

Developing Psychological Immunity in Pathogenic Work Settings

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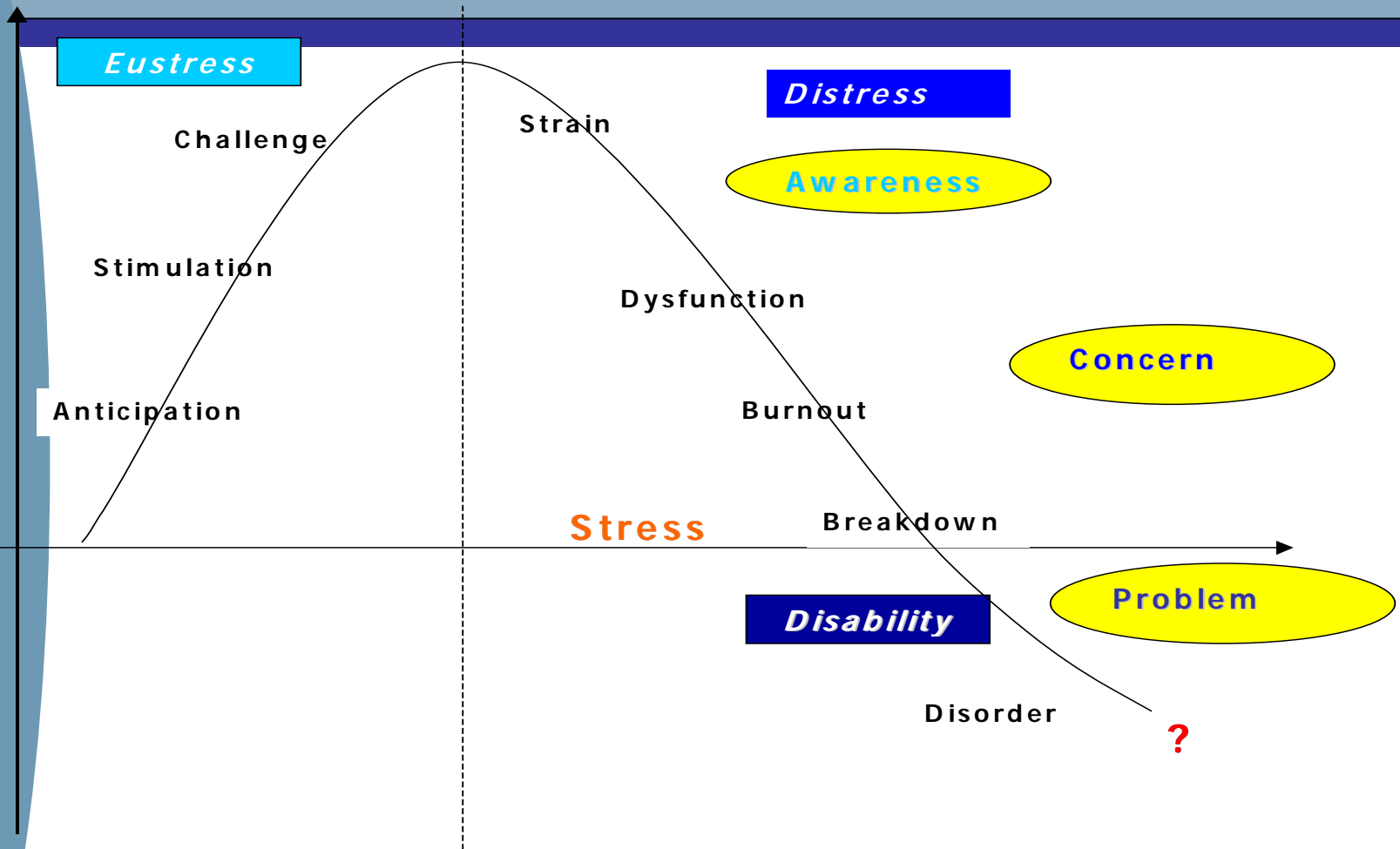


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Assumptions

All environments are potentially pathogenic

Effect of the pathogen is proportional to the strength of the worker's immune system



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Who is the Psychosocial Health Officer for the Organisation?



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We need to detect the pathogens (the psychosocial hazards) within the organisation, to which we are most vulnerable.



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In order to respond correctly we need to classify these as:

- **Irritants**
- **Bacteria**
- **Viruses**
- **Allergens**



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Characteristics of irritants:

- Abrasive
- Area becomes inflamed
- Create potential for bacterial infection



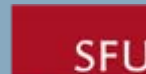
Treatment of irritants:

- Remove the irritant
- Use a buffer
- Rest the area
- Soothe the area



Treatment of irritants at work:

- Confront the irritant to decrease level of irritation
- Transfer the irritant or yourself
- Schedule to work a different shift
- Learn to “Float” psychologically



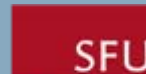
Characteristics of bacterial infection:

- Access to body through a break in the skin
- Potential for infection to spread
- Possible death of organism



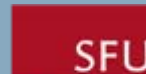
Treatment of bacterial infection:

- Repeated cleansing - antiseptic treatment
- Use antibiotics
- monitor
- Immunise against future infections



Treatment with antiseptics and antibiotics at work includes

- Correcting level of Role Overload
- Correcting Role Insufficiency
- Clarifying Role Ambiguity
- Delineating Role Boundaries
- Defining responsibilities
- Eliminating Psychological Toxins



Factors to consider in treating bacterial infection

- Is infection localised or is it spreading?
- Why did it start in the first place?



Characteristics of viruses:

- Systemic not usually local
- Usually not amenable to treatment - need symptomatic relief
- Usually time limited
- Can lead to death



Treatment of viruses:

- Treatment focus is preventative -e.g. flu injection - given to the vulnerable
- Mobilise body's defenses to kill the virus
- Symptomatic relief



Treatment of viruses at work:

- Work with the virus not against it
- Realise that it will pass through the system
- Refocus on your own work
- Reevaluate your work life balance



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Characteristics of allergens:

- Not a pathogen
- Indicates areas of heightened sensitivity - need to avoid
- Leads to massive overresponse of the individual's system
- Overresponse can lead to death



Treatment of allergens:

- Avoid allergen if possible
- Reduce immune response
- Desensitise with gradual exposure to the allergen
- Determine cause of overresponsiveness



Treatment of allergens at work:

- Avoid individual or situation as much as possible - relocate?
- Increase focus on your own work
- Gradually desensitise to individual or situation



Treatment of allergens at work:

- Examine why you are so reactive to that individual or situation



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Improve overall immunity by learning:

- Resilience skills
- How to deal with difficult people
- Clear communication skills
- To obtain clear definitions of demands and boundaries



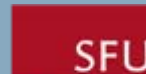
Thank You

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