

WHAT IS
STRESS?

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Discussion Topics

1. What Is Health?
2. What is Mental Health?
3. What is Wellbeing?

Describe a Mentally Healthy Person

Discussion Topics

1. What is stress?
2. Antonovsky's Salutogenic Model
3. The Impact of Stress on Health and Performance
4. The Impact of Stress and Lifestyle on Longevity
5. The Physiology of Stress
6. The Psychology of Stress
7. The Promise of Positive Psychology

WHAT IS STRESS?

What Is Stress?

- Stress can be experienced
 - Emotionally
 - Physiologically
 - Behaviorally
 - Cognitively

What Is Stress?

- **Homeostatic baseline:** Most healthy people return to their homeostatic baseline after a stressful experience
- **Fight or flight:** the body's physiological response to fight a stressor or flee from it
- **General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS):** Selye's (1956) three stage model of chronic stress

What Is Stress? (cont'd.)

- Stages of stress
 1. Alarm stage
 2. Resistance stage: body deals with stressors until its natural resources begin to deplete
 3. Exhaustion stage: body's systems break down and illness or premature death ensue

What Is Stress? (cont'd.)

- Selye thought there were two types of stress:
 - distress (negative)
 - eustress (positive)

What Is Stress? (cont'd.)

- **Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS):** scale that measures life change events, developed by Holmes & Rahe (1967)
 - Higher life change scores for 6 months – 1 year mean a person has a greater chance of developing illness
- Lazarus (1984) developed **Hazards and Uplifts Scale:** combines measures for hassles (irritants and pressures) and uplifts (positive encounters and experiences)

What Is Stress? (cont'd.)

- **Appraisal:**
- Make a judgment about the relative significance of the event and evaluate as a threat or challenge
- Appraisal patterns are linked to particular emotional responses
- Ex: experiencing a demeaning offense results in anger

- Lazarus identified 15 of these appraisals, called **Core Relational Themes**

Core Relational Themes

WHAT IS
HEALTH?

What Is Health?

- **Biopsychosocial model:**
- Model of health that views it as a product of biological, psychological, and social influences
 - Continuum of the very ill to super well
 - Mind and body are an interactive whole
 - Sees mind and body as separate (mind-body dualism)

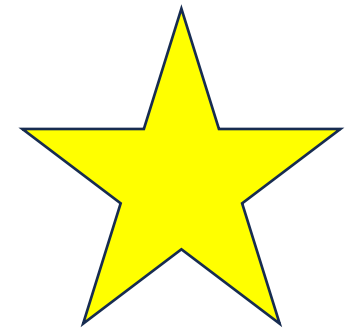
What Is Health? (cont'd.)

- **Psychosomatic medicine:** intrapsychic conflict can lead to somatic conversions expressed as physical symptoms
 - Inspired by Freud, was one of the first areas to challenge mind-body dualism
 - Social and psychological factors can also cause illness
 - Individual more responsible for own health in biopsychosocial model

What Is Health? (cont'd.)

- **Behavioral medicine:** applies elements of the behavioral sciences to illness prevention and treatment
 - A multi-disciplinary field that helps people maximize their health goals
- **Health psychology:** uses scientific and professional knowledge of psychology to promote and maintain health and treat illness

What Is Wellness?



- **Wellness:** a global approach to health that includes stress management, healthy living (nutrition and exercise), and activities for personal growth
- Health as defined by WHO: **“a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”**

ANTONOVSKY'S SALUTOGENIC MODEL

Antonovsky's Salutogenic Model

- **Salutogenic Model:** emphasizes **what people do right** to maintain health rather than risk and pathogenic factors
 - Focus in on maintaining health in the midst of **entropic** forces
 - Stressors cause tension and can move people along the health continuum depending on how they are managed
 - We must use our resources Generalized Resistance Resources (GRRs) to adapt

Antonovsky's Salutogenic Model (cont'd.)

- **Generalized Resistance Resources (GRRs):** include
 - social environment
 - personal reserves
 - physical environment
- **GRRs** shape our worldview, or sense of coherence (SOC)

Antonovsky's Salutogenic Model (cont'd.)

- **SOC** composed of three factors that are influenced by our life experiences. SOC's factors:
 1. **Comprehensibility:** the degree to which we can make cognitive sense of stimuli we perceive
 2. **Manageability:** our ability to access internal and external coping resources and use them when we need them
 3. **Meaningfulness:** our ability to emotionally make sense of demands and to perceive them as challenges rather than burdens

Antonovsky's Salutogenic Model (cont'd.)

- A strong SOC promotes resilience and positive health (Eriksson & Lindstrom, 2005)
- Strong SOC's benefit our health



THE IMPACT OF STRESS ON HEALTH AND PERFORMANCE

The Impact of Stress on Health and Performance

- Stressors can produce **detrimental physical and psychological changes**:
 - Worry
 - Inability to make decisions
 - Anxiety
 - Depression, etc.
- **Physiological reactions** to stress can include increased heart rate, headaches, and frequent illnesses
- There is an **optimal zone** of mid-level physiological arousal, neither under-stimulated or over-stimulated

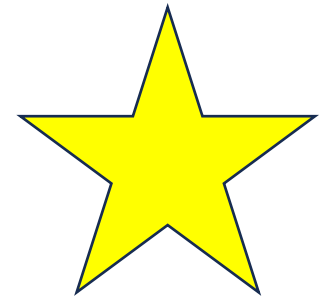
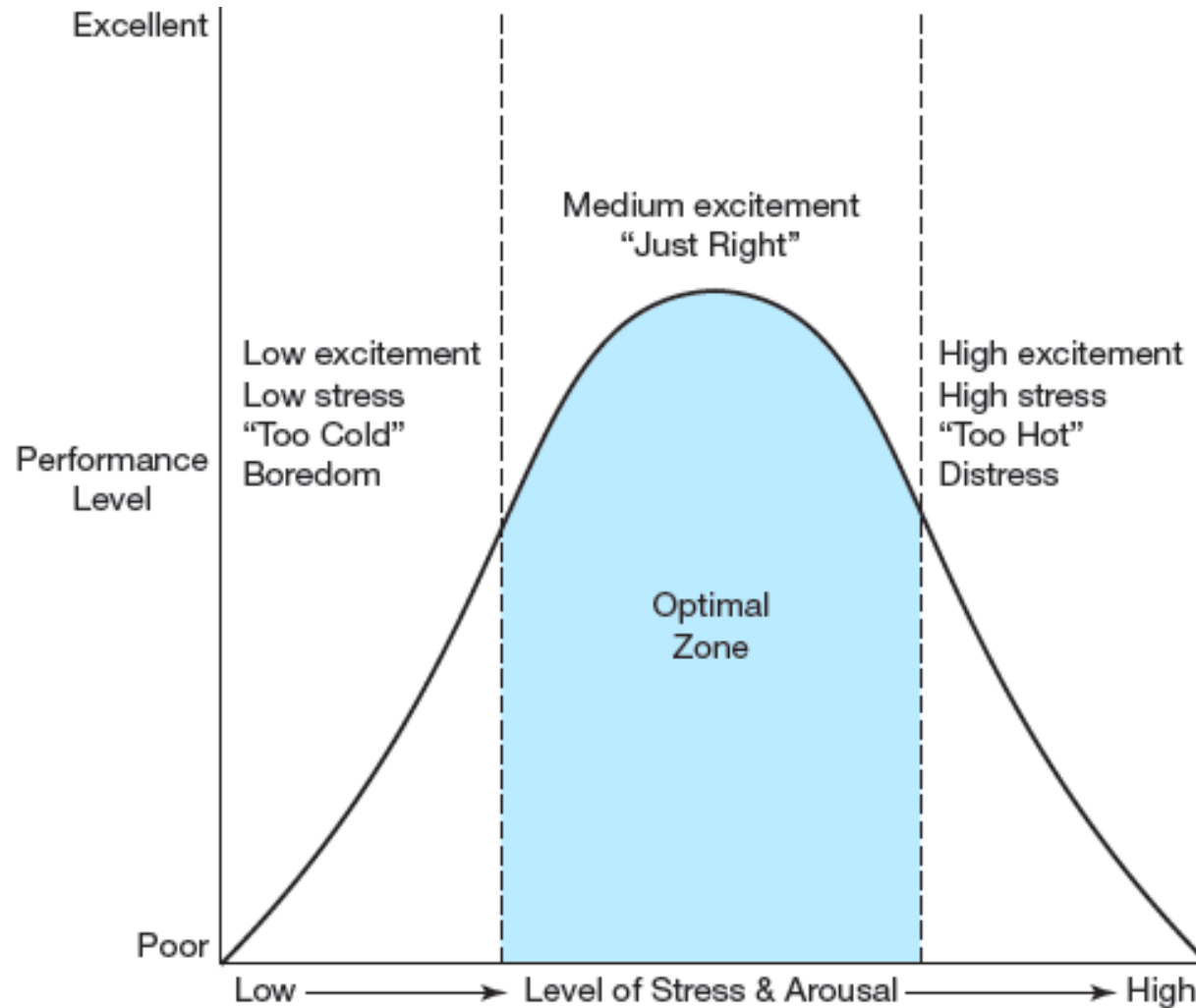


Figure: According to the Yerkes-Dodson curve, optimal performance occurs when we are at the midlevel of diffuse physiological arousal and excitement. It is like the Goldilocks theory of not wanting her bowl of porridge to be “too hot” or “too cold” but “just right.”

THE IMPACT
OF STRESS
AND LIFESTYLE
ON LONGEVITY

The Impact of Stress and Lifestyle on Longevity

- Lifestyle related variables found to have **impact on lifespan**
- Stress can interrupt healthy decisions!!!!
- A vicious cycle of stress contributing to poor health and poor health contributing to stress can begin
- Exercise is good for health and reduces stress
- Exercise increases chances of living long; smoking, diabetes, and obesity lowers it

THE PHYSIOLOGY OF STRESS



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Cannon's Fight or Flight Model

- Stressors evoke fight-or-flight reactions in different systems of the body
 - **Autonomic nervous system:** enervates the organ systems of the body
 - **Sympathetic nervous system:** responsible for the arousal response of organ systems
 - **Norepinephrine and epinephrine** primes the body to fight or flee from a stressor
- Food stores converted into glucose for energy



Cannon's Fight or Flight Model

- Today's stressors are primarily the saber-toothed tigers of our minds.

Selye's General Adaptation System

- Selye described physiological changes as stress reactions
- **Non-specific responses:** common patterns to a host of different stressors
- When first subjected to a stressor, organism activates fight-or-flight response
 - Activation brings on alarm stage
 - With repeated stress comes the resistance stage

Selye's GAS General Adaptation System

- **Allostatic load:** chronic stress begins to wear down the systems
 - In exhaustion stage, repeated stress leads to illness and possibly death

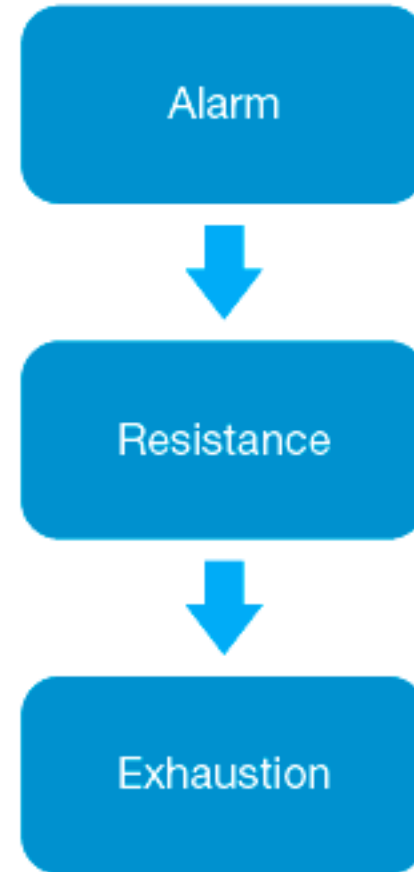


Figure: Stages of Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome. According to Selye's general adaptation syndrome (GAS), chronic stress leads to an increasing allostatic load that over time can move an individual through all three stages of the GAS.

Selye's General Adaptation System (cont'd.)

- Limitations of GAS:
 - Does not address psychological processes and how they can affect appraisal
 - Selye claimed universality: all stressors should have the same effects
 - However, this is not the case
 - Overly general in explaining responses to everyday stressors

Diathesis-stress model

- **Diathesis-stress model:** similar to GAS, it suggests that illness may result from interaction of biology and environment
- Therefore, each case is unique

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF STRESS



THE PSYCHOLOGY OF
STRESS
= ROLE OF PSYCHOLOGY IN
DETERMINING STRESS

Lazarus's Appraisal and Coping Model

- Three process cognitive model of stress and coping:
 1. **Primary appraisal:** person evaluates present and potential harm or loss from event
 2. **Secondary appraisal:** person evaluates coping resources; if not enough resources are available, threat is experienced
 3. **Reappraisal:** person may change meaning of event to minimize stress reactions

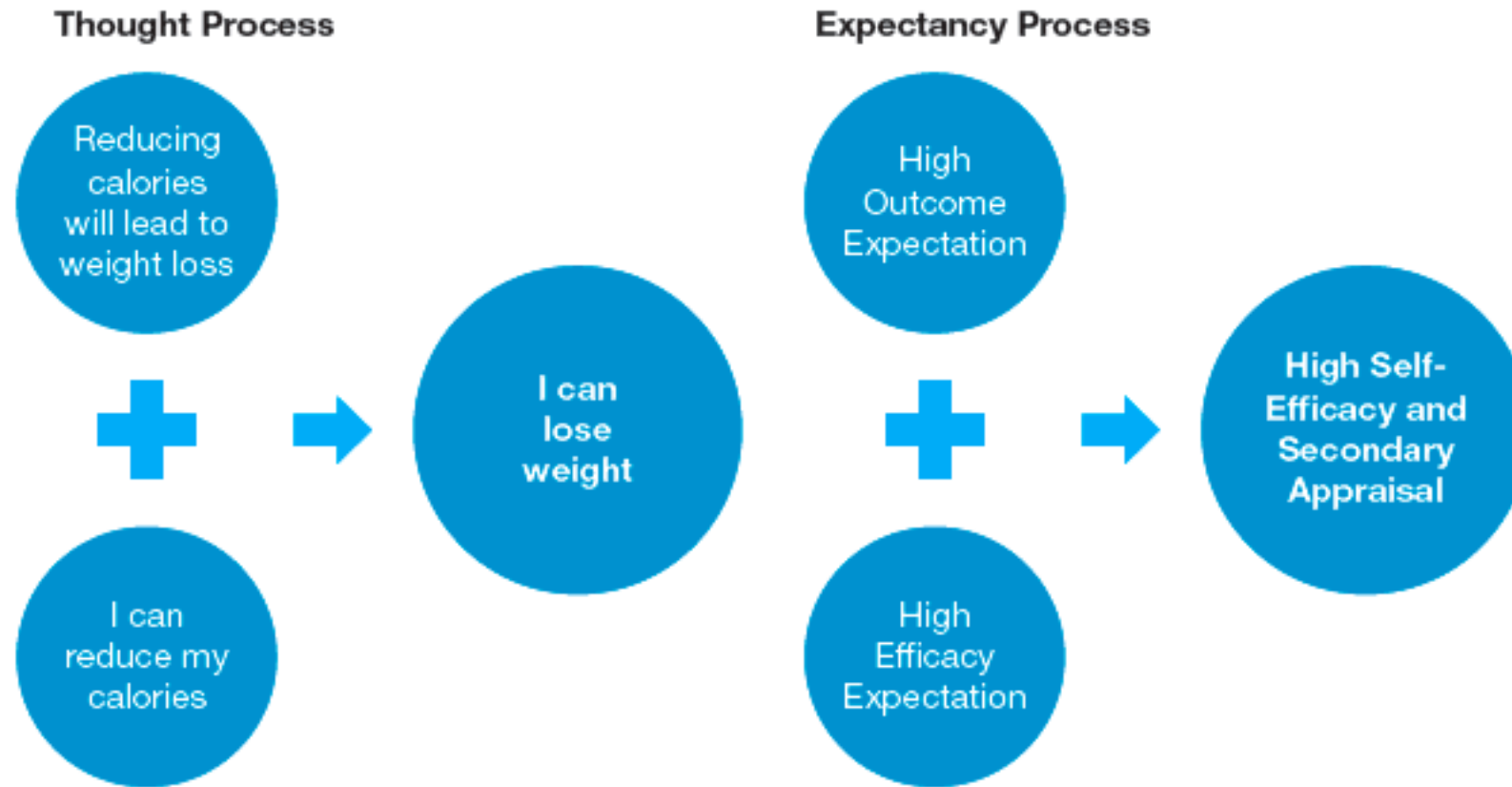
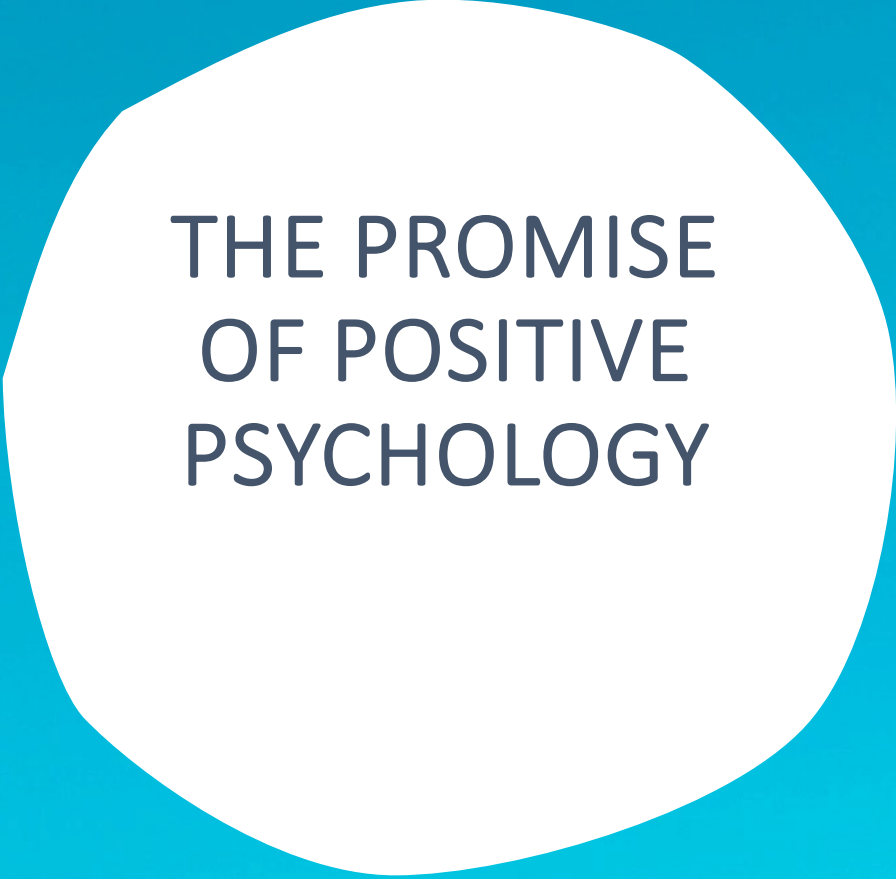


Figure: Weight Loss, Secondary Appraisal, and Self-Efficacy.

High self-efficacy is related to high secondary appraisal. High self-efficacy is a result of having a high outcome expectation and a high efficacy expectation. People with high self-efficacy believe they have the coping resources to deal with a challenge like weight loss.

POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY



THE PROMISE OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY



The Promise of Positive Psychology

- Stressors can be viewed as **challenges** that help us to **grow**

Positive Psychology

- **Positive psychology:** a field that studies what goes right with us rather than what goes wrong
- Studies areas of
 - Positive trait characteristics
 - Positive subjective experiences
 - Positive institutions
- Focus is on the **good life:** a fulfilling life
 - To live the good life, we must build on good feelings and our sense of well-being

Positive Psychology

- Managing stress only keeps one's life in a state of neutrality

Summary

- Antonovsky views stressors as omnipresent and possibly health promoting
- GRRs shape our SOC
- Health and wellness effected by cognitive, emotional, psychological, physiological, and behavioral changes
- Overall healthy lifestyle can lead to longevity



Summary

- Stress models evolved from biological to cognitive
- Cannon's model focused on fight-or-flight response
- Selye's GAS model showed how stress adversely affects organisms
- Lazarus's model focused on constant appraisal and subjective experience of stress
- Biopsychosocial model is health on continuum
- Positive Psychology focuses on what is right not wrong

