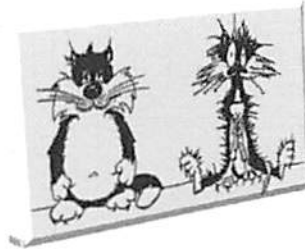


Surviving STRESS



Presentation developed by LAUSD
Psychological Services

Stress is any outside force or event that has an effect on our body or mind

Objectives

- Definition of Stress
- Prevalence of Stress
- Symptoms of Stress
- Healthy Ways to Cope with Stress (Adults)
- Helping Children Cope with Stress
- Developing Resilience in Children
- Simple Tips to Reduce Stress



Definition of Stress

Stress is...a physical, mental, or emotional response to events that cause bodily or mental tension.



Prevalence of Stress

- Stress of city life



- Workplace stress



- Stress in children



Stress of modern city life = Scientists are testing the idea that the stress of modern city life is increasing mental illness

Source: Nature – International Weekly Journal of Science

Workplace Stress (Source: The American Institute of Stress) = Numerous studies show that job stress is by far the major source of stress for American people. It has escalated progressively over the past few decades.

- Stress comes from the person's perception of having little control but lots of demands
 - **Studies show** that the less control people have over their work, the more likely they are to suffer stress-related illnesses.
- job stress is associated with an increase of heart attacks, hypertension, and other disorders
- Stress is a highly personalized phenomenon and can vary widely even in identical situations for different reasons

Stress in children = multi-factorial

- | | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| - death of a family member | - spousal fights |
| - marital separation | - hospitalization |
| - constant changes in routine | - other factors: environmental stressors |

Symptoms of Stress

- Tension and irritability
- Fear and anxiety about the future
- Difficulty making decisions
- Being numb to one's feelings
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Loss of appetite
- Anger

Center for Disease Control & Prevention

Activity: As the presenter goes over each symptom, ask participants to make a tally mark on a piece of paper (or mental note) for each symptom they have experienced.

-After going over all 13 symptoms ask participants (by a show of hands) how many of them (participants) have experienced 10 of the symptoms, 8, 5, etc.

-Allow 3-5 minutes for this activity

Symptoms of Stress

- Increase use of alcohol and drugs
- Sadness
- Feeling powerless
- Sleep problems
- Headaches, back pains and stomach problems
- Trouble concentrating

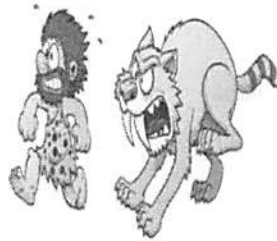
Center for Disease Control & Prevention

Other signs of stress include:

- overeating or under-eating
- spending money (shopping or gambling)

Stress is Beneficial

...when it helps people develop the skills they need to cope with and adapt to new situations that may be potentially threatening situations.



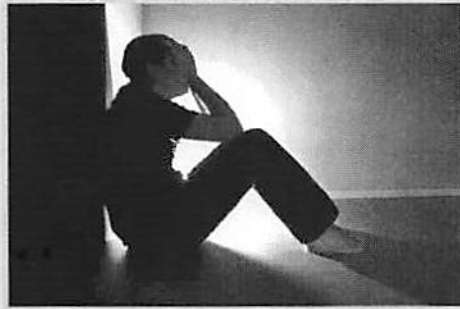
-Fight or flight situation = The physiological stress response is a good thing and it helps us survive.

- A threatening situation triggers the release of hormones such as cortisol & adrenaline. These hormones raise levels of sugar in the blood & redistribute blood flow to muscles and lungs, so that we can respond to the threat by running or fighting

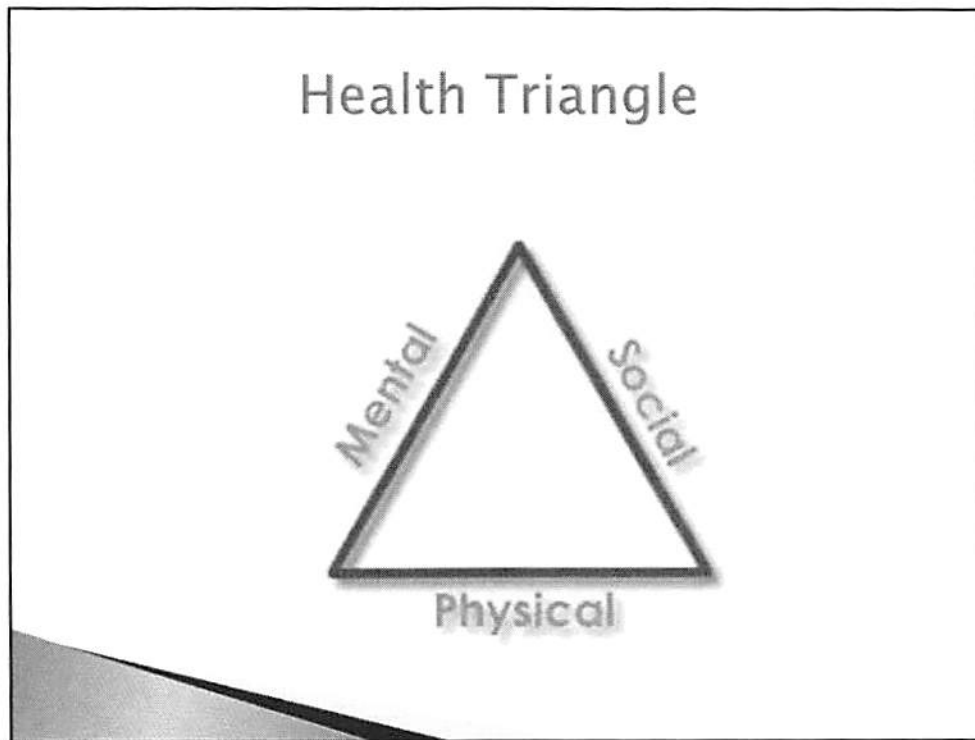
-Stress may also be related to positive life events: wedding, birth, etc.

Stress is Harmful

...when it is severe enough to overwhelm a person's ability to take care of himself/herself or their family



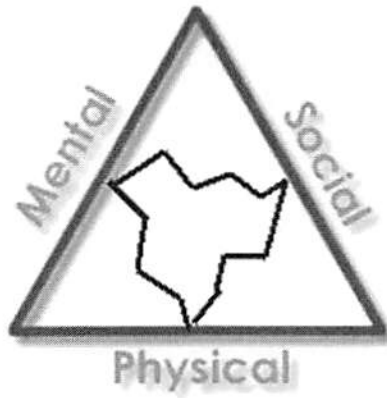
Problems arise when the stress response does not switch off. Stress hormone levels that stay too high for too long cause high blood pressure and suppress the immune system.



The health triangle consists of Physical, Social, and Mental health. These components are connected.

- Physical Health deals with nutrition, sleep, exercise. How we feel physically .
- Mental Health deals with how we think, feel, and cope with daily life. It encompasses learning, stress management, and mental illnesses or disorders.
- Social Health deals with the way we react to people within our environment (public, family, and peer relationships).
- Source: [www2.gsu.edu/.../Health Triangle.ppt](http://www2.gsu.edu/.../Health%20Triangle.ppt)

Health Triangle



All three components (physical, mental, and social) are connected and damage to any one of the components affects the others.

Types of Stress

Acute Stress = Short lived stress

➤ Can be beneficial...

- Meeting a deadline
- Studying for exams



Beneficial

➤ Can be damaging...

- Car accident
- Trouble at work
- Problems with children at school
- Daily hassles



Damaging

Acute Stress is short lived.

- It can be beneficial and create motivation, like meeting a deadline or studying for exams.
- It can be damaging for a short period of time. When the situation is resolved, the stress diminishes.

Source: Health Center & Psychology In Action

Types of Stress

Chronic Stress = Long term stress

- The result of a situation that has not been resolved
 - Traumatic event
 - Ongoing situation
 - War
 - Family abuse
 - Ongoing illness in the family



Chronic Stress is long term. It is the result of a situation that has not been resolved or continued for many years prior to being resolved.

-Traumatic event: Although a traumatic event is resolved, the feelings surrounding the situation may not have been dealt with and chronic stress remains.

Source: Health Center & Psychology In Action

Types of Stress

• Acute Stress can become Chronic Stress

- An isolated event can begin as acute stress, but if the repeated event is judged as stressful or threatening for the person, the acute stress may be characterized as chronic stress.
- Traffic may become chronic stress if the driver assesses the reoccurring experience as stressful or threatening, especially on a daily morning commute.

Source: Health Center and Psychology In Action

Healthy Ways to Cope With Stress

✓ Take care of yourself

- Eat healthy
- Exercise
- Get plenty of sleep



✓ Seek social support – talk to others

- Friends, family members, and others you can confide

-Airplane example: consider why airlines instruct you, in an emergency, to put the oxygen mask on yourself before assisting another person. If you can not breathe, you can not help anyone else.

EAT Healthy: ideas: 1) During the weekend write down a food menu for the week (Monday-Friday). This will assist you in purchasing only the necessary items needed.

- This will make you become more aware of the type of food your are preparing and whether you are using enough vegetables and fruits
- it helps you save money by not buying unnecessary items
- it helps you save time (not running to the store every time you need one ingredient to complete your cooking)
- If possible, cook two/three meals during the weekend and freeze them; that way you simply warm up the meal during the weekdays; --
- use left overs to cook other meals

Exercise = going for walks, using exercising equipment while watching your favorite TV program (sweating cleanses your body & strengthens your immune system)

Sleep = helps refresh your mind & body

LACK of sleep compromises your ability to think clearly, make effective decisions, and take appropriate actions. LACK OF SLEEP = weight gain (late night snacking)

-Recommended hours of sleep (Source: Center for Disease Control & Prevention)

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| - Newborns = 16-18 hours a day | - Teens = 9-10 hrs. a day |
| -Preschool-aged Children = 11-12 hrs. a day | - Adults = 7-8 hrs. a day |
| -School-aged Children = at least 10 hrs. a day | |

Social Support = Spend your time with people who support your efforts and inspire your dreams; maintain good/positive friendships.

Healthy Ways to Cope With Stress

- Learn new things
- Take a break
- Go for walks
- Do an enjoyable activity
- Create alone time



Learn new things = Phrase: "if you don't use it you loose it"

- keep your mind sharp and stimulate your brain cells
- take different routes to get home or to work
- read a good book (or obtain books on CDs from your local library)

Take a break: alone time = spend 5 minutes in your car before picking up your kids from school, prior to going into the house after work

- take a bath instead of a shower
- Wake up 5-10 minutes earlier and enjoy a cup of coffee; get your day/thoughts organized

Ways to Reduce Stress

- Plan ahead and be organized
 - consider a "To-do" list
- Set boundaries
 - at home and at work (if possible)
- Stay connected
 - especially when spending time with your children

-Set Boundaries at home, in order to achieve harmony and consistency.

- All adults must be on the same page regarding house rules and routines.

-Stay Connected = When spending time with your children, stay focused and engaged on the activity (quality time).

Enlist help = meet other classroom parents or neighbors and coordinate school pick ups/ drop offs

- Classroom parents can also be a great resource for homework assignments.

Ways to Reduce Stress

- Enlist help
 - Family, friends, neighbors



- Develop a routine

- Develop chores for all family members



Develop a realistic routine that will work for you and your family.

- When you develop a **realistic** routine it is more probable that you will follow the routine.

Home chores = provide a sense of belonging and defines a child's role in the family

- Chores help children understand the concept of teamwork, collaboration, and responsibility.
- Chores help develop life skills.

Simple Tips to Reduce Stress

- Do not rely on your memory...write it down
- Set priorities in your life
- Always make copies of important papers
- Appreciate the world around you (i.e. nature)
- Practice breathing slowly



-When you write things down, you unclutter your brain, allowing more room for other thoughts (i.e. use cell phones to write down reminders)

- Set Priorities = Make "to do" lists. Keep track of those things that you MUST do; those things that you FEEL like you SHOULD do; and those things that you WANT to do. Eliminate those things that are not as important.
 - This helps you budget your time, instead of driving your self crazy to do it ALL
 - YOU own your time = how you choose to "spend" your time is YOUR decision

-Notice Nature = listen to the sounds of your environment; feel the wind on your skin; listen to the birds chirping, and listen to the rustling of leaves (teach your children to do the same).

- Teach your children how to use all of their senses to notice nature

-Breathing = Teach your children how to take deep breaths.

- To inhale = pretend you are smelling a flower
- To exhale = pretend you are blowing the birthday candles from a cake

Simple Tips to Reduce Stress

- Schedule "Family ONLY" times
- Stand up and stretch
- Stop saying negative things to yourself
- Give a compliment to someone
- Give a SMILE



- "Family Only" Time = such as Movie Night; Game Night; Special Dinner Night. Try not to let anything interfere with this time. Family members are not allowed to schedule other activities during this time.
 - Make it a tradition and a "big deal" ; so that the anticipation of this event is as fun as the event.
 - Choose a day & time that works for your family (i.e. Fridays at 6:00)
- Negative things = Pay attention to the number of times you put yourself down (verbally or in your mind). When you catch yourself, stop the negative thought and re-frame it as a positive.
 - a negative and a positive thought CANNOT occur at the same time
- When someone gives you praise, learn to say "thank you" and "feel" the other person's appreciation.
- Smiling helps = Research shows that facial expressions— whether real or phony — can change a person's mood.
 - In one study, volunteers who thought they were testing theories of psychomotor coordination were instructed to clench a pen between their teeth in a way that created either a smile or a pout. Subjects felt happier when they were in an unwitting smile mode, than when they were unconsciously pouting.

Simple Tips to Reduce Stress

- Develop a sense of humor
- Laugh more
- Strive for excellence NOT perfection
- Believe in yourself



- Develop a sense of humor = see the humor in life and laugh at your past mistakes (i.e. embarrassing moments)
- Humor is one of the best stress-busters around. A good laugh relaxes muscles, lowers blood pressure, and may reduce levels of hormones that create stress and suppress immunity.

Helping Children



- ✓ Maintain a consistent routine
 - Waking up, eating, going to sleep at regular time
 - Going to school and participating in the afterschool activities
- ✓ Talk, listen, and encourage expression
 - Create opportunities to have your children talk, but do not force them
 - Listen to their thoughts & feelings and share some of yours

Opening line to this slide: Children experience stress as well as adults, specially during stressful situations: changes in the home environment (i.e. loss of a job, divorce, etc.) or community stressors

Maintaining a normal routine provides children with a sense of stability.

-During stressful times, continue to take your children to afterschool activities, which provide stability, predictability, and extra support.

Listening to children = acknowledge their thoughts/feelings

-Encourage your children to express their thoughts, but don't force them (if your child is experiencing stress by your questions, take a break).

- Depending on what developmental stage they are, children may blame their parents' separation on themselves

Helping Children

- Watch and listen
 - Be alert for any changes in behavior
- Reassure
 - Take opportunities to reassure your child about his/her safety and well being
 - Discuss ways you, the school and the community are taking steps to keep them safe
- Connect with others
 - Make on-going efforts to talk to other parents and the teacher about concerns and ways to help your child cope

Change in behavior = eating, sleeping, withdrawing, etc.

Reassure = Stressful events can challenge a child's sense of physical & emotional safety & security

- Natural Disaster = develop an emergency kit;
 - Create a list of the family's phone numbers (in written form), in the event that cell phones may not be working.
- Avoid watching the news when young children are present
- During major disasters = take a break from listening/watching the news
 - Constant exposure from television, internet, radio, etc., may be harmful (i.e. nightmares).
 - Young children have difficulty making sense/understanding the issues/news.

Resiliency

The ability to adapt well to adversity, trauma, threats, or even significant source of stress.



American Psychological Association

- The ability to thrive, despite challenges, arise from the skills of resiliency
- We all can develop resilience and we can help our children develop it as well. It involves behavior, thoughts, and actions that can be learned over time.
- Resiliency can be nurtured and supported by caring adults who empower a child's efforts to cope with hardships.

10 Tips to Build Resilience in Children

1. Make connections

- Connecting with people provides social support and strengthens resilience

2. Help your child by having him/her help others

- By helping others, your child will feel important and will improve his/her self-esteem

3. Maintain a daily routine

4. Take a break

- Endless worrying can be counter-productive

American Psychological Association

1. **Make Connections** = Teach your child how to make friends, including the skills of empathy (feeling others' pain).
 - Building a strong family network to support your child in their disappointments and hurts
2. **Helping Others** = Children who may feel helpless can be empowered by helping others.
 - If possible, engage them in age-appropriate volunteer work.
 - At home, ask for their assistance with tasks they can master.
3. **Maintain a routine** = Sticking to a routine can be comforting for children especially younger children who crave structure in their lives.
4. **Take a break** = Teach your children how to focus on something besides what is worrying them.
 - Be aware of what your child is exposed to that can be troubling (i.e. the news, overheard conversations), & make sure to take a break from those things.

10 Tips to Build Resilience in Children

5. Teach your child self-care

- Rest and play

6. Move towards your goals

- Set reasonable goals

7. Nurture a positive self-view

- Trust him/herself



American Psychological Association

5. Self-care = be a good example and teach your child the importance of making time to eat healthy, exercise, and rest

- Make sure your child has time to have fun & "down time" to relax; avoid scheduling every moment of their lives.

6. Goals = Teach your child to set reasonable goals. Work towards attaining them one step at a time.

- Giving praise for completing small steps helps the child stay focused on what she/he has accomplished; rather than on what has not been accomplished.
- This can help build the resilience to move forward in the face of challenges.

7. Positive self-view = Help your child remember ways that he/she has successfully handled hardships in the past & then help him/her understand that these past challenges help him/her build the strength to handle future challenges.

- Help your child learn to trust him/herself to solve problems and make appropriate decisions.
- Teach your child to see the humor in life and the ability to laugh at his/herself.

10 Tips to Build Resilience in Children

8. Keep things in perspective and maintain a hopeful outlook
9. Look for opportunities for self-discovery
10. Accept that change is part of living

American Psychological Association

8. Hopeful outlook = Even when your child is facing very painful/stressful events, help him/her look at the situation in a broader context & keep a long term perspective.
 - Even for young children = help him see that there is a future beyond the current situation and that the future can be good.
 - An OPTIMISTIC & positive outlook enables children to see good things in life & to keep going even in the hardest times.
9. Self-discovery = Tough times are often the times when children learn the most about themselves. Help your child take a look at what he/she learned about him/herself that he/she did not know before.
 - What did they learn from that experience?
10. Change is part of life = Change can be scary. Help your child see that change is a part of life. New goals can replace goals that have become unattainable.

Final Tips to Reduce Stress

- Remember that STRESS is an attitude.
- Relax, take each day at a time...You have the rest of your life to live!



ACTIVITY

➤ Activity

➤ Story



- Choose any of these activities or develop your own:
- 1a) Have participants write down 3 things about themselves that make them good parents
- 1b) Have participants write down 1-2 personal goals which they will be working on (i.e. self care)
- 2) Color candy = Provide different types of candy and asked those participants with a specific type of candy to answer certain questions (i.e. share a parenting tip; state one thing they learned from this presentation; one thing they would like to improve on/change; etc.)
- STORY from an Indian Tradition: A man was being chased by a tiger and the man ran and ran until he reached a well. He jumped into the well and landed on a tree limb that was jutting out into the middle of the well. He looked up and saw the tiger waiting for him at the top of the well. He looked down, and saw poisonous snakes. He looked around him and saw he was surrounded by fruit, as it was the fruit season. He stretched out his hand, grabbed a piece of fruit and began to taste and enjoy the ripe fruit. Now, think about this... Just because there is a tiger above you (problems at work or home) and snakes down below (other problems), why should you deprive yourself of the beauty and the gift of the moment?
- Your mind will not allow you to live the moment if you are either thinking about the past (regretting the past) or anxious about the future ; you cannot enjoy the gift of the present. Before you know it, fruit season will be over (your children will grow up). Enjoy every moment with your children and love them, as much as possible.

Questions/Discussion



**Thank
You** *Mahalo*
Tach **Kiitos**
Grazie *Toda*
Obrigado **Thanks**
Takk **Gracias** *Merci*

Thank You for Your Attention!