Chapter 10

STRESS, COPING, AND RESILIENCE

Theories of Stress

Response-oriented
Stimulus-oriented
Interactionist
Stress, Stressors, and Stress Reactions

Types of stress
Effects of stress
Coping with stress
Resilience

Types of Stress

Stress: physical or mental response to demands from environment, events that lead up to these demands, or individual’s perception of demands.

Coping: antidote to stress!

General Adaptation Syndrome

Seyle: coined the term “stress” and demonstrated link between psychological reactions and physical illness.

Two separate immune responses occur: natural immunity and specific immunity.
General Adaptation Syndrome

Response-oriented viewpoint

Stages to stress response:
• Alarm reaction
• Resistance
• Exhaustion
“Return to rest” never complete

How is stress related to our immune systems?

Stimulus-Oriented Viewpoint

Holmes and Rahe

Life-event rating scale: both positive and negative events contribute to stress

Critical question: Are all life events the same for all people at all points in their lives?
Types of Stress

Pearlin distinctions:
- Short-term life events
- Chronic life strains

Nelson and Burke types of job-related stress:
- Work stress
- Work strain

Almeida distinctions:
- Major life events
- Daily stressors
- Both types of stress have consequences
- 40% of US adults have 1 stressor; 10% have more
- Stressors accumulate

US Adult Daily Stress

Figure 10.1. US adults from 25 to 74 years report that the largest proportion of their daily stress arises from interpersonal tensions, followed by stressful events that happen to other people in their networks and events that happen at work or school.
Effects of Stress

Figure 10.2. Characteristics of the individual determine (a) whether they will be exposed to certain stressors and (b) what their reactions will be, resulting in a potential effect on daily well-being.

Physical Disease: A Quick Look at Some Research Findings

Lillberg et al. Finland study: stressors related to subsequent physical illness.

Matthews et al. Heart disease study: life stressors and physical illness strongly related

Leserman et al. AIDS study: time taken to progress from HIV to AIDS strongly related to amount of life stress.

Mental Health Disorders

Stress plays a role in the onset of depression and anxiety.

Trauma is hardest on those who have prior emotional problems.

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) strongly related to high levels of stressors.
Holocaust Survivors and PTSD

Figure 10.8. Holocaust survivors with PTSD perform less well on a two memory task than either Holocaust survivors without PTSD or a matched control group who did not experience the Holocaust.

Individual Differences in Stress-Related Disorders

Stress and Gender
Men and women cope with stress differently

Stress and Age
Stress decreases across the adult years.
• Stress interacts with age to produce lower immune system functioning which leads to higher risk of disease and death.

Stress and Discrimination
Racial and gender discrimination can be highly stressful.
Stress-Related Growth

*Stress-related growth*: positive changes that follow experience of stressful life events.

- Related to how one appraises and copes with problems.

Coping with Stress

*Resistance resources*: personal and social resources that may buffer person from impact of stress.

*Coping*: all things you might think, feel, and do in response to stressful events.

Types of coping:

- Problem-focused
- Emotion-focused
- Meaning-focused
- Social
After reading about the different types of coping, how would you describe your own coping style?

Why might it be difficult for you to select only one coping style when answering this question?

Evaluating the Effectiveness of Coping

Coping enhanced through:

Coping flexibility: ability to use variety of coping skills, depending on situation.

Goodness of fit: ability to match the appropriate skill with situation at hand.

Proactive Coping

Proactive coping: ways people cope in advance to prepare or mute impact of future stressful event.

Five interrelated components:

• Building reserve of resources
• Recognizing potential stressors
• Initial appraisal of initial stressors
• Preliminary coping efforts
• Seeking and acting on feedback about success
Religious Coping

Religious coping: reliance on religious or spiritual beliefs to reduce stress.
- Positive religious coping
- Negative religious coping

Social Support

Social support: affect, affirmation, and aid received by others.
- Person’s perception of support strongly related to physical and emotional health.

Buffering effect: provides some protection against stress
- Gender differences

A friend in need is a friend indeed!
Personality Traits and Coping

Coping related to sense of control, self-efficacy, and optimism.

Resilience most common response to traumatic stress.

Figure 10.11: Of four outcomes people can have after exposure to trauma, the most prevalent is resilience.

How does the concept of resilience challenge the concept of “grief work”? 
Individual Differences in Resilience

*Hardiness:* personality construct describing people committed to finding meaning in life.

*Self-Identity:* strong sense of self enable coping with change.

*Positive Emotion:* gratitude, concern for others, love produce better adjustments and encourages reciprocal positive responses from others.

Chapter Review

1. The best-known theory of stress response is ____’s general adaptation syndrome, in which we meet stressors with alarm reactions, followed by resistance and exhaustion if the stressor is still present.

2. Early studies showed that there was a relationship between the number and intensity of stressors and some _____ outcomes

3. The most common types of stressors are _____, followed by things that happen to other people in one’s family or social network and things that happen at work or school.

4. _____ is a long-lasting, extreme reaction to acute stress.
Chapter Review

5. Men and women have different sources of stress and different reactions. Men are exposed to more trauma, but women are more likely to develop _____.

6. Some researchers have suggested that racial discrimination is a form of _____ stress, and that the greater incidence of high blood pressure and stroke among African Americans is a result of this stress.

Chapter Review

7. Along with the negative effects of stress, there is evidence that some people experience _____, increased wisdom, new appreciation for life, and a stronger religious belief.

8. The measures we take to reduce stress are known as _____.

Chapter Review

9. The most common reaction to stress is _____, maintaining healthy functioning.

10. One feature of resilient people is ____. They show commitment, control, and a quest for meaning in their lives.