Week 2 Lab:

Symptoms of Stress

**Identifying Sources of Stress**

* **Internal Stressors** – Things going on inside us that cause us stress ex. telling yourself you aren’t good enough. These things can often be within our control so we can change them, ex. appreciating when you do something well.
* **External Stressors** – Things going in the world around us which can cause stress ex. work environment, noisy neighbours. Often, we may have less control, however we can sometimes take steps to reduce this ex. look for another job.

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| **Internal Stressors** | **External Stressors** |
| Lifestyle choices | Physical environment (noise, heat, cold) |
| Negative self-talk (self-criticism, low self-esteem) | Social (interactions with others) |
| Personality (perfectionist, workaholic) | Life events (marriage, new job, health) |

1. **External stressors**: Describe one external stressor that caused you a significant amount of discomfort recently or in the past.

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| External stressor | Description (what happened, why it caused you stress) |
| Social – Staff that ask me for help | I help teachers, secretaries, and other staff with their software issues at a K-12 schoolboard. Since it is the start of the school year, they are scrambling and unfortunately channeling their frustrations over the phone or on our ticketing system. This gets me stressed as I wish I could fix their issues instantaneously so they would get off my back, but I only have so many hours in a day and can only work so fast. |

1. **Internal stressors**: Describe one internal stressor that caused you a significant amount of discomfort recently or in the past.

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| Internal stressor | Description (what happened, why it caused you stress) |
| Negative self-talk | I have doubts that I will be able to make it through Centennial’s program while working full time. I am salaried and sometimes that means I must work until the job is done, not abiding by strict working hours. Although I have improved in thinking higher of myself, sometimes I feel as though I am not good enough for the job. Sometimes I have imposter syndrome which pushes me, but also brings my mood down which stresses me about my current situation and future. |

**Stress Effects**

Constant stress can have a *direct* or *indirect* effect on illness and disease.

* **Direct effect** – Stress can affect your body directly by weakening the immune system, increasing blood pressure, making you sweat.
* **Indirect effect** – Stress can cause you to change your behaviour such as taking up smoking, drinking, or eating unhealthy foods, which affects your health.

1. Describe a past stress situation that affected your body directly or indirectly.

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| Stressor | Description (what happened, how it affected your body directly/indirectly, and illness that it may have caused) |
| Lifestyle choices - Marijuana | As a result of a poor lifestyle, I found myself looking to escape my responsibilities. I had no structure, no accountability, and no need to keep myself balanced. I chose marijuana as I had a few friends who were really into it. This did nothing but push my anxiety away until the next morning where it would compound on itself. This ended up affecting my body, more specifically my mind, directly as it compromised my mental state from being able to take charge of my life. I believe the fight-or-flight response kicked in one day which allowed me to get out of a destructive cycle. Years ago, I found the Zones of Stress and found that anxiety isn’t the worst thing, but it needs to be controlled with a balanced lifestyle. |

**Reflection Question:**

* Reflect on any patterns or triggers you have noticed when you are stressed. Do certain situations or events tend to trigger more symptoms for you? If so, what are they?

I don’t believe I have any triggers per se. A pattern I have noticed getting me stressed out is the number of similar questions I get each day while having the pressure of doing certain projects that require a high understanding of programming and AI. I can add in the fact that there is no help to get from anywhere on most of these projects. It’s all up to me. This has happened time and time again.   
  
I am not given enough time to do any task with time between to decompress so my stress levels keep rising. Partially, it is my fault for wanting to make everyone happy with quick responses. I feel as though I am definitely in the exhaustion stage of Hans Selye’s General Adaptation Syndrome theory.