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We want to help you
Address Your Stress
to live happy and healthy



What is Stress?

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The mental, physical and emotional reactions you experience as a result of the demands of your life





Positive Stress

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Good Stress – Eustress

- Is short term
- Is pleasant and beneficial
- Improves physical and mental efficiencies
- Motivates us and improves performance
- Stimulates creativity
- Is essential to development and growth

Examples

- Buying a new home
- Getting a promotion
- Having a baby / adoption
- Getting married
- Moving to a new city



Negative Stress

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Bad Stress – Distress

- Doesn't fade, but builds
- Can be harmful day after day
- Is perceived as outside of our coping abilities
- Can impair functioning
- Drains your energy
- Can lead to mental and physical problems

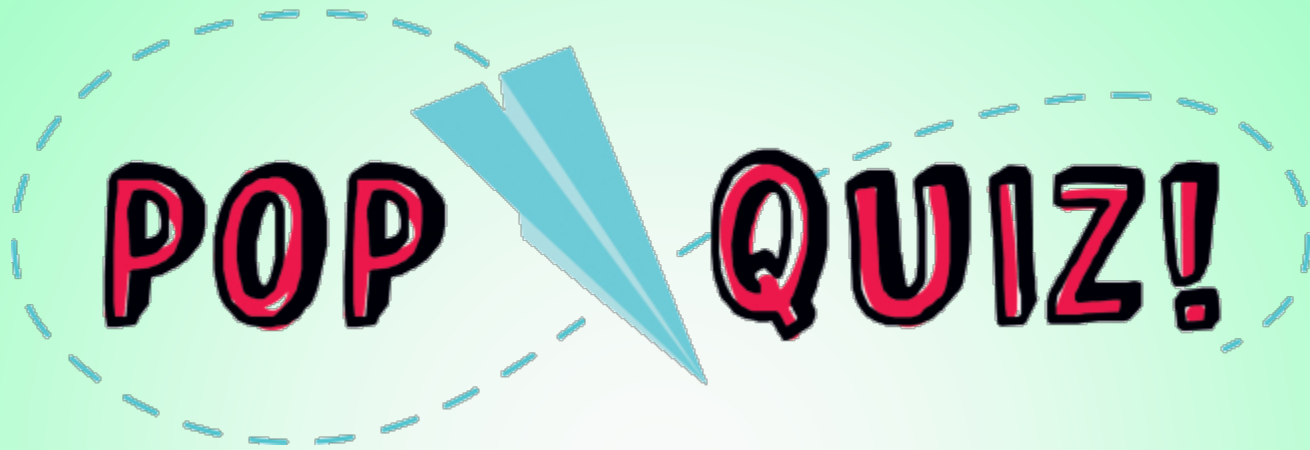
Examples

- Death of a loved one
- Divorce
- Illness
- Job or financial problems
- Loneliness



True or False?

Everyone responds to stress in the same way?



False!

Stress is all about perception



The Stress Response

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What is fight or flight stress response?



- Your heart speeds up
- You breathe faster
- Your blood pressure increases
- You get a burst of energy



Did you know:

An estimated

75-90%

of all visits to primary
care physicians are for
stress-related problems



Source: American Institute of Stress, <https://www.stress.org/Americas-1-health-problem>



What causes our stress?

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Internal Stressors

- Fears
- Uncertainty or worries
- Pessimistic attitude
- Self-criticism
- Unrealistic expectations or beliefs
- Perfectionism
- Low self-esteem
- Excessive or unexpressed anger
- Lack of assertiveness

External Stressors

- Major life changes
- Environment
- Unpredictable events
- Family
- Relationships
- Workplace
- Social
- Financial



Workplace Stressors

- Increased workload and demand
- Personality conflicts
- Lengthy commutes
- Work/life balance



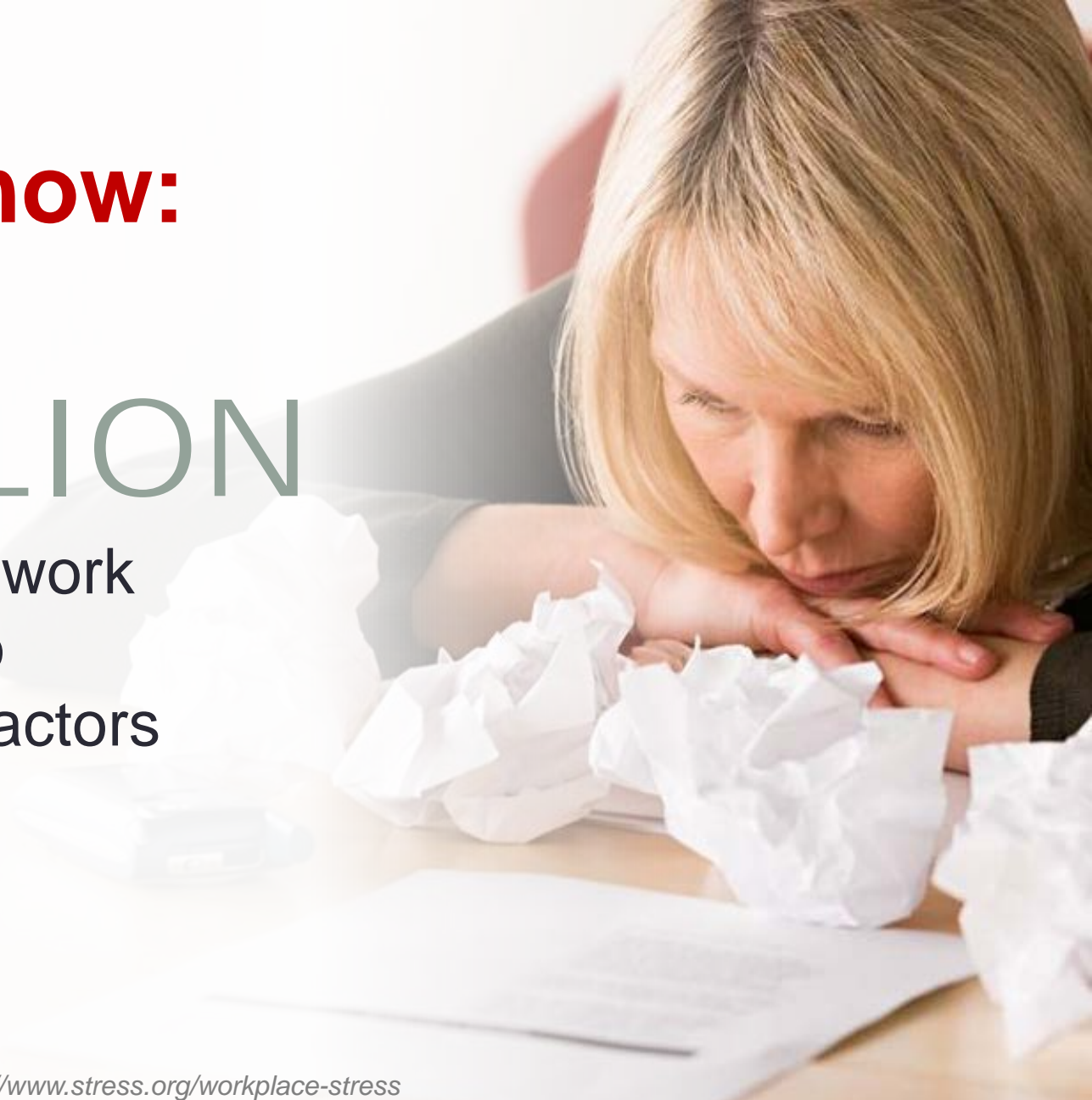


Did you know:

Nearly

1 MILLION

Americans miss work
every day due to
stress-related factors



Source: American Institute of Stress, <https://www.stress.org/workplace-stress>



The Impact of Stress

The impact of stress on the mind and body may include:

- Increased heart rate
- Increased respiration
- Increased blood pressure
- Burn out
- Long-term stress can become chronic stress



Chronic Symptoms of Stress

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Asthma

Insomnia

Cardiovascular Disease

Skin problems

Thinning hair

Stunted growth

Belly fat

Memory loss

Immune deficiency

Headaches

Reproductive
disorders

Back pain

Depression

Digestive problems

Appetite changes



Coping with Stress

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Negative Coping Methods

- Drinking excessive amounts of alcohol/smoking /drug use or abuse (prescript., illegal drugs, etc.)
- Denial
- Blaming others
- Indulging
- Worrying
- Revenge
- Procrastinating
- Acting violently towards others
- Emotional eating (bingeing / undereating)
- Withdrawing from people / Avoidance

Positive Coping Methods

- Breathing / Meditation
- Getaways / Spending time alone
- Finding a hobby
- Socializing with friends or family
- Listening to music
- Spending time with pets
- Watching a comedy / Laughter
- Volunteering
- Exercising



Identify Your Stress Triggers

The best way to cope with stress is to try to find a way to **change** the circumstances that are causing it

Keep a stress journal

- Make a list of demands on your time and energy
- Record negative responses to stress
- Record the day and time
- Give brief description of the situation
- Include a stress intensity rating (1-5)





Mood, Food and Stress

Reaction to stress can impact our **eating habits** including:

- Emotional eating
- Eating comfort foods
- Eating too little



True or False?

Holiday stress is fake.



False!

Holiday stress can affect anyone, even children.



Holiday Stress

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There are 3 triggers to consider:

1

Relationships

- Family tension or conflicts
- Feelings of isolation and sadness

2

Financial

- Overspending can add anxiety

3

Demand

- Extra time for shopping, food preparation and social events
- Overextending can cause stress or illness

Stress Management Techniques

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1. Time out
2. Progressive muscle relaxation
3. Thought-stopping
4. Breathing

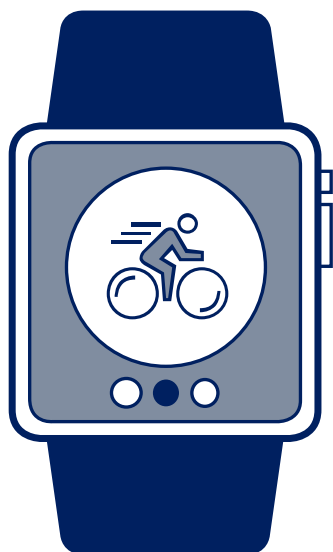
The secret to making these four techniques work is to:

- Practice them several times a week, until you feel comfortable
- Remember to use them
- Don't give up on them too soon

Wellness Tips to Manage Stress

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- Manage time better
- Take time to relax
- Exercise
- Reframe thoughts
- Organize clutter
- Laugh
- Focus on what matters



When to Seek Professional Help

Signs to pay attention to:

- Stress is affecting your health, family and life
- You find it difficult to sleep
- You engage in unhealthy habits
- You have feelings and thoughts that are hard to talk about
- You get angry or frustrated often
- You have a sense of hopelessness
- You are depressed, sad, tearful or feel that life is not worth living



BCBSTX Resources

Well onTarget®

- Health Assessment
- Self-Management Program- Managing Stress
- Coaching for Stress Management
- Stress Tracker

<https://healthselect.bcbstx.com/content/health-and-wellness-incentives/well-ontarget>

Fitness Program

You can call the Fitness Program toll-free at **(888) 762-BLUE (2583)**, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. – 9 p.m., in any U.S. time zone.

<https://healthselect.bcbstx.com/content/health-and-wellness-incentives/fitness-program>





Additional Resources

The American Institute of Stress

www.stress.org

National Institute of Mental Health

www.nimh.nih.gov

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

Alcohol Abuse and Crisis Intervention

1-866-949-7195

EAP assistance :

To find out if your agency has an EAP please visit your agency website.





Thank you!