

Basics of Stress Management

From Stress To Eustress

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Abstract: We as doctors are well aware about the concept of stress. But what becomes more important is how we help our patients to deal with it in their daily life. If day to day stress is well managed then, then it would be a significant contribution in preventing the morbidity which is a cumulative effect of mismanaged stress. This article focus on basic steps in controlling stress in its primitive stage itself.

IndexTerms - Stress, Eustress, management, emotions

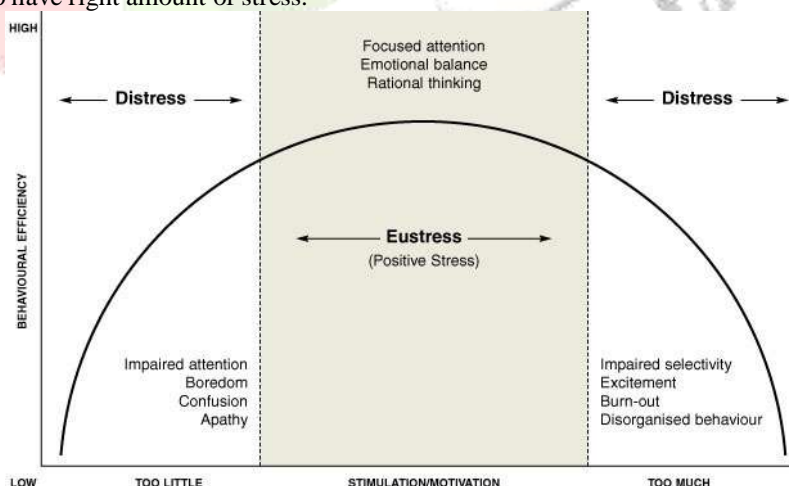
I. INTRODUCTION

Stress is a fact of Human Life. But in today's era, the pandemic levels of stress and stress related diseases are abnormal by historical standards and certainly not desirable. Anyone of us irrespective of age, occupation, gender etc are potential victims of this pandemic. Stress negatively impacts how we experience our lives, preventing us from living in a state of contentment and fulfilment. In today's world most of us feel overwhelmed by daily responsibilities, knowing that we cannot accomplish them to the core. Global urbanization, bloom in technology, simplicity of lifestyle getting replaced by artificiality, have created a world where people are held accountable for every action, privacy is jeopardized, healthy competition has taken an ugly face of cut throat and personal relations always put on gullotine. In short the relentless pace and complexity of modern life has let the 'stress' creep in all domains of life, marring the entire purpose of living. The recent untimely demise of SAP- INDIA CEO Mr. Ranjan Das is heart wrenching reflection of the same. But there is also an upside to the stress. Hence it is high time that we broaden our horizons to bring in awareness of potentially serious consequences of stress and skills that can equip us to deal more effectively with stress.

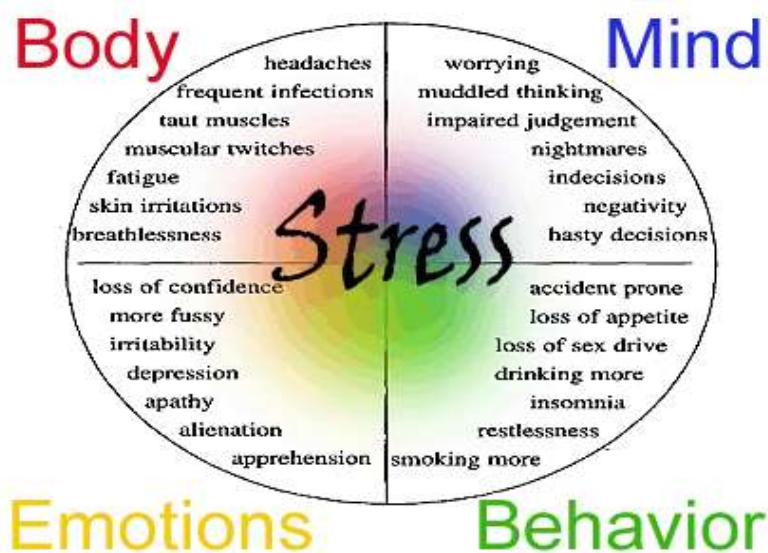
II. DISCUSSION

Stress to Eustress:

There is also an upside to stress. That is, stress actually is indispensable aspect of ability to survive. That is EUSTRESS. As explained by Hans Selye, in his General Adaptation syndrome it is evident that appropriate amounts of stress is the very stimulation that keeps us engaged with the world every moment and dealing with the challenges. Hence our goal is not a 'Stress Free Life' but, the idea is to have right amount of stress.



Much of the stress is invisible and relatively insignificant, hence not at our conscious level, but it certainly limits the fullness to which we can live.. Often when the grip of stress tightens, it starts manifesting in symptoms at all possible levels including causing psychological imbalance further culminating into diseases.



So everyone needs to follow a path which can transform the Distress to Eustress.

This journey starts with identifying the sources of stress in your life. This isn't as easy as it sounds. Your true sources of stress aren't always obvious, and it's all too easy to overlook your own stress-inducing thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. If your methods of coping with stress that you are using now aren't contributing to your greater emotional and physical health, it's time to find healthier ones. There are many healthy ways to manage and cope with stress, but they all require change. Here are a few baby steps that can usher in the change for betterment:

- **Learn how to say "no"** – Know your limits and stick to them. Whether in your personal or professional life, taking on more than you can handle is a surefire recipe for stress.
- **Take control of your environment** – It is essential that you take full charge of your mind and environment. There's a solution to any problem. "If you remain passive, thinking, 'I can't do anything about my problem', your stress will get worse," says Professor Cooper. "That feeling of loss of control is one of the main causes of stress and lack of wellbeing." The act of taking control is in itself empowering, and it's a crucial part of finding a solution that satisfies you and not someone else.
- **Express your feelings instead of bottling them up.** If something or someone is bothering you, communicate your concerns in an open and respectful way. If you don't voice your feelings, resentment will build and the situation will likely remain the same.
- **Be more assertive.** Don't take a backseat in your own life. Deal with problems head on, doing your best to anticipate and prevent them. If you've got an exam to study for and your chatty roommate just got home, say up front that you only have five minutes to talk.
- **Manage your time better.** Poor time management can cause a lot of stress. When you're stretched too thin and running behind, it's hard to stay calm and focused. But if you plan ahead and make sure you don't overextend yourself, you can alter the amount of stress you're under.
- **Reframe problems.** Try to view stressful situations from a more positive perspective. Rather than fuming about a traffic jam, look at it as an opportunity to pause and regroup, listen to your favorite radio station, or enjoy some alone time.
- **Look at the big picture.** Take perspective of the stressful situation. Ask yourself how important it will be in the long run. Will it matter in a month? A year? Is it really worth getting upset over? If the answer is no, focus your time and energy elsewhere.
- **Adjust your standards.** Perfectionism is a major source of avoidable stress. Stop setting yourself up for failure by demanding perfection. Set reasonable standards for yourself and others, and learn to be okay with "good enough."
- **Focus on the positive.** When stress is getting you down, take a moment to reflect on all the things you appreciate in your life, including your own positive qualities and gifts. This simple strategy can help you keep things in perspective.
- **Don't try to control the uncontrollable.** Many things in life are beyond our control— particularly the behavior of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems.

- **Look for the upside.** As the saying goes, “What doesn’t kill us makes us stronger.” When facing major challenges, try to look at them as opportunities for personal growth. If your own poor choices contributed to a stressful situation, reflect on them and learn from your mistakes.
- **Learn to forgive and forget.** Accept the fact that we live in an imperfect world and that people make mistakes. Let go of anger and resentments. Free yourself from negative energy by forgiving and moving on.
- **You can increase your resistance to stress by strengthening your physical health.**
- **Exercise regularly .** Physical activity plays a key role in reducing and preventing the effects of stress. Make time for at least 30 minutes of exercise, three times per week. Nothing beats aerobic exercise for releasing pent-up stress and tension.
- **Eat a healthy diet .** Well-nourished bodies are better prepared to cope with stress, so be mindful of what you eat. Start your day right with breakfast, and keep your energy up and your mind clear with balanced, nutritious meals throughout the day.
- **Reduce caffeine and sugar.** The temporary "highs" caffeine and sugar provide often end in with a crash in mood and energy. By reducing the amount of coffee, soft drinks, chocolate, and sugar snacks in your diet, you’ll feel more relaxed and you’ll sleep better.
- **Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.**
- Feeling tired will increase your stress because it may cause you to think irrationally.
- **When the stress levels are too overwhelming** then consulting with a professional can help you to take systematic steps to analyze your problems, identify your approach to them, try to help you generate different solutions and redefine your responses to negative events, so that you can reverse the, “vicious circle” of stress and problems and replace it with a “virtuous growth cycle”, one that continuously builds personal strength.

ALWAYS REMEMBER...it’s about a life of balance – the harmonious alignment of your mind and body, to use your time to reach the ultimate goal of fulfillment, contentment, and inner joy, all material goals being penultimate. So beat the stress and embrace vivacious life!

