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The rEvolution: The added stress of STEM

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The rEvolution: The added stress of STEM

Dr. Heidi Blackburn – UNO STEM and Business Librarian
WiSTEM Pro² Presentation – November 8th, 2018

DISCLAIMER

All materials presented are from Jenny Evans' presentations:

- ICAN Global 2018 – Omaha, NE
- Women Advance IT 2018 – Lincoln, NE

For more information, see <https://ph-performance.com/>

ACADEMIC STRESS

We have so much stress at the end of the semester!

- Work commitments:
 - Grades are due!
 - Committee wrap-up reports!
 - Advising for next semester!
 - Tenure packets! Annual reviews!
 - Paperwork! Paperwork! Paperwork!
- Family commitments: holidays, fundraisers, school events
- Invisible workload: mental, emotional, intelligence

ADDED STEM-RELATED STRESS

Women in STEM:

- Are underrepresented on all levels
- Have trouble with work/life balance
- Take on more committee work and student mentoring
- Paid less overall
- Face microaggressions and stereotyping
- Interrupted more than men during talks
- Experience chilly work environments
- Have fewer opportunities for advancing to leadership roles
- Double bind for leaders who “Lead like a man!”

See these studies and more at libguides.unomaha.edu/womeninSTEM

Stress becomes the norm

- We get used to it – “Everyone is doubling down!”
- Stress management is not one-size-fits-all
- We start sacrificing:
 - Relationships
 - Values
 - Health
- Real or imagined threat - physiological effects show up

What happens to our bodies?

Stress hormones release energy from our bodies so we can prepare for fight or flight!

Cortisol: Good news

- Helps restore balance
- Makes us hungry
- Replenishes energy stores and “restocks the shelves”

Cortisol: Bad news

- Crave fat and sugar
- Stores fat in abs
- Sleep issues and insomnia
- Depression, anxiety
- Kills cells related to memory and learning

What happens to leadership?

Stress can wreak havoc on our inner dialogue as leaders!

Negativity and bias

- Focus on problems
- Change is bad
- Judge harshly

Doubt:

- I'm not good enough to lead
- I'm a fraud/imposter
- It probably won't work

Fear:

- Failure, success, the unknown
- Don't take risks
- Closed off from opportunities

Decision-making:

- Emotional, reactive
- Short-sighted
- Not open to new information



Help!

“It’s time for a rEvolution”



Sneaky Pete

“Caveman brain”

- Good for:
 - Protection and survival
 - Strong emotional drive
 - Highly motivated
 - Action oriented
- Not so great:
 - Looking for pleasures
 - Avoids anything painful
 - Wants easiest default option - nothing difficult
 - Doesn't like change - too scary

The notorious RBG

“Advanced leadership brain”

- Good for:
 - Goal setting; long-term behavior
 - Rational thought
 - Great at problem solving
 - Strength in sense of purpose
- Not so great:
 - Limited self-discipline & will power
 - Overridden by emotions
 - Easily derailed by Caveman Brain without realizing it



How can I manage when
both brains are stressed out?

OPTION #1



PLAY it out

- 20 minutes at 70% of your maximum OR 30-60 seconds of intense exercise!
- Punch it, jump it, lunge it, stomp it!
- Microbursts of intense exercise help us:
 - Release endorphins (morphine)
 - Release endocannabinoids (makes you happy)
 - Other fun brain-growth hormones
 - Builds resiliency for faster recovery times

PLATE it out

- Micro meals keep us fueled!
 - Brains are being fed
 - Body and brain function optimally
 - Consistent energy and productivity
- If glucose dips, only one brain is being fed
 - Caveman brain gets hangry
 - Critical, cranky, resistant because of physiological feedback and we can't perform
 - Rational brain is not being fed and resilience drops for external stressors
- Small snacks should be 100-150 calories (fat, fiber, protein) every four hours

Play IT out

- Turn and focus on the problem
- Be clear on your beliefs and values
 - What are five things I believe?
 - Who gets my best energy?
- How you do anything is how you do everything!

Seek it out

UNO services to help you play it out:

- Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS)
- AAUP (Faculty union)
- Ombudsperson (Ombuds)
- Bias Assessment and Response Team (BART)
- Gender and Sexuality Resource Center

Read it out

Interested in the book?

Request it for FREE through UNO Libraries:

The Resiliency rEvolution: Your Stress Solution for Life -- 60 Seconds at a Time by Jenny C. Evans (2014)

Or buy the Hit the Deck exercise cards!

<https://ph-performance.com/products/hit-the-deck/>

Setting up optimal defaults

- We don't wrestle with choice in the moment
- Saves our willpower
- Defaults almost guarantee our behaviors and choices!
- Set defaults for nutrition, the grocery store, work, traveling, eating out, and exercise!
- Create your Resiliency rEvolution Action Plan to help take action steps.

See specific tips at <https://ph-performance.com/join-the-revolution/optimal-defaults/>

THANKS FOR COMING!

