

Nature of Stress

The word stress has its origin in the Latin words 'strictus' meaning tight or narrow and 'stringere' the verb meaning to tighten. These root words reflect the internal feelings of tightness and constriction of the muscles and breathing reported by many people under stress. Stress is often explained in terms of characteristics of the environment that are disruptive to the individual. Stressors are events that cause our body to give the stress response. Such events include noise, crowding, a bad relationship, or the daily commuting to school or office. The reaction to external stressors is called strain.

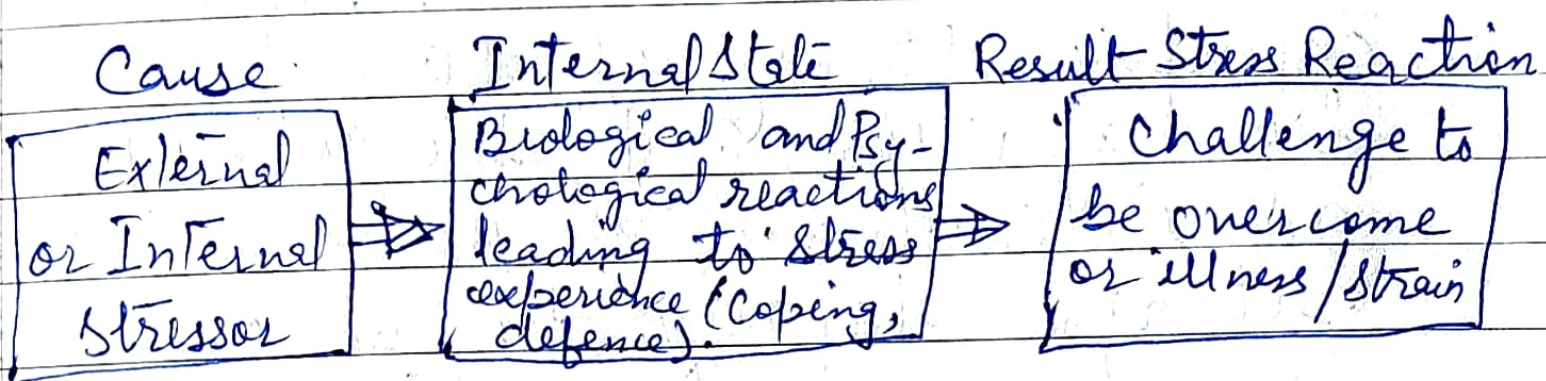
Stress has come to be associated with both the causes as well as effects. However, this view of stress can cause confusion. Hans Selye,

The father of modern stress research defined stress as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand" that is, regardless of the cause of the threat, the individual will respond with the same physiological pattern of reactions.

Stress is not a factor that resides in the individual or the environment, instead it is embedded in an ongoing process that involves individuals ~~transacting~~ interacting with their social and cultural environments, making appraisals of those encounters and attempting to cope with the issues that arise. Stress is a dynamic mental / cognitive state. It is disruption in homeostasis or an imbalance that gives rise to a requirement for resolution of that imbalance or restoration of homeostasis.

The perception of stress is dependent upon the individual's cognitive appraisal of

events and the resources available to deal with them.



Psychological Meaning of Stress.