

# Stress and coping

Psychology



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Stress and Coping Health psychology is a field of psychology, which focuses on the study of healthy living, not only psychologically, but also biologically. One of the constant struggles that many students in both high school and college deal with is stress. Stress is when someone's perceived demands are greater than their ability to cope with the problem. Learning how to cope with stress is extremely important for an individual in order to function in society. Stress has some important concepts, which must be understood before one can learn how to cope with it. The first is to understand the physiological responses, which occur in response to stress. Typical physiological responses include increased blood pressure, increased heart rate, increased body temperature, etc. Headaches and disturbances in sleep patterns are also often witnessed. One important hormone, known as Cortisol, is secreted when we are stressed. It is an immunosuppressant, which means that those who are stressed often do not get sick. It is after they stopped being stressed that they become susceptible to illness. Students often experience this phenomenon after finals (Cooper, & Dewe, 2004). Coping can be divided into two types of coping behaviors: adaptive and maladaptive behavior. Adaptive coping behaviors are healthy ways that a person deals with stress. Some adaptive behaviors could include exercising, meditation, communicating about the problem, etc. Maladaptive coping behaviors are negative ways that a person tries to control stress. Some of the most common maladaptive behaviors, especially in college students, are drug/substance abuse. This is achieved through excess partying where the consumption of alcohol and tobacco is common. People use both types of stress relieving behaviors in order to deal with the different kinds of stress that are dealt with everyday. A special case of stress is when

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a person regresses in their coping mechanisms. In stressful situations, this might include slamming doors, displacement, etc (Folkman, & Nathan, 2010). I know that when I get stressed out, there are certain ways in which I deal with the stress. Typically, I like to go to the gym to blow off steam because it is a healthy way to get rid of stress. Also, working out increases endorphin in the body, which gives me the natural high, which makes me happy. I also am extremely extroverted so I enjoy going to hang out with friends. This is especially important in the way I cope. However, I also have some maladaptive measures in which I deal with stress. I like to sleep a lot when I get stressed. Although sleep is good, I sleep excessively. In addition, I also like to go out and party with friends where there is usually the consumption of alcohol. The important thing about stress is that I know when it is getting too much to handle, so I am prepared to deal with it. Stress management and learning how to cope are extremely important for people to know. Having a basic knowledge and knowing how stress affects a person personally is important in order to learn what type of coping measures are most effective against certain types of stress. I have been able to learn over time that my coping weaknesses are and what types of stress affect me the most. References Cooper, C, & Dewe, P. (2004). Stress: a brief history. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing. Folkman, S, & Nathan, P. (2010). The oxford handbook of stress, health, and coping. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.