Contemporary Media Forum: Books, Films, and Audiocassettes

STRESS STUDIES, AND CREDIBILITY OF REPORTED TRAUMATIC HISTORIES IN REPRESSED MEMORY THERAPY


This is the second edition of a book that has become a classic in the field of stress research and intervention. A ten-year span separates the two editions: the editors believe "that the time is more than ripe for a new edition" to address the proliferation of scientific advances in stress studies. The volume consists of 39 chapters, an introduction, and prefaces to the second and first editions. Six of the original chapter have "stood the test of time" and so have been kept in their original form as classics. There are several new or updated chapters written by the original authors; for example, chapters 4, 11, 12, 15, 29, 34, 37, 38, and 39. Advances in the stress field required the introduction of new chapters that offer new information for the clinician and research scientists who are interested in the newer conceptualizations, methodologies, designs, and measurement approaches in the field.

The Handbook of Stress is a one-volume reference work. The Editors have carefully crafted this volume to reflect the new developments in life events scales, and to advance contemporary process-oriented research designs that are fast replacing those one-dimensional models presented in the previous volume.

Though the Handbook features the same major headings as the original edition, its content substantially makes it a new book that may be regarded as a companion to the original rather than a replacement volume.

Part I, Introduction, begins with a discussion of stress research by the Editors, Leo Goldberger and Schlomo Breznitz. Whether the reader is a
novice or an expert in stress theory, research, and intervention, the truly classic and excellent chapter on the history of the stress concept written by Hans Selye will prove to be an invaluable source of information.

Part II, Basic Psychological Processes, examines the complexities of psychological processes intrinsic to stress responses. Richard Lazarus's contribution, "Why Should We Think of Stress as a Subset of Emotion?" is a well written and beneficial contribution to the developing field of stress. Here he addresses the explosion and resurgence of interest in emotion, and presents a rationale for conceptualizing stress as an aspect of emotion, and not an isolated entity of disjointed conceptual lineage. The chapter by George Mandler, "Thought, Memory, and Learning: Effects of Emotional Stress," is an excellent one new and updated. Other contributions in this section were by Richard Lazarus and Irving Janis on stress as a subset of emotion, and on decision-making under stress.

Part III, or Basic Biological Processes by S. Ouellette, B. McEwen and S. Mendelson; M. Stein, A. Miller, E. Katrin, S. Dermit, and S. Wine, looks into the concept of hardiness, the effects of stress on neurochemistry and the morphology of the brain, the impact of stress on the immune system in health and illness, and contemporary psychophysiological assessment methods. Great emphasis has been placed on the biological sciences over the past decade, and this is reflected particularly in chapters seven and eight.

In Part IV, Measurement of Stress and Coping, Thomas Miller inaugurates the section with a discussion of the specific instruments widely used to measure a variety of stress responses—ary stress and hassles to extreme, catastrophic stress. Bruce Dohrenwend, Andrew Skodol, Leonard Derogatis, Rudolf Moos, and Aron Wolfe Siegman address such issues as measurement, paraverbal correlates of stress, and in the assessment of coping and defense in individuals suffering the adverse effects of stress.

Part V, Environmental and Social Sources, highlights the social contexts of stress, and shows the consequences of living in urban physical environments, sensory deprivation and overload, occupational stress, and the effects of workload on health. Moreover, adult stress and adaptation, and roles of challenge, change, and defeat, are discussed in a manner truly reflective of new emerging trends in the field. Contributors to the this section include Robert Holt, Leo Goldberger, Eric Craig, and Rena Repetti.

Part VI, Common Psychiatric and Somatic Conditions, provides vital information on such varied topics as Type A behavior and coronary heart disease, stress and depression; stress, ethyl alcohol, and alcoholism; and stress and psychosomatic disorders.

In Part VII, Extreme Stressors, Robert Pynoos and Associates, in their chapter, "Interpersonal Violence and Traumatic Stress Reactions," review