

# Chapter 11

## Stress

**Stress** – the nonspecific response of the body to any demand made upon it and may vary from one individual to another.

- Stress may be good or bad, depending on how you and your body react to the specific demand.
- Eustress – positive, or good stress
- Distress – negative, or bad stress
- Stressors – situations that cause stress

Major changes in your life are the real negative stressors for which you need to plan coping techniques in order to handle them positively.

How your body reacts to stress:

- First stage: alarm stage. The body makes an immediate response to a stressor, anticipating change and perceiving change as a danger or an emergency. Adrenaline – fight or flight.
- Second stage: the body learns, or tries to learn to adapt to the stressor, or it goes through a stage of resistance.
- Third stage: exhaustion – occurs when the body uses up the energy reserves required for coping with stress.

How your mind reacts to stress:

1. Rationalizing – making up reasons why the situation turned out the way it did, rather than the way it should have. Ex. dropped the ball – because “the sun was in my eyes.”
2. Projecting – blaming someone else for your own faults. Ex. “the teacher didn’t cover this stuff.”
3. Compensation – over-reacting to make up for a feeling of inadequacy.
4. Avoidance – refusing to act on a situation.

How stress affects you:

Eustress:

- Makes you more creative, alert, aggressive, and dedicated to a task.
- It keeps you from becoming bored and fatigued with your daily tasks.
- It makes you feel good about yourself
- It makes you alert and happy – not nervous or uptight

### Distress:

- Too much stress can have a negative effect and can interfere with school work, home life, and your relationships.
- Symptoms of irritability, fatigue, worry, and frustration.
- Can lead to health problems over an extended period of time – ulcers, high blood pressure, etc.

To manage stress, you need to develop your own stress management program. Build up your resistance to negative stress and develop techniques for avoiding negative stress, as well as develop positive coping strategies.

- Do not worry about the little things
- Get Fit
- Proper diet – sugar and caffeine stressors

Positive coping strategies for dealing with stressors you cannot avoid:

- Exercise, yoga, relaxation
- Recognize early symptoms of stress. Ex. tight neck muscles, shoulder/back stiffness, increase in heart rate, etc.
- Identify stressful situations
- Support groups
- Goal setting
- Time management

Negative coping techniques to avoid:

- Excessive emotion
- Impatience
- Avoidance
- Drugs and or alcohol