

# CHAPTER 10

## Worker Stress and Negative Employee Attitudes and Behaviors



*PSY 482 - Selective Topics in  
Industrial/Organizational  
Psychology*



# Defining Worker Stress



- ▶ A **stressor** is an environmental event that is perceived by an individual to be threatening.
- ▶ **Worker stress** involves the physiological and/or psychological reactions to events that are perceived to be threatening or taxing.
  - ▶ Negative stress (or **distress**) can cause stress-related illness and can affect absenteeism, turnover, and work performance.



# Physiological Effects of Stress



- Adrenaline is released, blood pressure rises, heart rate increases, extra sugar is discharged into the bloodstream
- Males and females respond differently to stress
  - Male - *fight-or-flight* response
  - Female - *tend-and-befriend* response
    - *Tending* – nurturing activities designed to protect self and offspring from stress
    - *Befriending* – development of social groups or networks that help defend against stress

# Physiological Effects of Stress

- Few people regularly face extreme emergencies on the job (e.g., firefighters and police)
  - Most job stress is emotional (e.g., arguments with the boss)
- Prolonged exposure to stress leads to physical and psychosomatic illness
  - These illnesses can contribute to stress
- Stress doesn't affect everyone the same way
  - Air traffic controllers are prone to hypertension but are no more likely to have stroke or heart attack than rest of population

# Job Satisfaction and Control

- ▶ Those with high job satisfaction suffer few harmful effects of stress
- ▶ Those with high levels of job dissatisfaction show considerable stress-related effects
- ▶ **Challenge-related** stress includes time pressure and high levels of responsibility
  - ▶ Leads to fulfillment and achievement
- ▶ **Hindrance-related** stress includes excessive job demands and constraints
  - ▶ Leads to frustration and low satisfaction
- ▶ Top executives seem to handle stress better than middle managers – have 40% fewer heart attacks



# Sources of Worker Stress

- ▶ **Situational stress** is stress arising from certain conditions that exist in the work environment or the worker's personal life.
- ▶ *Stressful occupations* include air traffic controller, health care provider, police officer, and firefighter.
- ▶ Characteristics of jobs related to worker stress include heavy workload, poor working conditions, physical dangers, and dealing with difficult clients and coworkers.

# Sources of Worker Stress

➤ **Organizational sources of worker stress** include *work task stressors*, such as:

- **Work overload**, which results when a job requires excessive speed, output, or concentration.
  - E-mail overload 😊
- **Underutilization**, resulting from workers feeling that their knowledge, skills, or energy are not being fully used.
  - *College graduates in low-level clerical or customer service positions*
  - *Even if the position is high → HR manager*
  - *Individual differences in susceptibility*

# Sources of Worker Stress

- **Organizational sources of worker stress** include *work role stressors*, such as:
  - **Job ambiguity**, which results from a lack of clearly defined jobs and/or work tasks.
  - **Lack of control**, a feeling of having little input or effect on the job and/or work environment.
    - Common in lower level jobs or in highly structured org.s
    - Individual differences again
  - **Physical work conditions**, including extreme temperatures, loud/distracting noises, crowding, poor lighting and ventilation.
  - **Interpersonal stress**, which results from difficulties dealing with others (coworkers, customers, supervisors) in the workplace.



# Sources of Worker Stress

- **Organizational sources of worker stress** include work role stressors, such as:
  - **Emotional labor**, which involves the demands of regulating and controlling emotions in the workplace.
  - **Harassment**, including sexual harassment, harassment due to group membership (e.g., gender, race, sexual orientation), and being singled out by a coworker or supervisor.
    - Tended to co-occur with generally uncivil behaviors.
    - Organizational culture and climate.
  - **Organizational change**, including mergers, changes in work technology, and personnel/managerial changes
  - **Work-family conflict**, which results from efforts to balance competing demands of work and family.



**TABLE 9.1**

*Characteristics of Jobs that Cause Worker Stress*

Work overload (for example, time pressures and too much work)  
Underutilization of worker knowledge, skills, ability, or energy  
Dangerous work conditions  
Responsibility for the health and well-being of others  
Difficult or complex work tasks  
Unpleasant or uncomfortable physical work conditions

Interpersonal conflict  
Decision making  
Organizational change  
Lack of support from supervisors or coworkers  
Lack of control over the work situation  
Work–family conflict  
Personal factors (for example, Type A behavior or stress-prone personality)

# Sources of Worker Stress

**Individual (dispositional) sources of work stress** include:

- ▶ **The Type A behavior pattern**, a personality characterized by excessive drive, competitiveness, impatience, and hostility.
  - ▶ Competitive drive → heart disease
  - ▶ Underlying hostility and the lack of appropriate expression of that hostility → heart disease
  - ▶ NA
  - ▶ Positive sides relative to Type Bs
- ▶ **Susceptibility to stress vs. hardiness**, the notion that some people may be more resistant to the health-damaging effects of stress (Kobasa, 1982; 1984).
  - ▶ HardiTraining (2001)

# Sources of Worker Stress

- **Individual (dispositional) sources of work stress** include:
  - **Self-efficacy**, an individual's beliefs in his/her abilities to engage in courses of action that will lead to desired outcomes.
  - Coping
  - Job-related
  - Leadership
  - Relationship

**TABLE 9.2***Type A Behavior Pattern*

Two popular self-report instruments designed to assess Type A behavior are the Jenkins Activity Survey (JAS; Jenkins, Zyzanski, & Rosenman, 1979) and the Framingham Type A Scale (FTAS; Haynes, Feinleib, Levine, Scotch, & Kannel, 1978). Examples of some of the types of questions asked by the FTAS and JAS are presented below:

*FTAS*

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- Are you hard driving and competitive?
- Are you bossy or dominating?
- Do you have a strong need to excel?
- Are you pressed for time after work?

*JAS*

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- Do you have trouble finding time to get your hair cut?
- Do you feel and act impatient when you have to wait in a line?
- Do you get irritated easily?
- When you were younger, was your temper fiery and hard to control?


Affirmative answers to these questions indicate possession of the Type A behavior pattern.



# Physical Working Conditions



- ▶ Poor working conditions affect:
  - ▶ Job satisfaction
  - ▶ Mistakes and accidents
  - ▶ Performance
  - ▶ Absenteeism and turnover
- ▶ Physical features of the workplace must be considered in light of complex psychological factors



# Complain, complain, complain...

## Newsbreak

### Complaints About Your Job? Maybe You're Experiencing Bad Workplace Design

What do you think is the number one complaint of people who work in offices? What is it about their workplace that bothers them more than anything else? Take a guess. According to the International Facility Management Association, the number one office complaint relates to temperature—the workplace is too cold. And the number two complaint? The office is too hot!

Here are the rest of the top 10 complaints reported by office workers:

- Poor janitorial service
- Not enough conference space

- Not enough storage or filing space at the workstation
- Poor quality of indoor air
- Lack of privacy at the workstation
- Inadequate parking
- Computer problems
- Too much noise in the workplace

Do any of these apply to your work or study area?



# Work Sites



- Factors include:
  - Physical plant
  - Parking
  - Location of the work site
  - Amenities, such as gyms and spas
- Google provides gourmet meals without charge
- Nielsen's Florida facility has "family friendly" days each month





# Office and Workplace Design

- Physical features can create dissatisfaction or frustration
  - Ventilation, heating, and air-conditioning (too hot in the sun, too cool in the shade)
  - Office size and design
  - Size of building
  - Slow elevators
  - Poor quality food in company cafeteria
  - Inconvenient or poorly maintained restrooms
  - Physical separation decreases communication
  - Access for disabled workers



# Environmental Psychology



- ▶ The study of the effect of workplace design on behavior and attitudes
  - ▶ Concerned with the relationship between people and their physical environment
- ▶ Combines psychology and architecture



# Landscaped Offices

- ▶ Huge open space with no floor to ceiling walls to create separate rooms
  - ▶ Uses partitions, and bookcases
  - ▶ Facilitates communication and workflow
  - ▶ Standard design for companies with large numbers of computer operators
  - ▶ Complaints relate to lack of privacy, noise, and difficulty concentrating



# Environmental Factors



- [Lighting](#)
- [Noise](#)
- [Color](#)
- [Music](#)
- [Temperature and Humidity](#)

# Lighting

- ▶ Inadequate lighting is a source of distress
- ▶ **Intensity** varies with nature of task and age of worker (older workers require more light)
- ▶ Lighting should be uniformly distributed
  - ▶ Indirect lighting is preferable to direct lighting
- ▶ **Glare** contributes to eyestrain and leads to errors in work within 20 minutes
- ▶ Most workers prefer the presence of natural light

# Noise

- ▶ Americans routinely exposed to noise levels that will affect their hearing
- ▶ Basic unit of noise is the *decibel (db)*
- ▶ Work exposure to decibel levels above 85 can lead to hearing loss; above 120 db can cause temporary deafness; above 130 db to permanent deafness
- ▶ U.S. government requires worker exposure to no more than 90 db for eight hour day; 100 db for two hour period; 110 db for 30-minute period
- ▶ Noise interferes with communication
- ▶ High noise levels impair emotional well-being and induce stress and high blood-pressure



# Color

- ▶ Claims that there are relationships between color and productivity, fatigue, or job satisfaction are not supported by research
- ▶ Color *can* provide a more pleasant work environment and aid in safety practices
- ▶ Light-colored walls give the feeling of open space
- ▶ Blues and greens are cool colors; reds and oranges are warm colors.
  - ▶ Anecdotal evidence suggests these colors may affect perceptions of temperature



# Music

- Early studies reported that most workers liked having music and believed it made them more productive
  - Music slightly increases productivity for dull, monotonous work, but not for more demanding work
  - Research generally lacks scientific rigor and control





# Temperature and Humidity

- ▶ Primary complaints of office workers
  - ▶ Fake thermostat gives illusion of control
- ▶ Productivity can deteriorate under uncomfortable temperatures
- ▶ Highly motivated workers are better able to function under temperature extremes than poorly motivated workers
- ▶ Automated office equipment increases temperature and lowers humidity to the point of dryness

# Work Schedules

- No standard work week around the world
  - American workers work 2 weeks more than Japanese and 14 weeks more than Norwegians
  - Americans also take fewer vacation days
- On average, take only 14 of 16 available days
  - Italians take 43, French 37, Germans 35, English 28 and Japanese 25
- Not surprisingly, managers who worked more hours made more money and had higher job satisfaction and job involvement, but were alienated from family

# Work Schedules



- [Working hours](#)
- [Permanent part-time employment](#)
- [The four-day workweek](#)
- [Flexible work schedules](#)
- [Rest breaks](#)
- [Shift work](#)



# Working Hours



- The 5-day, 40-hour week became the norm with the passage of in 1938
- *Nominal* (prescribed) working hours and *actual* working hours rarely coincide
  - Employees may spend no more than half the workweek actually performing job-related tasks
- As *nominal* day increases, *actual* working hours decrease with increase in tardiness and absenteeism
  - The longer the workday or workweek, the lower the productivity (also applies to overtime)

# Permanent Part-Time Employment

- Part-time employment is the most widespread form of alternative work schedule
  - >25% of workforce holds part-time jobs
- Part-time employment has grown faster than full-time employment, particularly in service and retail
- Actual working hours of part-time workers often exceeds that of full-time
  - Part-time welfare case workers in Massachusetts had lower turnover than full-timers
- Part-time is attractive to those with family responsibilities and to the aging and disabled
- Most are women in lower level jobs at lower pay rates

# The Four-Day Workweek

- Usually involves 4 x 10 hr. days or 4 x 9 hrs. (with no pay reduction)
- Initiative usually comes from management's hopes for increased productivity, recruiting incentive, and reduced absenteeism
- There is evidence of a positive impact on satisfaction and productivity, reduced absenteeism and easier work scheduling
- 45% of men liked the idea of the 4-day work week, while *women working at home* opposed it by a ratio of 2 to 1
  - Why? Husband at home too much?



# Flexible Work Schedules

- ▶ 72% of low-wage workers without flexible schedules call in sick if they have family issues (e.g., sick child)
- ▶ **Flextime** is a system of flexible working hours combining core mandatory work periods with elective work periods at the beginning and end of the day
- ▶ Advantages include avoidance of rush-hour, less absenteeism, more productivity, and satisfaction with the work schedule
- ▶ Most appropriate for R&D, clerical and data entry, and light and heavy manufacturing

# Rest Breaks

- Management has recognized the importance of rest breaks
- Employees will take breaks whether sanctioned or not
- Results in higher morale and productivity and lower fatigue and boredom
- Rest pauses also reduce repetitive motion injuries
- Data entry workers who took stretch breaks worked better after the break (Jett & George, 2003)
- Greater stress resulted in need for more recovery time from work day (Sonnentag, 2003)





# Shift Work

- Usually three shifts : (7 AM - 3 PM), (3 PM - 11 PM), and (11 PM - 7 AM)
- Workers may be permanently assigned to a shift or they may rotate
  - About 25% of workers perform shift work
- Workers tend to be less productive on night shift than day shift, and have more errors and accidents
- Disruption of normal sleep-wake cycle disrupts the body and requires recovery time
- Fewer problems occur with the *fixed shift* than with the *rotating shift*, even when fixed shift is at night



# Psychological and Social Issues

- Job simplification
- Boredom and monotony
- Fatigue
- Ethnic harassment
- Gender and sexual harassment
- Telecommuting



# Job Simplification

- ▶ *Job simplification* is the reduction of manufacturing jobs to the simplest components that can be mastered by unskilled or semi-skilled workers
- ▶ Advantages include efficiency, cost savings, and less training time required
- ▶ Disadvantages include less challenge, less satisfaction, lower morale, and lower quality
- ▶ Repetitive, simplified work can lead to cognitive deterioration usually associated with old age
  - ▶ Workers prone to absentmindedness and disorientation



# Boredom and Monotony

- ▶ Inevitable consequences of job fractionation and simplification
- ▶ Results in tiredness, restlessness, discontent, and a draining of interest and energy
- ▶ However, what is boring for one person may be exciting to another
  - ▶ Motivation is the key
- ▶ Job enlargement, changes in activities, attention to physical environment, and a congenial informal workgroup help



# Fatigue

- **Psychological fatigue** is similar to boredom
- **Physiological fatigue** is caused by excessive use of muscles
- Fatigue appears and disappears throughout the workday
- Productivity and job satisfaction negatively related to reported feelings of fatigue
- When the pace is gradual, workers can take on greater physical labor
- Research indicates workers under 50 more fatigued, women more fatigued than men, Whites more than Blacks (Ricci, Chee, Lorandeanu, & Berger, 2007)



# Ethnic Harassment

- Workplace is becoming increasingly demographically diverse
- Ethnic harassment is source of stress that negatively affects productivity, satisfaction, and emotional and physical health
- Manifested as overt behaviors or slurs, jokes, and derogatory comments
- Targets of verbal harassment reported lower sense of psychological well being (Schneider, Hitlan, & Radhakrishnan, 2000)
- Hispanics speaking Spanish vs. English on the job report more exclusion, harassment, and discrimination (Bergman, Watrous-Rodriguez, & Chalkley, 2008)

# Gender and Sexual Harassment

- **Sexual harassment** involves unwanted sexual attention and coercion
- **Gender harassment** refers to behavior that reflects an insulting, hostile and degrading attitude toward women in general
  - Does not necessarily involve sexual harassment
- Studies link harassment to low satisfaction, high stress and increased use of mental health services
- Frequently goes unreported due to fear of reprisal
- Strong organizational culture for acting on harassment reports will minimize but not eliminate harassment
- National Organization of Women (NOW; [www.now.org](http://www.now.org))

# Telecommuting

- Estimated that 45 million U.S. workers telecommute at least part time
  - Men in their early 40's comprise 65% of telecommuters
- Advantages include reduced overhead and absenteeism
- Women are more productive than men in virtual offices
- Telecommuting is attractive to employees with dependent care problems or with disabilities
- Some people miss the social interaction or find home to be distracting
- Nearly 20% of telecommuting programs fail
  - Workers feel they are never free of the job





# Work Overload and Underload

- **Work overload** – being overworked
  - *Quantitative* - there is too much work to perform in the time available
  - *Qualitative* - work that is too difficult for the employee to perform
- **Work underload** results from work that is too simple or insufficiently challenging for one's abilities
- Both conditions are positively correlated with stress

# Organizational Change

- Organizational change is stressful
- Those who view change as exciting and a challenge are less vulnerable than those who resist change or view it as a threat
- Older workers experience increased stress with the increase in younger worker and ethnic diversity which brings to the workplace unfamiliar habits and cultural values
- Introduction of employee participation in decision making can be stressful for higher-level managers

# Role Ambiguity and Role Conflict

- **Role ambiguity** results when job responsibilities are unstructured or poorly defined
- Components of role ambiguity
  - **Performance criteria** – uncertainty about performance standards
  - **Work method** – uncertainty about procedures that lead to success on the job
  - **Scheduling** – uncertainty about timing and sequencing
- **Role conflict** results when there is a disparity between job demands and the employee's personal standards



# Other Stressors

- Supervisors and managers
- Problems of career development
- Taking responsibility for subordinates
- Working under a deadline
- Computer use
- “Stress carriers” – contact with others experiencing stress
- Physical working conditions (e.g., assembly line)
- Computer-controlled performance monitoring

# Measurement of Worker Stress

- ▶ **Physiological measures of stress** include blood pressure monitoring, EKGs for heart rate, or blood tests for stress-linked hormones (cortisol) and cholesterol.
- ▶ Difficulties with such measures include variation of such physiological processes within each person throughout the day and variation between individuals.
- ▶ Medical personnel are needed to administer such measures.



# Measurement of Worker Stress

- ▶ **Self-report assessments of stress** include reports about organizational conditions and reports about psychological and/or physical states.
- ▶ Reports on organizational conditions involve questions about job autonomy, feedback, task identity, task significance, skill variety, workload, etc.
- ▶ Self-report measures of psychological /physical stress include the *Stress Diagnostic Survey*, the *Occupational Stress Indicator*, and the *Job Stress Survey*.



# Measurement of Worker Stress

- ▶ **Measurement of stressful life events** involves self-reports of significant events in a person's recent history that can cause stress.
- ▶ One measure is the Social Readjustment Rating Scale, a checklist where individuals total the numerical "stress severity" scores associated with significant life events experienced in the past year.
- ▶ Research suggests that persons with high personal stress indexes perform more poorly, have higher absenteeism, and change jobs more frequently (Bhagat, 1983).

**TABLE 9.3***Sample Items from the Social Readjustment Rating Scale*

Life Event	Stress Value
Death of spouse	100
Divorce	73
Marital separation	65
Jail term	63
Death of close family member	63
Personal injury or illness	53
Marriage	50
Fired at work	47
Change to different line of work	36
Change in number of arguments with spouse	35
Mortgage over \$10,000	31
Foreclosure of mortgage or loan	30
Change in responsibilities at work	29
Outstanding personal achievement	28
Spouse begin or stop work	26
Trouble with boss	23
Change in work hours or conditions	20
Change in residence	20
Change in schools	20
Change in number of family get-togethers	15
Change in eating habits	15
Vacation	13
Christmas	12
Minor violations of the law	11

Source: Holmes, T. H., & Rahe, R. H. (1967). The social readjustment rating scale. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 11, 213–218.



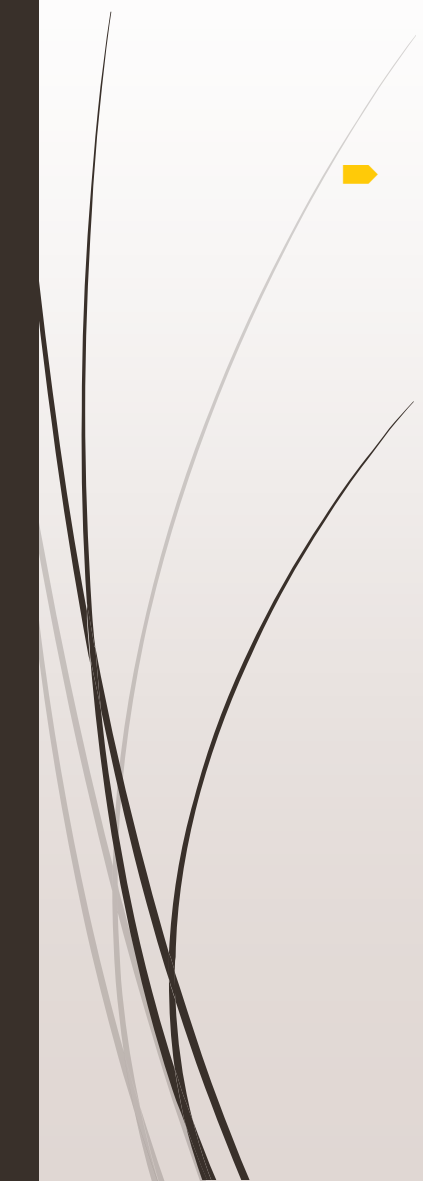


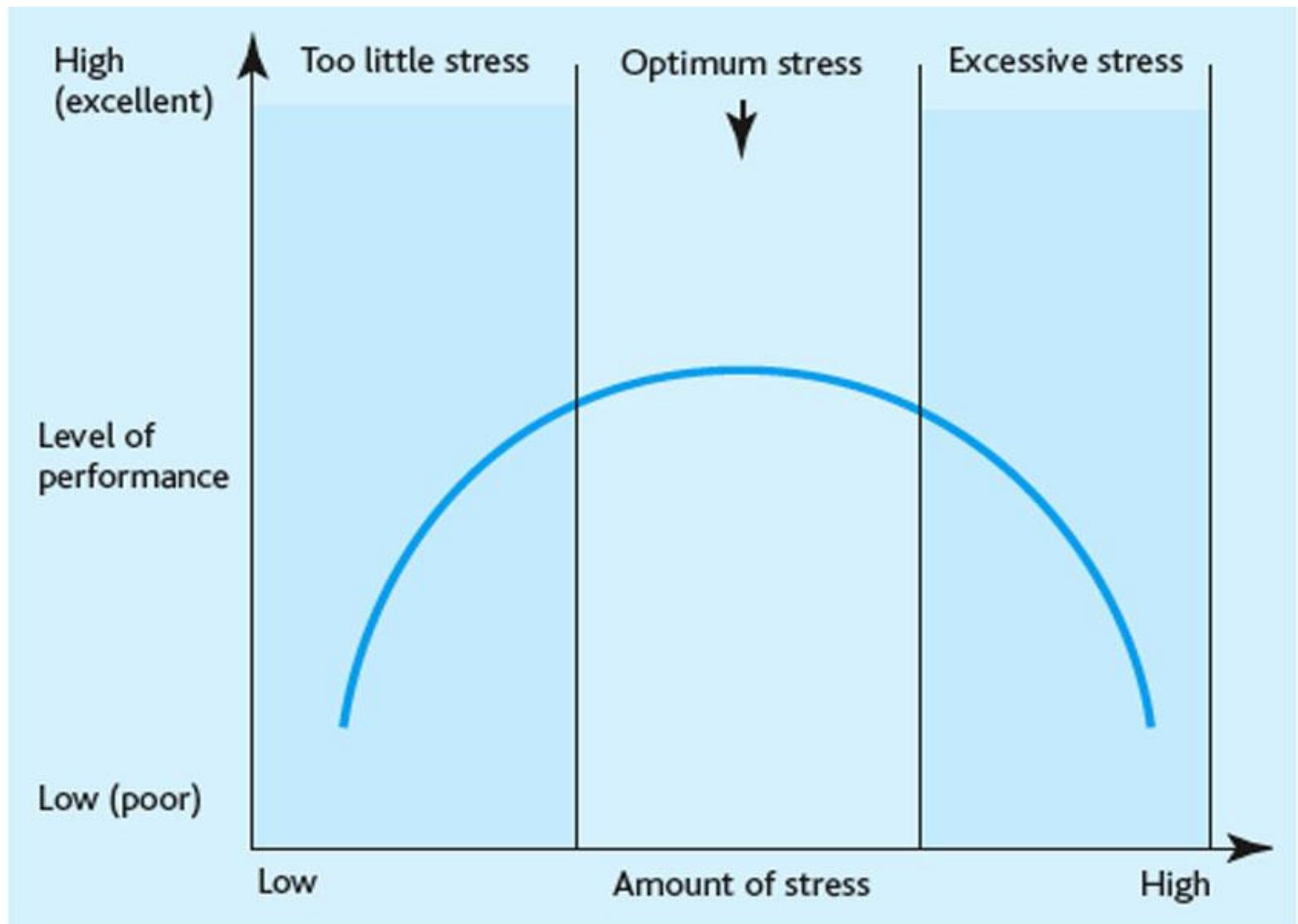
# Measurement of Worker Stress

- ▶ **Person-environment fit (P-E fit)** refers to the match between a worker's abilities, needs, and values, and organizational demands, rewards, and values.
- ▶ P-E fit is positively related to organizational commitment and negatively related to turnover (Hult, 2005).
- ▶ Measurement of P-E fit involves assessing worker skills and abilities, along with job demands and features of the work environment.



# Effects of Worker Stress

- ▶ Stress-related illnesses include ulcers, colitis, high blood pressure, heart disease, and migraine headaches. Stress can also worsen common colds and infections.
  - ▶ The relationship between stress and performance is complex, and generally is curvilinear (involving an inverted U), where both very low and very high stress are associated with poor performance.
- 



**FIGURE 9.1**

Relationship Between Performance and Stress

Adapted from Cohen, S. V. (1980). After-effects of stress on human behavior and social behavior: A review of research theory. *Psychological Bulletin*, 88, 85.

# Stress-Related Physical Problems



- High blood pressure
- Ulcers
- Colitis
- Heart disease
- Arthritis
- Skin diseases
- Allergies
- Headaches
- Neck and lower back pain
- Cancer
- Increase in infectious diseases

# Occupational Health Psychology

- ▶ The field of study dealing with the health effects of job stress and other aspects of well-being
- ▶ Proposed as a name in 1990 by Jonathan Raymond
- ▶ Focus group in the Organizational Behavior Division of the Academy of Management
  - ▶ *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*

# Effects of Worker Stress

- ▶ Job burnout is a syndrome resulting from prolonged exposure to work stress that leads to withdrawal from the organization.
- ▶ Burnout is especially high in human service professions.
- ▶ Burnout occurs in three phases:
  1. Emotional exhaustion
  2. Depersonalization
  3. Feelings of low personal accomplishment

TABLE 9.4

*Sample Items from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBIHSS)*

Directions: The purpose of this survey is to discover how various persons in the human services or helping professions view their jobs and the people with whom they work closely. Because persons in a wide variety of occupations will answer this survey, it uses the term "recipients" to refer to the people for whom you provide your service, care, treatment, or instruction. When you answer this survey please think of these people as recipients of the service you provide, even though you may use another term in your work.

Please read each statement carefully and decide if you ever feel this way about your job. If you have never had this feeling, write a "0" (zero) before the statement. If you have had this feeling, indicate how often you feel it by writing the number (from 1 to 6) that best describes how frequently you feel that way.

How Often:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
	Never	A few times a year	Once a month or less	A few times a month	Once a week	A few times a week	Every day

**I. Depersonalization**

5. I feel I treat some recipients as if they were impersonal objects.

**II. Personal Accomplishment**

9. I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work.

**III. Emotional Exhaustion**

20. I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.

From the *Maslach Burnout Inventory—Human Services Survey* by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson. Copyright 1988 by CPP, Inc. All rights reserved. Further reproduction is prohibited without the Publisher's consent.

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# Experiencing Burnout

- Women no more likely than men to experience burnout
- Single and divorced more likely than married individuals to experience burnout
- Those under 40 more likely to experience burnout
- Those high in neuroticism more likely to experience burnout
- Higher among external LOCs and those low in hardiness and self-esteem
- Prolonged overwork and stress saps energy leading to physical and psychological problems



# Workaholism

- **Workaholic** - an employee addicted to work
- Dysfunctional, or they may really like their job
- 5% of workers are workaholics - most are content
- *Healthy* workaholics are high in **Job Engagement**
  - High in energy, involvement and efficacy, vigorous, fully committed to work, seldom fatigued, persistent, enthusiastic and take pride in their work
- *Unhealthy* workaholics are highly involved but derive little satisfaction from their work



# Coping with Worker Stress

- *Individual coping strategies* are techniques such as exercise, meditation, or cognitive restructuring that can be used to deal with work stress.
- More efficient work methods, including time management, may also be used, although their success depends on individual commitment.
- Vacation time and voluntary absences may also be used to reduce stress, although missed work may increase stress upon the employee's return to work.



# Coping with Worker Stress

- *Organizational coping strategies* are techniques that organizations can use to reduce stress for all or most employees.
- Organizational strategies include:
  - improving person-job fit and employee training and orientation;
  - increase employees' sense of control;
  - eliminating punitive management;
  - removing hazardous work conditions;
  - providing a supportive work environment;
  - improving organizational communication.



# Organizational Efforts

- Controlling the organizational climate by allowing for participation
- Providing control
- Defining employee roles
- Eliminating work overload and underload
- Providing for social support
- Bringing pets to work
- Providing stress-management programs
- Providing fitness programs



# Coping with Stress

- High job satisfaction and control over working conditions reduce a person's susceptibility stress
  - Culturally bound – e.g., lack of autonomy and control not a major source of stress for Chinese workers (Liu, Spector, & Shi, 2007)
- Social support helps coping with stress and a lack of social support correlates with heart disease
- Employees with high levels of skills and abilities are more resistant to stress
- Those in good general physical health suffer fewer negative effects from stressful working conditions

# Differences in Stress Responses

- [Hardiness](#)
- [Self-efficacy](#)
- [Locus of control](#)
- [Organization-Based Self-esteem](#)
- [Self Control](#)
- [Negative affectivity](#)
- [Type of occupation](#)
- [Gender Differences](#)

# Hardiness

- **Hardiness** is a personality variable based on the idea of control that may explain individual differences in vulnerability to stress.
- Components (Kobasa, 1979, 1982):
  - Control
  - Commitment
  - Challenge
- Hardy persons develop fewer physical complaints under highly stressful conditions than those who are not hardy



# Self-Efficacy

- **Self-efficacy** is our belief in our ability to accomplish a specific task
- It is our sense of how adequate, efficient, and competent we feel about coping with life's demands
- Two levels of self-efficacy:
  - **Traditional** - individual-focused
  - **Collective** - group-focused
- Those with high levels of self-efficacy feel more control and are more stress resistant





# Locus of Control

- ***Locus of control*** (LOC) refers to belief about how much influence individuals have on the forces and events that shape their lives
- ***Internal locus of control*** - Those who believe that job performance, pay, and promotions are under their control and dependent on their own behavior
- ***External locus of control*** - Those who believe that life is outside their control
  - High Internal LOC correlates with less stress and burnout (Schmitz, Neumann, & Opperman, 2000)



# Organization-Based Self-Esteem

- **Self-esteem** refers to how we feel about ourselves
- **Organization-based self-esteem** (OBSE) is a personality dimension relating to our assessment of our adequacy and worth with regard to our place in the employing organization
- High OBSE see themselves as important, effective and worthwhile
- People low in OBSE are more affected by stress and are more passive in coping with it



# Self Control

- ▶ Personality characteristic related to the tendency to restrain behaviors, desires, and emotions that might interfere with the expectations of others
- ▶ Those higher in self control report greater stress and anxiety
- ▶ Two components: *impulse control* and *resisting distractions* (Schmidt & Neubach, 2007)
- ▶ Some self control is necessary – low self control may be less stressed, but may not accomplish task



# Negative Affectivity



- **Negative affectivity** (NA) is a “Big 5” personality dimension characterized by a generalized life and job dissatisfaction and by a focus on negative aspects of events
- Closely related to neuroticism
- People high in NA are likely to experience distress and dissatisfaction in all areas of life
- Research results are mixed as to relationship with stress



# Type of Occupation



- High stress jobs include laborer, secretary, clinical laboratory technician, nurse, first-line supervisor, restaurant server, machine operator, farm worker, and miner
- Also stressful: police officer, firefighter, computer programmer, electrician, plumber, and social worker
- College professor is one of the *least* stressful 😊
- Clerical and blue-collar generally more stressed than managers and professionals

# Gender Differences

- ▶ Women consistently report higher levels of stress than men
  - ▶ More headaches, anxiety, depression, sleep disturbances, and eating disorders
  - ▶ More likely to smoke, drink and use drugs in response to workplace stress
  - ▶ More likely to use social support networks to cope
- ▶ Women in highly stressful jobs more prone to spontaneous abortion and shorter menstrual cycles
- ▶ Women homemakers experience higher levels of stress than those in paid positions

# Work-Family Balance

- ▶ Both men and women report conflicts, but the difficulties are usually greater for women
- ▶ Stresses of work-family conflict are independent of type of job and working conditions
- ▶ Employed women enjoy better health than those who stay at home
- ▶ More than 60% of women with children under 6 work outside home
  - ▶ They remain responsible for the bulk of child and elder care – it's like having two jobs

# Organizational Assistance

- Presence of women managers increases organizational responsiveness to work-family conflicts:
  - Reducing hours, flexible scheduling and telecommuting
  - Supportive supervisors
  - Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) absence
  - Maternity leave
    - However, highly paid women may be penalized for taking extensive leave
- Companies with work-family conflict reduction programs had higher stock prices (Arthur, 2003)



# Are Family-Friendly Practices Fair?

- ▶ Family-friendly practices allow parents with dependent children to have a flexible schedule and avoid overtime
- ▶ What about those who don't have children?
- ▶ There is a growing sense among childless workers that they are being exploited
  - ▶ They receive fewer benefits than parents
- ▶ Is it fair?
- ▶ What factors should be considered?

# Negative Employee Attitudes and Behaviors

- ▶ **Counterproductive work behaviors (CWBs)** are deviant, negative behaviors that are harmful to an organization and its workers.
- ▶ Meta-analyses suggest that CWBs are **more prevalent in younger employees and those with lower job satisfaction** (Lau et. al., 2003).
- ▶ CWBs, and workplace aggression and violence, **are linked to trait negative affectivity, anger, and other personality variables** (Douglas and Martinko, 2001).
- ▶ The incidence of CWBs **is negatively related to the incidence of organizational citizenship behaviors** (Dalal, 2005).

# Negative Employee Attitudes and Behaviors

- **Alcohol and drug use in the workplace** is related to workplace accidents, decreased productivity, increased absenteeism and turnover; it costs billions of dollars annually.
- Workers who report problems with alcohol or drugs have greater job instability and lower job satisfaction.
- *Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs)* involve counseling that is provided for a variety of worker problems, particularly drug and alcohol abuse.