

## What is Stress?

**Stress is defined as how ones body reacts to change. Changes can come from feelings, situations and people.**

Ideas from Long Beach Unified School District GATE Program

## Is All Stress Bad?

No, stress can be happy, exciting and challenging. For example a person may feel stress before a performance, which helps that individual stay alert and attentive during the performance. However there are differing levels of stress and each individual has an optimum stress level.

## The Importance of Optimum Levels of Stress

### Level of Stress:

The level of Stress in which one performs is essential and affects that individual performance. For example:

Low Stress = performance may suffer due to boredom and lack of motivation

High Stress = stress related problems may interfere with performance

In the Middle = Optimum Performance. If you keep your self in this zone then you will perform better over all.

### Type of Stress:

To obtain the optimum level of stress will depend on what sort of stress is experienced:

Short Term – difficult meetings, sporting or performance, conformational issues.

Long Term – fatigue and high adrenaline levels over a long period of time can cause low performance levels over time. This type of stress can be linked to fatigue, morale, and health problems.

## Effects of Too Much Stress

Too much stress can have effects on the mind, body and emotion. Therefore one should be aware of the signs in order to prevent them from doing harm on the body.

### **SIGNS OF STRESS**

<b>Physical</b>	<b>Mental</b>	<b>Emotional</b>
Headaches	Lack of Concentration	Bored
Nervousness	Forgetfulness	Anger outbursts
Rashes	Drop in school performance	Nightmares
Stomachaches	Unable to study	Sad/depressed
Fast heartbeat	Carelessness	Scared
Perspiration		Withdrawn
Increased urination		Fighting

## Ways to Manage Stress

As with many things in life, there are both positive and negative ways to handle stress. Below are some ideas of healthy and unhealthy ways of managing your stress.

### **Unhealthy:**

- Eating too much or too little
- Taking it out on someone (or something else)
- Refusing to talk about it with others
- Avoiding (running away or escaping)
- Oversleeping
- Using alcohol or drugs
- Smoking making excuses
- Hurting yourself physically (or thinking about it)

### **Healthy**

- Writing out a positive step by step plan
- Taking deep breaths/practice deep breathing exercise
- Watch your thoughts/think positive
- Find time to relax and cool off
- Visualize what you want to happen
- Talk problems over with a friend or counselor
- Don't dwell on your weaknesses
- Feel proud of your accomplishments
- Exercise
- Punch a pillow, scream or kick
- Eat a nutritious snack or meal
- Take on one thing at a time
- Set realistic goals
- Stop worrying about things that may never happen
- Learn from your mistakes
- Forgive yourself and others
- Get involved with things you like to do
- Make time for fun
- Do something for others
- Make time for fun
- Use four steps to problem solving
- Brainstorm Solution
- Think of consequences
- Choose a solution
- Evaluate your choice
- Create a stress diary (see attached work sheet)

# STRESS DIARY

Keeping a stress diary is an effective way for you to find out what causes stress and what level of stress is optimum for you.

In this diary you will need to write down your stress levels and how you feel through out the day. Note down stressful events and record the following information.

At a regular interval, every hour or two record routine stress. Note

The time

The amount of stress you feel (possibly on a scale of 1 to 10)

How happy you feel

Whether you are enjoying your work

How efficiently you are working

When stressful events occur, write down:

What the event was

When and where did it occur

What important factors made the event stressful?

How stressful was the event?

How did you handle the event?

Did you tackle the cause or the symptom?

Did you deal with the stress correctly?

By completing this stress diary you will gain the following knowledge about yourself

Understand the level of stress you are happiest with

Understand which level of stress you work most effectively

Identify the main sources of unpleasant stress in your life

Understand which circumstances are most unpleasant

Understand whether your current methods of handling stress are effective (If your methods are ineffective then you would be able to change to make them more effective for yourself)

Information for stress management section adapted from

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