

# ***MANAGING STRESS***

***Earl G Wright M.D. M.P.H.***

**THERE IS NO GOOD HEALTH WITHOUT GOOD MENTAL  
HEALTH**

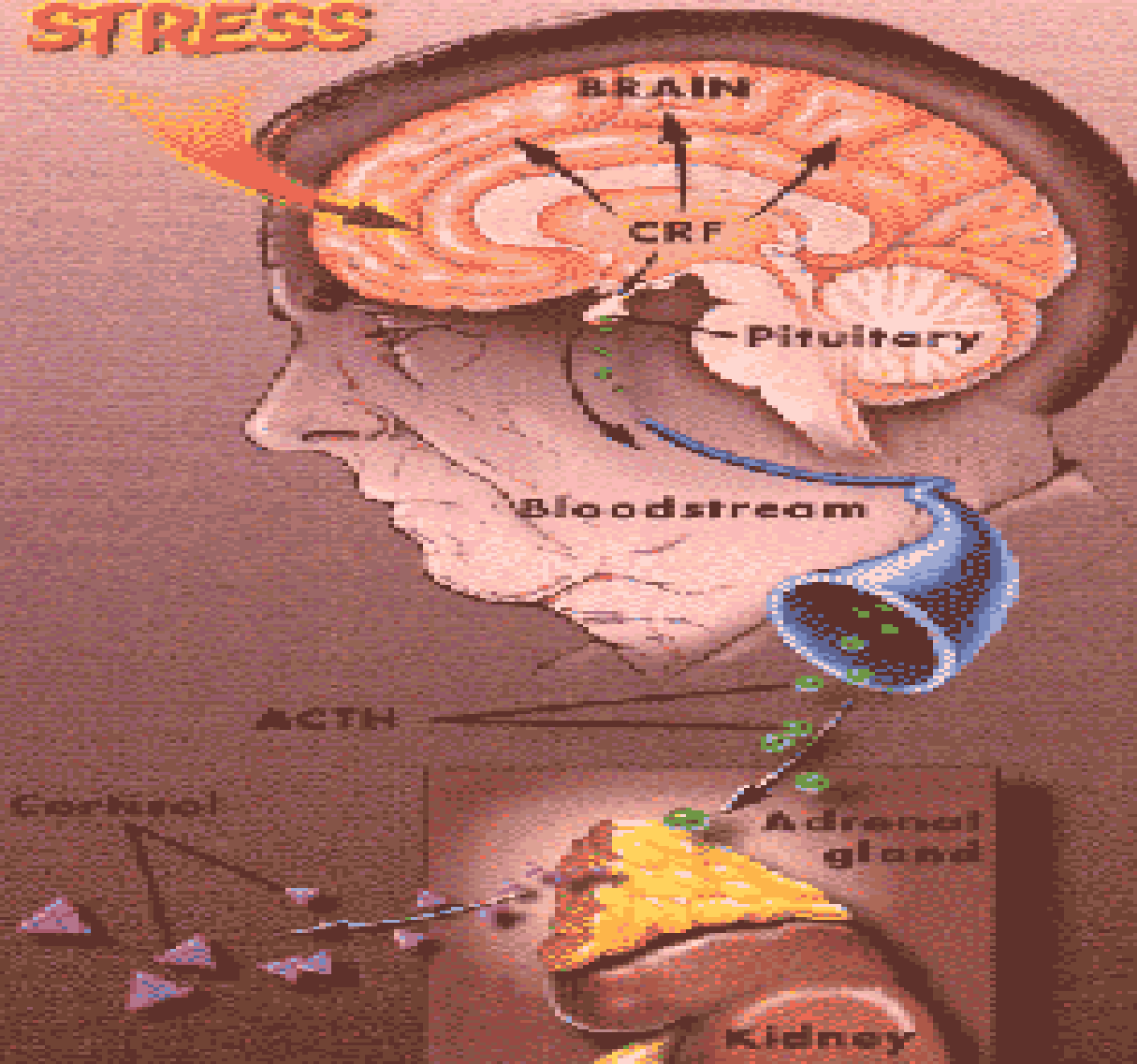
# OUTLINE

- BIOLOGY OF STRESS
- SIGNS SYMPTOMS OF TOO MUCH STRESS
- MENTAL DISORDERS
- MANAGING STRESS IN ALL SITUATIONS
- QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

# DEFINITION OF STRESS.

- **From a practical point of view, stress can be considered to be any physical, chemical, or emotional development causing strain.**

**STRESS**



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QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (LZW) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

# ***PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL***

- Stress is the "wear and tear" our bodies experience as we adjust to our environment.
- It has physical and emotional effects on us that can be positive or negative.

# Eustress

The stress that comes from good sources

- New marriage
- Birth of a baby
- Winning the lottery
- Promotion at work

# Distress:

The stress that comes from bad sources

- Difficult work environment
- Overwhelming sights and sounds
- Threat of personal injury



# Types of Stress

- General Stress:

Everyone has this stress at some time. It generally resolves within a day or two.

Cumulative Stress:

- Prolonged stress which builds up after time and can lead to adverse mental and/or physical consequences

# Types of Stress

- Acute Traumatic Stress: Called Critical Incident Stress. Produces considerable psychological distress. Normal reaction to abnormal STRESS
- Post Traumatic Stress: Severe stress produced by severe psychological trauma. Can produce lasting changes.

# STAGES OF STRESS RESPONSE

Three defining stages of the human stress response.

- 1 ALARM.
- 2 RESISTANCE.
- 3 EXHAUSTION.

# INDIVIDUALS RESPOND DIFFERENTLY TO STRESS

- **Some are vascular responders** (Heart rate, Blood pressure, hypertension)
- **Some are skeletal muscle responders** (EMG — measures muscle tension)
- **Some respond peripherally** (cold, sweaty hands).

# CARDIOVASCULAR

- **Heart, Lungs, and Circulation**

*Blood flow may actually increase 300% to 400%, priming the muscles, lungs, and brain for added demands of fight or flight.*

# THE IMMUNE SYSTEM

- *In the case of stress, the immune-boosting troops are sent to the body's front lines where injury or infection is most likely, such as the skin, the bone marrow, and the lymph nodes. Important white blood cells --are redistributed, to these critical areas*

# MOUTH AND THROAT

- *Fluids are diverted from nonessential locations, including the mouth, causing Dryness and difficulty in talking.*

*Spasms of the throat muscles, making it difficult to swallow .*

# THE SKIN

*Results in cool, clammy sweaty skin and in a tightening of the scalp that makes the hair seem to stand on end.*



# Metabolic Response

- *Stress shuts down digestive activity, a nonessential body function during short-term periods of physical exertion or crisis.*

**DEVELOPMENT of**  
**RELAXATION RESPONSE**  
**OR MOVE TOWARDS**  
**EXHAUSTION**

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# TOO MUCH STRESS !!

- *If the acute event is very traumatic,*
- *The body has an inefficient relaxation response,*
- *Stressors accumulate over time,*

ALL PARTS OF THE BODY'S STRESS APPARATUS ARE AFFECTED

# TOO MUCH STRESS

- *The brain, heart, lungs, vessels, and muscles -- become chronically over- or under activated, causing physical or psychological damage*

# CARDIOVASCULAR

- Stroke
- Heart attack(myocardial infarction)
- Hypertension etc

# Decreased immunity

## *Increased Susceptibility to Diseases*

- colds
- sinusitis
- influenza etc

# DIGESTIVE PROBLEMS

- **Diarrhea**
- **Cramping**
- **Spastic colon etc**
- **Weight problems**

# Diabetes

- *Chronic stress has been associated with the development of insulin-resistance, a condition in which the body is unable to use insulin effectively to regulate glucose (blood sugar).*



# Musculoskeletal Functions

- **Arthritis pain**
- **Back pain**
- **Tension headaches**
- **Migraine etc.**

# Sexual and Reproductive Dysfunction

- *Maternal stress during pregnancy has been linked to a 50% higher risk for miscarriage. It is also associated with lower birth weights and increased incidence of premature births -- both of which are risk factors for infant mortality*

# Memory, Concentration, and Learning



If stress is chronic or extremely severe, memory loss may become permanent.

Very severe and acute stress that causes post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is associated with physical changes in the brain.

# SKIN PROBLEMS

- Hives
- Acne
- Psoriasis
- Eczema etc

# Biologic or Genetic Factors

- *Certain people, because of inherited or other physiologic factors, are more vulnerable than others to the damaging effects of stress.*  
**GENETIC PREDISPOSITION**

# *What are the symptoms of not managing STRESS*

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# Performance Stress Symptoms

- It interferes with clear judgment and makes it difficult to take the time to make good decisions.
- Where you need good physical skills it gets in the way of fine motor control.
- It can seriously reduce your enjoyment of your work.
- It damages the positive frame of mind you need for high quality work by:
  - narrowing attention,

# Performance Stress Symptoms

- It damages the positive frame of mind you need for high quality work by:
  - damaging self-confidence,
  - promoting negative thinking,
  - disrupting focus and concentration and making it difficult to cope with distractions
- It consumes mental energy in distraction, anxiety, frustration and temper. This is energy that should be devoted to the work at hand.



# Behavioral Stress Symptoms

- Reduced personal effectiveness:
  - Being more forgetful
  - Being unreasonably negative
  - Making less realistic judgements
  - Making more mistakes
  - Being more accident prone
- Neglect of personal appearance
- Changing work habits
- Increased absenteeism

# Behavioral Stress Symptoms

- Yawning
- Talking too fast or too loud
- Fiddling and twitching, nail biting, grinding teeth, drumming fingers, pacing, etc.
- Bad moods:
  - Defensiveness
  - Irrationality
  - Being irritable
  - Being critical
  - Aggressive
- Overreaction and reacting emotionally

# Long Term Physical Stress Symptoms

Insomnia, Change in appetite

Sexual disorders

Aches and pains

Frequent colds

Illnesses such as:

asthma

back pain

digestive problems

headaches

Feelings of intense and long-term tiredness

# POST TRAUMATIC STRESS

- It is often said that PTSD is a normal response to an abnormal situation. A traumatic event may overwhelm the individual's coping ability, leading to the development of symptoms that may first begin up to 6 months to 1 year after that event. Delayed onset of trauma symptoms can occur even when the person coped well at the time of the traumatic event.

# SYMPTOMS OF PTSD

- **Avoidance** of anything associated with the traumatic event, such as places and behaviours of people that might be reminders of the event, e.g. not walking along a certain street etc
- **Re-experiencing** the event through anything that reminds the individual of the event - resulting in an intense over reaction, which might be physical or emotional, e.g. hearing gun shots in the distance may cause the person to re-experience a shooting event

# SYMPTOMS OF PTSD

- **Being easily startled** by loud or sudden noises, e.g. a car door slamming
- **Flashbacks** where images of the traumatic event suddenly come into the mind of the person for no apparent reason
- **Preoccupation** with the trauma - incident is almost constantly on their mind

# SYMPTOMS OF PTSD

- **Physical symptoms** such as trembling, diarrhea or constipation, nausea, and headaches
- **Inability to recall** certain aspects of the event
- **Decreased capacity** to feel certain feelings; a feeling of numbness
- **Feelings** of a shortened life; guilt and self-doubt for not having acted in some way during the trauma or for surviving the incident.

# SYMPTOMS OF PTSD

- **Sleep problems** including falling asleep, waking in the middle of the night, and nightmares
- **Anger** or irritability
- **Problems with thinking** and concentration



# SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- *Depressed mood*
- *Diminished interest or pleasure in activities*
- *Significant change in appetite and /or weight gain*

# SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- *Insomnia or hypersomnia*
- *Psychomotor agitation or retardation*
- *Tiredness or lack of energy*
- *Lack of concentration*

# SYMPTOMS OF DEPRESSION

- *Indecision*
- *Thoughts of death , dying and suicide*

# TREATMENT OF DEPRESSION

- REDUCTION OF STRESS
- TALK THERAPY
- ANTIDEPRESSANT RX

**Be aware of the signs of  
too much stress and do  
something about it .**

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# Managing Stress .

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# Identifying Sources of Stress

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# Restructuring Priorities

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# *Adjusting Responses to* *Stress*

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**Changing one's response  
to stress,**

**finding methods for  
managing and reducing  
stress.**

# Meditation

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# Deep Breathing

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# Muscle Relaxation

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# Exercise

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# Adapting Healthy Habits

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# Use Humor

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# Keep Perspective and Look for the Positive

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# Discuss Feelings

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Direct communication with another person may not even be necessary;  
***writing in a journal or composing a letter that is never mailed***

# ADD SOMETHING PLEASURABLE

- In fact, adding pleasurable events has more benefit than simply reducing stressful or negative ones.

# SPIRITUALITY

BASIC HUMAN QUALITIES OF  
GOODNESS  
KINDNESS  
COMPASSION  
CARING

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

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# STRESS TIPS

- **Avoid salt.** *Too much causes fluid retention.*
- **Don't skip meals.** *Missing lunch or dinner reduces blood sugar and causes mood changes and anxiety.*
- **Delegate authority.** Turn to others for help when work piles up.

# STRESS TIPS

- Don't bottle up anger. *Discuss problems with friends.*

Don't procrastinate. *It only increases the stress.*

Learn to relax. Sit quietly, close your eyes and relax tense muscles from head to toe twice a day.



# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- Keep a sense of humour. *Laughter is great for relieving tension.*
- Be polite. *Courtesy often means less conflict.*
- Forget the past. *Harping on mistakes leads to confusion and anxiety.*

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Face reality. There are things you can't change so don't waste energy getting angry about them.*
- *Set realistic mini goals as a way of reaching the big ones.*
- *Be assertive. Don't sit back and wait for things to happen.*

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Make decisions. There's less stress in trying and failing than there is in doing nothing.*

*Exercise regularly. A brisk walk is a super stress reliever.*

*Use mental imaging. Stressful situations are reduced by anticipating them and visualizing positive responses.*

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Rest and relax. Set aside several breaks every day to un-wind.*

*Express your feeling. Holding them in creates stress.*

*Choose your friends carefully. Seek companies who have a positive attitude towards life.*

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Get a massage. Especially the muscles of your neck and shoulders.*

*Use stress reducers.*

*Take a friend to a party if you're nervous about meeting strangers.*

## Positive Influences –

*Spend time around positive, cheerful people whenever possible. There's little that can drag a person down more easily than a lack of positive attitudes in one's life or excessive exposure to negative attitudes.*

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Help others. Most will return the favour when you need it most.*

*Be aware of your own weaknesses. How else will you know when you might need some help.*

*Avoid alcohol, though it seems to give you a lift, it's actually a depressant.*

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Dress up, not down. Those who look good usually feel good too.*

*Slow down. Schedule time to catch up on reading, phone calls and family.*

*Minimize the impact of the unexpected by anticipating a problem. Unpleasant surprises cause stress.*



# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Avoid gossip. Chats with friends reduce stress, but busy body talk creates enemies.*

*Set up a routine. There's less waste of time and energy.*

*Do relaxation breathing. It's easy to learn and easy to do.*

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Learn to say no. Without this ability, you can't feel in control.*

*Be flexible. Admit to yourself there's more than one way to do something.*

*Have a romantic evening with someone special and watch the stress disappear.*

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Be careful with medicine. Even anti-stress drugs, if misused, can produce a lack of energy and concentration.*

*Seek emotional help if you need it. Talking things over with a counselor can often help.*

*Get organize. It will add control and predictability to your life.*

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Monitor your body, and see a doctor or mental health counselor if stress or depression persists.*

*Buy an answering machine. It offers undisturbed relaxation at home.*

*Act out stressful situations in advance. Rehearsing for a confrontation will help you feel prepared.*

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Change room colours. Most relaxing are pale blues, and pinks and earth tones.*

*Reduce noise with insulation around doors and windows.*

*Try to avoid heavy traffic periods when driving and reduce trips by planning ahead.*

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Don't take work home. Learn to completely separate these two parts of your life.*

*Make a realistic choice. Don't bite off more than you chew.*

*Join a support group. Other peoples solution often provided options worth trying.*

# STRESS RELIEF TIPS

- *Take a moment now and then and daydream. A few minutes of escape can work wonders.*
- *Take up yoga. Many consider it the ultimate form of relaxation.*
- *Spoil yourself with a long, hot relaxing bath, with lots of soothing bath oils*

*AGAIN STRESS SHOULD BE  
MANAGED BEFORE  
SYMPTOMS ARISE*

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# FIVE CORE SKILLS/HABITS TO BE TAUGHT FOR EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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# **CORE SKILLS/ HABITS**

- ✓ **1 Recognizing one's feelings**
- ✓ **2 Managing one's feelings and impulses and responses,**

# CORE SKILLS HABITS TO BE TAUGHT FOR EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ✓3 Empathy
- ✓4 Social Skills
- ✓5 Motivating self towards goals

*FINALLY*

*"Grant me the courage to change  
the things I can change, the serenity  
to accept the things I can't change,  
and the wisdom to know the  
difference"*

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**THANK YOU !!**

# QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

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