
The Stress Buffering Hypothesis And Its Essence

Physician and epidemiologist John Cassel and psychiatrist Sidney Cobb formally proposed the stress buffering hypothesis in 1976. Both the researchers argued upon the idea that individuals with strong social bonds were protected from the potential pathogenic effects of stress generating events. Cassel thought that when an individual received a bewildering or an absent feedback from the social environment, then this acted as a potential stressor which placed the individuals at a risk of a disease. On the other hand when the individuals received a consistent and a constructive feedback on what is expected of them then it leads to the mitigation of these stressors. Along the similar lines.

The buffering model posits that social support buffered or protected persons from the potentially pathogenic influence of traumatic events and also proposed that it was related to well being for persons specifically under stress

Social support may provide protection from potentially stressful situations by playing a role at two distinct points in the causal chain that linked stress to psychological health.

In the initial stage, social support may have intervened between the stressful event and stress reaction by attenuating a stress appraisal response. The potential for harm posed by the situation and/or bolster one's perceived ability to cope with the imposed demands may be reconstructed by the perception that the essential social resources would be provided by the social networks. Thus the individual would refrain from appraising situation as highly stressful. Also adequate social support may have interfered with the experiencing stress and the onset of the pathological outcome by redirecting or eliminating the stress reaction or by directly influencing physiological processes. Support may alleviate the impact of stress appraisal by providing a solution to the problem by reducing the perceived importance of the problem, by tranquilizing the neuroendocrine system so that people are less reactive to perceived stress or by facilitating healthful behaviors.

Several types of social support have been delineated and it was posited that they were differentially useful for a range of stressors. The stress support matching hypothesis suggested that the potential benefit of a support type was dependent on which function would be most effective in for a particular stressful event. According to Cohen and Wills 1985, emotional support provided protection during various range of stressful situations, while other kinds of social support seemed to have responded to more specifically to specific needs elicited by stressful events. Consistent evidence can be found for buffering hypothesis when the methodological constraints are met like study to have a large sample size, reasonable distribution of stress and support measures.