

# Stress and well being psychology essay



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People act in different ways in stressful situations, some can cope with stressful situation and some cannot cope. People are more stressed today than in the past. Researches were made to measure and to manage stress.

For measuring stress, researches used a couple of types. One was the Social Readjustment rating scale or SRRS. This measure of stress was “ devised” by Holmes and Rahe in 1960. Their thought was that stress is more about the need of readjustment and change. For their research, they gathered almost 400 Americans and listed a scale of life events that could affect an individual. In their opinion, life changes have a major impact on an individual. In this scale at the top was death of a spouse with 100 units of life changes and the rest were adjusted accordingly. Almost 300 or even more of life changes units were linked to higher psychological and physical illnesses. Applying this method to measure stress, leads to some weakness and strengths, in which, the strength will be that it does capture something about stress, as SRRS were proven to be related to illnesses. A weakness could be that a particular life event like an operation for a person who has a life threatening illness is more stressful than a person operation for esthetical enhancement who just want to change something.(handouts, 12. 11. 2012)

Questionnaires measures is another type of stress measuring like SRRS, the Type A personality, Hassles and Uplifts, etc. With questionnaire method is more easy to measure stress because they are quick and easy to administrate, but the weakness is that people may not be sincere when they answer. Some people could give answers in a way that will make them look good “(social desirability bias)”. There are also job strain questionnaire based on job demands. Workers facing high psychological workloads

demands and pressure, who work very fast, very hard and do not have enough time to finish their job, are in a greater risk for mental and physical illness.(handouts, 12. 11. 2012)

Another type of stress measuring is controlled observation. There are various ways to measure, some of them cruel for example electric shocks, overcrowding, extremes of heat and colds used as stressors and others methods, by permanent interrupting the subjects during tests. A lot of researches were made on a link between Type A personality and heart diseases. The ones who developed the idea of Type A personality were Friedman and Rosenman. They had a different style to measure this Type A. They were given tests to people and then they constantly interrupt them during testing. They could observe that some of the participants dealt well with interruptions but some were more stressed because of the constant interruptions.(handouts, 12. 11. 2012)

While measuring stress, researchers came up with some methods of stress management. They grouped up this stress management methods in two, one psychological method in which are hardiness training and stress inoculation training and the other is the physiological method containing drugs and biofeedback techniques. (Gross, R., psychology, 5th edition, 2005)

Suzanne Kobasa's Hardiness Training has the three major Cs: Control, Commitment and Challenge. The people with hardiness personality are more in control of their lives, they can manage better stressful situation and see difficulties as a challenge rather than a problem. That's why Hardy personality is stress-resistant. The training for this has three stages. The first

one is focusing, in which the client is thought to be able to recognise the biological signs of stress such as increase of heart rate, muscle tension and also to be able to identify the source for this stress. The second stage consists in reliving stress encounters, in which the clients relive their stress encounters and are helped in analysing those situations and their response to them. This method could give them some insight on coping strategies. The last one, self-improvement, involves learning of new techniques for the increase of the three Cs.(psychology AS, 2012/handout, 22. 10. 2012)

Stress Inoculation Training or SIT is aiming to change people's behaviour and thinking and is a cognitive behavioural therapy being specifically developed to deal with stress. There are also three stages as in Hardiness. The first stage is Conceptualisation phase, in which a relation is established between client and the therapist and the client is educated about the impact and nature of stress. The client is trained to be able to identify the stressors and to learn how to break them down into chunks that can be tackled. The second phase is Skills acquisition. Here the person will develop skills in constructive thinking. First the skills are taught and practised in the clinic and after that they can be gradually rehearsed in real life. The skills can include positive thinking, relaxation, social skills, etc. The last phase Application and follow-through, in which clients are given opportunities to apply in real life the coping skills learned, some could be asked to even train others as well.(psychology AS, 2012/handout, 22. 10. 2012)

The Hardiness Training and the Stress Inoculation Training are both psychological methods. The next method is physiological which consists in Drugs intake as a method of stress management.

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There are a lot various types of tranquiliser and anti-anxiety drugs. The most common are benzodiazepines or Bz shortened. These include Librium, Ativan and Valium. The effect of this drugs is to lower the level of serotonin activity in the brain. If the level of serotonin is too low, produce depression but if it is too high produce anxiety. In 1960 they were highly prescribed as a replacement for barbiturates. Another group of tranquiliser are beta-blockers. Their activity is that of reducing the activation of the sympathetic branch of the anatomic nervous system meaning the activity reduction of SAM axis. The drugs are fast effective but the problem is that they are highly addictive.(handout, 29. 10. 2012)

Based on the evaluations of the methods, there can be found a lot of weaknesses and strengths in each and every one of them as well as similarities and differences between them.

In Hardiness Training strengths are that is it working, it deals with the cause of stress not just the symptoms, are more effective to people. The weaknesses consists in focusing on middle-class business people, some people find control stressful-they don't like to be in control, people respond in different ways to Hardiness Training, some people doubt about the all three Cs being equally important in protection against stress and even though control is important the commitment and challenges have no effects. (hand out, 22. 10. 2012 / psychology AS, 2012)

SIT works well in general and also works for acute and conic stress. The weaknesses of SIT consists in it being time consuming, requiring high

motivation and in the fact that not all people need the same skills to cope with stress. (hand out, 22. 10. 2012 / psychology AS, 2012)

Drugs work in reducing anxiety also BZ are better than placebo effect, drugs are easy to use involving only the need to actually take the pill and for some forms of phobias are quite handy. Weaknesses are the fact that some drugs are highly addictive, produce strong withdrawal symptoms, patients develop tolerance to them quickly, effectiveness requires a higher dosage, they have a limit of recommended intakes of a maximum of four weeks, treats the symptoms not the actual cause of stress, does not sort out the problem and because of dependency of drugs some people become like “vegetables”.

( hand out, 29. 10. 2012 / psychology AS, 2012)

The similarities between these types are: all of the methods allows the person to be in a better frame of mind to deal with stress; both SIT and Hardiness Training involves motivation and they take place over weeks and treat the cause rather than the symptoms and both change the way people think and help people learn skills to deal with their stress.

The differences between these types are: The effects of the drugs are relatively instant while the effects of SIT and HT require a longer period of time and greater effort until the results are seen; Drugs can be addictive and have short term solutions but other methods like HT may deal with the real issue; people can develop tolerance to drugs in comparison with the other methods that are more constant; drugs have side effects, the other methods don't; no withdrawal effect from stopping SIT and HT like there is with drugs; HT depends on the liking for control but drugs don't.