radio station, or enjoy some alone time.
- **Look at the big picture.** Take perspective of the stressful situation. Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.
- **Adjust your standards.** Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others, and learn to be okay with "good enough."
- **Focus on the positive.** When stress is getting you down, take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life, including your own positive qualities and gifts. This simple strategy can help you keep things in perspective.

4. Accept the things you can't change:

Some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can't prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession.

- **Don't try to control the uncontrollable.** Many things in life are beyond our control— particularly the behavior of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems.

- **Look for the upside.** As the saying goes, "What doesn't kill us makes us stronger." When facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth. If your own poor choices contributed to a stressful situation, reflect on them and learn from your mistakes.
- **Share your feelings.** Talk to a trusted friend or make an appointment with a therapist. Expressing what you're going through can be very cathartic, even if there's nothing you can do to alter the stressful situation.

Stress SWOT Analysis:

SWOT Analysis is a useful technique used for understanding an organization's strategic position. It is routinely used to identify and summarize: Strengths: **The capabilities, resources and advantages of an organization.** The Stress SWOT tool is a variant of this technique, focused on helping you to understand your unique strengths and weaknesses in the way you manage stress.

Using the Tool:

Strengths:

To use the tool, start by listing your strengths. Write down :Your personal strengths – things you are good at and people respect you for, your areas of good experience, etc.; Your support network – family, friends, professional or other networks, government services, powerful contacts, co-workers, your team, etc.; and The resources you can draw on – money, assets, power, etc.

Finally, look back into the past, and think about times when you handled intense stress successfully. Again, write down how you did this.

Weaknesses:

Next, list your personal weaknesses and the limitations in your position. Write down :Personal weaknesses – areas where you are aware that you are not strong, or things that people fairly criticize you for; Lack of resources – where other people at your level have access to these resources, or where the absence of resources is impacting your situation; and Bad situations – where you are experiencing problems with your job or relationships, or where you have a poor living or working environment.

Opportunities:

In the Opportunities section, brainstorm the opportunities you have available to you.

First, work your way through the strengths you have identified. Ask yourself how you can draw on these strengths to help you manage stress. For example, are there people whose job it is to help you? Are there people whose help you could call on? Could you pay people to take on tasks you do not have time for? Second, work through the weaknesses you have identified. These are opportunities for positive change and for development of new skills.

Threats: In the threats section, consider the consequences of leaving your weaknesses uncovered.

Consider the damage to relationships, career and happiness that would come from failing to manage stress. Use this consideration of the downside as a spur to ensure that you take stress management seriously!

Conclusion:

It may seem that there's nothing you can do about your stress level. The bills aren't going to stop coming, there will never be more hours in the day for all your errands, and your career or family responsibilities will always be demanding. But you have a lot more control than you might think. In fact, the simple realization that you're in control of your life is the foundation of stress management.