

BASICS ON THE BRAIN AND STRESS

Stressed brains don't learn the same way

Your brain is built to deal with stress that lasts about 30 seconds. The brain is not designed for long-term stress when you feel like you have no control. The saber-toothed tiger ate you or you ran away but it was all over in less than a minute. If you have a bad boss, the saber-toothed tiger can be at your door for years, and you begin to deregulate. If you are in a bad marriage, the saber-toothed tiger can be in your bed for years, and the same thing occurs. You can actually watch the brain shrink

What Causes Stress?

Business professionals have spent a long time studying what types of stress make people less productive and, not surprisingly, have arrived at the conclusion that control is critical. The perfect storm of occupational stress appears to be a combination of two malignant facts: a) a great deal is expected of you and b) you have no control over whether you will perform well.

What effect does stress have on the brain?

Stress damages virtually every kind of cognition that exists. It damages memory and executive function. It can hurt your motor skills. When you are stressed out over a long period of time it disrupts your immune response. You get sicker more often. It disrupts your ability to sleep. You get depressed. Stress not only lowers performance, but also heightens emotional memory so that the poor performances are very easy for us to remember.

effects on cognition - emotional memory

