

**NPTEL**

**NPTEL ONLINE CERTIFICATION COURSE**

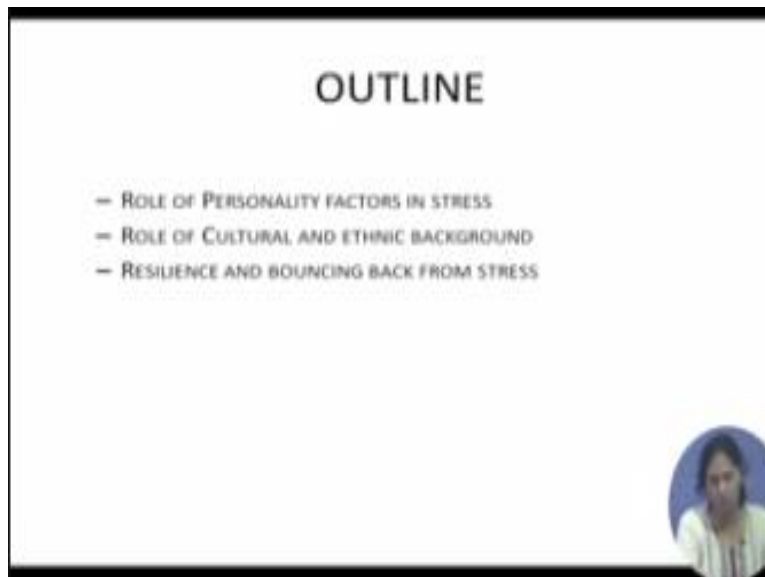
**Course Name  
Stress Management**

**by  
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**Lecture 04: Personality factors and stress**

Hello everybody welcome back to the fourth module of scientific foundations of stress today we shall discuss about

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The role of personality factors in stress the role of cultural and ethnic background in stress and resilience are bouncing back from stress.

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**What is personality?**

**Personality** refers to individual differences in characteristic patterns of thinking, feeling and behaving

These are developed through interaction with our environment over time - values, attitudes, personal memories, social relationships, habits, and skills

**How does it affect stress?**



So before starting about to talk about personality I will ask you this question what is personality we often talk about personality he has a very strong personality he is very weak and he does not display a personality so what actually are we talking of I will not go into the details but actually a personality is want something that differentiates two individuals from each other so basically personality refers to the individual differences and characteristic patterns of thinking feeling and behaving.

Now how these developed why is an individual different from another is basically because of their nurturance so nature and nurturance so there are some genetic components and of course there are environmental factors that bring about the changes in individual differences in behavior so it is dependent upon how what the person is the genetic makeup and how the person has been read overtime.

How the values attitudes and personal memories have been created how social relationships have been formed and how the individual has developed his habits and skills with exposure and modulation from others so people how the individual has picked up things from others and simulated things and how his so basically his culture and ethnic background also have an in on

the way he behaves and that brings about the individual differences so where he thinks and behaves now why is personality.

And important factor in stress so do you think that an individual will differ in his way he behaves in a stressful situation we have spoken about this earlier like when a teacher comes to class I had given this example when a teacher comes to class and tells everyone that none of you are good and nothing will happen to you in your lives your good for nothing so imagine this may infuriate one individual make another individual cry.

And the third individual may just not be bothered about what the teacher said so why are these people behaving differently so it is actually the way they are responding to this stimulus so some may be taking it as a stressor and some may be taking it as stimulus that they can deal with so on somebody else we think that well this is one stimulus that I do not need to pay attention to so I am just not bothered by it.

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**PERSONALITY AND STRESS**

Individual differences

- **cognitive reaction to a situation** - appraisal of the nature, importance and implications of the event, and by your ability to effectively manage or cope with the event
- **emotional responses to a situation** - determined by appraisal of situation and coping abilities

Ex: "I can handle this," – planning ways to handle the situation  
"This is terrible. I'm going crazy" - quitting, getting more anxious

So the individual differences in of an individuality of an personality actually make the person stressful when due to the way the person responds to the situation cognitively and emotionally so

how the individual is actually appraising the event we have spoken about this also that appraisal of the nature the importance and implications of the event and by how the individual feels that I can delivery it the emotional responses are actually determined by the ability of the individual capability of that individual to deal with the situation or his perception.

That he can deal with it there are many individuals who may not be able to have an actually faced that situation before say thing about somebody doing bungee jumping for the first time we might just feel that somebody may say or no I don't want to take that stress somebody else may say I haven't been there but well let me see and try and I think I have these people around me they've tied these loops around my feet so it is pretty secure so it is actually the way the individual is perceiving the stimulus that it becomes a stressor or it does not it's not dealt with as a stressor.

So it could be I can handle this and that will lead that individual to think about the way is to handle it so you are actually going a step further when you say that I can handle this situation and when you think say this is terrible and I am going crazy obviously use take a step backward you see the next step is something like oh god how can I run away so it's like quitting and also it increases more anxiety so just for a minute close your eyes and see in most of the situations do you actually tell yourself that I can handle this or do you actually start with oh god what will happen so now you know what the next step.

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**PERSONALITY AND STRESS**

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Ex: "I can handle this," - planning ways to handle the situation  
"This is terrible. I'm going crazy" - quitting, getting more anxious

It is so if you tell yourself that I can handle this your next step is definitely about planning so that's definitely more as a positive way adaptive way of dealing with stress but if it is that you keep thinking that oh god what will happen in most of the situations and you can actually feel the changes within the body then you need to focus more on this course on stress management.


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## Genetic makeup

influences health and behavior

- All human beings face stress when faced with a difficult or frustrating decision
- Some individuals may have a heightened level of arousal in the central nervous system, causing them to react more excitedly to events and adapt more slowly



As I was mentioning when I about personality that the genetic makeup of an individual is also very important in a effect on the on health and behavior so all human beings when they face stress they are they feel it as a frustrating situation but some individuals may have a heightened sense of arousal because of their genetic makeup and they may get more excited due to events and adapt more slowly whereas there may be some individuals who genetically they are endowed in such a way that they are more calm and they can adapt to a situation more comfortably than others.

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### Factors of Personality related to stress

- Locus of control
- Self esteem
- Personality Type
- Hardiness



Some of the other factors of personality that are related to stress one is locus of control second self-esteem third the different personality types and of course hardiness which is a positive factor that helps deal with stress.

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**Locus of control and stress**

Locus of control refers to the degree of control which individuals think they have over what happens to them

**Internal locus of control** . Persons who see themselves as having control over their environment  
less likely to be disrupted by stress

**External locus of control:** They do not believe they have control over their lives what happens to them determined by others or by outside events  
Stressors have much influence on their lives

Learned Helplessness (Seligman ,1975)

What is locus of control locus of control refers to the degree of control which individuals think they have over what happens to them so this is an overall idea or an overall perception that an individual has about himself and the environment so it could be divided into two that's internal locus of control and external locus of control an internal locus of control is actually where the person feels that he has a control over this situation so I can if there is some change that needs to be brought about I can bring about that change.

So if an external locus of control the individual feels that he has no control over the events over the happenings in his life and actually the outside events are controlling his life so it is something like an individual if he fails an exam an individual with an internal locus of control may think like this is where I went wrong so I need to correct this to do better while an external locus of control individual with an external locus of control may point out that the day was bad the teacher gave horrible questions and it was not his fault that they were this question paper was out of syllabus or something like that so generally it is seen that people with.

Internal locus of control are less likely to be disrupted by external stresses while people with external locus of control have more influence of the external stresses now there is another one



advantage of internal locus of control is that there will be more corrective measures from the individual while in external locus of control since the blame is on the environment outside me so I do not try to bring about changes within myself but the other disadvantages that the an individual with internal locus of control.

If he is going through chronic stress for a longtime he faces a lot of physiological problems the reason being that there is no how to burst of it so it is my fault and I need to bring about changes in my behavior may not always have if there is chronic stress here again when we are mentioning locus of control we must remember Seligman a theory of learned helplessness were even when the individual has and has a control over the environment.

When there is a chronic stress and the individual has external locus of control think he may start believing that the it is the external world that is bringing about the change so that is bringing about the helpers so I can do nothing to help myself.

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## Example...

This loss of control over the environment is exemplified by the many accounts of healthy natives who, having had 'bones' pointed at them by a witch doctor, have died within hours

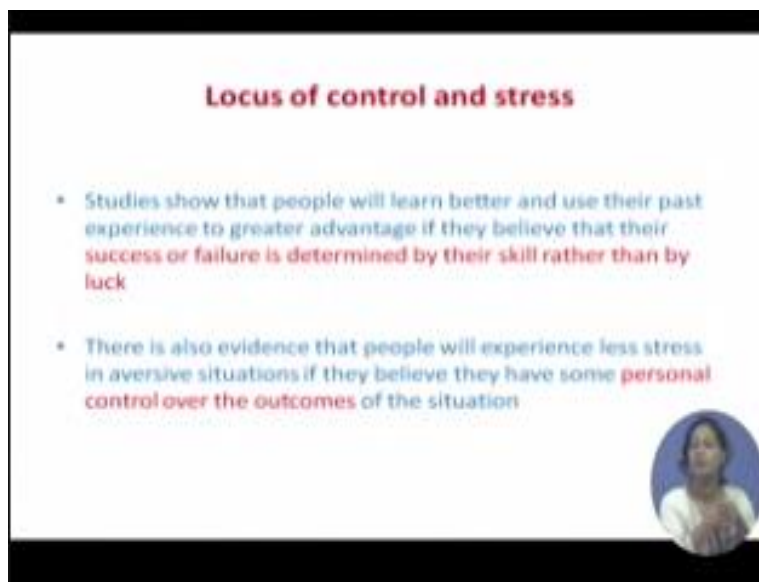
Common among Kurdaitcha – Australian Aborigines

Now this loss of control over the environment is exemplified by many accounts of natives who start behaving strangely if a witch doctor points a bone I don't know if you have heard of this of

kurdaitcha tribe of it is an Australian Aboriginines tribe who have this custom of you know if an individual if a witch doctor refer tribesman points a bone that is a specific type of bone of course it could be a human bone and animal bone and there are different techniques that are followed and if the bone is pointed as an individual at a person of the tribe strangely.


The in the person starts getting ill and weaker by with time and eventually dies now this is such a common feature even in the in today's Australia that many of the doctors and nurses paramedical staff are actually trained to treat this so this is a classic example of how the external locus of control is exemplified where it is the outside world that is bringing about changes within the body system.

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**Locus of control and stress**

- Studies show that people will learn better and use their past experience to greater advantage if they believe that their success or failure is determined by their skill rather than by luck
- There is also evidence that people will experience less stress in aversive situations if they believe they have some personal control over the outcomes of the situation



Studies have shown that people will learn better and use their past experience to greater advantage if they believe that their success or failure is determined by their skill rather than by luck so with experiences if they learn that it is that their skill that has brought about the change then that is a greater advantage for them and they learn back there is also evidence that people will experience less stress in aversive situations if they believe they have some personal control

over the outcomes of the situation that is if the people believe that they have an internal locus of control.

And they can actually control the situation at hand then they experience less stress we will come to this later when we talk about hardiness today okay where it is actually a positive factor where the sense of control brings about a positive feeling and brings about a change in the way an individual perceives a situation.

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**Self esteem and stress**

**Self esteem** - individual's self-perception of his/her abilities, skills, and overall qualities that guides and/or motivates specific cognitive processes and behaviors

Self-esteem has also been reported to predict stress in individuals with chronic disease

**Lazarus** - a potential stressor (e.g., external event) causes people to undergo two cognitive appraisal processes

- **primary appraisal** - focuses on the nature (positive, negative, or neutral) and respective level of threat an event presents
- **secondary appraisal** - determines one's available coping abilities and resources are sufficient to overcome the stressor

Lazarus and Folkman (1984)

Individuals with low self-esteem may lack the coping resources necessary to regulate environmental stressors

Steinhorst et al., 2005

Now coming to self-esteem and stress again what is self-esteem self esteem is the individual self perception of his or her abilities skills and overall qualities that guides his specific cognitive processes and behaviors so if I have a positive self-esteem I will not have a problem going and talking out talking to several strangers in a potty but think about a person who feels that I'm no good I don't know this and they are all there much better than way better than me and they are going to actually evaluate me appraise me so how will that person feel and how will that person behave.

So obviously a person who has a low self-esteem will have a problem dealing with situations public situations public interactions and he may actually bring about a stressor on himself just because he is thinking that others are evaluating him or assessing him now low self-esteem is seen to predict stress in individuals and chronic disease say Lazarus we talked about Lazarus here Lazarus and Folk Minhin 1984 they showed that a potential stressor that is an external event causes people to undergo two types of cognitive appraisal processes now cognitive appraisal process is how the individual is actually perceiving a situation.

So the primary appraisal and the secondary appraisal in primary appraisal what happens is the individual focuses on the nature and the level of threat while in the secondary appraisal the individual determines his coping abilities and resources to deal with that stress so if I see that a tiger is charging towards me I will not run away if I know if I understand so I first primary appraisal as I see a tiger are coming towards me that causes stress secondary appraisal is do I have my strengths or resources to deal with this tiger so if I am a good efficient hunter with a very good equipped with a gun then I will not be I will be stress but I will be alert but I will not run away I can face it.

But if I see that there is a tiger and I evaluate and realize that oh god I am not equipped to actually deal with the stressor then I will be more stressed now individuals with low self-esteem may also lack the coping reset resources necessary to regulate these environmental stresses so along with the appraisal system it is also important to understand what coping resources you have so neither men showed that individuals with low self-esteem actually feel that I do not have the coping resources even if they do so it would be something like never mind.

If I have a gun I am may just miss you know I am not confident that I will be able to use it when the time comes so that actually also brings about a reduced resource system so if an individual has low resources or rather if the individual does not use these resources then with time the less use of resources will also reduce the skills and likewise it will also bring about a lack of resources or a depletion of the resources and it further increases it is like a vicious cycle so it further increases the idea that I am no good.

So I am no good i will just give you an example i am no good nobody takes me in any game and or in any event I do not try I am no good I do not try nobody takes me and I do not I do not try again with tank nobody will take me all the more because I do not participate and that just confirms the fact that I am no good again so this is like a vicious cycle and this actually increases the stress in an environmental situation so like a social situation.

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**Self esteem and stress**

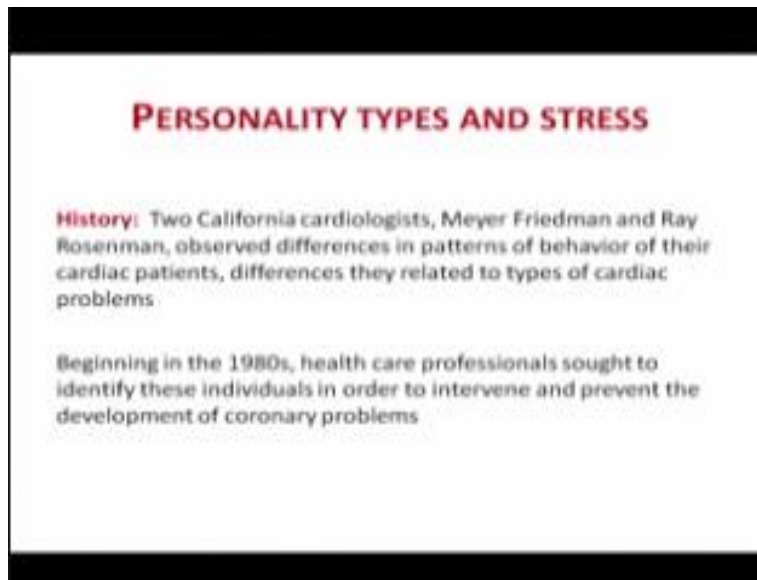
- **low self-esteem** - with negative life outcomes, including substance abuse, delinquency, unhappiness, depression, and worsened recovery after illnesses  
Leary and McCreath, 2005
- **High self esteem** - happiness and longevity  
Baumister et al., 2001

In studies of aging, a positive self-concept and internal locus of control predict successful aging, predicting independence, cognitive stability, and general health  
Baltes and Baltes 1990

Now these are some of the other scientific researches that were carried on with self-esteem and stress one that shows that was carried on by Donald and Leo in 2003 showed that low esteem individual low self-esteem individuals generally would have negative light life outcomes so they would get into alcoholism substance abuse depression and a worsened recovery from illnesses high self-esteem people on the other hand had more happy lives and had more longevity Vince there was a huge a very famous work that was carried out in the homes and it was seen that individuals who were more positive and who had more positive self-esteem lived more in a in a home where they felt.

Where they did not feel helpless the individuals aged ,aged people in homes who actually felt that there was no way they could deal with their lives and they were just put in a home very died very soon and this also affected their cognitive stability and general health.

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Now personality types coming to personality types and stress this is actually a very interesting part of today's discussion where we will see that different types of personality have a very important relationship with stress now to Californian cardiologists Friedman and Rosenman observed the different patterns of behavior in their cardiac patients and they were the first ones to point out that this was because of the different personality types so this brought.

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**Main Characteristics of Type A Behavior**

**A sense of time urgency and hostility**

1. **Time urgency** - This is the feeling that there is not enough time to do all the things that we believe should be done or that we wish to do.

It leads to the following symptoms:

- **Rapid movements**: The afflicted person usually walks, talks or eats fast.
- **Impatience**: There is a feeling that the rate at which most events take place is too slow. Frequently there is an attempt to hurry the speech of others by saying very quickly over and over again, "Uh huh, uh huh," or "Yes, yes, yes," or interrupting before people finish their sentences.
- **Anger** at waiting in line or waiting to be seated in a restaurant. Avoids repetitive tasks - making out bank deposit slips, writing checks, and washing and cleaning dishes.

About the idea of type A and type B personality today we shall study about type A Type B type C and type D personality type a people just think about this are you a type-a person do you have a sense of time urgency type a people generally feel that there is very less time to carry on with the work they cannot finish the work and there is lots to do and there is just very less time so it is not a particular work preside it is like this life is too short to carry on so many things and I have my goal and this and that and there are just too many things that need to be done and this is too less time overall.

So it naturally the also affects their behavioral patterns their thought processes so you will see that type a people are generally individuals who make rapid movements so they are rushing into things always into and have an impatience and when we are listening to conversations so it could be something like if you are talking to a type-individual halfway through he is rushing through the conversation with yes, yes okay, okay.

And so what more do you have to say so it is something like that there is so less time why are you taking up so much time of the for this conversation so they would always hardy you and

there is always an anguish that is present in these individuals they do not like doing repetitive tasks

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**Main Characteristics of Type A Behavior**

**A sense of time urgency and hostility**

**I. Time urgency:** This is the feeling that there is not enough time to do all the things that we believe should be done or that we wish to do.

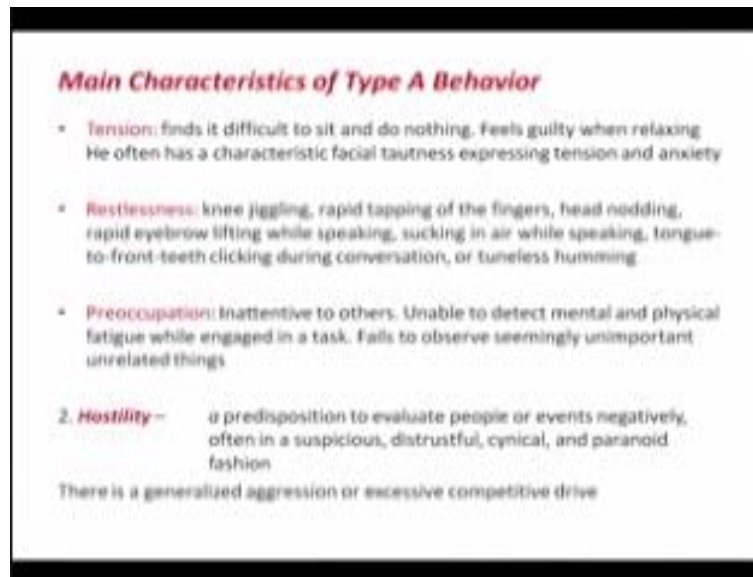
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- **Anguish** at waiting in line or waiting to be seated in a restaurant. Avoids repetitive tasks - making out bank deposit slips, writing checks, and washing and cleaning dishes

They will always avoid waiting in the line or waiting in queue to be seated to finish their bank work or when they have to be seated in restore our so these are some of the common features.



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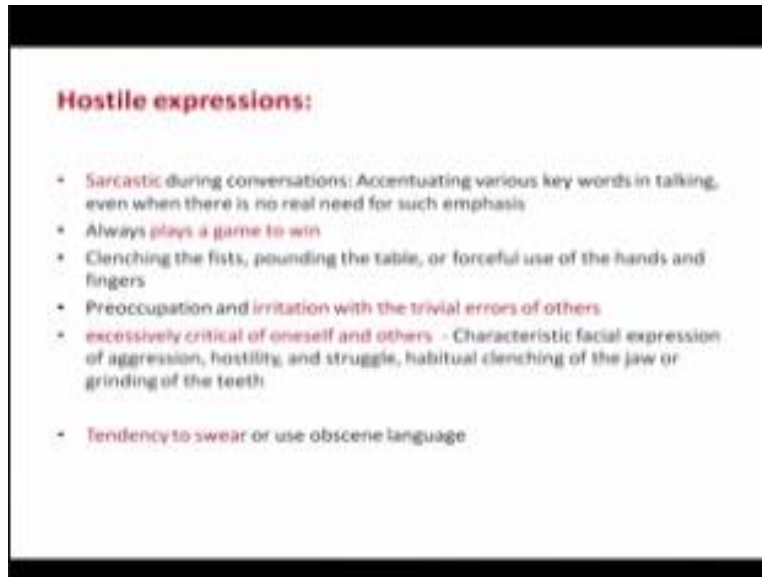


There is attention if they find nothing to do so if they are sitting down they cannot sit down and relax that is a very important identifier for a type-a personality so a type-a personality generally needs something to do they feeling restless if they are asked to sit down and relax and what do you what do you understand by restlessness so it is either tapping our fingers are shaking the knee or you know stretching their head and nodding so it is a timeless humming tuneless humming thinking doing multitasking so they are generally individuals.

Who have to keep themselves busy so if a person is multitasking if the person is dizzy very often you will see that such people are inattentive to others they do not focus their attention when others are talking to them and they do not they are not able to detect the fatigue and while engaged speed mental fatigue or beat a physical fatigue so they will carry on listlessly unless that work is finished so there are they also seem to they cannot absorb things that are not related to their work so they do not focus too much on a person a facial expressions or say some something that is irrelevant or unrelated to their work at hand very often.

Such people are also very hostile so they are suspicious distrustful cynical and paranoid about others primarily because there is a very high competitiveness.

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**Hostile expressions:**

- **Sarcastic** during conversations: Accentuating various key words in talking, even when there is no real need for such emphasis
- Always **plays a game to win**
- Clenching the fists, pounding the table, or forceful use of the hands and fingers
- Preoccupation and **irritation with the trivial errors of others**
- **excessively critical of oneself and others** - Characteristic facial expression of aggression, hostility, and struggle, habitual clenching of the jaw or grinding of the teeth
- **Tendency to swear** or use obscene language

So it may be something like somebody is getting beyond me he is going to get this and I want so there is a sense of severe competitiveness in a situation very often you find them very sarcastic during conversations pointing out to you know giving excessive stress to particular areas of conversation and they are playing a game to win.

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### Hostile expressions:

- **Sarcastic** during conversations: Accentuating various key words in talking, even when there is no real need for such emphasis
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- Preoccupation and irritation with the **trivial errors of others**
- **excessively critical of oneself and others** - Characteristic facial expression of aggression, hostility, and struggle, habitual clenching of the jaw or grinding of the teeth
- **Tendency to swear** or use obscene language

And there the preoccupation and irritation with trivial errors of others and excessively critical of oneself and others now type A personality need not always be negative it is definitely related to stress and type a people are very stressed out but it also makes them do a complete a lot of tasks at the constraint of feeling that stress on themselves.

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## Type B Personality Traits

So type B people very often land up with several insertions several chronic illnesses like high blood pressure and heart disease and they are generally very snappy and you table type b personality trait is just the opposite of type a the there are several advantages of type A personality it personality as in it is not related to stressful behavior but there is also what you see is procrastination.

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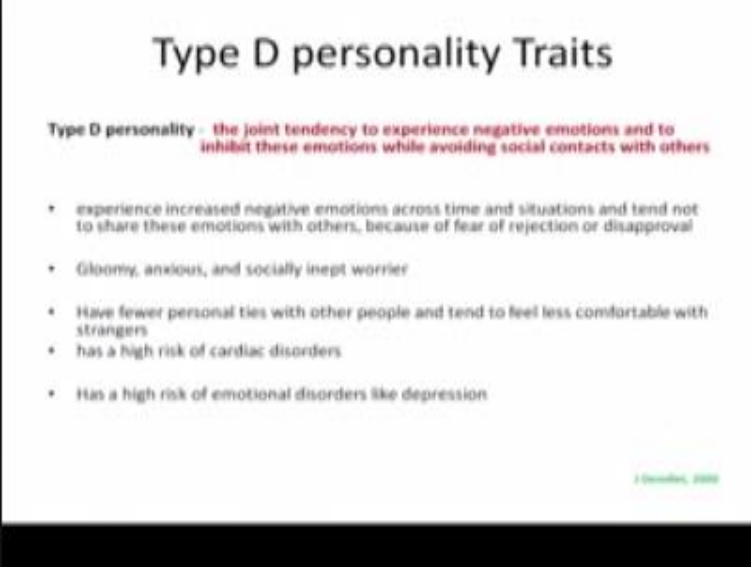
## Type C

- The Type C personality has difficulty expressing emotion and tends to suppress or inhibit emotions, particularly negative ones such as anger. Such individuals also display 'pathological niceness', conflict avoidance, high social desirability, over-compliance and over-patience
- While there's no clear-cut evidence that these personality characteristics can actually cause cancer, they influence the progression of cancer and, hence, the survival time of cancer patients

Weinman, 1995

Type C personality has difficulty expressing emotion and they generally suppress or inhibit emotions and like anger several times it has been said and whiner in 1995 has pointed out that type C personality is related to the immunological defenses being broken up in an individual and several he has related this to cancer patients.

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**Type D personality Traits**

**Type D personality - the joint tendency to experience negative emotions and to inhibit these emotions while avoiding social contacts with others**

- experience increased negative emotions across time and situations and tend not to share these emotions with others, because of fear of rejection or disapproval
- Gloomy, anxious, and socially inept worrier
- Have fewer personal ties with other people and tend to feel less comfortable with strangers
- has a high risk of cardiac disorders
- Has a high risk of emotional disorders like depression

2 October, 2020

Type D personality on the other hand has a joint tendency to experience negative emotions and to inhibit these emotions while avoiding social contacts with others so the D in this case actually transfer stands for distressed so the type D personality experiences negative emotions is gloomy anxious and a social warrior you will very often find cardiac disorders in timely personalities and as a high risk of emotional disorders like depression then all it pointed this type D personality type in 2000 when he was working when she was working with cardiac cases.

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**Hardiness – Protective factor**

In 1981 Illinois Bell Telephone (IBT) downsized from 26,000 to half

Dr. Salvatore R. Maddi and his team studied - 400 + supervisors, managers and executives at IBT (before and after downsizing till 1987)

**2/3 employees suffered significant performance, leadership and health declines**  
heart attacks, strokes, obesity, depression, substance abuse  
and poor performance reviews

**1/3 thrived - under same conditions**  
maintained health, happiness and performance and felt renewed  
enthusiasm



Now hardiness is a protective factor and I was talking about that this actually helps an individual to deal with stress this is very important Dr. Maddi and his team in 1981 showed he followed a group of workers who had been out of their job after downsizing in Illinois's bell company and he saw the two third employees suffered significant performance leadership and health declines while the one-third thrived under same conditions and they maintained health happiness and performance.

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**What made the two groups so different?**

Dr. Maddi found that those who thrived maintained  
**three key beliefs**  
that helped them  
turn adversity into an advantage

**COMMITMENT, CONTROL AND CHALLENGE ATTITUDES**

He found out that the reason was because of the three he believes that were different in these individuals and these key beliefs he termed as hardiness they were commitment control and the challenging attitude of individuals.



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**Hardiness – Protective factor**

Hardiness comprises the three Cs:

**COMMITMENT** – involves oneself in whatever one is doing  
to approach life with a sense of curiosity and meaningfulness  
The Commitment attitude led them to strive to be involved in ongoing events, rather than feeling isolated

**CONTROL** – related to Rotter's (1966) locus of control  
individual differences in people's beliefs regarding what controls events in their everyday lives  
The Control attitude led them to struggle and try to influence outcomes, rather than lapse into passivity and powerlessness


**CHALLENGE** – a tendency to believe that change is normal in life  
to anticipate change as an incentive to personal growth and development rather than a threat to security  
The Challenge attitude led them to view stress changes, whether positive or negative, as opportunities for new learning

So he pointed out that the commitment is involvement of oneself in whatever he is doing so he is to approach life with the sense of curiosity and meaningfulness we already spoken of control where the individual talks about fields that he has a control over whatever is going on in his life and a challenge to meet the adverse effects of life so he pointed out that if there was commitment and control.

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- **COMMITMENT AND CONTROL** - associated with good health
- **FEELING HELPLESS (NOT IN CONTROL)** and being **UNCOMMITTED**  
FIND THEMSELVES IN STRESSFUL CONDITIONS

**OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK TO LIFE - HEALTHIER**



It was associated with good health and feeling helpless that is not in control and being uncommitted individuals these individuals find themselves in stressful conditions so to sum it up an optimistic outlook of life actually makes you healthier.

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## **Cultural/ethnic background**

- competitiveness and striving for achievement are common goals in capitalist societies, but probably not in more traditional, communal ones

*Perry, 1996*

- the physical and mental health of African-Americans is worse than that of whites, especially in terms of the spread of AIDS and hypertension. While this is partly due to the direct negative effects of poverty, such as poor diet, low levels of education and poor medical care, there are many psychological and social stressors involved as well

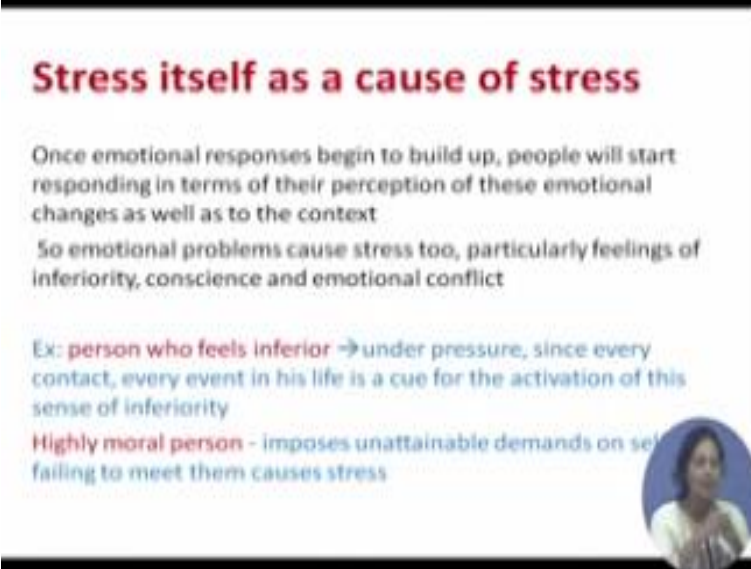
Although these are extremely difficult to measure, especially across cultures:  
... *there is little dispute that blacks in North America and Europe face a unique kind of stress - racial discrimination*

*Cooper et al., 1999*

So we actually see that a lot of cultural and ethnic backgrounds also have a relationship to stress so competitiveness and striving for achievement are some of the goals of some specific capitalist societies but not in traditional and communal ones so we are societies in oriental societies where the family acts as a protective factor in stress while in many of the modern societies the individual may feel more isolated.

And withdrawn and it has been seen that there are several cases of clinical depression where the individual has a lack of protective factors or the perception of a lack of protective factors also in several societies some of the political and social socio-political issues have been a serious reason for stress like in North America and Europe which fails racial discrimination in India we come across racial discrimination which has been a cause of stress for the diverse populations now I will just sum up today's session by saying that stress itself could also be a cause of stress.

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**Stress itself as a cause of stress**

Once emotional responses begin to build up, people will start responding in terms of their perception of these emotional changes as well as to the context

So emotional problems cause stress too, particularly feelings of inferiority, conscience and emotional conflict

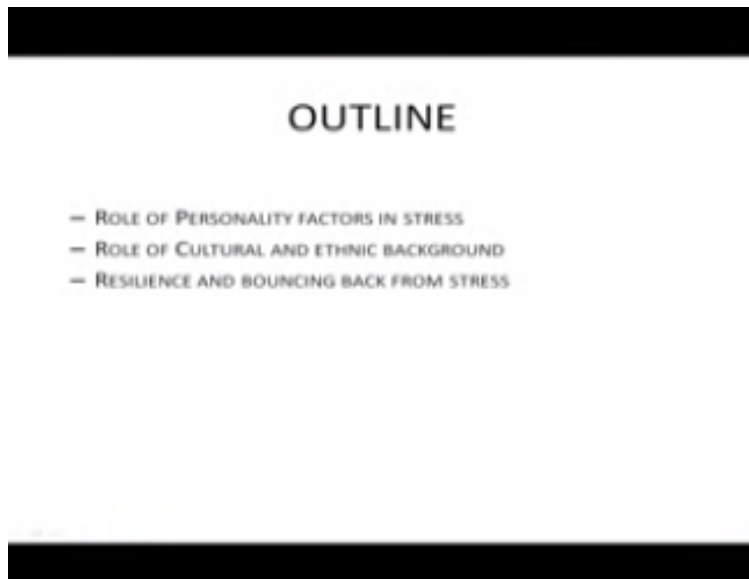
Ex: **person who feels inferior** → under pressure, since every contact, every event in his life is a cue for the activation of this sense of inferiority

**Highly moral person** - imposes unattainable demands on self, failing to meet them causes stress

So if an individual responds if individuals responses begin to build up then people will start responding in terms of their perception of these emotional changes so emotional changes bring about the stress too for example if I am under pressure since every contact then every contact in life is at you for a further stressor and say if there is a an individual who has in a social situation I am stressed I have been stressed before that will be a stress stressor for me when I face the next situation because the a perception of the previous experiences increases the stress so for a moral highly moral person.

So he himself imposes stress on himself for not being able to stand up to his own standards so in a nutshell today we have discussed the different types of stress sorry we have discussed about the different types of personality and how it relates.

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To stress locus of control and hardiness which is actually are resilience factor that helps us to bounce back so you can carry this home about the commitment control and challenge that you need to feel from a situation so that will act as a protective factor to help you deal with life events thank you.