

GENERAL PSYCHOLOGY

CHAPTER 14: STRESS

Stress

- stress: nonspecific response to real or imagined challenges or threats
 - acute stress: short term stress that is usually caused by adaptive changes
 - chronic stress: long term stress caused by a maladaptive stress
 - something happened and changes are not occurring to make the stress go away
- stressor: environmental stimulus that produces physical and psychological effects
- sources of stress:
 - catastrophes (cataclysmic events): natural or human caused disasters that cause a person long term stress
 - more stressful to a person if they are intentional and if they are in close proximity of the event
 - happen suddenly
 - effect a lot of people
 - could develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
 - post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD): severe and prolonged response to trauma
 - vivid, intrusive recollections of the trauma
 - anxiety, depression, aggression, sleep and eating issues
 - first found in post-war veterans, but now found mostly in women (rape and violence against them)
 - women are more susceptible
 - unhealthy environments- life events
 - poverty often creates environmental stressors
 - crowding, poor housing, lack of access to resources, higher rates of violence
 - modern city live creates stress (called urban press)
 - crowding, pollution, noise, commuting
 - combination more stressful than each individual factor
 - affects all city dwellers (rich and poor)
 - all of these things combined are called urban press
 - can be physical and psychological
 - could be a force for natural selection
 - discrimination- life events
 - more perceived discrimination = more mental health problems
 - discrimination due to
 - race/ethnicity
 - immigration
 - sex/gender roles
 - sexual orientation
 - 1/3 of population feels like they have been discriminated against for some reason
 - personal factors- life events
 - work-related stress: low-level jobs tend to be more stressful, but high-level jobs can still be stressful
 - low control = more stress
 - working night shift
 - working overtime
 - pressures for deadlines
 - feeling underappreciated

- burnout: emotional and physical exhaustion, lowered productivity, and feeling of isolation caused by work related pressures (caused by the work-related stress)
- unemployment stress: opposite extreme of work-related stress

Personal Factors and Stress

- personal relationships
 - supportive relationships reduce stress
- balancing work and family
- marriage
 - adjustment to marriage
 - conflict
 - unfulfilled expectations
- lack of time/deadlines
- other stressors for children
 - bullies
 - school
 - lack of control
- life events emphasize importance of change*
 - usually effect one person or a small group of people
 - occur slowly, over time

Responses to Stress

- physiology of stress
 - arousal of autonomic nervous system (sympathetic division)
 - increased heart rate
 - shallow and faster breathing
 - higher blood pressure
 - sweating palms
 - pupil dilation
 - two ways of arousal
 - direct to sympathetic
 - to amygdala and pituitary gland and then to sympathetic

Stress & Health

- heart disease
 - lifestyle and behavior influence the development of heart disease
 - influence: type A behaviors vs. type B behaviors
 - type A: competitive, impatient, always in a hurry
 - linked to heart disease
 - characteristics of hostility and anger
 - anger triggers same physiological responses as stress in the body
 - type B: calm, patient, less hurry
- infectious disease
 - stress affects the immune system
 - those with higher stress are more likely to get sick
 - nervous, endocrine, and immune systems
 - psychoneuroimmunology: study of behavioral, neurological, and immune factors as they relate to disease

- health related behaviors
 - behaviors used to cope with stress can have negative health effects
 - smoking
 - drinking alcohol
 - overeating
 - poor nutrition
 - poor health can lead to other disorders (ex. eating disorders)
 - five crucial healthy behaviors:
 - 7-8 hours of sleep a night
 - Moderate alcohol consumption
 - no smoking
 - regular exercise
 - ideal weight
 - those with two or fewer behaviors more likely to get sick and die earlier
- barriers to healthy behaviors
 - environmental factors
 - easier to make unhealthy choices than it is to make healthy choices
 - psychological factors
 - ways of thinking
 - optimistic bias: one does not feel like what they're doing will hurt them
- health psychology
 - subfield of psychology that uses psychological principles to enhance health
 - disease prevention
 - health promotion
 - positive focus