

STRESS

**Taking Personal Responsibility
For Stress Reduction**

by

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Perceptions

- “You can't change the problems you have in life, but you can choose your response!”
- Stress is an inside job!
- It's caused by what happens between your ears, by how you look at, think about, and respond to events.

The Stress Reaction

- Is commonly fueled from two sources
 - 1. The external events that happen in our lives
 - 2. The internal reactions to those events

Psychological Filters

- Stressors- Pressures, changes and demands
- Stress Response- Arousal or Coping
- Psychological Filters (Self)- Beliefs, expectations, conditioning, past experience, worries, anticipation, life style, personality or assumptions about self.

Effects of Stress

- 50% Health
- 21% Friendships
- 19% Marriages or relationships
- 15% Work performance

Stress do you have it?

- **Physical signs and symptoms**
 - tiredness, racing pulse, muscle tension, twitches, heartburn, dry mouth, clammy hands, rashes, hair-twirling, overeating, sleep difficulties, increased use of alcohol/drugs.
- **Psychological signs and symptoms**
 - Irritability, anxiety, moodiness, memory lapses, frequent absences, felling overwhelmed, loss of sense of humour.

What are Your Stresses?

- Time management
- Frustration
- Overwork
- Time Pressure
- Conflict
- Unclear expectations
- Financial
- Health
- Relationships
- Family

Top 4 Stress Factors for NAIT Students

- Time Pressure
- Frustration
- Overwork
- Getting a job

Top 4 Stress Factors for NAIT Staff

- Time Pressure
- Frustration
- Conflict
- Unclear Expectations

Time Pressure

Perception- I do not use my time effectively!

- Avoid doing important things
- Difficult to complete tasks
- Distractions
- People dump and I accept
- Forget- appointments, important things
- Move from task to task with no reason
- Do more than I have to
- Too busy helping others

Frustration

- Too many changes
- Not enough....
- What if....
- The problem is...
- Pressures...

Overwork

- Too many responsibilities
- Deadlines
- Job or organizational changes
- Delegation
- No time for self

Conflict

- Home....
- Work....
- Relationships
- Work vs. home/family

Unclear Expectations

- Conflicting or competing demands (For example- Home/work)
- No input on decisions
- No recognition
- too many people letting me know what to do
- Ethical problems

Top 4 Coping Strategies at NAIT

- Exercise
- Prioritizing Time
- Getting away- Changing the environment
- Talk it out- socializing

Stress Strategy Number 1

- Take care of yourself first!
- Exercise/ weight control
- Rest
- Relax
- Eat well
- Establish a routine

The Stress Myth

- The only way to cope with stress is to learn skills like:
- Eating right
- Exercising
- Taking care of your body
- Relaxation

Fact is: employers are looking for employee's who can handle stress's such as:

- Personal Power
- Adaptability
- Situation Mastery
- Time management

Personal Power

- **Confidence-** to meet new challenges
- The ability to make things happen
- **Optimal-** Fully confident and in complete control
- **Burnout-** Feelings of helplessness, depression, powerlessness

Adaptability

- The ability to shift gears, change directions, and try different strategies to manage challenging situations.
- **Optimal-** Flexibility, open to new things and new learning
- **Burnout-** Rigidity, unwillingness to move with change

Situation Mastery

- The ability to take control of life and work situations
- The key skills are patience, reasonable expectations, pacing and prioritization.
- **Optimal**- High capacity to take control
- **Burnout**- Ceaseless striving to control the uncontrollable.

Time Management

- Understanding that time management must be mastered as an essential resource.
- Time pressure is one of the main contributors to stress in our lives.
- **Optimal-** Good organizational skills with a results orientation.
- **Burnout-** Disorganization, missed deadlines, “hurry sickness”.

The 5 major time wasters

- Spreading yourself too thin
- Being afraid to delegate
- Not wanting to say “No” to requests
- Being a slave to the phone
- Procrastinating

Surrender skills

- Change causes stress
- How can we control Life changes
- surrender is accepting the present and letting go of the past
- What control do we have over the past
- Past- requires energy to maintain
- FOCUS- Present and future

Surrendering

- Identify things you need to let go of
- Use relaxation and imagery to let them go
- Don't waste time anticipating- worry only when the time comes
- Always leave something undone, it's natural

Relabeling or Reframing

- Stressful events need to be moved from a feeling of threat to a non-threat
- Seek the positive light
- Is it worth worry about
- What will be the impact in 5 years
- What is the worst case scenario
- Be grateful

Self- Talk

- What am I saying about myself
- Worry is self talk about things that have not happened yet
- Try flipping a negative thought into a positive one
- Shift your focus to solution- what do you want to happen instead of what you don't want to happen

Stress Skills

- Re-naming
- Belief and Faith
- Silent Support
- Changing the Box

Triple “A” Approach to Stress Management

- **Awareness**- Where does your stress come from? What does it look like?
- **Analysis**- what are your options? Change the situation, circumstances, yourself.
- **Action**- What am I going to do about it?

Action goals

- Develop action goals
- Start with something easily achievable
- Small action steps
- Read your goals over twice a day and see yourself achieving your goals. (visualize)

Attitudes and Awareness

- Change how you perceive events so you will react less violently to it. (Learn to see it not as a disaster than may destroy you but as a change that you can handle).
- Learn to express yourself (ventilate). With demonstration and feeling.
- Do not expect others to change.

Attitudes and Awareness- cont.

- Accept that life has a natural ebb and flow. You will never find the perfect state and stay there.
- Breathe in and give thanks. Too often we focus on what we do not have and what is not going right.

Attitudes and Awareness- cont.

- Expand your social support system. Much that is exhaustive and painful to handle alone is easier to manage when you have understanding from a circle of supportive family or friends.
- Be honest and open and do not blame others. If a problem crops up, ask yourself,
- **“Where do I go from here”.**

SITUATION

Choices

- Non- accountable
- Why do these things always happen to me?
- Who is to blame?
- Accountable
- What is the learning for me?
- What can I do to make a difference.

Stimulus/Response

- Freedom to choose
- It's your choice!

How to stay stressed

- **Benefits:**
- helps you seem important
- gives you a chemical rush
- helps you avoid family and friends
- helps maintain a “poor me” lifestyle

How to stay Stressed

Physical

- Don't exercise
- Eat whatever you want
- Take plenty of stimulants especially- coffee, cola and sugar
- Avoid meditation and relaxation

How to stay Stressed

Personal

- Get rid of your social support system
- Personalize all criticism
- Throw out your sense of humour
- Be “macho”

How to stay Stressed Professional

- Become a workaholic
- Don't manage your time
- procrastinate
- Worry about things you can't control
- Change a lot of things all at once
- Keep working no matter how you are feeling

How to stay Stressed

ABC approach

- A. Become a perfectionist
- B. Set impossibly high standards
- C. Beat yourself up when you don't meet them.