

Example of essay on stress and post traumatic stress disorder

[Health & Medicine](#), [Stress](#)



Effects on Daily Life

Abstract

This essay explains the meanings of stress and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), and how the various types of stress including PTSD affect us and our daily lives, including the effects on those close to us. Although most stress is a negative experience, the essay does point out that there is such a thing as “good stress” which helps us to perform better at key times.

Included in the essay are some statistics revealing the extent of stress in modern America; for example that 3 out of every 4 Americans suffer from stress every month. The effects stress has on our lives include not just various physical illnesses including Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), but also different emotional problems including panic attacks. The essay describes PTSD as an emotional illness that follows some sort of life-threatening or frightening event - often but not always in a war environment. Sufferers of PTSD tend to exhibit “avoidance”, where they avoid people, places or situations that remind them of the original, traumatic experience, and/or “hyperarousal” which manifests itself as the subject becoming ultra sensitive to normal, everyday life situations and experiences. Note that PTSD can be long-lasting and that people with a past history of PTSD may still experience social problems, depression, and panic attacks. The essay concludes by reiterating that stress can seriously affect the lives of the sufferers and those close to them, but that it is treatable.

Introduction

Stress

Stress Explained. The Mountain State Centers for Independent Living (MISTCIL) is an organization that provides advice and resources for individuals with disabilities, who can meet at their centers, discuss and share problems and learn to live their lives in a better way. The website posted an informative article entitled "What is Stress?" which defines stress, and describes its causes and its different forms. It also discusses the concepts of "good stress" and "bad stress" and provides a section on "Common Facts About Stress". These topics are discussed below.

definition of stress. According to the MISTCIL article, "Stress is your body's way of responding to any kind of demand". The article goes on to explain that the cause can be an experience that is either good or bad in nature, and that what actually happens is that when someone feels stressed, their body reacts by releasing into the bloodstream certain chemicals that increase their energy and strength levels. If the stressed feeling has been triggered by some physical danger, the increased reserve of energy and strength can be advantageous. However, if the cause of the stress is not physical but some emotional situation, those unused reserves can have a negative effect.

causes of stress. As mentioned above, the causes of stress may be physical (e. g. fear of a hazard or danger) or emotional (e. g. anxieties about your job or someone in your family). Explaining that identifying the cause of stress is the first move towards dealing with it, the MISTCIL article then moves on to describe some of the more common sources:

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Survival Stress: When someone is presented with physical danger from someone or something, there is a so-called “fight or flight” response. In that instance, the chemicals produced by the body produce the energy to either stay and attempt to survive the danger (fight), or escape from it (flight).

Internal Stress: The article describes this type of stress as when an individual worries – either for no apparent reason or about things beyond their control. In other words, internal stress is when someone brings stress upon themselves. In some instances people can acquire an addiction to the kind of hectic lifestyle that this kind of stress causes. They may even feel stressed about non-stressful situations and actively seek out situations that are stressful.

Environmental Stress: According to the article, this type of stress is defined as a response to the surroundings, such as high ambient noise levels, crowd situations, or work or family pressures. Reduce this stress by recognizing the cause(s) and learning how to either avoid those situations or to deal with them effectively.

Fatigue and Overwork: MISTCIL describes this category of stress as one that builds over an extended period and can in due course adversely affect your body. Causes can be working for too long or too hard in your workplace or school or in your home, but can also be the result of poor time management, or even failing to take periods of rest or opportunities for relaxation. Because many of us feel this kind of stress is caused by factors beyond our control, it can be one of the most difficult to avoid or overcome.

good stress and bad stress. Although stress is generally considered to be a bad thing, especially over the longer term or at extreme levels, it is said

(according to the MISTCIL article) that occasional moments of stress such as before a job interview or sports activity can be beneficial. That injection of energy can help you perform better when needed. The article suggests that if you have a life completely without stress, then you may be living below your true potential. On the other hand, if you find you are regularly stressed over a long term (e. g. because of job or other worries), then your energy may be drained, resulting in below par performance.

common facts about stress. Under the heading “ You Are Not Alone: Common Facts About Stress”, the MISTCIL article provides a few interesting statistics, as follows:

Every year, millions of U. S. citizens experience stress. In fact 3 out of every 4 of us admit to experiencing stress at least twice every month, over half describing it as “ high levels” of stress.

Stress can contribute to diseases such as heart problems, strokes, and raised blood pressure, and make you susceptible to catching colds. Alcoholism, nicotine or drug addiction, depression, obesity, and other problems can also be more likely.

The numbers of people reporting that their work is affected by stress has increased more than four times over the last two decades. In contrast, the numbers reporting that their work is affected by other illnesses have decreased.

Drugs prescribed in the United States to treat stress represent 25 percent of all drugs prescribed.

How Stress Can Affect Your Life. That is the title of an article published in August 2009 on the Stress and Anxiety Control website. It states that

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although many of us believe that stress is caused only by negative experiences such as marital or work-related difficulties, it is also true that positive incidents like being successful in applying for a job or getting a salary increase cause stress, but of a positive variety. However, the negative types of stress can produce symptoms that can have a major impact on your life or lifestyle. The article cites some examples of these negative effects of stress, as below:

illnesses. Various illnesses can either be triggered or made worse as a result of stress. One mentioned in the article is Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS), that is linked to stress and which is long-lasting. The referenced article states that in some cases, people suffering with CFS have had to give up work and have even become wheelchair-bound. Other illnesses such as insomnia or migraines have been linked to stress as have cases of women suffering from painful and heavy periods. In addition, problems such as hair loss, skin complaints, putting on or losing weight, and grinding of teeth at night have also been attributed to stress.

emotional effects. Someone who is suffering from stress may experience a loss of energy and/or diminished sexual desire. They may become depressed, or argumentative and short-tempered. In extreme cases, people suffering from severe stress may experience great difficulty in becoming "un-stressed". The referenced article describes how formerly pleasurable activities can cease to be enjoyable, which can be hard for family members, who may also suffer as a consequence. Stress may also result in panic attacks, which can happen suddenly and be frightening. The person experiencing one will feel a tightness in the chest, be short of breath, and

perhaps tingling in the arms and legs. The overall feelings can resemble those of a heart attack.

in summary. Bad stress can affect a person's life in many ways, psychological effects and physical illnesses included. If a person finds they are unable to manage stress, this article advises consulting a doctor, so that treatment can ensure that stress ceases to affect your life.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

PTSD Explained. On the Heal My PTSD website, an article entitled "What is PTSD?" Published in May 2009 reports that there is evidence that PTSD existed in ancient Egypt, and has been known by various names, including the term used in the first World War of "combat fatigue". In World War II, soldiers displaying the same symptoms were said to be showing "gross stress reaction". Then, following the Vietnam War, the same thing was called "post-Vietnam syndrome". Other names used include "shell shock" and "battle fatigue".

Definition of PTSD. The referenced article includes two definitions: one fairly technical and the other (attributed to Medicine. net) which is: "Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is an emotional illness that develops as a result of a terribly frightening, life-threatening, or otherwise highly unsafe experience". The article follows that basic definition by explaining that people with PTSD tend to exhibit two characteristics as a consequence. The first is called "avoidance" which means they try to avoid, people, places or situations that remind them of the original traumatic event. The second - called "hyperarousal" - has the effect of making the sufferer ultra sensitive

to normal, everyday life situations and experiences.

combat PTSD. The “ What is PTSD” article defines this type of PTSD as resulting from traumatic experiences in a war environment.

complex PTSD. The article notes that this type of PTSD was first described by Judith Herman in her book Trauma and Recovery. It is defined as “ a psychological injury that results from protracted, prolonged or repeated exposure to traumatic events and circumstances”. The article notes that it displays the same symptoms as “ regular” PTSD, but with additional and long-term problems of social and emotional dysfunctionality. According to another article by Amy Sillup (April 2010) entitled “ Causes Of and Treatments For Complex PTSD” published on the Suite 101 website, other symptoms are likely exist. Those include: “ severe withdrawal/isolation, strong distrust of others, loss of faith in society and God, persistent feelings of despair and profound depression, somatization symptoms, and even suicide attempts or self-mutilation.” However, she notes that with treatment patients can be returned to a normally functioning life.

How PTSD Affects Your Life.

general effects. Matthew Tull published an article on the About. com website (updated September 26, 2011) entitled “ Negative Effect of PTSD and Past PTSD on Your Life.” He began by stating that the PTSD symptoms can disrupt many aspects of life, in total having a tremendous effect. Apart from the sufferer feeling isolated and detached from close family, other effects can be as previously described above. Tull also notes that memory problems and concentration difficulties can occur.

people with past PTSD. Tull reported on a joint study by Columbia University and the New York State Psychiatric Institute. The study found that people with past PTSD still experienced some problems, and were more likely than people with no PTSD history to have social problems, depression and panic attacks. Tull also advised that people with a history of PTSD should continue with therapy, even after symptoms have reduced. Not only can it help in getting back to a normal life, it can help the patient deal with any future stress or problems.

Conclusions

The research has shown that stress can seriously affect a person's life, plus it is very likely to affect the lives of those close to the actual sufferer. The research undertaken provided good definitions of stress in its various forms. Diagnosis of the existence of stress is likely to result from noting changes in a person's personality and perhaps their impaired performance in a school or work environment. In the case of PTSD, it is likely that knowledge of previous traumatic events experienced by the subject will be the primary clue to the causes of their condition. Treatment is available to cure people suffering from stress-related disorders, although it was noted that some effects of PTSD can remain with the subject for a long time.

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