

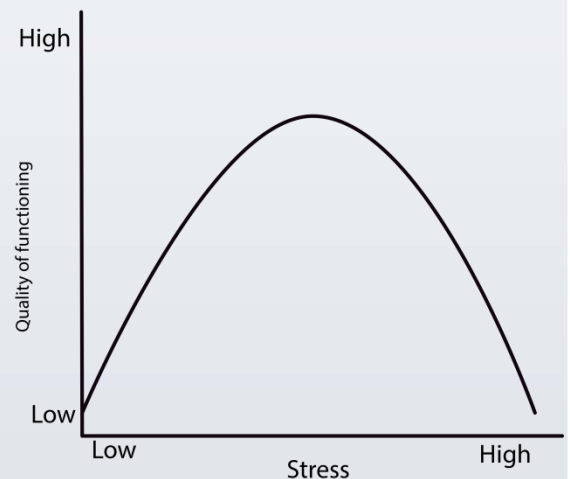
What is stress?

Stress is a natural reaction to the daily challenges and life changes. It is a state of mobilization of the body in reaction to negative mental and physical stimuli, which could lead to disturbances in the functioning of a person but also often it leads to development.

Stressing the essence of stress

According to H. Seyle stress is „the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change”. Those demands may be of the biological and psychological nature. On a physiological level, this is a non-specific response of the body to stimulate the autonomic nervous system and the so-called hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal cortex.

Hans Seyle discovered that we need small severity of stress to live. He divided stress into 2 types: beneficial eustress and harmful distress. Being of both psychical and physiological nature, stress causes a number of biochemical, physical and mental changes in our body. Under the influence of stress the body secretes many hormones: oxytocin, adrenaline, cortisol. Under the influence of eustress we have more energy which makes us to operate more efficiently and to use our abilities to cope with the challenges on the maximum level. In case of chronic distress, the human body is in a state of heightened mobilization for a long time. It can lead to exhaustion of remediation and resistance powers which results in somatic diseases or disorders in the psycho-emotional field.



Is that stress good or bad?



Eustress



Distress

Good, beneficial and constructive stress that increases the level of activity, strengthens the response and enables for effective activity. Eustress is an excitement and motivation to greater effort despite the difficulties. It leads to personal development and achievements in life.

Bad, hurtful and destructive stress. We experience it when the stream of stimuli exceeds a certain limit our individual strength. This stress is too intensive or lasts too long and in effect affected person loses strength and the ability to work effectively.

Sources of stress

Internal

Unrealistic expectations, lack of a sense of control, prejudices, complexes, inappropriate habits, erroneous thinking about themselves and others, lack of assertiveness



External

Pressure comes from the environment, the overwhelming number of classes, change of school or housing, poor working conditions



Stress at the university



Studying at the university is stressful for many young people. This is an important and difficult period in their life, which is associated with a number of changes, new responsibilities, but also the privileges and the possibility of improvement in various aspects, resulting in the achievement of social and psychological maturity. Undoubtedly, this is the period in which the young man is measured with stress more intense and more frequent than before. Studying is a time, wherein the solid component of the examination and issuance of the assessment is present. It is also a period of significant life changes. The simple fact is that the transition from high school to university is usually associated with a change of residence, friends, and forms of learning. This period of shift carries with it uncertainty and stress. It can be a challenge, but the loss of the existing stability may sometimes be too much of a stimuli.

Stress coping strategies

Stress coping strategies are specific remedial cognitive and behavioral methods one uses in a particular stressful situation. People cope with stress in different ways. Generally, strategies for coping with stress are divided into 3 main groups:

Strategies concentrated on coping with the problem.



Strategies focused on dealing with the emotions that arise as a result of a stressful situation.

Strategies focused on avoiding confrontation with a difficult situation.



Stress coping strategies

Confrontation – Action based on the first impulse, for example: *"I got angry on a person who was causing the problem", "I did something of which I did not realize - but at least I tried to do something"*.

Distancing - cognitive reactions involving the defense by removal of any thoughts pertaining the problem, which was a source of stress for example: *"He tries not to think about this", "I tried to forget about the whole thing."*

Self-control - control ones own emotions and avoiding the hasty action, for example: *"I tried to keep my emotions to myself", „I pondered in my mind what I should say or what to do"*.

The search for social support - behavior involving the use of factual, information, emotional support of others, for example: *"I asked a relative or friend for advice", "I accepted spiritual support and understanding from other people"*.

Accepting responsibility - these are the behavior and thoughts of a person, recognizing his/her own guilt in creating a stressful situation, for example: *„I criticized and blamed myself", "I promised to myself that the next time will be different"*.

Escape, avoidance - improve oneself frame of mind by being far away from the source of the problem, for example: *"Then I ate a lot, drank a lot, I used drugs", "slept more than usual"*.

The planned solution to the problem - are behaviors aimed at reaching final solution of the issue, which caused the problem in a given situation, for example: *"I made an action plan to follow and acted", "I was just focused on what I do",*

Positive revaluation - making changes in the hierarchy of values to gainsome benefits from stressful situation, for example: *"I discovered again, what is important in life", "changed for the better as a man"*.

**The choice of stress coping strategies usually does not depend on a situation
but rather on a personal preference**

Are you stressed?

Self diagnosis - my personal stress level

Many people are aware that that they are subject to constant stress stimuli, but we do not know whether it is just eustress, or already threatening distress - the constant state of tension. This tool allows you to answer that question.

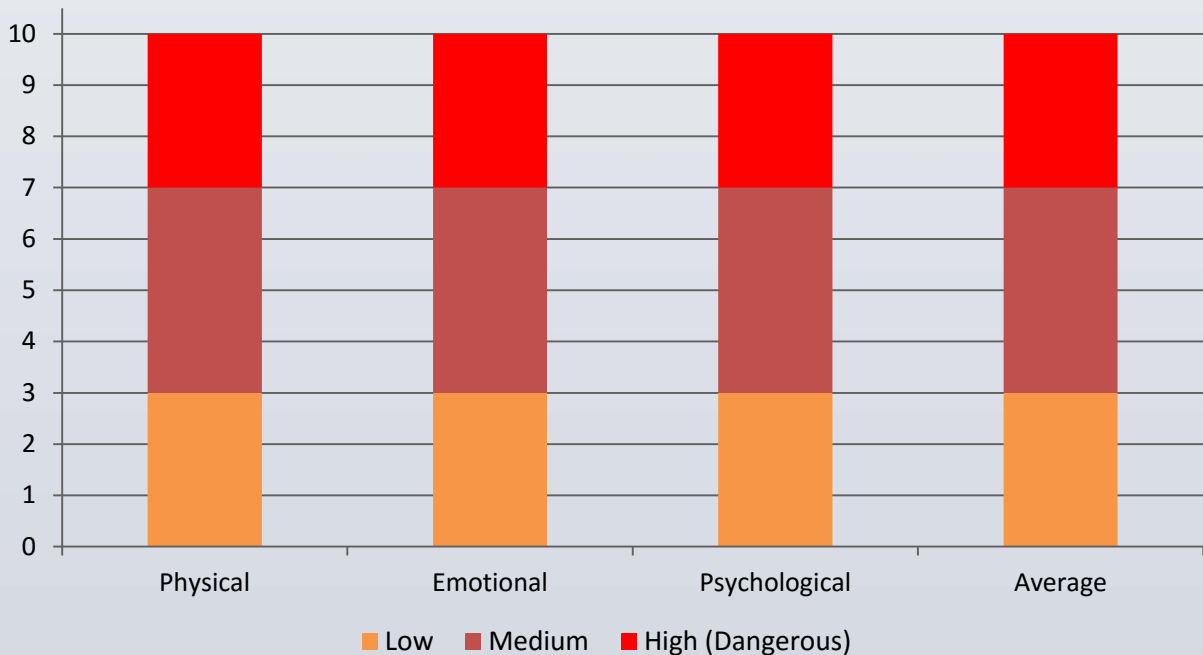
Instructions: For each sentence, which will answer affirmatively link, enter one point. If the sentence is not true - there is no point.

Physical level	points
1. I suffer from sleep disorders.	
2. During the day I am often tired and tense.	
3. I often have digestive disorders (diarrhea or constipation)	
4. I feel dizzy for no reason	
5. I often have rapid pulse.	
6. I have breathing disorder (with no particular reason).	
7. I'm sweating.	
8. I feel stomachache (pressure).	
9. I often react with headaches	
10. My blood pressure is raised and lowered.	
Sum I: Physical level	
Emotional level	points
1. I suffer, often I feel lonely, abandoned and alienated.	
2. I am often frustrated, even without a special reason.	
3. I would gladly sink into the ground.	
4. I have little opportunity to express my feelings and acting out.	
5. Lately I often lose my temper.	
6. I feel threatened, I'm more fearful than ever.	
7. Often I have no plan or purpose.	
8. Recently, I lack the motivation to solve problems.	
9. My reactions are often inadequately violent.	
10. I'm more nervous and emotionally locked than ever.	
Sum II: Emotional level	

Psychological level	points
1. My ability to concentrate in stressful situations is much worse than before.	
2. I'm not interested in my profession, I do not do anything either during free time.	
3. My self-control and self-discipline declined a lot recently.	
4. I forget about important matters more often than I used to.	
5. It's difficult for me to learn new things.	
6. I often feel indifferent and incapable of making decisions.	
7. I often feel that I have nothing important to say.	
8. Many issues begin to outgrow me.	
9. I can get a lot fewer cases done and stay calm than ever.	
10. I often loose the tread of the conversation.	
Sum III: Psychological level	

$$\text{Average} = \frac{\text{Sum I} + \text{Sum II} + \text{Sum III}}{3}$$

My stress is:



Sources:

Seyle H. A Syndrome Produced by Diverse Nocuous Agents; The journal of neuropsychiatry and clinical neurosciences (1936)
 Seyle H. The Stress of Life. New York: McGraw-Hill, (1956)
 Lazarus, R.S. Psychological stress and the coping process. New York, NY, US: McGraw-Hill Psychological stress and the coping process. (1966)
 Lazarus R., S Folkman S. Transactional theory and research on emotions and coping., European Journal of Personality, Vol 1, 141-169 (1987)