

Stress Sources and Management

STRESS

“Stress is the reaction people have toward excessive pressures or other types of demand placed upon them. It arises when they worry that they can’t cope (Rubenstein, 1999)”

Our body’s physical and emotional reaction to circumstances or events that frighten, irritate, confuse, endanger, or excite us.



STRESS

- Stress is a part of life
- Stress can be *acute* or *chronic*.
- Stress can be self-controlled
- Stress prepares a person to react to the causing event/stressor
- Nurturance is another factor that affects the way people handle stress

SOURCES OF STRESS

❖ Physiological stressors

illness, lack of sleep, poor nutrition etc.

❖ Cognitive / Psychological factors

attitude, belief, our own thoughts

❖ Socio-cultural stressors

financial problem, relationship problems, work

❖ Environmental stressors

heat, cold, noise, traffic, pollution etc.

(Rubenstein, 1999).



MAJOR CATEGORIES OF STRESS

- Daily Life Hassles
- Major Life Events
- Internal Stressors



MAJOR CATEGORIES OF STRESS (*continued*)

● Daily Life Hassles

- ❖ They are the minor stressors which are short-term or less severe such as events or problems including traffic hassles, peer/work relations, time pressures.
- ❖ They can cause feelings of sickness, and lack of sleep and concentration
(Corbin & Welk, 2008).



MAJOR CATEGORIES OF STRESS (*continued*)

● Major Life Events

- ❖ They are either **positive** or **negative**, which create major emotional changes or require tremendous amounts of adjustments.
- ❖ They include **personal crisis** (health issues, death in family, divorce, financial problems).
- ❖ Major age related transitions such as marriage, child birth, career or retirement (*Corbin, Corbin & Welk, 2008*).

THE LIFE EVENTS SCALES FOR STRESS

<u>Life Event</u>	<u>Value</u>
✓ Death of spouse	100
✓ Divorce	73
✓ Death of close relative	63
✓ Marriage	50
✓ Fired from job	47
✓ Pregnancy	40
✓ Relationship difficulties	39
✓ Change in finances	38
✓ Death of close friend	37
✓ Son/daughter leaving home	29
✓ Trouble with in-laws	29

MAJOR CATEGORIES OF STRESS (*continued*)

● Internal Stressors

- Lifestyle choices: Caffeine, Lack of sleep, Overloaded schedule
- Negative self: Pessimistic thinking, Over analysing
- Mind traps: Unrealistic expectations, All or nothing thinking
- Personality traits: Perfectionists, Workaholics (*Rubenstein, 1999*).

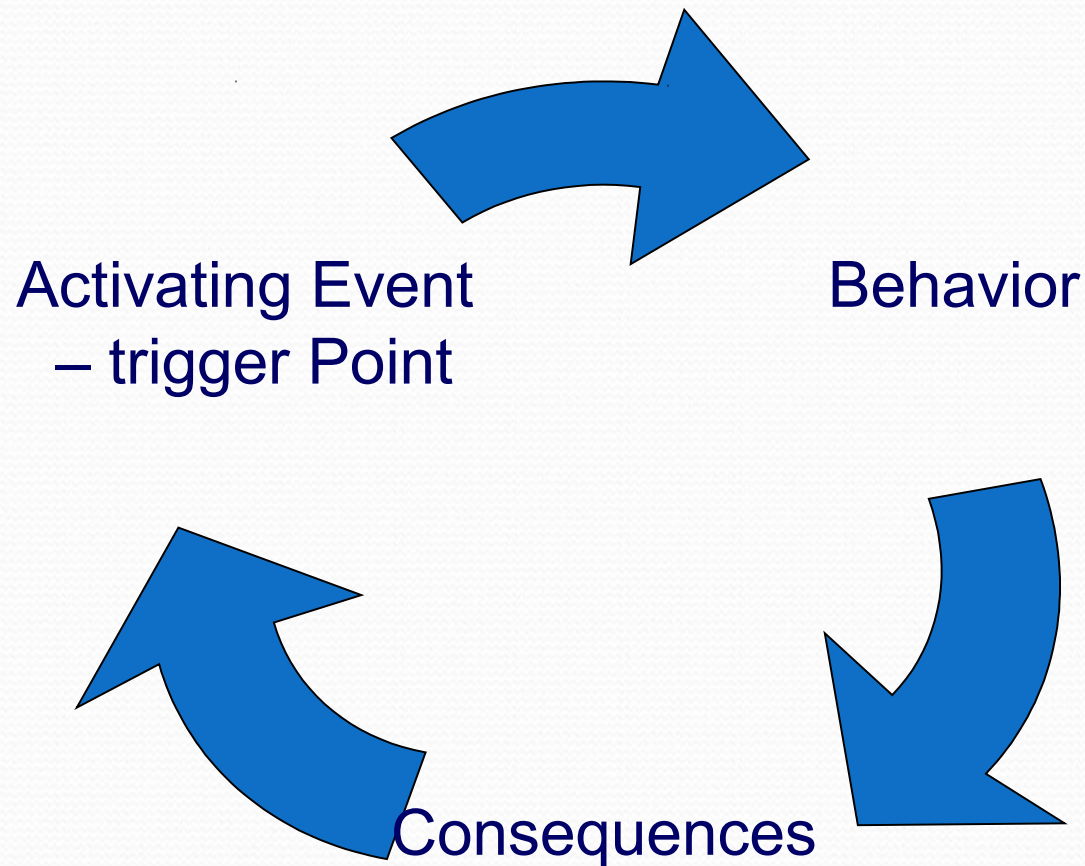


EFFECTS OF STRESS

- **Negative** effect on physical and psychological well-being
- **Positive** effect on personality includes motivation and ability to deal with stressful situations (*Rubenstein, 1999*).



THE STRESS CYCLE



IRRATIONAL BELIEFS LEADING TO STRESS

- **Demand from Self**: I should be perfect.
- **Demand from others**: Others should behave, as I want them to behave.
- **Demand from the world**: All the conditions in the world should be in my favor.



Self Generated Stress



Self Generated Stress

- Most of the stress we experience is self-generated. How we perceive life - whether an event makes us feel threatened or stimulated, encouraged or discouraged, happy or sad - depends to a large extent on how we perceive ourselves.
- Self-generated stress is something of a paradox, because so many people think of external causes when they are upset.
- Recognising that we create most of our own upsets is an important first step towards coping with them (*Rubenstein, 1999*).

Recognizing Distress

- Mood Signs (feeling jumpy, trouble sleeping, worrying, responding with anger, insecure)
 - Internal Signs (hands moist, sweating profusely, heart pounds, stomach upset)
 - Musculoskeletal Signs (jaw muscles tightness, frequent headaches, muscles tension, neck stiffness, twitches)
- (Corbin, Corbin & Welk, 2008).*

Symptoms of Stress

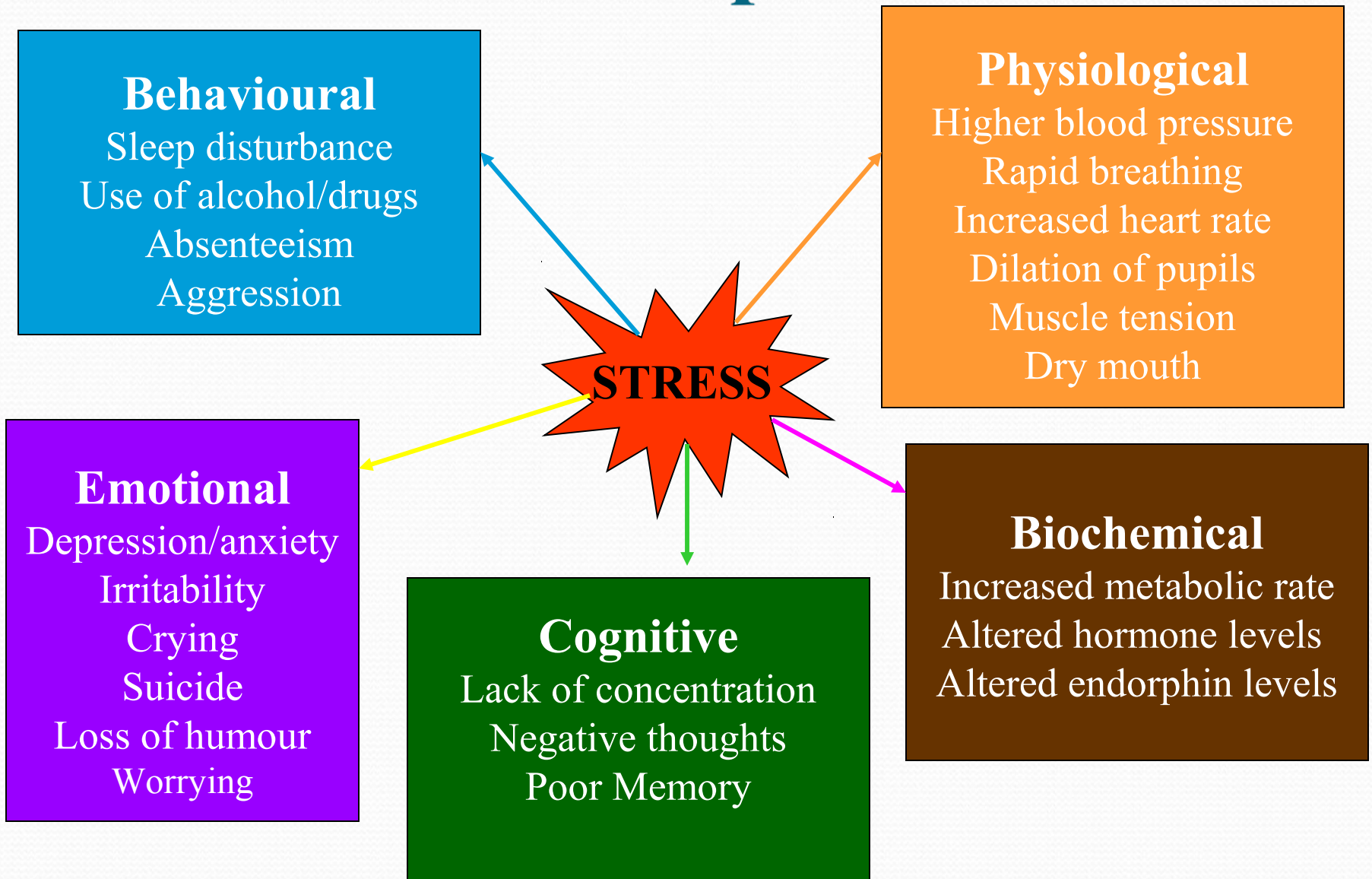
Physical symptoms

- Poor performance
- Increased sickness
- Cold and sweaty palms
- Headache / backache
- Jaw pain
- Heartburn
- Diarrhea

Behavioral symptoms

- Increased use alcohol or drugs
- Difficult relationships
- Reduced social contact
- Poor judgment / indecision
- Loss of appetite
- Irritability
- Tearfulness

Stress Responses



Stress Related illness

Stress is not the same as ill-health, but has been related to such illnesses as;

- Cardiovascular disease
- Immune system disease
- Asthma
- Diabetes
- Memory loss
- Ulcers
- Skin complaints - psoriasis
- Headaches and migraines
- Eating disorders
- Depression

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)

GAS, is a term used to describe the body's short-term and long-term reactions to stress.

It represents a three-stage reaction to stress.

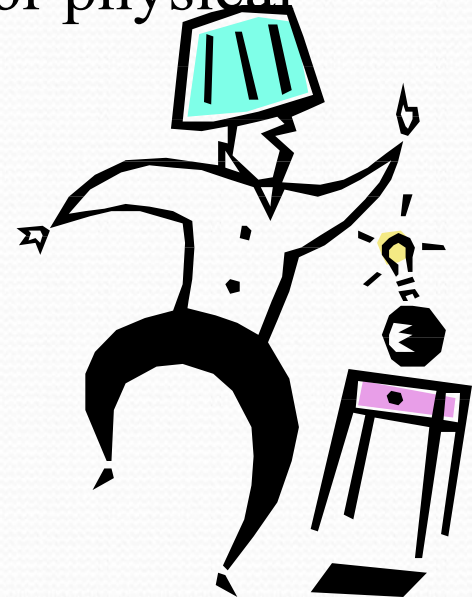
He called these stages:

- Alarm reaction (AR)
- Stage of resistance (SR)
- Stage of exhaustion (SE)

(Rubenstein, 1999).

Stage 1: Alarm Reaction (AR)

- The alarm reaction, is the immediate reaction to a stressor.
- In the initial phase of stress, humans exhibit a "**fight or flight**" response, which prepares the body for physical activity.



Changes in body

- Cardiac - increased heart rate
- Respiratory - increased respiration
- Skin - decreased temperature
- Hormonal - increased stimulation of adrenal glands which produce an adrenal rush.

Stage 2: Stage of Resistance (SR)

- Stage 2 might also be named the **stage of adaptation**, instead of the stage of resistance.
- The body has reacted to the stressor and adjusted in a way that begins to allow the body to return to homeostasis.
- If a stressful condition persists, your body adapts by a continued effort in resistance and remains in a state of arousal.

Changes in body

- Fatigue
- Concentration Lapses
- Irritability
- Lethargy

Stage 3: Stage of Exhaustion (SE)

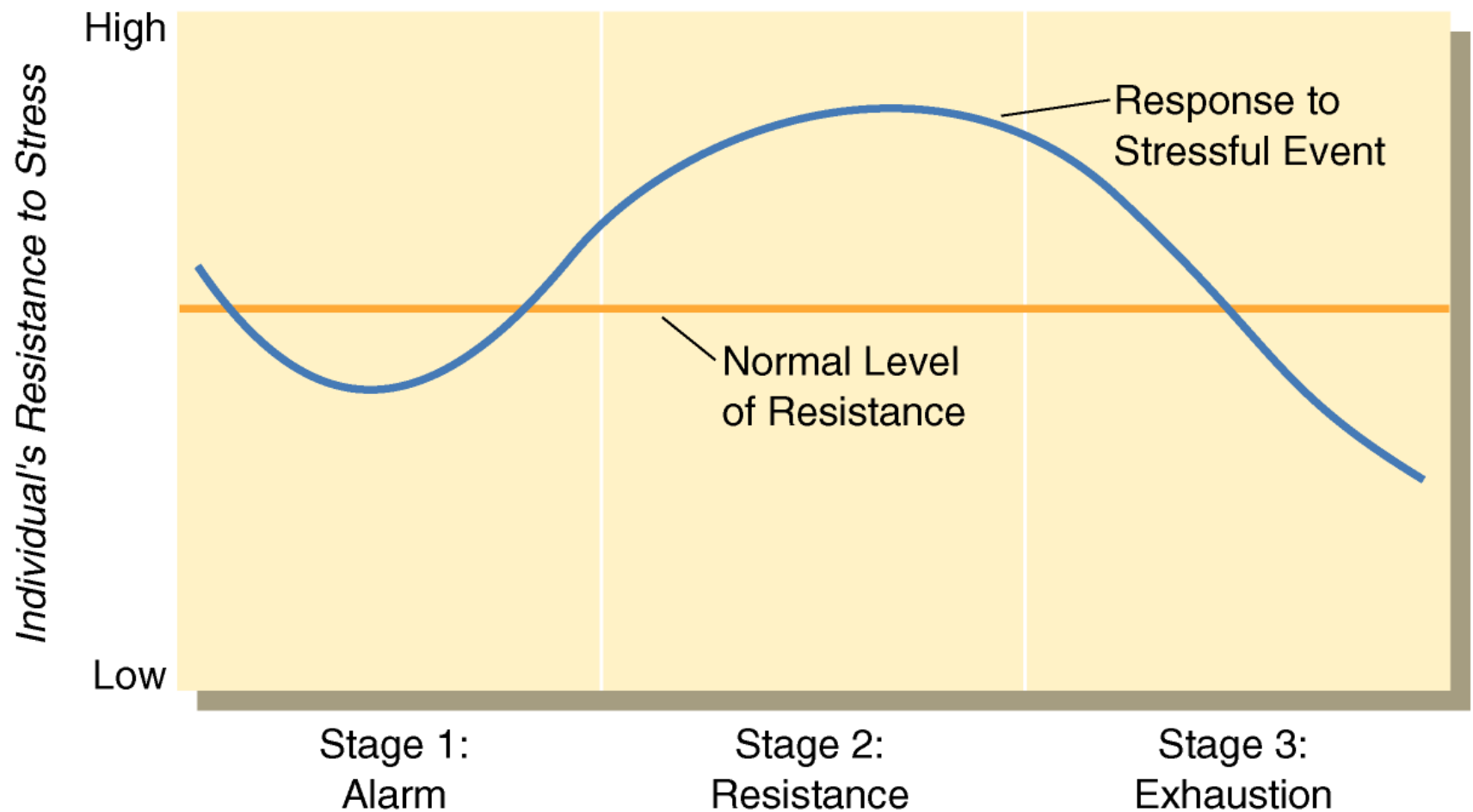
- In the exhaustion phase, the physical and psychological energy used to fight a stressor has been depleted.
- Short-term stress would probably not deplete all of a person's energy reserves, but chronic stressors, such as the struggle to get straight As, financial worries, or fights with family and friends may create continuous states of alarm and resistance.
- When a person no longer has the adaptation energy stores for fighting a distressor, serious illness may result.

Changes in body

- Chronic sadness or depression
- Chronic mental and physical fatigue
- Chronic stress related illnesses (headache, stomach ache, bowel problems, etc.)
- Isolation, withdrawal, self-destructive thoughts



Figure 9.1 The General Adaptation System



ABC Strategy

ABC strategy is used to control stress.

It includes:

- Awareness
- Balance
- Control



ABC Strategy

A = AWARENESS:

- What causes you stress?
- How do you react?

B = BALANCE:

- There is a fine line between positive /negative stress.
- How much can you cope with stress before it becomes negative?

C = CONTROL:

- What can you do to help yourself combat the negative effects of stress?

(Corbin, Corbin & Welk, 2008)



Stress Management Techniques



Stress Management Techniques

There are 3 ways to manage stress:

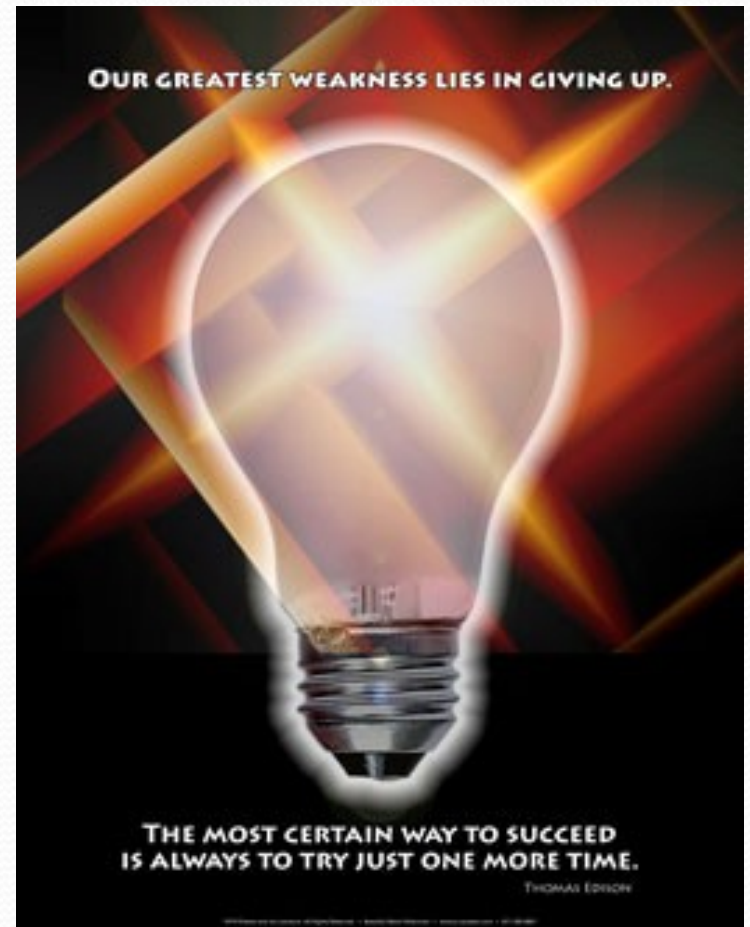
- Change your thinking
- Change your behaviour
- Change your lifestyle (*Rubenstein, 1999*)”



Change Your Thinking

A person can change his thinking through:

- Re-framing
- Positive thinking



Change Your Thinking

Reframing:

- Re-framing is a technique to change the way a person looks at things in order to feel better about them.
- There are many ways to interpret a certain situation. So, pick the one you like (*Rubenstein, 1999*).



Change Your Thinking (*Cont.*)

Reframing:

- Re-framing does not change the external reality, but helps you view things in a different light and less stressfully.
- (Challenge your Beliefs & put it in right perspectives)



Change Your Thinking (*cont.*)

Positive Thinking:

- Forget powerlessness, dejection, despair, failure
- Stress leaves us vulnerable to negative suggestion so focus on positives;
- Focus on your strengths (*Rubenstein, 1999*)



Change Your Thinking (*cont.*)

Positive Thinking:

- Learn from the stress you are under
- Look for opportunities
- Seek out the positive - make a change.



Change Your Behaviour

- Be assertive
- Get organised
- Ventilation
- Humour
- Diversion and distraction (*Rubenstein, 1999*) ”



Change Your Lifestyle

- Diet : Light Diet
- Smoking & Alcohol: Reduce or quit
- Exercise: Do it regularly
- Sleep: Have enough sleep
- Leisure: Have time for yourself
- Relaxation: Daily for at least 5-10 Minutes self talk



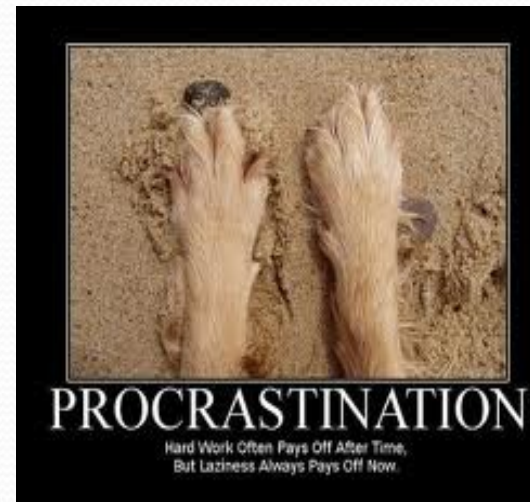
Strategies To Reduce Stress

- **Take control.**

Manage your time instead of letting it manage you. Use a to-do list, follow a written plan, set goals and follow through (*Rubenstein, 1999*).

- **Avoid procrastination:**

A major cause of stress. Make a realistic list of things you need to do each day. Do the most important things first. That way, even if you don't finish the list, you get the most important things done (*Rubenstein, 1999*).



Strategies To Reduce Stress (*Cont.*)

- **Join the crowd:**

Even though you may think you are the only person in the world who is experiencing stress, the fact is that everyone experiences it sometime (*Rubenstein, 1999*).

- **Talk to someone:**

Find someone you trust, discuss the problems and look for solutions (*Rubenstein, 1999*).



Strategies To Reduce Stress (*Cont.*)

- **Visualize:**

Sit comfortably and think of a favorite place. Imagine yourself in a successful situation.

- **Breathe:**

Sit quietly, and breathe deeply and slowly. Continue for five or six breaths. It is calming and the extra dose of oxygen increases the brain's thinking ability (*Rubenstein, 1999*).



Strategies To Reduce Stress (*Cont.*)

- **Lighten up:**

Take responsibility for your feelings.
When you get angry, take a break
and cool down before you act.



- **Use it:**

A little stress is a good thing. Athletes use it to increase performance. If you are experiencing a small amount of anxiety, it can help to keep you active and alert. Use it to increase your performance (*Rubenstein, 1999*).

Strategies To Reduce Stress (*Cont.*)

3 'C' Strategy:

- Control
- Commitment
- Challenge



Self-control, commitment and taking your problem as a challenge make you hardy and protect you from stress (*Rubenstein, 1999*).

Conclusion



- You can not control what happens to you but you can control your attitude towards what happens to you and in that, you will be mastering change rather than allowing it to master you.
- **“Don’t compare yourself with any one in this world. If you do so, you are insulting your self”** (*Alen Strike*)

(Every one is Unique – accept & respect their uniqueness)

REFERENCES

- Corbin, C. B., Welk, G.J., & Corbin, W.R. (2008).
Concepts of Fitness and Wellness: A Comprehensive Lifestyle Approach (8th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Rubenstein, L.A. (1999). *The Stress Management Handbook*. New York: McGraw-Hill.