

Stress and Mental Health

NATURE OF STRESS

Stress is basically a physical response when someone is stressed the body switches itself to fight and flight mode and release chemicals like adrenaline, cortisol and norepinephrine and become ready for physical action. Stress is basically a neutral word, it can be positive and as well as negative. If stress is created by desirable effects, it can be termed as Eustress. Eustress is a developmental, healthy and positive response of stress. Distress is the form of stress which is negative, it effects human health and requires observation, examination and strategies to cope with it because It is related to drug abuse, heart diseases, marital problems, alcoholism etc.

CONNECTION WITH HUMAN HEALTH AND ILLNESS

Stress can very much effect the human peace of mind as well as can detoriate human health and lead to some very serious consequences. Our ancient ancestors also suffered from stress but the reason of stress nowadays is entirely different as today we have to face many challenges everyday like paying bills, meeting deadlines and juggling childcare and that make our body react to it the same way. Our natural alarm system triggers the fight and flight response and can lead to serious problems related to our health. (Sherwood, 2017)

HEALTH PROBLEMS

Emotional stress is one of the form which can lead to health problems. Minor stress can lead to stomach-ache like before giving presentation. Emotional stress like anger can cause arrhythmias heart attacks and even can cause death. There is a time when stress start interfering our normal life for a longer period of time it even become more dangerous. The person who is suffering

from stress has very low self-esteem, and remain depressed. stress can lead to negative thoughts first and then it gradually become severe like a person start smoking, overeating and other bad habits like taking drugs and narcotics. These bad habits lead to several diseases like mental and cardiovascular disease

CAUSES OF STRESS

Stress is mainly caused by things happening in your life. Things that made us sad like people, relationships even the lack of money to not be able to fulfil our desires. There is a possibility that only one big thing can cause stress like death of a person beloved to you but small pressures can also lead to stress and this is a reason why sometimes a person is not itself able to identify that why the person is suffering from stress. There are so many things which can undergo a person into stress. Some causes are as follows:

1) Personal

It includes health problems, injury or illness, becoming a parent, organizing any event like group holiday, everyday tasks.

2) Friends and Family

It includes not having good relationship with parents, children, friends and siblings, getting divorced or having break-up.

3) Employment and Study

It includes fear of losing job or retiring, fear of failure and difficulties facing during work

4) Money and Housing

It includes Worrying about poverty, money and having responsibilities

5) Jealousy

Jealousy is also one of the reason that a person can go into stress. Jealousy is basically an emotion. A person can also go in stress if he or she sees someone successful more them him or her. (Meichenbaum, 2017)

GENERALISED ADAPTATION SYNDROME WITH ITS FEATURES

Generalized adaptation syndrome was developed by Hans seyle in 1936. It is a model that basically defines the body behavior and physiological changes towards stress. Generalized adaptation syndrome consist of three stages which are:

1) Alarm Reaction Stage

Alarm reaction is the first stage in which the body experiences some physiological changes. In this stage the body shows fight and flight response which occurs in response to stress. Certain physiological changes like release of cortisol and adrenaline hormone lead to increase heart rate. Behavioral changes occur in this stage is that person become excited and hyperactive. cognitive changes occur in this stage that person try to avoid negative thoughts.

2) Resistance Stage

After alarm reaction the body goes in resistance stage. Heart rate and blood pressure normalize by release of small amount of cortisol in this stage if you overcome the stress by the help of

positive cognitive behavior and reason of stress is resolved than the body start to repair itself but if the situation is not resolved so it may lead to exhaustion stage. Behavioral changes include in this stage are frustration, poor concentration and irritability. the cognitive change occurs in this stage that person remain positive and avoid to resist negative thoughts.

3) Exhaustion Stage

Chronic stress lead to this stage. Suffering from stress for a longer period of time can cause more physiological changes and weaken your immune system which lead to many stress related illnesses. The behavioral changes in this stage include depression, anxiety nausea and decrease stress tolerance. In Cognitive changes the person become very much exhausted and just think negative and remain sad. (Seaward,2017)

DISTINCT STRATEGIES FOR STRESS MANAGEMENT

1) Life style management:

Unfortunately, there is no magic can be done to remove stress from your life but

fortunately you can control it by making bit changes in your life style some of the ways are described under,

- Doing daily exercise will not only help you to keep physically healthy but the nervous energy and hormones release during this time will also help you when you are stressed.
- Take good care about what you drink and eat try to get balanced diet at least three meals per day.
- Get enough sleep of at least six to eight hours.
- Try to regulate your breath by concentrating on breathing out at a slower rate that is on a count of four.

- Make time for fun it will help you to forget the stress element in your life.

(Meichenbaum,2017)

2) Physiological Management:

For stress management there are two physiological methods.

a) Drug treatment

It manages the stress by altering the response of body towards stressor. The drugs usually use are benzodiazepines and beta blockers.

b) Biofeedback

It is an advanced technique in which participant is provided with information regarding the bodily processes and then try to find a muscle relaxation or meditation strategy to decrease the stress. (Greenberg,2017)

3) Cognitive Management

In the treatment of stress cognitive therapy is found to be very much useful. According to the Beck Institute for Cognitive Therapy and Research the patients can feel difference with in three to four weeks which is very much as compare to the other psychoanalytic therapy which takes about years to give result. Following strategies can be helpful,

- Prioritize your task and let go of those that are less necessary.
- Building an oasis.
- Try to make positive probability but prepared for worst.
- Monitor your mood and find effective ways to challenge your negative thought patterns.

COMPARISON OF PHYSIOLOGICAL AND COGNITIVE COPING STRATEGIES

By enhancing the action of biochemical element GABA the drugs slow down the activity of the central nervous system which is also the body's natural form to deal with the stress while the cognitive therapy helps the person to deal with the actual cause of the stress rather than dealing with the stress of the symptoms. The aim of this therapy focus on replacing the negative or irrational thoughts with more positive way of thinking about the reason of stress.

Drug therapy has some serious flaws one of the major problem is drug addiction after some time the patient become addicted to drug and they show withdrawal symptoms upon stopping the drug the major symptoms it includes are irregular heart burn, severe skin rash, seizures, blurred vision, dizziness and drowsiness while in case of cognitive therapy there is no risk of such addictions and hence no withdrawal symptoms. However still there are some weaknesses too one of the major weakness is that it requires special training and is comparatively less effective in treating the acute stressful conditions after at least six sitting the patient start responding and this should have maintained till six months. (Koster,2017)

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