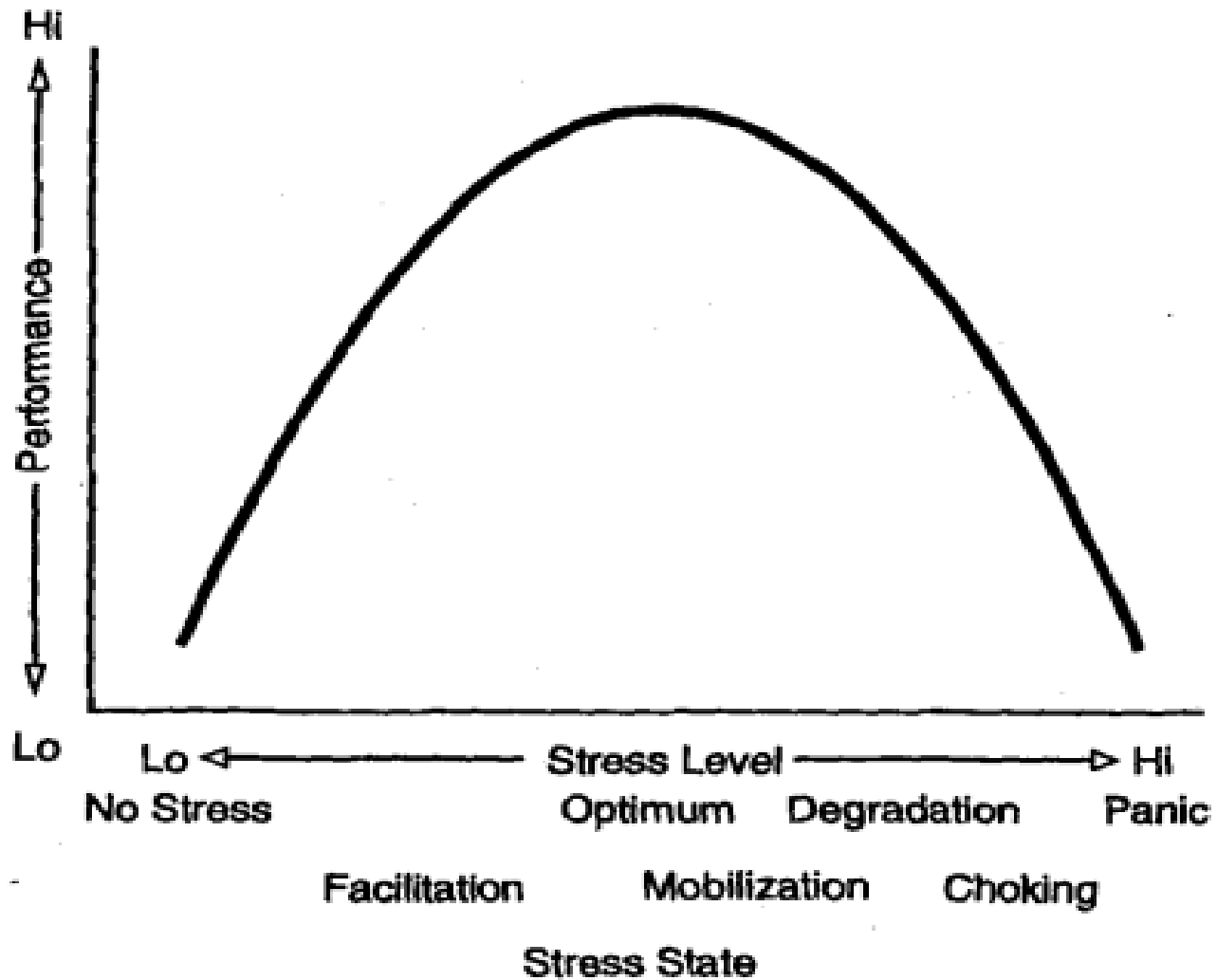




# Fear as an Ally

- Reframe fear: Fear is your “friend.”
- It is a warning that something is not right and that I must focus my awareness on what is causing this feeling of fear and then develop a plan to deal with it.
- Panic is the real problem. If I allow fear to continue for too long without finding a solution, the fear may build to panic.

# Cognitive Performance and Resilience to Stress



# Facing Fear: Behavior

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- Acquire information about what is feared
- Learn skills necessary to move through fear
- Have a plan and back-up plan
- Practice plan and back-up plan
- Confront fear with trusted colleagues when possible

Are some people really different? Why should we care?



# Thich Naht Hahn on Fear

If you try to run away, instead of confronting and embracing your ill-being (and fear), you will not look deeply into its nature and will never see a way out. That is why you should hold your suffering tenderly and closely, looking deeply into it, to discover its true nature and find a way out.

# Anxiety Disorders

- Avoidance and failure to face fear is at the heart of all anxiety disorders including Posttraumatic Stress Disorder
- Prolonged Exposure
- Cognitive Processing Therapy
- EMDR
- Mindfulness

# Positive Emotions



# Positive Emotions: Optimism

- Basic belief that the future will be bright
- Basic belief that there is light at the end of the tunnel

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Ryff

# Positive Emotions, Realistic Optimism, and Health

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- Fewer psychiatric symptoms after exposure to stressful event
- Better self-reported physical health
- Reduced cardiovascular responses when exposed to high stress

# Realistic Optimism

- Like pessimists: pay close attention to relevant negative information
- Unlike pessimists: do not dwell on negative information, filter out irrelevant negative information, and disengage rapidly from problems that appear unsolvable

# How to Enhance Realistic Optimism

- Insert positive thoughts
- Refute the negative
- Explanatory style
- Pick optimistic parents



# Social Support

# Isolation/ Poor Social Support

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- Exaggerated cardiovascular and stress hormone responses to stress
- May be as detrimental to longevity as obesity, cigarette smoking, hypertension or level of physical activity

King 1998, Pietrzak 2012 , Sapolsky 2004

# High Social Support

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- Protection against mental illness including PTSD
- More effective coping strategies
- Reduced physiological reactivity to stress

Reviewed in Southwick and Charney 2012



# Social support: Oxytocin

- Oxytocin increases trust in male college students.
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- Oxytocin helps in forming social attachments.
- Oxytocin dampens the stress response by inhibiting the amygdala.



# Moral Compass



“You can’t buy it or sell it, When supported with education, a person’s integrity can give him something to rely on when his perspective seems to blur, when rules and principles seem to waver, and when he’s faced with hard choices of right and wrong. It’s something to .. keep him afloat when he’s drowning.”

Admiral Stockdale

# Courage

- Samuel Johnson: “Courage is the greatest of all virtues because unless a man has that virtue, he has no security for preserving any other.”
- John McCain: “Without courage all virtue is fragile; admired, sought, professed, but held cheaply and surrendered without a fight.”



# Altruism and Resilience

- Associated with resilience and positive mental health and well-being
- Reciprocal altruism: Ethology
- Mutual cooperation: Activation of the nucleus accumbens/dopamine reward system



# Religion/Spirituality

# Religion/Spirituality and Resilience

- Associated with longevity (meta-analysis of 42 studies and 126,000 subjects)
- Fewer hospital days, fewer medical complications and in patients with rheumatoid arthritis, burns, organ transplants
- Lower levels of depression in numerous medical and non-medical populations
- Use of religious coping at time of trauma associated with lower subsequent distress

# Cognitive Flexibility

# Acceptance

“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference

Serenity Prayer, Alcoholics Anonymous

“Accept, then act. Whatever the present moment contains, accept it as if you had chosen it. Always work with it, not against it. Make it your friend and ally, not your enemy. Once the situation has been accepted, if it needs to be changed and you have the power to do so, then change it. But first accept it.”

Eckhart Tolle

# Cognitive Reappraisal

Ability to cognitively appraise, reframe or find positive meaning in adversity (e.g. redefining a crisis as a challenge and opportunity)

# Cognitive Reappraisal

Greater use of cognitive reappraisal in everyday life correlates with greater PFC and lower amygdala activation in response to negative stimuli.

Oshner 2004; Drabant 2009