

Cllr Pio Smith AILG Training

“Well Being for Councillors”

September 2017

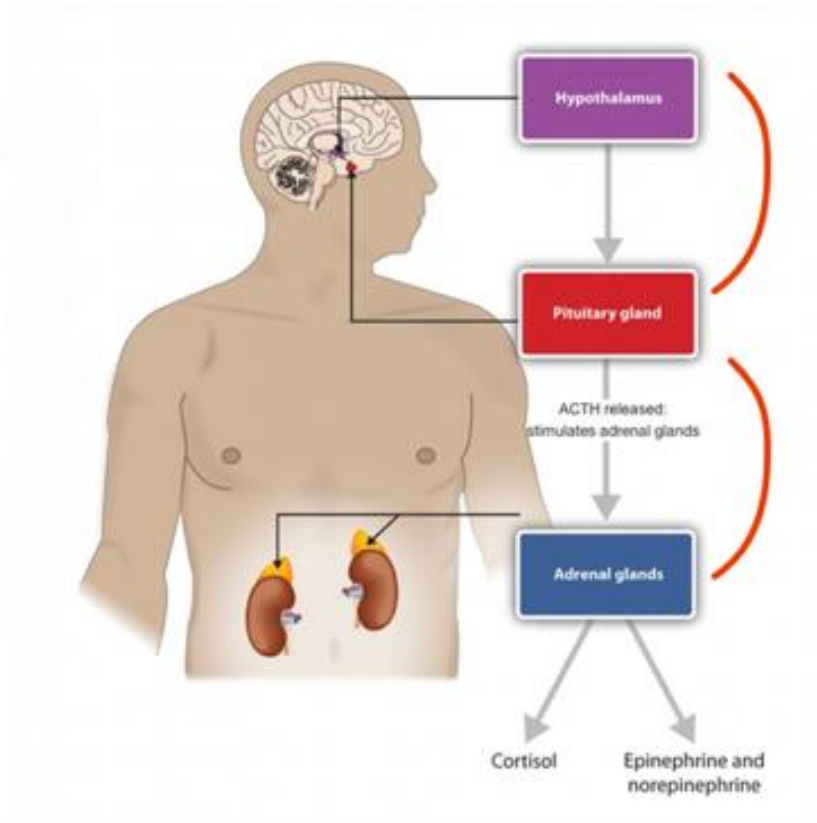
Stress Management and Personal Resilience For Councillors

Stress Management and Personal Resilience



What is Stress

HPA-Axis Feedback Loop



What is Stress

- Stress is something that affects us all, to varying degrees. It can be an overlooked and gradual build-up of the many pressures we experience in work, at home and in everyday life. But it is not all bad. Feeling stressed on occasions is a healthy natural response. Prolonged stress, however, is a different Matter.

What is Pressure

- Pressure comes from an accumulation of
- demands which can be either physical or
- psychological:
- **Physical demands - which take their toll**
- on our bodies, eg playing sports, illness
- or going on a long-haul flight.
- **Psychological demands - which can**
- lead to feelings of psychological burden,
- eg increased workload, redundancy, and
- general demands on your time.
- When the pressures increase beyond
- our ability to cope, we begin to feel
- pressurised

Difference Between Pressure and Stress

- You will experience all kinds of pressures. Busy lifestyle, Home, Work, Political Life, The Public, Colleagues, Press and Media, Vocal Pressure Group, Irate Constituent.
- All of these pressures can have a negative impact on your ability to cope and to operate to the best of your ability. In effect, this is what creates the stress you feel.

Difference Between Pressure and Stress

- While you will always encounter many different kinds of pressure, there is only one real source of stress - you. Stress is your individual response to pressure. That is why it affects all of us in different ways and to different degrees.
- The stress we feel can produce a wide range of signs and symptoms that can be physical, mental, emotional or behavioural. These responses will vary from person to person and from pressure to pressure.

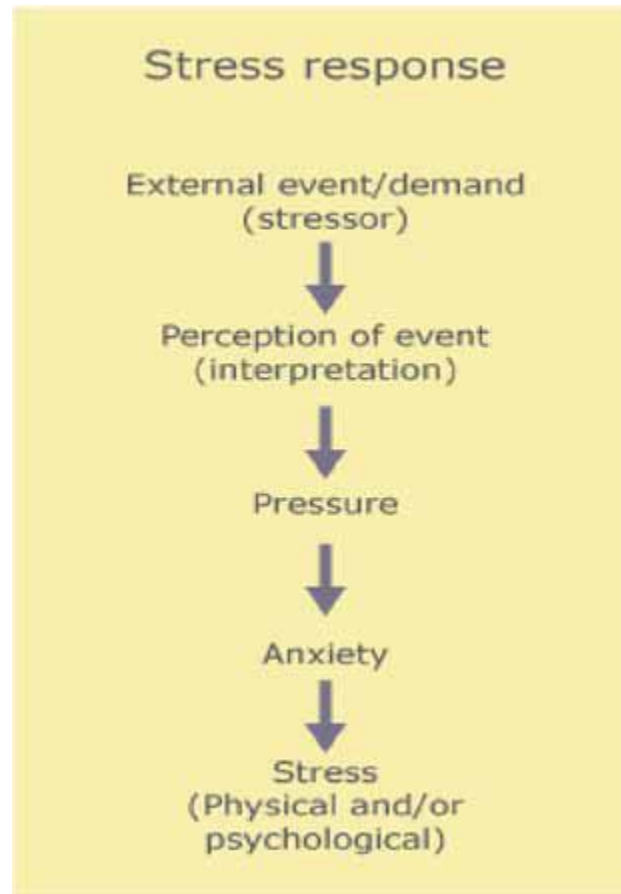
4 Stress Responses

- **Physical responses Can include:** Tiredness, headaches, 'butterflies' in the stomach, indigestion and nausea, neck ache, heartburn, allergies, skin problems, shallow breathing, blurred vision, aching muscles or palpitations.
 - **Mental responses Can mean you may:** Be more indecisive, find it hard to concentrate, become forgetful, have feelings of inadequacy or low self-esteem.
 - **Emotional responses Can mean you are likely to:** Get irritable or angry, be fearful, feel numb, get embarrassed, be hypersensitive, get tearful, or feel drained/listless.
- Behavioural responses** Can mean you may: Find it hard to sleep, change your eating habits, focus too much on work, smoke or drink more, avoid friends and family or experience sexual problems.

How Stress Can Impact On You As A Councillor

- Your response to pressure and stress will depend to a large extent on your perception of what is happening to you and the degree of control you believe you have.(Mayors, Chairs,etc).
- Our perception and interpretation of events affects how we respond to them, and the way we see the world is determined by a complex mixture of factors, eg personality, values, assertiveness, experience, beliefs, confidence and self-esteem.

Stress Response



How Stress Can Impact On You As A councillor

- Long-term anxiety and tension have a huge effect on the body, increasing levels of the stress hormone cortisol (linked with problems such as high blood pressure and making you more likely to put on weight), sapping your energy and diverting resources away from the immune system and digestion.

How Stress Can Impact On You As A Councillor

- ***An inability to concentrate or to decide*** on priorities(work-load, time management, work-life balance, budget cuts).
- ***Feelings of insularity, inadequacy, depression, or anger.***(If you are perceived as unapproachable or withdrawn, you risk losing their belief and support. This may also affect your longer-term election prospects.
- ***Changes in behaviour.***(Sleep,energy,work ethic).

Stressors

- Divorce
- Money Worries
- Family Arguments
- Time Pressure
- Travel
- Week-End Work
- Attending Functions
- Elections, Public Speaking, Social Media

Stress Management

- Making better use of technology.
- Delegating tasks to others.
- Recognising when you have taken on too much and being prepared to discuss the situation with your colleagues.
- Remove yourself from the immediate source of stress.
- Reflection V Reaction

Stress Management

- Belly Breathing
- Stretching/Movement/Exercise
- Be assertive, and prepared to say, 'No', 'I can't' or 'Yes, but I'll do it later'.
- Avoid Alcohol, Drugs, Comfort Eating,
- Good Time Management
- Manage the Workload(how do you eat an elephant?,,, in small chunks)

Stress Management

- ***Manage people & conflict***
- Avoid aggressive (fight) and submissive (flight) behaviour which will add to your stress.
- Explore options together, through collaboration and discussion. Be open to the idea that a 'third way' may exist.
- Listen first and talk second.
- Express Empathy

Stress Management

- ***Self-Management***
- Talk to others and seek advice
- Avoid striving for perfection, trying to please everyone, saying yes to everything,
- Healthy eating
- Hydration
- Relaxation
- Mindfulness

Improving your personal resilience

- Resilience is the ability to bounce back from
- tough times, or even to triumph in the face of
- adversity; to display tenacity, but not at the
- expense of reason. Resilient people know
- that they sometimes experience failure – but
- they see it not as something to dwell on, but
- as an opportunity to move forward, accepting
- that failure is a part of life.

Improving Your Personal Resilience

- According to psychologists Nicholson
- McBride, there are elements that
- contribute to resilience and evidence that
- these skills, attitudes and behaviours can
- be refined, developed or even, in some
- cases, learnt from scratch:
- **Optimism – seeing the glass half-full. It**
- encourages people to feel positive about
- themselves, about other people, and the
- world's general direction of travel.

Improving Your Personal Resilience

- **Solution orientation** – the ability to see
- and anticipate problems coming a long
- way off and to prepare accordingly.
- **Individual accountability** – a strong
- sense of self-worth and self-regard which
- gives people a belief in their own abilities.
- **Openness and flexibility** – the ability to
- tolerate, and even thrive on, ambiguous
- Situations.

Improving Your Personal Resilience

- **Prefrontal Cortex** and **Amygdala** hold the key to understanding the nature of emotional experience.
- To cultivate greater resilience and faster recovery from setbacks, I recommend the following: **Mindfulness & Cognitive Reappraisal & Positive Psychology**
- They strengthen the connections between the PFC and Amygdala

Improving Your Personal Resilience

- **Mindfulness:** “you only have moments to live”
- **Non Judging:** “step back from judging and break the automatic connection”
- **Patience:** “some things must unfold in their own time”
- **Non-Striving:** “Right now, I am OK”
- **Acceptance:** “Take each moment as it comes”
- **Letting Go:** “Going to sleep at night”

Improving Your Personal Resilience

- **Cognitive Reappraisal:**
- Challenge the accuracy of your thoughts
- Cognitive Errors:
 - All or Nothing Thinking
 - Catastrophisation
 - Over-Generalisation
 - Jumping To Conclusions
 - Emotional Reasoning

Improving Your Personal Resilience

- **Positive Psychology**
- What's working well (WWW)
- 3 Positive Things
- Gratitude (there are good and enjoyable things in the world).
- Savour (take time to notice beauty and pleasure in your daily life)
- Forgiveness (self and others)
- Meaning

Self Management and Personal Resilience for Councillors



Thank You