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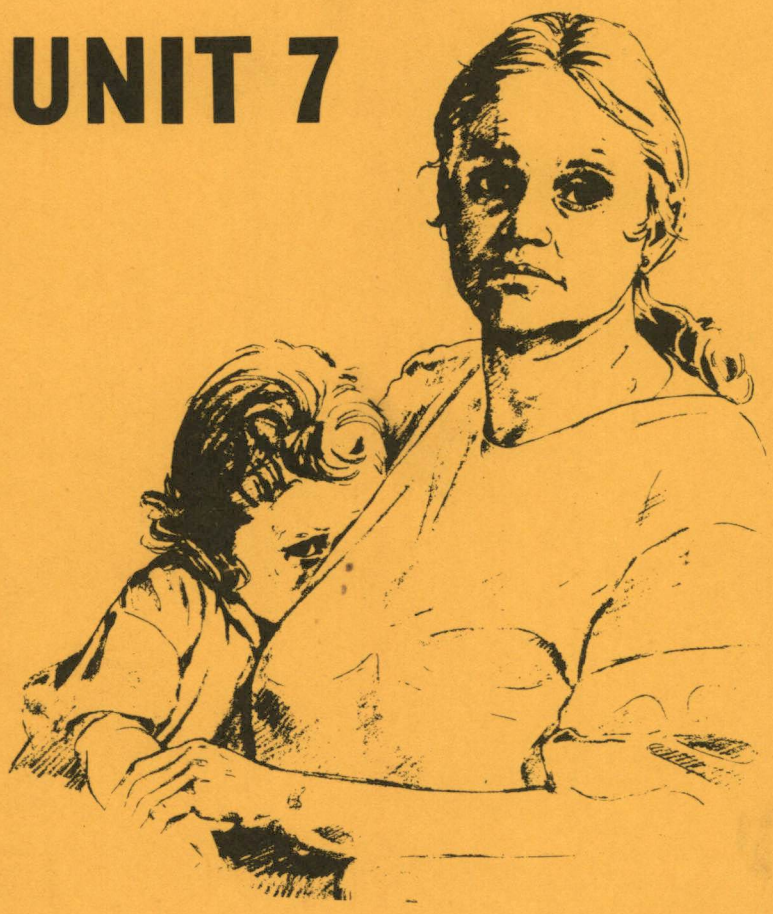
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SELF INSTRUCTION

# STRESS

## UNIT 7



# PARENTAL SKILLS PROGRAM HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

TRR

SELF-INSTRUCTION WORKBOOK

UNIT VII

# STRESS

PARENTAL SKILLS FOR PARENTS OF

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

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# STRESS



INSTRUCTIONS: Turn the page and begin reading. Take a sheet of paper and slide it down the page as you read. Throughout the unit, you will come to exercises marked with a big circle. You should complete each exercise as you come to it. Then slide the paper down and check your answer with the answer provided immediately following the exercise. If you are not satisfied with your answer, go back and read the part just before the exercise and then redo the exercise. When you are satisfied with your answer, proceed with your reading.

UNIT 7

THIS IS THE SEVENTH UNIT IN THE PARENTAL SKILLS PROGRAM. IT DEALS WITH UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING STRESS.



HANDICAPPED CHILD

RESEARCH INDICATES THAT WHEN THERE IS A HANDICAPPED CHILD IN A FAMILY, MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY EXPERIENCE MORE STRESS THAN OTHER PEOPLE. THEREFORE IT IS IMPORTANT FOR PARENTS TO UNDERSTAND AND LEARN TO MANAGE STRESS.

STRESS

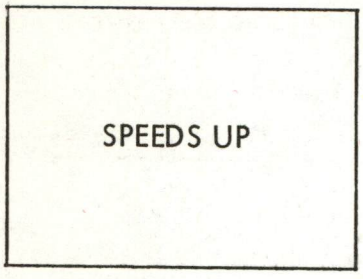
ALTHOUGH EVERYONE SEEMS TO BE ABLE TO DESCRIBE STRESS IN TERMS OF SYMPTOMS -- THAT IS, FEELINGS OF TENSION, NERVOUSNESS AND EVEN PANIC -- FEW PEOPLE REALLY UNDERSTAND WHAT STRESS IS ALL ABOUT. TO UNDERSTAND STRESS, YOU HAVE TO KNOW WHAT STRESS IS, WHAT CAUSES IT, AND THE DIFFERENT WAYS PEOPLE DEAL WITH IT.

STRESS =
EXCESS ENERGY

IN ITS MOST SIMPLE SENSE, STRESS IS THE BODY'S REACTION TO ANYTHING THAT THREATENS OUR SURVIVAL. WHEN THREATENED, THE BODY CREATES EXTRA ENERGY TO FIGHT OFF THE THREAT.

FEAR

WHAT WE ARE EXPERIENCING IN A STRESS SITUATION IS SOME FORM OF FEAR.




WHEN A PERSON IS THREATENED, OR EXPERIENCES FEAR, HIS BODY SPEEDS UP. THE HEART BEATS FASTER, THE BRAIN WORKS FASTER. THE BODY CREATES EXTRA ENERGY SO THAT THE PERSON CAN RUN OR FIGHT TO PROTECT HIMSELF.



Check (✓) the statements which are true of stress.

_____ 1. It is the body's reaction to threats.

_____ 2. It is a result of fear.

_____ 3. The body slows down.

_____ 4. There is a reduction of energy.

_____ 5. The heart and brain work faster.

(Statements 1, 2 and 5 are true.)



PRIMITIVE MAN

THIS PHYSICAL REACTION MAY GO BACK TO PRIMITIVE MAN. MOST THINGS THAT THREATENED HIM WERE THREATS TO HIS PHYSICAL SAFETY. FOR EXAMPLE, THE WEATHER, WILD ANIMALS AND OTHER HUMANS. HE NEEDED EXTRA ENERGY TO RUN AWAY OR FIGHT. THIS IS HOW MAN SURVIVED.

MODERN MAN

PHYSICALLY, MODERN MAN HASN'T CHANGED IN THE WAY HE REACTS TO A THREAT. OUR BODIES STILL CREATE EXCESS ENERGY SO WE CAN RUN FROM DANGER MUCH AS A PRIMITIVE MAN. WHAT HAS CHANGED IS WHAT THREATENS MODERN MAN. HIS THREATS ARE MOSTLY PSYCHOLOGICAL IN NATURE.

PSYCHOLOGICAL THREATS

WHERE PRIMITIVE MAN MOSTLY EXPERIENCED PHYSICAL THREATS, MODERN MAN MOSTLY EXPERIENCES PSYCHOLOGICAL THREATS. IN A PSYCHOLOGICAL THREAT SITUATION, THE BODY OF MODERN MAN, LIKE HIS PREDECESSOR, STILL GENERATES EXCESS ENERGY TO PREPARE HIM TO RUN OR FIGHT. HOWEVER, MODERN SOCIETY TENDS TO RESTRICT OUR USE OF ENERGY TO FIGHT OR RUN. SO THE EXCESS ENERGY REMAINS UNSPENT, CREATING THE SYMPTOMS WE CALL STRESS.

SOURCES

1. THREATS TO NEEDS
2. CHANGE
3. OVERLOAD
4. UNDERLOAD

LET'S TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE SOURCES OF STRESS IN MODERN MAN. PERHAPS THE MOST COMMON CAUSES ARE THREATS TO OUR NEEDS. CHANGE CAN ALSO BE A CAUSE OF STRESS. BEING OVERLOADED WITH TOO MUCH TO DO IN TOO LITTLE TIME CAUSES STRESS. IT MAY ALSO RESULT FROM HAVING TOO LITTLE TO DO.

EXPRESSION
ESTEEM
SOCIAL
SAFETY

YOU WILL RECALL THAT IN AN EARLIER UNIT WE TALKED ABOUT THE FOUR BASIC NEEDS WE ALL HAVE. THESE ARE THE NEEDS TO BE PHYSICALLY SAFE, SOCIALLY SAFE, THE NEED FOR SELF-ESTEEM, AND THE NEED FOR SELF-EXPRESSION. WHEN ANY OF THESE NEEDS ARE THREATENED, MOST PEOPLE EXPERIENCE FEAR AND STRESS.

SAFETY

OUR MOST BASIC NEED IS FOR PHYSICAL SAFETY. WE ALL NEED TO FEEL WE HAVE A PLACE TO LIVE, ENOUGH TO EAT, AND THAT WE ARE FREE FROM PHYSICAL HARM. WHEN WE BECOME UNSURE ABOUT THESE THINGS, WE BECOME AFRAID. FOR EXAMPLE, FEELING UNSURE ABOUT OUR JOB OR OUR HEALTH CAN CAUSE US TO BE AFRAID. THESE FEARS CAUSE STRESS ENERGY TO BE CREATED.

SOCIAL

WE ALSO EXPERIENCE FEAR RELATED TO THREATS TO OUR SOCIAL NEEDS. WHEN PEOPLE EXCLUDE, REJECT, RIDICULE OR OTHERWISE MAKE US FEEL UNWANTED, UNLOVED OR UNAPPRECIATED, OUR SOCIAL NEEDS ARE THREATENED. THESE FEARS CAUSE US TO CREATE STRESS ENERGY.

ESTEEM

ANOTHER SOURCE OF FEAR RELATES TO OUR NEED FOR SELF-ESTEEM OR A FAVORABLE SELF-IMAGE. WHEN SOMEONE THREATENS OUR SELF-IMAGE BY MAKING US LOOK BAD, WE FEAR FOR OUR PERSON. THIS FEAR DEVELOPS EXCESS STRESS ENERGY IN OUR BODY.

EXPRESSION

BLOCKAGE OF OUR NEED FOR SELF-EXPRESSION CAN CAUSE US TO EXPERIENCE STRESS. WHEN WE ARE DENIED OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE CHOICES, OR EXPRESS OUR DESIRES AND TALENTS, THE ENERGY IN OUR BODY IS BLOCKED. IF WE DO NOT HAVE AN OUTLET FOR SELF-EXPRESSION WE DEVELOP EXCESS ENERGY.



Below are some statements which describe threats to our four basic needs. Match each statement with the need it threatens and write the number in the blank beside the need.

| Need | | Statement |
|---|---|---|
| Safety | _____ | 1. Being told by your mother-in-law that you are not a good mother to your handicapped child. |
| Social | _____ | 2. Not being included in neighborhood activities because of your handicapped child. |
| Esteem | _____ | 3. Never getting to do what you want most to do. |
| Expression | _____ | 4. Losing your job. |

(Safety - 4, Social - 2, Esteem - 1, Expression - 3.)

STRESS SOURCE:
CHANGE

ANOTHER STRESS SOURCE IS CHANGE. WHEN WE EXPERIENCE CHANGE WE ARE OFTEN FACED WITH NOT KNOWING WHAT TO EXPECT, OR HOW WE SHOULD REACT. THIS UNCERTAINTY CAUSES US TO GENERATE EXCESS STRESS ENERGY.

STRESS SOURCE:
OVERLOAD

BEING OVERLOADED, OR HAVING TOO MUCH TO DO, IS A SOURCE OF STRESS. IF WE EXPECT TOO MUCH OF OURSELVES, OR HAVE TOO MUCH HAPPENING AT ONCE WE CAN BECOME OVERSTIMULATED. IN SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES PEOPLE GET KEYED UP BECAUSE THEIR BODY HAS CREATED EXCESS ENERGY.

STRESS SOURCE:
UNDERLOAD

BEING UNDERLOADED IS ALSO A SOURCE OF STRESS. WE ARE UNDERLOADED WHEN WE HAVE NOTHING TO DO, WHEN WE ARE UNINVOLVED, AND UNCHALLENGED. UNDERLOADED PEOPLE SIT AROUND AND DO NOTHING. BEING INACTIVE, THEY FAIL TO USE UP EXCESS ENERGY GENERATED BY NORMAL DAY TO DAY THREATS. THEY BECOME EDGY, NERVOUS AND IRRITABLE.



Below are some examples of sources of stress. Match each example with the kind of stress source it describes and write the number of the example beside the source. There are two examples for each source.

| Source | Example |
|---|---|
| Change _____, _____ | 1. Working late at the office for a month. |
| Overload _____, _____ | 2. Staying at the hospital with your child and also trying to care for the other children. |
| Underload _____, _____ | 3. Having to stay at home day in and day out because you can't find a sitter, and you get your work done by noon. |
| | 4. Moving to a new house in a new town. |
| | 5. Changing jobs, child going to camp for three weeks, wife going to work. |
| | 6. Two weeks of rain and very cold weather where you can't go any place or do anything, and there's nothing interesting to do at home. |

(Change - 4, 5; Overload - 1, 2; Underload - 3 and 6.)

REACTIONS

NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE MOST COMMON WAYS PEOPLE REACT TO THIS EXCESS ENERGY WE CALL STRESS.

ENERGY

- INWARD
- OUTWARD
- BLOCK

PEOPLE REACT TO EXCESS STRESS ENERGY IN THREE WAYS. THEY EITHER TURN IT INWARD, USE IT OUTWARDLY OR BLOCK IT OUT. CHILDREN GENERALLY LEARN WAYS TO MANAGE EXCESS ENERGY FROM THE WAYS THEIR PARENTS MANAGE THEIRS.

INWARD

SOME PEOPLE LEARN NOT TO OUTWARDLY USE THEIR STRESS ENERGY. THEY HOLD IT WITHIN. IF THIS REACTION OCCURS AS A LIFE-LONG PATTERN OF DEALING WITH STRESS, PEOPLE MAY DEVELOP ULCERS, HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE, HEART DISEASE OR OTHER PHYSICAL AILMENTS.

OUTWARD

- ACTIVITY
- AGGRESSION

ANOTHER WAY PEOPLE LEARN TO DEAL WITH EXCESS STRESS ENERGY IS TO TURN IT OUTWARD. THEY MAY TURN IT OUTWARD INTO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OR EXPRESS IT THROUGH AGGRESSION TOWARD OTHERS.

ACTIVITY

SOME PEOPLE LEARN TO DIVERT THEIR EXCESS ENERGY INTO ACTIVITIES SUCH AS WORK, SPORTS, EXERCISE, AND EVEN TALKING. SUCH USES OF STRESS ENERGY ARE SOCIALLY ACCEPTABLE AND SERVE A USEFUL PURPOSE. THEY MAKE THE PERSON FEEL BETTER AND ALSO HELP A PERSON GET THINGS DONE.



AGGRESSION

OTHER PEOPLE LEARN TO USE UP EXCESS ENERGY BY EXPRESSING AGGRESSION. THIS AGGRESSION IS EXPRESSED ON WHOMEVER OR WHATEVER IS HANDY. THEY HIT SOMEONE, BREAK SOMETHING, OR YELL OUT CURSE WORDS. THE AGGRESSION DOES NOT HAVE TO BE DIRECTED AT THE SOURCE OF STRESS. IT SIMPLY SERVES THE PURPOSE OF USING THE EXCESS ENERGY AND PROVIDING RELIEF TO THE PERSON. AGGRESSION IS MODERN MAN'S COUNTERPART TO PRIMITIVE MAN'S FIGHTING.

WITHDRAWAL

STILL OTHER PEOPLE LEARN TO WITHDRAW IN AN ATTEMPT TO ESCAPE AND TEMPORARILY BLOCK OUT THE SOURCE OF STRESS. BLOCKING BY WITHDRAWING REDUCES THE PRODUCTION OF EXCESS STRESS ENERGY.

WITHDRAWAL

PHYSICAL

ONE TYPE OF WITHDRAWAL IS PHYSICAL. SOME PEOPLE PHYSICALLY LEAVE THE PLACE OR THE PEOPLE WHO ARE CAUSING STRESS. WALKING OUT OF THE HOUSE DURING AN ARGUMENT, BEING ABSENT FROM SCHOOL WHEN YOU ARE FAILING, OR STAYING AWAY FROM WORK BECAUSE YOU CAN'T DO THE JOB ARE EXAMPLES OF PHYSICAL WITHDRAWAL. IN PHYSICAL WITHDRAWAL THE PERSON PUTS DISTANCE BETWEEN HIMSELF AND THE THREATENING SITUATION. PHYSICAL WITHDRAWAL IS THE MODERN COUNTERPART TO PRIMITIVE MAN'S REACTION OF RUNNING AWAY FROM DANGER.

WITHDRAWAL

MENTAL

MENTAL WITHDRAWAL IS ANOTHER REACTION TO STRESS. SOME PEOPLE LEARN TO MENTALLY ESCAPE FROM A STRESS SITUATION. EXAMPLES OF MENTAL WITHDRAWAL ARE DAYDREAMING, SLEEPING, WATCHING TELEVISION OR USING ALCOHOL AND DRUGS. MENTAL WITHDRAWAL TEMPORARILY REDUCES THE CREATION OF STRESS ENERGY.



Listed below are two examples of each kind of reaction people have to stress. Write the numbers of the two examples which fit with each kind of reaction in the blanks provided.

| Reactions | | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Inward | ____, ____ | 1. Getting drunk |
| Activity | ____, ____ | 2. Spanking a child |
| Aggression | ____, ____ | 3. Going bowling |
| Physical Withdrawal | ____, ____ | 4. Never outwardly showing your feelings |
| Mental Withdrawal | ____, ____ | 5. Walking out of the house during an argument |
| | | 6. Yelling at your children |
| | | 7. Mowing the grass |
| | | 8. Never talking about your worries |
| | | 9. Daydreaming all the time |
| | | 10. Staying home from work because the report isn't finished. |

(Inward 4, 8; Activity 3, 7; Agression 2, 6; Physical Withdrawal 5, 10; Mental Withdrawal 1, 9.)

BIGGER PROBLEM

AGGRESSION AND WITHDRAWAL OFTEN RESULT IN CREATING A BIGGER PROBLEM. AGGRESSION CAN RESULT IN ARREST OR CAUSE PROBLEMS WITH OTHER PEOPLE. WITHDRAWAL CAN RESULT IN A PERSON PUTTING OFF WORK OR NEGLECTING RESPONSIBILITIES.

TEMPORARY RELIEF

BOTH ACTIVITY AND WITHDRAWAL PROVIDE TEMPORARY RELIEF, EITHER BY USING UP EXCESS ENERGY OR HELPING TO BLOCK ITS CREATION. THESE REACTIONS TO STRESS ENERGY, HOWEVER, DO NOT GET AT THE CAUSE OF STRESS.

DEALING WITH STRESS:

- UTILIZE ENERGY
- MANAGE PROBLEM

IN DEALING WITH STRESS WE NEED TO UTILIZE OUR EXCESS ENERGY AND THEN TRY TO MANAGE THE PROBLEM THAT IS CAUSING THE STRESS.

UTILIZE ENERGY

IN DEALING WITH STRESS A PERSON MUST UTILIZE HIS EXCESS ENERGY IN ORDER TO GET HIS BODY BACK TO NORMAL. THE REASON YOU FEEL SO UNCOMFORTABLE IS BECAUSE OF EXCESS ENERGY. GOOD WAYS TO DO THIS ARE WORKING, TALKING OR TAKING A LONG WALK.

MANAGE PROBLEM

. IDENTIFY SOURCE

THE FIRST STEP IN MANAGING YOUR PROBLEM IS TO IDENTIFY THE SOURCE OF YOUR STRESS. LOOK TO SEE IF ONE OF YOUR NEEDS IS BEING THREATENED. IF THAT IS NOT THE SOURCE, MAKE A LIST OF THE NUMBER OF RECENT CHANGES IN YOUR LIFE. IF THERE ARE ONLY A FEW, SEE IF YOU ARE UNDERLOADED OR OVERLOADED.

EVALUATE

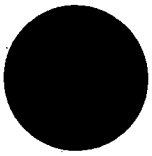
ONCE THE SOURCE IS KNOWN, THE SECOND STEP IS TO EVALUATE THE SOURCE. ASK YOURSELF SOME QUESTIONS: ARE THE THINGS THAT THREATEN ME REAL OR LIKELY TO HAPPEN? AM I CONCERNED ABOUT SOMETHING THAT WILL HAPPEN TODAY OR IN THE FUTURE? CAN I DO SOMETHING ABOUT THEM?

DECIDE

THE NEXT IMPORTANT STEP IS TO DECIDE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE PROBLEM. OFTEN STRESS SITUATIONS ARE WITHIN OUR CONTROL, AND ALL WE NEED IS A DECISION TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THE SOURCE. FOR EXAMPLE, WE CAN MAKE A BUDGET, CHANGE JOBS, WORK HARDER, CHANGE BEHAVIOR, ETC.

REDEFINE

IF THE SOURCE OF THE STRESS CANNOT BE CONTROLLED, THE SITUATION MIGHT BE REDEFINED IN SUCH A WAY AS TO HAVE MINIMUM IMPACT. IN REDEFINING THE SITUATION WE MAY HAVE TO GIVE UP IDEAS, STANDARDS AND GOALS BECAUSE THEY ARE UNREALISTIC. WE MAY HAVE TO REESTABLISH OUR PRIORITIES AND COME TO TERMS WITH OURSELVES AS TO WHAT IS REALLY IMPORTANT. SOMETIMES IF WE REDEFINE OUR PROBLEM WE ARE THEN ABLE TO SOLVE IT.



Listed below are examples of four steps for managing stress. Write the number of the example beside the step it describes.

Steps

Identify source _____

Evaluate _____

Decide _____

Redefine _____

Examples

1. He decided he couldn't change the situation, and that he was just going to have to think about it in a different way.

2. She thought about things that might be threatening her needs. Then she thought about how many changes there had been lately. Then she thought about how much she had to do, and then she wondered whether she was bored or not. She decided it was a little of each.

3. If the money problem was to be solved, they would have to stick with a budget, and they were going to do it!

4. She talked to her friend about feeling so threatened, and as she talked she realized that she was making a lot out of nothing.

(The answers are: Identify - 2; Evaluate - 4; Decide - 3; and Redefine - 1.)

TALK OUT WORRIES

IT IS OFTEN HELPFUL TO TALK OUT WORRIES WITH SOMEONE WE TRUST. SOMETIMES ANOTHER PERSON CAN HELP US LOOK AT OUR SITUATION A LITTLE MORE OBJECTIVELY, HELP US REDEFINE THINGS, AND GIVE A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE.



TEMPORARILY WITHDRAW

TEMPORARILY WITHDRAWING OR GETTING AWAY FROM OUR SITUATION CAN ALSO HELP REDUCE STRESS. IF WE READ A BOOK, WATCH TELEVISION, OR GO TO A SHOW, WE TEMPORARILY CUT BACK THE DEVELOPMENT OF EXCESS ENERGY. IN MANAGING STRESS, PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN SHOULD TRY TO GET AWAY FROM TIME TO TIME.

DEALING WITH STRESS IN CHILDREN

CHILDREN EXPERIENCE STRESS JUST AS ADULTS DO. HANDICAPPED CHILDREN PROBABLY EXPERIENCE MORE STRESS THAN OTHER CHILDREN. LET'S LOOK AT SOME OF THE COMMON CAUSES OF STRESS IN A HANDICAPPED CHILD.

THREATENED NEEDS

EXPRESSION
ESTEEM
SOCIAL
PHYSICAL

HANDICAPPED CHILDREN MAY HAVE THEIR NEEDS THREATENED BY ILLNESS, IMMOBILITY, BEING EXCLUDED, EXPERIENCING FAILURE, AND LIMITED OPPORTUNITIES. SUCH THREATS TO NEEDS CAUSE THE CHILD TO GENERATE STRESS ENERGY.

CHANGE

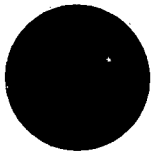
WHEN SOMETHING NEW COMES UP, HANDICAPPED CHILDREN MAY TEND TO BECOME AFRAID. THEY MAY NOT KNOW HOW TO COPE. THIS HAPPENS ESPECIALLY FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN WHO HAVE HAD LIMITED EXPERIENCES.

OVERLOAD

SOME HANDICAPPED CHILDREN ARE OVERLOADED AND OVERSTIMULATED. THEY MAY TRY TO KEEP UP WITH NON-HANDICAPPED CHILDREN WHEN IT'S IMPOSSIBLE, OR THEIR PARENTS MAY EXPECT TOO MUCH OF THEM.

UNDERLOAD

MANY HANDICAPPED CHILDREN ARE UNDERLOADED. WHEN THEY ARE EXCLUDED, OR WHEN EVERYTHING IS DONE FOR THEM, THEY HAVE FEW WAYS TO USE THEIR ENERGY. CHILDREN WHO MUST SIT IN WHEEL-CHAIRS OR STAY IN BED ARE OFTEN IN STRESS SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY LACK WAYS TO PHYSICALLY USE UP THE ORDINARY ENERGY THEIR BODY CREATES. THIS EXCESS ENERGY CREATES STRESS.



Check (√) the statements listed below which are <u>true</u> for children.

_____ 1. Children experience stress just as adults do.

_____ 2. Most handicapped children experience less stress than other children.

_____ 3. Threats to needs can cause stress.

_____ 4. Having nothing to do can cause stress.

(Statements 1, 3 and 4 are true.)

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO, AND WHAT CAN THEY TEACH THEIR CHILDREN TO DO IN ORDER TO MANAGE STRESS?

RECOGNIZE REACTIONS

FOR ONE THING PARENTS SHOULD LEARN TO RECOGNIZE STRESS REACTIONS IN THEIR CHILDREN. WHEN PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS LIKE HEADACHES AND STOMACH ACHES OCCUR, OR THE CHILD BECOMES OVERACTIVE, AGGRESSIVE OR WITHDRAWN, PARENTS SHOULD NOT THINK THE CHILD IS BAD OR LAZY. INSTEAD THEY SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT THE CHILD MAY BE IN STRESS.



Listed below are 2 examples for each kind of reaction children have to stress. Write the number of the 2 examples which fit with each kind of reaction in the blanks provided.

| Reaction | Examples (for children) |
|---|---|
| Inward ____, ____ | 1. Never talking to parents about feelings |
| Activity ____, ____ | 2. Running away from home |
| Aggression ____, ____ | 3. Throwing rocks at the other children |
| Physical Withdrawal ____, ____ | 4. Playing football |
| Mental Withdrawal ____, ____ | 5. Never letting anyone know how you feel |
| | 6. Pretending you are far away from your parents |
| | 7. Building a bird house |
| | 8. Kicking a dog |
| | 9. Watching television |
| | 10. Acting sick so you can miss a big test at school |

(The answers are: Inward - 1, 5; Activity- 4, 7; Agression - 3, 8; Physical Withdrawal - 2, 10; and Mental Withdrawal - 6, 9.)

PHILOSOPHY

PARENTS CAN ALSO HELP THEIR CHILD DEVELOP A PHILOSOPHY ABOUT HIS HANDICAP. THIS WILL HELP THE CHILD REDUCE SOME OF THE HANDICAP RELATED SOURCES OF STRESS. THE CHILD SHOULD KNOW THAT HE IS OF VALUE AS A PERSON, THAT HIS WORTH IS NOT COMPUTED IN TERMS OF HOW HE COMPARES TO OTHERS. HE NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND WHY OTHERS MAY REACT TO HIS HANDICAP AS THEY DO, SO HE WON'T TAKE THEIR ACTIONS PERSONALLY. HE NEEDS TO UNDERSTAND THAT IT IS OKAY FOR HIS TIMETABLE TO BE DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS.

MODEL

PARENTS SHOULD REMEMBER THAT THEIR CHILD WILL MODEL THE WAY HE DEALS WITH STRESS AFTER THEM. IF A PARENT USES AGGRESSION, CHANCES ARE HIS CHILD WILL. IF THE PARENT HOLDS EVERYTHING IN, SO MIGHT THE CHILD. IF A PARENT TUNS FROM PROBLEMS BY MENTALLY OR PHYSICALLY WITHDRAWING, SO MAY THE CHILD. A CHILD WILL ALSO COPY A PARENT WHO USES HIS EXCESS ENERGY ON WORK, SPORTS, OR OTHER ACTIVITIES.

USE EXCESS ENERGY

PARENTS SHOULD PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHILDREN TO USE UP EXCESS STRESS ENERGY. TOO OFTEN PARENTS PUNISH A CHILD FOR STRESS SYMPTOMS LIKE LOUDNESS OR AGGRESSIVENESS, BY MAKING HIM SIT ON A CHAIR OR GO TO HIS ROOM AND "BE QUIET". THUS THEY FAIL TO PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THE CHILD TO USE UP HIS EXCESS ENERGY AND REDUCE STRESS.

REDUCE FEARS

ALL CHILDREN ARE THREATENED AND EXPERIENCE FEAR AT SOME TIME. PARENTS CAN REDUCE THESE FEARS BY BEING CAREFUL NOT TO UNNECESSARILY FRIGHTEN THEIR CHILD. THERE ARE MANY WAYS TO DEAL WITH A CHILD OTHER THAN THE USE OF THREATS AND FEAR.

| | |
|---|---|
| TALK OUT WORRIES | LIKE THEIR PARENTS, CHILDREN NEED TO TALK OUT THEIR WORRIES. MANY FEARS CHILDREN HAVE ARE UNREAL OR UNREALISTIC. PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR CHILD DEAL WITH FEARS BY ENCOURAGING THEM TO TALK ABOUT THEM. THIS REQUIRES OPEN COMMUNICATION WHERE THE CHILD CAN TALK ABOUT HIS FEELINGS AND CONCERNS. |
| REDUCE OVERLOAD | ANOTHER IMPORTANT STEP IS TO REDUCE UNNECESSARY OVERLOAD ON THE HANDICAPPED CHILD. TAKE A LOOK AT HOW MUCH YOU EXPECT, HOW MUCH OTHERS EXPECT AND HOW MUCH THE CHILD EXPECTS OF HIMSELF. SETTING PRIORITIES IS ONE WAY TO CREATE A BALANCE IN THE CHILD'S LOAD. |
| REDUCE UNDERLOAD | INACTIVITY CREATES UNDERLOAD. TO REDUCE UNDERLOAD PARENTS SHOULD PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR THEIR CHILD TO PHYSICALLY USE HIS ENERGY. LET HIM DO AS MUCH AS HE CAN FOR HIMSELF, AND STIMULATE HIS INTEREST IN ACTIVITIES THAT WILL CONSUME ENERGY. |



Below is a list of examples of helping children manage their stress. Match the examples on the right to the list of ways to manage stress on the left and write the number of the example in the blank.

Ways To Manage Stress

Recognize reactions _____

Philosophy _____

Model _____

Use Excess Energy _____

Reduce Fears _____

Talk Out Worries _____

Reduce Overload _____

Reduce Underload _____

Examples

1. It was Saturday and all morning it had been raining. Jimmy wanted to go outside but he couldn't and he didn't have anything he wanted to do inside. By lunchtime he was picking on his sister everytime she walked by. Mother saw this and asked Jimmy what game he'd like to play after lunch. She said she'd be happy to play with him then.

2. Everytime father gets mad at Johnny, he yells at him and calls him a dumb kid. One day Johnny got mad at his friend and yelled, "You dumb kid" at him.

3. Suzy had been doing very badly in English and the teacher just called Mother to tell her. Instead of punishing Suzy, Mother sat down to help Suzy with the trouble she was having in English.

4. When Mother took Mary to school that morning she saw the other children were pointing at her brace and laughing. That evening she talked to Mary about what she had seen. Mary said it hurts her when the kids do it. Mother told her that there will always be some unkind people. It's best for Mary not to worry about them and concentrate on her friends instead.

5. Jim has had a lot of headaches lately. The Dr. said he was fine physically. Then mother began to think that his headaches may be a result of stress that he was experiencing.

6. Bobby ran to his father crying because his brother had gone off with some other boys and left him again. Father sympathized with Bobby and then asked Bobby to come outside and play catch with him.

7. Sharon had been moping around and keeping to herself for several days. It was pretty clear that something was on her mind. That evening Mother went to Sharon's room and told her that she'd be happy to listen if Sharon wanted to tell her about her problems.

8. Mark had told his father that he wanted to be in the band and his father was very happy about the idea. He was encouraging his son to try out for the band, when his wife reminded him that Mark will have to work hard for a while if he is going to stay in the new school. She thought that he enjoyed trumpet lessons and that it might be better for Mark to wait until his therapy was over before starting band.

(The answers are:

| | |
|---|---|
| Recognize Reactions | 5 |
| Philosophy | 4 |
| Model | 2 |
| Use Excess Energy | 6 |
| Reduce Fears | 3 |
| Talk Out Worries | 7 |
| Reduce Overload | 8 |
| Reduce Underload | 1 ) |

IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION, YOU WILL FIND PRACTICE ACTIVITIES. THESE ACTIVITIES WILL PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO APPLY WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNED IN THIS UNIT TO PROBLEM SITUATIONS WHICH ARE SIMILAR TO THE PROBLEMS PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN FACE.

## "THE LAST STRAW"

THE EXERCISE PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO APPLY YOUR UNDERSTANDING OF STRESS TO A SITUATION IN WHICH PARENTS ARE UNDER STRESS.

Mary Barnes is the mother of an 8 year old girl who has a speech impairment. Mary has two older children, a boy age 16 and a girl age 14. Mary has been upset lately, so upset that she feels irritable and very nervous.

Her husband, Jim, has told her he is worried about his job, that his sales have been slow and he feels that his boss is about ready to fire him. He spends a lot of time talking to Mary about his problems.

In the meantime, her child takes so much of Mary's time . . . the speech therapy visits and trying to fulfill the requirements of the speech therapist . . . that she feels constantly pressured.

Mary has also been worried about her health lately. She has noticed some lumps and is worried that she may have cancer. She thinks about this so much that she has started drinking during the day and when she drinks she yells at her handicapped child. Later she feels guilty. She is afraid to tell Jim about her health concerns because he has so many problems at work.

Mary's older children stay away from home a lot. She worries about them. She is especially concerned about her daughter, because she is at an age where she needs supervision and guidance. She feels she should be talking to her but she just doesn't have the time.

Today she got a call from her teenage son. He said he was at the police station, that he had been picked up for possession of marijuana. When Mary heard this she blew her stack. She told her son for all she cared he could stay in jail until he rots, and hung up the phone.

In order to understand what is happening in this stress situation, try to answer each question below:

1. Identify the sources of Mary's stress _____

_____

2. Identify how Mary reacts to stress _____

_____

3. Identify how Jim reacts to stress _____

_____

4. Analyze Mary's situation and develop some ways Mary can manage her problems.

_____

_____

_____

_____

(The answers appear on the next page)

## ANSWERS

1. Some possible sources of Mary's stress are: overwork due to her handicapped child, her concern for her older daughter, her husband's problems at work, her health, guilt about the way she acts toward her handicapped child, and her son's arrest.

2. Mary is having many reactions to stress. Yelling at her handicapped daughter and her son is a way of reacting to stress with aggression. Mary just can't hold her excess energy in any longer. Drinking is a way of reacting to stress by mentally withdrawing or blocking out her fears. By not talking about her fears or feelings of being under pressure, Mary is turning her stress inward. This is probably affecting her health.

3. Jim's reaction to stress seems to be entirely that of talking out his worries. He gets rid of his excess energy by talking about his troubles to his wife. But he is not doing anything positive about managing his problems. By ventilating on Mary, he is adding an additional stress burden to her overloaded situation.

4. When other parents were asked this question, they made the following suggestions:

   a. Mary first needs to identify her sources of stress. These are the sources listed in answer one.

   b. She should try to evaluate her problems. (Which are real problems and which are unreal problems?) For example, is her concern for her older daughter a real problem, or has her daughter shown responsibility in the past and can take care of herself. Also she should evaluate her problems in terms of those she can do something about and those she cannot. She cannot do anything about her husband's job. That is up to him.

   c. Mary's next step is to decide to do something about the problems which are real and which she can control. For instance, she might go to a doctor for her health problems, ask her older children to take the handicapped child to speech therapy and use that time to do something for herself.

   d. Finally, Mary should redefine the situations which cannot be controlled. For example, she may not be able to satisfy the total requirements of the speech therapist and must balance those requirements with her other responsibilities.

## "DREAMY DAN"

THIS EXERCISE PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU TO CONSIDER A REALISTIC SIT - UATION IN WHICH A CHILD IS UNDER STRESS.

Dan Green is 13 years old. He is partially paralyzed and uses a wheel chair. It has been difficult for his parents to get him to go to school lately. He often complains of a stomach ache in the morning.

His teacher called and told Dan's mother that he is loud and does not pay attention in class. He frequently rolls his wheel chair up and down the aisles. When he isn't being noisy he stares out the window during the class discussion. She said the other children often ignore Dan, especially at lunch, and that he eats alone. The teacher said she told Dan he will fail if he doesn't pay attention.

Dan's mother has been sick a lot lately and unable to pay attention to Dan. It takes all her energy to get him up and ready for school and take care of him when he comes home.

After the teacher called, Dan's mother developed a bad headache. She didn't say a word to Dan about the teacher's call. Instead, when he came home she just went in and watched television, a thing she has begun doing more and more.

Try to apply what you now know about stress to answer the questions below.

1. Consider Dan's problems. How is he reacting to stress? What are some of the causes of his stress?

2. Consider Dan's mother's problems. How is she reacting to stress? What are some of the causes of her stress?

3. How could Dan's mother successfully manage her own stress?

4. How could Dan's mother successfully help Dan manage his stress?

(The answers appear on the next page)

## ANSWERS

1. In school, Dan seems to be reacting to stress in two ways. When he is noisy and and rolls his wheelchair back and forth, Dan is trying to get rid of excess energy. When he just sits and stares out the window during the class period, he is mentally withdrawing. His stomach aches may be a sign of Dan's turning some of his stress energy inward.

   There could be a number of sources of stress for Dan. He may find schoolwork difficult, he is being excluded from social participation by his classmates, there is a possibility that he may fail, and his teachers may not be communicating with him. At home, Dan is unable to talk with his mother because she is withdrawing. This may also be a source of Dan's stress.

2. Dan's mother may be reacting to stress by turning the stress energy inward and becoming ill. Her headaches are an example of this reaction. Watching television is a way Dan's mother can mentally withdraw from the situation.

   Many things may be sources of stress for Dan's mother. She is probably overworked, concerned about Dan and concerned about her own inadequacy. The call from the teacher brought up a problem that she does not want to face. By avoiding the situation, she is compounding Dan's stress.

3. Dan's mother could more successfully mange her own stress problems if she first talked out her fear and worries with someone she trusts. Talking about her problems will help her eliminate her excess fear energy, identify the real sources of her stress, and decide on a course of action to take. If she does not decide on some course of action or redefinition of her problems, she will continue to generate excess fear energy. Once Dan's mother resolves her own stress problems, she is in a better position to help Dan.

4. In order to help Dan manage his stress, Dan's mother should cease any behavior on her part that is compounding his stress. For example, avoiding to talk about his classwork, which is a form of rejection. She needs to let Dan talk about his fears and eliminate those that are unreal. She and Dan need to talk to the teacher and explain that much of Dan's behavior is a reaction to stress. Between the three of them, they should work out ways in which Dan can rid himself of excess energy, be included in class activities and set standards for him that he can accomplish.

TEXT

# STRESS

## UNIT 7



# PARENTAL SKILLS PROGRAM HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

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FIRST DRAFT

TEXT

# UNIT VII - STRESS

# PARENTAL SKILLS FOR PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN PROGRAM

By

Charlotte A. Clifford

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# UNIT VII

## STRESS

The goal of this chapter is to help parents understand stress and stress behavior in themselves and in their handicapped children, and to offer some suggestions for managing stress.

Everyone knows what stress is because all of us have experienced it. We all seem able to describe stress in terms of symptoms: feelings of tension, irritability, nervousness and even panic. However, few of us really know what happens to us when we experience stress.

### STRESS IS EXCESS ENERGY [a]

To understand stress, you need to know what it is, what causes it, and the different ways people deal with it. In the simplest sense, stress is the body's reaction to anything that threatens our survival. [b] When we sense a threat, our body creates extra energy to either fight off the threat or run from it. [c]

What happens when you are threatened is that your body speeds up. Your heart beats faster, your blood pressure rises, your blood supply shifts to your muscles so you can fight or run. Your body quickly creates extra energy so that you will be able to protect yourself.

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(a) See 4, 21.

(b) See 2, 15, 36, 37.

(c) See 2.

Think about the times when you feel yourself getting all tensed up. Your muscles tense, your heart beats faster and pounds, you sweat perhaps, and you generally get the feeling that you can't sit still. Think about people you have seen waiting in a hospital when someone is very ill or perhaps undergoing surgery. These people often pace up and down, up and down. You might hear one of them say, "I can't stay here another minute. I think I'll walk downstairs and get a coke." They are not aware of it, perhaps, but they are full of excess energy because of the threatening situation, and they are using up some of that energy by pacing.

## Reaction Dates Back to Primitive Man [d]

This physical reaction may go back to primitive man. Most things that threatened him and made him afraid were threats to his physical safety. For example, the weather, wild animals and other humans. He often had to fight or run to protect himself and to survive. He needed extra energy to run away or fight. Man has survived because his body could provide this extra energy.

Although much has changed through the ages, modern man has not changed much in the way his body reacts to a threat or fear. Our bodies still create extra energy much as in primitive man.

## Threats are Different for Modern Man

What has changed, however, is what threatens and frightens modern man. We are not often threatened by wild animals, the weather, or other humans as primitive

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[d] See 2, 21.

man was. Most of the things that threaten modern man are psychological. Foremost among these things are threats to social needs, esteem needs, or needs for self-expression. Sometimes modern man also has threats to his economic well being, which do in fact threaten his basic needs for physical safety, like food, clothing and a place to live.

## Fear [e]

Let's look at some of the specific causes which operate in our everyday life to arouse fear in people. Most of us tend to think of fear in terms of such things as car, plane or train accidents, sickness, being bitten by a snake or dog, or drowning; or we may think in terms of burglars or murderers. Obviously these are things to be afraid of, but since they occur infrequently and thus are unlikely events, they are not primary causes underlying the kind of fear experienced by most of us.

The fears that occur daily in our lives are usually found to stem from an entirely different set of causes. That is, most of our fears are not for our physical safety. It is far more likely that our fears are of the following kinds:

- a fear of being disliked
- a fear of ridicule or teasing
- a fear of being misunderstood

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[e] See 2, 15, 36, 37.

- a fear of hurt feelings
- a fear of disapproval or sarcasm
- a fear of failure
- a fear of being bossed or imposed upon
- fear of loneliness
- a fear of loss of love
- a fear of loss of prestige
- a fear of the unknown, the future
- a fear of being dominated and coerced
- a fear of being different
- a fear of inadequacy or helplessness
- a fear we are missing something
- a fear of being unable to cope, that something will turn up we can't handle

These are the kinds of threats which, far and away, arouse the most fear in modern man. These are threats to our social needs, our esteem needs, and our needs for self-expression. It is strange that many of us still tend to think we fear threats to our physical safety (which are really very rare), when actually the things that cause the most fears in our daily lives are threats to our psychological safety.

So here is modern man, physically reacting much as primitive man did to threats; but because our threats are so different, the physical reaction does not serve as

useful a purpose as it did for primitive man. Our threats are things you can't fight physically or run away from very easily. (f) For example, how do you run away from loneliness, or from hurt feelings?

Society Restricts Modern Man's Use of Extra Energy

Modern man tends to find himself in a bad position. There are many threats of a psychological nature, and his body is busy creating extra energy to fight or run from the threats, but modern society tends to restrict the use of energy to fight or run. So the excess energy remains unspent. This unspent excess energy creates the symptoms of nervousness, irritability, tension or panic we all know as stress.

Threats to Parents of Handicapped Children (g)

Think about the kinds of things that threaten you as a parent of a handicapped child. Some parents tell how people they know make them feel bad because of the handicapped child. Friends may not accept them and include them any longer. Husbands and wives tell of problems they have with each other, how they often feel threatened and overwhelmed at the thought of all they have to do. Some parents fear getting sick and not being able to do what needs to be done.

Other parents talk of being lonely, about their fears for the future, their fears that they are missing something in life, or of fears that they will not be able to

(f) See 21, 24.

(g) See 1, 2, 6, 8, 13, 18, 18, 29, 34, 42, 43, 44, 45.

manage. Some parents talk of a fear of having to give up so much and becoming overwhelmed by their problems. Some talk of fears about jobs and having enough money. Still others talk about guilt and the fear that they aren't doing enough or aren't doing the right thing. (h) Others talk of being on the guilt merry-go-round . mentioned earlier. These parents, in their attempt to make some sense out of why this happened to their child, look for something they did or failed to do that could have caused the child's handicap. Ordinarily there is no logical basis for assuming their actions had any influence at all.

Sadly, however, some parents get into this mental rut and create great stress within themselves. Other parents talk about being threatened by guilt over their negative feelings toward their child, their spouse or other people. These parents don't realize that many people have negative and mixed feelings about others fairly often. These parents feel guilt because they fear they are thinking and feeling things they aren't supposed to. They fear they are different. Of course they are not different, only very human. Other parents talk about how they fear for their child, how afraid they are when the child is sick or out of their sight.

There is another point about fears. This is the time element. We generate stress energy if we fear something right now. We also generate stress energy if we think something threatening may happen in the future. We can even generate stress energy when we think of something threatening that happened to us in the past.

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(h) See 8, 19.

OUR BODY CREATES EXTRA ENERGY REGARDLESS OF THE KIND OF THREAT. THE THREAT CAN BE IN THE PRESENT, THE PAST, OR ANTICIPATED IN THE FUTURE. THE THREAT CAN BE REAL OR IMAGINED. WE SEEM TO REACT PHYSICALLY TO ANY THREAT BY THIS GENERATION OF EXTRA ENERGY.

## Other Causes of Stress [i]

Fear is not the only reason we experience stress. Change is also a common reason. Being overloaded with too much to do in too little time causes stress, and so does being underloaded with too little to do.

## Change

When we experience change we are often faced with not knowing what to expect or how we should react. [j] This uncertainty causes us to generate excess stress energy. When there are dramatic changes in our lives, events which cause us to have to make major shifts in our life pattern, we are likely to experience stress. The birth of a child, especially a handicapped child, changes our old routine and generates stress energy. Research by Wyler, Masuda, and Holmes (1971) showed that people who have a great number of major changes within a short period of time often develop some kind of illness.

## Overload

Having too much to do, expecting too much of ourselves, or too much happening at once can overload and overstimulate a person. [k] In such circumstances, these

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[i] See 1, 2, 6, 17, 18, 29, 44, 45 for "crisis periods" that have been noted as sources of stress for families with a handicapped child.

[j] See 20, 41, 47.

[k] See 22.

overstimulated people become tense and keyed up as they create excess energy. Perhaps their body's reaction is an effort to produce energy to meet an increased load. Nonetheless, when they have the extra energy, their body is in a state of stress, just as when their body reacts to a fear. As Hammer (no date) has noted for families with a multihandicapped child:

> There is stress within any family unit into which a multihandicapped child is born...Much of the stress...is physical stress from having the responsibility for total care of a child 24 hours a day, year in and year out. This alone can create dissolution of a family unit....(pp. 1, 5)

Underload (1)

Our bodies normally create a certain supply of energy. If, for one reason or another, we sit around and do very little and fail to use up the energy, we can end up with extra energy simply because we failed to use up our normally created supply.

This happens to many people in our culture who get little physical exercise. It also happens to people who are uninvolved, uninterested and unchallenged. Underloaded people sit around all day and do nothing. Often they can't sleep because of the excess energy, and they are edgy, nervous and irritable. This is also called boredom. Think about a rainy Sunday afternoon when there is nothing to do. Think of how everyone gets edgy -- husband, wife and children. You can't go outside and there isn't anything interesting to do inside, so everyone gets a good case of stress from underload.

(1) See 16, 26.

## SOURCE OF STRESS IS VERY PERSONAL

People are not threatened by the same things. Some people do not get in stress because of change. Others can sit contentedly for hours and do not get in stress because of underload. Other people would get in stress if they did half as much as we are doing. Stress is a very personal thing.

Some of us learn to fear a great many things. We learn this from our parents and other people. We also learn fears from uncomfortable experiences. Yet not all of us fear the same things, and some people have more fears than others.

Some of us are threatened by how others react to us when they tend to avoid, disapprove of, and exclude us. Others of us think nothing of it. Age has something to do with our needs for social approval. When we are very young, we are not sure about ourselves and we need others to say, "We like you," or "You're okay," or "What you do and how you are are fine." This tells us we are getting along pretty well, and we feel better about ourselves. As we get older, most of us feel a bit more certain about ourselves. We don't seem to need quite as much social acceptance and approval. Consequently, others may not threaten us quite so much.

Some people have very high expectations for themselves, and may fear they can't make the mark they have set. Such people may be easily threatened by the most minor and insignificant failures.

Some of us need many opportunities for self-expression, while others of us do not need so many. Some of us need a great amount of approval and words of encouragement because we don't have very high self-esteem; others of us luckily have good self-esteem and don't need so much approval.

As you can see, things that threaten one person may be entirely unthreatening to another. You have probably heard someone mention what he is "worrying" about and thought to yourself, "Isn't that silly. I wish that's all I had to worry about." And yet to the person who is worrying, whatever is bothering him is threatening, and his body is generating stress energy, just as yours does when you are threatened and worried.

## REACTIONS TO STRESS ENERGY

Now that we have considered some reasons why people get into a state of stress, let's look at some of the ways people tend to react to stress. Remember, stress is a state of the body where there is excess energy. What are the ways people handle this excess energy we call stress?

### REACTIONS

- Inward
- Outward
- Block

People generally react to excess stress energy in three ways. They turn it inward, use it outwardly, or try to block it out. They generally learn (m) ways to manage

(m) See 25.

their excess energy from the model their parents set for them and by trial and error. As we describe the ways people tend to react to stress, think about how you behave when in stress. Think of how each of your parents reacted. Try to see which parent you tend to copy.

Inward

Some people learn not to outwardly use their stress energy. They hold it within. They are often quiet and the stress doesn't show. You hear them described as "having nerves of steel," or showing self-control. Yet when they turn the stress energy inward and fail to use it, everything in their body continues to run faster. The body does not return to a state of equilibrium unless there is some release. If this reaction occurs as a life-long pattern of dealing with stress, these people may develop ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease or other physical ailments. (n)

Often these people who turn their stress energy inward are modeling after one of their parents who reacted to stress in the same way. Perhaps their mother never showed she was upset. She kept it to herself. If this were true, then the communication process may have been such that the child never learned to talk about feelings or to show them. Thus, a life-long pettern for dealing (or not dealing) with stress was established. People who hold their stress energy in are following their script on how to handle stress. It rarely occurs to them

(n) See 2, 6, 21, 34, 35.

that there is any other way. (o) Yet there is, and let's look at some other ways.

Outward

Another way people learn to deal with excess stress energy is to use it up. They learn that physical activity uses up the stress energy and makes them feel better.

Socially Acceptable - Some people learn to use excess energy in work, sports, exercise, talking and the like. These methods serve a useful purpose for the person. Such uses of stress energy are socially acceptable. They make the person feel physically better by reducing the amount of stress energy, and they also help a person get things done.

People who use their stress energy outwardly in socially acceptable ways are usually unaware that they are following a script for managing stress. They too, are following a life-long pattern often copied from their parents or learned by trail and error.

Let's take a few examples to give you an idea of how this works. Have you ever been tense and upset, and decided to get up and do something like clean the house, a closet, or the yard; or take a walk, jog, play a game, or ride a bicycle? Have you ever noticed how much better you feel after the activity? Teachers are usually aware of how useful physical activity can be in reducing the uproar in their class. After recess, most children can settle down, sit still and do classwork

(o) See 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, 12, 21.

much better than before recess. The reason is that the excess energy is used up and the body is in a better state of equilibrium.

Aggression [p] - Other people learn to use excess stress energy on whomever or whatever is handy. They may actually hit something or someone, or yell, fuss, or argue. The aggression is not necessarily directed at the person or thing causing the emotional upset. The aggression simply serves the purpose of using the excess energy and providing physical relief to the person. Aggression is modern man's counterpart of primitive man's fighting to protect himself.

Aggressive behaviors do serve the person in the sense that they allow him to use up stress energy quickly. Often a person will get upset and "blow his top." He'll hit, perhaps. Parents often do this with a child. The child may do something that adds to an already stressful day. The parent grabs the child and gives him a swat. It doesn't help the child much, as indicated in the last chapter, but the parent uses up his stress energy.

The problem with these aggressive behaviors is that they have negative long-range consequences for the person and others around him. People who are always angry and cross, quick to lash out with unkind words, quick to argue, quick to fuss and complain, are not such good company. People soon learn to avoid them, and then these people suffer a lack of approval and acceptance. This only creates more psychological threats for them and they may get on a stress merry-go-round.

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[p] See 9, 12.

If the people we are around as children manage their stress by aggression, both physical and verbal, we learn that this is how to manage stress. We then follow our stress-managing script without realizing there are other ways.

Block Out

Some people follow a pattern of avoiding stressful situations and in that manner control the generation of stress energy. These people learn to withdraw in an attempt to escape and temporarily block out the source of the stress. Blocking by withdrawing reduces excess stress energy.

Physical Withdrawal - One stress reaction is physical withdrawal. (q) People physically leave the place or people who are causing stress. Walking out of the house during an argument, being absent from school when we are failing or don't have our homework done, or staying away from work because we can't do the job, are examples of how we physically withdraw. In physical withdrawal we put distance between ourselves and the threatening situation. We are avoiding people and situations that are threatening. Physical withdrawal is the modern counterpart of primitive man's reaction of running away from danger.

We learn to manage stress through physical withdrawal by seeing others handle stress this way. We copy our parents if they managed stress in this manner, or we discover withdrawal by trial and error. We find that if we don't face the situation, at least for the moment we feel better.

(q) See 10.

Mental Withdrawal - Mental withdrawal is another way to deal with stress energy. Some people learn to mentally escape from a stress situation. Examples of mental withdrawal are excessive day dreaming, sleeping an exceptional amount, watching television hours on end, or using alcohol or drugs. Mental withdrawal temporarily reduces the creation of stress energy.

Bigger Problems

Some of these reactions to stress create bigger problems in the long run. Aggression can result in arrest, social exclusion, lack of harmony in a home, or physical or psychological hurt to another person.

Physical withdrawal can cause absences from the home when a person is needed, or absences from work or school. This often results in a person putting off or escaping from his responsibilities.

Mental withdrawal used extensively can make us avoid facing up to our problems and taking actions and planning. Instead, we just escape and hope the problem will go away. Alcohol and drugs cause untold problems in our society for the person himself and for others who care about him or must depend on him.

Turning stress energy inward can result in physical ill health in the long run.

Temporary Relief

Physical activity -- whether it be socially acceptable like work or sports, or socially unacceptable like aggressive acts -- provides temporary relief by using

up stress energy. Physical and mental withdrawal can also provide temporary physical relief by helping to stop the creation of stress energy by getting a person away from a stressful situation. However, these reactions to stress energy do not get at what is causing the stress. They are just ways to get temporary relief.

## MANAGING STRESS

Let's take a look at ways to successfully manage stress. In dealing with stress we can:

- Use up the excess energy
- Manage the problem

## UTILIZE ENERGY

Whenever you are in stress -- tense, irritable, can't sit still, heart pounding -- remember that the reason you feel so uncomfortable is because of excess energy. You can seek out ways to use this excess energy so your body will return to a more normal state. Working, talking, taking a walk, taking exercises or participating in sports are all good ways to do this. They make you feel better and at the same time you do something you enjoy or accomplish something you want to do.

If you are following a stress management script in which you use your stress energy through aggression, holding it in, physical withdrawal, or mental withdrawal, you might think about the long-range effects of such behaviors. Some of

them may create more stress. This can cause you to avoid solving problems, make you physically sick, or cause social problems with others. All of these effects will more than likely create even more stress for you in the long run.

You Can Choose How to Use Stress Energy - You really do have a choice of how you use up your stress energy. You can choose what you do with it. Once a person realizes that he can become more physically comfortable if he uses up the stress energy, and he can use it in a socially acceptable way, this aspect of managing stress becomes a simple matter of self-management. It may require breaking some old habits like day dreaming a lot, sleeping hours on end, or escaping with television. It might mean jogging instead of yelling and hitting. It might mean talking about worries instead of holding the stress energy in. It means changing your script a little - that is, your self-management script. As we said earlier, change may be difficult but not impossible, especially when you have alternative behaviors to use.

MANAGE PROBLEM

Once you use up the stress energy somewhat and calm down a bit, you really need to get at the problem and try to figure out how to manage it. If the problem continues, you will continue to be threatened and keep on generating stress energy. Pretty soon you'll be very tense, very nervous, and you'll have to keep on jogging, playing tennis or working all day long to use up all the stress energy.

You could, literally get into a pretty bad state: "problem-

threat-stress energy-physical activity-problem-threat-stress energy," and on and on. This is the reason that it is so important to manage the problem. Unmanaged problems continue to create stressful situations.

Identify Source

The first step in managing your problem is to identify the source of your stress and mentally bring it out in the open. Asking the following questions can help identify the source:

1. Is fear the source of your stress? Is one or more of your needs being threatened? Physical safety? Social needs for approval and acceptance? Self-esteem needs? Self-expression needs? If so, by what or by whom?

If that isn't the source,

2. Is too much change causing your stress? Make a list of the number of recent changes in your life.

If there are few, then

3. Are you overloaded? Too much to do; too high expectations; not organized and thus too busy?

If everything is going along fairly well in this regard, then ask:

4. Are you underloaded? Are you bored? Are you lacking stimulation, variety, not enough to do?

Chances are, the problem will fall into one of the above categories.

Evaluate

Once the sources of your stress are identified, the second step is to take them one at a time and evaluate them. Take a close look at them. (r)

1. Fears or Threats - Think about what you are afraid of. (s) If it is something that is threatening your physical safety -- worrying about paying bills, worrying about a job, worrying about your health, worrying about having enough food in the house -- try to analyze the chances of its even happening. Think about your situation and see if perhaps you are worrying about something that "might" happen but has only a very small chance of happening. Think about your logic in worrying about the future. Are you making mental predictions about what will happen, when such predictions really don't have much basis? Many of us do this. Some of us assume, for example, just because something happened to us in the past it is going to happen again. CHECK TO SEE IF YOUR FEARS ARE REALISTIC.

   If the threats or stressful situations are related to your needs for approval, love, and acceptance, check to be sure that you are seeing things clearly. It might help to talk to a friend and see if he gets the same impressions you have. If the threats are related to self-esteem or self-expression needs, you

(r) See 41.

(s) See 39.

might look at them and see if your self-esteem is suffering because your expectations for yourself are so high as to be unreachable.

If, after evaluating the things you are afraid of, you come to the conclusion that you are justified in having the fear or fears, then it is time to try to develop some solutions to the problem. If the problem is money, you may have to make a budget, get a part time job, move to a cheaper house, make a loan, stop buying anything extra for a time or make arrangements with creditors. You might make a list of all the different kinds of things that could help. If the problem is social but outside the family, you might try to think of ways to handle the situation which are different from how you've been handling them in the past. You might think of alternative ways for you to behave, for example. If the problem is between you and some member of your immediate family, look first at your own behavior. You may need to behave differently. Or you may need to have a session of open communication, or take some time off together to relax, to withdraw for a while. If the threats are to your self-esteem, you may have to examine what you expect of yourself, or what others are expecting of you. Maybe you are trying to stick to an old life script, or maybe someone in the family is trying too keep you in an old script which doesn't fit because conditions have changed. Maybe you are not having as many failures as you think; it may be a problem with expectations. If you are feeling overwhelmed and

that your individuality is gone, perhaps you need to give yourself a break. Take time for yourself and make a point of it. After all you have the right to do things you want.

2. Change - If fears that are threatening to you are very few, then look at the changes in your life lately. Have there been some dramatic changes - things that have upset all your plans, all your habits, all your predictions? Is your routine dramatically different? Do you have to plan every step and think about everything you do? Are you feeling unsure because everything is so new and so different? Perhaps you have moved, changed jobs, your child has started to school, you've been sick, your husband is traveling, or your wife has started working. Anyway, see if your whole routine, both the physical work you do and your mental routine, has been broken up. If so, it's time to cool it. Try to get in a groove for a while and get everything back together.

3. Overload - You say it isn't fears and threats, and there aren't that many new changes. Then see if you have gotten yourself into a position where you are overloaded. Are you trying to do too much? Are you trying to do all the things you've always done, plus a lot extra for your handicapped child and the other children? Are you carpooling three hours a day, and still doing everything else? Are you working at your job eight hours a day, coming home and helping the wife, and volunteering for this and that handicap

committee? Are you doing too much because you are expecting too much of yourself, or are others expecting too much and you are trying to live up to their expectations? Just add up how many hours per day it takes you to do the things that absolutely have to be done. If these add up to more hours than are in your day, then you are overloaded. Evaluate what you can stop doing, what you can give up, and see if you can reduce your responsibilities to a more realistic load.

4. Underload - Maybe nothing much is threatening you; maybe there are few changes; and far from having too much to do, you have too little to do. Maybe you are bored and this is causing your stress. Perhaps you are stuck in the house with the children, with no money for baby sitters, and after you get everything done you end up staring at the walls. Perhaps you are one of those parents who says, "It gets pretty boring talking to a 4-year old all day long." Then you have to look at your situation. You have to try to find some things to do. You can't afford to just sit there the rest of your life, or you'll become as boring as you are bored.

Decide

More often than not, stress situations are within our control, at least to some extent. They are caused by people or things about which we can do something. All we need to do is make a decision to take some action. Any problem that is ignored or endured when there are actions a person could

take, is likely to continue as a source of stress and may even become worse. It often takes some courage to decide to take action; but often such drastic steps as making a budget and sticking to it, changing jobs, working harder, taking some time off for ourselves or letting something go, saying "no" to someone's demands, or making a dramatic change in our life,are the only ways to manage serious problems.

Redefine (t)

Often the source of the stress cannot be controlled. Often there is nothing we can do about a situation except redefine it in such a way that it has a minimum impact on us. In redefining a situation we may have to give up an idea. We may have to change a standard we have, like keeping a sparkling clean house, or adhering to a strict schedule, or doing something a certain way. We may have to change our goals and follow a somewhat different life script. We may have to set priorities and come to some conclusions about just what is really important at this time. Sometimes redefining a situation is a matter of finally admitting to ourselves that "This is how it is. I can't change the situation, but I sure can change my reactions to the situation." It is a matter of finally coming to a conclusion that when we face a situation over which we have no control the only thing we can do is control ourselves.

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(t) See 5, 23, 38, 40.

## Talk Out Worries

In managing our problems and things that threaten us and create stress, it is often helpful to talk out our worries with someone we trust. (u) Sometimes another person can help us look at our situation a little more objectively. They can help us realize we aren't the only person in the world with such feelings. They can help us determine if we are being unrealistic. Talking out worries can help us make sense and order out of things, help us redefine a situation, or realize that we are over-reacting.

Many of us fail to talk about things that really are threatening to us, as if we are ashamed to be bothered by such seemingly minor things. Yet most people are bothered by little things, little hurts, little exclusions, and little failures. Still others of us have major things threatening us. Even though we may have substantial problems, talking it over may help us find alternative ways to handle ourselves or a situation.

When there is open communication, family members can often talk out their problems together before things accumulate. It is easier to manage problems a few at a time than to let them pile up. It is unrealistic to think we can avoid stress-creating situations - not in our modern world, as complex as it is. We should expect to run into stressful situations and we should learn to manage them. They aren't going to stop occurring. When we avoid managing a

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(u) See 27.

problem, we run the risk of having two more to manage the next day, and soon they can pile up. Few people get through a day without something or someone presenting a problem or threat to them.

Temporary Withdrawal

One last stress management technique that many of us fail to utilize is temporary withdrawal. We talked about people who habitually withdraw to escape from stressful situations, and how this is a problem. It is a problem when it is an habitual pattern that prevents people from managing their stress situations or themselves.

Occasional temporary withdrawal is a useful way to manage stress. Getting away for a time can help reduce stress. Many parents of handicapped children talk about how they feel guilty when they go out and have a good time, knowing their child is at home and not having any fun. This is faulty thinking. What these parents need to realize is that over the long run, they will be able to do a better parenting job, and make the home a more emotionally healthy place, if they take a break from problems occasionally. You can read a book, watch television, go to a show, for a walk, out to lunch or dinner or do something else you like to do. Temporary withdrawal, either mental or physical, can help give new views of one's circumstances by relieving the boredom, and it can get you away from a situation that causes you to create excess stress energy for a while. If you feel guilty about

getting away for a while, then you will only create more stress and you will cancel out the value of the temporary withdrawal.

No person should feel guilty for taking time for himself. Those of us who fail to manage our own mental and physical well being may in the long run damage not only our own but the well being of others for whom we care. Parents of handicapped children have a long row to hoe and they will be in recurrent stressful situation over a period of many years. It is better to learn to manage stress, to manage problems, and to manage ourselves than to think we will endure even the most stressful situations over such a long period of time.

## DEALING WITH STRESS IN CHILDREN

Now that we have talked about you and about other adults, let's turn our attention to stress in children, and in particular, stress in handicapped children.

Children experience stress just as adults do. When something is threatening to them, their bodies generate excess energy and they feel just as miserable and uncomfortable as adults do. Children express this excess stress energy in the same ways that adults do. As a matter of fact, they learn from their parents how to express their stress because their parents serve as models.

Common Causes of Stress In Handicapped Children

Let's look at some of the common causes of stress in a handicapped child. Remember that just because it is mentioned here, it does not mean that each and everything described will cause stress in your child. These are only general areas. Your child is as individual as you or anyone else, and what is threatening and stress generating to him is very personal to him. Yet there are some causes of stress that are common to many handicapped children.

Threatened Needs - Handicapped children may have their needs threatened even more often than other children. They can have their needs for physical safety threatened by illness, by being unable to move rapidly, or perhaps being unable to run away from something that frightens them. Blind and deaf children may become frightened at things they are unable to see or hear. Threats to social needs can also create stress. Being excluded or avoided, and being different and being teased or laughed at by other children are frequent causes of stress. Experiencing failures or having limited areas of self-expression can cause stress.

Change - Handicapped children are often threatened by new situations. They may not know how to cope or what to expect. This happens fairly often to handicapped children who have had very few experiences. They may have such limited knowledge about so many things that any change, any new experience may threaten them.

Overload - Some handicapped children are overloaded and overstimulated. When parents expect too much of them and push them, [v] when parents are determined to do "everything possible for my child," sometimes they put such pressure on the child and demand so much from him that the child is continually overloaded and kept in stress. Sometimes when too much is going on, or when handicapped children are unrealistic about their own physical limitations, they can push themselves too much and become overloaded.

Underloaded - Perhaps more often then we'd like to think, handicapped children are underloaded. People, including parents, expect too little of the child and do too many things the child could and should be doing himself. Many handicapped children have few ways to use their energy. Those who are excluded and uninvolved and who have limited experiences often have few interest areas. Many just sit and watch television which of course requires little energy use. Handicapped children who must sit in wheelchairs or stay in bed are often in stress because they lack ways to physically use up the ordinary energy their body creates. Failure to use up their daily energy creates a state of excess energy and puts the children in stress.

## WHAT CAN PARENTS DO?

What can parents of a handicapped child do to help their child learn to manage stress?

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[v] See 14, 30.

- Recognize child's reactions
- Help child develop a philosophy
- Set a good model
- Provide opportunities for child to use energy
- Reduce child's fears
- Encourage child to talk our worries
- Reduce overload
- Manage underload

Let's take these one at a time.

Recognize Child's Reactions

You should learn to recognize stress reactions in your child. Let's review quickly the reactions to stress:

- Holding stress inward
- Aggression, overactivity
- Physical withdrawal
- Mental withdrawal

When physical symptoms like headaches and stomach aches occur, you can think: "This could be a symptom of stress." Of course, stomach aches and headaches can have other causes, but if you are pretty sure there is no illness - no fever or other symptoms you should consider it as a stress symptom. Some parents tend to handle these stress symptoms in a very unbeneficial way. They say, for example, to a child who gets a headache every morning before school, "You aren't sick, you are just trying to get out of school. You are going to school - you are just pretending." Chances are the child is not pretending, but is only trying to tell someone he has a problem at school he can't handle. Ignoring the problem doesn't help.

When children become overactive (for them) or aggressive - hitting, biting, loudness, crying - they are trying to use up their stress energy. Many parents see these children as "bad" and fail to recognize that their behaviors are classic reactions to stress. Don't make the mistake of thinking that every time your child cries or becomes angry because he can't have his own way, that he is in the throws of some serious stress problem. Unless this kind of behavior becomes a frequent pattern, it signifies only momentary, small states of stress, which occur to most children in the ordinary course of events. As your child gets older, he will learn to manage many of these small stress problems.

When you see your child putting physical distance between himself and something or someone, you can be fairly sure he is avoiding a situation that is stress creating for him. When he wants to stay away from school, for example, he's likely trying to run away from some situation there that is highly unplesant for him. When you see your child mentally withdrawing -- for example, reading all day long, watching television for long hours, staying in his room alone, or daydreaming -- you should recognize this as a reaction to stress. Underload or overload may be the problem. Many parents decide their aggressive child is just "mean," or their withdrawing child is just "lazy," and never look beyond these behaviors to consider them as reactions to stress.

Help Your Child Develop a Philosophy

You can help your child develop a philosophy about his handicap. This can help your child reduce some of the handicap related sources of stress. Some handicapped

children speak of feeling that they are of little value as a person because of their handicap. You can help your child recognize his personal worth by helping him understand that his worth is not computed in terms of how he compares to others, and he is valuable as a person because he is who he is.

Handicapped children should be given a realistic understanding of the actual limitations that their handicap places on them so that they can learn to accept the things they will not be able to do. They need to understand how their time table may be different from other children's, and that if they try to compare themselves to others, they may create problems for themselves.

In developing a philosophy about their handicap, children need to understand why others may react to the handicap in rude and unthinking ways. They need to understand that many people have not had close contact with handicapped children and they simply do not know how to act. For this reason they may turn away, fail to speak, or avoid a handicapped child. Children need to realize that it is the other person's problem of not knowing what to do that makes him appear rude and unthinking.

Developing a philosophy about their own handicap comes gradually to children. They tend to pick up ideas and attitudes about themselves from their parents. Consequently, it is likely that your child will develop a philosophy about his handicap that is rather similar to your philosophy about his handicap. If you view

your child as a problem, he may view himself as one. If you view your child as sickly, he may view himself this way. If you view your child as a person with a handicap, not a handicapped person, he may come to view himself in this more positive light.

## Remember You Provide the Model

You might remind yourself from time to time that your child will learn how to manage stress and how to express his stressful feelings by copying you. If you use aggression, chances are your child will learn to use aggression. If you hold your feelings in, so may your child. If you run from your problems, your child may learn to run from his. Your child will also tend to copy you if you use your stress energy in constructive ways - on work, sports or other activities. Children also can learn from parents how to consciously manage stress, how to talk out worries, and how to solve problems.

## Provide Opportunities to Use Excess Energy

When your child is in stress, you should try to provide opportunities for him to use up his excess energy. You should recognize that part of the problem of stress is using up the energy, and that your child may feel better and calm down if he has a chance for some physical activity. Too often parents punish a child for his stress symptoms (overactivity, loudness, aggressiveness, withdrawal) by making the child go to his room and be quiet, or sit in a chair, or otherwise imposing a a state of inactivity. They thus fail to provide any opportunity for the child to

use up his excess energy and reduce the stress symptoms. Parents often make a child feel guilty for his stress symptoms and thereby generate even more stress for the child.

## Reduce Fears

All children are threatened and experience fear at times. Often this is because they do not have sufficient information to understand what is going on, or do not have enough experiences to predict what will happen. Some parents unwisely try to control their children by frightening them with scare tactics. Parents can be predictors of doom and scare their children with things like, "If you do that, you'll get sick," or "If you do that, the boogie man will come and take you away," or "If you do that, no one will like you." Young children often imagine things and put facts together in illogical ways that create fears. Young children are often frightened when things that make them feel secure are not present, or when people who make them feel safe are not around. Children gradually outgrow their childhood fears with the help and guidance of their parents. Again, open communication and gradually providing children with information on feelings, ideas and facts goes a long way toward ridding a child of unrealistic fears.

## Talking Out Worries

An important way for children to deal with fears is to talk out their worries. Many unreal or unfounded fears can be eliminated by talking. Parents can help

their child deal with fears and worries by encouraging him to talk about them.[x] As was pointed out in the unit on communication, open communication and sharing creates conditions where a child will feel free to talk about what he thinks and feels, and what he's concerned about.

Reduce Overload

Often handicapped children are overloaded. Sometimes they don't have a minute to themselves. You should check occasionally and look at how much is being expected of your child. How much are you expecting? How much are others expecting, for example, at school? How much is your child expecting of himself? You can help your child learn to set priorities and strive to create a balance in your child's load.

Manage Underload

Not all handicapped children are overloaded. Some are underloaded. Inactivity creates underload. You should let your child do as many things for himself as he can. You should strive to help your child develop skills to increase the things he can do. You should encourage new interests to increase his activities. Underloaded handicapped children often are in a state of more or less constant stress. They may react by withdrawing and becoming even more inactive and disinterested.[y]

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(x) See 31, 32.

(y) See 33.

As you read, it was probably obvious to you that some of the suggestions for helping a child manage stress would not work for all kinds of handicaps. For example, a child who is too young to talk or who is unable to talk cannot talk out his worries. Some children who are mentally handicapped may be unable to tell a parent what is bothering him. Wheelchair bound children or children who must stay in bed have limited ways of physically using up energy.

This means that parents will have to try out and determine the ways which work in managing stress and dealing with the problems in their child.

Let's take a concrete example. Say a child is eight, and cannot speak. It is obvious that he is in stress because he is hitting his mother, rocking back and forth, and making a mess of the place. Mother, on the other hand, has had about enough stresswise herself. The noise and clutter, added to other worries have mother pretty upset. So, mother, to releive her own stress, yells at the child, fusses and the child gets more upset. He goes outside and hits the kid next door whose mother appears at the door complaining. You have had such days.

What can the mother do? First, she can take a look at herself and realize that she is part of the problem. She is in stress and using her stress energy aggressively toward her child by yelling and fussing which is causing stress in the child. She can try to just withdraw for a bit - go watch television, have a cup of coffee with the irate neighbor and talk about their bad day, or take a warm bath.

Then she can begin to try to figure out what is upsetting her child. She can think of what's been going on at home - is the child physically comfortable or is he sick? Is the child getting his social needs for love, affection, and approval fulfilled? Is his self esteem suffering? How about opportunities for self expression? If all at home seems okay, she can inquire of the teacher at school if all is well there. She can think of the changes her child has had to face in the past few weeks. She can think of whether or not her child is overloaded or underloaded. (For example, rainy weather that keeps children indoors underloads them and they get roudy.)

After the stress cause is identified, parents can try to change the circumstances for their child when the child can't change them himself. If the child's behavior is causing others to reject him, ignore him, etc., it may be that the parent will have to start trying to build some socially acceptable behaviors in the child. Parents can also try to build behaviors in their child where the child can use up his excess energy in ways that are not annoying to the parent.

Summary

1. We can think of stress as a physical reaction in our body to threats, fears, change, overload or underload, where we generate excess energy.

2. Most fears of modern man come from things that occur in daily life that threaten our psychological safety and our social, self-esteem and self-expression needs.

3. People tend to react to their excess stress energy in several ways:

    - Hold it within
    - Aggression - anti social behavior
    - Activity - work, sports, other physical activity
    - Mental Withdrawal - escape mentally
    - Physical Withdrawal - leave the stress scene

4. These reactions do not get at the source of stress.

5. We need to manage stress by:

    - Using the stress energy constructively
    - Managing the problem
    - Sometimes temporarily withdrawing

7. Good ways to manage the problem are to:

    - Identify the source (fear, change, overload, underlaod)
    - Evaluate the possibility for changing the conditions
    - Take action to bring about change where possible
    - Redefine the situation if there's nothing we can change
    - Talk out worries

8. Children suffer from stress as often as adults and react in similar ways, which to some extent, they learn from their parents.

9. In helping their handicapped child manage his stress, parents can:

- Recognize stress reactions in children
- Help child develop a philosophy
- Provide a good model by your behavior
- Provide opportunities to use up stress energy
- Reduce child's fears
- Encourage child to talk out worries
- Reduce overload
- Manage underload

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