



# **STRESS MANAGEMENT: A BRIEF REVIEW**

EAP Health and Wellness Presentation

# STRESS MANAGEMENT: A BRIEF REVIEW



“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms – to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.” - Viktor Frankl

# OBJECTIVES

- Recognize signs of stress in yourself
- Learn how beliefs affect stress level
- Identify resources to manage stress



# WHAT IS STRESS?

The American Psychological Association's (APA) 2019 "Stress in America" poll results show that a majority of adults experience significant stress around:

- The current political climate (62%)
- Health care (69%)
- Mass shootings (71%)

Nearly 3 in 5 adults say they could have used more emotional support in the last year.

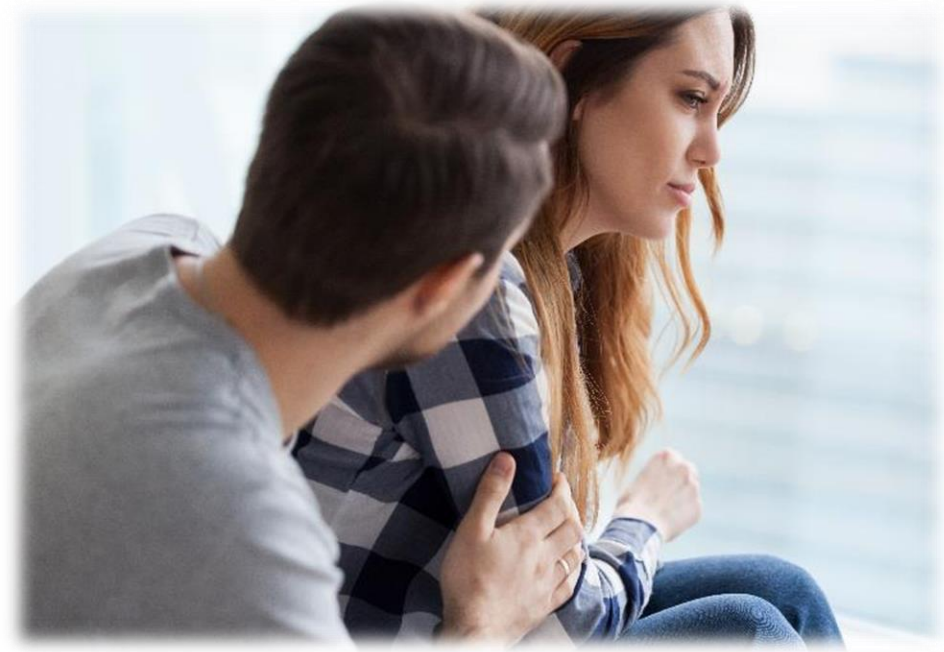
<https://www.apa.org/topics/stress>

# PHYSICAL SIGNS OF STRESS

- Faster heartbeat
- Increased sweating
- Cool skin (cold hands & feet)
- Feelings of nausea, or “butterflies in your stomach”
- Rapid breathing
- Tense muscles, aches & pains
- Dry mouth
- Changes in appetite
- Frequent colds
- Lowered energy, feelings of intense and long-term tiredness
- Worsening of asthma, back pain, digestive problems, headaches, skin eruptions
- Sexual side effects
- Difficulty sleeping

# EMOTIONAL SIGNS OF STRESS

- Feelings of sadness
- Anxious or nervous
- Fearfulness
- Feelings of dissatisfaction
- Frustration
- Defensiveness
- Short-tempered, irritable, angry
- Pessimism, unusually negative



# BEHAVIORAL SIGNS OF STRESS

- Reduced personal effectiveness, changes in work habits, making more errors at work
- Poor decision-making or difficulty making decisions
- Difficulty concentrating
- Unusually forgetful or accident prone
- Social isolation
- Increased absenteeism/sick leave
- Neglect of personal appearance
- Increase in smoking, alcohol use, medication, and other drugs
- Unusually abrupt or impatient with others
- Fiddling, twitching, nail biting, grinding teeth, drumming fingers, pacing

# LONG TERM EFFECTS OF STRESS

- Chronic conditions including diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart and gastric diseases
- All forms of pain such as headaches, backaches, stomach, joint, and muscle aches
- Insomnia, inability to get to and stay asleep
- Persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness
- Lowered resistance to contagious illnesses
- Overuse of drugs or alcohol



# WHEN STRESS STRIKES

What are your emotional, physical and behavioral signs of stress?

How do you know if you are stressed?

Do you recognize when stress is building to an unhealthy level?



# TIME TO CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE

*“I have not failed.*

*I’ve just found 10,000 ways that don’t work.”*

Thomas Edison

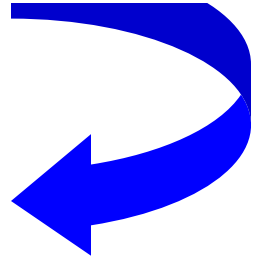
# THE ABC TECHNIQUE: IDENTIFYING BELIEFS

(REIVICH AND SHATTE, 2003)

**A - ACTUAL** event (source of stress) Any problem situation (big or small)



**B - BELIEFS**  
What the situation means to you. May include “shoulds, oughts, musts...”



**C - CONSEQUENCES**  
How the situation affects you emotionally, behaviorally, & physically (anger, stress, etc.)



**E – EFFECTIVE**  
outlook



**D – DISPUTING** and changing absolute thinking and beliefs

# IDENTIFYING AND AVOIDING THINKING TRAPS

(REIVICH AND SHATTE, 2003)

- Jumping to Conclusions
  - Slow down and ask yourself “What evidence do I have for my conclusion?”
- Tunnel Vision
  - Ask yourself “What more important or relevant information did I miss?”
- Overgeneralization
  - Be open-minded. Ask yourself, “Is there a reason that might explain the behavior?”
- Magnifying & Minimizing
  - Be evenhanded. Ask yourself, “Am I looking at the worst possible outcome? What are the alternatives? Am I looking at only the negative? What positive events occurred?”

# IDENTIFYING AND AVOIDING THINKING TRAPS

(REIVICH AND SHATTE, 2003)

- Personalizing
  - Look outward. Ask yourself, “How did others or circumstances contribute to the problem or issue?”
- Externalizing
  - Look inward. Ask yourself, “How did I contribute to the problem or issue?”
- Mind Reading
  - Ask clarifying information. Check to see what the other party was really thinking. Ask, “Did you mean....?” or “Can I clarify what you meant?”
  - Speak up. Ask yourself, “Did I express myself well? Did I ask for enough information?”
- Catastrophizing
  - Put it in perspective. What is the best case/most likely/worst outcome?

# RESILIENCE

The American Psychological Association (APA) defines resiliency as the ability to adapt positively in the face of adversity, trauma, or tragedy.

Successful stress management is about controlling or “managing” how you respond to difficult events/situations, not about “controlling” your environment.

# FOCUSING & CALMING

- Use thought stopping
- Manage use of time
- Effectively delegate
- Breathe
- Practice progressive muscle relaxation
- Use positive imagery



# BALANCED LIVING PRACTICES

- Eat a healthy balanced diet
- Add exercise and stretching to your daily routine
- Get a good night of sleep
- Add humor
- Build and maintain support





# SUMMARY

- Recognize signs of stress in yourself
- Identify typical sources of stress, and how beliefs contribute to stress
- Develop new skills and balanced living practices to build resilience and manage stress



# THANK YOU



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