

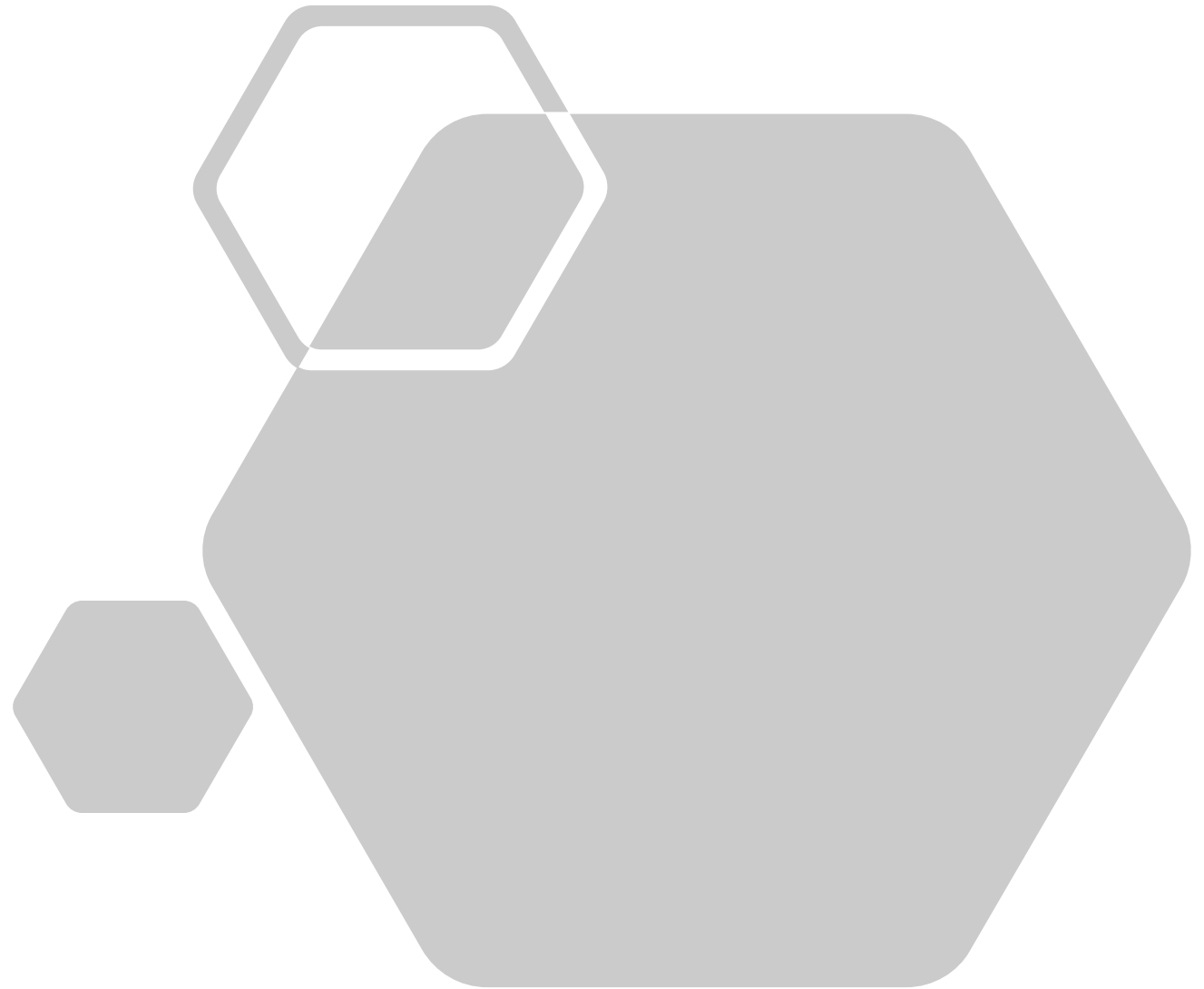
Stress and Anxiety

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What is Stress?

- Stress is a feeling of strain and pressure
- Stressors refer to any event/circumstance that we recognize as potentially dangerous or threatening, and respond to.
 - Stress comes in lots of different forms





...Good Stress?

- There can be both good and bad stress
 - Eustress: positive stress
 - Motivates us
 - Increases energy
 - Improves performance
 - SHORT TERM
 - Distress: negative stress
 - Causes worry or anxiety
 - Feels unpleasant
 - Decreases performance
 - Can lead to mental & physical problems
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Examples of Stressors

- Life Events
- Catastrophes, Natural Disasters, and War
- Daily Hassles (the little things that add up)
- Conflicts (interpersonal and intrapersonal)
- Money/Bills
- Work-related concerns
- Health/Medical issues



What can Stress cause?

- Anger/frustration
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Low motivation/productivity
- Anxiety
- Mental Health Concerns
- Job/School Difficulties

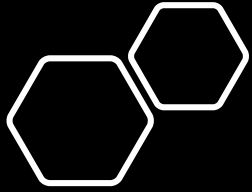


Stress Responses

The way in which we respond to stress depends on who we are, and what we have experienced

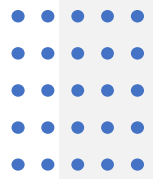
Some people may have more stressors to deal with (i.e. immigrants, marginalized individuals, etc.)

Resilience is a key personality characteristic that helps people to bounce back from stress, and even thrive in stressful circumstances



What is Anxiety?

- There are several types of anxiety, which are characterized by chronic disruptive worry, fear, or apprehension that are not to be expected.
 - Generalized Anxiety- extended periods of anxiety that are not specifically related to one stressor. Instead, there is worry about many different things
 - Panic Disorder- sudden and overwhelming periods of dread or worry, which are accompanied by physical symptoms (i.e. heart racing, trembling, tightness in chest, difficulty breathing, etc.)
 - Phobias- intense and irrational fears that are focused on a specific trigger (i.e. spiders, drains, certain sounds, etc.).
 - Social Anxiety Disorder falls within this category



What causes Anxiety?

- There is no one answer to what causes anxiety
- Biological Factors
 - Neurotransmitters
 - Genetic factors and predispositions
- Psychological Factors
 - Cognitive processes
 - Behavioral processes (how we learn to respond)
- Sociocultural Factors
 - SES status
 - Gender
 - Sex
 - Race/Ethnicity
 - Immigration Status

Recognizing Stress and Anxiety

- Stress can respond in many different ways (psychological and physical)
 - Heart racing
 - Tightness in the chest
 - Stomach pains
 - Restless thoughts
 - Difficulty sleeping
 - Tightness in muscles (i.e. neck, shoulders, jaw, lower back)
 - Changes in appetite
 - Increased blood pressure
 - Rumination
 - Irritability or anger outburst



Managing Stress and Anxiety

- Problem-focused coping
 - Address the cause of the stress to the best of our ability
 - Work to solve the problem
 - Drawback: sometime we cannot solve the problem
- Emotion-focused Coping
 - When we cannot solve the problem, we want to consider how we react to the problem
 - Concentrate on our own reactions to stressors
 - Cognitive Reappraisal: alter our interpretation of an event.
- We often use these strategies together

Managing Stress and Anxiety

Exercise

Relaxation
(including
progressive relaxation)

Developing social
support
relationships

Spirituality and/or
religion

Guided imagery
focused on a calm
environment

Meditation

Focus on optimism

Laughter

Effective time
management

Gratitude

- Research has found that showing/expressing gratitude can help to lessen our stress
 - May focus on the good in difficult people/situations
 - May see the opportunity within challenging circumstances
 - May appreciate what they have even when faced with loss



Cultivating Gratitude

- Keep a gratitude journal
- Keep reminders to be gentle with yourself and others
- Minimize comparisons
- Write a thank-you note
- Pray/Meditate



Our Challenge to You

- Think about someone who has had a positive impact on you in the past week
- What did they do or say to show you kindness, love, or compassion?
- What did it mean to you that they showed you kindness, love, or compassion?
 - Did it make your day better? Were you in a better mood? Did you feel more capable?
- If you had the chance, what would you want to say to them?
 - If you can, text or call this person to let them know why you're thankful for them.
 - If you can't text or call them, take this opportunity to write down why you're thankful for them, and meditate on the goodness within that interaction