



Mindsapces – Volume 10 Edition 3

STRESS MANAGEMENT



Dear Parent,

This edition of Mindscape will focus on stress and its management.

People are prone to various types of lifestyle diseases. The changes in the family structure, support system, migration, influence of media, globalization, unemployment and financial problems all intensify the stressful experiences. Stress is in fact, a basic ingredient of life. However, stress need not be always bad. Without undergoing any stress there would not be constructive or creative activity.

Stress is defined as “the process that occurs in response to events that disrupt, or threaten to our physical or psychological functioning”. There are two important kinds of stress. They are positive stress or Eustress or pleasurable stress that accompanies positive events. Distress, the negative stress or unpleasant stress accompanies negative events (Eg. Stress experienced during wedding would be eustress; during a funeral is distress).

Sources of Stress

There are many sources of stress in modern life which operate in our personal, social and work environments. They are the following: -

Sources in the Family: - The behaviour, needs and personality of each member of a family have an impact on stress.

Interpersonal conflicts within the family are one of the known sources of stress. Sometimes stress may arise with the birth of a new child, or the arrival of a new member. Sometime it may be a divorce or the illness of a family member, his disability or death.



Sources in the Community and Society:

- Since we are associating with people outside our family, certain stresses are from outside the family. For students stress may appear in the form of competitive events. For adults it may originate from their jobs. The demands of the occupation and responsibility in the work and several other aspects of the job can increase the worker's stress. The source may be physical environment, insufficient control over it, or poor interpersonal relationships, or inadequate recognition or job loss.

Sources in the Physical

Environment: - Some environmental conditions can also make us physically and psychologically uncomfortable. Noise and crowd are two stressors coming from the environment. Stress can also be caused by the changes in physical environment, such as excessive heat, cold or pain etc

Hassles of Daily Life: - Hassles are irritations and frustrations we experience on every day routines such as traffic, bad weather, lost keys, missing train, unexpected rain, strikes etc.

Stress Management Techniques

The stress is an unavoidable reality in life. It is inevitable in our part to know the techniques that can be adopted to manage the stress. The strategies developed to manage stress, either concentrate on the individual or the organization, and they are classified into different groups.



1. **Individual Coping Strategies:** The individual coping strategies fall into two categories: Emotion focused coping and Problem-focused coping. Emotion-focused coping concentrates on changing or managing emotions, whether anxiety or anger. It is aimed at reducing the demands of the stressful situation or expanding the resources to deal with the stress. It includes such strategies as accepting sympathy from others or liking at the bright side of a situation. In Problem-Focused Coping, is encountering of the problem itself. This coping tends to increase a person's self-esteem, control and effectiveness. Some of the individual coping strategies are the following.

- a. **Reappraisal:** - Whether an event is positive, neutral or harmful, is based on the thinking pattern of the individual. The reappraisal permits a person to turn the problems into challenges and transform losses into unaccepted gains. When a stressful situation might be controllable, the best coping strategy is to treat the situation as a challenge, focusing on ways of controlling it.
- b. **Social Comparison:** - If a person can compare himself to those who had severe stresses, it will make him feel that 'I am better than they are'.
- c. **Avoidance:** Suppose a person is able to ignore the stress-evoking event, it is running away from

- stress, which reduced the perceived intensity of stress. But this strategy reduced their interest in what is going to happen to them.
- d. **Humour and Outings:** Humour and outings are a good medicine for tackling stress.
 - e. **Relaxation:** Relaxations the simplest way to reduce signs of stress, such as high blood pressure, rapid breathing etc. Studies have shown that relaxation can decrease muscle tension, heart rate, blood pressure and rate of breathing to the optimum level. Relaxation training is learning to alternatively tense and relax certain muscles, to banish worries in the way that is apparently beneficial to reduce stress.
 - f. **Exercise:** Another way to relax is to take regular exercises. Physical exercises, such as jogging, dancing, swimming is very important in maintaining health and reducing stress. Besides reducing tension, exercise reduces anxiety, depression and the blues.
 - g. **Behavioural self-control:** By deliberately managing the consequences of one's own behaviour, people can achieve self-control. If people conscious of the limits, can controlling the situations, instead of allowing the situation to control the individual.
 - h. **Cognitive Therapy:** severity of stress, to a large extent, is determined by how we evaluate the stress stimulus. Cognitive therapy involves a group of techniques to modify our thought and thus to reduce stress. Studies show that people could better their self-control and lesser the strain by using the technique.
 - i. **Health Maintenance:** Proper diet, proper exercise and enough sleep
 - j. can keep the body in better shape, in dealing with stress. Under stress, people eat too much drink coffee and become physically sick and emotionally depressed, walking, jogging, swimming, riding bicycles etc. help people better to cope with stress.
 - k. **Engaging in Mindfulness:** Mindfulness is a type of mediation in which focus on being intensively aware of what you are sensing and feeling in the moment. It involves breathing methods guided imaginary and other practices to relax the body and mind and help reduce stress
 - l. **Counselling:** Counselling is more or less a final resort to tackle stress. One important function in counselling is to locate the stressor and help to learn relaxation and other stress reduction techniques. Counselling is also helps to transform the life dramatically and to reduce the burden of stress.

References

- *A Short textbook of psychiatry. – Niraj Ahuja*