

## CHAPTER 2

### MANAGING PERSONAL STRESS

#### QUICK RESOURCE LOCATOR:<sup>1</sup>

One way to help your students master the general skill of “managing personal stress” is to focus their attention on one or more specific skills. These basic skills are identified in the chapter’s title page, and below as learning objectives. If you elect to organize this portion of your course around specific learning objectives/management skills, you can use the following table as a roadmap—guiding each of your “trips” through the five-step learning model and corresponding support material in this chapter of the Instructor’s Manual (hereafter referred to as “IM”).

#### *Learning Objective #1:*

##### **Eliminate stressors**

<i>Skill Assessment</i> <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Take “Stress Management Assessment”, items 1, 5, 8, 9 (text, p. 106)</li> <li>✓ Take “Social Readjustment Rating Scale” (text, p. 109)</li> <li>✓ Take “Time Management Assessment” (text, p. 107)</li> <li>✓ Take “Internet Addiction Survey” (IM, p. 2-20)</li> <li>✓ Take “Procrastination Survey” (IM, p. 2-21)</li> </ul>
<i>Skill Learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Read “Eliminating Stressors” (text, p. 120)</li> <li>✓ Read Behavioral Guidelines 1-5 (text, p. 146)</li> <li>✓ View clip from “Apollo 13” (IM, p. 2-31)<sup>4</sup></li> <li>✓ View clip from “Pushing Tin” (IM, p. 2-31)<sup>4</sup></li> <li>✓ View clip from “Multiplicity” (IM, p. 2-32)<sup>4</sup></li> <li>✓ View PowerPoint slides<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Skill Analysis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Analyze “The Turn of the Tide” (text, p. 147; IM, p. 2-16)</li> <li>✓ Analyze “The Case of the Missing Time” (text, p. 150; IM, p. 2-16)</li> <li>✓ Do “Additional Stressors” exercise (IM, p. 2-13)</li> <li>✓ Do “Four Types of Stressors” exercise (IM, p. 2-16)</li> <li>✓ Do “Looking Ahead: Potential Stressors” exercise (IM, p. 2-27)</li> <li>✓ Analyze “Campus Life Problem” (IM, p. 2-30)<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Skill Practice</i> <sup>5,7</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do the “Life-Balance Analysis” (text, p. 156; IM, p. 2-17)</li> <li>✓ Do “Monitoring &amp; Managing Time” exercise (text, p. 159; IM, p. 2-18)</li> </ul>
<i>Skill Application</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Complete Assignments 1-3 (text, p. 161)</li> <li>✓ Complete an Application Plan and Evaluation (text, p. 162)</li> </ul>

#### *Learning Objective #2:*

##### **Develop resiliency**

<i>Skill Assessment</i> <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Take “Stress Management Assessment”, items 2, 3, 6, 7 (text, p. 106)</li> <li>✓ Take “Time Management Assessment” (text, p. 107)</li> <li>✓ Take “Type A Personality Inventory” (text, p. 108)</li> </ul>
<i>Skill Learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Read “Developing Resiliency” (text, p. 134)</li> <li>✓ Read Behavioral Guidelines 5-12 (text, p. 146)</li> <li>✓ View clip from “Apollo 13” (IM, p. 2-31)<sup>4</sup></li> <li>✓ View clip from “Multiplicity” (IM, p. 2-32)<sup>4</sup></li> <li>✓ View PowerPoint slides<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Skill Analysis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Analyze “The Case of the Missing Time” (text, p. 150; IM, p. 2-16)</li> <li>✓ Do “Life Balance exercise” (IM, p. 2-14)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do “Small Wins” exercise (IM, p. 2-16)</li> <li>✓ Do “Building in Life Balance” exercise (IM, p. 2-26)</li> <li>✓ Do “What’s Urgent and What’s Important” exercise (IM, p. 2-29)</li> </ul>
<i>Skill Practice</i> <sup>5,7</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do “The Small-Wins Strategy” exercise (text, p. 155; IM, p. 2-17)</li> <li>✓ Do the “Life-Balance Analysis” (text, p. 156; IM, p. 2-17)</li> <li>✓ Do “Deep Relaxation” exercise (text, p. 158; IM, p. 2-18)</li> <li>✓ Do “Monitoring &amp; Managing Time” exercise (text, p. 159; IM, p. 2-18)</li> <li>✓ Do “Managing Time” exercise (IM, p. 2-14)</li> <li>✓ Do “Delegating” exercise (IM, p. 2-15)</li> <li>✓ Do “Small Wins Lead the Way” exercise (IM, p. 2-28)</li> </ul>
<i>Skill Application</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Complete Assignments 4-8 (text, p. 161)</li> <li>✓ Complete an Application Plan and Evaluation (text, p. 162)</li> </ul>

### *Learning Objective #3:*

#### **Cope with stress in the short term**

<i>Skill Assessment</i> <sup>2</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Take “Stress Management Assessment”, items 4, 15 (text, p. 106)</li> <li>✓ Take “Time Management Assessment” (text, p. 107)</li> <li>✓ Take “Sources of Personal Stress” inventory (text, p. 111)</li> </ul>
<i>Skill Learning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Read “Temporary Stress-Reduction Techniques” (text, p. 144)</li> <li>✓ Read Behavioral Guidelines 5-8 (text, p. 146)</li> <li>✓ View clip from “Apollo 13” (IM, p. 2-31)<sup>4</sup></li> <li>✓ View clip from “Pushing Tin” (IM, p. 2-31)<sup>4</sup></li> <li>✓ View PowerPoint slides<sup>3</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Skill Analysis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Analyze “The Turn of the Tide” (text, p. 147; IM, p. 2-16)</li> <li>✓ Analyze “Campus Life Problem” (IM, p. 2-30)<sup>6</sup></li> </ul>
<i>Skill Practice</i> <sup>5,7</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Do the “Life-Balance Analysis” (text, p. 156; IM, p. 2-17)</li> <li>✓ Do “Coping with Stress” exercise (IM, p. 2-25)</li> </ul>
<i>Skill Application</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Complete Assignments 1, 4, 5, 6 (text, p. 161)</li> <li>✓ Complete an Application Plan and Evaluation (text, p. 162)</li> </ul>

#### **Footnotes:**

1 We have developed a web site to support DMS teachers. It allows you to post questions, share resource materials, seek feedback on new ideas, and so forth. If you would like to participate in this DMS teaching network, please send an enrollment request to [dms@byu.edu](mailto:dms@byu.edu).

2. Tips for helping students learn the most from skill assessment surveys are included in Section 1, “Designing the Course” of the Instructor’s Manual. A computerized version of all Skill Assessment surveys is available through the [www.prenhall.com/whetten](http://www.prenhall.com/whetten). The online assessments require an access code which can be valuepacked with their DMS book. An advantage of the online surveys is that students can compare their results with a continuously updated, demographically similar, norm group.

3. The PowerPoint slides for the text can be ordered through your Prentice Hall representative, or they can be downloaded from the Prentice Hall website.

4. Short video clips from popular movies can be used to introduce a chapter or as video cases—setting up Skill Analysis discussions or Skill Practice role playing exercises. We have included several suggestions in each IM chapter, under the heading: RELATED VIDEO CLIPS AND FILMS.

5. There are several benefits to using classroom exercises to introduce key concepts in a chapter. These activities generate a high level of interaction and they stimulate student interest in learning the related subject matter.

6. The use of a “Campus Life Problem” is a particularly useful means for helping undergraduates see how a “management” skill can be applied to their everyday experiences. These problems can be incorporated into your classroom discussion as examples, formal cases, or exercises (they are also great exam questions). As noted in the introduction to the Instructor’s Manual, it is important that students see the value of immediately applying the skills in this course to everyday situations. If they view what they are learning as “interpersonal”

skills, rather than peculiarly “managerial” skills, they are more likely to see their immediate relevance. We have only included one campus life problem per chapter because we encourage you to have students generate their own. Following the presentation of a campus life problem, students should use the behavioral guidelines and models in the appropriate chapter as the basis for generating recommendations. These “consulting” discussions also provide a good opportunity to discuss the coaching material in the Communications chapter.

7. In Section 3 of the IM, under the title “Action Skill Exams,” John Bigelow has developed a set of role play exercises for use as application, or performance, exams. These would be excellent demonstration role plays for introducing a particular learning objective, or simultaneous role plays for practicing specific behavioral guidelines. The first part of Section 3 contains numerous teaching tips for the effective use of demonstration and simultaneous role plays in a skill development course.

## Introducing the Chapter

This second of three chapters on personal skills builds on the foundation of self-awareness and sets the stage for creative problem solving. We review three main components of a model of stress management: stressors, reactions, and resiliency. To help students understand the relationships among these components, use “Force Field Analysis” as an analogy.

**Force field analysis:** Lewin’s force field analysis suggests that behavior is a product of “driving” forces that push behavior toward one level and “restraining” forces that inhibit or block that behavior change. Consistent behavior occurs when the forces are in balance—the driving forces counterbalance the restraining forces. When the forces are out of balance, behavior will change.

Similarly, stressors can be seen as driving forces that can create negative reactions by driving the individual toward physiological and psychological dysfunctions. The restraining forces comprise one’s resiliency. Negative reactions to stress can be counterbalanced or prevented if individuals consciously increase their restraining forces. Depicted in this way, you might want to redraw the summary model from Figure 2.2 (also included in the supplementary PowerPoint slides), which appears in the “Reactions to Stress” section of the chapter:

DRIVING FORCES	→	REACTIONS	←	RESTRAINING FORCES
Stressors		Anxiety		Resiliency

The **Life-Balance Analysis** exercise in the Skills Practice section at the conclusion of this chapter helps introduce force field analysis as well as the summary model of stress management. The accompanying discussion questions help point out why we frequently cope with the symptoms of stress rather than eliminate the problems. The need to place the highest priority on eliminating the driving forces (stressors), the next priority on increasing restraining forces (resilience), and the lowest priority on reactions (e.g., anxiety) is one of the most important insights for students to gain from this chapter.

## SKILL ASSESSMENT

Before the students read the rest of the chapter, have them complete the assessment instruments at the start of the chapter. Each instrument assesses some critical components of stress management discussed in the chapter. Completing them after reading the text can lead students to bias their scores toward a profile they think might be desirable.

Scores indicate competency in the relevant skills as well as the need to improve. Because competency in management skills is an ongoing process, not a final state, students need to keep improving.

The **Stress Management Assessment** assesses the student's skill in eliminating stressors, developing resiliency, and employing short-term coping strategies. The **Time Management Assessment** assesses how effective the student is as a manager of his/her time. The **Type A Personality Inventory** assesses a personality type known to have a negative effect upon stress. The **Social Readjustment Rating Scale** identifies recent life events to determine the extent to which individuals experience stress from life events and to predict future stresses and accidents. The **Sources of Personal Stress** is an attempt to personalize the stress a student might be feeling at this moment. Although not all these assessment instruments assess skill competency, students will find the text material more relevant after completing the instruments.

### *Stress Management Assessment*

**Purpose:** Several items from the Personal Assessment of Management Skills (PAMS) instrument in the Introduction chapter allow students to compare their scores with one another and with the norm group data in the scoring key.

**Procedure:** Scoring instructions are contained at the end of the chapter. Three subscales assess eliminating stressors (items 1, 5, 8, 9); developing resiliency to stress (items 2, 3, 6, 7); and temporary coping methods (items 4 and 10).

Students can compare scores with classmates or in their small group on each subsection. Some may be much stronger in one or two of the subscales than in others.

### **Sample Discussion Questions**

- ☐ Do students need different stress management strategies than top executives, homemakers, or professional athletes? Is there a basic level of stress management skill that is applicable to all positions?
- ☐ Describe the most-effective and the least-effective manager you have known. To what extent were they competent stress and time managers? To what extent were they able to control their time? What evidence is there of their stress and time management skill?
- ☐ Can people be skilled managers of their time and stress when they are in a subordinate position? Does one have to be in charge or have a secretary to be a skillful stress and time manager?
- ☐ What are the major stressors you face as a student? How do you currently cope with the stresses you face?

Because this is a comprehensive survey, it can be used to introduce the chapter. Recording students' scores on the subscales helps you focus classroom time on the areas

of greatest need and interest. Students can retake this survey at the end of the module or of the course.

### ***Time Management Assessment***

**Purpose:** To assesses the extent to which individuals use effective time management strategies, both in everyday matters and in a work organization.

**Procedure:** Students should complete both parts of the instrument, rating in part two their behavior in an organization to which they belonged. Those with no experience in any applicable setting can complete part one and double their scores to compute a score for the instrument. To determine the effectiveness of time use, simply add scores of all the items (4 = always, 3 = usually, 2 = sometimes, 1 = seldom, and 0 = never). Remind students that the instrument's usefulness depends on their honest assessment of their time use, and that scores will be used only to identify ways to improve skills as a time manager. In the Skill Learning section of the text, this instrument is discussed in detail as each principle of time management (i.e., each item in the survey) is explained.

The scoring key and comparison data is at the end of the chapter. Have students that score 100 or higher discuss their time management strategies to impress upon students that effective and efficient time management is possible right now, not once they begin their career.

### ***Type A Personality Inventory***

A great deal of research has shown that coronary heart disease can be reliably predicted by behavior patterns. The most coronary-prone behavior pattern is called Type A. This instrument is based on work done by C. David Jenkins and his colleagues, who wanted to identify a coronary-prone behavior pattern using a relatively simple instrument. They found that Type A behavior consists of four independent dimensions: competitiveness, work involvement, hostility/anger, and impatience/urgency. High scores on these four dimensions are significantly related to the development of coronary heart disease, although the job-involvement dimension has the weakest correlations with coronary heart disease.

**Purpose:** To help assess the extent to which that behavior pattern known as Type A exists in an individual.

**Procedure:** Items 1, 5, 9, 13, 17, and 21 have been found to reliably assess the competitive dimension; items 3, 7, 11, 15, 19, and 23 indicate the hostility and anger dimension; items 4, 8, 12, 16, 20, and 24 indicate the urgency and impatience dimension; and items 2, 6, 10, 14, 18, and 22 indicate the work involvement dimension. The sum of all four dimension scores gives an overall picture of the extent to which the student has developed a coronary-prone behavior pattern. Scores above 48 (an average of approximately 12 on each dimension) indicate definite Type A behavior. After students have completed the instrument, have them share their scores with the class so a distribution can be compiled. Comparisons with classmates are not only fun but also help raise issues about alternative ways to cope with stress. Ask several students with especially high and especially low scores to describe an average week, their family life, career aspirations, and so on. Interesting contrasts will likely surface.

**Considerations:** Remember that the research results on which this instrument and the previous one are based on aggregated data. That means that there is no tight causal connection between scores and some disastrous consequence. A student who scores high on the Social Readjustment Rating Scale and the Type A Behavior Pattern Inventory may never get ill and, instead, live to be 99. Do not let students think they are doomed because of their scores. On the other hand, scores may help motivate students to take seriously the stress management principles described in the next section.

### ***Social Readjustment Rating Scale***

**Purpose:** To determine the extent to which individuals experience stress from life events and to predict future stresses and accidents. Research results overwhelmingly point to an association between high scores on this instrument and future stresses and accidents. A score of 300 or above indicates an 80 percent probability that an individual will encounter a major illness in the next year. Individuals with scores between 150 and 300 have a 50 percent chance of developing a major illness and those with scores below 150 have a 37 percent chance or less (as noted in the Managing Stress section in Chapter 2).

**Procedure:** Students should complete this updated and revised instrument before reading the text material and learning of the relationship between their scores and illness. Scoring is done by simply adding the total points associated with the items checked on the instrument.

Have students report their scores in class to get an idea of the usually wide variance that exists in a classroom. Those who score low are often motivated to learn about stress management because of their awareness that some classmates score high. They realize that students are not immune from the detrimental effects of stress. Again, do not let students think they are doomed because of their scores; instead, use the scores to help motivate students to seriously consider this chapter's stress management principles.

### ***Sources of Personal Stress***

**Purpose:** To have students begin to see the value of this material in their own life as opposed to an abstract concept.

It is recommended that students be informed before starting this exercise as to the how the data gathered will be communicated to the class. If the instructor plans to have students discuss their information in a public forum, students should be notified of this intent so that potential embarrassing personal information can be avoided.

## SKILL LEARNING

### Outline: Chapter 2, Managing Personal Stress

#### I. Improving the Management of Stress and Time.

Managing stress and time is one of the most crucial, yet neglected, management skills in a competent manager's repertoire. Personal consequences of stress can range from inability to concentrate, anxiety, and depression to stomach disorders, low resistance to illness and heart disease. Consequences of stress for organizations range from absenteeism and job dissatisfaction to high accident and turnover rates.

##### The Role of Management

Incompetent managers are the largest cause of workplace stress. Stress not only impacts employees in the workplace but can drastically impede effective management behaviors such as listening, making good decisions, solving problems effectively, planning and generating new ideas. The ability to deal with stress not only enhances individual self-development but can impact the bottom-line for organizations. The purpose of the chapter is to explain the major types of stressors faced by managers, the primary reaction to stress, and the reasons some react more negatively to stress than others.

#### II. Major Elements of Stress.

Lewin suggests that all individuals and organizations exist in an environment filled with reinforcing or opposing forces (stresses). These forces act to stimulate or inhibit the individual's performance (see Figure 2.1). Under normal conditions, forces affecting individuals are balanced. The driving forces (stressors) can be balanced by restraining forces (effective stress management). Stresses produce both positive and negative effects. Absence of stress results in boredom and a lack of motivation. Under high stress, equilibrium can be restored through resiliency.

##### Reactions to Stress

Before reaching the extreme state under stress, individuals pass through three stages of reactions:

- **Alarm stage**-characterized by acute increases in anxiety or fear. Generally self-correcting if the stress is a brief duration.
- **Resistance stage**- if stress continues, defense mechanisms predominate and the body begins to store up excess energy. The five defense mechanisms mentioned can reduce a person's feelings of stress. The five type of defense mechanisms are:
  - **Aggression**-attacking the stressor directly (whack the computer).
  - **Regression**-adoption of a behavior or response that was successful earlier (respond in childish ways, cry).
  - **Repression**-denial, forgetting, or redefining the stressor (convincing oneself it isn't so bad).

- **Withdrawal-** engage in fantasy, inattention, or purposive forgetting or may actually escape from the stressful situation itself.
- **Fixation-** persisting in a response regardless of its effectiveness (repeatedly pushing elevator button).
- **Exhaustion stage-** most dangerous stage. Individual is defenseless resulting in heart disease, severe depression, or dissolution of relationships.
- Figure 2-2 provides a general framework for the information in this chapter as it identifies the major categories of stressors and the major attributes of resiliency (restraining forces).

### Coping with Stress

Individuals vary in how they handle stress. **Hot reactors** are people that have a negative emotional reaction to stress. Others have stronger resiliency, enabling them to cope more effectively with stress. The book identifies a hierarchy of strategies to manage stress:

- *Enactive strategy:* create or enact a new environment that does not contain the stressors.
- *Proactive strategy:* initiate action that resists the negative effects of stress, this strategy improves personal resiliency.
- *Reactive strategy:* a short-term technique for coping with stress when an immediate response is required.

Figure 2.3 (included in the supplementary PowerPoint slides) identifies the physiological effects of stress. Developing personal resiliency helps the body return to normal activities more quickly. Unfortunately most people use reactive strategies first because they are quick and easy; however, relying solely on reactive strategies usually results in the repetition of less-effective strategies that can lead to a vicious circle. A proactive strategy takes more time, but the long-term results are generally better.

## **III. Managing Stress.**

### Stressors

Table 2.1 lists the four types of stressors. They are

- **Time stressors** result from too much to do in too little time. Different cultures react to time differently. An orientation toward a short time horizon increases the likelihood of time stress.
- **Encounter stressors** are conflicts resulting from interactions with others. Encounter stressors are especially common for managers. Three specific kinds of conflicts are:
  1. *Role conflicts:* roles performed by group members are incompatible.
  2. *Issue conflicts:* disagreement exists over how to define or solve a problem
  3. *Interaction conflicts:* individuals fail to get along well because of mutual antagonism.



Research has found that encounter stressors negatively impact productivity and satisfaction. Differences among cultures impact encounter stressors. Cultures that are egalitarian face more encounter stress than cultures with a hierarchical or position based orientation. Cultures that have an outward expression of emotions have more encounter stress. Encounter stressors contributes more to burnout than the other stressors combined.

- **Situational stressors** arise from the circumstances (or the environment) in which individuals find themselves. The most common is unfavorable working conditions. Rapid changes or changes in life events contribute greatly to situational stress. The Social Readjustment Rating Scale (SRRS) (in the skill assessment for this chapter) identifies situational stress. High scores on the SRRS (over 300) increase the odds of a serious illness brought on by stress.
- **Anticipatory stressors** result from anticipating potentially disagreeable events, causing anxiety or fear. Fear of failure or fear of embarrassment in front peers are most common.

#### IV. Eliminating Stressors.

Table 2.3 outlines several methods available to eliminate the four stressors.

##### Eliminating Time Stressors through Time Management

The overwhelming amount of information people encounter today has increased time stress. The book identifies two important sets of skills to deal with time stress: effective and efficient time management.

*Effective Time Management* means that the person has aligned time use with core personal principles. Therefore,

- Individuals spend their time on important not just urgent matters
- People are able to distinguish clearly between what they view as important versus urgent
- The focus is on results rather than the process or methods
- People do not feel guilty when they must say “no”

Figure 2.4 (included in the supplementary PowerPoint slides) identifies the time management matrix. The 2X2 matrix uses importance and urgency as its key dimensions. Important activities are those that align with the individual’s personal values or that produce a personally desired result. Urgent activities, on the other hand, originate from external sources and demand immediate attention regardless of whether they align with the individual’s personal desires and values.

The book makes the case that the Important/Non-urgent cell should be one’s top priority. Importance should be determined by the individual’s core values, basic principles, and personal priorities, as articulated in a personal principles statement. A personal principles statement is an expression of the criteria one uses for evaluating what is important (see Table 2.4). Therefore, effectiveness in time management means that you accomplish what

you want to accomplish with your time. *How* you achieve these accomplishments relates to efficiency of time use.

*Efficient Time Management* is accomplishing more by reducing wasted time. One way to enhance efficient time use is to be alert to one's own tendencies in how one uses time (see Table 2.5). The Time Management Survey in the Assessment Section focuses on efficient time management and is tied to many of the techniques mentioned in the book that improve efficiency. The first 20 techniques mentioned are related to all aspects of a person's life. The last 20 techniques relate more directly to managers. Most efficient time management techniques involve people changing their own work habits while effective time management usually must take into account others.

### Eliminating Encounter Stressors through Collaboration and Emotional Intelligence

Encounter stress is the prime cause of job stress among workers. Collaboration and emotional intelligence are two approaches for eliminating encounter stressors.

#### *Collaboration*

A stable, closely-knit group or community helps eliminate encounter stress. When people feel a part of a group, or accepted by someone else, stress is relieved. The concept of an emotional bank account is mentioned as a metaphor to describe the trust or feeling of security one person has for another. The more deposits made in the emotional bank account, the stronger and more resilient the relationship. Deposits are made through treating people with kindness, courtesy, honesty, and consistency. Withdrawals are made by not keeping promises, not listening, not clarifying expectations or not allowing choices.

#### *Social and Emotional Intelligence*

Discussed in Chapter 1, emotional intelligence refers to a group of non-cognitive abilities and skills critical for interpersonal success. Social intelligence refers to the ability to manage your relationships with other people. The correlation between IQ (cognitive intelligence) and success is essentially zero. Conversely, there is a high correlation between social and emotional intelligence and success.

Social and emotional intelligence are skills and competencies that can be developed. This book is designed to improve one's social and emotional intelligence, resulting in one's ability to eliminate many forms of encounter stress.

### Eliminating Situational Stressors through Work Redesign

Research challenges the myth that job stress occurs most frequently in the executive suite. One study noted that low-level workers had higher job stress, and argued that this is to the high demands and low discretion (lack of freedom in making decisions) of low-level jobs.

The job redesign model consists of five aspects of work: *skill variety* (opportunity to use multiple skills), *task identity* (completing a whole task from beginning to end), *task significance* (impact of the work is visible), *autonomy* (opportunity to choose how and when the work will be done), and *feedback* (receiving information on task accomplishment). Applying this model to reduce job stress, managers can implement the job redesign model by doing the following:

- Combine tasks: provide opportunities for the employee to perform a variety of related tasks
- Form identifiable work units: assign groups to combine and coordinate their tasks and decide internally how to complete the work
- Establish customer relationships: improve the ability of employees to see the consequences of their efforts
- Increase decision making authority: increase the autonomy of individuals
- Open feedback channels: provide opportunity for feedback between employees and their bosses to reduce the unknown and provide information about their work

#### Eliminating Anticipatory Stressors through Prioritizing, Goals Setting, and Small Wins

Establishing a core set of values or a statement of basic personal principles (*prioritizing*) helps eliminate time stressors but also anticipatory stress by providing clarity of direction. See figure 2.5 (also included in supplementary PowerPoint slides) for a diagram depicting the process of short-term planning and *goal setting*. The purpose is to eliminate anticipatory stress by establishing a focus and direction for future activity.

- The first step in *goal setting* is to identify an objective.
- Step 2 is to identify specifically the activities and behaviors that will lead toward accomplishing the goal.
- Step 3 involves establishing accountability and report mechanisms, involving others to make the goal public.
- Step 4 involves establishing an evaluation and reward system, and identifying specific indicators of success.

*Small wins* is another method to reduce anticipatory stress. A tiny but definite change is made in a desired direction by changing something relatively easy to change. Small wins eliminate anticipatory stressors because the fearful unknown is replaced by a focus on immediate success. The rules for instituting small wins are:

- Identify something under your control
- Change it in a way that leads toward your desired goal
- Find another small thing to change and change it
- Keep track of the changes you are making
- Maintain the small gains you have made

## **V. Developing Resiliency.**

When it is impossible to eliminate stress, effective managers focus on developing resiliency.

**Resiliency** is the capacity to withstand or manage the negative effects of stress, to bounce back from adversity, and to endure difficult situations. Two categories explain individuals' differences in resiliency. One is personal factors (positive self-regard; self-efficacy) and the second is personal coping strategies (achieving balance in various aspects of life; see Figure 2.6, also included in supplementary PowerPoint slides). Individuals that are well-balanced in their life activities are more productive than individuals that only emphasize a few activities. Three common areas of resiliency development for managers are physical resiliency, psychological resiliency and social resiliency.

- **Physiological** resiliency is developed through
  - cardiovascular conditioning (regular exercise program; 20 to 30 minutes 3 or 4 days of week)
  - proper diet to maintain good physical condition.
    - Eat a variety of foods
    - Maintain optimal weight
    - Reduce fat intake
    - Eat more whole foods
    - Reduce sugar intake
    - Avoid alcohol
    - Restrict caffeine intake
    - Take vitamin and mineral supplements
    - Make eating a relaxing time
- **Psychological** resiliency is developed through building a hardy personality.
  - *Hardy personalities* have a
    - Feeling control of one's life. This dimension has a strong relationship to internal locus of control.
    - Feeling commitment to and involvement in one's activities. Feeling part of a group, feeling cared about, and feeling trusted by others encourages a constructive response to stress.
    - Feeling challenged by new experiences. Resilient people see change as an opportunity. This dimension is related to high tolerance for ambiguity
  - *Type A personality* counteracts resiliency and creates dysfunctional consequences. A Type A personality exhibits traits such as competitiveness, hostility, impatience, and significant life imbalance (see Type A survey in the skill assessment). *Traditional masculine behavior* is typical of Type A personality attributes. Type A personalities take a winner-takes-all approach in dealing with stress by trying to solve all sources of stress at once.
  - One antidote to the Type A personality problem is a *small wins strategy*. When individuals work for incremental accomplishments rather than try to "hit the homerun," they remain sensitive to the progress made and are able to cope better with major stressors. The small-wins strategy is most compatible with human preferences for learning, perception, motivation, and change.
  - Another antidote is implementing *deep relaxation techniques*. These techniques include meditation and yoga.

- ***Social resiliency*** involves developing close social relationships. These relationships are fostered in three ways.
  - Forming close *personal relationships*.
  - Forming *mentoring relationships*.
  - Forming cohesive *task teams* that function well.

## VI. Temporary Stress-Reduction Techniques.

Coping with stress on a temporary basis, using reactive strategies, is primarily accomplished by using *temporary relaxation techniques*.

- *Muscle relaxation* helps temporarily relax all muscle groups.
- *Deep breathing* helps clear the mind and relax the body.
- *Imagery and fantasy* help remove one's thoughts from the stressful condition. Visualizing a successful performance or achieving the goal is common
- *Rehearsal* helps individuals try out alternative reactions to stress. Appropriate reactions are rehearsed.
- *Reframing* helps people redefine or reinterpret stressful situations more positively. Examples are "I've solved similar problems" or "others have been here and made it through"

## VII. Summary.

This chapter identified four kinds of stressors---time, encounter, situational, and anticipatory. These stressors cause negative physiological, psychological, and social reactions. These reactions are moderated by the resiliency that individuals have developed for coping with stress. The best way to eliminate stress is through time management, delegation, collaboration, interpersonal competence, work redesign, prioritizing, goal-setting, and small wins. Another strategy to reduce stress is to improve one's resiliency.

The book identifies 12 specific behavioral guidelines for improving one's stress management skills.

## Teaching Hints

1. ***Additional stressors.*** Students can identify stressors they currently face, weigh them relative to the items on the Social Readjustment Rating Scale, and then list several ways to cope (this is an expansion of the **Sources of Personal Stress**). The more severe a stressor (the higher the weighting), the more likely it is that people do something out of the ordinary to cope. Many coping mechanisms used by students are either habit-forming (e.g., drugs, alcohol) or in other ways destructive (e.g., hollering at someone, breaking something). In addition, many are temporary and must be repeated every time stress arises. Students often do not know of long-term or permanent and positive alternatives. This exercise can stimulate interest in and motivation toward improving stress management skills, particularly when students see a more productive way.
2. ***Four types of stressors.*** In small groups, ask students to identify the extent to which they face the four types of stressors (summarized in Table 2.1) and the extent to which they have developed the four types of restraining forces. Have them rate on a scale of 1 to 100 how much each stressor or restraining force is present or have them list examples of each category relevant to them personally. This activity could be used in conjunction with **Sources of Personal Stress**. Since students have already identified the factors that produce the most stress in this exercise, having the categorized these factors within the four types of stressors would assist in their

learning of the material. Moreover, a discussion of the ratings or the examples lets students share ideas about sources of stress and ways to cope.

3. **Life balance.** Extra time discussing the life-balance exercise has proven worthwhile for our classes. When students are encouraged to do what the text suggests—diagnose their own levels of development in each of the seven major areas, and identify and share ways to become better-balanced—their stress-management skill levels almost always improve. Because few students have considered the need to develop in a variety of areas, they may need help either defining what an area involves or identifying ways to develop in an area. The following might help them determine their own strategies.

Area	Activities
Social	Invite a friend over for dinner, make cookies for someone, volunteer at the hospital.
Physical	Jog, swim, lift weights, or diet.
Spiritual	Attend church, read scriptures, pray, meditate.
Family	Play a family game, hold a family council, tell other family members what you like about them.
Intellectual	Read some classical literature, attend a debate on current issues, study an hour or more each night.
Work	Implement one new project this month, implement time management principles, and do not take work home this month.
Cultural	Attend a concert, visit a museum, or interview a foreign student.

These coping mechanisms are temporary in nature, so encourage students to establish long-term stress-management behavior patterns. On the other hand, these activities are ones that students can engage in right now as they undertake longer-term changes.

4. **Managing time.** Because students see time management as a major problem, we often spend class time reviewing suggestions from the assessment, the Time Management Survey, noting briefly each one's potential benefits. We encourage students to select two or three hints they are not currently practicing, practice them for a week or two, then report the results in their journals. Students often tell of significant improvements in their time use. Or ask students to keep a time log in their journal for a week, recording what they did for every 30-minute period for a week. Then they answer the following questions in a class discussion:

- ☐ How much time did you ineffectively use or waste during the week?
- ☐ How much discretionary time can you find through better time management?
- ☐ What are your biggest time wasters?
- ☐ What people are your biggest time robbers?
- ☐ What can you do right now to become a better time manager?

A third way is to have students provide real illustrations from their own lives of the patterns listed in Table 2.5. For example, when have they observed the following?

- ☐ We do things that require a little time before things that require lots of time.
- ☐ We do things that are planned before things that are unplanned.
- ☐ We do things we like before things we do not like.

Then discuss how these principles affect effective time management and how they can be used as tools for effective time management. (For example, managers who understand and apply these principles can design work tasks capable of being accomplished efficiently.)

5. **Delegating.** Because of lack of experience with delegation, students generally think it means just telling someone else what to do. While delegation is covered in Chapter 8, the instructor can offer a preview of this concept with this exercise. Have the students review Figure 8.3 paying particular attention to the 10 principles summarizing *how* to delegate. These principles should help students in their approach.

To provide experience with delegation; the instructor should divide the class into teams of three, where one student acts as the delegator, one as the recipient of the delegated assignment, and the other as the observer. The instructor can assign one of the suggested delegation tasks listed below to the team. Rotate team member roles so that each student has a chance to be the delegator. Make sure that the observer has time to provide feedback to the delegator. The observer should be cognizant of the 10 principles noted in Figure 8.3 but should look for in particular the following:

- ☐ The extent to which the delegation occurred clearly and completely
- ☐ The extent to which participation was allowed
- ☐ The extent to which there was parity of authority and responsibility
- ☐ The extent to which the delegation included adequate support
- ☐ The extent to which accountability for results was specified, both in terms of time and outcome
- ☐ The extent to which teamwork, trust, and support were engendered

### ***Suggested Delegation Tasks***

- ☐ You must finish a scholarly paper by next week and the bibliography is not yet developed.
- ☐ Someone in your organization will need to spend three weeks opening up a new market for your company in Mexico.
- ☐ Bookkeeping tasks, including paying monthly bills, have become too much to handle, and someone else needs to be assigned to do it for you.
- ☐ Some of your employees were accused by a customer of getting drunk at a community picnic. Someone needs to investigate to determine if this accusation is true.

### **Sample Discussion Questions.**

- ☐ Was delegation easy or difficult to do? Were all aspects of delegation adequately demonstrated?
- ☐ For those being delegated to, was it possible to improve delegation by the questions you asked?
- ☐ If you were to give advice about delegation, what advice would you pass along concerning delegation?



6. **Small wins.** A quick way to familiarize students with the small wins technique is to ask them to analyze the past week's activities. Take 15 minutes or so in class and do the following:
- ❑ Identify everything that happened that you would label a success, or that had a positive outcome. (Because it is much easier to be cynical and negative than positive, you will need to encourage students to adopt a positive perspective in this assignment.) Students should list everything they can think of, no matter how trivial.
  - ❑ Identify what good things you expect to happen to you in the coming week. (Again, these do not need to be big important events or happenings. Small wins refer to just that: they are small.)
  - ❑ Share your lists with your neighbor. (Sharing can be a success experience in itself as well as a positive example for others of small wins.)

## SKILL ANALYSIS

### *The Turn of the Tide*

This case illustrates a positive way to cope with stress on a temporary basis. The formula followed by Arthur Gordon is not exactly that discussed in the text, but the principles are similar. Besides having the students discuss the questions at the end of the case, you may want to discuss similarities to temporary relaxation techniques and how they can be implemented quickly in any setting. Have students follow the formula prescribed in the case and then record their experiences in their journals, or ask them to share similar experiences of successfully coping with stress by using some unusual principles. Get them to analyze what does and does not work in coping with stress.

In response to the discussion questions, this case clearly illustrates the practical use of several temporary coping mechanisms, such as imagery and fantasy and refraining. An issue worth discussing is whether similar results can be achieved without having to change locations and take the entire day. A major point made in the chapter is that this kind of temporary coping mechanism can offer release, but we can avoid the tension and stress in the first place if we use resiliency and proactive stress management strategies. Ask what students would advise the author on returning to normal life. Without some changes, this cycle will likely be repeated.

### *The Case of the Missing Time*

This case illustrates poor stress management. Chet violates a variety of time- and stress-management principles, although he sincerely tries to improve. It also shows that people often are not good judges of their own competence in stress and time management. Chet would probably rate himself as a relatively skilled person in these areas. However, comparing his activities with the principles in the text suggest that Chet's skill level is not very high. The same may be true of students in the class, so you may want to use this case to suggest that students ask people who know them well to offer feedback regarding their management of stress and time. We usually ask students to identify the main problems in this case and then devise possible solutions for Chet. To use this format, assign students in small groups to devise two lists: *Problems* and *Remedies*. Ask students

to apply the principles of time and stress management in the text as they help Chet solve his problems and improve his skill.

Some problems they might identify are the following:

Span of control too wide	No formalized reporting
Little delegation	No supervisors over unit foremen
No planning time	Office manager needs authority
Excessive plant tours	Centralized decision making
Upward delegation	No staff coordinating meetings

## SKILL PRACTICE

We suggest that students engage in these four practice exercises with a partner. Partners facilitate students' engagement and provide feedback. Also encourage them to keep a journal of these experiences for their own review and for evaluation by the instructor.

### *Small Wins Strategy*

Assign students to complete the form in the text. The most important part of the exercise is helping students subdivide the stressful situation into subparts, then to subdivide those subparts again resulting in small, incremental steps, small wins, and positive momentum. The second important part of the exercise is to motivate students to identify small, tangible successes from the past or anticipated in the future. Although it may seem insignificant, the psychological research asserts this will help alleviate stress and create positive energy.

In discussing this exercise, you may want to model the small wins strategy by having students share their own small wins with others.

For example, you might ask the following questions:

- ☐ What major kinds of stressors do you face as students? Pick one.
- ☐ What are the subcomponents of that stressor?
- ☐ What small wins have you and others accomplished relative to that stressor?
- ☐ What additional small wins can be implemented?

Have partners share their responses to get feedback and suggestions on additional ways to initiate small wins.

### *Life Balance Analysis*

Focusing on building resilience through life balance, this exercise also requires the student to analyze and plan ways to cope with stress. Because most students feel overloaded, they often resist this exercise saying that they have no time to add more activities to their schedules.

One way to achieve life balance is to combine current required activities with activities that help achieve life balance (for example, combining physical activities with social

activities). Or, students may need to analyze carefully their priorities and eliminate some activities that create time stress but accomplish very little—that is, implement Pareto’s law and identify the 20 percent of their tasks that produce 80 percent of the results. This is a lifelong process. Students can practice in an environment where there is some incentive and where they can receive feedback and advice.

Hold students accountable for starting this week to implement some new activity or experience to achieve better life balance.

### ***Deep Relaxation***

This exercise combines principles of several well-known deep relaxation techniques, including transcendental meditation, yoga, and self-hypnosis. It should be done outside the classroom with a partner. Continually practicing this exercise will necessitate that the instructions be memorized, that they be tape recorded, or that the exercise be done with a partner. We have found it helpful to have students do the exercise with someone with whom they feel comfortable, not a stranger. Therefore, we usually let students pick their own partner. Again, encourage students to discuss the exercise with their partner when they finish.

#### **Sample Discussion Questions**

- ☐ What did you have trouble letting go of when you began to relax?
- ☐ What mental image was most helpful to focus on to wipe all other thoughts out of your mind?
- ☐ What observations did you make of your partner that may help him or her better engage in deep relaxation?

### ***Monitoring and Managing Time***

We have found it successful to have students turn in their time logs as an extra incentive to have them accomplish the task. Almost without exception, this exercise surprises people. Students find that they are wasting much more time than they thought and spending more time on nonproductive activity than they would have guessed, and that some things are taking much more time than they imagined. It is impossible to improve time management unless we know how we are spending our time, so this exercise is a prerequisite for time management improvement.

A discussion with a partner can help identify some other suggestions for increasing the amount of discretionary time and using time more wisely. Direct the ensuing class discussion by listing three categories on the board: *Time Management Hints*, *Major Time Wasters*, and *Things to Eliminate*.

## SKILL APPLICATION

### Suggested Activities

These exercises provide opportunities for students to extend the learning experience outside the classroom. Your selection of assignments should consider your students' ages, access to organizations, employment status, etc., as well as which aspects of the chapter you spent the most time discussing in class. The Skill Application assignment can be used to balance the emphasis placed on various topics.

Assignments 1 and 4 focus on improving stress management techniques. Assignment 2 instructs students to teach the material to another person. Assignment 3 involves time management techniques. Assignment 5 encourages students to focus on long-term goals. This is consistent with the personal life management philosophy discussed at the beginning of Chapter 1 in the text. Assignments 6 and 7 may be the most important ones for middle-aged students. Assignment 8 is appropriate for all students. Assignment 9 is particularly appropriate for full-time employees.

### Application Plan and Evaluation

One of the best ways to generate application exercises that help students transfer their skill learning to a real-life setting is to have them create their own assignments. This application exercise is designed to help students identify the specific skills associated with the chapter that they want to improve. We urge students not to shortcut this exercise, but to complete each item on the form. They are thus forced to identify specific behaviors, a specific time frame, and specific reporting mechanisms that can help them actually implement a change in their skill behaviors outside the classroom environment.

**Step 1** asks students to identify the specific skill(s) that they want to improve. Writing this down helps clarify it in ways that would not occur otherwise. Ask them to write the skill(s) behaviorally, using the behavioral guidelines as a model—as well as a source of ideas.

**Step 2** asks students to identify the circumstances in which the improvement efforts will occur. This focuses their attention on a particular problem or issue, a particular work situation, or a specific set of individuals. Students should indicate when they will begin this application activity; otherwise it is easy for them to procrastinate.

**Step 3** asks the student to identify specific behaviors in which they will engage to improve their skill performance. Completing this step will take some analysis and time; it should not be done hurriedly or perfunctorily. This step essentially operationalizes the improvement activity into observable actions.

**Step 4** asks the student to identify specific outcomes that will signal success. This is not easy for skills without a quantifiable outcome, but that is why this step is so important. Identifying the ways they know they have improved helps students see more clearly what improvement requires. Appropriate outcomes might include increased satisfaction with a relationship or improved understanding, but do not let students use changes in another person's behavior serve as the criteria for success. Instead, they should focus on outcomes that they can control.

*Steps 5 through 7* ask students to analyze, evaluate, and record their improvement in a journal. These steps not only foster learning and self-understanding, they can also lead to continued improvement as students discover new ways to enhance their performance.

We usually have students hand in at least some of these skill application analyses as part of their grade for the course. By doing so, you reinforce immediate application and also get a chance for giving students written feedback and encouragement.

## **SUPPLEMENTARY EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES**

### ***Internet Addiction***

Internet addiction is a relatively new area of study in psychology. First identified by Kimberly Young in 1995, Internet addiction refers to excessive use of the Internet, in a way that impairs daily life functions. Her article, Addictive Use of the Internet: A Case that Breaks the Stereotype, describes the criteria for addiction as:

... withdrawal, tolerance, preoccupation with the substance, heavier or more frequent use of the substance than intended, centralized activities to procure more of the substance, loss of interest in other social, occupational, and recreational activities, and disregard for the physical or psychological consequences caused by the use of the substance.

There are many resources on the Internet that describe Internet addiction. Students can be referred to any of the following for an overview:

- ☐ Center for On-Line Addiction  
(<http://www.healthyplace.com/Communities/Addictions/netaddiction/index.html>)

However, it is also important to point out to students that the term “Internet Addiction” is controversial, and not accepted by all psychologists. Recently, Dr. John Grohol made the distinction between Internet use among new users and more experienced users, suggesting that new users often go through periods of overuse of the Internet, which diminish as they become more experienced. Direct students to <http://psychcentral.com/netaddiction/> for more details.

Whether or not overuse of the Internet is “addictive” it can certainly lead to increased stress and loss of balance in one’s life. In addition, having students take the different internet addiction tests available online can lead to a very interesting and productive discussion about self-assessment instruments and how to evaluate them (see materials in Section 1, “A Note on Using Skill Assessments”.) Sample tests include:

- ☐ Kimberly Young’s Internet Addiction Test  
([http://www.netaddiction.com/resources/internet\\_addiction\\_test.htm](http://www.netaddiction.com/resources/internet_addiction_test.htm))
- ☐ Quizland Quiz: Are You an Internet Addict?  
(<http://www.quizland.com/addict.htm>)

- ☐ Several quizzes are available over different types on internet addiction. Tests include cybersexual addiction, obsessive online gaming, online auction addiction, partner's addiction, and parent-child addiction.  
(<http://www.netaddiction.com/resources/iaindex.htm>)

### **Sample Discussion Questions.**

- ☐ How did your scores on the various tests compare?
- ☐ Which score do you think is most accurate, and why?
- ☐ Examine the sources of the various tests. Which source do you think is most likely to provide a valid and reliable test, and why? (Alternatively, ask students to research the tests in refereed journals – are reliability and validity scores available for any of them?)
- ☐ Grohol presents a model of Internet use that suggests that when a person is first introduced to the Internet, he or she is likely to spend too much time in on-line activities. After this initial period, Grohol says that people tend to stop Internet use altogether, only to settle into a more reasonable pattern of use when they are comfortable with the technology. To what extent do you feel Grohol's model can be used to describe other behaviors as well? Is the model a reasonable one for describing the ebb and flow of balance between all areas in our lives?

### ***Procrastination Survey***

The survey on the next page was developed by Clary Lay ("At last, my research article on procrastination." *Journal of Research in Personality*, 1986, 20, 474-495.) Use it to begin a discussion on time management with students. Lay has conducted extensive research with the scale, demonstrating its reliability and validity.

Once students have completed the test, ask them to think about something they have been putting off for awhile. Tell them that people often put things off because those things seem overwhelming, often due to distorted thoughts about whatever is being avoided. M. Susan Roberts, in her book "Living Without Procrastination: How to Stop Postponing Your Life", (New Harbinger Publications, Inc., 1995) discusses several common reasons for procrastination, and identifies questions that people can use to help them become more aware of their procrastination behaviors. These reasons and questions include:

### **Are You A Procrastinator?**

*For each of the twenty questions, circle either true or false as it applies to your behavior now. If you have trouble choosing either true or false, pick the one that best fits your most recent experience.*

- T F 1. I often find myself performing tasks that I had intended to do days before.
- T F 2. I often miss concerts, sporting events or the like because I don't get around to buying the tickets on time.
- T F 3. When planning a party, I make the necessary arrangements well in advance.
- T F 4. When it is time to get up in the morning, I most often get right out of bed.
- T F 5. A letter may sit for days after I write it before mailing it.
- T F 6. I generally return phone calls promptly.
- T F 7. Even with jobs that require little else except sitting down and doing them, I find that they often don't get done for days.
- T F 8. I usually make decisions as soon as possible.
- T F 9. I generally delay before starting on work I have to do.
- T F 10. When traveling, I usually have to rush in preparing to arrive at the airport or station at the appropriate time.
- T F 11. When preparing to go out, I am seldom caught having to do something at the last minute.
- T F 12. In preparing for some deadline, I often waste time by doing other things.
- T F 13. If a bill for a small amount comes, I pay it right away.
- T F 14. I usually return an R.S.V.P. request very shortly after receiving the invitation.
- T F 15. I often have a task finished sooner than necessary.
- T F 16. I always seem to end up shopping for birthday or Christmas gifts at the last minute.
- T F 17. I usually buy even an essential item at the last minute.
- T F 18. I usually accomplish all the things I plan to do in a day.
- T F 19. I am continually saying "I'll do it tomorrow."
- T F 20. I usually take care of all the tasks I have to do before I settle down and relax for the evening.

To score the questionnaire, give yourself one point each for questions 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 10, 12, 16, 17, and 19 that you answered true. Give yourself one point each for questions 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, 20 that you answered false. Total the points for true and false items.

**Scoring: 13+ = Extreme procrastinator; 9 -12 = Above average procrastinator; 7 - 8 = Average procrastinator; Below 7 = You aren't a procrastinator**

From Clary Lay (1986), "At Last, My Research Article on Procrastination, Journal of Research in Personality, 20, 474-495.

## **Common Reasons for Procrastination**

By  
M. Susan Roberts

### I'm not in the mood – setting up artificial barriers

- ☐ How am I setting up an “if” or “when” situation regarding my task?
- ☐ What event or feeling do I consider necessary for work to begin?
- ☐ Why is it really necessary for this event or feeling to occur first?
- ☐ How could I proceed if this event or feeling never occurred?

### I'm too busy – focusing on trivia

- ☐ On what activities do I spend more than three hours per week?
- ☐ How does each of these activities relate to my goal?
- ☐ How are these activities keeping me from my task?
- ☐ Am I avoiding what is important?

### I can't live up to expectations – perfectionism

- ☐ What am I expecting as a final result of my task?
- ☐ How can I accept my best effort even if not perfect?
- ☐ How can I look at the results of this task as a learning process, not a judgment?
- ☐ How can I let myself learn from the results of my effort?

### It's not my fault – blaming others

- ☐ Who or what event do I find myself referring to when I think I cannot accomplish my goal?
- ☐ How is it true that this person or event is keeping me at this time from pursuing my goal?
- ☐ Do other people accomplish this goal even though they experienced the same negative influence as I?

### I have too many interruptions – distractions

- ☐ What distractions have stopped work on my task in the past?
- ☐ How do I turn away interruptions from my task?
- ☐ How can I better respond to interruptions and be less distracted from my task?

### I can't cope – emotionalism.

- ☐ What are the feelings I have about my task?
- ☐ How strong are the feelings?
- ☐ How am I letting the feelings interfere with getting the job done?
- ☐ Do I spend as much or more time thinking about the feelings or about getting the job done?

Taken from her book, “Living Without Procrastination: How to Stop Postponing Your Life (1995), New Harbinger Publications



Have students spend some time answering the questions for themselves, and evaluating the things that may lead them to procrastinate. During the conversation, it is especially important to point out the difference between feeling like you “should” do something and feeling like you “want” to do something. Just making that simple changing in language (and, by extension, thought) can have a huge impact on procrastination.

Once students know more about how they procrastinate, they are ready to move on towards exploring ways to stop procrastination. Roberts identifies seven types of thinking distortions that can lead to procrastination, and suggests using “replacement thoughts” to overcome them. These thinking distortions are summarized in the table below, along with their associated “replacement thoughts.”

<b>Thought</b>	<b>Type of Distortion</b>	<b>Replacement Thoughts</b>
Don’t believe anything she says.	Overgeneralization	Not everything she says is a lie. I need to check it out before I believe her.
If this doesn’t work out, I’m finished.	Catastrophizing	If this doesn’t work, I’ll think of something else.
In four cards he’s sent, he’s only signed one “love.”	Filtering	He’s sent me four cards, he must be thinking positive thoughts about me.
Only the boss’s pets get promotions.	Control	I’ve done a good job. I deserve to try for the new position.
He’s thinking I’m not very smart.	Mind reading	I don’t know what he’s thinking. I’d better ask.
This is just too hard for me.	Labeling	It’s plenty hard, but not too hard.
I’m a social dud. I couldn’t think of anything to say.	Polarized thinking	I said some things. I’ll think up more conservative topics.

Share this table with the students, and use the blank table below to ask them to identify any distorted thoughts that may be affecting their completion of the task they are putting off, and to develop replacement thoughts that will be more productive.

<b>Thought</b>	<b>Type of Distortion</b>	<b>Replacement Thoughts</b>

Finally, end the exercise by telling students to go out and do one thing “right now” on whatever they have been putting off. Students will be reluctant to do this, but encourage them. Even in an evening class, students can make a phone call, create a plan, walk around the building, in short, take some form of action to move them towards ending the procrastination cycle.

### ***Coping with Stress***

**Teaching Note.** Assign each of five groups one of the following scenarios. After one student reads the scenario, all the group members write down their initial reactions. Then, students take turns presenting their reactions. Assign a recorder to write down these comments. Following these small-group discussions, ask the recorders from each group to present to the entire class their compiled list of reactions. You can conclude the exercise by having some students act out their reactions. Select several that are novel, creative, or typical.

### **Sample Discussion Questions**

- ☐ What were the most common reactions by group members?
- ☐ The chapter discusses three ways of dealing with stress: eliminating it, increasing our resilience, using temporary coping strategies. Which of these categories is most/least frequently represented in our lists? (Most students will focus on coping strategies. In fact, if you list all the responses on the board under the three categories, you will generally find that the distribution is the opposite of what is recommended in the text. That is, the least amount of attention is focused on eliminating the source of stress. This observation can lead to an interesting discussion of why we tend to focus on coping with symptoms rather than removing the problems.)
- ☐ Do people use fundamentally different coping mechanisms for different types of stress, or stress under different conditions? (Although these scenarios do not all pertain to work situations, most of us use basically the same strategies in all settings.)

### **Exercise**

**Scenario 1.** It is Monday morning. You have just arrived in your office one hour late because you had to find a substitute babysitter at the last minute. As you enter your office, you find a note from your secretary saying that she has a funeral today and will not be in until afternoon. A crucial staff meeting begins in 30 minutes to discuss budget cuts for each of your subordinates’ units, and you have not yet completed your preparations for the meeting. You know that there will be hostility and confrontation in the meeting, but if you have the data organized and charts prepared, you know you can get through the meeting without a blowup. The trouble is you do not have time to get everything prepared before your staff shows up. The meeting cannot be postponed because your meeting with your peer managers is scheduled right after your staff meeting. The main agenda item for that meeting is your report on the results of your staff meeting.

**Scenario 2.** You just received a phone call from the hospital emergency room where one of your children has been taken after an auto accident. The nurse on the other end of the line did not give you any information about the condition of your child because the physical examination is in progress. You do not have a car available to get to the hospital,

as your only car was being driven by your child. Neither of the two neighbors who live nearby is home. You are just going to have to wait for a cab to come, which will take about a half hour.

**Scenario 3.** You are preparing for an extremely important presentation to the Executive Committee of your corporation. Not only is this likely to be your only chance to make a presentation to the committee members personally, but your presentation is a request for some extra funds to pursue an idea you think will help the company's future profitability. If you are impressive, your career could be enhanced in the firm; if you are convincing enough to get the allocation, you are sure that this idea could develop into something very important for you personally and for the company. You know that the executive committee is not easily fooled, and they have a reputation for being extremely hard-nosed and tightfisted regarding any extra expenditures. Because times are lean in the firm right now, this could be a difficult presentation. You go into the boardroom in 15 minutes.

**Scenario 4.** This is the first track meet of the college season. Because of your success in high school, several newspaper articles have been written extolling your accomplishments and creating high expectations for your college career. Competing in high school is one thing, but competing in college is quite another. Although you have been improving regularly, it is still too early to tell whether you can equal your best performance in high school, and whether you can be competitive with these outstanding college athletes. Your parents and friends are watching, and the press row is full. Your event begins in 20 minutes.

**Scenario 5.** You have a paper due in the office of your instructor by 5:00 P.M. No late papers are accepted. You have been working late for several days, and you are exhausted. You have set aside this afternoon to finish the paper, a difficult one you do not feel quite prepared to write. With about three hours to go, and only about half the paper written, you get a telephone call from your best friend who is having a crisis. He just needs to talk it through for a few minutes. The trouble is, the call takes almost an hour, and now you are not sure you can finish the paper in time, let alone have it typed, spell-checked, and bound properly.

### ***Building in Life Balance***

**Purpose:** To help students recognize the importance of integrating life balance activities as an effective stress management strategy. Different corporations approach life balance programs in different ways. Through this exercise, students will learn how and why corporations are emphasizing life balance for managers and employees.

**Procedure:** Ask students to use library or online resources to research the life-balance strategies of two or three corporations. For example, an article about life-balance activities at SAS Institute, from *Fast Company* magazine, can be found online at <http://www.fastcompany.com/online/21/sanity.html>. Have students prepare a short (two-page) report based on their research:

- ☐ What are the elements of each corporation's life-balance strategy? (For example, SAS offers on-site child care, artwork on workplace walls, free M&Ms on Wednesdays, a seven-hour workday, and on-site sports and fitness facilities.)
- ☐ What stressors are corporate managers addressing, and how do these compare with the work site characteristics shown to cause burnout (see Table 2 of Chapter 2)?

*(Based on the article, SAS wants to help its staff better manage time stressors, situational stressors, and encounter stressors. Compared with the causes of burnout in Table 2, SAS's employees are encouraged to talk freely with one another, enjoy considerable control, talk opening with management, and have above-average sick benefits.)*

- ❑ How does each corporation explain its integration of life-balance activities? *(SAS seeks to retain good employees at all levels, minimizing hiring/training costs and keeping productivity high. It also shows employees that they are respected and valued, which reinforces workforce loyalty and encourages peak performance.)*
- ❑ Comparing the companies researched, what are the similarities and differences in the way they are addressing life-balance issues? *(Students' answers will vary, depending on the companies they have researched. This is an opportunity to discuss how managers must take into consideration variations in individual needs and behaviors as well as corporate constraints such as cost.)*
- ❑ Given their knowledge of life-balance strategies, which of these employers would students prefer to work for—and why? *(Students' answers will vary, depending on their personal and professional preferences and goals. Encourage them to also consider which stressors are being addressed by each employer, how they typically respond to such stressors, and the impact of the corporation's life-balance activities on stress reduction.)*

### ***Looking Ahead: Potential Stressors***

**Purpose:** To give students practice identifying anticipatory stressors at work, school, and home. Through this exercise, students will gain awareness of their concerns about certain potentially disagreeable situations looming in the future, and of the effect this stress has on their attitude and behavior.

**Procedure:** Allot 5 minutes for individual work on this exercise, followed by 10 minutes of group work and 10 minutes of classroom discussion. First, ask students to write down one or two answers completing each of the following sentences based on their anticipated stress from potentially unpleasant future events:

**Looking ahead at work, I am concerned about . . .**

**Looking ahead at school, I am concerned about . . .**

**Looking ahead at home, I am concerned about . . .**

Working in teams of four, have students compare answers and identify the most frequently cited stressors at work, school, and home. In addition, ask students to briefly outline what they do when confronted with these common stressors. (For example, do they put off studying in the hope that an event such as the final exam will not actually take place? Do they avoid a particular person associated with some dreaded event?)

Now ask one student from each team to summarize the team's most common stressors in each of these three areas. What are the most frequently cited stressors overall? How do students tend to deal with these anticipatory stressors? Ask students to apply their knowledge of enactive strategies to brainstorm different ways of eliminating these stressors.

### ***Small Wins Lead the Way Toward Long-Term Goals***

**Purpose:** People can be overwhelmed by the time and effort needed to achieve long-term goals. The purpose of this exercise is to help students learn to reframe the pursuit of a long-term goal into the achievement of a series of smaller short-term wins. By repeatedly applying the chapter's model for short-term planning and goal setting to each step along the journey toward a long-term goal, students can minimize the anticipatory stress that prevents them from pursuing important but challenging goals.

**Procedure:** To start, ask students to identify one long-term goal they particularly value and would like to pursue. The goal may be personal (such as becoming fluent in another language, overcoming fear of flying, or owning a home) or professional (such as passing a licensing examination, achieving a certain managerial level, or starting a small business).

Next, ask students to list the major steps required to achieve this goal. For example, to buy a home, students would need (1) a mortgage or some way of paying for the purchase; (2) a way of finding just the right home in the right community; (3) a legal way of completing the purchase; and (4) a way of moving into the home. Encourage students to confirm the steps they have identified by exchanging lists with another student. **For discussion or self-reporting:** How do you feel about these relatively few major steps? *Most will probably still feel stress at the anticipation of working toward their long-term goals.*

Now ask students to break each step into its component substeps. For example, to obtain a mortgage, students would need (1) a down payment, (2) a steady source of income, (3) a good credit record, and (4) a suitable mortgage rate and term. Even these substeps can be further subdivided, if students choose. Again, suggest that students exchange lists to confirm the steps they have identified.

**For discussion or self-reporting:** Do these component substeps seem more achievable than one single long-term goal? How much work and time do you think you would need to achieve each substep? Do you think you can actually handle these substeps? *Some will see the substeps as less intimidating, more short term, and therefore somewhat more realistically attainable. Some may see the growing list of substeps as more daunting. However, once students focus on the shorter-term nature of each substep, they should be able to begin the reframing process.*

For each of the substeps, ask students to create a brief four-part plan with a concrete goal, a few appropriate action items, an accountability mechanism, and success criteria and rewards, following the model in Figure 5 (within the Goal Setting section of Chapter 2).

**For discussion or self-reporting:** Can you achieve a small win to complete each substep? How does each win move you closer to your overall long-term goal? Does a series of small wins make you feel less stress about approaching your long-term goal? *Encourage students to think about subdividing steps further, if necessary, to create more manageable small wins, and remind them of the importance of rewarding themselves for each win.*

### ***What's Urgent and What's Important?***

**Purpose:** This exercise will give students practice distinguishing between activities that are merely urgent and those that are important so they can rethink the tendency to constantly react as a way of eliminating stress. By considering the potential outcomes of different approaches to each activity, students can learn to reprioritize so they are not constantly battling crises.

**Procedure:** Ask students, working individually, to classify the following work activities according to the matrix in Figure 2.4 (in Effective Time Management section of Chapter 2) as: (1) urgent/important, (2) urgent/unimportant, (3) not urgent/important, or (4) not urgent/unimportant.

Activity	Classification
1. Supplier calls to demand payment of a long-overdue invoice.	
2. Production supervisor stops by for help with a complicated database problem.	
3. Vice president sends around notice inviting suggestions for new products.	
4. Weekly staff meeting is unexpectedly moved up to start within a few minutes.	
5. Assistant passes along an announcement of an industry conference in Hawaii next month.	
6. Department head asks for two-year comparison of monthly departmental sales and expenses.	
7. In-box includes an annual customer-satisfaction survey from a favorite vendor.	
8. E-mail reminder from human resources about quality management Webcast during lunchtime.	
9. Inspector from the federal OSHA agency shows up to check for violations.	
10. Page message arrives from spouse, asking for spare car keys.	

Once students have classified all 10 activities, ask them to pair up and compare their results. When students don't agree on the classification of an activity, each should explain his or her reasoning, including how possible outcomes influenced their classification. This discussion may help students reframe some activities. For example, one student may see reading the Hawaii industry conference announcement as an escape (low urgency, low importance) whereas another sees it as a developmental opportunity to learn more about the business and meet other experts (low urgency, high importance). Similarly, the supplier call about overdue payment may seem like an argument to some (low urgency, low importance) but more of a crisis to others (high urgency, high importance) who see the outcome as maintaining good relations with a needed supplier.

Collect the class's classifications for each activity and list the results on the board or an overhead. This is an opportunity to discuss how differing priorities, viewpoints, and long-term goals affect the way managers choose to spend their time. It is also an opportunity for students to consider how they might better manage such stressors.

The ***Campus Life Problem: Managing Stress*** on the next page is set up as a one page handout for students.

### ***Campus Life Problem: Managing Stress***

**Situation.** Meet Ken. He is a senior in Business Administration, and in addition to his full load of classes he is busy interviewing with prestigious accounting firms. Ken has always been a leader so it is not surprising to see he is president of Sigma Alpha Pi fraternity, vice president of Beta Alpha Psi business fraternity, assistant manager at McDonald's, as well as being very involved in his church group. All of these commitments, Ken feels, are very important to being successful in the business world.

Yesterday was a typical day for Ken. He woke up at 5:46 A.M. to open McDonald's. Since it was broken into two months ago Ken carries the only set of keys because he no longer trusts anyone else with the responsibility. Although he had planned to study after opening, Ken ended up mopping for Ralph, a new employee who was not mopping properly.

Ken ran to his class at 8:00 A.M. but his mind was not on his studies. Instead he was thinking of the plumber he had to call for his fraternity house, which caterer to contract for Dad's Day, and how to motivate the pledges that clean the house after a weekend party. After class Ken ran to Kinko's to pick up notices for the Beta Alpha Psi meeting and posted them in the business school. In the process he checked to see if Tiffany, a fellow Beta Alpha Psi member, had reserved a room for a guest speaker.

On his way home he stopped for a Big Mac at McDonald's and ended up rechecking all the files and finishing up next week's schedule for Christy, a new shift supervisor. Ken finally got home, where he called a plumber and met with Mark, who is in charge of the house blood drive. Ken was in charge of the blood drive last year and won several awards. He wants to continue the recognition he established for the house last year.

Ken then hurried to the church where he met with the minister. Reverend White wanted to help pick the songs the group would be singing at the weekend service, but Ken insisted on doing it himself. After a couple of hours of studying, Ken returned home to his answering machine. He reluctantly turned it on:

"This is Tiffany. The speaker for Thursday night canceled, so we need to schedule a new speaker and change all the fliers."

"This is Mr. Smith. The time cards weren't turned in again this week. Please contact me."

"This is Reverend White. Tom broke his finger and won be able to play guitar for the weekend services. We'll need to make new arrangements."

"Ken, this is Mark. I can't do this blood drive deal all by myself. How about some help?"

"Hello, remember me? I thought I was your girlfriend. Am I ever going to see you again?"

Ken sits on his bed and ponders everything that needs to be done, saying to himself, "I could ask others to help me but if you want something done right you've got to do it yourself. I want to relax and spend time with my girlfriend but I can't give up my involvements, especially if I want a good job when I graduate. There just never seems to be enough hours in a day."

### **Discussion Questions**

- ☐ How would you rate Ken's time-management practices?
- ☐ How could he better manage his stress?
- ☐ What do you think about his basic motivation?

## RELATED VIDEO CLIPS AND FILMS

### *Apollo 13*

This film documents the voyage of the spacecraft Apollo 13, which was meant to be a routine flight, but nearly became a catastrophe due to an oxygen malfunction. The astronauts, stranded in space, fight desperately to survive while the NASA ground crew struggles to develop a rescue plan.

**Clip (0:49:45–0:54:40).** While conducting some routine maintenance aboard Apollo 13, astronauts Jim Lovell (Tom Hanks), Fred Haise (Bill Paxton), and Jack Swigert (Kevin Bacon) inadvertently send the space capsule into an uncontrolled tumble. The astronauts fight off panic as they attempt to ascertain what happened. Eventually, Lovell discovers that the capsule is leaking its oxygen supply into space. At mission control, flight director Gene Kranz (Ed Harris) urges his staff to remain calm to find a solution to the problem.

- ☐ What evidence do you see that the astronauts and mission control staff are experiencing stress? What are the functional and dysfunctional outcomes of their stress?
- ☐ What behaviors and routines help the astronauts maintain their composure in the face of stress? What are possible sources of their resiliency?
- ☐ What role does Gene Kranz play – both interpersonally and symbolically – in appropriately handling the stress of this situation? In what ways can we become the voice of calm in a stressful organization? In our own lives?

### *Pushing Tin*

Nick Falzone is the best air traffic controller in the New York City facility, until Russell Bell becomes his coworker. Competition between the two affects Nick's marriage and job.

**Clips (0:00:00–0:07:35; 0:11:50–0:15:10).** At an air traffic control facility outside New York City, Nick Falzone (John Cusack) and his fellow controllers guide stunningly large numbers of planes daily. At the end of their shift, they go to breakfast together. On another day, while elementary school children are touring the facility, a midair collision is narrowly avoided.

### Discussion Questions

- ☐ What kinds of stressors do the air traffic controllers face each day? Which strategies do they use to deal with their stress? How do they try to develop resiliency?
- ☐ How do the air traffic controllers react when it looks as though a collision will occur? How do they react after the collision has been prevented? What do their reactions indicate about how they try to manage job stress?
- ☐ Some individuals seem to thrive on stress. Do you believe these individuals have highly evolved coping mechanisms that enable them to deal well with stress, or that they are setting themselves up for trouble? Elaborate.



## ***Multiplicity***

A construction manager has himself cloned in hopes of having more time for nonwork pursuits.

**Clip (00:02:00–00:17:00).** Construction manager Doug Kinney (Michael Keaton) works so much that he has little time to spend with his wife Laura (Andie MacDowell) and children and no time for leisure activities. Due to a mistake by one of his subcontractors, he has to work even longer hours. When his wife tells him she wants to return to selling real estate (her job before having their first child), he snaps at her. At a construction site the following day, he goes berserk when a water pipe breaks. When a geneticist offers to give him more time by cloning him, he accepts.

### **Discussion Questions**

- ☐ What types of stressors does Doug have?
- ☐ How do Doug's job demands affect his wife and children? To what extent does Laura Kinney help her husband deal with his stressors? To what extent does she increase his stress level?
- ☐ What strategies does Doug use to cope with stress? How effective are they?
- ☐ Why does Doug believe that cloning will solve his problems? What would you recommend, other than cloning, to Doug to give him more time?
- ☐ To what extent will having more time give Doug a more balanced life? How do people's conscious, deliberate choices affect their stress levels?

### **FOR FURTHER READING**

- ☐ DeFrank, Richard S., & Ivancevich, John M. (1998). Stress on the job: An executive update. *Academy of Management Executive*, 12(3), 55–66.  
The authors review sources of workplace stress and underscore the serious problems stress creates for individuals (compromised physical and psychological health and work behavior) and their organizations (including legal liability). They urge managers to cultivate employees' skills for coping with stress and to minimize stressful working conditions.
- ☐ Friedman, Steward D., Christensen, Perry, & DeGroot, Jessica. (1988, November/December). Work and life: The end of the zero-sum game. *Harvard Business Review*, 46(6), 119–129.  
The authors discuss the three tenets of managers who view work and life as complementary rather than competing. These managers: (1) urge each of their subordinates to clarify and reveal to them his or her own priorities, so that together they can establish a means for fulfilling both the company's and the individual's goals; (2) cultivate and demonstrate an interest in their employees' lives outside work, and encourage employees to derive enrichment and meaning from their personal lives; and (3) strive to design novel work arrangements that allow employees to achieve organizational and nonwork goals.

- ❑ Ramsey, Robert D. (2000, June). 15 time wasters for supervisors. *Supervision*, 1(6), 10–12.

The author explains why managers should avoid the following 15 activities that would otherwise squander their time: (1) working without a plan, (2) working with unclear objectives, (3) having an excess of goals, (4) oversupervising, (5) worrying, (6) socializing excessively, (7) insisting on perfection for even trivial tasks, (8) procrastinating, (9) honey-coating negative feedback so much that it becomes too distorted to be useful, (10) having to correct errors, (11) engaging in unnecessary paperwork, (12) waiting, (13) attending useless meetings, (14) allowing oneself and subordinates to leave work before the end of the workday, and (15) becoming angry.