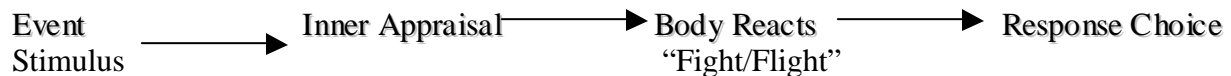


# PRINCIPLES OF STRESS

## What is Stress?

- The internal resistance of a body to a pressure or force
- The complex interaction between the events of life and the perception of those events by an individual

## The Stages of Stress



## What is a Stressor?

- A pressure or force that tends to strain or deform the body subjected to it
- A specific problem, issue or challenge

## Basic Sources of Stress

- The Environment: Weather, noise, traffic, pollution, rudeness
- Social: Home and work issues, financial concerns, personal losses
- Physiology: Accidents, illnesses, aging, poor nutrition, sleep problems, lack of exercise

## Factors that Impact on the Level of Stress

- 1. Unpredictability:** Being unable to foresee what will happen next can be very nerve racking. You must remain "on" or vigilant.
- 2. Lack of control:** An inability to do something to resolve the situation increases your stress reaction. Having a flat tire and no spare tire.
- 3. No frustration outlets:** Your stress reaction is much greater if there are no ways to get your frustration out constructively.
- 4. Intensity:** The more severe the change or stressor the greater the stress reaction will be. The "fight or flight response" goes on high!
- 5. Duration:** The longer the stressful event continues the greater the stress reaction will be. The "fight or flight response" builds slowly to high.

## How Do You Manage Stress?

This worksheet is designed to assess the methods that you currently use to manage stress. Please place an X beside each statement that is true for you.

### Positive Stress Management Strategies

When experiencing stress, which of the following activities do you use to resolve it?

- |                              |     |                                  |     |
|------------------------------|-----|----------------------------------|-----|
| Listen to music              | ___ | Visit or call a friend           | ___ |
| Watch TV or go to the movies | ___ | Do a good deed for someone       | ___ |
| Read a book or magazine      | ___ | Take a shower or bath            | ___ |
| Write in a journal or diary  | ___ | Openly express feelings          | ___ |
| Exercise, walk, or jog       | ___ | Take time to think about options | ___ |
| Take a short nap             | ___ | Other:                           | ___ |
| Meditation or deep breathing | ___ | Other:                           | ___ |

### Negative Stress Management Strategies

When experiencing stress, which of the following activities do you use to escape?

- |                                   |     |                                     |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-------------------------------------|-----|
| Avoid social contact with others  | ___ | Spend money you don't have to spare | ___ |
| Anticipate the worst outcome      | ___ | Sit and feel sorry for yourself     | ___ |
| Think about hurting yourself      | ___ | Blame others for your problems      | ___ |
| Use tobacco products              | ___ | Drive fast and recklessly           | ___ |
| Overeat, junk food, skip meals    | ___ | Sleep as an escape                  | ___ |
| Use alcohol or other drugs        | ___ | Other:                              | ___ |
| Become irritable with others      | ___ | Other:                              | ___ |
| Drink excessive amounts of coffee | ___ |                                     |     |

**Number of Negative Strategies** \_\_\_      **Number of Positive Strategies** \_\_\_

**What steps can you take to improve your stress management strategies?**