



Contemporary Context of Counselling Skills M4X00954

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Contemporary Context of Counselling Skill

Module Learning Outcomes:

- Recognise health as a contested topic and Counselling's position in the discipline
- Evaluate a range of theories of causality relating to emotional distress and its impact on well-being
- Recognise the links between individual experience of health and health issues and the wider structural elements relevant to health and well-being.
- Employ appropriate academic conventions in the production and presentation of work suitable for this level

Contemporary Context of Counselling

Lesson Aims:

- To Explore the effects of Stress on Health and Well-Being
- Stress and Immunity

ASSIGNMENT GUIDANCE

Assessment Component One

- ❖ Academic Essay - 2000 words (10% +/-)
- ❖ Essay Title: 'There is often a link between ill health and poverty; Discuss the social, economic and environmental influences that impact psychological health and well-being'
- ❖ SUBMISSION DATE: 5th December 2017 at 12:00

❖ **What is Stress?**

What is Stress?

- ❖ A natural reaction to excessive pressure
- ❖ When perceived events exceed an individual's ability to cope
- ❖ If prolonged, stress can lead to mental and physical illness
- ❖ Stress-Related Disorders (DSM)

❖ Consider Events Throughout Life that can Cause Stress?

Life Events Theory (Holmes and Rahe 1967)

Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS, Holmes and Rahe, 1967)

Representative life event items include for example

- ❖ Death of a spouse (100)
- ❖ Divorce (75)
- ❖ Change of job (37)
- ❖ Christmas (12)
- ❖ The more life events that occur, in say a year, the greater likelihood of physical health problems (Rahe, 1974)
- ❖ Major life events can and do impact on people's lives in a variety of ways

General Adaptation Syndrome (Seyle, 1974)

- ❖ The response to stress is seen as an innate drive to maintain internal balance (homeostasis)

Three stages:

- ❖ Alarm reaction – Awareness of stressor – arousal of adrenal cortex system (Cannot be maintained for long periods)
- ❖ Stage of resistance – Body adapts to stressor. This stage of defence can not last without the person becoming vulnerable to illness.
- ❖ Stage of exhaustion – Continuous exposure to the resistance stage can result in a depletion of bodily resources and energy. 'Diseases of adaptation'





Stress as a physiological Response

- ❖ Initially, an event has to be appraised and this involves the Central Nervous System (CNS)
- ❖ The sensory information and appraisal of events activate the automatic nervous system (sympathetic and Parasympathetic) and endocrine (Hormone) responses
- ❖ These feed back to the cortex and limbic system which in turn link with the hypothalamus and brainstem. Hormones such as CRF and Cortisol are released and affect every major organ in the body
- ❖ Fight-flight-freeze response – adrenalin and noradrenalin are released from adrenal glands of sympathetic nervous system (Seyle, 1974)



Cognitive Transactional Model of Stress (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984)

Stress is a result of an interaction between an individual's characteristics and appraisals, and internal or external events (Stressors)

Lazarus' model maintains that when an individual confront a new situation they engage in a process of appraisal (Cognitive appraisal)

According to Lazarus, the stress and coping model involve two elements

- ❖ An evaluation of a situation that produces negative emotions
- ❖ Coping efforts which attempt to reduce these negative emotions
- ❖ 'Stress results from an imbalance between demands and resources'

Stress and Coping

- Cognitive dissonance
- Gregg and Looker (1996) consider physiological and behavioural responses and their interface with the environment. Stress is 'a whole body and mind interactive response to a demand or a pressure (stressor)
- Stress exists when an individual feels they cannot cope with the demands of the environment, so the evaluation of the perceived threat.
- Individual differences

Stress and Cognition

- ❖ Perceived control
- ❖ An individual with internal locus of control beliefs would take responsibility for what happens to them (I am in control of my health)
- ❖ An individual with external locus of control beliefs might attribute success to external circumstances such as chance or luck (I can only do what my doctor tells me to do)
- ❖ Aaron Beck (1976) and Albert Ellis (1977) assume that cognitive response to events, determine mood and feelings of distress are a consequence of 'irrational thinking'
- ❖ Cognitive schemata – A set of unconscious beliefs about ourselves and the world
- ❖ Beck identified thoughts that might lead to negative thinking such as 'catastrophic thinking', 'over-generalising', 'arbitrary inference', 'selective abstraction'

Model of Stress (Palmer and Strickman, 1996)

- ❖ 1. External pressure from life
- ❖ 2. Perceived as stressful
- ❖ 3. Stress response: psychological, behavioural, physiological
- ❖ 4. Reappraisal of the situation
- ❖ 5. Stress responses fail to remove or modify causal factor
- ❖ 6. Physical and/or psychological illness

Symptoms of Stress (Cooper and Palmer, 2000)

Psychological:

Anxiety, Anger; Poor concentration; Low self-esteem; Depression; Guilt and shame; Mood swings

Behavioural:

Procrastination; increase in alcohol and caffeine intake; Disturbed sleeping patterns, irritability; Poor time management; Increased absenteeism; Over-eating; Passive or aggressive behaviour.

Physiological:

Tension headache, palpitations, skin complaint; Indigestion, Increase in illnesses; Racing heart; Asthma; Diarrhoea; Insomnia

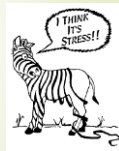
Symptoms of Increased Stress

- ❖ Increase in cynicism
- ❖ Psychological detachment
- ❖ Increase in self-doubt
- ❖ Perceiving self as a fraud and will be found out
- ❖ Shame
- ❖ Avoidance
- ❖ Omnipresent anxiety
- ❖ Blurred boundaries
- ❖ Denying there is a problem



Burnout

- ❖ The result of protracted stress is Burnout – physical and psychological exhaustion
- ❖ Cognitive, affective, behavioural and physical distress;
- ❖ Decreased effectiveness;
- ❖ Reduction in motivation;
- ❖ Dysfunctional behaviour and attitude (Kotler and Hazler, 1997)



Stress and Illness

- ❖ Continual exposure to stress affects health directly, not only by impacting autonomic and neuroendocrine responses, but also indirectly, by changing health behaviours.



Stress and Personality

Type A Personality

- ❖ Competitiveness, easily annoyed, impatient
- ❖ Hostility and Anger

Type C Personality (disease prone)

- ❖ Suppression of emotion, compliant, passive, stoic, self-sacrificing

Type D Personality

- ❖ Easily distressed, negative, social inhibition



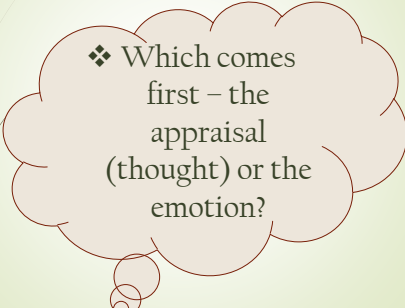
Diathesis – Stress: An Integrative Paradigm



- ❖ Introduced in 1970's as a way of acknowledging the multiple causes of schizophrenia (Zubin & Spring, 1977)
- ❖ Links genetic, neurobiological, psychological and environmental factors.
- ❖ Focus on the interaction between predisposition toward disease (diathesis) and environmental or life influences (stressors)

Stress and Burnout

- ❖ Therapists deal with other people's stress on a regular basis.
- ❖ Therapist need to apply techniques which are so easily dispensed to clients, such as empathy to themselves and be effective 'stress managers'.
- ❖ Practitioners need to develop a healthy attitude to self-care in order to manage work in a n ethical and safe manner which benefits self, clients and colleagues
- ❖ Staff sickness due to stress is estimated to cost the NHS £400 million a year



❖ Which comes first – the appraisal (thought) or the emotion?

Resources

Essential Reading:

- ❖ Morrison, V. & Bennett, P., 2012. *An Introduction to Health Psychology 3rd ed.* England: Pearson Chapter 11
- ❖ Woolfe, R., Strawbridge, S., Douglas, B. and Dryden, W., 2010. *Handbook of Counselling Psychology 3rd ed.* London: Sage. Chapter 14
- ❖ Teasdale, J., Williams, M., and Segal, Z., 2014. *The Mindful Way: An 8-week programme to free yourself from depression and emotional distress.* New York: Guilford Press
- ❖ <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/pages/understanding-stress.aspx>
