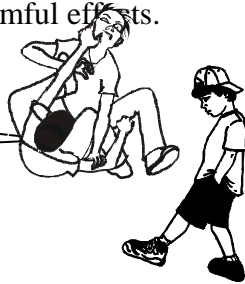


What is stress ?

From mental health perspective, “Stress” is a negative emotional experience accompanied by predictable biochemical, physiological, psychological, cognitive, and behavioral changes. Stress is the consequences of a person’s appraisal of whether his or her personal resources are sufficient to meet life demands.

Stress to a certain extent can improve our working efficiency and performance as well as promoting our personal growth. However, too much stress may give rise to a series of physical, psychological and interpersonal problems. Effective Stress Management is concerned of how to make positive use of stress and avoid its harmful effects.

Stress and Health



Excessive or prolonged stress may lead to:

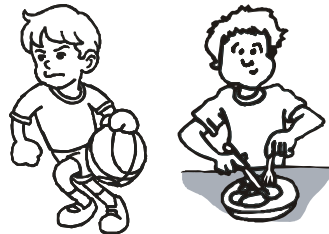
- Peptic ulcer, hypertension, insomnia, heart disease
- Nervousness, anxiety, depressed or agitated mood
- Decreased concentration, increased mistakes, and ineffective work
- Increased interpersonal conflicts and social withdrawal

There are some effective ways to cope with stress, and they are:

(1) Prevention

Maintain basic physical and psychological health

- Balanced diet
- Adequate sleep
- Adequate physical exercise
- Balanced schedule of work and leisure
- Develop optimistic outlook on life, e.g. being positive to life changes, seeing demands as chances for growth, etc



Enrich your skills and knowledge

- Learn new skills and knowledge so that life demands can be handled with competence
- Read more, join interest groups or short courses to expand our orientations and personal caliber

Maintain satisfactory interpersonal relationship

- Actively share life experiences with peers, teachers and parents
- Receive help from them and provide assistance to them appropriately

Know, accept and improve yourself

- Appreciate your strengths and merits
- Accept your weaknesses and limitations
- Set realistic goal for improvement, e.g. setting small targets for gradual improvement, focusing on one thing at a time, etc.

(2) Stress management

Identifying major sources of stress can help us to focus our efforts for effective problem solving. For students, some common sources of stress are:

- Academic or career problems, e.g. heavy homework, school exams and limited career choice or difficulties
- Interpersonal relationship problems, e.g. conflicts with schoolmates, peers, and lovers or feeling not being accepted
- Family problems, e.g. arguments with parents, severe illness of family members
- Environmental factors, e.g. change of living place, school and migration



Make active efforts to tackle the major sources of stress

Stress Management

- Take initiative to gather relevant skills and knowledge
- Seek help and support from others
- Apply persistent effort for problem-solving
- Evaluate the effectiveness, improve inadequacy, acknowledge progress and give credits to yourself, consolidate successful experiences

Ease tension

- Insert regular short breaks for tasks that produce accumulative tension and fatigue, e.g. take a break of 20 minutes after reviewing study for two hours
- Appropriately engage in leisure activities to refresh yourself e.g. listening to music, seeing movie, playing various sport games, etc
- Do relaxation exercise, e.g. progressive muscle relaxation, deep breathing exercise

Make good use of social support

- Seek active help from appropriate persons such as parents, teachers, friends or other helping professionals in case of need
- Cooperate with them and tackle difficulties with joint efforts

Refuse to use inappropriate ways to handle stress

- Avoid smoking, drinking or abusing drug. These will create other negative consequences and your degree of stress will go even worse
- Escape persistently from normal life demands e.g. missing classes, keeping truancy, avoiding normal contacts with parents, teachers, and friends etc, will accumulate your stress and prolong your suffering

Conclusion:

Stress can cause both negative and positive consequences to us. Seeing stress as the drive to promote our achievement and personal growth is more beneficial to our general well-being.

