



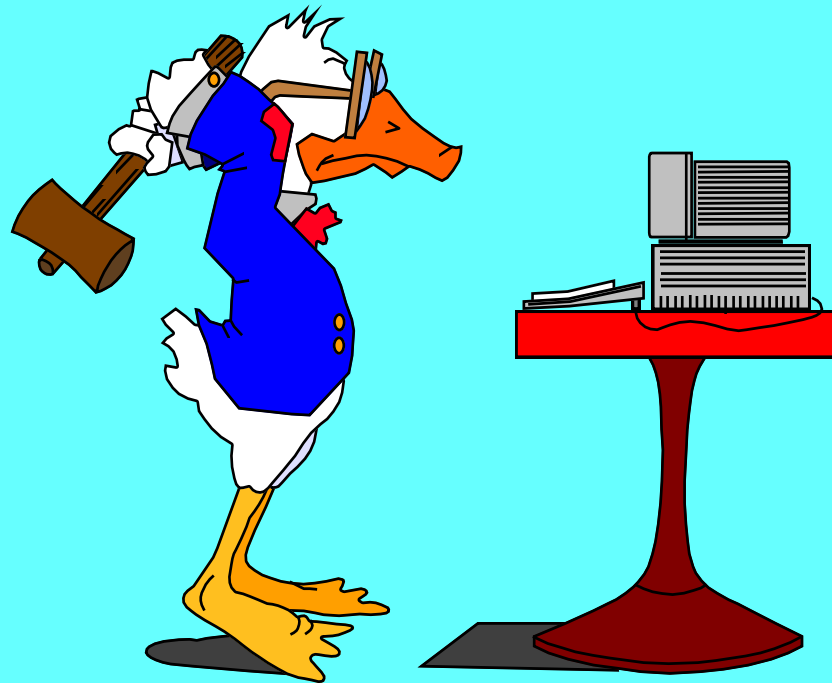
Texas Woman's University

Counseling
Center

Presents

Stress!

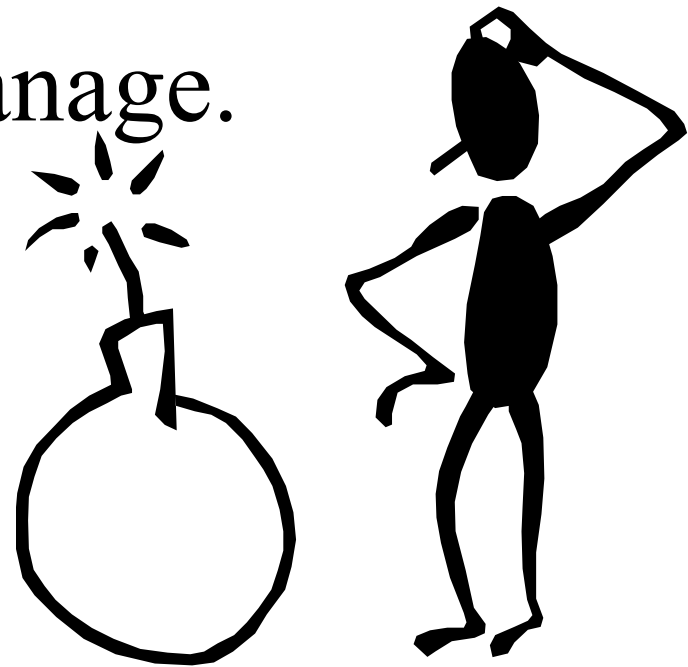
And How to Deal With It Effectively



What is Stress?

“Why do you ask?”

Because, if you don't know what stress is, it's hard to manage.



What Stress isn't

When asked to define stress, most folks describe events -

like tests, finances, people who bother them, etc.



But, that doesn't really define stress at a basic level.

Here's the Official Definition:

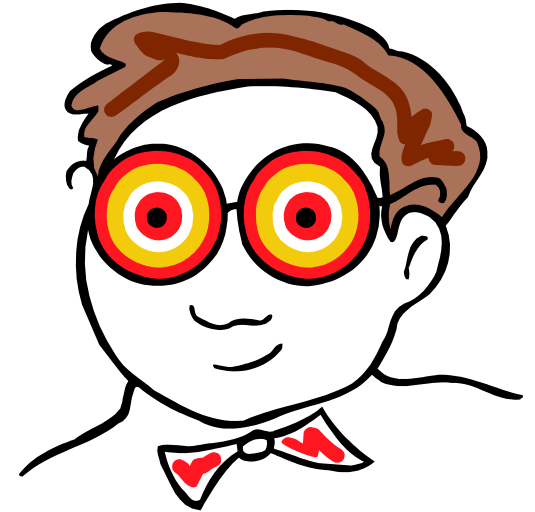
Stress is the non-specific response of the body to any perceived demand.

Stress can be in response to both positive and negative events.



That Non-Specific Response:


- Your heart beats faster
- You breathe faster
- You feel an adrenaline rush
- Your muscles tighten up
- Blood moves from the center of your body to your limbs
- Your pupils dilate



“When Does That Response Happen?”

Every time your body perceives a demand.

Sometimes it’s a small response (like when you open your eyes in the morning.)

Sometimes it’s a big response (like when you realize you’re about to get hit by a car.) 

“So, I’m OK because I can handle each little thing.”

Well, not necessarily. Small stress responses can be additive - that is, if a lot of little things are happening at the same time, you may feel a great deal of demand at that particular moment.

“Like having three tests, no time to study, having deadlines at work, needing to get the kids to soccer practice while cooking a complete dinner, and not having enough money to get by?”

That would be a good example.



“But I heard stress can be good for you.”

You know that saying, “Everything in moderation.”? It turns out that each of us has a level of stress which is optimal for us. That is, at that particular level, we work most efficiently and feel good.



However...

Most people find that too much or too little stress hinders their performance and their sense of well-being.

Too little stress = bored, unmotivated

Too much stress = overwhelmed, frozen, fearful

Moderate stress = energized, on-task, efficient



“OK, so how do I get in ‘the zone’?”

We’ll actually look at that in a bit, but first, you need to know that the zone may change.

“This is getting complicated.”

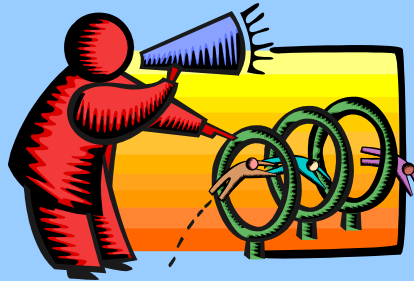


Check out the next page.....

The “Floating Levels”

How much demand you feel and how it affects you depends on many things which boil down to two variable dimensions:

1. How much demand is there at any moment in time for me?



2. How well am I able to cope with those demands at that time?



What Influences Demands?

Experience -

- the more you have with a particular demand, the more, on average, you feel you can handle it, so the demand tends to be less.
- New tasks tend to be more demanding because we may not know if we can be successful.

Number of Demands

- Remember, the number of demands is additive.



What Influences Coping?

Skills

- the more skills you have across a wide variety of dimensions, the more you will feel that you can handle whatever comes your way.

Health

- the more fit you are, physically and emotionally, the more energy you have to devote to dealing with each demand.



So, Let's Recap

- Stress is a non-specific response of the body to any perceived demand.
- Your ability to cope with stress depends on your physical and mental health at that moment.
- Your ability to cope also depends on the experience and skills you have in dealing with that particular stress.

“OK, fine. Now what?”



How to Deal With Stress:

First, for the general considerations.....



General Issue #1

Stress management works best when it is a lifestyle and not a response to a particular event.

“Oh, darn. Does that mean there’s ‘stress management homework’ every day?”

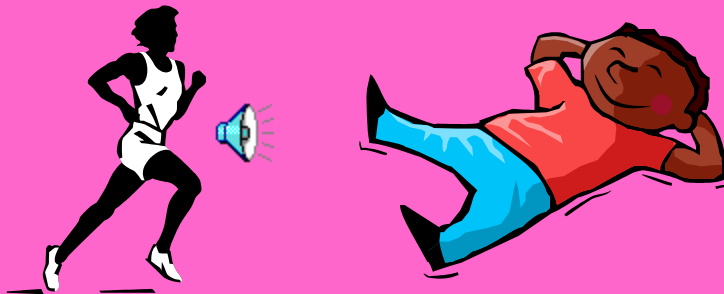
Only if you want to be good at it....



General Issue #2

Physical health is the basis for all good things....

Yes, eating right, sleeping right, and getting moderate exercise are the building blocks of good stress management.



General Issue #3

**There are 3 things we think we can control
- the environment, other people, and
ourselves. Guess which one you have the
most control over?**

“But, if only... my teacher wouldn’t give me so much homework, I’d be OK.”

“... my friends would be nicer to me, my stress would go away.”

“... I could just get the school to bend that rule just this once....”



And Now, The Specifics!

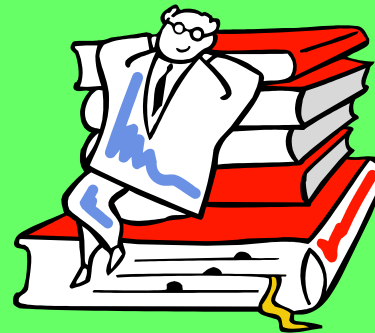


You Can Try To Change the Environment

You may be able to change the environment to reduce the amount of demand.

Examples:

- Buy an answering machine so phone calls don't interrupt
- Create an organization for your important papers so you can find things
- Find a quiet place to study



You Can Try To Change Other People

Most of us have figured out that this isn't very productive.

- Other people just don't seem to want to change for us.
- Even if they say they do, they don't ever change.
- Even if they change, it takes so long, we can't wait.

You might want to consider other techniques besides this.



You Can Change Yourself #1



Remember, demand is usually determined by our lack of skills or our experience using the skills we have.

So....

You Can Change Yourself #2

...the first thing to do is take an inventory of our skills and decide whether we need to learn new skills or practice the ones we have so we are better at them.



Inventory, Then Act



“To be or not to be...”

No, act as in **DO SOMETHING!**

- Where can you go to learn that new skill?
- Are you willing to take the time to learn and practice?
- Skills to be learned can be physical, intellectual, or emotional.

Remember, if you keep doing the same thing, you will get the same results.

Practice, Practice, Practice

In almost every case, if you're going to get good at something, you get good at it by practice.

The more you practice, the better you get.



How People Fail to Manage Stress

#1



1. “If I ignore it, it will go away.”

“It” may, but there will likely be more right behind it.



How People Fail To Manage Stress

#2

2. “Other people cause my stress.”

You control your response to other people.

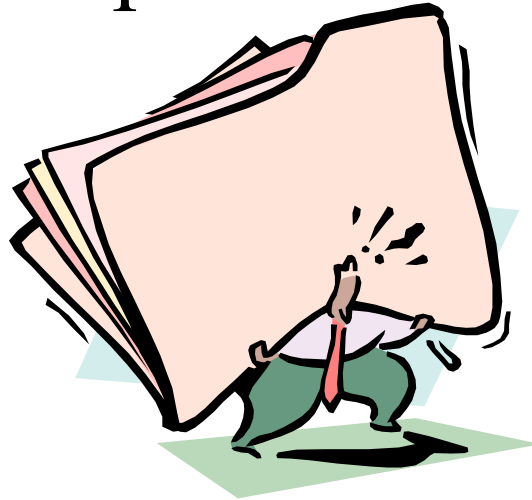
3. “Next time, I’ll do it differently.”

Unless you plan for changing what you do and learn new skills, chances are you’ll do the same thing.

How People Fail To Manage Stress

#3

4. “If I just push a little harder...”



Physical and mental health is the basic foundation of all stress management.

How People Fail To Manage Stress

#4

5. “If I just learn this one new thing, I’ll be fine.”



Stress management is a lifestyle, not a single event, that incorporates daily mental and physical health and lifelong learning of new skills to become more competent at responding to the demands of life.

The BIG Recap #1

1. Stress is a non-specific response of the body to any perceived demand.
2. Too much stress or too little stress affects performance negatively.
3. Things about which we have little experience or few skills to handle are perceived as more demanding.
4. Stressors are additive at any point in time.

The BIG Recap #2

5. The foundation to stress management is a healthy lifestyle.
6. You can learn new skills which will make you more able to handle demand.
7. You can practice the skills you have to become more efficient at using them.



Useful Skills for College and Where to Learn Them #1

Study Skills & Tutoring

Math & Technology Success Center 898-2169

Science Learning Resource Center 898-2553

Write Site Writing Center 898-2341

or

Counseling Center 898-3801

Useful Skills for College and Where to Learn Them #2

Personal Management Skills -
stress, anxiety, depression, time management,
etc.

Counseling Center

Useful Skills for College and Where to Learn Them #3

Relationship Skills - changing the way
you relate to others.

Counseling Center

Counseling Resources for Stress Management

Currently enrolled campus-based TWU Students may call or stop by the Counseling Center for an appointment. Counseling is free and confidential.

Denton:	West Jones Hall	940-898-3801
Dallas:	Parkland, Room 120	214-689-6655
Dallas:	Presbyterian, Room 16	214-706-2416
Houston:	6700 Fannin, Suite 2250	713-794-2059

TWU Counseling Center Resources

- Visit any of the TWU Counseling Center waiting areas to pick up handouts about stress management and other topics of interest.
- Denton: West Jones Hall
- Dallas: Parkland Room 120
Presbyterian Room 16
- Houston: 6700 Fannin, Suite 2250
- Some handouts are also available on our web site at: <http://www.twu.edu/counseling/self-help-library.asp>.

Informational Resources for Stress Management

- On the Web, visit the Virtual Pamphlet Collection at <http://www.dr-bob.org/vpc>. This web site contains handouts and pamphlets, created by university counseling centers across the country, on a variety of topics including stress and stress management.

Credits and Disclaimers

This presentation was created by Donald Rosen, Ph.D., Former Director, Texas Woman's University Counseling Center.

This presentation was created for educational purposes only. The TWU Counseling Center does not provide on-going counseling via the internet, telephone, or e-mail.



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BEST