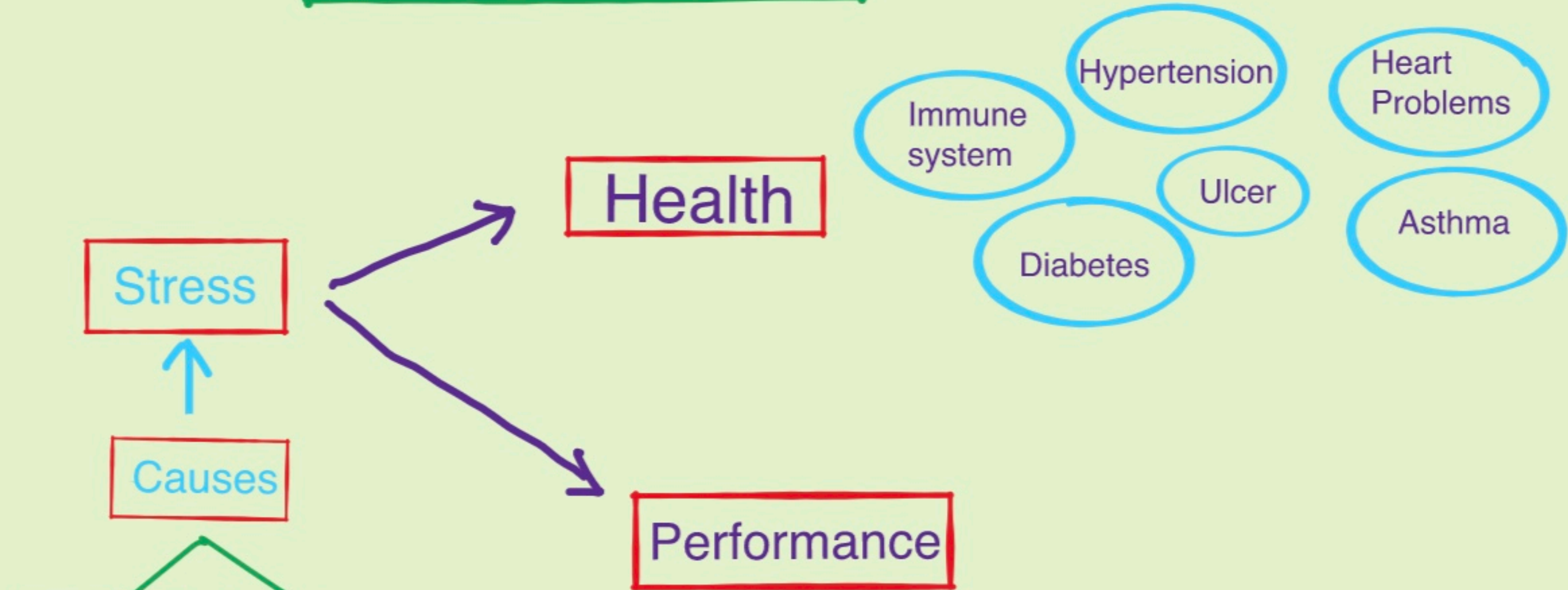


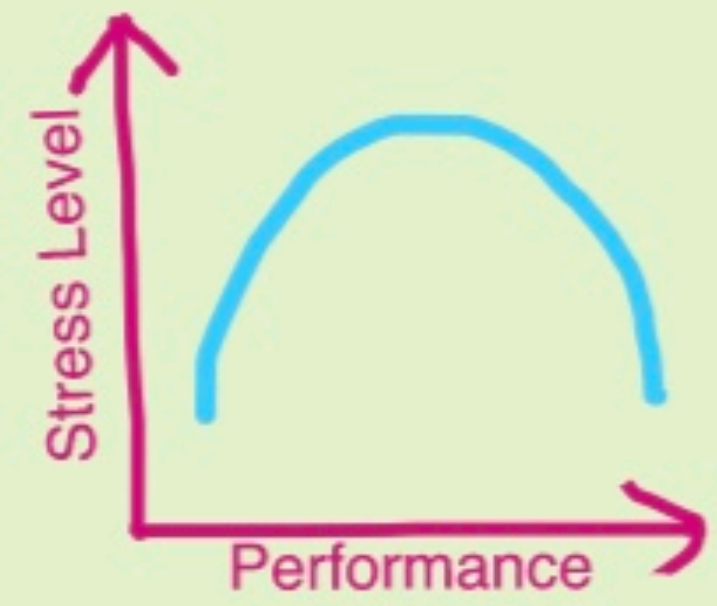
Meeting Life Challenges

Chapter 3

Chapter 3



Internal External



Cognitive Appraisal of Stress

Primary

Secondary

General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS)
by Hans Selye

Meaning of "Stress"

Stress Management

Effective

Ineffective

Chapter 3

- What is stress ?
- What are the causes of stress ?

Causes of Stress

- What is stress ?

Stress refers to our **response to events** that disrupt, or threaten to disrupt, our physical or psychological functioning.

Eustress - term used for the level of stress that leads to improvement or gains in performance.

Distress - term used for the level of stress which has adverse effects on the person's performance.

Causes of Stress

- What are the causes of stress ?

Stressors cause stress.

- What are stressors ?

Stressors are events or situations in our environment that cause stress.

Stressors are of two kind - positive and negative stressor.

Positive stressor - positive events that cause stress, such as marriage, birth of a child.

Negative stressor - negative events that cause stress, such as death of a loved one, failing in examination, meeting an accident

Causes of Stress

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graph TD; A[Causes of Stress] --> B[External/Situational]; A --> C[Internal/Dispositional];
```

External/ Situational

- Major life events (p.56)
- Minor hassles of everyday life (p.57)
- Work related causes
- Physical environment (p.55)

Internal/ Dispositional

- Personality type
- Personality variables
 - Attribution Style
 - Locus of control
 - Hardiness
 - Coping strategy

Causes of Stress: Dispositional/Internal

- **What are dispositional/internal causes of stress ?**

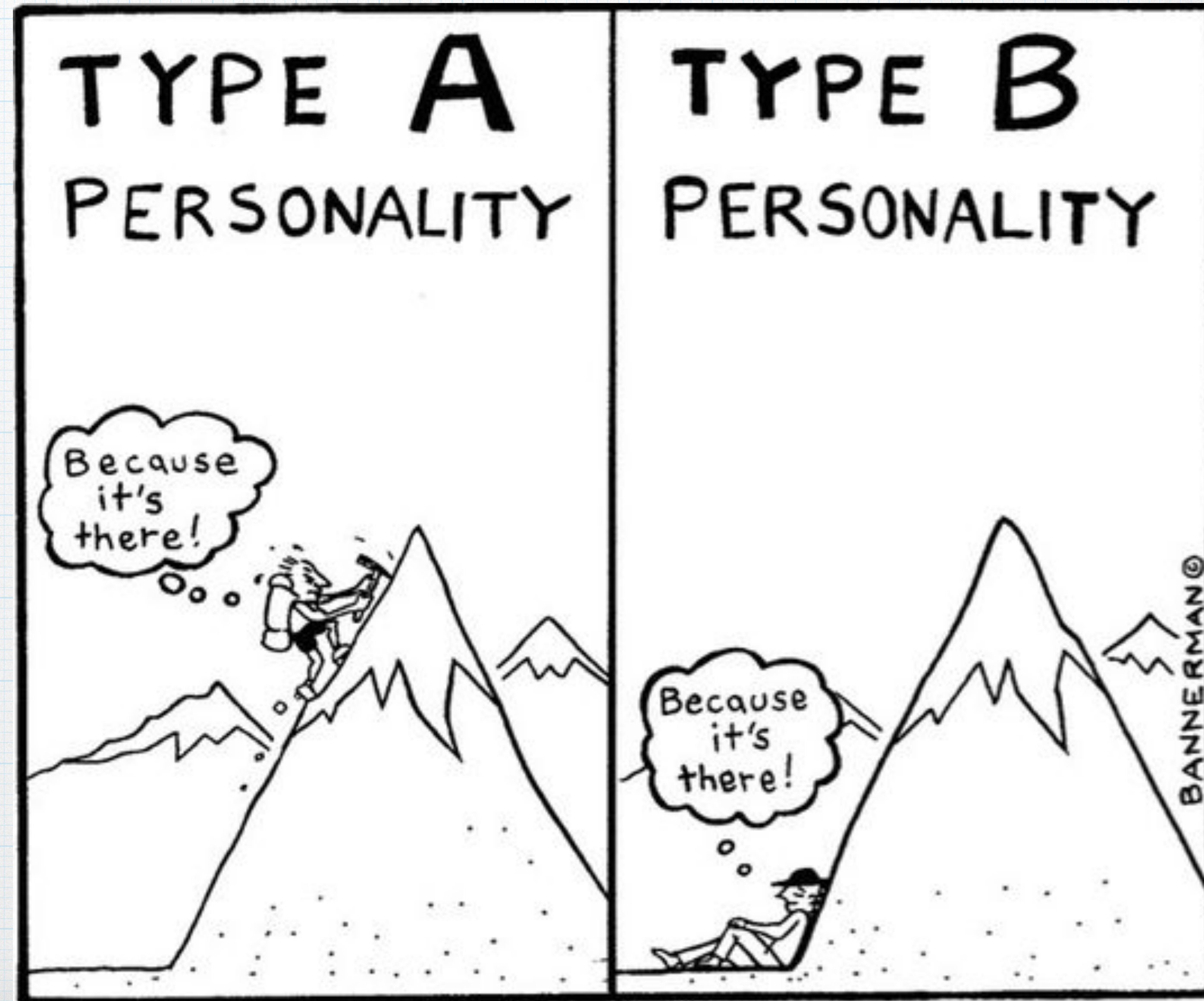
Dispositional or internal causes of stress are the qualities or attributes of the person. These comprise of personality types and personality variables within the person, that may cause or increase stress for a person. They are given as under.

- 1. Personality Type**
- 2. Attribution Style**
- 3. Locus of Control**
- 4. Hardiness**
- 5. Problem focused coping**

Causes of Stress: Dispositional/Internal

1. Personality Type

People with **Type A** personality are **more prone to stress**. The defining features of a type A personality are, competitiveness, aggression & hostility, inability to relax, always in a hurry and, difficulty relaxing. Type A personality people are prone to hypertension and coronary heart disease. On the contrary, **Type B** Personality is relaxed and easy going, and hence, not prone to stress. **Type C** and **Type D** personality also do not show a proneness for stress.



Causes of Stress: Dispositional/Internal

2. Attribution Style: refers to the manner in which causes are assigned for events/situations in one's life.

The attribution of positive events to **stable, global and internal** factors, and the attribution of negative events to **external, unstable and specific** factors, is considered to be a "healthy" attributional style. For instance, "I topped the exam because I am intelligent" is an example of stable, global and internal attribution style. Whereas "I failed the exam because the question paper was weird", is an example of external, unstable and specific attribution style.

On the contrary, the attribution of negative events to **internal, stable and global** causes is hypothesized to be "unhealthy" attribution style.

People who use **internal, stable and global** style for positive events, and, **external, unstable and specific** style for negative events are less likely to experience stress.

Causes of Stress: Dispositional/Internal

3. Locus of Control

People with **external locus of control** - tend to behave in response to external circumstances and tend to perceive their life events as out of their control. Such people are more prone to experiencing stress. They also lack inner resources to handle stress.

People with an **internal locus of control** tend to behave in response to their internal states and intentions and tend to perceive their life events as a result of their own agency and abilities. People with internal locus of control tend to handle stress effectively and hence are less affected by stress. They seem to believe in their ability to handle stress, and also feel themselves to be in greater control of their life situations than people with external locus of control.

Causes of Stress: Dispositional/Internal

4. Personality characteristic of Hardiness

Hardiness is a personality attribute which consists of the following:

- **commitment:** committed to work, family, hobbies and social life.
- **Control:** feel themselves to be in control of their life events and situations
- **Challenge:** view changes/stressors in their life as normal and positive rather than as threat. Research has revealed that people high on "Hardiness" are less prone to experiencing stress. In stressful situations, they are much more capable in lessening the impact of stressors, than those who are low on hardiness. (P. 63)

Causes of Stress: Dispositional/Internal

5. Problem focused coping

Problem focused coping means resolving the stressful situation or event by altering the source of the stress. This kind of stress handling involves an attempt to work on the factors/situation that causes stress.

Emotion focused coping refers to an attempt on the part of the person to get rid of the unpleasant emotions caused by the stressful situation.

Research has revealed that problem focused coping leads to less stress experience as opposed to emotion focused coping. (P. 62)