

Helping People With Chronic Stress or Pain

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2 Aspects of Medical Care

- Medical – specifically relating to things we have learned to do clinically
- Care – how we go about being people whose concern for others is translated into behavior that is helpful and is genuinely loving, nurturing, and caring
- This talk will focus on the latter.

What Is Stress?

- An applied force or system of forces that tends to strain or deform a body.
- The internal resistance of a body to such an applied force or system of forces.
- Pressure that comes when things change
- Tension between the old and the new
- Internal conflict, emotional rearrangement

Examples of Stress

- Marriage, separation, or divorce
- Moving, buying or selling a house
- Losing a job or getting a new one
- Trials, performances and examinations
- Financial pressures, success or failure
- Illness or affliction

Stress as Discordance

- The tension between the way things are and the way one wishes they were or the way it seems that they ought to be.

“Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but desire fulfilled is the tree of life.”

Proverbs 13:12

Stress from Illness

- Acute, limited illness
- Chronic, intractable or relapsing illness
- Afflictions with ongoing pain
- Disabling conditions
- Disfiguring conditions

Clustering of Pathology

- “If it isn’t one thing, it’s another...”
- Problems often come in clusters.
- Life changes and reversals produce stress, which lowers resistance, which allows illness, accidents, or dysfunctional coping patterns to compound the picture.

The Whole Picture

- Need to see the constellation of issues and influences that are impinging upon the individual
- Assessment of illness needs to be done within the context of other stressors and sources of strength

Energy Balance and Resistance in Whole Person Care – © Dr. Bill Morehouse, Grace Family Medicine

<u>Type of Energy</u>	<u>In</u>	<u>Out</u>	<u>Intervention</u>	
Body (<i>soma</i>)	Rest	Work, toil	Scheduling	
	Physical	Sleep	Rectify disorder	
Soul (<i>psyche</i>)	Health	Illness, injury	Medical treatment, healing prayer	
	Good nutrition	Malnutrition	Dietary counsel, supplement	
	Well-being, fitness	Improper exercise	Balanced exercise	
	Sexual harmony (<i>eros</i>)	Sexual dysfunction	Godly therapy	
	Righteousness	Self-righteousness, sin	Repentance, discipline	
	Psychological	Good relationships (<i>phileo</i>)	Destructive relationships	Interpersonal counsel
	Mind, emotions	Marital harmony	Marital strife	Marital counsel
		Family harmony	Family conflict	Family therapy
		Job satisfaction	Job, school stress	Vocational counsel
		Wholesome fellowship	Bad company	Good friends, church
Spirit (<i>pneumo</i>)	Harmony with past	Unresolved personal pain	Inner healing, prayer	
	Confidence, faith	Anxiety, depression	Reassurance, support	
	Financial security	Economic problems	Contentment, giving	
	Stability	Transition, stress	Concern, acceptance	
	Spiritual	Union with God	Separation from God	Reconciliation through Christ
		Harmony with God	Conflict with God	Spiritual guidance
		Obedience	Rebellion	Yieldedness, mercy
		Understanding	Ignorance	Bible study, teaching
		Spiritual clarity, vision	Spiritual confusion	Prayer and fasting
		Moral virtue	Hypocrisy, guilt	Wisdom, forgiveness
		Peace (<i>shalom</i>)	Spiritual torment, fear	Consecration, deliverance
		Perennial joy	Emptiness, vanity	Infilling with the Holy Spirit
		Patience	Frustration	Building faith
		Spiritual vitality	Struggle, weakness	Empowerment by the Holy Spirit
		Optimism, hope	Discouragement, hopelessness	Encouragement, inspiration
		Praise, worship	Intercessory burdens	Share, release burdens
		Receiving ministry	Ministry to others (<i>agape</i>)*	Priorities, "pruning"

Fatigue and lowered resistance occur when Energy In < Energy Out. Intervention is directed toward restoring positive balance, wholeness, and integrity. *The object is to attain a positive energy balance that enables an individual to give consistently more to others than they take.

The First 3 Steps in Helping

1. Listen to their story
2. Listen to their heart
3. Listen to the specifics of their situation

Caring: Process and Goal

- Empathy – “Identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives.”
- Comprehension – “The act or fact of grasping the meaning, nature, or importance of the situation, and the knowledge that is acquired in this way.”

Caring: Righteousness

- “Righteousness” = being rightly related to those around us
- Who are you to them, and where do you fit into their life?
- What is your identity, and what are its associated responsibilities?
- Humbly being “my brother’s keeper”

“I Am”



- He is the ultimate Being, and we were made in His Image.
- *“I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.”*
- We are human beings, not human doings.
- Who we *are* matters more to God than what any of us *do*.

The three “A”s of “Am”

- Be Authentic
- Be Accepting
- Be Accessible

Be Authentic

- Being real, genuine and transparent, personally and emotionally
- Without guile (pretense) or hypocrisy
- A person of integrity
- Who are you in Christ?

“If anyone is in Christ, he is a whole new creature... the old has passed away and the new has come.”

Be Accepting

- Agape – unconditional love
- Unselfish – putting other's needs and agenda ahead of our own
- Messengers of God's reconciling love
 - Accepting the sinner, not the sin

Be Accessible

- Available 100% to the person
- Attentive to their condition, mood, thoughts, needs
 - Put aside preoccupations
 - Be entirely present in the moment

Responsibility

Definition:

= the ability to respond

Question:

Are we responsible

for the person or *to* them?

Responsibility: Attitude

For Others

- I try to fix
 - Protect
 - Rescue
 - Control
 - Carry their feelings
 - Tell them what I think

To Others

- I show empathy
 - Empower
 - Gently confront
 - Encourage
 - Demonstrate sensitivity
 - Listen

Responsibility: Focus

For Others

- I am concerned with
 - The solution
 - Answers
 - Circumstances
 - Being right
 - Details
 - My own performance

To Others

- I am concerned with
 - Relating to the person
 - Feelings
 - Being Present
 - I believe that if I just share myself, the other person has enough to make it.

Responsibility: Expectations

For Others

I am a manipulator.

I expect the person to
live up to *my*
expectations.

I try to control things.

To Others

I am a helper-guide.

I expect the person to be
responsible for himself
and his own actions.

I can trust and let go.

Having Genuine Faith in God

- Listening for God's still, small voice
- Giving witness to what you hear Him saying and see Him doing in the situation
- Allowing the encouragement of His Word to flow through you
- Not being afraid to pray, connecting with godly touch when appropriate

To Prophecy (*verb*): Definition

1. To reveal by divine inspiration.
2. To predict with certainty as if by divine inspiration.
3. To prefigure; foreshow.
4. To reveal the will or message of God.
5. To predict the future as if by divine inspiration.
6. To speak as a prophet.

Prophetic Healing Ministry

- Getting God's picture in your mind of the individual restored to reasonable wholeness
- Conveying the hope of that calling to the person in the midst of their affliction

“But he who prophesies speaks to men words of edification, encouragement and comfort.”

1 Corinthians 14.3

Helping Identify Impediments

- Some are structural – germs, biochemistry, anatomic or systematic disturbances
- Some are functional – mistaken ideas, broken relationships, negative attitudes
- Some are related to sinful thought patterns and behavior

Structural Impediments

- Clinical, economic, environmental, political, etc.
- Bringing physical comfort and relief
- Management may require specialized skill, training, or authority but often may be very obvious to a lay person with a heart to help (e.g., the good Samaritan).

Functional Impediments

- Sensitivity to whatever traumatic events may lie behind the dysfunction
- Empathetic understanding and validation of feelings without necessarily agreeing with the dysfunction that has resulted
- Underlying question: What can change so that things might improve?

Sinful Behavior Patterns

- Right to speak into a person's life is a trust that is “earned” by being a careful and empathetic listener.
- “Speaking the truth in love” by asking leading questions, illuminating alternatives
- Allowing the Holy Spirit to bring conviction that leads to repentance and cleansing

In Summary: The Situation

- People with chronic stress and/or pain are dealing with a complex of issues.
- They also have many resources available, both internal and external.
- Jesus wants to bring a greater measure of wholeness to them.
- He's recruited you to be part of His plan.

In Summary: Our Role

- Listen with genuine interest and compassion to the whole story.
- Try to discern where Jesus comes in.
- Then find where you fit into His plan.
- Share your insights along the way with humility, gentleness, and faith.
- Pray and leave the results in God's hands.