

## BOOK REVIEW

Whitman, Neal A., Spendlove, David C., and Clark, Claire H. (2000). *Student Stress: Effects and Solutions*. Jossey-Bass. 114 pp., \$26.00. ISBN 0-913317-11-X.

*Student Stress: Effects and Solutions* is based on the authors' ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Research Report (Whitman, Spendlove, & Clark, 1984). In the original work, the authors aimed to present research on stress and coping so that, according to Jonathan Fife, the series editor, "...faculty and administrators can provide an educational atmosphere with maximum learning and social growth that avoids the extreme levels of stress that contribute to unnecessarily high student attrition rates."

Research findings are presented in an organized and compact fashion that aids the reader in understanding relevant concepts and applying various stress and coping models to four specific categories of students: college students, graduate students, law students, and medical students and residents. Within each category the environmental setting is described, sources of stress are identified, and solutions are given. The authors conclude the book with practical recommendations.

As a psychologist, I think that the authors did a nice job of summarizing some popular models of stress, including those by Lazarus (1966), Meichenbaum (1977), Selye (1982), and Yerkes & Dodson (1908), and then relating these theories to the student experience in different educational settings. This crucial application of theory to practice results in some very useful recommendations.

For example, based on Meichenbaum's (1977) "stress inoculation" concept, the authors suggest that students be provided with more information in orientation so that they feel more in control and can mobilize resources when needed. Also, based upon the Yerkes-Dodson law (1908) that states that individuals under moderate amounts of stress learn the most, the authors propose specific ways educators can provide a stimulating environment that will challenge students to grow, learn, and succeed without stressing the student to the point of causing failure.

Person-environment interaction and the developmental context of college are highlighted. Students are in a major transition period trying to deal with academic issues and other stressors. The authors recommend social support, campus mental-health services, peer counseling, and self-help groups for reducing stress and help in coping and adapting.

With the authors' coverage of several student types and educational settings, the book should appeal to a wide audience. Advisors, faculty members, administrators, and student affairs staff would likely see positive results (e.g., higher retention and graduation rates, reduced illness, and increased satisfaction and happiness) from students by heeding the thoughtful advice presented in this book.

### **References**

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