CHAPTER 3
Mental Health and Stress Management
In recent years, psychologists have become more interested in positive psychology

- Focus on positive emotions, characteristics, strengths, and conditions that create happiness
- Six virtues that “enable human thriving”
  - Wisdom
  - Courage
  - Humanity
  - Justice
  - Temperance
  - Transcendence
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Virtue and Strength</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Wisdom and knowledge</td>
<td>Cognitive strengths that entail the acquisition and use of knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td>Thinking of novel and productive ways to do things</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curiosity</td>
<td>Taking an interest in ongoing experience, openness to experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Open-mindedness</td>
<td>Thinking things through and examining them from all sides</td>
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<td>Love of learning</td>
<td>Mastering new skills, topics, and bodies of knowledge</td>
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<td>Perspective</td>
<td>Being able to provide wise counsel to others</td>
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<td>2. Courage</td>
<td>Emotional strengths that involve the exercise of will to accomplish goals in the face of opposition, external or internal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Speaking the truth and presenting oneself in a genuine way</td>
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<td>Bravery</td>
<td>Not shrinking from threat, challenge, difficulty, or pain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Persistence</td>
<td>Finishing what one starts</td>
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<td>Zest</td>
<td>Approaching life with excitement and energy</td>
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<td>3. Humanity</td>
<td>Interpersonal strengths that involve “tending and befriending” others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kindness</td>
<td>Doing favors and good deeds for others</td>
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<td>Love</td>
<td>Valuing close relations with others</td>
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<td>Social intelligence</td>
<td>Being aware of the motives and feelings of self and others</td>
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<td>4. Justice</td>
<td>Civic strengths that underlie healthy community life</td>
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<td>Fairness</td>
<td>Treating all people the same according to notions of fairness and justice</td>
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<td>Leadership</td>
<td>Organizing group activities and seeing that they happen</td>
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<td>Teamwork</td>
<td>Working well as a member of a group or team</td>
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<td>5. Temperance</td>
<td>Strengths that protect against excess</td>
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<td>Forgiveness</td>
<td>Forgiving those who have done wrong</td>
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<td>Modesty</td>
<td>Letting one’s accomplishments speak for themselves</td>
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<td>Prudence</td>
<td>Being careful about one’s choices; not saying or doing things that might later be regretted</td>
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<td>Self-regulation</td>
<td>Regulating what one feels and does</td>
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<td>6. Transcendence</td>
<td>Strengths that forge connections to the larger universe and provide meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appreciation of beauty and excellence</td>
<td>Noticing and appreciating beauty, excellence, and/or skilled performance in all domains of life</td>
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<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>Being aware of and thankful for the good things that happen</td>
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<td>Hope</td>
<td>Expecting the best and working to achieve it</td>
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<td>Humor</td>
<td>Liking to laugh and tease; bringing smiles to other people</td>
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<td>Religiousness</td>
<td>Having coherent beliefs about the higher purpose and meaning of life</td>
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Key Characteristics of Mental Health

Self-actualization
Optimism
Self-efficacy
Resilience
Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs

- Physiological Needs
  - food and water
  - shelter
  - sleep
  - exercise
  - sex

- Safety and Security
  - safe surroundings
  - protection by others
  - knows to avoid risks

- Love and Belongingness
  - loved
  - loving
  - connected

- Self-Esteem
  - as a person
  - as a doer
  - in relationships

- Self-Actualization
  - realism
  - self-acceptance
  - autonomy
  - authenticity
  - capable of intimacy
  - creativity
Emotional Intelligence (Psychologist Daniel Goleman)

- Insists qualities such as self-awareness, self-discipline, persistence, and empathy are more important than IQ
- People who are emotionally intelligent can:
  - Recognize, name, understand their emotions
  - Manage their emotions and control their moods
  - Motivate themselves
  - Recognize and respond to emotions in others
  - Be socially competent
Enhancing Your Mental Health

- A supportive social network
- Good communication skills
- Healthy lifestyle patterns
Mental disorder is a pattern of behavior associated with:
- Distress/pain or disability
- Significantly increased risk of suffering, death, pain, disability, or loss of freedom
- Mood Disorders
- Anxiety Disorders
- Psychotic Disorders

Deciding when a psychological problem becomes a mental disorder... Seek trained professional
Known as depressive or affective disorders
Among the most common mental disorders around the world
Examples include:
- Major depressive disorder (depression)
- Bipolar disorder (manic episodes)
Along with depression, anxiety disorders are the most common mental disorders.

Examples include:

- Panic attack: Apprehension or intense fear
- Panic disorder: Recurrent, unexpected panic attacks
- Phobias: Intense fear of a situation or object, invoking immediate anxiety (includes social phobias)
- Obsessive-compulsive disorder: Persistent, intrusive thoughts, impulses, or images that cause intense anxiety or distress
Schizophrenia and Other Psychotic Disorders

- Delusions
- Hallucinations
- Disorganized speech or behavior
- Other signs that an individual has lost touch with reality
- Schizophrenia has a strong genetic component
- In most cases, symptoms of the disease can be controlled with medication
Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death among college students.

About 6% of college-aged students seriously considered suicide, and almost 1% attempted to kill themselves in the past year.

Women in U.S. society are more likely to attempt suicide, but men are four times more likely to succeed.
As many as 90% of those who commit suicide are suffering from a mental disorder—often depression.

The symptom linking depression and suicide is a feeling of hopelessness.

Depression and alcoholism are common factors.

Substance abuse and depression can be lethal.

Sometimes there is no apparent precipitating event or problem.
Potential Signs of Suicide

- Comments about death and threats of suicide
- Increasing social withdrawal and isolation
- Intensified moodiness
- Increase in risk-taking behaviors
- Sudden improvement in mood, accompanied by certain behaviors, such as giving away possessions
Psychotherapy

- Based on the development of positive interpersonal relationship between a client and a therapist

Medications

- Use of medications has increased dramatically in recent years
Stress: The general state of the body, mind, and emotions when an environmental stressor has triggered the stress response

Stressors: Events or agents in the environment that can cause stress

When you see an event as positive, you experience eustress, or positive stress.

When you appraise an event as negative, you experience distress.

My stress is a function of how I perceive my environment.
Is All Stress Bad?

- Eustress – positive
- Distress – negative
- Inverted “U”
Sources of Stress

- Life events
- Daily hassles
- College stress
- Job pressure
- Money and financial worries
- Family and interpersonal issues
- Time pressure
- Overload

- Technology
- Anger
- Trauma
- Societal issues
A stress response is a series of physiological changes that occur in the body

- We have emotional and behavioral responses, as well

All animals, including humans, have the ability to respond to emergencies they perceive as dangerous

The ANS (Autonomic Nervous System) activates the body’s organs to respond to the possible threat
Physical Stress Response

- The ANS acts on...
  - Hypothalamus → pituitary gland → horomone → adrenal glands → stress hormones → tissues/organs

- **Sympathetic Pathway**
  - ↑ respiration, heart rate, perspiration, endorphin release, reflexes, strength
  - Fight or Flight

- **Parasympathetic Pathway**
  - returns body to homeostasis
  - Rest and Digest
Physical Stress Response

**Scalp** The scalp tightens so that hair appears to stand up

**Eyes** Pupils dilate to sharpen vision

**Ears** Hearing becomes sharper

**Heart** Heart rate increases, heart beat becomes stronger

**Blood** Blood pressure increases, vessels clotting time decreases

**Lungs** Breathing rate increases, lungs take in more oxygen

**Liver** Liver converts glycogen to glucose for instant energy

**Sweat glands** Perspiration increases to cool the body

**Hands** Extremities become cold as blood is directed away from skin and toward large muscles

**Brain-center** Neurotransmitters in the brain activate the amygdala, triggering an emotional response to the stressor, such as fear or anger

**Brain-front** Neurotransmitters suppress activity in the frontal cortex of the brain (concerned with short-term memory, inhibition, and rational thought), allowing quick reactions to take over

**Mouth** Salivation decreases as fluids are diverted from nonessential functions

**Stomach, intestines** Digestion in the stomach slows or stops

**Adrenal glands** Adrenal glands release hormones that cause physiological and metabolic changes

**Large muscles, legs** Muscle tension in the large muscles increases to prepare body for action
Emotional Stress Response

- Common emotional responses:
  - Anxiety
  - Depression
  - Fear
  - Exhilaration
  - Happiness
  - Excitement
A stress response continuing without a relaxation response is called **chronic stress**, which increases the likelihood of illness or disease.

**Homeostasis** is a state of stability the body returns to once the stress response has been turned off.
Hans Selye developed the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS) as an explanation of the physiological changes observed during a stress response.

The process has three stages:
- Alarm
- Resistance
- Exhaustion
Behavioral Stress Response

Stress Reduction Strategies

- Time (Choice) management
- Social support
- Healthy lifestyle, including nutritious diet, sleep, and exercise
- Deep breathing
- Progressive relaxation
- Visualization
- Yoga
- T’ai Chi
- Biofeedback
- Affirmations
Health Effects of Stress

- Researchers have concluded that every system in the body can be damaged by stress, including:
  - Immune System
    - Both brief and long-term stressors decrease immune function
  - Cardiovascular System
    - Long-term stress response can cause various forms of heart disease
  - Gastrointestinal System
    - Common forms of stomach ailments can be related to stress
  - Mental Health
    - Forms of acute and chronic stress can contribute to the development of psychological illnesses