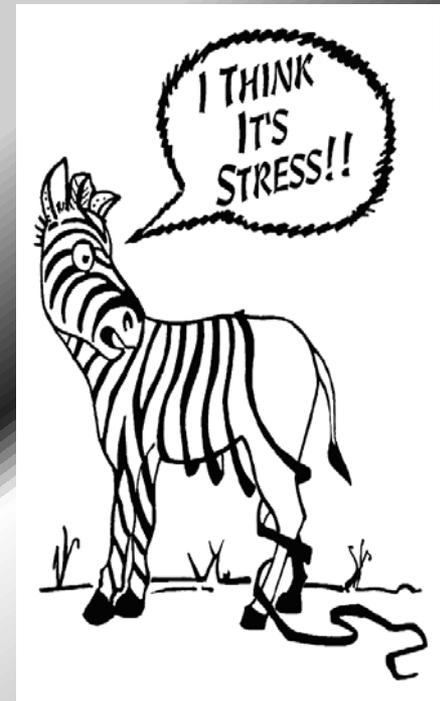




STRESS

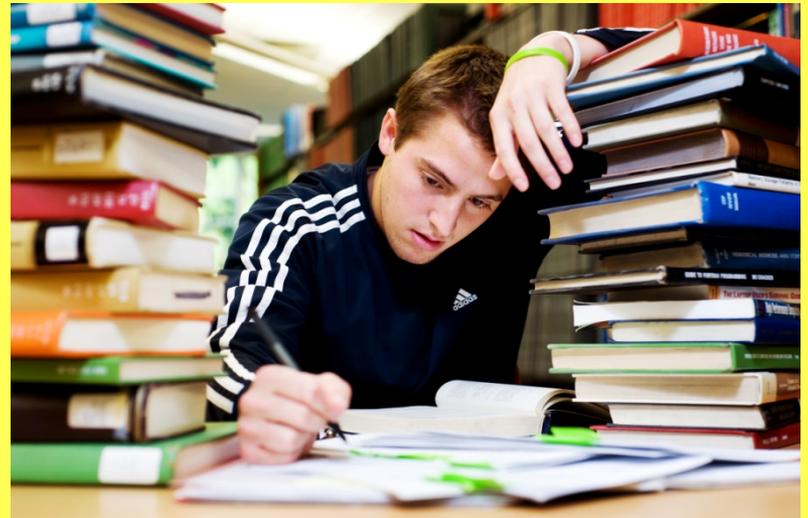
What is Stress?

- Stress can be defined as any influence that is disruptive to a person's functioning.
- “Stressors” are circumstances that force you to act, change, or adjust in some way to maintain your footing.
- In other words, stress is anything that speeds up, keys up, or tenses our bodies.



Top 5 Stressors Reported by BSU Students

- Academics
- Finances
- Intimate relationships
- Family problems
- Sleep difficulties



(Source: National College Health Assessment II: Ball State
University Spring 2013)

Symptoms of Stress



Emotional

- Moodiness and agitation
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Difficulty relaxing and quieting your mind
- Sense of loneliness and isolation
- Depression or general unhappiness

Physical

- Headaches
- Diarrhea or constipation
- Nausea, dizziness
- Aches, pains, and tense muscles
- Chest pain, rapid heartbeat
- Low energy
- Insomnia
- Frequent colds

Cognitive

- Memory problems
- Inability to concentrate
- Poor judgment
- Seeing only the negative
- Anxiety and constant worrying

Behavioral

- Eating more or less
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Isolating yourself from others
- Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities
- Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax
- Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, fidgeting, pacing)

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)

- The body responds to stress by what is called the GAS
- Three stages of GAS:
 - Alarm
 - Fight or flight response is the most common type. The sympathetic nervous system releases the chemicals epinephrine and norepinephrine, which increase heart rate, breathing, alertness, and muscle response, and the hormone cortisol, which speeds up the body's metabolism.
 - Resistance
 - The body's systems adapt and return to normal, but remain alert.
 - Exhaustion
 - The point at which the body can no longer resist the stressor. Repeated exposure to this response can cause mental and physical damage.

Not All Stress is BAD

- In the right amount, stress helps you focus better and achieve what you want
- In athletes, stress can help them be more *alert, motivated*, and gain a *competitive edge*.
- “Eustress” is the term used to describe positive stress
 - Examples of eustress include graduating college, starting a new job, and planning a wedding.

How to Manage Stress in College

WARNING: Stress is inevitable. You cannot eliminate it completely from your life. One can only manage and reduce its symptoms.

- Get enough sleep
 - To keep your mind focused, recharged, and energized, go to bed earlier or schedule regular naps of 20-30 minutes.
- Eat well
 - Follow a diet rich in vegetables, fruits, and whole grains. A steady diet of pizza and vending-machine fare can decrease energy levels, leading to a lower threshold for stress.
- Exercise
 - As little as 20 minutes a day of physical activity can reduce stress levels. Try something that you enjoy doing, like swimming or yoga.

More Stress-Less Tips

- Don't bite off more than you can chew
 - Between classes, student organizations, work, and friends, it's easy to take on more than you can handle. If you've got too much on your plate, distinguish between the "shoulds" and the "musts." Drop tasks that aren't truly necessary to the bottom of the list or eliminate them entirely.
- Take a deep breath
 - When you breathe deeply it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. It's simple, super effective, and can be done just about anywhere.
- Ask for help
 - Adjusting to college can be difficult, and venting your feelings to a trusted friend can go a long way in fighting stress. If you don't feel comfortable talking with a friend, the Counseling Center in Lucina Hall is available to students for free.

More Stress-Less Tips

- **Get a massage**
 - Stress often causes your muscles to become tight and knotted, and a massage can help to loosen them. Try the massage chairs in the Counseling Center and Office of Health Education for FREE or get a professional massage in the SRWC for \$35!
- **Plan ahead**
 - Waiting until the last minute to write a paper or study for an exam just stresses you out even more. Try to plan for delays and unexpected things to get in the way of your studying/writing so you can remain calm and focused.
- **Learn to say no**
 - Know your limits and stick to them. Whether in your personal or academic life, taking on more than you can handle is a surefire recipe for stress.

Stress-Free Resources at BSU



- **Counseling Center**
 - Individual & group therapy; massage chair
 - Lucina Hall 320; (765)285-1736
- **Office of Health, Alcohol and Drug Education**
 - Massage chair
 - 2nd floor of the Health Center; (765)285-3775
- **Student Recreation & Wellness Center**
 - Fitness classes, massage therapy
 - (765)285-1753