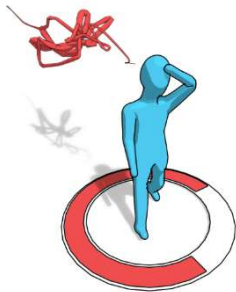


Think Well, Be Well

Provided by Evolution of Benefits

Stress Vs. Anxiety

Stress and anxiety are often used interchangeably, but they aren't the same. While both are emotional responses, stress is typically caused by an external trigger. Stress is the body's reaction to a threat, and anxiety is the body's reaction to stress.



More than three-quarters of adults report symptoms of stress, including headache, tiredness and depression, according to the American Psychological Association. Additionally, the Anxiety and Depression Association of America reported that an estimated 40 million Americans suffer from anxiety.

Knowing the difference between stress and anxiety can help you better manage these common feelings. This article explains the similarities and differences between them.

Comparing Stress and Anxiety

Stress and anxiety can both impact your physical and mental health. Each can result in excessive worry, uneasiness, tension, headaches, body pain, high blood pressure, digestive issues, difficulty concentrating and loss of sleep. Although stress and anxiety may present themselves in similar ways, they have key differences.

Stress is typically a direct response to a specific external cause, such as an important work project or an argument with a partner, that often dissipates once the situation has been resolved. Stress can also have positive and negative results. It may inspire you to perform well at a meeting while causing you to lose sleep. Since it's usually caused by a specific event or threat, stress is typically a short-term response; however, it can become a chronic condition.

On the other hand, anxiety is a feeling of fear, tension or worry in response to a real or perceived threat. It can be accompanied by an increased heart rate, restlessness, sweating, feelings of dread and faster breathing. It is typically defined by constant and excessive worrying that doesn't go away, even without an identifiable trigger. Anxiety typically lasts longer than stress because it isn't linked to a specific situation. Some people only experience anxiety occasionally; for others, frequent anxiety can be a sign of an anxiety disorder.

Techniques for Managing Stress and Anxiety

Similar strategies can be used to manage or reduce both stress and anxiety. Consider the following techniques to cope with these feelings:

- Keep a journal and write about your feelings in the moment.
- Practice positive self-talk.
- Use relaxation exercises, such as breathing techniques.
- Get regular quality sleep.
- Limit caffeine and alcohol consumption.
- Reach out to friends and family and share how you're feeling.
- Set aside time for hobbies and activities that you enjoy.

If stress or anxiety begins to impact your everyday life, it may be time to talk to a mental health professional. A qualified health professional can help you identify potential triggers and create effective coping strategies to decrease their impact. They may also be able to recommend medications and types of therapies to help alleviate symptoms.

Summary

While stress is typically short-term and easily identifiable, and anxiety can be long-lasting with less clear triggers, they can both have negative impacts on your overall health. Consult a doctor or mental health professional for more guidance on these conditions.