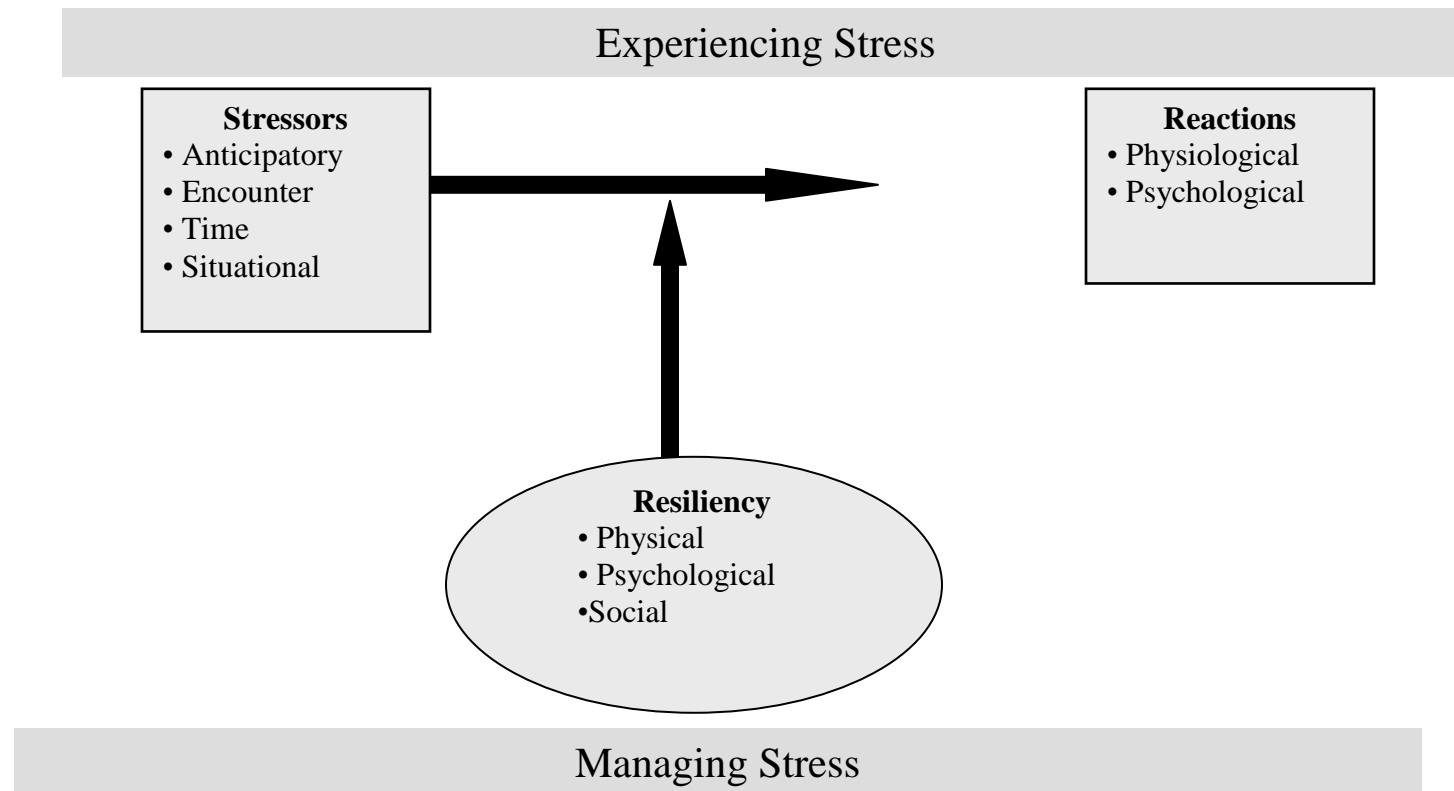


Common Signs and Symptoms of Excessive Stress

Adapted from International Critical Incident Stress Foundation, Inc. 1998

<p>COGNITIVE</p> <p>confusion in thinking difficulty making decisions disorientation</p>	<p>PHYSICAL</p> <p>excessive sweating dizzy spells increased heart rate elevated blood pressure rapid breathing</p>
<p>EMOTIONAL</p> <p>emotional shock anger grief depression feeling overwhelmed hopeless and/or helplessness</p>	<p>BEHAVIORAL</p> <p>changes in ordinary behavior changes in eating decreased personal hygiene withdrawal from others prolonged silence</p>

A General Model of Stress (Source: Whetten, D. & Cameron, K., 2005)



	Enactive Strategies	Proactive Strategies	Reactive Strategies
Purpose	Eliminate Stressors	Develop resiliency strategies	Learn temporary coping mechanisms
Effects	Permanent	Long Term	Short Term
Approach	Enactive	Proactive	Reactive
Time Required	Long Time	Moderate Time	Immediate

Relaxation Techniques

Relaxation is a process that can decrease the negative impact of life's challenges on mind and body. Developing skills in the routine use of relaxation techniques is a proven way to improve physical and emotional response to stress. Following are the main types or categories of relaxation.

Autogenic Relaxation

--something that comes from within you

- can use both visual and body awareness
- repeating words or suggestions in your mind
- imagining a peaceful place
- focus on controlling your breathing
- reducing physical tension by focus on slowing down heart rate, relaxing

Progressive muscle relaxation

--slowly tensing and relaxing each muscle group

- noting the different feeling of muscle tension vs. relaxation
- increase awareness of physical sensations
- start with head or toes, work progressively through body
- tense muscles at least 5 seconds, relax 30 seconds, repeat

Visualization

--form mental images to take an internal visual journey

create a peaceful, calming place or situation
use as many senses as possible—smells, sights, sounds and textures
close eyes, sit in a quiet spot, and relax body to focus inside

Other techniques

Yoga	Tai chi
Music	Exercise
Meditation	Hypnosis
Massage	Mindfulness
Laughter	

Adapted from [MayoClinic.com](http://www.mayoclinic.com): *Relaxation Techniques: Learn Ways to Calm Your Stress, 2007*

See also: www.helpguide.org/mental/stress_relief_meditation_yoga_relaxation.htm for step by step directions for many relaxation options

Supervisor Strategies for Preventing Burnout

Administrative

- If possible, insist on workers taking vacations
- Offer and encourage professional development activities
- Enhance opportunities for workers to do new things/things they do well
- Foster teamwork
- Foster social interaction among staff

Education

- Invite speakers on health promotion/resilience
- Let workers know about insurance/benefits for health promotion

Consultative

- Supervision around healthy boundaries
- Support workers around difficult clients/difficult co-workers/other job stressors
- Focus on workers' strengths

Counseling

- Address symptoms of burnout
- Encourage self care/counseling if symptoms are affecting worker's performance
- Assist staff to resolve interpersonal conflicts (e.g., mediation)

Evaluation

- Attend to changes in work performance
- Encourage worker self-assessment around self-care

RESPONSIBLE FOR vs RESPONSIBLE TO

Rescue often means feeling **responsible for**. It is important to remember that we all trained, in a variety of ways, to be **responsible for**, rather than **responsible to** others. The results of rescue or being **responsible for** often happen over and over again, until we find ways to identify and interrupt the pattern.

	RESPONSIBLE FOR	RESPONSIBLE TO
I am Concerned With	Answers Solutions Right Details Performance Mistakes	Relating to others Caring Being compassionate "OKAYNESS" (Self and others)
I feel	Tired Discouraged Anxious Fearful Put upon Depressed Used Self neglectful	Comfortable Calm Peaceful
I do	Minimize Carry feelings Protect Control Fix Rescue Manipulate Deny feelings Rationalize Intellectualize Project blame	Empathize Confront Level Share feelings Assert
	DISHONEST	HONEST

Learning to be **responsible to** others is difficult, but often rewarding, as we change attitudes, behaviors, and feelings.

From Sondra Smalley, "Co-dependency: An Introduction," 1984.

Case Scenarios: Managing Workplace Stress

One:

With only two years left until he plans to retire, a veteran caseworker with 30 years of dedicated service is showing physical and emotional signs of burnout and exhaustion. Also, he is openly complaining about the recent caseload increases, unreasonable and confusing paperwork requirements, unrealistic performance expectations set by state administrators, and the increasingly difficult and demanding nature of clients. He has often turned team meetings into unproductive complaint sessions. In addition to undermining the general climate in the office, you have noticed that his attitude and behavior are negatively affecting the outlook of a promising younger caseworker who is just starting his career in child welfare.

Two:

A caseworker in a neighboring state was badly assaulted during the removal of a child from a home. This news story was the topic of a lively lunchroom conversation between caseworkers in your office. An experienced caseworker stated: "It's getting really dangerous out there! Many times I've felt threatened and unsafe out in the field."

Three:

The past several months have especially hard on your team, both personally and professionally. A beloved older worker who served as a mentor for several caseworkers retired, the husband of another worker suffered a heart attack, and a younger caseworker suffered a miscarriage. A provider which provided excellent treatment for families and with whom your staff had great relationships lost its contract with the state and your team is not confident about the new provider. A major plant has announced that it will be closing in 6 months; the closure will not only affect several of your employees' families, but you also anticipate more stress in the community which may result in a greater number of incoming cases.

Four:

The front page news story for the past several days has focused on a child death in a DHS-involved family in a neighboring county. With intense media scrutiny and public pressure, a full-scale investigation was launched. In the meantime, the caseworker was temporarily placed on desk duty. There are rumors that the longer the investigation continues, the more likely it is that the caseworker will be used as a scapegoat (i.e., fired, face possible legal action, etc.). Caseworkers on your team have commented that they feel like they could easily be the next organizational scapegoat if this occurred in your office.

Supervisory Strategies for Managing Workplace Stress

Action Continuum	Example of Something You Might Do	Organizational Support Needed to Carry Out Strategy
<p>REACTIVE STRATEGIES:</p> <p>Apply an on-the-spot remedy to reduce temporarily the effects of stress (e.g., a short term coping response)</p>		
<p>PROACTIVE STRATEGIES:</p> <p>Initiate action that enhances the worker's/team's resiliency and capacity to handle stress</p>		
<p>ENACTIVE STRATEGIES:</p> <p>Eliminate or minimize stressors by changing the environment</p>		

20 Ways To Maintain A Healthy Level Of Insanity

1. At Lunch Time, Sit In Your Parked Car With Sunglasses on and point a Hair Dryer At Passing Cars. See If They Slow Down.
2. Page Yourself Over The Intercom. Don't Disguise Your Voice.
3. Every Time Someone Asks You To Do Something, ask If They Want Fries with that.
4. Put Your Garbage Can On Your Desk And Label it 'In'.
5. Put Decaf In The Coffee Maker For 3 Weeks Once Everyone has Gotten Over Their Caffeine Addictions, Switch to Espresso.
6. In The Memo Field Of All Your Checks , Write ' For Smuggling Diamonds'.
7. Finish All Your sentences with 'In Accordance With The Prophecy'.
8. Don't use any punctuation.
9. As Often As Possible, Skip Rather Than Walk
10. Order a Diet Water whenever you go out to eat, with a serious face.
11. Specify That Your Drive-through Order Is 'To Go'.
12. Sing Along At The Opera.
13. Go To A Poetry Recital. And Ask Why The Poems Don't Rhyme?
14. Put Mosquito Netting Around Your Work Area and Play tropical Sounds All Day.
15. Five Days In Advance, Tell Your Friends You Can't Attend Their Party Because You're Not In the Mood.
16. Have Your Co-workers Address You By Your Wrestling Name, Rock Bottom.
17. When The Money Comes Out The ATM, Scream 'I Won! I Won!'
18. When Leaving The Zoo, Start Running Towards The Parking lot, Yelling 'Run For Your Lives ! They're Loose!'
19. Tell Your Children Over Dinner, 'Due To The Economy, We Are Going To Have To Let One Of You Go.'
20. And The Final Way To Keep A Healthy Level Of Insanity...copy this list and give to someone to make them smile. It's called therapy!

Author unknown