

# STRESS makes you Distracted, Distraught, Dumb, and Dead

Debi Hinson, MBA, RRT, CHC, CHP, CCEP, CHRC

Compliance Content Developer

HCCS/Healthstream

Chief Research &

Associate Compliance Officer

Columbus Regional Health

Albert H. Eaton, Ph.D., M.Div.

Director of Behavioral Science

Family Medicine Residency

Columbus, Georgia

## **What is my role in this presentation?**

I'm here as the real life "example" of what stress  
does to you ...

## My Personality ...

Myers-Briggs personality type: ISTJ

"POLAR BEAR"

Motto: *I'll work it out myself*

"Perfection" is typically my goal.

Type "A": competitive, outgoing, ambitious, impatient, high-strung, hard-driving, control freak ...

## My Personality ...

As a child,

- Intense & serious, very mature
- Attracted to interest requiring precision & skill
- Learned best by doing
- Valued routine and structure
- Liked to research and become an "expert"

## **My Personality ...**

As a young person,

- Often more adult than the adults!
- Valued independence, privacy & personal space
- Dependable, loyal & responsible.

## **My Personality ...**

As a partner,

- Practical
- Loyal & sensible
- Do not like spontaneity

## My Personality ...

At work,

- A task finisher
- Good at understanding & applying the RULES
- Over-represented in accountancy, law, uniformed services, surveying, business administration, management & COMPLIANCE!

STRESS **still** makes you  
Distracted,  
Distraught,  
Dumb,  
and Dead

## Who Manages You?

## **What is Stress?**

- Threat of job change or loss
- Job deadlines or difficult boss
- Your spouse demands more time
- Your child suffers a loss
- Your parent dies
- You get promoted/demoted
- You win the lottery
- A new administration

## **What distresses you?**

- Talking to a psychologist
- Talking to an administrator
- Talking to a physician
- Talking to a patient
- Talking to a judge
- Public speaking

## **Real Stressors!**

- Our “Customers”
  - External/Internal
  - Rules, Regulations, Interpretations
- Threat of ...
  - Mistakes
  - Ambiguity

## **Real Stressors!**

- Our Physical Environment
  - Traffic, Physical threat
  - Economics – food, shelter, water
  - Weather and landscape
- Our Social Environment
  - Family
  - Work
  - Community

## **Real Stressors!**

- Ourselves
  - Biology
  - Behavioral patterns
  - Thoughts
  - Feelings

## **Stress & It's Effects ...**

*Back to the Compliance Professional's Story*

## **Stress...**

*If your personality is anything like mine,  
Think about all the things that irritate you, that cause you  
stress...*

*Now,  
Think about the various health events in your life.*

## **Stress...**

*Compliance Officer for around 20 years...  
High anxiety – Creating Compliance Programs from the  
ground up, several Qui Tam litigations, 1<sup>st</sup> OCR Security  
Audit.*

*Sudden death of my father.  
... Panic attack on an airplane.  
... Panic attacks in traffic.*



## Stress & It's Effects ...

May '13 New Job – immediate Qui Tam

*Feb '14 - Hospitalized: Vestibular Dysfunction*

*Sep '14– Hospitalized: Heart Attack*

*Nov '14 – Hospitalized: ? ? Stroke*

*Mar '15 – Diagnosed: Hypoglycemia*

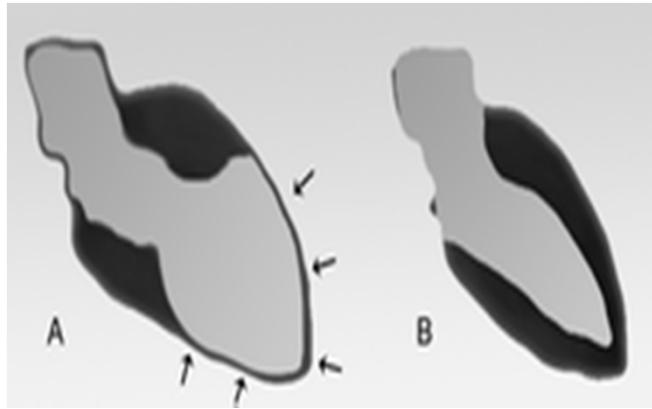
## The Effects of Stress



*I'd like to introduce you to  
my 36 year old daughter,  
Kimberly who was  
diagnosed with Takotsubo  
Cardiomyopathy*

## The Effects of Stress

Takotsubo  
cardio-  
myopathy



Normal  
heart

Resulting in Acute Congestive Heart Failure

## The Effects of Stress



... sudden onset of congestive  
heart failure associated with  
ECG changes mimicking a  
myocardial infarction of the  
anterior wall ...

## **The Effects of Stress**

Takotsubo cardiomyopathy...

Stress is the main factor in takotsubo cardiomyopathy, over 85% of cases are set in motion by either a physically or emotionally stressful event that prefaces the start of symptoms. Examples of emotional stressors may include grief from the death of a loved one, fear from public speaking, arguing with a spouse, relationship disagreements, betrayal or financial problems. Acute asthma, surgery, chemotherapy, and stroke are examples of physical stressors.

## **The Effects of Stress**

*October 30, 2015*

## **The Effects of Stress**

December 28, 2015

### **Sorry, It's Not Entirely the Event**

- It is our PERCEPTION of the Event
- What is "stressful"??
- Perception is your reality!
- What you **think** you are going through and
- What you are actually going through

## Stress and Distress

- Some **Stress** is **normal/desirable**
  - Effective homeostasis
  - Coping = return to baseline
- **Distress** is a **problem**
  - Ineffective homeostasis
  - Dumb
  - Dead

## Psychobiology

- Data
  - 5 senses
  - emotions
  - memory
- Outside of consciousness
- Mediated by thoughts

## **Perception**

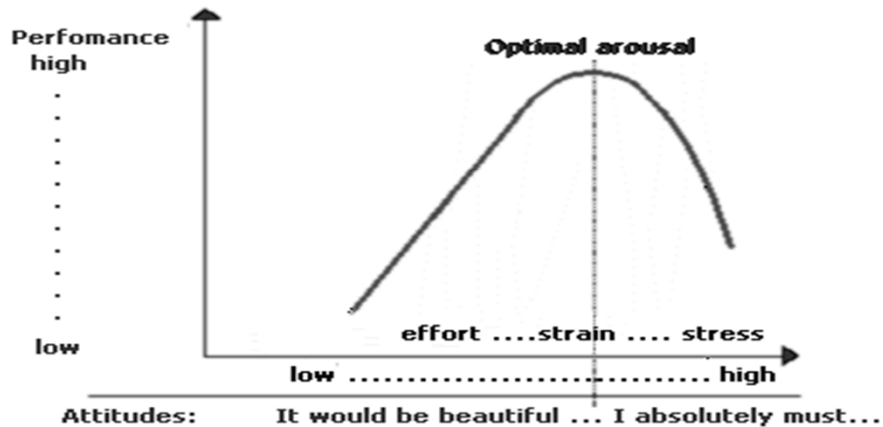
- My reality
- Biases my future perceptions
- An internal process
  - Senses
  - Emotion
  - Memory
  - Schemas, models, frames
- Unconscious and Conscious

## **Biology**

- Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal Axis
  - ACTH
  - Cortisol
  - Epinephrine
  - Norepinephrine
- Increased arousal
- Freeze – overwhelmed arousal

# DUMB

## Yerkes-Dodson Law



## Biological responses (short list)

- ↑ Heart Rate
- ↑ Respiration
- ↑ Blood Pressure
- ↑ Sweating
- ↑ Muscle tension
- ↑ Blood to Big Muscles
- ↑ Blood Glucose

## **Biological responses (short list)**

- ↓ Blood to gut and gut motility
- ↓ Immune Response over time
- ↓ Heart rate variability (HRV)
- ↓ Cellular repair
- ↓ Hippocampal cells (memory)
- ↓ Frontal lobe functioning
- ↓ Shortens telomeres
- ↓ Inhibits collagen formation

## **The Consequences**

- Pain, indigestion, muscle tension
- Difficulty sleeping
- Anxiety/worry
- Distraction/poor awareness
- Loss of Pleasure
- Diabetes risk
- Heart attack risk



## The Consequences

- Cancer risk
- Difficulty making decisions - judgment
- Impulsivity
- Diabetes risk
- Heart attack risk
- Shorter Life

## Questions?



## Thinking

- What you think counts
- Determines perception
  - Threat
  - Challenge
  - Opportunity
- Can lead to physical arousal

## The Consequences

# DENIAL

## **Dysfunctional Coping**

- Alcohol (more than 1-2 drinks)
- Food (especially high fat and sweet)
- Sad or mad
- Sleep (more than 9 hours)
- Work (loss of balance)
- Exercise (dominating your life)
- Sex (overindulgence)
- Avoidance

## **Coping**

- Eat better
- Exercise
- Recreate
- Relax
- Good social connections
- Change your thinking
- Change your thinking (What?!)

## Negative Cognitions

- I can't do this ...
- He always ...
- I never ...
- This will be a disaster
- I can't
  - Cope
  - Change
- Your own negative self-talk

## Thought Stopping

- Changing patterns
- Recognize negative attributions
- STOP!
- The illusion of "Don't"
- Change thoughts to ...

## Optimistic Cognitions

- This is an opportunity
- I can really grow through this
- A novel solution will present itself
- I will find help where I least expect it
- How can I see this from another angle
- I will do better if I relax

## Questions?



## Feeling



- Let yourself feel!
- What do you feel?
- Do Feelings fit Reality?

## Memory

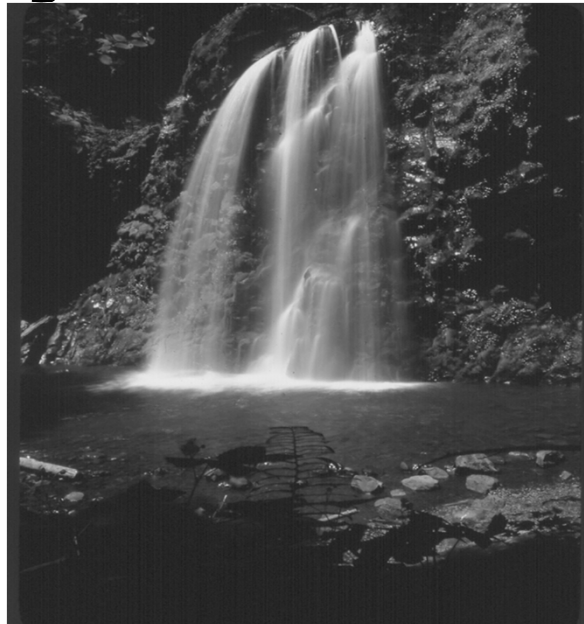
- How do your memories
  - affect your perception?
  - influence your mood?
  - guide your perception?
- Memory changes
  - Expectation
  - Satisfaction

## **Physiologically**

- **How relaxed are you?**
- **How tense are you?**

**DO YOU KNOW ?**

## **Breathing**



## Writing

- Keep a Journal
  - Activities
  - Thoughts
  - Feelings
- A Fifty-word story
  - Great for a specific event
  - Beginning, middle, and end

## Long-Term Strategies

- Regular Exercise
- Healthy food
- Yoga
- Tai Chi
- Meditation
- Develop relationships



**Questions?**



**Thank  
You**