

General Psychology

lectures 14-15

Stress and adjustment.

1. Stress and adjustment
2. Causes of stress
3. Reactions to stress:
 - a. *Anxiety*
 - b. *General adaptation syndrome*
 - c. *Burnout*

STRESS

Anything that produces demands on us to adjust our behavior.

It includes

threats to our well-being

pressures

changes which require us to adjust to new situations

Psychological demands: conflict and frustration.

Physical demands: infection, disease, injury.

Adjustment

A person is considered well-adjusted when he is able to meet the changing demands of his environment.

3 adaptive responses :

- 1) maladjustment (poor personal effectiveness);
- 2) Adjustment (satisfactory)
- 3) Competence (excellent) (well-adjustment)

Types of stress

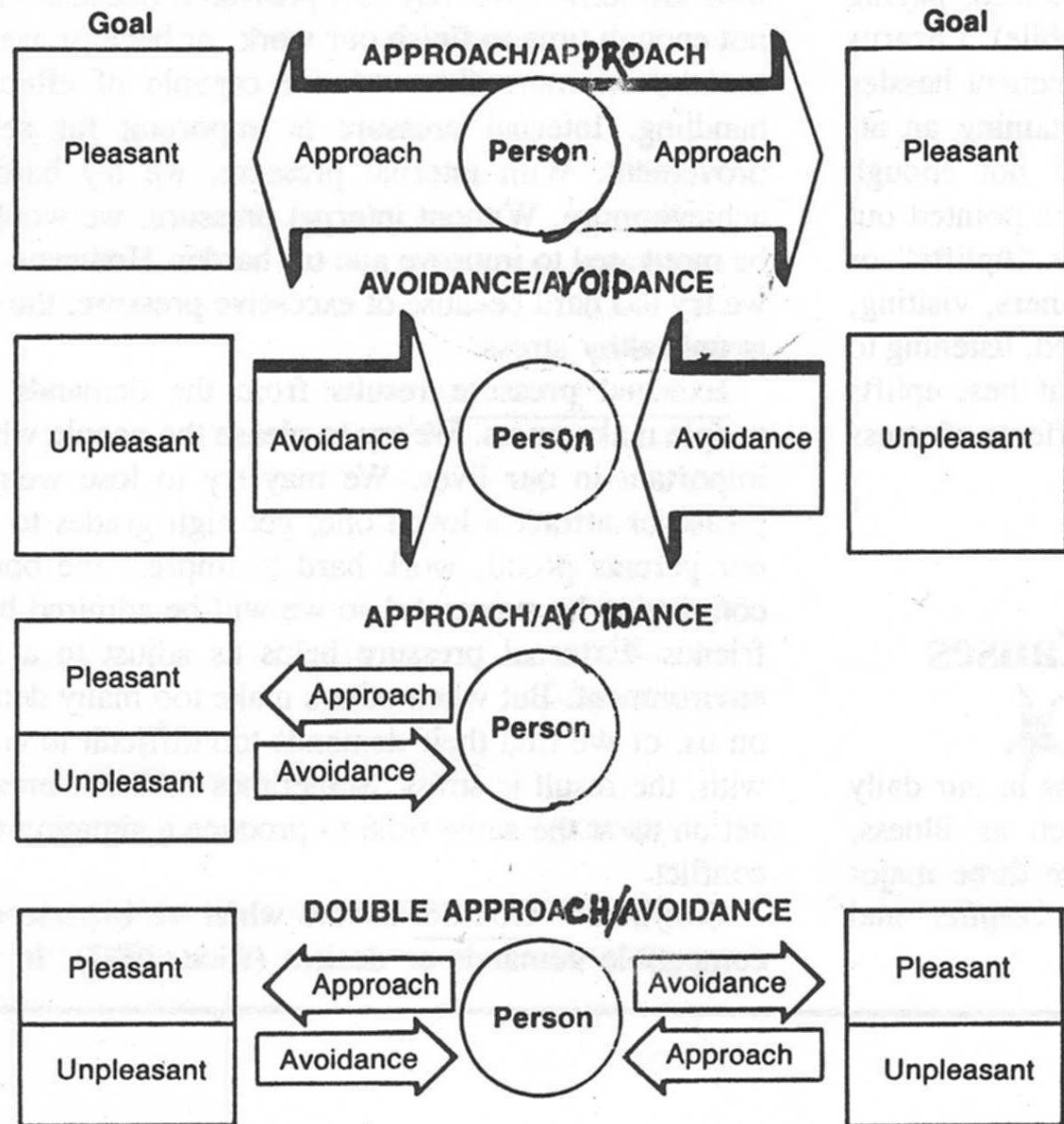
distress	eustress
Unpleasant with negative sources; anxiety, fear	Positive sources; getting married earning a high grade achieving success.

Sometimes it is unavoidable and motivates us to lead a full life.

3 major psychological causes of stress.

Pressure	Conflict	Frustration
<p>Internal: we strive to maintain self-esteem by forcing ourselves to achieve higher standards (study harder, more popular, look attractive) It is important.</p> <p>External: result from the demands that other people make on us. (pleasing other people, high grades for parents, admiration from friends) It helps to adjust to social environment.</p>	<p>1) Approach –approach □ equally desirable goals that are incompatible (2 girls, 2 jobs, 2 presents)</p> <p>2) avoidance-avoidance □ 2 equally undesirable demands (test and grade)</p> <p>3) Approach –avoidance □ single goal with positive and negative aspects. (a new car but expensive)</p> <p>4) Multiple approach –avoidance □ we make choices away several alternatives.</p>	<p>We are prevented from reaching a goal.</p> <p>Types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Time delays b) Daily hassles c) Lack of resources d) Losses e) failure

Conflict chart



Reactions to stress



Anxiety:

A fear of the demands (traits/situational)

In children: punishment no parents love, darkness, thunder.

In adults: general security, self-concept, interpersonal relationship social expectations task completion.

Behavioral responses:

- Avoidance
- Escape
- Impairment in speech, coordination, mental activities

Physiological responses:

Increased blood pressure, breathing, heart rate sweating stomach distress.

General adaptation syndrome (GAS)

Stage I

**Alarm reaction:
Immediate
response;
Adrenalin
release;
Slow digestion;
Heart beats;
Blood pressure
increase**

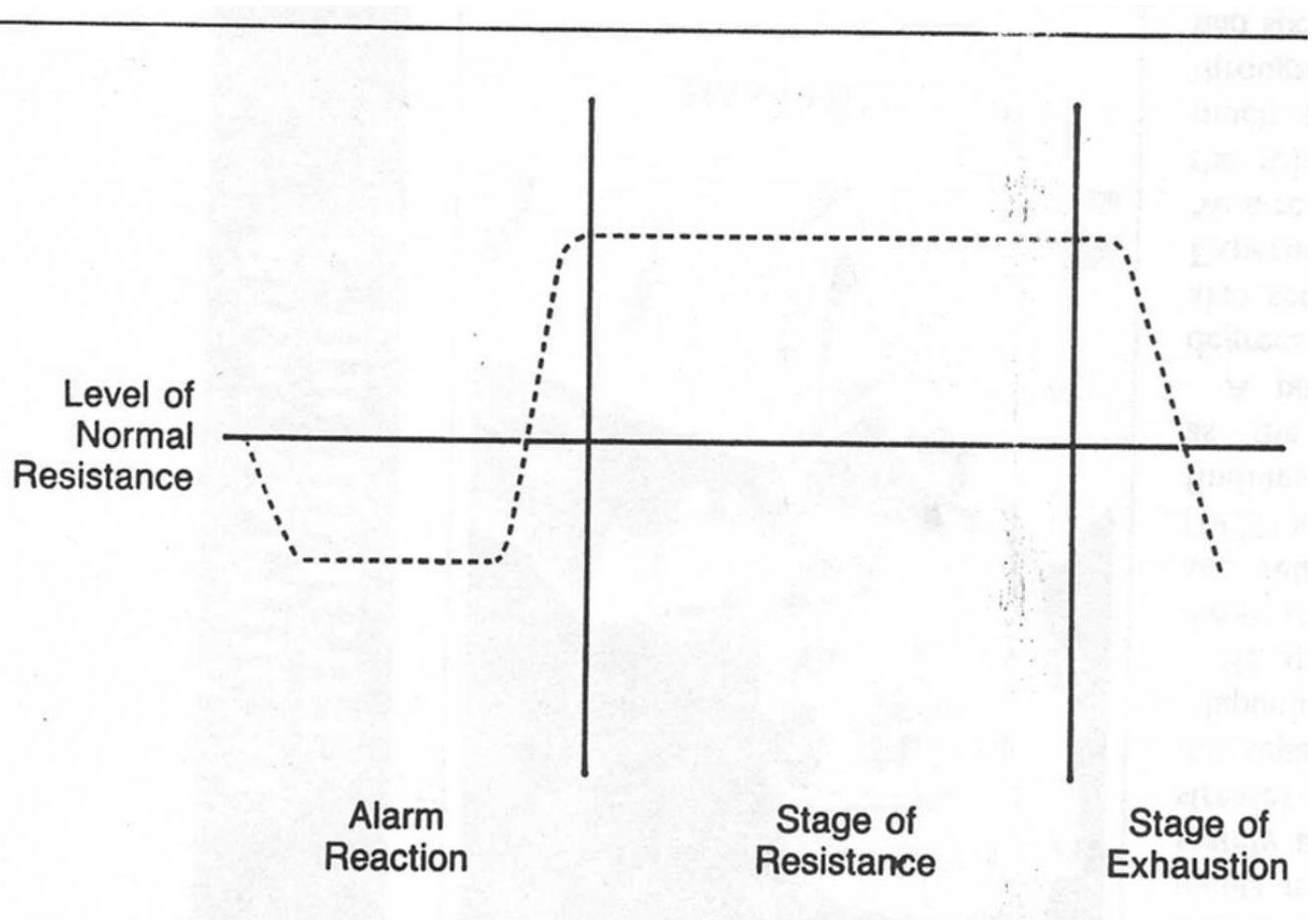
Stage II

**Stage of
resistance
Negative
consequences;
Stay in the
body;
Though we
think; we can
handle the
situation.**

Stage III

**Stage of
exhaustion
Body begins to
deplete its
energy
resources:
asthma,
diabetes,
arthritis,
allergies,
ulcers.**

GAS CHART



Burnout



A depletion of our physical and mental resources.

People who often experience burnout:

- achievers, taking extra work, courses;
- teachers, giving extra help to students
- Responsible ones – more than can do.

Stress persists until burnout occurs.

Symptoms of Burnout

- Exhaustion
- Detachment
- Boredom
- Impatience (irritability)
- Sense omnipotence (only you)
- Feelings unappreciated
- Physiological problems

Occupations: nurses, teachers, counselors, doctors, therapists, police, social workers □ too much contact with people.

Solutions to burnout.

1. Setting realistic goals, manageable but still challenging.
2. Know your limits – no additional responsibilities.
3. Don't become involved emotionally with other people
4. Enjoy yourself by taking a break.

Type A and Type B behavior

A □ particular type of personality

Competitive, aggressive, hard-driving, constantly under excessive stress. Impatient with others who can't keep up with them. Hate delays and do several things at a time. Often suffer from CHD, heart attack, stroke.

B

Can be hard working, aggressive, impatient but relax more.

They react to environmental demands and work hard when it is required.

SEMINAR questions.

1. Define stress
2. Describe a well-adjusted person
3. Name major psychological causes of stress.
4. Describe internal and external pressure.
5. Explain conflict situations (according to the diagram)
6. When does frustration occur?
7. Describe most common reactions to stress
8. Illustrate most common types of frustrations.
9. Explain how people respond to stress according GAS (general adaptation syndrome)
10. Describe the causes and symptoms of burnout and possible solutions.

Home assignment:

Write an essay (1-2 pages) describing defense mechanisms and managing stress techniques in general and find out you won coping stress skills and cognitive and behavioral techniques.

Literature: R. Atkinson Ch 15 'Stress and Coping' pp 602 -614