15.1 Sources of Stress

Objectives:

1. Define Stress
2. Identify various sources of stress.
3. Differentiate between the various types of conflict situations.
I. What is Stress?

An event or the produces tension or worry.

Various Views and Sources of Stress

A person’s physical or psychological response to an event.

The perception of an event
I. What is Stress?

A. Definition: A person’s perception of his or her inability to cope with a certain tense event or situation.
II. Components of Stress

A. Events or situations that produce stress are known as **stressors**. A **stress reaction** is an *observable* response to how an individual responds to a stressor; this varies from person to person.

Example: A person flying for the first time may be more stressed over the event than a pilot or flight attendant.
II. Components of Stress (con’t)

B. Not all stress is bad. Stress comes in both positive and negative forms. Negative stress is called **distress**, while positive stress is called **eustress**.

Marriage is a form of eustress in most cases.

Getting a speeding ticket could be a form of distress.
## Types of Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distress</th>
<th>Eustress</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The “bad” kind of stress</td>
<td>The “good” kind of stress</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Work Demands</td>
<td>• Job Promotion</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Death of loved one</td>
<td>• Purchasing a new home</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Car troubles</td>
<td>• Marriage or birth of a child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Financial Woes</td>
<td>• Etc…</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Etc…</td>
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</table>
II. Components of Stress (con’t)

C. A third component of stress is how a person perceives and evaluates an event. This is known as the **Cognitive Model of Stress**.

Cognitive Model of Stress process for determining stress:

1. Analyze a situation
2. Evaluate a situation
3. Determine stress level of the situation
III. Conflict Situations

A. People are faced with choices and decisions everyday that create some form of stress. These choices are known as conflict situations because they force us to choose between options that are in conflict with each other.

B. There are four types of conflict situations.
   1. Approach-Approach
   2. Avoidance-Avoidance
   3. Approach-Avoidance
   4. Double Approach-Avoidance
Approach-Approach Conflict

A situation where an individual must choose between two attractive alternatives. Usually this type of conflict does not produce major stress because both results are satisfying to the individual. This is only really stress in name due to the individual satisfaction.

Examples:

Being accepted at both of your two top college choices and then having to choose; either way you get to go where you want.

Having to choose between two job offers that offer a desirable job and compensation plan. You must choose one but either way you will have a job you want with good pay.
Avoidance-Avoidance Conflict

A situation where an individual must choose between two unattractive alternatives. Usually this type of conflict does produce major stress because both results are unsatisfying to the individual. In this situation one is likely to look at the options and choose the “lesser of two evils”.

Example:
An individual who is unhappy with the current political leadership of the nation may have viewed the presidential election in this way. I don’t like John McCain or Barak Obama but I have to choose between the two.
A Far-Sider’s View of Avoidance-Avoidance Conflict

“C’mon, c’mon — it’s either one or the other.”
Approach-Avoidance Conflict

In this model of conflict the individual finds themselves in a situation that has both enjoyable and disagreeable consequences.

Example:
You have an offer to go a great party but you know that if your parents find out you will likely be grounded for attending. You will enjoy the party (positive consequence) but you will not enjoy the result of being grounded (disagreeable consequence).
Double Approach-Avoidance Conflict

A situation where an individual must choose between two or more options, each of which has pleasurable and disagreeable aspects. This is the most common type of conflict situation.

Example:
Choosing a house in the country means fresh air, room to live, peace and quiet. It also means many hours of commuting to work in heavy traffic and long distances from city amenities and cultural events. Choosing to live in the city will likewise present both the problems and the advantages of city life.
C. People view situations as stressful differently; what is stressful for one is not for another. The level of stress depends on how the individual appraises the situation. A primary appraisal refers to one’s immediate evaluation of a situation. A secondary appraisal deals with how to deal with the potential stressful situation.
## Appraisal Types

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Appraisal</th>
<th>Secondary Appraisal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Deals with questions like:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Deals with the question of:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can I meet the demands of the situation?</td>
<td>How do I deal with the situation?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the situation present more challenges than I can handle?</td>
<td>--Coping Strategies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is this situation positive, negative, or irrelevant?</td>
<td></td>
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IV. Environmental Stressors

A. Environmental stressors sometimes play a role in the stress we experience.

Examples:
1. Noise
2. Overcrowding
3. Life Changes—marriage, death of loved ones, illness, new job
4. Common day-to-day hassles have been linked to health issues.

***It has also been suggested by research that small “uplifts” can help against stress-related illness. Uplifts are those things that make a person feel good.