

Dealing with stress

For most of us, our daily lives provide ample opportunity to experience stress.

IBS, panic attacks, anxiety, weight problems, heart problems are often the outward manifestation of stress.

Short term stress is not the problem – indeed a certain amount of stress is useful as a way of being on the ball and motivated. It is when a person feels powerless and not in control in the longer term – be it at work, or at home – that the corrosive effects kick in. The body continues to produce adrenalin and other stress hormones. The digestive and sexual systems are disrupted as the body puts all its effort into getting out of a situation from which it seems there is no escape.

Yet a situation that might prove stressful for one person, may be like water off a duck's back for someone else. Situations that have the potential to cause stress – only become stressful when they are perceived as such.”

Mary became stressed when her husband retired. His attentions and needs seemed restricting and intrusive. She learnt that she could view this as a demonstration of love and caring and that she could continue to lead her own life and do those things that were important to her.

Janet felt stressed by the constant demands of her children – believing that it preventing her from getting on with her life. She learnt to put the situation into a wider perspective and realise that in the context of a lifetime, the time she had with her children would be very short and precious. She learnt to enjoy making the most of them while she could.

John is a cancer survivor. His experience has helped him focus on what is really important to him. People and situations he used to resent no longer bother him.

While we can never be in control of events, we can be in control of how we respond to them – and this is the key to leading a healthy and fulfilling life.

To do this may involve changing deeply held beliefs about ourselves and our own ability to manage situations. Beliefs that have been strengthened by repetition and experience.

And beliefs can change – sometimes overnight. Hypnotherapy can help people shift old thinking patterns and embrace more constructive ones. Hypnotherapy can help people focus on a constructive future and let go of the past. Hypnotherapy can help people know that they can manage, that they are in control of themselves and how they feel. That they do have choices where they used to see no choice.