

The diathesis-stress model essay sample

[Science](#), [Biology](#)



The Diathesis-Stress Model illustrates the dynamic between a diathesis and an individual's stress and how the effects of this dynamic can influence an individual's behavior. A diathesis is a person's predisposition towards developing a disorder. A predisposition towards a disorder can be caused by one or a combination of biological, psychosocial and/or sociocultural factors. (Carson, p. 65) Some examples of the causes of a diathesis are genetic inheritance, biological processes such as brain abnormalities or neurotransmitter problems and early learning experiences.

Stress is the response that an individual experiences when presented with life events and experiences which they perceive as exceeding their coping abilities. Examples of some of the causes of stress are trauma, abuse, neglect and relationship and job problems. The Diathesis-Stress Model shows that it is the combination of stress and a diathesis which leads to abnormal behavior. In other words, a diathesis alone is not sufficient to cause abnormal behavior and likewise, a stressor by itself is also not sufficient enough to cause abnormal behavior. Rather, abnormal behavior is a result of both a diathesis and a stressor being present in an individual.

However, having both a diathesis and a stressor present does NOT guarantee that an individual will engage in abnormal behavior in all cases. This is due to what is known as protective factors. Protective factors are influences or traits that a person can have that increases their ability to cope with certain stressors and therefore, can decrease or eliminate the stressor's ability to influence their mental health. Protective factors often lead to a person developing resilience to certain stressful situations, allowing them to not be adversely affected by that particular stress. (Carson, pp65-66)

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There are many different models of abnormal behavior that exemplify the diathesis-stress model. Each one has a different dynamic between one's stressors and diathesis; and the influences of protective factors varies from individual to individual.