

NEWSLETTER

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Stress: Good & Bad?

Stress is something that everyone encounters daily—it is a natural and unavoidable aspect of life that affects people of all ages. How a person interprets each situation will dictate whether they perceive the stress as positive or negative. For example, how we view situations like public speaking, long car rides with family, being stuck in traffic, or your baby crying in a restaurant can result in a person experiencing either “good” or “bad” stress.

Eustress, the “good” stress will motivate, challenge, and improve performance, leading to positive feelings and thoughts and is typically short-lived. Conversely, the “bad” stress – Distress, will diminish motivation and performance, result in negative feelings and thoughts and is chronic in nature. Both types of stress involve the same heightened level hormonal reactions; the difference is they are acutely present during eustress and are chronically present in distress.

Three major hormones associated with stress are Cortisol, Norepinephrine, and Adrenaline. Cortisol **increases energy**, Norepinephrine **improves alertness**, and Adrenaline **triggers rapid physical responses** commonly known as the “fight or flight.” You can see how these hormones can allow us to perform better when needed for a brief period, but if they are prolonged or chronic they lead to negative effects of both our physical and mental health. Whether it is the “good” or “bad” stress it is important that you are managing both on a regular basis.



To manage stress, it is important to maintain a healthy life/obligation balance. Lifestyle changes may be necessary so first examine these areas: **1)** are you overcommitted and cannot say “no”, **2)** do you need to improve your time management, **3)** can your sleep routine improve and **4)** are you utilizing relaxation and coping skills daily. Once you have done all you can, and if the distress continues, it may be time to seek professional help.

The most commonly reported symptoms we hear as therapists are **1)** feelings of being overwhelmed and anxious, **2)** having difficulty performing tasks and responsibilities, **3)** having noticeable changes in your sleeping or eating patterns, **4)** being withdrawn from activities and relationships, **5)** experiencing intense or uncontrollable emotions, or **6)** having thoughts of self-harm or harm to others. If any of these symptoms are present, please reach out for help – you do not have to continue to struggle daily.

Eustress	Distress
▶ Promotion at Work	▶ Loss of Job or Income
▶ Having/Expecting a Baby	▶ Loss of a Loved One
▶ Buying a New Home/Moving	▶ Money Problems
▶ Planning a Wedding	▶ Family Conflict



As a therapist, I sometimes need to shift my own perspective about stressful events to remind myself it is all going to be okay. I am here and available to help you, or your loved one, reduce and manage stress in their life and promote a more positive daily experience.