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What is personality?

➤ **Baron and Byrne (1991)**, define **personality** as... "*The combination of those relatively enduring traits which influence behavior in a predictable way in a variety of situations*" (cited by Gross, 2010, p185).

➤ **The Five Factor Model** otherwise known as **The Big Five** or **OCEAN**, is most commonly used today when identifying different personality types. And can be particularly helpful in finding methods that can counteract the negative appraisal effect (Gross, 2010).

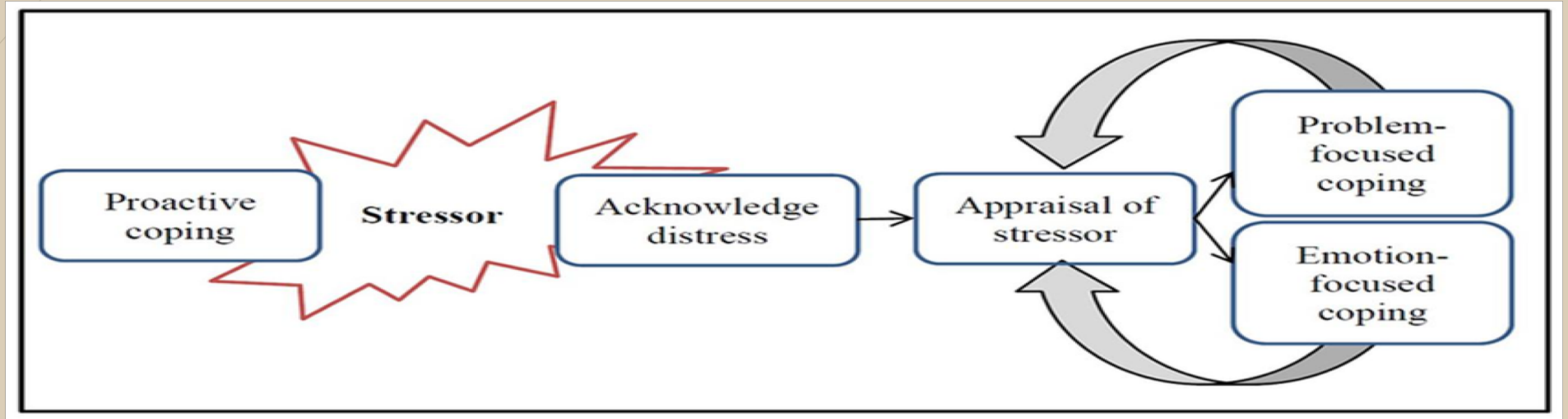


The Five Factor Model

- **Neuroticism**; calm, even-tempered/ temperamental, anxious, moody, impulsive...
- **Extroversion**; assertive, outgoing, sociable/ passive, introverted, reserved...
- **Open to experience**; creative, imaginative, intelligent/ shallow, unperceptive...
- **Agreeableness**; kind, trusting, warm/ hostile, selfish, cold...
- **Conscientiousness**; competent, organized, tidy, thorough/ unreliable careless, sloppy... (cited by Gross, 2010, p672).

Kluckhohn & Murray (1953) state *"Every man is in certain ways like all other men... and like no other men"* (cited by Gross, 2010, p664)

Lazarus Transactional Model



- Problem focused coping is often used when dealing with short term or nonsignificant stressors, while emotion focused is used when dealing with long term problems that are often out of our control.
- Cohen and Lazarus (1979) identified include: Direct action response, information seeking, inhibition of action, palliative coping, and turning to others (cited by Gross, 2010, p193)

How personality traits and coping styles influence subjective well-being

- Diener (1984), Lyubomirsky & Dickerhoof (2010), state that temperamental and biological factors direct behavior, cognition and attitudes, rather than the external influence.
- Clement & Nilson Schonnesson (1998), account coping strategies for **53%** of overall life satisfaction.
- A Turkish sample study by Malkoc (2011), of **251** undergraduate students showed that **neurotic** personality traits, such as being **anxious, worried, depressed** or having **poor communication skills** was correlated with **negative** subjective well-being. While **extroversion** personality traits, such as being **happy, energetic, active assertive**, and **outgoing** were correlated with positive subjective well-being **Results** = Personality traits accounted for **53%** of differences in subjective well-being, and coping styles accounted for **17%** difference in subjective well-being. When combining both personality traits and coping style they accounted for **70%** of overall subjective well-being.

(Malkoc, 2011)

Protective and non-protective personality variables

► Protective:

Kobasa et al., (1982), Hardiness, **the 3 C's...**

Commitment; approach life with sense of curiosity and meaningfulness.

Control; Rotter's (1966) Locus of Control.

Challenge; to view change as an opportunity of self growth rather than a threat.

Funk (1992) states that hardiness mediates the relationship between stress related illnesses by reduced cognitive appraisals of threat, reducing use of regressive coping.

(cited by Gross, 2010).

► Non-protective:

Hostility best predictor of coronary heart disease.

Tendency to suppress or inhibit emotions, difficulty expressing emotions, pathological niceness, conflict avoidance are all characteristics likely to influence progression of cancer according to Weinman

(1995: cited by Gross, 2010)

A Danish study of 6500 women has shown that high levels of daily stress can reduce the risk of breast cancer by 40%, by reducing estrogen levels (Laurence, 2005: cited by Gross, 2010).



How to counteract the negative effects of personality on health and well-being...

- **Bio-feedback.** Aims to treat the symptoms of stress without drugs by learning to control body functions such as tension, blood pressure and heart rate
- **Meditation, mindfulness practice or progressive muscle relaxation.** Similar to above these are aimed bringing about relaxation.
- **Cognitive restructuring.** Helping to change the way a person perceives their situation and themselves, in order to change behavior and emotional responses. Different forms of Cognitive Behavioral therapy can be used, such as; Ellis' rational emotive therapy, or Becks, treatment of automatic thoughts.

(Gross, 2010)

References

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