

Coping mechanism  
for stress  
management  
psychology essay



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Modern life is full of hassles, deadlines, frustrations, and demands. For many people, stress is so commonplace that it has become a way of life. Stress isn't always bad. In small doses, it can help you perform under pressure and motivate you to do your best. But when you're constantly running in emergency mode, your mind and body pay the price. You can protect yourself by recognizing the signs and symptoms of stress and taking steps to reduce its harmful effects. (1, 3)

We generally use the word " stress" when we feel that everything seems to have become too much - we are overloaded and wonder whether we really can cope with the pressures placed upon us. (3) Basically, stress is the unconscious preparation to fight or flee with the situation that a person experiences when faced with any demand, triggered by stressors causing strain or distress.

So any strain that poses a challenge or a threat to our well-being is a stress. (5) Some stresses get you going and they are good for you - without any stress at all many say our lives would be boring and would probably feel pointless. However, when the stresses undermine both our mental and physical health they are bad. (1, 3, 8) Then there are basically three issues:

Stress Identification

Stress Segregation (among positive and negative stressors)

Stress Management

## **Signs and symptoms of stress overload**

The following table lists some of the common warning signs and symptoms of stress. The more signs and symptoms you notice in yourself, the closer you may be to stress overload.

### **Cognitive Symptoms**

Memory problems

Inability to concentrate

Poor judgment

Seeing only the negative

Anxious or racing thoughts

Constant worrying

### **Physical Symptoms**

Aches and pains

Diarrhea or constipation

Nausea, dizziness

Chest pain, rapid heartbeat

Loss of sex drive

Frequent colds

## **Coping mechanism for stress management**

Stress is a fact of everyday life but it all depends on our perception about stressors. We may be motivated and invigorated by the events in our lives, or we may see some as “ stressful” and respond in a manner that may have a negative effect on our health and well-being.(3, 8) So one can think about the positive ways by which one can currently manage and cope with stress in the life.(2, 4) Thus there are two possible way outs from distress or strain one is unhealthy ways and the other is healthier ways to cope up with stress which are as follows:-

### **Unhealthy ways of coping with stress**

These coping strategies may temporarily reduce stress, but they cause more damage in the long run:

Smoking

Drinking too much

Overeating or under eating

Zoning out for hours in front of the TV or computer

Withdrawing from friends, family, and activities

Using pills or drugs to relax

Sleeping too much

Procrastinating

Filling up every minute of the day to avoid facing problems

Taking out your stress on others (lashing out, angry outbursts, physical violence) (5, 7)

## **Healthier ways to manage stress**

If your methods of coping with stress aren't contributing to your greater emotional and physical health, it's time to re-think and to find out healthier ones. There are many healthy ways to manage and cope with stress, but they all require change. You can either change the situation or change your reaction. When deciding which option to choose, it's helpful to think of the four A's: Avoid, Alter, Adapt, or Accept. (6, 8) These four A's can be grouped into two categories:

### **Change the situation:**

Avoid the stressor.

Alter the stressor.

### **Change your reaction:**

Adapt to the stressor.

Accept the stressor.

## **1: Avoid unnecessary stress**

Not all stress can be avoided, and it's not healthy to avoid a situation that needs to be addressed. You may be surprised, however, by the number of stressors in your life that you can eliminate.

Learn how to say “ no”

Avoid people who stress you out

Take control of your environment

Avoid hot-button topics

Pare down your to-do list

## **2: Alter the situation**

If you can't avoid a stressful situation, try to alter it. Figure out what you can do to change things so the problem doesn't present itself in the future.

Often, this involves changing the way you communicate and operate in your daily life.

Express your feelings instead of bottling them up

Be willing to compromise.

Be more assertive.

Manage your time better.(2, 5)

## **3: Adapt to the stressor**

If you can't change the stressor, change yourself. You can adapt to stressful situations and regain your sense of control by changing your expectations and attitude.

Reframe problems

Look at the big picture.

Adjust your standards.

Focus on the positive.

Adjusting Your Attitude

#### **4: Accept the things you can't change**

Some sources of stress are unavoidable. You can't prevent or change stressors such as the death of a loved one, a serious illness, or a national recession. In such cases, the best way to cope with stress is to accept things as they are. Acceptance may be difficult, but in the long run, it's easier than railing against a situation you can't change.

Don't try to control the uncontrollable.

Look for the upside.

Share your feelings.

Learn to forgive.

There could be two additional stress management strategies which are as follows:

#### **5: Make time for fun and relaxation**

Beyond a take-charge approach and a positive attitude, you can reduce stress in your life by nurturing yourself. If you regularly make time for fun

and relaxation, you'll be in a better place to handle life's stressors when they inevitably come. (7)

## **Healthy ways fun and relaxation**

Go for a walk.

Spend time in nature.

Call a good friend.

Sweat out tension with a good workout.

Write in your journal.

Take a long bath.

Light scented candles.

Savor a warm cup of coffee or tea.

Play with a pet.

Work in your garden.

Get a massage.

Curl up with a good book.

Listen to music.

Watch a comedy.



Don't get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of life that you forget to take care of your own needs. Nurturing yourself is a necessity, not a luxury. (4)

Set aside relaxation time.

Connect with others.

Do something you enjoy every day.

Keep your sense of humor.

## **6: Adopt a healthy lifestyle**

You can increase your resistance to stress by strengthening your physical health.

Exercise regularly.

Eat a healthy diet.

Reduce caffeine and sugar.

Avoid alcohol, cigarettes, and drugs.

Get enough sleep.

“ If you ask what the single most important key to longevity is, I would have to say it is avoiding worry, stress and tension. And if you didn't ask me, I'd still have to say it.”- George F. Burns, Beloved American Comedian, 1896-1996.(5, 6, 7)

Stress is fact of everyday life so we must learn how to turn stress into bliss. Just by understanding ourselves and our reaction to stress-provoking situations, we can learn to handle stress more effectively.

“ Adopting the right attitude can convert a negative stress into a positive one.” – Hans Selye, “ Father of stress,”