

# STRESS, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

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## OUTLINE

- What is stress?
- The stress response
- How to manage stress
- Stress disorders
- Anxiety
- Depression

# STRESS

- Pressure, tension, conflict (experienced by an individual in response to life's demands)
- How we respond (to situations that disrupt or threaten to disrupt our physical or psychological functioning)
- Can be good (normal) or bad (abnormal)

# THE STRESS RESPONSE

- What it is and its importance
- FIGHT OR FLIGHT
- The effects of the stress response if left for a prolonged period can lead to certain disease conditions e.g. hypertension, peptic ulcer disease, musculoskeletal pains, infections e.t.c.
- It is therefore essential for us to learn ways and means to calm down our reactions to the stressors and to develop adequate "coping mechanisms" to tackle the stressors of day-to-day living.

## CAUSES

- Caused by stressors
- Positive or negative
- Stress can be positive when it serves as a motivating factor for better work performance.
- When not properly managed or channelled, it becomes a negative thing.

## TELL TALE SIGNS...1

- Inability to sleep properly
- Becoming so impatient and irritable
- Inability to concentrate
- Inability to make decisions
- Not enjoying food
- Always feeling that something needs to be done

## TELL TALE SIGNS...2

Physical symptoms such as:

- Headache
- Nausea
- Sweating
- Palpitations
- High blood pressure etc

## ADVERSE EFFECTS OF STRESS

- Psychosomatic: hypertension, Diabetes mellitus, peptic ulcer, tension headaches, arthralgia, myalgia
- Emotional: irritability, suppressed hostility, fatigue, sleep disorders, anxiety, depression, poor relationships
- Performance problems
- Habit problems

## HOW TO MANAGE STRESS...1

- Self-awareness is key! Learn to recognize when you are stressed before it becomes a long-term problem.
- Be aware of unhelpful thought patterns and try to replace them with more balanced ways of thinking. (Develop good decision-making techniques).
- Have a positive outlook to life.
- Learn to laugh, it helps reduce stress hormones and release helpful endorphins.

## HOW TO MANAGE STRESS...2

- Learn and practice relaxation techniques e.g. meditation.
- Be assertive instead of aggressive. Assert your feelings, opinions or beliefs instead of becoming angry, defensive or passive.
- Get enough sleep, exercise and adequate diet.
- Learn to manage your time more effectively.

## HOW TO MANAGE STRESS...3

- Spend quality time with family.
- Develop social support systems.
- Avoid ego struggles

## STRESS DISORDERS

- Acute stress disorder
- Adjustment disorder
- Post-traumatic stress disorder

## ANXIETY...1

- A normal human reaction to stressful situations.
- It can help increase alertness and performance.
- In situations of danger it can help one to act quickly to escape/ward off danger.
- The challenge is to manage anxiety levels and avoid anxiety disorders.

## ANXIETY...2

- While fear is a present-oriented defensive response to observable threat, anxiety is a future-oriented defensive response to perceived threat.
- In anxiety, there is uncertainty, lack of control and perceived danger.

## MANAGING ANXIETY

- Same as for stress management.

## ANXIETY DISORDERS

- Anxiety becomes a disorder when it is excessive, long-lasting and impairs function. A common psychiatric disorder.
- Generalized anxiety disorder
- Panic disorder
- Social anxiety disorder
- Specific phobia
- Agoraphobia



## DEPRESSION...1

- A mood disorder.
- A common mental disorder.
- Globally, more than 300 million people affected.
- Can lead to suicide.
- Different from mood fluctuations and short-lived emotional responses to stressors

## DEPRESSION...2

- Can be mild, moderate or severe.
- Can either be a recurrent depressive disorder or a bipolar affective disorder
- Major symptoms include
  - depressed mood,
  - loss of interest and enjoyment in previously pleasurable activity, and
  - reduced energy

## DEPRESSION...3

Other symptoms include:

- Feelings of guilt or low self-worth
- Disturbed sleep or appetite
- Tiredness
- Poor concentration
- Suicidal ideation
- Physical symptoms e.g. weakness, tiredness, body pains etc

## MANAGEMENT...1

- See a specialist whenever you notice these symptoms in yourself or anyone close to you.
- Talk to someone you trust about your feelings.
- Try to keep up with activities you used to enjoy.
- Stay connected with friends and family.
- Exercise regularly.
- Stick to regular eating and sleeping habits.

## MANAGEMENT...2

- Avoid alcohol or illicit drugs.
- Above all, fill your mind with the Word of God!!!