

Relax Please

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Forward

Stress is common but stress management is uncommon. Stress Management books and manuals are common but user friendly ones are uncommon. Trainers are common but only a few are uncommon. Nagalingam is an uncommon trainer, a rare breed and his stress management manual is also uncommon. Writing this manual itself must have been a stress relieving exercise for Nagalingam. Nagalingam's educational qualification, professional expertise and training experience give him an advantage not available to many. So his latest publication is easily the best of his words published so far.

Though Nagalingam is not a medical doctor or a therapist he is a practioner of stress relieving exercises based on his knowledge of yoga, meditation and psychology. I appreciate his efforts in making a neat manual on stress management, which will be a handy tool to all of us. The layout, the contents, the learning methods and the exercises make it a manual of great quality. I recommend this manual strongly to all who find life stressful.

JCI.Sen.R.Raja Govindasamy

Past National President, JCI India,

International Graduate, JCI University, U.S.A.



Message

In my surgical career of 35 years, I find stress related illnesses increasing in number in the last decade. The symptoms of the disease appear to increase manifold due to the stress factor. On deeper enquiry with patients and relatives, I am able to pinpoint stress as a factor in illness.

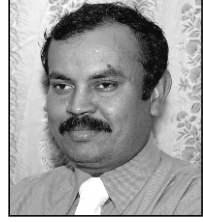
From prehistoric cavemen to twentieth century manager, everybody undergoes stress. The fast track life of current generation eminently predisposes to stress. Hence stress management has become an absolute necessity for most of us.

Jc.S.Nagalingam has been making waves not only as a trainer but also as the author of many useful Training Manuals.

He has extensively researched before compiling this very good manual. This covers the entire gamut of stress, which is a vast subject, in a gist. Another highlight is that it is useful as a tutor's manual also. Questionnaires and caricatures are a welcome addition.

I appreciate Jc.S.Nagalingam for his commitment to training and congratulate him for yet another labour of love.

Jc. HGF. **Dr. K. N. Krishnan**, M.S.,
Past Executive Vice President(1981), JCI India,
Endoscopic surgeon, Madurai.



Dear Readers,

Greetings from Nagalingam. This is the third time this manual is published. Since every one of us face lot of stressors day in and day out and we all expect one dose(Sarva Roga Nivarani) to eliminate all our stress. This attempt is to create an awareness among the readers that we cannot do away with stress rather we can manage it.

This work fetched me the coveted recognition of National Training Fellow(NTF), JCI India. Only 11 trainers from India were fortunate to get this recognition by submitting a course design and I was one among them. I am very much thankful to the Jaycees of Madurai Excel for bringing out the first edition and JCI Palayamkottai for the second one.

I thank my better half Smt. Malarkodi, my children Soundar and Nighileswaran for their relentless support to me in designing this manual. I owe everything to my younger son Nikhil who guides me and the Foundation from the heavenly abode.

Ever in Nikhil Foundation spirit,

- S.Nagalingam

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Introduction

1

Is it difficult to relax? And why we need a book on relaxing? When people around us are moving in a fast pace, making this era known as speed age or velocity age and now fast food and bullet trains have become order of the day, we hardly can avoid running pillar to post in our day to day activities. Even it is said that the younger womenfolk is highly reluctant nowadays to give birth to a child as it takes nearly 10 months to deliver a baby which they even feel atrocious in this age of velocity.

We are like a passenger in a bus which plies on a 100 Km speed and when the driver suddenly applies the brakes we find it difficult to adjust as our bodies also travel at the speed of 100Km. It is said that when everybody around are moving in a fast pace you have to maintain the same speed at least to keep your present position intact, otherwise you will lag for

behind. Hence there is difficulty in relaxing. But the resultant effect we found is people are becoming more sweeter and India has now become the sugar capital of world not by growing more sugar canes but by the enlargement in the number of people affected by Diabetes. The research says in most of the cases it is not due to the genetic transfer but due to the demon called “Stress”.

It is not the surprising news that India was once called a land of philosophers and even a riksha puller used to speak complex philosophy with ease but the days are gone and the erstwhile philosophers have now been transformed into hardcore materialists. This has opened the flood gates and most of the killer diseases have found a haven in these fast paced and stress afflicted Indians.

There is yet another culprit in the name of Consumer culture in India also leads to unnecessary purchases and this type of aping western culture leads to stress not due to lack of resources but because of an insatiable mind. When Rama was taken to a village by his father to show how rich they are resulted in negative, as the boy opined that the villagers are more richer than them by having more greenery than their garden, plenty of water in their riverside than the swimming pool they have and more illumination from the stars when compared to the few imported lamps in the house. It is quite unexpected that the Indian meditation schools hitherto busy in the western countries suddenly found a very grey market in India too by teaching Indians how to be peaceful and how to relax.

Dr.Bates says, most of our eye problems are due to our inability to relax and see. But to me **“Relax and see”** is not only the mantra of Dr. Bates to improve the effectiveness of one’s eyes but also holds good to improve the effectiveness of oneself in balancing one’s stress by helping one to relax a little who is otherwise on a mad race.

Ravi, a lad in his twenties entered into IT profession, work, long hours in the night and return very late to his house. He was happy that he was earning multifold what his father earned in his age. He bought an apartment in two years and a Santro Car. His parents got him married. The journey of marriage was started with a honey moon at Kodaikonal and life seems to be a bed of roses for both of them. They felt as if they were in the heaven. When they have returned back to his working place, this girl found bored in the day time despite having all facilities in the form of cooking oven, dish washer, washing Machine, LCD TV etc., as she was alone in the house. Our friend Ravi off late getting irritated to come to the house as Latha his new wife expected him to talk to her for sometime when he returned home late in the night. This he found very difficult and he started answering to the questions of Latha in mono syllables. This has resulted in small skirmishes and later into serious quarrels. Ravi was complaining often about migraine and Latha has developed rashes in the skin. Why suddenly migraine to Ravi and skin disease to Latha. Again stress has played a role here.

Friends the journey ahead is in a road less travelled which will expose you to the hitherto unknown facets of stress, do some

research about it; learn about the symptoms to be noticed and the ways to cope up with which will definitely relax you and make you effective in your performance. Are you ready for this journey in the road, less travelled by many? Try the questionnaire below answering Yes or No:

Questionnaire 1

- Are you easily angered?
- Do you frequently get bored?
- Do you have difficulty in concentrating?
- Do you find it increasingly hard to make decisions?
- Do you experience anxiety?
- Do you have difficulty in sleeping?
- Are you unable to control your emotions?
- Do minor problems and small disappointments make you tense?
- Do you find it difficult to get along with people and are people having trouble in getting along with you?
- Do you fear people or situations that never used to bother you before?

If your answers to most of these questions are in the affirmative, then don't hesitate, read further. It seems you are suffering from stress. You find it difficult to relax in your day-to-day functioning.



Why an awareness about stress?

2

The following statements will reveal the importance of creating an awareness about stress.

- Job burnout experienced by 25% to 40% of U.S. workers is stress related
- Employee stress is recognized as a major drain on corporate productivity and competitiveness
- Depression is the leading occupational disease of the 21st Century, responsible for more days lost than any other single factor
- All together \$300 billion and \$7,500 per employee, is spent annually in the U.S. on stress related compensation claims, reduced productivity, absenteeism, health insurance cost, direct medical expenses, and employee turnover

- 40% of U.S. Companies are having regular course on Stress Management
- 42% of Japanese who are 40 years and above suffer from mental disorder as stated by the Japanese Health Minister
- Statistics say that in U.S at least one person from a family goes to a psychiatrist or psychologist or psycho therapist to treat his/her stress related problems.
- More strain in Husband and wife relations lead to many divorces in India.
- Non performing juniors, demanding bosses, deadline driven projects and competitive peers makes the organizational climate stressful for most middle level executives.

It is also hard to digest that one among the best sellers in U.S., Japan and France two years back was on the subject “How to commit suicide”. People have committed suicide with those manuals on hand. The famous cardiology surgeon Cherman jumped out of the 3rd floor to commit suicide and a person who has brought in the concept of shares for a film company, G.Venkateswaran, committed suicide due his inability to settle his loans. The womenfolk is now mostly affected by Rheumatoid Arthritis which is an offshoot of their stress, a psychosomatic disease.

Stress management is now the globally most talked about subject and it is found that stress has damaging psychological & physiological effects on employee’s health and prevents employees from concentrating & making decisions. This limits the potential success of an organization. It is the major cause for employee absenteeism & turn over too. Stressed employee

can affect the safety of co workers and even the public. The cost of stress related problems now is phenomenal.

As we have already seen, we the Indians also joined the majority in acquiring stress induced diseases through our LPG project i.e., Liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation. We can even call it as the bye product of globalization besides getting many good things as main product. Hitherto secluded and protected Indian market has become an open jungle where the Indian Business men have been forced to hunt with other business giants from various other countries.

In one of the meetings I have attended, Shri. Chandra Mohan of Hudson Products told that Indian businessmen are like caged tigers and they can happily hunt for their prey within the cage which is otherwise protected from outside threat. This wild exposure will make them to undergo enormous stress. Once when I was discussing with the Managing Director of a local company Mr.B.T.Bangera I was told that till globalization the Government was protecting the trade and absolutely there was no competition from outside India. Now the policy change has exposed them to the global competition and people feel that the Government has deserted the trade community by toning down anti dumping duty and allowing trade from all parts of the globe. The passage of time only will tell whether it is a boon or bane to the trade community. However the repercussions in the trade will also have ripple effect to the other spheres of Indian society.

The IT community in India is now undergoing enormous stress because of the uncertainty created by the recession. The un-

certainty of the safety needs as the security of job has become a threat now. Hitherto the blue eyed boys of the Indian Society happy with their cozy flats and cars have now become depressed and disoriented guys fearing always about firing, pay cuts etc.,

The changing role of an Indian woman from a simple housewife to a tough professional demands more from her and exposes her to more bottlenecks and problems making her exhausted in this process without the support of the joint and extended families, a comfort of the yester years. She becomes highly stressful in the process.

The expectations of the parents on the adolescent children to pursue the studies of their choice and the difficulties of their wards in raising to the expectations and the hormonal imbalance they face at this stage make them more stressful than the children of their age in the past.

Sometimes too much of relaxation will also lead to stress as it happens with the underprivileged and rural youth who are happy with the low cost rice and minimum 10 days salary and free TVs. The stress faced makes them addict to liquor as statistics from various governments support this.

Hence this attempt to create awareness about stress and to impart the techniques to balance the same has become a necessity.



Is it omnipresent?

3

Yes, stress is all pervasive cutting across caste, creed, gender, age, financial status, educational status etc., that everyone of us is undergoing it at various times and you have also witnessed the following:

- ❖ The athlete is pumped up at the starting block,
- ❖ The young adult is jumping, dancing all the way to his house after getting a favourable response from his girl,
- ❖ The inability of the job seeker to sleep after getting the news about his appointment,
- ❖ The anxiety on the part of the bride during betrothal,
- ❖ the two wheeler rider rides with full arousal of his body after just averting an accident,
- ❖ The child reveals its stress through its tongue bites and mild seizures,

- ❖ the adolescent reveals it through his/her tantrums,
- ❖ The adult tries to obviate it by landing into bad habits like smoking, drinking alcohol or even drug addiction,
- ❖ The adult woman exhibits through her Rheumatoid Arthritis problem or skin disease without any past family history, and
- ❖ An adult male acquires diabetes without any such precedence in his family history.
- ❖ The inability of the just fired employee to sleep in the night
- ❖ The lack of tolerance in the young couple resulting in more divorces
- ❖ The wide prevalence of killer diseases with the middle level executives of Indian Industry.
- ❖ The ever increasing no. of family counselors, educational counselors, etc.,
- ❖ The surge in no. of meditation schools

This is only a sample and not an exhaustive list. We can even say stress is a normal part of daily living. Here the biggest problem is everybody thinks that they know what it is but very few know what it is. But we all will agree the sayings of Hans Selye, M.D., *"Who would enjoy a life of no runs, no hits and no errors?"*



4

What is stress?

Let us start with the old adage about stress. “Stress is the spice of life....”

Stress is a ‘funny’ emotion! It starts even before we are born and stays with us till the last moment. Is it surfaced all of a sudden? No. Even the cave man underwent stress as a hunter and was being hunted. The origin of concept of stress pre-dates antiquity.

Stress has been called as invisible disease, so we cannot afford to get killed by it. Seven out of the top ten killers are all stress related deceases. All of us experience stress. Beneficial stress can help drive a few of us to Olympic champions. But harmful stress can drive others to despair, a force as powerful as that should always be handled with respect.

Stress is the internal **response to a situation we find hard to manage**. It is a **response to pressure**.

Stress is the non – specific and stereo typed response of the body to any demand made upon it
- Selye

Stress is the interaction of the individual with the environment; Stress is an adaptive response, mediated by individual differences and/or physical demands upon a person.
- Ivancevich and Matterson.

Stress is the state of autonomic imbalance i.e., imbalance between sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system.

‘ Anything that stimulates you and your level of alertness

Stress is response of body, mind, and intellect unit to change. Stress is the response of the individual to change. The change could be of any type, internal or external, actual or perceived. This is called

as stress response. It is a defensive response whose natural objective is to safeguard body functions.

Stress is defined as an adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological, and/or behavioural deviations.

For easy understanding we consider stress to be anything **that stimulates you and your level of alertness**. The art of stress management is to keep you at a level of stimulation that is healthy and enjoyable.

“Stress, in simple terms, is like a fire – more precisely, embers, permanent embers and enjoy their glow, or fan them into huge fires. Not knowing better, many of us do the latter.

- Promod Batra

4.1 STRESS ACTUALISED:

When there is a mismatch between the demands and resources available to meet such demands stress surfaces. Either you have to reduce your demands or increase your resources.

“
Uncertainty
over the
outcome and
the outcome
must be
important

When you could not balance, your bodies react with the **fight or flight** response.

It can be said that **constraints and demands** create stress. The former prevent you from doing what you desire. The later refers to the loss of something desired. So when you take a test at college or you undergo your annual performance review at work, you feel stress because

you confront opportunities, constraints and demands. A good performance review may lead to a promotion, greater responsibilities and a higher salary. But a poor review may prevent you from getting the promotion. An extremely poor review might even result in your being fired.

Two conditions are necessary for potential stress to become actual stress. There must be **uncertainty over the outcome** and the **outcome must be important**. Regardless of the conditions, it is only when there is doubt or uncertainty whether your girl will accept your proposal or whether you will be

rewarded with promotion for your successful accomplishment of a project, and you are longing for the same, there is stress. Thus stress is highest for those individuals who perceive that they are uncertain as to whether they will win or lose and lowest for those individuals who think that winning or losing is a certainty. But importance is also critical. If winning or losing is an unimportant outcome there is no stress. If keeping your job or earning a promotion doesn't hold any importance to you, you have no reason to feel stress over having to undergo a performance review.

It is not necessary that all stress is bad. Stress is even needed at times for an individual to go the extra mile or to reach the unreachable, to conquer the unconquered in the journey of your achievement. Hence stress is divided into two broad headings viz., Eustress and Distress. In simple terms:

*Stress that is enhancing growth is called **Eustress**.*

*Stress that is depressing and producing disease is called **Distress**.*

4.2 EUSTRESS:

"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing at all".

-Helen Keller

A positive mind will accept that it is impossible to achieve stress free life. Stress is needed to growth. Stress is needed for development. Life without stress will be dull and boring. It is the spice and spark of life and too much stress makes you unpleasant and tiring and may ultimately damage your health or well being. Stress at optimum levels will help you to bring out the **Kamal Hasan** or **Dhoni** in you, you need this.

If you achieve success under stress and if you are not affected physically and mentally by any adverse effect then stress becomes Eustress and it helps you to grow. (For example, a college student makes the University Cricket Team

“
Growth
enhancing
stress -
eustress

or meets his favourite hero, an attractive, respective colleague/student invites for a coffee, falling in love, an employee is offered a job promotion at another location). The first time when I got the news that I was selected to represent the Ramanathapuram Men District Hockey Team, selected to play Annamalai University Hockey team, got selected in the Department of Central Excise and Customs, got married to my lady love, awarded as outstanding Direct Trainer of National Academy of Customs, Excise and Narcotics in 1996, got conferred with Outstanding National Trainer of Indian Junior Chamber in 2003 and got conferred with the title National Training Fellow of JCI India my body got aroused, I couldn't sleep a bit and the stress I have undergone was enormous but it did nothing to me. Infact it increased my vigour for further performance. It is an opportunity when it offers potential gain. Consider, for example, the superior performance that an athlete or stage performer gives in 'crunch' situations. Such individuals often use stress positively to rise to the occasion and perform at or near their maximum. This term was coined by the pioneers of stress research from the Greek eu, which means 'good'. This type of stress is also called positive stress. This can invigorate, motivate, and pump us up!

4.3 DISTRESS:

To an extent stress is not harmful. Beyond that extent body continues to respond, that means sources that lead body to respond continuously, then the body, mind, intellect unit starts paying a price and that is where the effects of stress are harmful. Then the impact on health in the form of disease is



Disease
producing and
depressing -
distress

shown. The question is how much stress one can withstand without his body being affected or mind being affected by that stress? Answer is difficult because of individual's uniqueness.

This cannot be generalized. A half glass filled with milk is seen by some as half glass filled and half glass empty by some. It is at the perspective level that the mind plays a vital role. At the body level it is said generally that stress management is mostly needed when one reaches forty and till then the body normally withstand the stress. Once withering started in the body, it tends to cave in against continued stress resulting in different types of psycho somatic diseases.

Stress itself is not a disease but it can cause or exacerbate disease. Stress is usually thought of in negative terms. It is thought to be caused by something bad (for example, a college student is placed under suspension, a loved one is seriously ill, or a boss gives a formal reprimand for poor performance). When I lost my second son in an accident I thought initially that I am the cause as I have permitted him to go to the college in a private bus rather by the college bus which starts from our area. I was under enormous stress at that

moment and my blood sugar level went to 300mg though I was not diabetic till then. This is a form of distress. But when I remembered the incident, when I have given permission my blood sugar level started decreasing and now I am able to maintain it under normal level. When my boy came to me and said, “You have admitted me in a ‘balwadi’ where they are not permitting me to turn this side or that side, not allowing me to smile or laugh, and even keeping the windows closed. I feel as if I am in the jail. I want to enjoy my life. Please allow me to go by private bus to college. I will not go by accident prone buses rather I will go by ‘Balasakthi’ bus in which I will safely travel.” He was very assertive and I have also obliged to his request as he was an adult and his rights should be honoured. But on the 10th day as I was told the same ‘Balsakthi’ bus met with an accident by the irresponsible driver who jumped out instead of applying brakes and the bus made a head on collision against a stationary bus and killed my son. Here I have honoured the rights of my son and this perspective helps me to get consoled now.

4.4 MYTHS ABOUT STRESS

1. I must be stressed to succeed...

There is no scientific proof that you have to be stressed to succeed as sometimes the stress in you will not allow you to think calmly. Imagine Viswanathan Anand plays the world championship in a stressed state. Will he win?

2. All Stress is bad...

No it is proved that a certain amount of stress helps an athlete to win the race and a speaker to captivate his audience.

3. *If only I could move from this school/get rid of that mischievous student then my stress would go away...*

Can any teacher get a guarantee that he or she will not get mischievous students in a class.

4. *There is nothing I can do about stress...*

No. This entire book is to help you to do something about stress so that it can be effectively balanced.

5. *Stress is simply anxiety:*

Anxiety operates solely on the emotional and psychological sphere, whereas stress operates there and also on the physiological sphere. Thus stress may be accompanied by anxiety, but the two should not be equated.

6. *Stress is simply nervous tension:*

Like anxiety, nervous tension may result from stress, but the two are not the same. Unconscious people have exhibited stress, and some people may keep it “bottled up” and not reveal it through nervous tension.

7. *Stress is simply strain:*

Strain is a feeling associated with physical exertion. It is physical inability and discomfort to go ahead with work because the body cannot take more loads. On the other hand STRESS acts in both psychological and physiological sphere.

Most of the times, managers mistake tension to stress and most often equate Strain with stress. A proper understanding of these differences will dispel the myths and would go a long way in reducing unnecessary Stress and generate a feeling of Comfort and calmness.



5

Is it a Physiological or a psychological function?

Stress is considered as a response to a situation which demands that the individual adapt to a change physically or psychologically. We often think of stress in terms of tough deadlines, difficult projects, trying bosses, and our busy lives, these are in fact the causes of stress and not stress itself. They are known as ‘Stressors’ It’s our internal response to difficult situations; it’s how we mentally react to our problems or stressors, though it often has physiological symptoms.

Stress affects the inner personality of human being. Your mind and intellect together constitute your inner personality. We are what we are because of our inner personality determined by the quality of our mind and intellect. Our physical body is only the outer personality, which serves as an equipment of

action. Our mind and intellect propel our body to act. Stress arises in a person when his mind over powers his intellect. When intellect loses control over the mind's desires, the person becomes disturbed. Stress is the mental agitation caused by unfulfilled desires. There are physiological and psychological symptoms and through which you can find out whether you undergo stress or not.

Ram, the husband of Sita, out of anger scolded her and the words used by him were objectionable. Sita could not tolerate that. "How my husband can use such harsh words against me?" whether he really loves me? This very thinking made her irresponsive to the situation in the kitchen and the entire preparation went waste. Nothing could be tasted and the children have to leave for the school after having their breakfast. Ram didn't mean what he said and he also profusely apologised to Sita. But Sita has become depressive and that mood continued for another three days as everybody in the family have become depressed in the process. Here the cause of action started in the psychological sphere of Sita and ended in inert physiological response by her. Infine it is both psychological and physiological.

Ganesh went to his village and visited his lands. There he jumped over a rope mistaking it as a snake. His heart started pumping fast. He was sweating profusely. Here he wrongly imagined a rope as a snake but what followed was a physiological response. Here the perception, a psychological response led to this physiological response.



Symptoms of stress

6

There are physical, mental, emotional, social, spiritual and behavioral symptoms to identify whether a person is affected by stress and the same are explained below:

6.1 PHYSICAL:

Biting nails, clenching fists, clenching jaw, finger tapping on chair/table, grinding teeth while sleeping, Hunching shoulders, wrinkles on forehead and tense forehead muscles, frequent sighing or yawning, tapping feet on the floor, shaking while sitting on chair, shallow breathing or upper chest breathing, tightness of stomach and reduced movement of diaphragm, headache, migraine, sleep difficulty, fatigue, over eating, loss of appetite, digestive problems, body pains, allergy disorders, peptic ulcers, blood pressure, diabetics, cancer, dryness of the throat and mouth, etc., are the typical physical symptoms one may undergo when affected by stress.

6.2 MENTAL

Chronic worry or constant worrying, nervousness, anxiety, or racing thoughts, depression, anger, memory problems, making it difficult to concentrate or to deal with distraction, emotional instability, losing sense of humour etc., Interfering with one's judgment and causing one to make bad decisions, Making one see difficult situations as threatening, Reducing one's enjoyment and making one feel bad, Leaving one anxious, frustrated or mad, Making to feel rejected, unable to laugh, afraid of free time, unable to work, and not willing to discuss one's problems with others, Worrying and feeling anxious (which can sometimes lead to anxiety disorder and panic attacks), Feeling out of control, overwhelmed, confused, and/or unable to make decisions, Increasing dependence on food, cigarettes, alcohol, or drugs, Developing irrational fears of things such as physical illnesses, natural disasters like thunderstorms and earthquakes, and even being terrified of ordinary situations like heights or small spaces are some of the mental symptoms.

6.3 EMOTIONAL

Rapid mood swings, Impatience & irritability, or short temper, Fits of rage/anger, Anxiety attacks, Depression, Worry, Feelings of despair, Bursts of tears, Nervous laughter, Deterioration in personal hygiene and appearance, Moodiness, Agitation, inability to relax, Feeling overwhelmed, Sense of loneliness and isolation, Depression or general unhappiness, Angry outbursts, Hostility, Jealously, Lack of interest, Tendency to cry, Narrowed focus, Reduced self-esteem, Insomnia, Changes in eating habits and Weakened positive emotional response

reflexes, Being critical of others, Self-deprecation, nightmares etc. are some of the emotional signs one may exhibit while he/she undergoes stress.

6.4 SPIRITUAL

Feelings of emptiness, Loss of forgiveness, Loss of direction, Lack of purpose, Hostility, Hopelessness, Guilt feelings, Lack of connection to anything or anyone, Feelings of apathy, Burn-out are some of the spiritual symptoms.

6.5 SOCIAL & BEHAVIOURAL

Isolation, Loneliness, Intolerance, Lack of communication, Irritability towards people, Reduced performance, lower productivity, non cooperative attitude, lack of adjustability, increased use of smoking and alcohol, sexual problems eating more or less, Sleeping too much or too little, Isolating oneself from friends, family and society, intolerance with self and others, Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities, Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing) Conflict with others, Absenteeism from work, Neglecting important things in life such as work, school, and even personal appearance are some of the social and behavioural symptoms we notice in an individual when he / she undergoes stress.

If these symptoms are not given proper attention it may lead to stress induced diseases. But having one or two symptoms listed above may not lead to a conclusion that one is undergoing stress. But a combination of these signs shall be looked into a wholistic perspective to diagnose one is stressful or not.



Stress induced diseases

7

It is said that seven out of the top 10 killer diseases are acquired due to stress related problems. The following diseases are classified as stress induced diseases viz., Cardiovascular disease, crack in immune system, Asthma, Diabetes, Ulcers, Digestive disorders, Skin complaints, Headaches & migraines, Premenstrual syndrome (pms), Depression

There are physicians to cure somatic problems and counselors/psychiatrists to cure psychological problems. But the diseases induced by stress are psycho-somatic in nature. It is very difficult to get treatment as there are no physicians who are competent to deal in both domains and the current breed have exclusive domains like somatic or psycho illness. That is why it is very difficult to treat such diseases without the active cooperation of the patients.



Stressors- internal or external 8

There are a variety of stressors which you face on a daily basis. Most of the minor stressors tend to be small ones but they may accumulate and wear you down. Some Psychologists have estimated that we normally encounter 50 to 200 hassles on a daily basis - such as driving to work, getting a flat tire, getting the kids up and ready for the day and work deadlines, commuting daily to work etc. These minor irritants are not major life problems, yet they may add and contribute to your distress - if you allow them too. Here the role of your perception- making mole hill out of nothing, your reflexive reaction to a threat also plays a vital role. The stressors are broadly classified as internal and external.

8.1 Internal source

- * Survival stress
- * Self generated stress

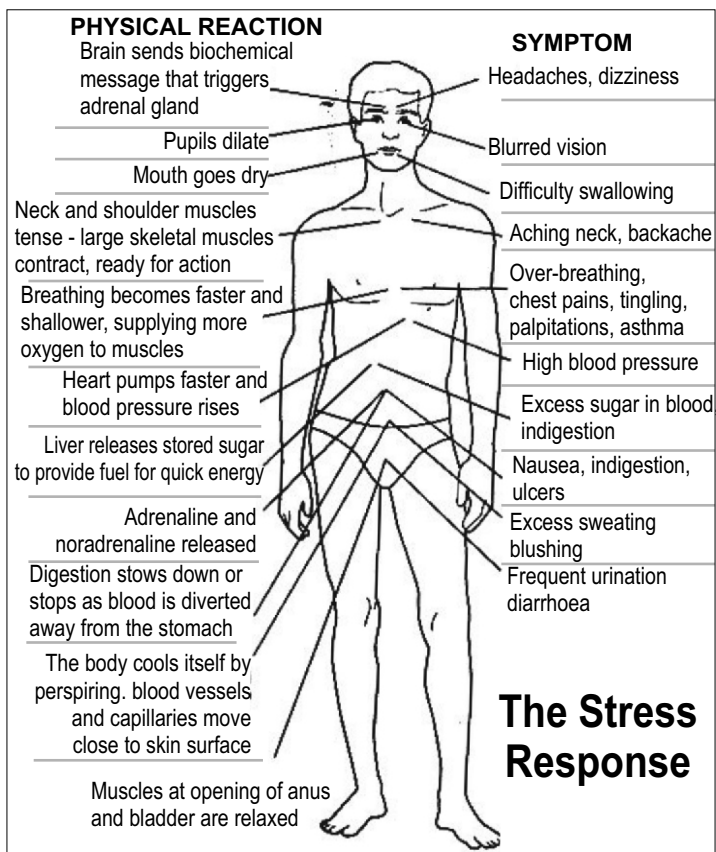
8.1.1 Survival stress

Where you are in a physically or emotionally threatening situation, your body adapts to help you react more effectively to meet the threat. This was genetically transmitted to us from cave men.

The sympathetic component of autonomous nervous system is aroused through an impulse from the hypothalamus results in the following: The changes are quite powerful and useful in a 'fight or flight' situation. The main ones are:

- ☛ Pituitary gland releases the hormone ACTH which triggers the adrenal glands
- ☛ Adrenal glands produce another hormone cortisol which acts on the liver.
- ☛ Cortisol converts glycogen stored in the liver into blood sugar to provide instant energy.
- ☛ Stress chemicals such as adrenalin and nor adrenalin are released directly into the blood stream to produce a surge of energy in the body giving your body access to more strength, energy and stamina. This helps you to fight harder or run faster.
- ☛ Breathing becomes faster to provide more oxygen to the body.
- ☛ Heartbeat is increased to increase blood circulation. Blood vessels are dilated and blood pressure is increased.
- ☛ It reduces the blood supply to your skin and short – term inessential organs. This minimises bleeding if you are hurt, and ensures that energy is not wasted on processes that are not immediately useful.

- ☛ The process of digestion is shut down as blood is diverted away from stomach towards skeletal muscles.
- ☛ Dilation of pupils occurs to allow more light into the eye.
- ☛ Mouth dries up, because the salivary glands dry.
- ☛ The rectum and bladder muscles relax. You may experience nausea or diarrhea; this eliminates excess weight that might otherwise slow you down.



You may have experienced these changes as fear. Where you have to exhibit your physical prowess through speed and physical strength this adrenaline stress will be helpful and beneficial – fear can help you to survive or perform better. However where calm thought or precise motor skills are important, it is best to control and, ideally, eliminate these adrenaline responses. Prolonged exposure to adrenaline can damage your health. The reserve fuel tank has only to be drawn on in emergencies. The flight response helped the primitive man to flee from danger and the flight reaction prevents Homo sapiens from total annihilation.

Contrary to the above when we are peaceful, relaxed and not aroused, the other branch of autonomous nervous system, namely parasympathetic nervous system takes over. Its function is more or less opposite and complementary to sympathetic nervous system. It makes body chemistry return to normal by balancing the sympathetic response. It is concerned with internal housekeeping, relaxation and restoration of the body like repair of tissues, inward activities of nourishment and excretion etc.

8.1.2 Self generated stress:

Outer circumstances and events don't create stress. It is our response to them which creates stress.

-Humboldt

It is said that for most people, most of the time, most of the stress they encounter is self induced. Self generated stress is stress that you cause for yourself. This can come from anx-

ious worrying about events beyond your control, from a tense, hurried approach to life, or from relationship problems caused by your own behaviour. It can also come from an 'addiction' to and enjoyment of stress.

Stress can cause the levels of a chemical called noradrenalin to rise in and between nerve cells. This gives a feeling of confidence and elation that some people like. They can subconsciously defer work until the last minute to cause a 'deadline high'. Or can create a stressful environment at work that feeds their enjoyment of a situation. The downside of this is that they may leave jobs so late that they fail when an unexpected crisis occurs. They may also cause unnecessary stress for other colleagues who are already under a high level of stress.

Other aspects of personality can cause stress. Examples are perfectionism where extremely or impossibly high standards can cause stress; and excessive self – effacement where constant attention to the needs of others can lead to dissatisfaction. A major cause of self generated stress in many people is anxiety. It also depends upon your personality which are broadly divided into Type A & B

8.1.2.1 Type A Vs Type B:

We all have different ways of reacting to pressure, but broadly these can be fitted into two categories which were given the labels Type A and Type B by the American Dr.Meyer Friedman in the 1960's. Spend a few minutes thinking which of these behaviours best fits your typical reaction to a situation. Try to be honest. Let us see how our personality causes stress by attending the following questionnaire:

FIND OUT YOUR PERSONALITY

Type 'A' or Type 'B' ?

*Please answer the following questionnaire with **YES or NO***

1. Do you move, walk or eat rapidly?
2. Are you impatient with the rate at which most things happen?
3. Do you try to finish the sentences of those speaking to you?
4. Do you get irritated or angry when others are driving more slowly than you are, or when you're waiting in lines?
5. Is it difficult for you to watch people do things that you know you could do faster?
6. Do you have difficulty being interested in conversations if you're not interested in the subject?
7. Do you feel guilty when you "do nothing" for any length of time"?
8. Do you schedule more than is possible to accomplish in a given time span?
9. Do you believe that your success is due to your ability to do things faster than others?
10. Do you often clench your fist or bang it against the table to make your point?

If you answer yes to more than 5 questions you will be branded as Type A personality.

Type A people, as described Friedman and Rosenman, are more intense driven and impatient than Type B people and type A people are more likely to suffer health problems as a result.

Type A people typically find themselves angry in traffic jams, with people they find inefficient or unskilled, with people who can't keep up. Type A people often try to do many things at once, and are usually pressing to do even more. Type B people on the other hand, tend to be more relaxed, are comfortable working on one assignment or project at a time, and seem better able to avoid the physical problems that come with stress. Off course whether you are Type A or Type B, you can choose to alter your behaviour to reduce stress. You see obvious stresses, overlook the less obvious

TYPEA	TYPEB
Is always moving	Is not concerned about time
Walks rapidly	Is patient
Eats rapidly	Doesn't brag
Talks rapidly	Plays for fun, not to win
Is impatient	Relaxes without guilt
Does two things at once	Has no pressing deadlines
Can't cope with leisure time	Is mild – mannered
Is obsessed with numbers	Is never in a hurry
Measures success by quantity	
Is aggressive	

Most often your eyes are wide open to the big causes of stress – the demanding boss, the illness or lost job- but we often overlook the myriad hidden causes that follow us through our daily lives; the waiting line at the bank, the late appointments, the traffic jams and bills to pay and shopping to get done. The list goes on and on. When we work out ways to reduce the stress in our lives, we need to remember to look at all the causes.

“The difference between a really good day and a really awful day is not found in what happened but in what you tell yourself about that day”

-Thomas Whiteman, Sam Verghese & Randy Peterson

8.2 EXTERNAL SOURCE

- ☛ Chemical and nutritional stresses
- ☛ Environment
- ☛ Life style
- ☛ Organisation

8.2.1. Chemical and nutritional stresses:

“Whenever I experience stress, I try to consider the following factors, each of which can increase or prolong my stress: caffeine, or other stimulant drugs, noise and news. Then I try to eliminate one thing at a time to see how it affects my stress levels.

- Dr. Andrew Weil

‘ Beware of your eating habits

The food you eat may contribute to the stress you experience. Examples of stressors you may not be aware of are:

- Caffeine raises your levels of stress hormones, makes it more difficult to sleep, and can make you more irritable. Many people report as big a reduction in feelings of stress after switching away from coffee as they do after giving up smoking. Note that there is often as much caffeine in a cup of tea as there is in a cup of coffee.
- Bursts of sugar from sweets or chocolate: These can make you feel more energetic in the short term. However your body reacts to stabilise abnormally high sugar levels by releasing too much insulin. This causes a serious energy dip shortly after the sugar high.
- Too much salt: This raises your blood pressure and puts your body under chemical stress.
- Smoking: Most people who smoke feel relaxed after a cigarette. If you smoke, however, try taking your pulse before and after a cigarette and think about the difference. Smoking puts your body under chemical stress. Most people who have given up smoking feel much more relaxed generally after the initial ‘giving up’ period is finished.

As well as these specific sources of stress, you may experience stress if you eat an unbalanced or unhealthy diet. You may find that some dietary deficiency or excess causes discomfort and illness which generates stress. If you are obese, then this causes physical stress on your internal organs and

emotional stress as your view of yourself declines. While there is a lot of crooked, biased, naïve or incorrect dietary information around, you can normally rely on nutritional advice from your doctor or from government health education. Before you accept advice, examine the motives of the people offering the advice.

8.2.2.Environment:

Your environment may be a significant source of stress. This can come from:

- Crowding and invasion of personal space
- Insufficient working and living space
- Noise
- Dirty or untidy conditions
- Pollution
- A badly organised or run down environment

Modern man has learned to change his environment more quickly than his ability which has to face those changes. The changes which affect human beings now are over crowding, noise pollution, change of values and loss of tradition in the society, changing family concept, changing roles for men and women, changing nature of work, especially the decision stress. His inability to grow or to adapt to the quick changes has landed him in stressful situations. There are discoverable limits to the amount of change that each individual can absorb. By endlessly accelerating change without prior determination of these limits, individuals are forced to face changes with limited resources and they get distress.

8.2.3.Lifestyle and job stress:

Many of the stresses you experience may come from your job or from your lifestyle. These may include:

- Too much or too little work
- Time pressures and deadlines
- Responsibility for people, budgets or equipment
- Frustration and boredom with current role
- Lack of clear plans and goals
- Demands from clients
- Disruptions to plans
- Frustration at having to overcome unnecessary obstacles
- Financial or relationship problems
- Ill health
- Family changes such as birth, death, marriage or divorce etc.,

‘Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory’ has quoted the Top 10 stressful life events as follows:

1. Spouse’s death
2. Divorce
3. Marriage separation
4. Jail term
5. Death of a close relative
6. Injury or illness
7. Marriage
8. Fired from job

9. Marriage reconciliation

10. Retirement

Let us see how much life style stress you get by attending the following questionnaire :

Life and career changes; Compute your life change risk - Which of these changes occurred in your life? Add up the point values of each event.

Life change	Relative weight
Death of spouse	100
Marital reconciliation	45
Divorce	73
Change in health of a family member	44
Jail term	63
Wife's pregnancy	40
Death of close family member	63
Gain of new family member.....	39
Major personal injury or illness	53
Change in financial status	38
Marriage	50
Increase or decrease of arguments with spouse	35
Fired from work	47
Change in no. of family get together.....	15
Retirement	45

Change in eating habits	15
Sex difficulties	39
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
Business readjustment	39
Son or daughter leaving home	29
Change to a different line of work	36
Trouble with in laws	29
Change in responsibilities at work	29
Outstanding personal achievements	28
Trouble with boss	23
Taking out a big mortgage on home	31
Change in work hours or conditions	20
Wife beginning or stopping work	29
Vacation	13
Revision of personal habits	24
Deepavali / Christmas / Ramzan	12
Trouble with business	23
Minor violations of law	11
Change in residence	20
Change in schools	20
Change in recreation	19
Change in social activities	18
Change in sleeping habits	16
Taking out a small mortgage on home	17

Scores of about 300 supposedly indicate a major life crisis, scores of 200 to 299 a moderate life crisis, and 100 to 199 a mild life crisis.

8.2.4 Job stress

The organization or the job environment throws lot many challenges in the form of deadline driven projects, aggressive and not helping bosses, competitive peers, non cooperative subordinates etc. Is your workplace a den of incivility, rudeness and hostility? Are the employees ignoring the rights and feelings of others Whether Rudeness, Yelling, Snippy communication, Verbal abuse have become the culture of your organizational networking. Do you also notice other aggressive behaviors like late for meetings, talking about others behind their backs, trying to undermine authority, theft which can create a ripple effect! and ultimately creates a hostile work environment! They infect the entire organization!

The simple formula is managing your job stress before it manages you. To quote an apt example, the middle level executives of the Indian Industry are like filler in the sandwich and get banging both from the top management and workforce. They are expected to work faster, work harder and work smarter. Indian industries badly need them.

The outcome felt by them quite often are “Burn out, disgust, impatience, lack of confidence and lack of concentration.” However he has to add flavor to it, give it without feeling or experiencing stress.

8.2.5 Fatigue and Overwork

Working environments are rarely perfect, however often you can improve your environment quite cheaply.

Here stress builds up over a long period. This can occur where you try to achieve too much in too little time, or where you are not using effective time management strategies.

The works may be attended on priority basis. Ganesh, a junior Assistant in a Govt. Department has to furnish data to his higher office by 7th of every month and the particulars will reach him on 1st itself. But he will start preparing the statement only on 6th evening which makes him stressful and most of the times the calculation goes wrong putting him under enormous stress. Selvi, a Deputy Registrar prefers loneliness has less interaction with her subordinates and when her section has to meet crisis there used to be no team work always make Selvi to be under enormous stress. Ravi a good natured junior officer doesn't say no to any of his superiors when they come out with requests. This puts him under tremendous stress as he couldn't complete the various commitments he made to his senior officers.

Ganesh, Selvi and Ravi becomes fatigue and they are stressed out due to overwork. It is better if they prioritise the jobs, have better interpersonal relations and little assertiveness help them to overcome their work style related stress.



Stages of stress

9

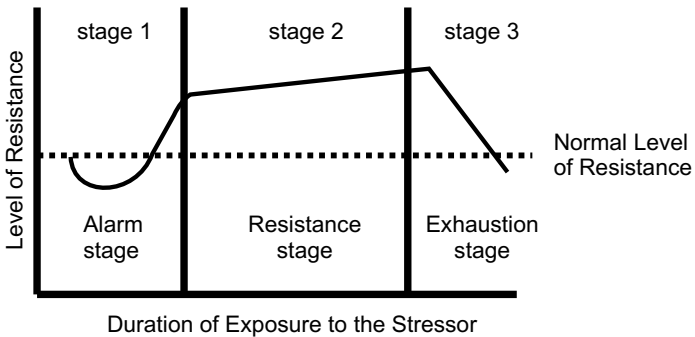
The theory of “**General Adaptation Syndrome**”(GAS), proposed by Hans Selye, the father of stress research states that when an organism is confronted with a threat, the general physiological response occurs in three stages.

- Alarm reaction
- Stage of resistance
- Stage of exhaustion

9.1 ALARM REACTION:

Shock phase:
Immediate action,
Shock one into
inactivity

The first stage includes an initial “**shock phase**” in which resistance is lowered, and a “**counter shock phase**” in which defensive mechanisms become active.



Alarm stage of stress is a perfectly normal physical and mental response to stress causing situations. Sometimes referred

to as “fight or flight,” the body prepares itself for emergencies. Alarm reaction is characterized by autonomous excitability; adrenalin discharge; increased heart rate; muscle tone, and blood content; and gastro – intestinal ulceration. Depending on the nature and intensity of threat and the conditions of the organism, the periods of resistance vary and the severity of symptoms may differ from a mild invigoration to disease of adaptation.

Counter shock phase mobilisation of physical resources for defensive purpose

to as “fight or flight,” the body prepares itself for emergencies. Alarm reaction is characterized by autonomous excitability; adrenalin discharge; increased heart rate; muscle tone, and blood content; and gastro – intestinal ulceration. Depending on the nature and intensity of threat and the conditions of the organism, the periods of resistance vary and the severity of symptoms may differ from a mild invigoration to disease of adaptation.

9.2 Stage of Resistance:

If your stress isn't resolved in the alarm stage, and you maintain the same mental attitudes as in the alarm stage, you may enter into the resistance stage. Rama, for example, refuses to discuss his work situation with his wife. He becomes isolated,

Resistance stage symptoms disappear because one has become attuned to the stressor

emotionally unavailable to others, and as he focuses on his disappointment, he finds himself additionally withdrawn from his friends and family. Maximum adaptation occurs during this stage. The bodily signs characteristic of the alarm reaction disappear. Resistance increases to levels above normal. If the stressor

persists, or the defensive reaction proves ineffective, the organism deteriorates to the next stage.

9.3 Stage of Exhaustion:

Exhaustion stage infinite persistence of the stressor leads to irreversible chemical scars

Adaptation energy is exhausted, signs of alarm reaction reappear, and resistance level begins to decline irreversibly. The organism collapses. In the exhaustion stage of stress, our health becomes affected. We have trouble, we're prone to unusual behaviour and

personal problems. The physical toll of stress can lead to migraine headaches, depression, ulcers and hypertension. Other symptoms are a loss of appetite, illness, boredom, irritability and a loss of self – esteem and confidence.



Why you want to reduce your stress?

10

- to increase your energy
- to improve your memory
- to improve your ability to concentrate
- to do a better job at work
- to enhance your sense of well being
- to improve your patience
- to have better interpersonal relations
- to sharpen yourself in the
 - i. physical
 - ii. mental
 - iii. spiritual &
 - iv. behavioral spheres
- list other reasons, if any.....



How to cope with stress?

11

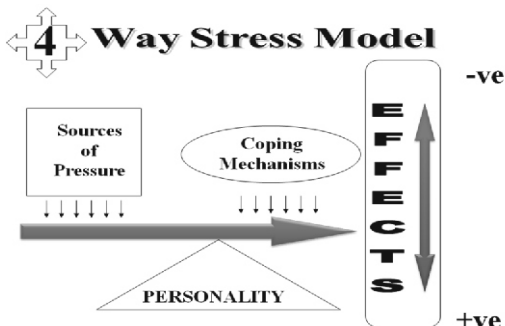
We can control our reactions and responses to stress. How we cope with stress is up to us

- Jeff Davidson

Life's battles don't always go to the stronger or faster man, but sooner or later to the man who thinks he can

- Virgil

There are a number of choices and numerous strategies to effectively cope! You are limited only by yourself and the few or many options you give yourself! Remember the key is to manage your stress. If coping mechanisms are more effective than the source of stress there will be true effect and if the coping mechanism could not affect the source of stress then there will be more effects on one's body and mind.



Think for a minute. How many coping skills do you have in your repertoire?

One coping skill, as you probably know, does not work in every situation! Yet we may rely on it and expect it to be effective! How often do you use your favorite coping strategy?

This brings up the issue of reviewing our coping skills tool bag! How often do you discard old and ineffective strategies that may have worked when you were young (i.e. throwing a tantrum)? How often are you trying to learn new strategies and skills? Remember it takes time and practice to improve skills! It may help to regularly think of adding to your coping strategies and skills tool bag!

Instructor may wish to share personal experience of adding and discarding coping skills)

A leading expert on stress, cardiologist **Robert Eliot**, gives the following prescription for dealing with stress:

- **Rule No. 1:** Don't sweat the small stuff
- **Rule No. 2:** It's all small stuff. And if you can't fight and you can't flee, flow.

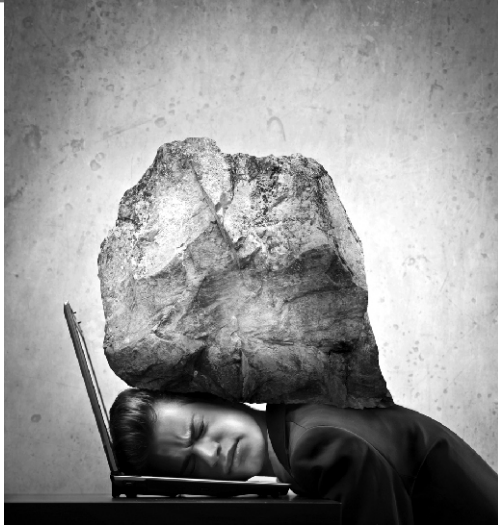
The most difficult thing about stress is recognising it: doing something about it is relatively easy. Once you have recognized that you are suffering a stress response, identify and tackle the underlying causes, not just the symptoms.

Make a list:

First, make a list of signs of stress, note how severe they are and how long they have lasted for. Next list all the possible causes and sort them into categories. Is the cause a major life event, for example bereavement? Is there a serious problem such as redundancy or what to do about elderly parents who can no longer look after themselves? Are you troubled by a worry such as a teenage daughter who has abandoned her studies and gone away to become a model? Or are you troubled by a series of irritations like the street being drilled, noise from loud speaker from neighborhood, etc,. Remember that a series of minor irritations may be more disorienting than the major problems of life.

Where there are practical solutions (and this applies to most problems) make a list of these and try them out. You should be prepared for the fact that some of these solutions may upset others. Remember that looking after yourself does not mean being unkind to others and that you are useful to yourself and to others only if you are functioning well.

Let us see how much stress resilient you are by attending the questionnaire in the following Chapter.



How stress resilient are you? 12

Stress resilience is the key now in this extremely competitive and break neck race for survival and progress. Your stress resilience is measured by your ability to withstand the stressful situation Honestly tick your reactions in the few day to day situations you are in and gauge your stress resilience.

1. You are alone in a lift. The lift stops between floors.

YOUR REACTION	YES	NO
Amusement	A	B
Calm	A	B
Palpitation	B	A
Rage	B	A
Feeling unwell	B	A
Cool reflection	A	B

2. You have been summoned to a government office, and the exact time has been clearly stipulated. Although you arrive punctually, you are kept waiting for over an hour.

YOUR REACTION	YES	NO
Unfriendliness	B	A
Self control	A	B
Palpitation	B	A
Rage	B	A
Amusement	A	B
Damp palms	B	A

3. You are stopped by a traffic control. You are in a hurry. The policeman, realizing this, deliberately takes his time in dealing with you.

YOUR REACTION	YES	NO
Friendliness	A	B
Aggression	B	A
Trembling of hands	B	A
Calm	A	B
Uneasiness	B	A
Perspiring	B	A

4. At a party you are unexpectedly asked to make a speech.

YOUR REACTION	YES	NO
Palpitation	B	A
Nervousness	B	A

Amusement	A	B
Calm	A	B
Embarrassment	B	A
Blushing	B	A

5. In a discussion, you are ridiculed by all because they think your ideas both crazy and wrong.

YOUR REACTION	YES	NO
Blushing	B	A
Amusement	A	B
Calm	A	B
Rage	B	A
Self – control	A	B
Embarrassment	B	A

6. You return home from shopping. As you open the front door, you are met by a deluge: your washing machine has broken down.

YOUR REACTION	YES	NO
Calm	A	B
Resignation	B	A
Trembling of hands	B	A
Self – control	A	B
Rage	B	A
Amusement	A	B

7. You have a heated argument with a close friend, which ends by your friend saying, “I want nothing more to do with you”.

YOUR REACTION	YES	NO
Aggression	B	A
Calm	A	B
Amusement	A	B
Uncertainty	B	A
Palpitation	B	A
Self – control	A	B

8. Your superior is dissatisfied with your work and criticizes you.

YOUR REACTION	YES	NO
Calm	A	B
Blushing	B	A
Self – control	A	B
Uncertainty	B	A
Stammering	B	A
Embarrassed smile	B	A

9. In the course of a discussion somebody reproachfully says to you, “I wonder if you have any opinions of your own”.

YOUR REACTION	YES	NO
Aggression	B	A
Self – control	A	B

Embarrassment	B	A
Perspiring	B	A
Composure	A	B
Stammering	B	A

10. You have lunched in a restaurant. As you are about to settle your bill, you discover that you have left your wallet at home.

YOUR REACTION	YES	NO
Blushing	B	A
Calm	A	B
Palpitation	B	A
Amusement	A	B
Embarrassment	B	A
Perspiring	B	A

11. You are caught traveling on a bus without a ticket.

YOUR REACTION	YES	NO
Blushing	B	A
Calm	A	B
Palpitation	B	A
Amusement	A	B
Embarrassment	B	A
Perspiring	B	A

12.You wake up during the night and hear a noise in the hall.

YOUR REACTION	YES	NO
Calm	A	B
Agitation	B	A
Palpitation	B	A
Cool reflection	A	B
Perspiring	B	A
Anxiety	B	A

Test evaluation :

Add up all the 'a' you have ticked. The total is your score. Now check your stress resilience in the chart below, according to your age group.

14-16 Yrs.	17-21 Yrs.	22-30 Yrs.	Over 30Yrs.	Level of stress
Points	Points	Points	Points	resilience
58-65	59-65	60-65	62-65	Very Strong
53-58	54-59	53-60	55-62	Strong
44-52	42-53	40-52	42-55	Average to strong
28-43	30-41	30-39	30-42	Average to Weak
0-28	0-30	0-30	0-30	Weak

Your test results analysed:

Very Strong : Your emotional stress resilience is very high. It is almost impossible to embarrass you. The worst will have

to come to the worst before you lose your calm and composure.

Strong : For your age group, your emotional stress resilience is high. Your equanimity is not easily upset. Even if, occasionally you may give yourself away, you will seldom get embarrassed.

Average to strong : Your level of emotional stress resilience is within the normal range, tending to be rather more strongly developed.

Average to weak : Your level of emotional, stress resilience is equanimity and calm. You are inclined to get very worked up about your own faults and to lose your emotional balance.

Weak: When faced with unpleasant situations you readily tend to grow uneasy and embarrassed. Try to react to minor mishaps with a sense of humour. Try also to develop a more calm and collected attitude



Main strategies in responding to stress

13

The two main strategies are Preventive and curative strategies which we will see one by one.

13.1 PREVENTIVE

The saying goes like this “A stitch in time saves nine”. Like that prevent yourself by increasing your defense mechanism to cope up with stress.

13.2 CURATIVE:

The following strategies are followed when you have already been affected by stress:

- * Fight
- * Flight
- * Freeze

✱ Subjugation

✱ Divert

✱ Face

13.2.1 Fight:

It is nothing but taking treatment by going to a Doctor and taking medicines sometimes tranquilisers which will help you to sleep. Sleep makes you stress free.

13.2.2 Flight:

You are taking a leave from the stressful situation by going to a hill station like Kodaikonal or Ooty and get rid of your stress.

13.2.3 Freeze:

It's quite dangerous as the individual encountering stress will freeze and will not attempt to resolve stress like being hit by a shocking news.

13.2.4 Subjugation:

It is nothing but taking shelter under a glass of liquor or acquire other addictive habits to resolve one's stress.

13.2.5.Divert:

If you are getting a firing from your boss which makes you stressful. You cannot react to him rather coming out of his room and give a thrashing in the punching bag or buy one Kg. potato in the market and place it in the dining table and cut it as if you are chopping your boss so that you can vent out your feeling and thus getting your stress reduced.

13.2.6. FACE:

It is the right way to resolve your stress by understanding the stressor and resolve it in an appropriate way.



Defence against stress

14

*Fear less, hope more, eat less, chew more
Whine less, breathe more, talk less, say more
Love more and all good things will be yours.*
- Sweedish proverb

*Man never made any material as resilient as the
human spirit.*

-Bern Williams

You can defend yourselves against stress in your lives by understanding what causes you stress and by learning how to avoid or adjust and adapt better to this. The principle defences are within yourselves and mainly consist of physical and mental fitness - healthy body and a healthy mind and the third important one is social defense which depends upon your interpersonal relations. How you move with people and the help you can get from out side like caring agencies and counsellors etc.

14.1 PHYSICAL DEFENSES:

14.1.1.Sleep:

We really think that those who need 3 hours of sleep are superior and the rest of us are slugs. I felt that way until I found out that Albert Einstein needed 10 hours a night.

- Dr. Christine Northrup

We should get enough sleep and learn how to relax. The amount of sleep needed varies from person to person but it is probably true to say more is needed during times of stress than when life is running quietly and smoothly-beware however of too much sleep as it can make you feel almost as bad as too little.

If you are having difficulty in sleeping make sure that you eat your dinner early and avoid strong tea or coffee after 7.00 p.m. A glass of warm milk may help. Try to tire yourself physically, have a bath and then spend some time switching your mind off before going to bed by reading or watching television. Do not allow yourself to brood over problems, they can wait until the morning.

Try not to succumb to taking sleeping pills unless it is only for one or two nights in order to break the pattern of your sleep.

Let us understand your sleeping habit by attending the following questionnaire:

How do you sleep?

- ❖ How long does it take you to hard sleep?
- ❖ Has this changed within last year?

- ❖ Do you awaken in the night? If so, how many times each night? How long do you remain awake?
- ❖ Do you ever awaken prematurely, unable to return to sleep?
- ❖ How much total sleep do you usually get? Has that changed recently?
- ❖ Do you stay awake long after feeling sleepy?
- ❖ Do you go to bed not feeling tired?
- ❖ Do you wish you could remain in bed when it is time to wake up?
- ❖ Do you take sleeping pills? How often?
- ❖ Do you drink alcohol in the evening?
- ❖ Do you ever worry about whether you sleep well?
- ❖ Do you snore?
- ❖ Does your spouse complain of being kicked in the night?
- ❖ Do you do anything to aid sleep?
- ❖ Do you bring work home with you at night?
- ❖ Is your bedroom sufficiently quiet and dark?
- ❖ What do you think causes your sleep problems/
- ❖ What do you think about when lying awake in the bed?
- ❖ Do you feel you need more sleep?
- ❖ What are your peak hours during the day?
- ❖ What are the times of “slump?”
- ❖ Do you ever nap during the day? Would you like to?

14.1.1.1 Twelve Ways To Get A Better Night's Sleep

Normally we are managing on about two hours less sleep than our ancestors in Victorian times did. The pace of life has been speeding up, so we need to take care to meet body/mind's need for rest. Try these tips to improve your sleep patterns:

1. Cut down on caffeine, found not just in coffee but tea, cola, and chocolate. And what do you think is the active ingredient in those 'healthy' energy drinks? That's right - caffeine! If you're a heavy coffee drinker, cut down gradually - going 'cold turkey' may give you headaches and other withdrawal symptoms. As you'd expect, the earlier in the day you have your last cup, the longer your body has to settle back down to normal before bedtime.
2. Don't use alcohol as a way of getting to sleep. Drinking a lot before you go to bed will produce a surge of noradrenalin (one of the body's natural stimulants or 'stress chemicals') at about 4AM.
3. If you work from home, stop work (of any kind) at least two hours before you go to bed. This gives your mind and body a chance to wind down.
4. Have a bath or shower before you go to bed. Research shows you will sleep better as a result.
5. Make sure you get enough bright light during the day. Recent research suggests that this wakes you up during the day, so you sleep better at night.
6. If there are still things on your mind when you go to bed, write down your concerns on a piece of paper and put

them in a box. Remind yourself that they'll still be there when you wake up.

7. Use a relaxation CD to unwind before you go to sleep, or to draw a boundary between work and leisure time.
8. Get enough exercise. If your body is pleasantly fatigued from exercise you will sleep better. Finish aerobic exercise at least two hours before you go to bed.
9. Keep your evening meal light, and avoid cheese or spicy foods in the evening. Nothing keeps one awake like that "washing machine" effect in the tum.
10. Keep the bedroom for sleep and lovemaking only.
11. Further to this, don't have a TV or electronic equipment in your bedroom. If space forces you to have an office in your bedroom, make sure all equipment is switched off and cover the computer with something to 'conceal' it.
12. The more sorted out the rest of your life is, the better you will sleep. If insomnia was a message to you from your body or your unconscious mind, what would it be telling you?

14.1.2. Diet

We should eat a sensible diet to avoid the health hazards of being over weight and to reduce or prevent the risks of developing diseases known to be related to diet, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, bowel cancer, and late onset diabetes. Let it be balanced with carbohydrates, protein, fiber and vitamins. This Wholesome diet will make you energized and even help you to recoup your lost energy.

Let us see how much balanced diet you eat by attending the following questionnaire:

Your diet

1. Have you ever been put on a restricted diet? If so, do you often cheat?
2. Do you have a history of indigestion? Constipation? Diarrhea? Excessive flatulence?
3. Are you seriously overweight? Have you had difficulty losing weight? Do you gain easily?
4. Do you have insatiable cravings for food? You know you should either limit or avoid entirely
5. Do you salt your foods heavily?
6. Do you have sugar cravings? Do you give into them frequently?
7. Do you eat a lot of fatty high cholesterol food?
8. Do you feel particularly heavy and dull after most meals?
9. Do you often skip meals due to overwork?
10. Do you usually have a few drinks before or during meals?
11. Do you often eat on the run?
12. Do you eat while working?
13. Do you chew and swallow rapidly/
14. Are most of your lunches business lunches?
15. Do you occasionally lose your appetite
16. Do you wake up hungry during the night/ do you wake up with indigestion during night?

17. Does your energy level fluctuate excessively/ do you perk up immediately after eating only to slump soon afterwards?
18. Do you get hyperactive irritable or disoriented if you go too long without eating?
19. Do you neglect to read the labels on packed foods?
20. Do you eat a good deal of prepared canned or frozen foods?
21. Do you drink coffee? How much per day?

14.1.3. Exercise:

Exercising is an excellent stress buster! The military has encouraged physical fitness as a healthy way to cope with stress and to stay in shape..How many of you exercise regularly?

Exercise not only has physical benefits, it also has strong psychological and mental payoffs. Most exercisers feel relaxed, refreshed, and reinvigorated after their work out. . .

There is only one way to keep the body trim and fit i.e., by doing exercise. We all need some regular exercise. This might amount to no more than a pleasant brisk 15 minute walk in the fresh air but it could well be much more. The important thing is that the exercise chosen should be pleasurable-which for some of us is a problem.

Exercise is a must because the muscles deteriorate without exercise. Exercise increases strength, maintains blood circulation, improves muscle tone and posture, reduces tiredness and tension, improves control of weight, reduces stiffness

improves appearance. Walking and jogging are wimple expedients. The distance and the time must be gradually increased and not all of a sudden. This slow increase helps your body to adapt. Regular walking is an insurance against heart problems.

There are other forms of exercises to tone up various body muscles including stationary bicycles. Yogic exercises also help improve muscle tone, keeping joints fit and making body more flexible. Yoga must not be done to force your body into a position of pain or discomfort. The posture mentioned in yoga books should be assumed slowly and gently without hurting your body.

Let us see your exercising routine by attending the following questionnaire:

How do you exercise?

1. Do you exercise regularly? How often?
2. What type of exercise would you do?
3. Do you think of exercise as drudgery, or do you enjoy it?
4. Do you have difficulty fitting exercise into your schedule?
5. Have you been promising yourselves that you will get back into safe, but avoiding it?
6. Have you been told by Doctors to exercise regularly?
7. Have you been told not to exercise?
8. Do you have any medical condition that limits your participation in vigorous recreation?
9. Do you engage in competitive sports?

10. Do you feel you are too old or out of shape for exercise?
11. Do you ever walk up stairs instead of taking the elevator, just for the exercise?
12. Do you walk instead of taking cabs?
13. Do you ever take walks after work, just for the enjoyment of it?
14. While sitting at your desk, do you ever feel the urge to get up and run around?
15. Do you do mild, stretching exercises, like yoga?

14.2 MENTAL DEFENSES

*Mind is the most powerful thing in the world.
One who has controlled his mind can control
anything in the world*

-Swami Vivekananda

To get the body in tone, get the mind in tune!
- Dr. Zachary Bercovitz

14.2.1. Self Instructions

When we learn a new skill such as driving we learn by a combination of receiving instructions and observations. Finally the complete activity “automatically” carried out without consciously thinking of instructions. This is also called unconscious competence in the learning theory.

Using the imagination, pay attention to the way your thoughts tend to work than the stress is imminent. Next we can make a list or a note of practical positive instructions that would be useful. Thirdly we instruct ourselves positively with the most useful instructions we have thought of before hand instead of

wasting time and energy panicking or ruminating irrelevant thoughts. In course of time the process becomes “automatic”.

14.2.2.Control

Having a sense of control over events, emotions and feelings lessens their stressful impact. There are some things over which we have no control, there is usually some aspects of a problem that we can change to our advantage, helping us to reduce stress.

Self control methods are useful to alter particular aspects of our behaviors or response to people or events. First carefully observe the behavior in question, chart the circumstances in a notebook. Think of practical ways in which we can modify the behavior. Choose some thing pleasant to reward yourself with when you change the behavior in question and reach a predetermined standard.

You are irritated for not being considered for promotion despite having the requirements. But promotion policy is decided by management and nothing is in your hands to change/modify the same. The choice before you is either resign your post and seek employment elsewhere or change your approach to promotion and work happily in the present job as getting promotion is not in your control. Here the uncertainty in the outcome creates stress. You have to change your expectation which is very much in your control.

14.2.3.Relaxation

Under stress the most useful technique is relaxation. There are a number of methods and most of which have to be followed with proper instructions.

Let us see how you relax. Attend the following questionnaire:

Are you relaxed?

1. Do you hesitate to take time out to do nothing?
2. Do you find it difficult to relax?
3. Do you feel guilty when you take time out to relax?
4. Do your hands or feet get cold even in a warm room?
5. Are your palms or brow chronically moist?
6. Are there deeply etched wrinkle lines on your forehead?
Around your eyes or mouth?
7. In the course of the average day, do you often experience tightening of the stomach muscles? Rapid heartbeat? Shortness of breath? Trembling hands and fingers? Restless legs? Other signs of tension?
8. Do your neck and shoulder muscles get tight frequently?
Do you feel the urge to stretch or massage them?
9. Do you clench your jaw or grind your teeth habitually?
10. During a lull in your work day, can you easily turn off the pressure and just let go?
11. Do you practice any formal method of relaxation?
12. Have you ever looked into Transcendental meditation or other relaxation techniques? Do such practices have a negative connotation to you?
13. Are your muscles – particularly arms and legs – chronically tensed?

14.2.4.Shortcut to deep relaxation:

Whichever method of tension control you use, after a few days you will be familiar with the sensation of deep relaxation. You will then be able to produce the sensation at will by simply closing your eyes, repeating the phrase “I am completely relaxed from my head to my knees to my toes”. This is a useful shortcut when you haven’t the time for a complete session and can be used at any time of the day.

Slow deep breathing is probably the single best anti-stress medicine we have

-Dr. James Gordon

I use breathing techniques to calm myself

-Dr. Andrew Weil

(a) Breathe like a baby: “Watch a baby breathes,” says, James S.Gordon, director of the Centre for Mind/Body Medicine in Washington “and you’ll see the belly go up and down, deep and slow.” With age most of us shift from this healthy abdominal breathing to shallow chest breathing. This strains the lungs, which must move faster to ensure adequate oxygen flow, and taxes the heart, which is forced to speed up to provide enough blood for oxygen transport. The result is a vicious cycle, where stress prompts shallow breathing, which in turn generates additional stress. According to Gorden, “slow, deep breathing is probably the single best anti – stress medicine we have.” It is one way of relaxation. Keep your hands on your stomach below the navel. Breathe through your nose slowly and steadily. Your fingers will feel the abdomen protruding. Then exhale slowly. Abdominal breathing can be prac-

ticed when you are under stress or when you anticipate stress without breaking your routine and without anybody noticing it.

(b) Self massage: This relieves muscle tension. You should not apply too much of pressure. It should be gently. Starting from the head with both palms and fingers make a slow circular motion in various parts of your body. This can be done at bed time or before bath.

(c) Focus on your breathing: Just close your eyes and focus on your breathing. And you don't have to change your breathing in any way at all although you may find that after a while your breathing shifts by itself. And any time you find your attention wandering, just return it to focus on your breathing. If you have any tension in any part of your body, let go of the tension by imagining you are breathing into that part.

Breathing is normally unconscious, but you can control it consciously, changing your breathing, or just becoming aware of it, is an easy way to change your physiological state.

(d) Worry time: Our worries (Dhukkha) do really imbalance our stress resilience. It is advisable to have a separate but fixed worry time everyday which will help you in managing your stress. Research has proved that people who have allotted separate worry time were able to have their stress under control.

(e) Body revisited: Lie down in a comfortable place and close your eyes. Spend a few minutes relaxing your body. Begin by letting your body become loose and limp. Allow your weight to sink and your muscles to relax.

Focus on your entire body and pay attention to how it feels. Focus on your physical sensations in your arms, shoulder, back, stomach, legs, inside your chest, abdomen, hips and in head.

Now shift your attention slowly to your breathing rhythm. How you breath and the way you feel when the air crosses your nostrils, the way you inhale and exhale. Be natural and do not try to breath in and breath our artificially.

Whenever your mind wanders gently bring it back to your bodily sensation Start giving auto suggestion that fresh supply of oxygen passes through your body and you feel fresh in that portion.

Begin with your awareness at your head. Say that fresh supply of Oxygen is passing through your head and you are feeling fresh and energized. Travel through the entire body like your neck, shoulder, chest, abdomen, back, hips, thighs, calf muscles, feet and hands and repeat these words, “fresh supply of oxygen is passing through and you feel energized”.

You will feel totally relaxed and become so quiet inside that you can feel your heart beat. Once you finish picturising all the parts of your body now visualize your entire body receiving fresh supply of oxygen and feels fresh throughout. Now immerse yourself in total relaxation.

“When we learn to relax the body, breath and mind, the body becomes healthy, the mind becomes clear and our awareness becomes balanced”

-Tarthang Tulku, Buddhist Teacher

The relaxation really helps you in normalizing the agitated functioning of your body due to stress. See the table below:

Stress response	Relaxation response
Rapid metabolism	Normal metabolism
Fast heart beat	Normal heart beat
Raised blood pressure	Normal blood pressure
Muscles tense	Muscles relaxed
Blood supply to digestive system diverted	Normal circulation restored
Water retained in the body	Normal water balance restored
Immune resistance lowered	Immune resistance restored

14.3 SOCIAL DEFENSE:

Coping with stress is easier by having social support or help from family and friends. Found in having a stable home life, a trouble free work environment or some “refuge that provides a breathing space within which we can work through, friendly or loving relationships can all bring the necessary social support to counter stress.

14.3.1 Loneliness:

Loneliness and isolation though difficult can help a lot if you break out from a fear of rejection. Network of social support by seeking intellectual and physical simulations through classes, courses, sports, voluntary work or political activities can be a good alternative to loneliness. Remember that there are other people just as isolated and with as much potential, find them and come out of yourselves.

14.3.2 Caring Agencies:

There are several caring agencies such as your doctor, religious organisations, voluntary groups, citizens advice, guidance counsels, which can be of great help. It needs persistence and continuous efforts as instant solutions are not possible.

14.3.3 Counselling:

Counselling is a process covering a range of activities in which an attempt is made to understand the meaning of some event or state of being to an individual, family, group, and to plan with the person or people concerned, how to manage emotional and practical realities which face them. There are many different counseling techniques but the successful counselor should have emotional warmth, understanding, genuineness and empathy. Bhagavat Gita, though supposed to be the product of war front is one such counseling activity by Lord Krishna to Emotional Archuna.

14.3.4 Self help groups

There are groups of people who feel they have a problem in common and have joined together to have a solution. Small, voluntary groups for mutual aid and accomplishment they work to find results with help from within. Diabetes forums, Association of Stammerers etc., are few examples.

14.3.5 Media

Although passive forms of communication when used selectively, media can be useful in providing practical information on several range of information.

14.3.6 Telephone and internet

Both provide confidential access to an enormous number of helping organizations worldwide. It is very useful to overcome initial reluctance and embarrassment of seeking advice.

14.3.7 Family Doctor

For many people family doctor becomes the first and chief source of help. Besides handling all our health problems, Family Doctor is the ideal person to identify and help us in overcoming stress in the initial stages itself.



Tips to manage stress

15

15.1 Choosing the appropriate stress management technique:

Techniques that you select depend on the cause of the stress and the situation in which the stress occurs.

In choosing methods to combat stress, it is worth asking yourself where the stress comes from. If outside factors such as important events or relationship difficulties are causing stress, then a positive thinking or imagery based technique may be effective. Where stress and fatigue are long term, then lifestyle and organisational changes may be appropriate. If the feeling of stress come from adrenaline in your body, then it may be effective to relax the body and slow the flow of adrenaline.

15.2 MAINTAIN A STRESS DIARY:

Keeping a stress diary is an effective way of finding out what causes you stress, the level of stress you prefer, and your effectiveness under pressure.

15.2.1 STRESS DIARY

Record the following information:

At a regular interval, for example every hour, record routine stress. Note:

- ❖ The time
- ❖ The amount of stress that you feel(perhaps on a scale of 1 to 10)
- ❖ How happy you feel
- ❖ How efficiently you are working

When stressful events occur, write down:

- ❖ What the event was
- ❖ When and where did it occur?
- ❖ What important factors made the event stressful?
- ❖ How did you handle the event?
- ❖ Did you tackle the cause or the symptom?
- ❖ Did you deal with the stress correctly?

15.2.2 Analysing the diary:

It may be interesting as you carry out the analysis to note down the outcomes of the jobs you were doing when you were under stress. This should give you two types of information:

You should be able to understand the level of stress you are happiest with, and the level of stress at which you work most effectively. You may find that your performance is good even when you feel upset by stress.

You should know what the main sources of unpleasant stress in your life are. You should understand what circumstances make stresses particularly unpleasant, and should be able to see whether your strategies for handling the stresses are effective or not.

Once you have kept a stress diary for a number of weeks, you will be in a position to analyse it and develop an action plan to control stress.

15.3 'PSYCHING UP' – RAISING STRESS LEVELS TO IMPROVE PERFORMANCE.

Where you are not feeling motivated towards a task, either because you are bored by it, or because you are tired, then you may need to 'psych yourself up'. This will increase your arousal so that you can perform effectively.

You can use the following techniques to psych up:

- * Focus on the importance or urgency of the task
- * Set yourself a challenge – e.g. to do the job in a particular time or to do it to a particularly high standard.
- * Break job down into small parts, do each part between more enjoyable work, and take satisfaction from the successful completion of each element.
- * Use suggestion: e.g. 'I can feel energy flowing into me'
- * Get angry about something.

Psyching up is a useful way of improving your performance if you are feeling bored or demotivated. Use it to move into your area of best performance when you are understressed.

15.4 ANTICIPATING STRESS – MANAGING STRESS BY PREPARING FOR IT:

By anticipating stress you can prepare for it and work out how to control it when it happens. You can do it in the following ways:

15.5 REHEARSAL

By practicing for a stressful event such as an interview or a speech several times in advance you can polish your performance and build confidence.

15.6 PLANNING

By analysing the likely causes of stress, you will be able to plan your responses to likely forms of stress. These might be actions to alleviate the situation or may be stress management techniques that you will use. It is important that you formally plan for this – it is little use just worrying in an undisciplined way – this will be counterproductive. Formal planning of responses to stress is a technique used by top – level athletes to ensure that they respond effectively to the stresses of competition.

15.7 Avoidance

Where a situation is likely to be unpleasant, and will not yield any benefit to you, it may be one you can just avoid. You should be certain in your own mind, however, that this is the case, and that you are not running away from problems.

15.8 REDUCING THE IMPORTANCE OF AN EVENT:

When an event is important to you, this can make it very stressful. This is particularly true when you are operating at a high level, where many people are watching, or where there is the prospect of a large financial reward or promotion, or of personal advancement. The presence of family, friends or important people can also add to pressure. If stress is a problem under these circumstances, then think carefully about the event – take every opportunity to reduce its importance in your eyes.

- + If the event seems big, put it in its place along the path to your goals. Compare it in your mind with bigger events you might know of or might have attended.
- + If there is a financial reward, remind yourself that there may be other opportunities for reward later. This will not be only chance you have. Focus on the quality of your performance. Focusing on the rewards will only damage your concentration and raise stress
- + If members of your family are watching, remind yourself that they love you anyway. If friends are real friends, they will continue to like you whether you win or lose.
- + If people who are important to your goals are watching then remind yourself that you may well have other chances to impress them.
- + If you focus on the correct performance of your tasks, then the importance of the event will dwindle into the background.

15.9 REDUCING UNCERTAINTY:

Uncertainty can cause high levels of stress. Causes of uncertainty can be

1. Not having a clear idea of what the future holds
2. Not knowing where your organisation will be going
3. Not having any career development plans
4. Not knowing what will be wanted from you in the future.
5. Not knowing what your boss or colleagues think of your abilities
6. Receiving vague or inconsistent instructions.

In these cases lack of information or the actions of other people are negatively affecting your ability to perform. The most effective way of countering this is to ask for the information you need. This might be information on your organisation's performance. It may involve asking what your employer wants from you in the future, so that you can set the appropriate career development goals. If you are unsure of how you are doing, ask for clarification.

If you ask in a positive way, then people are usually quite happy to help.

Thus by anticipating stressful situations you can prepare for them. This may involve rehearsals, plans to counter stressful contingencies, or avoidance of an unpleasant situation altogether.

Stress may also be caused by the size of an event. If this is the case put it in its proper context within your goals. Where

stress arises from uncertainty, ask for information you need. Thought awareness, Rational thinking and positive thinking are good in controlling internally – generated stress:

15.10 THOUGHT AWARENESS:

It is the process by which you observe your thoughts for a time, perhaps when under stress and become aware of what is going through your head. It is best not to suppress any thoughts – just let them run their course while you observe them.

Watch for negative thoughts while you observe your ‘stream of consciousness’. You are thinking negatively when you put yourself down, criticize yourself for errors, doubt your abilities, expect failure, etc., It damages confidence, harms performance and paralyses mental skills. Examples of common negative thoughts are:

- * Worries about how you appear to other people
- * A preoccupation with the symptoms of stress
- * Dwelling on consequences of poor performance
- * Self criticism
- * Feelings of inadequacy

Make a note of the thought and then let the stream of consciousness run on. Thought awareness is the first step in the process of eliminating negative thoughts.

15.11 RATIONAL THINKING:

Once you are aware of your negative thoughts, write them down and review them rationally. See whether the thoughts have any basis in reality. Often you find that when you prop-

erly challenge negative thoughts that they are obviously wrong. Often they persist only because they escape notice.

15.12 POSITIVE THINKING AND AFFIRMATION:

You may find it useful to counter negative thoughts with positive affirmations. You can use affirmations to build confidence and change negative behaviour patterns into positive ones. You can base affirmations on clear, rational assessments of fact, and use them to undo the damage that negative thinking may have done to your self confidence.

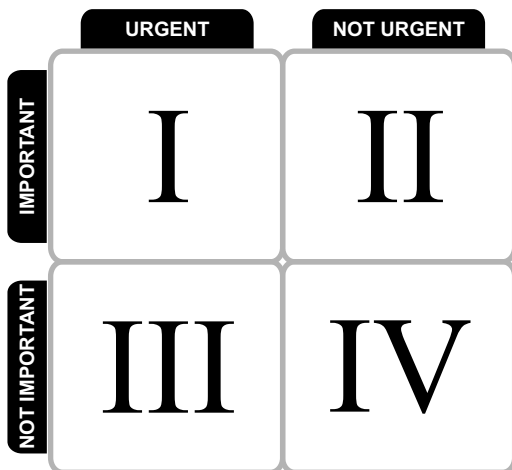
Examples of affirmations are:

- * I know - I can - I will
- * I can do this
- * I can achieve my goals
- * I am completely myself and people will like me for myself
- * I am completely in control of my life
- * I learn from my mistakes. They increase the basis of experience on which I can draw
- * I am a good valued person in my own right.

Traditionally people have advocated positive thinking almost recklessly, as if it is a solution to everything. It should be used with common sense. Decide rationally what goals you can realistically attain with hard work, and then use positive thinking to reinforce these.

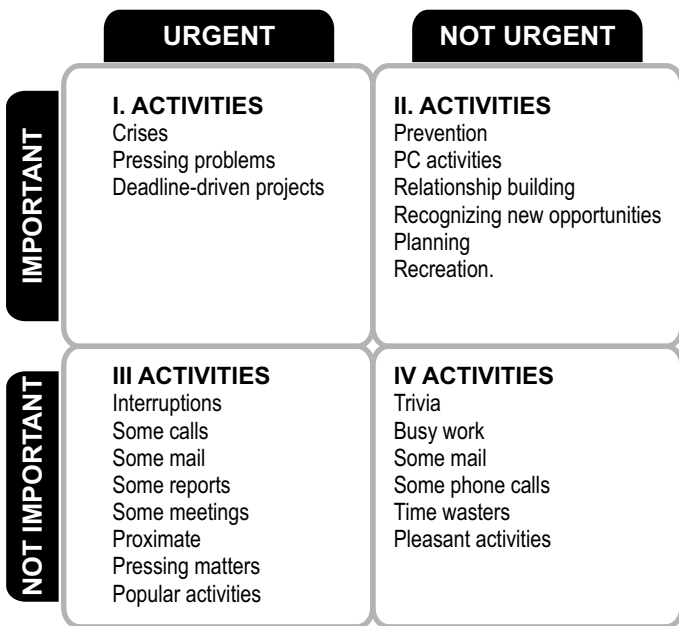
15.13 TIME MANAGEMENT – reducing stress by improving your effectiveness and efficiency:

Time management and Stress Management are both complimentary. If you can't manage time you will fail in stress man-



agement and vice versa. Time management is a set of related practical skills that help you to use your time in the most effective and productive way possible. Time management helps you to reduce work stress by being more in control of your time and by being more productive. This ensures that you have time to relax outside work. In fact time management is really a misnomer – the challenge is not to manage the time but to manage oneself that is to perform around your priorities. It is nothing but **self management**. If you know your life purpose and if you are able to find out your day today activities are inline with that purpose then naturally you will be concentrating on the activities coming under quadrant II. In that way it can reduce the activities coming under stress inducing quadrant I which are urgent and important and expects always a fire fighting approach from you. Anchoring on your mission and values help you over come the “**yes man**” attitude and make you more assertive.

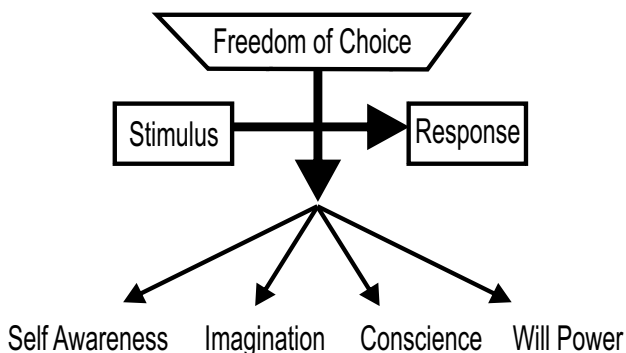
Quadrant II is the heart of effective personal management. It deals with things like building personal relationships, writing a personal mission statement, long range planning, exercising, preventive maintenance, preparation – all those things we know we need to do but really get around to doing, because



they are not urgent. If you dwell more time in these type of activities you are known as **prioritiser**. Contrary to this if you spend more time in quadrant IV you will be known as **irresponsible person**; if you spend more time in quadrant III you are known as **yes man** and both will land you in quadrant one and you will be called as **procrastinator**. Be a prioritiser to manage your time as well as your stress.

15.14 PROACTIVE PERFORMANCE.

The proactive habit advocated by Stephen R. Covey comes in handy to us to deal with any situation with proper response and reactive tendencies can be controlled by concentrating on the four endowments given by God.



Let your response be based on your self awareness, your ability to visualise the repercussions, your own conscience of deciding the right or wrong and your strong will power to subordinate your feelings to your values.

Victor Frankl, a Jewish Psychiatrist was in Nazi's death camp and lost most of his relatives there. The situation was so sickening and it was very difficult to maintain one's equanimity and stress free as death was hanging like a democlus sword over every inmate's head. But he said that he was able to maintain his equanimity with a feeling that one day he will escape from the camp and teach his students about the choice of freedom he had despite that sickening stimulus and how he was able to respond rather than reacting by using the four god given endowments.



Stress and Indian Tradition 16

There is no special concept of stress in the Indian tradition. But it is very vocal about the causes and management of stress. The new found awareness in yoga, meditation, relaxation, food habits, etc., in managing stress has got strong roots in Indian tradition.

A balance between the tridoshas viz., vata, pita and kapha and the trigunas viz., satva, tamas and rajas brings normality. Yogi Vashista describes how mental disturbance is said to produce a variety of symptoms, which eventually create an imbalance of the tridoshas causing disease. Thus every disturbance has somatic repercussions. What is interesting here is it has been derived more than 2000 years back when modern imaging and monitoring systems were unheard of.

Swami Vivekananda suggests to practice the four yogas – Jnana yoga, Bhakthi yoga, Karma yoga, and Raja yoga to balance one's stress.

Jnana yoga speaks about the path of analysis, karma yoga speaks about the path of action, bhakthi yoga speaks about the science of emotion and raja yoga speaks about the path of will power. By practicing these yogas one acquires an analytical mind which increases his intelligent quotient, also acquires the competence to handle his emotions with selfless service and gains the escape velocity to overcome his desires and emotions with the strong will power gained through the practice of raja yoga. Here knowing the steps in raja yoga prunes our will power. The eight steps involved are as follows:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Yama | : Moral commandments |
| 2. Niyama | : Self Discipline |
| 3. Asana | : Postures |
| 4. Pranayama | : Rhythmic control of breathe |
| 5. Prathyahara | : Abstraction |
| 6. Dharana | : Concentration |
| 7. Dhyana | : Meditation |
| 8. Samadhi | : Super consciousness |

It is very difficult to follow these eight steps as Swamiji told that yogis cannot be bogis and bogis cannot be yogis. However many modern schools bypass these first six steps and help you reach directly to the seventh and eighth steps to get relaxation.



Conclusion

17

First I was dying to finish high school and start college,

- And then I was dying to finish college and start working
- And then I was dying to marry and have children,
- And then I was dying for my children to grow old enough for school,
- And then I was dying to retire,
- And now, I am dying
- And suddenly I realize,
- I forgot to live.

So don't forget to live. Life is a precious gift given to you and make use of it. Stop feeling guilty about the past, stop worrying about the future and live in the **Present!** Stress is not a dragon to be afraid upon but a friendly soldier who helps us to

achieve the desired results provided it is kept under control. If you follow the methods discussed above to manage stress you can very well say good bye to many stress related diseases. A man of optimum stress level is an asset to the society and people like him will be the torch bearers of a peaceful universe.

Again one thing to be reiterated is stress management starts from your paradigm or perception of an event/situation/people. The popular saying in Tamil is “smile at adversities.” So smile at problems and try to be at your humorous best at any time. When I was part of the faculty team to certify graduation of aspirants as National Trainers for an NGO even better performing participants reacted like anything when they were advised to come next year in a close one on one meeting. But a person from Goa, himself was a good performer responded to similar comments with a smiling face which is still lingering in my eyes. So fortify yourself with the defenses suggested in this book and be prepared to balance your stress. All the very best.

