

Management of Stress & Anxiety

Action Plan Part III



What is Stress?

- The physical and emotional reactions that a person experiences when faced with stressors

What are stressors?

- Events or situations in everyday life that require us to make an adaptation or change

What stressful situations do you experience?

- Personal
 - Personal illness/handicap
 - Change in financial status
- Work, daily activities and environment
 - Change in ability to dress, shower, shop
 - Loss of job, disability leave, retirement
- Family and social network
 - Separation/divorce
 - Illness or death of a relative
 - Conflicts with family members or friends

Stress Reactions

Fear – Normal reaction to a present danger

Symptoms

- Increased heart rate
- Shallow, rapid breathing
 - Similar to feeling SOB
- Sweating and muscle tension

Stress Reactions

Anxiety – Involves constantly worrying and anticipating stressful situations

Panic Attack – An exaggerated, irrational and often sudden fear or anxiety reaction

Being in an anxious or panicked state does not help your stressors go away. It will potentially make you tired, tense and can even cause shortness of breath. Being in a more relaxed or calm state may even help you better deal with stressors.

Understanding your reaction

Some people experience anxiety that they cannot relate to a stressful situation. It is easier to deal with the situation if you are aware of the cause. Take a few moments to relax and evaluate the situation you are in to find the cause. Here are some questions you can use to reflect:

- What is the most important stressful situation that you are dealing with these days? Does it make you anxious?
- How does your body react when you are anxious? What do you do about it?
- Can you think of other actions that would help you cope with this situation in the future?

Strategies to Break the Cycle

- Recognize & understand your feelings
- Examine and investigate your fears
- Do not worry about future events
- Plan your actions in advance
- Do things you enjoy

Strategies to break the cycle

- Try to solve one problem at a time
- Let yourself make mistakes
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Use humor
- Ask for help



What do you do to manage stress?

Relaxation techniques

- Visualization
- Positive thinking
- Deep breathing
- Listening to music
- Meditation



Visualization

Concentrate on positive images

- Like “mental movies”
 - Persons, places or things
- Begin to relax using ALL your senses
 - Cruise ship, see the clear blue sky, hear the water, smell
 - The more senses you bring in, the stronger the effect
- End your session by retaining your image

Positive Thinking



Negative, stressful thoughts use up energy and make you feel tired

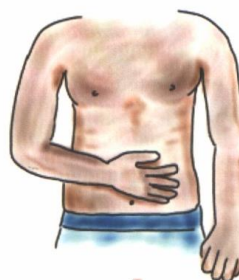
- Recognize that you are dwelling on something negative
- Imagine a big stop sign and tell yourself to “stop”
- Switch the negative image to something pleasant or relaxing

Deep Diaphragm Breathing

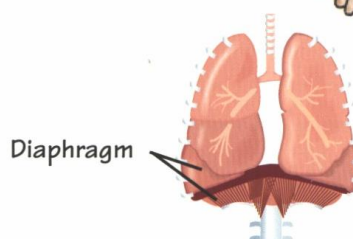
Deep breathing is an excellent way to relax.

Practice your diaphragm breathing to control your stress and anxiety.

- 1 Relax your shoulders.
- 2 Put one hand on your abdomen.
- 3 Inhale and feel your abdomen expand.



- 4 Contract your abdominal muscles.
- 5 Exhale using pursed-lip technique.



Expressing yourself

In a situation with friends, family or partner, how do you express yourself?

- How do you express yourself?
 - Aggressively
 - Passively
 - Assertively
- Aggressively may cause anxiety, panic, strain in the relations...
- Passively will cause tiredness, frustration, loss of self-respect...
- Assertively will save you energy and let you express your true feelings, as well as make you feel good about yourself.

Action Plan – I feel worse

- Stress can lead to an increase in shortness of breath, increased heart rate and perspiration
- A stressful situation can be controlled without medications
 - Use the breathing techniques & body position
 - If a physical action occurs you may need to use your bronchodilator
 - Note the difference between shortness of breath from emotions and from a chest infection

Action Plan – I feel much worse

- If your symptoms get worse or do not improve, contact your resource person or go to the ER

Action Plan – I am in danger

- In these situations - Call 911
 - Extremely short of breath
 - Confused and/or drowsy
 - Having chest pain

Support

- Family and friends
 - Learn to ask for help and express yourself
- Health care providers
- Support groups
- Local information available



Summary

- Stress is a natural part of our lives and can cause anxiety
- Lung disease and difficulty breathing can cause increased anxiety
- You cannot eliminate all of your stress but you can choose how to react
- Practice the strategies presented today whenever you feel stressed or anxious
- If symptoms increase follow your Action Plan

Reflection Activity

Incorporate these stress management strategies into your life.



1. Think of the last time you felt stressed. What was the cause (stressor)?
2. Which techniques discussed today could you use to better manage your stress