



Stress, Compassion Fatigue and Self Care

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- Member of the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress
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INTRODUCTIONS

- Your Name
- Location of employment
- Favorite hobbies

Goals

- Define and describe the problems
- Explore personal reactions
- Understanding Stress
- Understanding Crisis
- Understanding Compassion Fatigue
- Self Help issues

What's the problem at NASA? The Stressors

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- Violence in the work place
- Job security 4,000+ lay-offs

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- Disasters
- Accidents
- Alcohol or drug abuse problems.
- Violence in the work place
- Job security 4,000+ lay-offs
- Other

What are Your Stressors?

- Job Security
- Interpersonal relationships
- Too much to do and not enough time
- Making a dent in the problem
- Stories you hear
- Personal Health
- Other



Stress Overview

- Stress is normal
- Stress is essential to life
- We cannot eliminate stress
- We can only manage it

Former Surgeon General C. Everett Koop

“80% of Americans who do not die from some form of trauma will die from a stress related illness”

Stress Overview

- A person's Perception is their reality



A Elephant is Like:

A snake

A wall

A pillar

A bird

A tree branch

A pipe

Stress

- Eustress



- Distress



Although the mind perceives the difference between eustress and distress; the body does not differentiate.

“nonspecific response of the body to any demand”

Hans Selye

Eustress and Distress



Stress



Distress

- Acute, such as traffic and deadlines
- Cumulative, such as too many crises
- Chronic, such as interpersonal relationships
- Critical Incidents, such as violence



Critical Incident Stress

- Life Threatening Events

- Natural Disasters
- Terrorism
- Violent Crime

- Severe Injuries

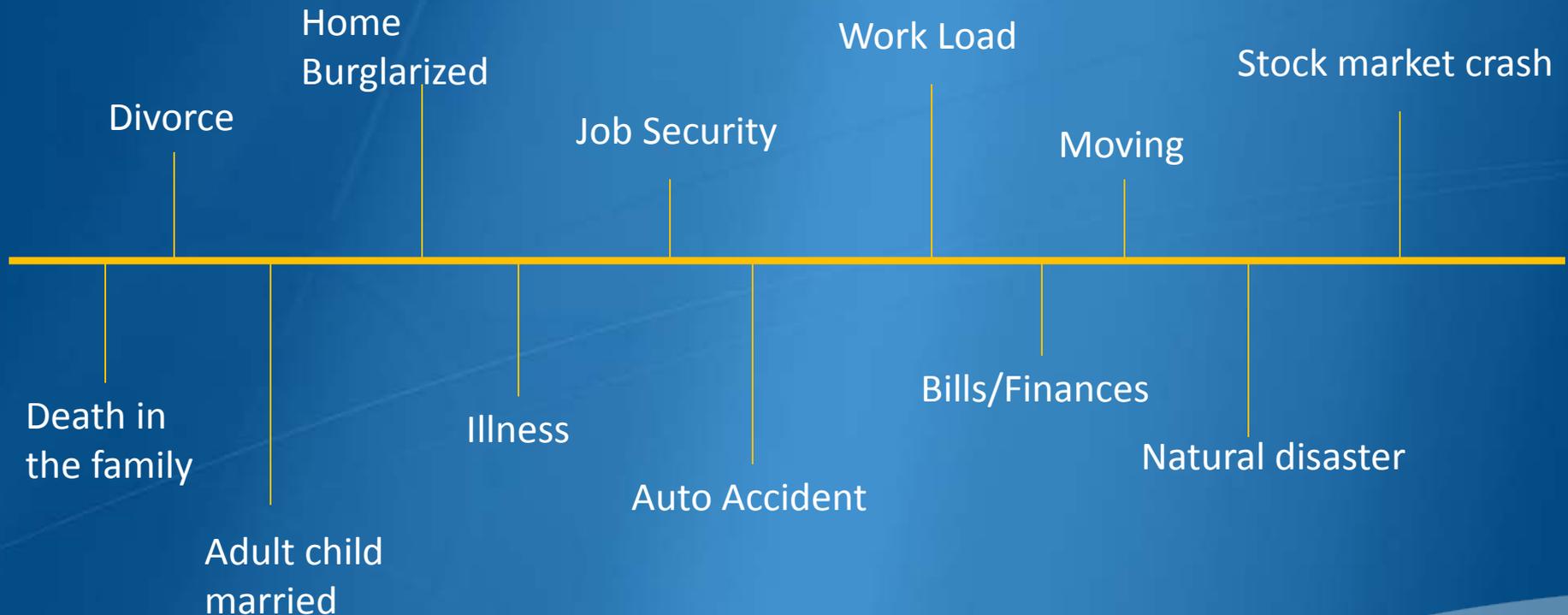
- Death

- Natural
- Untimely
- Violent



Personal Exercise Stress Line

List your stress events for the last 5 years

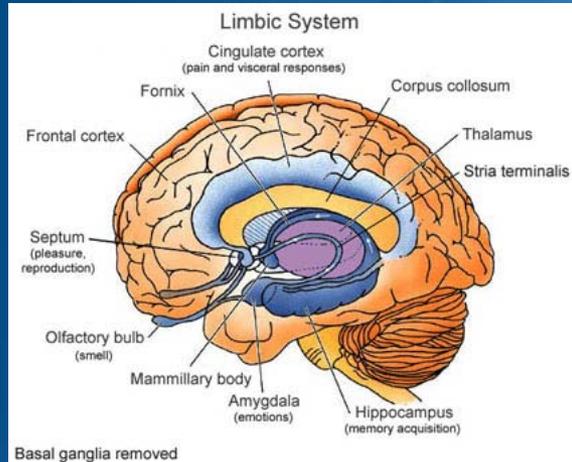


On a scale of 1 – 10 what was the level of stress of each event

Stress

- Stress is a response characterized by physical and psychological arousal arising as a direct result of an exposure to any demand or pressure on a living organism.
- Stress is an adaptive process to meet the demands of the environment.
- Stress is essential for survival

Human Stress Response



Sympathetic Nervous System

Arousal

Epinephrine,
Norepinephrine, etc.

Fight, Flight, Freeze Response

The Human Stress Response

- Why do I feel so bad?
- Why am I thinking and behaving as I do?

Arousal stress hormones

The arousal threat may be physical, emotional, or cognitive

Human Stress Response

- Parasympathetic Nervous System
 - Counterbalance the Sympathetic Nervous System
 - Reduce arousal state

Too much stress over too long period of time can alter the Parasympathetic Nervous System!

Manifestations of Distress (severe)

PHYSICAL

- Headaches
- Nausea
- Irritable bowels
- Exhaustion
- Muscle Spasms
- Unexplained pain
- Appetite
- Blood Pressure
- TMJ

EMOTIONAL

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Helplessness
- Sadness
- Inappropriate response
- Feeling out of Control
- Frustration
- Irritability

Manifestations of Distress

Cognitive

- Poor concentration
- Problem solving skills
- Memory
- Second guessing
- Uncertain
- Greener grass syndrome
- Blaming others
- Pessimistic

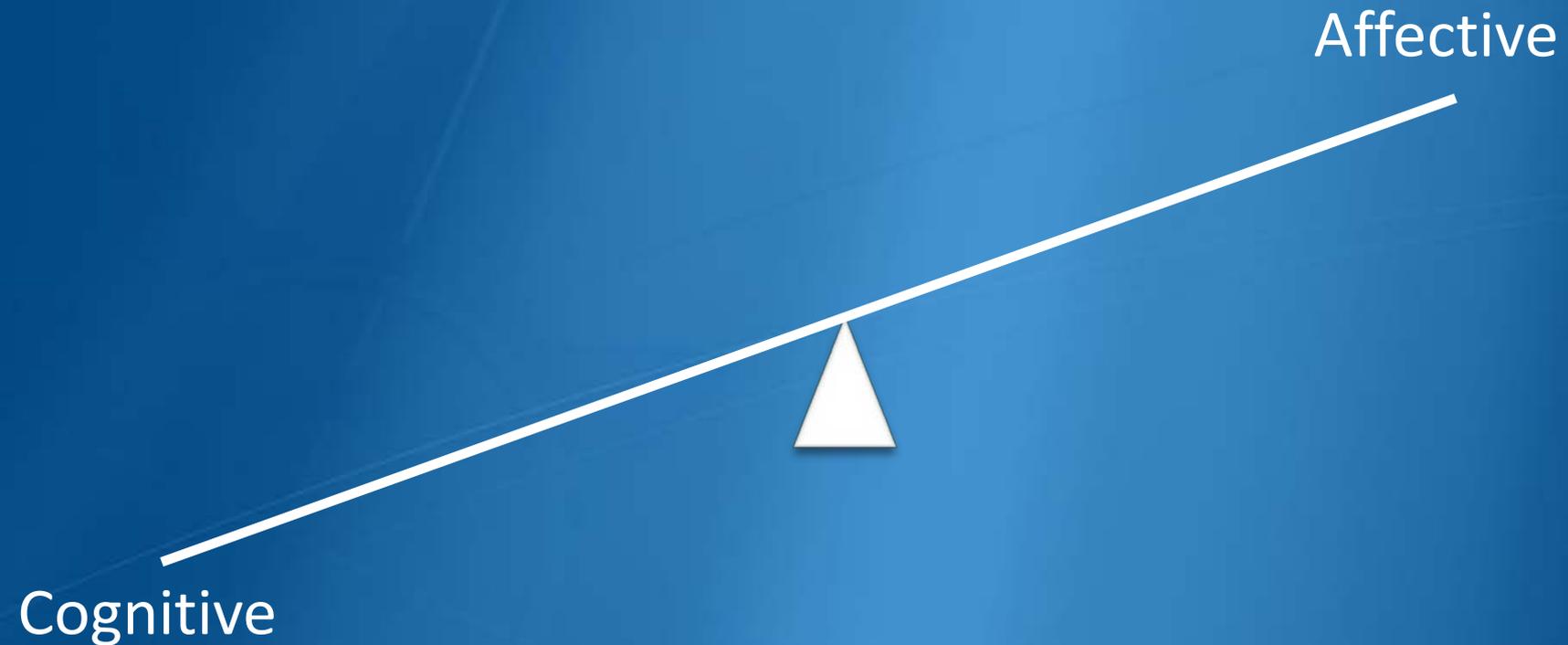
Behavioral

- Withdrawal
- Restlessness
- Eating habits
- Emotional outbursts
- Obsessive/Compulsive
- Alcohol/Drugs
- Sexual activity
- Social activity

Personal Stress Exercise

Go through the lists of possible symptomology of stress and circle all the symptoms you have experienced. Add to the list anything not listed.

Emotional vs. Cognitive domain



Shifting Gears

● From Stress to Crisis



Crisis

- Crisis are precipitated by specific identifiable events that become too much for the person's usual problem solving skills.
- Crisis are normal in the sense that all of us feel overwhelmed at some time.
- Crisis are personal. A situation that devastates one person may be a simple annoyance to another.
- Crisis are resolved one way or another.

Crisis

- Perception of the event
- Perception of resources



The point is that people make their own choices based upon their perceptions

Crisis

- Are not necessarily bad
 - They can lead to heightened maturity
 - Learn new problem solving skills
 - Open to other ideas
 - Seek other and greater opportunities
- OR
 - Severe Depression
 - Helplessness
 - Self-Destructive Behavior
 - Give up

COMPASSION FATIGUE

COM / PASSION
WITH / SUFFER

It is not caring too much. One can never care too much.

It is caring for others at the
expense of self-care

COMPASSION FATIGUE

We only have so much physical and emotional energy



Where is your gas gauge?

What Causes Compassion fatigue?

- Day in, day out, workers struggle to function in care giving environments that constantly present heart wrenching, emotional challenges.
- It's everyday
- It's heart breaking

What Causes Compassion fatigue?

- Affecting positive change in an individual or group, a mission so vital to those passionate about caring for others, is perceived as elusive, if not impossible.
- Trying to change a world that doesn't want or cannot be changed

Compassion Fatigue

How much do you feel that you have made a difference?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

COMPASSION FATIGUE

- **Assuming ownership, control, and responsibility for the suffering of others**

And

- **Assuming ownership, control, and responsibility for the situation**

What 's in a name?

- Secondary Victimization (Figley, 1982)
- Secondary Traumatic Stress (Figley, 1983)
- Vicarious Traumatization (McCann and Pearlman, 1989)

What's in a Name

- Countertransference
- “Emotional Contagion”

An affective process in which an individual observing another person experiences emotional responses parallel to that person's actual or anticipated emotions (Miller, Stiff & Ellis, 1988)

Common Symptoms

- Excessive blaming
- Bottled up emotions
- Isolation from others
- Substance abuse used to mask feelings
- Obsessive/Compulsion behaviors
- Sadness and Depression
- Difficulty concentrating
- Mentally and physically tired

Common Symptoms

- Feelings of incompetency and self doubt
- Negative attitude
- Cynical
- Disillusioned
- Wanting to run away



Self Help -- Perspective and Boundaries

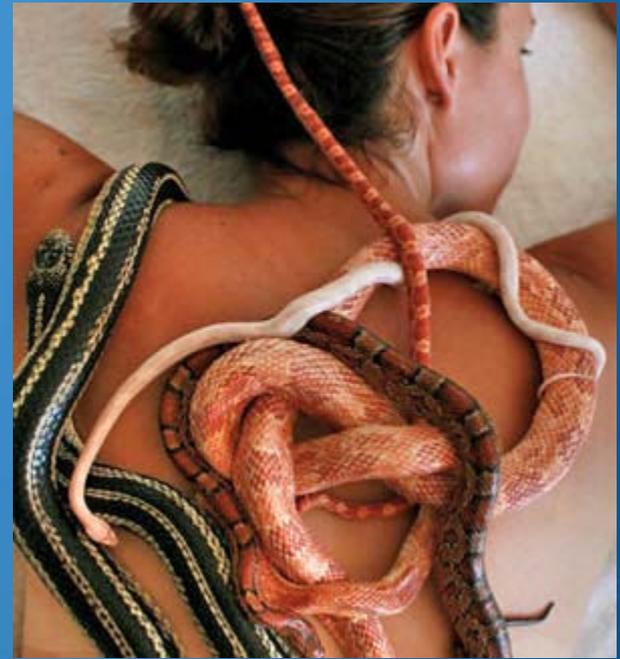
- Is there a separation or boundary between what you do and who you are?
- Is there a separation or boundary between their needs and your needs?
- Focus on the positives not the negatives
- What are you worth?
- Heavy dose of reality

Self Help

- Awareness
- Self Esteem
- Resources of family and Friends
- Talk to someone - Even Mental Health Professionals need to talk to some.
 - Talk about the situations
 - Talk about your reactions
- Periodic evaluation
- Journaling

Self Help

- Relaxation
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Clear liquids
- Healthy diet
- Pleasurable activities
- Healthy aggressive outlet



Relaxation Exercise

- Get comfortable (Preferably a quiet place of solitude)
- Close your eyes
- Breathe slow and deep (Diaphragmatic breathing, less than 6 breaths per minute)
- Progressive relaxation

Breathing controls the brain

Questions

Resources

- Stress Resistance Through the Project Smart Program -- Raymond Flannery
- The Emotional Brain -- Joseph LeDoux
- Shattered Assumptions -- Ronnie Janoff-Bulmann
- Boundaries -- Henry Cloud
- A Clinical Guide to the Human Stress Response -- George Everly and Jeffrey Lating
- Crisis Intervention, A Handbook of Immediate Person to Person Help -- Kenneth France
- The Relaxation and Stress Reduction Workbook -- Martha Davis, Elizabeth Eshelman, Matthew McKay