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
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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 microagressions 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!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cortisol: Good news</th>
<th>Cortisol: Bad news</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Helps restore balance</td>
<td>• Crave fat and sugar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Makes us hungry</td>
<td>• Stores fat in abs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Replenishes energy stores and “restocks the shelves”</td>
<td>• Sleep issues and insomnia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Depression, anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Kills cells related to memory and learning</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What happens to leadership?

Stress can reek havoc on our inner dialogue as leaders!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negativity and bias</th>
<th>Doubt:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Focus on problems</td>
<td>• I’m not good enough to lead</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Change is bad</td>
<td>• I’m a fraud/imposter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Judge harshly</td>
<td>• It probably won’t work</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fear:</th>
<th>Decision-making:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Failure, success, the unknown</td>
<td>• Emotional, reactive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Don’t take risks</td>
<td>• Short-sighted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Closed off from opportunities</td>
<td>• Not open to new information</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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
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
• 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
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!

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!