

18.6: Glossary

Key Terms

anxiety

A feeling of inability to deal with anticipated harm.

frustration

Refers to a psychological reaction to an obstruction or impediment to goal-oriented behavior.

general adaptation syndrome

Consists of three stages: the first stage, alarm; the second stage of resistance; and the third stage, exhaustion.

strain

The damage resulting from experiencing stress.

stress

A physical and emotional reaction to potentially threatening aspects of the environment.

locus of control

The concept that much of what happens in one's life is either under or outside of their own control.

personal control

Represents the extent to which an employee actually has control over factors affecting effective job performance.

Type A personality

Type A personality is characterized by impatience, restlessness, aggressiveness, competitiveness, polyphasic activities, and being under considerable time pressure.

rate of life change

The variety of life events were identified and assigned points based upon the extent to which each event is related to stress and illness.

role ambiguity

Occurs when individuals have inadequate information concerning their roles.

role conflict

The simultaneous occurrence of two (or more) sets of pressures or expectations; compliance with one would make it difficult to comply with the other.

role overload

A condition in which individuals feel they are being asked to do more than time or ability permits.

role underutilization

Occurs when employees are allowed to use only a few of their skills and abilities, even though they are required to make heavy use of them.

tolerance for ambiguity

Individuals measure and affect by role ambiguity (in terms of stress, reduced performance, or propensity to leave) than others with a low tolerance for ambiguity.

burnout

A general feeling of exhaustion that can develop when a person simultaneously experiences too much pressure to perform and too few sources of satisfaction.

hardiness

Represents a collection of personality characteristics that involve one's ability to perceptually or behaviorally transform negative stressors into positive challenges.

social support

The extent to which organization members feel their peers can be trusted, are interested in one another's welfare, respect one another, and have a genuine positive regard for one another.

Eustress

Beneficial stress.

health promotion programs

Represent a combination of diagnostic, educational, and behavior modification activities that are aimed at attaining and preserving good health.

Summary of Learning Outcomes

18.1 Problems of Work Adjustment

1. How do you recognize the symptoms of stress in yourself and in others?

Stress is a physical and emotional reaction to potentially threatening aspects of the environment. The damage resulting from stress is called strain. The general adaptation syndrome is the common pattern of events that characterizes someone who experiences stress. The three stages of the syndrome are alarm, resistance, and exhaustion. Two primary types of stress can be identified: frustration and anxiety.

18.2 Organizational Influences on Stress

2. What are the underlying causes of stress in a particular situation?

Four organization influences on stress can be identified: (1) occupational differences, (2) role ambiguity, (3) role conflict, and (4) role overload or underutilization. Three personal influences on stress are (1) personal control, or the desire to have some degree of control over one's environment; (2) rate of life change; and (3) Type A personality. Type A personality refers to individuals characterized by impatience, restlessness, aggressiveness, competitiveness, and polyphasic activities (that is, attempting to do several activities at the same time).

18.3 Buffering Effects of Work related Stress

3. How do managers and organizations minimize the dysfunctional consequences of stressful behavior?

The effects of potential stress can be buffered by two factors: (1) social support from one's coworkers or friends and (2) hardiness, or the ability to perceptually and behaviorally transform negative stressors into positive challenges. Sustained stress can lead to (1) health problems; (2) counterproductive behavior, such as turnover, absenteeism, drug abuse, and sabotage; (3) poor job performance; and (4) burnout.

18.4 Coping with Work related Stress

4. What are the remedies for job-related stress, and how can managers motivate employees to participate actively in health promotion efforts for the benefit of all concerned?

Burnout is defined as a general feeling of exhaustion that can develop when a person simultaneously experiences too much pressure to perform and too few sources of satisfaction. Individual strategies to reduce stress include (1) developing one's self-awareness about how to behave on the job, (2) developing outside interests, (3) leaving the organization, and (4) finding a unique solution. Organizational strategies to reduce stress include (1) improved personnel selection and job placement, (2) skills training, (3) job redesign, (4) company-sponsored counseling programs, (5) increased employee participation and personal control, (6) enhanced work group cohesiveness, (7) improved communication, and (8) health promotion programs.

Chapter Review Questions

1. Discuss the five types of problems related to employee work adjustment.
2. Define stress. How does it differ from strain?
3. Describe the general adaptation syndrome.

4. Contrast frustration with anxiety.
5. Identify the major categories of variables that have been found to influence stress. What role does social support play in the process? What role does hardiness play?
6. In the chapter, the plight of assembly-line workers was discussed. What realistic suggestions would you make to relieve the tension and stress of this job?
7. Compare and contrast role conflict and role ambiguity.
8. How does a manager achieve a useful balance in a person-job fit so neither role overload nor role underutilization occurs?
9. How should a manager deal with a subordinate who is clearly a Type A personality? How should a manager who is a Type A personality handle her own stress?
10. Of what utility is the rate-of-life-change concept?
11. In organizations with which you are familiar, which of the many suggestions for coping with stress would be most applicable? Are the strategies you selected individual or organizational strategies?

Management Skills Application Exercises

1. You may wish to see if you have experienced stress in your present (or previous) part- or full-time job. To do so, simply complete this self-assessment. When you have finished, refer to the scoring procedures in [Appendix B](#).

How Stressful Is Your Job?

Instructions: This instrument focuses on the stress level of your current (or previous) job. Think of your job, and answer the following items as frankly and honestly as possible.

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
1. I am often irritable with my coworkers.	1	2	3	4	5
2. At work, I constantly feel rushed or behind schedule.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I often dread going to work.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I often experience headaches, stomachaches, or backaches at work.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I often lose my temper over minor problems.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Everything I do seems to drain my energy level.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I often interpret questions or comments from others as a criticism of my work.	1	2	3	4	5

8. Time is my enemy.	1	2	3	4	5
9. I often have time for only a quick lunch (or no lunch) at work.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I spend considerable time at home worrying about problems at work.	1	2	3	4	5

2. Are you interested in determining whether you are a Type A or Type B? If so, simply complete this self-assessment. When you have finished, score your results as shown in [Appendix B](#).

Are You a Type A?

Instructions: Choose from the following responses to answer the questions below:

- a. Almost always true
- b. Usually true.
- c. Seldom true
- d. Never true

Answer each question according to what is generally true for you:

_____	1. I do not like to wait for other people to complete their work before I can proceed with my own.
_____	2. I hate to wait in most lines.
_____	3. People tell me that I tend to get irritated too easily.
_____	4. Whenever possible I try to make activities competitive.
_____	5. I have a tendency to rush into work that needs to be done before knowing the procedure I will use to complete the job.
_____	6. Even when I go on vacation, I usually take some work along.
_____	7. When I make a mistake, it is usually due to the fact that I have rushed into the job before completely planning it through.
_____	8. I feel guilty for taking time off from work.
_____	9. People tell me I have a bad temper when it comes to competitive situations.
_____	10. I tend to lose my temper when I am under a lot of pressure at work.
_____	11. Whenever possible, I will attempt to complete two or more tasks at once.
_____	12. I tend to race against the clock.
_____	13. I have no patience for lateness.

Source: Adapted from "Are You a Type A?" *The Stress Mess Solution: The Causes and Cures of Stress on the Job*, by G. S. Everly and D. A. Girdano. Reprinted by permission of the authors.

14. I catch myself rushing when there is no need.

Source: Adapted from “Are You a Type A?” *The Stress Mess Solution: The Causes and Cures of Stress on the Job*, by G. S. Everly and D. A. Girdano. Reprinted by permission of the authors.

3. The Holmes and Rahe “Schedule of Recent Experiences” is shown here in this self-assessment. You are encouraged to complete this scale by checking all those events that have occurred to you within the past year. Next, follow the scoring procedures described in [Appendix B](#).

How Stable Is Your Life?

Instructions: Place a check mark next to each event you experienced within the past year. Then add the scores associated with the various events to derive your total life stress score.

Life Event	Scale Value
——— Death of spouse	100
——— Divorce	73
——— Marital separation	65
——— Jail term	63
——— Death of a close family member	63
——— Major personal injury or illness	53
——— Marriage	50
——— Fired from work	47
——— Marital reconciliation	45
——— Retirement	45
——— Major change in health of family member	44
——— Pregnancy	40
——— Sex difficulties	39
——— Gain of a new family member	39
——— Business readjustment	39
——— Change in financial state	38
——— Death of a close friend	37
——— Change to a different line of work	36
——— Change in number of arguments with spouse	35
——— Mortgage or loan for big purchase (home, etc.)	31
——— Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
——— Change in responsibilities at work	29
——— Son or daughter leaving home	29
——— Trouble with in-laws	29
——— Outstanding personal achievement	28

Source: Adapted from “Scaling of Life Change: Comparison of Direct and Indirect Methods” by L. O. Ruch and T. H. Holmes, *Journal of Psychosomatic Research* 15 (1971): 224, 1971.

—— Spouse begins or stops work	26
—— Begin or end school	26
—— Change in living conditions	25
—— Revision of personal habits	24
—— Trouble with boss	23
—— Change in work hours or conditions	20
—— Change in residence	20
—— Change in schools	20
—— Change in recreation	19
—— Change in church activities	19
—— Change in social activities	18
—— Mortgage or loan for lesser purchase (car, etc.)	17
—— Change in sleeping habits	16
—— Change in number of family get-togethers	15
—— Change in eating habits	15
—— Vacation	13
—— Christmas	12
—— Minor violations of the law	11
Total Score = ——	
Source: Adapted from “Scaling of Life Change: Comparison of Direct and Indirect Methods” by L. O. Ruch and T. H. Holmes, Journal of Psychosomatic Research 15 (1971): 224, 1971.	

4. If you are interested in your own potential for burnout, you may wish to complete this self-assessment. Simply answer the ten questions as honestly as you can. When you have finished, follow the scoring instructions shown in [Appendix B](#).

Are You Suffering from Burnout?

Instructions: Check whether each item is “mostly true” or “mostly untrue” for you. Answer as honestly as you can. When you have finished, add up the number of checks for “mostly true.”

	Mostly True	Mostly Untrue
1. I usually go around feeling tired.	——	——
2. I think I am working harder but accomplishing less.	——	——
3. My job depresses me.	——	——
4. My temper is shorter than it used to be.	——	——
5. I have little enthusiasm for life.	——	——
6. I snap at people fairly often.	——	——
7. My job is a dead end for me.	——	——
8. Helping others seems like a losing battle.	——	——

9. I don't like what I have become.	_____	_____
10. I am very unhappy with my job.	_____	_____

Critical Thinking Case

Managerial Leadership, Sustainability, and Responsible Management: Mindfulness at Google Inc.

Even though the outside appearance of Google headquarters may be filled with stereotypical visions of nap pods and scenes from “The Internship,” there is still a lot of work that is accomplished by those working there. With work, there can come stress, and job-related stress is a huge issue, with studies by the Behavioral Science and Policy Association stating that working long hours has been shown to increase mortality by 20 percent. No matter how many cushy perks you can get, they won’t make everyone happy, and Google is combating this with creativity. They attempt to counteract the stress-related issues by offering specific classes—for example Meditation 101 and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction. They also encourage their employees to join their online and in-person community called gPause. This specific group helps support and encourage meditation practice. The key to this stress-reducing revolution at Google is that they have a company culture that supports the behavior. The company also promotes day meditation retreats at a handful of their locations. This type of creativity is sure to take hold at other companies across the globe.

Questions:

1. Google is one of the leading tech companies in the world. What do you think of their approach to handling stress within the workplace? Do you think that this approach will be effective? Why or why not?
2. A company culture that supports stress reduction is key to the success of any program within the company. What are some obstacles that can arise when handling stress within a workplace? What are some methods that you would employ as manager to counteract these obstacles and implement stress-reduction programs within your workplace?

Sources:

J. Goh, J. Pfeffer, S. A. Zenios, “Workplace stressors & health outcomes: Health policy for the workplace,” *Behavioral Science and Policy Association*, February 15, 2017, <https://behavioralpolicy.org/article...the-workplace/>;

J. Porter, “How Google And Others Help Employees Burn Off Stress In Unique Ways,” *Fast Company*, November 16, 2015, <https://www.fastcompany.com/3053048/...in-unique-ways>.

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