

# Chapter Thirteen

## STRESS, COPING, AND HEALTH

### Review of Key Ideas

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#### THE NATURE OF STRESS

##### 1. Discuss the impact of minor stressors.

- 1-1. While some forms of stress arise from unusual, traumatic crises, most stress arises from (infrequent/  
everyday) problems. These minor hassles appear to be detrimental to mental health because of the  
\_\_\_\_\_ nature of stress.

Answers: 1-1. everyday, cumulative.

##### 2. Describe the nature of our appraisals of stress.

- 2-1. The text defines stress as any circumstances that threaten or are perceived to threaten one's well being,  
and thereby they tax one's coping abilities. This definition would indicate that the sources of stress are  
quite (subjective/objective). Or to put it another way, stress lies in the mind of the \_\_\_\_\_.

Answers: 2-1. subjective, beholder or individual.

#### MAJOR TYPES OF STRESS

##### 3. Distinguish between acute and chronic stress and describe frustration as a form of stress.

- 3.1 Acute stressors (do/do not) have a relatively short duration and a clear endpoint, while chronic stressors  
(do/not).
- 3.2. Which of the following three situations best illustrates what is meant by frustration?
- (a) Your family moves from a large city to a rather small, rural community.

- (b) You are late for an appointment and stuck in a traffic jam.
  - (c) You are forced to choose between two good movies on television.
- 3-3. If you picked choice (b) then you have caught on that frustration always involves the \_\_\_\_\_ of the pursuit of some goal.

Answers: 3-1. do, do not b 3-2. b 3.3. thwarting or blocking.

**4. Identify the three basic types of conflict and discuss which types are most troublesome.**

- 4-1. Many persons do not want to pay their income taxes, but, on the other hand, they don't want to go to jail either. These persons are faced with an \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ conflict.
- 4-2. Getting married has both positive and negative aspects that make it an excellent example of an \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ conflict.
- 4-3. Consider the problem of the student who has to choose between scholarships for two different universities. Since he cannot accept both, he's faced with an \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ conflict.
- 4-4. Now that you have correctly identified the three basic types of conflict, list them below in their order of troublesomeness, beginning with the least troublesome.
  - (a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - (c) \_\_\_\_\_

Answers: 4-1. avoidance-avoidance 4-2. approach-avoidance 4-3. approach-approach 4-4. (a) approach-approach (b) approach-avoidance (c) avoidance-avoidance.

**5. Summarize evidence on life change and pressure as forms of stress.**

- 5-1. The Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) measures the stress induced by \_\_\_\_\_ in daily living routines. The developers of this scale theorized that all kinds of life changes, both pleasant and unpleasant, would induce stress. Early research showed that high scores on the SRRS were correlated with psychological disturbances and many kinds of physical \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5-2. Later research began to indicate that high scores on the SRRS were primarily the result of (pleasant/ unpleasant) events. At the present time, research seems to indicate that change by itself (is/is not) inevitably stressful.
- 5-3. There are two kinds of pressure. One is the pressure to get things accomplished, or the pressure to \_\_\_\_\_. The other is the pressure to abide by rules, or the pressure to \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5-4. Which appears to have the strongest influence on mental health, life changes or pressure?

Answers: 5-1. changes, illness 5-2. unpleasant, is not 5-3. perform, conform 5-4. pressure.

## RESPONDING TO STRESS

### 6. Identify some common emotional responses to stress, and discuss the effects of emotional arousal.

- 6-1.** The text describes three different dimensions of negative emotions that are particularly likely to be triggered by stress. Identify which of these dimensions is most likely to be present in the following situations.
- (a) The emotions in this dimension are likely to be found as a person begins to feel more and more helpless and unable to cope (e.g., you detect signs that your lover is going to leave you).
  
  - (b) The emotions in this dimension are likely to be found as a person begins to feel increasingly put upon and treated unfairly (e.g., you are being falsely accused of a deed you didn't commit).
  
  - (c) The emotions in this dimension are likely to be found as a person faces increasing degrees of conflict or uncertainty (e.g., you're driving on a highway, and the fog is gradually becoming thicker).

**6-2.** What did the five year study of caregivers of AIDS patients find?

**6-3.** What does the inverted U hypothesis say about what happens to the optimal arousal level as tasks become more complex?

**Answers:** **6-1.** (a) dejection, sadness, and grief (b) annoyance, anger, and rage (c) apprehension, anxiety, and fear  
**6-2.** The caregivers experienced many positive emotions (as well as negative ones). **6-3.** The optimal arousal level decreases.

### 7. Describe the fight-or-flight response and the three stages of the General Adaptation Syndrome.

**7-1.** What division of the autonomic nervous system mediates the fight-or-flight response?

**7-2.** Although the body's fight-or-flight response appears to be an evolutionary carry-over from our past, why is it perhaps of more harm than help to modern human beings?

7-3. Indicate which of the three stages of the General Adaptation Syndrome is being described in each of the following.

(a) This is the initial stage in which the body prepares for the fight-or-flight response.

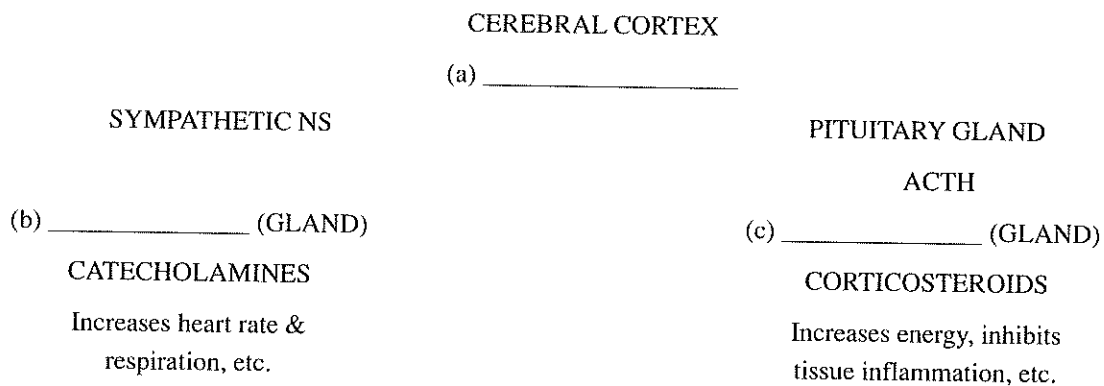
(b) This is the second stage in which the body stabilizes its physiological changes as it begins to effectively cope with the stress.

(c) This is the third stage in which the body's coping resources are becoming depleted, and the resistance to many diseases declines.

Answers: 7-1. sympathetic nervous system 7-2. Because most stressful situations generally require a more complex response than simple fight or flight. 7-3. (a) stage of alarm (b) stage of resistance (c) stage of exhaustion.

8. Discuss the two major pathways along which the brain sends signals to the endocrine system in response to stress.

8-1. Fill in the missing parts in the diagram below, detailing the two major pathways along which the brain sends signals to the endocrine system.



Answers: 8-1. (a) hypothalamus (b) adrenal medulla (c) adrenal cortex.

9. Describe some relatively unhealthy coping responses that are common.

9-1. Answer the following questions regarding giving up and blaming oneself as responses to stress.

(a) What syndrome often results from giving-up in response to exposure to unavoidable stressful events?

(b) What phenomenon often accompanies blaming oneself in response to stress?

- 9-2.** Answer the following questions regarding aggression and self-indulgence as responses to stress.
- (a) Which of these responses is illustrated by the saying: “When the going gets tough, the tough go shopping?” \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) Which of these responses is frequently, but not always, triggered by frustration?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- (c) Which of these responses is linked to internet addiction? \_\_\_\_\_
- 9-3.** What is a common fault with both of these behavioral responses to stress?

**Answers:** 9-1. (a) learned helplessness (b) catastrophic thinking 9-2. (a) self-indulgence (b) aggression (c) self-indulgence 9-3. They divert effort away from solutions to problems.

## 10. Explain how defense mechanisms work, and discuss the value of defensive coping.

- 10-1.** Indicate whether each of the following statements regarding defensive coping is true or false.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) Although they are largely unconscious, defense mechanisms can operate at any level of consciousness.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Only neurotic persons use defensive mechanisms.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) Defense mechanisms are used to shield against emotional discomfort that often occurs with stress, particularly anxiety.
- 10-2.** One shortcoming of defensive coping is that it avoids the real problem. What other consequence might arise here?
- 10-3.** What conclusion does the text draw regarding small versus extreme positive illusions?

**Answers:** 10-1. (a) true (b) false (c) true 10-2. health-related risks (poor health) 10-3. Small positive illusions may be beneficial while extreme illusions may be harmful.

## THE EFFECTS OF STRESS ON PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONING

### 11. Discuss the effects of stress on task performance and the burnout syndrome.

- 11-1.** Baumeister’s theory as to why stress affects task performance is that pressure to perform makes us self-conscious, and this elevated self-consciousness disrupts our \_\_\_\_\_. The term we commonly use for this is \_\_\_\_\_ under pressure. Research shows that this phenomenon is quite (rare/common) among normal persons.

**11-2.** Indicate whether each of the following statements regarding the burnout syndrome is true or false.

\_\_\_\_\_ (a) Burnout is related to only a few highly stressful occupations.

\_\_\_\_\_ (b) The onset of burnout is usually sudden.

**Answers:** 11-1. attention, choking, common 11-2. (a) false (b) false.

**12. List some psychological problems and disorders that may be stress related.**

**12-1.** In addition to drug and alcohol abuse, what three other problems appear to be related to stress? (One of them has to do with school, one has to do with sleep, and one involves intimate relationships.)

**12-2.** Stress has also been implicated in the onset of serious psychological disorders. In addition to schizophrenia, what two other disorders are mentioned?

**Answers:** 12-1. poor academic performance, insomnia (and other sleep disorders), sexual difficulties 12-2. depression and anxiety disorders.

**THE EFFECTS OF STRESS ON PHYSICAL HEALTH**

**13. Describe the evidence linking personality factors to coronary heart disease.**

**13-1.** What is the principal cause of coronary heart disorder?

**13-2.** Tell whether the following characteristics are found in Type A or Type B persons.

\_\_\_\_\_ (a) easygoing                      \_\_\_\_\_ (d) amicable

\_\_\_\_\_ (b) competitive                      \_\_\_\_\_ (e) hostile

\_\_\_\_\_ (c) impatient

**13-3.** Which aspect of the Type A behavior seems to be most highly related to coronary heart disorder?

**Answers:** 13-1. atherosclerosis 13-2. (a) Type B (b) Type A (c) Type A (d) Type B (e) Type A 13-3. hostility (anger).

**14. Summarize the evidence linking emotional reactions and depression to heart disease.**

**14-1.** Research has shown that negative emotions (can/cannot) trigger acute symptoms of heart disease. Once again, the most frequent emotional response that triggered participants' heart attacks was found to episodes of \_\_\_\_\_.

**14-2.** Which of the following statements appears to best reflect the causal relationship between depression and heart disease?

- (a) Heart disease can lead to depression.
- (b) Depression can lead to heart disease.

**Answers:** 14-1. can, anger 14-2. (b) Depression can lead to heart disease.

**15. Discuss how stress affects immune functioning.**

**15-1.** Research has found stress to be related to numerous diseases and disorders. What appears to be a common factor that relates stress to so many disorders?

**15-2.** A key factor in determining the impact of stress on immune function is the (intensity/duration) of the stressful event.

**Answers:** 15-1. Stress appears to suppress the immune system temporarily. 15-2. duration.

**FACTORS MODERATING THE IMPACT OF STRESS**

**16. Discuss how social support moderates the impact of stress.**

**16-1.** What two areas of our health appear to benefit from having strong social support groups?

**16-2.** What role does social support apparently play during times of high stress?

**Answers:** 16-1. Both mental and physical health. 16-2. It acts as a protective buffer.

**17. Discuss how personality factors are related to stress resistance.**

**17-1.** What difference was found between optimists and pessimists, with respect to good physical health?

**17-2.** What personality characteristic was found to be related to longevity in a recent study from a sample of Terman's gifted children?

**Answers:** 17-1. Optimists were more likely to enjoy good physical health. 17-2. conscientiousness.

## HEALTH-IMPAIRING BEHAVIOR

### 18. Explain the negative impact of smoking on health.

18-1. Answer the following questions regarding the negative impact of smoking on physical health.

- (a) How much shorter is the life expectancy of an average smoker compared to a similar nonsmoker?
  
- (b) What are the two most frequent diseases that kill smokers?
  
- (c) What appears to happen with respect to readiness to give up as smokers cycle through periods of abstinence and relapse?

Answers: 18-1. (a) 13-14 years (b) lung cancer and heart disease (c) Readiness to quit smoking builds gradually.

### 19. Discuss how poor nutrition and lack of exercise are related to health.

19-1. Answer the following true-false questions related to nutrition and exercise.

- \_\_\_\_\_ (a) Vulnerability to cardiovascular diseases appear to be influenced by dietary factors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (b) High consumption of salt invariably leads to hypertension.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (c) High fat diets have been linked to some forms of cancer.
- \_\_\_\_\_ (d) Regular exercise will not increase longevity.

Answers: 19-1. (a) true (b) false (c) true (d) false.

### 20. Discuss the relationship between behavioral styles and AIDS.

20-1. What two bodily fluids are most likely to transmit AIDS?

20-2. What two general groups have the highest incidence of AIDS in the United States?

20-3. In the world as a whole, which form of transmission, gay and bisexual or heterosexual, is most common?

20-4. How can one virtually guarantee that he or she will not contract AIDS?

Answers: 20-1. blood and semen 20-2. Gay & bisexual males and intravenous drug users. 20-3. heterosexual transmission 20-4. Stay with only one sexual partner (known to prefer this same lifestyle), and don't use intravenous drugs.



**21. Explain how health-impairing lifestyles develop.**

**21-1.** The text lists four complementary explanations as to why health-impairing lifestyles develop. Given the hints below, list these four reasons.

(a) slowly

(b) immediate

(c) delayed

(d) “not me”

**Answers: 21-1.** (a) They develop slowly. (b) The pleasure they provide is immediate. (c) The health-impairing consequences are delayed. (d) The consequences are likely to happen to others (but “not me”).

**REACTIONS TO ILLNESS**

**22. Discuss individual differences in willingness to seek medical treatment.**

**22-1.** Indicate whether the following statements regarding individual differences in willingness to seek medical treatment are true or false.

\_\_\_\_\_ (a) Delay in seeking treatment is perhaps the biggest problem here.

\_\_\_\_\_ (b) The perception of pain and illness is very subjective.

**Answers: 22-1.** (a) true (b) true.

**23. Describe some barriers to effective patient-provider communication and ways to overcome these problems.**

**23-1.** Which of the following factors appears to be a barrier to effective patient-provider communication?

(a) economic realities

(d) patient evasiveness

(b) medical jargon

(e) patient passivity

(c) patient forgetfulness

**23-2.** What does the text recommend as the best way to improve patient-provider communication?

**Answers: 23-1.** all of these factors **23-2.** Don't be a passive consumer of medical advice.

**24. Discuss the extent to which people tend to adhere to medical advice.**

- 24-1.** The text lists three reasons for failure to comply with medical advice. One is that patients often fail to completely \_\_\_\_\_ treatment instructions. A second is that the treatment may prove to be quite \_\_\_\_\_. The third reason is not directly related to either instructions or treatment, but rather to the attitude towards the \_\_\_\_\_. A negative attitude makes compliance (more/less) likely.

**Answers:** 24-1. understand, unpleasant (or aversive), physician or doctor, less.

**REFLECTING ON THE CHAPTER'S THEMES**

**25. Explain how this chapter highlighted two of the text's unifying themes.**

- 25-1.** The fact that the amount of stress in any given situation primarily lies in the eyes of the beholder nicely illustrates the theme that experience is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 25-2.** The fact that stress interacts with numerous other factors that affect health illustrates the theme of multifactorial \_\_\_\_\_.

**Answers:** 25-1. subjective 25-2. causation.

**APPLICATION: IMPROVING COPING AND STRESS MANAGEMENT**

**26. Summarize Albert Ellis' ideas about controlling one's emotions.**

- 26-1.** The main idea behind Albert Ellis' rational-emotive therapy is that stress is largely caused by \_\_\_\_\_ thinking. Therefore, by changing one's catastrophic thinking and taking a more rational approach, one can then reduce the amount of \_\_\_\_\_ being experienced.
- 26-2.** Ellis illustrates this theory by postulating an A-B-C series of events. Describe below what is going on during each of these events.
- (A) activating event:
- (B) belief:
- (C) consequence:
- 26-3.** Since the emotional turmoil in the A-B-C sequence is caused by the B (Belief) sequence, effort must be directed towards changing irrational beliefs. Ellis proposed two techniques for doing this. One must first learn to \_\_\_\_\_ instances of irrational beliefs. Then one must learn to actively \_\_\_\_\_ these irrational beliefs.

**Answers:** 26-1. catastrophic, stress 26-2. (A) the activating event that precedes the stress (B) one's belief about the event (C) the emotional consequences that result from the belief 26-3. detect, dispute.

**27. Discuss the adaptive value of humor and releasing pent-up emotions.**

**27-1.** What dual role does humor appear to play in easing stress from difficult situations?

**27-2.** Why might writing or talking about a problem with a sympathetic friend prove useful when experiencing stress?

**27-3.** What two common benefits were found among people who learned to manage hostility and people who practiced forgiveness?

**Answers:** **27-1.** It allows for both redefining the problem in a less threatening way and the releasing of tension. **27-2.** It may help to release pent-up tension. **27-3.** Both mental and physical health improved.

**28. Discuss the adaptive value of managing hostility and forgiving others.**

**28-1.** What is the goal of hostility management?

**28-2.** What does research suggest that forgiving is associated with?

**Answers:** **28-1.** To reduce the frequency and intensity of one's hostile feelings. **28-2.** Better adjustment and well-being.

**29. Discuss the adaptive value of relaxation and exercise.**

**29-1.** Complete the following statements regarding the adaptive value of relaxation and exercise.

(a) A quiet environment, a mental device, a passive attitude, and a comfortable position are conditions that facilitate:

(b) Eating a balanced diet, getting adequate sleep and exercise, and staying away from overeating and harmful drugs can help to minimize:

**Answers:** **29-1.** (a) learning to relax (b) physical vulnerability.

## CRITICAL THINKING APPLICATION

### 30. Describe some important considerations in evaluating health statistics and making health decisions.

**30-1.** Which kind of faulty statistical reasoning (correlation is no assurance of causation, statistical significance is not equivalent to practical significance, and failure to consider base rates) is illustrated by the following statements?

(a) Using cell phones may cause brain cancer.

(b) Since heart disease and depression are correlated, heart disease must cause depression.

(c) In a large sample population it was observed that the prevalence of hypertension was statistically significantly higher in higher sodium intake individuals. Therefore, everyone should reduce their sodium intake.

**30-2.** In addition to seeking information to reduce uncertainty, what other two basic principles of quantitative reasoning does the text suggest?

**30-3.** What should one do after reaching a decision and initiating action?

**Answers:** **30-1.** (a) failure to consider base rates (and also forgetting that correlation is no assurance of causation) (b) correlation is no assurance of causation (c) statistical significance is not equivalent to practical significance **30-2.** Make risk-benefit assessments and list alternative courses of action **30-3.** Continue to reevaluate the decision (in light of treatment progress, new options, etc.).

## Review of Key Terms

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Acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS)  
Acute stressors  
Aggression  
Approach-approach conflict  
Approach-avoidance conflict  
Avoidance-avoidance conflict  
Biopsychosocial model  
Burnout  
Catastrophic thinking  
Catharsis

Chronic stressors  
Conflict  
Constructive coping  
Coping  
Defense mechanisms  
Fight-or-flight response  
Frustration  
General adaptation syndrome  
Health psychology  
Immune response

Internet addiction  
Learned helplessness  
Life changes  
Optimism  
Pressure  
Psychosomatic diseases  
Rational-emotive therapy  
Social support  
Stress  
Type A personality



- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. Physical ailments caused, in part, by psychological factors, especially emotional distress.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. A disorder in which the immune system is gradually weakened and eventually disabled by the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

**Answers:** 1. biopsychosocial model 2. health psychology 3. stress 4. learned helplessness 5. frustration 6. conflict 7. approach-approach conflict 8. avoidance-avoidance conflict 9. approach-avoidance conflict 10. life changes 11. pressure 12. fight-or-flight response 13. general adaptation syndrome 14. coping 15. aggression 16. internet addiction 17. defense mechanisms 18. constructive coping 19. burnout 20. chronic stressors 21. Type A personality 22. acute stressors 23. immune response 24. social support 25. optimism 26. rational-emotive therapy 27. catharsis 28. catastrophic thinking 29. psychosomatic diseases 30. Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

## Review of Key People

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Walter Cannon  
Robin DiMatteo  
Albert Ellis  
Meyer Friedman & Ray Rosenman

Thomas Holmes & Richard Rahe  
Janice Kiecolt-Glaser  
Richard Lazarus

Neal Miller  
Hans Selye  
Shelley Taylor

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Observed that minor hassles were more closely related to mental health than were major stressful events.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Noted for his extensive investigations of the three types of conflict.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. These researchers developed the Social Readjustment Rating Scale.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. One of the first theorists to describe the “fight-or-flight” response.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Coined the word “stress” and described the General Adaptation Syndrome.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. These researchers found a connection between coronary risk and what they called Type A behavior.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Has conducted research on communication between health care providers and patients.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The developer of Rational-Emotive Therapy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Showed that “positive illusions” may be adaptive for mental health and well-being.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Has conducted research linking stress to temporary suppression of the immune system.

**Answers:** 1. Lazarus 2. Miller 3. Holmes & Rahe 4. Cannon 5. Selye 6. Friedman & Rosenman 7. DiMatteo 8. Ellis 9. Taylor 10. Kiecolt-Glaser.

## Self-Quiz

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1. Which of the following statements regarding stress is incorrect?
- Stress is a subjective experience.
  - The effects of stress are cumulative.
  - Minor hassles may prove more stressful than major ones.
  - One should seek to avoid all stress.

2. You've been invited to dinner at a nice restaurant on the final night of a TV mini series you've been watching, and thus find yourself confronted with
  - a. pressure
  - b. frustration
  - c. an approach-avoidance conflict
  - d. an approach-approach conflict
3. The week of final exams subjects most students to what kind of stress?
  - a. pressure
  - b. change
  - c. frustration
  - d. conflict
4. High scores on the Social Readjustment Rating Scale were found to be correlated with psychological disturbances and
  - a. type A behavior patterns
  - b. physical illness
  - c. pessimistic attitudes
  - d. all of the above
5. According to optimal-arousal theories, which of the following situations would be least affected by a high optimal-arousal level?
  - a. taking a psychology exam
  - b. typing a term paper
  - c. buttoning a shirt
  - d. learning to drive a car
6. The General Adaptation Syndrome shows that the body
  - a. gradually adapts to a particular stress
  - b. gradually adapts to all form of stress
  - c. may gradually weaken and die from continued stress
  - d. can react rapidly to all forms of stress
7. Which of the following organs is involved in both of the body's two major stress pathways?
  - a. the adrenal gland
  - b. the sympathetic nervous system
  - c. the pituitary gland
  - d. the pineal gland
8. Aggression is frequently triggered by
  - a. helplessness
  - b. frustration
  - c. loneliness
  - d. change
9. Which of the following behavioral responses to stress may result in internet addiction?
  - a. defensive coping
  - b. self-indulgence
  - c. positive illusions
  - d. giving up
10. Which of the following situations is most likely to result in chronic stress?
  - a. being diagnosed with AIDS
  - b. preparing for final exams
  - c. being late for an appointment and stuck in traffic
  - d. being told that you need root canal work

11. Smoking is to lung cancer as Type A behavior is to
  - a. coronary disease
  - b. AIDS
  - c. defensive coping
  - d. mental disorders
  
12. One of the key links between stress and physical illness may be that the body's response to stress
  - a. increases the optimal-arousal level
  - b. suppresses the immune system
  - c. decreases the optimal-arousal level
  - d. suppresses the adrenal gland
  
13. Health-impairing life styles appear to develop
  - a. rapidly
  - b. unconsciously
  - c. slowly
  - d. as a defense against stress
  
14. A major idea behind Rational-Emotive Therapy is that stress is caused by
  - a. conflict
  - b. frustration
  - c. pressure
  - d. catastrophic thinking
  
15. Analyzing the possible gains and losses before undertaking a health-treatment program is an example of
  - a. seeking information to reduce uncertainty
  - b. listing alternative courses of action
  - c. making a risk-benefit analysis
  - d. analyzing base rates

Answers: 1. d 2. d 3. a 4. b 5. c 6. c 7. a 8. b 9. b 10. a 11. a 12. b 13. c 14. d 15. c.

## InfoTrac Keywords

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Constructive Coping  
Health Psychology

Internet Addiction

Type A Personality