

Fifth Edition

COPING WITH STRESS

in a Changing World

MCGRAW-HILL
DONATION

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PREFACE

As a stress management instructor, you are well aware of the myriad potential stressors that students face on a daily basis. As a Certified Health Education Specialist (CHES) who has been teaching stress management in the classroom and online for more than twenty years, I have written this book with both the instructor and the student in mind. *Coping with Stress in a Changing World* is designed to help students learn to cope with stress and transform potential stressors into personal challenges that will invigorate their days and enrich their lives. The book draws on real-world examples and solutions to provide a solid understanding of stress along with practical tips for managing it.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FIFTH EDITION

I am very excited about this latest edition and feel it is the best version of the textbook yet. The fusion of ACT-based principles and practices with the existing theoretical framework makes it unique among all stress management textbooks.

This fifth edition of *Coping with Stress in a Changing World* has been thoroughly revised and reorganized. We've listened and responded to the reviewers' requests to craft a leaner and even more hands-on book. To accomplish this we slashed the old Part Three, "Stress: A Developmental Perspective," added new material on mindfulness, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, and beefed up the chapters with lots of additional exercises and assessments.

New data and examples have been added throughout, and as in previous versions, the fifth edition of *Coping with Stress in a Changing World* empowers students to take control of their lives by recognizing stressors and implementing strategies to deal with them. The organization, flow, and pedagogical aids are designed to allow the instructor to present the material easily and in a manner that appeals to students.

A Strong Theoretical Framework

The fifth edition of *Coping with Stress in a Changing World* continues to be rooted in two unifying theoretical

frameworks; one related to defining stress and the other to managing it. This separates it from other textbooks that are eclectic in nature and harder for students to understand and apply.

To define stress, this book melds together two primary models—Lazarus's stress appraisal and coping model and the National Wellness Institute's wellness model—to create a new theoretical framework for understanding stress. This theoretical framework presents stress as a dynamic transaction involving a potential stressor, an individual, and the environment at a specific point in space and time. The term *potential stressor* is used throughout the text and reflects the author's beliefs about the individual nature of stress appraisal. In order for a potential stressor to become an actual stressor, individuals must appraise it as something with which they cannot cope and thus view it as capable of causing them loss or harm. Stress transactions vary according to space and time and are influenced by an individual's overall state of wellness across the six dimensions of health. Stress and health are interconnected; one's level of health influences both the appraisal of potential stressors and the ability to cope with them.

To manage stress the fifth edition of *Coping with Stress in a Changing World* uses the Five Rs of coping model. The Five Rs—rethink, reduce, relax, release, and reorganize—provide a variety of different strategies across five different levels of coping. These strategies and levels of coping can be used independently or together to manage stress. Many of the strategies and levels use healthy health habits to increase wellness and coping ability. Using a multilevel stress management model that incorporates different kinds of strategies and levels of coping is flexible and enables students to develop greater psychological flexibility and meet the challenges of coping with stress in a changing world.

A New Focus on Developing Greater Psychological Flexibility

The fifth edition of *Coping with Stress in a Changing World* integrates principles and practices from Acceptance

and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to help students develop greater psychological flexibility and coping abilities. New sections in chapters 2, 7, 8, and 12 explore the relationship between stress and psychological inflexibility and show students how to reduce their stress by becoming more flexible in their thinking and behaving. The key aspects of psychological flexibility such as mindfulness, acceptance, setting values-based goals, and understanding and managing control issues are embedded in this new edition. ACT-based principles and practices fit seamlessly into both the stress defining and coping theoretical frameworks upon which the book is based. A new ACT-based feature entitled "ACT on Managing Your Stress" has been built into the end of each chapter. It helps students integrate ACT-based principles and practices into their personal stress management plans.

A Clearer Focus on Physical Activity and Stress

The fifth edition of *Coping with Stress in a Changing World* continues to promote healthy ways to dissipate the buildup of muscle tension and mobilization of energy that is a result of the stress response. Chapter 11 of this edition provides a unified way of doing this by incorporating the 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, developed by the United States Department of Health and Human Services in conjunction with leading sports medicine organizations. These guidelines qualify and quantify mild, moderate, and vigorous physical activity levels and provide a sound theoretical framework for using this information to cope with stress. The fifth edition clearly outlines how to use the varying levels of physical activity to release the muscle tension and energy associated with the stress response.

A Continued Emphasis on Spirituality and Diversity

The fifth edition of *Coping with Stress in a Changing World* continues to emphasize coping strategies and approaches to emotional and spiritual health rooted in Asian philosophy, psychology, and spirituality. The boxed feature entitled "Living Constructively" draws heavily from Pure Land Buddhism and Naikan and Morita therapies, which have their origins in Japan. Much of the new material in the fifth edition on mindfulness, acceptance, and learning how to coexist with troubling thoughts and painful emotions instead of trying to control them has been influenced by Asian philosophy, psychology, and spirituality.

This culturally diverse yet connected approach to understanding and managing stress is a unique feature of this textbook. In addition, the examples, illustrations, and activities used in the text appeal to diverse populations, including both traditional-age and nontraditional-age students. Recurring "Diverse Perspectives" boxes, as well as a wealth of in-text examples, offer insights into the specific stressors that affect individuals of different

ages, races, ethnicities, sexual orientations, and cultural backgrounds. My hope, further, is that the developmental perspective on stressors and coping will give students a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the tasks and stressors people face at various points in their development.

Organization and Content

A major change in the fifth edition of *Coping with Stress in a Changing World* is a shift away from dividing the book into three parts. Most of the reviewers who contributed to this new edition requested eliminating Part Three and merging key content from it into the remaining chapters. We listened to the reviewers and the fifth edition has two parts: Part One, a wellness-based look at the stress response, and Part Two, an integrated approach to coping with stress.

In addition, we split rethink (formerly chapter 7) into two chapters: Chapter 7, "Rethinking the Big Picture," and Chapter 8, "Rethinking the Little Picture." A key part of understanding Rethink as a line of defense against stress is knowing that one's perception of potential stressors determines whether or not they become actual stressors and trigger a stress response. Often, one's appraisal of potential stressors and the emotions aroused by them is inaccurate and based on a distorted worldview and illogical, unhelpful thinking. In the fifth edition of *Coping with Stress in a Changing World*, we'll refer to one's worldview as *the big picture* and the perception of individual stressors as *the little picture*. Chapter 7 examines strategies for helping reduce stress by rethinking the big picture. Chapter 8 presents strategies related to rethinking the little picture.

We've also responded to the reviewers' request for more activities and exercises embedded into the actual text itself. In addition to revising many of the "Assess Yourself" activities at the end of the chapters, we've embedded exercises within the chapters and expanded the number of "Stress Buster Tips" to provide instructors and students with even more opportunities to apply the content contained within the chapters. Each of the six chapters on coping offers a different approach to managing stress and contains useful strategies, tips, and tools.

- Chapter 7 ("Rethinking the Big Picture") integrates the latest information from Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) and relational frame theory (RFT) to explain how the mind processes information and teaches students how to unleash the power of their minds to manage potential stressors.
- Chapter 8 ("Rethinking the Little Picture") uses approaches to coping based on rational emotive behavior therapy (Ellis), positive psychology (Seligman), and ACT (mindfulness, self-as-context, and cognitive defusion) to help students manage individual potential stressors.

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