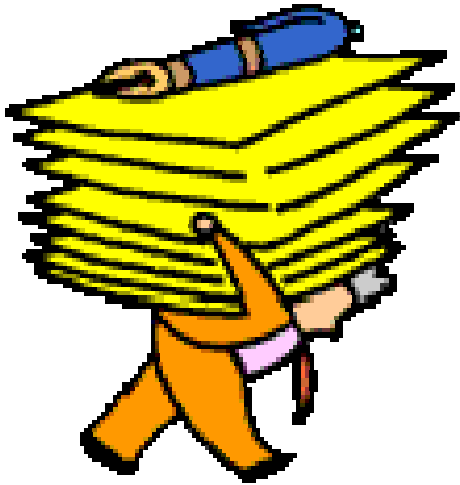


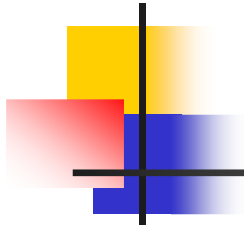
The University Administrator's Dilemma: Managing Stress in Competitive and Demanding Work Environments



Presented at the 2nd ACU HRM
Network Conference, Kuala
Lumpur, Malaysia, Sept. 1-3, 2006

Presenter: Sydney Arthur, Barbados

Objectives of the Presentation



By the end of the presentation participants should be able to:

- *Appreciate the difference between the terms 'stress' and 'stressors'.*
- *Identify the common causes of job stress, especially as they relate to their own job.*
- *Understand the mechanisms through which stress damages the body.*
- *Appreciate the extent to which they are under stress.*
- *Identify and understand any symptom(s) of stress which they are experiencing.*
- *Identify and apply stress reduction and stress management techniques in the work environment for self and others.*





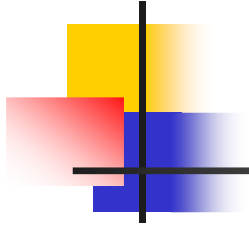
Format of the Presentation

- **1: The context**
 - what is health?
 - the size of the problem...
 - the imbalance in modern lifestyles
 - the dilemma facing University Higher Education Administrators

- **2: The Nature and Effects of Stress**
 - what are stressors and what is stress?
 - what are the features of stress?
 - how does stress affect the body ?
 - why is it necessary to manage stress effectively ?

- **3: Workplace Stress: How it Affects the Body**
 - The biological response to stressors
 - Stage 1, 2 & 3 stress

- **4: Workplace stress: Strategies for Managing/Coping with Stress**
 - Six Areas in which to Improve Workplace Stress
 - Stress Reduction/ Stress Management
 - Dimensions of Stress Management



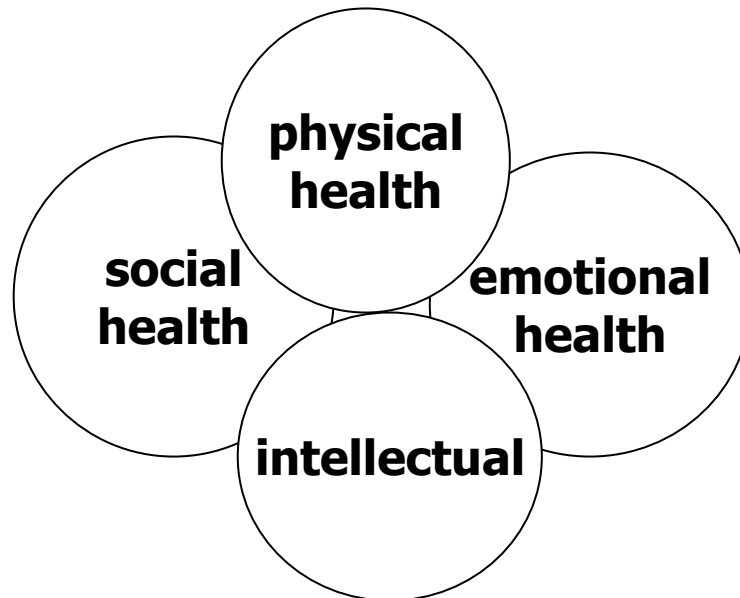
The Context



What is Health?

Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

(WHO Definition, 1948)



How good is your life balance?



Size of the Problem!!!

- *75-90% of all doctors visits are due to stress-related ailments, and stress-related disorders.*
- *Stress plays a major causative role in both physical and mental ill-health.*
- *Stress can affect the onset of, or susceptibility to disease.*
- *Stress can affect the progression or course of disease, even when there is another cause of the disease.*
- *Job stress poses a threat to the health of workers, and in turn, to the health of the institution.*

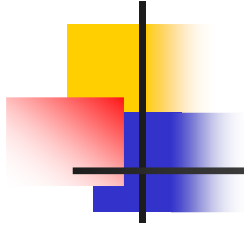
The Dilemma Facing HE Administrators

Maintaining physical, social and emotional health, and a positive, professional, and productive attitude in the face of:

- *Excessive demands on time*
- *Unrealistic deadlines*
- *Inadequate support from superiors*
- *Long hours of work*
- *Inadequate resources*
- *Unfair assessment of work performance*
- *Insufficient or no involvement in decision-making*
- *Coping with multiple situations at the same time*
- *Little or no appreciation shown by seniors for work effort.*



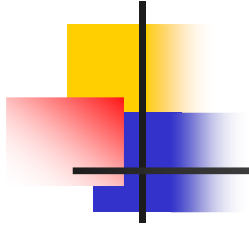
A State of Imbalance



The Natural: one where there is natural physical activity, beauty, balance and order.

The Artificial: one where there is inactivity, constant competition, shortage of time, rushing around, and feelings of discontentment.

- The highly pressured, time controlled and sedentary life styles of modern people are not in sync with the body's built in physiological response systems.
- The built-in flight – fight response mechanisms of the body are initiated in response to the stressors of modern work environments, just as they did in response to life challenges in primitive times.



The Nature and Effects of Stress



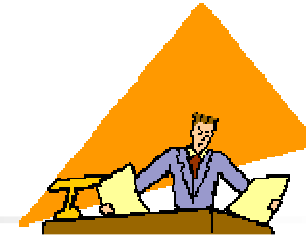
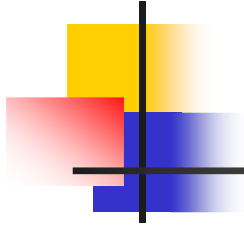
Stress and the Body

According to Deepak Chopra, M.D. in his book "*Ageless Body, Timeless Mind*", a person experiences three response phases to stress.

- (1) the event (stressor),
- (2) your inner appraisal of the event (how you see it), and
- (3) your body's reaction

Stress Point: The body automatically increases blood pressure, heart rate, respiration, metabolism, and blood flow to the muscles in response to daily stressors

The Meaning of Stress



- Stress is the term coined by Hans Selye to describe the internal changes occurring in the body in response to stressors.
- A stressor is any event/situation/object the individual *perceives* as threatening, challenging, exacting, controlling, punishing, exciting, stimulating, or demanding.
- Stress can be defined as the tension and anxiety we feel when faced with uncertainty about something that is important to us or conflicting expectations.

Stress Point: STRESS IS DIFFERENT FOR DIFFERENT PEOPLE

Definition of Job Stress



A dynamic condition in which an individual is confronted with an opportunity, constraint, or demand related to what he or she desires and for which the outcome is perceived to be both uncertain and important.

The harmful physical and emotional responses that occur when the requirements of the job do not match the capabilities, resources, or needs of the worker. This has both physical, mental and behavioural dimensions.



Causes of Stress

- *FACTORS INTRINIC TO THE JOB OF ADMINISTRATORS*

- *Workload (job enlargement)*
- *Long working hours*
- *Role overload*
- *Multi-tasking*



Causes of Stress

- *COGNITIVE FACTORS*

There are a number of factors cited as the individual's cognitive vulnerability to stress.

- *self-defeating beliefs*
- *Self-efficacy*
- *differences in coping style*

Perceived self-efficacy is defined as people's beliefs about their capabilities to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave.



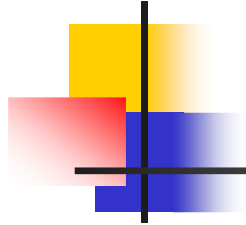
Causes of Stress

■ *INSTITUTIONAL/POLITICAL FACTORS*

These refer to organisational factors relating to the 'climate' in the workplace or the wider context of administrative work including the political.

- *Lack of social support in the workplace*
- *Management/Leadership style*
- *An organisational culture that does not VALUE the worth of the employee*

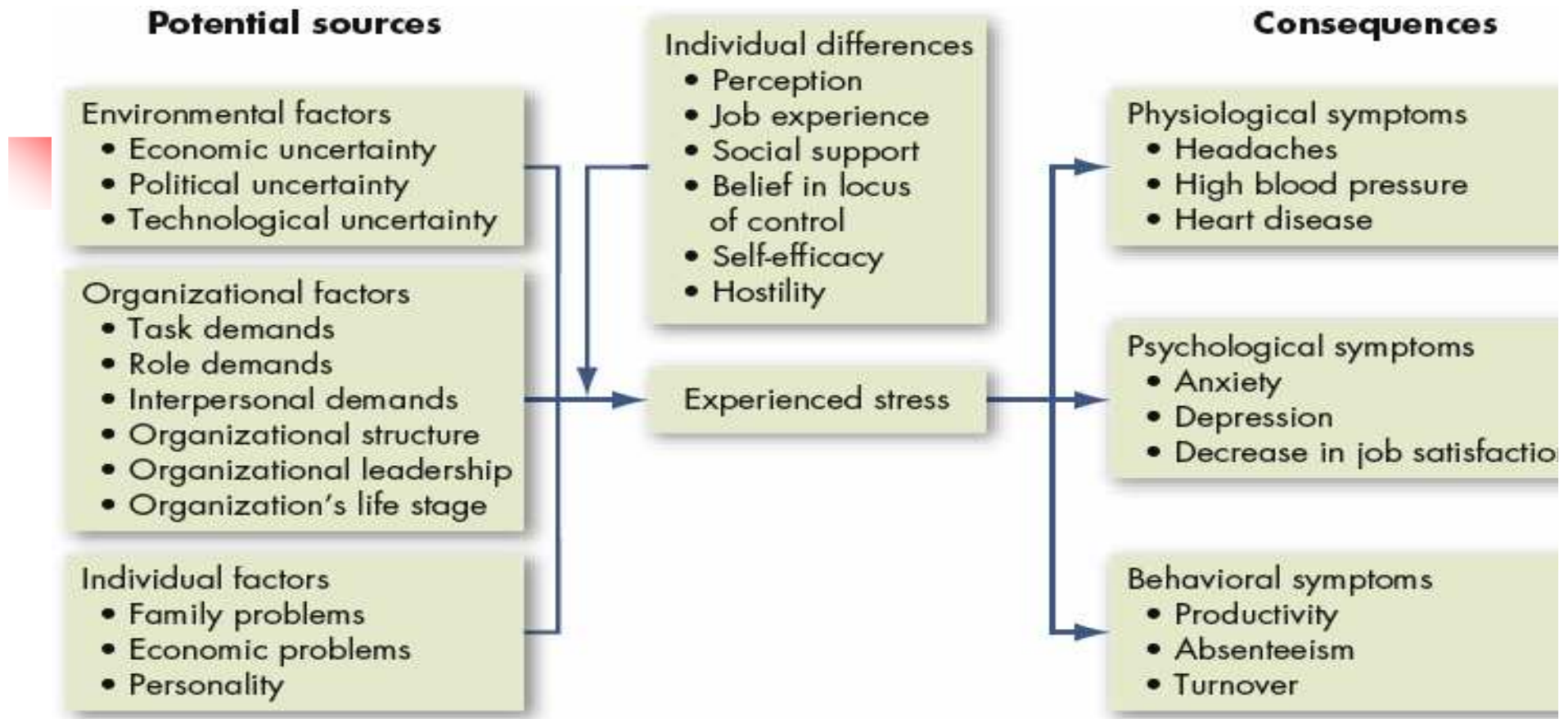
Formula for Job Stress



- *It is generally agreed that job stress results from the interaction of three main factors:*
 1. *Working conditions*
 2. *Worker characteristics*
 3. *Nature of the job*

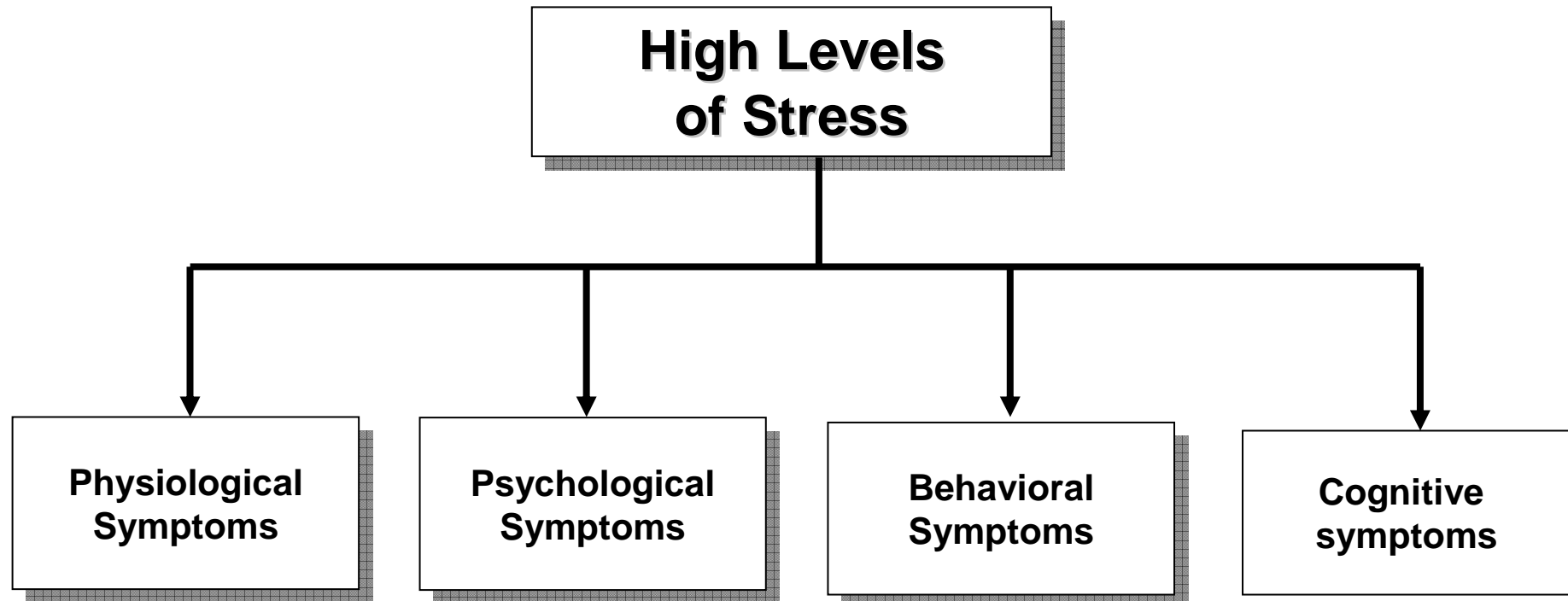
Stress Point :we tend to create our own stress

Model of Stress





Consequences of Job Stress





Specific Symptoms of Stress

Physical Symptoms

- *Headaches*
- *Indigestion*
- *Stomachaches*
- *Sweaty palms*
- *Sleep difficulties*
- *Dizziness*
- *Back pain*
- *Tight neck, shoulders*
- *Racing heart*
- *Restlessness*
- *Tiredness*
- *Ringling in ears*

Behavioral Symptoms

- Excessive smoking*
- Bossiness*
- Compulsive gum chewing*
- Attitude critical of others*
- Grinding of teeth at night*
- Overuse of alcohol*
- Compulsive eating*
- Inability to get things done*

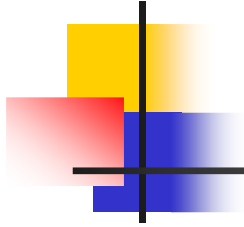
Emotional Symptoms

- *Crying*
- *Nervousness, anxiety*
- *Boredom – no meaning to things*
- *Edginess – ready to explode*
- *Feeling powerless to change things*
- *Overwhelming sense of pressure*
- *Anger*
- *Loneliness*
- *Unhappiness for no reason*
- *Easily upset*

Cognitive Symptoms

- *Trouble thinking clearly*
- *Forgetfulness*
- *Lack of creativity*
- *Memory loss*
- *Inability to make decisions*
- *Thoughts of running away*
- *Constant worry*
- *Loss of sense of humor*

Reflection: *what are your stress symptoms?*



Workplace Stressors:
How they Affect the Body



The Biological Response to Stressors

- Increased catecholamine hormones
 - * adrenaline (epinephrine)
 - * noradrenaline (norepinephrine)

- Increased glucocorticoid hormones
 - * cortisol
 - * cortisone

These return to baseline levels when the challenge disappears.



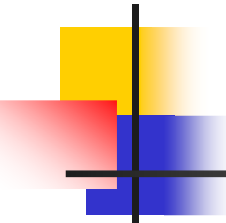
How Stress Affects the Body: Stage I Stress

- *Stage 1 Stress (a transient stage) – The Flight or Fight Response (The Automatic Primary Stress Response).*

This type of stress is generally good for the body. It is finished as soon as the threat is over: you have caught the bus, the deadline is reached, project is completed, confrontation is over etc.

However, if the situation (stressor) remains, the stress response is kept on continuously. The bodily changes do not revert to normal and the individual moves into Stage II stress.

Stress is more than the flight or fight reaction of the body!



How Stress Affects the Body : Stage II Stress

- *Stage II stress – Consuming Energy*


This is the stage of ‘I have to’ ... I am being pressured, and ‘I can’t escape from’ ... I must stay in the situation.

The danger of this stage is that the normal response of the body to THREAT .. i.e. release of adrenaline.. is no longer enough to supply the body with the energy it feels it needs.

As you continue to feel stressed, the stress response will pick up the signals coming from your emotional centres in the brain and will stay switched on in an effort to keep you supplied with extra energy and power....

The body turns to its stores of fats and sugars to provide the energy. This is brought about by the CORTISOLS or Cortico-steroids.

Where do the sugars and fats go, given that we don’t really need them?



How Stress Affects the Body : Stage III Stress



Stage III Stress – Draining the Energy Stores

By the time the individual reaches this stage he/she is feeling the effects of constant strain on the body. The stage manifests itself in both physical emotional symptoms: increasing irritability, over-reaction to 'little things', easily fatigued, difficulty concentrating, indigestion, heart burn etc.

The most significant change at this stage is a change in the personality of the person.

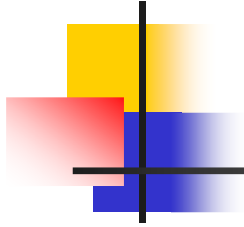
- recurrent headaches*
- frequent use of antacids*
- palpitations and chest pain*
- getting any illness that is around*
- feelings of being overwhelmed*
- difficult to live with*
- loss of former reliable memory*
- difficulty in dismissing problems from the mind*
- insomnia*
- frequent feelings of anger and irritation*
- feelings of wanting to cry*
- difficulty in coming to a decision*



WARNING!!!!

WARNING!!!!

- *When stressful situations go unresolved, the body is kept in a constant state of activation, which increases the rate of wear and tear to biological systems.*
- *Eventually, fatigue or damage results, and the ability of the body to repair and defend itself can be seriously compromised.*
- The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)



*Workplace Stress:
Its Reduction & Management*



Six Areas in Which to Improve Workplace Stress

According to Dr. Michael Leiter, Canada Research Chair, there are six areas of work life that need be in balance in order to reduce workplace stress.

- 1. Workload – the amount of work to be done in a given time.*
- 2. Community – the quality of an organisation’s social environment.*
- 3. Control - the opportunity to make choices and decisions.*
- 4. Reward & Recognition - a meaningful reward system.*
- 5. Values – the congruence of organisational and personal values.*
- 6. Fairness – the extent to which the organisation has consistent and equitable rules for everyone.*



Stress Reduction/Stress Management

- *Some General Points:*
- *No one is immune from stress and its harmful effects.*
- *The first step toward managing stress is acknowledging its existence.*
- *No one SM activity is adequate for managing stress.*
- *The best SM technique is reducing stress.*
- *All effective SM activities start with the mind (thought).*



Stress Reduction

- *Stress Reduction: eliminating the source of stress: making changes, taking action.*
- *Avoidance of known stressors*
- *Cultivation of healthy personality traits & behaviours*
- *Cognitive restructuring*
- *Planning and prioritization*
- *Maintenance of good physical and mental health*



Stress Management

Stress management encompasses techniques intended to equip a person with effective coping mechanisms for dealing with psychological stress.

- ***Stress Management:** coping, recovery, re-interpretation, reframing, cognitive restructuring.*



Dimensions of Stress Management

self-management (e.g. becoming better organized)

managing time

conflict resolution

positive attitude

self-talk

breathing

meditation

exercise

diet

rest



How to Manage Stress

- *There are six (6) Keys to managing job stress.*

1. *Taking adequate rest/relaxation*

2. *Taking a balanced diet*

3. *Implementing time management strategies*

4. *Maintaining an adequate exercise routine*

5. *Eying (appraising) situations (stressors) differently*
** conflict management*

6. *Establishing a social support network in the work place*

These would give us more quality time



Exercise and Stress

- *The build up of harmful fats and sugars released during stage II stress can be reversed by physical exercise.*
- *Exercise burn up the extra fats and sugars. This in turn release from the cells the burden of unused chemicals which are making you fatigued.....*
- *Exercise is the one sure way of cleansing the body of harmful fats and sugars that, go unchecked, can lead to the development of disorders that reduces one's quality of life..*



The Mind and Stress

- *It is impossible for us to avoid stressors. The only totally stress free state is death.*

The Rational-Emotive Approach

- *Change the tape you play in your head*
How can I benefit from this situation?
What can I change about this situation?
How important is this situation to me in the short –long term?
Who can I call on for support?
How can I appraise this situation so that it is not stressful?

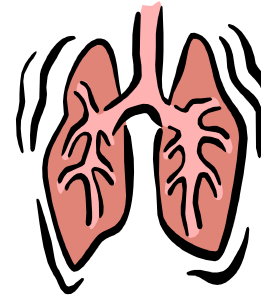


Breathing and Stress Management

The way we breath alters the way the body responds to internal (mind) and external (situations) events.

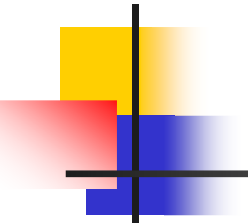
Our breathing alters from rapid to slow, deep to shallow depending on the messages sent to the brain.

- *sleep = deep and slow*
- *angry = rapid and irregular*
- *relaxed = slow with a quiet rhythm*
- *under pressure = shallow and fast.*



Controlling our breathing can therefore influence how the body responds to stressors.

Breath in to the count of 3, and breath out to the count of 3 (3/3 breathing)




Visualisation and Stress Reduction

Visualization is exactly what it sounds like: Using a process of deep relaxation incorporating all of your senses and guided imagery (visualization).

*"Thoughts of your
mind have made you
what you are, and
thoughts of your mind
will make you what you
become from this day
forward."*

-Catherine Ponder

Some Quotations from the Mind/Body Medical Institute



“(We are) at a time when companies lose an estimated \$200 billion annually in absenteeism, sub par performance, tardiness, and workers’ compensation claims related to stress ...’If businesses were clever, what they would do is simply put time aside (and have) a quiet room for people to carry out a meditative behaviour of their choice,’ “

- “The ideal is to develop a routine, a time to bring forth the relaxation response that becomes as much a part of the day as brushing your teeth.”
- “Most folks are about as happy as they make up their minds to be
.”

What should be Our Priorities??

VALUE:

- Health
- Family
- Relationships

Accentuate the Positive

- for a greater sense of internal peace, energy, and renewed health



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Booth, L. A (1988), *Stressmanship*. Severn House Publishers.

Dua, J.K. Job Stressors and their Effects on Physical Health , Emotional Health and Job Satisfaction in a University, *Journal of Education Administration* , Vol. 32, Jan. 1994, pp. 59-78(20)