Stress - the term used to describe the describe the perception of and response to events that are appraised as threatening, overwhelming, or challenging. }

Stressors - events that are demanding or threatening

Cognitive appraisal approach - states that how people think about a stressor determines, at least in part, how stressful that stressor will become ◦

Primary appraisal – judgement about the degree of potential harm of threat to wellbeing that a stressor may involve ◦

Secondary appraisal - involves estimating the resources available to the person for coping with the stressor as well as how effective those options may be

When encountering a stressor, a person judges its potential threat (primary appraisal) and then determines if effective options are available to manage the situation. Stress is likely to result if a stressor

is perceived as extremely threatening or threatening with few or no effective coping options available. } Catastrophe - an unpredictable, large-scale event that creates a tremendous need to adapt and adjust as well as overwhelming feelings of threat (also referred to as a “traumatic event”) } E.g., war, natural disasters (hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, floods), terrorist attack, forest fire,

Major Life Events - cause stress by requiring adjustment (can be positive or negative) ◦ E.g., job loss, marriage, divorce, new baby, relocation } Hassles - the daily annoyances of everyday life ◦ E.g., bills, traffic, busy schedules }

Pressure - the psychological experience produced by urgent demands or expectations for a person’s behavior that come from an outside source ◦ E.g., Tariq’s boss has given him a specific deadline to complete a major project. He knows if he doesn’t get it done in time, he may lose his job. }

Uncontrollability - the degree of control that the person has over a particular event or situation-- The less control a person has, the greater the degree of stress. ◦ E.g., Stuck in a traffic jam with the next exit 5 miles away, Noel suddenly realizes that she may be late for work for the first time in her career. }

Frustration - the psychological experience produced by the blocking of a desired goal or fulfillment of a perceived need ◦ E.g., Just as Danielle sat down to register online for her classes, her computer shut down. } Conflict - psychological experience of being pulled toward or drawn to two or more desires or goals, only one of which may be attained ◦ E.g., Navid is torn between going to his brother’s graduation or going to his best friend’s wedding; both are occurring during the same weekend but in different states. }

Approach–approach conflict – conflict occurring when a person must choose between two desirable goals ◦ Acceptance to two good colleges. Both options are desirable. } Avoidance–avoidance conflict - conflict occurring when a person must choose between two undesirable goals ◦ Toothache or dentist? Neither option is desirable. }

Approach–avoidance conflict - conflict occurring when a person must choose or not choose one goal that has both positive and negative aspects. ◦ Good job in Alaska—don’t want to move to Alaska. Job is desirable, move to Alaska is not. } The Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS)— ◦ Consists of 43 life events that require varying degrees of personal readjustment. ◦ Includes examples of both eustress and distress. ◦ Mean value scores for each event are referred to as “life change units (LCUs)” and range from 11 to 100 where 11 represents the lowest perceived magnitude of life change each event entails and 100 represents the highest. ◦ Death of a spouse is ranked highest on the scale at 100 LCUs, and minor violations of the law is ranked lowest at 11 LCUs. ◦ To complete the scale, participants check “yes” for events experienced within the last 12 months; LCUs are then totaled for a score that represents the

Autonomic nervous system consists of: ◦ Sympathetic system - responds to stressful events by mobilizing the body (“fight or flight”)— heart races, blood pressure rises, stomach flutters, mouth dries, muscles tense, pupils dilate, skin tingles, bladder relaxes, energy level increases, etc. ◦ Fight-or-flight response occurs during the alarm stage of the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS). ◦ Parasympathetic system - restores the body to normal functioning after the stress has ceased.

Hans Selye (1936)—introduced General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) alarm reaction/stage—initial exposure to stressor occurs; resources to combat stress are activated; resistance to stressors peak; “fight-or-flight” response is triggered; physiological reactions surface producing energy resistance stage—resistance to stressors are leveled off with prolonged exposure to stressor—the initial shock of the stressor has worn off and the body has adapted to the stressor; the body remains “on alert” exhaustion stage—resistance to stressors is used up— person is no longer able to adapt to stressor; physical wear takes toll on the body

} The immune system consists of a variety of structures, cells, and mechanisms that serve to protect the body from invading toxins and microorganisms that can harm or damage the body’s tissues and organs. ◦ Immunosuppression – a decrease in the effectiveness of the immune system ◦ People with immunosuppression become susceptible to any number of infections, illness, and diseases (e.g., Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome—AIDS). }

Psychoneuroimmunology - the study of the effects of psychological factors such as stress, emotions, thoughts, and behavior on the immune system and immune functioning ◦ The field evolved in part from the discovery that there is a connection between the central nervous system and the immune system

Coping strategies - actions that people can take to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize the effects of stressors ◦

Problem-focused coping- coping strategies that try to eliminate the source of a stress or reduce its impact through direct actions E.g., You can’t pay your tuition, so you get a student loan.

◦ Emotion-focused coping - coping strategies that change the impact of a stressor by changing the emotional reaction to the stressor—can involve the following: Avoiding the problem Rationalizing what has happened Denying the occurrence of the problem Laughing the problem off Hoping the problem will just “go away” E.g., You fear failing an exam, so you don’t go to class

Types of Stress Management Techniques ◦ Exercise ◦ Meditation and Relaxation Response Transcendental meditation (use of a mantra—repetition of a calming phrase or word used to cleanse the mind for new experiences) Mindfulness meditation (maintaining a “floating” state of consciousness that encourages individuals to focus on whatever comes to mind at that particular moment—used to increase concentration) ◦ Biofeedback The process in which individuals’ muscular or visceral activities are monitored by instruments; then, individuals learn to voluntarily control their physical activities as information from the instruments is fed back to them

Positive emotions can also be experienced during stressful situations. } Positive emotion and social support are reciprocally linked (they influence each other). } Positive emotions, such as happiness, appear to improve our ability to cope with the physical effects of stressors.

Optimists - people who expect positive outcomes – tend to experience less stress and fewer health problems Pessimists - people who expect negative outcomes – tend to experience more stress and more health problems