

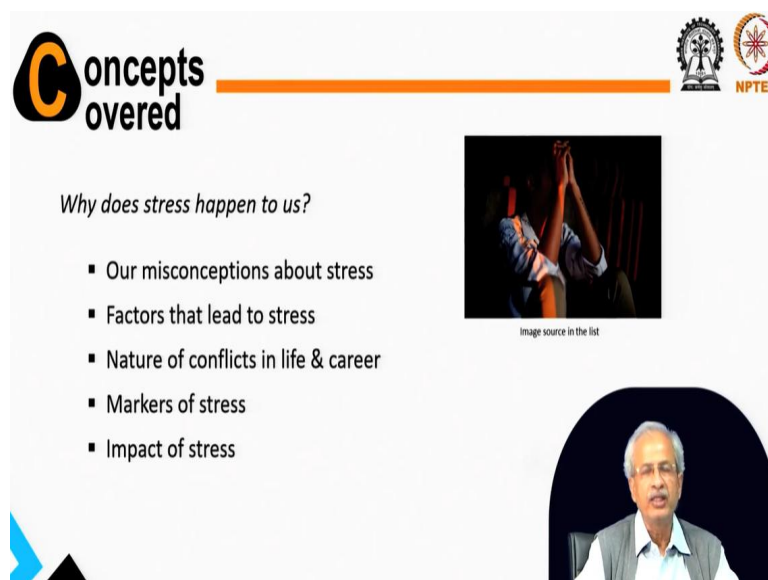
The Science of Happiness and Wellbeing
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Indian Institute of Technology - Kharagpur

Lecture No # 24
Module No # 05
Conflicts and Stress

This talk is about conflict and stress and the idea behind talking about conflict and stress is to let you know that to remain happy it is not important to have certain positive traits. So presence of positive traits is very important but at the same time what is more important is absence of negative traits as well. And more often we know that absence of positive traits are possible through development of some kind of awareness that why do we get stressed and how do we resolve our conflict?

Many of our conflicts and stresses are basically misconceptions and once we develop awareness about it we can negate those negative traits. And we can make sure they are absent from our traits only to become more and more positive and develop happiness. So with this introductory note we would like to first talk about stress and conflict.

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The slide features the 'Concepts Covered' logo on the left, which includes a large stylized 'C' and the text 'Concepts Covered'. To the right of the logo is a horizontal orange bar. In the top right corner, there are two logos: the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur logo and the NPTEL logo. Below the orange bar, the text 'Why does stress happen to us?' is displayed. Underneath this text is a bulleted list of five items: 'Our misconceptions about stress', 'Factors that lead to stress', 'Nature of conflicts in life & career', 'Markers of stress', and 'Impact of stress'. To the right of the list is a small video inset showing a person with their hands clasped in a prayer-like gesture. Below the video inset is a larger video inset showing a man in a grey vest and white shirt, identified as Prof. Manas Kumar Mandal, speaking. A small caption 'Image source in the list' is visible below the smaller video inset.

The concept that we would like to understand is why does stress happen to us. People often talk about stress, question is do we really understand what stress is all about? Do we actually inculcate lot of misconceptions about stress, and what are the factors if I have got some stress what are the factors that lead to stress what are the nature of such conflicts about life and career what kind of career conflicts we get?

And what kind of life based carrier life based conflicts we get and how do we understand that we have developed certain stress and what would be the impact. So the talk this time of this module is to help you understand that what are those nature of stress? What are those conflicts we often face in reality or in daily life and, how should we develop awareness about it so that we can handle it more effectively.

And to sum it up in the beginning is to help you get rid of those stresses in conflict in order to retain your level of happiness or whatever the index of happiness you have as a person. So let us see what kind of stress we are going to talk about through our key concepts.

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The slide features a large 'K' in a black circle followed by the word 'eywords' in black. An orange horizontal line is positioned below the title. In the top right corner, there are two logos: the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) logo and the NPTEL logo. A list of keywords is displayed on the left side of the slide:

- Stress [psychological]
- Decido-phobia [conflicts]
- Resilience
- Analysis-paralysis
- Markers of stress

To the right of the list is a photograph of a person in a white shirt and dark pants, standing in a forest with their hands on their head. Below this photo is the text 'Source: Getty image'. In the bottom right corner, there is a circular video inset showing a man with grey hair, wearing a light blue shirt and a grey vest, speaking.

So the kind of stress that we have been talking about is more of psychological stress because we can have stress biological stress we can have blood pressure we can have blood sugar we can have other biological problem that can also cause stress to us. We would not refer about that we did not refer about so much of social stress we will talk about something. But not so much about social stress or so much about biological stress we will, try to emphasize more on the psychological stress.

And then of course one of the major reasons why there is a stress because we cannot resolve conflict. Conflict is something where you have got two opposing motives of equal strength and you do not know how to take a transition? We call it decidophobia so when we refer about the decidophobia basically we are referring about the kind of conflicts why some people, can resolve conflict better earlier we have understood what resilience is all about, but we would also like to know how resilient people resolve conflict.

But those who cannot really resolve that conflict they suffer from a disease called analysis paralysis, they freeze in terms of decision-making they cannot take a decision properly. And since they cannot take a decision properly they retain their stress level over a period of time. And if the stress level is retained over a period of time the body, the biology of your system takes it all.

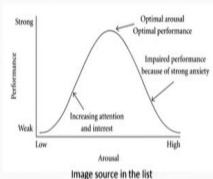
And in put together the psychological stress when it is transferred to biological stress and biological stress when it transferred to a social stress ultimately it hits you as a person who is prone to stress. So you would like to know what are the markers of stress idea is to let you know that if you understand that such kind of things are happening with you will understand that you are engulfed in stress.

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Misconceptions...we have

- Normal people do not get stress or anxiety
- Stress can be reduced by spending time leisurely
- Compromising conflicting issues is adjustment
- Happiness comes from satisfaction of self
- Taking decision about self is easy
- We deceive others only, & not ourselves
- We behave the way 'mind' functions

Yerkes-Dodson Law



The graph illustrates the Yerkes-Dodson Law, plotting Performance (Y-axis, from Weak to Strong) against Arousal (X-axis, from Low to High). The curve rises from low arousal, peaks at 'Optimal arousal' leading to 'Optimal performance', and then declines at 'High' arousal, labeled as 'Impaired performance because of strong anxiety'. A point on the rising slope is marked 'Increasing attention and interest'. Logos for IIT Bombay and NPTEL are in the top right. A portrait of a man is in the bottom right.

image source in the list

So let us try to understand the misconceptions that we have. One such misconception are that normal people do not get anxiety or stress in fact everybody gets stress. And those who are under stress or anxiety they find it very difficult to share an discuss with others they believe that it is their own unique problem nobody else is suffering in this world he or she is only suffering in this world.

Therefore it is a misconception that nobody suffers from anxiety or stress it is only some people suffer from that. Honestly speaking majority of the people have got some kind of anxiety some kind of stress and that is a normal life. Some people, therefore believe that well if I can entertain myself then probably my stress will go down let us have some lesser time and then our stress will go down.

If the stress is of psychological nature by simply entertaining yourself through certain leisurely movement will not actually reduce it. As long you are entertaining yourself you may be able to mask it but once your level of entertainment goes down, you cannot entertain yourself all the time your stress comes back. We also have the difficulty of understanding adjustment that how do, we adjust each other that also creates some personal stress.

We believe that if you compromise certain issues probably you would be able to get rid of the stress it is a short term relief actually. It is a misconception that having compromised every time you would be able to resolve stress. We believe that if you are happy if you want to be happy satisfy yourself your happiness will come back and you would be able to get rid of the stress.

We told you earlier that happiness comes by creating happiness for others if you are not amongst the ambience of the happy people your happiness cannot be perpetuated. If you try to make yourself happy you will actually add, more stress and conflict. Likewise so many other misconceptions that we have about others in fact the most important being the last point that we behave the way the mind functions actually this is a misconception.

Our mindset does not allow our mind to function horizontally more often what we do we think in a particular way we call it a tunnel vision or pipeline vision where you see things only through one prism. Therefore those who are under stress cannot horizontally expand their thought process they cannot see the world in a long-term vision. So it is very important to understand that we all suffer from some kind of anxiety but what we need to know what are the sources behind it why does this happen and how to get rid of it to remain happy.

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What causes stress?

- **Conflicts:** togetherness of opposing motives
- **Faulty coping strategy:** lack of insight & flexibility
- **Analysis-paralysis:** inability to take decisions
- **Hypothetical failure:** lack of clarity about success
- **Lack of resilience:** difficulty in 'bouncing back'
- **Alienation:** pre-occupation with self

Now let us try to understand what are the causes of stress one is the conflict is togetherness of opposing motives of equal strength. You can have approach-avoidance conflict you can have approach-approach conflict you can have approach-avoidance conflict I mean for example you want to avoid exam and at the same time you want to avoid the reprimand from your parents. So you do not know how to resolve this conflict or at the same time there could be an, approach-approach conflict you want to go to movie at the same time you want to spend time with your family which one you would like to have. They also cause stress not only threatful situation causes stress even approach situations can also cause stress. We cannot actually resolve this stress because of our faulty coping strategy we all think about lifestyle but we really do not pay much attention to our coping style. Coping style if it is poor you would not be able to gain insight into the conflicting situation you would be inflexible.

So lack of insight and flexibility creates faulty coping strategy and as a result of which you would not be able to take the decisions. Analysis paralysis is another thing that is you cannot take a decision you remain indecisive there are a lot of lot many ways you can, actually take the decisions. People who are stress-free, they do not bother always about the outcome of the stress of the decisions making.

They can take decision at any point of time without freezing their decision-making process so analysis paralysis is rather condition where we can develop stress. Hypothetical failure is another thing, the apprehension of hypothetical failure we believe that we will, not be able to do it. We do not have clarity about success we are too engrossed about failure and as a result of which we develop hypothetical failure as a source of our anxieties.

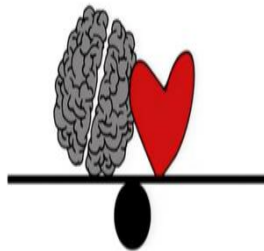
Lack of resilience, those who cannot bounce back they also develop because they know that if they fail they would not be able to rise again. Therefore the people who do not have resilience they suffer from lot of stress and conflict. People say I mean Nelson Mandela often used to say that failure is something when you don't know how to get up and once again fight back. So people who suffer from stress and conflict have the problem of resilience and finally alienation.

If you are preoccupied with self you would not be able to see outside, so ego-centrism also causes lot of conflict. One needs to be ecocentric as well as, egocentric not that you would always be ecocentric that is seeing outside you need to find a balance between egocentrism and ecocentrism where you cannot afford to remain preoccupied with yourself.

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Decidophobia: Head or Heart?

- Are these parts friends?
- Is one part the boss?
- How do these two communicate with each other?
- How do they react in the event of disagreement?




Source: Getty image

Now why do we find trouble to take a decision, now metaphorically we can say that head and heart. When we take a decision logically our brain works and when our decision making is primarily governed by our feeling component we call metaphorically we call heart. In the sense that if there is a clash between your between your logical thought processing and your feeling component what will happen?

Now decidophobia is a phobia of taking decision, it is both the organs are both the processing is within you but you do not know the 2 sides of your system decision making system are they friends, who is your boss? Your logical processing is more important and that is your boss or your feeling component is more important and that becomes your boss how do they communicate amongst each other?


And if there is a conflict between your logic and feeling that is your reasoning process and your emotion what will happen how do you resolve such issues? So people resort to some kind of freezing condition which; we call analysis paralysis or decidophobia.

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Conflicts in personal life

- Discipline vs. Flexibility
- Self esteem vs ego-vulnerability
- Guilt vs. moral disengagement
- Growth vs. Development
- Purpose vs. Passion
- Mind vs Mindset



Source: Getty image



Now what are the conflicts that we get in our personal life. In personal life we find it difficult to prioritize between flexibility and discipline. If I ask you this question you would like to be flexible in life or you would like to be disciplined in life now a lot of people say that flexibility is very important now flexibility is important but with flexibility we cannot develop a worthwhile habit as well.

So if you cannot develop a worthwhile habit your life cannot be fruitful so both the discipline and flexibility are important which one is more important for you is a source of conflict. Whether you would like to go for self-esteem or your ego is more important that is ecocentrisism and egocentrisism how do you resolve, such conflict that whether you should go outward more or whether you should protect yourself more?

What is more important in you guilt or moral disengagement if we do something wrong we develop guilt. But there are certain things you need to do you are forced to do you know that is wrong but you are forced to do because of the situation which we call moral disengagement. Moral disengagement is a condition where you know that morally it is wrong but you are duty bound to do it like a hangman a hangman kills a person if there is a court order and he knows that killing a person is wrong but he is bound to follow a duty.

So it is called moral disengagement but between guilt and moral disengagement how do how to resolve the conflict you may call guilt and conscience as well. When your ego is satisfied I mean when you do something which is morally correct you develop conscience that is your ego is rewarded. But when you do something wrong you know that is wrong and you did it still you develop guilt. So between guilt and conscience we also find a conflict what to go first if you want to develop concerns then you have to suffer a lot to reward your ego.

If you want to reward yourself by hitting your conscience you develop guilt you know that you have done something wrong like stealing money you may gain some money. But at the same time you develop guilt out of it so how to prioritize between guilt and conscience? How to prioritize between the growth and development? Growth is generally physical, development is generally social and psychological growth you can see every day but the development you cannot see every day.

So whether you would look more for your development or more for your growth when you actually take a decision whether they are purpose driven or passion driven that is you go by your interest more often or you go by the purpose for which you are doing this act action. So in personal life we get lot of such conflicts and we call it as a clash between mind versus mind-set.

Mind-set is a condition where you have got a set of known solutions which you have developed out of your experience and whenever there is a problem or conflicting situation you try to apply to your my apply your mindset in a habitual manner. Without actually using mind so our mind is beautiful but we take more often our decision through mindset not through mind. So it is a clash between the mind and, mindset when we actually get conflict in our personal life.

Likewise we also get conflict in our public life like they are in the workplace.

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Conflicts at workplace

- Choice vs. Compulsion
- Hierarchy vs. Transparency
- Loyalty vs. Morality
- Integrity vs. Identity
- Pride vs. Price
- Security Vs. Dynamicity
- Life vs Career







Image source in the list



Let us see what kind of conflicts we get in the workplace whether I should work out of my choice or whether I should do something which is being compelled to me to do. So choice and compulsion is a conflict whether I would like in the organization more transparency horizontality or whether I should like more verticality and hierarchy? So it's a conflict what kind of organization is doing better.

Now it has been found if you are production oriented you need to be hierarchical if you want to be people friendly you need to have transparency now in order to survive your business or workplace which one would be your current. Loyalty versus morality is another conflict if you are loyal you cannot afford to be moral if you are moral you cannot afford to be loyal. So how to balance between these two in such situation how do you actually develop a decision-making by compromising between loyalty and morality.

Integrity and identity is another kind of conflict that is you want to develop identity for yourself or you want to submerge your identity in order to have team orientation within the group which I call integrity. You would want like more pride or you would it be interested more a brand or price if you want to go for a job are you going to go for a job which is something part of your pride a national pride or a community pride or an organizational pride or a family pride.

Or you would like to do some work which is part of your I mean, desire part of the brand for which you would be interested in working where you would be getting more and more money. Likewise in an organization what is more important for you security or dynamicity you would like to be more dynamic or you would like to have a job which is more secured. Put together

life and career is also a conflict we often find difficulty in choosing a carrier which may not, satisfy my life.

And at the same time we lead a life where career is not so important but life becomes more important. So to resolve such conflicts we need to come out with the decision making and if we fail to do that we will definitely have conflicts.

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What are our problems...?

- Managing ambiguity & uncertain situations
- Dealing with opposing motives
- Speaking truth to power
- When and how to say '*no*'
- Having '*FEAR*' (*False Evidence Appearing Real*)
- Striving but without success



Source: Getty image



So what are our problems our problems we get stress because we fail to manage ambiguity the photograph that you see is whether you are seeing two, phases or whether you are seeing a flower vase is a ambiguous situation. It depends the way you would like to see rather than what you see? So in uncertain condition how do you take a decision ambiguity management and uncertain decision making is a major problem or source for our conflict.

How do we deal the opposing motives? As I said approach-approach motive or avoidance-avoidance motive or approach-avoidance, motive, if such motives of equal strength are available with you then what is that you would like to do? Another source of conflict is speaking truth to power that you know that something is wrong but you cannot tell it to the power you in fact do not know how to say no.


And if you say no you feel that probably you would be overpowered not empowered in order to survive in any situation. So we call it, having fear false evidence appearing real that is at times we develop anxiety and stress where you have not done something wrong but you feel that probably you have done something wrong or you are apprehensive always that if

something wrong goes then what will happen to me? So people who are having such kind of problem they develop more and more stress.


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Impacts...

- I don't know how to control emotions
- My efficiency is seldom recognized
- I do not know how to stay away from bad dreams
- I don't know how to enhance my efficiency
- I find it difficult to strike a balance of value & reality
- I am unsure of how to remain motivated
- I often get depressed without reason



Source: Getty Image



The slide features the NPTEL logo in the top right corner. The text 'Impacts...' is followed by a bulleted list of seven common stress-related struggles. To the right of the list is a black and white image of a person in a distressed state, and below it is a portrait of a man.

What are the impacts therefore people those, who are under stress in conflict they say that I don't know how to control my emotions? I mean I may become angry and so I have outbursts which may lead to some kind of danger again for myself. People believe that well I am stressed because my capacity has seldom being recognized I have been doing so much almost everybody thinks in the organization or family that they have been doing so much, but it has never been recognized.

How to stay away from bad dreams people who are under stress have bad dreams, people feel that they cannot enhance their efficiency they find a difficulty in balancing out the value based conditions and the reality based condition. Whether they should value they should go for what is morally correct or whether they should go by what is reality driven. So these are the impacts we often get and people get up in the morning and they find that they are not at all motivated because lot of stress have pushed them to a condition where they often get depressed without reason.

So these are the impacts which are possible if a person is continuously under stress or in conflicting condition.

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Markers of stress...

- Overreaction to life's small problem
- Expecting the worst to happen always
- Wanting to make sure that everything is all right
- Unable to take decision or to concentrate
- Taking everything that goes wrong 'personally'
- Experiencing panic reaction without reason
- Feelings easily hurt
- Something to worry about always

So the markers of the stress are something like that if 4 or 5 of these, markers are available then person need some kind of guidance from either a counselor or a doctor. That is if there is a small problem if you overreact to that like if I have got a headache and if I start thinking probably I have gotten a brain tumor then it is the overreaction to a small problem we call it maximization effort.

So overreaction to life small problem expecting always what's to happen, nothing has happened you only apprehend that something is going to happen. And since you cannot control the future you believe that you are helpless and if you are helpless over a period of time you will always want to make sure that at least today everything is all right. You cannot take a decision and if something goes wrong you believe that it is you who is responsible for this.

So it is a, internal locus of control where you actually attribute the fault of someone else's onto your trait, therefore people who are having such kind of markers they experience panic reaction without reason. They are feeling easily get hurt and they always find something to worry about. Even if you console them even if you comfort them for a longer period you will find that they are always worried about something. Today maybe everything okay they will say I do not know what is going to happen tomorrow.

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Symptoms of stress...

- A tendency to suffer from frequent headaches
- The feeling of being constantly under strain
- Being excessively tired much of the time
- Sensation of pressure in the head
- Tremor, perspiration, racing of heartbeat
- Poor sleep, nightmare, Feelings easily hurt
- Something to worry about always



Image source in the list



So these are the situations where certain things happen in this manner. So what are the symptoms these symptoms are of course tendency to get frequent headaches. You have a feeling of constantly under stress, you are tired all the time you believe that there is a pressure always in your head you find, tremors. You perspire raise the heartbeat, poor sleep, nightmare something to worry about always you get. So these are the situations which are symptoms of stress which we get.

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CONCLUSION

- Stress is a universal experience...a normal reaction to normal pressure
- It results from our inability to resolve conflicts & take decisions
- Prolonged stress gives rise to spiraling negative thoughts
- The impact of stress depends on the way we carry it



Source: Getty image




In conclusion I would like to tell you stress is a universal experience there is nobody in this world who is not getting stress. So let us try to destigmatize it that we or someone is only suffering from stress or conflict is a normal reaction to normal pressure. The primary problem of stress is our inability to resolve conflict our inability to go into a condition where we are paralyzed to take decisions.

The major problem in stress is that the way we carry it is not the burden that makes us stressed it is not the load that make you stressed is the way we carry it. Some people can carry it very easily, more heavier weight but some people even if it is not a very heavy weight they actually carry it in a wrongful manner and as a result of which they find stress for everything.

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DYNAMICS OF STRESS

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SOCIAL PERSPECTIVES

Edited by
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and
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So I would suggest some books for that dynamics of stress its important because you must understand the biological stress the psychological stress and social stress how they actually impact us? Honestly speaking the psychological stress if it spills over it will go to biological stress and if it still pills over it will disturb your family relationship and it will go for your social stress as well.Thank you.