

Dealing with Stress

Stress is an inevitable part of life and can refer to a physical, mental or emotional stimuli that upsets the body's natural balance. Issues with loved ones, pressures and deadlines at work, the need to pay the bills, and getting ready for the holidays are some of the causes of stress for many people. Less noticeable causes include everyday encounters with crowds, noise, traffic, pain, extremes of temperature, and even welcome events such as starting a new job or the birth or adoption of a child. Overwork, lack of sleep, physical illness, excessive alcohol consumption and smoking are common physical factors that put stress on the body.

Identifying Triggers to Stress

A first step to managing stress, is to identify the causes of stress in your life. Take a stress inventory bi-annually to help you understand what is causing you problems. The following list of major stressors can be used as a starting point:

- Death of a spouse, close family member or close friend
- Divorce, legal separation, end of a long term relationship
- Job loss, trouble at work
- Change of jobs
- Scheduled surgery
- Major injury
- Change in family member's health
- Sexual problems
- Child leaving home
- New marriage
- Change in residence
- Major change in diet
- Vacation
- Allergies

Note this is not an exhaustive list and individuals react to the same events in different ways.

It is not stress that is harmful – it is distress. Distress occurs when unresolved emotional stress is prolonged and not dealt with in a positive way. Hence why one needs to identify sources of stress in one's life.

Prolonged Stress and Anxiety can affect your bodily functions in the following ways;

- Brain
- Blood supply increase - under pressure
- Thinks more clearly - acute pressure

- Headaches or migraines, tremors and nervous tics - chronic pressure
- Mood
- Serious - under pressure
- Increased concentration - acute pressure
- Anxiety, loss of sense of humour - chronic pressure
- Muscles
- Blood supply Increase - under pressure
- Improved performance - acute pressure
- Muscular tension and pain - chronic pressure
- Heart
- Increased rate and blood pressure - under pressure
- Improved performance - acute pressure
- Hypertension and chest pains - chronic pressure
- Lungs
- Increased respiration rate - under pressure
- Improved performance - acute pressure
- Coughs and asthma - chronic pressure
- Stomach
- Reduced blood supply and increased acid secretion - under pressure
- Reduced blood supply reduces digestion - acute pressure
- Ulcers due to heartburn and indigestion - chronic pressure
- Bowels
- Reduced blood supply and increased bowel activity - under pressure
- Reduced blood supply reduces digestion - acute pressure
- Abdominal pain and diarrhea - chronic pressure
- Skin
- Decreased blood supply. Dry skin. - Under pressure
- Decreased blood supply - Acute Pressure
- Dryness and rashes and Outbreaks - Chronic Pressure

If you feel you simply cannot handle the stresses in your life, consider seeking outside help. It may be worth it to consult a credentialed coach who can help you to handle your problems and learn effective stress reduction techniques. It is often enlightening and beneficial to talk with someone who can offer an objective response and a plan to move forward to manage stress.

Contact Business Coach Michelle Cronje at michelle@one-solution.co.za to assist you in work/life balance and managing stress moving you from stressed to success with a six session stress management coaching plan.