

# Psychology of stress

Science



The road of pain caused by a stress-related illness 73132: Psychology of Stress Open Polytechnic Wellington Elizabeth Ross Words: 2, 149 “ The road of pain caused by a stress-related illness”, is the name of this final assignment. A detailed case study and treatment plan for Sera-jean who has a stress-related illness. I will endeavour to propose a treatment plan to help Sera-jean manage hypertension and type 1 diabetes. There will be brief outlines of the techniques I have chosen, how it works and what benefits it will be to Sera-jean overall.

There will also be two relaxation ideas for Sera-jean to utilise if she so wishes. Sera-jean is aged thirty-four and is married with 3 children. She has quite a bubbly personality, easy going, diligent, hard-working, open, honest, sympathetic listener, knowledgeable and a very sincere and caring person. Sera-jean and her husband had just bought a lifestyle property, so Sera-jean applied and was offered the position of lead operator in the new plant of Individual Quick Frozen cheese department.

A great opportunity to be a part of a new concept in a global organisation, Sera-jean gladly signed up and became an important part of a good team, with the aspirations to want to learn and get a good start to a new concept with great opportunities. After two years IQF had lost 30, 000 metric tonne of Pizza Hut and Dominoes orders, the plant was just unable to keep up with the orders. Machinery breakdowns, rejected product, foreign matter in product, packaging faults and with all of these malfunctions from the plant and losing orders everyone began to wonder what would happen.

Sera-jean was already becoming quite worried about what was going to happen with her department. There was no word from the company, the <https://assignbuster.com/psychology-of-stress/>

union or management which from all points of view was very upsetting for everyone. She was getting headaches and at times was having dizzy spells. She took two days off to have some tests done and when she returned she told us that she had hypertension and type 1 diabetes. Poor Sera-jean she couldn't understand why she suddenly had these illnesses as she had always been quite fit and healthy.

Change as a stressor, when change happens your life feels out of control and it brings with it discomfort. Sudden and prolonged change frightens us you can have trouble adapting your thinking and cause confusion. When changes are imposed without any input into the process, the other aspect of change that can affect your stress level is the significance of the change on the rest of your life. Extensive research suggests that two related psychological factors can mediate an, organisms responses to the stress of change: controllability and predictability (Krantz, 1986).

Perceived control is defined as the felt ability to escape avoids and/or modifies threatening stimuli (Averille, 1973). Increased predictability can help minimize the stress of making changes. The fear of the unknown is a potent stressor that needs reduction. Another stressor for Sera-jean that may have contributed to the hypertension is sympathomimetic agents which are the chemical substances that mimic the sympathetic stress response. Many foods contain these substances and when they are consumed it can trigger a stress response in the body, so depending on how much was consumed.

Xanthines are powerful amphetamine-like stimulants that increase metabolism which creates a highly awake and active state. They also trigger release of the stress hormones that among other actions are capable of

increasing heart rate, blood pressure, and oxygen demands on the heart. Extreme, prolonged stress-hormone secretion can even initiate myocardial necrosis – that is, destruction of the heart tissue. (pp. 179 – 181).

Constructive coping tactics for Sera-jean to use help manage stress.

Appraisal-focused strategies; detecting and disputing negative self-talk, rational thinking, using positive reinterpretation, finding humour in the situation, turning to religion. Problem – focused strategies; active problem solving, seeking social support, enhancing time management, improving self-control, becoming more assertive. Emotion – focused strategies; releasing pent-up emotions, distracting one, managing hostile feelings and forgiving others, exercising, mediating, using systematic relaxation procedures. (pp. 114 – 131).

To relax is the very foundation of any program to overcome anxiety, phobias, or panic attacks. Many other skills such as desensitization, visualization, and changing negative self-talk, build on the capacity to achieve deep relaxation. The type of relaxation that really makes a difference in dealing with anxiety is the regular, daily practice of some form of deep relaxation. Deep relaxation refers to a distinct physiological state that is the exact opposite of the way your body reacts under stress or during a panic attack.

This state was originally described by Herbert Benson (pp. 81 – 103. 1975) as the relaxation response. This involves a series of physiological changes, including decreases in heart and respiration rate, blood pressure, skeletal muscle tension, metabolic rate and oxygen consumption, analytical thinking, and an increase in skin resistance and in alpha wave activity in the brain. Regular practice of deep relaxation for twenty to thirty minutes on a daily

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basis can produce, over time, a generalization of relaxation to the rest of your life.

So after several weeks of practicing deep relaxation once per day, Teri-jean will tend to feel more relaxed all the time. There are many benefits of deep relaxation that have been documented such as the following; reduction of generalized anxiety. Many people have found that regular practice also reduces the frequency and severity of panic attacks; to prevent stress from growing in strength. Stress that is unabated may tend to build up overtime. Entering into a state of physiological quiescence once a day gives your body the opportunity to recover from the effects of stress.

Even sleep can fail to break the cumulative stress cycle unless you give yourself permission to deeply relax while awake; increased energy level and productivity; improved concentration and memory; regular practice of deep relaxation tends to increase your ability to focus and keeps your mind from racing; reduction of insomnia and fatigue; learning to relax leads to sleep that is deeper and sounder; prevention or reduction of psychosomatic disorders, such as hypertension, migraines, headaches, asthma and ulcers; increased self-confidence and reduced self-blame.

You can perform better as well as feel better when you are relaxed; increased availability of feelings. Muscle tension is one of the chief impediments to an awareness of your feelings. To achieve a state of deep relaxation, using some of the common methods such as; abdominal breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, passive muscle relaxation, visualizing a peaceful scene, guided imagery, meditation, biofeedback, sensory deprivation, yoga and calming music. (pp. 86 – 90) Guidelines for <https://assignbuster.com/psychology-of-stress/>

practising progressive muscle relaxation (or any form of deep relaxation) so the following information will definitely help Sera-jean make use of progressive muscle relaxation that is undertaken to practice regularly, including self-hypnosis, guided visualization and meditation. Aerobic or cardiovascular exercises, stretching and toning exercises would encourage your mind and body to be more active on a daily basis. Planning a set programme of relaxation methods, breathing exercises, meditation and counselling these are all shown in this assignment as a great way to help with any and all illnesses that you are experiencing.

Stress is a normal part of life, but too much stress can lead to emotional and psychological and even physical problems – including heart disease, high blood pressure, chest pains or irregular heartbeats. Reducing stress can help lower high blood pressure. If stress itself is a risk factor for heart disease, chronic stress exposes your body to unhealthy, persistently elevated levels of stress hormones like adrenaline and cortisol. Stress changes the way blood clots, which increases the risk of heart attack and stroke.

Being exposed to long periods of stress is where your body can give warning signs if there is something wrong. These physical cognitive emotional and behavioural signs of stress should not be ignored. Slowing down, if you continue to be stressed and if your body doesn't rest you will definitely develop health problems. Physical signs; dizziness, general aches and pains, grinding teeth, headaches, indigestion, muscle tensions, racing heart, sweaty palms, tiredness, upset tummy. All mental signs; suffering from constant worry, forgetfulness and the inability to concentrate, lack of creativity, loss of sense of humour.

Emotional signs; anger, anxiety, crying depression, feeling powerless, frequent mood swings, irritability, loneliness, nervousness, sadness. The behavioural signs; there is bossiness, along with compulsive eating you display explosive actions, and at times you show a critical attitude towards life.. How to cope with stress, eat and drink sensibly, assert your-self and exercise regularly, relax every day, take responsibility and set realistic goals and maintain positive thoughts.

It takes commitment, learn and practice relaxation, deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, mental imagery relaxation, relax to music, biofeedback. It is time to reiterate that stress arousal involves both the mind and body interacting to form a response to an event, the event that might be external to the body or could be a memory or a thought. We will now focus on stress-management techniques that involve the mind and they are autogenic training and visual imagery and this involves the use of mental images to supplement and extend the relaxation response.

The two technics are as follows; challenging limited thinking and cognitive restructuring. There are eight limited thinking patterns; Filtering, you focus on the negative details while ignoring all the positive aspects of a situation; Polarized thinking, things are black or white, good or bad, there's no middle ground, no room for mistakes; Overgeneralization, you reach a general conclusion based on a single incident or a piece of evidence; Mindreading, without their saying you know what people are feeling and why they act the way they do; Catastrophising, you expect to visualise horrible events.

Magnifying; you assume that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you. Should; you have a list of ironclad rules about how you and

other people should act. (p. 38) Autogenic (self-produced) training and visual imagery this is where you need to take time to practise the techniques of the exercises recommended and along with the exercises that involve you imagining a special place, like the beach or a mountain meadow. If you are to become proficient at using the techniques, then, to use it in combination with relaxation and breathing exercises would be the most beneficial to you.

So when you have followed these 3 steps of muscle relaxation, controlled breathing and special place imagery have a very effective means of managing stress, or helping others manage stress. However, keep in mind that it is essential to set realistic goals; the primary goal of relaxation and imagery training is to learn the technique; the secondary goal is to influence stress-related body states, such as high blood pressure, pain, tension and nausea. It is important that people do not assess themselves as failures if they do not achieve results quickly.

Change may be subtle and takes time to master. It might take the form of a better level of relaxation, or a person achieving emotional, intellectual or spiritual balance before noticing any definite physical change. In conclusion Sera-jean had all the tools to help her understand the illnesses she had and how to best cope with them. She had got a little bounce in her step and was looking quite relaxed at times, which helped her manage her life her way. It has indeed been very informative for Sera-jean, her family and her work colleagues as she has shared her experiences, what she has gained from the treatment plan and counselling sessions as she feels that if she can help one person to be able to get through what she has then it has all been worthwhile.

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