



Definitions and Concepts for AQA Psychology A-level

Option 2: Stress

Benzodiazepines: A type of medication that is a sedative, used to treat anxiety.

Beta blockers: A class of medication that works by reducing heart rate. They also reduce noradrenaline and adrenaline receptors which decreases the effects of stress.

Biofeedback: A procedure that will allow you to be alerted to usually undetected changes in your body like heart rate, via sensors and signals.

Challenge: A trait found within the “hardy” personality type, which is to perceive stressful/negative events as “challenges” to be overcome.

Control: A trait found within the “hardy” personality type, which is to perceive yourself as in control of your life and the events within it.

Cortisol: A hormone produced in response to stress.

Emotional support: Support in the form of listening to a person talk about their stress.

Esteem support: Support in the form of raising a person’s self-esteem.

General adaptation syndrome: The body’s adaptation to stress, which occurs in 3 stages.

Hardiness: A personality type that allows people to experience less stress, or deal better with it. This personality trait exhibits 3 traits; commitment, challenge and control.

Hassles and uplifts scales: A questionnaire that aims to measure the views of people on common negative and positive experiences.

Hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal system: The main physiological system in our body that responds to stress.

Immunosuppression: A term used to describe the reduced functionality of the immune system, meaning its response to disease is suppressed. This leaves an immunosuppressed person very prone to non-fatal illnesses like the flu.

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Instrumental support: Tangible, physical forms of support such as offering money or doing a task for a person.

Personality type A: A high stress personality type, which prioritises working and avoiding failure.

Personality type B: A healthy, calm personality type, which is characterised by flexibility and acknowledgment of limits.

Personality type C: A nonassertive personality type, which deals with stress by suppression and avoidance.

Skin conductance response: Measuring the stress response via measuring electrical activity conducted on the skin.

Social readjustment ratings scale: A self report questionnaire that allows for people to find the impact of stressful life events on people.

Social support: Forms of comfort that can be provided by people in difficult times.

Stress: Emotional, physical or mental pressure.

Stress inoculation therapy: Therapy that aims to manage stress through 3 phases; conceptualisation, skills acquisition and rehearsal.

Sympathomedullary pathway: The way our brain activates the sympathetic response to stress.

