

Stress

What is Stress?

Stress is the presence of pressure or tension on an object or person. Humans experience stress when faced with difficulties or challenges. Stress isn't always bad. It alerts us to the fact that something isn't right. We are motivated to do things that need to be done, or make positive changes. A student stressed about an exam will be motivated to study hard and prepare well. Knowing they have done their best helps to relieve the stress. Events or situations that cause stress are *stressors*.

Too much unrelieved stress erodes health emotionally, mentally and physically, contributing to conditions like anxiety and depression. Adrenalin released into the blood stream can cause high blood pressure. We are not all stressed by the same things. Knowing your stressors is important. You are then better prepared to take evasive and preventative action.

Types of Stress

Acute Stress is about particular situations. Once the situation is over, the stress dissipates.

Episodic Stress is a repetitive occurrence of acute stress. You may have the same stressful situation occurring regularly, such as meeting a regular deadline at work.

Chronic Stress is an ongoing occurrence of stress from the regular demands of life, caused by a plethora of stressful situations, constantly occurring and causing a stress overload.

Causes of Stress

External causes of stress include:

- ◆ Accidents
- ◆ Attacks
- ◆ Bullying
- ◆ Conflicts
- ◆ Crime
- ◆ Family problems
- ◆ Famine
- ◆ Generation differences
- ◆ Job loss
- ◆ Political conflicts
- ◆ Prices going up
- ◆ Stressful environments.
- ◆ Unemployment
- ◆ Wars
- ◆ Workplace change
- ◆ Reading negative news reports about any of the above

Internal causes of stress include:

- ◆ Anxieties
- ◆ Apprehensions,
- ◆ Disappointments
- ◆ Fears and Phobias
- ◆ Unpleasant thoughts and memories

Symptoms of Stress

Symptoms of stress include:

- ◆ Aches and pains
- ◆ Headaches
- ◆ Upset stomach
- ◆ Unable to 'switch off'
- ◆ Feeling overwhelmed,
- ◆ Lethargy and tiredness
- ◆ Concentration problems
- ◆ Not relaxing or sleeping well
- ◆ Emotional imbalance or outbursts
- ◆ Reduced confidence and self-esteem
- ◆ Withdrawal from people and situations
- ◆ Negative effects on appetite or social skills
- ◆ Difficulty facing and coping with problems
- ◆ Increasing dependence on alcohol or medication
- ◆ Constant feelings of disappointment, sadness or discouragement

Managing Stress

- ◆ Avoid negative self-talk
- ◆ Open your heart and smile
- ◆ Accept and give help when needed
- ◆ Become aware of your own stressors
- ◆ Practice regular relaxation and walks in nature
- ◆ Make positive self-statements, such as 'I am calm'
- ◆ Keep a supportive network of family and friends
- ◆ Identify early warning signs, such as body tensing
- ◆ Healthy practices for eating, sleeping and exercise
- ◆ Learn Mindfulness meditation and other self-help techniques - Contact us below to find out how.

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