**Stress 101**

An Introduction to the Physiology, Detection, Management, and Prevention of Stress

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**Presentation Goals**

- Rules of Professional Conduct require competence and diligence, among other things. To best meet our obligations to our clients and the profession, we need to feel our best, think clearly and use good judgment, and have the stamina to do our best work.
- Reducing our stress levels help to make that happen.
- We should not feel guilty about taking time to make ourselves feel better.
- When we do, everyone wins:
  - Our clients
  - Our families
  - Our co-workers
  - Our friends
  - And us!

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**Presentation Goals (cont.)**

- To provide some practical, easy stress management techniques.
- To provide inspiration and motivation to make stress management and prevention a priority.
  - It’s not enough to know what we should be doing to manage stress.
  - We need to actually work at it and prioritize stress management.
- If we do, we can be healthier, happier, and more productive.
Introduction

- Stress is the tense feeling we experience when changes take place in our lives.
  - Positive and negative changes
- Stress responses are very individualized.
- We shouldn’t be too hard on ourselves if we feel stressed by something that “shouldn’t” stress us out.

Introduction (cont.)

- We want some stress in our lives.
  - Too little results in boredom.
  - Too much takes a physical and mental toll on us.
- To find our optimal level of stress, it is helpful to understand the basics of physiology, detection, and management of stress.
- This presentation is designed to provide an introduction to those basics.

Physiology

- During stress, cortisol is released.
  - We crave sweets.
  - It causes weight gain in the abdomen.
- Epinephrine is released.
  - It’s linked to heart disease.
  - Caffeine also releases this. (In a Duke study, a caffeine pill produced 32% more of this than a placebo.)
Physiology (cont.)

- While we want to reduce cortisol and epinephrine, we want to increase some neurotransmitters in our brain.
- We want serotonin.
  - It boosts mood.
  - It combats the negative effect we experience with stress.
  - Seek out foods rich in Vitamin B.
    - Eggs
    - Leafy greens
    - Salmon

Physiology (cont.)

- Mackerel
- Carbohydrates (within 30 minutes of eating carbs, people feel calmer)
- Milk
- Brief exercise
  - (Protein can interfere with serotonin, so you may want to avoid large amounts of protein at night. Vegetables can improve relaxation.)
    - These foods also help nerves transmit properly, regulate blood sugar, and decrease anxiety by upping the body’s key stress-related compounds called pyruvate and lactate.

Physiology (cont.)

- We want dopamine, as well.
  - It also boosts mood.
  - It combats the negative effect we experience with stress.
    - Eggs
    - Leafy greens
    - Salmon
    - Mackerel
Physiology (cont.)

- Stressors ignite the “fight or flight” response in our systems.
  - Muscles tense.
  - The heart races.
  - Breathing is more rapid.
  - Sugars and fats are released for quick energy.
- Today, though, we can’t fight or flee from our typical stressors.
- Exercise, though, can complete the fight or flight cycle, reducing blood pressure and cholesterol.

Physiology (cont.)

- BEWARE of raising dopamine too high
  - High levels of dopamine (which increases hallucinations in schizophrenics) may cause people to perceive meaning and patterns that don’t exist.
- BEWARE of misattribution of arousal
  - Caffeine, nicotine, and other chemicals may create an artificial sense of stress which we then attribute to innocent sources in our environment.

Detection of Stress

- Think of three things that are causing you stress right now.
- It’s useful to get a sense of our overall stress level.
  - Stress Test
- It’s important to pinpoint which areas in our lives are causing our stress.
- Examples of stressors.
Daily Stressors

- Work
- Traffic
- Noise
- Running late
- Family issues
- Bills
- Misplacing or losing something
- Being around other stressed people
- Waiting in line
- Lack of control
- Some studies indicate a feeling of lack of control is the #1 stressor at work.
- Oversleeping
- Too much/too little responsibility
- Relationship issues
- Shaky economy
- Worry about crime
- Negativity in our lives

Major Events

- Marrying
- Divorcing/breaking up
- Death/loss
- Moving
- Having a baby
- Health problems
- Having surgery
- Going to war
- Diagnosis of illness
- Buying a house
- Having your children leave home/come back
- Addiction
- Promotion/increase in seniority
- Changes in living arrangements
- Noisy neighbors
- Think of examples of stress "Signatures."

Stress "Signatures" — Listening to Our Bodies

- Headaches
- Muscle tension
- Dry mouth
- Digestion problems
- Colds
- Racing heart
- Perspiration
- Teeth grinding
- Ulcers
- Back pain
- Stomachaches
- Chest pain
- Insomnia
- Fatigue
- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Forgetfulness
- Depression
- Apathy
Stress “Signatures”

- Worry
- Confusion
- Cynicism
- Hostility (Type A myth)
- Difficulty concentrating
- Racing/obsessive thoughts
- Overeating/undereating
- Withdrawing
- Blaming others
- Crying easily
- Being accident prone
  - Stressed and depressed people have more on-the-job accidents.
  - Completing tasks with difficulty
  - Trying to do several things at once
  - Talking very fast
  - Smoking
  - Drinking
  - Pacing, twisting hair, etc.

Management/Prevention

- We can’t prevent all stress, so we must learn to manage it.
- So, what can we do to feel better?
- Think of 5 things you are currently doing to manage and prevent stress.
- We need to actively have a stress management plan for our lives.
- Examples of stress management/prevention techniques.

General Techniques

- Exercise
  - Talk to someone about how you’re feeling
    - A trusted friend or confidante
    - A professional
    - Vent on paper and throw it away
    - People who vent are sick less often and miss less work.
- Volunteer
  - Improves perspective
  - Sense of contribution
- Prioritize your hobbies
- Have a pet
  - Lowers blood pressure
  - May lower the number of visits to the doctor
General Techniques

- Have a work-free zone at home.
  - Avoid working in bed if you have insomnia.
  - Learned associations
- Pamper yourself.
  - Massages
  - Just having your hand held releases calming endorphins
- Take a bath.
- Get enough sleep.
  - Use Jamine at night.
  - Extreme sleep deprivation can result in hallucinations.
- Make your commute fun.
  - Personal calls
  - Books on tape
- Practice separating free time from work time.
- Work on developing:
  - A view of changes as challenges
  - A sense of commitment to something
  - A feeling of being in control of your life
  - Stress-resistant people share these traits

At the office

- Open your blinds.
  - Sunshine boosts serotonin.
- Laugh.
  - Get a funny desk calendar.
  - Read a joke online.
  - Improves blood pressure
  - Relaxes muscles
- Progressive muscle relaxation.
  - Relaxing the body can relax the mind.
  - Tighten and release individual muscle groups.
- Helps re-learn how it feels to be relaxed.
- Aromatherapy.
  - Jamine reduces stress, increases performance on analytical tasks, and improves sleep.
  - Make use of state-dependent learning.
  - Performance is improved if conditions are the same as when the information is learned.

At the office

- Be optimistic.
  - It improves immune function.
- Avoid nicotine.
  - Workers are more likely to smoke. (Columbia Univ.)
  - Smokers may be at greater risk for panic attacks.
- Visualization.
  - Spend 5 or 10 minutes a day picturing yourself in a relaxing setting.
  - Picture yourself succeeding at a stressful task.
- Strike a (power) pose.
- Put flowers in your office.
  - Studies show they lift spirits and stimulate positive mood receptors in the brain.
- Listen to music.
  - .5 hr. = 10 mg Valium
- Chew gum.
  - Improves memory by producing insulin in anticipation of food.
At the office

- Exercise — stairs, walk at lunch,
  gym before or after work, back
  parking space
  - Need only 10 minutes to
  improve mood
- Avoid caffeine
  - Okay for a quick, occasional
  mood boost
  - Can function as an anti-
  depressant
  - Small coffee before you drink
  it because this lowers heart
  rate, respiration, and blood
  pressure
  - Avoiding it may lead to
  improved mood and energy
- Stretch
  - Shoulder stretch
  - Back bend
- Deep breathing
  - Belly breaths
- Go outside for lunch
  - Too little natural light
  increases melatonin, the
  sleep hormone
  - Nature images lower blood
  pressure (these can be
  photos).

At the office

- Have those Vitamin B
  foods for lunch
- Take a break (HBR)
- Avoid procrastination
- Communicate immediately and directly
- Drink a lot of water
  - Dehydration curbs blood
  flow to the brain, resulting
  in exhaustion.
  - Strawberries and
  watermelon help hydrate.
  - Eat some chocolate.
    - Chocolate works as an
    anti-depressant, especially
    dark chocolate.
- Use cognitive dissonance.
  - Talk yourself into feeling
  relaxed and happy.
- Do work you like at
  regular intervals (HBR)

At the office

- One last technique:
  - Smile!
    - You don’t have to have a belly laugh to gain
      benefits.
    - Even just a smile can neutralize negative, stress-
      producing thoughts.
- And remember:
  "Stress is not what happens to you. It is what
  you do with what happens to you." — Author
  Unknown
At the office

- Know whether you are an introvert or extrovert and make decisions accordingly when possible.
- Extroverts have a low neocortical stimulus for optimal performance.
- Introverts are the opposite.
- If you must assume a role different from your personality type, be sure and take time for a restorative niche. (Prof. Brian Little, Harvard College)

At the office

- Extroverts are better
  - With caffeine
  - With noise (72 decibels)
  - In emergency situations
  - Working in groups
  - With quick, energetic tasks

- Introverts are better
  - Without caffeine
  - Without noise (55 decibels)
  - In non-emergency situations
  - Working alone or in a small group of people they know
  - With slower, more monotonous tasks

Biodots

- These dots measure body temperature and change color based on stress level.
- Generally, a lower body temperature equals higher stress.
- They are most effective at room temperature.
**Biodots**

- Violet = Very Relaxed
- Blue = Calm
- Turquoise = Relaxing
- Green = Normal/Alert
- Yellow = Unsettled
- Amber = Tense
- Black = Very Tense

**Resources**

- Lawyerbrain.com and Dr. Larry Richard
- Quiet: The Power of Introverts in World that Can't Stop Talking by Susan Cain
Life Stress Test

Based on The Holmes and Rahe Stress Scale Test. In the past 12 to 24 months, which major life events have taken place in your life. Mark down the points for each event that you have experienced this year. Divorce – 73 points. 2 x Moving = 40. Write down the points for each event then add up the points = Total Life Stress Score.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LIFE EVENT (STRESSOR)</th>
<th>VALUE</th>
<th>#/YR</th>
<th>TOTAL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 DEATH OF SPOUSE</td>
<td>100 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 DIVORCE</td>
<td>73 X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3 MARITAL SEPARATION</td>
<td>65 X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 JAIL TERM</td>
<td>63 X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 DEATH OF CLOSE FAMILY MEMBER</td>
<td>63 X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6 MAJOR PERSONAL INJURY OR ILLNESS</td>
<td>53 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>7 MARRIAGE</td>
<td>50 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>8 FIRED FROM WORK</td>
<td>47 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 MARITAL RECONCILIATION</td>
<td>45 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>10 RETIREMENT</td>
<td>45 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>11 MAJOR CHANGE IN HEALTH OF FAMILY MEMBER</td>
<td>44 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>12 PREGNANCY</td>
<td>40 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>13 SEX DIFFICULTIES</td>
<td>39 X</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>14 GAIN OF NEW FAMILY MEMBER</td>
<td>39 X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>15 MAJOR BUSINESS READJUSTMENT</td>
<td>39 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>16 MAJOR CHANGE IN FINANCIAL STATE</td>
<td>38 X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>17 DEATH OF CLOSE FRIEND</td>
<td>37 X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18 CHANGE TO DIFFERENT LINE OF WORK</td>
<td>36 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>19 MAJOR CHANGE IN NUMBER OF ARGUMENTS WITH SPOUSE</td>
<td>35 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>20 MORTGAGE OVER $100,000</td>
<td>31 X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>21 FORCLOSURE OF MORTGAGE OR LOAN</td>
<td>30 X</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>22 MAJOR CHANGE IN RESPONSIBILITIES AT WORK</td>
<td>29 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>23 SON OR DAUGHTER LEAVING HOME</td>
<td>29 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>24 TROUBLE WITH IN-LAWS</td>
<td>29 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>25 OUTSTANDING PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT</td>
<td>28 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 SPOUSE BEGINS OR STOPS WORK</td>
<td>26 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>27 BEGIN OR END SCHOOL</td>
<td>26 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>28 MAJOR CHANGE IN LIVING CONDITIONS</td>
<td>25 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>29 REVISION OF PERSONAL HABITS</td>
<td>24 X</td>
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<tr>
<td>30 TROUBLE WITH BOSS</td>
<td>23 X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>31 MAJOR CHANGE IN WORK HOURS OR CONDITIONS</td>
<td>20 X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>32 CHANGE IN RESIDENCE OR SCHOOLS</td>
<td>20 X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33 MAJOR CHANGE IN RECREATION</td>
<td>19 X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34 MAJOR CHANGE IN CHURCH ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>19 X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 MAJOR CHANGE IN SOCIAL ACTIVITIES</td>
<td>18 X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 MORTGAGE OR LOAN LESS THAN $10,000</td>
<td>17 X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37 MAJOR CHANGE IN SLEEPING HABITS</td>
<td>16 X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38 MAJOR CHANGE IN NUMBER OF FAMILY GET-TOGETHERS</td>
<td>15 X</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>39 MAJOR CHANGE IN EATING HABITS</td>
<td>15 X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>40 VACATIONS, CHRISTMAS</td>
<td>13 X</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>41 MINOR VIOLATIONS OF THE LAW</td>
<td>11 X</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

YOUR TOTAL

0-149 Low susceptibility to stress-related illness
150-299 Medium susceptibility to stress-related illness. Practice relaxation and stress management skills.
300 and over High susceptibility to stress-related illness

www.stressmarket.com for UV Meter Cards, Mood Cards, Mood Pencils, Relax CDs, Stress Thermometer + more.
"Stress is not what happens to you. It is what you do with what happens to you."  *Author Unknown*

**Ways We Relieve Stress**

Circle those you use and put a star by the ones you would like to incorporate into your life.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make a list of what makes you happy</th>
<th>Watch TV</th>
<th>Read a book</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Complete errands</td>
<td>Pat yourself on the back</td>
<td>Enjoy a good meal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a scenic drive</td>
<td>Go to the ocean</td>
<td>Play a musical instrument</td>
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<tr>
<td>Laugh/joke</td>
<td>Listen to music</td>
<td>Get a massage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meditate</td>
<td>Do yoga</td>
<td>Breathe deeply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find a quiet place</td>
<td>Clean/organize</td>
<td>Visit a spa/salon</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use relaxation techniques</td>
<td>Have a cup of tea</td>
<td>Sing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Have a manicure</td>
<td>Talk about your feelings</td>
<td>Take a bath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sleep/rest</td>
<td>Visit a friend</td>
<td>Call a friend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Go to a park</td>
<td>Start a garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about happy memories</td>
<td>Write poetry</td>
<td>Spend time with children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play a game</td>
<td>Vary your place</td>
<td>Buy a treat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take a walk</td>
<td>Use positive self-talk</td>
<td>Write down pros and cons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enjoy a hobby</td>
<td>Take vitamins</td>
<td>Chew gum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult a professional</td>
<td>Catch up on correspondence</td>
<td>Smile</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance</td>
<td>Cry</td>
<td>Stretch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play with a pet</td>
<td>Sit up straight</td>
<td>Schedule free time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Try to see the positive</td>
<td>Take a tour</td>
<td>See a movie</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take a shower</td>
<td>Take a break</td>
<td>Problem-solve</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaze out the window</td>
<td>Use aromatherapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Set goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take a vacation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Light a candle</td>
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</tbody>
</table>