2 Stress and Time Management

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Learning Objectives

This chapter will help prepare students to:

- LO 2-1 Describe the relationship between stress and the General Adaptation Syndrome.
- LO 2-2 Identify potential stressors in agency settings.
- LO 2-3 Employ stress-management strategies to improve practice effectiveness.
- LO 2-4 Describe the relationship between poor time management and stress.
- LO 2-5 Use time-management techniques to improve practice effectiveness.
- LO 2-6 Utilize mechanisms for eliminating procrastination.

CONSIDER THIS SCENARIO: You are a social worker for a county department of social services. It is now 8:00 a.m. By 4:30 p.m. today, you are supposed to accomplish the following tasks:

- *Meet with your supervisor for your weekly supervisory session.*
- *Complete appointments established with six clients as noted on your weekly calendar.*
- *Call to schedule a dentist's appointment as soon as possible. You cracked a molar, and it hurts like all get out.*
- *Return phone calls to the following clients about crisis issues: Ms. Hermanez, Ms. White, Mr. Scissorhands, Ms. Cheatum, Mr. Beauregard, Ms. Leinenkugal, Ms. Dewie, and Mr. Howe.*
- *Find the homeless Shaver family a place to stay.*
- *Enroll Tina Tuna in an alcohol treatment program.*
- *Decide what to get your mother for her birthday (it's tomorrow, and you already forgot to send her a card on time).*
- *Try to stop thinking about your fight with your significant other this morning.*
- *Have lunch.*
- *Use the restroom—probably twice.*
- *Prepare an agenda for tomorrow's 8:00 a.m. staff meeting.*
- *Help Ms. Loophole place her critically ill father in a hospice center.*
- *Drop your car off to get your leaky tire fixed.*
- *Complete your 2 weeks' worth of progress notes before your supervisory meeting.*
- *Call Irma about riding together to the state social work conference next Thursday.*
- *Talk to your colleague Horatio about the minor conflict you had yesterday.*
- *Make appointments with eight clients for next week.*
- *Check up on your client Merhan Birmquach, who you believe is seriously depressed and potentially suicidal.*
- *Work on that grant application that's due in 2 weeks.*

What would you do?

a. *Cry.*
b. *Take a sick day.*
c. *Punch a hole in the wall.*
d. *Use good time-management skills.*
e. *Update your résumé.*

What do you do when you have multiple tasks to complete right now? How can you handle the stress from the demands of clients you feel desperately need your help? How can you keep your own personal concerns from interfering with your ability to accomplish your work? How can you keep from going absolutely crazy with all the pressure? Social work can be a stressful profession whether you are working with multiple clients, lobbying the legislature for funding, or pursuing a community change project. Some social workers experience burnout and leave the profession. Others remain but are no longer productive or, worse, inured to the suffering and challenges facing their clients. The bottom line is that

you cannot help others when you are incapacitated with stress. Consequently, you have to find a way to manage the professional and personal stressors in your life.

Two practical means of coping with professional and personal stress are recognizing and using established stress- and time-management techniques. You can't necessarily get rid of all the pressure in your life, but you can begin to control it.

Introduction

Two variables are important to conducting your professional life effectively and efficiently: stress and time. Both variables can and will affect your ability to do your job. They exist whether you like it or not, and they are related. Failure to manage time well can become a major stress producer. However, you can begin to get control of both time and stress. Stress- and time-management techniques allow you maximize your time both professionally and personally.

Stress and time are also two critical facets of your macro environment. They are integrally involved in everything you will be doing. In order to fulfill your job responsibilities with clients, comply with supervisory directives, and make decisions concerning your macro objectives, you will need to manage both your time and stress level.

The Relationship Between Stress and the General Adaptation Syndrome LO 2-1

EP 1b

Stress is the comprehensive process by which external pressures affect individuals emotionally and physically, producing some internal tension (Kottler & Chen, 2008; Olpin & Hesson, 2013). Kottler and Chen (2008) describe some potential reactions to stress:

> *Stress is the feeling you experience when you can't seem to sit still, when your thoughts are racing and you feel out of control. Your body feels tense, as if tied into a knot. You feel revved up but you can't figure out where to direct your energy. Time pressures weigh on you. Concentration seems difficult.*
>
> *Inside your body you feel intense pressure in your neck, in your back, in your belly. You notice your jaw muscles are clenched. There is, perhaps, a throbbing in your head. Your heart rate has increased, and your hands feel clammy. (p. 8)*

Each individual may experience a potentially stressful situation differently, although most of us recognize that certain situations cause unusual stress. For example, abruptly losing your job or hearing of a significant other's unexpected death will always cause stress.

Even positive events can be stressful. They, too, can force you to deal with new circumstances and expend energy pursuing unfamiliar or different activities. Getting married or receiving a promotion, desirable events for most people, still cause stress.

Environmental situations can also create stress. For example, expending time and effort to change an agency policy may add to the pressure you already feel from fulfilling your everyday responsibilities to clients, or the abrupt shutdown of a major industry in the town where you work may leave thousands of people unemployed. Your client caseload soars. You see the need to develop a range of new services, from job retraining to relocation planning to food pantries for hungry, newly unemployed workers and their families.

As in all work with human beings, stress can be engendered by traumatic events, including such things as the death of a client, serious injury to a child with whom you were working in child protective services, and prolonged exposure to crisis after crisis. For some, a single event may be sufficient to produce post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or less serious negative outcomes. For others, the day in and day out exposure to discouraging situations may accumulate to the point where the social worker has trouble functioning due to the stress. Of course, stress can also be engendered by events in the environment such as natural disaster, war, terrorism, and similar traumas. For some groups, particularly those exposed "to large scale or repeated trauma stresses," this can also become a factor in their current functioning. This historical trauma often affects ethnic groups that have suffered from horrific past events (Crawford, 2014, p. 2). Recollections and stories about these events are passed down intergenerationally. Groups such as the Jews (Holocaust),

Native Americans (extermination), African Americans (slavery), refugees (ethnic cleansing), and others often have a shared traumatic experience with others in their communities. Collective suffering, violence, and cumulative traumas still influence the experiences of many members of these groups and engender high levels of stress and other mental health challenges (Brown-Rice, 2013; Crawford, 2014; Myhra, 2011).

Similarly, secondary trauma (sometimes called vicarious trauma) can influence those who were not directly exposed to the trauma events but acquire knowledge of it from others who were. Spouses of returning soldiers with PTSD, those working directly with sex offenders, and anyone hearing or reading repeated stories of traumatic events can experience this (Severson & Pettus-Davis, 2013). Tosone, McTighe, Bauwens, and Naturale (2011), for example, found evidence of secondary trauma in social workers providing clinical services to survivors of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in 2001. The result is much like PTSD, with symptoms that include recurrent thoughts or dreams, avoidance of dealing with thoughts and feelings, detachment from others, volatility, sleep disturbances, decreased sexual desire, and problems concentrating. Hyper-vigilance has also been observed in those exposed to secondary trauma (Branson, Weigand, & Keller, 2014; Newell & MacNeil, 2010).

Likewise, self-critical perfectionism contributes to stress and helps prevent sufferers from even talking about their stressful events (Richardson & Rice, 2015). Most of us, however, can withstand significant amounts of stress and survive. When we are exhausted, we go to sleep. When memories are too painful, we forget. In effect, we have developed coping mechanisms to keep our stress levels under some degree of control.

Certain factors are associated with stress. Rigid, authoritarian attitudes and so-called "Type A" personalities appear to be more prone to stress (Daft, 2016a). The Type A personality frequently fights the clock to squeeze more work into smaller and smaller time frames. Likewise, irrational thinking can cause stress. For example, believing that your intimate other can satisfy all of your needs—which, of course, is impossible—can produce stress.

Compassion fatigue is a continuous risk for those whose positions expose them to individuals in distress (O'Brien & Haaga, 2015). This is an occupational hazard of social work because we are often confronted by suffering, the negative life experiences of others, and the challenges of system change. While compassion fatigue has often been cited as a problem for therapists and those doing individual counseling, it can just as well apply to macro practice. Macro practice is associated with correcting long-term problems and improving the lives of neighborhood and community members. The fact that it can take months or years to accomplish a change effort can seem overwhelming. Lacking the resources or skills to effect change may drain our own abilities to deal with stress. It may be helpful to conceive of our work as a process of building, planting a seed for future change, or simply taking one of many steps along a journey.

General Adaptation Syndrome

Your body appears to respond to both negative and positive stress in the same way. Selye (1956), one of the initial authorities on stress, found that the body reacts to all stressors in the same way, regardless of the source of stress. This means that the body reacts to positive stressors (a romantic kiss) in the same way it reacts to negative stressors (an electric shock). The body has a three-phase reaction to stress: (1) the alarm phase, (2) the resistance phase, and (3) the exhaustion phase. This stress response process is known as the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) (Kottler & Chen, 2008; Olpin & Hesson, 2013; Selye, 1956). Following is a brief outline of how this syndrome works.

In the **alarm phase**, the body recognizes the stressor and responds by preparing for fight or flight. A stressor can be any stimulus that causes stress. The body's reactions to a range of stressors are numerous and complex: The body sends messages from the hypothalamus (a section of the brain that regulates a range of physiological functions) to the pituitary gland to release its hormones. These hormones trigger the adrenal glands to release adrenaline.

The release of adrenaline and other hormones results in the following:

- *Increased breathing and heartbeat rate*
- *A rise in blood pressure*
- *Increased coagulation of blood to minimize potential loss of blood in case of physical injury*
- *Diversion of blood from the skin to the brain, heart, and contracting muscles*
- *A rise in serum cholesterol and blood fat*
- *Gastrointestinal tract problems*
- *Dilation of the pupils*

This range of changes results in a massive burst of energy, better vision and hearing, and increased

muscular strength—all changes that increase our capacities to fight or to flee. A major problem of the fight-or-flight reaction in modern times is that we often cannot deal with a threat by fighting or by fleeing, especially in agency life. In our civilized society, fighting or fleeing—helpful to primitive humans—is generally considered unacceptable behavior.

In the **resistance** or **repair phase**, bodily processes seek to return to homeostasis. The body strives during this phase to repair any damage caused by the stressors. The body can adapt itself to hard physical labor, a serious stressor. In handling most stressors, the body generally goes through only the two phases of alarm and repair. Over a lifetime, a person goes through these two phases hundreds of thousands of times.

The third phase, **exhaustion**, occurs only when the body remains in a state of high stress for an extended period of time. If such stress continues to affect the body, the body is unable to repair the damage. If exhaustion continues, a person is apt to develop a stress-related illness or even to die.

Identifying Potential Stressors in Agency Settings LO 2-2

Social workers often consider themselves, their profession, and their agency work environment to be highly stressful. Certainly, dealing with the complicated needs of multiple clients, confronting the large amounts of paperwork and documentation required for accountability, and operating within bureaucratic systems can produce significant stress.

While many associate stress with individual psychological traits or characteristics, this is only part of the picture. Many studies in multiple professionals fields have identified **structural factors** that can both increase and decrease the likelihood of human service workers experiencing high levels of job-related stress. Potential structural causes of stress for social workers include the following (Cao, Chen, Tian, & Diao, 2016; Kubicek & Korunka, 2015; Schaufeli, 2015; de Beer, Pienaar, & Rothman, 2015; Huhtala, Tolvanen, Mauno, & Feldt, 2015):

- *Lack of social support within one's own organization or agency*
- *Supervisors and administrators who place unreasonable demands on staff*
- *Supervisors failure to back staff up in their professional decisions*
- *Lack of praise or recognition for one's accomplishments*
- *Work overload*
- *Policies that repeatedly impede workers' ability to do their jobs*
- *Lack of sufficient autonomy to perform one's job*
- *Lack of distributive justice or an ethical culture within the organization*

Structural factors that prove problematic in an organizational or agency setting can be the focus of change efforts. In fact, changes you seek within your immediate organization may be easier to achieve than those in the community. The payback in terms of improved working conditions and structural support for your efforts can make the difference between surviving and thriving or burning out.

It is likely that you have previously encountered the term *burnout,* which is a great concern in social work practice. **Burnout** is "a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that results from constant or repeated emotional pressure associated with an intense, long-term involvement with people. Burnout is characterized by feelings of helplessness and hopelessness, a negative view of self, and negative attitudes toward work, life, and other people" (Corey & Corey, 2016, p. 354). Burnout can occur when you have too much work and feel that you have too little control over getting it all done. Obviously, social work usually addresses problems. Constant confrontation with problems is also stressful.

On the other hand, helping another person overcome disappointment, bad luck, personal tragedies, and catastrophic experiences is a rewarding feeling that tends to rise above our reactions to day-to-day events. Helping others, the goal of social work, is challenging but ultimately very satisfying. Most social workers would likely identify completing required paperwork as the least desirable and potentially most stressful part of the profession. If it is any consolation, other professions often feel the same about the paperwork requirements of their work.

To avoid burnout and enhance your usefulness, good stress- and time-management skills are essential. The following sections will explore stress-related problems and techniques for changing your perception about stress and managing stress. Because time management is so critical for effective control of stress, we will extensively explore the issues concerning time and techniques recommended to manage it.

Perceptions of Stress

Stress becomes a problem only when the stressors are so great that your adaptive system is overwhelmed. This can happen either from too much stress in a short time or from the cumulative effects of stress over an extended period. It is typically the chronic or long-term stress that causes us the greatest concern. Due to the prolonged time involved, you can develop both physiological and psychological problems. Interestingly, it is often not a single major event that triggers stress-related problems. Rather, it is many—sometimes trivial—occurrences and factors that add up.

Stressors can be better understood if we recognize that they differ in quality, duration, and quantity (Kottler & Chen, 2008; Olpin & Hesson, 2013). That is, some stressors are harmful because of their importance (seriousness). Others are detrimental because of the length of time they affect us or because of the large number of stressors occurring at one time. What one person considers stressful, another may not. Individual judgment defines just how stressful an experience is. Individual judgment also determines how effective we perceive our coping mechanisms to be.

Thus, both the type of problems encountered and your perception of how well you can cope with them affect the stress-related problems you experience. Feeling you simply cannot cope with a particular problem, no matter what, can lead to increased anxiety. The anxiety increases stress and starts a snowball effect. The consequences of stress, thus, can include physiological, psychological, or behavioral problems.

Physiological Stress-Related Problems

Often the first recommendation for coping with stress is to recognize its existence and magnitude. **Physiological** problems of stress include headaches, stomach upset (such as colitis), and skin rashes or hives. They also can include high blood pressure, which, of course, can be life-threatening. Although most of us have some of these symptoms from time to time, you should recognize that chronic, long-lasting symptoms are warning signs that your stress level is out of control.

Psychological Stress-Related Problems

Psychological difficulties from chronic stress include anxiety and depression. **Anxiety** is "a mood state wherein the person anticipates future danger or misfortune with apprehension. This response causes a markedly negative effect consisting primarily of tension and [other physical features. People who are anxious frequently experience] . . . a vague feeling of apprehension manifested as worry, unease, or dread" (Gray & Zide, 2008, p. 118). **Depression**, technically referred to as **depressive disorder**, is a psychiatric condition characterized by persistent episodes of feeling sad, disheartened mood; lack of interest in daily activities; inability to experience pleasure most of the time; disruption of sleep; pessimism; significant weight loss not related to dieting, or weight gain; insomnia; an extremely low energy level; feelings of hopelessness and worthlessness; decreased capacity to focus and make decisions; and preoccupation with thoughts about suicide and one's own death (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Attempts to cope with psychological stress vary. Some people turn to excessive intake of alcohol, drugs, or food. Others smoke or even consider suicide.

Behavioral Stress-Related Problems

Behavioral correlates of stress include any behaviors resulting directly from excess stress. A father might hit his 5-year-old daughter when he's had a hard day at work, or a woman might argue incessantly with her significant other when she's under extreme duress. Other people withdraw inwardly and isolate themselves.

Figure 2.1 illustrates an example of the stress process in a macro context, reacting to pressures at work. First, a stressor occurs. In this case, the problem stressor is too much paperwork. Second, a person's perception of the problem shapes that individual's reactions to stress. Figure 2.1 illustrates that the person, depending on his or her individual makeup and perception, may experience physical symptoms such as stomachaches, headaches, or hives; psychological symptoms such as

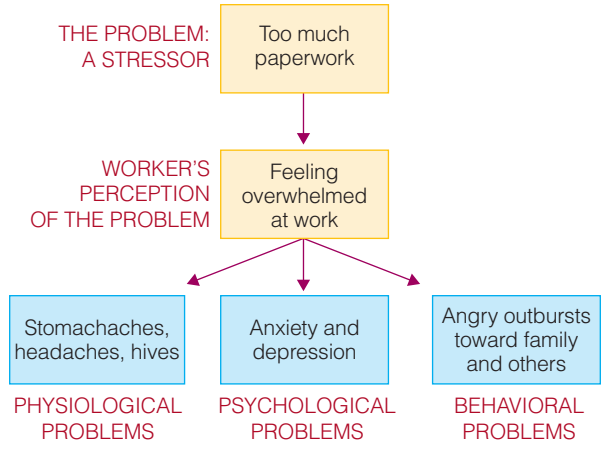

Figure 2.1 The Stress Process

anxiety or depression; or behavioral symptoms such as angry emotional outbursts. Depending on the individual, the environmental context, the problem, and the person's perception of the problem, each individual will react differently to stressors.

Stress-Management Strategies to Improve Practice Effectiveness LO 2-3

People react to stress in highly individualized ways. We have mentioned that some people react to extensive stress by **fleeing** it, or pursuing activities to avoid confronting the stress. We have already mentioned that they might drink to excess, use drugs, overeat, or smoke.

Other people react to serious stress by **fighting** and attempting to manage it. Positive ways to handle stress include the various stress-management techniques we will discuss next.

Managing Your Stress

Managing stress often means reducing it or finding ways to keep it under control. Fighting stress to control it is more effective in the long run than fleeing from it. The latter only can result in physiological, psychological, or behavioral problems.

There are three primary approaches to stress management. This is true both in your work setting and in your personal life. First, you can change the way you think about the stressful event. Second, you can try to change the stressful event itself. Third, you can adopt specific strategies and techniques to help control your stress level.

Changing Your Thinking About the Stressful Event

The ABCDE theory of irrational thinking, developed by Albert Ellis, conceptualizes how your thinking can affect your stress level (Ellis, 2005; Kottler & Chen, 2008; Olpin & Hesson, 2013).

The ABCDE approach includes the following steps:

A = Activating event (identify the stressor)
B = Belief system (identify rational and irrational beliefs about the stressor)
C = Consequences (mental, physical, behavioral)
D = Dispute irrational beliefs
E = Effect (change consequences) (Olpin & Hesson, 2013, p. 89)

Corey and Corey (2016) offer the following explanation:

> *This theory explains the relationship among events, beliefs, and feelings. According to Ellis, your interpretations of events are frequently more important than what occurs in reality. He calls A an Activating event, B one's Belief system, and C the emotional [or physical or behavioral] Consequence. Consider the situation of [applying for a new job and] going through an interview. Let's imagine the worst outcome: The director of the agency interviewed you and said that you lack the necessary experience for a placement in this agency. You do not get the job you wanted. The activating event (A) in this case is the situation of being rejected. The emotional consequences (C) you experience may include feeling depressed, hurt, and maybe even devastated. Chances are that you hold what Ellis would term "irrational beliefs" about not having been accepted. Ellis would say that your beliefs (B) about this rejection might include some combination of the following thoughts: "It is absolutely horrible that I didn't get this job, and it surely proves that I'm incompetent." "I should have gotten this job, and this rejection is unbearable." "I must succeed at every important endeavor, or I'm really worthless." "This rejection means I'm a failure."*
>
> *[Such irrational belief systems and thinking can also affect our work as social workers. We as practitioners] often incorporate a wide range of dysfunctional beliefs that impair our capacity to function effectively when people seek our assistance. At times we may distort the processing of information, which can easily lead to faulty assumptions and misconceptions. As helpers, we can complicate our life by believing that we must be all-knowing and perfect. If we feel depressed or agitated about the job you are doing, it is essential that we examine our basic assumptions and beliefs to determine how they are influencing what we are doing and how we are feeling. As we become more aware of our faulty thinking, we are in a position to change these patterns (pp. 347–348).*

The following five themes often characterize an irrational belief system that results in stress and its symptoms: "(1) Life isn't fair; (2) It's awful; (3) I can't stand it; (4) I must get what I want; and (5) I'm incompetent" (Kottler & Chen, 2008, p. 145). The D in the ABCDE theory involves *disputing* such irrational

beliefs. Kottler and Chen (2008) explain how such disputation might work:

> *Basically what you are trying to do is to force yourself to look logically, rationally, and systematically at your situation. Imagine that the events were recorded and you were watching the reenactment on a screen. What would you observe? What would the recorder capture in objective, accurate images?*
>
> *There are three major questions to ask yourself when disputing your irrational beliefs:*
>
> 1. ***Where is the evidence that what you are experiencing is true?*** *We don't mean to invalidate the legitimacy of whatever you are thinking and feeling—you are perfectly entitled to any beliefs you want. But assuming that you don't like the way you are feeling and want to do something about it, then it is time to consider things more objectively. Ask yourself what a camera would record about this scene. Are things indeed as dire and disastrous as you think they are? Is this really the worst thing that ever happened to you? Is it true that you can't stand what is happening, that you will die as a result?*
> 2. ***Who says that things must be the way you think they are?*** *YOU do. You are the one who is demanding that things be a particular way. Examine your "shoulds" and "musts" that signify your rigidity and your imposing of your standards and values on the rest of the world. Look at your tendency toward perfectionism, holding expectations for yourself and others.*
> 3. ***Does your response seem logical and reasonable, given the situation?*** *Return to the task of watching yourself. How are you exaggerating things? How are you making invalid assumptions? How are you overgeneralizing based on limited cases? How are you overpersonalizing? (pp. 145–146)*

Olpin and Hesson (2013) provide some additional examples of how an **activating** (A) event results in a stressful **consequence** (C) as a result of a person's irrational **belief** (B) system; they also explain how **disputing** (D) irrational beliefs can result in positive psychological **effects** (E):

> *A person performs poorly on a test. That event is A, what actually happened. This fact might activate the belief system that sounds something like, "I really did poorly on that test. That is just horrible! I always do that. I'm really incompetent at everything I do. I'll never succeed. I'm worthless." The emotional result of thinking this way might include anxiety, loss of self-esteem, and even depression. We sometimes call this type of negative, irrational thinking* awfulizing *. . . This person is overreacting to the facts of the situation.*
>
> *Consider another example in which a normal college student asks a girl out for a date and she turns him down (A). Irrational thinking based on a faulty belief system might sound like this: "I must not be good enough for her. Girls always turn me down. I'm such a loser." The emotional feelings (C) this person will experience may include anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem. This way of thinking might even lead to a vicious circle of additional events that reinforce this student's negative belief system (B) about his inability to have a comfortable situation with the opposite sex. As a result, he may avoid asking another person out on a date or avoid social situations altogether.*
>
> *This irrational way of thinking, however, can be repaired by learning to successfully dispute (D) the irrational thought. In rational thinking, the student who did poorly on the test could change her way of thinking to a more accurate series of thoughts, which sound something like this: "Boy, that test was rough! Everybody struggles occasionally on tests. The important thing is that I learn from today's experience. How can I improve my performance on the next test?" With these thoughts running through her head, she will feel powerful, assertive, and ready to continue pursuing her academic activities.*
>
> *The young man who is turned down for the date might more accurately say these things to himself: "She must have a lot going on in her life. There are a lot of other girls who would be happy to spend some time with me. Everyone gets turned down occasionally. It's no big deal." He will be confident enough to find another person to go on a date and will feel much better about himself. He will feel more courageous, confident, and self-assured with these thoughts foremost in his mind.*
>
> *Once we dispute (D) the irrational belief, we are free to enjoy the positive psychological effects (E) of the more rational belief. By reinforcing realistic, self-benefiting beliefs, you can eliminate your emotional and behavioral problems in the present and avoid future problems of that sort. In the process, you'll experience far less stress. (pp. 101–102)*

Figure 2.2 depicts the ABCDE process using the case example of having difficulty achieving a goal established with a client.

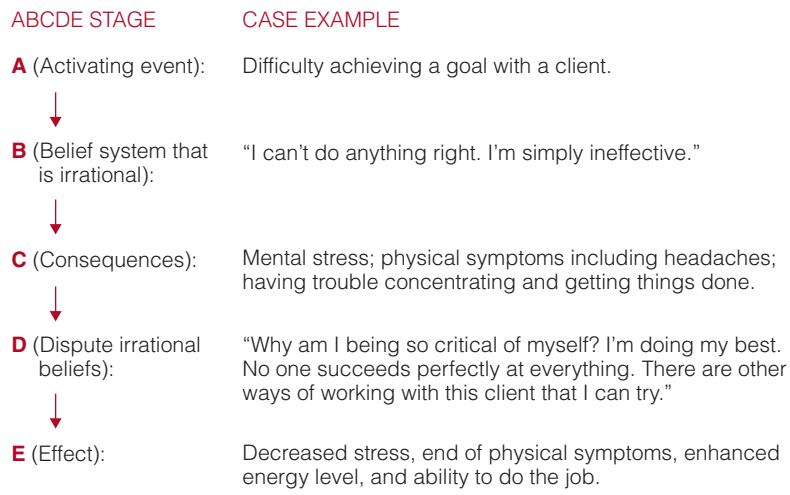

Figure 2.2 The ABCDE Theory of Stress Management

The following are some additional suggestions to consider in order to change your thinking about a stressful event:

1. *Accept that some stress cannot be avoided.* Do you have to worry about every stressor? Or can you accept the fact that some stressors will exist regardless and put them out of your mind as much as possible?
2. *Realize that the primary changeable element in your life is you.* Appreciate the fact that you can control your thinking and your behavior.
3. *Separate problems that cannot be solved from others.* If you can't solve the problem, can you put it out of your mind and stop worrying about it?
4. *Examine your expectations.* Put plainly, dump the unrealistic ones. Both positive thinking (reframing a negative event to make it more positive) and talking to others about your expectations can be helpful. Recognize that some things are not worth getting upset about.
5. *Avoid should/should not thinking.* This limits your options. Are you wasting time worrying about what you should be doing while you're not doing it? Either do it or don't, but don't waste time worrying about it. Thinking differently really can reduce your stress level.
6. *Analyze your needs.* What do you really need? How much does the stressful event really affect you? To what extent should you let it bother you? Are you wasting your time and energy thinking about it?
7. *Emphasize your strengths—physical, emotional, and spiritual.* Could your time be better spent placing greater emphasis on positive aspects of your life instead of dwelling on stress-producing negatives?

Changing the Stressful Event

At least seven problem areas in a work context can cause you undue stress: inadequate or distressing work settings, frequent urgent deadlines, too much work to accomplish in the time allocated, distractions to accomplishing work (such as frequent interruptions), problematic relationships with other staff members, role ambiguity, and poor matches between staff and job. Sometimes you can change such stressful events, but other times, you can't. The following will explore the possibility of implementing changes to control each type of stressful event.

Inadequate or Distressing Work Setting (Corey & Corey, 2016; Daft, 2016a; Gibelman & Furman, 2008). Is your work environment helpful for getting your work done? Do you have sufficient privacy? Or do you have to work in a tiny cubicle separated only by paper-thin partitions of shoulder height?

A social worker we know once held a job as a counselor at a mental health center where she was supposed to do counseling in an office located in a large room with paper-thin dividing walls. It was virtually impossible to