



## Eustress Vs Distress-A Review

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### Abstract:

*In daily life, we often use the term "stress" to describe negative situations. This leads many people to believe that all stress is bad for you, which is not true. Eustress means beneficial stress-either psychological, physical (e.g. exercise), or biochemical/radiological (hormesis). The term was coined by endocrinologist Hans Selye, consisting of the Greek prefix eu- meaning "good", and stress, literally meaning "good stress".*

*It is typically assumed that experiencing chronic stress, either in the form of distress or eustress, is negative. However, eustress can instead fuel physiological thriving by positively influencing the underlying biological processes implicated in physical recovery and immunity.*

**Keywords:** *Eustress, Distress*

### 1. Stress is not always a bad thing.

Stress is simply the body's response to changes that create taxing demands. The previously mentioned Dr. Lazarus (building on Dr. Selye's work) suggested that there is a difference between eustress, which is a term for positive stress, and distress, which refers to negative stress.

### 2. Definition

**Eustress** occurs when the gap between what one has and what one wants is slightly pushed, but not overwhelmed. The goal is not too far out of reach but is still slightly more than one can handle. This fosters challenge and motivation since the goal is in sight. The function of challenge is to motivate a person toward improvement and a goal

**Distress** is the most commonly referred to type of stress, having negative implications. It general term used to describe unpleasant feelings or emotions that impact your level of functioning in other words; it is psychological discomfort that interferes with your activities of daily living. Psychological Distress can result in negative views of the environment, others and the self.

### 3. Measurements

Eustress and distress may be measured on subjective levels such as of quality of life or work life, job pressure, psychological coping resources, complaints, over all stress level and mental health. The level of measurements mainly focuses on occupational, self efficacy, flow. The person will fall on eustress or distress depends upon their mental perception of stressor.

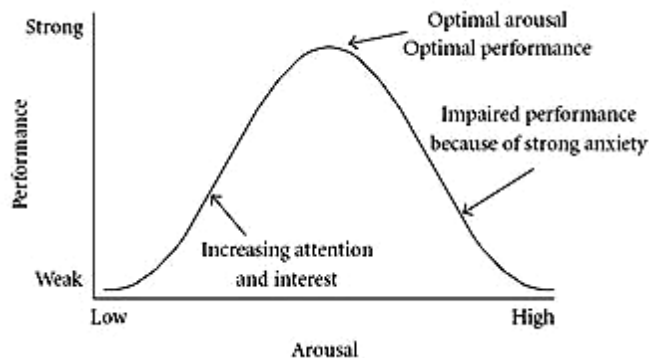
- Occupational
- Self Efficacy
- Flow

### 4. Occupational

In the workplace, stress can often be interpreted as a challenge, which generally denotes positive eustress, or as a hindrance, which refers to distress that interferes with one's ability to accomplish a job or task.

Eustress creates a better environment for employees, which makes them perform better and cost less. Eustress is necessary for achievement. Eustress is related to well-being and positive attitudes and thus increases work performance.

Techniques such as Stress Management Interventions (SMI) have been employed to increase occupational eustress. SMI's often incorporate exercise, meditation, and relaxation techniques to decrease distress and increase positive perceptions of stress in the workplace. Rather than decrease stress in the workplace, SMI techniques attempt to increase eustress with positive reactions to stressful stimuli.



Distress is the most commonly referred to type of stress, having negative implications, whereas eustress is usually related to desirable events in a person's life. Selye first differentiated the two in an article he wrote in 1975. In this article Selye argued that persistent stress that is not resolved through coping or adaptation should be known as distress, and may lead to anxiety, withdrawal, and depressive behavior.

## 5. Self Efficacy

Eustress is primarily based on perceptions. It is how you perceive your given situation and how you perceive your given task. It is not what is actually happening, but a person's perception of what is happening. Eustress is thus related to self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is one's judgment of how they can carry out a required task, action or role. Some contributing factors are a person's beliefs about the effectiveness about their options for courses of action and their ability to perform those actions. If a person has low self-efficacy, they will see the demand as more distressful than eustressful because the perceived level of what the person has is lower. When a person has high self-efficacy, they can skill in order to set goals higher and be motivated to achieve them. The goal then is to increase self-efficacy and enable people to increase eustress.

## 6. Flow

When an individual appraises a situation as stressful, they add the label for distress or eustress to the issue at hand. If a situation induces eustress, the person may feel motivated and can experience flow. Positive psychologist, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, created this concept which is described as the moments when one is completely absorbed into an enjoyable activity with no awareness of surroundings. Flow is an extremely productive state in which an individual experiences their prime performance. The core elements are absorption, enjoyment and intrinsic motivation. Flow is considered a peak experience or "the single most joyous, happiest, most blissful moment of your life."

## 7. Characteristic of Eustress and Distress

**Eustress, or positive stress**, has the following characteristics:

- Motivates, focuses energy.
- Is short-term.
- Is perceived as within our coping abilities.
- Feels exciting.
- Improves performance.

## 8. Distress

In contrast, **Distress**, or negative stress, has the following characteristics:

- Causes anxiety or concern.

- Can be short- or long-term.
- Is perceived as outside of our coping abilities.
- Feels unpleasant.
- Decreases performance.
- Can lead to mental and physical problems.

### 9. Examples of Eustress and Distress

It is somewhat hard to categorize stressors into objective lists of those that cause eustress and those that cause distress, because different people will have different reactions to particular situations. However, by generalizing, we can compile a list of stressors that are typically experienced as negative or positive to most people, most of the time. Examples of negative personal stressors include:

- The death of a spouse.
- Filing for divorce.
- Losing contact with loved ones.
- The death of a family member.
- Hospitalization (oneself or a family member).
- Injury or illness (oneself or a family member).
- Being abused or neglected.
- Separation from a spouse or committed relationship partner.
- Conflict in interpersonal relationships.
- Bankruptcy/Money Problems.
- Unemployment.
- Sleep problems.
- Children's problems at school.
- Legal problems.
- Examples of positive personal stressors include:
- Receiving a promotion or raise at work.
- Starting a new job.
- Marriage.
- Buying a home.
- Having a child.
- Moving.
- Taking a vacation.
- Holiday seasons.
- Retiring.

### 10. Management of Eustress and Distress

Everyone needs a little bit of stress in their life in order to continue to be happy, motivated, challenged and productive. It is when this stress is no longer tolerable and/or manageable that distress comes in. Bad stress, or distress, is when the good stress becomes too much to bear or cope with. Tension builds, there is no longer any fun in the challenge, there seems to be no relief, no end in sight. This is the kind of stress most of us are familiar with and this is the kind of stress that leads to poor decision making. Physiological symptoms of distress include and increase in blood pressure, rapid breathing and generalized tension. Behavioral symptoms include overeating, loss of appetite, drinking, smoking and negative coping mechanisms. Stress tolerance is the power to endure stress. If you feel stress, lose against or not all depends on your stress tolerance. A person's tolerance to stress is not only different according to the person but is also influenced by time and condition. So tolerance to stress may differ largely to the same person according to the time and condition in which it is experienced. Mainly, the personality and physique, environment and condition change the strength of tolerance to stress.

The trick to coping with stress is not to expect that you can eliminate it; but rather, to manage the symptoms of stress. Teaching you how to do that has become a multi-million dollar industry. But in the end, it all boils down to a few good tried-and-true skills you can learn and the willingness to work at it.

### 11. Ways to Become Stress-Resistant

- Stop feeling guilty.
- Be decisive.
- Avoid being a perfectionist.
- Set priorities for yourself.
- Stop procrastinating.
- Praise yourself.

### 12. Conclusion

It is therefore important to have a better understanding of both distress and eustress to separate the grain from the chaff.

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