

The scope of today's forum presentation is a continuation of day 1. Days 3 & 4 will include interactive presentations.

Let's take a minute to discuss self esteem because self esteem does decrease/is negatively impacted when you're stressed. Self esteem or self concept is how we feel about who we are. Self esteem has four main characteristics: Loveable, capable, responsible and worthwhile. Each of us usually identifies more strongly with one of these characteristics than the others. Which of these characteristics can you most easily see in yourself? Stress directly impacts how we see ourselves. Accident prone people don't feel so capable anymore. If you're having trouble concentrating you might not feel so worthwhile anymore. If you're not getting out of bed you might not feel so responsible anymore, if you're having conflicts with others you might not feel very loveable. Is it clear how burnout decreases self esteem? A strong sense of self esteem requires that we can see all four characteristics in ourselves. Remember: you can only see in others what you can see in yourself. How you see yourself impacts not only your work, but teamwork as well.

Behavior changes that result when stress reaches the burnout level include communication problems, inability to listen, social withdrawal, talk of changing jobs, substance abuse, change in eating patterns, tardiness, inattention to detail, forgetfulness, insensitivity, failures of judgment, conflicts, and blaming others. People who are stressed behave in these ways as a means of escape, as attempts to change reality, and because they don't feel very good about themselves.

Stress Relief Techniques:

1.) Identify the Stressors * identifying the problem is the first step to solving the problem.

2.) Identify your support system * who helps you to cope. Who you see as your support system vitally impacts your ability to cope. I worked with a sibling group of two children who were in foster care. Being in foster care is a major stressor * lots of change, loss, uncertainty and pain. The little boy was coping better than the little girl; he had more resiliency. When they each identified their support systems the lists were identical, except that the little boy counted God as a member of his support system. A belief in a Higher Power helps us to better manage stress.

3.) Accept Stressful Situations for what they are (you can't necessarily avoid or prevent a stressful situation * ex. Death of someone close to you, or an illness* you can manage your reaction to it and limit its power)

4.) Build Stress Resiliency: Resiliency is an ability to recover from or adjust easily to misfortune or change. It is the capability of the Self to recover after deformation caused by compressive stress. The following are building blocks that you can use to build stress resiliency.

Optimistic Attitude

Master of Fate * you are in control. You find meaning in your life rather than expecting your job, child, relationship, etc. to make your life meaningful.

Open to Learning * and consider alternatives

Opportunities/Challenges vs. Good/Bad approach * example * Lydia has a 2 year old daughter. Lydia was recently diagnosed with cancer. Lydia has health insurance and good family support. Lydia may not be able to continue to work while she receives treatments. Lydia resides 110 miles from the closest cancer center. Notice the difference in perception when you view Lydia's situation from an Opportunities/Challenges perspective vs. a Good/Bad perspective.

Problem Solve * Step back, gain perspective, define the problem, find a solution. Remember, you have more ability to change your environment than you think. (self-statements help * I can do this, every day I'm doing better and better) Generate a Different Feeling * if you don't like a feeling state, generate a different feeling. Cognitive/Behavioral therapy techniques can help with this. Use Change to Your Advantage - view change as an opportunity for enrichment.

Responsibility * you are a responsible person and, as such, you can accept positive and negative feedback and use this feedback as an opportunity to learn and to improve. You can accept success and failure without a loss of self-esteem. You like yourself.

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