

DEFINITIONS: STRESS

1. **Stressor:** Any physical or psychological event or condition that produces physical or emotional reactions.
2. **Stress Response:** The physical and emotional reaction to a stressor.
3. **Stress:** The general physical and emotional state that accompanies the stress response.
4. **Nervous system:** The brain, spinal cord and nerves.
5. **Autonomic Nervous System:** The branch of the nervous system that controls the basic body processes. It is divided into the Sympathetic and Parasympathetic Systems.
6. **Parasympathetic Nervous System:** A division of the autonomic nervous system that is responsible for restoring the body back to its normal homeostatic state. It moderates the excitatory effect of the sympathetic division, slowing metabolism and restoring energy supplies.
7. **Sympathetic Nervous System:** A division of the autonomic nervous system that prepares the body to react to danger or any challenge posed by a stressor. It accelerates the body processes.
8. **Endocrine System:** The system of glands, tissues and cells that secrete hormones into the blood stream to influence metabolism and other body processes.
9. **Hormone:** A chemical messenger produced in the body and transported into the bloodstream to target cells or organs for specific regulation of their activities.
10. **Norepinephrine:** A neurotransmitter released by the sympathetic nervous system into specific tissues to increase their function in the face of increased activity. When released by the brain it causes arousal (increased attention, awareness and alertness). It is also called Noradrenaline.
11. **Epinephrine:** A hormone secreted by the adrenal medulla (inner core) that affects functioning of organs involved in responding to the stressor. It is also called adrenaline.
12. **Cortisol:** A steroid hormone secreted by the adrenal cortex (outer core). It is the stress hormone. It is also called hydrocortisone.
13. **Endorphins:** Brain secretions that have pain inhibiting effects.

14. **Fight-or-Flight Reaction:** A defense reaction that prepares a person for conflict or escape by triggering hormonal, cardiovascular, respiratory, neuromuscular and metabolic changes.
15. **Homeostasis:** A constantly changing (within narrow limits) state of stability and consistency in an individual's physiological functioning.
16. **Somatic Nervous System:** Branch of the peripheral nervous system that governs motor functions and sensory information, largely under conscious control.
17. **Personality:** The sum of behavioral, cognitive and emotional tendencies.
18. **Gender Role:** A culturally expected pattern of behavior and attitudes determined by a person's sex.
19. **General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS):** A pattern of stress responses consisting of three stages: alarm, resistance and exhaustion.
20. **Eustress:** Good Stress resulting from a positive/pleasant stressor.
21. **Distress:** Bad stress resulting from a negative/unpleasant stressor.
22. **Allostatic Load:** The long-term negative impact of the stress response on the body.
23. **Psychoneuroimmunology (PNI):** The study of interactions among the nervous, endocrine and immune systems.
24. **Acute Stress:** Stress immediately following a stressor. May last for a couple of minutes. If persistent it turns into chronic stress.
25. **Chronic Stress:** It is stress that continues for days, weeks or longer.
26. **Burnout:** A state of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion.