

Handout 1

Stress and Humor In Our Lives

Stress, who has stress? We all do, every day to some degree.

The body's response to stress (the mind/body connection) is to release hormones that have direct impact on brain and body function. Chronic stress creates an inner body environment for disease to occur and makes management of health issues already present more difficult to manage.

Chronic stress can trigger:

- ❑ Migraines and Tension Headaches
- ❑ Heart Disease and Strokes
- ❑ Pounding heart
- ❑ High Blood Pressure
- ❑ Diabetes (effecting glucose and insulin use by the body)
- ❑ Allergies and Asthma symptoms
- Ulcers
- Irritable bowel Syndrome (both constipation and diarrhea) and irritable bladder
- GERD
- ❑ Menstrual irregularity and cramping
- ❑ Eczema
- ❑ Impairs the immune system
- ❑ Speech difficulties
- ❑ Premature Aging
- ❑ Decreased concentration and other memory problems
- ❑ Depression
- ❑ Anxiety
- ❑ Panic Attacks
- ❑ Compulsive behaviors
- ❑ Fatigue
- ❑ Insomnia, may grind teeth, nightmares
- ❑ Over eating or under eating
- ❑ Increased risk of Choking and Aspiration
- ❑ Carelessness
- ❑ Accident-proneness
- ❑ Aggressive Behaviors
- ❑ Impatience

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Stress Management includes:

- When in doubt breathe—a few deep breathes with prolonged exhalation time helps to interrupt the stress in the moment
- Adequate rest
- Proper diet, take time to eat properly
- Exercise
- Adequate sleep
- “I am relaxed” breathing technique. Breathe deep in through the nose while thinking “I am”. Hold your breath while you count to three, then breath out long and slow while thinking “relaxed”. Repeat up to three times.
- Lifestyle Management to include:
 - Friendship
 - Laughter
 - Avoiding/ reducing-- known stressors when possible
 - Avoid the constant “**rushing**” (Do not let your “To Do’s greatly outnumber your “Can Do’s)
- Find time everyday for something you find enjoyable. Music, Reading, a Humorous Show
- Some people meditate
- Smile more often
- Develop a positive attitude
- List your STRESS BUSTERS:

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HUMOR THE OPPOSITE OF STRESS

Good humor, not the needling or sarcastic variety, while not appropriate in all circumstances, has health facilitating benefits. Humor is good; a good “belly” laugh is best.

- Stimulates the immune system
- Increases Productivity
- Can increase the ability to concentrate
- Increases Morale (yours and those around you)
- Increases the quality of sleep
- Lowers blood pressure
- Aides digestion
 - Decreases constipation
 - Stimulates energy absorption
 - Aides a normal level of stomach acid production
 - Decreases indigestion
 - Lowers cholesterol production
- Diffuses tense situations
- Creates a brief mental recess
- Decreases the feelings of helplessness
- Decreases muscle tension
- Stimulates breathing
- Increases productivity
- May decrease aches and pains
- Assists in muscle relaxation
- Decreases anxiety and feelings of helplessness
- Laughter shared with others increases feelings of acceptance and belonging
- Helps make and keep friends
- Helps to defuse rage and aggressive behavior
- May increase self confidence
- List how healthy laughter helps you: