

STRESS



What is it?

Where does it come from?

What can I do about it?

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Employee Assistance Service for Education

What Is Stress?

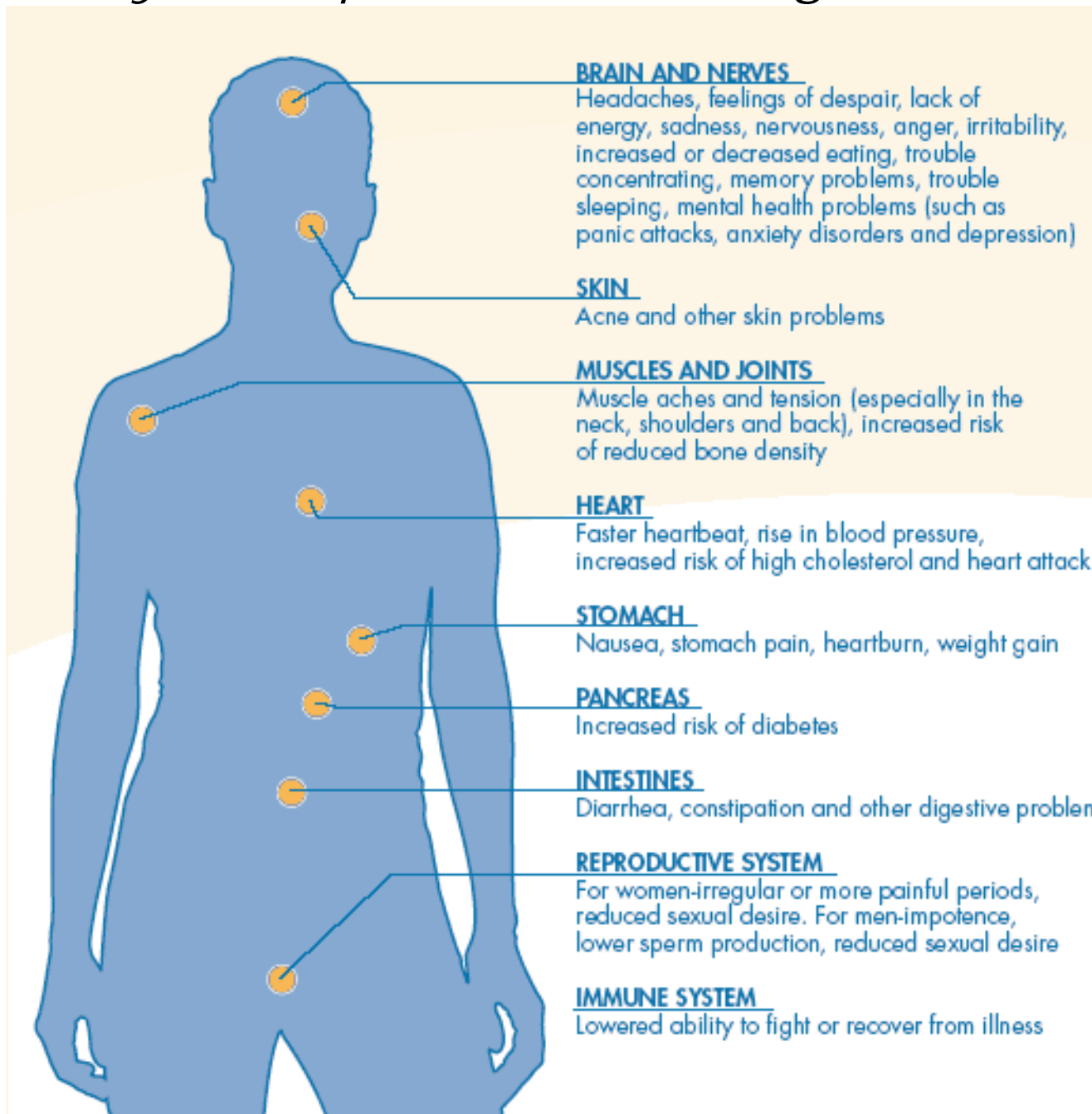
- Any change that you must adjust to
- Three basic sources:
 - Environment
 - Job changes, time pressures, relationship problems, financial worries, traffic, noise
 - Body
 - Adolescence, menopause, aging, illness, accidents, poor nutrition, lack of exercise
 - Thoughts
 - How you interpret, perceive and label experience

Fight or Flight Response

- A series of automatic biochemical changes
 - Adrenaline and cortisol flood system
 - Heart rate, blood volume, blood pressure UP
 - Perspire, yet extremities go cold
 - Digestion, reproduction, growth, tissue repair, immune system shut DOWN
- Takes 3 minutes to return to normal
- Same response whether real or imagined



Body's Response to Prolonged Stress





Signs of Stress Overload

● Emotional

- Angry outbursts
- Irritable
- Worrying
- Anxious
- Feeling hopeless
- Feeling apathetic

● Physical

- Eczema
- Headaches
- Gastric problems
- Heart racing
- Breathing difficulties
- Get sick easily

● Behavioral

- Sleep Disturbance
- Appetite Change
- Alcohol/Drugs/
Nicotine
- Forgetful
- Can't focus
- Withdrawing

Where Does Stress Come From?

- External

- Job changes
- Time pressures
- Relationship problems
- Financial worries
- Developmental changes
- Illness/Accident
- Lack of exercise
- Poor nutrition

- Internal (Thoughts)

- How you interpret and perceive events
- Focus where you have no control (the other)
- Negative self-talk

"Our stress isn't a result of the event but of the view we take of it."

Ellen Langer, Ph.D. - Harvard University

What Can I Do About Stress?

- Relax your body
 - PMR, meditation, exercise, yoga
- Learn to reframe your thoughts
 - Notice your thoughts and replace with more positive ones
- Build resiliency

Notice Your Thoughts

- **Mindful awareness**
 - Paying attention to your inner experience in a particular way
 - On purpose
 - In the present moment
 - Non-judgmentally
 - Journaling/recording thoughts
 - Meditation





Scenario

Your supervisor calls you at 3 p.m. with an urgent project that needs to be completed by the end of the day. You figure you can just about get it done on time but may have to stay a few minutes over time.

To top it all off you're already behind on the month end reports due tomorrow and this will only make it that much harder to get them done. It just seems like the work keeps piling up and there are less people around to do it.



Understanding Self-Talk

- The endless stream of thoughts running through your head
 - Can be positive or negative
 - Can be true or untrue
 - Can be helpful or unhelpful
- Important to challenge your automatic thoughts

Reframe Your Thoughts

- Learn to transform your thoughts into more positive ones
 - Minimize the strength of your self-talk by using less strong or negative feeling words
 - View as a challenge rather than a threat
 - Look for the positives in each situation

Build Resiliency

- Like a bank account
 - ~ Abundant
- Deposits~Withdrawals
 - ~ Balanced
 - ~ Overdrawn
- Self-care is NOT selfish.
It's making deposits

Stress-Resistant Personal Account

Deposits

- Positive self-talk
- Exercise/Nutrition
- Meditation/Quiet (EASE audio clips)
- Relaxation tapes
- Deep breathing
- Talk with friends
- Rest and recreation
- Fun and laughter

Withdrawals

- Job changes
- Time pressures
- Relationship problems
- Financial worries
- Developmental changes
- Illness/accidents
- Negative self-talk



Balanced Personal Account

- Replenished in body and spirit
- Aware of beauty and gratitude
- Understanding of self and others
- Accompanied by friends and family
- Calm and appropriately responsive
- Good humor
- Capable of welcoming challenges



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