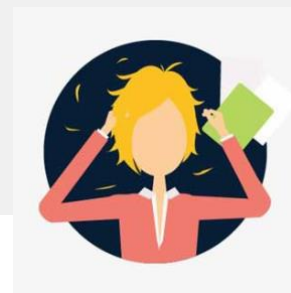


Stress Awareness Month



Overview

Stress Awareness Month has been recognized every April since 1992, but this year it seems particularly important. Learning to cope with our stress and finding healthy ways to deal with these situations can go a long way in living a healthy and positive life.

What does stress mean to you?

We all experience stress – yet we may experience it in very different ways. Because of this, there is no single definition for stress, but the American Institute of Stress states the most common explanation is a “physical, mental, or emotional strain or tension.”

A 2017 study from the American Psychological Association found the most common sources of stress reported among Americans was the “future of our nation” (63% of respondents mentioned), Money (62%), Work (61%), political climate (57%), violence/crime (51%).

Effecting more than just your mind

Long term stress can prove to be more than just a mental issue. From headaches to stomach disorders to depression – even very serious issues like stroke and heart disease can come as a result of stress.

When you are placed in a stressful situation, specific stress hormones rush into your bloodstream leading to an increase in heart rate, blood pressure and glucose levels. This is helpful in emergency situations, but having this “rush” for extended periods of time can be dangerous and make you susceptible to the issues mentioned previously.

Learn to overcome issues you cannot change

Sometimes the stress in our lives is not something we any power to change – it is during these times that the recommendation is to change your approach to the situations.

Try to...

- Recognize when you don't have control, and let it go.
- Avoid getting anxious about situations that you cannot change.
- Take control of your reactions and focus your mind on something that makes you feel calm and in control.
- Develop a vision for healthy living, wellness, and personal growth, and set realistic goals to help you realize your vision.

Tips for coping with your stress

The CDC provides some basic ideas to help you cope with stress...

- Take care of yourself – eat healthy, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep, give yourself a break if you feel stressed.
- Discuss your problems with a parent, friend or another trusted source.
- Avoid drugs and alcohol.
- Recognize when you need more help – know when to talk to a psychologist, social worker or counselor if things continue.