

# ***STRESS - It's Today's Norm***

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Man should not try to avoid stress  
any more than he would shun food,  
love or exercise

— *Hans Selye* —

Hans Selye is considered to be the “*Father of modern stress research*”

# ***STRESS - It's Today's Norm***

## ▶ Goal

- ▶ Understand stressors and how to manage our stress

## ▶ Objectives

- ▶ Understand the causes of your stress
- ▶ Identify ways to reduce your stress
- ▶ Know when to seek help

# STRESS - Outline

- ▶ Definition: What is stress?
- ▶ Causes of Stress
  - ▶ Physical
  - ▶ Mental/emotional
- ▶ Types of Stresses
  - ▶ Internal
  - ▶ External
- ▶ Symptoms of Stress
- ▶ Tools to Reduce Stress
- ▶ Conclusion



## DEFINITION OF STRESS

- Hans Selye, the father of modern stress research, defined Stress as "any event which may make demands upon the organism, and set in motion a non-specific bodily response which leads to a variety of temporary or permanent physiological or structural changes".



# What is Stress?

- ▶ Stress is the reaction a person has to excess pressures or other types of demand placed upon them.
  - ▶ Expected: relationships, work, financial
  - ▶ Unexpected: disasters, loss of a job and income
- ▶ It arises when a person worries that they cannot cope with the amount of pressures/demands placed on them
  - ▶ Multiple stressors may push us past our usual coping point
- ▶ Stress is how we try to cope with ongoing changes

**Dr. Hans Selye (1956)**  
**Stages of Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome**  
**(GAS)**

<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Alarm</b>	In response to a stressor, the body prepares for immediate physical action. The sympathetic nervous system is activated, and stress hormones (cortisol, epinephrine, norepinephrine) are released in greater amounts.
<b>Resistance</b>	If the stressor continues, the body maintains a moderate level of physiological arousal. The organism has increased its ability to withstand the original stressor, which brought about the alarm reaction.
<b>Exhaustion</b>	With added stressors or depletion of the ability to continue resisting, the body enters a stage in which a variety of <u>illnesses</u> or <u>even death</u> may occur.

# Causes of Stress

Uncontrolled events/disasters (COVID-19)

Fear and uncertainty

Loss of income or job loss

People being rude, aggressive, etc.

Unhappy in your job

Working long hours or cut in work hours

Increase in financial obligations

Constant change at work, environment

Facing work discrimination/harassment

The death or loss of a loved one

Increased concerns/pressures in relationships

Change/move or loss of home

Emotional concerns (depression, anxiety, anger, grief, guilt, low self-esteem, etc.)

Unsafe environment

Fear: lack of food, toilet paper, etc.

Commuting challenges: car issues, lack of transportation

Sudden changes in regulations, rules

Heavy workload or too much responsibility

Chronic illness or injury

Unclear expectations of your work

Working conditions

Having poor management

Getting married or divorced

Taking care of an elderly or sick family member

No input in the decision-making process

Environmental: noise, temperature, odors, lighting, etc.



# Stresses We Create

Excessive work hours

Expecting the worst case scenarios

Lack of sleep

Negative Thinking (eg., The sky is falling; It's my fault; they all hate me)

Overemotional, non-flexible, unrealistic expectations

Self criticize; pessimistic thinking

Shift changes without adequate rest in between

## Symptoms of Stress (partial listing)

Anger

Anxious/Anxiety

Depressed/Depression

Elated

Fear

Tense

Tired

Worry

Headache

Stomach problems

Easily agitated or short tempered

Increased or decreased appetite

Increased blood sugar

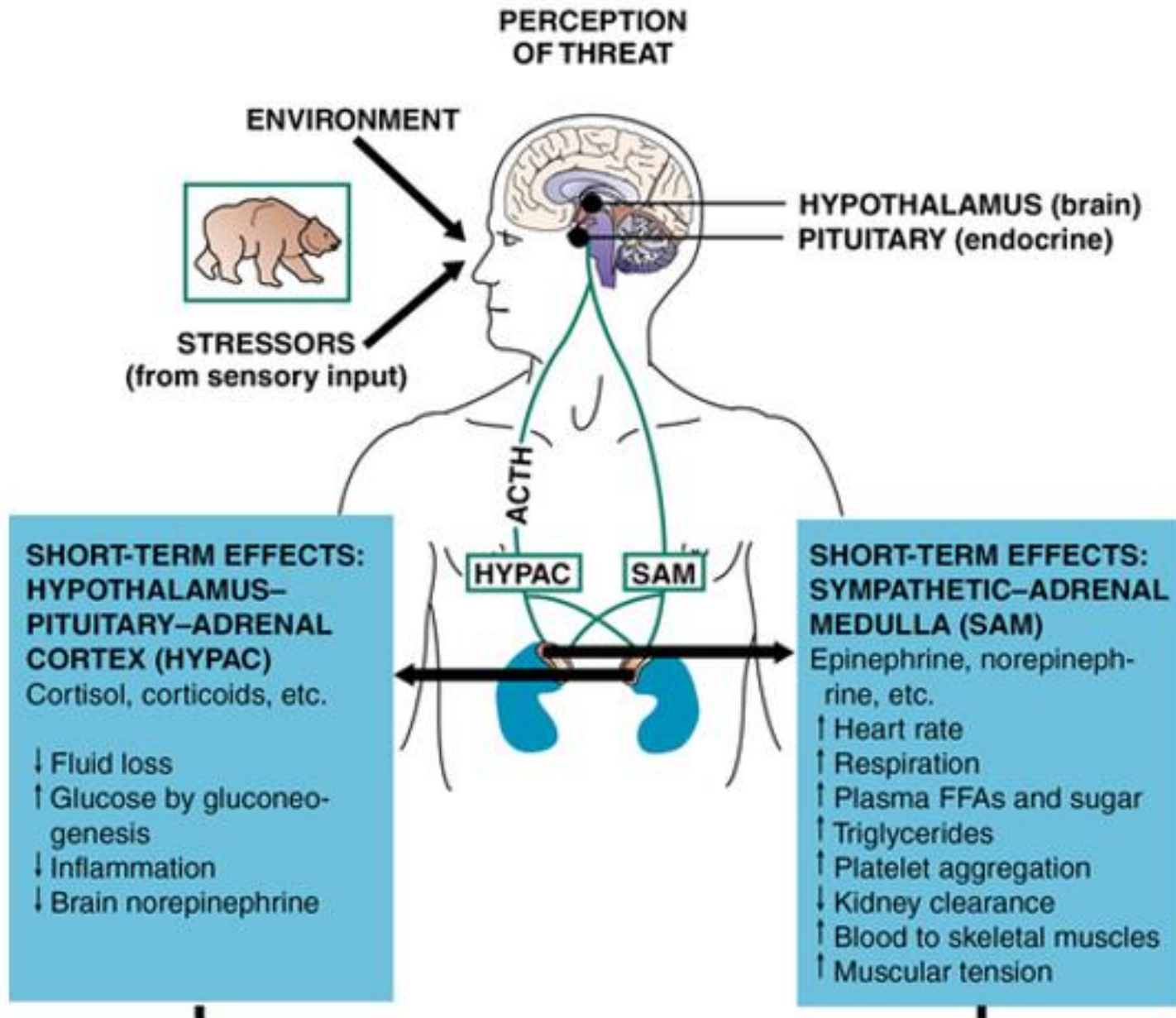
Increased Blood Pressure

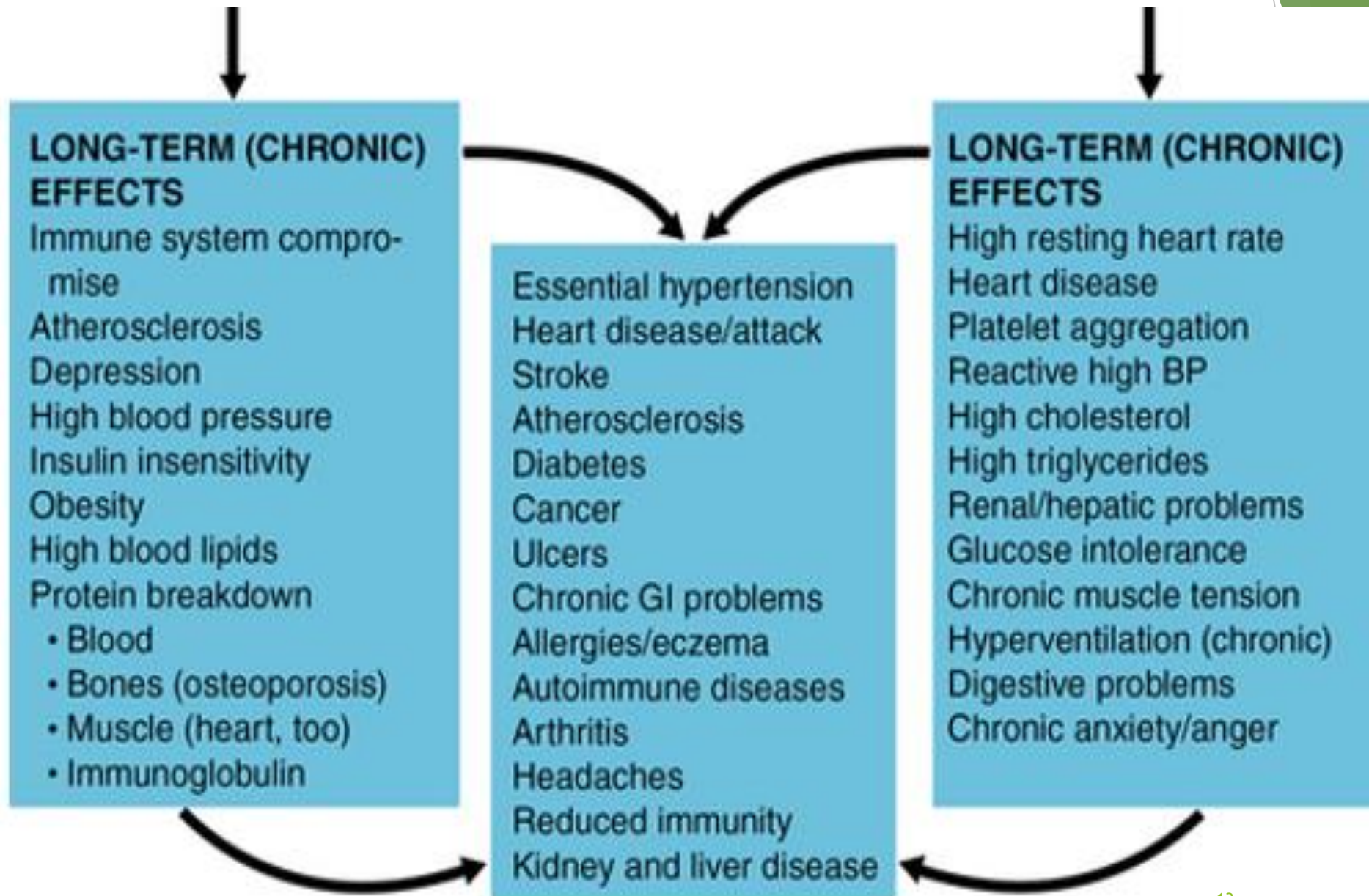
Increased or irregular heart rate

Vision changes

# Symptoms of Stress by Systems







# Stress - Positive Effects

- Fight or Flight
  - Survival response to threatening situation
  - Release hormones: Adrenaline
    - Increase pulse and blood pressure
    - Increased mental alertness
    - Blood sugar
    - Adaptation
- Motivation
  - Short time-frame motivates some people to action

# Coping Strategies - Where to Start

- **Awareness**
  - Recognize stressors and your reactions to them
- **Balance** between what I can cope with and what I cannot
- **Control** - what can I change and how do I cope
  - Change lifestyle
    - What can you change to decrease stressors
    - Look for opportunities: seek positive people, positive experiences
  - Change your thinking
    - Re-frame thinking
    - Positive internal speaking
    - Positive thinking
    - What can you change to decrease stressors

# Coping Strategies - Action

- **Change lifestyle**
  - What can you change to decrease stressors
  - Look for opportunities: seek positive people, positive experiences
- **Change your thinking**
  - Re-frame thinking
  - Positive internal speaking
  - Positive thinking
  - Set priorities
    - Establish goals and timelines that are realistic
    - Create to-do lists
    - Learn to say no or delegate
  - What can you change to decrease stressors



# Coping Strategies - Active Action

- **Physical things you can do**
  - **Laugh or just smile**
  - **Exercise**
    - Change position in chair or stand up
    - Walk around the room...or further
    - Change activity to something more engaging to increase your focus
  - **Communicate**
    - Be assertive
    - Talk to friends, co-workers (in person is always best; call; text; e-mail)
  - **Change sleep behaviors to get enough sleep**
  - **Deep breathing**
  - **Music - try to sing along or move to the beat**
  - **Hobby - make time for something you enjoy**

# Coping Strategies - Active Action *(Continued)*

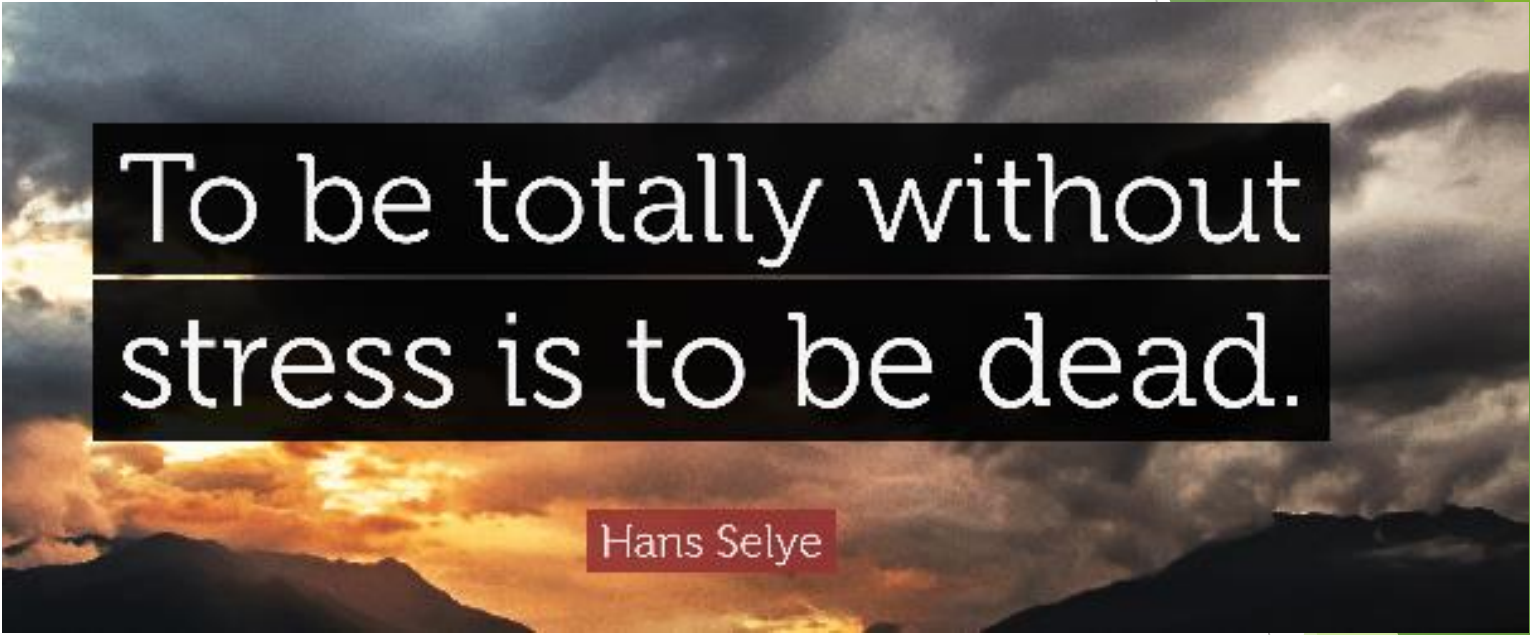
- **Things you can do immediately**
  - **Diet**
    - Limit salt, fried foods, take vitamin and/or herbal supplement
      - (Please consult with your healthcare provider before taking any over-the-counter pills)
  - **Alcohol**
    - Limit how much you drink
  - **Smoking**
    - If you cannot stop reduce the number of cigarettes or puffs per cigarette
  - **Caffeine**
    - Limit caffeinated beverages

# Coping Strategies - Deep Breathing

- Take a 5-minute break to focus on your breathing
  - Sit up straight (if possible)
  - Close your eyes (DO NOT close your eyes if you are driving)
  - Place one hand on your belly as you take a slow breath:
    - Keeping your hand there as you inhale through your nose and feel the air move down inside you and it fills your abdomen (your hand feels your abdomen expand).
    - As you exhale push the air out of your abdomen feel that breath go up through your body and out through your mouth.
    - Repeat this several times
- Don't do this too fast or you will hyperventilate and get dizzy. Stop if you feel dizzy and consult your healthcare provider before continuing with this exercise.

**ADOPTING THE  
RIGHT ATTITUDE CAN  
CONVERT A  
NEGATIVE STRESS  
INTO A POSITIVE  
ONE.**

Hans Selye



**To be totally without  
stress is to be dead.**

Hans Selye



**Stress is the spice of life.**

Hans Selye

# Conclusion

- ▶ Stress can be good or bad: it's how we handle it - *or not handle it* - that can be a challenge
- ▶ Take care of your own needs first
  - ▶ A good caregiver is a healthy caregiver
- ▶ Stay tuned to what is happening to you medically, emotionally, and mentally
- ▶ Keep your body and your mind as healthy as possible
- ▶ If you feel a need for help get help sooner versus later
  - ▶ Do not wait until your plate is over-full
- ▶ Get help from family, friends, community resources or call a hotline (next slide)

# Emergency Resources

- ▶ EAP – Employee Assistance Program through your job
- ▶ Religious Contact through place or worship
- ▶ Suicide Hotline 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
  - ▶ [1-800-SUICIDE](tel:1-800-SUICIDE) 1-800-784-2433
  - ▶ [1-800-273-TALK](tel:1-800-273-TALK) 1-800-273-8255
- ▶ The Veterans Crisis Line is also available by phone or text:
  - ▶ Call [1-800-273-8255](tel:1-800-273-8255) and Press 1
  - ▶ Text [838255](text:838255)
- ▶ Support for deaf and hard of hearing: [1-800-799-4889](tel:1-800-799-4889)