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 other addictions
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

- Basic
  Normal response to regular demands of daily living

- Distress
  Prolonged or intense demands that exceed the normal routine of daily living

- Burnout
  Long-term excessive exposure to distress
## STAGES OF STRESS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic</th>
<th>Distress</th>
<th>Burnout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Motivates, energizes</td>
<td>• De-motivates, reduces energy</td>
<td>• Physical resources are exhausted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Protects, develops &amp; expands personal resources</td>
<td>• Decreases ability to respond effectively</td>
<td>• Coping strategies are depleted</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Typically results in closure, resolution</td>
<td>• No closure or resolution</td>
<td>• Increased risk of stress-related illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Destructive behavior or emotional dysfunction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td></td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>Past traumatic events continue to effect present stress level</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Immediate threats or challenges that demands attention right now</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chronic</td>
<td>Enduring situations such as illness, strained personal relationships, or difficult work situations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anticipatory</td>
<td>Caused by concern over a future event</td>
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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.
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
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](http://www.stressless.com/stressqui2.cfm)
REFERENCES

• Ursano, Robert J. and James E. Mccarroll, “Exposure to traumatic death: the nature of the stressor,”
  www.usuhs.mil/psy/traumaticdeath.html, 12/18/01

• 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

THANK YOU