

ICS HEADSTART MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS NEWSLETTER

JULY 2021



STRESS is a natural part of life. Stress is hard to define because it means different things to different people, however, it is clear that most stress is a negative feeling rather than a positive feeling. Stress can be both physical & mental. You may feel physical stress, which is the result of too much to do, not enough sleep, a poor diet or the effects of an illness.

STRESS can also be mental: when you worry about money, a loved one's illness, retirement, or an experience an emotionally devastating event, such as the death of a spouse or being fired from work. Much of our stress comes from less dramatic everyday responsibilities. Obligations and pressures which are both physical and mental are not always obvious.

In response to these daily strains, your body automatically increases blood pressure, heart rate, respiration, metabolism, and blood flow to your muscles. This is known as the "fight or flight" response, which is intended to help your body react quickly and effectively to a high-pressure situation. When you are constantly reacting to stressful situations without adjusting the counter effects, you will feel stress which can threaten your health and well-being. For more information visit www.nmha.org).

"TIPS ON REDUCING OR CONTROLLING STRESS"

- Be realistic- learn to say no and eliminate activities that are not absolutely necessary.

- Shed the “Superman/woman” urge- no one is perfect, so don’t expect perfection from yourself or others.
- Meditate- 10 to 20 minutes of quiet reflection may bring relief from chronic stress as well as increase your tolerance to it. (Examples- listen to music, relax and try to think of pleasant things or nothing).
- Visualize- Use your imagination and picture how you can manage a stressful situation more successfully.
- Take on one thing at a time- individuals under tension or stress can see an ordinary work load as unbearable. Best way to cope is take one task at a time. Pick one urgent task and work on it until completed, then move to the next task. Checking off completed tasks leaves a positive feeling of relief and will motivate you to keep going.
- Exercise- regular exercise is a popular way to relieve stress: 20 to 30 minutes daily can be beneficial to both the mind and body.
- Healthy Life Style- good nutrition makes a difference. Limit your intake of caffeine and alcohol, get adequate rest, and balance work and play.

“ANXIETY”



ANXIETY affects approximately 19 million adults in the U.S. alone. 1 out of every 6 people will experience uncomfortable anxiety at some time during their lives. The body’s natural response to danger is to prepare for “fight or flight”. When the sympathetic nervous system activates to emergency situations, you may experience feelings and body sensations such as:

- Increased heart rate
- Quick, shallow breaths
- Increased muscle tension
 - Light headedness

- Chest pains
- Increased perspiration and adrenaline

Anxiety begins in the cognitive (thinking) part of the brain. Physical symptoms always begin as thoughts or perceptions based on your personal beliefs. You may experience the following kinds of thoughts:

- Fear, apprehension
- Negative thoughts you cannot stop
 - Uncontrollable worry
- Negative thoughts about yourself, the future, or past events.

The thinking part of the brain can activate the physical “danger” response even when there is no immediate threat of danger. Physical and cognitive aspects of anxiety feeds into each other to alleviate the physical and cognitive discomfort of anxiety. Examples of behavioral exercises that can be used to reduce physical symptoms of anxiety includes:

- Relaxation breathing
- Challenging negative or distorted thinking
- Engage in enjoyable/distracting activity
- Physical exercise

It will take practice to feel comfortable using these techniques and also notice a decrease in your symptoms of anxiety.

“DEPRESSION”

Some symptoms of depression and anxiety overlap, such as problems with sleep, irritability, and difficulty concentrating. But there are several key differences that help distinguish between the two. Feeling down, sad, or upset is normal. It can be concerning feeling that way for several days or weeks on end.

Depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest. When depression is accompanied by anxiety, the person suffering from this can show some of the typical depression warning signs plus the symptoms of chronic anxiety such as extreme fear and/or panic attacks. Other symptoms may include:

- Sadness & crying outbursts
 - Low self esteem

IMPORTANT DATES:

World Doctor's Day- July 1st

Independence Day- July 4th



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