

Stress and Coping and Resilience

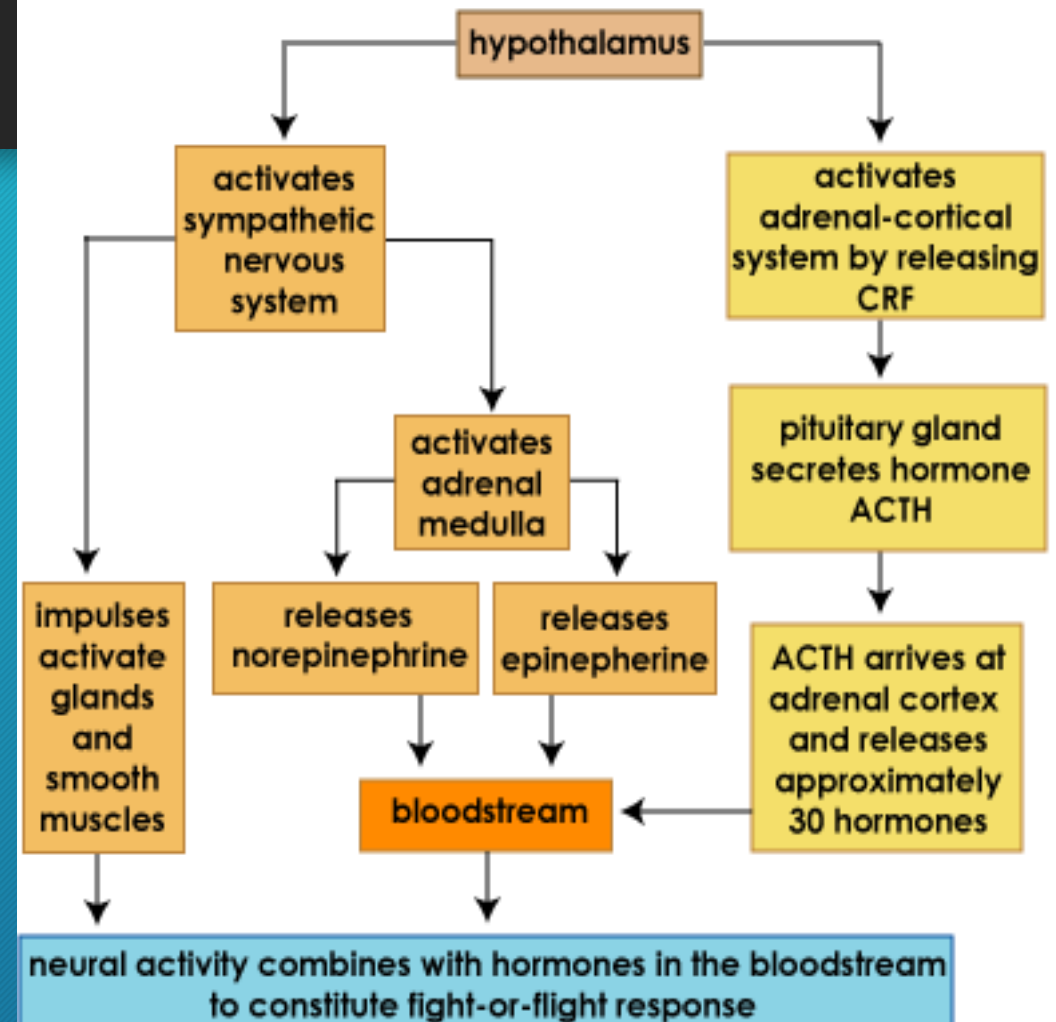
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Fight or Flight

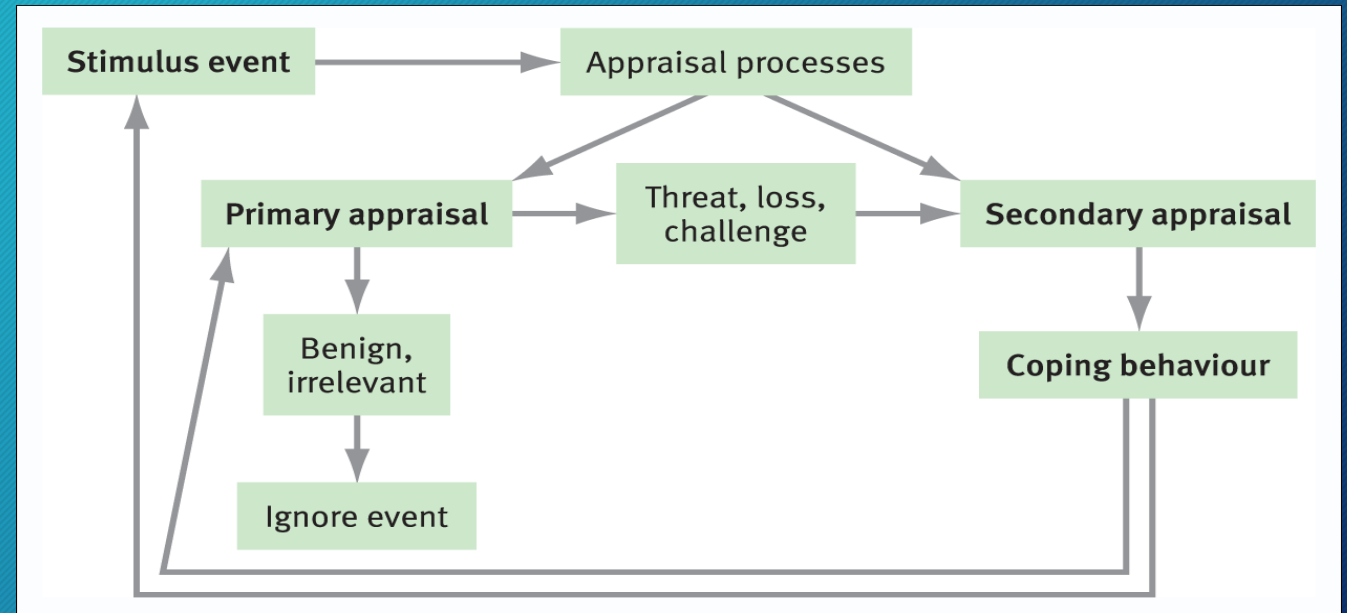
- The fight or flight response stress response was first explained in the 1920s by Cannon (1915), an American Psychologist. He discovered a chain of reactions occurring inside the body to help mobilise the bodies response when dealing with threatening situations. (Harrington 2012)
- The fight or flight response is a physiological reaction which occurs when an individual is presented with something frightening, either mentally or physically.
- When acute stress occurs, the body's sympathetic nervous system is triggered to a release of hormones. This happens to increase heart rate, blood pressure and breathing rate. This is engaged so that the body is ready to deal with the situation or run away to safety. (Harrington 2012)

Fight-or-flight Response



The Transactional Model Of Stress

- The transactional model of stress was designed by Lazarus and Folkman (1984). Here they designed a three-process cognitive model of stress and coping, which included primary appraisal, secondary appraisal, and reappraisal.
- The first step of the transactional model is, primary appraisal, here individuals evaluate the present and any other potential harm from a stimulus event. For example, if you heard some footsteps running behind you down a dark alleyway, the individual would appraise this as a potentially harmful event. (Harrington 2012)



The Transactional Model Of Stress



- In the secondary appraisal, the individual develops coping recourses and how to deal with the situation.
- The individual assesses the situation and seeks to find recourses or techniques which could help cope. E.g. the individual in the alleyway may begin to pick up speed and look for a house or open lit up street where they could go into for safety. (Harrington 2012)
- If there aren't any resources around the person will experience a threat, which develops to a stress reaction.
- Then there is appraisal where the individual may change how they perceive the threat in order to reduce stress reactions. For example, the individual walking down the dark alleyway hearing footsteps approaching, may then begin to evaluate the situation as a less threatening than previously analysed.
- This could be influenced by the individual seeing another person walking their dog past them and decide it is just someone running home because it is cold outside. (Harrington 2012)

Weaknesses Of The Transactional Model

- Weaknesses of the transactional model:
 - The model is very simple and does not include, social, and environmental factors.
 - It overlooks the physiological perspective in response to a stressor
 - The model is difficult to test through experimental research because of the subjective nature. (Zureck, Altsoffer, Friederike, Gerstenberg, 2015)
- Strengths of the transactional model:
 - It looks at psychological response to stress in situations that we do not have control over and does not show how individuals react to stress differently.
 - It interprets what each situation could mean to an individual and their perspective, it allows more variability in the human stress response. This can help explain why we all respond in different ways to the same stressor. (Zureck, Altsoffer, Friederike, Gerstenberg, 2015)



Personality Type A and B

Type A People



Full of fluctuations

Type B People



Relatively calm

Type A:

- Competitive
- Often aggressive and present in all personal and social interaction
 - Muscular tension, difficulty in relaxing
 - Time urgent
- Always needing control over situations
- Often smoking or alcohol is present
 - Limited physical activity
 - No interests outside of work

Type B:

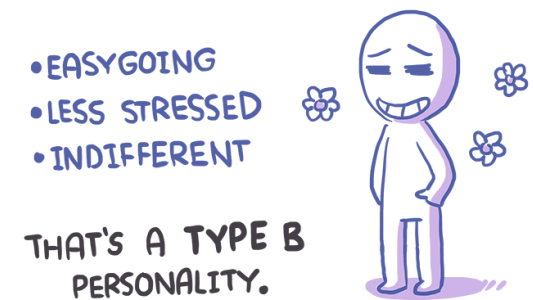
- Able to tolerate differences between individuals
 - No difficulty in relaxing
- Tendency to plan things and to achieve goals but at own pace
- Little need to be in control of situations
- Doesn't feel the need to consume or acquire pointless things.
 - Limited use of tobacco or alcohol
 - Takes part in regular physical activity
 - Has other interests outside of work

Friedman and Rosenman's theory of Type A and Type B behaviours

- Friedman and Rosenman (1974) made an observation that some of their patients had “hurry sickness”. This led them to believe that individuals who were always on the go, had a relation to Type A behaviour and the increased risk of cardiovascular heart disease when stress is involved.
- They took 3200 Californian men aged between 39-59 and categorised them as either Type A, Type X (Mixture of both A&B), or Type B personality. Each participant had to answer 25 questions a day, and had their blood pressure and heart rate measured frequently. This study was spread out across eight years and assessed the individual's lifestyle and health outcomes.
- The findings of this study were that 257 of the men developed Cardiovascular heart disease (chd) due to stress. 70% of these people were in the personality group type A. Type A is generally more vulnerable to stress due to the high demands of their behaviour.
- The conclusions of this study were that Type A behaviours e.g. smoking, drinking, overworking and not taking enough self-care are linked to vulnerability to heart disease and stress.
- By finding correct interventions to reduce stress and a busy lifestyle that personality type A strive for, will reduce risk of heart disease.

Weaknesses of the study

- Friedman and Roseman (1974) study can be criticised for only using males aged 39-59 years old. The study lacks variety and validity, the study cannot be generalised to the entire population as women may deal with stress in a different way.
- The study does not take into account individual differences. For example, there could be lifestyle variables which can affect vulnerability to heart disease. Type A personality is usually linked with smoking and alcohol intake, to relax therefore this could be a reason why they are more at risk. Although some individual differences were accounted for, some important variables were not.

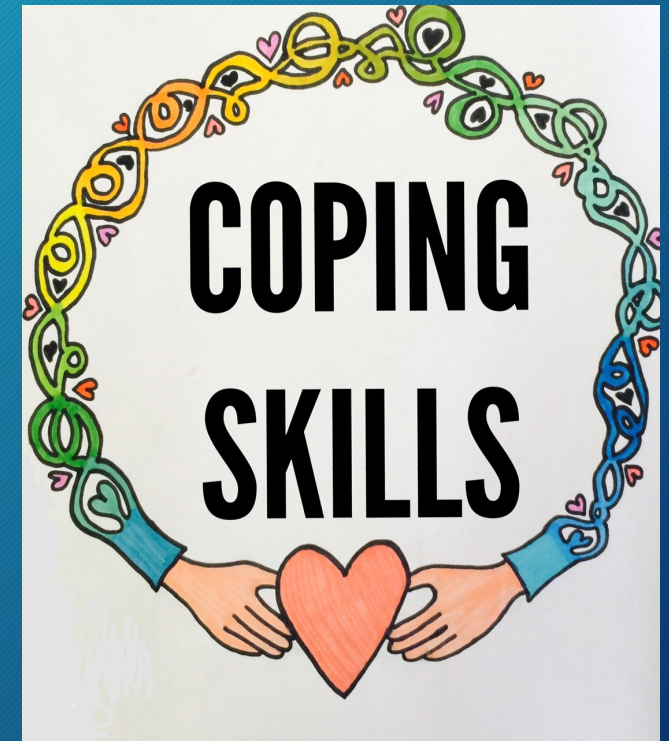


Which personality type is more vulnerable to stress, type A or type B?

- Studies have shown Type A behaviour is associated with being busy and goal orientated. They take on too much and leave little time for themselves.
- However, personality type B are very laid back and energised. They take their time with what they are doing and are never in a rush. They have hobbies and interests outside of work to motivate them. They are energetic and enjoy other people's company. Personality type B is able to relax and recuperating from day to day life. They are not affected by failure and do not worry about situations which cannot be changed.
- Type A behaviour has been associated with hyperactivity to stressful situations. This increases the hormone production, heart rate and blood pressure. (Beehr, 1998, Ivancevich and Matteson, 1980, Spector and O'Connell, 1994, Zyzanski and Jenkins, 1970).
- Type B do not develop these tendencies and have a sense of fulfilment from socialising so they are much more relaxed. Type B are often satisfied with their job, however Type A personality often lack a sense of fulfilment and see their job as a daily routine. (Hackman and Oldham, 1975)
- So, overall personality type A are more vulnerable to stress, this is because they are always on the go and lack time for themselves. They are constantly on the go, and always working hard. This impacts their stress levels and puts them at higher risk to health problems. If personality type A was to use interventions such as meditation and mindfulness they may begin to adopt some of type B traits and become less stressed.

Coping Skills

- Problem focused coping:
- This occurs when an individual has control over a particular situation and they know how to manage the problem in order to get in a positive outcome. The individual may develop further coping skills during this phase which can be used to help cope with other situations which may occur in the future. (Heftier & Eisenberg, 2009; Lee, Keough, & Sexton, 2002)
- Emotional focused coping:
- This happens when there is little control over a situation and the individual cannot find the root of the problem, this is when emotional-based coping comes into action. The individual may avoid particular situations, distance themselves from socialising, or talking to people for emotional support. E.g. staying at home from school because someone is calling you hurtful names. (Heftier & Eisenberg, 2009; Lee, Keough, & Sexton, 2002)



What healthy strategies can be used to counteract someone's personality vulnerabilities

- Everybody deals with stress and vulnerability with different coping methods. Some people are able to overcome stress and others are more vulnerable to becoming stressed. There are different interventions which can be introduced in order to overcome and prevent vulnerability to stress and other negative effects.
- Interventions to overcome vulnerability to stress are:
- Mindfulness
- Relaxation skills
- Practicing Breathing techniques
- Yoga
- Learning Coping skills
- Taking part in regular Exercising



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