

Managing Stress

Creating Calm in Your Career

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What is Stress?

- According to psychologist and professor Richard Lazarus stress is, “a condition or feeling experienced when a person perceives that demands exceed the personal and social resources the individual is able to mobilize.”



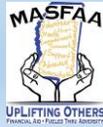
Reactions to Stress

- We have two instinctive reactions that make up our stress response.
 - These are the “**Fight or Flight**” response, and the **General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)**. Both of these reactions can happen at the same time.



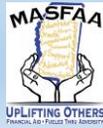
Fight or Flight

- Walter Cannon identified the "fight or flight" response as early as 1932.
- It's a basic, short-term survival response, which is triggered when we experience a shock, or when we see something that we perceive as a threat.



General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)

- **GAS**, which Hans Selye identified in 1950, is a response to long-term exposure to stress.
- Selye found that we cope with stress in three distinct phases:
 1. The alarm phase, where we react to the stressor.
 2. The resistance phase, where we adapt to, and cope with, the stressor.
 3. The exhaustion phase, where, eventually, we're "worn down" and we cannot function normally.



Stress and the Way we Think

- When we encounter a situation, we make two (often unconscious) judgments.
 1. First, we decide whether the situation is threatening
 2. Next, we judge whether we have the resources to meet the perceived threat.



Signs of Stress

- Everyone reacts to stress differently. However, some common signs and symptoms of the fight or flight response include:

Frequent Headaches	Cold or Sweaty hands and feet
Frequent heartburn, stomach pain or nausea	Panic Attacks
Excessive sleeping, or insomnia	Persistent difficulty concentrating
Obsessive or compulsive behaviors	Social withdrawal or isolation
Constant fatigue	Irritability and angry episodes
Significant weight gain or loss	Consistent feelings of being overwhelmed or overloaded



Consequences of Stress

- Stress impacts our ability to do our jobs effectively, and it affects how we work with other people. This can have a serious impact on our careers, as well as on our general well-being and relationships.



Approaches to Managing Stress

- Consider using some of the following techniques to manage your stress.
- You will likely need to use a mixture of these strategies from each area.



How to Manage Stress

- The first step in managing stress is to understand where these feelings are coming from.
- Keep a **stress diary** to identify causes of short-term or frequent stress in your life.
 - List these stressors in order of their impact. Which affect your health and well-being most? And which affect your work and productivity?
- Use the Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale to identify specific events that could put you at risk of long-term stress or illness.



Managing Your Time

- Your workload can cause stress, if you don't manage your time well. This can be a key source of stress for many people.
1. Search "Time Management Quiz" and utilize the Mind Tools "How Good is your Time Management?" quiz to assess your time management skills.
 2. To Do Lists



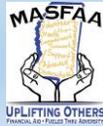
Time Mgmt cont'd

- Industrial Strength versions of To-Do Lists which incorporate short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- They help you plan your time.
 - They encourage you to think about your priorities properly so you can focus on the things that matter.



Eisenhower's Urgent/Important Principle

- **Important** activities have an outcome that leads to us achieving our goals, whether these are professional or personal.
- **Urgent** activities demand immediate attention, and are usually associated with achieving someone else's goals.





- **1. Important and Urgent**
- There are two distinct types of urgent and important activities: ones that you could not have foreseen, and others that you've left until the last minute.
- **2. Important but not Urgent**
- These are the activities that help you achieve your personal and professional goals, and complete important work.
- **3. Not Important but Urgent**
- Urgent but not important tasks are things that prevent you from achieving your goals. Ask yourself whether you can reschedule or delegate them.
- **4. Not Important and not Urgent**
- These activities are just a distraction – avoid them if possible.



Other People

- **People** can be a significant source of stress in our lives.
- **Students, parents, co-workers, our own family.**
- **Remember Eisenhower's Principle** – How urgent or important is this?



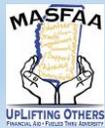
Working Environment

- **Workspace** stress can come from irritating, frustrating, uncomfortable or unpleasant conditions in the workplace.
- Poor lighting
- Background Noise
- Proximity to others
- Commuting
- Office temperature
- Clutter



Emotion Oriented Approaches

- Emotion-oriented approaches are useful when the stress you're experiencing comes from the way that you perceive a situation.
- Use the following to change how you think about stressful situations:
 - **ABC Technique**
 - Adversity
 - Beliefs
 - Consequences



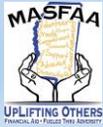
Thought Awareness, Rational Thinking and Positive Thinking

- Quite often, the way we feel about a situation comes from our perception of it. You can obtain a worksheet to help you with this particular approach at: www.mindtools.com/rs/Thinking.



Thought Awareness

- You're thinking negatively when you fear the future, put yourself down, criticize yourself for errors, doubt your abilities, or expect failure. Negative thinking damages your confidence, harms your performance, and paralyzes your mental skills.



Rational Thinking

- The next step in dealing with negative thinking is to look at every thought you wrote down and rationally challenge it. Ask yourself whether the thought is reasonable, and does it stand up to fair scrutiny?



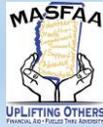
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Positive Thinking and Opportunity Seeking

- Where you have used Rational Thinking to challenge incorrect negative thinking, it's often useful to use rational, positive thoughts and affirmations to counter them. It's also useful to look at the situation and see if there are any opportunities that are offered by it.



Acceptance-Oriented Approaches

- Acceptance-oriented approaches apply to situations where you have no power to change what happens, and where situations are genuinely bad.
 - This is where we can use things like meditation, a support network or exercise to help us handle stress.



Key Points

- We experience stress when we feel threatened, and when we believe that we don't have the resources to deal with a challenging situation.
- To control your stress, conduct a job analysis, learn good time management, let go of negative thinking habits and become a positive thinker.
- Create defenses against stressful situations you cannot control.



**THANK
YOU!**



MASFAA would like to thank our Vendors for their support!

Please be sure to visit with them and let each of them know how much we appreciate their support of MASFAA!