



# **Health, Stress, and Coping**

# Health Psychology

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- Uses behavioral principles to prevent illness and death, and promote health
- Behavioral medicine: Applies psychology to manage medical problems (e.g., asthma and diabetes)
- Lifestyle diseases: Diseases related to health-damaging personal habits (e.g., strokes and lung cancer)

# Behavioral Risk Factors

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- Actions that increase the chances of disease, injury, or premature death
- Disease-prone personality: Personality type associated with poor health; person tends to be chronically depressed, anxious, hostile, and frequently ill

# Ways to Promote Health and Early Prevention

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- Refusal skills training: Program that teaches young people how to resist pressures to begin smoking (can also be applied to other drugs)
- Life skills training: Teaches stress reduction, self-protection, decision making, self-control, and social skills

# Community Health Campaign

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- Community-wide education program that provides information about how to decrease risk factors and promote health
- More Ways to Promote Health
- Role model: Person who serves as a positive example of good and desirable behavior
- Wellness: Positive state of good health and well-being; more than the absence of disease

# Stress

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- Stress: Mental and physical condition that occurs when a person must adjust or adapt to the environment
- Includes marital and financial problems
- Eustress: Good stress
- Stress reaction: Physical reaction to stress
- Autonomic nervous system is aroused

# Stressor

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- Condition or event in environment that challenges or threatens the person
- Pressure: When a person must meet urgent external demands or expectations

# Immunity

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- Immune system: Mobilizes bodily defenses, like white blood cells, against invading microbes and other diseases
- Psychoneuroimmunology: Study of connections among behavior, stress, disease, and immune system



# Stress Management

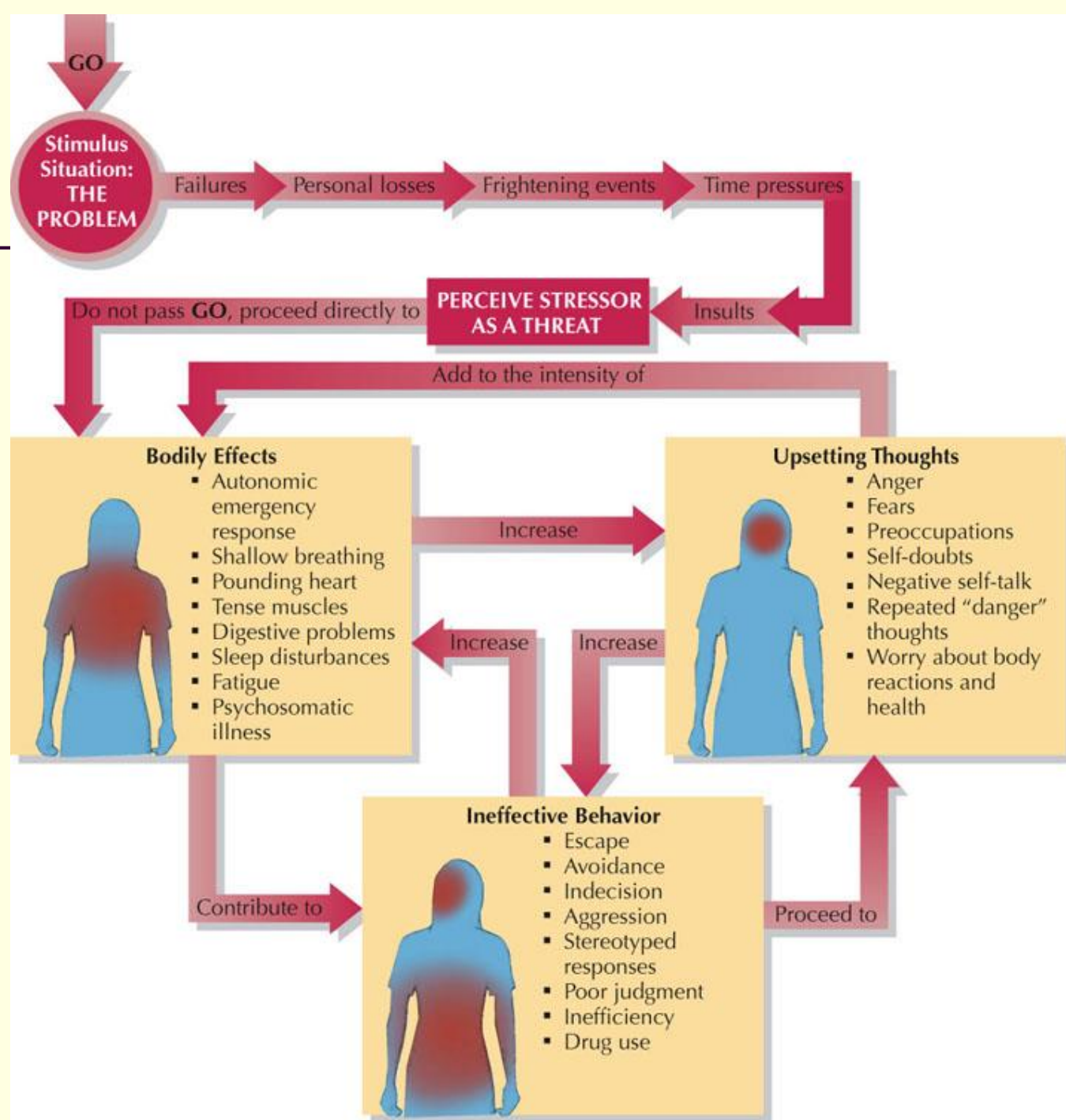
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- Use of cognitive behavioral strategies to reduce stress and improve coping skills
- Progressive relaxation: Produces deep relaxation throughout the body by tightening all muscles in an area and then relaxing them
- Guided imagery: Visualizing images that are calming, relaxing, or beneficial in other ways

# Avoiding Upsetting Thoughts

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- Stress inoculation: Using positive coping statements internally to control fear and anxiety
- Designed to combat negative self-statements (self-critical thoughts that increase anxiety and lower performance)
- Coping statements: Reassuring, self-enhancing statements used to stop self-critical thinking



# Signs and Symptoms of Ongoing Stress

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- Emotional signs: Anxiety, apathy, irritability, mental fatigue
- Behavioral signs: Avoidance of responsibilities and relationships, extreme or self-destructive behavior, self-neglect, poor judgment
- Physical signs: Excessive worry about illness, frequent illness, overuse of medicines

# Burnout

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- Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress. It occurs when you feel overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands.
- Job-related condition (usually in helping professions) of physical, mental, and emotional exhaustion; has three aspects:
- Emotional exhaustion: Feel “used up” and apathetic toward work
- Cynicism: Detachment from the job
- Feeling of reduced personal accomplishment

**Table 13.3 • The Top 10 Work Stresses**

<b>Work Stress</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Workload	1
Feeling undervalued	2
Deadlines	3
Type of work people have to do	4
Having to take on other people's work	5
Lack of job satisfaction	6
Lack of control over the working day	7
Having to work long hours	8
Frustration with the working environment	9
Performance targets	10

# Your body's response to stress

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- When you're faced with stress, certain chemicals (hormones) in your body are released. These hormones trigger many changes in your body. For instance, your:
- Blood pressure may rise
- Heart may pound
- Muscles may tighten
- Stomach may become tense
- Concentration may get worse
- Forgetfulness may get worse

# Stressors

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Stressors may include:

- Adapting to constant, rapid change
- Worrying about your finances and the economy
- Handling a major life event, such as changing jobs or moving to a new home
- Handling more than one major life event at the same time, for instance, dealing with a family illness while changing jobs
- Juggling many roles and responsibilities, such as spouse or life partner, parent, friend, employee, and caregiver for aging parents
- Going from one challenging situation to the next without taking time to relax
- Being overwhelmed by technology such as, keeping up with cell phone messages, e-mails, and text messages



# The long-term effects of stress

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- If you're often under stress, you need to learn to manage it well. Stress can affect your well-being. Over time, you may show some of these symptoms of being stressed:
- **Physical.** Frequent colds or flu, headaches, trouble sleeping, muscle tension, skin problems, trouble with digestion
- **Mental.** Poor concentration, forgetfulness, learning problems, frequent negative thoughts, speech problems
- **Emotional.** Anxiety, depression, anger, irritability, feelings of helplessness, lack of purpose, relationship troubles
- **Behavioral.** Eating poorly, driving recklessly, abusing alcohol or drugs, being accident prone, showing aggression

# Ways to manage stress

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When it comes to managing stress, making simple changes can go a long way in improving your overall health and reducing stress. Having tools and strategies you can turn to in stressful situations can prevent your stress levels from escalating.

## Find a balance

- It's important to structure some of your time so that you can be comfortably busy without being overwhelmed, Brown says. "Working hard does not usually equate with working efficiently," he said. In fact, working too much can reduce productivity.

# Ways to manage stress

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## Lean on the people you trust

- Before your stress levels escalate, reach out to someone you trust, such as a friend, family member, or coworker. Sharing your feelings or venting your concerns may help to reduce your stress.

## Keep a journal

- Set aside time to reflect on your day. Write down any thoughts or feelings you're having. This can be a useful tool to help you better understand your stressors and how you react to stress, Brown says.

## Eat well-balanced, regular meals

- When it comes to managing stress, proper nutrition is your friend. Skipping meals can lower your blood sugar, which can depress your mood. In some cases, this can also trigger intense feelings of anger and frustration, Brown says.

# Ways to manage stress

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## Be kind to yourself

- Understanding that you aren't weak because you're feeling stress is important, Brown says. Stress is a very normal reaction to the stressors in your life.

## Exercise regularly

- Engaging in regular physical activity can improve your overall health and reduce your stress levels. When you exercise, your body releases endorphins. These feel-good hormones can also ease symptoms of depression and anxiety.

# Ways to manage stress

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## Get plenty of rest

- Your ability to manage stress decreases when you're tired. Try to get a recommended seven to nine hours each night. If you have insomnia, aim to get as much sleep as you can, then build in periods of rest during the day.

## Practice relaxation exercises

- These exercises, which can include deep, slow breathing and progressive muscle relaxation, involve tensing and then relaxing various groups of muscles.
- Try to carve out three minutes, three times a day to practice these exercises, says Dr. Russell Morfitt, a psychologist.

# Ways to manage stress

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## **Schedule your worry**

- While it may feel awkward at first, consider scheduling the worry to specific parts of the day, Morfitt says. “When we lean into our fears by deliberately seeking out our stressors and not avoiding them or escaping them, they often lose their power,” he said.