

Learning Relaxation Skills Reduces Stress

Dear Carole,
Can you give me some information about stress? I feel stressed out most of the time and I want to learn how to change.

Stressed Out

Dear Stressed Out,
Stress is a reaction to people, events and our view of the world around us. Each person reacts differently to things that happen in their lives. Many reactions to stress are learned. Comments such as "she is high strung, just like her mother," may describe a person who is easily upset. That person may "overreact" to situations, "just like her mother," because she has learned to do so. Once the person understands that a different way of acting can also be learned, then a positive change can be made.

The importance of an event to a person, can also determine how stressful that event may be. Good, as well as bad experiences can be stressful. A job promotion, with added responsibilities can be as stressful as being fired or laid off.

An important way of managing stress is to first recognize it.

Patrol Stress Driving Safe

RALEIGH—The Christmas and New Year's holidays are certainly times to enjoy friends and family. It is a time for festive occasions, a time to give and a time to celebrate. But, for too many people, it is a time marred by death and tragedy.

During the Christmas holiday period last year, 23 persons were killed in motor vehicle accidents in North Carolina. An additional 28 were killed during the New Year's holiday period. Over 2,000 persons were injured in motor vehicle accidents during both holidays.

Colonel J. F. Cardwell Commander of the North Carolina Highway Patrol, offered some sobering remarks. "For these families, this holiday season will never be the same. They must live with their memories of loved ones who were senselessly killed on our highways. Those who were injured will always remember this season as a time they suffered because someone drove carelessly. The Patrol can emphasize safety programs, concentrate manpower in selected locations, and even increase the time Troopers spend on patrol, but highway safety actually depends upon the motoring public. Without their support, we all lose."

During this holiday season, buckle up, stay alert and drive safely. If you plan to travel, take a rest stop every hour. A fatigued driver could lead to a fatal mistake.



With Carole Ricks

Some signs of stress are noticeable, other signs are subtle. Ulcers and hypertension are indicators that a person has a tense way of handling life situations. Sweaty palms and a shaky voice

may indicate a nervous reaction to a situation. This type of physical and emotional reaction may occur once in a while. It can be readily overcome.

Stress can be managed by learning relaxation skills. Prioritize events. Every experience should not be equally stressful.

Let go of past negative reactions to people and events. (It is unhealthy to hold a grudge against another person. The other person may be fine but your stress level will be great.)

Stress can be managed by learning assertiveness skills. Stand up for your rights while

respecting the rights of others. Change in attitude and behavior can successfully reduce your level of stress and help you have a more relaxed and productive life.

Carole

Editor's Note: Carole B. Ricks, A.C.S.W., is a marriage and family therapist with a private practice in Charlotte, NC. If you have personal, parent-child, or marriage problems, write to: Carole's Corner P.O. Box 37107 Charlotte, NC 28237

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Mr. Charles, R.B.

QUESTION:
Mr. Charles, I am a professional like yourself, and watched your TV special once and want to know how you started in public speaking.

ANSWER:
Often it is other people who deserve the credit for what you become and not so much you yourself. I am an Elder in my church and have to speak there. I am also Vice President of the Cosmetologists and Barbers State Association, have headed the Model Cities participation segment, and worked in three political contests. Presently, I am the Education Director for M&M Products Co. In this area and often speak to clubs, colleges, churches and other organizations.

The House of Charles

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