

STRESS, COPING and MENTAL HEALTH



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What Is Stress?



Dual Meaning

1. The external cause: the “stressor”
2. The person’s reaction
 - Physical
 - Psychological

Six Step Model of Stress



1. Perception
2. Psychological Defenses (coping styles)
3. Psycho-physiological Responses
4. Response Reduction
5. Illness Behavior
6. Illness Measure

General v. Specific Stresses



- **General**
 - Heat, Cold
 - Hunger
 - Sleep deprivation
- **Specific**
 - Tied to perception of significance

1. Perception



- How stressful do you find
 - A first date
 - Going to the dentist for a filling
 - A weekend with your parents
 - A flight to NYC
 - ✦ 7 a.m. departure
 - ✦ 11 a.m. departure

MD Professional Stressors*



1. Time Demands
2. Doctor-Patient Relationships
3. Role Responsibility
4. Career – Family Conflicts
5. Inability to Cure
6. Threat of Malpractice

*reported by experienced physicians and residents

2. Psychological Defenses



-Coping mechanisms which serve to reduce the magnitude of responses

- Displacement
- Reaction Formation
- Intellectualization
- Humor
- Suppression

3. Psycho-physiological Responses



- **With Awareness**
 - Headache, Muscle tension, Mood shifts
- **Without Awareness**
 - Elevated lipids and BP
 - Low blood sugar

4. Response Reduction



- Exercise
- Muscle Relaxation
- Situational Adjustments
- Psychotherapeutic Interventions
- Medications

5. Illness Behavior

6. Illness Measures



- When coping is not sufficient
- Sustained symptoms
- Sick role/help-seeking
- Diagnosis & Treatment
- Documentation in medical record

Coping with Stress



1. Health-sustaining Habits
2. Social Supports
3. Responses to Stress
4. Life Satisfaction

1. Health-Sustaining Habits



- Diet
- Relaxation
- Physical Exercise
- Pace
- Medications

2. Social Support



- Benefits come from both structure *and* function
 - Health Benefits of marriage/relationships
 - Key role of a confidant
 - Availability when needed

3. Response to Stress



- **Positive**
 - Problem solving
 - Utilize social support
 - Look for silver lining
- **Negative**
 - Avoidance
 - Self-blame
 - Wishful thinking

4. Life Satisfaction



- Optimism & Humor
- Work
- Family
- The Arts
- Nature
- Spirituality

The Arts in Louisville



- Orchestra, Opera & Ballet
 - At Center for the Arts on Main St.
- Actor's Theater & Shakespeare in Central Park
- Gallery Trolley Hops
 - 1st, 2nd and 4th Fridays
- Speed Art Museum (temporarily closed)

Shakespeare in the Park



- Nightly at 8 pm Mid-June to August
- Central Park (4th Street & Magnolia)
- It's FREE

Nature Places



- Louisville's Olmsted Parks
 - Cherokee, Iroquois & Shawnee
- River Walk
- Bernheim Forest
- Many Lakes and Rivers
- Red River Gorge