

Chapter 13 | Health, Stress and Coping

Health Psychology

Psychological research aimed at promoting health and wellness



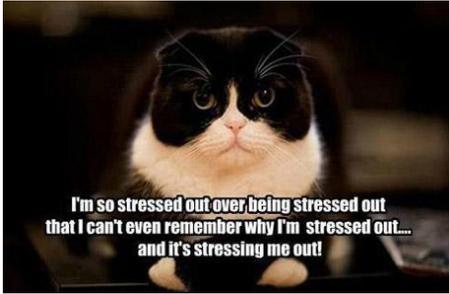
Growing field– your psychological processes impact your health!

Health Psychology



Your choices play a role in long-term health and wellness!

Stress...



Understanding Stress



Stress- an internal process that helps us adjust to situations/events (stressors)

Stress Reaction- physical, psychological and behavioral

Stress Mediators- how we try to deal with stress

Understanding Stress



Stress is measured by LCU's (life changing units)

Holmes and Rahe created the Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) to rank stress based on LCU's

There is a correlation between your SRRS score and life expectancy...*but what do we know about correlation??*

Stress Response: Emotional

→ Hopefully not this...

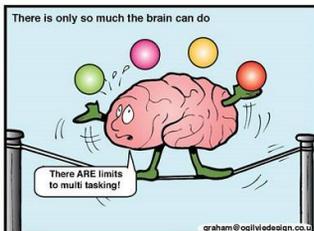


Emotional responses (*excitation transfer??*)

- Common response to stress?
"I'm frustrated!" "I'm upset!"

Stress Response: Cognitive

If you are busy stressing, you aren't going to do other things well either!



Stress Causes...

Ruminative thinking: I just keep thinking about that test Friday...

Catastrophizing: What if I buy a new car and it is a lemon and the engine dies and the transmission drops out and I get stranded on the side of the road!

Stress also causes...



Functional Fixedness:
mental block against using something
in a new way

people who die in a fire not realizing
they can use the furniture to break a
window...



→ *The anti functional fixedness website!*

Behavioral Changes

People behave differently when
stressed. Areas post natural disasters
(Katrina, Sandy...)

- domestic violence increases
- suicide rates increase
- Excitation transfer



Stress & Psychological Disorders

Burnout: you just can't do it anymore



Stress & Psychological Disorders



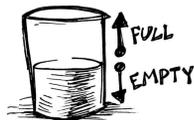
Posttraumatic stress disorder: not just soldiers, anyone who experienced one or more traumatic events

- Symptoms: anxiety, irritability, jumpiness, inability to concentrate, sleep disturbance, nightmares, flashbacks...
- Treatment: counseling, social support

Stress Mediators

Lazarus- stress responses can be primed, they are learned!

Optimists show better responses to stress



Stress response depends on your Locus of Control- am I in charge here or something/someone else?

Stress Mediator

We handle stress better when...

- We can predict it
- It is within our control
- It doesn't last a long time

Buying a house is stressful, but fun- you can decide what you want, control what you buy and hopefully it doesn't take forever to decide.



Stress Mediator



We handle stress better when...

- We have the resources (time, \$\$)
- We employ coping methods:
 - Problem-focused: change the problem (confront it, working with others, solve it)
 - Emotion-focused: change the way we feel about it (control your feeling, "count to 10", distance yourself)

Social Support

One of the best ways to deal with stress, is with friends and family

Knowing you are not alone helps!

"You got a friend in me..."



Social Support

But sometimes...



Friends can make a stressful situation worse, encourage dangerous behavior, and lead to more stress in the long run!

Life Lesson from Psychology...choose your friends carefully ☺

Gender Differences

GENERALLY...

Women “tend-and-befriend”

- I’m stressed let’s talk about it, work it out, make it better!



Men “fight-or-flight”

- I’m going to tackle it head on or ignore it

Check it out...

Page 543 has a good review of stress responses and mediators!!!

Stress and Health

Stress suppresses your immune system!

Heart disease is linked to stress, and research is showing a correlation between hostility and heart problems.

Stress can break your heart



So Let's Prevent It!

Promoting healthy ways of dealing with stress...

Health Belief Model
(not just for stress):



1. Will I get *it*?
2. How serious is *it*?
3. What do I have to do to stop *it*?
4. Cost benefit analysis– is the action I have to stop doing more important to me than the risk of getting *it*?

Stages to Behavior Change



1. Precontemplation: Cookies are delicious
2. Contemplation: Maybe cookies are bad for me and I should stop eating them
3. Preparation: I have decided to stop eating cookies! My plan is to not buy them anymore, then I can't eat them!
4. Action: I am not buying or eating cookies!
5. Maintenance: I have not eaten cookies for six months!

Coping

Stages of coping (pg 550!)
Coping strategies: Test day!



- Cognitive restructuring- "I will do my best, that's all I can do!"
- Emotional- "My friends and family will still love me regardless of how I do on this test"
- Behavioral- "I managed my time well and studied"
- Physical- "I just need to take a deep breath and calm down" (deep relaxation)
