

## **Lesson:-39**

# **Stress and Stress Management**

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Dear students we often say "I am under stress ?" or " I feel stressed" why do we say so ?

lets try to understand in today's class what actually stress means and how to manage it

### **What is Stress**

The common expression for stress is 'tension' One is said to be tense, when there is some anxiety, some fear of whether the desirable things may happen, whether something may go wrong, etc. It is a state of discomfort felt in the mind and experienced by the body. When there is tension, the body may become weak.

In management literature, 'Stress' is defined as a response of the human body to a felt need. When one is hungry and there is an urge to eat food, the body is in a state of stress, which disappears when the need is fulfilled. This definition suggests that stress is a desirable condition, making one move towards fulfillment of needs. This is partly true. Stress occurs also when the need arises out of fear and the urge is to run and escape. This may sometimes, be not possible. In that case, there is no movement, the need remains unfulfilled and the stress condition does not disappear.

Stress is identified as of two kinds. One is called EuStress, which is the condition in which there is drive and effort to fulfill the needs. Motivation is high. Achievement is seen as possible. The situation is challenging. Stress disappears when the need is fulfilled. There is success. The other is Distress, which is the condition when there is a sense of helplessness in being able to achieve. The feeling is of frustration. There is no success. May be, there is no attempt even, because success is seen as impossible. The stress condition remains.

If one were to chart the level of stress and the level of effort put in to work, it would be an inverted parabola. EuStress would be in the ascending left side of the parabola. The challenge would be maximum at the hump. The latter half on the right side represents Distress. The problems of stress are caused by Distress, not by EuStress.

EuStress is necessary for the person to be fully alert, for all his faculties to come into play to face the situation. For example, a goalkeeper in football or hockey, will be totally relaxed when the ball is at the other end of the ground, but becomes extremely alert as the ball moved towards him. His body stiffens, the eyes begin to bulge, focusing on the ball and the movement of the players, picking up the slightest of movements and every nerve and muscle ready to respond to those movements. That is EuStress, without which the goalkeeper cannot be at his best. So also, Eustress is experienced by the batsman in cricket when the bowler is on the run, and by the tennis player when the ball is about to be served at the other end.

### **Stress is physical**

When the goalkeeper or the batsman or the tennis player experiences Eustress, there are changes in the physical system. The muscles become tense. The eyes become sharper. When one is under severe distress, the person sweats, the body becomes weak and loses strength.

Study of stress shows that the response is the same whether it is Eustress or Distress, except that the degree varies. The response is called the Fight or Flight response. When one senses danger, one is tempted to either stand and fight to ward off the danger or run away – Flight. The body conditions itself for either event, automatically, causing changes in the normal secretions of hormones and other chemicals, withdrawing from activities that are less important and diverting to activities that should have higher priority in that situation.. Food is less important. The muscles need more energy and therefore the blood carries substances to the muscles, diverting them from the stomach. More oxygen than normal is required. Therefore, the breathing becomes faster, the heart-beat rate increases, the blood vessels dilate to carry more oxygen. The liver releases more stored energy. The eyes and ears become more acutely sensitive to the sensations from outside.

The body is programmed to reverse these changes, and revert to normal, when the threat disappears. If however, one remains in a continuous state of stress, without becoming normal, the changed conditions tend to remain permanent, like a rubber band loses its elasticity when held extended for a long time. These abnormal conditions manifest as diseases and one suffers from high blood pressure, cardiac disorders, peptic ulcers, insomnia, constipation, fatigue, colitis, kidney problems, etc. Behaviourally, they lead to absenteeism, alcoholism, use of drugs, marital disharmony and so on, which are both organisationally and socially, undesirable

### **Stress is psychological**

Stress is experienced when one perceives a threat and the fight or flight response is called for. This perception is an interpretation that one makes within oneself, of the external factors. When one sees a dog on the street baring its teeth, one may either get frightened or remain calm. Both fright and calmness are psychological reactions. The choice is one's own and is not dictated by the dog. This choice is made, largely unconsciously, on the basis of one's beliefs about dogs in general, what one has heard about rabies being caused by dog bites, what one sees about the characteristics of the dog in question at that time, one's predilections towards animals, and so on.

When one becomes anxious in a situation, the situation does not create any anxiety. What one thinks about the situation creates the anxiety. If one is confident of tackling the situation, there is no anxiety. Therefore, the level of stress is caused by one's own perception of one's capability to cope with the situation. Thus, stress is a psychological response, depending upon one's level of fear, confidence, anxiety, anger, hurt, etc. The physical response is an automatic sequel to one's psychological condition. The physical changes depend on the extent of fear or confidence etc. Therefore, the management of stress essentially is in the control one has on one's emotions.

### **Stressors**

Stress is not caused by any external factor. It is created by oneself, by the way one thinks about the external factors. Yet there are situations, in which most people tend to get stressed. These are called stressors. In personal life, death of a close relative is a stressor. An important test in life, like a final examination; a transfer of residence; separation due to marriage, divorce or change of job; difficult financial demands; serious illness; likelihood of unpleasant secrets becoming revealed; are common stressors. Having to welcome and entertain important visitors or having to deliver a speech for the first time, also cause considerable stress. At work, the following may be stressors.

- Needs not met. These could be needs for power, for fulfillment, for use of knowledge
- Not being included by others as part of a group you want to belong to

- Not being recognized or valued for one's competence
- Feeling that one is not adequate for the task, particularly when compared to some one else
- Being denied what is due (rewards, work)
- Monotony or boredom
- Not having enough freedom at work, being closely supervised
- Inequity in rewards, assignments
- Very little opportunity for growth
- Too much of work, overload
- Too little work, boredom
- Inadequate resources to do the assigned work, creating possibilities of failures
- Conflict in values at work, being required to do what one does not like to do
- Too many and conflicting demands at work from the role set
- Responsibilities not clear, ambiguity on what is expected
- Ununderstanding, unpredictable, temperamental boss
- New unfamiliar work
- Being blamed

On close analysis, it will be found that all of the above situations are, in some way or other, causing perceptions of possible failure at work or non-recognition and consequent loss of self-esteem.

### **Levels of Stress**

There are four basic levels of stress symptoms. The first is the normal initial response and is characterised by increased heart beat rates, increased blood pressure, dilation of pupils, sweat in palms and reduced activity in the stomach.

At the second level, there is more irritability, stuttering and stammering, difficulty in concentrating, restlessness, lack of appetite and tendency to increased smoking or drinking for those so habituated.

At the third level, there would be more headaches, stomach aches, diarrhoea, sweating, insomnia, depression etc. The fourth level would be characterised by ulcers, stroke, alcoholism, drug addiction, psychosis etc.

### **Managing Stress**

Stress cannot be avoided. It should not be avoided. Without stress, there will be no attempt to try the difficult. One will give up much too easily. One will not succeed in doing even what one is easily capable of, because even the normal faculties will not come into play - like the goalkeeper, if he remained relaxed even at the last minute.

There are two aspects to take care of in managing stress. One is that one should not develop stress to the point that one becomes non-functional like Arjuna laying down his arms. The second is to try to get back to normal as quickly as one can and not continue to be in a state of stress for too long.

The former is achieved essentially by an attitude that is developed by rational thoughts. The first is to realise that one's perceptions often distort the reality. The situation may not be as bad as it may seem to be. The second is to understand that a failure is not an unmitigated disaster. It is not possible to succeed all the time. It is not even necessary to succeed all the time. One failed effort does not mean that the person is no good. Nobody has succeeded without many losses. Even

World champions sometimes lose a first round match to an unseeded player. Marconi and Thomas Alva Edison succeeded in their inventions after many attempts that failed. They saw failures as opportunities to learn.

The third is to recognise that worry and anxiety will not modify the situation, but will only disturb one's peace of mind and health. If one watches passengers at airports and railway stations, one will find how some of them remain quite relaxed and even sleeping while others are continuously making enquiries from officials about extent and causes of delays. Such constant enquiries only irritate, but do not expedite solutions. They add to stress of self and of others.

Another very valid concept is what is postulate in the Gita. You can only do. The results are not in your hands. The results, called failures or successes are in the future. One does not have control on the future. One can acquire some control on the present and that is what one does. Also the success or failure does not depend only on what one does. Many other factors impinge. Therefore, the Gita proposes, do your duty and do not worry about what the consequences or fruits may be. Only thoughts about the possible desirability of the fruits cause anxieties. Mother Teresa had expressed the same thought, when she is reported to have said to the industrialist Mr J.R.D.Tata, " Why are you worrying about poverty? Your work is to open more industries, give more employment to people and leave the rest to God."

A situation that causes stress is a problem situation. The solution needs generating managerial options. People lose tempers and abuse officials as a result of stress. None of these solve the problems that may exist. Problem-solving needs calm, clear, analytical thinking. Clarity of thought and analysis improves with Eustress and deteriorates with DiStress. Managerial alternatives and options will be seen when one 'is concerned' with the matter, not when one is 'anxious'.

An awareness that nothing will be perfect and that anything that can go wrong will go wrong, helps to cope with the stress situations. People who demand of themselves Excellence always, are likely to develop high stress. Perfection is not necessary. It may also not be possible. Satisfying is often the only available option.

At work one must learn to delegate. Many people believe that they alone can do certain tasks. The golden rule is to make this statement invalid as quickly as possible. Stress is only one reason for doing so. The positive outcomes are many. As one rises in the hierarchy, it would be impossible to do all the jobs that have to be done. One needs to pass on to others. Time spent in making this happen, is good investment for the future.

Getting back to normal is relatively easy. One only has to get one's mind into a condition in which there is no stress. Any pleasant activity will make this possible. Hobbies help. The practice of Yoga is excellent to relax one's body and mind. Stress is relieved when one can share one's thoughts and feelings with someone else. Good tunes and ragas, like in bhajans and ghazals, have the capacity to soothe one's nerves, even if one is not listening.

### **As the Manager**

As the boss, one can ensure that subordinates are not put to undue stress and also that they are helped to get out of stress situations as quickly as possible. The steps are

- Recognise the stress levels
- Show concern
- Encourage talking
- Listen
- Empathise
- Explain and show how it can be done

- Reassure
- Provide support
- Discuss and involve them in decisions
- Show respect to the individuals
- Avoid insult, denunciation, abuse, reprimand, particularly in public
- Avoid manipulation, coercion, blaming
- Avoid pressurising too much
- Provide social support

All the above, render support and help to reduce anxieties. It is not suggested that the demands on people should be lowered. People like challenges. They must be given challenging assignments. That is the only way to growth. But if there is a sensing of extreme stress, it should be managed through reassurance, not by withdrawing the assignment.

### **Personality Types**

Studies on Stress have identified that Type A personalities tend to get stressed much faster than Type B personalities. The characteristics of a Type A personality are an intense urge to achieve, impatience and restlessness, always on the move, hurrying, doing more than one task at a time. He keeps a heavy and tight schedule and dislikes waiting and relaxing. The Type B is exactly the opposite, takes things easy, finds time to relax, is not impatient and is not obsessed with winning all the time.

Instruments have been developed to identify the Type of any person. But no one is fully Type A or fully Type B. It is possible to move from one type to another. It is not as if Type B is the more desirable personality, because stress is not the only factor relevant for effectiveness. Achievement is equally important for effectiveness and there the Type A has a better chance to win.

### **Time Management**

Inadequacy of resource is a common stressor. One needs resources to do a job and if the resource is not available, there could be stress. One important resource is Time. Many people find that they do not have enough time to do a job. Deadlines seem to be difficult to meet. This is true of individuals as well as of collectives. We read of committees asking for extension of time to do their jobs; of projects not being completed on time. Unfortunately, time is such a resource that nobody can give more or take away. Everybody has a definite amount of time available. Studies show that people are poor planners in terms of usage of time as a resource. Time is wasted in a number of ways. Therefore, if one learns ways to manage one's time better, there could be a better control on stress.

Time is wasted because of

- non-productive work like searching for files, papers and references.
- available information being inadequate or incomplete
- meetings and lengthy reports
- indecisiveness, unable to make up one's mind
- correcting errors in instructions, assignments
- clarifying goals and roles
- too much routine, paperwork
- lack of prioritisation

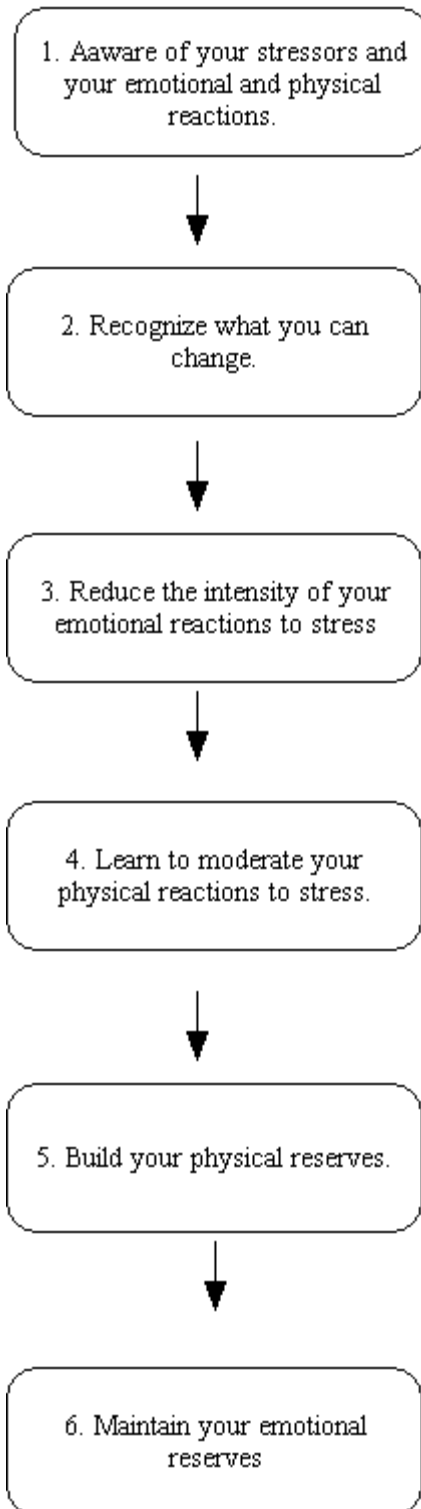
Once the cause is known, the remedy should be obvious. The best way to know the cause is to keep a detailed log of how one is using his time over a period of a week or so. Some of the remedies will be in the nature of readjustments of personal habits, like planning on priorities, avoiding drift in meetings, not insisting on perfectionism etc. Some remedies will be in the nature of reorganising work systems in the office so that search and corrections are made minimal. Some will be in the nature of training others for better work practices, so that supervision can be less.

Indecisiveness has been mentioned as a time waster. This may happen because of lack of clarity on objectives or because of fatigue and the mind not being able to concentrate. Both are avoidable. Indecisiveness can also happen because of lack of knowledge on the subject. The time one takes to study a matter depends on one's skill. Experienced people run through a 100 page file, without reading every page, but picking up the important and relevant matter, while another may have to spend double the time reading every paper to determine its relevance. Thus, one way to manage time better is to improve one's skills at work

### **Steps to be followed in STRESS MANAGEMENT**

Identifying unrelieved stress and being aware of its effect on our lives is not sufficient for reducing its harmful effects. Just as there are many sources of stress, there are many possibilities for its management. However, all require work toward change: changing the source of stress and/or changing your reaction to it. How do you proceed?

## Stress Management



**1. Become aware of your stressors and your emotional and physical reactions.**

Notice your distress. Don't ignore it. Don't gloss over your problems.  
Determine what events distress you. What are you telling yourself about meaning of these events?

Determine how your body responds to the stress. Do you become nervous or physically upset? If so, in what specific ways?

## **2. Recognize what you can change.**

Can you change your stressors by avoiding or eliminating them completely?

Can you reduce their intensity (manage them over a period of time instead of on a daily or weekly basis)?

Can you shorten your exposure to stress (take a break, leave the physical premises)?

Can you devote the time and energy necessary to making a change (goal setting, time management techniques, and delayed gratification strategies may be helpful here)?

## **3. Reduce the intensity of your emotional reactions to stress.**

The stress reaction is triggered by your perception of danger...physical danger and/or emotional danger. Are you viewing your stressors in exaggerated terms and/or taking a difficult situation and making it a disaster? Are you expecting to please everyone?

Are you overreacting and viewing things as absolutely critical and urgent? Do you feel you must always prevail in every situation?

Work at adopting more moderate views; try to see the stress as something you can cope with rather than something that overpowers you.

Try to temper your excess emotions. Put the situation in perspective. Do not labor on the negative aspects and the "what if's."

## **4. Learn to moderate your physical reactions to stress.**

Slow, deep breathing will bring your heart rate and respiration back to normal.

Relaxation techniques can reduce muscle tension. Electronic biofeedback can help you gain voluntary control over such things as muscle tension, heart rate, and blood pressure.

Medications, when prescribed by a physician, can help in the short term in moderating your physical reactions. However, they alone are not the answer. Learning to moderate these reactions on your own is a preferable long-term solution.

## **5. Build your physical reserves.**

Exercise for cardiovascular fitness three to four times a week (moderate, prolonged rhythmic exercise is best, such as walking, swimming, cycling, or jogging).

Eat well-balanced, nutritious meals.

Maintain your ideal weight.

Avoid nicotine, excessive caffeine, and other stimulants.

Mix leisure with work. Take breaks and get away when you can.

Get enough sleep. Be as consistent with your sleep schedule as possible.

## **6. Maintain your emotional reserves.**

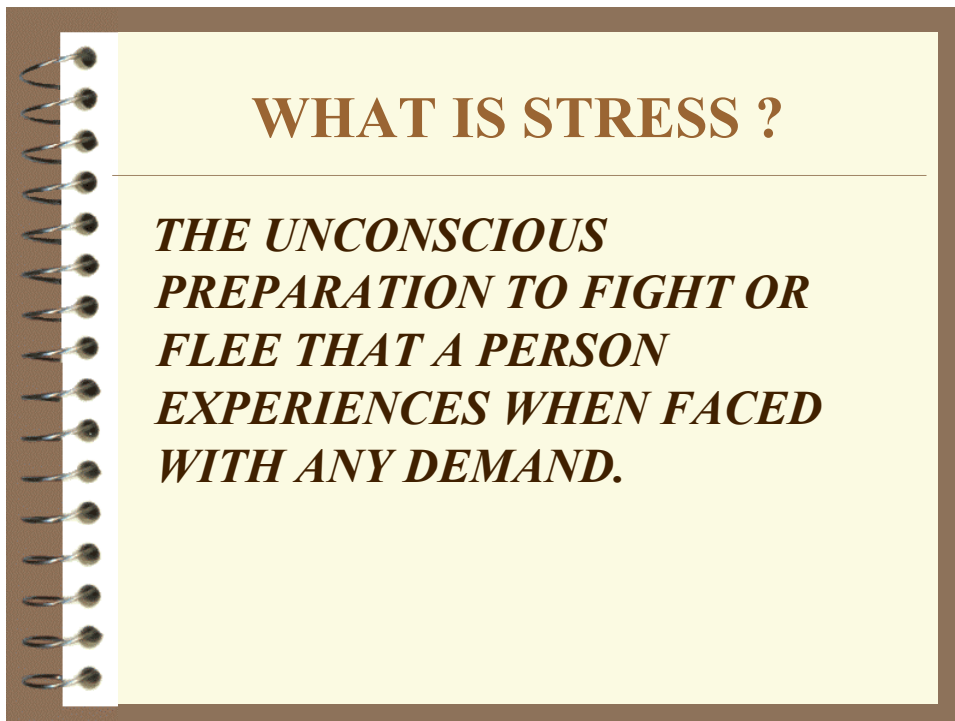
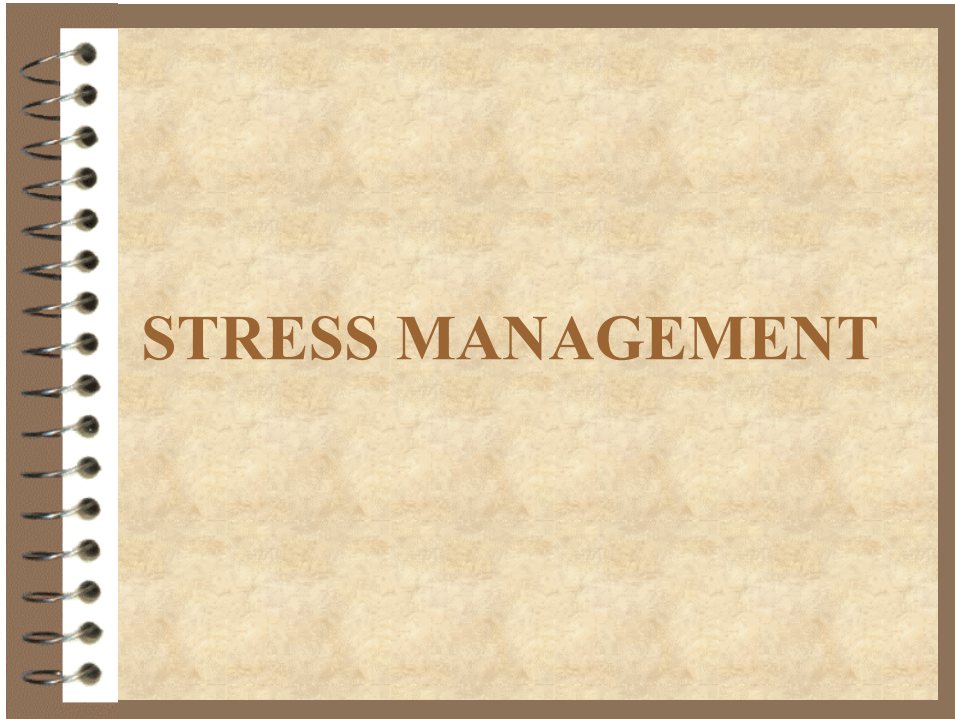
Develop some mutually supportive friendships/relationships.

Pursue realistic goals which are meaningful to you, rather than goals others have or you that you do not share.

Expect some frustrations, failures, and sorrows.

Always be kind and gentle with yourself -- be a friend to yourself.

Points to remember



# CONSTRAINTS AND DEMANDS

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## CONSTRAINTS


*FORCES THAT PREVENT INDIVIDUALS FROM DOING WHAT THEY DESIRE TO DO*

## DEMANDS

*THE LOSS OF SOMETHING DESIRED*

# A FEW IMPORTANT TERMS

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 **STRESSOR** : THE PERSON OR EVENT THAT TRIGGERS THE STRESS RESPONSE

 **STRAIN**: DISTRESS

## A FEW IMPORTANT TERMS (Contd.)

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### **COGNITIVE APPRAISAL**

JUDGMENT ABOUT THE STRESSFULNESS OF A SITUATION BASED ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH SOMEONE PERCEIVES A STRESSOR AS THREATENING AND CAPABLE OF COPING WITH ITS DEMANDS

## EU-STRESS AND DISTRESS

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### **EU-STRESS**

*POSITIVE STRESS WHICH IS NORMAL AND HEALTHY FOR THE INDIVIDUAL*

### **DISTRESS**

*NEGATIVE STRESS WHICH CREATES ADVERSE PHYSICAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL, BEHAVIOURAL, AND ORGANIZATIONAL CONSEQUENCES THAT MAY ARISE AS A RESULT OF STRESSFUL EVENTS*

## STRESS RESPONSE

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- ▣ **REDIRECTION OF BLOOD TO BRAIN AND LARGE MUSCLE GROUPS AND AWAY FROM SKIN, INTERNAL ORGANS AND EXTREMITIES**
- ▣ **INCREASED ALERTNESS AND IMPROVED VISION, HEARING AND OTHER SENSORY RESPONSES**
- ▣ **RELEASE OF GLUCOSE IN BLOOD STREAM TO SUSTAIN BODY DURING STRESS**
- ▣ **DEPRESSION OF IMMUNE SYSTEM AS WELL AS THE RESTORATIVE AND EMERGENT PROCESSES**

## OCCUPATIONAL DEMANDS AND STRESS

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- ▣ **MAKING DECISIONS**
- ▣ **CONSTANTLY MONITORING DEVICES OR MATERIALS**
- ▣ **REPEATEDLY EXCHANGING INFORMATION WITH OTHERS**
- ▣ **WORKING IN UNPLEASANT PHYSICAL CONDITIONS**
- ▣ **PERFORMING UNSTRUCTURED RATHER THAN STRUCTURED TASKS**

## **OCCUPATIONAL DEMANDS AND STRESS (CONTD.)**

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- 📄 **WORK Vs. NON-WORK DEMANDS**
- 📄 **ROLE AMBIGUITY**
- 📄 **OVERLOAD & UNDERLOAD**
- 📄 **RESPONSIBILITY FOR OTHERS**
- 📄 **LACK OF SOCIAL SUPPORT**

## **MAJOR EFFECTS OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS**

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- 📄 **TASK PERFORMANCE**
- 📄 **STRESS AS A SOURCE OF 'DESK RAGE'**
- 📄 **BURNOUT**
- ☹️ ***PHYSICAL EXHAUSTION***
- ☹️ ***EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION***
- ☹️ ***DEPERSONALIZATION***
- 📄 ***STRESS & HEALTH***

## **CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS**

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 **PHYSIOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS**

 **PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS**

 **BEHAVIOURAL SYMPTOMS**

## **PHYSIOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS**

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 **AFFECT CCARDIOVASCULAR  
SYSTEM**

 **INCREASED BLOOD PRESSURE**

 **DISTURBED DIGESTIVE SYSTEM**

 **ULCER**

 **NERVOUS STOMACH /NAUSEA**

 **IRRITABLE BOWEL**

 **MUSCULOSKELETAL SYSTEM**

## PHYSIOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS (CONTD.)

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- 📄 BACK PAIN
- 📄 HEADACHE
- 📄 IMMUNE SYSTEM
- 📄 RESIRATORY INFECTIONS
- 📄 ALLERGIES
- 📄 CANCER

## PSYCHOLOGICAL SYMPTOMS (CONTD)

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- 📄 MENTAL HEALTH
- 📄 DEPRESSION
- 📄 ANXIETY PHOBIA
- 📄 ADDICTION

# INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

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- 📄 **GENDER EFFECTS**
- 📄 **TYPE-A BEHAVIOUR PATTERN**
- 📄 **PERSONALITY HARDINESS**
- 📄 **TRANSFORMATIONAL COPING**
- 📄 **SELF-RELIENCE**

# MANAGING STRESS

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- 📄 **INDIVIDUAL LEVEL**
- 📄 **ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL**

## INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

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### PRIMARY PREVENTION

- 📄 LEARNED OPTIMISM
- 📄 TIME MANAGEMENT
- 📄 LEISURE TIME ACTIVITY

### SECONDARY PREVENTION

- 📄 PHYSICAL EXERCISE
- 📄 RELAXATION TRAINING
- 📄 DIET

### TERTIARY PREVENTION

- 📄 OPENING UP
- 📄 PROFESSIONAL HELP

## ORGANIZATIONAL LEVEL

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📄 JOB REDESIGN

📄 GOAL SETTING

📄 ROLE NEGOTIATION

📄 SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS

