

# Stress: A Way of Life or a Fact of Life

Presented by GuidanceResources Program®



**Stay Ahead** of Performance, Productivity and Health Issues

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# Agenda

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Defining “Stress”

Recognizing symptoms

Management strategies

# Types of Stress

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## **Acute Stress -**

- Most common form of stress
- Fight vs. Flight response
- Demands and pressures of everyday life

## **Chronic Stress -**

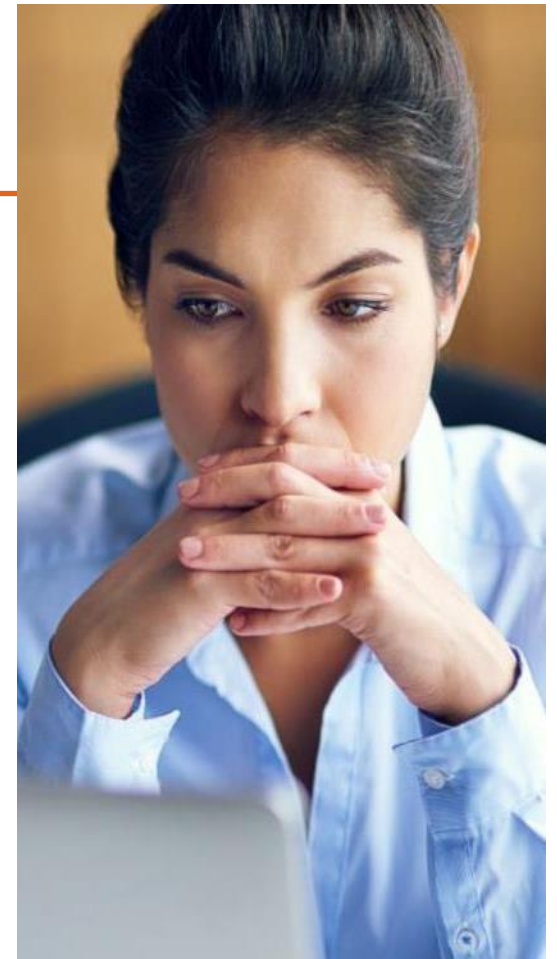
- Long term damaging stress associated with poverty, dysfunctional families, trapped in an unhappy marriage or in a disliked job
- Chronic stress occurs when a person does not see a way out of a miserable situation

## **Eustress -**

- Good stress
- Positively correlated with life satisfaction and well-being

# Stress Symptoms

- Sleep problems
- Appetite problems
- Muscle tension
- Headaches
- Fatigue
- Poor concentration, mind racing, forgetfulness
- Irritability, loss of humor
- Grinding teeth
- Digestive upsets
- Chest pains



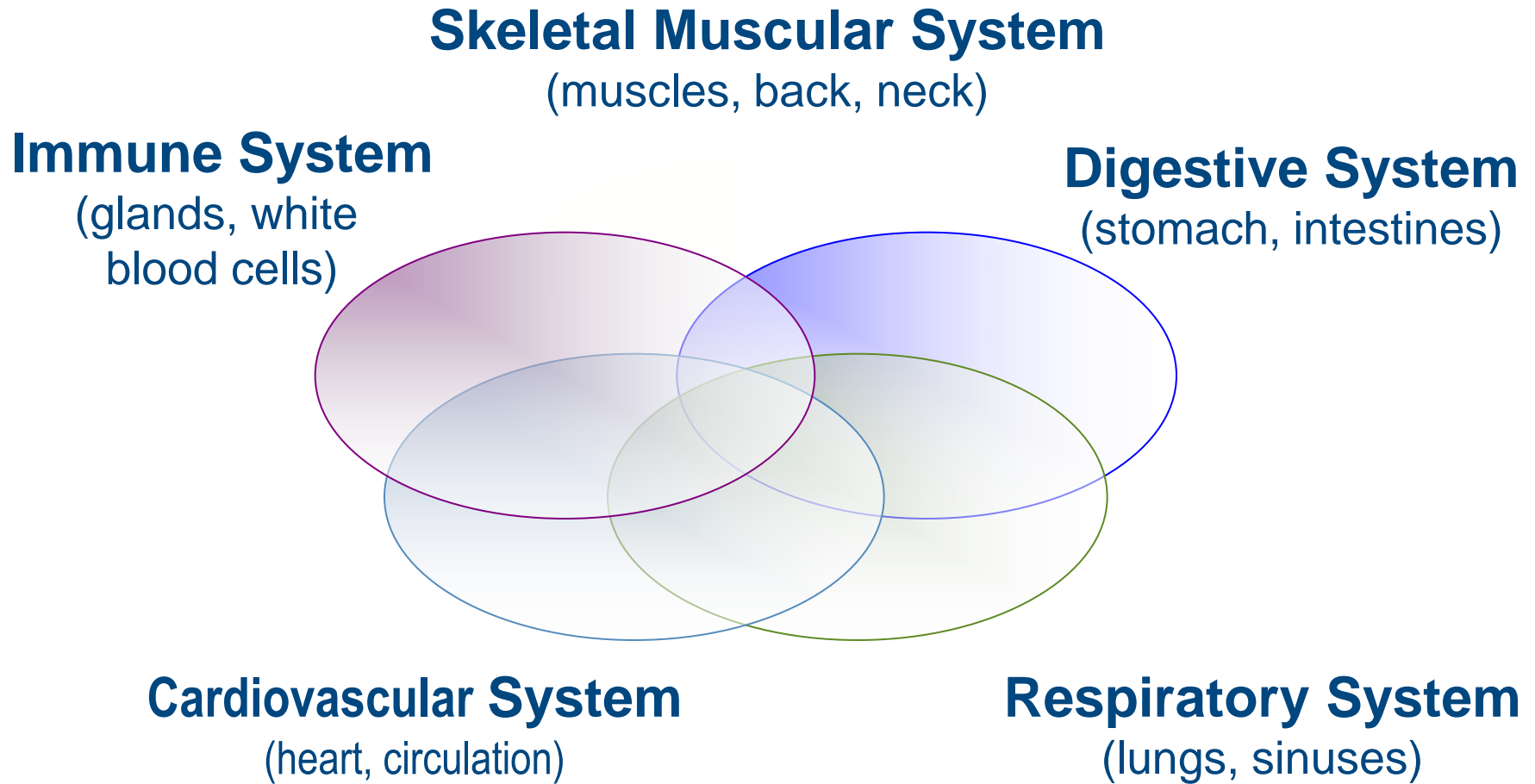
# Stress Causes Increases in...

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- Blood pressure
- Heart rate
- Respiration
- Metabolism
- Blood flow to your muscles

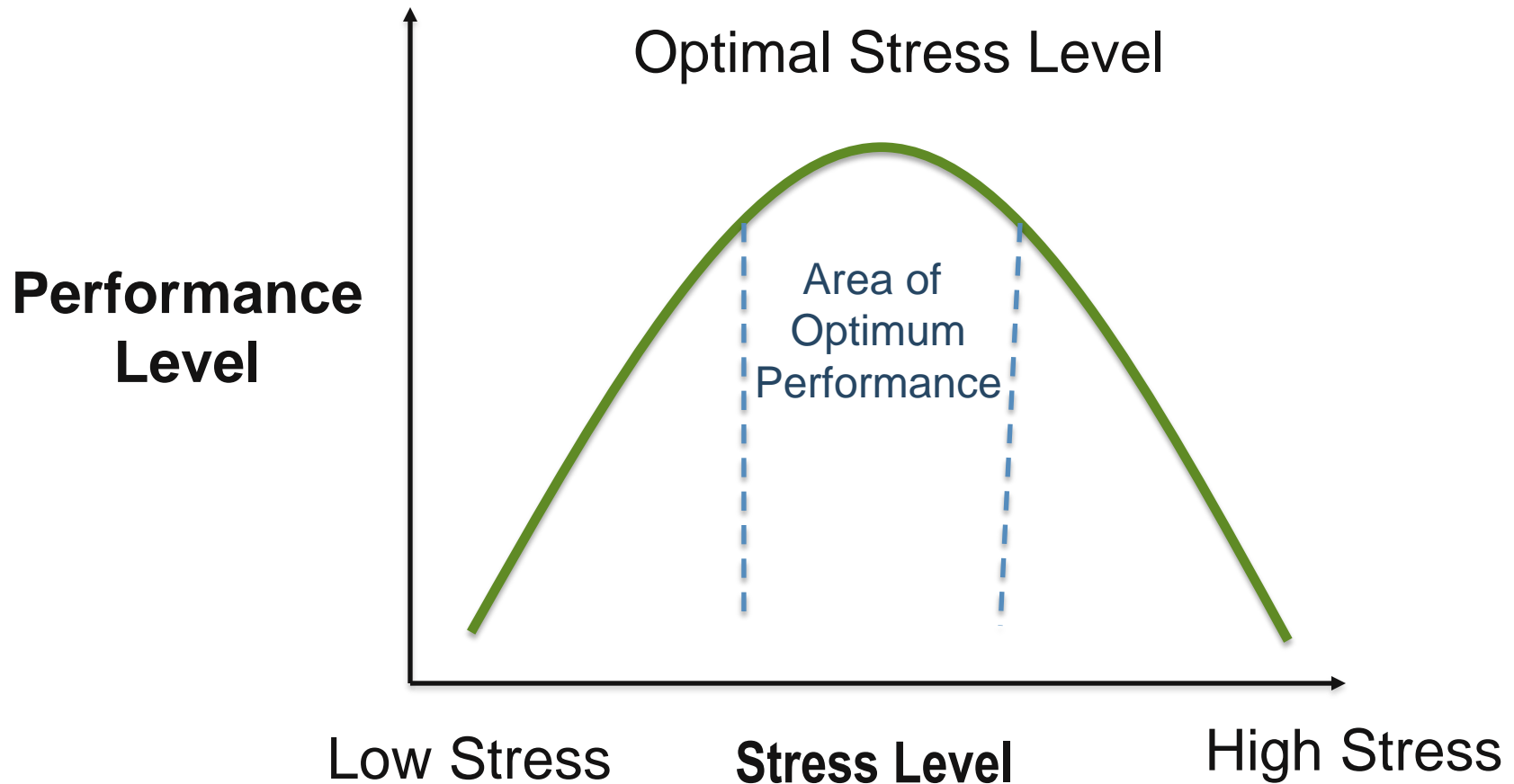


# The Effects of Stress on Our Bodies



# Stress and Performance

## *Yerkes–Dodson Performance and Stress Curve*



# Flow Experience – Six Factors

1. Intense and focused concentration on the present moment
2. Merging of action and awareness
3. A loss of reflective self-consciousness
4. A sense of personal control or agency over the situation or activity
5. A distortion of temporal experience
6. Experience of the activity is intrinsically rewarding (an “autotelic experience”)





# Managing Stress

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1. Understanding the causes
2. Establishing the pattern
3. Taking control of the stressors



# Focusing Your Stress Management

Stressor	Signals	Level of Control	Level of Stress
Negative and Positive Event	Physical Emotional Mental	High Medium Low None	Scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high)

# Taking Control through Planning

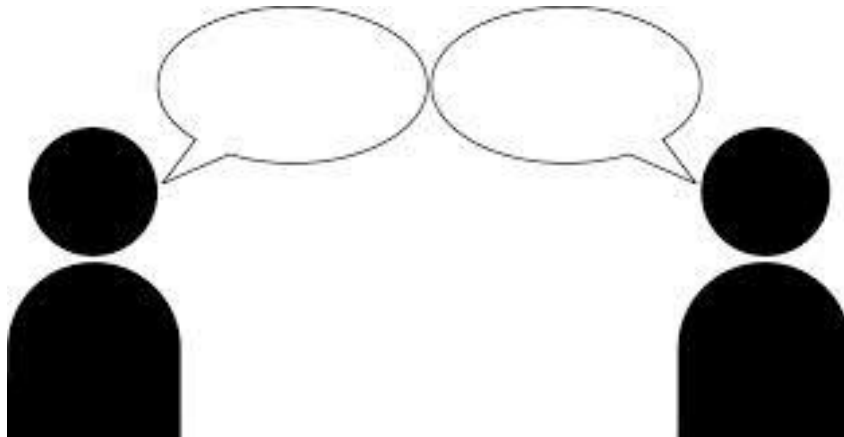
- Two Important Questions:
  - “What do I want to accomplish today?”  
(short and long-term objectives)
  - “What will prevent me from achieving this?”
- Breakdown tasks that are overwhelming:  
“What is the first thing I need to do?”
- Keep a schedule of appointments and tasks to be accomplished
- Prioritize tasks



# Talking Changes Thoughts

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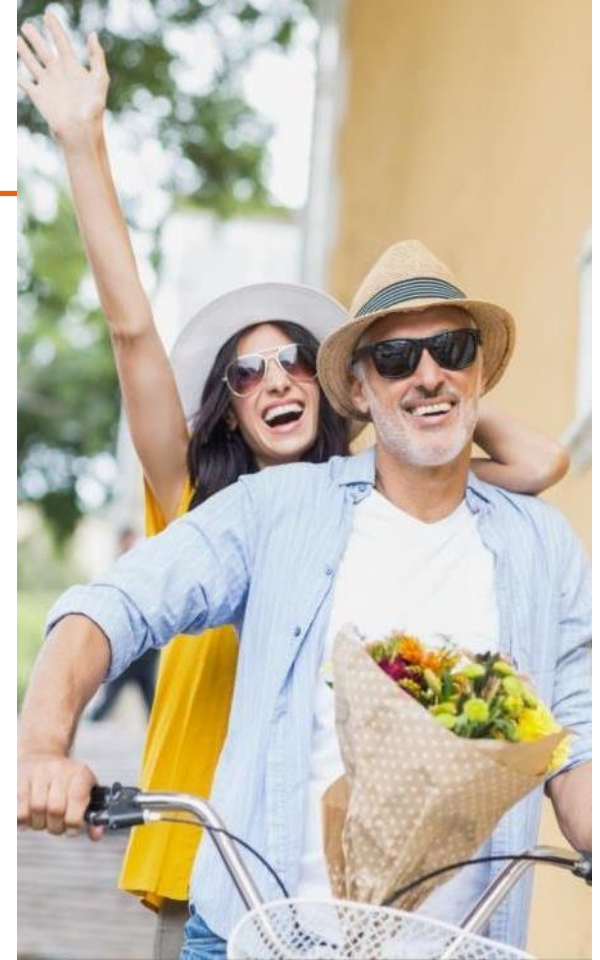
1. Acknowledge experience – “What is happening and how am I feeling?”
2. Verbalizing your thoughts to another person



3. Embracing opportunity - “How is this stressful event an opportunity?”

# Lifestyle Changes

- Make stress reduction a priority
- Take time off for yourself and schedule regular breaks
- Do something you enjoy – cultivate hobbies
- Sleep 8 hours a night
- Exercise regularly – go outside into nature if possible
- Develop supportive relationships
- Help others in need



# Outside vs. Inside Awareness

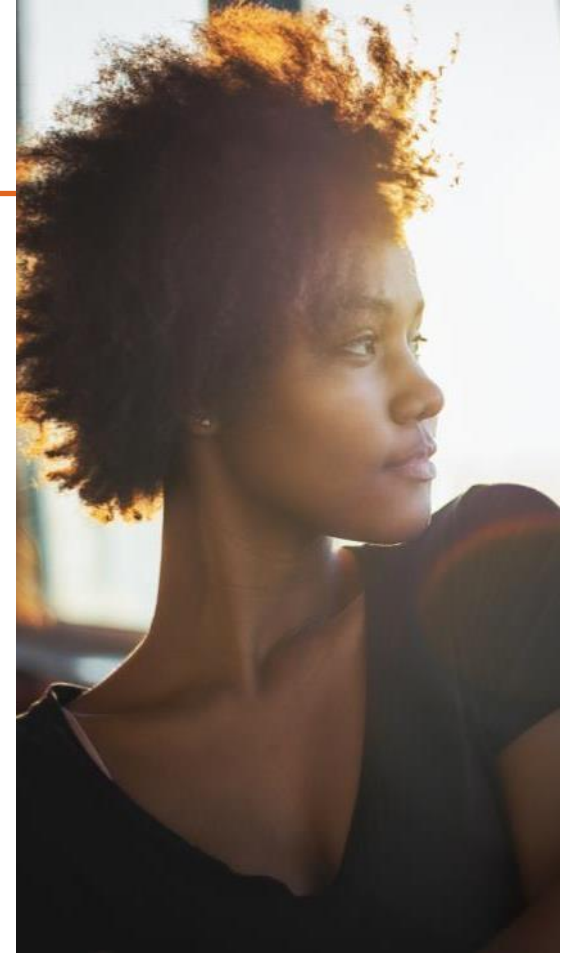
Focus your attention on the outside world by finishing this sentence:

“I’m aware of \_\_\_\_\_.”

Next shift your attention to what is happening in your body:

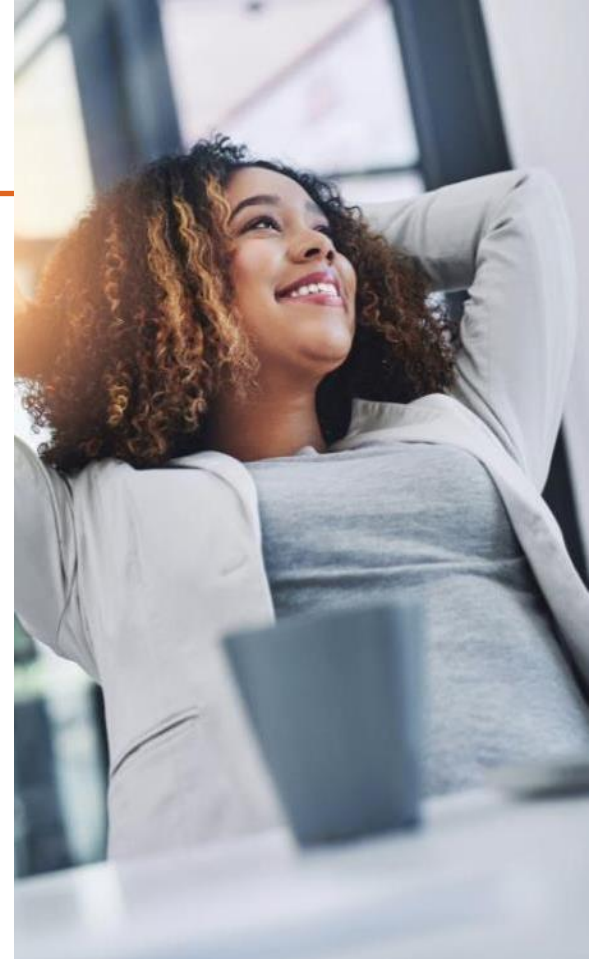
“I’m aware of \_\_\_\_\_.”

Now go back and forth a few times between observations of the outside world and experiences in your body



# Breathing

- Take a deep breath
- Now yawn and exhale with an audible sigh
- Place your hand over your abdomen. Take a deep breath allowing your abdomen to expand, pushing your hand out.
- Imagine a balloon in your stomach expanding upon inhalation and contracting on exhalation.



# Progressive Muscle Relaxation

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Progressive muscle relaxation involves tensing each muscle group from 5 to 7 seconds and then relaxing it for 20 to 30 seconds and then repeating it at least once.

- Hands, forearms and biceps
- Head, face, throat and shoulders
- Chest, stomach and lower back
- Thighs, calves and feet



# Visualization

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## Clearing a Space:

- “I am perfectly comfortable and content right now”
- “What's between me and feeling perfectly all right?”
- Imagine the concern floating off into a container
- “Aside from that, what else is between me and feeling perfectly all right at this moment?”

## Serene Place:

- Imagine you are in a place that you love. It can be a place you have been before, or a perfect place you make up. Wherever it is, you must feel totally safe here.
- Imagine it in all five senses

# Thank You for Attending

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