



New Trends  
in Psychology

## Stress and General Manifestations on the Human Body

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**Abstract:** Today, stress has become an increasingly widespread phenomenon. Stress is seen as a response to a situation where individuals are unable to meet the requirements required of them. Occupational stress is not only pressure in the workplace, it is a life-long factor and must be viewed from several perspectives: work load, workplace relationships, organizational structure and climate, role ambiguity and conflict of role, opportunities for career development, work-family relationship. In general, occupational stress is caused by several factors, which can be classified into three groups: external factors, factors that depend on the organization and factors that depend on the employee. Stress can manifest itself in different ways. Symptoms of stress can be divided into three main groups: physiological, psychological and behavioral.

**Keywords:** stress; situation; work; organization; career; internal-external factors; symptoms; physiological; psychological; behavior; feelings; success; constraints

### Introduction

Stress has lately become an increasingly widespread phenomenon. This term is one of the most popular and has become a source of concern, quite justified, for top managers. This is one of the most expensive types of costs of the company, having a negative impact on both the health of workers and the profit of the company. “In

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the European Union, stress at work is the second health problem related to work, after back pain. It affects 28% of EU employees.” Stress at work is the cause of more than a quarter of all medical leave, the duration of which represents at least two weeks of absence from work.

Stress at work can be caused by psychosocial risks such as job design, work organization, management (special professional demands and limited control over one’s own activities or problems such as violence and harassment in the workplace). Some physical risks, such as noise and temperature in the workplace, can also cause stress at work.

Our daily life subjects us to a true explosion of feelings and mental states. Although the adaptive capabilities of the individual are particularly flexible, we are not always prepared to cope, bear or successfully resolve such situations without a psychological effort often exaggerated.

The term “stress” appears more and more often, not only in scientific publications, even in the current vocabulary in a dual use: one refers to the stressful situation – harmful, aggressive conditions that assault or threaten the body, pressures, constraints, deprivations to which the individual is subjected; the other takes into account the stress state of the body – its suffering, wear and tear, as well as the psychological and physiological responses of the individual to the action of stressors.

Stress means the body’s reaction and not the situation that causes stress: “It’s not what happens to you that’s important, it’s how you react.” Selye justifies the reaction to stress by the three stages that make up the general adaptation syndrome: the first stage consists of the alarm reaction, which involves a form of shock that causes the immobilization of all parts of the body, then a second stage consists of the so-called specific resistance, during which the person concerned adapts to the stressful agent and a third phase consisting of the phenomenon of exhaustion, which develops if adaptation can no longer be maintained. All these phases are included in general adaptation syndrome or Selye’s syndrome. A “division of stressful mental situations that cause unpleasant emotional manifestations and trigger avoidance or rejection behavior in the behavior expressed by the subject”. The division is made into three classes:

- benign stress, viewed as a disorder lasting in time from a few seconds to a few hours;
- moderate stress, with effects lasting from a few hours to a few days;

The severe stress situation that affects several weeks, months, years, as happens in the case of the death of a loved one. The latest types of stressful situations are generating intense emotional disorders and responsible for characteristic behavioral changes.

The second aspect discussed by Selye is the reaction to stress given the excess emotional responses, changes in reactivity as well as the deviation of constant mental and physiological functions until the onset of the disease. Intraindividual variations explain why one and the same person react differently from one moment to the next, why the extent, intensity, duration of psychophysiological reactions changes over time, as a result of familiarity, habituating with some stressors or on the contrary of sensitization, increasing vulnerability.

The influences of stress on the human body depend, both on the intensity and character of stressors and on the individual peculiarities of vulnerability and resistance. The general influences of stress are divided into: influences on personality; influences on behavior; physiological influences; influences on health; influences on working capacity.

From the multitude of psychic traits that shape the personality, an important place occupies those peculiarities that determine the behavior of the individual on his fellow human beings. They are based on the natural baggage of neuropsychic qualities, permanently shaped by education. There is an extremely high degree of anatomical and functional similarity between individuals. For a group living in the same socio-cultural conditions there is a high degree of similarity in the sphere of social needs, experience, procurement. Therefore, the specification of certain individual differences will be made considering "the general ways of responding to stressful agents that give rise to conflict, feeling frustrated or threatening."

Research into the correlations between different personality traits and stress-related conduct have highlighted certain adaptive modalities characteristic of certain personality types. In a stressful situation, the extrovert is concerned with the concrete things in the real world, is task oriented, is integrated into direct, practical actions, is open, active. He is sociable and adapts more easily to the stressful situation, while the introvert, being in a continuous struggle with himself, preoccupied with intellectual and artistic problems, is more vulnerable to threat and failure, is worried, enters a state of tension, anxiety, tends to withdraw, to resign.

Flexibility and stiffness are other personality traits experienced in stressful situations. Flexible personalities are oriented towards social reality and are closely related to the dynamics of changes. Rigid personalities, on the contrary, are self-oriented, self-confident, do not consider the pressure of others, therefore, the rigid is very little sensitive to changes, does not accept contingencies.

Inevitable stressful situations can cause numerous behavioral traits, leading to situations of a pathological nature. Thus, the person concerned easily adopts impulsive behavior, becomes easily dependent on alcohol, tobacco, narcotics, falling into emotional crises marked by heightened vulnerability. Other indicators refer to cognitive effects that are the result of the action of cognitive functions (perceptions, memory, thinking).

Deterioration of performance in psychological samples addressing cognitive activity is very commonly found in a state of stress. Thus, many authors point to significant improvements in responses made in stressful situations. Considering all the factors that come into play (nature of pregnancy, intensity of stress) it has been proven that some individuals work better under conditions of increased mental tension, and others – on the contrary. However, in typically stressful situations when the subject is not prepared to respond adequately to tasks, the cognitive effects most common and concreted by: lack of concentration, inability to make decisions, inhibition, mental blockage occur.

Along with cognitive effects, physiological effects consisting of hyperglycaemia, hypersweat, heat or cold waves, insomnia or sleep deprivation also occur. Sleep deprivation occupies a particular place in the category of stressors, because it intervenes, both in exceptional situations, but also in normal situations such as the period of preparation of exams, competitions, additional work. The stressful effect of sleep deprivation is rarely unique, in many cases it adds to the action of other stressors of psychological or physiological nature.

Stress can also influence the ability to work through lack of concentration, conflict in the workplace, low productivity, dissatisfaction, frequent occupational accidents. But negative stress can turn into positive stress. The way in which daily confrontation situations are viewed, the behaviors adopted to cope with stress and the imposition of a positive attitude in such contexts, all these lead to the habit of being stressed.

As regards the causes of psychological stress, we must specify that there are a multitude of such causes, including physical/psychic traumas, conflicts of different intensities and nature, certain diseases or physical, mental, chemical stimuli, etc., leading to the appearance of stressors, which will disturb the proper organization of the organization.

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