

What is Stress?

Chapter 1



Introduction

- What do you experience when you are “stressed out”?
- How do you define stress?
 - Write your own definition
 - Now work with 2 others to define “stress”
- While difficult to define, stress researchers have taught us much about what stress is...

Stress Research Pioneers

- Walter Cannon
 - the “fight or flight” response
- Hans Selye
 - first definition of stress
 - how stress causes disease and illness
 - the “general adaptation syndrome”
- Simeons
 - why do humans respond to symbolic stressors so vigorously?

Stress Research Pioneers

- Harold Wolff- intense stress & mortality
- Stewart Wolf- digestive function
- Larry LeShan/Simonton- stress & cancer
- George Engel- ulcers, sudden death
- Friedman & Rosenman- heart disease

Relaxation Techniques

- Meditation
 - Herbert Benson- TM & Hypertension
 - Luthe & Shultz: Autogenics
- Muscular Relaxation
 - PMR- Edmund Jacobsen

The Psychology of Stress

- Holmes & Rahe-
 - Life Change (Life Events) and Disease/Illness
 - The Social Readjustment Rating Scale (Try it)
 - Why was this important? What is wrong with LESs?
- Richard Lazarus (& Susan Folkmann)
 - daily hassles
 - stress perception and stress response

Defining Stress: Stress & Stressor

- **A stimulus- the “stressor”**
 - condition (external/internal) triggering fight/flight (fright?) response.
 - e.g., “This pop quiz is stressful”
- **A response-**
 - Stress Reactivity- characterized by intensity(degree), duration & recovery
 - Distress & Eustress---adaptations (Selye) (look)
 - e.g., “My Heart is racing”

Defining Stress- Holistic

- An Interaction between Stress & Response
 - point in time
 - e.g., stress is public speaking for COM101
- A spectrum of factors interacting
 - less specific but assumes cognitive, social, physiological, environmental stimuli
 - e.g., “Being a student is stressfull”

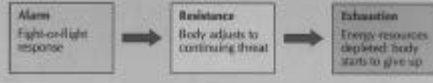
The Body During Stress: Selye

- Cannon- fight/flight
- Selye-The General Adaptation Syndrome
 - a three stage model that explain how the body respond to demands (stressors) and how stress-related illness develops (beware book definition)
- Stage 1: Alarm
- Stage 2: Resistance
- Stage 3: Exhaustion

The General Adaptation Syndrome

General adaptation syndrome

General Adaptation Syndrome



Stress Management Goals

- Limit the harmful effects of stress
- Engage our lives sufficiently to add and improve quality/vitality
 - too much demand and too little are not healthy
 - flow

Social Readjustment Rating Scale

Table 3.7 Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS)

Event	LCU value	Event	LCU value
1. Death of spouse	100	21. Sex or daughter leaving home	29
2. Divorce	73	22. Possible write-in event	29
3. Marital separation	65	23. Outstanding personal achievement	28
4. Jail term	63	26. Wife begins or stops work	26
5. Death of close family member	63	27. Begin or end school	26
6. Personal injury or illness	53	28. Change in living conditions	25
7. Marriage	50	29. Deviation of personal habits	24
8. Start at work	41	30. Enable work home	25
9. School re-enrollment	40	31. Change in work hours or conditions	30
10. Retirement	40	32. Change in residence	30
11. Change in health of family member	44	33. Change in schools	30
12. Pregnancy	40	34. Change in recreation	39
13. Sex difficulties	39	35. Change in church activities	30
14. Care of new family member	39	36. Change in social activities	30
15. Business readjustment	39	37. Mortgage or loan less than \$1,000	17
16. Change in financial state	38	38. Change in sleeping habits	35
17. Death of close friend	37	39. Change in number of family RTV appliances	18
18. Change in address or place of work	36	40. Change in eating habits	19
19. Change in number of exposures with spouse	35	41. Vacation	13
20. Mortgage over \$1,000	31	42. Christmas	13
21. Fertilization of marriage or loan	30	43. Minor violations of the law	11
22. Change in responsibilities at work	28		

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Arousal -Performance Curves

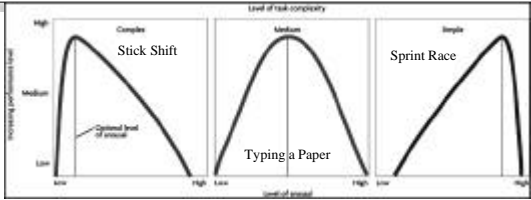


Figure 13.5 (BACK)
Arousal and performance. Graphs of the relationship between emotional arousal and task performance tend to resemble an inverted U, as increased arousal is associated with improved performance up to a point, after which higher arousal leads to poorer performance. The optimal level of arousal for a task depends on the complexity of the task. On complex tasks, a relatively low level of arousal tends to be optimal. On simple tasks, however, performance may peak at a much higher level of arousal.
