

ABSTRACT

EUSTRESS and DISTRESS in PILOTS

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We need and seek stress in our lives. Stress gets us out of bed in the morning, inspires us, challenges us to create relationships, and allows us to otherwise sustain the human race. As biological entities there is an innate need to regulate our levels of stress through preferred activities, spirituality, physical exertion, or daily life events. Regardless of whether individual homeostasis is sought in high stress environments or in calm, less challenging situations, un-planned events can force us outside our optimum level of stress. Usually we are able to regulate our stress; however the immensity or repetitious nature of a critical event may morph normal *eustress* into undesirable distress, or if unaddressed, further to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Post-traumatic stress is a normal reaction following a critical event and recognition of possible symptoms can aid the return to a new *normal*, without further complications. In this presentation I will offer proven methods to reduce stress with a focus on mitigating distress following a critical event. Additionally I will discuss the importance of peer support in providing a trusted emotional support system to crew members following an accident or critical incident.