

Chapter 14 Project

Purpose

The physical and emotional impacts of stress are real and meaningful. Both good and bad sources of stress contribute to physiological, emotional, and behavioral outcomes in individuals. **The purpose of this project is to help you better understand how and what environmental events trigger stress reactions, what those reactions look like and why, and how stress impacts health and well-being.**

Directions

Think about a time you have experienced stress. What triggered the stress reaction? What factors contributed to your appraisal of the situation, and what were the consequences of experiencing this stressor? How did you respond and cope? As you think about this stressor, it may be helpful to take notes about the experience, your reactions, and the outcomes.

After identifying your specific stressor and stress situation, think about what psychology says regarding stress reactions and the outcomes of stress. What would psychologists explore to better understand your stress situation? What would they make of your reactions and coping mechanisms?

Use the following guide to analyze your stress situation and reaction.

1. Briefly describe your stressor. What environmental event, hassle, or life challenge caused your stress?
2. Was your stressor chronic or acute? Briefly explain why or why not.
3. What was your initial appraisal of the stressor? In other words, did you appraise the stressor as a challenge and/or a threat? Briefly explain why or why not.
4. Briefly describe your reaction to the stressor as related to each of these categories:

Description	Did you experience distress? (yes or no)
physiological	
cognitive	
behavioral	

5. What, if any, individual factors or personal characteristics might have contributed to your initial reaction?
6. What was your secondary appraisal of the stressor? What, if anything, changed?
7. What, if any, type of social support did you receive when coping with this stress?
8. What, if any, additional social supports would have been helpful?
9. What coping mechanisms emerged for handling your stress? Complete the following chart to explore two of the coping mechanisms that emerged to deal with your stress.

Coping mechanism (briefly describe)	Is this mechanism problem-focused or emotional-focused? (briefly explain)	Did this coping mechanism address physiological, cognitive, and/or behavioral reactions to the stressor? (briefly explain)

10. What impacts, if any, did this stressor have on your health and/or lifestyle?
11. What would be the long-term physical and/or mental health consequences of this stressor if it were left unaddressed?

Materials

None required.

Checklist

- all questions answered
 - a stressor described
 - described as chronic or acute
 - initial appraisal
 - physiological, cognitive, and behavioral responses to the stressor
 - contributing factors
 - secondary appraisal
 - social support received
 - social support requested
 - two coping mechanisms described
 - problem-focused or emotional-focused
 - addressed physiological, cognitive, or behavioral responses
 - impact on health and/or lifestyle
 - long-term physical and/or mental health consequences