

STRESS MANAGEMENT

The human brain receives messages from several sources, each dealing with separate types of information. Input dealing with everyday matters such as news, music, jobs, relationships, weather, etc., comes from the external environment. Our own bodies provide data concerning movement, digestion, tension, pain, etc., all in the form of messages, sent to the brain. The conscious mind deals with reasoning, logic, decisions, goals planning and conscious activity. The unconscious mind, which includes both the subconscious and the super-conscious, wields the greatest influence. It receives all the messages from our social, spiritual and genetic backgrounds and all the conflicts and disturbances that enter into our consciousness each day. The unconscious mind receives and holds information, neither accepting nor rejecting the message. It does not evaluate as that procedure is reserved for the conscious mind.

From primitive times the human animal has possessed an escape mechanism that even today, under severely threatening conditions, can cause regression to primitive behavior. The fight/flight syndrome, always a means of dealing with fears, threats, attacks and other disturbances, has gained tolerance through evolution with the addition of reaction vs. action and repression vs. depression. Without these survival responses, when the message output volumes reached overload conditions, the escape would be toward the denial of reality. However, the desire for social acceptance provides motivation to cope with and adapt to reality.

Nevertheless, when the conscious mind can no longer handle the message unites overloading the brain, the sub-conscious prepares us for the fight or flight- the heart pumps harder, blood pressure rises, super-strength can be generated. But some-times there is nothing to fight. We can't fight the environment. We can't fight a job, an accident, and a bad decision. What now?

ENTER STRESS/ANXIETY

Unable to fight, the reaction turns to the alternative to flight, which in present day life can prove impossible. Often a state of apathy, depression and/or hyper suggestibility ensues. Negative input finds acceptance. Futility and melancholy develop and an overreaction to the senses develops together with a loss of tolerance. The road turns downhill.

Imagine a group of musicians playing together. Imagine the trumpet player getting a measure or two ahead of the rest. Imagine the saxophone player, trying to figure out what the trumpeter is doing, dropping a measure behind. Imagine the drummer, becoming confused, missing his beats so that the whole group gets off beat. Imagine the conductor waving his arms desperately trying to orient the players. Imagine the cacophony as the musicians collapse, give up and quit playing.

A person experiencing continuing stress may well become subject to such frenzy, in the process developing any or several forms of stress-related illness. While certain types of stress are even desirable (romantic stress, job promotions, winning a lottery), stresses that produce debilitation, depression, excessive smoking, overeating, anger, grief, and similar reactions need attention and usually professional help.

The first recognition of a therapist dealing with stress is likely to be that while the world, or the past if it is a factor in the condition cannot be changed, it is possible to alter the client's perception of and reaction to them. Again, causal factors need to be investigated. And not infrequently regression can be helpful in this process. Stress may be a reaction to people, places, events, or things. The threats may be real or imagined. Remember, the sub-conscious mind does not analyze, and usually by the time depression appears the conscious mind has lost its ability to do so. However, there are several common basic causes of stress, which can be recognized, defined and often eliminated.

WHATS BEHIND IT ALL

Why me? Stress victims ask the question quite often. Many factors enter into the picture of possibilities. Overachievers, typical Type A personalities, are hyper-competitive. They can be addicted to stress. They can enjoy it, until it gets out of control. Victims can learn stress early in life from parents, teachers, relatives and others. Through early experience they simply consider stress a normal part of life; they see it all the time.

Fears, valid or otherwise, can lead to the development of symptoms of stress. They can expand into full-grown phobias and psychiatric disorders. Unrelenting pain or worries over health situations are factors, as are repressed emotions such as hurt, anger grief, etc. Specific incidents are frequently involved, such as the necessity to speak to a group in the course of job performance when such activity is uncomfortable. Medical conditions, including deficiencies, can lead to stress, as can such female experiences as PMS. External factors, such as continuous or intermittent bothersome noise levels, can create or add to stress levels.

Every individual is different in tolerance levels, coping abilities, reactions and therapeutic needs. Dealing with stress is best accomplished through a trained, experienced and sensitive professional who can determine causes and evaluate reactions. Sheer willpower is no the remedy in stress cases. Effective and permanent relief responds to desensitization, which can be brought about through Hypnosis.

It is important to analyze the stress stimuli and the physical and/or emotional responses that they bring about. Through hypnosis positive new responses can be created to replace the devastating reactions of the past. Buried feelings can be brought to the surface and released. Outside pressures can be relieved. And finally, new responses to old disturbances can be induced with major changes in attitudes and reactions.

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