

# 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
  - 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Fridays
- Speed Art Museum

# Shakespeare in the Park



- *The Tempest & Richard III*
- Nightly at 8 pm June 16-July 11
- Central Park (4<sup>th</sup> 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