

Mental & Emotional Health Unit

Objectives:

- Describe characteristics of positive mental health
- Compare the stages of Maslow's hierarchy of needs
- Describe or demonstrate three positive strategies for managing your emotions
- Define mental disorder
- Identify common signs of a mental disorder
- List at least 3 examples of mental disorders and a characteristic of each
- Define stressor
- Describe the body's physical response to stress
- Differentiate between positive and negative stress
- List at least three ways to effectively manage or deal with stress
- Identify and describe the three stages of stress and how it could affect your health long-term

Vocabulary:

Stress – the body's and mind's response to a demand

Stressor – any situation that puts a demand on the body or mind; cause of stress

Eustress – a positive stress that energizes one and helps one reach a goal

Distress – a negative stress that can make a person sick or keep a person from reaching a goal

Fight-or-Flight Response – the physical changes that prepare your body to respond quickly and appropriately to stressors

Mental health – a state of mental well-being in which one can cope with the demands of daily life

Self-actualization – the achievement of the best that a person can be

Emotion – the feeling that is produced in response to life experiences

Mental Disorder – an illness that affects a person's thoughts, emotions and behaviors

Depression – a sadness and hopelessness that keeps a person from carrying out everyday activities

Types of Stressors:

- Environmental: conditions or events in your physical environment that cause you stress (Ex. pollution, poverty, crowding, noise, natural disasters)
- Biological: conditions that make it difficult for your body to take part in daily activities (Ex. Having an illness, disability, or injury)
- Thinking: any type of mental challenge can cause stress (Ex. Test-taking)
- Behavioral: unhealthy behavior leading to stress (Ex. Not enough sleep or exercise; using drugs, tobacco, alcohol, etc.)
- Life Change: any major life change, whether positive or negative, can be a cause of stress.(Ex. Death of a loved one, getting married, and other personal events)

What happens during Fight-or-Flight Response?

-During the fight-or-flight response, your body provides you with the energy, reflexes, and strength you may need to respond to the stressor. Your body releases epinephrine (adrenaline) which is a hormone released by the body in times of stress.

Some changes that occur during fight-or-flight response include:

- Your breathing speeds up, which helps get more oxygen throughout your body.
- Your heart beats faster, increasing blood flow and oxygen to your muscles.
- Your muscles tense up, which prepares you to move quickly.
- The pupils of your eyes get wider, allowing extra light for sensitive vision.
- Your digestion slows down, (Unnecessary activity during an emergency.)
- blood sugar increases to provide more fuel for fighting or running.

Positive Stress:

A positive stress that energizes one and helps one reach a goal is called eustress.

Characteristics of eustress include:

- alert
- focused
- motivated
- energized
- confident

Negative Stress:

A negative stress that can make a person sick or keep a person from reaching a goal is distress.

Characteristics of distress include:

- nervous
- forgetful
- frightened
- confused

Examples that may cause eustress:

- interview
- giving a speech
- sporting event
- getting married

Examples that may cause distress:

- death of a loved one
- divorce
- injury/illness
- poor grades

Stages of stress (General Adaptation Syndrome model):

Alarm Stage : Body and mind become alert. Events brought on by fight-or-flight response are experienced in this stage. All of your body's efforts respond to demand (stressor).

This stage may lead to: headaches, stomachaches, difficulty sleeping, anxiety

Resistance Stage : If stress continues, your body becomes more resistant to disease and stress than normal. You can cope with added stress, but only for a limited time.

Exhaustion Stage : In this stage, your body cannot take the resistance to the stressor any longer, especially if many stressors occur in a row. You become exhausted, in a serious way. Organs such as your heart may suffer, and your immune system can no longer fight illness.

*If your body experiences stress continuously over a long period of time, you increase your risk for a wide range of stress-related diseases.

*Long-term stress can also weaken your immune system, which defends against infections. As a result, one is more likely to suffer from infections, such as colds.

*By learning to manage stress, you can protect yourself from many illnesses and enjoy a healthier life.

Examples of stress-related diseases and disorders include:

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| - headaches/migraines | - cold and flu |
| - anxiety disorder | - high blood pressure |
| - depression | - heart disease |
| - stroke | - chronic fatigue |
| - insomnia | - stomach ulcer |

Stress Management:

Take care of yourself :

- Exercise regularly
- Get enough rest
- Eat right

Learn to relax:

- Breathing exercises
- Tension-releasing exercises

Change your attitude:

- Use positive self-talk
- Be confident about yourself
- Don't worry about things out of your control

Manage your time:

- Prioritize and schedule projects
- Know and set your limits

The ability to recover from illness, hardship, and other stressors is called resiliency.

Resilient people continue to be optimistic (positive) when life gets tough.

Many resilient people get their strength from their assets.

(Asset - A skill or resource that can help you reach a goal.)

Assets that help someone to **build resiliency** include:

1. Support (family, friends, and others to help)
2. Empowerment (feeling valuable)
3. Boundaries (having clear set of rules for school, family, relationships)
4. Productive use of time (choosing creative and productive activities)
5. Commitment to learning (understanding value of school-work)
6. Positive values (having values including caring, integrity, honesty, equality, etc.)
7. Social skills (communicating effectively, respecting others, avoiding peer pressure)
8. Positive identity (having high self-esteem, sense of control, having a purpose)