Techniques for Managing Stress

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ABSTRACT
Stress is the process that occurs in response to the events that disrupts the person physical and psychological functioning. In the age of globalization, everyone is facing the stress. A wide range of conditions are capable of generating stress, such as stressful life events, hassles of daily life etc. It is impossible to eliminate the stress from life, as Selye believed that stress is the spice of life and absence of stress is death. High level of stress can influence physical, psychological well being and performance of an individual. It is necessary to manage the stress effectively. The present paper focused on various strategies for managing the stress. Exercise, relaxation, visualization and guided imagery, cognitive behaviour therapy, support group, time management, positive attitude are some of the techniques for managing the stress.

INTRODUCTION
Stress is the body’s mental, physical, and emotional reaction to everyday activities. Stress is a dynamic condition, which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important. Stress is associated with constraints and demands. The former prevent you from doing what you desire, the latter refers to the loss of something desired.

Beehr and Newman define stress as “a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force them to deviate from their normal functioning”.

The most commonly accepted definition of stress (mainly attributed to Richard S Lazarus) is that stress is a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that “demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.”

Hans Selye was the first psychologist to examine the physiological aspects of stress. Selye introduced the model termed as General Adaptation Syndrome, which consists of three stages – Alarm stage, Resistance and Exhaustion.

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Stage 1. Alarm Stage: In alarm stage the body prepares itself for immediate action; arousal of the sympathetic nervous system releases hormones that help prepare our body to meet threats (Selye, 1976).

Stage 2: Resistance: In this stage arousal is lower than during the alarm stage. During this stage person’s body continue to draw on resources at an above-normal rate in order to cope effectively with stressors.

Stage 3: Exhaustion: During this stage individual’s capacity to resist is deleted, organ systems begin to break down, and susceptibility to illness increases.

Stress may be caused by stressful life events (e.g., death of love one or divorce), hazardous of daily life (too many things to do at once, traffic jam, etc.), work related stress. There are several causes of stress which are as follows:

- Death of spouse, family, near relative or friend.
- Injury or illness of family members.
- Separation or divorce from partner.
- Not sufficient money to meet out daily expenses.
- Argument with spouse, family members or friends or neighbours.
- Change of place or change of city or change of country.
- Argument or heated conversations with co-workers or boss.
- Working overtime and on holidays.
- Excessive work pressure.
- Threats: physical threats, social threats, financial threat and other threats.
- Persons having type A personality (aggressive and competitive set high standards, constant time pressure) are more prone to stress.

Stress arises from various factors, it is impossible to eliminate it completely. Stress can influence physical, psychological well being, performance on various tasks and even on the careers. By applying various techniques stress can be reduced. The techniques are as follows:

Deep Breathing. Deep breathing is a classical way to bring balance back into life. As person breathing deepens, the relaxation response forms and the respiration rate slows. Yogic long deep breathing and Zen breathing are both very effective. In yogic breathing, first the diaphragm expands; then each portion of the lungs, from the bottom to the top, fills with oxygen. A mantra or healing sound may be utilized with yogic breathing, while in Zen breathing, the participant usually focuses on their breath. Hobson, Charles J, Delunas, Linda (2009) found deep breathing as a successful technique in reducing stress.

Exercise Regularly. According to MayoClinic.com, exercise, aside from helping to lose weight and stay healthy, actually stimulates brain activity that is believed to make people feel more relaxed, happy and stress free. It appears that aerobic exercise is the best form of exercise for stress reduction. Some research findings indicate that the more aerobically fit an individual is, the better they manage stress. Carmack, Boudreaux, Amaral-Melendez, Brantley, and Moor (1999), Skirka
Techniques for Managing Stress (2000) and Hassemen and colleagues (2000) all found an association between some form of aerobic exercise and lower levels of stress in their survey studies.

Relaxation. Meditation is one of the relaxation technique, which eliminate the stressful situation. Research on meditation and stress has shown that meditation can definitely counter the effects of stress. To avoid the medication follow the meditation. Marion Kostanski studied the role of meditation in reducing stress for pre-service students. Outcomes of the study support that introduction of a meditation programme into pre-service training programmes may be facilitate students in being better equipped to manage stress in their study, work and everyday lives. Bonadonna (2003) demonstrated that yoga and meditation practices are effective in reducing stress.

Another technique for relaxation is time-out at work and biofeedback. Biofeedback is a technique in which patients are taught to interpret and respond to signals from their own bodies. It can be taught by doctors, dentists, nurses, and physical therapists as well as by psychologists or psychiatrists. The objective of relaxation is to reach a state of deep relaxation, in which one feels physically relaxed and detached from body sensations.

Cognitive Therapy: The amount of stress someone will feel when faced with a situation is based on how the individual interprets what is causing it. Broadly, two factors influence the appraisal process: emotion, and rational thought. The Rational Emotive Therapy (RET) developed by Ellis states that individual appraisals influence their moods, and when appraisals are distorted and exaggerated, so too will be their moods. Rational Emotive Therapy focuses on changing irrational beliefs. For example irrational belief is “I am an incompetent worker who cannot handle the work load” it is changed as “I handle this workload as well as anyone else.” Stress is a result of how individual interpret the external situation. People can learn to control their stress if they can gain more awareness of and control over their appraisal process. Kushnir (1993) observed a rational-emotive group intervention as a useful therapy for preventing and coping with stress among safety officers.

Good Social Skills in Workplace and Support Groups: Having good social skills can help in reducing stress, since it allows individual to interact with co-workers and colleagues, as well as give a person an opportunity to develop their relationship with supervisors. If the person is able to foster good and healthy relationships in the workplace, then the person can keep a positive outlook and sound work ethic.

Stress may be managed by support groups. Support groups consist friends and family members with whom an individual can spend time. Such type of group can be supported an individual during the time of crisis and develop sense of belonging, increased sense of self-worth, feeling of security.

Visualization or Guided Imagery Techniques: Visualization and imagery (also referred as guided imagery) techniques is another avenue for stress reduction. These techniques involve the systematic practice of creating a detailed mental image of an attractive and peaceful setting or environment. Imaginal techniques have often been applied in stress management and related training or therapeutic areas (Dycknan & Cowan, 1978; Goid, 1982; Miechenbaum, 1983).

Laughter: Laughter and Humor are very powerful. Laughter reduces the level of stress hormones like cortisol, epinephrine (adrenaline), dopamine and growth hormone and strengthens the immune system. It also increases the level of health-enhancing hormones like endorphins, the feel good and
happy hormone, in the brain. Laughter is not only a physical release, but an emotional one, and easily one of the most fun ways to relieve stress. Laughing, takes away the person from negative feelings, such as anger, pain, fear, and stress.

**Time Management:** Most of the people are poor in managing time, which result in feeling of work overload, skipped schedules and stress. To avoid the stress, it is necessary to manage the time effectively. Some basic techniques in time management are:

- Knowing yourself is the first step for effective time management. Find out what you really want from life or determine your vision.
- Make a list of daily activities. This helps keep track of work progress.
- Prioritize the activities by importance and urgency.
- Do not feel guilty about those things that have not been accomplished today. Put them on the top of the “to do” list for tomorrow.
- Make telephone calls between 4.30pm and 5.00 pm. People tend to keep these conversations brief so that they can go home.
- Determine when you do the best work—morning or afternoon and schedule the most difficult assignments for this time period.
- Appreciate the value of time.

**Music Therapy:** Music therapy could reduce stress and the stress response. When dealing with stress, the music can actually lower blood pressure, relax body and calm mind. Labbe E, et.al. (2007) found that listening to self-select or classical music, after exposure to a stressor, significantly reduces negative emotional states and physiological arousal compared to listening to heavy metal music or sitting in silence. There are some tips for managing the stress:

- Find out the weakness of the personality and train them.
- Have a positive attitude.
- Be happy and feel proud of your achievements.
- Try to accept failures.
- Increase the self confidence.
- Keep yourself physically fit.
- Have a right ambition of your career.
- Try to discover something positive— even in unpleasant situation.
- Develop the tolerance of listening others.
- Evaluate others and yourself as accurately as possible.

**CONCLUSION**

Stress is the result of response to environment and it is an inevitable part of life. Stress arises due to individual, organizational and environmental factors. Various techniques have been used for reducing the stress.
REFERENCES


