Stress and the Mind Body Connection

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This session is eligible for 1.5 Continuing Education Hours.

To earn these hours you must:
- Have your badge scanned in and out at the door
- Attend 90% of this presentation
- Fill out the online evaluation for this session
Stress Defined

Â Stress is defined as the consequence of not having adequate resources to meet the demands in one’s life:

- Money
- Time
- Health
- Social support

Symptoms of Stress

Â Symptoms of stress can be physical, psychological, or behavioral

Â Do you have a sense of your own stress-related symptoms?

Â What signals does your body send out when you are under stress?
Physical Symptoms

- Insomnia
- Headaches
- Neck and back pain
- Fatigue
- Gastrointestinal symptoms (constipation, diarrhea, bloating, nausea)
- Abdominal pain
- Shortness of breath
- Menstrual issues

Psychological Symptoms

- Irritability
- Worry
- Sadness
- Hopelessness
- Confusion
- Anger
- Forgetfulness
What do you think are the top two behavioral changes in men?

Men ë When Stressed

1. Watch more television
2. Drink more alcohol

What about women?
Women in When Stressed

1. Exercise less
2. Eat more junk food (sweet and salty)

Behavioral Symptoms-overall

- Gum chewing
- Increased TV watching
- Alcohol or drug abuse
- Increased consumption of sweet and/or salty foods
- Decreased exercise
- Lethargy
- Tearfulness
Long-term Consequences of Stress

- Increased risk of hypertension (high blood pressure)
- Increased risk of coronary heart disease (heart attack or stroke)
- Decreased immune function
- Hastened aging

Strategies to Decrease Stress

\[ \text{Physical strategies:} \]
- Relaxation techniques
- Mini relaxation techniques
- Moderate exercise
- Appropriate nutrition
Psychological strategies:
- Cognitive restructuring
- Emotional expression
- Social support
- Self-nurturance

Relaxation Techniques
- Meditation
- Imagery
- Body Scan
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Autogenic training

Most important thing is to find a technique that works and feels comfortable for you.
Mini Relaxation Techniques

Â Based upon diaphragmatic breathing
Â Eyes open or closed
Â Count from 10 down to 1, one number for each breath
OR
Â Inhale to a count of 4, exhale to a count of 4
OR
Â Take a slow deep breath, pause for a count of 3, then exhale and pause for a count of 3

Appropriate Nutrition

Â There are no bad foods
Â Aim for an 80/20 balance in terms of healthful foods and less healthful foods
Â Watch out for the "what-the-hell" effect
Â Deprivation of desired foods tends to lead to sporadic binging, rather than moderated eating of desired food categories
**Exercise**

- Any amount of exercise is better than none
- Finding a form of exercise which you enjoy is key
- Exercising several times a day for brief periods of time is better than one longer session

- Exercise is as effective a treatment of moderate depression as are antidepressant medications
- It is associated with decreased risk of heart disease, cancer of the breast, colon and bladder, and improved immune function
- Walking is one of the best forms of exercise there is
Cognitive Restructuring

- The purpose is to challenge and restructure automatic thought patterns by asking a series of questions:
  - Does this thought contribute to your stress?
  - Where did you learn this thought?
  - Is this a logical thought?
  - Is this thought true?

Social Support

- Defined as trusting someone enough to confide in them
- Crucial for our emotional and physical health
- Lack of social support is associated with increased mortality
Emotional Expression

- Research supports the efficacy of writing down one’s thoughts and feelings
- More effective in dealing with distress than speaking about these issues
- Writing for 20 minutes daily for 4 days leads to improved health and decreased psychological symptoms

Self Nurturance

- Learning to put your own needs on an equivalent level to the needs of those around you
- The concept is about self-care, not about being selfish
- Learning to recognize when you need to slow down and attend to yourself
Summary

Â Stress can lead to a variety of physical, psychological, and behavioral symptoms.

Â Tune in to your body to recognize these symptoms and address the stress level in your life prior to developing longer-term health issues.

Â There are physical and psychological methods to decrease stress. Try several out until you find some which work for you.

Â www.domarcenter.com
Â www.dralicedomar.com

Books include:
Â Healing Mind, Healthy Woman
Â Self-Nurture
Â Be Happy Without Being Perfect
Â Live a Little
Questions

Up Next: Lunch in Biscayne and Chopin

Breakouts resume at 1:30