

MODULE 1 – CHAPTER 1 – UNDERSTANDING STRESS

- ✚ **Introduction:** Today’s world is very busy. In this fast paced world, people have become very busy. Work load has increased. This has caused a lot of STRESS.
- ✚ **Meaning of stress:** Stress basically means one’s body’s reaction or way of responding to any kind of demand or threat. It is basically pressure upon a person’s psychological system that arises out of intensity of one’s life and work.
- ✚ **Definition of stress:** Stress is defined as, “A state of psychological and physiological imbalance resulting from the disparity between situational demand and the individual’s ability and motivation to meet those needs.”
- ✚ **Features of stress:**
 1. Stress can result in variation in behavior of a person.
 2. It changes the psychology of a person
 3. Stress can also have positive effects
 4. Stress can be temporary or long-lasting, mild or severe, depending upon the circumstances.
- ✚ **Types of stress:**
 1. Eustress: It is healthy, positive and developmental stress response. This is a motivational stress that leads a person to work hard enough to get ample amount of success in life.
 2. Distress: It is a negative stress. It is caused due to tension and unhealthy relationships. Errors increase and this result in bad decision making that causes uneasiness.
 3. Hyper stress: This is also a part of negative stress. It occurs when the individual is unable to cope with the workload. This results in headaches, person gets irritate on small-small issues.
 4. Hypo stress: Hypo stress is an extreme low side of Eustress. This stress occurs when a person has nothing to do with his/her time and feels constantly bored and unmotivated. This reduces productivity of a person and causes idleness.
- ✚ **Stressor:** Stressor is a factor that causes stress. Stress is the physical. Mental and emotional and human response to a particular stimulus, otherwise called a ‘stressor’. A

stressor is a chemical or biological agent, environmental condition, external stimulus or an event that causes stress to an organism. Stressor can be:

- a. Environmental stressor: Climatic changes, noise pollution, over crowding etc.
- b. Daily Stressor: Traffic, lost keys, Money etc.
- c. Life changes : Divorce, death of closed one
- d. Work place stressor : Demanding Job
- e. Chemical stressor: Tobacco, Alcohol, Drugs consumption
- f. Social Stressor: Societal and Family demands
- g. Physiological \ Physical stressor : These are stressors that put strain on our body
- h. Psychological stressor: These are events, situations, individuals, comments or anything we interpret as negative or threatening.
- i. Absolute stressor: These are stressors that everyone exposed to them would interpret as being stressful. Eg- earthquakes, tsunami etc.
- j. Relative stressor: These are stressors that only some exposed to them would interpret as being stressful. Eg:- Time pressure at office, Traffic etc.

Causes of Stress :

- a. Career concern: A person is concerned or tensed about the future as he is not progressing in his current job.
- b. Role Ambiguity: A person is clueless about the function that he has to perform for a specific job designation that he or she has got.
- c. Rotating work shifts: When work shift changes disturbs the life style of a person. Stress occurs.
- d. Role conflict: When there are different expectations from a person performing a particular role.
- e. Occupational demand: some jobs are demanding that involves risk and danger.
- f. Lack of participation in decision making: Supervisors hardly ask the concern employees before taking a decision which develops a bad feeling.
- g. Work overload: Excessive work load leads to stress as it puts a person under tremendous pressure.

- h. Poor working conditions: Employees may be subject to poor working conditions that include bad lighting and ventilation, unhygienic sanitation, lack of safety measures etc.
- i. Lack of group cohesiveness: Individual experience stress when there is no unity among work group members. There is mistrust, jealousy, frequent quarrel etc. in groups and this leads to stress in employees.
- j. Lack of social support: If any social is not available, then an employee experiences more stress.

Work Stress Model

- a. Person Environment Fit Model: A person should have a job profile in accordance to his needs, knowledge and skills. If these needs are not satisfied, then a person starts to feel stress.
- b. Job Characteristics Model: This model proposes that an employee should have some level of authority or autonomy and that the feedback given by that employee should be heard and adhered to. The absence of these factors can cause work disassociation and drops in productivity.
- c. Diathesis Stress Model: This model specifies that a person undergoes through two different stresses. First stressful job conditions and seconds individual strain. Strains can be physical, mental or emotional and these strains differ from person to person.
- d. Job Demand Resource Model: This model proposed that workplace stress can be associated to the difference of job demand and resources. Such stress is experienced at management level, where a bully or highly demanding management expects manager to deliver high results with low resources.
- e. Efforts Reward Imbalance Model: This model focuses on the relation between efforts and rewards. When employees put in hard work they expect management to reward their effort. In absence of any such reward program, the employees get demotivated and underperformed.

Consequences of Stress:

- a. Physiological symptoms: Stress, Anxiety, Depression
- b. Psychological symptoms: Mental Problem, Dissatisfaction, Nervousness, Irritability, Tension, Boredom, Low self esteems

c. Behavioral Systems: Personality Changes, Over Eating, Under Eating, Sleeplessness, Increase Smoking or Drinking, Drug Abuse, Loosing sense of humor, Reduction in productivity.

✚ **Burn Out:** Burn out basically means the reduction of a fuel or substance to nothing through use or combustion. In stress management, burn out means a feeling of physical and emotional exhaustion, due to stress from working with people under difficult demanding conditions. Burn out is not considered as a separate disorder because it overlaps significantly with depression. Burn out is followed by sign such as chronic fatigue, quickness to anger & suspicion and susceptibility to cold, headache and fever.

✚ **Difference between Stress and Burnout**

Stress	Burnout
Stress implies an adaptive response to any kind of demand caused due to adverse circumstances.	Burnout refers to a state of mental or emotional tiredness, occurs out of continuous exposure to stress.
Anxiety, mood swings, guilt	Hypertension, Mental depression, impatient, irritating
Fatigue	Chronic exhaustion
Motivation and hope is not there	Physical energy is not there
Dissatisfaction with work	Bored and cynical about work
Dropped job commitment	No job commitment
Lack of concentration, tends to forget things	Forgetfulness is frequent
Physiological changes	Psychological changes

✚ **Conclusion:** The stress largely affects a human being that results in various issues in physical health of a person.

Module II – Chapter II – Managing Stress – I Prerequisites of Stress-free life

 Introduction: Man is a social animal. He has the skill to work and communicate. This has helped progress of humans. Today's business world has achieved great success and is still growing higher. This has increased the workload and that has caused a lot of STRESS in humans. It is always advisable to recognize stress on time. Ignoring is destroying. Stress, if recognized on time, helps us to manage it well. Stress can be simply managed by following mentioned steps:

- a. STEP 1: Wake up early – as the saying goes, “early to bed and early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise.” Therefore, follow a daily routine and set a time to sleep at night and when to wake up.
- b. STEP 2: Make a to – do – list: As it is said, “a stitch in time saves nine”. Always make preparation for the unforeseen. Always be positive and jot down the things that make you feel high and happy.
- c. STEP 3: Balanced diet: It should be remembered that “health is wealth.” If food intake is healthy and on time, then there would be no health problems.
- d. STEP 4: Look after yourself: Never forget to take good care of you. When you are in a stressful situation, we end up getting tensed and worried without giving a thought about ourselves. This hampers our health a lot.
- e. STEP 5: Relax: Relax your mind and body by either taking a nap or breathing deep. Being continuously in work can be stressful. So it is important to relax.
- f. STEP 6: Meditate: Meditation helps in cleansing your mind from negative and stressful thoughts. It is an excellent way of relaxing.
- g. STEP 7: Avoid distractions: To fully relax your lifestyle and live stress – free life, remove all the distractions. These distractions are generally the types of equipment such as mobile phone, laptops and television.
- h. STEP 8: Focus: Focus should be there on important things. “Concentrate and stay focused” should be the motto of your life. While you are focused on your work, you are able to accomplish more and in an efficient manner.

- i. STEP 9: As it is said by elders, “Tomorrow never comes.” Do not leave your work for the next day. Complete your job as soon as possible; postponing today’s job if remaining will create unnecessary problems.

 **Anxiety:** “Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feeling of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure.”

 **Types of anxiety disorders:**

1. Generalized anxiety disorder (GAD): This is a chronic disorder involving excessive, long-lasting anxiety and worries about non-specific life events, objects and situations. It is most common anxiety disorder.
2. Panic disorder: Brief or sudden attacks of intense terror and apprehension characterize panic disorder. These attacks can lead to shaking, confusion, dizziness, and nausea and breathing difficulties.
3. Phobia: This is an irrational fear and avoidance of an object or situation. Phobias differ from other anxiety disorders, as they relate to a specific cause.
4. Social anxiety disorder: This is a fear of being negatively judged by others in social situations or a fear of public embarrassment. This includes a range of feelings, such as stage fright, a fear of intimacy and a fear of humiliation.
5. Obsessive – Compulsive disorder (OCD): This is an anxiety disorder characterized by thoughts or actions that are repetitive, distressing and intrusive. OCD sufferers usually know that their compulsions are unreasonable or irrational, but they serve to alleviate their anxiety.
6. Post – traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): This is anxiety that results from previous trauma such as military combat, sexual assault, a hostage situation or a serious accident. There are often flashbacks and the person may make behavioral changes to avoid triggers.
7. Separate anxiety disorder: This is characterized by high levels of anxiety when separated from a person or place that provides feelings of security or safety. Separation sometimes results in panic symptoms.

 **Coping with anxiety:**

1. Practice deep breathing meditation or relaxation
2. Look back to other stressful times

3. Identify effective coping from the past
4. Accept negative feelings
5. Engage in active problem solving
6. Maintain and utilize supportive relationships
7. Get plenty of sleep
8. Exercise regularly
9. Eat well
10. Schedule rest breaks
11. Engage in pleasurable activities
12. Avoid caffeine and alcohol

 **Relaxation:** Relaxation is the state of being free from tension and anxiety. Relaxation in psychology, is the emotional state of a living being, of low tension, in which there is an absence of arousal that could come from sources such as anger, anxiety or fear.

 **Techniques of relaxation:**

1. Breath focus
2. Progressive muscle relaxation
3. Body scan
4. Guided imagery
5. Mindfulness meditation
6. Yoga
7. Repetitive prayer
8. Rhythmic movement and mindful exercise

 **Time management:** Time management is the ability to use one's time effectively or productively, especially at work. Time management refers to managing time effectively so that the right time is allocated to the right activity. Time management refers to making the best use of time as time is always limited.

 **Importance of time management:**

- a. Time management makes an individual punctual and disciplined.
- b. One becomes more organized as a result of effective time management
- c. Effective time management boosts an individual's morale and makes him confident

- d. Individuals who stick to a time plan are the ones who realize their goals and objectives within the shortest possible time span
- e. Effective time management helps an employee to reach the pinnacle of success quickly and stay firm at the top for a longer duration
- f. Better time management helps in better planning and eventually better forecasting
- g. Research says that individuals who accomplish tasks on time are less prone to stress and anxiety
- h. Time management enables an individual to prioritize tasks and activities at work place
- i. Time management helps an individual to adopt a planned approach in life

 **Stress management:** Stress management is a process of controlling an individual's level of stress. Stress management is having the ability to recognize situations that may cause stress, in order to use strategies to prevent stress from occurring.

 **Models of stress management:**

1. Transactional model: In order to develop an effective stress management program it is first necessary to identify the factors that are central to a person controlling his/her stress. The model proposes that stress can be reduced by helping stressed people change their perceptions of stressors.
2. Innate health model: The health realization/innate health model of stress is also founded on the idea that stress does not necessarily follow the presence of a potential stressors. The model states that is ultimately depends upon the thinking process that determines response to potentially stressful external circumstances.

 **Conclusion:** Thus stress management is an essential part of our life today.

Module III – Chapter III – Stress management II – Models of stress management

- The transactional model: This model was introduced by Richard Lazarus and Susan Folkman in 1984. This model emphasizes how stress becomes the result of the imbalance between what the situation demands and what the person possesses in relation to those demands. The transactional model tells us that a stress management program can only become effective if the individual's ability to eliminate, reduce or cope with stress is successfully assessed and that the factors related to such capacity are put into consideration.
- Health realization model: Also called as the Innate Health Model of stress, the health realization model states that the presence of a probable stressor does not directly result to the stress experience. This idea opposes that of the transactional model; according to this model, the appraisal must be according to this model, the appraisal must be focused on removing negativity from one's mind so that a person would be more effective in eliminating stress.
- General Adaption Syndrome (GAS): Proposed by scientist Hans Selye, GAS is a 3-stage set of physiological processes which prepares or adapt the body for danger so that we are ready to stand a better chance of surviving it compared to if we remained passively relaxed when faced with a threat.

The three phases of stress response:

1. Alarm stage:
 - a. Upon encountering a stressor, body reacts with “fight-or-flight” response and sympathetic nervous system is activated.
 - b. Hormones such as cortisol and adrenaline released into the bloodstream to meet the threat or danger.
 - c. The body's resources now mobilized.
2. Resistance:
 - a. Parasympathetic nervous system returns many physiological functions to normal levels while body focus resources against the stressor.
 - b. Blood glucose levels remain high and continue to circulate at elevated levels, but outward appearance of organism seems normal.

- c. Increases blood pressure
- d. Body remains on red alert
- 3. Exhaustion:
 - a. If stressor continues beyond body's capacity, organism exhausts resources and becomes susceptible to disease and death.

■ Measurement of stress reaction:

- 1. Physiological response to stress –
 - a. When the body is in a constant state of stress, there is hormonal dis balance in the body
 - b. Continued immune system suppression leaves you open to more frequent colds and infections.
 - c. Upset stomach leads to digestive disorder
 - d. Risk for diabetes increases
 - e. Trouble in either falling asleep or staying asleep may occur
- 2. Behavioral response –
 - a. Sleeping difficulty
 - b. Withdrawal from participation
 - c. Addictive behavior
 - d. Unhealthy eating habits
 - e. Risk – taking behavior
 - f. Suicidal talk or behavior
- 3. Cognitive response to stress –
 - a. Chronic stress takes a high toll on mental health
 - b. Affects brain structure
 - c. Hastens brain aging
 - d. Increases risk of psychiatric and neurodegenerative diseases
 - e. Increases frustration

■ Meditation: Meditation is a precise technique for resting the mind and attaining a state of consciousness that is totally different from the normal waking state. Meditation is not a part of any religion; it is a science, which means that the process of meditation follows a particular order, has definite principles and produces results that can be verified.

Importance of meditation:

- a. Enhances strength of the immune response
- b. Helps reduce impact of physical and emotional pain
- c. Improves mood and working memory even under stress
- d. Increase the size of brain
- e. Regular meditation slows thinning of brain tissue
- f. Improves powers of empathy
- g. Increases positivity
- h. Attain enlightenment

- **Pranayam:** Pranayam basically means “control of breath”. One can control the rhythms of pranic energy with pranayama and achieve healthy body and mind. Also pranayama is important means of supplying our body and its various organs with pran or oxygen, it is vital for our survival.
- **Mantra meditation:** It’s a powerhouse of a stress reliever because of all of the ways it can improve an individual’s outlook and overall health. Mantra meditation has been linked to a reduction of chronic stress as well as decreases in heart rate and blood pressure, an increase in immune system functionally and any other benefits.
- **Balanced diet:** A nutritious well balanced diet has powerful stress reducing benefits that improve brain functioning, shore up immune function, lower blood pressure, improve the circulation and reduce toxins from the body.
- **Music:** Music combines frequency, beat, density, tone, rhythm, repetition, loudness and lyrics to extend our language and influence our emotions. Music can enhance positive, calming emotions and relaxing music reduces cortisol levels, the hormone related to stress. Soft, quiet, classical or meditative music can reduce pain and stress.
- **Conclusion:** Thus stress management is an essential part of human life.