



Unit V – Wellness, Fitness and First Aid

Chapter 8 - Understanding and Controlling Stress

Section 1 – Understanding and Controlling Stress



What You Will Learn to Do

Assess how stress impacts your life



Objectives

1. Differentiate between stress and anxiety in overall health
2. Identify the physical and psychological effects of stress
3. Practice prevention of stress overload including relaxation and anger management techniques
4. Identify leadership strategies that promote healthy stress levels within a group
5. Explore positive ways to deal with depression and anxiety



Key Terms

- Dilated -** Having been widened; expanded
- Fight-or-flight Response -** An involuntary reaction to an immediate danger or threat, which prepares a person physically either to respond to the danger or run away
- Migraine -** A severe, recurring headache, usually affecting only one side of the head, characterized by sharp pain and often accompanied by nausea, vomiting and visual disturbances



Key Terms

Anxiety -

Eager, often agitated desire; one's anxiety to make a good impression, for example

Depression -

Psychiatric disorder characterized by an inability to concentrate; insomnia; loss of appetite; feelings of extreme sadness, guilt, helplessness, and hopelessness; thoughts of death



Key Terms

Meditation -

A contemplative discourse, usually on a religious or philosophical subject

Visualization -

To make visible

**Manic-depressive
Illness -**

Bipolar disorder

Generalized -

Generally prevalent



Introduction

Stress in small doses is a normal, healthy part of life.

However, stress that continues over long periods of time can lead to exhaustion and possible mental or physical illness.



The media often portrays the teen years as a carefree time with few major responsibilities and lots of new and exciting experiences.



Introduction

Expectations for the future can be exhilarating, but can also result in anxiety and pressure to succeed.

As teenagers make their way to adulthood they experience a range of **emotions** and **changes** that can make their high school years very stressful.





What is Stress?

Stress is the way your body reacts and adjusts to the psychological and physical demands of life.



By creating **periods of rest** that follow periods of stress, you can make yourself better prepared to manage the next stressful time.



What is Stress?

Experiencing constant stress without a break often has a negative effect on people.

Eventually, constant stress can affect a person psychologically and physically, disrupting normal behavior and resulting in illness.

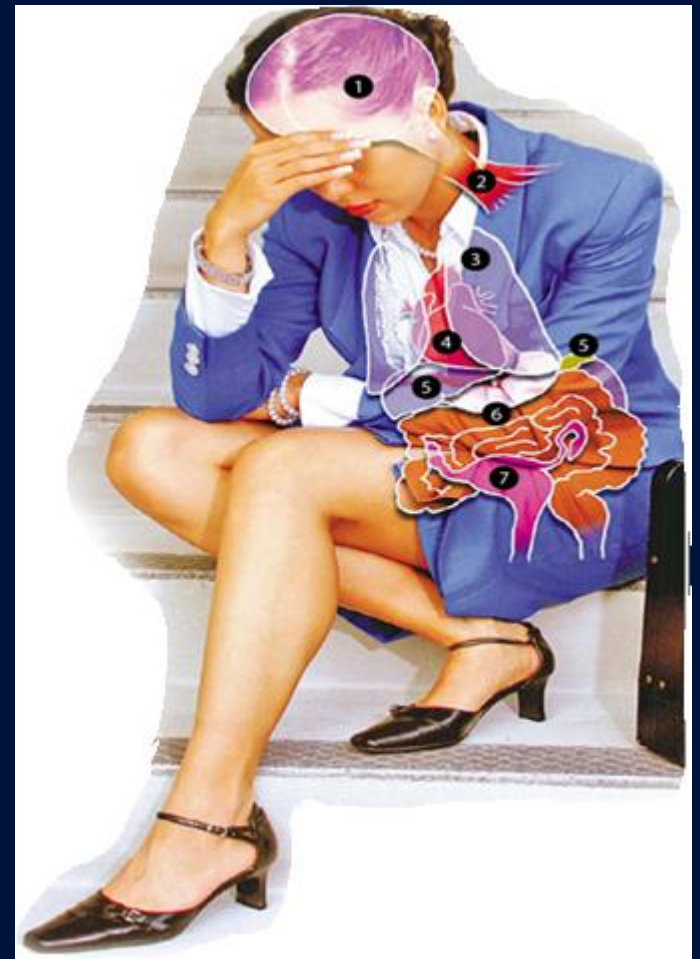


When your mind perceives a situation as stressful, it triggers a series of **physical** and **chemical reactions** in your body.



How Stress Affects the Body

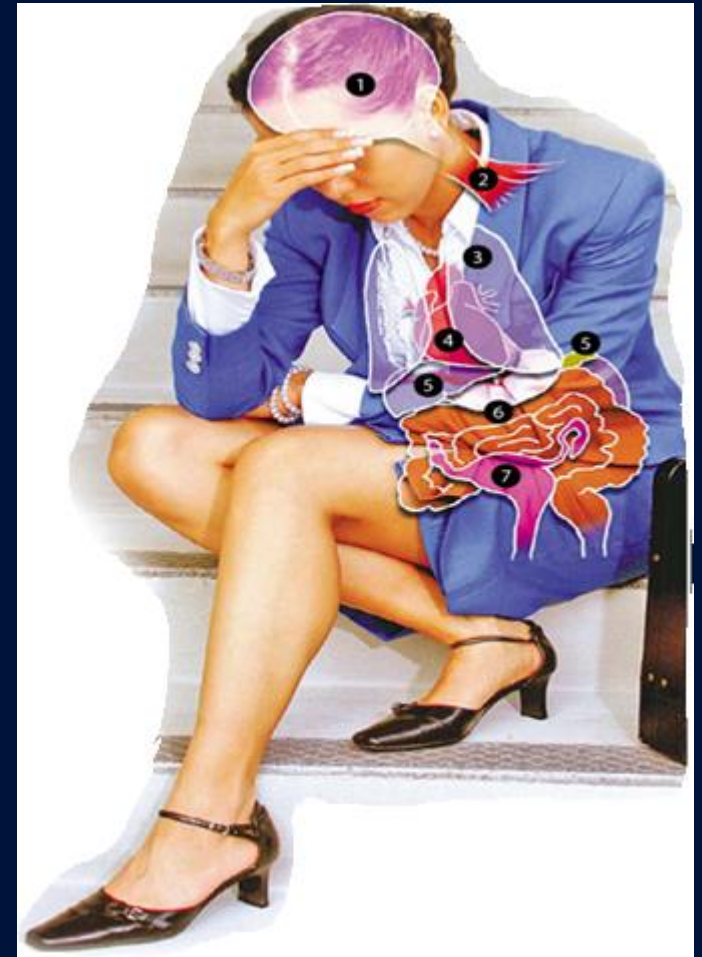
1. **Nervous System** – the body suddenly shifts its energy resources to fighting off the perceived threat.
2. **Musculoskeletal System** – contraction of muscles for extended periods can trigger tension headaches and migraines.





How Stress Affects the Body

3. **Respiratory System** – Stress can make you breathe harder and cause hyperventilation.
4. **Cardiovascular System** – Increase in heart rate and stronger contraction of the heart muscle.
5. **Endocrine System** – The body sends signals from the hypothalamus, causing the adrenal cortex to produce cortisol (stress hormones).





How Stress Affects the Body

6. **Gastrointestinal System** –

Esophagus – Stress may prompt you to eat much more or much less than you usually do.

Stomach – Stress can cause nausea or pain.

Bowels – Stress can affect digestion and which nutrients your intestines absorb.



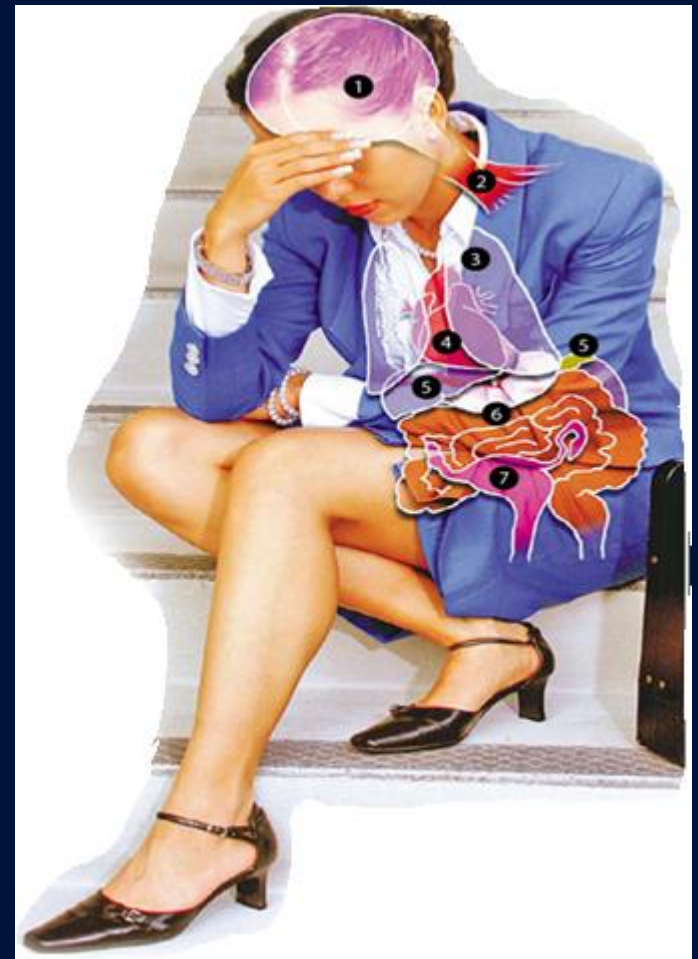


How Stress Affects the Body

7. Reproductive System –

In men, excess cortisol can affect the normal functioning of the reproductive system.

In women, stress can cause absent or irregular menstrual cycles or more-painful periods.

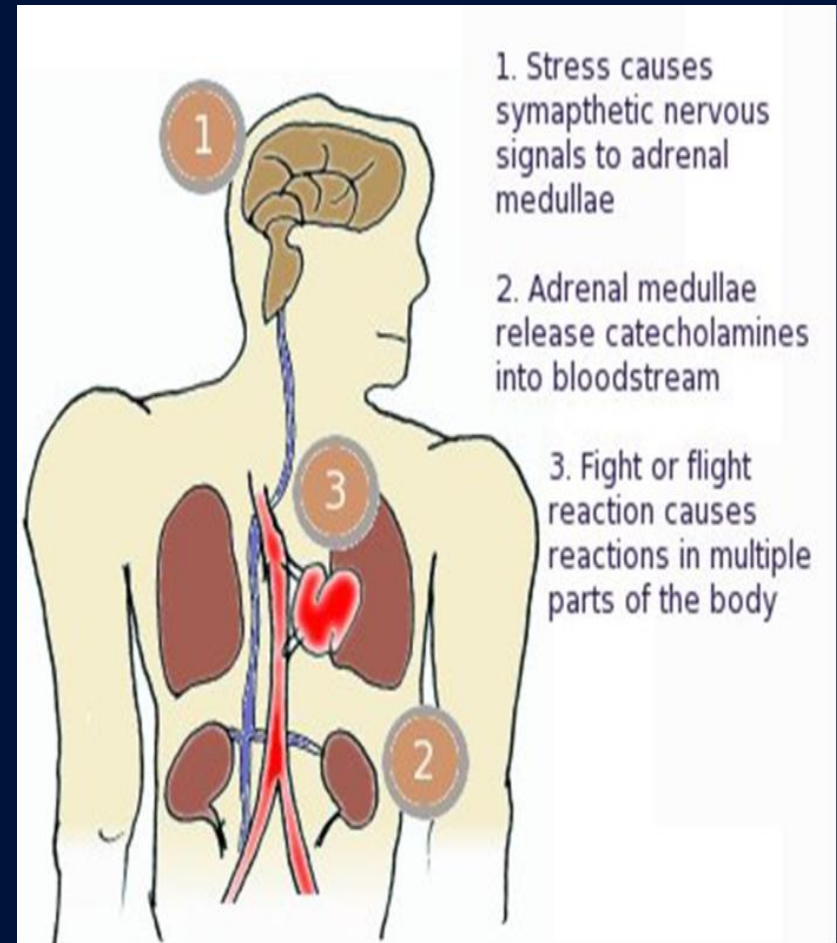




How Stress Affects the Body

While these internal reactions to stress may not be obvious to you, noticeable results in your body might include:

- Increased heart rate
- Increased breathing rate
- Muscle tension
- Dilated pupils
- Cold hands
- Dry mouth





How Stress Affects the Body

For modern man, most stressful situations are not life threatening and do not require a physical response.

Yet common-place, everyday stresses like being stuck in a traffic jam or pushing hard to finish a report still cause the same physical reactions as those needed for fight or flight.





How Stress Affects the Body

If the source of stress continues, it may result in the following physical problems:

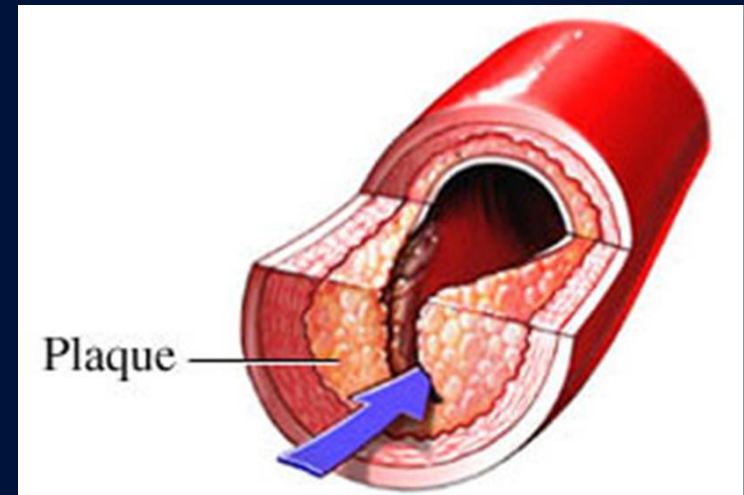
- Insomnia
- Teeth Grinding
- Diarrhea
- Indigestion
- Ulcers
- Nausea
- Backaches
- Tics or twitches
- Headaches
- **Migraines**
- Stuttering
- Allergies
- Asthma
- High blood pressure
- Heart disease



How Stress Affects the Body

There is a connection between continual stress and heart disease.

Because most of modern man's stressful situations do not require physical action, the fat that is left unused in the bloodstream collects on the artery walls and contributes to **heart disease**.





Psychological Effects of Stress

Generally, the first indications that a person may have of stress overload are certain feelings like irritability or worrying.

These feelings can intensify over time.

Continued stress may cause symptoms such as....





Psychological Effects of Stress

- **Irritability**
- Excessive worrying
- **Anxiety**
- Inability to Relax
- **Forgetfulness**
- Disorganization
- **Inability to concentrate**
- Inability to complete tasks
- **Lack of energy**
- Trouble with relationships
- **Changes in eating habits**
- Use of alcohol or drugs
- **Lowered self-esteem**
- Feelings of discouragement
- **Feelings of guilt or self-blame**
- Emotional overreactions
- **Sense of doom**
- Disinterest in world and life
- **Dissatisfaction with routine**
- Avoiding people or activities
- **Feelings of hopelessness**
- Depression



Causes of Stress

Causes of stress and levels of stress experienced under certain circumstances vary from person to person. It depends on the person's personality and tolerance for different situations and experiences.

Things that make your friend nervous may not bother you at all.



So, do not compare yourself with others when it comes to stress.

What is important is that you understand what causes stress and learn to manage it before the stress "mismanages" you.



Causes of Stress

Personal Habits:

Personal habits can contribute to stress, if they are negative.

- Poor time management
- Poor diet
- Irregular sleep habits
- Lack of exercise

Social Activities:

Social activities can create stress for young people.

- Conflicts with friends or family
- Peer pressure to use alcohol, tobacco or drugs
- Peer pressure to engage in a sexual relationship
- Pressure to be popular
- Lack of money



Causes of Stress

Major Life Changes:

- Death in the family
- Severe illness in the family
- Parents' divorce
- Parent remarries
- Moving or changing schools

Environmental Changes:

- Air and noise pollution
- Feeling confined
- Uncomfortable temperature
- Feeling unsafe in home, school or neighborhood
- Poor lighting



Causes of Stress

Responsibilities:

Personal responsibilities are placed on everyone at one time or another, and can be stressful. Examples would be:

- Participating in too many activities
- Having unrealistic expectations of yourself
- Constant deadlines
- Concern about grades
- Concern about college and career decisions
- Having to work and go to school
- Having to care for younger brothers or sisters



Stress Strategies

There is no way to completely eliminate stress from life. In fact, a stress-free life would not even be desirable, because stress in reasonable amounts aids **performance, creativity, and problem solving.**

It's common to feel stressed in today's hectic world.

The key is to recognize signs of stress overload, and learn to manage it.



Stress Strategies

Preventing Stress Overload:

- Get plenty of sleep
- Eat well-balanced meals
- Exercise regularly
- Maintain a positive outlook
- Manage your time with daily, weekly and/or monthly schedules
- Take care of your problems as soon as possible; avoiding them will not make them go away
- Keep a journal of the situations you find stressful
- Develop a hobby or participate regularly in an activity you enjoy
-more on next slide....



Stress Strategies

- Take some time every day to do something you find relaxing
- Talk over problems with people you trust and who you know are good listeners
- Accept that throughout life you will encounter stressful situations that you cannot or should not avoid
- If possible, do not participate in activities you find stressful
- Be prepared when you know you will have to face a stressful situation
- Do not use tobacco, alcohol or other drugs
- Limit the number of changes in your life if you can
- Learn a relaxation technique like **meditation**, **visualization** or deep breathing



Relaxation Techniques

Deep Breathing

1. While closing your eyes, take a deep breath in through your nose so that your abdomen expands.
2. Slowly exhale through your mouth, letting all the air out of your lungs and allowing your stomach to contract.
3. Repeat for 5 to 10 minutes.



Relaxation Techniques

The Worry Box

1. Start deep breathing.
2. Visualize a box that has a lock and key.
3. Imagine yourself putting all your worries and fears in the box, then closing the lid, and locking it with the key.
4. Imagine yourself putting the key somewhere out of sight—like under a mattress or on the top shelf of a closet—and, therefore, out of mind.



Relaxation Techniques

Meditation

1. Find a quiet place where you can be alone for at least 10 minutes.
2. Sit on the floor with your legs crossed. Keep your back and neck straight. Relax your arms with your hands in your lap or on your knees—palms up or down.
3. Close your eyes and try to empty your mind.



Relaxation Techniques

Quick Calming Response

1. Turn inward and listen to a sound or word that you find relaxing and choose to use when stress overload hits.
2. As you repeat the sound or word inside yourself, slowly take deep breaths in and out, visualizing the release of the “tense air” from your body with each exhaled breath.



Relaxation Techniques

Progressive Relaxation

1. Sit or lie down in a comfortable position and begin deep breathing.
2. As you inhale, tighten the muscles in your head and neck area.
3. Relax the tensed muscles as you slowly exhale.
4. Continue with all parts of your body, working your way from head to foot.



Letting Off Steam

1. Take several deep breaths, releasing tension with each exhale.
2. Close your eyes; visualize yourself in a calming situation/place .
3. Take a break; if possible, remove yourself from the problem or situation.
4. Analyze the importance of the situation.
5. If something is important to you and you can take action, confront the person or situation calmly.
6. Work off tension with a physical activity, like screaming into a pillow, taking a walk, or lifting weights.



Stress and Leadership

As a leader, you should learn to manage your own stress effectively, so that you do not create a negative environment for your followers.

Stress in groups can be increased to a counterproductive, unhealthy level - when leaders....

- Act unpredictably
- Constantly find fault with their followers
- Set up a win-lose situation in which either they are right and their followers are wrong or vice versa
- Demand too much or too little of their followers





Stress and Leadership

Leaders can keep a group's stress to healthy levels by:

- Allowing some participation in the decision-making process; this promotes team spirit and cooperation within the group
- Giving credit where it is due and praise where warranted
- Offering constructive criticism when necessary
- Having a good working knowledge of the tasks the group needs to perform
- Monitoring and tracking tasks as they are performed and offering guidance when necessary



Stress and Leadership

As a leader, you must also be aware of any indications that cadets are feeling or acting “stressed out.”





Depression

People often say, “Oh, I’m so depressed” when they are having a bad day or because some unhappy event has recently occurred.

Sadness and grief are normal reactions to certain events in life.





Depression

However, **major depression** is a serious illness that requires treatment.

It affects the whole body and involves thoughts, feelings, bodily functions and behaviors.



An episode of depression can occur once in a person's life, or many times, lasting for months, years or a lifetime.

He/she may have a variety of symptoms to different degrees.



Depression

Many of these symptoms of depression are similar to symptoms of stress, such as:

- Constantly feeling sad or “empty”
- Feeling hopeless, worthless and helpless
- Unable to make decisions, remember things or concentrate
- Loss of interest in normally pleasurable activities
- Irritability
- Disinterest in school, at home and in other activities
- Not caring about appearance



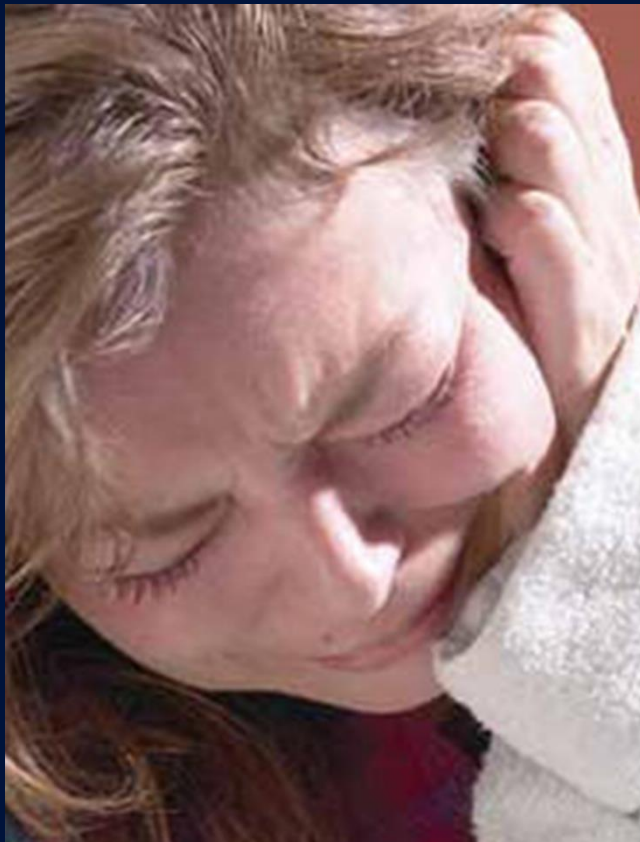
Depression

More symptoms of depression are:

- Avoiding people; staying alone most of the time
- Problems falling asleep and getting up
- Loss of appetite
- Feeling tired and “slowed down” all the time
- Chronic aches and pains and digestive problems
- Frequent thoughts of death and/or suicide
- Suicide attempts



Depression



It is important to remember that **depression** is a real illness and not caused by personal weakness.

Manic-depressive illness seems to occur in people whose genetic makeup is different than those who do not become ill.



Depression

As with stress, **physically active people** who eat well and get plenty of sleep tend to feel less depressed than people with less healthy lifestyles.

If you are feeling mildly depressed....



- Do some things you enjoy
- Try something you've always wanted to do
- Talk to friends
- Spend time outside
- Try not to pressure or push yourself for awhile



Depression

If you know someone who is exhibiting signs of depression, take the time to listen to him or her. Often, depressed people are not fun to be around.



They may even try to push you away, but they really need a friend to understand and encourage them to try to make some changes.

If after giving these suggestions a try, you think his or her depression is worsening or becoming long-term, encourage your friend to seek help.



Depression

Some places or people that can offer help for all types of emotional disorders include:

- Doctors
- Family services
- Private clinics
- Hospitals
- Psychologists
- Social agencies
- Mental health clinics





Anxiety

Anxiety is a feeling that everyone experiences occasionally, when dealing with things they fear or worry about. It can give you a spurt of energy and sharpen your mind.

Too much anxiety, however, can be harmful and lessen your ability to perform.





Anxiety

To keep anxiety from getting the best of you, admit to yourself those things you fear and/or worry about. Being unprepared will only fuel your anxiety.

When a person experiences anxiety over a long period of time that is related to so many worries and fears that the anxiety has become **generalized**, the person is suffering from **free-floating anxiety**.





Anxiety

An **anxiety attack** is a strong, sudden sense of anxiety for no apparent reason, that lasts only a few minutes. When having such an attack, a person feels panic and extreme stress accompanied by:

- Dizziness
- Faintness
- Rapid heartbeat
- Excessive perspiration
- Nausea

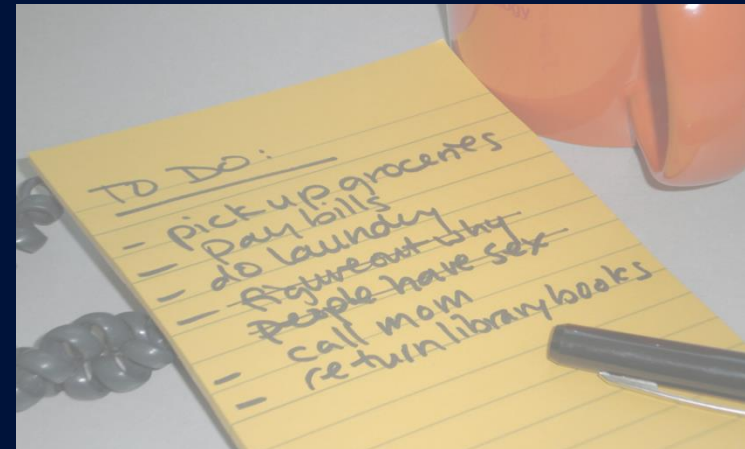


People suffering from excessive anxiety, whether free-floating or anxiety attacks, should seek help from a counselor who can help them reduce or learn to deal with their anxiety.



Conclusion

Humans experience a wide range of emotions, and not all of them are pleasant.



Stress can easily get out of hand because of hectic, hurried schedules and pressures to do either too many things or things we do not necessarily enjoy.



Conclusion

So, to be prepared for the stressful events that will surely pop up throughout your life, you should maintain a healthy lifestyle so that you are better able to handle whatever life throws your way.

Remember that if these uncomfortable emotions ever become extreme, your mental and physical well-being may be threatened. Know where you can go for some help along the way.





Questions?

