



STRESS MANAGEMENT

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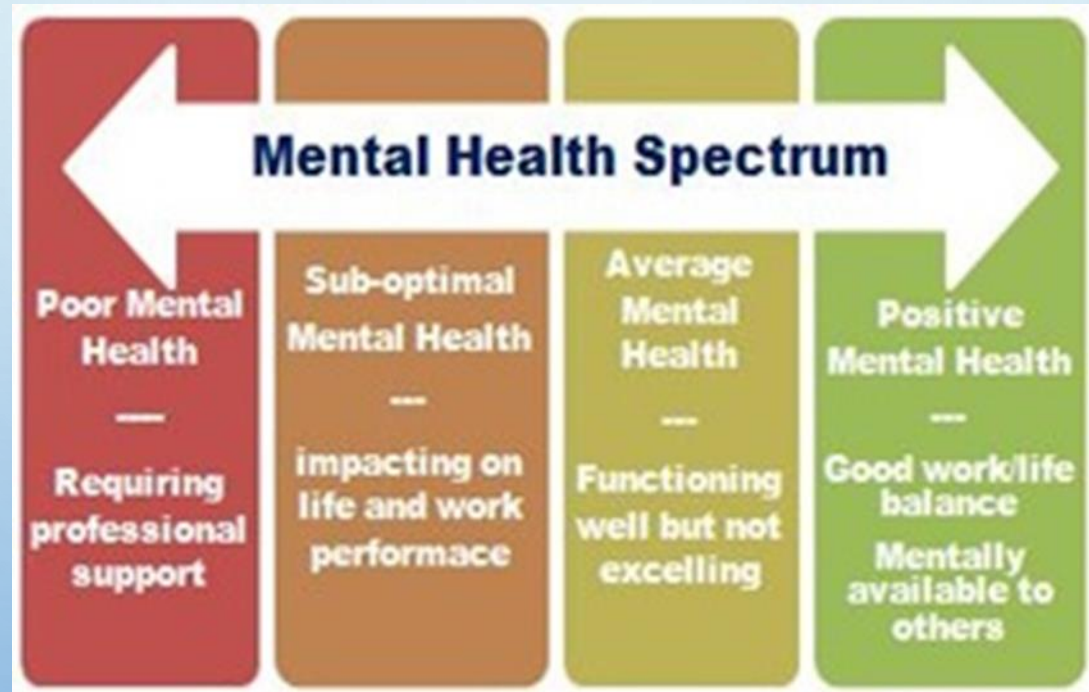
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MENTAL HEALTH



- The WHO defines Mental Health as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community
- It encompasses emotional, psychological, cognitive and social well-being
- Mental disorders can and do affect all of us to a certain degree

MENTAL HEALTH SPECTRUM





MENTAL HEALTH SPECTRUM

- Mental health is a spectrum and we all fall somewhere on that wide spectrum
- Mental disorders can manifest in something as small as **stress** and something as major as schizophrenia
- There is generally stigma associated with mental illness and very few of us can ever admit when things are not going well with us mentally
- Mental disorders are not a sign of personal failure, they are illnesses like any other

STRESS

- Stress is your body's way of responding to any kind of demand or threat.
- The “fight-or-flight” reaction or the "stress response."
- It is a normal reaction and positive reaction
- Keeps you focused, energetic and alert
- Helps you slam the brakes when you need to, when you have an exam or work deadline it keeps you awake at night!

SO WHAT GOES WRONG?

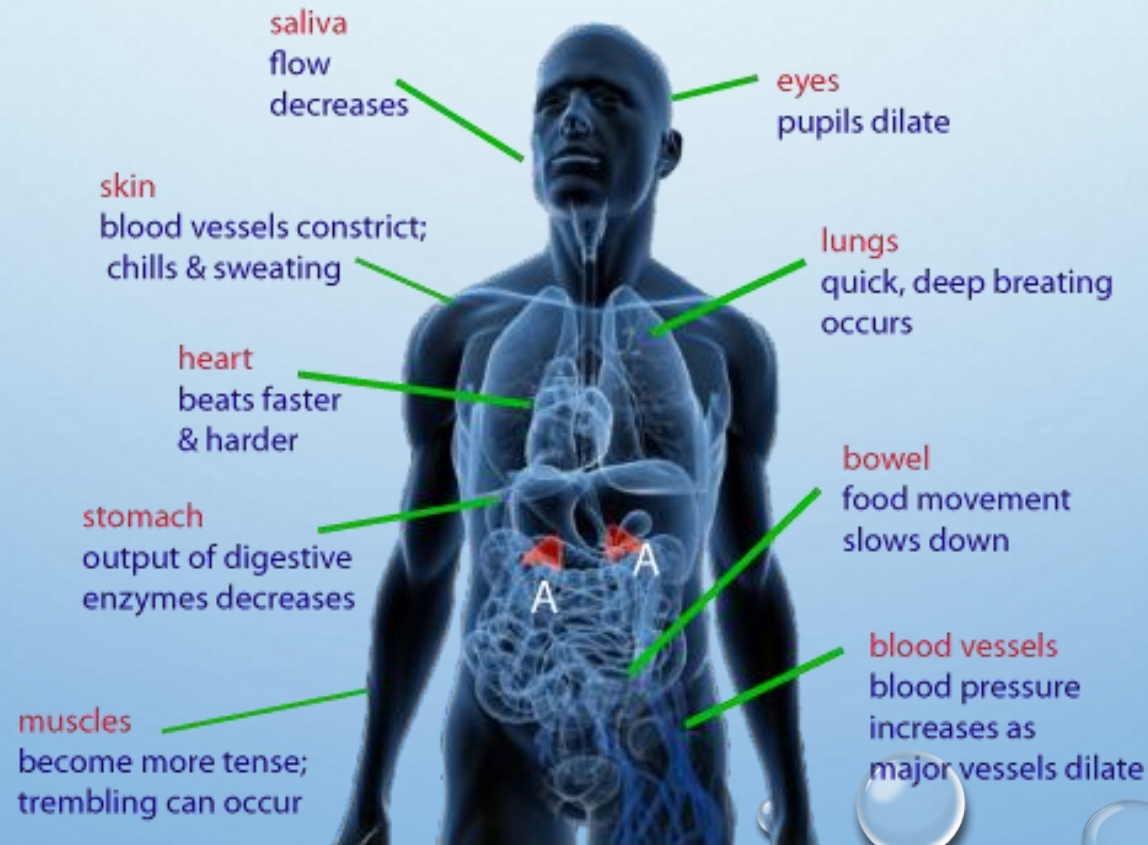
- Unfortunately your nervous systems is not very good at distinguishing between emotional and physical threats
- Your nervous system responds by releasing a flood of stress hormones, including **adrenaline and cortisol**, which rouse the body for emergency action
- This reaction is the same when you are “stressed” over an argument with a friend or a true life-or-death situation
- “STRESS” or chronic stress or distress occurs when our stress levels are high over a long time and tension builds up



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STRESS RESPONSE

Fight or Flight Response



NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF STRESS

- Depression and anxiety
- Pain of any kind
- Sleep problems
- Autoimmune diseases
- Digestive problems
- Skin conditions, such as eczema
- Heart disease
- Weight problems
- Reproductive issues
- Thinking and memory problems

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS

- Memory problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor judgment
- Seeing only the negative
- Anxious or racing thoughts
- Constant worrying

EMOTIONAL SYMPTOMS

- Depression or general unhappiness
- Moodiness, irritability, or anger
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Loneliness and isolation

PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS

- Aches and pains
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Nausea, dizziness
- Chest pain, rapid heart rate
- Loss of sex drive
- Frequent colds or flu

BEHAVIOURAL SYMPTOMS

- Eating more or less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Withdrawing from others
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)

CAUSES OF STRESS

- Stress can be caused by external (the outside world) or internal (personal perceptions)

External stressors include;

- Major life changes – such as divorce, separation, death of a loved one, job loss, imprisonment, illness
- Work or school
- Relationship problems
- Financial difficulties
- Busy schedule
- Family problems/ children

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CAUSES OF STRESS

Internal factors include;

- Pessimism
- Inability to accept uncertainty
- Rigid thinking / lack of flexibility
- Negative self-talk
- Unrealistic expectations / perfectionism



DEALING WITH STRESS

- Get moving
- Eat right
- Connect
- Confront
- Relax
- Engage
- Rest

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GET MOVING



- Physical exercise is nature's way of combating stress [think of Eden]
- Endorphins – feel good hormones counter adrenaline and cortisol
- Takes your mins off your problems
- 75 minutes of high intensity exercise per week (running, jogging, skipping, HIIT)
- 150 minutes of moderate to low intensity exercise per week (walking, cycling, swimming, yoga)
- Sessions should be split over 3 – 5 days
- At least 30 mins of strength training per week
- At least 5 mins of stretching per day (when exercising)

EAT RIGHT

- The food you eat can improve or worsen your mood and affect your ability to cope with life's stressors
- Processed foods or foods high in sugar can worsen your mood by causing unstable blood glucose levels
- The closer to nature it is the better [think of Eden]
- 25% starchy vegetables/ high fiber whole grain carbohydrates
- 25% plant based proteins (only 10% of this should come from animal sources)
- 50% fruits and vegetables
- Drink at least 2 liters of water
- Avoid alcohol
- Detoxify at least monthly



STRESS AND DIET

- When **VITAMIN C** intake is increased, the harmful effects of the stress hormones are reduced and the body's ability to cope with the stress response improves [citrus fruits, peppers, tomatoes, green leafy vegetables]
- The majority of the **B-VITAMINS** function in the development and maintenance of the nervous system, support the adrenal glands and improves coping mechanisms [whole grains, seeds, nuts, green leafy vegetables, legumes, citrus fruits]
- The brain needs **OMEGA 3 FATTY ACIDS** for the formation of healthy nerve cells. It is a good natural anti-depressant. [soya beans, chia seeds, flax seeds, walnuts, fish oils]
- **COMPLEX CARBOHYDRATES-WHOLE GRAINS, VEGETABLES AND FRUITS** will boost levels of serotonin, a chemical in the brain that makes us calm



CONNECT

- The simple act of talking **face-to-face** with another human can trigger hormones that relieve stress [think of Eden]
- Put your phone away and connect with people
- Spend time with people who lift your mood – avoid negative people
- If your relationships are the source of your stress, make it a priority to build stronger and more satisfying connections

CONFRONT

- Deal with the problem head on
- Do you need to have an uncomfortable conversation with someone?
- Resolve conflicts in the work place and at home – talk
- Bring in a third party if necessary
- Do you need to review your spending habits
- Will counselling help?



RELAX

- You can't completely eliminate stress from your life, but you can control how much it affects you.
- Find time to quieten your mind
- Meditation, quiet time, prayer
- Isaiah 26vs3 Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee.
- Philippians 4 vs 6

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Choose not to worry [Matt 6 vs 25- 34]

- 40% of the things you worry about will never occur anyway
- 30% of the things you worry about are in the past can't be changed by all the worry in the world
- Needless worries about our health -12%
- Petty, miscellaneous worries – 10%
- Real, legitimate worries – 8%

ENGAGE

- Engage healthy in activities you enjoy
- Start a hobby
- Listen to music
- Reading
- Travel
- Photography
- Take up a sport



REST

- Rest your mind
- Enjoy at least 7 hours of good quality sleep
- Go to bed at least an hour or two before midnight
- Avoid heavy meals in the evening eat 2 -3 hours before bedtime
- Avoid electronics before bed
- Switch off your phone or put it on silent



THE SABBATH SECRET

- The bible speaks of a day of rest and it calls it the Sabbath, maybe God was onto something!
[Genesis 2 vs 2 – 3, Exodus 20 vs 8-11]
- Break the vicious cycle
- It is a day to change focus
- It is a day to worship God
- It is a day to refresh, rejuvenate and reflect
- Also spend this time with loved ones
- Involve yourself in acts of charity
- In so doing you recharge and sharpen the saw!

THE END

