

BIBLICAL COUNSELING MINISTRY

MOUNT ZION BAPTIST CHURCH OF GREENSBORO, INC.

Topic: Understanding, Coping, and Overcoming “Stress”

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“Our mental health may be determined by how we treat our Temple (1 Cor 6:19) whether in eating habits, exercising, sleep deprivation, and how we understand and overcome stress (stressors) in our lives, it can be linked directly to how we Bless the Body of Christ.”

Chris Hall

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Preface

I. Orientation of Publication

The Biblical Counseling Ministry has been and will continue holding Biblical Counseling classes to address how to handle problems that may arise within and outside of our church. So the classes will continue to be the Core of our ministry to edify the Body of Christ. In addition, with our efforts to continue to serve the body with facilitation of classes, we will do more outreach work with other ministries, leaders, and parishioners within our church and the community at large. With this view in mind, this is the second publication from the Biblical Counseling Ministry in continuance in blessing the Body of Christ.

II. Overview information for Understanding, Coping, and Overcoming “Stress”

Defining the terms Understanding, Coping, and Overcoming.

Webster’s New World Dictionary defines understanding as the power to think and learn, to interpret. Overcoming is defined to get the better of in competition, to master, to win. Coping is defined as fight or flight in dealing with problems successfully. There are two basic types of coping:

Defensive Coping – when one is emotionally unable to interpret a problem in order to deal with it; self-deception

Direct Coping – action taken to alter an uncomfortable situation either by confrontation, compromise, or withdrawal.

What is Stress?

Stress is the body’s reaction to a perceived threat that ultimately could affect one Holistically.

What are the two major types of “Stress?”

Eu – Stress = Good stress that motivates

Dis – Stress = Bad stress causing discomfort

The Four Common Perceptions of “Stress”

*Stress is different to everyone. Each person would probably define/describe stress in different ways, however, there are four common perceptions in determining stress.

- Stress is a stimulus:

Example: Stress is an outside force that originates from things like one’s boss/supervisor

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- Stress is a response:
 - Example: Stress is an inside force that’s exhibited in the form of a head and/or stomachache.
- Stress is a transition:
 - Example: Stress is an exchange between perception and response of a situation like muscle tension.
- Stress as a Holistic Perspective:
 - Example: Stress is part of a large whole whereby mind, body, and spirit is out of control.

What is a Stressor?

A stressor is the source of stress. If one can alleviate the stressor, the stress may dissipate.

Some Stressors that can cause Stress

- **Change** – a preference for order has been broken
- **Conflict** – arises when one confronts two or more incompatible demands
- **Hassles** – small-time problems become major problems
- **Self-imposed** – one may create problems to an extent whereby one may carry around irrational, self-defeating beliefs that add unnecessary stress.

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Other Stressors that may cause Stress

Life Events

- Death of one's spouse
- Divorce
- Personal injury or illness
- Marriage
- Being fired at work
- Retirement
- Pregnancy
- Change in residence
- Change in schools
- Change in social activities
- Change in sleeping habits
- Change in eating habits
- Vacation
- Son or daughter leaving home
- Outstanding personal achievement
- Beginning or ending school
- Change in living conditions
- Trouble with one's boss
- Gain of a new family member
- Change in one's financial state
- Death of a close friend
- Change to a different line of work
- Foreclosure of a mortgage or a loan
- Change in responsibilities at work

Personality and Stress

Type "A"

Type A individuals can be described as impatient, excessively time-conscious, insecure about their status, highly competitive, over-ambitious, business-like, hostile, aggressive, incapable of relaxation in taking the smallest issues too seriously; and are somewhat disliked for the way that they're always rushing and demanding other people to serve to their standards of satisfaction. They are often high and over-achieving workaholics who multi-task, drive themselves with deadlines, and are unhappy about the smallest of delays.

Type “B”

Type B individuals are at most times calm and collected. It takes a lot to irritate them. They are barely overstressed and when feeling stressed they tend to be productive rather than destructive. Type B people don’t mind driving behind a slow car. They don’t care too much if the line is long at the grocery store. Their pace is relaxed and they are not in too big of a hurry to get things done. Type B people are patient.

Type “C”

Type C individuals want to be right. They research every aspect of a situation and consider every eventuality before making a decision. Type C people value their reputation for being accurate and logical. They like systems and procedures that produce predictable and consistent outcomes. They look for what could go wrong; they read the fine print and are sticklers for detail. Type C people prefer to work alone; they have high standards, especially for themselves. They can be perfectionist.

Type “D”

Type D individuals enjoy solving problems, getting things done, and achieving goals. They want to be in charge and dislike being told what to do. They set high standards for performance for themselves and other people. They trust their ability to produce results. They enjoy challenges and competition. Type D people are willing to take risks, challenge the status quo, and break the rules. They make decisions quickly and are impatient with people who “waste time” by talking or planning, who they think are incompetent or who resist change. They don’t mind telling people they’re wrong; they value “telling it like it is.” Type D people can be blunt.

Type “E”

Type E individuals have a marked sense of insecurity and strive to convince themselves that they are worthwhile. They try to be “all things to all people.”

Six Dimensions of Stress and Wellness

- **Emotional:** Being in touch with feelings, having the ability to express them, and being able to control them when necessary.

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- **Environmental:** The effect on the functioning of the physical and societal surroundings of an individual. The well being of our environment includes the level of functioning of our school, home, work site, neighborhood, family, friends, and associates. Our social support system is also part of our environment.
- **Intellectual:** The ability to process information effectively. Intellectual wellness involves the ability to use information in a rational way to problem solve and grow. It also includes factors such as creativity, spontaneity, and openness to new ways of viewing situations.
- **Physical:** Factors such as genetic inheritance, fitness level, and eating habits.
- **Social:** Being connected to others through various types of relationships. Individuals who function optimally in this area are able to form friendships and give and receive constructive criticism or praise. They are able to give of themselves and share in the joys and sorrows of being part of a valued group.
- **Spiritual:** Feeling connected to something beyond oneself. One way to express spirituality is through participation in organized religious activities. This usually involves the belief in a supreme being or higher supernatural force and a formalized code of conduct to live by.

The Four R's of Overcoming Stress

Recognize: think about one's own thinking

Relax: imagery, meditation, and visualization

Remember: exercise as an outlet

Resist: negatives and increase positives

Additional Tid-Bits to Overcome Stress

- Plan ahead; ask questions about responsibilities, deadlines, and expectations. Be positive. Questions should show that you want to do the job better. If a workload is too much, say so. Good supervisors want employees to do well.
- Avoid office gossip and constantly negative people. Just say, “Oh” when they start talking. Too much negativity affects morale and is contagious.
- Seek out someone who can provide a pep talk or encouragement.
- Set priorities. If e-mail is essential, set aside time for it but answer in a few short sentences and try to check it only at select points during the day.
- Refocus. Look at what you contribute to by working, whether it’s a larger goal or your family’s well being.
- Be clear that your job is not you. You are a person with a job. Remember everything else in your life; friends, hobbies, and family.
- Reward accomplishments if you are a boss. It’s amazing what a little praise will do.
- Get enough sleep. Trading a half-hour of TV for extra sleep can change attitudes.
- Set aside time to play. Play is an important aspect of being human, even if it’s as simple as watching a movie with your children.
- Change your scenery. Go to another room or take a walk outside. Take time off. Schedule vacations or even just a mental-health day before you get overwhelmed.

III. Summative Information for Understanding and Overcoming “Stress”

Critical Issues Related to Stress

Stress affects the health; it is a major contributing factor in the development of Coronary Heart Disease (CHD). It is the leading cause of death and disability in the United States. Stress also affects the immune system that makes one more susceptible to respiratory infections, common colds and exposes the body to bacteria and germs. Another interesting fact that’s being researched now is that prolonged stress increases the likelihood of getting cancer. Stress does not cause cancer, but it impairs the immune system so that cancerous cells are better able to grow and spread throughout the body.

To avoid the aforementioned critical issues that one may confront with stress, it may be important to consider the following areas. They are as follows:

Accept Yourself

You are a human being, and you have talents and abilities that are unique. Concentrate on the good points and make friends with yourself.

Develop Friendships

Making friends with others is an excellent method for reducing stress. Not only can you share your concerns with friends, but they may offer you suggestions for reducing the stress you experience. If both of you or all of you experience stress, you can work on a strategy that will allow you to resolve the problems that generate these feelings.

Help Others

Attempting to help others can also help you reduce the types and amount of stress you experience. You may find that you not only feel satisfaction in helping others, but that the stress you experience may stop through your efforts.

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Disclaimer

This Publication on Understanding, Coping, and Overcoming “Stress” is not to stipulate that persons should alter his/her behavior or lifestyle to the discretion of this article. It is to Bless the Body of Christ to present our Temples (Mind, Body, and Spirit) before God in excellence at all times.