CHAPTER: 1

INTRODUCTION
1.1 INTRODUCTION TO TOPIC

Organisational stress is most the common in wake of liberalization, globalization and modernization process across industries. Making provision of better culture and climate is the support members expected from their top management in the changing organisational scenarios. Mentally alert and better-adjusted employees are the asset to any organisation and are required to face the challenges. Instead of confusion, more confidence and trust should be inculcated to the employees at all levels of hierarchy. As far as the success of an organisation is concerned, the efficiency of the work force is the most decisive factor. In turn, the efficiency is dependent on the psychosocial well being of the employees. In an era of highly competitive and dynamic world, man is exposed to all types of stressors that can affect him whether personal or social etc.

MEANING OF STRESS

Stress can be explained basically as pressure upon a person’s psychological system which arises out of complexity or intensity of one’s work life. Though stress is basically upon a person’s psychological set up. It also in turn affects his or her physical and behavioral systems the sources of stress can be individual organisational and social. Stress is the physical and mental response of the body to demands made upon it. It is the result of our reaction to outside events, not necessarily the events themselves.

According to Beehr and Newman.” Stress is a condition arising from the interaction of people and their jobs and characterized by changes within people that force to deviate from their normal functioning.”

According to Fred Luthans.” Stress is an adaptive response to an external situation that results in physical, psychological and behavioral deviations for organisation participants.”
Occupational stress

Occupational stress or work related stress generally occurs when there is a disparity between the demands of the job and the resources and capabilities of the individual worker to meet those demands. Work stressors may refer to any characteristic of the workplace that poses a threat to the individual (Donovan and Kleiner, 1994).

Work related stress is thus understood to occur when there is a mismatch between the demands of the job and the resources and capabilities of the individual worker to meet those demands (Blaug, 2007).

1.2 FEATURES OF STRESS

1. Stress may result into any kind of deviation – physical, psychological, or behavioral- in the person. This deviation is from the usual state of affairs. From this point of view, stress may be accompanied by anxiety but it is more comprehensive than the latter.

2. Stress may be result of individual’s interaction with environment stimuli. Such stimuli may be in any form interpersonal interaction, event and so on. The impact of the stimuli produces deviation in the individual.

3. It is necessary that stress is always dysfunctional. On the contrary there may be some stresses called eustresses, like stress for creative work. Entrepreneurial activities, keen competition etc. which stimulate better productivity. It is only the dysfunctional stress, called distress, which is bad and must be overcome.
4. Stress can be temporary or long-term, mild or severe, depending mostly on how long its causes continue how powerful they are and how strong the individual’s powers are. If stress is temporary and mild, most people can handle it or at least recover from its effects rather quickly. Similarly persons who have strong power for tolerating stress can cope with stress more quickly.

1.3 TYPES OF STRESS

Stress has often been misunderstood to be negative, with few people acknowledging the importance and usefulness of positive stress. In our everyday lives, stress is everywhere and definitely unavoidable; hence our emphasis should be on differentiating between what is good stress, and what is bad. This will help us to learn to cope with negative stress, and harness the power of positive stress to help us achieve more. There are 4 main categories of stress, namely eustress, distress, hyper stress and hypo stress. Negative stress can cause many physical and psychological problems, whilst positive stress can be very helpful for us. Here’s how we differentiate between them

**EUSTRESS:** Eustress is the healthy, positive and developmental stress response. This may lead employees to new and better ways of doing their work. It denotes the presence of optimum level of stress in an individual. Under optimum level of stress the employees will perform to his full capacity. If the stress experienced is below this level. Then the individual gets bored, the motivational level to work reaches a low point and apathy sets in. If one operates in very low stress environment and constantly experienced is below this level, then the individual gets bored, the motivational level to work reaches a low point and apathy sets in. if one operates in very low stress environment and constantly
experiences boredom the person is likely to be psychological withdrawal will result in careless mistakes being frequently made, forgetfulness and absentmindedness. Physical withdrawal will manifest itself in increased rate of tardiness and absenteeism which will ultimately lead to turnover.

**DISTRESS:** Distress is the unhealthy and negative stress response. It denotes the presence of high level of stress in an individual which affects his performances and efficiency adversely. Errors will increase, bad decision will be made and the individual will experience insomnia, stomach problems and psychosomatic illnesses.

![Performance Curve](image)
HYPER STRESS

This is another form of negative stress that occurs when the individual is unable to cope with the workload. Examples include highly stressful jobs, which require longer working hours than the individual can handle. If you suspect that you are suffering from hyper stress, you are likely to have sudden emotional breakdowns over insignificant issues, the proverbial straws that broke the camel’s back. It is important for you to recognize that your body needs a break, or you may end up with severe and chronic physical and psychological reactions.

HYPO STRESS

Lastly, hypo stress occurs when a person has nothing to do with his time and feels constantly bored and unmotivated. This is due to an insufficient amount of stress; hence some stress is inevitable and helpful to us. Companies should avoid having workers who experience hypo stress as this will cause productivity and mindfulness to fall. If the job scope is boring and repetitive, it would be a good idea to implement some form of job rotation so that there is always something new to learn.
1.4 CAUSES OF STRESS

Different things cause stress in different people. Some of the things students commonly cite as causes of stress include: examinations, deadlines, returning to study, pressure of combining paid work and study, difficulty in organizing work, poor time management, leaving assignments to the last minute, out of control debts, poor housing, overcrowding, noise, adjusting to life in a new environment or country, difficulties with personal relationships (e.g. splitting up), balancing the demands of a family with studying, parents or problems at home. Very often stress results from an accumulation of many different pressures which build up gradually without us noticing.

Following as the most common stressors in the workplace:

- Setting unrealistic goals for work completion, whereby several tasks are undertaken simultaneously or unrealistic timelines are proposed and set
- The number of working hours that is undertaken by the individual, as this can often lead to job burnout where hours worked are excessive
- Frequent interruptions in the workplace which result in lost productivity
- The external environment, with stressors such as noise, temperature, lighting, the sound of the telephone ringing, etc.
- Competing in terms of performance with other colleagues, business units, business, etc.
- Dealing with violent, abusive or inconsiderate people
- Experiencing feelings of job insecurity.
1. **INDIVIDUAL STRESSOR**: Some stressors at the level of an individual may arise in the context of organisation life or personal life.

1) **Career development**: there are two major clusters of stressors relating to career development.
a) Lack of job security (fear of redundancy, obsolescence or early retirement);
b) Status incongruity (under or over promotion and frustration stemming from attainment of one’s career ceiling).

2) **Personality Type:** in respect of personality, two concepts: Type A and Type B personalities are relevant in this context.

The Type A Personality is stress prone as it is associated with following behavioral patterns:

- Always moves, walks and eat rapidly,
- Feels impatient and dislikes waiting,
- Feels guilty when relaxing,
- Does not have time to enjoy life,
- Does several things simultaneously.

The Type B Personality on the other hand is less stress prone. Following are the typical characteristics of Type B personality:

- Not concerned about time,
- Is patient,
- Play to fun not to win,
- Has no pressing deadlines,
- Mild mannered,
- Never in hurry.

3) **Life Changes:** Life and career changes are stress-producing. Fast changes are more dangerous than the slow changes as fast changes have greater stress. Heart attacks are commonly observed in the case of fast changes in life and careers. People who believe in work, are more stress prone than the externals.

4) **Role Perceptions:** Individuals have multiple roles to perform successfully. A person has to work as a father, husband, boss, junior, friend and so on. In his diverse roles, he comes into contact with stress as it is difficult to perform equally well in all the diverse roles. In a job for example he has to face role ambiguity, poor communication, role conflicts and overloads of different roles. Stress factors are additive. It is necessary to control stress in the initial stages itself.
2. **GROUP LEVEL STRESSORS:** Group level stressors are caused by group dynamics and managerial behaviors. Managers create stress for employees by:

i) Exhibiting inconsistent behaviors  
ii) Failing to provide support  
iii) Showing lack of concern  
iv) Providing inadequate direction  
v) Creating a high productivity environment  
vi) Focusing on negatives while ignoring good performance  
vii) Sexual harassment is yet another group level stressor.

3. **ORGANISATIONAL STRESSORS:** Organisational stressors are various factors in the work place that can cause stress. The general sets of organisational stressors are as follows;

1) **Task Demands:** Task demands are stressors associated with the specific job a person performs. Some occupations are by nature more stressful than others. The jobs of surgeons, air traffic controllers and professional football coaches are more stressful than those of general practitioners, airoplane baggage loaders and football team equipment managers.

2) **Role Demands:** The sources of stress in organisational role include role ambiguity, role conflict, role responsibility towards people and things and other stressors. Role ambiguity involves lack of clarity about the work objectives, expectations of colleagues related to scope and responsibilities of the job. Role conflict arises where the individual is exposed to conflicting job demands or is required to do things which he does not want to do.
3) **Inter-personal relationships at work:** The nature of relationship with one’s boss, subordinates and colleagues also form a major source of stress. Poor relations involve low trust, low supportiveness and low interest in listening to and dealing with organisational problems of the members.

4) **Organisational Structure and Climate:** This source of stress involves perception of being in the organisation and a threat to one’s freedom, autonomy and identity. Specifically such stressors include: little or no participation in decision-making, lack of belongingness, lack of effective consultation, poor communication, restrictions on behavior and politics by some organisational members.

5) **Organisational Leadership:** Leadership style also may cause stress. Suppose an employee needs a great deal of social support from his leader but the leader shows no concern or compassion for him. This employee will probably feel stressed. Similarly assume an employee who has a strong need to participate in decision making and to be active in all aspects of management. But this boss is very autocratic and refuses to consult about anything. naturally, stress is likely to result.

6) **Group Pressures:** Group pressures may include pressure to restrict output, pressure to conform the group’s norms and so forth. an individual who feels a strong need to vary from the group’s expectations will experience a great deal of stress.

4. **EXTRA-ORGANISATIONAL STRESSORS:** Extra organisational stressors are caused by factors outside the organisation. For instance conflicts associated with one’s career and family life is stressful.home life certainly impacts one’s attitude and performance at work. Death of spouse, injury to one’s child, war, failure in school or at work and similar life events can be stressful.

5.
1.6 SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

According to Dua (1994) the strains caused by stress are:

1. Lower emotional health which manifests as psychological distress, depression and anxiety

2. Lower physical health which manifests itself as heart disease, insomnia, headaches and infections

3. Organisational symptoms such as job dissatisfaction, absenteeism, lower productivity, and poor work quality

STRESS WARNING SIGNS

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive Symptoms</th>
<th>Emotional Symptoms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memory problems</td>
<td>Moodiness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inability to concentrate</td>
<td>Irritability or short temper</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poor judgment</td>
<td>Agitation, inability to relax</td>
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<td>Seeing only the negative</td>
<td>Feeling overwhelmed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxious or racing thoughts</td>
<td>Sense of loneliness and isolation</td>
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<td>Constant worrying</td>
<td>Depression or general unhappiness</td>
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<tr>
<th>Physical Symptoms</th>
<th>Behavioral Symptoms</th>
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<tr>
<td>headache</td>
<td>Eating more or less</td>
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<tr>
<td>Diarrhea or constipation</td>
<td>Sleeping too much or too little</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nausea, dizziness</td>
<td>Isolating yourself from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chest pain, rapid heartbeat</td>
<td>Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequent colds</td>
<td>Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax</td>
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<tr>
<td>insomnia</td>
<td>Nervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)</td>
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1.7 STAGES OF STRESS

1. **Alarm**: The first stage is alarm stage wherein the stress mobilizes the internal stress system. Many physiological and chemical reactions are observed during the alarm stage. Increased pituitary adrenaline secretions, increased respiration, heart trouble and high blood pressure are observed during the alarm stage. Many employees prevent themselves from becoming more stressed through physiological and psychological treatment.

2. **Resistance**: If the alarm stage is not prevented, resistance develops. The body organs become resistant but it paves the ways for the development of other stressors. Nervousness and tension are increased making individuals unable to relax. Individuals develop conflicts, frustration and uneasiness. Illness and diseases attached with stress are developed under resistance. Apparently, individuals feel free from stress. But serious diseases develop stealthily. It is essential to know the causes of stress and avoid them at the beginning stage.

3. **Exhaustion**: Resistance or resistance stress creates exhaustion. The immunity of the body is reduced. Individuals feel fatigue and inability. Exhaustion develops moodiness, negative emotions and helplessness. The impact of stress is visible in physics, psychology and the behavior of the employees in an organisation wherein stress has reached the state of exhaustion. Health and psychological depression reduces the effectiveness of employees. Consequently the success of an organisation is adversely affected. Stressed employees can not contribute significantly. A large number of organisations have started stress education to prevent stress from negatively affecting the employees.
1.8 EFFECT OF STRESS:

**Physically** The heart pumps faster, making the heart pound and blood pressure rise; some people experience palpitations. Muscle tension increases, leading to headaches, dizziness, jaw ache and even insomnia. The mouth goes dry, digestion slows causing "butterflies" in the stomach. Breathing is faster and less efficient which can lead to over breathing (hyperventilation) and breathlessness. Changes in the flow of blood to the skin can cause sweating, blushing or clammy hands and feet.

**Mentally** A certain amount of stress can be mentally stimulating but too much can affect our thinking ability. Thoughts may become jumbled and confused. Thinking becomes focused on worrying. We may become preoccupied with problems. It becomes much harder to make decisions or find solutions to problems Thinking negatively and fearing the worst increases worry and stress.

**Emotionally** People respond to stress in many different ways. Common emotional effects are irritability, impatience, anger, frustration, fear, anxiety, self-doubt, panic, despondency, feelings of inadequacy, insecurity, hopelessness, unhappiness, emotional withdrawal and depression.

**Behaviorally:** Stress can change people's behavior towards one another. We may become less sociable, less caring, more hostile and insensitive towards others. When stress is accompanied by anger we may become less tolerant, fly off the handle easily and provoke rows. Many people respond to stress by eating, drinking or smoking much more than is usual: some engage in risk taking behavior. Students often complain that when they feel stressed they find it hard to concentrate, feel tired all the time, perhaps start to miss lectures and deadlines and feel they can't cope.

**Financial and economically:** The financial and economic impact of workplace stress cannot be ignored. It is generally accepted that untreated workplace stress is associated
with increased levels of employee absenteeism and turnover, decreased levels of productivity as well as lost workdays due to disability or sick leave (Williams, 2003).

1.9 STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress management refers to a wide spectrum of techniques and psychotherapies aimed at controlling a person's levels of stress, especially chronic stress, usually for the purpose of improving everyday functioning. Stress management is a continuous process of monitoring, diagnosing and prevention of excessive stressors that adversely affects employees, management and productivity. These stressors are as much a function of the environment as one's perception of the environment. Stress management should be the responsibility of managers and employees as well; and both must maintain the lines of communication and feedback to determine appropriate means of diagnosis and a suitable mix of primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention methods.

Workplace interventions and strategies can be broadly classified into three main groups; primary, secondary and tertiary:

1. Primary strategies aim to prevent workplace stress through the control and prevention of hazards by design and worker training to reduce the likelihood of workers experiencing stress

2. Secondary strategies focus on the timely reaction to the stress and aims to improve the ability of managers to recognise and deal with problems as they arise. These then tend to focus on the employee and attempts to minimise the impact of stress and hence diminish or reduce the effects and seriousness of the consequences of such stresses.

3. Tertiary interventions involve the rehabilitation of the effects of stress once they have occurred and often involves offering enhanced support such as counselling
to help distressed workers cope and recover, thereby enabling them to return to work as soon as possible

1.10 COPING STRATEGIES AT ORGANISATIONAL LEVEL

Some of the prominent organisational level strategies to manage stress are discussed below:

1. **Organisational Role Clarity:** People experience stress when they are not clear about what they are expected to do in the organisation. This may happen because either there is ambiguity in the role or there is role conflict. Such a situation can be overcome by defining each role more clearly. Role analysis techniques help to analyze what the job entails and what expectations are. Breaking the job to its various components will clarify the role of job incumbent and this will help to eliminate imposing unrealistic expectations on individual leading to reduced stress.

2. **Job Redesign:** Job may be a source of stress to many individuals. Properly designed jobs and work schedules can help ease stress in the individuals and the organisation.

3. **Stress Reduction and Stress Management Programmes:** Stress reduction programmes aim to identify relevant organisational stressors and thus to reduce their effects by redesigning, reallocating workloads, improving supervisory skills, providing more autonomy or job variety, etc. Stress management schemes usually focus on training individual employees or their work groups to manage their stress symptoms in more effective ways.

4. **Personal wellness Programmes:** A Collateral stress programme is an organisational programmes specifically created for the well being of the employees. organisations have
adopted stress management, health promotion programmes, career development programmes, counseling and other kinds of programmes for this purpose.

It's in a manager's best interest to keep stress levels in the workplace to a minimum. Managers can act as positive role models, especially in times of high stress. If a respected manager can remain calm in stressful work situations, it is much easier for his or her employees to also remain calm.

Additionally, there are a number of organisational changes that managers and employers can make to reduce workplace stress. These include:

a) Improve communication

- Share information with employees to reduce uncertainty about their jobs and futures.
- Clearly define employees’ roles and responsibilities.
- Make communication friendly and efficient, not mean-spirited or petty.

b) Consult employees

- Give workers opportunities to participate in decisions that affect their jobs.
- Consult employees about scheduling and work rules.
- Be sure the workload is suitable to employees’ abilities and resources; avoid unrealistic deadlines.
- Show that individual workers are valued.
- Offer rewards and incentives.
- Praise good work performance, both verbally and officially, through schemes such as Employee of the Month.
- Provide opportunities for career development.
- Promote an “entrepreneurial” work climate that gives employees more control over their work.

c) Cultivate a friendly social climate
• Provide opportunities for social interaction among employees.
• Establish a zero-tolerance policy for harassment.
• Make management actions consistent with organisational values.

d) Resolve conflict positively.

Resolving conflict in healthy, constructive ways can strengthen trust between people and relieve workplace stress and tension. Adopt constructive techniques of grievance handling.

1.11 COPING STRATEGIES BY INDIVIDUALS

The key to success is to think positively; take control of your stress and anxiety by learning effective techniques to combat it. Relaxing bodily tension in order to reduce the physical sensations of stress is a good place to start. If your body is free of tension your mind tends to be relaxed. This helps you concentrate and study, take decisions and solve problems. When you are relaxed, you can view each task as a positive challenge, and use stress as a stimulus to help you to carry it out giving you a relaxing glow of achievement afterwards.

1. Looking after yourself Be kind to yourself. Give yourself "me time" in which you can choose what you want to do: Rest; do nothing; try a relaxation technique, massage or yoga; do meditation; have a long hot bath; spend time with friends; treat yourself to something special. Taking proper breaks and eating well do help to combat stress.

2. Confronting the problem Try to stand back and look at the problem carefully. Break it down into manageable parts. Talk it through with someone else, brainstorm solutions, or get help if you need it. Try to manage your time effectively. Leaving everything to the last minute is a major source of stress. Think about why you are finding it hard to get started? uncertainty about how to do the assignment, fear of being judged or failing?
Starting a piece of work effectively reduces stress levels as it frees your mind, putting the thoughts of failure back into perspective. If you've had a row or a misunderstanding with someone, it rarely helps to avoid the issue. Talking it through with the other person or with someone outside the situation, often helps you express your feelings, regain a sense of proportion, and identify a way of resolving the differences.

3. **Find some distractions** Sport and physical activity helps you to relax physically and also releases endorphins in the body which produce a real feeling of well-being. Walk, cycle, swim, join a gym or a sports team. Joining a club or society, maintaining an existing hobby or learning something new, talking to other people can all help you to take a mental and physical break.

4. **Express yourself** Talk about it, write about it, shout or moan about it: expressing your feelings can help to relieve stress. Acknowledging a problem to yourself and to others can be the first step in dealing with it. Sometimes having a good cry or bashing a pillow can release emotional pressure and calm your feelings of anxiety.

5. **Flip your negative thinking.** If you see the downside of every situation and interaction, you’ll find yourself drained of energy and motivation. Try to think positively about your work, avoid negative-thinking co-workers, and pat yourself on the back about small accomplishments, even if no one else does.

6. **Don’t try to control the uncontrollable.** Many things at work are beyond our control— particularly the behavior of other people. Rather than stressing out over them, focus on the things you can control such as the way you choose to react to problems.

7. **Reduce job stress by prioritizing and organizing**

When job and workplace stress threatens to overwhelm you, there are simple steps you can take to regain control over yourself and the situation. Your newfound ability to maintain a sense of self-control in stressful situations will often be well-received by coworkers, managers, and subordinates alike, which can lead to better relationships at
work. Here are some suggestions for reducing job stress by prioritizing and organizing your responsibilities.

a). Time management

- Create a balanced schedule. Analyze your schedule, responsibilities, and daily tasks. All work and no play is a recipe for burnout. Try to find a balance between work and family life, social activities and solitary pursuits, daily responsibilities and downtime.

- Don’t over-commit yourself. Avoid scheduling things back-to-back or trying to fit too much into one day. distinguish between the "shoulds" and the "musts." Drop tasks that aren't truly necessary to the bottom of the list or eliminate them entirely.

- Try to leave earlier in the morning. Even 10-15 minutes can make the difference between frantically rushing to your desk and having time to ease into your day. Don’t add to your stress levels by running late.

- Plan regular breaks. Make sure to take short breaks throughout the day to take a walk or sit back and clear your mind. Also try to get away from your desk or work station for lunch. Stepping away from work to briefly relax and recharge will help you be more, not less, productive.

b). Task management

- Prioritize tasks. Make a list of tasks you have to do, and tackle them in order of importance. Do the high-priority items first. If you have something particularly unpleasant to do, get it over with early. The rest of your day will be more pleasant as a result.

- Break projects into small steps. If a large project seems overwhelming, make a step-by-step plan. Focus on one manageable step at a time, rather than taking on everything at once.
Tackling Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal response to danger or stress: it prepares us for coping with stress. Anxiety is only a problem when it is out of proportion to a situation or goes on for too long. Then our thoughts may become muddled and we may experience physical symptoms such as rapid breathing, racing heart, sweaty palms, tense muscles. Anxiety can lead to panic attacks. Learn how to breathe efficiently and practice it in order to prevent over breathing (too much oxygen in the blood). This causes a series of unpleasant physical symptoms i.e. tingling hands and face, muscle cramps and tremors, dizziness, breathing difficulties and feelings of fatigue. These sensations can be controlled by breathing slowly and smoothly through the nose, filling the lungs completely.

Breathing Exercise

Place one hand on your chest and one on your stomach. As you breathe in through your nose allow your stomach to swell. This means that you are using the diaphragm to breathe in and allowing air right down into your lungs. Try to keep the movement in your upper chest to a minimum and keep the movement gentle. Slowly and evenly breathe out through your nose. Repeat and get a rhythm going. You are aiming to take 8-12 breaths a minute: breathing in and breathing out again counts as one breath. Practice until it becomes a habit and switch to regular breathing when you next become anxious. Learn how to really relax and develop a skill which will enable you to reduce unnecessary physical tension whenever you need to. Information sheets and relaxation tapes are available from the Medical Centre. Learn how to combat worrying thoughts because worrying thoughts keep the anxiety going then the symptoms of anxiety maintain the worrying thoughts. Try simple distraction techniques such as physical exercise or refocusing your mind by concentrating hard on one thing to absorb all your attention.
**Panic Attacks**

A panic attack is the body's natural "fight or flight" reaction to a sudden threat. If there is no real external threat, the adrenaline pumping around the body is experienced as a panic attack: the heart beats fast and hard, we may sweat, feel faint or nauseous. All these symptoms can be very frightening. If you experience a panic attack, it is important to remind yourself that none of these feelings can harm you - you are not going to have a heart attack, faint, or be sick. Although you may feel very strange, no-one else is likely to notice anything wrong. Try to deepen your breathing and relax. Distract yourself by thinking about something else or focusing on an item in the room. Block any panicky or worrying thoughts. As you manage the panic in this way, your brain and body begins to recognise that there is no real danger, the supply of adrenaline to the blood is cut off, and the symptoms will subside. Follow the breathing exercises above to help you manage your panic attack.