

# Lesson 3.10



## Stress Management

### Lesson at a Glance

#### Aim

To inform UN peacekeeping personnel about the threat stress poses to their health, and the techniques to apply in stressful situations.

#### Relevance

As peacekeeping personnel, you work in **high-risk areas and crisis operations**. You need to be prepared to do your **work without negative effects**.

Awareness is low on the negative effects of stress. Negative effects include:

- A decline in alertness, performance and judgment decline
- Operational mistakes which can result in loss of life
- Harm to health of personnel

This lesson explains how stress management is important for both the physical and psychosocial well-being of personnel. You can try to have a professional attitude, which means respecting your own limits and those of your colleagues. It is important to have a **work-life balance**.

#### Learning Outcomes

Learners will:

- Identify the warning signs and symptoms of negative stress
- List sources of stress
- Explain the different types of stress
- Describe stress management techniques and coping methods

Lesson Map

**Recommended Lesson Duration: 45 minutes total**

1-2 minutes per slide

Use short option learning activity

<b>The Lesson</b>	Pages 3-28
Starting the Lesson	Intro Slides
<b>Learning Activity 3.10.1: Job-Related Stress</b>	
Definition of Stress	Slide 1
Useful versus Harmful Stress – Positive versus Negative Stress	Slides 2-3
Sources of Stress	Slide 4
Types of Stress	Slides 5-9
<b>Learning Activity 3.10.2: Personal Stress Profile</b>	
Coping with Stress	Slides 10-13
Summary	Page 29
<b>Learning Evaluation</b>	Pages 30-33
<b>OPTIONAL: Additional Learning Activities</b>	See Resource
<b>Learning Activity 3.10.3: Can You Relax?</b>	

## The Lesson



### Starting the Lesson

Introduce the following (using the Introductory Slides):

- Lesson Topic
- Relevance
- Learning Outcomes
- Lesson Overview

## Learning Activity

3.10.1

### Job-Related Stress

#### METHOD

Group work, discussion

#### PURPOSE

To consider the importance of work/life balance for peacekeeping personnel

#### TIME

10 minutes

- Group work: 5-7 minutes
- Discussion: 3 minutes

#### INSTRUCTIONS

- Consider your work as peacekeeping personnel
- Why are you at risk of stress due to your job?
- List other high-risk jobs and draw comparisons
- Discuss the importance of self-care

#### RESOURCES

- Learning Activity instructions

**Learning Activity**
3.10.1

Job-related Stress

**Instructions:**

- Consider your work as peacekeeping personnel
- Why are you at risk of stress due to your job?
- List other high-risk jobs and draw comparisons
- Discuss the importance of self-care

**Time:** 10 minutes

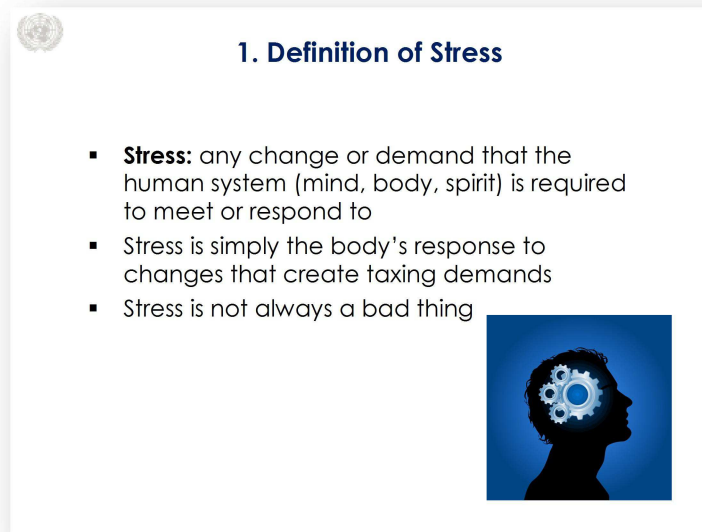
- Group work: 5-7 minutes
- Discussion: 3 minutes

## Definition of Stress




Ask participants if they remember what “psychosocial” means from the previous lesson. Recall and move on.

### Slide 1

A presentation slide with a white background and a blue header. The title '1. Definition of Stress' is centered at the top. Below the title is a bulleted list of three points. To the right of the list is a small square image showing a silhouette of a human head in profile against a blue background, with several interlocking gears inside the head.

**1. Definition of Stress**

- **Stress:** any change or demand that the human system (mind, body, spirit) is required to meet or respond to
- Stress is simply the body's response to changes that create taxing demands
- Stress is not always a bad thing



**Key Message:** Stress is the body's response to changes that create taxing demands. Stress can be good or bad.

**Stress: any change or demand the human system (mind, body and spirit) is required to meet or respond to.**

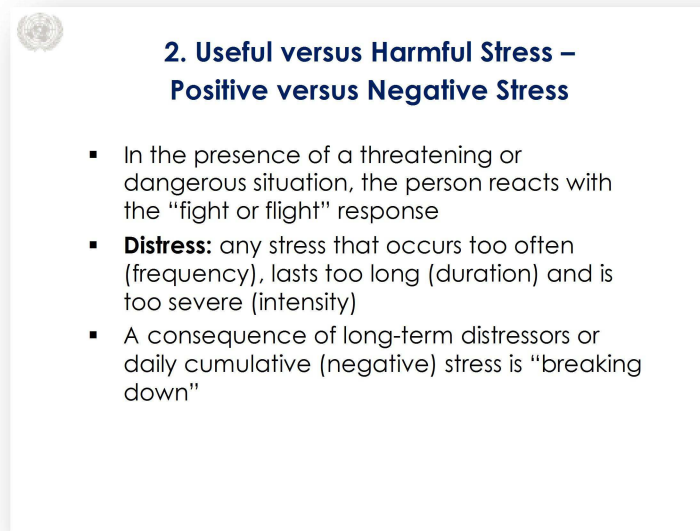
Normal stressors keep life going: breathing, blood circulation, walking, eating, talking and playing.

These are part of life for everyone. You would die without these stressors and other physical demands on your human system.

In daily life, we often use the term "stress" to describe negative situations. People think all stress is bad, but this is not true.

## Useful versus Harmful Stress – Positive versus Negative Stress

### Slide 2

A white rectangular slide with a small circular logo in the top-left corner. The slide contains a title and a bulleted list. The title is "2. Useful versus Harmful Stress – Positive versus Negative Stress". The list has three items: 1. In the presence of a threatening or dangerous situation, the person reacts with the "fight or flight" response. 2. **Distress:** any stress that occurs too often (frequency), lasts too long (duration) and is too severe (intensity). 3. A consequence of long-term distressors or daily cumulative (negative) stress is "breaking down".

**2. Useful versus Harmful Stress – Positive versus Negative Stress**

- In the presence of a threatening or dangerous situation, the person reacts with the "fight or flight" response
- **Distress:** any stress that occurs too often (frequency), lasts too long (duration) and is too severe (intensity)
- A consequence of long-term distressors or daily cumulative (negative) stress is "breaking down"

**Key Message:** Stress can be positive or negative. Life presents both. Positive stress is useful. Negative stress is harmful.

Stress becomes a problem and distress when it:

- Occurs too often - frequency
- Lasts too long - duration
- Is too severe - intensity

**Distress:** Any stress that occurs too often (frequency), lasts too long (duration) and is too severe (intensity). In other words, negative stress.

A basic life-protecting reaction helps explain the different effects of positive and negative stress.

### **Fight or Flight Response**

In 1936 Dr. Hans Selye made an important discovery: when threatened, the body always reacts with the same general adaptive mechanism fight or flight. Sometimes the fight or flight response is called fight or flee.

He identified three phases in the fight or flight response:

- Alarm phase
- Adaptation phase
- Exhaustion phase

**The alarm phase:**

- **In the presence of threats and danger, a person reacts with the "fight or flight" response. This reaction spikes our adrenaline and prepares us to run or to fight.**
- If we respond physically, the stress-produced fear, anger or hostility lessens or dissipates. Running, fighting, even responding with verbal aggression have the same effect.
- The "fight or flight" response is a primitive physical protective reaction. Physical responses to today's threats are often not possible or fitting.

**The adaptation phase:**

- When stressors continue without resolution, the alarm stimulus is lessened but not lost. The person enters the adaptation phase.
- When a person feels a survival threat, the whole being funnels resources to help: biochemical, physiological, psychological and spiritual changes happen to help a person cope. However, adaptation or adjustment to a persisting situation are not solutions.

**The exhaustion phase:**

- Long-term stressors or "cumulative stress" lead to the person showing typical signs of breakdown. Symptoms of distress involve physical, mental and behavioural conditions.

Slide 3

**2. Useful versus Harmful Stress –  
Positive versus Negative Stress**

Common Symptoms of Negative Stress		
Physical	Psychological	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fatigue</li> <li>▪ Back pain</li> <li>▪ Headache</li> <li>▪ Ulcer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Memory loss</li> <li>▪ Poor concentration</li> <li>▪ Decrease in esteem</li> <li>▪ Depression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Verbal outburst</li> <li>▪ Increased smoking</li> <li>▪ Increased alcohol use</li> <li>▪ Eating disorders</li> </ul>

**Key Message:** Some common symptoms and warning signs of negative stress or distress include:

- **Physical symptoms:** fatigue, back pain, headache, Ulcer
- **Psychological symptoms:** memory loss, poor concentration, decrease in esteem, depression
- **Behavioural symptoms:** verbal outburst, increased smoking, increased alcohol use, eating disorders

**Positive and Negative Stress**

Dr. Lazarus built on Dr. Selye’s work. In 1974 he suggested that there is a difference between positive stress or eustress, and negative stress or distress.

Positive stress, has the following characteristics:

- Motivates, focuses energy
- Is short-term
- Seems manageable – we can cope
- Feels exciting
- Improves performance

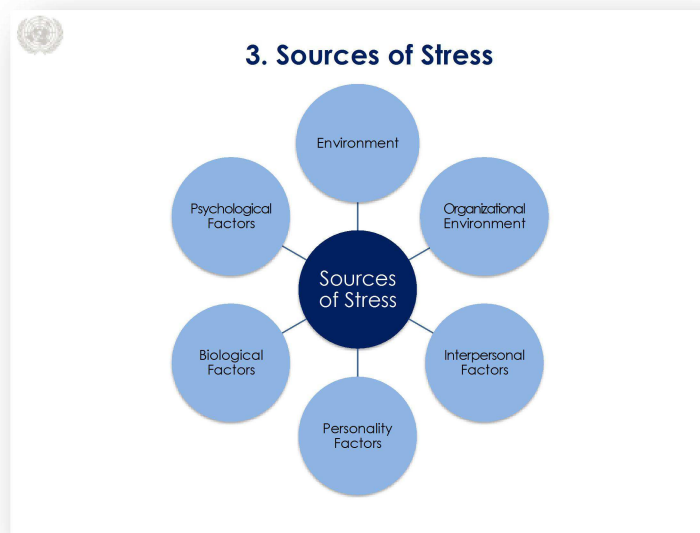


In contrast, negative stress or distress, has the following characteristics:

- Causes anxiety or concern
- Is short-term or long-term
- Does not seem manageable – we do not feel confident to cope
- Feels unpleasant
- Decreases performance
- Can lead to mental and physical problems

## Sources of Stress

### Slide 4



**Key Message:** Having stress is not bad. In small quantities stress is good. What is bad for people is experiencing prolonged stress.

Stress is a part of life. People handle it differently.

The best thing you can do to prevent stress overload and health consequences is know your stress symptoms and warning signs. When you recognize the symptoms of stress, you can get to the source. Sources of stress are also called “stressors”.

Different people react differently to the same experience. This makes it difficult to say definitely that certain stressors cause positive and negative stress. Some stressors are experienced by most people as positive or negative, most of the time.

**Sources of stress fall under several categories:**

- Physical environment
- Organizational environment
- Interpersonal factors
- Personality factors
- Biological factors
- Psychological factors

**Physical environment**

Environmental stress may result from:

- Climate
- Remote location
- Shortage of shelter and resources
- Dangerous conditions - militarized settings, crime and hazardous political climates

Environmental stress also results from bias and discrimination linking to:

- Culture
- Diversity
- Age
- Sex and gender

**Deployment stress:** The UN requires peacekeeping personnel to serve away from their families for a period of time.

Deployment stress may result from the physical and emotional demands of deployment.

Both separation and reunion place extra demands on individuals and families.

**Culture shock:** Peacekeeping personnel deploy into new cultural environments – of the host country and the mission.

Overall symptoms of culture shock include:

- Anxiety
- Homesickness
- Helplessness
- Boredom
- Depression
- Fatigue

- Confusion
- Self-doubt
- Feelings of inadequacy
- Unexplained fits of weeping
- Paranoia
- Physical ailments and psychosomatic illnesses

### **Organizational environment**

Some organizations develop an environment that causes stress for the work force. Contributing influences are:

- Hierarchy
- Bureaucracy
- Management style
- Allocation of resources
- An assignment

### **Causes of job stress include:**

- Lack of control
- Increased responsibility
- Low job and performance satisfaction
- Confusion about work roles
- Poor communication
- Lack of support
- Poor working conditions
- Exposure to traumatic and critical incidents on-the-job

**Trauma or critical incident** refers to an event outside the range of normal experience. The event is:

- Sudden and unexpected
- Disrupts one's sense of control
- Involves the perception of a life threat
- May include physical or emotional loss

### **Types of critical incidents include:**

- Natural disasters
- Multiple-casualty accidents
- Sexual or other assault
- Death of a child
- Hostage-taking

- Suicide
- Shocking death of family member or close friend
- Duty-related death of co-worker
- War-related civilian deaths
- Bombing of buildings, mining of roads
- Attacks on vehicles and convoys
- Armed attacks and robberies
- Direct or indirect intimidation and threats

Any person can be involved accidentally in a critical incident. People in high-risk occupations involving emergency and disaster situations, have an increased risk of exposure. They include:

- Fire-fighters
- Emergency health-care workers
- Police officers
- Search and rescue personnel
- Disaster relief and humanitarian aid workers
- UN peacekeeping personnel

### **Interpersonal factors**

Interpersonal stress may rise from:

- Staff conflicts
- Abrasive or unskilled supervision
- Incompetent or ill colleagues
- Dissatisfied receivers of your service
- Family problems
- Unhealthy relationships with others

Sources of interpersonal stress at isolated postings may be:

- Forced intimacy
- Lack of social and recreational choices

Problems at home contributing to stress include:

- Financial problems
- Strained family relationships
- New marriage
- Broken marriage
- Break up with girlfriends, boyfriends
- Family illnesses

- Children's education
- Death of a spouse, close relative or friend

### **Personality factors**

Perceptions of the world and general disposition are important factors in what we view as stressful and how we manage stress.

Many people who choose to work for the UN bring with them qualities of idealism and altruism. We set high personal standards, focus on results and expect to make a difference with our efforts.

These very qualities increase vulnerability to stress. In particular, vulnerability is increased when needs are overwhelming, resources are limited and assistance is frustrated. We may identify closely with success or failure of our work.

### **Biological factors**

Internal biological factors can address or affect your stress level. Biological sources of stress may include physical factors:

- Degree of fitness
- Illness or condition
- Allergy
- Injury
- Trauma
- Fatigue and exhaustion

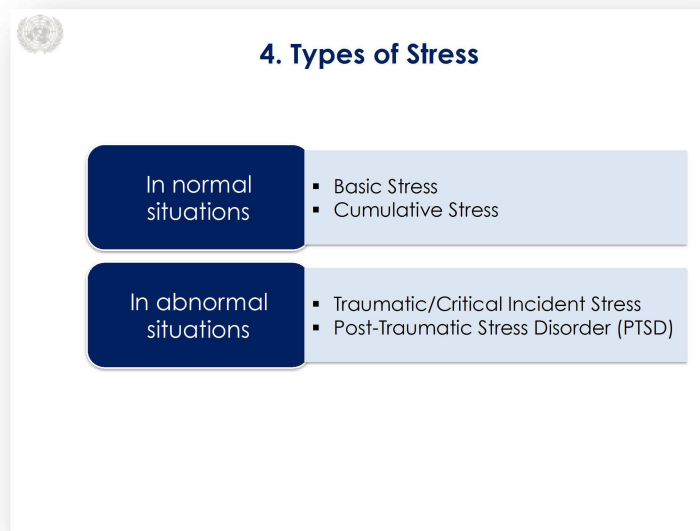
### **Psychological factors**

Sources of psychological stress are:

- Previous work-related or personal experiences
- Threats of physical harm
- Traumatic experiences past and present
- Attacks on self-esteem
- Lack of self-confidence
- Feelings of insecurity

## Types of Stress

### Slide 5



**Key Message:** The UN recognizes distinctions between four types of stress:

- General or basic stress
- Cumulative stress
- Traumatic stress or critical incident stress
- Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

**General or Basic Stress:** everyone copes with this, day and night. This form of stress usually resolves within a day or two.

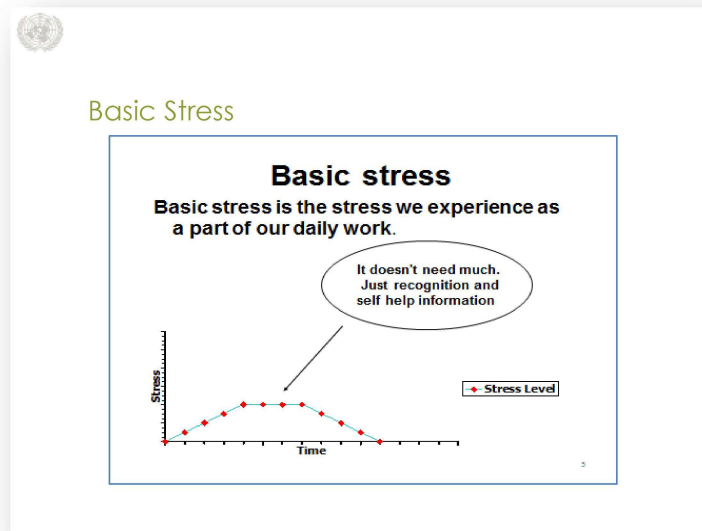
**Cumulative stress:** prolonged stress, which builds up after time and can lead to adverse mental and physical effects.

**Traumatic Stress or Critical Incident Stress:** Critical Incidents are abnormal events that produce a normal reaction of considerable psychological distress.

**Post-Traumatic Stress disorder (PTSD):** PTSD results from unresolved Critical Incident Stress. It is severe distress produced only by severe psychological traumatization. PTSD:

- Makes lasting changes in a person's life and work
- Needs professional assistance
- Can only be diagnosed and treated by a specialist

Slide 6

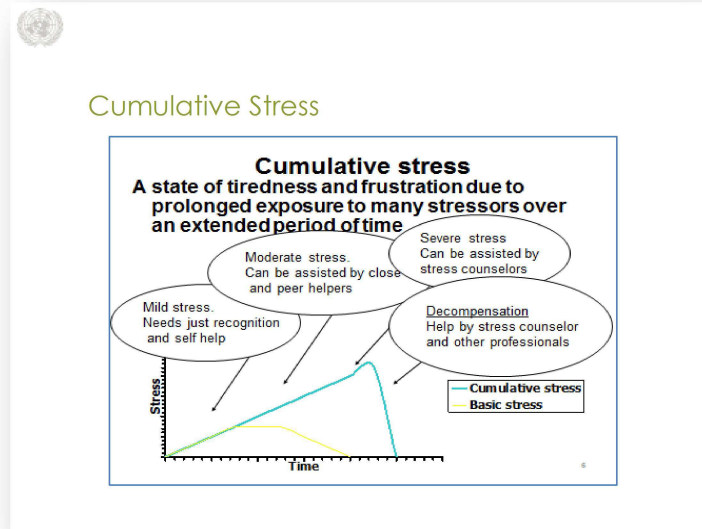


**Key Message:** Stress is part of our daily lives and important for our motivation. Day-to-day stress occurs as you manage competing demands of personal maintenance, transport and workload.

The feeling of being stressed usually comes from isolated events and changes.

- Everybody experiences it
- Related to normal conditions of life, “engine” of our lives
- Equips us to face challenges, meet obligations, cope with daily life
- Basis of our human survival mechanism
- Can be positive
- Can be negative
- Most people deal with it daily and recover

Slide 7



**Key Message:** Most people suffer from cumulative stress, which results from a build-up of stress over time. Some issues are large, with long duration. Other small stressors happen as part of regular life.

Daily repeated frustration that can lead to cumulative stress are:

- **Housing:** lack of privacy or comfort, noise, shortage of water, cold, heat
- **Travel:** risks, threats, roadblocks
- **Food:** shortages, unfamiliarity, lack of variety
- **Immobility, lack of activity**
- **Colleagues**

Cumulative stress first leads to unproductive hyperactivity, then to physical and emotional exhaustion and finally to burn-out. Cumulative stress is:

- Accumulated, unresolved general stress
- Takes time to develop
- A destructive pathway of stress
- Produces negative changes in:
  - Mental and physical health
  - Performance
  - Relationships
  - Personality

Learn to deal with cumulative stress before burnout.



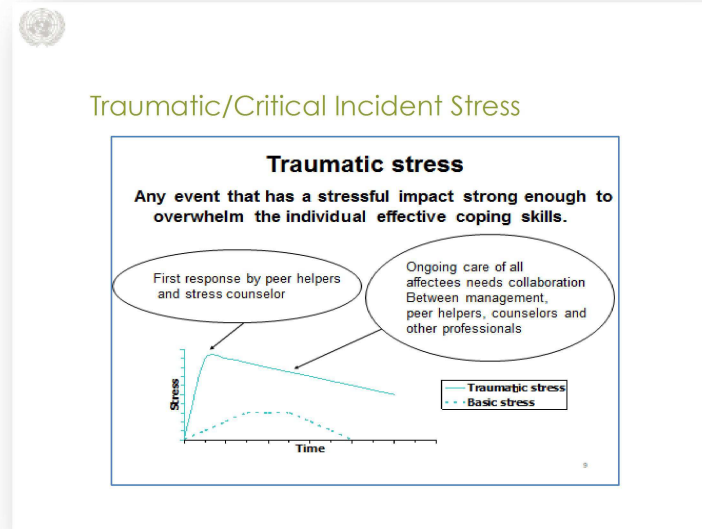
### **Signs of cumulative stress**

Pay attention to these signs in yourself, colleagues and partners. Use your knowledge to shape your responses when colleagues or partners show these signs. Do not take stress behaviour personally. Reactions may occur earlier in those who have come directly from other similar assignments. Reactions multiply with unmanaged stress.

Typical cumulative stress reactions include:

- Physical complaints, headaches
- Sleep disturbance
- Negativism, cynicism
- Feeling pressured, overwhelmed
- Loss of sense of humour
- Difficulty concentrating
- Feeling indispensable, obsessions
- Irritability, blaming others
- Unwillingness to take leave
- Increased alcohol consumption and/or substance abuse
- Disillusionment
- Disregard for security, risky behaviour

## Slide 8



**Key Message:** Traumatic or critical incident stress is a normal reaction to an abnormal situation. Critical incident stress is:

- An event outside the range of normal experience
- Sudden and unexpected
- Disrupts one's sense of control
- Involves perception of a threat to life
- May include physical or emotional loss

Reactions may be physical, emotional or cognitive. Reactions may also develop over time.

**Immediate reactions are:**

- **Physical:** nausea, muscle tremors, sweating, dizziness, chills, rapid heart rate, hyperventilation, high blood pressure
- **Emotional:** anxiety, anger, fear, irritability, guilt, grief, hopelessness
- **Cognitive:** confusion, inability to decide, impaired thinking, memory loss

**Delayed reactions are:**

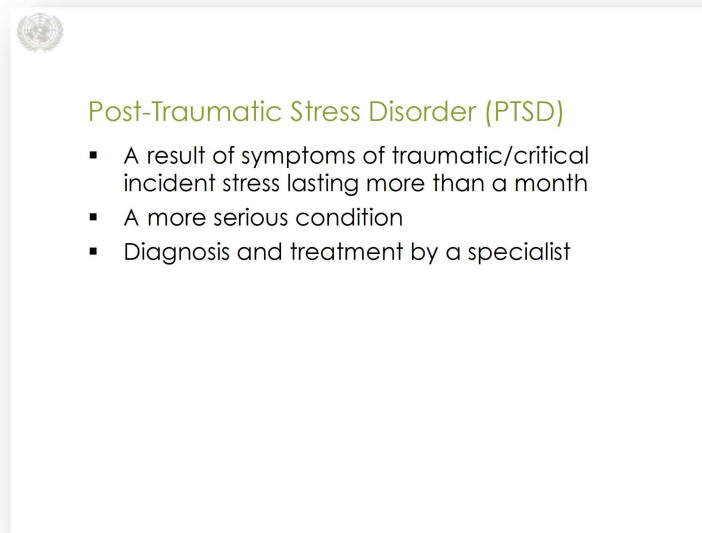
- **Physical:** fatigue, startle response, substance abuse, sleep difficulties, nightmares, restlessness
- **Emotional:** feeling abandoned, resentful, alienated, withdrawn, numb, depressed
- **Cognitive:** decreased attention span, poor concentration, memory problems, flashbacks

The severity of an individual's reactions to a critical incident depends on:

- **Factors related to the incident:** suddenness, intensity, duration, available social support
- **Factors related to the person:** past experience, personal loss, perception of threat, personal coping abilities

Untreated effects of critical incident stress may lead to PTSD.

### Slide 9



**Key Message:** If symptoms of critical incident stress last more than a month, they may lead to PTSD. This condition is more serious. Psychological stress is complicated. PTSD is similar to a physical wound that will not heal naturally.

For PTSD diagnosis, these factors must all be present:

- Trauma
- Persistent reliving of the trauma - memories, nightmares, flashbacks, intense emotional reactions to trigger events
- A tendency to avoid any thought, emotion or activity that reminds one of the traumatic event
- Marked hyperactivity, exaggerated startle reaction, quick temper and sleep disorders, especially when falling asleep
- At least one month of persisting symptoms

A specialist must diagnose and treat PTSD.

**Learning Activity****3.10.2****Personal Stress Profile****METHOD**

Individual exercise

**PURPOSE**

For each participant to create an individual stress response profile, deepening understanding of stress management and its relevance

**TIME**

15 minutes

- Introduction: 2 minutes
- Individual work: 12 minutes
- Close: 1 minute

**INSTRUCTIONS**

- What are the sources of stress in your life?
- What symptoms of negative stress do you experience?
- List negative ways you deal with stress
- List positive ways to manage stress

**RESOURCES**

- Learning Activity instructions
- Activity material

The screenshot shows a document titled "Learning Activity" with the identifier "3.10.2" in the top right corner. Below the title is the subtitle "Personal Stress Profile". The "Instructions" section contains three bullet points: "What are the sources of stress in your life?", "What symptoms of negative stress do you experience?", and "List negative ways you deal with stress". The "Time" section lists "15 minutes" total, with "Intro and close: 3 minutes" and "Individual work: 12 minutes".

## Coping with Stress

### Slide 10

**5. Coping with Stress**

**ABC Strategy**

<b>A</b> = Awareness	Important to recognize the source of negative stress
<b>B</b> = Balance	Know yourself and your limits to manage stress effectively
<b>C</b> = Control	Managing stress is all about taking control of your life

**Key Message:** Stress is inherent to field duty. You are responsible for managing your stress. The ABC Strategy is one way to plan how you will manage your stress.

It is important to realize that stress will be present in various forms throughout your assignment. To manage stress, it is important to learn your sources of stress. When you know major sources of stress, develop a strategy to avoid them.

#### **A = Awareness**

- **Key is recognizing sources of negative stress for you.** This first step is practical. It is not an admission of weakness or inability to cope.
- What causes you stress? How do you react?
- Learn your major stressors – before they occur.
- Learn to recognize problems as they occur.

#### **B = Balance**

- There is a fine line between positive and negative stress. **Knowing yourself and your limits may be the most important way to manage stress effectively.**
- How much can you cope with? When does stress become negative for you?
- Manage to re-balance before stress becomes negative.

## C = Control

- Stress can be created by you.
- Work to keep situations in perspective.
- What can you change in your life to better manage stress?
- The realization that you are in **control of your life** is the foundation of stress management.

## Slide 11



**Key Message:** Managing stress is all about taking control. For effective stress management:

- Change your thinking
- Change your behavior
- Change your lifestyle

**Stress management** involves different activities and positive attitudes that combat negative effects of cumulative stress. Many of the steps you take to keep your body healthy also relieve stress.

### Change your thinking

Nobody can create stress in your mind. You are responsible.

Helpful techniques are:

- Re-framing
- Positive thinking
- Accepting creative challenges

**Mental resistance:** Here are some ways to increase your mental resistance to stress:

- Review your attitude – how you view life events. Do you become angry when caught in traffic? Upset when it rains? Adjust your expectations.
- Control what you can, accept what you cannot.
- Keep your sense of humour.
- Take courses, read books – challenge your mind.
- Vary your daily activities. Often just having something different to do will lower stress levels.
- Analyze your reactions to stress. Pay attention to what triggers your negative stress. Every person is different.
- Recognize that lack of control over a situation can cause significant stress. Work on adjusting your expectations.

### **Change your behaviour**

You must:

- Be assertive not aggressive
- Organize yourself
- Practice venting or expressing strong emotions in positive ways
- Use your sense of humour

**Diversion and distraction:** Engage in healthy pleasures. These diversions will help you restore yourself and manage stress at the same time.

### **Managing anger:**

- Three steps to success are: relaxation, positive self-talk, assertiveness
- Remind yourself “What do I have to do?”
- Take a surge of anger as a signal: “I am slightly angry, time to relax now”
- Keep the goal in sight, not anger: “I need to do it, I can do it, I have done it before”

### **Managing tension:**

- Relax the mind by relaxing the body
- Relaxing by paying passive attention to verbal cues
- Experience an imaginary pleasant scene with all senses

### **Managing time:**

- Manage your time well
- Fix a routine
- Make lists:
  - What MUST be done
  - What SHOULD be done
  - What I would LIKE to do
- Learn to drop unimportant activities
- Say no or delegate
- Concentrate on true priorities

### **Change your lifestyle**

Live well.

The most effective stress management technique is building healthy activities into your daily routine. Healthy, fit people are resistant to all types of distress.

### **Diet:**

- Additional stress comes from skipping meals, forgetting to drink fluids, overindulging on sugar, fatty snacks, alcohol and coffee.
- Try to eat three well-balanced meals a day.
- Keep healthy snacks available at work.
- Eat well – different kinds of food, portioned right for your activities.
- Avoid caffeine, a stimulant.
- Lessen salt intake – use it in moderation.

### **Smoking and Alcohol:**

- Things we do for fun can have negative impact on our health, relationships or other areas of our lives – especially if taken to extremes.
- Alcohol, caffeine, sex and food are pleasures for most people. In excess, they can cause serious problems including addiction.
- Cigarette smoking is addictive and can cause cancer and death.
- Avoid excessive use of alcohol, caffeine and nicotine. Moderate consumption.

### **Exercise:**

- Exercise is key to strength and tension relief with many good effects:
  - Uses up excess energy released by the 'fight or flight' reaction
  - Improves blood circulation
  - Lowers blood pressure
  - Clears the mind of worrying thoughts



- Improves self-image
- Makes you feel better about yourself
- Physical and mental fitness go together. Your physical qualities of strength, flexibility and reliability translate to your mental attitudes as well.
- Exercise for endurance and strength at least three times a week.
- Some locations may present limited choices, but even 20 minutes of an activity will have benefits. You do not need a gym to exercise. Use stairs, walk around the compound, etc.

**Rest and Sleep:**

- Tiredness makes it hard to cope.
- Rest and sleep are good stress reducers. You awake refreshed after a night's sleep and have plenty of daytime energy. Get the sleep you need.
- Rest and sleep requirements vary among individuals. Few people can function with less than six hours of sleep a night. The relentless and urgent demands of providing assistance in certain locations can lead to fatigue and exhaustion of peacekeeping personnel.

**Work/Life Balance:**

- Balance your official and private life, at work and during away from the mission.
- You should not feel essential to the team 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**Leisure:**

- Plan your free time positively. Follow healthy interests.
- Each work site will have music lovers, game players and those who find solace in nature.
- Relaxation and healthy pleasures are individual choices to meet your needs for time out. This gives you a 'break' from stressors, provides an outlet for relief and provides social contact.

**Faith/Religion:**

- Know and practice your philosophical approach to life.

**Relaxation:**

- Relaxation lowers blood pressure, combats fatigue, promotes sleep, reduces pain, eases muscle tension and decreases mental worries.
- Learn the healing value of relaxation and meditation.
- When you have racing thoughts at work and you do not know what to do first, try focusing on your breathing.

- In some situations, concentrating on deep breathing may help manage acute pain. Deep breathing also has an important role in controlling panic.
- Other relaxation exercises will help you manage stress – muscle relaxation or yoga.

**Slide 12**



The slide features a small circular logo in the top left corner. The title 'Maladaptive Coping' is written in a green font. Below the title, there is a bulleted list with three items, each starting with a square bullet point.

**Maladaptive Coping**

- Occurs when normal coping mechanisms do not work or when stress is inappropriately dealt with
- Damaging to our health and welfare in the long run
- Substance abuse (drugs, self-prescribed medicine, alcohol, coffee) and behavioural modification (stress sex, overeating)


**Key Message:** Sometimes normal coping mechanisms do not work. People may ignore stress symptoms or not address them effectively. Maladaptive coping strategies result.

Maladaptive coping strategies help us instantly feel better and therefore may make us think that we are coping. In fact, such strategies damage health and welfare.

Examples of maladaptive coping strategies:


- **Substance abuse:** This includes taking a substance regularly. For example, drugs, self-prescribed medicine, alcohol and coffee. Certain substances can create addiction quickly. Dependence on a substance can also take time to develop.
- **Behavioural modification:** This involves comfort behaviours, such as stress sex and overeating.

## Slide 13



**Additional Help & Resources**

- Contact your staff counselor, medical service, UN examining physician and peer support personnel
- Discuss with a trusted friend and/or family member
- Managers should be aware
- Work as a team with your colleagues



**Key Message:** Trauma can overwhelm effective individual coping skills. You are not alone. Help is available.

Many of us need assistance to help get through difficult episodes in our lives. Ask for help, without fear.

**Accessing Help:**

- Call for help or support as soon as you feel you need it.
- As UN personnel, you have access to various mental health resources. Contact your staff counselor, medical service, UN examining doctor and peer support personnel for information and resources.

Your staff counselor will not undertake any action on your behalf without your agreement.

**Friends and Family:**

- If no trained individual is available, discuss your situation with a trusted friend. Discuss or write about the incident, the nightmares or troublesome thoughts.
- **Friends and family can:**
  - Listen carefully
  - Spend quality time offer help and a listening ear
  - Reassure that you are safe and normal
  - Help with routine tasks like cleaning and cooking to allow you some private time

- Empathize with and understand you

**Managers:**

- Managers need to be aware how stress affects subordinates and help with prevention.
- Encourage staff to talk to stress counselors, take rest and recreation, cut back work time.

**Colleagues:**

- In many ways, your health and welfare depend on:
  - Working as a team with your colleagues
  - Supporting each other – checking in
  - Keeping relationships positive
- Respecting your colleagues also means protecting your own health and safety so they will not have to face the stress of organizing your evacuation.

## Summary

### Sources of stress include:

- Physical environment
- Organizational environment
- Interpersonal factors
- Personality factors
- Biological factors
- Psychological factors

### The different types of stress are:

- **General stress:** everyone has this type of stress all the time – day and night. This form of stress usually resolves within a day or two.
- **Cumulative stress:** prolonged stress which builds up after time and can lead to adverse mental and/or physical consequences.
- **Traumatic stress or critical incident stress:** produces considerable psychological distress. It is a normal reaction to an abnormal event.
- **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder:** severe distress produced only by severe psychological traumatization. Can produce lasting changes in person's life and work. Produced by unresolved critical incident stress. Generally needs professional assistance.

### Symptoms of negative stress are:

- **Physical:** fatigue, back pain, headache, ulcer
- **Psychological:** memory loss, poor concentration, decrease in esteem, depression
- **Behavioural:** verbal outburst, increased smoking, increased alcohol use, eating disorders

### The ABC strategy for managing stress:

- **A = Awareness.** It is most important to recognize the source of negative stress.
- **B = Balance.** Knowing yourself and your limits may be the most important way to manage stress effectively.
- **C = Control.** Managing stress is all about taking control of your life.

## Evaluation

**Notes on Use:** An example of learning evaluation questions for this lesson may be found below.

There are different types of learning evaluation questions for the instructor to choose from (See Options). Types of learning evaluation questions are:

- 1) Narrative
- 2) Fill in the blank/sentence completion
- 3) True-False

Combine in different ways for pre-assessment and post-assessment. Each evaluation type covers different content. No sub-set covers all learning outcomes. Make sure you include learning evaluation questions for each learning outcome when you combine them.

Three main uses of evaluation questions are: a) informally ask the whole group, b) semi-formally assign to small groups or c) formally give to individuals for written responses.

Evaluation Questions for Lesson 3.10	
Questions	Answers
<b>Narrative</b> <i>Note: Frame narrative evaluations as questions, requests or directions</i>	
1. Long-term stressors and cumulative stress show common symptoms. Name some physical, mental and behavioural symptoms.	<b>1. Physical</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ fatigue, back pain, headache, ulcer</li> </ul> <b>2. Mental</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ memory loss, poor concentration, decrease in self-esteem, depression</li> </ul> <b>3. Behavioural</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ verbal outbursts, increased smoking, increased alcohol use, eating disorders</li> </ul>
2. The UN recognizes four types of stress. Name and describe them with examples.	<b>General, Basic Stress</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ normal</li> <li>▪ motor of our life</li> <li>▪ equips us to face challenges, meet obligations, cope with daily life</li> <li>▪ basis of human survival mechanism</li> <li>▪ can be positive or negative</li> <li>▪ most people deal with it and recover</li> <li>▪ biological responses to different</li> </ul>

	<p>demands (work, personal, politics)</p> <p><b>Cumulative Stress/distress = origin of disease</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ repeated stress –frequent, intense</li> <li>▪ prolonged stress, builds up over time</li> <li>▪ without resolution leads to distress</li> <li>▪ most people suffer from it – build-up of stress over time</li> <li>▪ some issues are large, duration long</li> <li>▪ other stressors: daily repeated frustrations that lead to cumulative stress:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- housing – lack of privacy or comfort, noise, shortage of water, cold, heat</li> <li>- travel – risks, threats, roadblocks, delays</li> <li>- food – shortages, unfamiliarity, lack of variety</li> <li>- immobility, lack of activity</li> <li>- colleagues – interpersonal stress</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ destructive – first unproductive hyperactivity, then physical and emotional exhaustion then burn-out</li> <li>▪ negative changes in:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mental, physical health</li> <li>- performance</li> <li>- relationships</li> <li>- personality</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ also biological responses to different demands (work, personal, politics)</li> </ul> <p>Both of the above are part of <u>normal situations</u> – all events, daily demands, self-care, challenges.</p> <p>In <u>abnormal situations</u> → terror, physical threat, two other types of stress develop.</p> <p><b>Traumatic Stress</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ immediate, normal reaction to a critical incident ("critical incident stress"), abnormal events</li> <li>▪ body and nervous system react – neurophysiological, psychological distress</li> </ul> <p><b>Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder</b></p>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ always abnormal</li> <li>▪ severe distress produced by severe psychological traumatization</li> <li>▪ lasting changes in a person's life</li> <li>▪ results from unresolved Critical Incident Stress</li> <li>▪ trauma, sustained</li> <li>▪ psychological reaction</li> </ul>
3. Explain the A-B-Cs of coping with stress.	<p><b>A – Awareness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ know your sources of negative stress</li> <li>▪ recognize the symptoms, your reactions</li> </ul> <p><b>B – Balance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ know yourself and your limits to manage stress effectively</li> <li>▪ know your balance point between positive and negative stress</li> <li>▪ train yourself to be aware of early warning that you've gone beyond those limits</li> </ul> <p><b>C – Control</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ take control of your life</li> <li>▪ “The realisation that you are in <b>control of your life</b> is the foundation of stress management.” No-one <i>makes</i> a person stress out – we do it to ourselves. And we can stop.</li> </ul>
<b>Fill in the Blanks</b>	
4. Distress is any stress that occurs _____, _____ and _____. These define distress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ occurs too often – frequency</li> <li>▪ lasts too long – duration</li> <li>▪ is too severe – intensity</li> </ul>
5. A _____ must diagnose and treat PTSD.	A specialist – not just a doctor or a medical professional, someone experienced with PTSD
6. _____ coping strategies make us feel instantly better, trick us into thinking we are coping when in fact, they damage health and welfare.	<p>Maladaptive</p> <p><b>Substance abuse</b> – drugs, alcohol, coffee</p> <p><b>Behaviours</b> – comfort sex, over-eating</p>
<b>True-False</b>	
7. Stress is always a bad thing that negatively affects people experienced it.	<p><b>False</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Stress can be good or bad.</li> <li>▪ Stress is any change or demand that</li> </ul>



	<p>requires a human system, person, to respond.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Normal stress keeps life moving – positive stress includes breathing, walking, blood circulating, eating, talking, playing.</li> <li>▪ Negative stress is harmful stress.</li> </ul>
<p>8. All types of stress a) impair our judgement of threat and risk, b) lower efficiency and c) lead to illness when not recognized and dealt with.</p>	<p><b>All true</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ timely dealing with stress is important</li> <li>▪ don't wait to have time – you have to make time</li> </ul>

## Commonly Asked Questions and Key Words

Key Words or phrases for this lesson:

Key Word or Phrase	Definition
<b>Stress</b>	<b>Stress:</b> any change or demand the human system (mind, body and spirit) is required to meet or respond to.
<b>Distress</b>	<b>Distress:</b> Any stress that occurs too often (frequency), lasts too long (duration) and is too severe (intensity).

Commonly asked questions from participants:

Possible Questions	Possible Responses
How can you avoid negative stress?	<p>Anyone can suffer negative stress, depending on a situation's frequency, intensity and duration.</p> <p>The better you understand stress, the better you can manage and control it.</p> <p>Different people find different things distressing. The degree of distress you experience is affected by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your perception of an event</li> <li>• The degree of threat you feel</li> <li>• The amount of control you have in the circumstances</li> </ul> <p>Some factors influence how distressful events affect you are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the person you are</li> <li>• your experience</li> <li>• education</li> <li>• skills</li> <li>• philosophy of life</li> <li>• age</li> <li>• sex</li> <li>• physical fitness</li> <li>• personal or self esteem</li> </ul> <p>All types of stress impair our judgement of threat and risk. They lower efficiency and lead to illness when not recognized and dealt with.</p> <p>Timely and effective dealing with stress is important. Waiting to have the time for stress management may lead to</p>

	<p>physical illness and decreased efficiency at work.</p> <p>You can manage and control the effects of stress. You can learn to manage excessive stress. The benefits make the work worthwhile.</p>
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## Reference Materials

Below are materials which are a) referenced in this lesson, and b) required reading for instructor preparations:

- [Charter of the United Nations, 1945](#)
- [United Nations Peacekeeping Operations Principles and Guidelines, also known as the Capstone Doctrine, 2008](#)
- [United Nations Field Security Handbook, January 2006](#)
- [United Nations Basic Security in the Field: Staff Safety, Health and Welfare \(ST/SGB/2003/19\), 9 December 2003](#)

## Additional Resources

### UN Information

The website for UN peacekeeping: <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/>

### UN Documents

UN documents can be found on: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/index.html> (Search by document symbol, e.g. A/63/100)

### DPKO and DFS Guidance

The repository for all official DPKO and DFS guidance is the Policy and Practice Database: <http://ppdb.un.org> (only accessible from the UN network). Official peacekeeping guidance documents are also accessible through the Peacekeeping Resource Hub: <http://research.un.org/en/peacekeeping-community>

Instructors are encouraged to check for the latest guidance.

### UN Films

UN films can be found on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/user/unitednations>

### Additional Information

Trainers should let participants know that in addition to the Mission-specific information received during this training, participants should also familiarize themselves with the Pre-deployment Information Package (PIP). The PIP provides information on the mission and the local context.

### **Additional Training Resources**

UN mandatory training includes Basic and Advanced Security in the Field (B/ASITF) online Course:

<https://dss.un.org>

The training can also be accessed on Inspira:

<http://inspira.un.org>

Where Peacekeeping Training Institutes do not have sufficient IT facilities, it is sufficient that eligible personnel are informed of their obligation to complete B/ASITF *upon arrival in the mission*.