



JOUBERT SYNDROME &  
RELATED DISORDERS FOUNDATION

The faith to believe, the hope to dream, the love to see it through

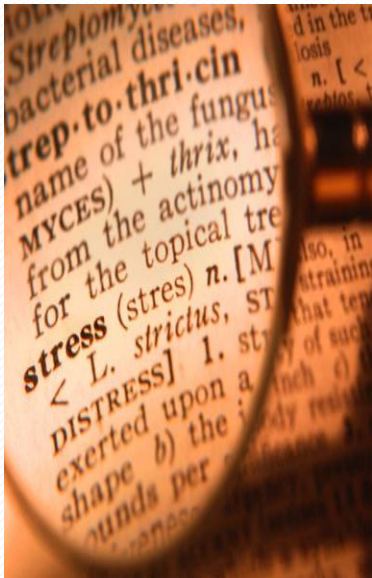
# *STRESS MANAGEMENT*

*for the  
Special Caregivers  
of our  
Special Needs Kids*

*Kim Walton, MSN, APRN.*

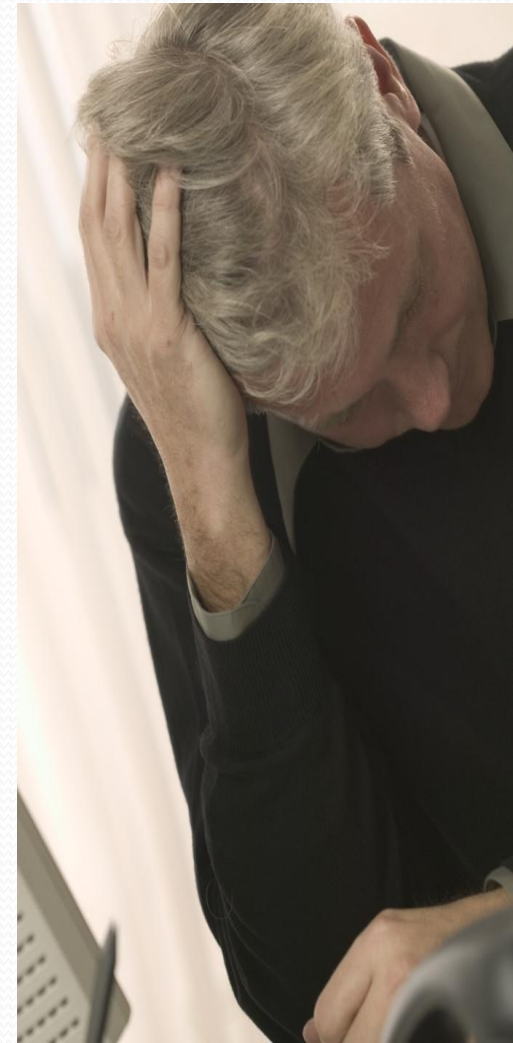
*July 14, 2011*

*JSRDF conference - Orlando*



# *STRESS MANAGEMENT*

- *Welcome and Introductions*
- *Stress and Health Self Test*



# **STRESS and Health Self Test Results**

## **Score 15 - 24 You're in good shape!**

You appear to have a pretty healthy handle on your stress levels and are mostly experiencing minimal consequences to your health as a result of stress related physical responses. Good for you!

## **Score 25 - 34 You could be doing better.....**

You may be experiencing a degree of stress-related health effects. While you may not be having serious health consequences yet, it is important to lead a healthy life style that includes minimal stress as stress over time can lead to more serious problems.

## **Score 35 - 45 You're in trouble!**

You appear to be at high risk of experiencing health consequences due to your stress levels, or you may be experiencing them already. It's vital to manage stress in your lifestyle to safeguard your health or prevent further damage.

# *The Science of Stress*

The Story of Sarah.....

- How do we explain super-human responses that release power and strength beyond anything we have imagined or previously experienced?
- What physical and psychological factors are responsible for these amazing abilities?

# *The Science of Stress*

- *Stress and the BIG BEAR.....*

*Yes –*

*that is the FIGHT OR FLIGHT RESPONSE*



# *Fight or Flight response*

## *So what happens???*

- *Immediate and automatic response*
- *State physiological **and** psychological hyper arousal*
- *Primitive response that gives us power, strength and speed*
- *Activated to protect ourselves and others when we perceive danger*

# *Physiological Response*

- Activation of the Autonomic Nervous System (ANS)
  - Sympathetic nervous system – responsible for initiating the fight or flight response
  - Parasympathetic nervous system – designed to return us to a state of balance - homeostasis
- Completely automatic and beyond our conscious control

# *Physiological Response*

- *ANS is controlled by the hypothalamus*
  - *Sensory input*
  - *Goes to the thalamus*
  - *Determined to be threatening*
  - *Goes to the cortex and neocortex*
  - *Delivers message to the endocrine system*
  - *Releases hormones (adrenalin and cortisol)*
  - *Hormones flood cells to prepare for fight or flight.....*

# *Physiological Response*

*Immediate physiological responses.....*

- ✓ Increased CNS activity*
- ✓ Increased mental activity*
- ✓ Increased adrenalin and cortisol*
- ✓ Increased heart rate*
- ✓ Increased cardiac output*
- ✓ Increased blood pressure*
- ✓ Increased breathing rate*
- ✓ Breathing airways dilate*
- ✓ Increased metabolism*



# *Physiological Response*

*More immediate physiological responses.....*

- *Increased oxygen to the brain*
- *Increased muscle contraction*
- *Increased blood sugar*
- *Release of endorphins*
- *Pupils dilate*
- *Sweat glands increase secretion*
- *Increased brainwave activity*



# *Physiological Response*

*So what decreases when fight or flight is activated?*

- ✓ Immune system is suppressed*
- ✓ Constriction of blood vessels, except to running and fighting muscles*
- ✓ Reproductive and sexual systems stop working normally*
- ✓ Digestive system stops metabolizing food normally*
- ✓ Saliva dries up*
- ✓ Decreased perception of pain*
- ✓ Kidneys decrease output*
- ✓ Bowel and bladder sphincters close*

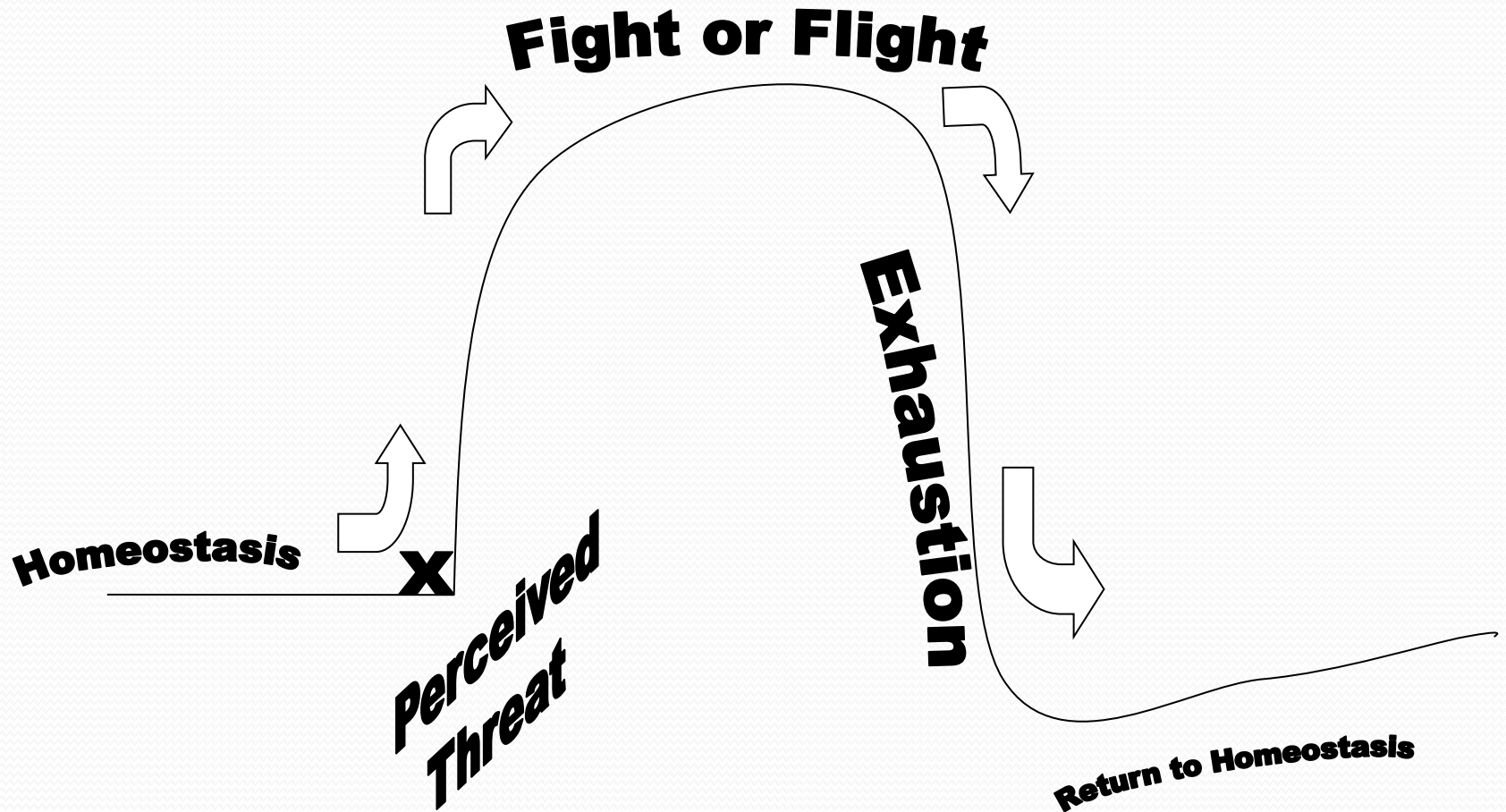
# *Purpose of Fight or Flight*

*Designed for one thing only – help us SURVIVE!*

- *We are built to handle acute stress.....*
- *In the short run, this response is powerful and useful.*

*However, kept “on” for a longer period, as in CHRONIC STRESS, this response can produce serious problems.*

# *Stress response.....*



# *Research note.....*

*Early research characterize female responses to stress by a pattern described as*

*“tend and befriend”*

*Based on premise that female stress has selectively evolved to max survival of self and offspring*

*Related to responses built on biobehavioral attachment-care giving processes that depend on oxytocin, estrogen and other sex-linked hormones.*

# *So what does this mean for you?*

*“the flight or fight emergency response is inappropriate in today’s social stresses” –*

*Harvard Cardiologist Herbert Benson*

*So unless you work in a high-risk occupation, the percentage of days that include actual threats to our lives is less than 1%*





# *Stress affects the whole person*

*Cognitive*

*Behavior*

*Emotional*

*Physical*

*Spiritual*

# *Stress affects the whole person*



*“Normal  
does not mean  
comfortable”*

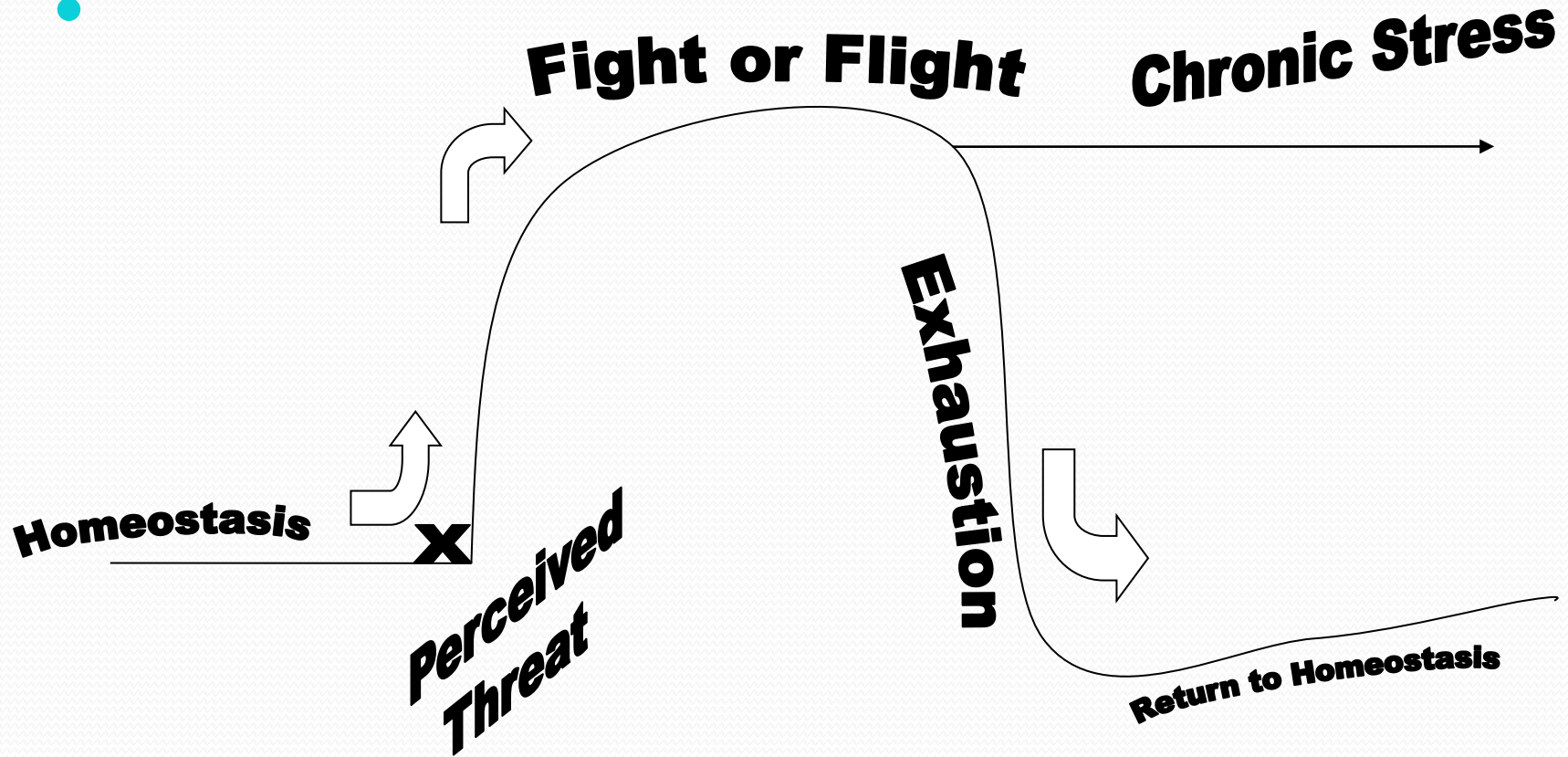
# *Chronic Stress*

*So we define “chronic stress” as continued sympathetic nervous system activation*

*If stress response stays “ON” for more than is necessary, result can be damage to our health.....*

*Chronic stress feels never-ending and inescapable*

# Chronic Stress



# *Chronic Stress*

*Listen to your body.....*

*Remember the effects of an overactive ANS.....*

- *Early physical symptoms of chronic stress*
  - *Chronic headaches*
  - *Increased susceptibility to colds*

*It is difficult to maintain a state of wellness over time when our body is channeled into coping with stress*

# *Chronic Stress*

*Although stress is not listed among the Top 10 causes of death in America, it is linked to many illnesses.*

*It is estimated that 90% of MD visits are for conditions in which stress plays a major role.*

# *Chronic Stress*

*With more chronic exposure to stress we may see.....*

*depression*

*diabetes*

*obesity*

*heart disease*

*sexual dysfunction*

*tooth/gum disease*

*anxiety*

*hyperthyroidism*

*hair loss*

*OCD*

*ulcers*

*cancers*

*So what can we do?????*

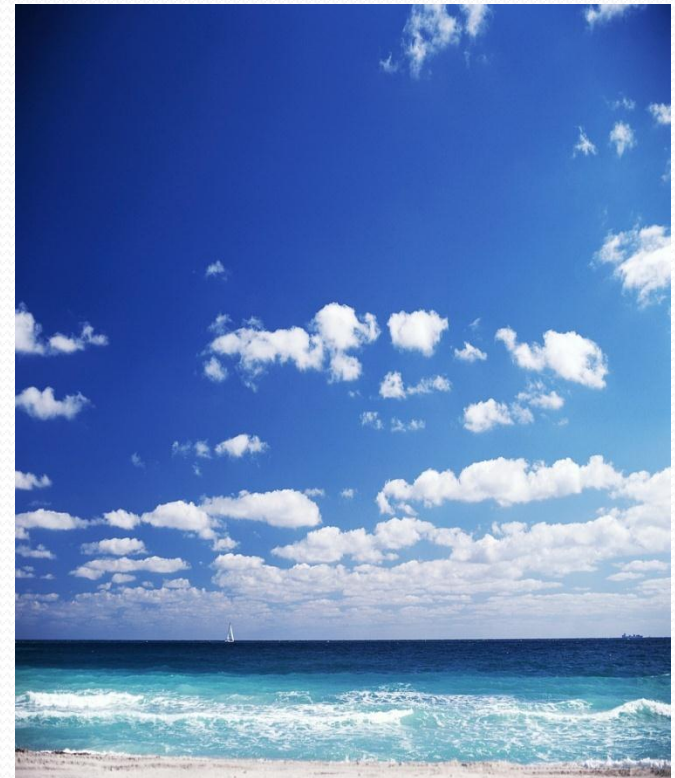
*Let's talk stress management for special caregivers of our special needs kids.....*



# *Tension Taming Techniques*

*Designed to activate the relaxation response by putting the body in a calm state.....*

- *Deep breathing*
- *Stretching*
- *Positive self talk*
- *Progressive relaxation*
- *Guided imagery*
- *Journaling*
- *Meditation*
- *Yoga*



# *Steps to decrease excess stress*

- *Organizational techniques*
- *Time management*
- *Exercise*
- *Healthy diet*
- *Learn to say “NO” or “NOT NOW”*



# *Steps to decrease excess stress*

- *Reassess areas of self sabotage*
  - *Type A personality*
  - *Negative self talk*
  - *Poor conflict resolution*
  - *Pessimism*





## *It takes a village.....*

- *Need for regular respite – take a day off*
- *Develop a strong social network*
- *Find parents of special needs kids*
- *Speak up – tell others what you need*
- *Learn from each other*
  - *What works for you?*
  - *What is in your bag of tricks*
  - *Time outs for caregivers*

# *When to seek professional help*

- *Depression*
- *Anxiety*
- *Unhealthy or compulsive behaviors*
- *Eating disorders*
- *Substance abuse*



*So what works for you?????*

