Stress Management:

Positive vs. Negative Coping Skills

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Learning Outcomes

- Defining Stress
- Causes and Effects of Stress
- Reactions to Stress
- Positive and Negative Coping Skills
- Tips and Resources to Manage Stress

(Sweet, 2014)
What is stress?

- Stress is how your brain or body responds to any demand
- A stressor can be:
  - Exercise
  - Work
  - School
  - Major life changes
  - Traumatic event

(NIMH, n.d.; Morano, Jennye, 2015)
How does stress affect college students?

- High levels of stress among college students result in poor mental health status including
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Suicidal behavior
  - Decreased self-esteem
  - Suboptimal sleep quality

(Kadhiravan and Kumar, 2012; Shatkin et al., 2016; Kim, Lee, Kim, Noh, & Lee, 2015)
Causes of Stress in College

- Academic Performance Pressure
- Financial Stress
- Multitasking Stress
- Stress about the Future
- Increased Responsibility and Independence
- Peer Pressure

How Does Our Body React To Stress?

Our body responds to stress physically, emotionally, cognitively and behaviorally

- Physical
  - Headaches
  - Nausea
  - Fatigue
  - Trouble sleeping

- Emotional
  - Sadness/depression
  - Restlessness
  - Irritability
  - Sense of isolation

- Cognitive
  - Impaired concentration
  - Trouble remembering deadlines and assignments
  - Chronic worrying
  - Anxious thoughts or feelings

- Behavioral
  - Change in eating habits
  - Nail biting
  - Increased use of drugs or tobacco
  - Change in sleeping habits

(Cohen, 2016)
Negative Coping Skills

• Negative/Maladaptive Behaviors
  • Suboptimal sleep quality
  • Avoiding family and friends
  • Criticizing oneself / negative self talks
  • Reduced exercise
  • Increased substance use
  • Increased consumption of soda and junk food

Positive Coping Skills

- Exercise
- Talk to a friend
- Journal
- Listen to Music
- Meditate
- Get a massage

Tips to Make College Less Stressful

- Manage your time
  - Don’t over commit
  - Prioritize tasks
  - Break projects into smaller steps
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle
  - Eat a healthy diet
  - Avoid cigarettes and alcohol
  - Reduce caffeine and sugar
- Make time for fun and relaxation
  - Set aside leisure time
  - Do something you enjoy everyday

(Robinson, Smith, & Segal, 2017; Clipart Kid. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://clipartfest.com/download/c9e2e31195b8d1de40e0b1db3a30381477d8f09.html)
Resources on Campus

• Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction
• Biofeedback Training
• Restorative Yoga
• Kortschak Center for Learning and Creativity
• USC Counseling Services

(Be Well USC, n.d.; USC KCLC, 2014; USC Engemann Student Health Center, n.d.)
References

- Be Well USC. (n.d.) Stress Relief Clinic & Workshops. Retrieved from https://bewell.usc.edu/mental-health/stress-relief-clinic/


References


