

Module: Ethics

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Lesson: Stress

“Give your stress wings and let it fly”

Stress

Although “stress” is commonly used term in today’s vernacular, and most people appear to have an intuitive sense of what it means, stress is difficult to precisely define as it often used interchangeably with a variety of other terms, such as anxiety, pressure or strain. In a general sense, stress refers to a collection of , emotional, behavioral, and cognitive reactions that occur in response to environmental demands. As we interact with the world around us. We must make constant appraisals of environmental threat, challenges, and demands and attempt to cope with any issues that arise. At time, environmental demands are easily handle, such as when have to press a button on a key to unlock your car. However, at other times the demands of the environment can seem daunting or unmanageable, such as when you have to take three exams on the same day, and result in feelings of physical tension, negative thoughts patterns, and unpleasant emotional experiences. Lazarus and Folkman suggested that stress results when the demands of the environment are greater than the individual’s perceived coping resources.

Stress is often described as a feeling of being overloaded, wound up tight, tense and worried. We all experience stress at times. It can sometimes help to motivate us to get a task finished, or perform well. But stress can also be harmful if we become over stressed and it interferes with our ability to get on with our normal life for too long.

The Stressor

A stressor is any event or stimulus that causes stress. However, what serves as a stressor for one person may not be the same for another. For example, being asked to attend a social event may create stress for someone who perceives that they lack the necessary social skills to fit in, whereas another person who feels comfortable in social situations may not experience any stress. Stressors can take many forms, ranging from the daily hassles of life to significant life changes. Daily hassles are the regularly occurring events or situations that we experience

in everyday life, such as misplacing items, concerns about weight, or having to wait your turn. Any one of these events is unlikely to have a major impact on our overall quality of life. In contrast, life changes, such as death of a family member, getting married, or a negative health diagnosis are more significant. Notice that not all stressors are negative. Getting married, having children and starting a new job are often positive experiences, though they can create a significant amount of stress because they require us to alter our lives and adjust to new circumstances.

College is a transitional time of life when new and unique stressors are often being encountered. Not only are college students often away from home for the first time and forced to be more self-sufficient, but they must also cope with the increasing demands of the academic environment. Changes in sleep and eating habits, increased financial responsibilities, having to share living space and position with strangers, and increased exposure to alcohol, drugs, and sex are only a few of the additional stressors often by college students.

Aspects of Stress

- Anxiety: is explained as the manner in which a person reacts or response to stress, accept and interpret.
- Distress: is a moment of great pain sorrow, acute physical and mental suffering; affliction and trouble. It is a result of an inability to handle or deal with a challenge or problem encountered in the performance of specific activity or studies. Distress results in both emotional and physical pain.
- Fear: is a chain reaction in the brain the start with a successful stimulus and ends with the release of chemicals that cause a racing heart, fast breathing and energize muscles, among other things also known as the fight of light responses. Fear is a common aspect of human emotion that is sentenced in our nervous system. Fear is a result of instinct in human that responses to sensed danger or unsafe. It protects and alerts us to an impending danger and that's help to prepare for this danger. It is a natural aspect of human and in some cases it is very good because it can be a warning or a signal that cautions us to be very careful. However, it is and can be extremely dangerous to the life of a person. Fear can mild or intense and it can be short term and last longer.
- Worry: is as a result of thinking about existing problem. It is constant thing and mediating of challenge or fear. Worry looks into what is likely to happen in the future

as a result of the present situations. It is a disturbing of one composer or peace of mind, worry causes distress to the mind and results in high blood pressure, headache, stomach disturbances and other physical discomforts.

A prescription for stress managements

To maximize your ability to cope with stress, try the following:

1. Exercise regularly. Engage in 3-5 sessions of moderate intensity exercise each week to enhance your immune system and reduce your risk of developing anxiety and mood disorders. However, even if you cannot exercise regularly, remember that even a single episode of exercise can be a great way to relieve stress and improve mood.
2. Eat healthy diet. Eat plenty of fruits, vegetables, whole grains and fatty fish to maximize your physical health and your body's ability to manage stress.
3. Sleep. Get 7-8 hours of uninterrupted sleep per night to improve your mood and boost your immune functioning.
4. Practice relaxation. Engage in relaxation exercises on a regular basis or during periods of moderate to high stress. Progressive muscle relaxation (PMR), guided imagery, and meditation or mindfulness by engaging in yoga two to three times per week.
5. Express yourself. Look for the humor in stressful situations, and find ways to express your emotions through writing, art, or talk with friends and family.
6. Reframe, attend to the ways in which you think about and interpret stressful situations and look for opportunities to reframe the situation in a more rational or positive manner.

Conclusion

Stress is the combination of psychological, physiological, and behavioral reactions that people have in response to events that threaten or challenge them. Sometimes, stress is helpful. It provides learners with the extra energy or alertness they need, but unfortunately, stress can be harmful when it is not managed effectively, so learners have to take into account the negative aspect of stress and finding ways through which they can copy it.