

## TOPIC: INTRODUCTION TO STRESS

### What is Stress?

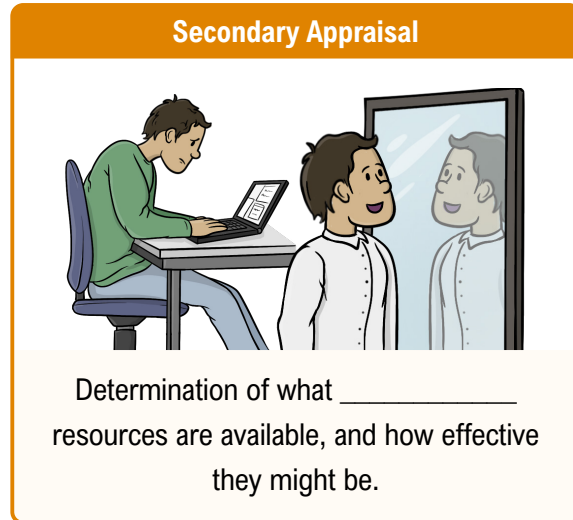
- ◆ **Stress:** Psychological and physiological response to events perceived as \_\_\_\_\_ or overwhelming.
  - Often viewed as negative but \_\_\_\_\_ be beneficial for motivation and performance.
- ◆ Stress *response* depends on \_\_\_\_\_:

**Primary Appraisal**



Determination of how potentially \_\_\_\_\_ or threatening an event is.

**Secondary Appraisal**



Determination of what \_\_\_\_\_ resources are available, and how effective they might be.

### EXAMPLE

Researchers Michael J. Renner and R. Scott Mackin created a life stress instrument tool to help students quantify the impact of stressful life events. The tool includes various life events that college students may experience and gives them a numerical value for stress. The scale is out of 100. Shown below are a few of the events and their stress scores.

Event	Score
Death of a family member	96
Flunking a class	89
Getting married	76
Performing in public	69
Maintaining a relationship	55
Getting sick	52

Some of the events listed in the tool would be considered positive. Why would they be included in this tool?

---

---

## **TOPIC: INTRODUCTION TO STRESS**

### **PRACTICE**

Which of the following describes a secondary appraisal?

---

- a) Determining if the spot on your shirt is dirt or a spider.
- b) Determining if the thump upstairs is a bugler or a raccoon.
- c) Determining which study strategy would help you pass your final.
- d) Determining if the animal running towards you is a friendly dog or an angry dog.

### **PRACTICE**

Which of the following statements about stress are true?

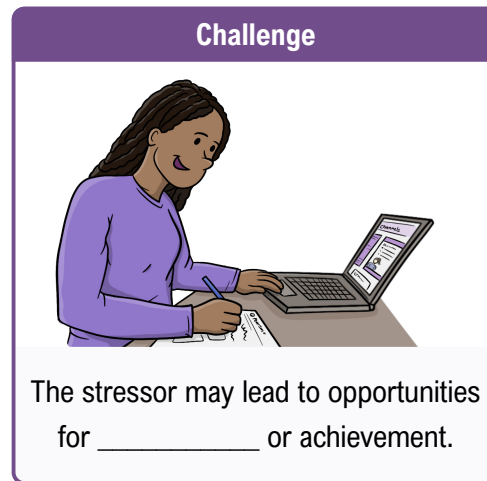
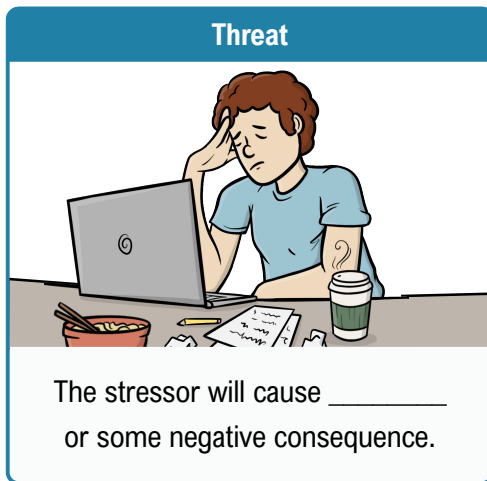
- I. Stress response is based on appraisals of the situation.
  - II. Secondary appraisals are the determination of how dangerous a stressor is.
  - III. Stress involves both physiological and psychological dimensions.
- 

- a) I & II.
- b) II & III.
- c) I & III.
- d) I, II, & III.

## TOPIC: INTRODUCTION TO STRESS

### Interpretation of Stress: Challenge vs. Threat Framework

- ◆ Framework used to explain appraisals under \_\_\_\_\_ performance conditions, or in competitive environments.
- ◆ In these cases, stressors can either be appraised as \_\_\_\_\_ a threat or a challenge.



- ◆ These two appraisals have been associated with \_\_\_\_\_ physiological responses (Tomaka et al., 1993).
- ◆ Shifting from a **threat** → **challenge** mentality can increase performance (Jamieson et al., 2010).

**Note:** Not all stressors are appraised as threats or challenges. Some may be more neutral (ex: missing the bus).

#### References

- Jamieson, J. P., Mendes, W. B., Blackstock, E., & Schmader, T. (2010). Turning the knots in your stomach into bows: Reappraising arousal improves performance on the GRE. *Journal of experimental social psychology*, 46(1), 208-212. doi: 10.1016/j.jesp.2009.08.015
- Tomaka, J., Blascovich, J., Kelsey, R. M., & Leitten, C. L. (1993). Subjective, physiological, and behavioral effects of threat and challenge appraisal. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 65(2), 248-60. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.65.2.248

## **TOPIC: INTRODUCTION TO STRESS**

### **EXAMPLE**

Think about the last 30 days. In the space below, write an example of a situation that could be appraised as either a threat or a challenge that differs from the one above.

---

---

---

### **PRACTICE**

True or False: if false, choose the answer that best corrects the statement.

The challenge vs. threat framework is applicable to appraisals under all conditions and situations.

- 
- a) True.
  - b) False: The challenge vs. threat framework is used to explain appraisals under neutral contexts.
  - c) False: The challenge vs. threat framework is used to explain appraisals in low-stake situations.
  - d) False: The challenge vs. threat framework is used to explain appraisals in high-performance conditions.