



# Stress Notes



## Stress Overview

### • What is Stress?

- Unfortunately, we are all too familiar with the feeling of \_\_\_\_\_
- **Stress** → a process when an individual perceives and responds to events they view as \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ to one's well-being
  - **Simplified** → a state of worry or mental tensions caused by difficult situations
- We often use the term loosely in describing a variety of unpleasant \_\_\_\_\_
  - Ex: "I'm so stressed" when you actually feel frustrated, angry,, overwhelmed, fatigued
  - Stress is a \_\_\_\_\_ concept that is difficult to precisely define

### • Conflicting Definitions:

- Researchers have a difficult time \_\_\_\_\_ on an acceptable definition
- Some view stress as a demanding or threatening \_\_\_\_\_ or situation
  - Ex: a high-stress job, overcrowding, long commutes to work, etc
  - These views are known as \_\_\_\_\_ definitions because they characterize stress as a stimulus that causes certain reactions
    - *Problematic: fail to recognize that people \_\_\_\_\_ in how they view and react to challenging life events and situations*
- Others view stress in ways that emphasize the body's \_\_\_\_\_ responses that occur when faced with demanding or threatening situations (ex: increased arousal)
  - These views are known as \_\_\_\_\_ definitions because they describe stress as a response to environmental conditions
    - *Problematic: people may feel the \_\_\_\_\_ physiological responses (increased heart rate) in situations they don't consider stressful (ex: receiving great news like a raise or a proposal)*

### • Stressors:

- More researchers (and others) are starting to view stress as \_\_\_\_\_
- Those demanding and threatening events and situations (*stimulus-based*) are now being considered as \_\_\_\_\_
  - There are three main stressors in our lives:
    - \_\_\_\_\_ → unexpected events that we cannot control (ex: floods, earthquakes, war)
    - \_\_\_\_\_ → major events and life transitions



# Stress Notes



- \_\_\_\_\_ → taking care of ourselves/family and managing time

## ○ Main Appraisals:

- Stressors categorized as two main appraisals, as well:
  - Primary Appraisal
  - Secondary Appraisal
- **Primary Appraisal** → involves judgment about the degree of potential \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_ to well-being that a stressor might entail
  - Stressors might likely be viewed as a threat if one anticipates that it could lead to some kind of harm, lose, or other negative consequences
  - Might be viewed as a \_\_\_\_\_ if one believes that it carries the potential for gain or personal growth
    - *Ex: an employee would perceive a promotion as a threat if they believe the promotion would lead to excessive work demands*
- **Secondary Appraisals** → judgment of the \_\_\_\_\_ available to cope with a stressor and how effective the options would be
  - The perception of threat \_\_\_\_\_ a secondary appraisal
  - An individual's belief in their \_\_\_\_\_ to complete a task is important
    - A threat tends to be viewed as less catastrophic if one believes something can be done about it

## ● Stress Variations:

- Stress is going to vary from person to person
  - \_\_\_\_\_ levels are always different, depending on the person
    - *Ex: friends are climbing a tree. One friend may be scared of heights, so his threat level is super high. Whereas, his friend enjoys climbing, so his threat level is low.*
  - People have different \_\_\_\_\_ strategies to handle stressors
    - *Ex: Friends go to a concert and are not fans of large crowds. One friend continues to focus on the small space and strangers bumping into her. The other friend is choosing to focus on the music instead of the strangers and crowd.*
  - \_\_\_\_\_ of the stressors make a HUGE difference
    - *Ex: Two people are driving to a big game and get stuck in traffic. One person hates traffic and sitting in one place, and is getting stressed that he will be late to the game. The other person hates traffic as well, but realizes he can't do anything about it. He decides to use this extra time to jam out to music to get him more pumped for the game. Exact same situations, but different mindsets.*



# Stress Notes



## ● REFLECTION:

- How would you define stress? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- What are the three main stressors in our lives? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Describe the difference between primary and secondary appraisals. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Responses to Stress

### ● Health

- Stress can be very detrimental to our \_\_\_\_\_
  - It is important to take care of ourselves
  - Learning how to handle and \_\_\_\_\_ with stress will help prevent the negative outcomes that accompany stress

### ● Fight or Flight

- You have probably heard this saying before
- “Fight or flight” is a response to stressors, enabling people and animals to react \_\_\_\_\_ to life-threatening situations
  - “Fight” → face and \_\_\_\_\_ the threat/stressor
  - “Flight: → \_\_\_\_\_ yourself from the threat/stressor
- It is our stress response that involves the \_\_\_\_\_ nervous system
  - Sympathetic nervous system activity \_\_\_\_\_ when you’re stressed, in danger, or physically active

### ● Sympathetic Nervous System

- In response to danger or stress, your sympathetic nervous system may affect the following:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ → enlarged pupils to improve vision
  - \_\_\_\_\_ → increased heart rate to improve oxygen to body
  - \_\_\_\_\_ → relax airway muscles to improve oxygen to lungs
  - \_\_\_\_\_ → slows down digestion so its energy is diverted to other areas of your body
  - \_\_\_\_\_ → activates stored energy to be used quickly
- These effects help you in situations where you might need to think or act quickly
  - \_\_\_\_\_ eyesight, reflexes, endurance, and strength
  - This system also activates when your body is under \_\_\_\_\_, like when you’re exercising or sick



# Stress Notes



- This activity also affects the \_\_\_\_\_ system and body's repair process
  - They can help your body start repairs on an injury quickly
  - However, continuous activation of the sympathetic nervous system can cause \_\_\_\_\_ effects to your body and immune system

## ● Stress Response Phases

- Psychologist, **Hans Selye**, came up with the three phases of stress response:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_ → our sympathetic nervous system is activated and our body is ready to face the stressor
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ → we attempt to cope with the stressor. Our body is on high alert and stress hormones are released
  3. \_\_\_\_\_ → we cannot be in high alert forever, so our body begins to be vulnerable

## ● Dealing with Stress

- There are two main ways of dealing with stress:
  1. \_\_\_\_\_ yourself and isolating from society
    - This is the "flight" response. People tend to use this if they are more \_\_\_\_\_ and don't want to deal with the stress or conflict
  2. \_\_\_\_\_ and befriend response
    - This is more of the "fight" response. Communicating with others and supporting others
    - \_\_\_\_\_ often do with and like to bond because of the high oxytocin levels (*social bonding*). \_\_\_\_\_ usually respond more aggressively to stress (*exercise, sports, physical labor, etc*)
    - Although you might not be physically fighting, you are combatting the stress and handling it

## ● Stress Related Illness

- \_\_\_\_\_ exposure to stress can cause stress-related illness
  - *Ex: heart disease, cancer, stroke, chronic lung disease*
    - These could also be called psychophysiological illnesses
- Prolonged stress can also cause \_\_\_\_\_ effects on the body
  - *Ex: headaches, nausea, dizziness, sweating, increased heart rate, frequent colds, muscle tension/pain, shallow breathing, and more*
  - When people are stressed, sometimes they get into unhealthy \_\_\_\_\_ to cope (*ex: smoking, drinking, drugs, etc*)
- Learning how to cope with stress and relax the body and mind is a wonderful skill to have



# Stress Notes



## ● Scenario Practice

- Scenario #1: Explain how the alarm stage could be related to their moving process.

---

---

- Scenario #2: Explain how the resistance phase contributed to the success of Ruben's visit.

---

---

- Scenario #3: Explain how the data shown in the graph are consistent with the exhaustion phase.

---

---

## Good and Bad Stress

### ● Prevalence of Stress

- Stress is everywhere and it has been on the \_\_\_\_\_ in recent years
- Stress is an experience that evokes a variety of responses:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ (increased heart rate, sweating, headaches)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ (difficulty concentrating or making decisions)
  - \_\_\_\_\_ (drinking alcohol, smoking, exercising)

### ● Good Stress

- Although stress carries a negative image, at times it may be \_\_\_\_\_
  - Stress can \_\_\_\_\_ us to do things in our best interests
    - Ex: study for exams, visit the doctor, exercise, perform better
  - Selye (1974) pointed out that not all stress is harmful
    - He argued that stress can sometimes be a \_\_\_\_\_, motivating force that can improve the quality of our lives
    - Selye called this kind of stress “\_\_\_\_\_” (eu = good)
- **Eustress** → a good kind of stress associated with \_\_\_\_\_ feelings, optimal health, and performance
- A moderate amount of stress can be beneficial in \_\_\_\_\_ situations
  - Ex: athletes may be stressed about the big game, but this is motivating and energizing
  - Research also shows that moderate stress can enhance both immediate and delayed \_\_\_\_\_ skills

### ● Optimal Level of Stress

- Changing level of stress will cause performance to change in a \_\_\_\_\_ way
  - As stress increases, so does performance and general well-being (**eustress**)



# Stress Notes



- When stress reaches an \_\_\_\_\_ level, performance reaches its peak
  - A person at this level is at the \_\_\_\_\_ (*fully energized, focused, and can work with minimal effort and maximum efficiency*)

- **Bad Stress**

- However, when stress exceeds this \_\_\_\_\_ level (*peak*), it's no longer a positive force
  - This becomes excessive and weakening
  - Selye called this \_\_\_\_\_ (*dis = bad*)
    - People who reach this level of stress feel burned out, fatigued, exhausted, and performance beings to \_\_\_\_\_
    - If the stress remains excessive, health issues begin to make an appearance

- **REFLECTION:**

- How does excessive stress affect your health?

---

---

---

- How can stress be a good thing for people?

---

---

---