



STRESS MANAGEMENT

Presented by Military & Family Life Counselors

AGENDA

- Definition of Stress Response
- Effects
- Signs & Symptoms
- Sources
- Levels and Stages
- Types
- Stress Management Strategies



WHAT IS THE STRESS RESPONSE?

The stress response is:

- A normal response to the demands and changes of life - both positive and negative

This response is:

- Individual
- Physiological
- Necessary for survival



WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF STRESS?

- Stress becomes problematic when we are habitually confronted with chronic stressors
- The effects of stress are experienced:
 - Emotionally
 - Mentally
 - Physically
 - Behaviorally



PHYSICAL SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Headaches
- Muscle tension
- Shortness of breath
- Fatigue
- Changes in appetite
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Upset stomach



MENTAL SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Trouble thinking clearly
- Poor concentration
- Confusion
- Negative self-talk
- Forgetfulness
- Poor judgment



EMOTIONAL SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Feeling out of control
- Nervousness, anxiety
- Sadness
- Hopelessness
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Increased anger



BEHAVIORAL SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

- Aggression
- Excessive use of alcohol or drugs
- Inability to start or complete projects
- Compulsive gambling, sex or internet use



SOURCES OF STRESS

- Uncontrollable or unpredictable events
- Excessive workload demands
- Conflicting expectations
- Environmental conditions
- Insufficient resources – internal and external
- Relationships
- Health
- Finances
- Threats to safety



LEVELS OF STRESS



STAGES OF STRESS

Basic

- Motivates, energizes
- Protects, develops & expands personal resources
- Typically results in closure, resolution

Distress

- De-motivates, reduces energy
- Decreases ability to respond effectively
- No closure or resolution

Burnout

- Physical resources are exhausted
- Coping strategies are depleted
- Increased risk of stress-related illness
- Destructive behavior or emotional dysfunction



FOUR TYPES OF STRESS

Residual

Past traumatic events continue to effect present stress level

Situational

Immediate threats or challenges that demands attention right now

Chronic

Enduring situations such as illness, strained personal relationships, or difficult work situations

Anticipatory

Caused by concern over a future event



EXPOSURE TO TRAUMATIC DEATH

Research on Traumatic Death Exposure

- Anticipatory Stress
- Past Experiences
- Identification and Emotional Involvement
- Fatigue, Irritability and a Need for Transition Back to the Real World



WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED SO FAR...

- Signs and symptoms
- Levels of stress and their effects
- Types of stress as it occurs across time
- Sources of stressors

Now let's look at some coping strategies that can help.



EMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

Changing Destructive Thought Patterns:

- Our thoughts and perceptions of events directly affect our emotional and behavioral responses
- Learning to change our destructive thought patterns can reduce our stress levels



CHANGING OUR PERCEPTIONS

- Re-frame “failures” as new opportunities
- Challenge the “shoulds”
- Avoid “all or nothing” thinking
- Be compassionate with yourself
- Focus on the present- let go of issues from the past
- Embrace optimism



BEHAVIORAL STRATEGIES

- Get organized
- Exercise
- Limit computer or internet based recreation
- Eat healthy
- Reduce intake of alcohol
- Practice relaxation
 - Slow stretching
 - Deep breathing
 - Visualization
 - Meditation or prayer



SOCIAL STRATEGIES

- Make and maintain social connections
- Share your thoughts and feelings with someone you trust
- Reach out to others when you feel overwhelmed
- Engage in social activities that don't involve excessive alcohol, drugs or destructive behavior



STRENGTHEN YOUR INTERNAL RESOURCES

- Communication skills
- Problem solving skills
- Decision making skills
- Conflict-resolution skills
- Time management skills
- Spiritual beliefs and practices



PERSONAL STRESS INVENTORY

- What are my signs and symptoms of stress?
- What are the primary sources of my stress?
- What are my thoughts related to these sources?
- What meaning do I give to these issues?
- What can I control in the situation?
- My action plan.



SEEKING SUPPORT

- Don't be afraid to seek help if stress symptoms persist
- Asking for help is a sign of strength
- Seek assistance through Military Community Services, Chaplain or Behavioral Health Services



SUMMARY

- Stress is an individual response
- Signs and symptoms of stress overload include behavioral, emotional, physical and mental symptoms
- Learning coping strategies can reduce stress symptoms
- Seek help if stress symptoms persist





QUESTIONS?



RESOURCES

- Military Community Services
- Chaplain and Local Clergy
- Military OneSource (800) 342-9647
- TRICARE www.Tricare.mil
- Behavioral Health Services



INTERNET RESOURCES

On-Line Stress Self-Assessments

- www.stressless.com/stressqui2.cfm
- www.mayoclinic.com/health/stress/SR00023



REFERENCES

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- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, “Stress...at Work, DHHS(NIOSH), Publication No. 99-101, www.cdc.gov/niosh/stresswk.html
- National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), 6001 Executive Boulevard, Room 8184, MSC 9663, Bethesda, MD 20892-9663, (301) 443-4513, www.nimh.nih.gov
- Encyclopedia of Occupational Health and Safety, 4th Edition, “Mental Health”; Vol 2, Chapter 34, “Psychological and Organizational Factors,” www.ilocis.org





THANK YOU