Chapter 3 NOTES: Managing Stress

Section 3.1 What causes Stress?

I. What is Stress? Stress is the response of your body and mind to being challenged or threatened.
   - Forms of Stress:
     - Distress: negative stress that can cause too much pressure or trauma
     - Eustress: positive stress that helps you accomplish your goals

II. The Many Causes of Stress
   - Stressors are events or situations that cause stress. Four general types of stressors are:
     - Major Life Changes (failing a class, breakups, serious illness)
     - Catastrophes (natural disasters, violence)
     - Everyday Problems (disagreements, pressure to succeed, hassles, missing your bus)
     - Environmental Problems (overcrowding, noise pollution)

Section 3.2 How Stress Affects your body

I. Stages of Stress
   1. Alarm Stage: attention narrows as you focus on the stressor
      - Adrenaline, the “emergency hormone”, may be secreted at this time
      - Fight-or-flight response
   2. Resistance Stage: If you are unable to successfully respond to the stressor during the alarm stage your body adapts to the continued presence of the stress.
      - If being in this stage for too long, you may become tired, irritable, and less able to handle any additional stress
   3. Exhaustion Stage: Your body can no longer keep up with the demands. Your physical and emotional health is reduced.

II. Recognizing Signs of Stress
   - Warning signs of stress include:
     - Physical Changes: headaches, muscle tensions, shortness of breath, skin rash, pounding heart
     - Emotional Changes: irritable, angry, nervous, crying
     - Changes in Thinking: unable to concentrate, negative thinking, excessive worry
     - Behavioral Changes: not eating, overeating, sleep problems, being reckless, withdrawing from relationships
III. **Stress and Illness** – stress can trigger certain illnesses, reduce the body’s ability to fight illness, and make some diseases harder to control.

- Stomach ache
- Asthma
- Headaches
- Lowered resistance to disease
- Heart Disease

### Section 3.3 Stress and Individuals

I. **Stress and Personality**
   - **Optimism** (positive thinking) vs. **Pessimism** (negative thinking)
   - **Perfectionists** – people who set goals that are often impossible to attain and are never satisfied with what they have accomplished.

II. **Resilience** – the ability to recover or bounce back from extreme or prolonged stress

### Section 3.4 Coping with Stress

I. **Take Control of Stress:**
   a. Time Management – poor time management is one of the biggest contributors to stress
   b. Mental Rehearsal – practice an event in your head without actually doing it
      - Athletes going over a play to prepare for a game
      - To prepare for a difficult conversation

II. **Reduce Tension** – things you can do to reduce stress
   a. **Physical Activity**
      - Bicycling, taking a walk, playing the drums, etc.
   b. **Relaxation**
      - Reading, listen to music, deep breathing
   c. **Biofeedback** : people learn to control one or more body functions by monitoring their body responses with the help of a trained professional and technology.
      - Manage tension and heart rate

III. **Change Your Thinking**
   a. Avoid Negative Thinking - it only increases a person’s stress level making it almost impossible to succeed
   b. Find humor in a situation

IV. **Build Resilience**

- Build a Support System by developing caring relationships
- Help somebody
- Put Things into Perspective and look beyond a difficult situation to a time when things will be better