

Mental Health: The capacity to use the abilities we have in ways that allow us to function in a state of mental and emotional well-being

Characteristics of people who are mentally healthy

(page 91):

- They generally observe and understand what's going on around them
- They judge their own reactions and capabilities realistically
- They are aware of their own motives and feelings and can control their behaviour
- They may sometimes act without thinking about the consequences, but they can restrain their impulses when necessary
- While they may not always behave as society expects, they do so deliberately and with a reason
- They appreciate their own worth and feel accepted by others in their lives.
- They are capable of forming close and satisfying relationships with others and of being sensitive to others' needs as well as their own

STRESS

Stress: a physical and psychological response to circumstances in the environment that test our ability to cope

Effects of Stress on the Body



Brain and Nerves: Headaches, feelings of despair, lack of energy, sadness, nervousness, anger, irritability, trouble concentrating, memory problems, difficulty sleeping, mental health disorders (anxiety, panic attacks, depression, etc.)



Heart: Faster heartbeat or palpitations, rise in blood pressure, increased risk of high cholesterol and heart attack



Stomach: Nausea, stomach ache, heartburn, weight gain, increased or decreased appetite



Pancreas: Increased risk of diabetes



Intestines: Diarrhea, constipation and other digestive problems



Reproductive Organs: For women-irregular or painful periods, reduced sexual desire. For men-impotence, low sperm production, reduced sexual desire

Other: Acne and other skin problems, muscle aches and tension, increased risk for low bone density and weakened immune system (making it harder to fight off or recover from illnesses)

PHYSICAL RESPONSES TO STRESS

Much of our knowledge of stress comes from the work done by Canadian researcher **Hans Selye** (1907-1982) – McGill University in Montreal – who developed:

The General Adaptation Syndrome Theory:
explains how organisms react to long term stress

General Adaptation Syndrome Theory

There are three stages to

The General Adaptation Syndrome Theory:

1. *Alarm*

- Organism recognizes the existence of a threat
- Body reacts by producing hormones such as adrenalin to ready itself to fight or flee

General Adaptation Syndrome Theory

2. *Resistance*

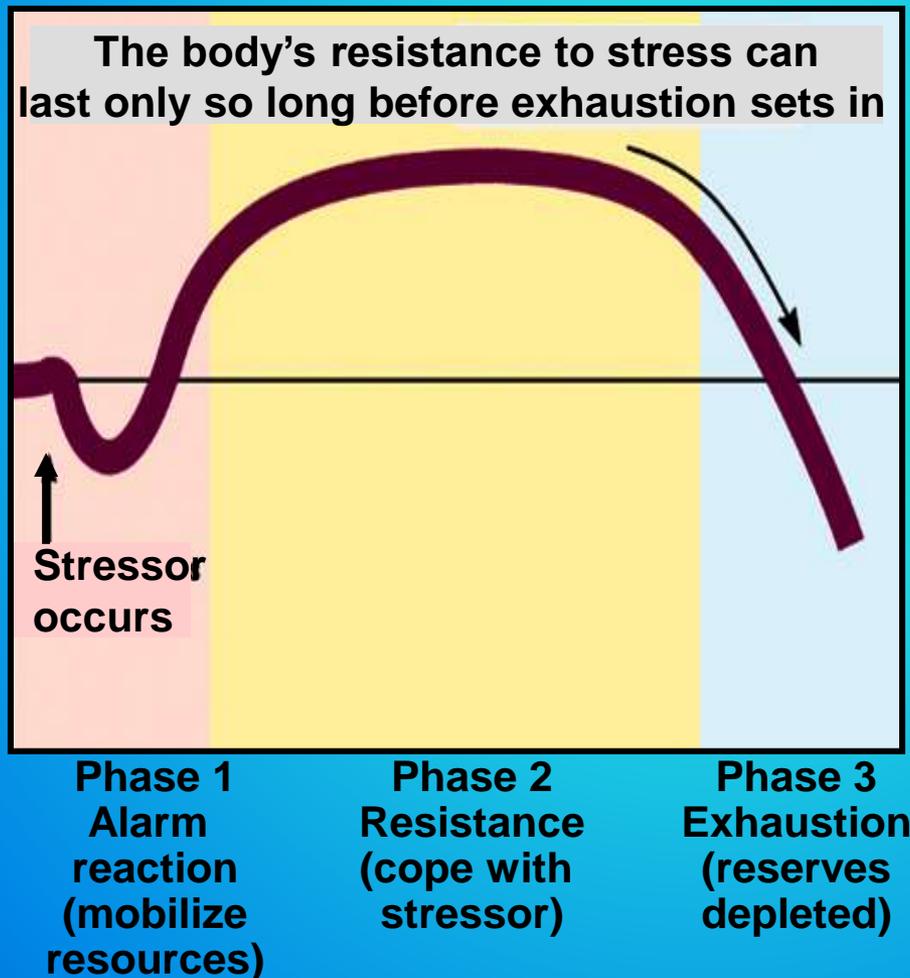
- Physical changes level off
- Organism becomes accustomed to the threat
- Hormones and other physical responses remain high
- Body can better deal with original stress but has lower resistance to other stresses that come along

General Adaptation Syndrome Theory

3. *Exhaustion*

- Body's resources wear down
- Glands lower their supply of adrenalin
- Immune system loses its ability to prevent disease and physical illness
- Sometimes death results

General Adaptation Syndrome Theory



Selye's concept of the body's adaptive response to stress in three stages

CAUSES OF STRESS

- Loss of an important relationship
- Events that produce a sense of helplessness
- Factors that pose a long term threat
- Life transitions
- Series of positive events
- Too many irritations and problems
- Physical problems or illness
- Having to decide between conflicting choices

STRESSFUL LIFE EVENTS

- ***Catastrophic Events***
 - earthquakes, combat stress, floods
- ***Life Changes***
 - death of a loved one, divorce, loss of job, promotion
- ***Daily Hassles***
 - rush hour traffic, long lines, job stress, burnout

COPING WITH STRESS

Stress Theory (Richard Lazarus)

- Views stress as whatever is considered a threat to one's safety or well-being

Stress Cognitive Appraisal

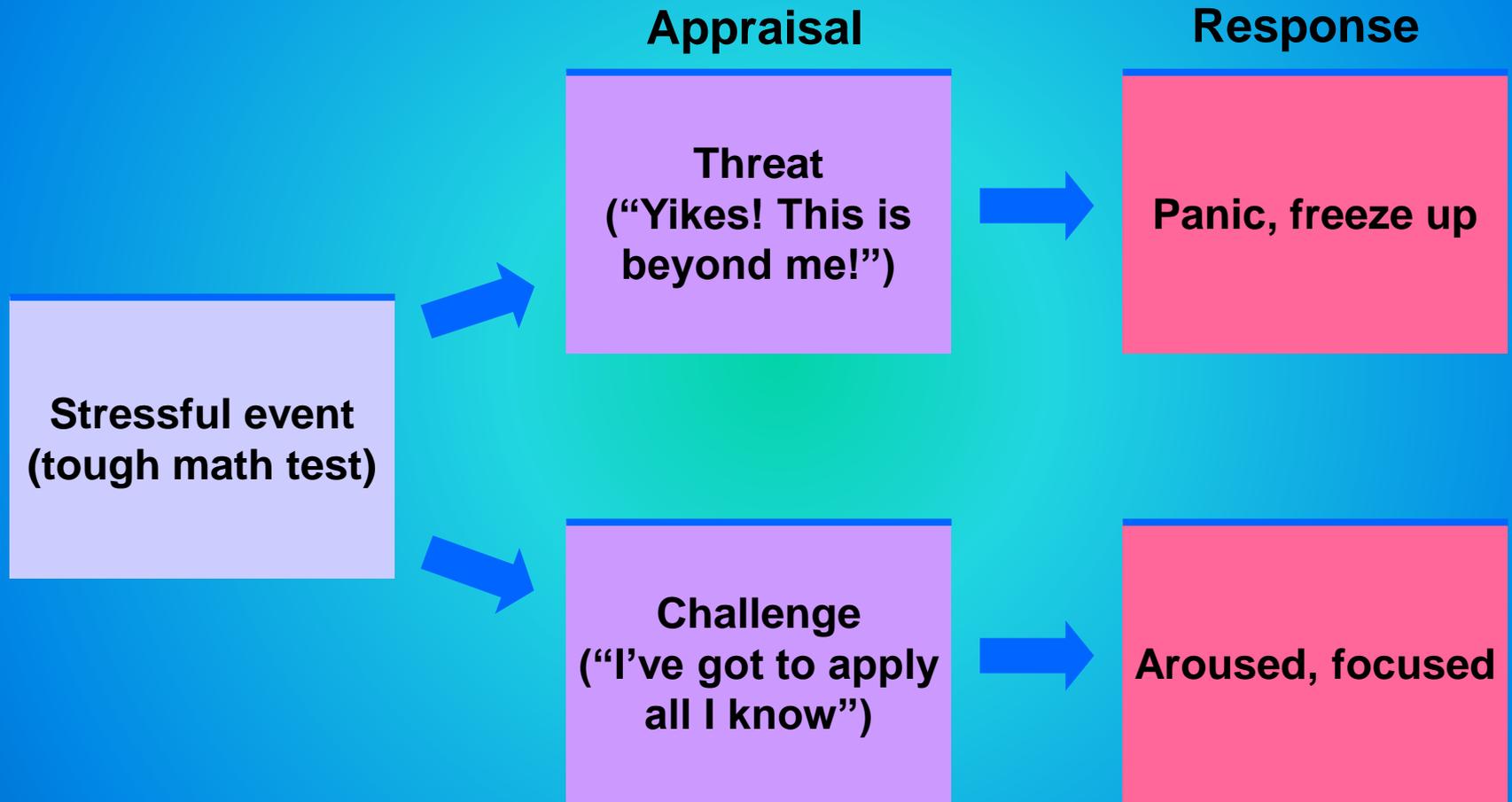
- 1. *Primary Appraisal*** – the individual assesses the degree of threat that is present
- 2. *Secondary Appraisal*** – the individual chooses a way to deal with this threat

Stress Cognitive Appraisal

How it works:

- The amount of stress a person feels in a situation depends on the balance of these two factors.
- When harm and threat are high and resources to deal with the situation are low, people experience much stress.
- When harm and threat are low and resources are high, people experience moderate or low stress

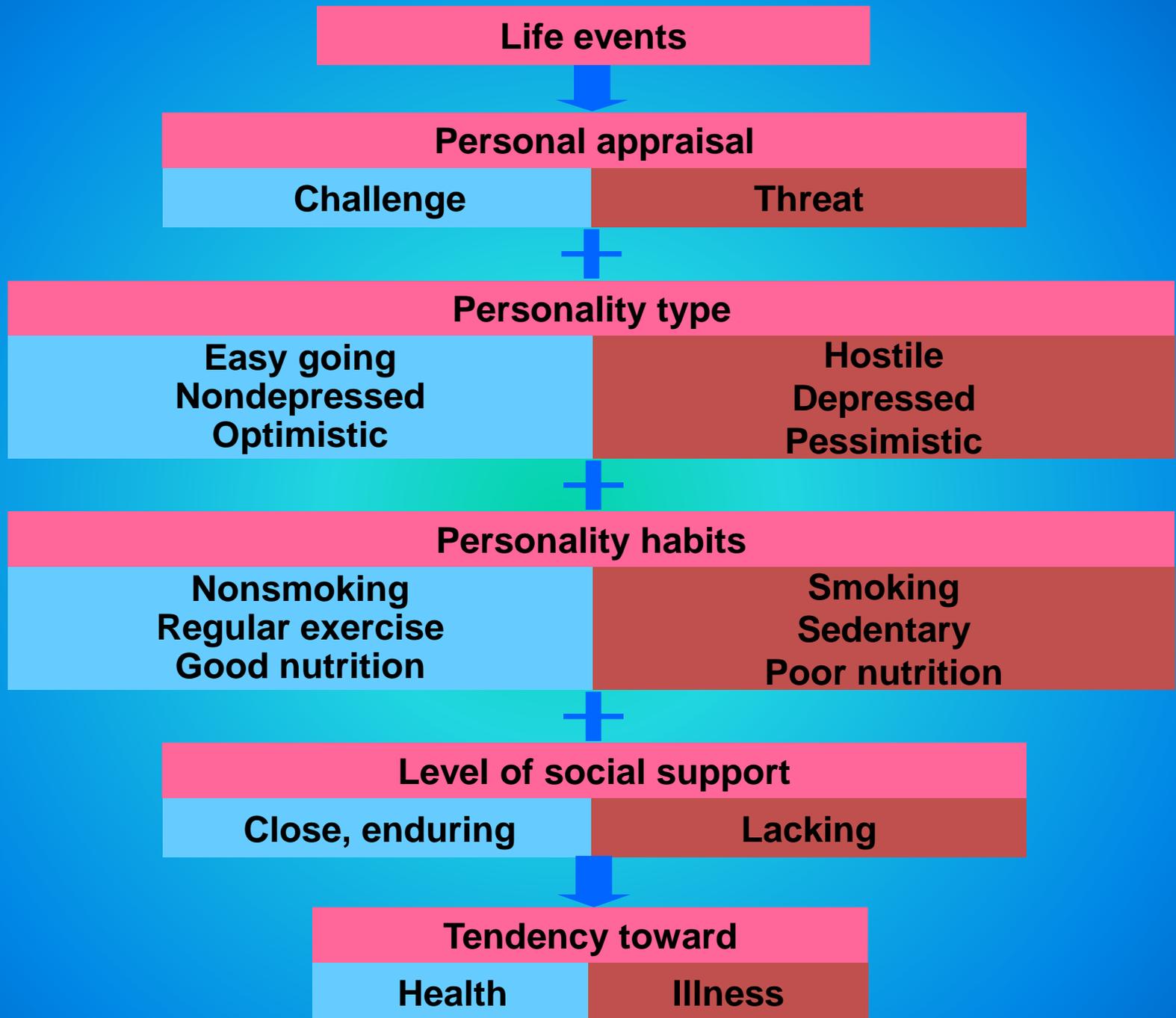
Stress Cognitive Appraisal



Stress Cognitive Appraisal

How to cope with stress:

- Remove or alter the source of stress
- Change your own mental or physical reactions to the stressor
- Physical exercise
- Do something you love
- Talk to or confide in someone you trust



Eustress: positive stress that is
necessary and feels good
(ex: competing in an athletic event)