

Stress

Stress is a normal response to situational pressures or demands, especially if they are perceived as threatening or dangerous. Stress is the result of brain chemicals, called hormones, surging through the body. A certain amount of stress is a normal part of daily life. Small doses of stress help people meet deadlines, be prepared for presentations, be productive and arrive on time for important events (eustress).

However, long-term stress can become harmful. When stress becomes overwhelming and prolonged, the risks for mental health problems and medical problems increase. Long-term stress increases the risk of mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. (Hyperstress)

It has been well-established that stress can contribute to the deterioration of an individual's mental health, and particularly contribute to the development and exacerbation of depression. Byproducts of stress hormones can act as sedatives (chemical substances which cause us to become calm or fatigued). When such hormone byproducts occur in large amounts (which will happen under conditions of chronic stress), they may contribute to a sustained feeling of low energy or depression. Habitual patterns of thought which influence appraisal and increase the likelihood that a person will experience stress as negative (such as low self-efficacy, or a conviction that you are incapable of managing stress) can also increase the likelihood that a person will become depressed .

Stress has traditionally been viewed as a major risk factor for depression. Recent research efforts have indicated, however, that stress may predispose individuals only for an initial episode and not for recurring episodes. Responses to stress differ greatly among individuals: some are more susceptible than others to depression following life events, when they are in difficult relationships, or because of socio-economic factors such as inadequate income or housing, prejudice and workplace stress.

It is therefore important to learn about ways of managing stress.

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