

Well  
Now

THE STUDENT HEALTH CENTER NEWSLETTER

# STRESS

**IS IT INEVITABLE?  
CAN YOU CONTROL IT?**

## The Good Stress

By Lucy Mead

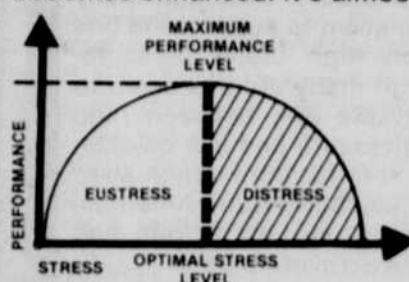
Stressed out. Under pressure. Overstressed. Distress signal. Stressful. The idea of stressors in our lives can bring about uncomfortable feelings for many people. In fact, the very thought of stress can be stressful. But for those of us who have felt this pressure (c'mon, who hasn't?), there's hope. The hope comes in the form of a different perspective which we each have the power to choose. But first a few words about stress.

Stress is a natural consequence of life. It is strain, it is force, it is pressure and urgency. It is an influence which causes a need to respond. Without stress, there would be no reason to move on, no incentive to change since there would be no compelling force to drive our desires. When we

experience too much of this force in our life, we feel an imbalance referred to as distress. Under conditions of distress, we are compelled to take action to relieve the excessive pressure causing discomfort. It is currently common to confuse the idea of stress with distress and to consider any sort of stress as distress. This gives a negative connotation to the idea of stress and many people automatically assume that stress is bad. Here's where the ray of hope enters: not all stress is bad!

Good stress, or eustress (pronounced "you-stress"), is another type of stress we have all felt but may not have considered as being stress since it feels so good, and stress can't be good — it's uncomfortable. Not so with eustress. Consider

the diagram. The horizontal axis represents the stress in our lives (we all have some level of it). The vertical axis is our level of performance. As stress builds, our performance becomes enhanced. It's almost



like a conversion of energy: stress goes into our system and we convert it into some sort of response. To a certain point (the top of the curve in the diagram) our output in response to stress is productive. We are motivated and exhilarated under the effect of what we've called eustress, the good stress. When we get to the peak of our performance curve, we have reached the op-

timal level of stress for healthy performance. After that, any additional stress begins to lower our performance. We have reached the distress level which means our ability to respond favorably is reduced. The more distress we feel, the worse our performance.

It is the choice of each individual to find his or her peak in the stress/performance curve. And what makes us all the special individuals we are is the fact that no two people will have the same curve. Some people can function extremely well under what looks like incredible (di-) stress to others. We each can choose our eustress area by taking on reasonable loads of responsibility and saying no to things which push us into the distress area. Take some time to think about the things in your life that motivate you to positive action. Appreciate the eustress in your life, minimize the distress. It's your choice.

## FROM THE HIP

**Marijuana For Stress?**

**An Introduction to the Lifestyle Planning Program**

**Stress Without Distress!**

**Recipes**

**AND MORE...**

### FREE CONDOMS

Interested in free condom samples and information? Come by the Student Health Center Pharmacy and pick up a sample, Monday through Friday between 8:30am and 4:30pm

**ARE YOU STRESSED OUT????** Get some help from a Peer Health Advisor who is a Stress Management specialist. To set up an individual appointment, just call 686-4456 or come by the Health Education Center in the Student Health Center, Monday through Friday between 10:30am and 3:00pm

**NEED SOME HEALTH INFORMATION FOR THE PAPER YOU ARE WRITING????** Come by the Health Education Center, Monday through Friday between 10:30am and 3:00pm. You'll find a variety of books and audio cassettes to check out, plus educational pamphlets and handouts on many different health topics.

**LOOKING FOR AN INFORMATIVE, ENTERTAINING SPEAKER ON A HEALTH TOPIC????** Just call the Lifestyle Planning Program at 686-4456, Monday through Friday between 10:30am and 3:00pm.