

Negative people might make us age more quickly

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From supportive friendships to toxic colleagues, our relationships can shape our stress levels more than our jobs, finances, or even our diet and health habits. A new study suggests that who we surround ourselves with can negatively

affect our longevity. Scientists at Indiana University in the USA conducted a study on how the people around us can impact the stress in our lives. The researchers focused on the effect people called "hasslers" had on us. A hassler is an annoying individual who regularly hassles us. Lead researcher Professor Brea Perry said, "having more hasslers is associated with accelerated biological aging...and how much wear and tear [people] have on their body".

The study is published in the journal PNAS. Researchers questioned participants about the difficult relationships in their lives to identify hasslers. Dr Perry found around one third of the participants had at least one hassler in their social network. She said about 10 per cent had at least two hasslers. She suggested that each additional hassler was associated with a 1.5 per cent faster pace of aging. Perry added: "It can actually take days for that stress response to drop and for your body to go back to normal." She highlighted the adverse effects of accumulated stress from hasslers, saying: "When you experience that chronically, over and over again, it has this long-term effect on the body."

Sources: sciencealert.com / dw.com / cbc.ca

Writing

We should all ignore the negative people in our lives. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

supportive friendships / toxic colleagues / stress / diet / hassle / aging / wear and tear / study / journal / relationships / social network / body / normal / experience

True / False

- 1) The article says toxic colleagues destroy supportive friendships. T / F
- 2) The research is from a university in India. T / F
- 3) The research focused on how "hasslers" affect people's longevity. T / F
- 4) A researcher said stress from hasslers can add to bodily wear and tear. T / F
- 5) Every research participant knew at least two hasslers. T / F
- 6) One additional hassler can increase the pace of aging by 1.5 per cent. T / F
- 7) A researcher said it can take months for the body to destress. T / F
- 8) The researcher said chronic stress has short-term effects on the body. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------|
| 1. supportive | a. harmful |
| 2. toxic | b. damage |
| 3. conducted | c. inconvenience |
| 4. hassle | d. poisonous |
| 5. wear and tear | e. recognize |
| 6. identify | f. persistently |
| 7. pace | g. helpful |
| 8. adverse | h. heaped up |
| 9. accumulated | i. speed |
| 10. chronically | j. carried out |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) How much stress do you give other people?
- c) What do you do when you are with people you dislike?
- d) What do you do to reduce your stress levels?
- e) Should we tell people if they are being negative?
- f) Are there times when stress is good for us?
- g) Are you more negative or positive about life?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. toxic | a. aging |
| 2. who we surround | b. of accumulated stress |
| 3. the people around us can impact | c. tear |
| 4. accelerated biological | d. effect on the body |
| 5. wear and | e. ourselves with |
| 6. a 1.5 per cent faster | f. back to normal |
| 7. for your body to go | g. over and over again |
| 8. She highlighted the adverse effects | h. colleagues |
| 9. you experience that chronically, | i. pace of aging |
| 10. this long-term | j. the stress in our lives |

Discussion – Student B

- What are your friends like?
- Are all of your friends true friends?
- How much stress do your friends cause you?
- What are your colleagues like?
- How much stress does your family give you?
- What can we do about toxic colleagues?
- What hassles are there in your life?
- How worried are you that other people may affect your longevity?

Spelling

- vpureopist friendships
- toxic elecgsualo
- who we usrndour ourselves with
- negatively affect our olytigven
- hassler is an annoying ialiududvn
- eectaeclrda biological aging
- Researchers questioned stanictrppia
- yidfinet hasslers
- iotcaasdse with a 1.5 per cent faster pace
- highlighted the seervda effects
- cadtuuelamc stress from hasslers
- inhcaclolry, over and over again

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. d	3. j	4. c	5. b
6. e	7. i	8. a	9. h	10. f

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions. (Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What can shape our stress levels besides supportive friendships?
2.	What does who we surround ourselves with negatively affect?
3.	What university is this research from?
4.	What are negative people called who give us stress?
5.	What can rise in the body because of negative people, besides stress?
6.	What is PNAS?
7.	What did Dr Perry say one third of test participants had in their lives?
8.	How many negative people did 10% of test participants know?
9.	How long did Dr Perry say it can take for stress to disappear?
10.	What effect does accumulated stress have on the body?

Speaking – Stressful People

Rank these with your partner. Put the most stressful at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- A one-upper
- A personal space ignorer
- A chronic borrower
- A non-stop crisis person
- A micromanaging boss
- An always-jealous friend
- A super-lazy friend
- A very demanding parent

Answers – True False

1	F	2	F	3	T	4	T	5	F	6	T	7	F	8	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.