

# Five Simple Steps to Managing Stress in Your Life

PASFAA NextPage - 2019

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# Agenda

**Stress Defined**

**Stressors**

**Recent Facts & Statistics**

**Steps to Handle Stress**

**Summary**

**STRESS IS THE BODY'S  
REACTION TO A CHANGE  
THAT REQUIRES A  
PHYSICAL, MENTAL OR  
EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT  
OR RESPONSE**

*Source: WebMD*

# 5 Cents Please!!



# Stress

- **Negative stress** is referred to as distress
  - Caused by losing, failing, overworking and not coping properly
  - Can be harmful if not handled, but is perfectly **normal**



# Stress

- Not **all** stress is negative
- Positive stress results from exhilarating experiences
  - Winning the lottery
  - Unexpected promotion
  - Recognition/awards



***Stress is a part of everyday life...***

Time, money and relationships ensure  
that stress will ALWAYS be with us.

# Facts



**66%** of Americans surveyed believe stress impacts their physical health



**63%** of Americans surveyed believe stress impacts their mental health

*Source: "Stress in America Survey" published by the American Psychological Association in 2014*



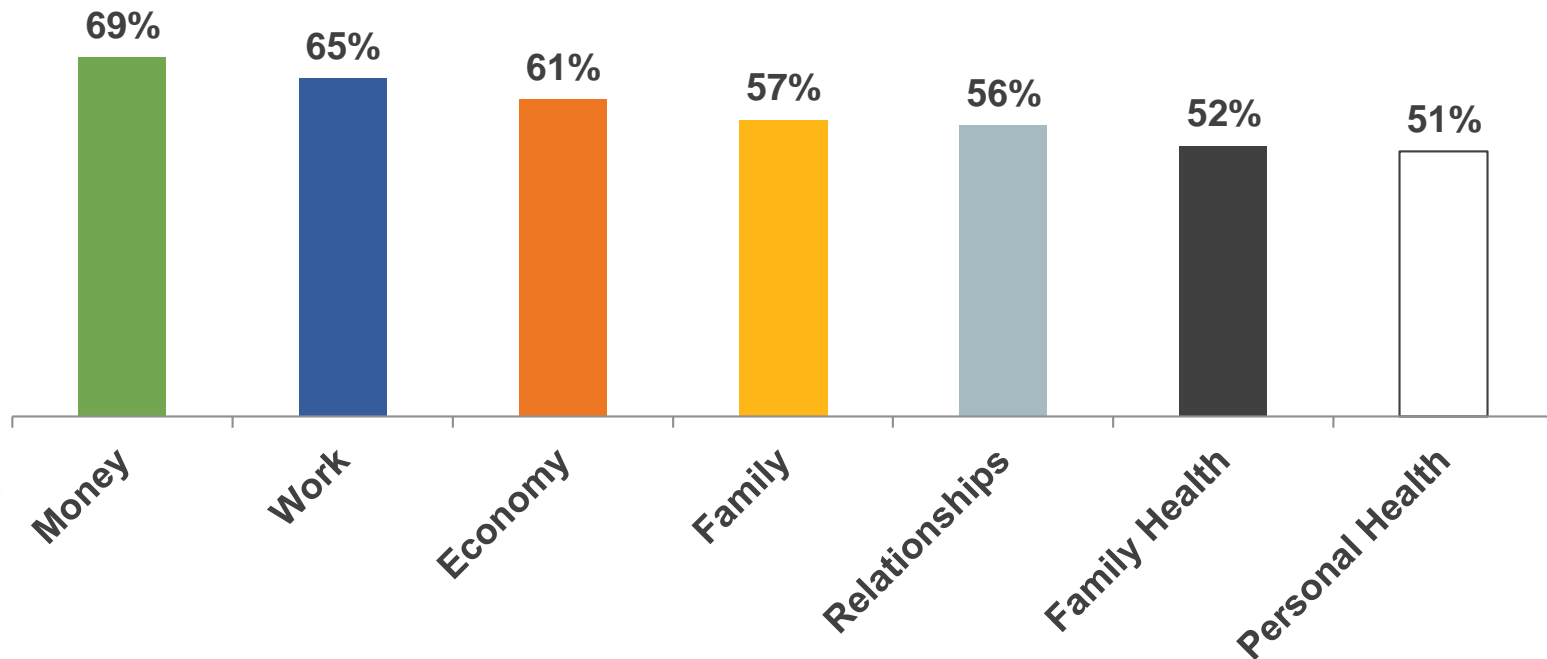
# Recent Statistics

- **72%** of Americans surveyed say their stress level has increased or stayed the same over the last 5 years
- **80%** of Americans say their stress level has stayed the same over the last year
- **20%** say their level of stress has decreased over the last year
- **20%** of Americans surveyed rate their stress level as high (8-10 on a 10 point scale)

*Source: "Stress in America Survey" published by the American Psychological Association in 2014*

# Stressors

## Stressors (indicated by those surveyed)



Source: "Stress in America Survey" published by the American Psychological Association in 2014

## Causes of Stress in Life

- Lack of sleep
- Competing priorities
  - family, housework, personal
- Money
- Social Media
- Others?

# Stress in Life

**#1 Cause of stress = Lack of Sleep**

- Nearly half of respondents indicated poor or insufficient sleep affected their daily activities
  - **67%** of those also reported poor or only fair health
  - **76%** of women reported waking up feeling rested on zero of the past seven days
  - **84%** of men reported waking up feeling rested on zero of the past seven days

*Source: National Sleep Foundation, 2014*

## Causes of Stress in the Financial Aid Office

- Shortage of resources (staff and budgets)
- Increasing aid applicants
- Negative interactions with students
- Verification
- Increasing regulations and oversight
- Others?

*Source: NASFAA 2010 Administrative Burden Survey*

# Stress in the Financial Aid Office

**#1 Cause of stress = Shortage of resources**

- Two thirds of respondents indicated a resource shortage was their major stressor
  - **80%** of those said the shortage was permanent in nature
  - **90%** indicated the shortage impacted:
    - Face to face counseling
    - Outreach efforts
    - Attention to target populations

*Source: NASFAA 2010 Administrative Burden Survey*

# Stress Categories

Shown below are the average **Stress Index Scores** for each of the categories.



Source: Inceptia 2013 Survey: Stress in the Financial Aid Office

# 5 Steps to Handle Stress





# STEP 1

# ***AWARENESS***



# Awareness

- You must know your own body so you can recognize stress
  - Increased heart rate
  - Increase in blood pressure
  - Breathing speeds up
  - Sleeplessness
  - Changes in eating habits
  - Susceptible to illness



**STEP 2**  
***ATTITUDE***



# Attitude

- Positive attitude
  - Positive thinking and negative thinking are attitudes – they determine how you handle life situations
- Belief in being able to handle the situation
- View problems as opportunities in disguise
- Train your mind to think in terms of “possible” and “can be done”



“The pessimist sees the difficulty in every opportunity, the optimist sees the opportunity in every difficulty.”

*Winston Churchill*

# Attitude

- View life as a series of challenges
- Do not view life as a threat or endless problems
- Seek out challenges – opportunities to grow
- Believe you will learn from the challenges you will face



# Attitude

- Change your self talk
- Watch and monitor what you say and how you say it
- Switch your inner voice from “I can’t” to “I can!”



“A man is but the product of his thoughts, what he thinks, he becomes.”

*Mahatma Gandhi*



Step 3  
*Action*



# Action

- Attitude is action in motion!
- Embrace stressful situations
- Learn from others
- Alter your perspective
- Change what you can
- Let go of the rest
- Learn to laugh!



# Action

- Learn to say “No”
- Practice relaxation techniques
  - Muscle relaxation
  - Breathing techniques
  - Imagery/visualization
  - Exercise
  - Meditation/prayer
  - Massages



# Action

- **48%** of Americans surveyed say they listen to music to reduce stress
- **40%** of Americans surveyed say they read to reduce stress
- **34%** of American surveyed say they watch TV or movies more than 2 hours a day to reduce stress



Source: “Stress in America Survey” published by the American Psychological Association in 2012

# Action (cont.)

- Ideas for stress reduction at work
  - Retreats (part day or full day)
    - Team-building
    - Planning
    - Inter-office
  - Potlucks
  - Take breaks and lunches
  - Desk stretching
  - Flexible schedule



“Don’t sweat the small stuff! It’s almost all small stuff.”

*Dr. Richard Carlson*

# STEP 4 ***CONTROL***



# Control

- **37%** of Americans surveyed believe they are doing an excellent or very good job of managing stress
- **60%** of Americans surveyed over the past five years are trying to reduce stress
- **53%** of those who responded over the past five years state they are **STILL** working on reducing their stress level



Source: “Stress in America Survey” published by the American Psychological Association in 2012



# Control

- You **must** believe you have control of your life – easy to say, harder to believe!
- You **must** believe you can manage any problem you face
- You **must** develop a positive outlook on life
- “Feeling” in control helps reduce stress



# Control

- Respond appropriately to any given situation – act, don't react!
- Minimize the effects of stress by exploring possible consequences of action or inaction - preparation
  - Removes fear of the unknown
- Deal with it rationally
- Ask for help



# STEP 5

# ***COMMITMENT***



# Commitment

- Have a mission or purpose for your life
- Be committed to whatever you do
- Believe what you do is meaningful, purposeful and right
  - Financial Aid is an honorable profession
  - Those in it do it because it helps others
  - Dedicated people



# Commitment

- Commit to learn from EVERY experience
- By experiencing stress, we learn to deal with stress
- We actually train ourselves to better handle stress



# Summary

- It's not rocket science
- Take control of your life
- Learn to live and enjoy every day, one moment at a time
- After all, the present is all we have
  - The past is gone
  - We have no guarantee on tomorrow



**QUESTIONS ARE  
GUARANTEED IN LIFE;  
ANSWERS ARE NOT.**

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