

**STRESS: MAKING THE MOST OF IT
A SUPERVISOR'S GUIDE**

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A SUPERVISOR'S GUIDE

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APPENDIX A: PERSONALIED STRESS PROFILE CHART

I. INTRODUCTION

"I really wish I knew how to motivate these people -- they don't seem to care."

"Rachel is a great assistant. Best I've ever had. She's bright, reliable, and hardly ever makes mistakes. But, boy, she's made a couple mistakes lately that really caused problems. She doesn't seem to have her mind on her work."

"He's one of my best agents. But, he's been sick a lot lately. In fact, he has missed one or two days of work each of the last four weeks."

"These new guidelines stink. Well, I mean, they're not so bad, but there's no way my guards are going to follow them"

"Look, get off my back! I know the budget has to be reviewed by tomorrow, but the warden at Hansonville just called. Half of her officers didn't show up this morning. I've got to get down there right away."

"You can take this *!-\$q job and #8+-f"

Sound familiar? You've heard it. So has everyone who works in corrections -- or most any other field. Take any one of these problems. There may be lots of things which helped cause it. But, there's a good chance that stress was a major cause. And, you can be sure that a lot of stress will result from the problem

Why is this important?

The simple reason is that employee performance and the performance of an organization are directly affected by how well the organization and each individual handle stress.

The above quotations are not unusual. The situations are not unusual. The problems reflected are not unique to corrections -- they occur *every day in every business*. But the fact is that people working in corrections experience more than their share of stress. Therefore, they experience more than their share of problems related to stress. The list of bad effects caused by stress overloads is a long list indeed. In personal terms, stress has been found to cause:

- 0 Mental and emotional problems
- 0 Physical illness
- 0 Family problems
- 0 Problems with interpersonal relations
- 0 Poor job performance

and a host of other bad reactions.

These personal problems become organizational problems. Stress overload causes "burn-out." It causes high staff turnover. It causes tardiness, absenteeism, carelessness, and inefficiency. It causes resistance to change, frustration, low motivation, and noncooperation. Workers having problems due to too much stress do not work well; supervisors under too much *stress* do not supervise well; nor do managers manage well.

The performance of a business or agency can be greatly reduced if its employees are under too much or the wrong kinds of stress. The loss of productivity due to stress induced turnover, absenteeism, goldbricking, waste, accidents, and so forth is enormous. The U.S. Clearinghouse for Mental Health Information estimated that stress-related mental disorders cost more than \$17,000,000,000 in lost productivity each year. Stress-related physical problems are even more costly. They are estimated to be as high as \$60 billion. This

loss of productivity is a serious concern for managers. The challenge is to do something to reduce it.

There are also legal reasons for concern. Employers generally must make worker compensation payments for any disability that results from the job. In at least 15 states, this includes disabilities resulting from prolonged exposure to stressful work situations. An employer may even have to pay if an already existing mental problem becomes bad enough that a person cannot work. This is true no matter what the underlying cause of the problem is.

Corrections agencies may also be held liable for damages if any prisoner or person under the agency's care becomes physically or mentally disabled.

Who is this guide for?

These facts are important to everyone working in corrections, but they are doubly important to anyone who is in a supervisory or managerial position. *Not* only do supervisors have to know about their own stress and stress reactions, they have to know about the stress and stress reactions of the people who work under them; and, they also have to know about the stress and stress reactions of prisoners or clients. Managers and administrators have to be concerned about the ability of everyone to manage their stress. They also need to learn how to use stress creatively to the benefit of individual employees and the organization as a whole.

This book is for supervisors, middle managers, and top administrators in corrections. It is meant to be read by them as a self-help, self-instructional guide. If you are a supervisor, manager or administrator, or if you plan to become one, this book should prove helpful to you.

We should clarify something. In this manual, we are talking about "managers and supervisors" together. In fact, their roles are quite different and the stresses they experience may be different. The vast majority of the research on occupational stress has focused at either the top or bottom -- that is, at the manager/executive level or at the line staff level. We have chosen to include supervisors with managers for two reasons.

1. They share many similar responsibilities -- particularly in that they direct the work of others and are responsible for others' performance.
2. Many supervisors aspire to management positions and will, in fact, assume such positions,

Before reading this guide, you should be familiar with Stress: How to Get the Most Out of It: A Personalized Guide for Corrections Staff. The Personalized Guide helps develop stress management skills in general. This guide concentrates on the special problems of supervisors, managers and administrators.

What is this guide for?

This guide aims to help managers and supervisors do a better job. It tries to reach this goal by helping them improve their "stress management" skills.

By "stress management" we mean the ability to anticipate, recognize, prevent, control, and cope with undesirable stress and its adverse consequences. By improving their stress management skills, managers and supervisors will be able to help themselves and others do three important things:

1. handle their own stress better;
2. cause less undesirable stress for themselves and others; and,
3. help others to recognize and manage stress better.

The result will be fewer and less severe problems caused by stress. This, in turn, will result in a better work environment, more productive workers, and better performance.

Lest we create false expectations with these glowing promises, let us be clear about what reading this guide can and cannot do. While it can help you become better at preventing stress, it cannot help you eliminate stress -- not even the undesirable kinds., While it can help you become better at coping with and managing stress, it cannot make you an expert. While it can lead to a reduction in individual and organizational problems associated with stress, it cannot solve all individual and organizational problems.

All of the good things to be gained by reading this guide will be gained in small amounts -- at least initially. Only through experience will you become really good at managing stress. Only with constant awareness and practice will you become really good at helping others to manage their stress. This guide is a beginning step. It can give you a direction and a framework for future growth as a manager or supervisor.

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11. STRESS AND THE WORK SETTING

In this chapter we will provide an overview of the relationship between stress, work, and management and supervision. The understanding gained will provide the base for the following chapters where we discuss the special problems of managers and supervisors. In this chapter, we will answer the following questions:

- o What is stress?
- o What are the consequences of stress?
- o Who is affected by it?
- o What are the roles of the organization, managers, supervisors, and workers in regard to stress management?

Our answers will not be complete -- indeed, there are no complete or "right" answers. But our answers will provide the necessary base for the next chapters; and they will provide an opportunity for you to review your thinking about stress and the material in the Personalized Guide.

What is Stress?

Before we answer this question, think back to the Personalized Guide. Recall the definition you developed in Module A. Write it below. You may rewrite or change it if you wish. If you didn't write one before, do so now.

DEFINITION: Stress is . . .

The following definition was offered in the Personalized Guide.

Stress is the natural condition of a constant and continuing variety of requests and demands made upon our physical and psychological resources which along the way continuously challenge who and what we think we are.

"Stress" is a word we all use a lot. Yet, we often misuse it or use it imprecisely. Many, many volumes have been written about "stress" and "stress management." Very few authors actually define "stress." They usually discuss "stressors" or "stress reactions." The reason for this approach is that it is easier to identify the causes and the results of stress than it is to identify or define stress itself.

Some authors define stress in terms of the way we respond physically and psychologically to demands made upon our bodies, minds, or emotions. The immediate reaction of the body to any stressful event has been described by Hans Selye as the General Adaptation Syndrome (appropriately enough referred to as G.A.S.). In the first steps of the G.A.S., the body reacts to a stressful event with what is termed the "alarm-reaction." The body reacts to defend itself and to meet a demand placed upon it. Pituitary-adrenal secretions are increased. This, in turn, produces an increase in pulse rate, blood sugar level, muscle tone, and general alertness. Thus, the body prepares itself for "fight or flight." The fight or flight response is an unconscious, automatic reaction to the body preparing the individual to flee from danger or to fight to survive.

Other authors focus on the things which cause the demands on our bodies, minds or emotions. This approach is reflected in the following definition which is based on the notion of "stressors":¹

A management stressor is defined as:

1. Any objective condition or any change in the work environment that is perceived as potentially harmful, threatening, challenging, or frustrating; or

Moss, Leonard, M.D. Management Stress. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1981, p. 4.

2. Any set of circumstances related to work that requires change in the individual's on-going life pattern.

Neither of these definitions is necessarily better than yours. Use the one you like best. We will use the term "stress reaction" to describe the physical or psychological responses to the demands, and the term "stressor" to those things causing the demands and the stress reaction. The term "stress" will be used in a rather loose, more broad sense to encompass the whole process of experiencing a stressful event and the reaction to it and the intervening steps.

It is important to note that these terms are neutral. They do not imply that stress is bad, that the stressor is bad, or that a stress reaction is bad. Most of us assume that stress is bad. That is not true. Most of the time stress is neither bad nor good; and sometimes it is actually a very positive thing. The right kinds of stress, in the right amounts, make us more vital and more productive on our jobs. It is only when our stress reactions lead to adverse consequences that the stress experience becomes a problem. We will use the term "distress" to talk about stress which has undesirable stress reactions.

If we cannot define stress precisely, perhaps we can get a better understanding of it by identifying some stressors, describing the characteristics of stress, and discussing its consequences.

What are some examples of stressors affecting corrections personnel? In a study of 143 corrections officers, Dr. Frances E. Cheek and Marie Di Stefano Miller found that the following items were perceived as most distressful out of a list of 109 possible sources of stress:²

2. Cheek, Frances E. and Marie Di Stefano Miller. "The Experience of Stress for Correction Officers." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, Cincinnati, OH: March 15, 1975.

1. Lack of clear guidelines for job performance.
2. Facility policies not being clearly communicated to all staff members of the facility.
3. Crisis situations.
4. Getting conflicting orders from your supervisors.
5. Having to do things against your better judgement.
6. Having your supervisor give you things to do which conflict with other things you have to do.
7. Not being treated as a professional.
8. Low morale of other officers.
9. Other personnel putting things off.
10. Lack of training.
11. Officers in the department not being quickly informed about policy changes.
12. Criticism from supervisors in front of inmates.
13. Poor physical conditions and equipment.
14. Having too little authority to carry out the responsibilities assigned to you.
15. Your immediate supervisor not keeping you well-informed.
16. Not having pretty good sharing of information among the officers on all three shifts.
17. Not receiving adequate pay.
18. Not having a chance to develop new talents. .
19. Having feelings of pressure from having to please too many bosses.
20. Lack of training in riot control and the use of firearms.
21. Lack of opportunity to participate in decision making.

Once again, think back to Module A in the Personalized Guide. Think of the "notions" about stress which were discussed. Remember as many as you can and list them here: (Hint: The first notion was "natural" - stress is natural.)

Notions About Stress

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Get them all? If not, take a peek at the bottom of the page. O.K. !
Now, take a couple of minutes to think about those notions. If you can't remember what was said, go back to the Personalized Guide and look them up. Think about the notions in relation to the stressors listed above and in relation to yourself.

-
- | | | |
|----------|---------------|-----------------------|
| Notions: | 1. Natural | 4. Differential |
| | 2. Individual | 5. Reaction provoking |
| | 3. Personal | 6. Competitive |

'The following characteristics of stress provide further description:³

1. Any change, especially when rapid, generates stress.
2. Difficult conditions to which an individual has been accustomed for a long time are less disturbing than more favorable conditions that are unfamiliar.
3. Novelty enhances the impact of stressful events.
4. Unanticipated or unpredictable events evoke a sense of helplessness or uncertainty, which magnifies the stress reaction.
5. Events over which an individual has no control, undesired events, or events that represent a loss of something or someone valued or important-are perceived as particularly stressful.
6. Stress from all environments to which an individual is exposed seems to have a cumulative effect.
7. Numerous stressors operating simultaneously or in sequence have greater impact than stressors that occur singly. Behavioral capabilities tend to drop dramatically with even a mild degree of overloading.
8. Anyone can be overwhelmed by stressors of sufficient magnitude.

Take a couple minutes to think about these characteristics of stress. Think about the examples of stressors listed above and stressors in your own life and work. Do these examples and ideas fit you?

You will have a chance in the next module to explore these ideas further. But, for now, we want to consider our next question.

3. Mbss, op cite, p. 6.

What are the Consequences of Stress?

Reactions to stress are many and varied. Underlying all stress reactions is the "fight or flight" reaction and the General Adaptation Syndrome (G.A.S.). The "fight or flight" reaction, was first discussed by W.B. Cannon more than sixty years ago. Building on Cannon's work, Hans Selye discovered that the G.A.S. is "nonspecific" -- that is, the same physiological reactions occur, in a greater or lesser degree, in response to nearly all situations to which we are exposed. The degree of the reaction is dependent upon the intensity and nature of the event. As Selye says:⁴

From the point of view of its stress-producing or stressor activity, it is immaterial whether the agent or situation we face is pleasant or unpleasant; all that counts is the intensity of the demand for readjustment or adaptation.

He is saying that the joy associated with winning a promotion can produce the same physiological reactions (perhaps in a differing degree) as the sorrow experienced from the death of a loved one or the fear experienced in being threatened with a weapon.

Whereas the G.A.S. can produce desirable consequences in reaction to stress -- such as getting keyed up to accomplish your work or becoming more alert in a dangerous situation -- the long-term consequences of overexposure to stress can be very serious.

Stress (or more appropriately distress) has been found to be closely associated with a number of physical, psychological and behavioral problems. The list below presents only a few.

4. Selye, H. Stress Without Distress. New York: J. B. Lippencott, 1974, p. 15.

Physical Health Consequences:

High blood pressure
Heart attack, chest pains
Stomach or intestinal problems
Backaches, headaches, aching feet, etc.
Arthritis
Rashes, acne, skin problems
Dizziness, difficulty breathing
Allergies
Frequent colds
Fatigue, exhaustion
Frequent accidents
Sweating, chills
Exhilarated, keyed up, "ready to go"
Able to resist fatigue, supercharged

Psychological Consequences:

Denial
Nervousness, anxiety, tension
Nightmares, trouble sleeping
Fear, distrust
Anger, hostility
Alienation, desire to hide/withdraw
Inability to concentrate
Low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy
Inability to concentrate
Disinterest, low motivation
Depression, psychoses
Alertness, motivated to meet challenge
Heightened interest
Ultra calm, cool & collected

Behavioral Consequences:

Absenteeism, skip work

Late for work

Poor work performance

Carelessness, inattention to detail

Hostility, noncooperation, arguments, poor interpersonal relations

Overdemanding

Complaining, backbiting, gossiping

Vandalism, stealing, sabotage

Neglectful of others

Avoid others, sleep a lot

Joke and laugh a lot, sick

humor

Drink too much, use drugs

Overeating, undereating

Nervous tics, gestures, pacing

Suicide attempts

Work harder, longer or faster

Work more alertly

Able to "get off the dime," stop procrastinating

Shape up rather than shipping out

Frequently, the behavioral consequences are secondary results of the physical or psychological consequences. And, frequently, one person's stress reactions cause stress and lead to stress reactions in other people. Before examining your personal reactions to stress, let's consider our next question.

Who is Affected?

Everyone experiences stress. Everyone at some time or another experiences distress. Given the same set of circumstances different people will react differently. You may find that a particular set of events (stressors) causes you little or no distress, while others experience very significant distress (or vice-versa). Even the same person will react differently at one time than s/he will at another time. You may find that what caused no problems yesterday, causes you great deal of distress today.

What about you? In the table on the next page, list three stressors that cause you stress (or distress) but don't cause much stress for someone else. For your stressors, try to choose things about your job, things about the environment in which you work, things other people at work do (or don't do!), or things happening in your personal life (or not happening).

And then list three stressors that bother someone else but don't bother you.

Finally, list three stressors that bother you sometimes but not other times.

STRESSORS which cause stress for me but not much for someone else:

1.

2.

3. .

STRESSORS which cause stress for someone else, but not for me:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

STRESSORS which cause stress for me sometimes, but not other times:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

For some time it was popularly believed that executives were particularly prone to experiencing distress as a result of their jobs. "Executive stress" was a favorite topic as people talked about the high rates of heart attacks, ulcers, marital problems, and other unhappy events befalling executives. Recent research has shown, however, that workers at all levels and in all professions experience substantial amounts of unwanted physical and psychological stress reactions. If anything, executives are less prone to negative stress reactions than middle managers, supervisors and front line workers.

Research has also shown that the amount of negative stress reactions experienced by people working in different occupational areas varies considerably. Of particular importance is that workers in the corrections field are among the greatest sufferers. They experience more and more severe stress-related problems than nearly any other field.

Think about the people you supervise. Just as you did for yourself, list some stressors that cause noticeable stress reactions in those people.

STRESSORS which cause stress for my supervisees:

1.

2.

3.

Now, look at your lists. Do any of the stressors result in "good" stress reactions, or are all the consequences negative? If they are all negative, go back and add at least one "good" stressor to each list.

It is important to be aware of the fact that your stressors can cause reactions that result in consequences far beyond yourself. It's like a nuclear reaction. If the radiant effects of the first reaction are controlled some heat may be generated, but no major problems develop. If, on the other hand; they are not controlled, they may lead to secondary reactions which, in turn, lead to more and more reactions. The result can be too much heat, or even an explosion.

So, "Who is the victim?" Look at the following list of potential "victims." Perhaps you wish to add to the list.

"VICTIMS"

Myself

Family

Friends

Supervisor

Supervisee

Coworkers

Clients/Inmates

Neighbors

Society at Large

Earlier we listed some physical, psychological, and behavioral reactions and consequences of stress. These deal primarily with what your stress does to you. What about what it does beyond you?

One thing your stress does, if you don't manage it well, it causes stress for others. Potentially, your stress reactions can cause stress and stress reactions in all the "victims" listed above. Those reactions may be good, they may be bad, or they maybe neither. But, you need to be aware of them and recognize them

Do any of your stressors Involve those you supervise? Are your staff the source of stress for you?

Look at their stressors. Do any of their stressors involve you? Are you a source of stress to them? How?

Of particular concern to you as a supervisor *or* manager are the effects these behavioral and other secondary consequences have upon you, your staff, and your organization's functioning. Look at the three lists of consequences again. Do you want to add anything? Go ahead and add it.

Now look at the lists and think about the stressors you listed above. Do you see any consequences that you have experienced in the last year? (Don't worry about whether they were caused by stress or not; we'll take care of that later.) List three in the left hand column below. (If you don't have three, think about some other supervisor/manager you know and list some for him/her.) When you have done that, think about the resulting effects upon your own job performance, the job performance of others, and your entire organization. Describe those consequences in the right hand column.

<u>Consequences of Distress</u>	<u>Job/Organizational Consequences</u>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

As an example, we listed a couple of our own.

<u>Consequences of Distress</u>	<u>Job/Organizational Consequences</u>
1. Fatigue and frequent colds	1. Falling behind in getting my work done; this is causing delays in other people being able to complete their work; this is causing anger and hostility toward me.
2. Boredom and low motivation	2. Not paying much attention to how staff in my unit are doing; taking longer coffee and lunch breaks; not going to work on some days when I have a cold (I would have gone last year.)
3. Under eating	3: No particular consequences -- except I've lost weight and I had to buy new clothes. Oh, yeah! My girl friend doesn't like it, either.

Do you think some of these might be related? Are any of yours related?

What about people under your supervision? Have you seen any of them exhibit any of the consequences in the lists? If so, list them; if not, look at some other supervisor's unit and list some consequences. Finally, list the ultimate effects upon job performance and the organization.

<u>Consequences of Distress</u>	<u>Job/Organizational Consequences</u>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

At this point, hopefully, it should be clear that stress which is not properly managed, stress which becomes distress, can cause real problems in the performance of individual jobs and problems in overall organizational performance. As a manager/supervisor, you have to contend with these problems because you are responsible for individual and organizational performance.

What are the roles of the organization, managers, supervisors, and workers in managing stress?

Specific answers to this question can be quite varied -- depending upon the specific organization, its setting, and other factors. Some general principles can be derived from the four basic notions listed below.

1. All people have the right and the responsibility to take care of themselves -- to protect their own self interest.
2. Organizations are legally and morally responsible to create environments which minimize health hazards to their employees and clients.
3. In pursuit of their goals, it is in the self interest of organizations to manage stress which affects performance and productivity.
4. Out of human concern and self interest, most people have a desire and commitment to help others in distress and to avoid harming others.

Clearly these are philosophical points which could generate considerable debate. We hope they are generally well enough accepted that we can base the following conclusions on them without our conclusions being rejected out-of-hand.

Managers and supervisors have a dual need to develop skills in managing stress:

They need to manage their own stress well in order to reduce the adverse impact it has on their health, well being, and performance.

They need to be able to recognize others who are having difficulty handling stress and they need to be able to help those others manage stress better.

Organizations should undertake efforts to encourage and support employees in their efforts to cope with distress and manage stress more effectively.

The next two modules are directed at these goals.

III. HELPING YOURSELF

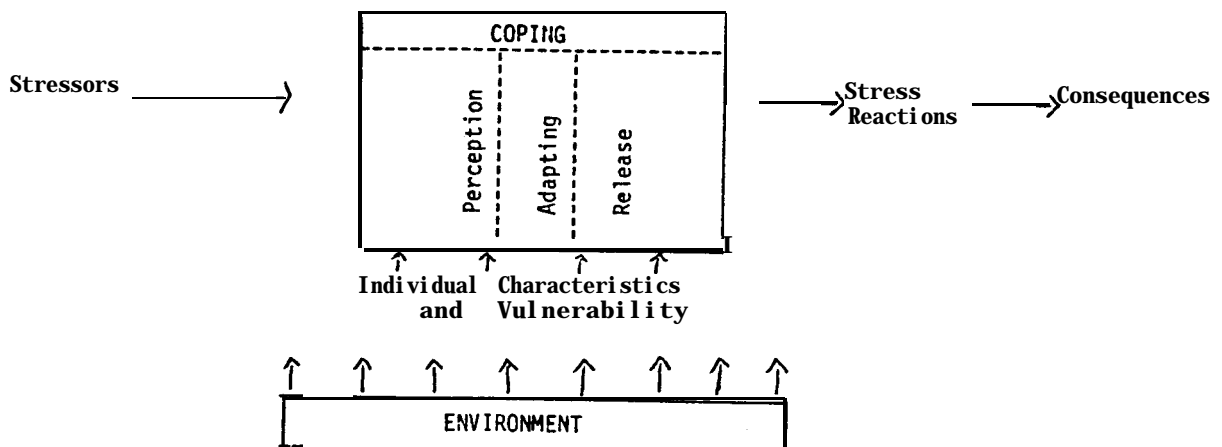
"Things are bad. We're already overcrowded. We've got 1,100 residents when we're supposed to have a maximum of 950. There is a lot of tension in the population and in the staff. There have already been several minor incidents. Aside from the problems this causes in the population, the staff are really bummed out. I've got two lieutenants who won't even talk to one another. Everybody seems to be bitching at everybody else. There is no morale. I think a couple of my best officers are about to quit. But then, that's probably just as well since the budget cut we're getting is gonna' mean lay-offs anyway. Man, there just isn't any way to win.

"Not only is the job a pain, but my kid is a pain. He's having trouble in school. He won't do his work and he has been mouthing off to the teachers. The lil' creep has been stealing stuff from the store and getting in other kinds of trouble. My ex-wife can't handle him and dumps it on me. To top that off, you want to know what happened two days ago? You know that heavy rain? Backed the sewers up! Two feet of water in my basement! And I had some stuff stored down there!

"Have I got anxiety or stress? You bet. My stomach's in knots all the time and I can't sleep at night. I go to bed, I lay there with my mind racing 100 miles an hour. I start sweating, tossing and turning, and just getting worse and worse. So most of the time I get up and have a couple of drinks and watch TV for an hour or so."

In the two previous modules we have provided a brief review of stress in the work setting and the purposes of this manual. In this module and the next module, we will talk specifically about stress management techniques for supervisors and managers. In this module we will focus on how to help yourself; in the next module, we will focus on your responsibilities as a supervisor/manager and on how to help others.

To help place the discussions in context, consider the following model of the stress process.



Stressors from a number of sources (e.g., work, family, social settings, etc.) pose threats to you. How you perceive these threats and adapt to them is mediated by a number of factors including your environment, your individual characteristics, and your personal vulnerability at the time. These same factors also affect how you voluntarily or involuntarily release the tension and energy from your fight or flight reactions and display your reactions to the stressors. Ultimately, the stress reactions may lead to more important, long-term consequences.

This is a simple "black box" or "input-output" model. Stressors are put into the system (you) and stress reactions come out. For our purposes, it is not essential to know exactly what goes on inside the box (i.e., how you internalize and process stress). We only need to find some ways of affecting that process so that your reactions (output) are better¹. That's what this manual is all about.

1. Obviously the more we know about how people process stress internally, the better our position for improving coping ability. Research will increase our limited understanding of the psychological and physiological processes involved. In the meantime, we can still improve our coping abilities even though our understanding is limited.

As the model suggests your stressors are linked through a cause-effect chain to their ultimate long-term consequences. In order to avoid undesirable long-term consequences, you can try to interrupt this sequence at a number of places. Or, you can simply respond to and treat the distressful consequences. This frequently involves medical or psychiatric care to treat serious physical or emotional problems which have developed. Such is not the concern nor subject of this manual.

You might also seek to treat and alleviate the distress reactions. Alleviation of these reactions, particularly when they are painful or debilitating, is certainly a worthy goal. However, while aspirin, tranquilizers and other remedies may offer temporary relief, they often only mask the fact that there is a continuing underlying problem which might produce serious long-term consequences if not dealt with in a different manner.

Moving back towards the beginning of the chain, we see that it is also possible to modify the stress process by attacking the stressors. If you can eliminate or change them, then the whole process, including the stress reactions and consequences, will be different. Another point of attack is your coping process: you can make it more effective in handling the stressors so they don't produce distressful reactions. A third point of attack is your characteristics and vulnerability. You can modify them and decrease your vulnerability. This will have the effect of changing how the stressors are perceived, perhaps making them less threatening, and thereby reducing the amount of distressful reaction provoked. A fourth point of attack, which is closely related to the other three, is your environment and social support network. The purposes of this manual and of the Personalized Guide is to provide you with some ideas on how to modify your stress process by attacking at one of these four points. In this module we will deal with three main themes:

Recognizing and understanding your own stress;

Coping with stress; and

Reducing or preventing stress.

Note that we are talking about preventing and coping with stress. If you can do either of these, then you will reduce or prevent distress (either by keeping stress from becoming distress, or by preventing the stress in the first place). It will help if we define the terms "coping" and "preventing.":

Coping Taking action to endure and minimize the negative consequences of stress you are experiencing. Putting up with that stress while trying to avoid the undesirable physiological, psychological and behavioral reactions which it may provoke. Preventing stress from becoming distress.

Preventing Taking action to prevent or reduce the frequency, intensity and/or duration of stressful events or situations in the future.

These distinctions are not hard and fast. They are presented merely to provide a framework for thinking about and discussing stress management strategies. In some cases, coping and preventing strategies and actions are similar; in some cases they are quite different.

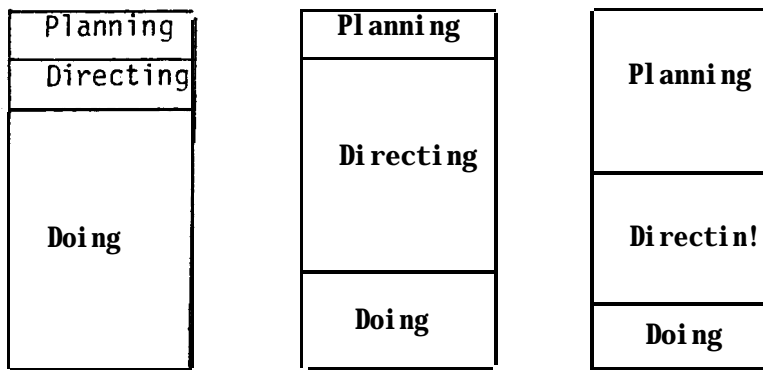
Recognizing Your Own Stress

The first step in attempting to manage your stress better is to recognize and analyze that stress. You need to understand what stressors are acting on you and what effects they are having. You did a little bit of this in the last module. If you worked through the

Personalized Guide and completed a Personal Stress Profile (PSP) and did the Force Field exercises, you learned some good strategies for recognizing and understanding your own stress.

In this module, we would like to focus on some of the special problems that confront supervisory and management personnel. These people generally are subject to all the same stresses that front-line personnel experience; in addition, they are exposed to new stresses deriving from their position, their ambition, and their responsibilities.

When considering the work-related stress to which you are exposed it is important to consider the nature of your job. You must realize the way in which the nature of work changes as you move from line staff positions into supervisory and management positions. The figure below provides one simple view of the shift in work activities which takes place as you move up the career ladder.



For example, a supervisor of a probation/parole unit might find his time broken down in the following manner:

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>PERCENT TIME</u>
<u>Doing</u>	30%
Supervising parolees (Meeting with parolees; maintain- ing case records; travel; collateral contacts, etc.)	
<u>Directing</u>	50%
Supervising unit staff Assigning new cases to unit staff Training staff Evaluating staff performance Conducting staff meetings Meeting with individual staff Consulting on cases of unit staff	
<u>Planning</u>	20%
Completing unit reports Helping manager with budget Scheduling own time (meetings with parolees, staff; Developing unit objectives, workplan, etc.)	

The percentages of time in doing, directing, and planning activities shifts as you move up. Line staff spend most of their time "doing" the nitty-gritty front line work that constitutes the "production" of the organization. They usually spend relatively little time "directing" and "planning" their own activities and almost none directing or planning the activities of others. (This is a point we will return to in the next chapter.)

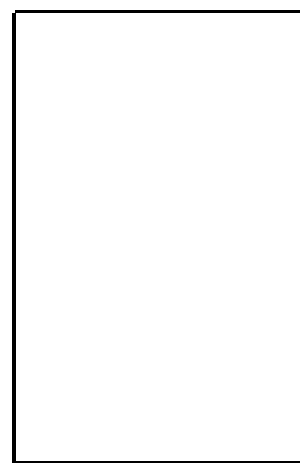
As you move into a supervisory position, your job responsibilities change; suddenly, you are required to spend considerably more time "directing" and less time "doing" (at least theoretically). The time spent doing "planning" activities also increases. Then, when you move into a management position, the job responsibilities and activities change again. The job becomes almost entirely "planning" and "directing" with very little "doing."

What about your job? How much of each of these activities do you do? Maybe it would help to consider this matter for a moment. Under the headings below, list some of the "doing," "directing," and "planning" activities in your job. Then, divide the rectangle to the right into segments showing the percentage of time doing each type of activity.

DOING

DIRECTING

PLANNING



The reasons we raise this whole matter is to point out the following important fact:

The job responsibilities of supervisors and managers are different from those of line staff (and each other); therefore, they may experience different stresses related to the job. Moving up into

a supervisory or managerial position means: (a) Changing what you were doing; (b) assuming a lot of new responsibilities; and consequently, (c) doing a lot of different activities with which you are unfamiliar and inexperienced.

This fact is important. You must keep it in mind when you analyze your own stress and you must keep it in mind when you analyze the stress of others -- particularly those who work under your direction. Several stressors were listed in Module II. Another list was presented in Module B of the Personalized Guide. Below, we present yet another list of stressors. This list includes events and situations which have been found through research to be particularly stressful to managers. It is certainly not all inclusive. Nor do we mean to suggest that the events in this list are not stressful to nonmanagers. Some are and some are not.

Workload

- Work overload
- Work underload
- Deadlines

Job Responsibilities

- Worry about making decisions
- Worry about consequences of making mistakes
- Overpromotion
- Lack of training/skill/experience

Change

- Relocation
- Change in staff
- Promotion
- Unexpected or unfamiliar demands of job
- Organizational change - shifts in responsibility, authority, associations with others, reporting patterns, work activities, etc.
- Organizational change - shifts in values, attitudes, policies, management style, rules of behavior, etc.
- Changes in society - shifts in values, attitudes, norms of behavior, etc.

Job/Organizational Expectations

Differences between what/how you want to do and what/how is expected or approved with regard to:

- normal work behavior
- dealing with problems
- dealing with stress
- dress
- interpersonal relations and/or socializing with coworkers
- interpersonal relations with clients

Problems with Superiors

- Interference from above
- Lack of support
- Lack of clear or adequate direction/supervision
- Insufficient information
- Insufficient authority
- Lack of feedback on performance
- Violation of mutual expectations

Problems with subordinates

- Failure to perform up to expectations
- Apathy, low motivation
- Noncooperative, trouble making, lack of respect, bad attitude
- Goldbricking, goofing off
- Not supportive of organization or others
- Presenting unreasonable or unmeetable demands

Career problems

- Approaching retirement
- Stalled career - no advancement
- Too slow advancement
- Family influence on career
- Midlife career change (actual or desired)
- Two career couple

Self Fulfillment/Self Actualization

- Discrepancy between what you want to do and what you are doing
- Low job satisfaction
- Low career satisfaction
- Disagreement with organizational values/goals
- Frustration of personal ambitions

Are these labels for stressors all clear? Keeping in mind that stress is individual and personal -- and, therefore, the important thing is how you define these factors to yourself. However, a brief discussion and references for additional reading about each of these stressors are provided in the Trainer's Guide.

We want to spend a little time considering (reconsidering?) your own personal stress. Because you have already developed a Personal Stress Profile (PSP) when you read the Personalized Guide, we will take a slightly different direction here.

Consider the examples and lists of stressors which have been presented. Also consider the stressors you listed in Module II. In the space provided below, list five stressful events, conditions or responsibilities that apply to you.

STRESSORS

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Consider the list of stress reactions in Module II and the reactions/consequences you listed there. In the space provided below, list some reactions that your stressors cause in you. Try to list some good reactions as well as bad ones, if you can.

Reaction/Consequences

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Now, for each stressor and reaction(s), think about any effects they may have on others. Look at the list of "victims." For each stressor, try to list one or more "victims" beyond yourself and describe reactions or consequences your stress ultimately causes for them. You may want to go back and add to or change the reactions you listed above. That's ok. Again, try to think of some good consequences as well as bad.

Victim

Reaction/Consequence

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

As a supervisor or manager, you need to become proficient in managing your stress to gain control over your own reactions and others' reactions. That's what the rest of this module is about.

But, first, let's take this exercise a step further. The chart on the next page is a variant of the chart used to construct your Personalized Stress Profile in the Personalized Guide. We call this chart a Stress Reaction Profile. For each stressor you listed above, complete this chart by following the steps listed below:

Step 1: List the stressor in the column headed "Stressor."

Step 2: Under the "My Reactions" column,, circle the physiological and psychological reactions you experience as a result of the stressor. Draw lines from the stressor to the circled reactions.

Step 3: Look at the behavioral reactions listed. Your psychological and physiological reactions probably cause you to change your behavior -- voluntarily or involuntarily. Circle the behavioral reactions you experience and connect each one to the physiological or psychological reaction leading to that behavioral change. (Note: Not all circled physiological or psychological reactions need necessarily be connected to all circled behavioral changes.)

You now have a partial profile of your personal stress similar to the Personal Stress Profile developed in the Personalized Guide. If you have listed different stressors here, you may find it enlightening to complete a PSP for these stressors following the steps in Module B of the Personalized Guide. (Blank forms and instructions for this purpose are provided in Appendix A.) In this manual, however, we want to take a slightly different direction.

- Step 4:** For each behavioral reaction which you have circled, circle anyone in the "Other Victims" column who is affected by your behavior. Circle those victims and draw lines connecting the behavior to the victims.
- Step 5:** For each victim, circle the physiological and psychological reactions which they experience as a result of your stress reactions. Their reaction is probably not caused solely by your reactions, but you may have helped them along by adding a little more stress on top of what they already have. Connect the circles in the victim column to the circles around the physiological and psychological reactions.
- Step 6:** Finally, just as you did in Step 3, consider the victims' behavior reactions. Circle the resulting reactions and connect them to the physiological and psychological reactions.
- Step 7:** There's no more room on the chart, but consider the next steps in this reaction chain. How do the other victims' reactions come back to affect you? Who else is affected and how?

Answer the following questions from the information you provided on the Stress Reaction Profile chart.

Under "My Reactions" did you circle any behaviors which you wish you did not exhibit -- or at least didn't exhibit so often or so strongly?

If you answered "yes," then you probably need to improve your stress management skills in relationship to the specific stressors listed. If you answered "no" then you are probably maintaining your balance and handling your stress pretty well.

Under "Their Reactions" did you circle any reactions which are likely to be undesirable or distressful to the other victims or yourself'?

If you answered "no" then you are probably managing your stress well enough to keep it from spilling over onto others. If you answered "yes" then you may be imposing unfair burdens on others. If so, you should improve your ability to handle these stressors.

If you answered "yes" to the previous question, are those reactions being experienced by your supervisor, supervisees, or coworkers (in the "Other Victims" column)?

If you answered yes, then your stress reactions are interfering with your functioning as a supervisor or manager. You need to improve your ability to handle those stressors in order to become a more effective manager or supervisor.

Coping with and Preventing Distress

We have defined "coping" (as opposed to "preventing") as taking action to keep stress from becoming distress -- that is, taking action to better endure your stress and to minimize the harmful effects from it. Thus, coping strategies are strategies that come into play when you are already under stress or when you see you are about to be so. Everyone already has a wide variety of coping strategies which they offer to use. Indeed, one of the points made in the Personalized Guide which we would like to re-emphasize is that for the most part, most people are already doing a pretty good job of coping with most of the stress in their life. The purpose of this manual and of the Personalized Guide is to offer some tips, some new strategies, and reinforcement for those times when you are not doing quite such a good job or for those stressors with which you have not been able to deal in the past.

"Preventing," on the other hand, has been defined as taking action to head off stress before it develops -- and, therefore, before it can turn into distress. As it turns out, the difference between coping and preventing is not so much a matter of what you do as it is a difference of when you do it and where you direct your energies. Prevention takes place before the stress arises; coping takes place after it arises.

Prevention is usually most effective when directed at your environment, your stressors, or your vulnerability. You prevent stress by reducing your exposure to stressors, making the conditions of that exposure more favorable, and/or increasing your ability to be exposed without experiencing a fight or flight, G.A.S. reaction. Coping efforts are usually most effective when they are directed at the way you perceive or adapt to a stressful event, condition, or demand (i.e., stressor), or when directed at altering the way you release the energy and tension resulting from your fight or flight reactions.

We don't use these two terms just for semantic reasons or to make things more confusing. We use them to emphasize the importance of thinking in terms of both short-term and long-term survival. We also use them to emphasize the importance of dealing with the right objectives at the right time.

TIP: When you're up to your waist in alligators, don't worry about how you're going to drain the swamp. Get the heck out of there!

When you have a major stress problem on your hands, concentrate on coping with it in the short run. Make sure you have your balance. Then start thinking about trying to handle that problem better next time or trying to keep from recurring. In the long run, it's probably more profitable if you can keep some of the problems (stressors) from occurring than if you just become proficient at dealing with them

TIP: If you must live near a swamp, you ought to drain it, learn the path through it, or learn how to wrestle alligators:

Whether your stressors are chronic or acute, intense or relatively mild, there are some things you can do, some actions you can take, to reduce their impact upon you. Some tips and techniques were discussed in the Personalized Guide. We will review some of them here and present some new ones. But first, we will discuss two prerequisites which are necessary to using any of these tips or techniques. They are:

You must overcome your barriers to managing stress; and,

You must set clear and reasonable goals for managing your stress.

The first step in overcoming your barriers is recognizing and admitting that you are experiencing stress and admitting that you need to do something about it. Managers are indoctrinated to believe that they should accept and meet challenges; they should be cool, strong and decisive; and, they should not show anxiety, weakness or indecision. This image of the manager as a confident, assertive, rugged individualist leads to the following attitudes:

1. Stress is part and parcel of the manager's job; it is natural and should be accepted.
2. Showing or admitting distress are signs of weakness and exhibit a lack of competency.
3. Coping with your problems and distress is a private, do-it-yourself affair.
4. Needing or accepting help from anyone else is a sign of weakness and makes you dependent.

You will not make much progress toward improving your stress management abilities unless you can avoid or change these attitudes. It is likely that if you have read this far you do not have too much of a problem in this area; however, it's a trap of which you should be aware. You should periodically re-examine your attitudes and the attitudes of those around you to assess your and their readiness to accept help.

When setting goals for managing our stress, we frequently make three mistakes. First, we're fuzzy; we don't set our goals in a clear and specific statement. Consider the following example based on the situation described at the beginning of this module:

I'm going to do something to get my stomach under control and let me sleep at night.

This can be made much clearer and more specific if it is restated in the following manner:

I am going to start playing racquet ball again. I'll play three evenings each week after work. And I'll take a 15 minute walk before going to bed. That should help me sleep and stop my stomach problems.

The second mistake in setting goals is to aim at immediate relief of our distress symptoms without attacking the causes or developing a long-range plan for gaining mastery over the stress-causing conditions. Even if we achieve the goal of immediate relief, it is likely that the distress will continue and the symptoms reappear unless you adopt a better strategy for preventing or coping with the stress. Keep taking aspirin to relieve your headache, but do something about the cause of the headache also. Taking the previous example and carrying it a step further, we can add to it as follows:

In addition, I will get counseling help for my son (and ex-wife and myself, if needed) to correct his behavior. I will also take steps to eliminate the overcrowding.

The third common mistake is setting unrealistically high goals. Setting a goal of eliminating your distress immediately and permanently is sort of like promising yourself to quit smoking or lose 20 pounds: It may happen once in a while but don't count on it. Be reasonable in your expectations. Set goals which you can achieve. If necessary, set a series of intermediate goals representing incremental steps toward the goal you want to finally reach. In our example, we would have to consider the feasibility of "correcting" my son's behavior and of "eliminating" the overcrowding. A more realistic expectation might be to hope for some level of improvement in the kid's behavior. The overcrowding issue is probably out of my control; I should be setting goals related to coping with that problem and containing it so it doesn't cause other major problems.

In summary, when you set stress management goals for yourself (and you should set goals) those goals should be clear and specific and they should:

Seek relief of distress symptoms and undesirable reactions;

Seek to gain mastery over the events and circumstances which cause the distress; and,

Provide a long-term strategy for managing the stress so that it doesn't become distress.

Several techniques which can be used to cope with stress are discussed in the Personalized Guide. Among those discussed are physical exercise, assertiveness training, and several relaxation techniques including biofeedback, meditation, the relaxation response, yoga, autogenic training, and progressive muscle relaxation. We won't dwell on these techniques here except to say that they all work. For different people with different problems at different times, any one of these may be an effective way of coping with their stress. Any one of them may be helpful to you. It all depends on your own personal characteristics, vulnerability, and stress situation. Give them a try.

To this list we will add six additional "techniques." They are:

Medical treatment

Counseling

Diet

Recreational activities

Building your social support network

Management/supervision skills training

Medical Treatment is used primarily to relieve the symptoms of distress reactions. In mild cases it may be self-administered (e.g., taking aspirin for headaches or sleeping pills for insomnia) but in more severe cases it requires professional medical help. Although medical treatment is generally aimed at the relief of physical symptoms and the physical causes of those symptoms, more and more physicians are becoming aware of the impact of stress and psychological factors as causes of physical health problems. When stress is a factor, treatment generally includes an explanation of the role and relationship of stress to your medical problems, reassurance, and the prescription of tranquilizers or other drugs.

TIP: Don't treat just the symptoms. On the other hand, don't make the mistake of not treating them. Don't be afraid or embarrassed to seek appropriate medical help.

Medical treatment may do more than just relieve symptoms. Sometimes it is an effective coping mechanism by helping to eliminate the stressor or decreasing your vulnerability. If a stress reaction is provoking more stress (e.g., your chest pains are causing increasingly high levels of anxiety for both you and your wife) relieving the physical stress symptoms from one stressor (in this case, the chest pains) may, in fact, remove the source of stress and relieve another set of stress reactions (in this case, the anxiety of you and your wife).

Sometimes a physical ailment may make you more vulnerable to stress. For example, an allergy or insomnia may leave you fatigued and not very alert (stress reactions in themselves) which in turn leaves you less able to cope with other stressors from your job. Again, medical treatment to relieve the one physical condition may not only relieve that symptom but improve your ability to cope with other stressors.

Counseling, either formal or informal, can be very effective in helping you cope with stress. By "counseling" we are talking about more than just consulting with a friend (which is good and is discussed under social support networks). We are talking about a structured process of consultation and deliberation which gives you more than just a chance to "talk it out." During the consultation process you identify and discuss your problems, their causes, their consequences, and ideas for relief. By deliberating on the alternatives you can compare their potentials for success, consider the problems in adopting each alternative, and decide which is the best decision for you.

Talking with a counselor can help you sort out and clarify your own thoughts. Frequently an outsider can see what you are struggling with and understand it easier than you can. It's sort of a case of being

able to see the forest easier when you're not in the middle of all the trees. In addition, the other person may have experienced your problem and be able to offer suggestions for dealing with it.

Our earlier comments about barriers are particularly relevant here. Many people are particularly hesitant to seek "counseling" because they think it carries a stigma of mental illness or emotional unbalance. They think that it is an open admission of weakness, and that they will be forced to reveal things about themselves that they would prefer to leave unmentioned. None of these things are true. Although you may find yourself talking about some things you have been repressing, you will not be forced to do so.

TIP: Don't be too proud to accept help if it is offered.
Don't be afraid to seek help if it's needed.

Diet has an important effect not only on our body but on our ability to function. The relationship between stress and nutrition is not clear, but it is clear that Americans especially consume too much fat, sugar, salt, alcohol, caffeine and nicotine which are all widely recognized as contributors to serious diseases.

TIP: Pay attention to your diet; be sure you have nutritional balance. If you overeat or skip meals because of anxiety or depression, take action to relieve the causes.

Overeating or undereating is frequently a sign of stress. If you tend to do either, you should ask yourself whether it is a symptom of stress and, if so, try to analyze your stress experience. Overeating also leads to obesity which can lead to psychological stress as well as increasing the load on your circulatory system and placing other stresses on your body's functioning. Large meals tend to make you drowsy. If you eat a large meal in the middle of your workday you may not be able to function at peak level during the latter part of your day.

Malnutrition may not be obvious, but vitamin deficiencies can cause anxiety, sluggishness, irritability, and a host of physical reactions. It can reduce your strength and resistance, impede your ability to cope with stress, and make you more vulnerable to distressful reactions in stress situations. While the equation is not entirely clear, it seems there is a link between nutritional habits and stress. For this reason, as well as for many other even better reasons, it makes sense to follow good nutritional habits.

This section on diet is a good place to talk about two other diet-related topics: Use of alcohol, and coffee breaks. We do not recommend the use of alcohol; but, it is a fact of life that many people do drink. Some people drink to excess occasionally, others frequently. Used in moderation alcohol can help some people relax and "unwind" from a tough day. Used carelessly it can become a major problem and a major stressor. The following advice is not new nor original, but it is worth repeating:

TIP: Be careful with alcohol; if you are not a drinker, don't drink; if you are a drinker, drink in moderation.

Never drink when you are unhappy, depressed, anxious, or irritable.

Don't drink if you are going to exercise or work; don't exercise or work if you've been drinking.

Don't drink with people you dislike, who tend to make you angry, who oppose the use of alcohol, or who become unpleasant when using it.

Alcohol is a depressant. It dulls the senses and reactions. It leaves you less alert and, perhaps, less able to respond appropriately in situations which call for a reaction on your part. Used to excess, it can leave you weakened and more vulnerable to stress even after its

initial effects have worn off (what person who drinks has not experienced a hangover?). People who are "hungover" simply cannot function at their best. They are much more vulnerable to the stresses of work -- to the degree that even minor stresses can become major problems.

Chronic overindulgence in the use of alcohol can lead to serious physiological damage to the body. Use of alcohol increases the body's need for Vitamin B₁. Many regular drinkers (note we said "regular," not necessarily heavy) suffer from a nutritional deficiency in Vitamin B₁. Such deficiency is damaging to both the brain and the liver.

TIP: If you are under stress, take rest and relaxation breaks, not coffee or smoke breaks.

A coffee break is called a "break" because it gets us away from the pressure of our work. But, the caffeine in coffee (or tea or cola) is a stimulant. It adds stress to your body. It does not relax you, it jars you. "Toffee nerves" is one reaction to this stressor. Insomnia, ulcers, and other physical ailments have also been linked to

caffeine. Recently it has been discovered that many people who drink a fair amount of coffee at work experience headaches and other "withdrawal" symptoms when they don't drink coffee on the weekend.

Another favorite activity during coffee breaks is smoking. Nicotine is, ultimately, a depressant. However, its initial action on your body is that of a stimulant. It increases your heart rate and adds stress to your body. A third favorite coffee break activity is eating. Usually junk food. These foods, if they are high in sugar, contribute to wildly fluctuating blood sugar levels. This gives you an initial burst of energy followed by a sharp drop in blood sugar level and accompanying depression -- the "sugar blues." To the extent that consumption of junk food low in nutritional value replaces the eating of more nutritious food, it contributes to poor nutrition.

Recreational Activities are another valuable outlet which can help you cope with distress. Not only sports and physical exercise, but other activities such as hobbies, reading, dating, camping, picnics, puttering around the house, making love, etc. are helpful as stress relievers because they provide:

Entertainment;

Diversion from your troubles;

Satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment; and,

Contact with other people.

It's not important what you do but that you do something. The old saw "All work and no joy makes Jack a dull boy" is true. It also makes Jack a good candidate for distress.

TIP: Make sure you have some fun in your life. Give yourself a chance to play regularly.

Recreational activities can also offer you the "quiet time" you need to get your mind free from your problems. It can begin the creative process of generating new ideas, new approaches, new solutions to those problems. Remember the seven steps for "putting it together" (Personalized Guide, Module E)? Quiet time is the first step.

TIP: When things get tough and your stress level is high, take a break. Give yourself some quiet time. Daydream. Then get on with the other six steps of the seven-step process outlined in Module E of the Personalized Guide.

Social Support is a subject of recent and rapidly growing interest. The level of individuals' social support has been found to be directly related to the levels of distressful reactions they experience from stress situations. The notion of "social support" and its definition is still one of some controversy; however, Sidney Cobb has defined social support as follows*:

" . . . information belonging to one or more of the following three classes:

- 1 Information leading the subject to believe that he is cared for and loved;
- 2 Information leading the subject to believe that he is esteemed and valued;
- 3 Information leading the subject to believe that he belongs to a network of communication and mutual obligation. "

Social support helps both to prevent stress and to increase your ability to cope with it. If you have a good support network with people at work, it helps to reduce the pressure and tensions between you and your peers, your supervisor, and your subordinates. It can help you and them realize fulfillment of your needs for approval, acceptance, job satisfaction, and so forth.

2. Cobb, S. "Social Support as a Moderator of Life Stress"
Psychosomatic Medicine 38(5): 300-314, 1976.

It also helps by improving your health and reducing your vulnerability to stress. By increasing your sense of being loved, being secure, belonging, and being approved, it helps to make you stronger in a general sense and better able to withstand the onslaughts of stressful events.

Although the mechanisms are not yet clear, social support also acts as a buffer by helping to improve your competence in dealing with stress. Thus, people with strong social support networks exhibit less severe reactions to stress than people with relatively weaker networks. James S. House identifies four types of social support.³

Emotional Support which involves "providing empathy, caring, love, and trust" This type of support appears to be the most important, but the following are also significant.

Instrumental Support which involves "behaviors that directly help the person in need." This might include, for example, doing their work for them, helping them to do their work or to understand it, showing them better ways to do it, etc.

Informational Support in which one provides information to other people that they can use in coping with their problems. This differs from instrumental support in that information does not directly help them with their problem it helps them to help themselves.

Appraisal Support is similar to informational support except that the information is related to self-evaluation. The information which you receive allows you to appraise and evaluate yourself more accurately.

3. House, James S. Work, Stress and Social Support. Addison-Wesley Publishing Co., Reading, MA, 1981.

There is a fair amount of evidence accumulating which suggests that the strength of their social support system is one of the factors which helps some people deal with stress more effectively than others. You can derive social support from people at work and from people outside of work. It seems that both are important and both are helpful.

TIP: Make use of your social support network. Assess your support system and take steps to insure that it is adequate and in good repair.

Management and Supervision Skills or lack of them is a major cause of stress in nearly every organization., It has been estimated that 90 percent of all supervision problems are people problems. So, to give yourself a break, learn how to deal with these people problems when they arise. Also, learn how to deal with people in order to prevent problems. This is not the place for a complete course in human resource management or supervision, but we will offer a few tips.

TIP: Improve your interpersonal relations skills. Make friends rather than enemies.

Managing people is the essence of management. If you want to be a good manager or supervisor, you must be able to manage relations between people. Emphasize communication. Listen as well as talk. Be honest and direct, and insist on the same in return. Be as open and sharing of information as possible within appropriate bounds. Be fair with all staff; don't play favorites. Maintain confidences. Be clear about your expectations and honest in your appraisals. In short, master the art of human relations.

TIP: As a supervisor or manager, emphasize your role in providing support to *your* staff and coworkers.

As a manager or supervisor, one of your most important functions is that of supporting your staff. This includes acting as a motivator, trainer, director, helper, problem solver and facilitator. You are responsible for insuring that your staff have the resources, skills, information and working conditions necessary to do their jobs properly. You are responsible for helping them handle unusual situations that arise and for helping them resolve any problems which interfere with their ability to do their job. If you support them well, they will cause you far fewer headaches. If you support them they will support you.

Listen to their problems (and they'll listen to yours). Offer them praise for a job well done (and they'll offer you praise). Back them up (and they'll back you up.) Assist them with difficult tasks, especially if the tasks are new and unfamiliar. Show them better ways to do their job (without being offensive). Be sure your directions are clear and your staff understand what they are to do -- and that they know how to do it. Be available to answer questions, offer training or assistance, and make decisions. This will make the workplace a happier, healthier environment, eliminate many stressors and prevent much distress.

TIP: Sit down and analyze your job.

Are you getting satisfaction from it? If not, why not? What are the reasons you took this job? Are your expectations being met? If not, why not? What are the things you like about it? What are the things you dislike? Identify the things you dislike that can be changed and change them. If the dislikes outweigh the likes, maybe you should consider changing jobs.

TIP: Develop a positive attitude toward your job.

If you don't like your job and approach it with motivation, you surely can't motivate others. As the leader of a work group, you set the tone. Play an upbeat tune and you get happier staff, better performance, and fewer headaches. Play a downbeat tune and you get just the opposite.

TIP: Help develop a healthy organizational climate.

If you have decided that you like your job, talk it up. Even if there are things wrong with your agency or organization, talk about the good things. It's easier to change the bad things when people are in a positive frame of mind.

Don't grouse! If you disagree with a policy or decision of a superior, express your point of view honestly and openly and suggest what you think should be done. However, make clear that whatever the decision, if it is organizational policy you will support it even if you disagree with it. There are, of course, limits to this (for ethical, moral and legal reasons) but, in general, your job is to carry out organizational policy as effectively and cheerfully as you can. If you can't do it, and you can't change it, then consider getting out.

TIP: Delegate!

Don't overload yourself with detail work that others should be doing. As much as possible, you should push work to the lowest level at which it can be done in an adequate fashion. This does not mean "dumping" your work on your subordinates. It means being clear in your own mind as to who should do what and resisting the temptation to hang on to many things which others should do.

Most of us, especially if we came up through the ranks, tend to hang on to way too much work that should be passed down. One reason for this is that we know how to do it, perhaps better than those below us (after all, we were promoted because we were good, weren't we?). Trust your subordinates. They can do it. If they can't then you are better off taking time now to train them because they can save you time and headaches in the-future. If they can't do it and you can't train them, then they should consider getting out.

Be sure you delegate appropriate authority with responsibility.

TIP: Manage your time and improve your own work habits.

Managing your time well is a big step towards managing your stress well. Don't procrastinate. Don't put off the tough or unpleasant jobs, get at them. Take a few minutes each morning to plan your day. Schedule your time and what you'll do during each hour of the day. When you make a schedule, keep it. Take a few minutes at the end of each day to think about and make a list of the things you have to do the next day.

Even if you are working on an important task with a pressing deadline, make some time available each day for keeping up with mail, telephone calls, and little things coming across your desk. Otherwise, you'll not only have the stress of the impending deadline for the important project, but you'll have lots of added little stressors from all the things piling up on your desk. It only takes a few minutes usually to clear the little jobs from your desk, but it can be a big relief.

Most of these tips are appropriate for this module (reducing your own stress) and for the next module (reducing the stress of others). In fact, in the workplace, much of the stress we experience centers around our relationships with other people. The next module is concerned with helping others -- which will also help you in return.

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IV. HELPING OTHERS

We said in Module II that you, as a supervisor or manager, have an obligation to help your staff manage their stress better. Not only is this an obligation, but it is in your own best interest. It pays to help them manage their stress better because they will then perform better. And the better they perform, the better you look (as their supervisor or manager).

Beyond this, as a person who (presumably) cares about others, we assume that you have a desire to help them avoid the grief and distress which often accompanies excess stress. The question is, how can you help them?

In this module, we will talk about some answers to that question. The main topics which will be discussed are:

Recognizing stress in others;

Helping them recognize it;

Helping others manage stress better - what you can do;
and,

Helping others manage stress better - what your
organization can do.

Recognizing Stress in Others

Recognizing stress in others is not too much different than recognizing it in yourself. In some ways, it's even easier because it is easier to take a detached view and analyze the behavior of others

than of yourself. The only thing that makes it less easy is that you don't feel the stress yourself. On the other hand, if you have to deal with someone who is experiencing stress to the point where s/he is having adverse reactions, that person is likely to be causing you stress.

There are two very basic ways to recognize stress in others. One is to recognize the symptoms of distress -- that is, their stress reactions. The second is to anticipate and recognize high risk situations by knowing what causes stress, recognizing stressors in your work situation, and observing people exposed to those situations a little more carefully.

Detecting stress or distress in others by recognizing their distressful reactions requires that you know those reactions. Presumably, if you have read this far, you have a good start in this direction. Additional practice in the art of managing your own stress will make you better at recognizing these symptoms and therefore better at being able to recognize them in others as well as yourself. Just for practice, let's redo an exercise from Module II. Think of the people you supervise. Can you think of any of them who are exhibiting behavior or other signs symptomatic of stress? At this point, we are not concluding that the reactions are, in fact, caused by stress, simply that the reactions are there, therefore we should perhaps investigate further.

In the space below, list two people whom you supervise and the factors which you think are possible indicators of distress reaction.

Name

Behavior Indicating Stress

- | | |
|--|----|
| | 1. |
| | 2. |
| | 3. |

Name

Behavior Indicating Stress

1.

2.

3.

The next step requires some detective work. You have some clues that suggest the possibility of a problem. Now, you have to inductively work your way back to figure out the causes. Who dun it? Are the reactions the result of stress? If so, what are the stressors involved? You may want to think about and pursue this question a bit on your own. If you are as in touch with what's going on as a good supervisor should be, you can probably come up with at least partial answers.

For practice, do the following exercise:

- Step 1. The Stress Reaction Profile form on the next page is identical to the one you completed in Module III. Change the column heading "My Reactions" to say "Supervisee's Reactions."
- Step 2. Under "Supervisee's Reactions," circle the reactions which you listed for the first person named above. If the reactions you cited aren't on the list, add them
- Step 3. If you have circled any behavioral reactions, try to identify some physiological or psychological reactions which the person is also experiencing.

STRESSOR

OTHER "VICTIMS"

THEIR REACTIONS

STRESSOR	OTHER "VICTIMS"	THEIR REACTIONS
1.	Behavioral: Absenteeism, skip work Late for work Poor work performance Carelessness, inattention to detail Hostility, noncooperation, arguments, poor interpersonal relations Overdemanding Complaining, backbiting, gossiping Vandalism, stealing, sabotage Neglectful of others Avoid others, sleep a lot Joke and laugh a lot, sick humor Drink too much, use drugs Overeating, underating Nervous tics, gestures, pacing Suicide attempts Work harder, longer or faster Work more alertly Able to "get off the dime," stop procrastinating Shape up rather than shipping out	Physiological: No reaction High blood pressure Heart attack, chest pains Stomach or intestinal problems Backaches, headaches, aching feet, etc. Arthritis Rashes, acne, skin problems Dizziness, difficulty breathing Allergies Frequent colds Fatigue, exhaustion Sweating, chills Exhilarated, keyed up, "ready to go" Able to resist fatigue, supercharged Psychological: No reaction Denial Nervousness, anxiety, tension Nightmares, trouble sleeping Fear, distrust Anger, hostility Alienation, desire to hide/withdraw Inability to concentrate Low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy Inability to concentrate Disinterest, low motivation Depression, psychoses Alertness, motivated to meet challenge Heightened interest Ultra calm, cool & collected
2.	Behavioral: Absenteeism, skip work Late for work Poor work performance Carelessness, inattention to detail Hostility, noncooperation, arguments, poor interpersonal relations Overdemanding Complaining, backbiting, gossiping Vandalism, stealing, sabotage Neglectful of others Avoid others, sleep a lot Joke and laugh a lot, sick humor Drink too much, use drugs Overeating, underating Nervous tics, gestures, pacing Suicide attempts Work harder, longer or faster Work more alertly Able to "get off the dime," stop procrastinating Shape up rather than shipping out	Physiological: No reaction High blood pressure Heart attack, chest pains Stomach or intestinal problems Backaches, headaches, aching feet, etc. Arthritis Rashes, acne, skin problems Dizziness, difficulty breathing Allergies Frequent colds Fatigue, exhaustion Sweating, chills Exhilarated, keyed up, "ready to go" Able to resist fatigue, supercharged Psychological: No reaction Denial Nervousness, anxiety, tension Nightmares, trouble sleeping Fear, distrust Anger, hostility Alienation, desire to hide/withdraw Inability to concentrate Low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy Inability to concentrate Disinterest, low motivation Depression, psychoses Alertness, motivated to meet challenge Heightened interest Ultra calm, cool & collected
3.	Behavioral: Absenteeism, skip work Late for work Poor work performance Carelessness, inattention to detail Hostility, noncooperation, arguments, poor interpersonal relations Overdemanding Complaining, backbiting, gossiping Vandalism, stealing, sabotage Neglectful of others Avoid others, sleep a lot Joke and laugh a lot, sick humor Drink too much, use drugs Overeating, underating Nervous tics, gestures, pacing Suicide attempts Work harder, longer or faster Work more alertly Able to "get off the dime," stop procrastinating Shape up rather than shipping out	Physiological: No reaction High blood pressure Heart attack, chest pains Stomach or intestinal problems Backaches, headaches, aching feet, etc. Arthritis Rashes, acne, skin problems Dizziness, difficulty breathing Allergies Frequent colds Fatigue, exhaustion Sweating, chills Exhilarated, keyed up, "ready to go" Able to resist fatigue, supercharged Psychological: No reaction Denial Nervousness, anxiety, tension Nightmares, trouble sleeping Fear, distrust Anger, hostility Alienation, desire to hide/withdraw Inability to concentrate Low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy Inability to concentrate Disinterest, low motivation Depression, psychoses Alertness, motivated to meet challenge Heightened interest Ultra calm, cool & collected
4.	Behavioral: Absenteeism, skip work Late for work Poor work performance Carelessness, inattention to detail Hostility, noncooperation, arguments, poor interpersonal relations Overdemanding Complaining, backbiting, gossiping Vandalism, stealing, sabotage Neglectful of others Avoid others, sleep a lot Joke and laugh a lot, sick humor Drink too much, use drugs Overeating, underating Nervous tics, gestures, pacing Suicide attempts Work harder, longer or faster Work more alertly Able to "get off the dime," stop procrastinating Shape up rather than shipping out	Physiological: No reaction High blood pressure Heart attack, chest pains Stomach or intestinal problems Backaches, headaches, aching feet, etc. Arthritis Rashes, acne, skin problems Dizziness, difficulty breathing Allergies Frequent colds Fatigue, exhaustion Sweating, chills Exhilarated, keyed up, "ready to go" Able to resist fatigue, supercharged Psychological: No reaction Denial Nervousness, anxiety, tension Nightmares, trouble sleeping Fear, distrust Anger, hostility Alienation, desire to hide/withdraw Inability to concentrate Low self-esteem, feelings of inadequacy Inability to concentrate Disinterest, low motivation Depression, psychoses Alertness, motivated to meet challenge Heightened interest Ultra calm, cool & collected
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These are generally harder to spot, but if you think about it for a while you may remember hearing him/her complain about headaches, trouble sleeping, being sick a lot, or some such thing. If you can't come up with any, don't worry.

There are two reasons for this step. First, it gives you a little more insight into exactly what's going on with your staff member. This might (only might) make it easier to identify the stressors causing his/her reactions. It also might give you more "appraisal" type information to share with him/her if you talk to the individual about your concerns. The second reason for this step is more general. Without regard to the specific problem at hand, it gives you good practice in thinking about your staff. Thinking about their situation and their needs once in a while helps to make you more sensitive. This, in turn can help you be more supportive to them and a better manager or supervisor.

Step 4: Just as you did in Module III, identify and circle any other "victims" affected by the person's reactions. Then, for each victim, circle any reactions that victim is experiencing.

Step 5. Finally, try to list some "stressors" which you think may be causing the worrisome reactions in your staff member.

This process of "working from the middle out" should give you a more complete understanding of what's going on. It doesn't solve the problem, but it may give you the information needed to solve it -- or the information to pass on to the person involved so s/he can do something about it.

Anticipating other people's stress is similar, it just works the opposite direction. You begin with a knowledge of what things in the work setting and people's personal lives are likely to cause them stress. From your own experience and the experience of others, you can learn to know what things will cause stress, when, and where. This manual and other sources can help you increase your awareness. Training and practice can improve your skill in recognizing potentially stressful situations.

Look around, make mental note of the stresses in your work setting. Talk with your staff and get to know enough of their personal life to be aware and identify potential stressors there. This does not require becoming buddies with them, or prying. It simply requires chatting with them *once in a while* and listening. Handled properly, this will not seem like prying but will be perceived as a sign of caring and concern. Again, this is a part of the art of supervision. It will be appreciated if handled properly.

Think about and analyze each person's work and personal situations and consider whether a stressload may be getting too high. If it is, then decide whether or not a time is right to talk to them. If it is, do so in a forthright and honest manner.

Helping Them Recognize It

At some point, you may want to approach the other person and discuss the situation with him or her. This may seem like a difficult or uncomfortable step to take, but it's not really. Furthermore, it's your job. The individual, if approached properly, will be appreciative of your concern. It, in effect, demonstrates that you care about and support him. It makes you a part of his support system.

One thing you should not do is discuss one employee with another. The only exceptions to this rule might be to gather additional information about some incident you observed, to get another person's sense of the

situation, or to get other information which will help you size up the situation. This, if done, should be done in such a manner as to make it appear to be a normal part of your keeping track of what's going on in your unit -- not some special "checking up" on a particular person.

We'll offer some hints for approaching the individual and discussing the situation. Handle this much as you would approach him (or her) to discuss a new work assignment, a problem you have with something they did or didn't do, or a performance review. It should be handled confidentially. It should be handled in a nonthreatening, noncritical manner. Explain your observation and concern. Be honest. Indicate that you are concerned and that you would be willing to help if possible. Offer, but don't press, to discuss and explore the matter in more detail. If the situation is serious or if it is interfering with his work or the work of others, then you need to pursue it further in any case. Be prepared, if the employee asks, to do so at that time *or* to provide concrete suggestions.

Talk to the individual at a convenient time. Don't chose a time where things are hectic in the office or where you or he have a pressing deadline. (If the situation is serious, or if it is related to an impending deadline or to the hecticness, or if there are a series of deadlines and there is no break in them, then you may have to violate this suggestion.) Pick a time when the person can be alone afterwards to relax and think about what you have to say. The end of the day or before lunch might be a good time. Give your meeting a "business as usual" appearance so as not to call the attention of other employees to the fact that "something is up."

There is another thing you can do to help your staff recognize stress. Help them improve their stress management skills. Provide them with some training or materials to help them develop these skills. Encourage them to read the Personalized Guide or some other materials on stress. Discuss the notion of stress and its consequences with them. Encourage them to look at themselves and

their situation -- to analyze their lives, their jobs, and the stress they are experiencing. Have them develop their own Personalized Stress Profile and Stress Reaction Profile; offer to help with them. Again, all of these things are legitimate within your role as a supervisor. They're a part of providing support to your staff. If done in a helpful and tactful manner, your efforts will be well received and appreciated. It requires some skill at handling interpersonal relationships, but then that's what supervision is primarily all about.

Helping Others Manage Their Stress -- What You Can Do

If you observe someone who is under considerable stress, there are some things you can do to help them. Of course, exactly what you do depends upon the situation. If he (or she) is in a state of acute distress, immediate intervention and first aid may be necessary. If he is in a less acute or chronic stage of distress, then you may want to intervene but the situation may not dictate immediate action. If he is under stress but not yet suffering a distressful reaction, you may wish to intervene or simply keep a careful eye on a situation and be prepared to intervene if it gets worse.

The five steps described below can be used as a guide when you see someone under stress.

1. Determine if the person is in distress.
2. Determine if you can do anything to relieve the situation. If so, do it.
3. Call the situation to the person's attention and offer to help.
4. If requested, offer help.
5. Refer the person to appropriate sources of additional help.

Step 1. The goal of the first step is to determine if a problem exists and, if one does, to increase your understanding of it. This step requires you to recognize the other person's stress. You need to analyze the situation and identify the stressors and stress reactions as best you can. Fill out a Stress Reaction Profile. Consider the effects the stress is having on yourself and others as well as the central figure. Use Force Field Analysis and/or Personalized Stress Profiles to increase your understanding of what stressors are having what effects on the people involved.

The specific techniques mentioned are only suggestions. Use other techniques or don't use any at all. Tailor your approach to the specific situation and your own preferences.

Step 2. Chances are that you may be able to do something at this point which will help to relieve the situation. Ask yourself whether anything you are doing (or not doing) is contributing to the situation. Ask yourself whether providing some additional support to your staff member might relieve the stress or help him cope with it better.

Consider whether you can change the situation. For example, maybe you can temporarily avoid giving the person all the tough probation cases. Or, maybe you can show him how to handle a challenge from an inmate better. Or, maybe you can make sure he only gets directions from one boss and that those directions aren't conflicting.

The goal at this step is to see if there is some way you can relieve the stress situation by yourself more easily than you can by going to the next steps. There is some degree of "escalation" involved in moving to Step 3. There is a risk that you will create more stress by raising the "problem" with the person. If that escalation can be avoided, it may be worth doing so.

Step 3. Sometimes you can't avoid raising the issue with the other person. Sometimes you don't want to avoid it.

This may be the most important step. Sometimes the person may have gotten into a crisis state or be approaching it without even being aware of it. Having someone bring it to his attention will help him realize that the situation is serious enough that others are aware of it. This might be just- the catalyst needed for him to kick into action and begin managing his stress better. Sometimes the person, might actually be aware that he is having a problem, but be unwilling to admit it, unsure what to do about it, or unable to seek help. Being confronted with the fact that someone else already knows about his dilemma and is empathetic, can serve to impel? him to action to relieve his distress.

Step 4. In all likelihood, the main help you will be able to offer will fall under the heading of providing social support. But that covers a pretty broad range. Go back to Module III and look at the definitions and discussion of the four categories of social support -- emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal. Many of the support things you can do are really nothing more than applying good management/supervision skills. We will provide some tips in this area shortly.

Less likely, but worth considering is the possibility of helping to modify the person's job or environment. If the job or the organizational environment is a major source of stress, then perhaps they should be changed. In some cases you may be able to initiate such changes yourself; in other cases it may require action by your superiors or others at your level. A word of caution: If more than just minor changes in one person's job is involved, you are probably starting a pretty large task. That doesn't mean, however, that you shouldn't do it.

Step 5. If the person isn't able to alleviate the distressful situation alone, or with your help, then, perhaps, you should encourage him to seek additional help. Before doing so, take time to consider whether the situation is serious enough to the person to warrant the effort they will have to expend. Of course, this is not your decision, but it is something you should think about -- and something the other person should consider carefully.

In the context we are using it here, referral to "additional help" could include any of a very wide range of options. It could include, for example, referral to:

A counselor (either one sponsored by your organization or one outside);

An exercise or recreational program;

A stress management training program;

Additional training to enhance job skills;

Another colleague who has had a similar experience;

and so forth.

If the five steps above all sound like "social support," don't be surprised; they are. If they all sound like a part of being a good manager or supervisor, don't be surprised; they are. In fact, our advice on helping others manage their stress better can all come under the heading of:

TIP: Improve your management skills and apply them better.

Talk with other managers or supervisors about the subject in general and about specific situations. Seek additional training in

supervision and management. Read about it on your own. Put yourself in one of your worker's place and think about how you would like your supervisor to behave.

One of the most important, if not the most important responsibilities of supervisors or managers is providing support to staff under their direction. Studies of numerous organizations in many fields of endeavor have discovered that a common characteristic of successful and highly productive work units is that the units' workers view their supervisors as "supportive."

In the last Module, we emphasized social support as a way of enhancing coping skills and preventing stress. This works both ways. Provide more support to your staff, and they will experience less distress. They will then cause you less distress.

TIP: Support your staff.

Listen to their needs, their problems, their gripes and do something about them if you can. Empathize, if you can't. Provide your staff with adequate training and information to do their jobs. Praise them frequently for jobs well done. Criticize them honestly and fairly and explain your dissatisfaction with jobs not well done. Make them laugh occasionally. Let them know what's going on. Ask them about and help them achieve their career objectives. Help them do a good job. (Remember, if they do a good job they make you look good.)

We've said it before and we'll say it again: Stress management skills are essential to good supervisory and management capacity. Supervisors should be expected to manage their stress well. They should be expected to keep their stress from causing stress for others or interfering with the work of the organization. They should also be

expected to be able to identify and help alleviate distressful working conditions and to intervene to help other individuals experiencing distress. It is essential that they be able to intervene to keep one person's distress from causing serious distress for others. So, even though it's redundant, we'll repeat this tip.

TIP: Improve your stress management skills and apply them in controlling your own life and helping others to control theirs.

Stress management and social support are two areas of management/supervisory skill worth singling out. There are, however, many other areas of management/supervisory skill that are also important. Much of the stress that workers experience is directly related to poor management or supervision. Go back to Module II and look at the list of 23 most common stressors for correctional officers. (See page/D) How many of them are related to supervision or management? Count the things that are controlled or affected by first line supervision or middle management.

Number of Stressors Affected = _____
by Supervision/Management

How many did you find? We counted 12 out of 23. Plus a couple more that might be affected somewhat. That's a lot! Look at the list of stressors affecting managers (see page 30). How many of those have to do with the manager or the manager's manager not doing a good enough job? Several. The point is that while other people, your subordinates in particular, may be a source of stress to you, you are a source of stress to them

Let's do an exercise. In the spaces below, list five things that you do or don't do that you think cause stress for people under your direction. List only those things that cause undesirable stress (since one of the supervisor's responsibility is to create a certain amount of stress to help get things done).

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

We are not going to pursue that exercise any further here, but if you listed any behaviors at all, you should heed the tip given a few pages earlier. We'll repeat it here and add some specific suggestions:

TIP: Improve your management and supervisory skills.

Reduce and avoid job ambiguity for yourself and for those under your direction. Be clear about your expectations, the duties you are assigning, and the objectives of those duties.

Avoid placing conflicting demands on your staff.

Avoid creating work overload or work underload for your staff.

Offer praise as well as criticism

Allow your staff to make mistakes. This has two dimensions: First it means giving them the chance to go ahead and do things on their own (just as children fall while learning to walk, workers will make mistakes while learning their job); and, second, they should not be so fearful of the consequences of making mistakes that they become anxious or inhibited from displaying initiative.

On the other hand, point out mistakes and discuss them fairly, honestly and openly. If too many mistakes are made, take appropriate action.

Don't feel guilty about exercising power over others -- it's your job, it's expected, it's necessary, and it's desired.

Don't abuse that power.

Show respect for others, your staff included. Consider their needs as well as your own and the organization's. They will respect you and the organization more and do a better job.

Consult with your staff about their career goals and help them attain them

Keep your frustration to yourself. Don't infect others.

Don't let your goals or frustration cause you to drive others too hard.

Avoid conflicts where possible. When they are unavoidable, seek resolutions that offer opportunities for all parties to save face.

Delegate responsibility. Be sure you delegate well, but do delegate.

Make sure you delegate adequate authority to go with responsibility.

Make sure you receive adequate authority to go with your own responsibilities.

Go out of your way to make your staff feel important, needed, good.

Sometimes, go out of your way to make yourself feel important, needed, good.

Analyze your employees' situations; anticipate their problems and pressures and help prepare them to face them Offer to help if needed.

Manage organizational change carefully. Keep people informed about what's going on and reduce their uncertainty as much as possible.

Communicate with your staff. This means listening as well as telling. Where possible, talking with them in person is far more supportive and superior to memos.

Don't favor one staff person over another. Treat everyone equally and fairly. (This doesn't mean that if they perform unequally that they don't subsequently get treated unequally. It simply means that the ground rules are the same for everyone.)

Don't overuse your good people. We all have a tendency to keep giving important assignments to those we trust and who have performed for us in the past. They may appreciate your trust, but they will burnout.

Don't neglect anyone. Along with our tendency to overuse trusted subordinates, we tend to overlook and avoid those who have failed us in the past or who have not yet proven their worth to us. This will keep them from being able to develop and will discourage them. It is unfair to them; it is unfair to you.

If you simply don't trust or can't rely on someone to do a good job, either get rid of them or change their responsibilities in such a way that they can measure up.

Make a conscious effort to build team spirit. Encourage people in your work group to rely upon and support one another.

Identify problems between staff as quickly as possible (before they develop if possible) and act fast to head them off.

Helping Others Manage Their Stress - What Your Organization Can Do

First of all, let us repeat: Enlightened self-interest as well as legal considerations make it worthwhile for an organization to take steps to prevent or reduce stress in its workplace. Many approaches

have been tried and a number of them have been found to be effective. They generally fall into one of two categories: Those that seek to effect or modify the work environment in such a way as to prevent or reduce stress by eliminating or reducing stressors; and those that attempt to improve the stress management skills of management and staff. Some approaches fall into both categories.

Health/Stress Education and Promotion programs are used to increase the awareness of employees about the existence, the nature and the dangers of stress and to improve their skills in dealing with it. These may include education and training programs, career and/or crisis counseling programs, or broader, more general medical-based health care programs. The benefits of counseling are dramatically evident in a study by Dr. Nicholas A. Cummings' summarizing two decades of prepaid health plan experience at the San Francisco Kaiser-Permanente Medical Center. As summarized by Dr. Leonard Mboss²:

Almost 68 percent of physician visits were from sufferers of emotional distress rather than organic illness. The impact of a brief crisis intervention counseling program by professionals trained in this mode of service delivery is dramatically indicated by their results. One session only, with no repeat visits, reduced utilization of medical benefits by 60 percent over the following five years. In those patients initially receiving two to eight visits (brief therapy) there was a 75 percent reduction in medical utilization over a five-year period.

And this was just the savings in medical costs. It did not include cost-savings due to reduced absenteeism, sick days, low productivity, and so forth.

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1. Cummings, N. A. "Prolonged (ideal) Versus Short-Term (realistic) Psychotherapy." Professional Psychology (8): 491, 1977.
 2. Mboss, Leonard, M D. Management Stress. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1981, pp. 235-6.

It is evident that the benefits are potentially enormous. A low-cost, confidential counseling program for relief of distress should, if utilized, pay for itself many times over. Inclusion of a stress-education/training program should be a major contributor to getting a well-designed counseling program used by the employees of the organization.

There are many different ways to set up counseling programs. They can be set up using professional counselors such as social workers or nurses trained in counseling; they can be set up using peer counselors; or, they can be set up using managers and supervisors who have had special training in providing counseling to others. The program can be a general counseling program, or it can be more specific. Examples of counseling programs focusing on specific problems are alcoholism counseling programs, support groups for single parents or recently separated or divorced persons, weight loss programs, and so on. More general counseling programs could deal with the whole spectrum of personal problems or be narrowed slightly by focusing on stress and job tension problems or career counseling.

An organizational counseling program may be part of a broader health program or it may stand alone. In small organizations, the counseling "program" may be oriented primarily towards providing appropriate referrals to outside organizations. If an in-house program aims to provide more than referrals, it may be limited to dealing with one-shot crisis situations or it may be geared to providing short-term (up to six or eight sessions) counseling. Most counseling programs in occupational settings do not provide long-term counseling; people requiring this type of help are referred to appropriate programs providing this service.

Similarly, education and training programs can take a number of different forms. Education efforts be as simple as trying to create awareness through distribution of literature about stress, publication of articles about stress in an organizational newsletter, or a display

of posters in the workplace. - Sometimes such efforts can be combined with "rap" sessions, attitude surveys, organizational development efforts, and other activities which serve not only to create awareness but to let management assess the level of stress within the organization.

Training programs can range from simply making materials available to interested individuals to the offering of formal training workshops. Another possibility is to train management and supervisory staff to be able to perform the following three functions:

Case finding - detecting stress in their staff and taking appropriate steps to see that the individuals receive such help as may be appropriate and necessary;

Counseling - being able to provide crisis intervention, short-term counseling, and referrals; and

Evaluation - including a review of each employee's level of stress as a part of his/her regular performance review.

Management Development and Supervisor Training programs can be helpful in reducing stress within an organization. Through the improvement of their management and supervisory skills, people with those responsibilities significantly reduce the level of stress within an organization. As indicated in the previous sections, this is one of the most effective ways for managers and supervisors to reduce their own stress, and for them to effect the stress level and stress coping abilities of their subordinates.

Job Restructuring may be a way of reducing stress within an organization. In many cases, an individual manager or supervisor can work with an individual employee to make modifications in his/her job to make it more rewarding and less stressful. In other cases, the

types of changes required may necessitate obtaining approvals from higher levels in the organization. If more than one or a very few jobs are involved, then this task is likely to become a major organizational development effort. Such an undertaking may be very expensive. It is probably not justified unless the stress problem in the organization is very serious or unless there are other reasons for undertaking such an effort.

Each organization's situation (and possibly each job) is unique. It may be that the job complexity should be reduced by limiting the number of reporting relationships a person has or reducing the number of contact points outside the agency. Complexity can further be reduced by reducing the variety of tasks performed in the job and providing time and opportunity to learn those tasks better. On the other hand, it may be that rather than being too complex, the job is not sufficiently challenging nor offering sufficient opportunity for fulfillment of the employee's needs. Included in the notion of "job restructuring" are such notions as "job enrichment," "job enlargement," establishment of "autonomous work groups," and other recent trends in organizational and job design.

Variable Work Schedules, "flex time," and similar plans have been tried successfully in many organizations. Although not introduced for the purpose of reducing stress, it has been found that this has occurred. In some settings it is not possible. In others, it may be. It is an organizational design and personnel management issue worth considering.

"Rap" Sessions and Attitude Surveys are ways of taking the pulse of an organization to determine its stress profile. These can be done in a formal manner on a periodic basis (say once a year) or on a more informal basis. Determining the level of stress within the organization and what factors are contributing to that stress could be the sole purpose of a survey or it could be one part of a survey with broader goals. In any case, good management practice dictates that

managers and supervisors keep themselves aware of the general tone and climate of an organization as well as the climate with regard to specific issues like stress.

Organizational Development. Beyond the issue of specific organizational steps described above, is the possibility of broader organizational development. This might focus on organizational structure or on management philosophy and style. It must be recognized that no one structure or style may' be appropriate throughout the entire corrections system in a given state or locality. For example, probation and parole agencies typically are designed on a bureaucratic model while penal institutions use a military model.

For organizations with a large number of professionals, a human relations (or behavioral) or contingency management model is usually more effective than a traditional bureaucratic model. A more traditional, highly structured, hierarchical model may be more appropriate for institutions where security is a major concern. However, it should be recognized that even the "new" U.S. armed services are emphasizing career opportunity, self-fulfillment, opportunities for responsibility and decision-making, and other attributes of the behavioral (or human relations) approach to management.

If the stress level in your organization is unacceptably high, or if the level of effective functioning is unacceptably low, perhaps the organizational structure and management structure should be re-examined.

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V. USING STRESS

In the earlier modules, we have said a number of times that stress is neutral -- it's neither good nor bad. While the main focus of this manual has been on the issue of preventing or coping with stress which threatens to produce distress, we want to end with a few words about the good side of stress. Harking back to Selye's concept of the General Adaptation Syndrome, and the notion that a stressor is anything that invokes the G.A.S., it is easy to see that there are many enjoyable or pleasurable events which induce stress. For example, getting married, having a child, buying a new house, and getting a promotion are all (usually) perceived as pleasurable events; yet, they all induce high levels of stress which can contribute, along with other stressors, to undesirable stress reactions.

Beyond the fact that stress may be associated with many pleasurable events, there are two important facets of human behavior that are worth noting:

1. People consciously seek some stress. Some people even thrive on relatively high levels of stress.
2. People generally try to avoid circumstances which they know will produce uncomfortable levels of distress.

These two factors suggest two ways in which stress can be used to reduce or prevent distress. By controlling or intentionally creating desired stress situations, you can use one stressor to provide a release for the strain induced by another stressor; or, you can use stress as a motivator.

The notion of using one stressor as a means of avoiding distressful reactions from another stressor has been implicitly introduced earlier in this manual and in the Personalized Guide. Exercise and many recreation activities create a significant stress demand on your body. The key here is using these stressors as a way to release the pressure and tension built up from other stressors. In effect, referring back to the figure at the beginning of Module III, exercise and recreation are helping to modify the "releases" process and release your tension and pressure through more desirable reactions (such as fatigue, exhilaration, a sense of accomplishment, and so forth). If you thrive on the pressure of competition, consciously include nonwork competitive situations in' your life. Join a bowling league, play racquet ball, play tournament bridge. If you like thrills and exhilaration, take up hang gliding. Or scuba diving.

Stress is a powerful motivator. We can use it to motivate ourselves or others to adopt desirable behaviors or to avoid undesirable behaviors. You can manage your' own stress to improve your performance. As a manager or supervisor, which you can control stress to improve the performance of your staff. By "control" we mean you have some ability to turn on or turn off, turn up or turn down certain pressures. Some ways you can do this are:

For your staff, you can use the promise of your approval or disapproval to induce them to do the things you want done and not to do the things you don't want done.

The threat of job loss may help to motivate an employee to come to grips with his problem with alcohol.

You can set or extend deadlines for yourself and your staff.

You can assign additional staff or take staff away from a unit.

You can assign additional work or relieve the workload.

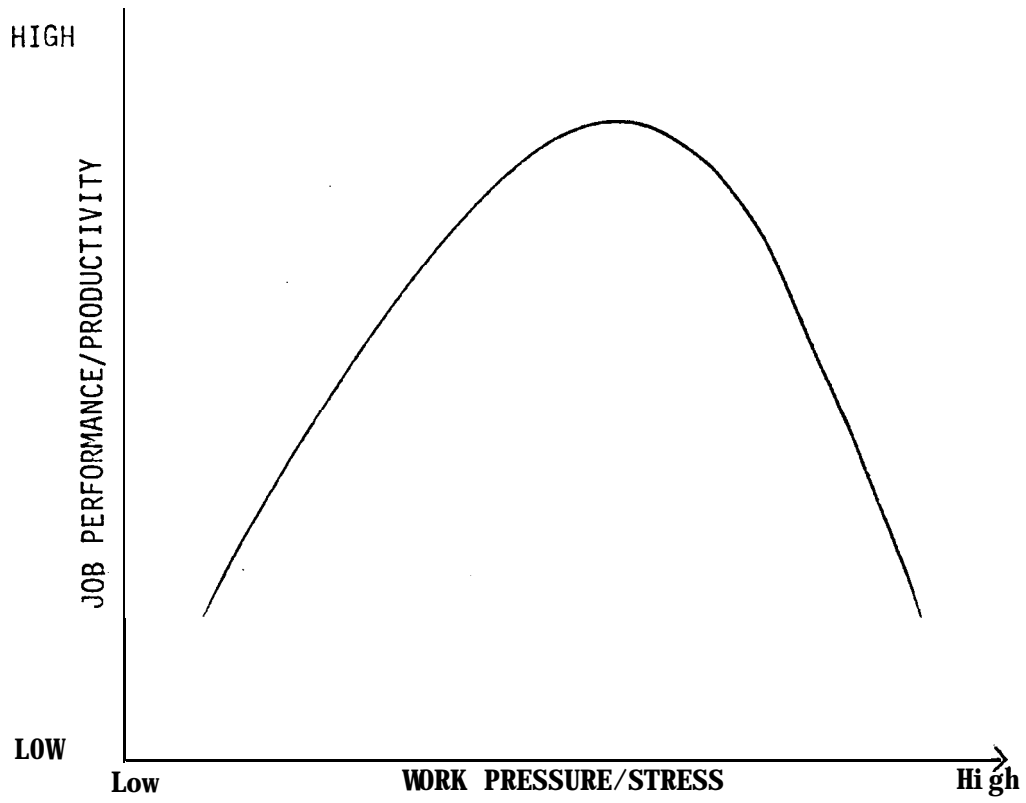
You can provide challenging tasks and opportunities to assume new responsibilities and demonstrate additional capability.

Consider the example of setting deadlines.. Deadlines generate stress -- the closer they come the more the stress. If you are a procrastinator, set deadlines for yourself and make yourself adhere to them. If you have staff members who tend to perform only under pressure, then keep some pressure on them. If, on the other hand, they tend to get rattled by too much pressure, then try to protect them from pressure.

Finally, we want to return to the relationship between stress and work. Without going into great detail, we want to emphasize the importance of work in our lives. Work occupies a major part of our time and plays a major role in defining the image we have of ourselves. Our jobs offer immense potential for gratification and self-fulfillment -- or major potential for personal unhappiness. How we respond and how we perform at our jobs is a key contributor to how we view ourselves. The figure presented below diagrammatically depicts the relationship between job demands (which is related to stress) and job performance. As that figure suggests, job performance falls off dramatically if there is either too much work pressure or too little. If you overload yourself or your staff, you can expect breakdown; if you seriously underload yourself or your staff, you can expect low motivation and low productivity.

As a manager, you owe it to your organization, yourself, and your staff to manage stress and make it a positive force rather than a negative one. Don't feel guilty about using stress and exercising power over your staff. Use it with care. Don't abuse it, but don't not use it. It's your job to do so. Our final tip is:

TIP: View stress positively. Strive to control it and use it constructively.



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APPENDIX A:

PERSONAL STRESS PROFILE CHART

STRESSOR	TIME		FEELINGS		DURATION		FREQUENCY		REACTION		ACTION		JUDGMENT	
	A lot	Some	Happy	Unhappy	Brief	For a year	Often	Occasionally	Backache	Drink	Enough	Very happy	Somehow happy	
1.			Happy	Unhappy	Brief	For a year	Often	Occasionally	Headaches	Drink	Enough	Very happy	Somehow happy	
2.	Some		Sad	Glad	Several years	Currently	Frequently	Frequently	Sweating	Eat	Too little	Don't pay attention to it	Somewhat unhappy	
3.	Not much		Frustrated	Free	As long as I can remember	Regularly	Constantly	Constantly	High blood pressure	Nervousness	Too much	Somewhat unhappy	Very unhappy	
4.	Very little		Frustrated	Free	As long as I can remember	Predictably	Predictably	Predictably	Exhaustion	Sleep	Bad timing	Somewhat unhappy	Very unhappy	
5.	Other (describe)		Angry	Angry	Other (describe)	Unexpectedly	Unexpectedly	Unexpectedly	Colds	Rest	Good timing	Don't want to have to think about it	Don't want to have to think about it	
6.			Pleased	Confused		Other (describe)	Other (describe)	Other (describe)	No reaction	Skip work				
7.			Certain	Certain					Allergies	Late for work				
8.			Joyful	Excited					Nightmares	Argue				
9.			Warm	Warm					Withdrawal	None				
10.			Ambivalent	Ambivalent					Nervousness	Joke				
			Fearful	Fearful					Stomach disorder	Drugs				
			Other (describe)	Other (describe)					Hide	Exercise				
									Distrust	Recreation				
									Dizziness	Quiet time				
									Disinterest	Talk with spouse/friends				
									Skin disorders	Talk with professional				
									Difficulty breathing	Avoidance				
									Arthritis	Denial				
									Other (describe)	Vacation				
									Other (describe)	Other (describe)				