

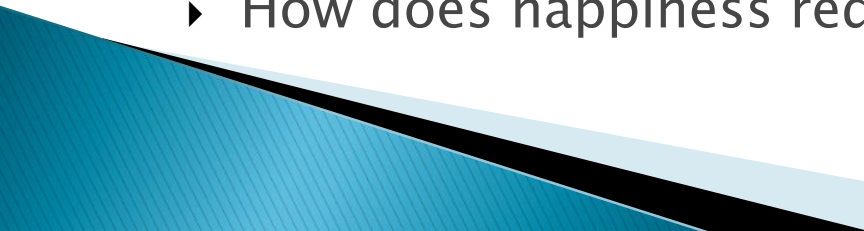
Stress, Lifestyle, and Health



Study Guide Questions

- ▶ How is stress defined and what are stressors?
- ▶ What does the *cognitive appraisal approach* to stress propose, and what is the difference between *primary* and *secondary appraisal*?
- ▶ How does “good” stress (*eustress*) differ from “bad” stress (*distress*)?
- ▶ How are the following types of stressors described: *catastrophes, life events, hassles*?
- ▶ How are the following four common sources of stress that occur in everyday life explained: *pressure, uncontrollability, frustration, conflict*?
- ▶ How are the three main types of conflict described: *approach–approach; avoidance–avoidance; approach–avoidance*?
- ▶ What is “health psychology”?

Study Guide Questions cont.

- ▶ How are the *autonomic nervous system*, the *General Adaptation Syndrome*, and the *fight-or-flight response* related to stress and each other?
 - ▶ What are psychophysiological disorders?
 - ▶ What is the relationship between stress and the *immune system*, and what is *immunosuppression*?
 - ▶ What is *psychoneuroimmunology*?
 - ▶ What is the relationship between stress and personality—how do the four personality types differ (Type A, Type B, Type C, and Type D)?
 - ▶ What is meant by catharsis and hardiness?
 - ▶ What are the two ways of coping with stress (coping strategies) and how are they described?
 - ▶ What is the relationship between stress and social support?
 - ▶ How are the following techniques used to relieve stress: *exercise, meditation, biofeedback*?
 - ▶ How does happiness reduce the effects of stress?
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Stress



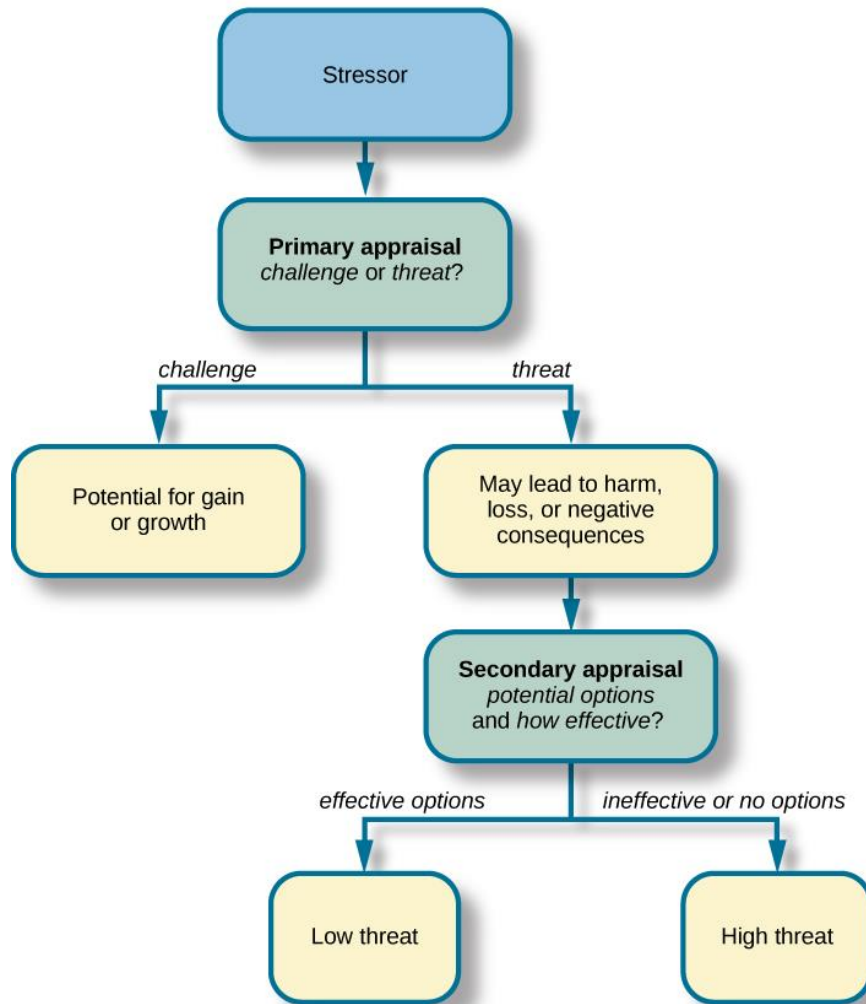
- ▶ **Stress** – the term used to describe the perception of and response to events that are appraised as threatening, overwhelming, or challenging.
- ▶ **Stressors** – events that are demanding or threatening

Cognitive Factors of Stress

- ▶ Cognitive appraisal approach – states that how people think about a stressor determines
 - Primary appraisal – judgement about the degree of potential harm or threat to well-being that a stressor may involve
 - Secondary appraisal – involves estimating the resources available to the person for coping with the stressor as well as how effective those options may be



Figure



- ▶ When encountering a stressor, a person judges its potential threat (primary appraisal) and then determines if effective options are available to manage the situation. Stress is likely to result if a stressor is perceived as extremely threatening or threatening with few or no effective coping options available.

Good vs. Bad Stress

- ▶ **Eustress** – the effect of **positive** events, or the optimal amount of stress that people need to **promote health and well-being**
 - associated with positive feelings, optimal health, and performance
 - *Examples: marriage, graduation, having a baby, getting a new job*
- ▶ **Distress** – the effect of unpleasant and undesirable stressors
 - *Examples: losing a job, death of a loved one, failing an exam, suffering an illness*

Types of Stressors

- ▶ **Catastrophe** – an unpredictable, large-scale event that creates a tremendous need to adapt and adjust as well as overwhelming feelings of threat (also referred to as a “traumatic event”)
 - ▶ *E.g., war, natural disasters (hurricanes, tornados, earthquakes, floods), terrorist attack, forest fire,*



Types of Stressors cont.

- ▶ **Major Life Events** – cause stress by requiring adjustment (can be positive or negative)
 - *E.g., job loss, marriage, divorce, new baby, relocation*
- ▶ **Hassles** – the daily annoyances of everyday life
 - *E.g., bills, traffic, busy schedules*



Four Common Sources of Stress

- ▶ **Pressure** – the psychological experience produced by *urgent demands* or *expectations* for a person's behavior that come from an outside source
 - *E.g., Tariq's boss has given him a specific deadline to complete a major project. He knows if he doesn't get it done in time, he may lose his job.*
- ▶ **Uncontrollability** – the *degree of control* that the person has over a particular event or situation-- The less control a person has, the greater the degree of stress.
 - *E.g., Stuck in a traffic jam with the next exit 5 miles away, Noel suddenly realizes that she may be late for work for the first time in her career.*

Four Common Sources of Stress cont.

- ▶ **Frustration** – the psychological experience produced by the *blocking of a desired goal* or fulfillment of a perceived need
 - *E.g., Just as Danielle sat down to register online for her classes, her computer shut down.*
- ▶ **Conflict** – psychological experience of *being pulled toward or drawn to two or more desires or goals*, only one of which may be attained
 - *E.g., Navid is torn between going to his brother's graduation or going to his best friend's wedding; both are occurring during the same weekend but in different states.*



Types of Conflict



- ▶ **Approach–approach conflict** – conflict occurring when a person must choose between two desirable goals
 - *Acceptance to two good colleges. Both options are desirable.*
- ▶ **Avoidance–avoidance conflict** – conflict occurring when a person must choose between two undesirable goals
 - *Toothache or dentist? Neither option is desirable.*
- ▶ **Approach–avoidance conflict** – conflict occurring when a person must choose or not choose **one** goal that has both positive and negative aspects.
 - *Good job in Alaska—don't want to move to Alaska. Job is desirable, move to Alaska is not.*

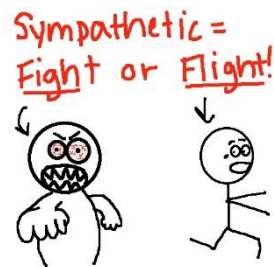
Health Psychology



- ▶ *A subfield of psychology devoted to understanding the importance of psychological influences on health, illness, and how people respond when they become ill –emerged as a discipline in the 1970s*
- ▶ Health psychologists:
 - Study the connection between health and illness.
 - Investigate why people make certain life choices and how those choices affect health.
 - Design and assess the effectiveness of interventions aimed at changing unhealthy lifestyles.
 - Identify groups of people especially at risk of experiencing negative health outcomes related to behavior and stress.

Bodily Reactions to Stress

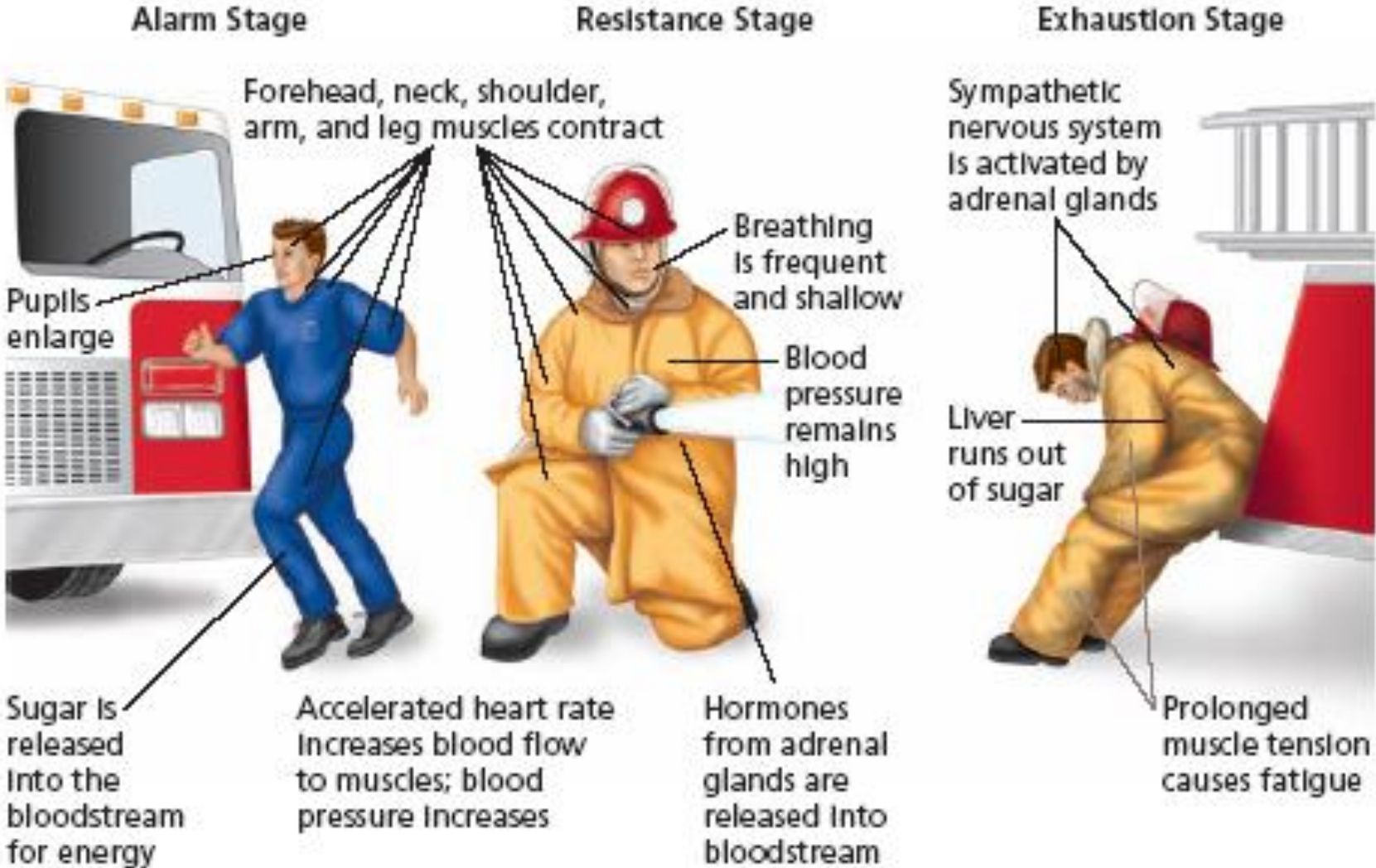
- ▶ Autonomic nervous system consists of:
 - Sympathetic system – responds to stressful events by mobilizing the body (“fight or flight”)—heart races, blood pressure rises, stomach flutters, mouth dries, muscles tense, pupils dilate, skin tingles, bladder relaxes, energy level increases, etc.
 - Fight-or-flight response occurs during the alarm stage of the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS).
 - Parasympathetic system – restores the body to normal functioning after the stress has ceased.



The General Adaptation Syndrome

- ▶ Hans Selye (1936)—introduced **General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)**
 - **alarm reaction/stage**—initial exposure to stressor occurs; resources to combat stress are activated; resistance to stressors peak; “fight-or-flight” response is triggered; physiological reactions surface producing energy
 - **resistance stage**—resistance to stressors are leveled off with prolonged exposure to stressor—the initial shock of the stressor has worn off and the body has adapted to the stressor; the body remains “on alert”
 - **exhaustion stage**—resistance to stressors is used up—person is no longer able to adapt to stressor; physical wear takes toll on the body

Bodily reactions to stress



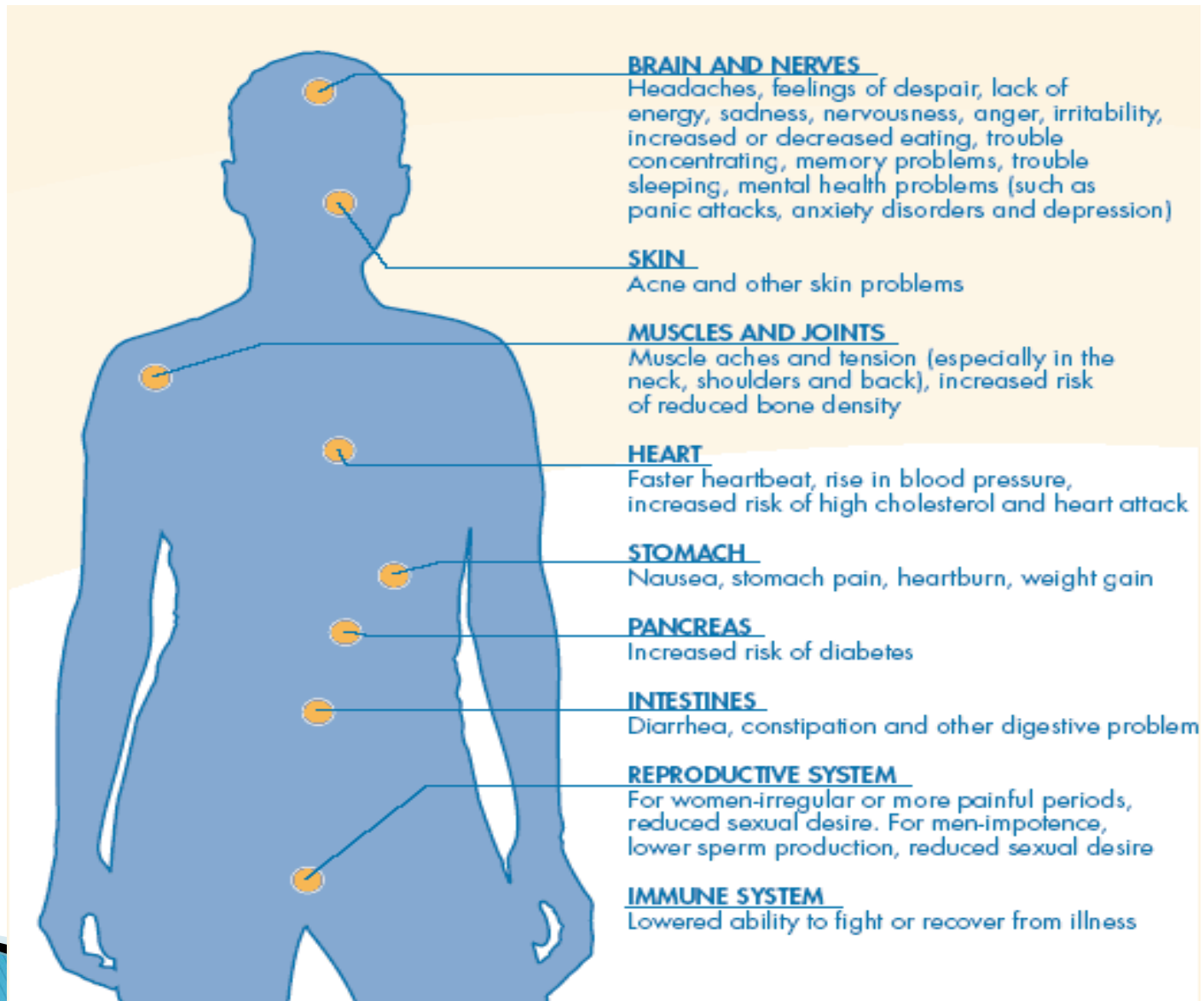
Psychophysiological Disorders

- ▶ *Physical disorders or diseases whose symptoms are brought about or worsened by stress and emotional factors*
- ▶ Types of psychophysiological disorders include:
 - Cardiovascular disorders (*e.g., hypertension, coronary heart disease*)
 - Gastrointestinal disorders (*e.g., irritable bowel syndrome*)
 - Respiratory disorders (*e.g., asthma, allergy*)
 - Musculoskeletal disorders (*e.g., low back pain, tension headaches—migraines*)
 - Skin disorders (*e.g., acne, eczema, psoriasis*)

Stress, the Immune System, and Illness

- ▶ The immune system consists of a variety of structures, cells, and mechanisms that serve to protect the body from invading toxins and microorganisms that can harm or damage the body's tissues and organs.
 - Immunosuppression – a decrease in the effectiveness of the immune system
 - People with immunosuppression become susceptible to any number of infections, illness, and diseases (e.g., Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome—AIDS).
- ▶ Psychoneuroimmunology – the study of the effects of psychological factors such as stress, emotions, thoughts, and behavior on the immune system and immune functioning
 - The field evolved in part from the discovery that there is a connection between the central nervous system and the immune system.

The Effects of Stress on the Body



Stress and Personality Types/Patterns

Type A (competitive, hard-driven/hard-working, impatient, hostile, aggressive, confrontational, angry)—related to heart disease

Type B (relaxed, easygoing) behavior patterns—can be achievers, but are also known to procrastinate

Type C (patient and detail-oriented, but emotionally repressed, introverted, and lack assertiveness; known to suppress own desires)—passiveness can often lead to stress and/or depression

Type D (distressed, pessimistic)—of all types, most vulnerable to depression

- ▶ Catharsis (release of anger)
 - *Catharsis hypothesis*—release of anger reduces subsequent anger
- ▶ Hardiness (buffer against stress)—personality style that is characterized by:
 - 1) a sense of commitment
 - 2) a sense of control
 - 3) a perception of problems as challenges (not threats)—thrives on stress, but lacks the hostility and anger of the Type A personality

Coping With Stress

- ▶ Coping strategies – actions that people can take to master, tolerate, reduce, or minimize the effects of stressors
 - Problem-focused coping– coping strategies that try to eliminate the source of a stress or reduce its impact through direct actions
 - *E.g., You can't pay your tuition, so you get a student loan.*
 - Emotion-focused coping – coping strategies that change the impact of a stressor by changing the emotional reaction to the stressor—can involve the following:
 - Avoiding the problem
 - Rationalizing what has happened
 - Denying the occurrence of the problem
 - Laughing the problem off
 - Hoping the problem will just “go away”
 - *E.g., You fear failing an exam, so you don't go to class.*

Stress and Social Support

- ▶ *Social Support* – the soothing impact of friends, family, and acquaintances
 - Social support has been linked with:
 - Increased longevity.
 - Improved survival rates following illness/disease.
 - Reduced risk of cardiovascular disease, the common cold, and blood pressure.
 - Less distress.
 - Boosted immune system.

Stress Reduction Techniques



- ▶ Used to teach individuals how to appraise stressful events, how to develop skills for coping with stress, and how to put these skills into use in their everyday lives.

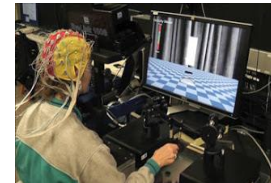
- ▶ Types of Stress Management Techniques



- *Exercise*

- *Meditation and Relaxation Response*

- ***Transcendental meditation*** (use of a *mantra*—repetition of a calming phrase or word used to cleanse the mind for new experiences)
 - ***Mindfulness meditation*** (maintaining a “floating” state of consciousness that encourages individuals to focus on whatever comes to mind at that particular moment—used to increase concentration)



- *Biofeedback*

- The process in which individuals’ muscular or visceral activities are monitored by instruments; then, individuals learn to voluntarily control their physical activities as information from the instruments is fed back to them

Coping and Positive Emotion



- ▶ Positive emotions can also be experienced during stressful situations.
- ▶ Positive emotion and social support are reciprocally linked (they influence each other).
- ▶ Positive emotions, such as happiness, appear to improve our ability to cope with the physical effects of stressors.
 - *Optimists* – people who expect positive outcomes – tend to experience less stress and fewer health problems
 - *Pessimists* – people who expect negative outcomes – tend to experience more stress and more health problems