



STRESS AND ITS MANAGEMENT

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Definations

- Stress is the **body's reaction to a stressor** that requires a physical, mental or emotional adjustment or response.
- stressor is a physical, mental, or emotional **factor that causes bodily or mental tension**. Stresses can be external (from the environment, psychological, or social situations) **or internal** (illness, or from a medical procedure).

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)

- The **General Adaptation Syndrome**, or **GAS** by Hans Selye, a pioneer in the study of stress.
- The three stages of GAS are the: -
 - 1- The Alarm Stage.
 - 2- The Resistance Stage.
 - 3- The Exhaustion Stage.

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)(cont..)

- The **Alarm Stage** is the body's initial response to a physical, mental, or social stressor.
- The body's defenses prepare for sudden action and quick movement.
- The adrenal glands secrete adrenaline into the bloodstream. Adrenaline causes many changes to occur in the body.
- The alarm stage of GAS may be healthful or harmful depending on the individual.

THE ALARM STAGE

- The adrenal glands releases adrenaline into the bloodstream.
- Heart rate and blood pressure increase.
- The rate of digestion slows.
- Blood flow increases to muscles.
- The liver releases sugar into the blood stream making more energy available for muscles.
- Muscle tension increases and results in increased strength and endurance.
- Respiration increases providing more oxygen to body cells.
- The pupils dilate allowing more acute vision.
- Hearing becomes more acute.
- Thrombin (a blood clotting hormone) is released into the bloodstream in preparation for quick clotting if there is a cut.

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)(cont..)

- The ²Resistance Stage the body attempts to regain a state of internal balance, or homeostasis.
- During the resistance stage, the pulse, breathing rate, and blood pressure return to normal levels.
- The body attempts to regain homeostasis during the resistance stage of GAS.

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)(cont..)

- The ³Exhaustion Stage of GAS results in wear and tear on the body, lowered resistance to disease, and /or death.
- The exhaustion stage is experienced only after prolonged periods of distress.
- Harmful body changes may occur during the exhaustion stage of GAS.

Coping strategies & mechanisms of defense

- **Coping Strategies may be adaptive or maladaptive: -**
- Adaptive coping strategies are of two kinds: **Problem-Solving Strategies**, which can be used to make adverse circumstances less stressful, and **Emotional-Reducing Strategies**, which can enhance adaptation to stressful circumstances, .

Coping strategies & mechanisms of defense

- **Problem-Solving Strategies** Includes: -
 - Seeking help from another person, or obtaining information or advice that would help to solve the problem;
 - **Problem solving** –making and implementing plans to deal with the problem;
 - **Confrontation** –defending one's own rights, or persuading another person to change his behavior, when either action would help the patient.

Coping strategies & mechanisms of defense

- **Emotion-Reducing Strategies** Includes: -
 - **Ventilation of emotion-** talking to another person and expressing emotion;
 - **Avoidance** –refusing to think about the problem, avoiding people who are causing problems, or avoiding reminders of the problem;
 - **Positive reappraisal** – recognizing that the problem has led to some good, for example self-betterment;
 - **Accepting or rejecting responsibility** – recognizing that one is wholly or partly responsible for the problem and can deal with it, or that one is not responsible and need not react.



Coping strategies & mechanisms of defense

- These coping strategies are generally useful in reducing the problem or in lessening the emotional reaction.

Coping strategies & mechanisms of defense

- **Maladaptive Coping Strategies** : -
 - **Use of alcohol or unperceived drugs** to reduce the emotional response or to reduce awareness of stressful circumstance.
 - **Deliberate self-harm** either by drug overdose or self-injury. Sometimes the skin is cut with a sharp instrument to induce pain and draw blood as a way of reducing tension.

Coping strategies & mechanisms of defense

- **Maladaptive Coping Strategies** (Cont....): -
 - **Histrionic behavior:** an unrestrained display of emotion may reduce tension, and in some societies such behavior is sanctioned in particular circumstances, e.g. grieving.
 - **Aggressive behavior:** overt aggression may release pent-up feelings of anger and provide immediate release. In the longer term, however, it damages relationships and increases the person's difficulties.

Coping strategies & mechanisms of defense

- When particular coping mechanisms are used repeatedly by a person in different situations they are said to constitute a coping style.
- **Mechanisms of defense:**
 - Were originally described by Sigmund Freud and later elaborated by his daughter Anna Freud (1936).
 - Defense mechanisms are unconscious processes.



Mechanisms of Defence

| | |
|--------------|---------------------|
| Repression | Reaction formation |
| Denial | Rationalization |
| Displacement | Sublimation |
| Projection | Identification |
| Regression | Intellectualization |



STRESS MANAGEMENT SKILLS

Stress Management Skills

Problem Solving: -

- Stress management skills are techniques used to help you cope and to prevent or lessen the harmful effects produced by the stress response.
- Problem solving is a series of steps you apply to a difficult situation to help you make a responsible decision.
- Identify the cause of your stress and anxiety.
- Identify ways to cope with the situation.
- Evaluate each way you could cope with what is happening.

Stress Management Skills (Cont...)

Diet & Exercise: -

- Regular exercise uses up adrenaline and sugar in the blood and helps homeostasis to return sooner.
- Persons who regularly exercise are thought to release beta-endorphins.
- Beta-endorphins are substances produced in the brain that relieve pain and create a feeling of well-being.

Stress Management Skills (Cont...)

Progressive Relaxation: -

- Progressive relaxation involves tensing and relaxing different muscle groups.

Biofeedback: -

- Is a technique in which you are fed back information about what is occurring in our body at a particular time so that you can alter physiological functions
- Research has demonstrated that response previously believed to be involuntary can be brought under voluntary control using biofeedback.