



Stress and the Mind Body Connection

Stress and the Mind Body Connection

Alice D. Domar, Ph.D

*Executive Director, Domar Centers for Mind/Body Health
Associate Clinical Professor, Harvard Medical School*

**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

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

- . Money
- . Time
- . Health
- . Social support



APRIL 13-16, 2015

Symptoms of Stress

- “ Symptoms of stress can be physical, psychological, or behavioral
- “ Do you have a sense of your own stress-related symptoms?
- “ What signals does your body send out when you are under stress?



APRIL 13-16, 2015

Physical Symptoms

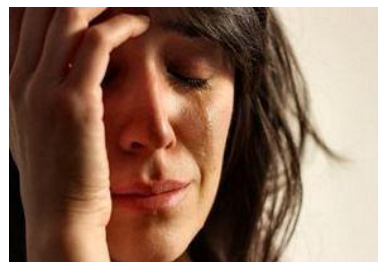
- “ Insomnia
- “ Headaches
- “ Neck and back pain
- “ Fatigue
- “ Gastrointestinal symptoms (constipation, diarrhea, bloating, nausea)
- “ Abdominal pain
- “ Shortness of breath
- “ Menstrual issues



APRIL 13-16, 2015

Psychological Symptoms

- “ Irritability
- “ Worry
- “ Sadness
- “ Hopelessness
- “ Confusion
- “ Anger
- “ Forgetfulness



APRIL 13-16, 2015

What do you think are the top two behavioral changes in men?



APRIL 13-16, 2015

Men . When Stressed

1. Watch more television
2. Drink more alcohol



What about women?



APRIL 13-16, 2015

Women . When Stressed

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



APRIL 13-16, 2015

Behavioral Symptoms-overall

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



APRIL 13-16, 2015

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



APRIL 13-16, 2015

Strategies to Decrease Stress



- “ Physical strategies:
 - Relaxation techniques
 - Mini relaxation techniques
 - Moderate exercise
 - Appropriate nutrition



APRIL 13-16, 2015

“ Psychological strategies:

- Cognitive restructuring
- Emotional expression
- Social support
- Self-nurturance



APRIL 13-16, 2015

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



APRIL 13-16, 2015

Mini Relaxation Techniques

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



APRIL 13-16, 2015

Appropriate Nutrition

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



APRIL 13-16, 2015

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



NN
NECA NOW
2015

APRIL 13-16, 2015

- “ 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

NN
NECA NOW
2015

APRIL 13-16, 2015

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



APRIL 13-16, 2015

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



APRIL 13-16, 2015

Summary

- “ Stress can lead to a variety of physical, psychological, and behavioral symptoms.
- “ Tune in to your body to recognize these symptoms and address the stress level in your life prior to developing longer-term health issues.
- “ There are physical and psychological methods to decrease stress. Try several out until you find some which work for you.



APRIL 13-16, 2015

- “ www.domarcenter.com
- “ www.dralicedomar.com



Books include:

- “ Healing Mind, Healthy Woman
- “ Self-Nurture
- “ Be Happy Without Being Perfect
- “ Live a Little



APRIL 13-16, 2015

Questions

Up Next: Lunch in Biscayne and Chopin

Breakouts resume at 1:30



APRIL 13-16, 2015