

# BACK<sup>2</sup>NORMAL *be* responsible.™

## MONTHLY TOPIC

April 2017

# STRESS & DIS-EASE

## dollars & sense

It is estimated that American businesses lose 200-300 billion dollars a year to stress related productivity and treatment costs. Every week, over 95 million Americans suffer from some kind of stress related symptoms for which they take medications. These statistics do not include alcohol, tobacco or recreational drug use which are used by many for coping mechanisms. A 20-year study conducted by The University of London revealed that reactions to stress were more dangerous risk factor for cancer and heart disease than either cigarette smoking or high cholesterol.

## recognition

Stress is recognized as the #1 proxy killer disease going unnoticed many times.

**The American Medical Association has noted that stress is the basic cause of more than 60% of ALL human illness.**



## The cold hard facts of stress.

Contributed by Dr. Ali Saberi

### Eustress vs. Distress

When stress enhances function, physical or mental, it is considered **eustress**. Common examples of this would be professional sports athletes who have to deliver the winning shot, goal or putt. They feed off of the positive aspects of stress to enhance their focus, precision and delivery. This concept was introduced by Hans Selye, a Canadian-Austrian Endocrinologist, in 1975. Whereas persistent stress that is not resolved through coping or adaptation, deemed **distress**, may lead to anxiety and depression. With chronic maladaptive stress, physical disease also starts to sprout. The difference between the results in eustress and those that manifest as distress is determined by the disparity of perception, experiences (real or imagined), personal beliefs and expectations, and the resources to cope with the stress.

### Managing Stress

- Stress management encompasses techniques intended to equip a person with effective coping mechanisms, be them physical, psychological and spiritual. These may be both learned and intuitive aspects which help us with psychologic and physiologic stress to an internal or external stimulus.
- Most have difficulty just sitting and staring at a tree or a candle. Mind racing tends to occur and one gets easily distracted. There is a much simpler way: MINDFULNESS
- Being mindful of the simplest tasks that we take for granted. Like brushing your teeth, drinking a glass of water, walking or eating food.
- It's important to use your senses with focused intention: Touch, Taste, Smell, Listen, Sight, Feel.

## Mind the Mind

Our perceptions and interpretations of things plays an integral role in our stress levels. No one can shut the mind off. Instead, we step back from it by being an observer. Just as we observe others, we also observe ourselves with focused intention. This allows us to recognize the thoughts that keep causing more disruption for us. Key Words: Cognitive Distortions, Mindfulness, Resiliency Skills, Mind-Body-Spirit.

## Mindfulness Exercise

With a glass of water in front of you, focus your sight to see the water and imagine yourself as the observer. Observe your hand reaching out for the glass. Feel the texture of the cup on your fingertips and palm. Listen to the water move as you bring the



cup closer to your lips. Observe your lips touch the water and sense the water on your tongue rolling down towards the back of your throat. As you swallow, feel, by focusing on the path of the water down your throat and into your belly. Experience the emotion of satisfaction when your thirst is quenched.

The key with any mindfulness exercise is to have active intention in every moment. The more you practice, the more it becomes "second nature", and the next thing you know, you are the moment.

Mindfulness Authors: Thich Nhat Hanh, Daniel Gole, Jon Kabat-Zinn, Zindel Segal, Tara Brach

Thank you Dr Saberi for contributing to this month's beresponsible topic. Ali Saberi, MD is Board Certified in Internal Medicine. He enjoys all aspects of health promotion and has a passion for stress management and how the mind-body-spirit unit processes stress. To learn more about Ali Saberi, visit [inthe feeling.org](http://inthe feeling.org) or contact him at [inthe feeling@yahoo.com](mailto:inthe feeling@yahoo.com).

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