

STRESS!!!

Objectives

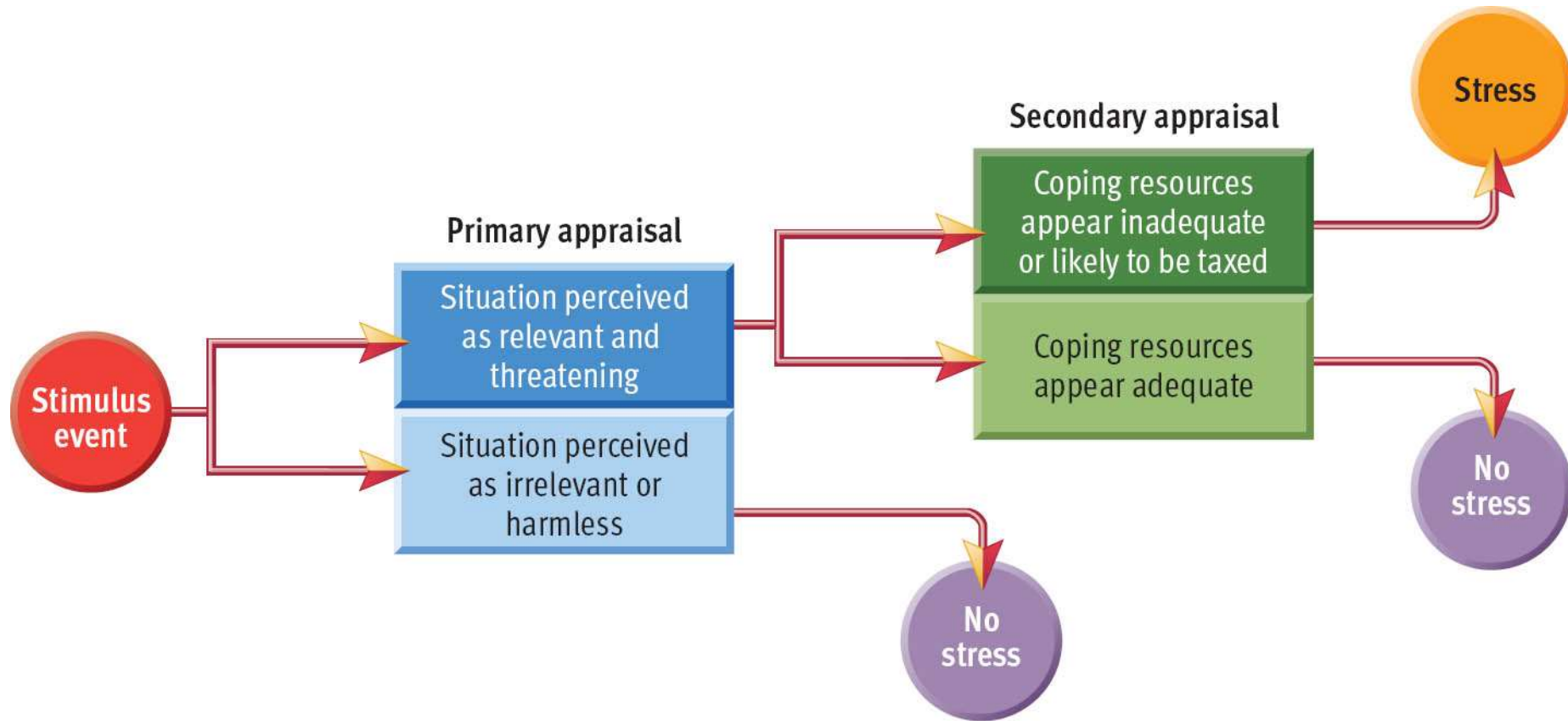
- 1. Definitions of stress and stressor.**
- 2. The stress process**
- 3. Causes of stress and reactions to particular causes.**
- 4. Examples of other psychological, behavioral, biological, and social system factors that play a part in the stress process.**
- 5. Responses to stress (e.g., fight-or-flight, general adaptation syndrome).**
- 6. Factors moderating the impact of stress**
- 7. Behavioral and cognitive coping methods.**

The Nature of Stress

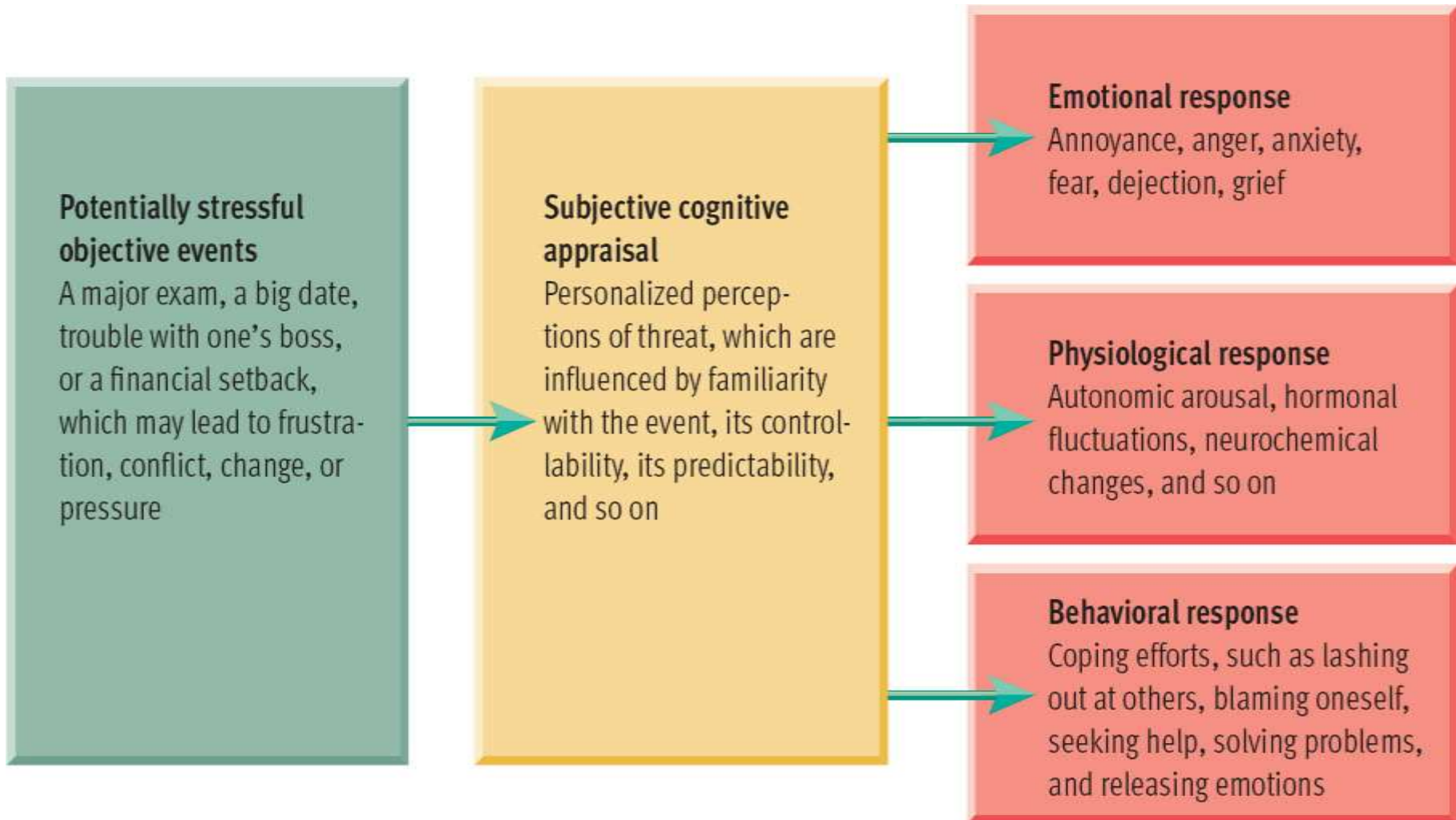
- **Biopsychosocial model** – A model that holds that physical illness is caused by a complex interaction of biological, psychological, and sociocultural factors
- **Stress** – Any circumstances that threaten or are perceived to threaten one's well-being and tax one's coping abilities

Stress as an Everyday Event

- Routine hassles can have significant harmful effects on mental and physical health.
- Stress is cumulative and collectively can create great strain.



Stressor: Condition or event in the environment that challenges or threatens a person



A Few of the Causes: Frustration

- **Frustration:** Negative emotional state that occurs when one is prevented from reaching desired goals

A Few Reactions to Frustration

- **Displaced Aggression**: Redirecting aggression to a target other than the source of one's frustration
- **Scapegoating**: Person or group are blamed for conditions they did not create; the scapegoat is a habitual target of displaced aggression
- **Circumvention** – Go around it
- **Withdrawal**
- **Persistence**

Causes of Stress: Conflict

Conflict: Stressful condition that occurs when a person must choose between contradictory needs, desires, motives or demands


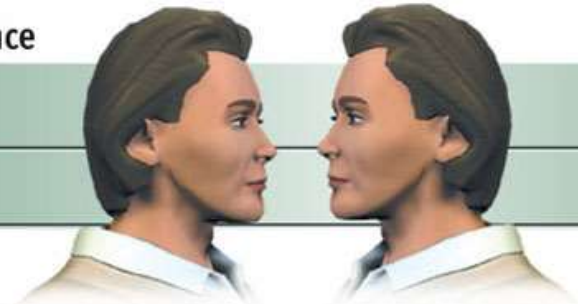



Types:

- **Approach - Approach Conflict**
- **Avoidance - Avoidance Conflict**
- **Approach - Avoidance Conflict.**


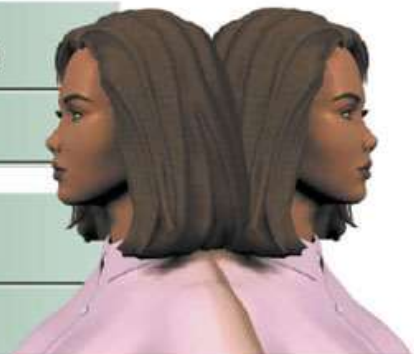



Approach-approach

 Tennis		 Racquetball
 Pizza		 Spaghetti
 Blue sweater		 Gray jacket

Avoidance-avoidance

 Unemployment		 Degrading job
 Painful backache		 Surgery

Approach-avoidance

 Date with an attractive person	
 Rejection	
 Investment returns	
 Loss of capital	

More Causes of Stress: Roles

Roles (real or perceived expectations for behavior)

- **Role Overload**
- **Role Conflict**
- **Role Ambiguity**

More Causes of Stress

Life changes



(adapted from Thomson Higher Education, 2007)

Life Changes & Stress

Table 12.1 Social Readjustment Rating Scale

Life Event	Mean Value	Life Event	Mean Value
Death of a spouse	100	Change in responsibilities at work	29
Divorce	73	Son or daughter leaving home	29
Marital separation	65	Trouble with in-laws	29
Jail term	63	Outstanding personal achievement	28
Death of a close family member	63	Spouse begins or stops work	26
Personal injury or illness	53	Begin or end school	26
Marriage	50	Change in living conditions	25
Fired at work	47	Revision of personal habits	24
Marital reconciliation	45	Trouble with boss	23
Retirement	45	Change in work hours or conditions	20
Change in health of family member	44	Change in residence	20
Pregnancy	40	Change in school	20
Sex difficulties	39	Change in recreation	19
Gain of a new family member	39	Change in church activities	19
Business readjustment	39	Change in social activities	18
Change in financial state	38	Mortgage or loan for lesser purchase (car, TV, etc.)	17
Death of a close friend	37	Change in sleeping habits	16
Change to a different line of work	36	Change in number of family get-togethers	15
Change in number of arguments with spouse	35	Change in eating habits	15
Mortgage or loan for major purchase (home, etc.)	31	Vacation	13
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30	Christmas	12
		Minor violations of the law	11

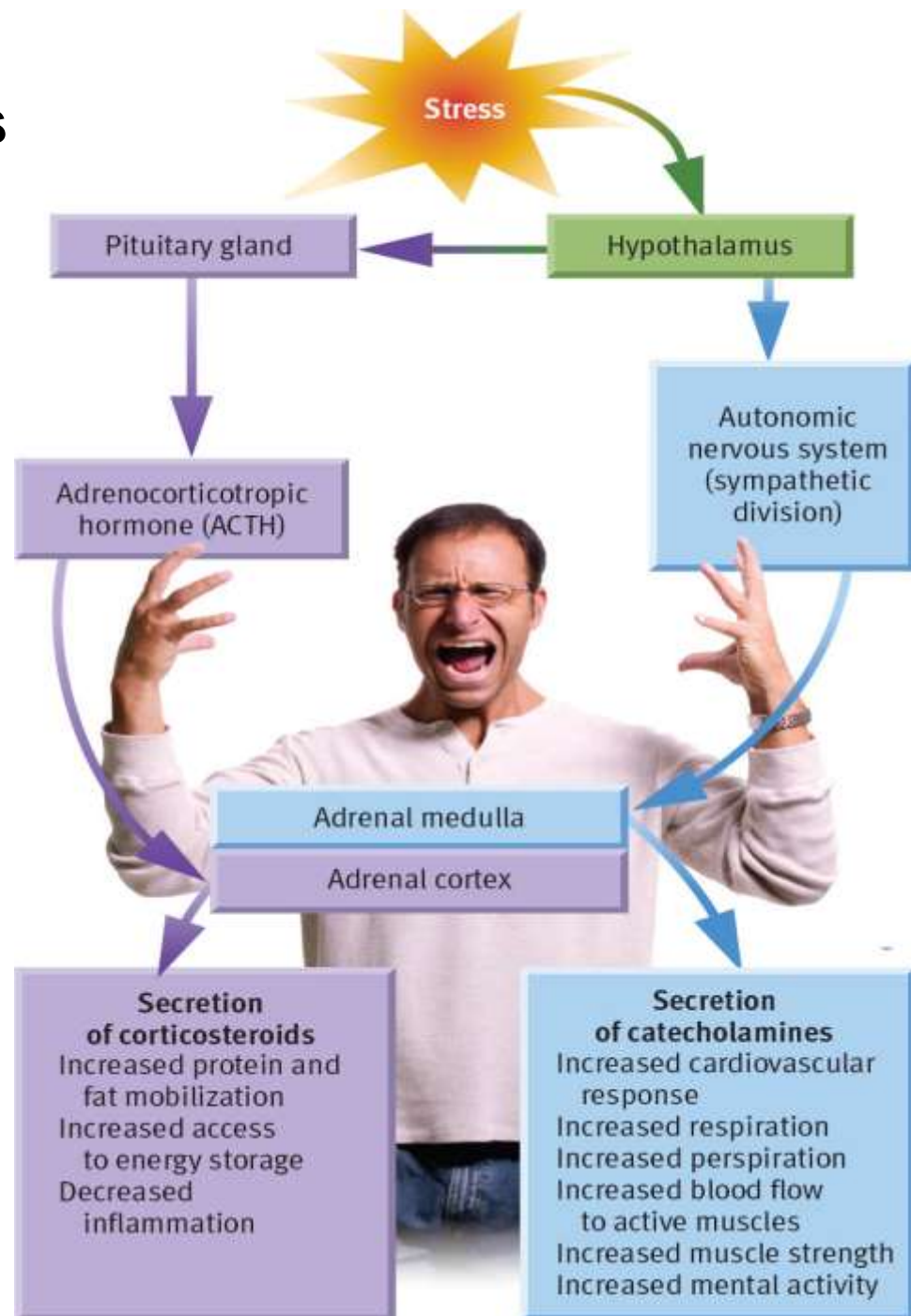
Source: Adapted from Holmes, T. H., & Rahe, R. (1967). The Social Readjustment Rating Scale. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 11, 213–218. Copyright © 1967 by Elsevier Science Publishing Co. Reprinted by permission.

More Causes of Stress

Control

A perception of control can lead to a lower perception of a stressor. A perceived lack of control can increase the amount of perceived stress.

Physiological Responses to Stress: Fight-or-Flight Response



The General Adaptation Syndrome

General adaptation syndrome – A model of the body's stress response, consisting of three stages:

- **Alarm stage** – Physiological arousal occurs as the body musters its resources to combat a threat.
- **Resistance stage** – Physiological changes stabilize as coping efforts get under way
- **Exhaustion stage** – If the stress can't be overcome, the body's resources may be depleted.
 - Diseases of adaptation – The harmful physiological effects associated with chronic overactivation of the stress response

Factors Moderating the Impact of Stress

Optimism and Conscientiousness

- **Optimism** – A general tendency to expect good outcomes
- Conscientiousness, one of the Big Five personality traits, is associated with good physical health and increased longevity.

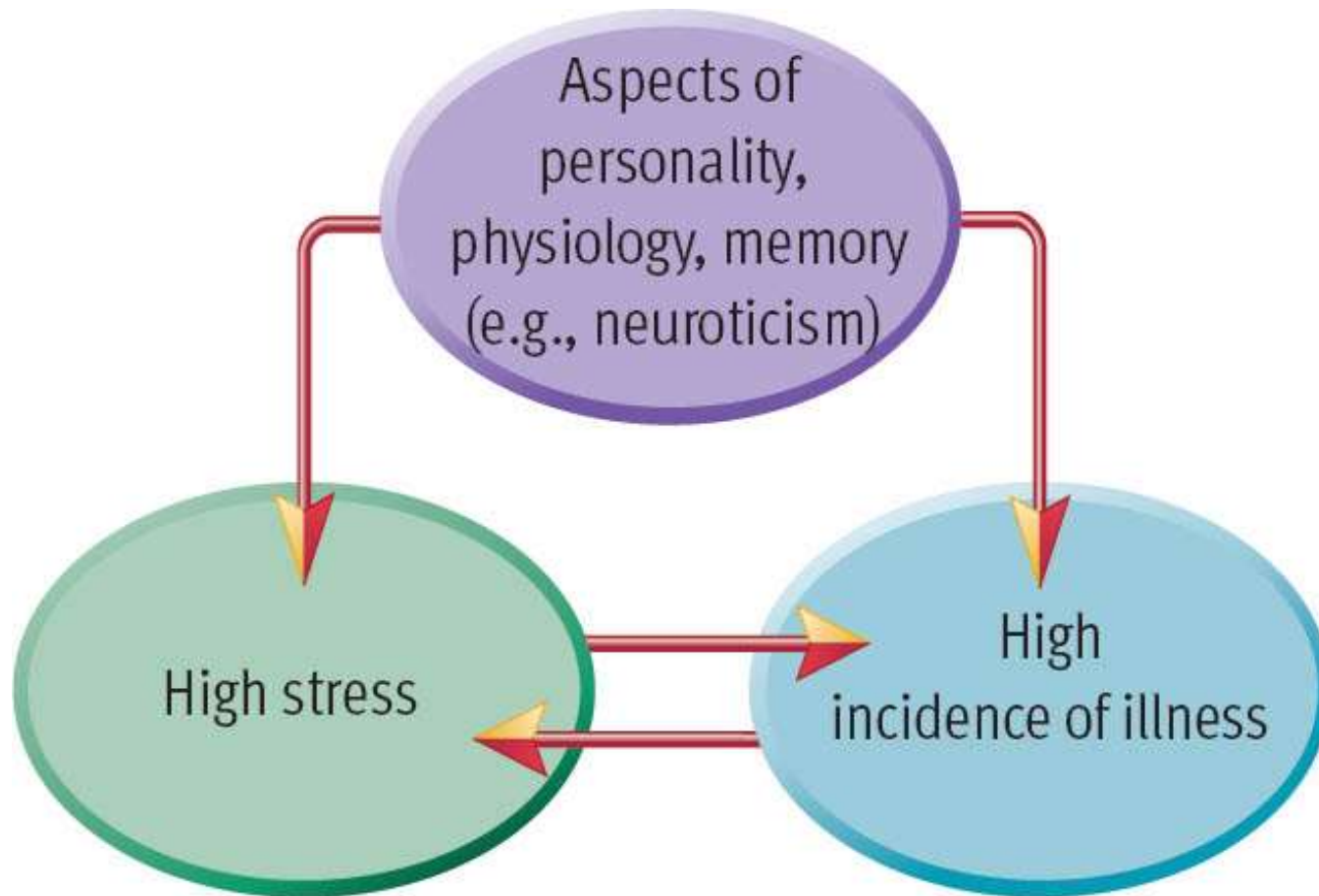
Stress Mindset

- A stress-is-enhancing mindset should be associated with intermediate arousal in response to stress and more effective coping strategies.

Other Factors That May Moderate the Impact of Stress

- **Autonomic reactivity**
 - Cardiovascular reactivity to stress
- **Hardy Personality**
 - Sense of personal commitment to self and family
 - Feel have control over life
 - See life as series of challenges, not threats

Stress-Illness Correlation



Emotions Commonly Elicited - Negative

- Common emotional responses to stress include:
 - Annoyance, anger, and rage
 - Apprehension, anxiety, and fear
 - Dejection, sadness, and grief

Emotions Commonly Elicited - Positive

- Positive emotions also occur during periods of stress.
- The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions explains how positive emotions promote resilience.
 - Positive emotions alter people's mindsets, broadening their scope of attention and increasing their creativity and flexibility in problem solving.
 - Positive emotions can undo the lingering effects of negative emotions, thus short-circuiting the potentially damaging physiological responses to stress.
 - Positive emotions can promote rewarding social interactions that help to build valuable social support and enhanced coping strategies.
- A positive emotional style has many health benefits.

Behavioral Responses

- **Coping** – Active efforts to master, reduce, or tolerate the demands created by stress

Giving Up and Blaming Oneself

- **Learned helplessness** – Passive behavior produced by exposure to unavoidable aversive events

Striking Out at Others

- **Aggression** – Any behavior that is intended to hurt someone, either physically or verbally
- **Catharsis** – The release of emotional tension

Behavioral Responses

Indulging Oneself

- Stress sometimes leads to reduced impulse control, or self-indulgence.
- A relatively new manifestation of self-indulgence is Internet addiction.
 - Excessive gaming
 - Preoccupation with sexual content
 - Obsessive socializing

Defensive Coping

- **Defense mechanisms** – Largely unconscious reactions that protect a person from unpleasant emotions, such as anxiety and guilt
- Self-deception distorts reality so it seems less threatening.
- Defense mechanisms are largely unconscious.

Behavioral Responses

- **Constructive coping** – Relatively healthful efforts that people make to deal with stressful events
 - Confront problems directly.
 - Avoid excessive self-deception and highly unrealistic negative thinking.
 - Reappraise stressful events in less threatening ways.
 - Ensure that your body is not especially vulnerable to the damaging effects of stress.

Emotional Reactions, Depression, and Heart Disease

- Brief periods of mental stress can trigger sudden symptoms of heart disease.
 - Outbursts of anger can be particularly dangerous.
- Depression is a risk factor for heart disease.
 - The emotional dysfunction of depression may cause heart disease.
 - Depression roughly doubles one's chances of developing heart disease.

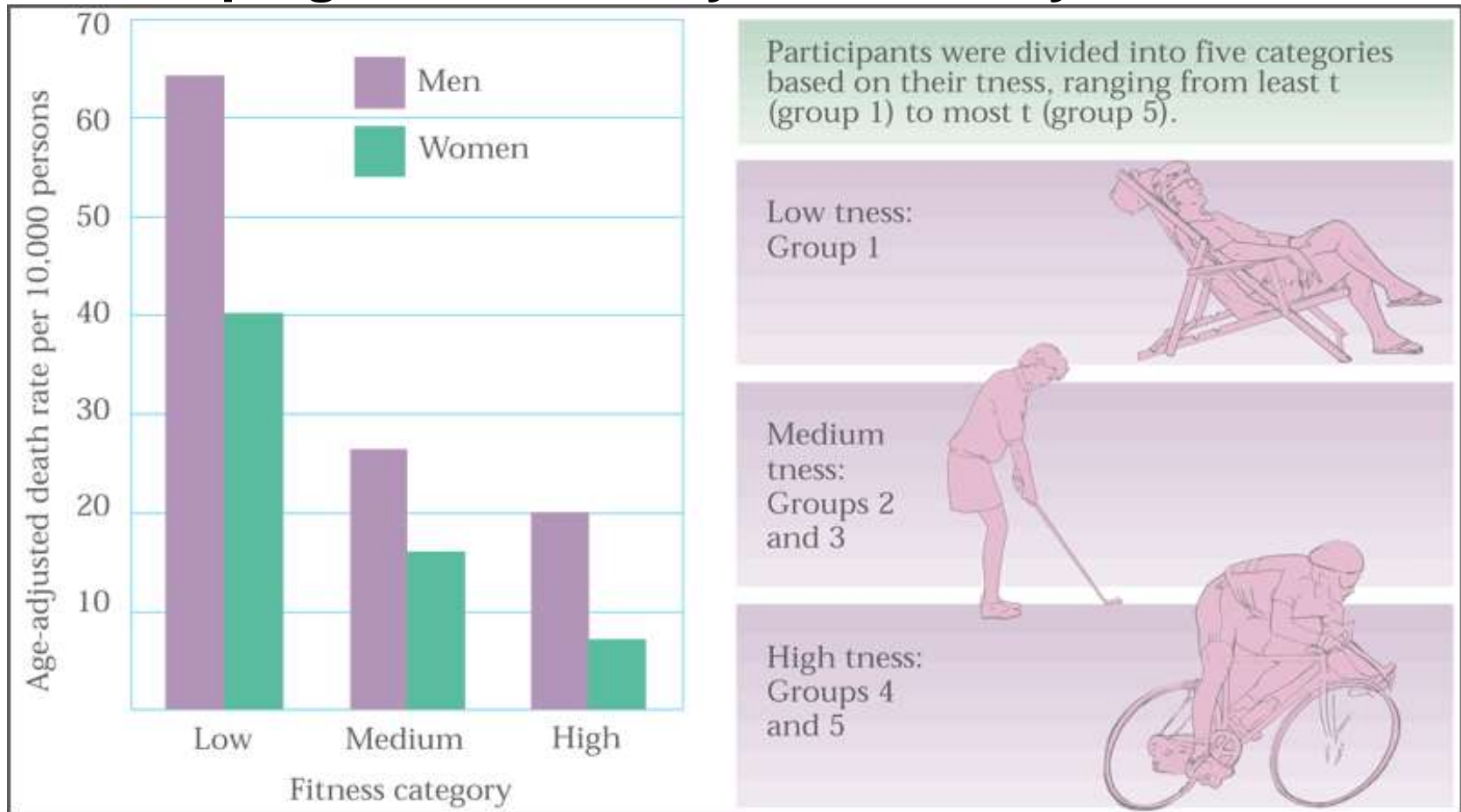
Stress, Other Diseases, and Immune Functioning

- **Immune response** – The body's defensive reaction to invasion by bacteria, viral agents, or other foreign substances
 - Some studies have related stress to suppressed immune activity in humans.
- Exposure to long-term stress can sometimes promote chronic inflammation, which is recognized as a factor in heart disease.
 - Chronic inflammation also contributes to arthritis, osteoporosis, respiratory diseases, diabetes, Alzheimer's disease, and some types of cancer.

A Few Coping Methods

- **Exercise**
- **Rational Emotive Therapy**
- **Systematic Relaxation**
- **Seek Social Support**
- **Sleep**
- **Change the Situation**
- **Leave the Situation**

Coping Methods: Physical Activity/Exercise



Physical fitness and mortality. Blair and colleagues (1989) studied death rates among men and women who exhibited low, medium, or high fitness. As you can see, fitness was associated with lower mortality rates in both sexes.

(adapted from Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2001)

The commonsense view

A Activating event

Stress:
Someone stands you up on a date you looked forward to.

C Consequence

Emotional turmoil:
You feel angry, anxious, agitated, dejected.

Ellis's view

A Activating event

Stress:
Someone stands you up on a date you looked forward to.

B Belief system

Irrational appraisal:
"This is terrible. I'll have a boring weekend. I'll never find anyone. I must be a worthless person."

Rational appraisal:
"This is unfortunate but I'll salvage the weekend. Someday I'll find someone who is mature and dependable."

C Consequence

Emotional turmoil:
You feel angry, anxious, agitated, dejected.

Emotional calm:
You feel annoyed and subdued but remain hopeful.

Coping Methods: Rational Emotive Therapy (RET)

(adapted from Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 2007)

Positive Effects of Stress

- Positive effects of stress include resilience.
- Research on resilience suggests that stress can promote personal growth or self-improvement.
 - The adaptation process initiated by stress can lead to personal changes for the better.
- Having to grapple with a moderate amount of stress may build resilience in the face of future stress.

And above all ...

**Don't
Panic!**



Humor helps!

(Adams, 1979)