



1. Explain the concept of stress. Give examples from daily life.

Ans: The pattern of responses an organism makes to stimulus event that disturbs the equilibrium and exceeds a person's ability to cope.

Origin in the Latin word 'strictus', meaning tight/narrow and

'stringere' (to tighten). Stress may get manifested in two forms :

(a) Eustress : The level of stress that is good for you and is one of a person's best assets for achieving peak performance and managing minor crises. This is positive, healthy and inspiring.

(b) Distress: Manifestation of stress that causes our body's wear and tear. It is negative, unhealthy and demotivating.

Stressors: Events that cause our body to give the stress response.

Whatever causes stress is known as stressor.

Strain: Reaction to external stressors is known as strain. Hans Selye (Father of modern stress research) defined stress as a non-specific response of the body to any demands.

Basic Features of Stress:

1. Different stressors may produce different patterns of stress reaction.

2. Stress is embedded in the ongoing process that involves individuals interacting ' with their social and cultural environment.

Stress is a dynamic mental/cognitive state. It is a disruption in homeostasis/imbalance that gives rise to resolution of the imbalance/restoration of homeostasis. Perception of stress is dependent on an individual's cognitive appraisal of events and the resources available to deal with them.

2. State the symptoms and sources of stress.

Ans.

- Everyone has their own pattern of stress response. So the warning signs may vary, as may their intensity.
- Some of us know our pattern of stress response and can understand the depth of the problem by the nature and severity of our own symptoms or changes in behaviour.
- These symptoms of stress can be physical, emotional and behavioural.
- A wide range of events and conditions can generate stress; among the most important of these are major stressful life events such as death of a loved one or personal injury, the annoying frequent hassles of everyday life and traumatic events that affect our lives.

(i) Recent Life Events:

- Changes, both big and small, sudden and gradual affect our life from the moment we are born.
- We learn to cope with small, everyday changes but major life events can be stressful because they disturb our routine and cause trouble.
- If several of these life events that are planned (e.g., moving into a new house) or unpredicted (e.g., break-up of a long-term relationship) occur within a short period of time we find it difficult to cope with them and will be more prone to the symptoms of stress.

(ii) Daily Hassles: There are daily hassles from which we have to

cope like noisy surroundings, quarrelsome neighbours, electricity and water shortage, traffic jams, and so on. The more stressed people report as a result of daily hassles, the poorer is the psychological well-being.

(iii) Traumatic Events:

- These include being involved in a variety of extreme events such as fire, train or road accident, robbery, earthquake, tsunami, etc.
- The effects of these events may occur after some lapse of time and sometimes persist as symptoms of anxiety, flashbacks, dreams and intrusive thoughts etc.
- Severe trauma can also strain relationships.

3. Describe the GAS model and illustrate the relevance of this model with the help of an example.

Ans: Hans Selye's GAS Model explains the influence of stress on the body. From his studies, he found that there was a similar pattern of bodily responses in animals to a variety of stressors.

According to Hans Selye, stress refers to non-specific bodily reactions. He believed that stresses may be many but responses are only physiological reactions. Selye is known as 'father of modern stress researches'. He did many experiments on animals in extreme climatic conditions as well as he observed chronic patients and concluded that reaction of stress is the same.

On the basis of his experimental conclusions, he gave a pattern of stress reactions. He called this pattern the General Adaptation Syndrome and it involves three stages:

1. Alarm Reaction:

- The presence of a harmful stimulus or stressor leads to activation of the adrenal-pituitary-cortex system.
- This triggers the release of hormones which produces the stress response and prepares the individual for fight or flight.

2. Resistance:

- If stress is prolonged, the parasympathetic nervous system calls for more cautious use of the body's resources.
- During this stage, an individual makes an effort to cope with the threat.

3. Exhaustion:

- Continued exposure to the same stressor or additional stressors drains the body of its resources and leads to burn out.
- The physiological systems involved in the first two stages become ineffective and susceptibility to stress-related diseases like high blood-pressure increases.
- This model is widely criticized because it focuses only on physiological aspects of stress and ignores the psychological dimension of stress.

4. Enumerate the different ways of coping with stress.

Ans: Coping is a dynamic, situation-specific reaction to stress. It is a set of concrete responses to stressful situations that are intended to resolve the problem and reduce stress. Endler and Parker gave following Coping Strategies:

1. Task-oriented Strategy:

- It is goal management through confrontation with the problem.
- This involves obtaining information about the stressful situation and making best use of resources available.
- It also involves prioritising and acting so as to deal directly with the stressful situation.

- Mostly it is used by optimists.
- Task-oriented strategies are particularly effective when the resources in the environment are within the control of the individual.
- It is cognitive response to stress.

2. Emotion-Hyper oriented Strategy:

- It is emotion management.
- This strategy involve efforts to maintain hope and to control one's emotions. Individual works on his emotions rather than situations and goals.
- This mainly happens when the stressful event is such that it can not be manipulated in any way eg. loss of spouse or a family member.
- The individual deals with his emotions of anxiety, helplessness, hopelessness etc. and tries to gain hope and happiness again in his life.
- It can also involve venting feelings of anger and frustration or deciding that nothing can be done to change things.
- Emotion oriented strategies are particularly effective when the resources in the environment are beyond the controlled of the individual.

Avoidance-Hyper oriented strategy

- It is avoiding stressful event by indulging in different activities. Individual does not want to accept that he is facing such a stressful situation.
- This involves denying or minimising the seriousness of the situation.
- It also involves conscious suppression of stressful thoughts and their replacement by self protective thoughts.
- Watching T.V., attending parties or going to sleep are example of this type of coping.
- It is basically escapism by using defense mechanisms.

According to Lazarus and Folkman, coping responses can be divided into two types of responses:

(a) Problem-Focused:

- It includes taking direct action to solve the problem.
- It is seeking information that will be relevant to the solution for, e.g., developing a study schedule to cope up with the semester demands, and thereby reduce examination pressure.
- It is basically confronting with the problem using all the available resources.

(b) Emotion-Focused: It refers to reduction of the negative emotional reaction to stress, e.g., by distracting oneself from the problem, relaxing or seeking comfort from others.

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