



Stressed Out!!

Relaxation Methods for You and Your Patient

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Effects of Stress on Your Health

“Current studies show that stress or distress may have a significant effect on the onset, the course, and the management of many, if not all, diseases”.

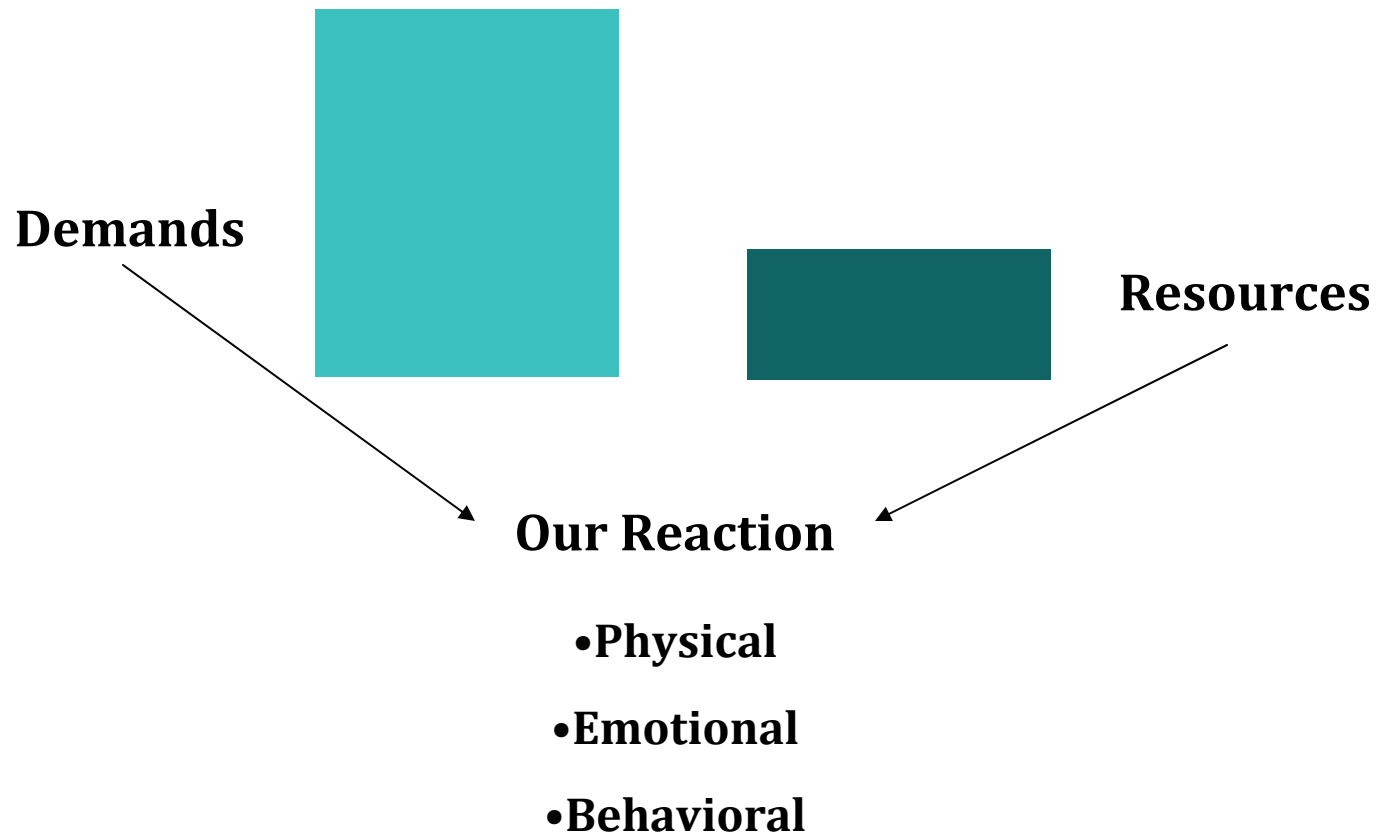
- Benson-Henry Institute for Mind Body Medicine at
Massachusetts General Hospital

Americans Biggest Health Concern

- Americans identify stress as their number one health concern
- More than 50% of adults in the U.S. report high stress on a daily basis
- Studies show that between 60% and 90% of all physician visits are for stress-related complaints

- source: Benson-Henry Institute
For Mind Body Medicine

What is Stress ?



History of Stress

- Also called the *fight-or-flight* response
- Identified by Dr. Walter Cannon of Harvard Medical School almost 100 years ago
- Critical to survival of primitive humankind as it prepared body for a physical reaction to a threat - fight or flee

Physiology of Stress

Whether stress is real or imagined,
physical or emotional:

The hypothalamus causes sympathetic
nervous system to release hormones
which moves you into a state of arousal

What Happens Under Stress?

- Metabolism increases
- Heart beats faster
- Muscles tense
- Breathing become shallow
- Perspiration begins
- Blood flow to organs and extremities decreases
- Immune and digestive system functioning is inhibited



Benefits of Stress Response

- Useful in emergencies
- Motivates you to accomplish tasks
- Increases efficiency
- Increases performance

Once stress threshold is exceeded without the balance from the relaxation response there is a negative impact



Mind/Body Interventions

Evidence demonstrates that mind/body interventions can improve clinical outcomes

- Cognitive/behavioral therapy- positive thinking
- Relaxation response training
- Lifestyle modifications- nutrition and exercise
- Coping strategies

Relaxation Response

- Dr. Herbert Benson, leading researcher
- A state of deep rest – polar opposite of stress response
 - Brings balance to your system
 - Slows breathing
 - Decreases metabolism, blood pressure
 - Slows heart rate
 - Relaxes muscles
 - Increases levels of nitric oxide



Session Goals

- Practice several techniques to help you elicit the relaxation response
- Experience the benefit of relaxation
- Share these techniques with your patients

Relaxation Techniques

- Deep Abdominal Breathing
- Progressive Muscular Relaxation
 - Autogenic Training
 - Guided Imagery



Guidelines for Relaxation

- Be aware of muscle tension
- Pay attention to internal feedback
- Just let go
- Focus your mind
- Quiet, warm environment
- Comfortable position
- Belief in method
- Regular practice

Progressive Muscular Relaxation

- Developed in 1920's by Dr. Edmund Jacobson
- Muscles relax more deeply after tensing and releasing
- Use for whole body or specific muscles
- Conditions you to relax muscles during exhalation

Autogenic Training

- Developed in 1930's by Dr. Johannes Schultz
- Uses images of melting away tension
- Elicits feelings of heaviness and warmth
- Important to end with flexing/stretching



Other Relaxation Methods

- Meditation
- Yoga
- Tai Chi