

Information and Protective Services

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Article of Interest for Seniors: STRESS!!

Note: This is an abbreviated version of what was presented at the TRTA Convention break-out session
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All of us experience stress in our lives to various degrees but what happens when it is carried to extreme? According to research it can contribute to: Cancer, asthma, heart disease, diabetes, chronic pain, headaches, heartburn, and a host of other ills plus it can impact jobs and relationships.

- What causes it? Change! We live in a time of rapid unprecedented change. “Human brains and bodies are not acclimatized to that pace, and that is a stressor.” [Dr. Roberto Jimenez, Center for Health Care Services, former Board Chairman of University Health Systems, San Antonio]
- We walk around with so much tension, frequently patients say: “Oh, I am not stressed out, although they may be experiencing lack of sleep or poor immune function. Stress can be built up until you get used to it”

What can we do to “de-stress?”

- Tried and true coping methods include the following: deep breathing, mediation (prayer), muscle relaxation, guided imagery, exercise, and focusing on what is going on around you in a positive way can be helpful.

What does new research say can help?

- Back to nature! Remarkable article: “The Nature Cure” found in April 2017 *Reader’s Digest* by Florence Williams from *National Geographic* focuses on the research of a cognitive psychologist at the University of Utah and the powerful influence of nature.
- Scientific research shows that nature has healing powers for both mind and body from living near green spaces to spending 3 days in a national park. EEG graphs show that a river quieted brain waves.
- Nature improves problem solving—sunsets, streams, and butterflies are what reduces stress and mental fatigue. It promotes a soft focus that allows our brains to wander, rest, and recover.
- Rx: Reduce stress: take a walk in the park or a vacation at a national park!