

EFFECTIVE STRESS MANAGEMENT



Black&McDonald



Learning Objectives



- Understand the science of the stress response
- Recognize your own stress triggers
- Learn how to respond rather than react
- Discover powerful stress busting strategies



Understanding Stress

Think about the last time you felt
stressed?

How did you feel?

How did you act?

What is Stress?

How would you define the word stress?

There is a large amount of debate around the subject of stress and how to define it.

Dr. Gillian Butler, states that the easiest approach is to consider the subject of stress from three different perspectives;

- 1. *Stimulus Based Definition***
- 2. *Response Based Definition***
- 3. *The Dynamic Process***



The Definitions

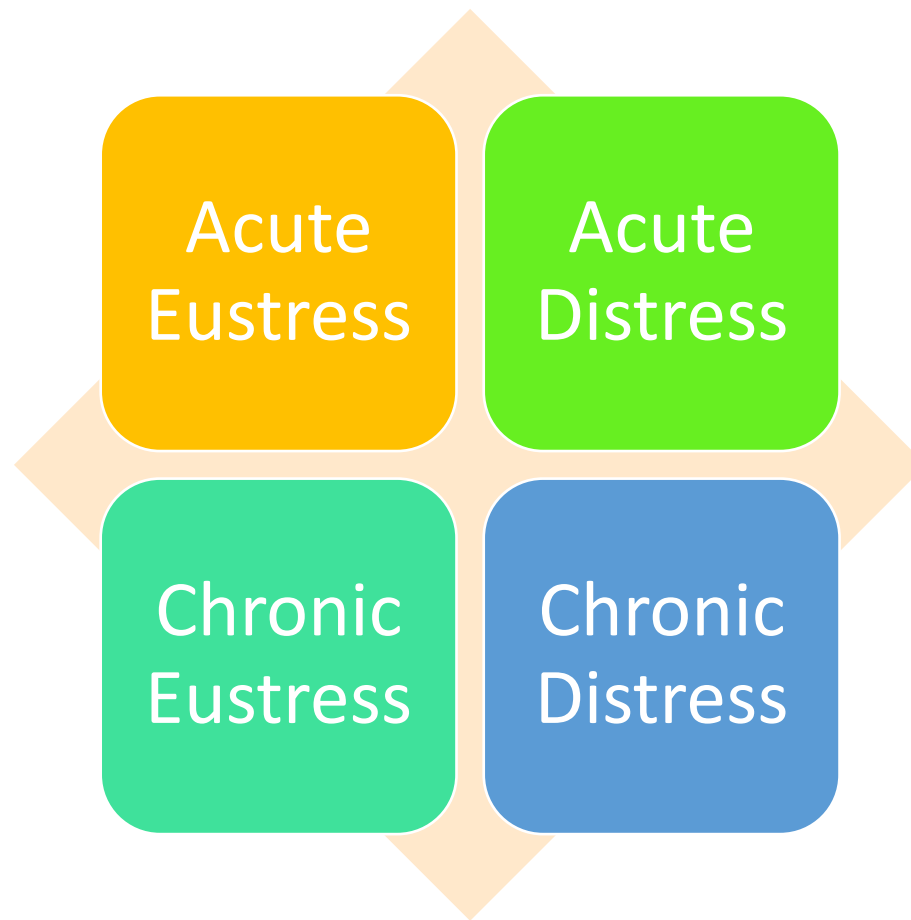
Recognizing Stressors

- **External stressors:** External stressors are events and situations that happen to you. They are often out of your control. Examples are major events, other people's behavior or traffic jams.
- **Internal stressors:** Internal stressors refer to stress that is self-induced. This might include feelings and thoughts that pop into your head and feelings, like being depressed, worried, or putting pressure on yourself to be perfect.

Acute Stress and Chronic Stress

- Acute stress is short-term stress; it is an immediate response to a threat.
- Chronic stress is long-term stress; it is an ongoing exposure to stress.

Stress Matrix



The Stress Response

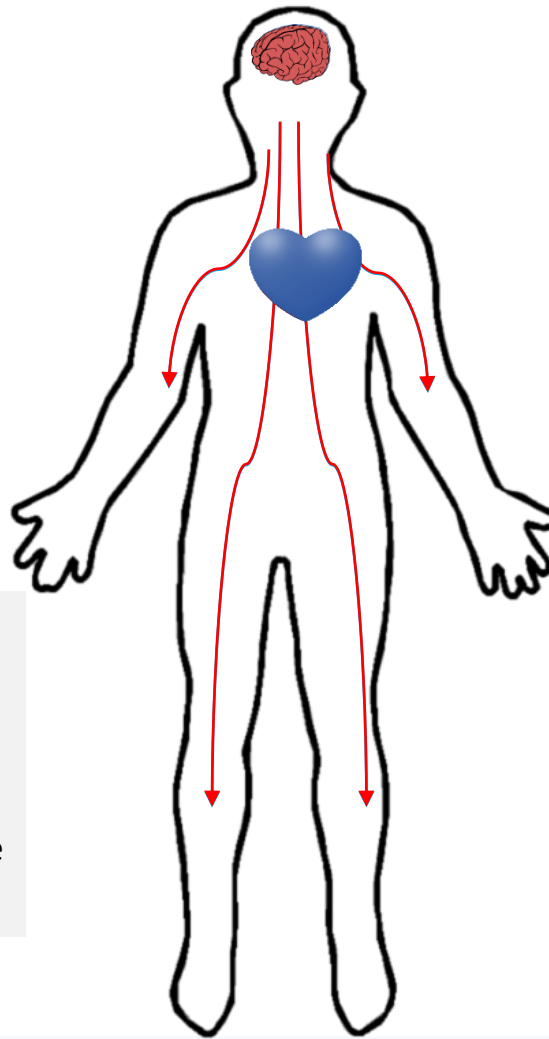
Under stress we often **react** to the trigger, rather than choosing how to **respond**.

Our body is primed to instantly **fight or flee** from the threat.

Our body is swamped with hormones which **shut down** every other system in the body.

The priority **is dealing with the trigger** which is advantageous when faced with a physical threat.

It becomes **problematic** when it is a different kind of trigger, like those we face at work.

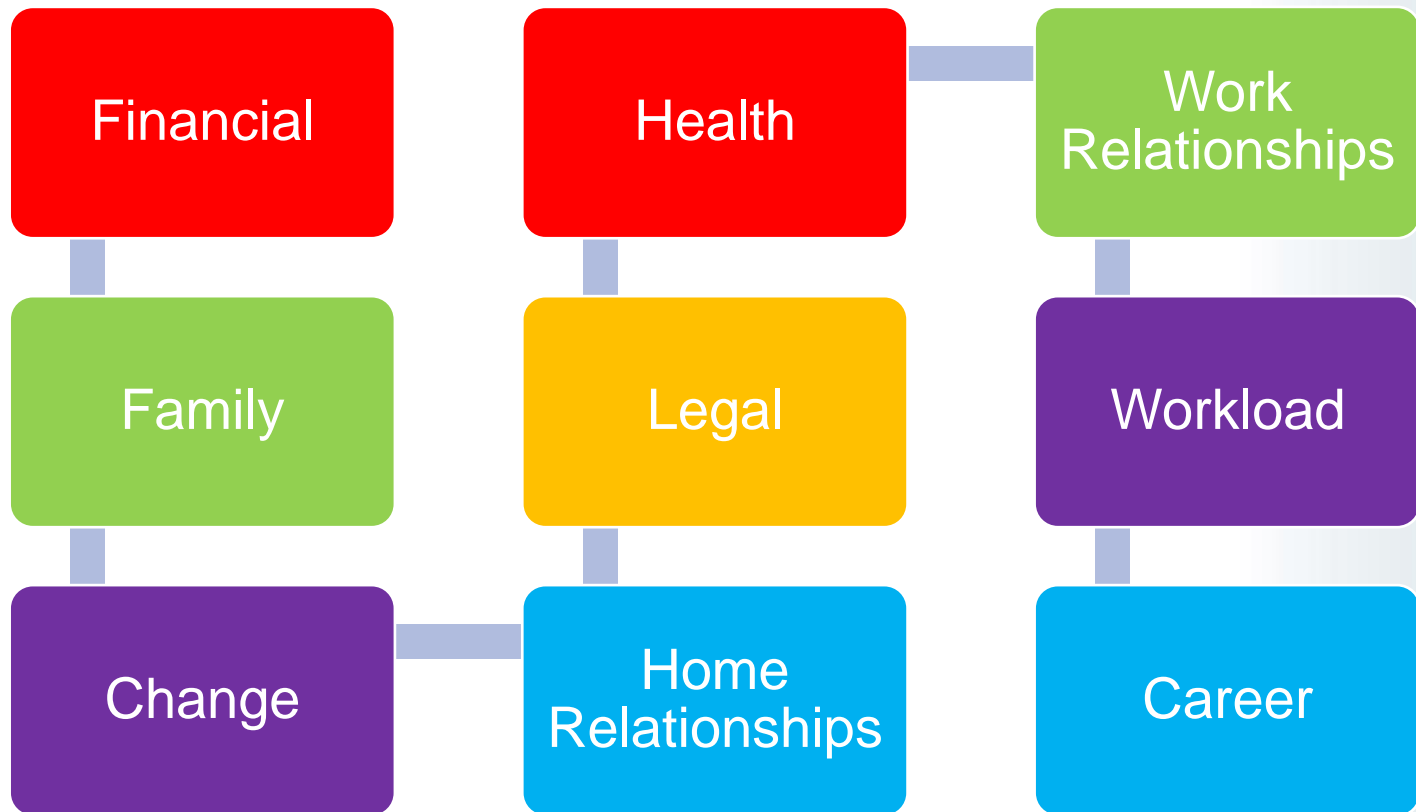


When we take a **moment to breathe** and become mindful of our environment, we stop the hijack of our bodies.

This gives us the **time** and **space** to think with **clarity** and **objectivity**.

This allows us to **change our physiological state** and think **calmly** how to **tackle the situation**.

Triggers in Life



Workplace Triggers

Intrinsic to Job

- Too little work
- Time pressure
- Mistakes
- Too many decisions

Role in Organization

- Role ambiguity
- Role conflict
- Too little responsibility
- Responsibility for people/things

Organizational Climate

- Restrictions on behavior
- Lack of effective communication
- No sense of belonging
- Loss of identity
- Office politics

Intrinsic to Individual

- Poor relations with boss
- Poor relations with colleagues/staff
- Personality conflicts
- Difficulties delegating

Relations within Organization

- Inability to cope with change
- Lack of insight into own stressors
- Interpersonal problems
- Fear of moving out of area of expertise





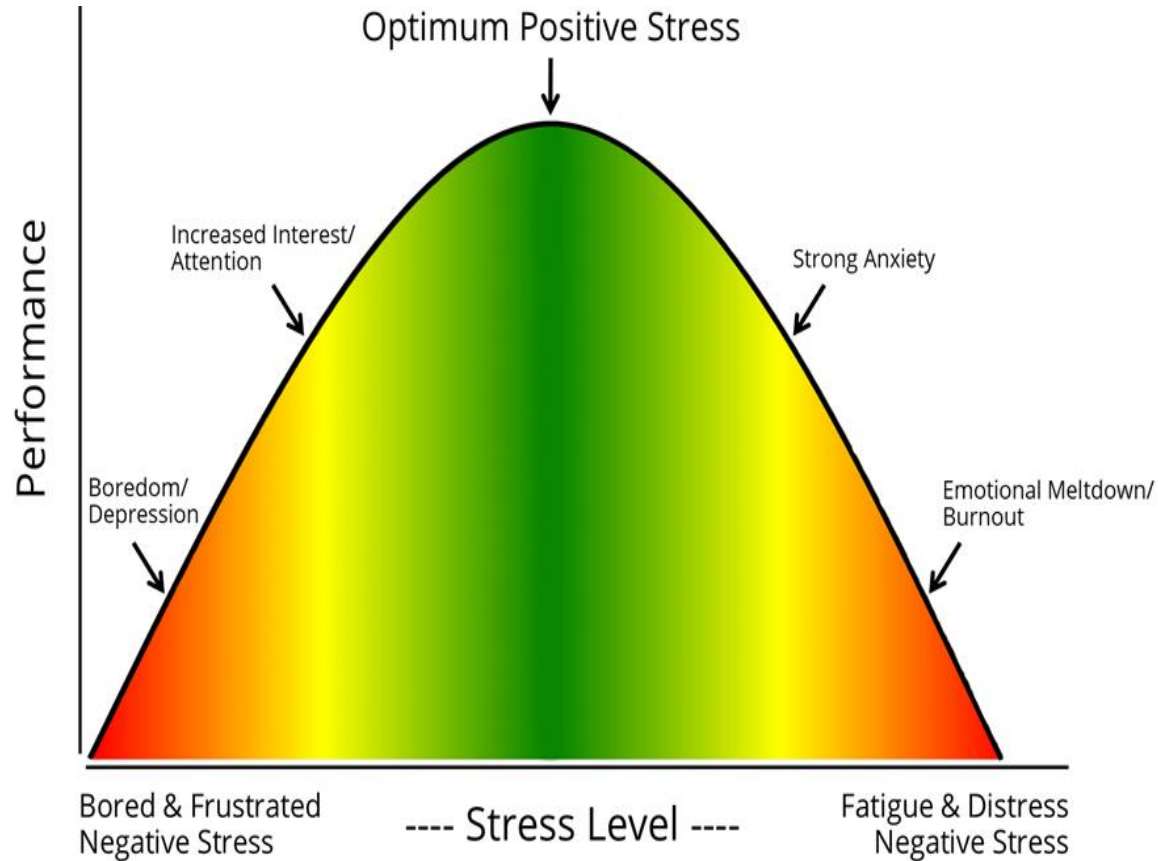
**What are your common
stress triggers?**

**How do you usually respond
to these triggers?**

Keeping a Stress Diary

Keeping a stress diary is a really useful way to help you identify the stressors you face and start to decide how to manage them more effectively.





Impact of Stress

Recognizing the Symptoms of Stress

Emotional symptoms include:

- Agitation, frustration and moodiness
- Feeling overwhelmed or out of control
- Feeling bad about yourself, lonely, worthless, sad, etc.

Physical symptoms include:

- Low energy or insomnia
- Frequent aches and pains
- Lower interest in usual activities
- Nervousness
- Ringing in the ear
- Clenched jaw and grinding teeth

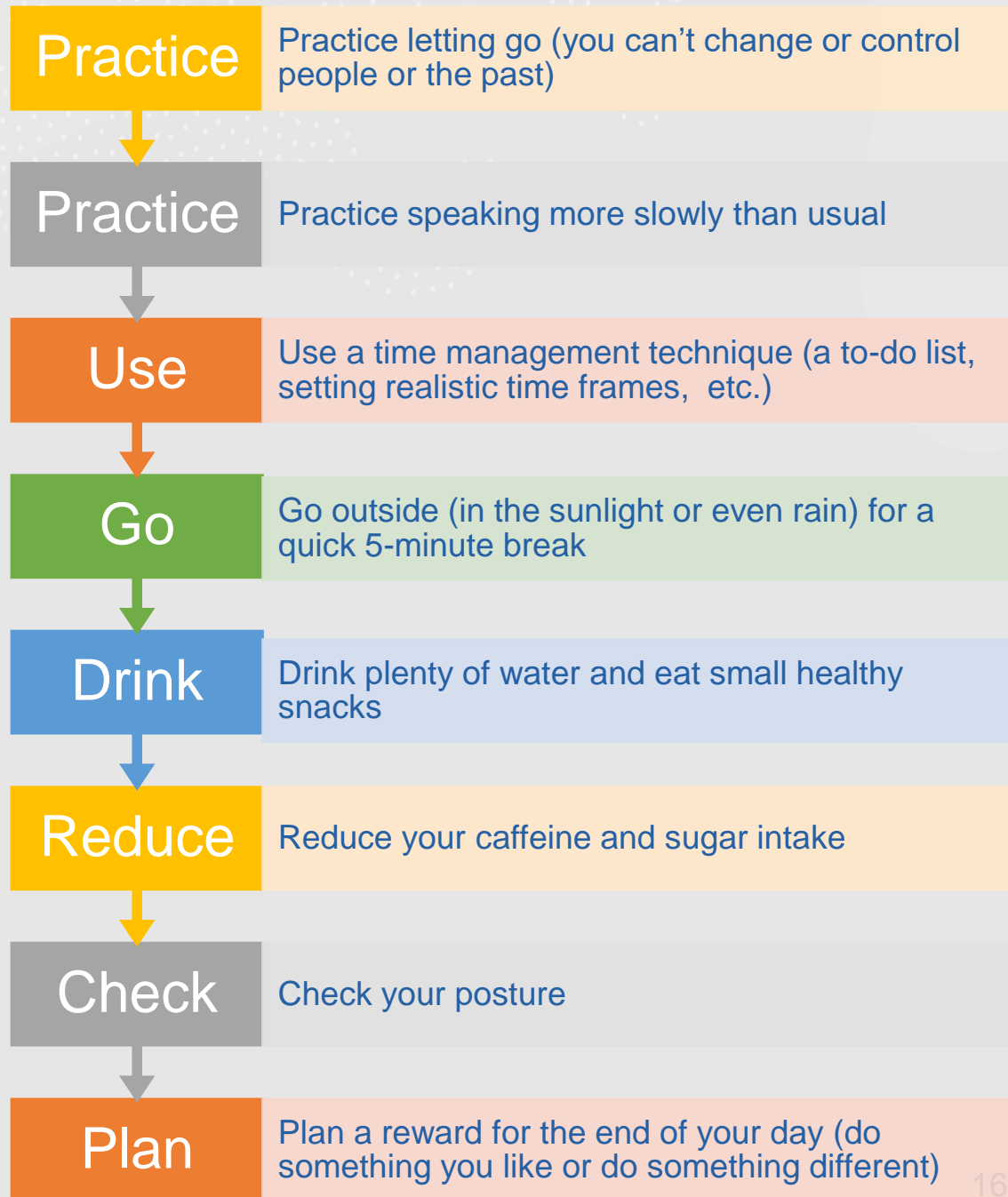
Behavioral symptoms include:

- Frequent crying
- Frequent screaming, fighting, blaming
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Oversleeping or disrupted sleep

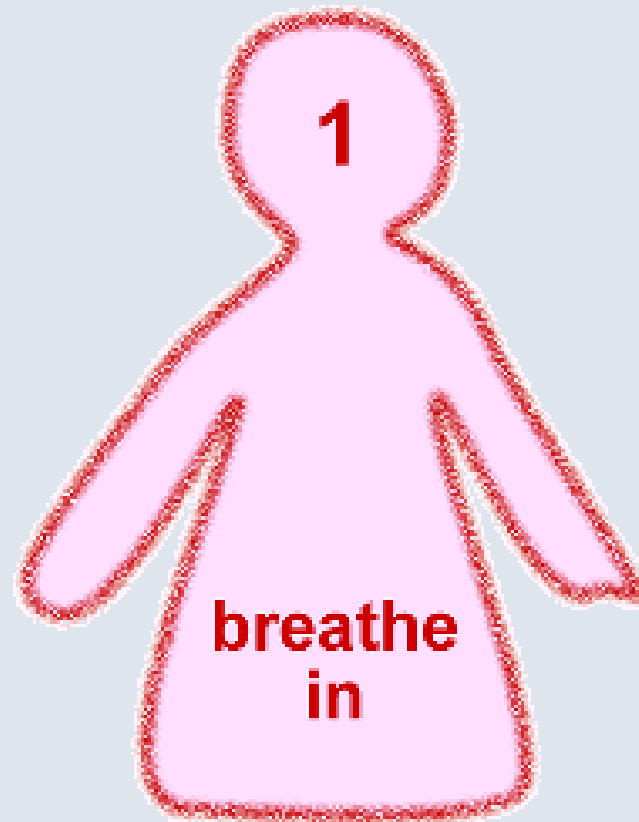
Mental symptoms include:

- Poor concentration
- Forgetfulness
- Slow decision making
- Poor decision making
- Pessimistic outlook

Stress Busters



A Simple Breathing Activity



Source: [Mic/Tumblr](#)

A Simple Breathing Activity

Source: [Tumblr](#)

Eating to Relax

- Sip green tea
- Snack on nuts and seeds
- Include salmon, orange, avocado and spinach in your diet
- Chew gum
- Add honey
- Try small amounts of dark chocolate



Simple Ways to Soothe Your Mind


- Self massage
- Cool down
- Get out in nature
- Dance, sing and laugh
- Breathe in lavender



Supporting a Colleague

- Invite them to take a break
- Share your experiences
- Ask if there's anything they need
- Think about how you would want to be treated if you opened up to a colleague





Supporting Others cont.

- Be generally kind and sincerely when asking them how they are
- Be prepared to listen and not talk
- Emphasize/signpost the support provided by the organization (e.g. EAP)
- Use open questions

THANK YOU ANY QUESTIONS?

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Thank you!

Questions?