How to Handle Extremely Stressful Circumstances

Presented by:

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Types of Highly Stressful Situations

- **Traumatic events**
  - violence in the home or workplace
  - car accident, etc.

- **Significant losses**
  - loss of a loved one, etc.
  - loss of a job, etc.

- **Big changes at work or at home**
  - change in work environment or responsibilities, etc.
  - going through a divorce, etc.

- **Other highly stressful circumstances**
  - dealing with burnout, etc.
  - community health crisis, etc.
Part 1
The Impact of Highly Stressful Situations
Health Conditions...

...that can be associated with high levels of stress

**Emotional Effects:**
anxiety, aggression, apathy, boredom, depression, fatigue, frustration, guilt, shame, irritability, bad temper, moodiness, low self-esteem, threat, tension, nervousness, loneliness, inability to make decisions and concentrate, frequent forgetfulness, hypersensitivity to criticism and mental blocks

**Health Effects:**
asthma, chest and back pains, coronary heart disease, diarrhea, faintness and dizziness, headaches and migraine, neuroses, nightmares, insomnia, psychoses, hypertension psychosomatic disorder, diabetes mellitus, skin rash, ulcers, loss of sexual interest and weakness
Relationship Problems...

...that can occur during highly stressful times

- Less ability to use good interpersonal skills (patience, listening, etc.)

- More conflict in personal & professional relationships

- A tendency to avoid others, isolate ourselves, etc.

- Morale issues & negativity
Productivity Issues...

...that can occur due to highly stressful situations

- More sick time, missed deadlines, etc.
- Concentration problems, less creativity, etc.
- Reduced energy levels & less enthusiasm/motivation
- Lower overall engagement & productivity
Part 2
How to More Effectively Handle Highly Stressful Situations
Stages experienced by individuals during highly stressful times

- Shock/Immobilization – mental & emotional paralysis
- Denial – refuse to believe, or act like it’s not happening
- Anger – this isn’t fair, it’s their fault, etc.
- Bargaining/Negotiation – try to control the circumstances
- Depression – feel sad, hopeless, etc.
- Exploration – begin to explore the new realities
- Acceptance – start to accept that things will be OK
Manage Your Attitude

• Manage the way you think about the stressful circumstances
  – stay constructive in your self-talk
  – aging study

• Let go of worrying
  – it’s a destructive mental habit
  – realize that “this too shall pass” (research study)
Manage Your Emotions

- Manage your emotions (anger, fear, etc.)
  - stay aware of how you feel
  - understand the connection between your thoughts and your feelings

- Don’t overreact out of emotion
  - think before you act/speak
  - respond rationally, instead of reacting emotionally

“I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become.”
—Carl Gustav Jung
Become More Resilient

• Take care of your health
  – exercise
  – get enough sleep

• Proactively connect (safely) with your support system
  – don’t isolate during tough times
Become More Resilient

• Pace yourself (slow but sure wins the race)
  – allows you to recharge your batteries

• Take constructive steps to deal with difficult situations to maintain a sense of control
  – make a list, do one thing at a time
UTSA EAP Program Details

- Up to 8 counseling sessions
- Life coaching services
- Concierge work-life services
- Legal consultations
- Financial consultations
- Access 24 hours a day – 1–866–327–2400
- Website: www.deeroakseap.com
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