

STRESS MANAGEMENT

& MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH

Definitions

Mental health can be defined as a state of mental well-being that enables people to manage the stresses of life. It has been declared a basic human right by the United Nations and is considered integral to our well-being.

Stress is defined as a state of worry or mental tension, and characterised as a natural human response. It impacts both our mind and body.



Consequences of stress



Persistent stress can cause or worsen already-existing mental health conditions, such as anxiety or depression, leading in the worse-cases, to suicide or intentional self-harm.

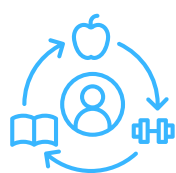
Men in the EU are experiencing **death rates 3.6 times higher than women** for intentional self-harm (Eurostat, 2022), showing the dangerous consequences of poor mental health for men.

Stigmatisation

Men's mental health disorders often go undiagnosed because **social biases** surrounding **traditional masculinity** ("toughing it out", not being vulnerable...) and it is necessary to overcome those biases in order to ensure men's health.

In order to prevent the deterioration of men's mental health because of stress, it is important to know how to manage it. Two kinds of stress management strategies exist: the positive ones and the negative ones.

STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES



Routine and balanced diet

One's routine should have regular balanced meals (with fluids, vegetables and fruits), regular exercise, chores, and leisure time.



Substance abuse

Alcohol, smoking, drugs, excessive medication can create long-term addiction and worsen mental health.



Consistent sleep

Consistent quality sleep is essential to avoid exhaustion and worsening stress.



"Bottling-up"

Suppressing or distancing oneself from emotions causes isolation and damages mental health.



Sociabilisation

Spending time with friends, family, or a community is essential to develop a supportive social environment.



Aggression and anger

It is often used as an avoidance mechanism, causing isolation and which can lead to worse sanctions.



Limiting screen-time

Limiting time on the news, on social media, and on television can help calm the mind and avoid stress.



Overeating or starvation

Used in an attempt to give the body a sense of control, it can quickly become an eating disorder.

+ The **problem focused approach**, which consists in:

- **analysing** the roots and effects of the problem creating stress, and establish a step-by-step way of solving it
- **restoring emotional balance**, by talking it out, reframing thoughts or keeping a stress journal.
- **relaxation techniques** including deep-breathing exercises, meditation or muscle relaxation.



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