

# Defining stress: types, effects and communication process

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



Stress could be as simple as “ feeling stressed to do this assignment”.

Something that is an inseparable part of one’s life. Something that motivates us to be prepared and something that is not always bad.

Stress is basically the body’s response to adjustment, threat or demand.

When detected by the base of the brain called the hypothalamus reacts by stimulating the body to produce hormones that include adrenaline cortisol and norepinephrine. This secretion further switches our body either to flight or fight mode, preparing the body to respond by fleeing or defending itself. It could be good in small doses as it helps us to be punctual, prepared and best while performing. But the state could be troublesome, if prolonged. It has both physical and psychological repercussions. They are as follows:

1. During stress the blood flow is most in the muscles involved in flight or flee functions and not in the brain. This minimizes the brain functions, increases sugar and BP levels.
2. Depression.
3. Pain of any kind.
4. Lack of concentration and unrest.
5. Weight problems.
6. Low on confidence and morale.
7. Digestive and reproductive issues.
8. Memory and thinking problems.
9. Sleep problems.
10. It affects relationships.

## **Types of stress:**

**Acute stress:** Acute stress is temporary stress that arises due to various experiences of life. It could be thrilling or exciting but too much could be exhausting. It is felt by most people and back to normal state is easily possible.

Examples for acute stress are as follows:

1. Meeting any eminent person for the first time creates some sort of stress and panic
2. Anchoring for an event and addressing a huge crowd is a stressful situation which as a college student we will have to deal with.
3. Joining a new college is the most common stress we all face which includes meeting new people, new place and new rules.
4. Sudden injury that delays our planned activities might result in stress.
5. Nearing deadlines of assignments creates some kind of psychological pressures that lead to sleepless nights, over eating etc.

**Chronic stress:** Unlike acute stress, chronic stress lasts for longer durations from months to years and sometimes lifelong. It could be severe and getting back would require serious counselling sessions. Chronically stressed people find it hard to find solutions to get rid of it and accept it as a part of their lives. This might lead to mental or physical depletion causing suicides, high blood pressures, heart attack, violence and even cancer.

Examples for chronic stress are as follows:

1. Fatal Accidents in which life seems to be boon are difficult to forget.

2. Loss of closed ones is something which is hard to forget as we keep on missing the person and indirectly stressing our present.
3. Huge academic failures during student life don't leave us alone for quite a long time
4. Existential crisis is something which is frequent and the urge of belonging leads to stressful life.
5. Ragging to massive extent has led to serious repercussions as huge as suicides and depressions for life.

**Does stress affect men and women differently?**

Even though stress has no relation with age, color or gender most researchers have found that women are more prone to stress than men. The reasons include postpartum depression, stronger hormonal secretion, puberty, pregnancy and societal pressures. According to the Anxiety and Depression Further, according to the Ontario Human Rights Commission, women are more likely to make less money than men, be sexually harassed on the job, live in poverty, perform child rearing responsibilities while holding down a full-time job, and simultaneously manage the care of both their children and elderly parents. Association of America (ADAA), women are twice as likely as men to suffer from depression and anxiety disorders. Anxiety disorders also tend to occur at an earlier age for women than for men.

While this is an astonishing factor what's more detrimental is stress conversion to depression. And undoubtedly it's more men than women in this category. This is the result of lack of reaching out to others for stress

related problems. Reason for the same being, stereotype created around males to be the stronger sex who cannot vent out, whatever the issue be.

### **Does stress affect one's communication skills?**

Communication is a vital part of life that helps build relations and lead a smooth life. At the same time miscommunication cannot just lead to mishaps but also shake relationship and thus life. Frequent cause for this being: STRESS. Prolonged period of stress leads to anxiety because of thinking and communicating processes could get affected. The person might start falling short of right words, develop unpleasant expressions or gestures and might end up escalating pity arguments. Stress is a common phenomenon but it should be kept away from affecting our communication skills especially as corporate leaders or communicators. For this reason instead of escaping the situation one must try calming down. He/ she can go take a break and get back to work.

Things that can help calming down stress generally are:

- Deep breathing amidst such situations.
- Practicing yoga everyday preferably mornings
- Talking to someone who helps calm down and helps open up.
- T
- Stress leads to depression, which in turn affects what we think and speak. There could difficulty in putting up our thoughts or while framing sentences, presenting them to superiors or even processing them for self.

- Stress leads to mental blockage. Especially in creative fields like advertising thinking creatively, analyzing and presenting is very important. When we are stressed this communication is blocked and might lead to failures.
- Stress leads to hyping up of small situations and creating a mess. And further it affects communication skills that ruin it totally. We might end up crossing our lines of respect, bashing up juniors unnecessarily and creating rivalry at work place.
- When we are stressed we are most importantly unable to communicate with ourselves. We remain confused as what is that we need to accomplish on a particular day or time. This leads to anger.
- In a stressful scenario a person tends to get moody. And this is very well reflected by his communication. This might have an effect on his reliability, compatibility and competence as whole.

aking time out from routine and indulging in some hobby you like

- Stress busters like dancing, singing out loud or diary writing can useful
- Change in work performed for some time to avoid stressing on situation at hand
- Talking to pets or kids helps de-stressing to some extent
- Watching stand up comedies or anything that makes you laugh and relax
- Going out for a walk in some less crowded areas
- Taking a nap can help refresh and handle better.

Examples of chronic and acute stress affecting communications in Professional or business world are as follows:

**Acute:**

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People around might start reconsidering his appropriateness for everything and anything.

**Chronic Stress**

- Chronic stress dampens the immune system. This not only leads to health problems but also mental issues. He/she is easily prone to stressful situations and finds it difficult to deal with it. This hampers overall communication skills, where in person has no control over his tongue or pitch.
- Chronic stress at times destroys newly formed brain cells. This might have a direct effect on communication as processing of thoughts and memory is affected severely. He/she might face problem recalling numerical or own ideas in workplace.
- Chronic Stress causes Bipolar disorder. Wherein he/she faces dramatic changes in mood, energy level and behavioral patterns. This three are clearly linked and are a pre requisite for effective communication in business world.
- Chronic stress might lead to personality changes that might in turn affect communication. A person who was known to be calm might suddenly appear depressed, rude and clumsy owing to constant stress. These traits don not contribute to efficient communication in any way.
- Most importantly chronic stress affects are confidence level. I might have brilliant idea or B-plan, but if I am stressed I will fail to communicate it effectively leading to a huge loss.

What can be done to ensure that effective communication channels continue to function smoothly in professional context?

During high stress situations, the average number of processing messages goes down from 8 to 4. Audiences recall what they perceive and what they hear last. The processing of messages which is usually takes place at 8th grade goes down to 4th and trust can be built only by caring, empathizing and listening.

Great communicators are made and not born; it's just about having right composure, thinking clearly, having right information and taking the call. Keeping all this in mind stress strategies that could be formulated are as follows:

- First and foremost is controlling emotion: It is pertinent to appear confident and positive during such situations. It creates a
- positive atmosphere for listeners (employees, teammates etc.) by giving a hope that the plan is been formulated and the situation is soon going to be better.
- Body language: Only 7% of communication comprises of words. Hence lays the importance of gestures, facial expressions and postures. During stressful situation anxiety, fear and tension are natural. But effective communicator is the one who handles it well and doesn't let his body language show it by any means.
- Speaking only what is needed and listening carefully: He/She should always make a point to know what is supposed to be delivered by means of research or feedback. It is not important to know everything rather it is important to be sure of what is being said. Only the details

one is sure about should be disseminated to avoid confusions and chaos.

- Communicating at the right time is crucial during such situation. If delayed can lead to misunderstandings, conflicts and pre assumptions which could be detrimental to the organization
- Keeping calm and being focused: Stressful situation require the speaker to be sorted on what has to be said. Proper planning, letting anger cool down and talking about solutions rather than the blame game should be the communicator's prime focus.