## Therapy for stress reduction

## What Causes Stress?

Both positive and negative experiences and <u>life transitions</u> can lead to stress. The <u>Holmes-Rahe</u> <u>Stress Inventory</u> shows this by indexing common stressful events and using a numerical value to rank the events, using these values to determine a person's potential to become ill as a result of stress. Some of the more frequent stressors in life, most of which appear on the stress inventory, include:

- Losing a job
- Getting divorced or going through a breakup
- Getting married
- Being discriminated against
- Experiencing a change in financial status
- Having a child
- Moving
- Beginning or ending school
- Experiencing a loss
- Being diagnosed with a serious illness

These events are generally considered to be normal parts of the life cycle. Not everyone will



experience a divorce or marriage or have a child, but many will experience discrimination, lose a job, go through a breakup, and experience other affecting events, whether major or minor.

Stress will therefore be a part of most people's lives, but it may be somewhat easier to manage when experienced in smaller amounts, especially when other factors help mitigate the stress. A marriage, for example, is generally considered to be a happy event, and though it may be stressful to plan and prepare for the ceremony, the excitement experienced by the couple may help reduce the physical and mental effects of the stress experienced.

## The Effects of Stress on Health

Few people will deny being stressed at least once in their lifetime, but for many, stress can be ongoing and unbearable. Chronic stress can contribute to a myriad of mental health and physical health issues. Research has linked high stress levels to:

- Insomnia or hypersomnia
- Reduced or increased appetite
- Self-medicating with drugs or alcohol
- Changes in mental health
- Decreased productivity and enjoyment at work
- Decreased intimacy
- Migraine headaches
- Chronic pain
- Anger issues
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Decreased enjoyment in social activities
- Heart attack and stroke

When these complaints occur as a result of stress, they may often clear up as the stressful situation is resolved. However, they can become serious, and treatment from a doctor or mental health professional may often be necessary, especially if stress persists.

## **Therapy for Stress**

When the stress of life leads to <u>drug abuse</u>, chronic physical ailments or pain, an absence of pleasure or relaxation in life, or when it affects one's well-being negatively in any way, it may be helpful to meet with a mental health professional to receive treatment for the manifested symptoms of stress and work through the issues causing it.