

Stress in Medicine

Module 1



Objectives

By the end of this session, students should:

- Realize the relevance and importance of Stress Management Training
- Know the personality traits and environmental factors that may lead to an increase in stress
- Understand the role stress plays in personal health
- Understand the role stress plays in patient outcomes



What is Stress?

- In his 1975 book Stress Without Distress, Hans Selye defines stress as:

...“one’s reaction to life events...the non-specific response of the body to any demand made upon it...”

(Selye, 1975)



Stress 101

- It's normal: Everyone experiences it!
- Two kinds of Stress:
 - 1) Eustress - Energy Producing
 - 2) Distress - Anxiety Producing



Stress Continuum

- In the Zone (PEAK PERFORMANCE)
- Optimistic Perspective
- Effortless
- Positive Attitude
- Ok with Stress
- Unhappy
- Negative Attitude
- Distress



- *As a direct result of the negligent acts of the defendant, plaintiff suffered permanent personal injuries, incurred and will continue to incur profound physical pain and suffering and permanent physical disabilities, some of which may yet be diagnosed.*

—A malpractice complaint



Physiologic Reactions to Stress

- HR increases
- BP rises
- Respirations increase
- Blood glucose levels rise
- Blood is sent away from the stomach to the arms and legs



Common Stressors

- Job Change
- Marriage
- Divorce
- Financial Change
- Personal Injury
- Holidays
- Death of a spouse
- Beliefs/values
- Perfectionist
- All or nothing attitude
- Expectations of self
- Perceptions
- Critical of self



2000 Integra Survey

65% of workers said that workplace stress had caused difficulties

10% said they work in an atmosphere where physical violence has occurred because of job stress

42% report that yelling and other verbal abuse is common;

62% routinely find that they end the day with work-related neck pain, and 34% reported difficulty in sleeping 12% had called in sick because of job stress;



The Nature of MD's

Obsessions

High intelligence

Conscientiousness

Commitment

An excessive obsessional trait results in dysfunctional perfectionism, inflexibility, over commitment to work, isolation of affect, dogged persistence and an inability to relax. Overly obsessional individuals have an intense perceived need to control their environment.



Negative Physical Effects of Stress

Fatigue

Insomnia

Headaches

Chronic Pain

GI symptoms

URI

Respiratory changes

Muscle tension



Negative Cognitive Effects of Stress

- Frustration
- Irritable/moody
- Decreased Concentration
- Anxiety/Worry
- Poor Decision Making
- Withdrawal from activities
- Decreased self-confidence
- Impaired memory/forgetful



Signs

- Indecisiveness
- Close to tears or crying
- Trouble learning new information
- Confused/Disorganized
- Suicidal Thoughts
- Tardiness/Don't show up
- Over-react
- On-edge, rushing/pacing



Signs of MD Impairment

- **Increasing incidence of complaints**
- **Uncharacteristic interpersonal and other behavior**
- **Falling standards and clinical errors**
- **Failure to keep abreast of administrative demands (eg, paperwork)**
- **Lack of responsiveness and poor punctuality when called**
- **Overt signs or symptoms of substance misuse or psychiatric illness**



Potential Outcomes

- Reduced productivity
- Defensive demeanor
- Increased use of OTC's
- Increased use of tobacco/alcohol
- Increased use recreational drugs
- Explosive/Impulsive behaviors



What Impacts Response to Stress?

- Genetics
- Life Experiences
- Other stressful events experienced previously
- Patterns of thinking (negative vs. positive)



Stress Reduction Strategies

- Exercise
- Support system
- Express yourself
- Good Nutrition
- Spiritual/Religious
- Meditation
- Vacations



Stress Reduction Strategies

- Develop new interests
- Music
- Identify goals and work toward them
- Laugh
- Cry
- Animals/Pet Therapy
- Problem solve with someone else



Stress Release

Stress Release begins with understanding what drives you, what your major struggles are, how to put them into perspective, and how to take action.



If we didn't laugh, we'd all go
insane....

Jimmy Buffet



References

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