

STRESS MANAGEMENT: A BIGGEST CHALLENGE AMONG HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

Simran Kaur, Manipal University Jaipur
R. K. Tailor, Manipal University Jaipur

ABSTARCT

Stress has been defined in many ways by different people. For many years it is considered as an important topic for discussion. Psychologically, stress refers to the feeling of being worried that threatens the productiveness and drain out one's identity. Stress can lead to hook into difficult values and disturbed mental health. Everyone experiences stress at times, but a high rate of stress can result in mental trauma and behavioural changes. Hence, stress management is an important skill to understand and master. Developing coping skills such as cognitive restructuring strategies can help people identify methods for managing stressful life events in a positive way. The paper provides an abstract on the topic of stress management. Specifically, it discusses how effective stress management can be achieved through maintaining proper time management skills, engaging in mindful leisurely activities which help to improve focus and help connect to their inner self. Stress management can also be achieved through lifestyle changes such as physical activity, eating healthy and drinking plenty of water. Student should always create smart and attainable gaols which keep them motivated. It stresses that while no two individuals may need the same type of treatment to successfully manage their stress levels, knowledge about the options available is necessary for everyone who wishes to cope with this often-overwhelming emotion. The goal set out by this paper is ultimately to equip readers with reasons for stress among students and their deprived mental health due to academic pressure, social pressure, lack of support that is not getting enough support which is longed for resulting in hampering growth process. This study provides a comprehensive review of current research on effective stress management interventions and its effect on mental health.

Keywords: Stress Management, Depression, Time Management, Mental-Health, Academic Pressure, Social Pressure.

INTRODUCTION

Stress and deprived mental health have engaged the normal life in current generation. Higher education is a stressful event in the lives of student's due various reasons such as living away from families, college based heavy curriculum or ineffectiveness of higher education program. There are lot of challenges that an individual needs to face along with various demand which requires enormous amount of stress and sacrifice. The university level involves challenges, goals, and responsibilities that must be overcome and achieved over the years. Stress management is the process of recognizing, addressing, and managing stress. Current environments include group of college students, especially freshmen prone to stress (Bhargava & trivedi, 2018). Academic vitality, environment and lifestyle changes, pressure regarding future achievement can lead to anxiety and tension among themselves. Students spring through different culture and background therefore often finds difficult to thrive away from home. The dynamic relationship between the person and environment in stress perception and reaction is

especially magnified in college students. When stress is perceived negatively student experience physical and negative impairment.

The surrounding in which college student live is quite different. The competitive environment may not always result in positive motivation among the learners. (Barne, Bauza, & A, 2003) they might consider themselves burdened with responsibilities. Moreover, coming far away from homes with the expectations and desire of been successful in life but are burdened with stress and anxiety of futility and failure. Jobs outside the university setting again involves stress, such as hectic interview rounds creating a feeling of hesitant and under-confidence. The continuous evaluation that the students must go through include phases of ups and down which subject them to a sense of self-doubt. The pressure of earning good grades, been upgraded through recent technologies to be available in recent market leads to deprived mental health. Hostel living and meeting new faces may not always create harmony. Students might not be comfortable with the surrounding yet needs to co-ordinate which sometimes leads to incommunicable trauma. To avoid these negative effects, it's important that one should learn how to manage stress for the state of better wholeness.

Mental Health and Stress

Mental health and stress are closely related. Stress is normal response to challenging situations, but when stress becomes chronic, it can have a negative impact on mental health which leads to depression, anxiety, and other health problems. (Hemamalini, Ashok, & Sasikala, 2018) Stress and mental health is also linked with immune system. Prolonged depression and stress can negatively affect brain's function which contribute to weaken immune system. Stress can affect mental health in various ways, and some of the effects include.

Anxiety Disorders

Stress can cause a feeling of failure, apprehension, worry or fear that can lead to anxiety disorders. Anxiety can range from mild to severe and can interfere with a person's daily activities. In severe cases one can even harm themselves. Panic attacks include a sense of breathlessness, nausea, shaking, sweating etc. which can hamper ones personal and work life. It can cause psychological and emotional distress. Anxiety disorder effects tons of students worldwide, there are number of examples that demonstrate how anxiety can affect young people. These include exam anxiety- feeling overwhelmed with stress and fear when it comes to taking exams or tests is commonly experienced by college level students due to high expectations from professors and peer. Social phobia due to increased social interaction during teenage years can cause extreme self consciousness which prevents them from making contact. Performance anxiety about presenting publicly in front of others often leaves one feeling inadequate even if prepared thoroughly. They may experience some kind of catastrophe; this constant fear leads to an inability among some individuals in participating actively in the environment. All such situation leads to stress among individual and poor mental health.

Insomnia: Stress can lead to difficulties in sleep leading to disturbed mental health and irritability. Lack of sleep can also contribute to stress and exhaustion. The productivity level of an individual is reduced which affects the ability of growth. A bad mental health and insomnia are common among hostellers or college students which reduce there critical thinking and leads to low growth level. Prolonged stress and insomnia are closely linked and can have serious consequences for person's physical and mental health.

Depression: Prolonged or chronic stress can lead to depression. Lack of sleep due to college burden and academic vitality leads to depression. Not only academically students are harmed but there are other social and environment factors which triggers depression in students. Depression symptoms include persistent sadness or hopelessness, loss of interest in activities, difficulty concentrating, changes in appetite and sleep issues. Depression is considered as the growing problem among students and can have serious negative impact on students. Struggling to concentrate or focus on school or college due to the feeling of been incapable or worthless can lead to depression. For example, decreased interest or lack of motivation in class, becoming easily irritable when faced with typical teenage life issues like relationship troubles between roommates\peers that could lead to frustration, anger social isolation. All these create stress and depression among students.

Substance abuse: Substance abuse among student is a major issue and it can manifest in a variety of way. Individuals who suffer from excessive stress may turn to drugs, alcohol, or other substances to cope with their stress, leading to substance abuse disorder, consuming alcohol may provide to weaken mental health and various fatal health issues. College student have access to lot large amount of alcohol due to availability on campus and parties, making them more susceptible to binge drinking. Substance use can lead to a host of physical, psychological, and social problems for individuals. Here are some examples of how substance abuse can affect students: Students might experience impaired concentration and focus while studying due to their substance use, leading to academic difficulties and poor grades. Substance abusers struggle with interpersonal relationships resulting in conflict with peers and family members caused by misunderstanding due to intoxication episodes exacerbated by defensiveness around drug/alcohol consumption. Long-term users often develop medical issues related directly to withdrawal such as fatigue headaches gastrointestinal issues etc., leading them further away from recovery.

Physical Health Problems: Chronic stress can result in physical health problems (Kong, Marcus, & Isa, 2019) for example, high blood pressure, headaches, back -pain and heart problems. Body stress response involves the release of cortisol, which elevate levels of hormone which results in moon face .it is the common side effect of prolonged exposure to high levels of stress. It can be really embarrassing and create a lot of self consciousness. These physical health problems can also affect mental health. There is a long-standing interest in the effects of diet on mental health and well being and the interaction of the two with stress. These factors often hold multidirectional relationship. For example, dietary changes influence psychiatric disorder through direct effect on mood; during the development of psychiatric disorder, it led to the changes in eating habit of individual. (Bremner, Moazzami, & Wittbrodt, 2020) It's essential to manage stress to maintain good mental health. Engaging in stress reducing activities can help reducing stress and prevent it from negatively affecting mental health.

Reason Regarding Stress among Students

Stress is considered as the feeling of pressure and emotional strain. Often one cannot fulfil the communities demand which can lead to directionless thoughts. It can create a serious impact on physical and mental health. open conversation with students regarding fear, worries and hope for future will aid in understanding how stressful mind a student holds. It overtakes them in times when they feel clueless and unable to cope with the demands put Infront of them. There are several grounds in which students experience stress, some of which include.

Academic Pressure: Students often feel pressurized to perform well academically which can lead to a feeling of fear or anxiety in them. Burden of achieving demands of family and leading

towards specific goal can be tiresome. In this fast moving world where each day new technologies are upgrading youth can find themselves stuck in the process of confusion. (**Jain & Manisha, 2018**) Such academic pressure can be a hinderance in one's growth and development and lead to a feeling of anxiety and fear about their future success in life.

Social Pressure: Many youths feel social pressure from peers, family members, or teacher. The expectations of doing something better and different from others often lead to stress. This creates myriad effect on students academically and emotionally (brown, 1982). People coming up with different opinions and suggestions may create low confidence and reduce self-esteem of students and youth resulting in stress. It influences youth's well-being and existing skills and competencies to do something better than other people. For example, social pressure of peer or group expectation to conform, academic and athletic competitiveness among peers, the need of approval from others can create a sense of pressure among students leading to stress and anxiety. Other examples include being pressured into making certain lifestyle choices such as drug use, drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, or wearing specific clothes\style deemed to be "cool" by their peers. Social pressure can be detrimental to student success both academically and personally; it can cause students to feel stressed out due to fear of rejection if they do not comply with the standards set by their peers.

Financial Worries: Financial worries are an ever- growing problem among college students that can lead to stress, anxiety and even depression. The financial blockage can cause roadblocks while paying bills time. Moreover, having not much future support and backup plan with finance create a sense of self doubt of being successful in future. Additionally, struggling students may be unable to find part time jobs which leads to depression. To make matter worse adding interest rate in debt repayment plan by government could put additional strain on tight budgets especially those have multiple loans at once. All such tons of financial worries add stress and lead to bad mental health. The rising cost of higher education and the resulting amount of student debt is a current issue for not only students but for the whole family carrying expectations and the economy. Financial stress can be caused by number of factors such as growing tuition fees, student loan payments, increasing cost of living expenses such as rent, utilities, food and transportation, limited access to employment due to covid-19 restrictions. All such factors put a significant strain on student's finances leading financial stress and hindered learning opportunities. For example, having unrealistic expectation on job compensation after graduation and lack of financial literacy skills can create an unexpected burden on students. (Joo, Durband, & Grable, 2008).

Lack Of Support: Sometimes youth lack the support which they long for in academics which may hamper their growth process and lead to stress and depression among students. Not getting right guidance can make them fall in wrong path creating confusion and chaos. social support is a multi dimensional concept that refers to social and psychological support that an individual perceives or perceives to be available from family, friends, and community. Less access to social network leads to higher level of psychological distress compared to stronger support in place. When an individual doesn't have stronger social ties, they may not feel well equipped when facing difficult situations which can lead to downward spirals if left unchecked. The knowledge of current environment cannot be communicated on time leading to slow growth among students. For example, lack of understanding, companionship can create symptoms of chronic stress and disorder, think about two youth one been supported by family and friends leads him\her to a good self- esteem and growth while the other having lack of knowledge about the environment and opportunities it includes can adversely affect the person's performance. It is the human

psychological tendency of longing for an emotional support for growth if an individual struggles with emotional comfort it can hamper their growth process. Poor mental health outcomes are also associated with loneliness and isolation experienced by many students in higher education sector. Poor quality relationships can increase stress levels, resulting in further deterioration of well-being through physical reaction such as increased cortisol production leading to exhaustion and inflammation that impair cognitive functioning. Mindfulness teaches us every human is valuable but suffering from lack of support and recognition can lower the self-esteem and motivation of growth. There are tons of students which lacks support leading to slow growth and inefficiency.

Time Management: Time management behaviours have a buffering effect on academic stress then leisure satisfaction activities. Issues related to balancing studies, a large amount of content to master in small amount of time and extracurricular activities such as sports teams or clubs requires time management skills. Many students find they lack sufficient time management when they try to juggle up both things resulting in feeling of inadequacy and frustration that further contribute towards feeling of being stressed out. Higher education is a stressful period which requires proper time management skills. Dilemma in academic life has increased due various demand and perception of mechanisms to manage time during university life. Students are faced with onerous responsibility to organize a proper time from personal\social life. For example, giving a prioritization to wrong task or only one task neglecting the others can lead to missed opportunities, feeling of guilt\resentment and general lower self-worth associated with the feeling of falling behind could be created leading to more pressure when facing challenges. A more pressure while facing daily challenges without having enough mental capabilities either hinder quality or push towards lowered productivity and eventual exhaustion further down the line resulting in higher stress caused by these seemingly small issues snowballing over time. (Lolandes & Zapata, 2020).

Hence, there are tons of reasons which lead to a feeling of stress and anxiety among students. Proper time management skills are key to growth and eventually development of individual. Small amount of stress for a short period of time is considered healthy as it motivates a person for betterment, but prolonged and chronic stress is harmful. It brings negative effect in both mind and health of youth. Effectively managed task often takes a shorter time leading to completion of task with deadlines which further creates concentration and confidence.

Stress Management

Managing stress is a crucial tool for college students. Stress can be managed through a variety through a variety of methods including relaxation techniques, exercise, cognitive-behavioural therapy, lifestyle changes, medication, and professional counselling. There are several strategies that can be used to help students manage stress. This is due to several factors, including the following:

Prioritizing task and maintaining good time management skills. Hostel life requires students to balance their studies and extracurricular activities, socializing and other commitments, which results in increased stress levels. Researchers have found that students managing their time and not procrastinating their work are less likely to feel stressed. Time management often considered as a difficult task due to multiple commitments but using weekly planners to pre plan the day or week's task and been committed to it can make work easier and smoother. Prioritising task with managing time in a correct way that can reduce the amount of stress to great extent. (kabir, 2017) It helps maximising their learning potential and stay on

track, setting reasonable goals and deadline for themselves but the goals set should be realistic and achievable. Breaking complex task to smaller one and prioritising activities according to importance or urgency level reduce the level of stress to a great extent.

1. **Engaging** in mindful leisurely activities can be beneficial for students as it helps reduce stress and improve focus. It allows students to step away from studies and give time to recharge and refocus (**Sharma & Rus, 2014**). It helps them to connect with their inner-self and the release of dopamine provide an insight of happiness. Moreover, these activities create a room for opportunities for personal growth and can help develop useful skills such as problem- solving setting, goal setting, accepting change etc. Which can be considered useful.
2. One of the **ways to combat** stress is self care and self compassion. Engaging in mindful techniques inspire acceptance instead of judgmental attitudes. Self care can help reduce feelings of isolation by providing an opportunity for students to focus on their own needs. They can make some time to know their worth and refocus their attention on themselves. It helps students recognize that they have much time with them and recognize that mistake happens, and they have time to correct it results in reducing the pressure associated with fear of failure. As such mindfulness practice is considered as the excellent tool in regulating emotion and decreasing anxiety levels.
3. **Eating healthy** release healthy hormones which reduces the stress. It regulates blood sugar level which can lead to improved mood and reduced stress level. Consuming plenty of fruits, vegetables and other dietary fibre provide enough nutrients which are required for energy production leading to increased physical activity improving the person's mental well being. (**singh, 2016**) Having timely meals prevent sudden and drastic shift in hormones like cortisol giving rise to impulsive snacking habits which reduces mental wellness.
4. **Drinking plenty** of water or keeping an individual hydrated is the key factor toward been healthy and mentally fit. It enhances relaxation of body and mind. Drinking plenty of water keeps skin healthy and it has been found important factor for reducing psychological distress from stress related conditions.
5. There is evidence that **physical activity** can reduce stress. With exercising body naturally produces these 'feel-good' hormone which reduces stress levels. it helps elevate mood and overall well- being. Exercising can help to distract. (**Kassymova, Kosherbayeva, Sangilbayev, & Schachl, 2018**)
6. Students should **always create smart and attainable goals** which keeps them motivated. Students often create grandiose goals that are unattainable. Goals should be realistic and complete.
7. **Participating in meaningful debates** have been found to reduce anxiety amongst student as it promotes self-reflection by enabling one's personal evaluation. Having access to peers via internet platform also allows multidirectional exchange that gives insight into alternate perspectives allowing students perspective adjustment leading reduced pressure shifting towards collaborative success achievement.

Hence, there are various other time management strategies that can used to ease prolong stress and depression. It allows better focus and knowing one's limitation is important to release out stress. It is important to identify reason increasing anxiety issues and take measures of controlling it. Additionally, the access to loneliness should be reduced as it often eventually leads to towards depression. Spending time with the person an individual is comfortable with can ease the level of stress to a good extent. Stress management practice should be adapted by students to protect one from prolonged exposure to stress and anxiety.

CONCLUSION

It can be safely concluded that stress management is an important part of physical and mental health. Stress can have serious impact on person's well-being, so it is essential to learn how to manage its effects to stay healthy. There are various ways that people can do this, including relaxation techniques such as meditation, breathing exercises and progressive muscle relaxation, engaging in regular exercise, and staying hydrated.

The conclusion to stress management is that there is no single answer for it. It's a combination of strategies and habits developed with time. Individual can only learn the techniques to manage and reduce it to an extent. Additionally, stress management is important to a healthy and successful life. It is important for students to practice stress management to help them manage the pressure of their academic and social life. Furthermore, it is important for the students to discuss about their worries with friends and family so that they can receive support and love that they crave for at that crucial time. Managing stress will convert their dorm life with the light of success and growth. It will create a positive aura in and around them which will motivate them to do better in life.

REFERENCES

- Barne, V. A., Bauza, L. B., & A, T. r. (2003). Impact of stress reduction on negative school behavior in adolescents. *Health Qual Life Outcomes*.
- Bhargava, D., & trivedi, h. (2018). A Study of Causes of Stress and Stress Management among youth. *IRA-International Journal of Management & Social sciences*, 108-117.
- Bremner, j., Moazzami, k., & Wittbrodt, m. t. (2020). Diet, Stress and Mental health. *Nutrients journal*, 2-27.
- Brown, B. (1982). The extent and effects of peer pressure among high school students: a retrospective analysis. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 121-133.
- Hemamalini, R., Ashok, V., & Sasikala, V. (2018). A Study on Stress Management and its Impact among students. *International Journal of Academic research in economics and management sciences*, 101-110.
- Jain, G., & manisha, S. (2018). Academic Stress Amongst Students: A Review of literature. *Prestige-e-journal of management and research volume 4 issue 2*, 58-67.
- Joo, S.-H., Durband, B. D., & Grable, J. (2008). The Academic impact of financial stress on college students. *Journal of college students retention: research theory and practice*, 287-305.
- Kabir, S.M. (2017). Stress and time management . research gate; curtin university, 206-248.
- Kassymova, k., Kosherbayeva, N., Sangilbayev, S., & Schachl, H. (2018). Stress Management Techniques for students. *international conferene on the theory and practice of personality formation in mordern society*, (pp. 47-56).
- Kong, i., Marcus, v. b., & Isa, s. f. (2019). Stress management among students in university teknologi lin. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Student and Disable Student Development 2019 (ICoSD 2019)*, (pp. 51-59). Malaysia.
- Lolandes, G. Y., & Zapata, N. A. (2020). Time management and academic stress in lima university students. *international journal of higher education*, 32-40.
- Sharma, M., & Rus, S. (2014). Mindfulness based stress reduction as a stress management intervention for healthy individual: a systematic review. *journal of evedence based complementary and alternative medicine*, 272-286.
- Singh, K. (2016). Nutrient and stress management *Journal of nutrition and food management*, 2-6.

Received: 25-Apr-2023, Manuscript No. AMSJ-23-13527; **Editor assigned:** 11-May-2023, PreQC No. AMSJ-23-13527(PQ); **Reviewed:** 29-Jun-2023, QC No. AMSJ-23-13527; **Revised:** 16-Jul-2023, Manuscript No. AMSJ-23-13527(R); **Published:** 07-Aug-2023