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I THINK IT'S STRESS



Stress



- Stress is a necessary part of life
- Stress adds flavor, challenge, and opportunity to life. Without stress, life would be dull and unexciting.
- Stress is unique and personal to each of us. What is relaxing to one person may be stressful to another. One person may find “taking it easy” at the beach relaxing while another may find it boring.



Signals of Stress

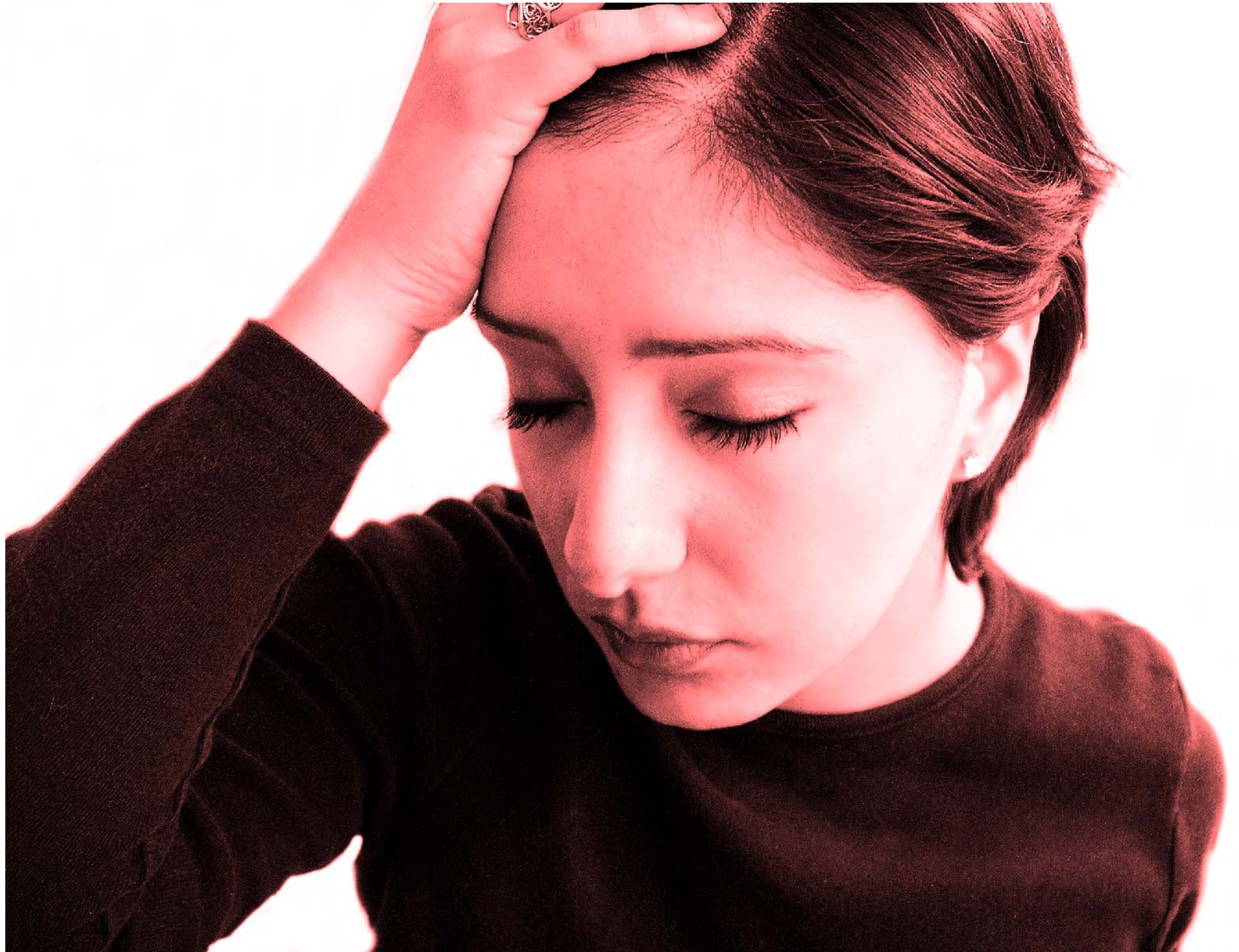


- Feelings: anxiety, irritability, fear, moodiness, embarrassment
- Thoughts: self-criticism, difficulty concentrating, difficulty making decisions, forgetfulness, mental disorganization, preoccupation with the future, repetitive thoughts, fear of failure

Signals of Stress



- Behavior: stuttering or other speech difficulties, crying, acting impulsively, nervous laughter, snapping at friends, teeth grinding, jaw clenching, increased smoking, increased alcohol or drug use, increased or decreased appetite
- Physical: muscle tightness, sweaty hands, headaches, back or neck pain, sleep disturbances, upset stomach, recurrent infections, fatigue, palpitations, trembling or twitching, dry mouth, rapid breathing



Stress Reduction Kit



Directions:

1. Place kit on FIRM surface.
2. Follow directions in circle of kit.
3. Repeat step 2 as necessary, or until unconscious.
4. If unconscious, cease stress reduction activity.

Stress Management



- Take a deep breath
- Stress often causes us to breathe shallowly, and this in turn causes more stress.
- Next time you feel uptight, take a slow deep breath in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to inhale deeply enough so your lower abdomen rises and falls. Do 10 of these slow deep breaths and you will feel better.



Stress Management



- Manage time
- One of the greatest sources of stress is over commitment or poor time management. Plan ahead. Make a reasonable schedule for yourself and include time for stress reduction as a regular part of your schedule.

Stress Management



- Manage time
- Trying to take care of everything at once can seem overwhelming, and, as a result, you may not accomplish anything. Instead, make a list of what tasks you have to do, then do them one at a time, checking them off as they are completed. Give priority to the most important ones and do them first. Be sure to do the most unpleasant tasks first and get them over with.



Stress Management



- Manage time
- Do not overwork yourself. Resist the temptation to schedule things back to back. All of us underestimate how long things will take. Schedule time for both work and recreation. Continually working too much is actually inefficient and can lead to burn out. Recognize when you are most stressed and allow yourself some reasonable breaks. When things feel especially difficult take a walk or otherwise change your scenery.

Stress Management



- Talk it out.
- Share your feelings. People feel better just expressing their feelings. Talking to someone else can help clear your mind of confusion so that you can focus on problem solving.
- Putting problems on paper can assist you in clarifying the situation and allow you a new perspective.

Stress Management



- Take a “minute” vacation
- Create a quiet mental scene. You can’t always run away, but you can dream. Imagining a quiet place can take you out of the turmoil of a stressful situation. Take a moment to close your eyes and imagine a place where you feel relaxed and comfortable. Notice all the details of your chosen place, including pleasant sounds, smells, and temperature.



Stress Management



- Take a “minute” vacation
- Change your mental channel by reading a good book or playing relaxing music to create a sense of peace and tranquility.

Stress Management



- Maximize your physical comfort.
- Wear comfortable clothing. Adjust the temperature and the lighting. If your furniture is uncomfortable change it.

Stress Management



- Get physical
- Physical activity plays a key role in reducing stress.
- Try to find some activity you enjoy and make regular time for it.
- Running, walking, dancing, washing your car, or playing with a pet can actually energize you.
- Exercise has been found to be equally effective to 40 mg of Prozac in helping depression

Stress Management



- Take care of your body
- You are special! Take care of yourself. Healthy eating and adequate sleep fuels your mind as well as your body.
- Avoid consuming too much caffeine and sugar. In excess, the temporary highs they provide often end in fatigue later. Take time to eat breakfast in the morning. It really helps to keep you energized throughout the day, and also helps you to lose weight.

Stress Management



- Laugh
- Try to maintain your sense of humor, including the ability to laugh at yourself. Rent a funny movie. Go to a comedy club with friends.
- Laughter really can be the best medicine

Stress Management



- Know your limits
- There are many circumstances in life beyond your control starting with the weather and including in particular the behavior of others. Consider the fact that we live in an imperfect world. If a problem is beyond your control and cannot be changed at the moment, don't fight the situation. Learn to accept what is, for now, until such time when you can change things.

Stress Management



- Must you always be right?
- Do other people upset you particularly when they don't see things your way? Consider compromise rather than confrontation. A little give and take on both sides may reduce the strain and help you both feel more comfortable.

Stress Management



- ❑ Have a good cry
- ❑ Big boys and girls do cry.
- ❑ Crying can be a healthy outlet and can help bring relief to your anxiety.
- ❑ Watch for unexplained or daily crying which can be a sign of depression.

Stress Management



- ❑ Avoid self-medication
- ❑ Self-medication with alcohol, sleeping pills, caffeine, sugar, or other drugs may temporarily make a person feel better but in the long run makes stress and anxiety much worse.
- ❑ Self-medication with overly intense exercise can also break down your body's reserves and cause more harm than good.

Stress Management



- Look for the “pieces of gold” around you
- Try to keep a positive attitude. It is easy to fall into a rut of seeing only the negative side of things when you’re stressed. When someone says “that’s a nice outfit” the stressed person questions whether they really mean that.
- Your thoughts can become like a pair of very dark glasses allowing little light or joy into your life.
- Commit yourself to finding five pieces of gold from your environment every day.

Stress Management



- Look for the “pieces of gold” around you
- Someone you met yesterday remembers your name. Children’s laughter. A motorist who stops to let you in through traffic. A glorious sunset. The smell of a flower. Etc.



Stress Management



- Coaching
- Just like athletes sometimes benefit from coaching to enhance or recover their skills, sometimes you may need coaching too.
- A smart step would be to seek assistance through one of the local counseling services. Contact your family doctor for a reference.

