

Conceptual Study on Stress and Stress Management

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Abstract

Stress is what you feel when you have to handle more than you are used to. When you are stressed, your body responds as though you are in danger. It makes hormones that speed up your heart, make you breathe faster, and give you a burst of energy. This is called the fight-or-flight stress response. The hormones increase our heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, metabolism and muscle tension. Our pupils dilate and our perspiration rate increases. While these physical changes help us try to meet the challenges of the stressful situation, they can cause other physical or psychological symptoms if the stress is ongoing and the physical changes don't settle down.

Keywords: Stress, Stress management, and Factors.

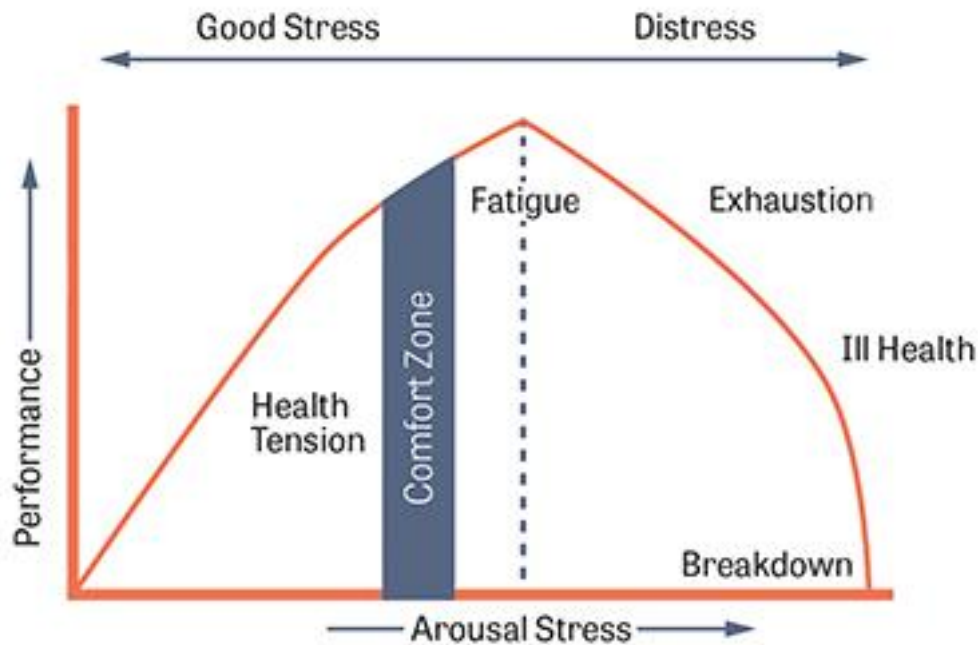
Introduction

Recent trends have also made it increasingly difficult for employees to adequately balance the responsibility of their families, as employee are working longer hours and bringing more work home at night. This has resulted to more pressure being placed on the work-family relationship such that coordination of work, vocation schedules and child care options have become very unsuccessful (Dar et al. 2011). More and more voices warn about the possible risks that could emerge if the human resource management ignores the current signs of increase in levels of stress among employees (Robbins & Judge, 2007).

Stress is what you feel when you have to handle more than you are used to. When you are stressed, your body responds as though you are in danger. It makes hormones that speed up your heart, make you breathe faster, and give you a burst of energy. This is called the fight-or-flight stress response.

What is stress?

Researchers define" Stress as a physical, mental, or emotional response to events that causes bodily or mental tension. Stress is often described as a feeling of being overloaded, wound-up tight, tense and worried. We all experience stress at times. It can sometimes help to motivate us to get a task finished, or perform well. But stress can also be harmful if we become over-stressed and it interferes with our ability to get on with our normal life for too long.



THE HUMAN FUNCTION CURVE

Hence Selye developed a model called the **General Adaptive Syndrome Model** to explain the stress phenomenon and the stress level. This model has four stages. The first stage is the alarm reaction stage, which involves the body's response to or familiarizing itself with the new situation or stressor. The second stage is the resistance stages, which involves resisting and reacting to the situation, and the third stage is the exhaustion stage, which is the aftermath of resistance. If the resistance stage goes on for a long period, then the person becomes distressed. Fourth stage is termination if there is no relief from arousal, and then the stress on the physiological system can lead to death.

The signs of stress

When we face a stressful event, our bodies respond by activating the nervous system and releasing hormones such as adrenalin and cortisol. These hormones cause physical changes in the body which help us to react quickly and effectively to get through the stressful situation. This is sometimes called the 'fight or flight' response.

The hormones increase our heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, metabolism and muscle tension. Our pupils dilate and our perspiration rate increases. While these physical changes help us try to meet the challenges of the stressful situation, they can cause other physical or psychological symptoms if the stress is ongoing and the physical changes don't settle down.

These symptoms can include:

1. Headaches, other aches and pains
2. Sleep disturbance, insomnia
3. Upset stomach, indigestion, diarrhea
4. Anxiety
5. Anger, irritability
6. Depression
7. Fatigue
8. Feeling overwhelmed and out of control
9. Feeling moody, tearful
10. Difficulty concentrating

11. Low self-esteem, lack of confidence
12. High blood pressure
13. Weakened immune system
14. Heart disease

Here are two kinds of stress: external and internal stress

External stress comes from outside us:

1. Our physical environment
2. Our job
3. Noise – loud and constant low level noise
4. Pollution
5. Trauma
6. Injury
7. Foreign organisms (bacteria, viruses, fungi)
8. Toxins
9. Poor work conditions (not enough attention paid to ergonomics, too much noise, poor air circulation, lack of privacy, excess demands, etc).
10. Relationships with others
11. Our home,
12. All the situations, challenges, difficulties, and expectations we're confronted with on a daily basis.

Internal stress comes from inside of us and determines our body's ability to respond to, and deal with, the external stress-inducing factors or stressors:

1. Nutritional status
2. Attitudes
3. Thoughts
4. Feelings of anger, fear and worry
5. Anticipation
6. Imagination
7. Memory
8. Overall health and fitness levels
9. Presence of illness and infection
10. Emotional well-being
11. Amount of sleep and rest you get.
12. Managing stress can involve making changes in the external factors which confront you, or in internal factors which strengthen your ability to deal with what comes your way.

External stress is often associated with:

1. Workplace stress
2. Interpersonal conflicts
3. Relationship / marital stress
4. Balancing career and family
5. Being a parent

Stress Warning Signs and Symptoms	
Cognitive Symptoms	Emotional Symptoms
Memory problems	Moodiness
Inability to concentrate	Irritability or short temper
Poor judgment	Agitation, inability to relax
Seeing only the negative	Feeling overwhelmed
Anxious or racing thoughts	Sense of loneliness and isolation
Constant worrying	Depression or general unhappiness
Physical Symptoms	Behavioral Symptoms
Aches and pains	Eating more or less
Diarrhea or constipation	Sleeping too much or too little
Nausea, dizziness	Isolating yourself from others
Chest pain, rapid heartbeat	Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
Loss of sex drive	Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
Frequent colds	Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)

Effects of stress

The effects of stress can be emotional, psychological, and physical. Signs of stress are different in everyone, with some people expressing more physical signs, like fatigue or high blood pressure, and others expressing more emotion or psychological signs, like irritability or depression.

How to avoid stress?

Stress is a fact of life for most people. You may not be able to get rid of stress, but you can look for ways to lower it.

You might try some of these ideas:

1. Learn better ways to manage the time. You may get more done with less stress if you make a schedule. Think about which things are most important, and do those first.
2. Find better ways to cope. Look at how you have been dealing with stress. Be honest about what works and what does not. Think about other things that might work better.
3. Take good care of yourself. Get plenty of rest. Eat well. Don't smoke. Limit how much alcohol you drink.
4. Try out new ways of thinking. When you find yourself starting to worry, try to stop the thoughts. Or write down your worries and work on letting go of things you cannot change. Learn to say "no."
5. Speak up. Not being able to talk about your needs and concerns creates stress and can make negative feelings worse. Assertive communication can help you express how you feel in a thoughtful, tactful way.
6. Ask for help. People who have a strong network of family and friends manage stress better.

How to relieve stress?

You will feel better if you can find ways to get stress out of your system. The best ways to relieve stress are different for each person. Try some of these ideas to see which ones work for you:

1. Exercise: Regular exercise is one of the best ways to manage stress. Walking is a great way to get started.
2. Write. It can help to write about the things that are bothering you.
3. Let your feelings out. Talk, laugh, cry, and express anger when you need to with someone you trust.
4. Do something you enjoy. A hobby can help you relax. Volunteer work or work that helps others can be a great stress reliever.
5. Learn ways to relax your body. This can include breathing exercises, muscle relaxation exercises, massage, aromatherapy, yoga, or relaxing exercises like tai chi and qi gong.
6. Focus on the present. Try meditation, imagery exercises, or self-hypnosis. Listen to relaxing music. Try to look for the humor in life. Laughter really can be the best medicine.

Conclusion

Stress is not always bad. But sometimes it causes several problems both for organizations as well as employees. Most of the organizations are take care of their employees and providing stress management strategies to reduce the stress level. But periodical review is necessary to know the stress level of employees. It helps the organization to identify the effective strategies to be implemented and reduce the employees stress.

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