

Stressed Out!! Coping with Consequences in Challenging Times

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Stress: Occupational stress is defined as the cumulative pressures in the workplace that cause psychophysiological symptoms and vulnerabilities to work.

Stressors in Dentistry:

Environmental

- Small work environment
- Monotonous work
- Sound and noise

Physical

- Precise slow hand movements
- Poor ergonomics
- Physical pain

Mental

- Intense focus
- Lack of knowledge

Emotional

- Isolation
- Team dynamics
- Lack of autonomy in decision making
- Lack of opportunity for promotions
- Harassment

Stressors in Dentistry/Dental Hygiene

Lack of control or autonomy in decision making

Lack of support from co-workers or management

Demanding work

Restrictions by government or insurance companies

Lack of communication

Chronic physical pain

Difficult clients

No buffer time or breaks in workday

Continuous sounds and noise
(e.g., from ultrasonic scalers or sterilization units)

Low pay or limited benefits

Working without an assistant

Working in a "helping" profession

Working long hours with a person in your personal space

Isolation: no time for socializing with peers

Monotonous work

Poor ergonomics

Lack of opportunity for promotions

Lack of knowledge of stress management

Lack of recognition, civility and respect

Negative relationships with peers

Demanding work schedules

Lack of office organization

Lack of policies to deal with stress

Chronic, unresolved stress load

Imbalance in work and home life

Consequences of Stress: Anxiety- mind and body's reaction to stressful, dangerous and unfamiliar situations

5 Steps to Coping with Stress:

- 1) Know the Signs and Symptoms
- 2) Acknowledge the Stress
- 3) Own the Stress
- 4) Leverage the Stress
- 5) Manage the Stress

Signs and Symptoms:

Feelings of depression, low self-esteem, hopelessness
Confusion or memory problems
Anger, irritability
Isolation and withdrawal from previously enjoyable activities
Negative attitude
Gastrointestinal problems
(e.g., constipation, ulcers, irritable bowel syndrome)
Cardiovascular disease
Type 2 diabetes
Musculoskeletal problems or injuries
(e.g., chronic neck/back/wrist pain)

Headaches
Insomnia and fatigue
Anxiety
Instigating conflict at work or home
Alcoholism or drug abuse
Dietary changes (e.g., loss of appetite)
Menstrual or pregnancy problems, impotence
High blood pressure
Obesity
Compromised immunity
Loss of productivity and costs to organizations,
increased health care

Coping/managing strategies

Identify sources of stress
Seek out social support including friends, family, co-workers
Get 7–9 hours of sleep
Practice hatha yoga
Have fun: dancing, singing, laughing, gardening, social sports
Try massage therapy
Take a long walk or bath
Do not use negative stress-management techniques such as alcohol consumption, substance abuse, smoking, overeating, oversleeping or withdrawal
Improve ergonomics
Communicate clearly in a respectful manner
Engage in regular moderate physical activity
Write in a journal
Eat a balanced diet and limit caffeine and sugar intake
Be assertive
Take time to play with a pet
Remind yourself to nurture yourself first in order to have the personal resources to care for others
Strive for personal optimal health and well-being
Foster better working relationships with your employer and co-workers
Learn to say “no”

Use relaxation techniques such as visualization, deep breathing, and meditation
Prioritize your time and make lists
Seek professional help from a counsellor, physician, registered dietician, fitness trainer
Try to focus on the positives in situations
Spend time outdoors
Let go of situations that have caused you past stress

Help Resources:

2015 ADA Dentists Well Being Survey: (
https://ebusiness.ada.org/assets/docs/32944.PDF?OrderID=1364096&_ga=2.52666664.1449320603.1587093573-1504286949.1575165179)

<https://www.rdhmag.com/career-profession/article/14073700/the-state-of-the-rdh-career-in-2020>

ADA Center for Professional Success

ADA Mental Resource site: <https://success.ada.org/en/wellness>

National Institute of Mental Health: <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/index.shtml>

Anxiety and Depression Association of America: <https://adaa.org/>

National Alliance on Mental Illness: www.nami.org

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration: <https://www.samhsa.gov/>

Psychology Today-anxiety and depression tests: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/>

Dental Mental Network nonprofit: info@dmn.com

Humor video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2vSPSHKkmTw&t=96s&has_verified=1

PEMF: Drpawluk.com

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Tips for managing stress and anxiety from Anxiety and Depression Association of America:

HOW TO DEAL WITH STRESS AND ANXIETY

MIND



-  **Accept that you cannot control everything.**
Put your stress in perspective: is it really as bad as you think?
-  **Do your best.**
Instead of aiming for perfection, which isn't possible, be proud of however close you get.
-  **Maintain a positive attitude.**
Make an effort to replace negative thoughts with positive ones
-  **Learn what triggers your anxiety.**
Is it work, family, school, or something else you can identify? Write in a journal when you're feeling stressed or anxious, and look for a pattern.

BODY

-  **Limit alcohol and caffeine.**
Alcohol and caffeine can aggravate anxiety and trigger panic attacks. Instead, drink water.
-  **Eat well-balanced meals.**
Do not skip any meals and always keep healthy, energy-boosting snacks on hand.
-  **Get enough sleep.**
When stressed, your body needs additional sleep and rest. It's important to get 8 hours of sleep per night!
-  **Exercise daily.**
Exercising can help you feel good and maintain your health

ACTION

-  **Take deep breaths.**
Inhale and exhale slowly throughout the day when you are feeling stressed.
- 10** **Slowly count to 10.**
Repeat, and count to 20 if necessary.
-  **Give back to your community.**
Volunteer or find another way to be active in your community, which creates a support network and gives you a break from everyday stress.
-  **Take a time out.**
Practice yoga, listen to music, meditate, get a massage, or learn relaxation techniques. Stepping back from problems helps clear your head.
-  **Get help online.**
If you are struggling with stress and anxiety in your life, consider taking a mental health screen. Screening is an anonymous, free, and private way to learn about your mental health. www.mhascreening.org
-  **Talk to someone.**
Tell friends and family you're feeling overwhelmed, and let them know how they can help you. Talk to a physician or therapist for professional help.