

Mental Stress among Students Due to COVID-19: Techniques to Manage Stress

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Abstract

Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry or nervous. Stress is your bodies reaction to a challenge or demand. In short bursts, stress can be positive such as when it helps you avoid danger or meet a dead line.

Benjamin Franklin “ Stress is often termed as a twentieth century syndrome, born out of man’s race towards modern progress and its ensuring complexities.”

Main Words- Acute Stress, Chronic Stress, Stress Management.

We all know what it’s like to feel stressed, but it’s not easy to pin down exactly what stress means. When we say things like “ this is stressful” or “ I am stressed” we might be talking about – situation or events that put pressure on us or our reaction to being placed under pressure. There are two main types of stress –

1. Acute stress
2. Chronic stress

Acute stress is short term stress that goes away quickly. It helps you manage dangerous situations. It also occurs when you do something new or exciting. All people have acute stress at one time or another. While chronic stress is that lasts for a longer period of time. Any type of stress that goes on for weeks or months is chronic stress. One can become so used to chronic stress that you don’t find ways to manage stress, it may lead to health problems.

Due to the long lasting pandemic situation and onerous measures such as lockdown and stay-at-home orders, the COVID-19 pandemic brings negative impacts on students. Many of us are facing challenges that can be stressful, overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and student. Public health actions, such as social distancing are necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but they can make us feel isolated and lonely and can increase stress and anxiety. In student mental health terms, the main psychological impact to date is elevated rates of stress or anxiety. School and colleges were closed due to pandemic situation. In the four walls of

home, there were several problems such as short of space at home, problem of internet and technology, fear of future, pressure of parents, economic problems etc. These were some common problems of each and every family. All these were enough to create mental disorders and stress in students. Casualty of relatives and dear ones, physical and health problems were creating mental stress among youths and students. Pressure of schools, curriculum, examinations were another component of stress among students. Job insecurity in private sector employees and daily wagers were putting pressure in the family and children and students. During and after COVID period, many reports of newspapers and researches were published, showing that mental stress was common among students. Many of them need medical help.

A study was carried out on the “Effects of COVID-19 on college student’s Mental Health in the United States: Interview Survey Study” by Changwon son, Sudeep Hegde and Farzan Sasangohar on 195 students. The result was that, of the 195 students, 138 (71%) indicated increased stress and anxiety due to the COVID-19 outbreak. Multiple stressors were identified that contributed to the increased levels of stress, anxiety and depressive thoughts among students. These included fear and worry about their own health and of their loved ones (177/195, 91%) reported negative impacts of the pandemic), difficulty in concentrating (173/195, 89 %),

disruptions to sleeping patterns (168/195, 86 %) decreased social interactions due to physical distancing (167/195, 86 %) and increased concerns on academic performance (159/195, 82 %). To cope with stress and anxiety, participants have sought support from others and helped themselves by adopting either negative or positive coping mechanisms. There are some causes of stress –

- Difficulty with concentration
- Disruption to sleep patterns
- Increased social isolation
- Concerns about academic performance
- Disruption to eating patterns
- Changes in the living environment
- Financial difficulties
- Increased class workload
- Depressive thoughts
- Suicidal thoughts

Stress Management–

Stop stressing---start living Stress management is a wide spectrum of technologies and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person’s level of stress, especially chronic stress, usually for the purpose of and for the motive of improving every day functioning. There are some physical symptoms of stress include –

- Aches and pains
- Chest pain or a feeling like your heart is racing
- Exhaustion or trouble sleeping
- Headaches
- High blood pressure
- Digestive problems

Stress is subjective, not measurable with tests. Only the person experiencing it can determine whether it’s present and how severe it feels. A healthcare provider may use questionnaire to understand stress and its effects.

Relief from stress –

- Stop shallow breathing
- Create the habit of deep breath
- Laugh
- Be aware of your choices, you always have a choice.

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Learn To Say No, You Can Not Do Everything You Are Asked.

Do nothing –

That’s right. Close the door, open the windows, have a seat and take a little break from life. Meditate, Listen music.

A B C Strategy –

A – Awareness

B – Balance

C – Control

So, enjoy your life as it comes---- and always be happy.

There are some specific self-care strategies for students to avoid stress. Self-care strategies are good for mental and physical health. Take care of your body. Students are advised to follow–

- Get enough sleep
- Participate in regular physical activity
- Eat healthy
- Limit screen time
- Relax and recharge

It is necessary to take care of mind because students do lots of mental work.

- Keep your regular routine
- Limit exposure to news media
- Stay busy
- Focus on positive thoughts
- Set priorities
- Connect with others
- Do something for others

Stress problems are very common. During pandemic period maximum number of students were worried about his studies, carrier, family situations, health issue of near and dear ones. All the time they were afraid of his future. That was the tough time for each and every one. Stress problems were common among all. The American Psychological Association’s “Stress in America” poll found that one third of people in the United States report experiencing extreme level of negative stress. In addition, nearly one out of five people reported high level of negative stress 15 or more days permanently.