



# Kinship Link

Volume 15, Issue 12

December 2019

## Pro Kinship for Kids

### Inside this issue:

How Stress Affects Your Health continued 2

Four Core Principles Underlying Stress Resilience 2

Pro Kinship for Kids  
Lower level Our Saviors  
Lutheran Church  
1400 S. State Street  
P.O. Box 666  
New Ulm, MN 56073  
Phone 359-2445 or  
1-800-642-5779  
Website:  
www.prokinship.org

Newsletter by  
Kari Beran, Director



## How Stress Affects Your Health

Holidays are to be fun times with family and friends, but sometimes it just causes more stress in your life. Some stress is healthy. It helps you feel challenged and energized and gives you a sense of purpose in life.

When stressors occur repeatedly or for a long time, it may be very harmful to your health, your relationships, and your well-being.

If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, stress may be affecting your health.

- ◆ You can't sleep.
- ◆ You feel nervous, tired, or cranky.
- ◆ Your heart feels like it's racing.
- ◆ Cardiovascular system constricts (cold hands, cold feet).
- ◆ Breathing becomes shallow.
- ◆ Your muscles are tight, neck and back pain.
- ◆ You have an upset stomach, high blood pressure, or muscle pain (pain is experienced more profoundly). Stomach acid increases.
- ◆ You get sick more often than normal.
- ◆ You have trouble concentrating or remembering things.

- ◆ You overeat, eat compulsively, or don't eat at all.
- ◆ You're using tobacco, alcohol, or other drugs to cope with how you feel.

### Colds, Flu, and Viruses

Stress affects your immune system (the part of your body that protects against disease). A study showed that people under chronic stress are three to five times more likely to get sick.

### Mental and Emotional Problems

When you are stressed, your body makes chemicals that affect how your brain works. People who are stressed often have trouble sleeping and concentrating. They are more likely to feel tired, depressed, or angry. Stress is often a hidden cause of alcoholism, drug addiction, and suicide.

### Gaining or Losing Weight

The anxiety caused by stress may make you neglect healthy eating habits. To cope with stress some people overeat, or don't eat enough. The result can be gaining, or losing too much weight for good health.

### Diabetes

Stress can affect glucose (sugar) levels in the body. For people with diabetes, stress may bring on symptoms, or make the diabetes worse.

### Muscles and Joints

Stress sends a signal to your body telling it to pump out chemicals that make you feel tense and make your muscles tight. People who are stressed often have tension headaches, and back, shoulder, and neck pain.

### Heart Disease and Stroke

When you're stressed, your heart pounds, your blood pressure rises, and your breathing speeds up. Overtime, your blood vessels become less flexible, and more prone to strokes, and heart attacks.

### Anger, Hostility, and Your Heart

Some scientists believe that anger and hostility are associated with heart disease. Have you ever felt the pounding of your heart or tensing of your jaw as you drive through slow traffic or deal with a difficult person? Anger causes the body to release adrenalin and other stress hormones into the blood stream. These "anger chemicals" may:

## How Stress Affects Your Health continued

- \* Temporarily increase blood pressure and/or heart rate
- \* Increase muscle tension
- \* Slow digestion
- \* Constrict and dilate the body's arteries
- \* Cause the liver to put cholesterol and triglycerides into the blood
- \* Increase testosterone levels, which may contribute to reduced HDL levels (the "good" cholesterol)

If they occur repeatedly or over a long time, these body responses probably cause wear and tear on the heart and blood vessels. This may explain the possible association between angry and hostile behavior patterns and increased rates of heart disease and stroke.

### Upset Stomach

Stress can cause indigestion, heartburn, nausea, and constipation. Stress alone does not cause ulcers, but it can be a factor. A recent study showed that people under stress are twice as likely to get an ulcer.

### Breathing Problems

Stress can trigger asthma attacks. The chemicals produced during stress squeeze the airways in your lungs.

You maybe saying then, what can I do to help with my stress levels. Well, Laughter is the best Medicine for stress. You may not believe it, but it is the truth. Laughter and play cause physiological changes in the body that are health inducing. It is not new!

People who really have fun at work are the ones who make a difference in organizations and in our lives.

Think of things this way to help you deal with the events of your life. How important will this event be in my life in one year? How important will this event be in my life in ten years? The trick is to remember the questions when you are stressed and determine how stressed you should really be at the time.

Enjoy Life: this is not a dress rehearsal! Live life for today. Laughter make the unbearable bearable and a person with a well developed sense of humor has a better chance of living a long life than a individual who seldom laughs. Do the small things with great love.

The Good News is the body after laughter and play is:

- ◇ Muscles relaxed
- ◇ Cardiovascular system dilates
- ◇ Breathing deepens
- ◇ T-cells production increase (a boost to the immune system)
- ◇ Endorphins are released (more powerful than morphine)
- ◇ Blood pressure and pulse drop slightly

Find ways to bring more laughter and joy into your life. Into your home and family. If you don't do "stupid stuff" naturally that you can laugh at yourself, plan it at least once a week into your life.

## Four Core Principles Underlying Stress Resilience

Stress resiliency is the ability to bounce back from stress and the capacity to recover quickly from difficult times. To recover from stress you need to have these four keys in place for you and your family.

### *A sense of empowerment and personal control*

- Control over one's responses, not necessarily over the environment but yourself
- The ability to live by one's deepest values (integrity)
- Feeling heard and valued

### *A sense of connectedness and acceptance*

- To one's deepest self
- To other people

- To the earth and the cosmos
- To all regarded as good, and to the sources of one's spiritual strength

### *A sense of meaning and purpose*

- Giving of self for a purpose of value: a caring sense of mission
- Finding meaning and wisdom in here-and-now difficulties
- Enjoying the process of growth
- Having a vision of one's potential

### *Hope*

- Positive expectation
- The ability to envision what one wants before it happens

