



Understanding Stress



Stressed spelled backwards is...

Desserts

Coincidence?

I think not...



What is stress?

- Our Bodies natural response to change
- Something that causes feelings of worry or anxiety
- Special importance or attention that is given to something
- Can have a physical, emotional or psychological response



Stress Hormones and What They Do

- **Cortisol and adrenaline**
 - These both rev up the engine, think fight or flight response
- **Oxytocin**
 - Tend and befriend hormone
- **Acetylcholine and dopamine**
 - Aids in bringing balance back to the system, think rest and digest response



Our Wondrous Nervous System

Sympathetic

- Fast
- Fight or flight
- Prepare body for emergency
- Increase heart rate
- Increase respiratory rate
- Dilate pupils
- Direct blood to heart, lungs and skeletal muscles
- Increase blood sugar

Parasympathetic

- Slow
- Rest and digest
- Slows heart rate
- Decrease blood pressure
- Decrease respiratory rate
- Improve digestion
- Improve kidney function
- Libido



Distress vs Eustress

Distress

- Viewed as bad stress
- Short or long term
- Occurs when something becomes difficult to cope with
- Perceived with being out of control
- May trigger anxiety
- Decreases focus and attention
- May contribute to mental and physical problems

Eustress

- Viewed as beneficial or adaptive stress
- Usually short term
- Energize and motivates us
- Can feel exciting
- Perceived as something we have control over
- Increases focus and performance



Mindset matters

How We View Stress

- Associating stress with negativity can intensify our experience of stress itself
- Understanding that what we believe affects our response to stress
- Acknowledging stress when it happens, and noticing how it makes you feel
- Recognizing that stress is usually a response to something you care about
- Examining internal and external resources
- Examining priorities



Long Term Effects of Chronic Distress

- Suppression of the immune system
- Increased inflammatory response
- Increased blood sugar levels and increased risk of developing diabetes
- Hypertension
- Weight gain
- GI problems
- Fertility problems
- Chronic fatigue
- Depression



What to do

Stress Management Techniques

- Breathing Techniques
- Social Connections
- Laughter and Levity
- Music and Art
- Regular Physical Activity
- Journaling
- Mindfulness
- Pet therapy
- Taking time for Yourself
- Seeking Professional Counseling when Necessary



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