

Stress Management

for

Persons with ID / DD
Their Parents and Family
Their Service Providers

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What is Stress

- Stress is your mind and body's response or reaction to a real or imagined threat, event or change.
- The threat, event or change are called stressors.
- Stressors can be internal (thoughts, beliefs, attitudes) or external (loss, tragedy, change).

Levels of Stress

Eustress

- Eustress or positive stress occurs when one's level of stress is high enough to motivate him / her to move into action to get things accomplished.

Distress

- Distress or negative stress occurs when one's level of stress is either too high or too low and his / her body and / or mind begins to respond negatively to the stressors.

Stages of Stress

Alarm Stage

Acute stress is the temporary type of stress when one steps back to the curb out of the path of an oncoming car.

Examples

- Cardiac- increased heart rate
- Respiratory- increased respiration
- Skin- decreased temperature
- Hormonal- adrenal gland (rush)

Alarm Stage

- Tension headache may ensue
- Momentarily angry, elated, boisterous or resentful
- Cry in joy, in relief, or in frustration
- The moment passes and one moves on.

Resistance Stage

- During this stage, life's situation gets the best of us. For example, we believe we deserve a raise, but don't act on our feelings.
- Or several stressors (divorce, loss of job) occur in a short period of time.

Resistance Stage

- Behavior: lack of enthusiasm for family, school, work or life in general, withdrawal, change in eating habits, insomnia, hypersomnia, fatigue, recurring headaches.
- Cognitive: poor problem solving, confusion, nightmares, hypervigilance.

Resistance Stage

More Examples

Emotional: tearfulness

fear

anxiety

panic

guilt

agitation

depression

overwhelmed

Exhaustion Stage

During this stage, the body and mind reacts with serious, long-term, physical and/or mental disorders.

Exhaustion Stage

- Situations become impossible to deal with and one gives up trying to deal with adversity.
- Symptoms include grinding teeth, tremors, confusion, forgetfulness, over-eating and alcoholism

Effects of Stress

- Adrenalin “Rush” saves one’s life
- Motivates us to complete tasks
- Chronic stress lowers immunity
- Caridovascular Disease (CVD)
- Diabetes Management

Effects of Stress

- Emotional:
 - hopelessness
 - chronic anxiety
 - depression
 - paranoia
 - delusions
- * Mental:
 - lost work productivity
 - relationship difficulties
 - displaced anger
 - aggressive behavior

Sources of Stress

- Change
- Hassles
- Pressure
- Inconsistent goals and behaviors
- Conflict
- Overload
- Burnout
- Other (discrimination, unemployment)

Sources of Stress

- When being different from the crowd causes stress:

Race

Ethnicity

Religious Affiliation

Age

Sexual Orientation

Sources of Stress

Self Imposed Stress

- * Self Concept
- * Self Efficacy
- * External vs. Internal Locus of Control

Service Provider Job Stressors

- Scheduling
- Co-Worker Support
- Job Review / Supervisor Support
- Work – Home Life Balance
- Training (Initial and Ongoing)
- Client Issues

Service Provider Work Recommendations

- Continuous positive feedback
- Regular job reviews
- Adequate screening of job candidates
- Regular multi-level staff meetings
- Good worker – supervisor relationship

Service Provider Stress Management Tips

“work to live – not live to work”

- School yourself to wake and get ready, not for work, but for your day.
- On the drive to work, listen to music, humor, or anything not related to work
- Take an alternate route
- Plan your work and work your plan
- Keep a calendar and ‘to do’ list
- Take your allotted breaks...do not think or talk about work during breaks

Service Provider Stress Management Tips

- Do not drink caffeine
- Plan your time away from work
- Take a walk during work
- Focus on one's own goal
- Say 'no' to unrelated tasks
- Eat healthy
- Keep laughing
- Learn to relax

Stressors for Parents of Persons with ID / DD

- Parent stress is proportional to behavioral severity of child / adult
- Parent stress is greater for children with intellectual disability / developmental disability than for children with no disability
- Parent stress is from perception of circumstances, not from behavior

Stressors for Parents of People with ID / DD

- Balance caring role with employment
- Uncertainty about the future (aging)
- Sense of restriction of day-to-day activity
- Finding opportunities for child to make friends
- Initial knowledge of ID / DD
- Search for appropriate services and support

Parent Stress Management Tips

“A house divided against itself cannot stand”

- Take Time for Family
 - Work household chores together
 - Share at least one meal a day
 - Schedule a weekly family event

Parent Stress Management Tips

- Manage family stress
 - School suspensions
 - Addictions
 - Mental Disorders
 - Death
 - Hurricane
 - Finances

Parent Stress Management Tips

- Manage Individual Stressors for Family
 - Don't avoid discussion – find a solution
 - Don't trivialize – talk it out, listen, important to family
 - Don't lay blame – work the problem and find a solution
 - Respect privacy

Parent Stress Management Tips

Individual

- Internet Flash Games
- Computer Games
- Off-line Stress Busting Games
 - Deck of cards
 - Slinky
 - Rubik's cube
 - Punch balls
 - Darts
 - Crossword puzzles

Parent Stress Management Tips

- Exercises

- “Blow it off”
- Get up and stretch or smile
- Short walk
- Squeeze a lemon
- Progressive relaxation
- Dance
- Take time
- Sleep on it
- Find the good

Exercises

- * Just say no
- Need help, get help
- Adequate sleep
- Take a nap
- Warm bath
- Respite
- Read a book
- Support group
- 30 minutes of daily fun

Stressor of People with ID / DD

- Switching or giving up an activity
- Change in routine
- Interruption of self stimulating activities
- Learning new skills
- Awareness of difference from peers
- Frustration with communication
- Health issues

Stress Management Tips for Persons with ID / DD

- Eat healthy – manage blood sugar levels
- Maintain peaceful environment
- Play music
- Exercise within physical limits
- Function in structured environment
- Routine and schedule
- Family and community inclusion
- Clear and consistent rules and applied discipline
- Hug therapy
- Relaxation techniques