

Untangled Spaghetti



Helpful information on stress and trauma

Following a period of chronic stress or trauma,
it can be difficult to know where to start.

This is due to how our body deals with anxiety.

Scientific research has shown that anxiety hinders good decision-making by reducing the brain's capacity to screen out distractions whether they are physical or take the form of thoughts and worries.

Anxiety interrupts the brain's capacity to ignore these distractions by numbing a group of neurons in the pre-frontal cortex that are specifically involved in making choices.

The simplest of decisions become difficult and we can become forgetful and distracted.

FREE GUIDE! FREE GUIDE! FREE GUIDE! FREE GUIDE! FREE GUIDE!

So, what is trauma?



Trauma can be described as any event or experience that causes a severe, negative emotional impact on a person and/or leaves lasting effects on them which negatively affects them or impacts on their future potential.

Everyone is different

Something that one person may find distressing could be incredibly traumatic for another. No one trauma is “worse” than another.

Every person has different life experiences, upbringings and events. Their responses to incidents will therefore result in different impacts and influences.

Sometimes it will result in self-limiting beliefs which they will unconsciously carry with them, stopping them from fulfilling their potential and living the life they dream of.

Types of trauma

When considering trauma many people think of obvious events, such as sexual or physical assault, childhood abuse or being the victim of any other kind of crime. And unfortunately, these events will be traumatic for nearly everyone who experiences them.

However, trauma can come in other forms such as bullying, discrimination, death, loss, or systemic belittling in the workplace.

Your environment

Indeed, working in an environment which is unsupportive and uncaring can be traumatic, particularly if that individual has other challenges ongoing in their personal life.

This toxic environment is particularly dangerous to individuals who are dealing with the trauma experienced by others (ie. Health Care Practitioners, Social Work Services, Police, Counsellors etc).

And stress, what is that?



Well firstly not all stress is bad for you – in moderation it can keep you safe!

Stress in moderation

It is a physical response which the body switches on when it thinks it is in danger by switching on the fight, flight or freeze mode. It releases a mixture of hormones to prepare the body for physical action such as diverting blood from muscles to shutting down bodily functions such as digestion. It can keep us safe in dangerous situations and helps us to focus our attention when required.

The downside

However, the downside of stress is that when blood flow is being directed to the areas of our body which are required to support our fight or flight mode then our brains are not able to function as efficiently. This makes it more difficult for us to focus, whether that is within a work or home environment. The simplest of decisions become difficult and we can become forgetful and distracted. And if we remain in a stressed state for long periods of time then it can adversely impact on our health.

Signs that you are under a lot of stress

- o Anxiety or nervousness
- o Anger or irritability
- o Difficulty concentrating or forgetfulness
- o Depression, low mood, or crying
- o Fatigue
- o Withdrawn mood
- o Feeling overwhelmed
- o Difficulty sleeping
- o A change in eating habits or appetite (eating much more or less)
- o An increase in alcohol or drug use

Physical symptoms of stress

- o Muscular tension (tight shoulders, back, or jaw)
- o Headache
- o Gastrointestinal symptoms including acid reflux, stomachache, constipation, or diarrhoea
- o Increased blood pressure and heart rate
- o Sweating
- o Dry mouth
- o Heart palpitations or arrhythmia
- o Lowered immunity — you may be more prone to infection
- o Skin rashes

Possible Health Problems from Chronic Stress

- o Gastrointestinal upset, such as irritable bowel syndrome, heartburn, nausea, and pain
- o Headaches and jaw pain
- o Heart disease
- o High blood pressure
- o Muscle pain and tension
- o Skin rashes
- o Weight gain
- o Burnout and loss of purpose

Fight, Flight and Freeze



The Stress Response of Fight

What happens if our stress reaction is the fight response? Well, you can feel agitated, anxious, or even aggressive.

This is fine if you are fighting off an attacker or in another dangerous situation but in the home or workplace it can cause stresses and strain between you and your family members or work colleagues.

Flight Response

When the flight instinct is our response to stress it causes us to remove ourselves from a situation and avoid dealing with it.

Again, this is a healthy response in a truly dangerous situation but if we are choosing to avoid a stressful situation instead of tackling it, it can escalate our stress levels and make things worse.

And if I freeze?

For some people, their stress reaction is to become frozen into a state of inaction.

This can have the same effect as the flight response as people feel unable to take any action to deal with the stressful situation which they find themselves in and things get worse and more out of control.

Taking Your Next Steps in a Balanced Way



It is important when making any life changes that you do not adversely impact on other areas of your life.

Whilst making these changes it is an opportunity to balance any competing demands, take stock and live a more mindful and calm life.

Life today is fast paced, and money driven in a demanding society and the concept of finding and maintaining a work life balance or the demands of a family life balanced with our own aspirations and goals can seem like an impossible dream. Previous traumatic events or current challenging circumstances can cause fright or flight making changes more challenging.

Hours at work can be inflexible, family commitments can be overwhelming whether they are demands from children, grandchildren or aging families and time with friends, self-care, or time to stop and make plans for the future never seem to get to the top of the to do list.

This is where Untangled Spaghetti can help. We can help you identify the changes that you want to make whilst achieving a work-life balance. Coaching on work-life balance can help you explore ways to get more satisfaction out of all aspects of your life.

What is work life balance?



Work-life balance has been described as an individual's concept of how well they manage work and non-work-related obligations while having satisfaction, health, and wellbeing (Casper, Vaziri, Wayne, DeHauw, & Greenhaus, 2018).

Remember that work can be defined as things such as attaining an education, running a home or family (or both!), looking after aging family members or trying to rise the corporate ladder.

Does any of this sound familiar? At Untangled Spaghetti we can help you overcome whatever your response to stress and trauma has been, help you to reset and then prioritise actions which will add the most value to your happiness and contentment levels as soon as possible.

Contact us for a chat to see how we can help you.



Let's untangle your spaghetti together!

Whether you're raring to go or a little skeptical, we'd love to hear from you and discuss the value of adding life coaching to your life.

untangledspaghetti@outlook.com

untangledspaghetti.co.uk

