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Counseling for Stress Reduction

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Abstract

Stress is a common condition of disequilibrium human mind wherein physical activities and thinking process are disturbed and interrupted. Any individual under stress, irrespective of its causes, generally fails to apply his wisdom. Hence, it needs to be corrected before long. Counseling is one of the ways for stress reduction. The individual undergoing stress has to accept the levels of his/her stress and must be willing to co-operate with the counselor with total faith and commitment. The expert and experienced counselor must work in good faith and conviction

Introduction

According to the law of physics, stress arises whenever the internal resistance of anybody falls short of its external load. The body develops certain deformity when the external load continues to be more than its inherent internal resistance.

Likewise, when the human body consisting of physical body, mind and intellect, fails to resist the external pressures, the stress is felt by a person. If the situational pressures continue to increase its intensity as well as density, the body gets afflicted by stress and distress. Its continuance is excessively harmful as that may likely to result in severe ailments like diabetes, cardiac arrest, depression, mental fatigue, nervousness etc. Hence, it needs to be reduced and controlled to an extent possible. R.H. Cohen (1) examined several issues relating to stress and brought forth a few specific conclusions given below in short:

- Minimum level of stress is necessary for activation of a specific task,
- Time sets right stress or distress both,
- Continual brooding over the issue accelerates the stress level,
- Stress reduces capacity to function effectively, and
- Distress leads to chronic mental disorder.

Hypothesis

It is in the fitness of things to deal with the clear hypothesis that stress reduction is attainable if an individual is willing to accept his/her stress and undertakes steps for its reduction.

Objectives

This paper aims at defining the ailment of stress and its direct causes and offering certain preventive measures for stress reduction

Definition of stress

In the field of psychology, different experts have given different definitions and those however cannot be discussed in this paper. The generally accepted definition of stress in the words of Keith Davis (2), “Stress is a condition of strain on one’s emotions, thought processes, and physical condition”. Thus, the stress is (a) state of mind, (b) disturbed by any external stimulus, (c) affecting the normal activities of mind and body.

Causes of stress

Psychologists like, Abraham Maslow,(1) and Richard Hemingway,(2) have classified the major causes into two categories, namely,

- a. Attitudinal Causes
- b. Perceptual Causes

Fear is the deadliest enemy of a person. Most people nourish the fears relating to the future, failure, fate, and fatality. It causes to create strong negative waves in the brain affecting the nervous system. Secondly, doubts and suspicion, which do not have realistic base or evidence, add further to stress. These attitudinal traits can be brought under control, if reasons stand. Both are baseless waves in human mind.

Habitually, most persons are of the view that optimism demands high expectations from any pursuit, and they do not have any little regard to the corresponding conditions essential as the means for achieving the purpose. Unfounded expectations not only raise unreasonable assurances but cause to generate heavy pressures on those carrying out the undertakings. It is unfathomable why those who are not involved in carrying out the particular activity or activities raise expectations without any appropriate reasons. This apart, self deprecation, which does not imply self-effacement, causes diminishing the capability of body, mind and intellect equally. It is called negative auto-suggestions. The last but not the least importance, is attachment. This attitudinal drawback creates, more often than not, considerable amount of stress. No sooner one is detached from the things, his mind becomes free to accept newer things and situations. That is the reason why the Gita strongly pleads for the approach of detachment from everything in the world.

Anger is a mental ailment and the negative feeling. It is a fighting reaction. It being natural, it has become mental attitude. It is habitual but what is its impact? According to science, an acute anger of five minutes reduces the working capacity of two hours and its negative chemical reaction adversely affects the nerves for 72 hours. The minute blood supplying veins to the brain are also affected. In addition, the immunity of human body for diseases starts diminishing. As a result, many ailments raise their heads.

b. Perceptual Causes

It is the matter of common observation that majority of people pay greater attention to the reward rather than the result of the work. When the results are not predictable, the thoughts of reward dissuade the performer from concentrating his energies on work and its possible results. Focus on rewards and not on results create unnecessary stress in the mind of workers. There are a number of misconceived perceptions which create considerable stress in human mind. Mary

K. Ash (3) tells. “There are a number of baseless notions which are false and immaterial that cause to develop aberrations disturbing the peace of mind.”

Pessimism is yet another perceptual factor that causes to develop stress.

The reasons of external stressors may be social, familial, commercial, or political or physical intellectual or economic or relating to the ethical aspects, ought to be realized clearly. If there lies the scope for improvement, attempts should be made to do so. Avoidable stressors must be avoided. They should be accepted if they are unavoidable. As a last resort, they must be fought if fight is necessary. When it becomes clear that prevailing situation or person cannot subject to change, the person having stress must change himself. This would bring down his worries. Any change according to the situation is not a defeat but a strategy of win over it. If the world were to change, it should be changed by now.

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The impact of stress on the health of a person depends upon his physical, mental, intellectual, and spiritual make-up. For these factors, the culture, .parentage, domestic environment, religion, spiritual environment, education etc., are directly and immediately responsible. Educational, imaginative, spiritual conscience may help in defeating the stress.

To change according to situation, society, or age, may likely to cut down stress. But, if the person fails to change as per situation, he would have to suffer stress.

Angry and stubborn people suffer stress more than those who are flexible in their vision. A cool headed thinking also condenses the stress. Even proper time management helps reducing the stress. When the assigned activities have a timetable, that would mitigate the stress considerably if they are performed according it. By setting up of priorities, allocating the time, dividing the activities, and decentralizing the task, are the methods that largely bring down the stress during the work.

By treating the external determinants strongly, the stress can be easily cut down. Every time it would not be feasible. In such situation, stress can be brought down by totally neglecting. This could be performed better by Yogic exercises. It is always better to understand the mental stress than to escape from it. In order to fight such stress what is deemed necessary are proper behavior, manner, emotions, food, and discipline.

Physical exercises contribute in eradication of stress. The develop endorphins kind of hormones in the body which causes to develop the sense of well being. It curtails down the negative emotions and thereby minimizes the stress.

Individual movement in ordinary light is common. But in a bright beam of light eyes are closed. Similarly, when any person communicates in ordinary tone with ordinary voice, the person too reacts in ordinary manner. On the contrary, when any person shouts with anger, he knowingly shuts all the ways of cognition. For example, the dealers in credit cards repeatedly make calls to the customers.

Someone among the customers, getting annoyed, replies in anger using indecent words. Yet, the recipient dealer keeps his cool and closes saying –Thank You, Have a good day/ Most of us, shouts at their wives or husbands, and at times show their anger on children. The children due to respect or fear avoid reacting to the anger.. Similar behaviors are observed in offices but one has to control it for reasons best known to him. Here, if someone despite being angry on another

person, communicates calmly, the former could avoid the inappropriate reaction. This would be equally possible in the families.

Most of us forget that the anger is harmful to human body and spoils domestic atmosphere. In order to enjoy life, one has to remain conscious every moment about utilizing the powers of mind. One has to maintain positive angle of vision. To change according to situation, society, or age, may likely to cut down stress. But, if the person fails to change as per situation, he would have to suffer stress. Angry and stubborn people suffer stress more than those who are flexible in their vision. A cool headed thinking also condenses the stress. Even proper time management helps reducing the stress. When the assigned activities have a timetable, that would mitigate the stress considerably if they are performed according it. By setting up of priorities, allocating the time, dividing the activities, and decentralizing the task, are the methods that largely bring down the stress during the work.

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Essential Technique for lessening Stress

It is most common in human life that many a time, things do not happen what the human mind expects, success is not achieved. Its intensity differs from person to person. How does a person face it or come out of it depends upon his attitude. One has to keep positive attitude in adverse circumstances. It helps reducing the gravity of the problem. If one keeps an alert eye on the situation, he could be able to think in a right direction. It is found out from the experiments that the positive attitude

widens thinking capacity of the brain. Negative thoughts are inescapable and they are created by the person himself. Hence, it needs to be underlined that they can be altered by the person if he determines .

Counseling for Stress control

As a matter of fact, counseling is a two-way process which implies communication between the counselor and his subject, i.e., a person under stress need counseling. In order to make counseling effective, it is of considerable importance that both the parties have to understand the basic purpose of counseling i.e. minimization of stress level. The counseling, unless both the parties candidly strive for the purpose, cannot be effective. There are a few following preconditions to be meticulously observed and maintained by each of them.

(A) Conditions for the subject

Any person who seeks counseling from an experienced and expert counselor is required to observe the following conditions till their counseling process comes to an end;

- First and foremost, the subject must accept that he is under stress and is willing to get rid of it as far as possible; acceptance is essential because it opens the mindset of the subject to accept the guidelines without question.
- The subject must remain committed to the purpose at any cost till the process is finally complete.
- The subject must have unquestionable faith, confidence, and devotion in the counselor and willingness to abide by his recommendations.
- Unless the subject furnishes true and factual information asked by the counselor, the latter cannot offer remedial measures and proper guidelines.
- The subject, during the process of counseling, should be attentive and serious.

(B) Conditions for counselor

An experienced and expert counselor has to gain confidence of his subject to obtain true and right information necessary for providing remedial measures and therapies:

- The counselor has to guarantee that the information furnished shall remain undisclosed in future and shall not be shared by any other authority;
- The counselor has to develop cordial and respectable and responsible relationship with the subject.
- His therapies and curative measures must be appropriate and adoptable by the subject in the light of his physical, social, familial , economic and attitudinal conditions.
- The Counselor has to monitor and regulate the administration and practice of therapies and exercises until the subject is satisfied.
- The reasons of stress must be found out to control it; they consist of both external stressors and internal stressors. The factors involved in the external stressors, when dealt effectively, would reduce the stress to a great extent. However, those factors are independent and unrelated and hence cannot be brought into the control. In case, they could not change, then the person has to change his responses.

Everyone desires to lead healthy, affluent, successful, happy, and satisfactory and fearless life. This is possible. Yet it rarely happens so because of lack of self – confidence, which is the power that overturns the life. Self confidence implies confidence of having the capacity to perform the action. Responsibly accepted positive attitude means the self confidence. Every thought is a source of energy. The more pragmatic it is, the more powerful it would be. Thus, strong thoughts provide considerable energy. Knowing all these, the positive and/or negative thoughts constantly visit human mind. But, the negative thoughts override the positive ones. Everyone is full of self-confidence. This inherent power is applied without care and responsibility. The people search reasons for dejection, defeat,

despondency, and destitution elsewhere. It is not difficult to be successful, happy, affluent and healthy. It is the question of selection of attitude and way of thinking.

Summary

Stress is a condition of disequilibrium of human mind which more often than not adversely affects the thinking process and physical activities. Some level of stress is necessary to function in a right direction, but if it continues accelerating, that would weaken the human mind and body.

The causes are many- environmental as well as attitudinal. Both are fundamentally beyond the control of an individual. Nevertheless, the measures that are normally deemed as therapies are meant for improving the capacity of human body and mind with stand the onset of environmental forces as well as attitudinal outbursts.

The importance of counseling in management of stress cannot be undermined. The person undergoing the onslaught of stress has to accept the stressed conditions of mind and must have faith in the counseling for its reduction. Unless, the counselor and the subject have mutual faith and devotion on each other it cannot be an effective solution.

Key words

Stress, Attitudinal factors, Environmental forces, meditation,

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