

# STRESS MANAGEMENT: CAUSE AND EFFECT

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## ABSTRACT

Stress is the way human beings react both physically and mentally to changes, events, and situations in their lives. People experience stress in different ways and for different reasons. The causes of stress are first, the unsettling effects of change second, the feeling that an outside force is challenging or threatening you third, the feeling that you have lost personal control. Some common stressors are changes in family relations, financial responsibilities, changes in your social life, exposure to new people, ideas, and temptations etc. Symptoms of stress fall into three general, but interrelated, categories—physical, mental, and emotional. Stress can have consequences far beyond temporary feelings of pressure. While we can't avoid stress, we can learn to manage it and develop skills to cope with the events or situations we find stressful. By learning to cope with stress and by recognizing the symptoms of depression we will be better prepared to help not only yourself, but also friends, fellow workers, and the others you will someday lead.

Key words: stress, stressors, depression

## INTRODUCTION

Stress is a fact of life, wherever you are and whatever you are doing. You cannot avoid stress, but you can learn to manage it so it doesn't manage you. People experience stress in different ways and for different reasons. The reaction is based on your perception of an event or situation. If you view a situation negatively, you will likely feel distressed—overwhelmed, oppressed, or out of control. Distress is the more familiar form of stress. The other form, eustress, results from a “positive” view of an event or situation, which is why it is also called “good stress.” Eustress helps you rise to a challenge and can be an antidote to boredom because it engages focused energy. That energy can easily turn to distress, however, if something causes you to view the situation as unmanageable or out of control. Many people regard public speaking or airplane flights as very stressful causing physical reactions such as an increased heart rate and a loss of appetite while others look forward to the event. It's often a question of perception: A positive stressor for one person can be a negative stressor for another. Many professionals see the pressures of heavy workloads and deadlines as positive challenges that enhance the quality of their work and the satisfaction they get from their job.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Wyatt-Watson (2002), his annual survey identified that mental health disorders can also put employees at greater risk of other illnesses, or increase the gravity duration and likelihood of recurrence of chronic illness.

Panchanath and Goal (1992), this study revealed that the behavioural changes due to stress depend upon a large number of variables such as, nature and intensity of the stress stimulus, previous experiences of the individual, and the existence and degree of social support in the individuals environment.

Ross, Neibling and Heckert (1999), their study was conducted to determine the major sources of stress among college students. They were concluded five sources of stress, they are change in sleeping habits, change in eating habits, vocation, increased work load and new responsibilities.

### **NEED OF STRESS MANAGEMENT**

In the past decade, the news headlines have definitely made it clear that the need for stress management should be one of the top agendas in modern day's society.

Living today is a lot tougher than it was even in the days of the great depression. It's been coming out in many ways such as all-time occurrence of stomach and intestine ulcers. Others finds sleep disorders during busy days.

Today stress management is important in everyone's lives. It is necessary for long happy lives with less trouble that will come about. There are many ways to deal with stress ranging from the dealing with the causes of stress to simply burning off its effects.

### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To study the causes of stress.
2. To know the stress management strategies.

### **CAUSES OF STRESS**

The most frequent reasons for "stressing out" fall into three main categories:

1. The unsettling effects of change
2. The feeling that an outside force is challenging or threatening you
3. The feeling that we have lost personal control.

Life events such as marriage, changing jobs, divorce, or the death of a relative or friend are the most common causes of stress. Although life-threatening events are less common, they can be the most physiologically and psychologically acute. They are usually associated with public service career fields in which people experience intense stress levels because of imminent danger and a high degree of uncertainty police officer, fire and rescue worker, emergency relief worker, and the military. Situations which are recognised to be very stressful are associated with change, and with lack of control over what is happening. Some of the causes of stress are happy events, but because they bring big changes or make unusual demands on you, they can still be stressful.

Some of the most stressful events are moving house, getting married, having a baby, bereavement and serious illness in yourself or a friend or family member.

Stress is also caused by long-term difficult circumstances, such as: unemployment, poverty, relationship problems and caring for a disabled family member.

## SYMPTOMS OF DISTRESS

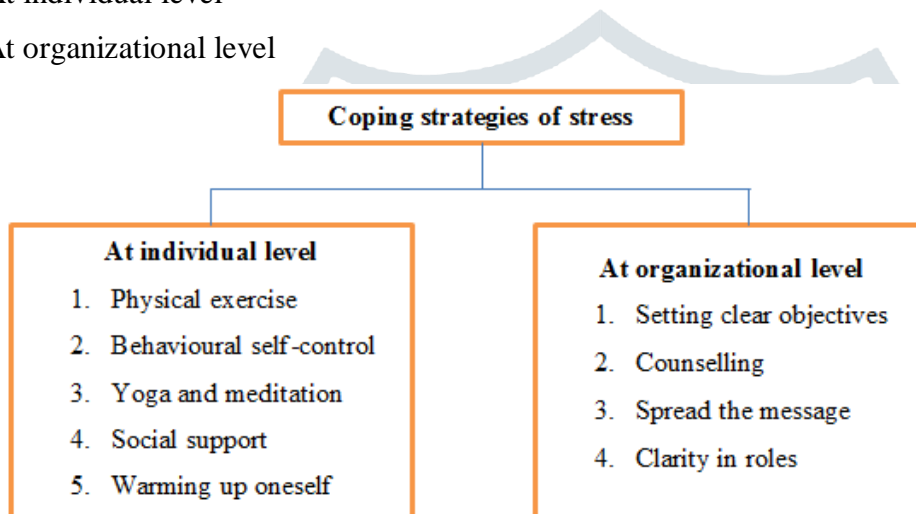
Symptoms of stress fall into three general, but interrelated, categories—physical, mental, and emotional. If we frequently experiencing these symptoms which mean we are likely feeling distressed:

Headaches, gastrointestinal problems, hypertension (high blood pressure), heart problems, inability to focus/lack of concentration, sleep disturbances, whether it's sleeping too much or an inability to sleep, sweating palms/shaking hands and anxiety

## COPING WITH STRESS

Think about the ways we currently manage and cope with stress in our life. Unfortunately, many people cope with stress in ways that compound the problem. Coping strategies can be classified into two categories,

1. At individual level
2. At organizational level



### At individual level

Individual strategies are based on self-study approach. Some specific techniques that individuals can use effectively manage their stress are:

- i) Physical exercise: Exercise may in any form, be it walking, swimming, jogging, riding, bicycling or playing games people fight stress.
- ii) Behavioural self-control: Careful analysis of the causes and effects of their own behaviour help managers controlling the situation instead of letting the situation control them.
- iii) Yoga and meditation: Yoga helps us to reduce the effects of stress and tension of life. Likewise meditation relates to psycho-spiritual process. It has positive effects on physiological, psychological and spiritual processes which buffer stress.
- iv) Social support: Social support moderates the effects of stress on personal wellbeing.
- v) Warming up oneself: we need to warm up before starting work to avoid tension.
- vi) Changing gears: Shifting attention from one work to something else.

### At organizational level

An organization can help individuals stress through various techniques. Some of the interventions are,

- i) Setting clear objectives: Clear and define objectives help employees work towards the goal of the concern.

- ii) Counselling: Counselling in career planning to provide them clarity in their job roles, helping them in identifying their strengths and weaknesses help them better cope with stress.
- iii) Spread the message: Spreading the message about the importance of regular habits of work, leisure, proper diet, exercise and mental peace among the organizational members helps them better cope with stress.
- iv) Clarity in roles: defining individual roles through role efficacy helps them reduce their stress.

➤ **Unhealthy ways of coping with stress**

These coping strategies may temporarily reduce stress, but they cause more damage in the long run (i.e) smoking, drinking too much, bingeing on junk or comfort food, zoning out for hours in front of the TV or computer, withdrawing from friends, family, and activities, using pills or drugs to relax, sleeping too much, procrastinating, filling up every minute of the day to avoid facing problems and taking out your stress on others (lashing out, angry outbursts, physical violence).

➤ **Healthier ways to manage stress**

If our methods of coping with stress aren't contributing to our greater emotional and physical health, it's time to find healthier ones. No single method works for everyone or in every situation, so experiment with different methods and strategies. Focus on what makes you feel calm and in control.

**Facts about Stress & Burnout**

- Stress has been referred to as the “silent killer” as it can silently cause heart disease, high blood pressure, chest pain, and an irregular heartbeat (Chilnick, 2008).
- Telogen effluvium is the result of hair loss caused by stress that can happen up to three months after a stressful event (McEwen, 2003).
- Stress is believed to account for 30% of all infertility problems. In women, stress can cause spasms in the fallopian tubes and uterus. In men, it can affect the sperm count and cause erectile dysfunction (Bouchez, 2018).
- Researchers have found that stress worsens acne. More so, than the prevalence of oily based skin (Warner, 2002).
- Stress can be to blame for weight gain too. The stress hormone cortisol has been found to cause both the accumulation of abdominal fat and the enlargement of fat cells, causing what is referred to as “diseased” fat (Chilnick, 2008).
- In children, chronic stress has been found to negatively impact their developmental growth due to a reduction of the growth hormone in the pituitary gland (Van der Kolk, B. et. al., 2007).
- In the event of chronic stress, dominant hormones are released into our brain. These hormones are intended for short-term emergencies and in the event where they exist for extended periods they can shrink, impair and kill brain cells (Wallenstein, 2003).
- Stress can increase the likelihood of developing blood clots since the blood prepares itself for injuries and becomes “stickier” (Chilnick, 2008).

## ADVANTAGES OF STRESS MANAGEMENT

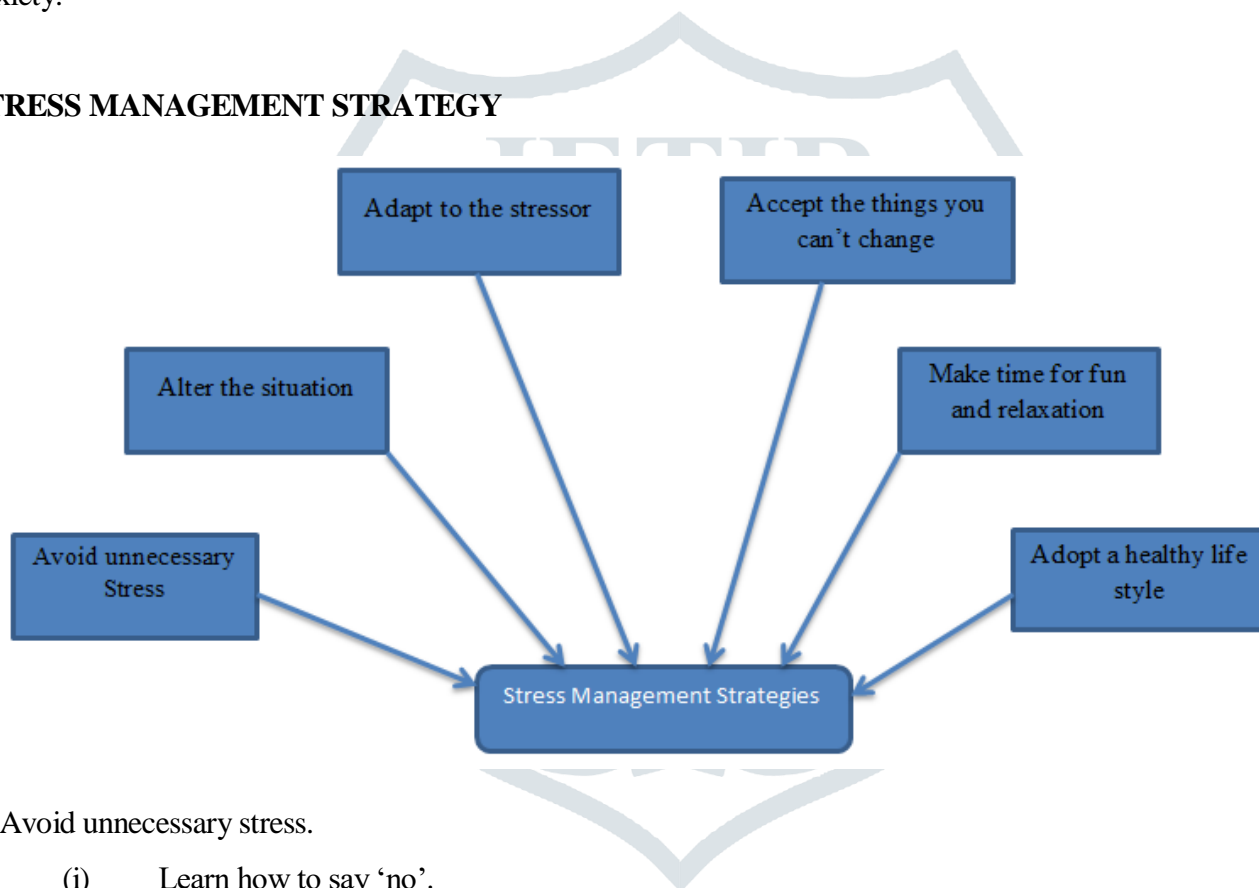
**Business advantages of stress management:** Less absenteeism due to stress-related disorders, improved job performance, less stressful, more efficient workplace, improved employee attitude and improved employee overall health.

**Health advantages of stress management:** Decreased stress-related symptoms, improved sleep, decreased anxiety, decreased use of medication, decreased pain, increased ability to manage pain, increased ability to relax physiologically and increased sense of control and improved self-esteem.

## DISADVANTAGES OF STRESS MANAGEMENT

Affects health, leads to poor performance, affects behavior, social withdrawal, financial problem, depressed and anxiety.

## STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGY



1) Avoid unnecessary stress.

- (i) Learn how to say 'no'.
- (ii) Avoid people who stress you out.
- (iii) Take control of your environment.
- (iv) Pare down your to-do list.

2) Alter the situation.

- (i) Express your feelings instead of bottling them up.
- (ii) Be willing to compromise.
- (iii) Be more assertive.
- (iv) Manage your time better.

## 3) Adapt to the stressor.

- (i) Reframe problems.
- (ii) Look at the big picture.
- (iii) Adjust your standards.
- (iv) Focus on the positive.

## 4) Accept the things you can't change.

- (i) Don't try to control the uncontrollable.
- (ii) Look for upside.
- (iii) Share your feeling.

## 5) Make time for fun and relaxation.

- (i) Set aside relaxation time.
- (ii) Connect with others.
- (iii) Do something you enjoy every day.
- (iv) Keep your sense of humor.

## 6) Adopt a healthy lifestyle.

- (i) Exercise regularly.
- (ii) Get enough sleep.
- (iii) Eat a healthy diet.

**CONCLUSION**

Stress is an important survival tool and can keep you alert and focused. But when you're not dealing with a real survival issue, it can make you uncomfortable and interfere with your ability to think through the problem. Making time for regular leisure activities can help you release tension, and to take your mind off the worries of the day. Whether you unwind by soaking in a hot bath, browsing through your favourite books, listening to music, gardening or photography, the important point is to enjoy the activity, purely for itself, and take your mind off work or whatever is causing you stress.



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