Lecture 2

Managing Stress: Coping with Life’s Challenges

HEAL 101: Health and Lifestyle

Kevin Petti, Ph.D.
Department of Natural Sciences, Health, Exercise Science and Nutrition
San Diego Miramar College

Objectives

- Define Stress
- Explain the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)
- Examine health risks associated with chronic stress
- Discuss psychosocial, environmental and self-imposed sources of stress
- Examine special stressors affecting college students
- Explore coping techniques for stressors
- Examine role of spirituality in dealing with stress

What is Stress?

- Strain or tension that disturbs an individual's physical, mental or emotional equilibrium
- Any stimulus that causes the hypothalamus to release Corticotropin Releasing Factor (CRF)
- The nonspecific response of the body to any demand placed upon it
- Any stimulus that disrupts homeostasis
- Mental and physical response of our bodies to the changes and challenges in our lives

Stress Key Terms

- Stressor - physical, social, or psychological event that requires adjustment or disrupts homeostasis
- Eustress - stress that presents opportunities for personal growth - Good Stress
- Distress - stress that can have a negative effect on health - Bad Stress
General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)

- Alarm phase
  - Fight-or-flight response
  - Reaction of the autonomic nervous system (sympathetic and parasympathetic systems)
- Resistance phase: return to homeostasis
- Exhaustion phase: stress overload

The General Adaptation Syndrome: Alarm Phase

- Physical effects of stress may include:
  - CVD risks
  - Impaired immunity (psychoneuroimmunology)
  - Digestive Disorders
  - Reproductive Disorders
    - Dysmenorrhea/Amenorrhea/Erectile Dysfunction
  - Tension Headaches
  - Migraine Headaches
**Stress and Your Body**

- Skin Disorders
  - Herpes, Acne, Hives
- Muscular Pain
- Hypertension
- Heart Disease
- Stroke
- Cancer
- Mental Disability and Emotional Dysfunction
  - Depression, Anxiety, Mental Illness, Suicide

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**Sources of Stress**

**Life Changes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital separation</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jail term</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal injury or illness</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fired at work</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in health of family member</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gain of new family member</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business readjustment</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in financial state</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change to a different line of work</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreclosure or mortgage or loan</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Sources of Stress**

**Personality**

- Type A Personality
- Type B Personality

- Which Personality Type is Linked With Disease?
- Which Disease is it Linked To?
- Is Everyone Either Type A or Type B?
- Should We Try To Convert Personality Types?
- Which Personality Type Are You?

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**Sources of Stress**

**Student Stress**

- Traditional (younger) versus Returning (older) Students
- Traditional Students Feeling Pressure From: Parents, Career Decisions, Schools to Attend
- Returning Students Feeling Pressure From: Employers, Juggling Family, Home, Career and School
Signs of Student Stress:
- Difficulty keeping up with classes
- Frequent clashes with friends
- Hostile or angry feelings
- Disinterest in social activities
- Increased use of alcohol or other drugs
- Sleep disturbances
- Problems making decisions
- Inability to listen

Sources of Stress

- Occupational Stress
  - Role Overload: Workaholism & Burnout
  - Role Ambiguity
  - Role Insufficiency
- Dual Career Family
  - Housekeeping
  - Time For Spouse
  - Childcare
  - Single Parenting (with career and school?)

Sources of Stress

- Urban Living
  - Traffic
  - Noise
  - Overcrowding
  - Crime
- Daily Hassles
  - Rushing
  - Fatigue
  - Tasks (shopping, getting gas)

Sources of Stress

- Social Stressors
  - Isolation
  - Discrimination
  - Unemployment
  - Illness
  - Money
  - Family

Sources of Stress

- Self-Imposed stress
  - Low self-esteem
  - Certain personality types
  - Lack of psychological hardiness
  - External locus of control
Coping with Stress

Manage Your Time Productively & Creatively
- Good time management strategies include
  - Setting priorities
  - Scheduling tasks for peak efficiency
  - Setting, writing down, visualizing realistic goals
  - Break up long-term goals into short-term ones
  - Delegating responsibilities
  - Taking breaks and saying no when necessary

Practice Relaxation Techniques
- Choose and practice a relaxation technique
- Do so until it becomes natural
- Use it whenever you feel the need

Incorporate Regular Exercise Into Your Daily Life
- Exercise helps relieve tension and it burns calories
- Even small amounts of activity such as climbing stairs is helpful
- Eat A Nutritious Diet
  - Limit caffeine intake
  - Eat high-fiber and low-fat

Change Your Thinking
- Worry constructively
- Moderate expectations
- Monitor self-talk
- Weed out trivia
- Live in the present
- Cultivate your sense of humor
- Be flexible; accept what you can’t change
Coping with Stress

- Develop Spiritually
  - Take Solace in God
  - Engage in Prayer (meditation?)
- Manage Anger

Steps in Anger Control

1. Learn problem-solving techniques. Think of viable options. Rather than complaining, suggest possible solutions. Seek opportunities rather than problems. Try to adopt a more optimistic reframing of your situation.
2. Develop a support system. Find a trusted friend to confide in and with whom you can openly vent. Listen to what others have to say. Try to get objective opinions rather than persuading others to agree with you. Use such input as you determine realistic solutions to problems.
3. Plan ahead. You’ll learn from your journal which situations trip you up. If it’s traffic, plan ahead or take alternate routes. If it’s your parents, think about how you’ll respond to get the results you want.
4. Learn to express feelings comfortably and constructively. Don’t avoid, ignore, or repress them permanently. Deal with the situation after the initial rage reaction has cooled. Express yourself openly and honestly. Learning to control your outbursts and stay composed is a real gift.
5. Learn to deescalate. Count to 10, take a walk, take some deep breaths, get a drink of water. Take time out to validate your feelings, assess consequences of possible actions, and regroup. Try to rechannel anger. Punch a pillow, weed the yard, vacuum your room.
6. Know your anger style. Do you hold anger in, or are you the kind of person who explodes? Know what “trips your trigger.” Keep a journal of such times, places, people, and settings. Avoid these if possible.

Alternative Stress Management Techniques

- Hypnosis
- Massage therapy
- Meditation
- Biofeedback

Technostress

- Technostress: caused or increased by reliance on technological devices
- Set rules for Internet time
- Take regular breaks
- Resist the urge to buy newest technology
- Do not take technological devices on vacation
- Back up materials on your computer regularly