Stress Hardiness

Preview Points

- Stress may harm human health. It may also affect people’s ability to deal with the responsibilities in their lives; it has been shown to lessen people’s performance and efficiency.
- A number of life elements may contribute to stress hardiness: exercise, social support, control, challenge and commitment (Benson & Stuart, 1992, p. 178).

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“Stress-hardy individuals see stress as a challenge rather than a threat; feel in control of their life situation; and have a sense of commitment rather than alienation from work, home, and family,” suggest Benson and Stuart. Such individuals have a “zest for life.”

Approaching life positively may help people be involved, challenged and empowered, instead of feeling like life is overwhelming. In a sense, one aspect of stress is perceptual and attitudinal.

EXERCISE: Having regular exercise allows the body to defuse tensions.

SOCIAL SUPPORT: Social support provides a healthy way to handle life challenges. It helps a person approach life with a broader range of perspectives.

CONTROL: This refers to a person’s ability to manage his or her own life—in terms of goals, scheduling, and other choices.

CHALLENGE: A challenging life is an engaging and interesting one.

COMMITMENT: This refers to a person’s ability to invest themselves into their work lives, friendships, and family in a balanced and effective way.

Concluding Points
• Building stress hardiness or resiliency may enable people to face life’s challenges with a greater sense of health, calm and management skills.
• Five factors may enable stress hardiness: exercise, social support, control, challenge and commitment.

References