

Stress & Resilience

Definitions

Stress: body's response to a real or perceived threat; a *reaction* to a situation

Resilience: the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress. It involves behaviour, thoughts, & actions that can be learned & developed in anyone.

Types of Stress

Acute stress

- most common / highly treatable & manageable
- cause = demands & pressure of the recent past & anticipated demands & pressures
- Symptoms = emotional distress (anger, anxiety, depression), muscular problems (tension headaches, back pain, jaw pain), stomach problems (heartburn, acid stomach, IBS)

Episodic Acute stress

- Frequent acute stress; ceaseless worry
- Similar characteristics of Type A personality classification
- Symptoms: extended over arousal, persistent tension headaches, migraines, hypertension, chest pain & heart disease.

Chronic stress

- Stress of unrelenting demands & pressures for seemingly interminable periods of time
- Can stem from traumatic early childhood experiences
- If untreated, chronic stress can lead to suicide, violence, heart attack, stroke, or even cancer

Strategies for Building Resilience

Caring & supportive relationships within & outside the family

Make connections with others

Avoid seeing crises as insurmountable problems

Accept that change is a part of life

Move towards your goals

Look for opportunities for self-discovery

Nurture a positive view of yourself

Keep things in perspective

Maintain a hopeful outlook

Take decisive actions

Take care of yourself

More Information

Canadian Psychological Association – www.cpa.ca

Government of Canada: Mental Health & Wellness – www.healthycanadians.gc.ca

Canadian Mental Health Association – www.cmha.ca

Mood Disorders Society of Canada – www.mdsc.ca

Canadian Institute of Stress – www.stresscanada.org

The American Institute of Stress – www.stress.org

Sources

American Psychological Association (2016). The Road to Resilience. Online

American Psychological Association (2016). The Different Kinds of Stress. Online

Canadian Mental Health Association (2016). Stress. Online