



I stress
about stress before there's
even stress to
stress about!

MY SUCCESS IS YOUR
SUCCESS



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WHAT ABOUT STRESS?

We all face stress at some point in our lives. The triggers are probably your job, a family illness, a tumultuous social life, or money problems.

Sometimes a small amount of stress can help us complete tasks and feel more energized. Not all stress is necessarily bad. It can make you more aware of things around you and allow you to stay more focused. In some cases, stress can give you strength and help you achieve more.

However, stress can become a problem when it lasts a long time or is very intense. In some cases, stress can affect our physical and mental health and even cause emotional reactions.

Stress can be felt in different circumstances:

- *As an individual:* when you have many responsibilities that you find difficult to manage.
- *As a group:* if your family is going through a difficult time, such as bereavement or financial problems.
- *In your community:* if you belong to a religious or political group that has been discriminated against.
- *As a member of society:* during natural disasters or major events, such as a flood, a blizzard, or a pandemic.



If you are feeling stress as part of a larger group, you can all experience it differently. This can happen even if the cause of your stress is the same.

1. *Symptoms of stress:*

- a. *Acute stress:* you may sometimes feel stressed for a short time. In general, there is nothing to worry about. Like when you have to hand in a project, or you have to speak in front of a group of people.

You may feel « butterflies » in your stomach and the palms of your hands become sweaty. These types of positive stressors are short-lived and are your body's way of getting you through what could be a difficult situation.

- b. *Chronic stress:* you might experience this if you are often under pressure.

You can also experience chronic stress if your daily life is difficult, for example, if you are a caregiver or if you live in poverty.

If you let your stress skyrocket for too long, it can have detrimental effects on your body, mental, and emotional health, especially if it becomes chronic.

You need to be aware of the warning signs of chronic stress so you can take care of it.

2. *Physical effects of chronic stress:*

- Headache.
- Sleep disorder or excessive sleep.
- Muscle pain or tension.
- Digestive problems.
- Change in libido.
- High blood pressure.

3. *Emotional effects of chronic stress:*

- Feeling that you can't get things done.
- Bad mood.
- Anxiety.
- Worry.
- Lack of motivation.
- Irritability.
- Sadness or depression.

4. *Manage stress:* sometimes you may feel as if you have too much stress to handle. If you think you just can't handle it, you might want to get help from a specialist.

Talk to your GP to see if they can help you determine if what you're feeling is stress or an anxiety disorder. They can also refer you to a mental health expert and provide additional resources and tools. Signs of stress overload include:



- Panic attacks.
- Worry all the time.
- Feeling under constant pressure.
- Drinking or taking drugs to cope with your stress.
- Overeating.
- Smoking.
- Depression.
- Isolation from family and friends.

5. *The causes of stress:* stress is different for everyone. What stresses you may not bother your best friend, and what bothers your friend may not necessarily bother you.

However, many causes of stress can have a negative impact, including:

- When bullied.
- Working too hard.
- Losing a job.
- Marital or relationship problems.
- Recent breakup or divorce.
- Death in the family.
- Difficulty at school or at work.
- Family issues.
- Busy schedule.
- Recent move.

Much the same way our bodies react to stressors. Of course, the answer is how your own body copes with difficult or demanding situations, as it causes hormonal, respiratory, cardiovascular, and nervous system changes.

For example, stress can make your heartbeat faster, cause you to breathe quickly, sweat, and become irritated. It can also give you an energy boost.

This is called the « fight or escape » response of the body. It is this chemical reaction that prepares your body for a physical reaction because it thinks it is under attack. This type of stress allowed our human ancestors to survive in the wild.

6. *Stress Diagnosis:* if you are having difficulty managing your stress or if your reaction to a certain event is more intense and lasts longer than usual, it is a good idea to speak with a specialist who can help you.

They will likely ask you questions related to the following:

- If a traumatic life event has occurred in the last three months.
- If your level of stress is higher than usual when reacting, to situations at home or at work.
- If your stress may be related to bereavement.
- If you suffer from a mental disorder that may be related to your stress.



Based on your answers to these questions as well as other areas you talk about, the specialist may recommend some things that can help you.

7. *Stress and mental health*: stress is not normally considered a mental health issue. But it is linked to our mental health in several ways:

- *Stress can cause mental health problems*: if you feel a lot of stress, it could cause you to develop a mental health problem like anxiety or depression. Or a traumatic period of stress can lead to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- *Mental health issues can cause stress*: you may find it stressful to deal with the day-to-day symptoms of your mental health problem. You may also feel stressed about managing your medications, medical appointments, or other treatments.
- *Recreational drugs and alcohol*: you may resort to recreational drugs or alcohol to cope with the stress. It could also affect your mental health and cause additional stress.

8. *Stress management*: stress doesn't have to affect you negatively if you learn to manage it.

Here are some tricks you can try:

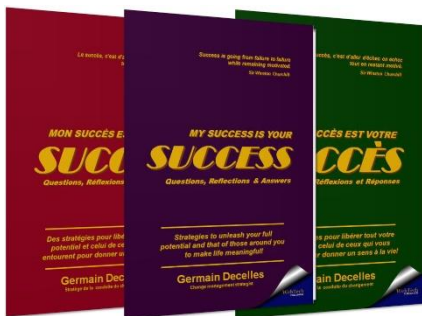
- a. *Look for the cause of the stress*: recognize what causes you stress at home or at work and find ways to avoid these situations.
- b. *Prioritize*: try not to take on too much and systematize your goals. Give yourself a break and be more forgiving when you're not getting anywhere.
- c. *Self-criticism*: criticizing yourself can add to your stress. Replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts. Tell yourself « I think I can » rather than « I know I can't. »
- d. *Find support*: create a network of close friends and co-workers you can turn when stress begins to build up. A hobby or a cause to volunteer can be good opportunities.
- e. *Stop smoking and drinking*: although alcohol and tobacco are said to help you relax, they can actually make you more anxious.
- f. *Eat well*: a balanced diet can help keep your body healthy and handle stress better. Dark chocolate and foods high in vitamin C, such as oranges and grapefruits, can lower stress hormones.
- g. *Take time for yourself and do some exercise*: a 15–20-minute walk three times a week can break up your day and help relieve stress.
- h. *Relax*: meditation, deep breathing, guided imagery, or other relaxation techniques can help calm your mind.
- i. *Sleep well*: In order to get a good night's sleep, you may need to reduce your caffeine intake during the day and your screen time in the evening. Before going to bed, develop a to-do list for the next day that will help you get a more restful night's sleep.



If these steps don't help you manage your stress, talk to your doctor about seeing a specialist.

If your stress has reached the point where you think you are hurting yourself or someone else, go to the nearest emergency room or call the local emergency service.

Find out more about « stress » with *My Success Is Your Success*. The book through questions, quotes and reflections provides the necessary elements to explore all about motivation so to shape your success and help those around you do the same. Remember that success is all about team efforts!



This 404-page book, available in French and English, is the fruit of forty years of experience acquired with local and international organizations and companies and during consultancy, change management, transition, and marketing services. For more information and to consult the flipbook, go to: www.webtechpublishing.com .

About the Author

In addition to writing, Germain Decelles acts as Change Management Strategist. He has over 40 years of business and consultation experience with local and international markets, including sectors such as retail trade, distribution, information technology and communications, transportation, manufacturing, financial services, and government organizations.



Other publications: ISO Pour Tous – Le manuel d'information ISO – Le guide de préparation ISO – La gestion du changement en affaires – La gestion de projet d'affaires – Le changement POUR TOUS – Change your future, now! – Mon succès est votre succès.

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