

STRESS & COPING

CSS 287

What happens when the Actual \neq Ideal?

- How do recreationists deal with situations where their actual experience does not meet their prior expectations?
 - Overcrowding
 - Low Satisfaction
 - Recreational Conflicts
- They feel stress!

OVERCROWDING
GIVE ME AIR



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Stress

- **Stress**: is defined as an unavoidable negative person-environment relationship (Lazarus, 2001)

3 Types of Stress:

- 1) **Prior Harm**, damage realized from past experiences;
- 2) **Threat**, anticipated harm; and
- 3) **Challenge**, difficulties dealing with demands.



...AND YOU THINK YOU HAVE STRESS.
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Causes of Stress: Low Satisfaction

- **Satisfaction**: is a *positive or negative attitude* formed after experiencing a situation
- **Discrepancy Model of Satisfaction** says:
 - Consumers have preexisting expectations, before they participate,
 - They compare the performance to their expectations
 - They ask if preexisting expectations were confirmed or disconfirmed, and then make a satisfaction judgment



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Causes of Stress: Crowding

- Overcrowding causes feelings of unpleasantness
 - Loss of privacy
 - Loss of perceived control
 - Physiological arousal
 - Sensory overload



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Causes of Stress: Recreation Conflict

- **Recreation Conflict** is defined as goal interference attributed to another's behavior
- Occurs when the behavior of another group or individual causes dissatisfaction



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Coping

- **Coping**: the process of altering our circumstances, or our interpretation of circumstances, to make them appear more favorable (Lazarus, 2001)

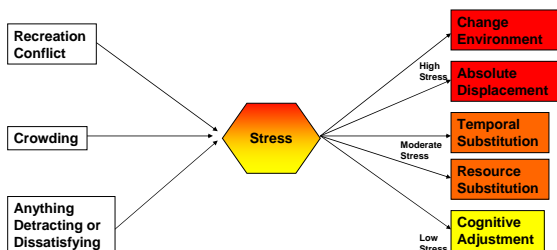
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Coping Strategies

- **Problem-focused** (external), where an individual changes the person-environment relationship for the better
- **Emotion-focused** (internal), where an individual changes the way they interpret a situation to make it seem more favorable
- “Both strategies are interdependent and work together, one supplementing the other in the overall coping process” (Lazarus, 2001).

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Causes of Stress and Coping Mechanisms



Adapted from Miller & McCool 2003

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Cognitive Adjustments

- **Product Shift**: has been defined as a redefinition of the experience or standards of importance.
- Levels of Specificity:
 - 1) redefining the experience; and
 - 2) redefining the importance
- **Example**: “This probably is not a wilderness experience, but it’s a beautiful hiking-camping experience.”

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Cognitive Adjustments

- **Rationalization**: is defined as “a process whereby recreationists re-evaluate an undesirable situation in a more favorable light” (Hammit & Patterson, 1991)
 - “Everyone is surprised at the crowds launching on the Grand Canyon, but they quickly accept it and are overwhelmed by the scale of the rapids & the canyon scenery!”
- **Trade-off**: individual prioritizes certain key aspects of the experience and is willing to make concessions to preserve a higher order priority
- Which coping method is chosen depends on the individual.
 - personality, controllability, history of experience, place attachment, etc.

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Substitution as a Coping Strategy

- **1) Location**: Spatial Displacement
 - Different location within a resource (intra-site)
 - Choose a completely different resource (inter-site)
 - **2) Time**: Temporal Displacement
 - Recreating during times of non-peak use: different seasons, days of the week, time of day, etc.
 - **3) Activity**
 - Substituting one activity for another
 - Less common than spatial or temporal displacement
- Some combination of the above is typical, and choice once again depends on the characteristics of the individual.

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What if you're really, really stressed?

■ Absolute Displacement

- ❑ Leaving and never coming back
- ❑ Quitting an activity

■ Seek Environmental Change (Direct Action)

- ❑ Confrontation with offending group or individual
- ❑ Complain to resource staff

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Management Implications

- Hard to know if people are being displaced and how people are coping
- Some things we can "manage" & some are outside our control
- Set realistic visitor expectations
- Increased need for open communication between visitors and resource staff

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Management Implications

- Probe to find out what is underlying reported "conflict"
- Who do you manage for: the sensitive few or the majority?
- Addition of temporal and further spatial dimensions to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (Hells Canyon)
- Expect and plan for displacement (regional planning, increased use during non-peak times)

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