



Session aims

- Stress indicators in yourself and others
- Stages of the stress response
- The stress continuum
- Balancing demands with resources
- Sources of support



Stress has nothing to do with
how many hours you work

And everything to do with how
you feel during those hours

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definitions

- 'The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them.' HSE
- *'Stress occurs when pressure exceeds your perceived ability to cope'. Palmer (1999)*
- 'Complete freedom from stress is death!' Henry Ford (1922)

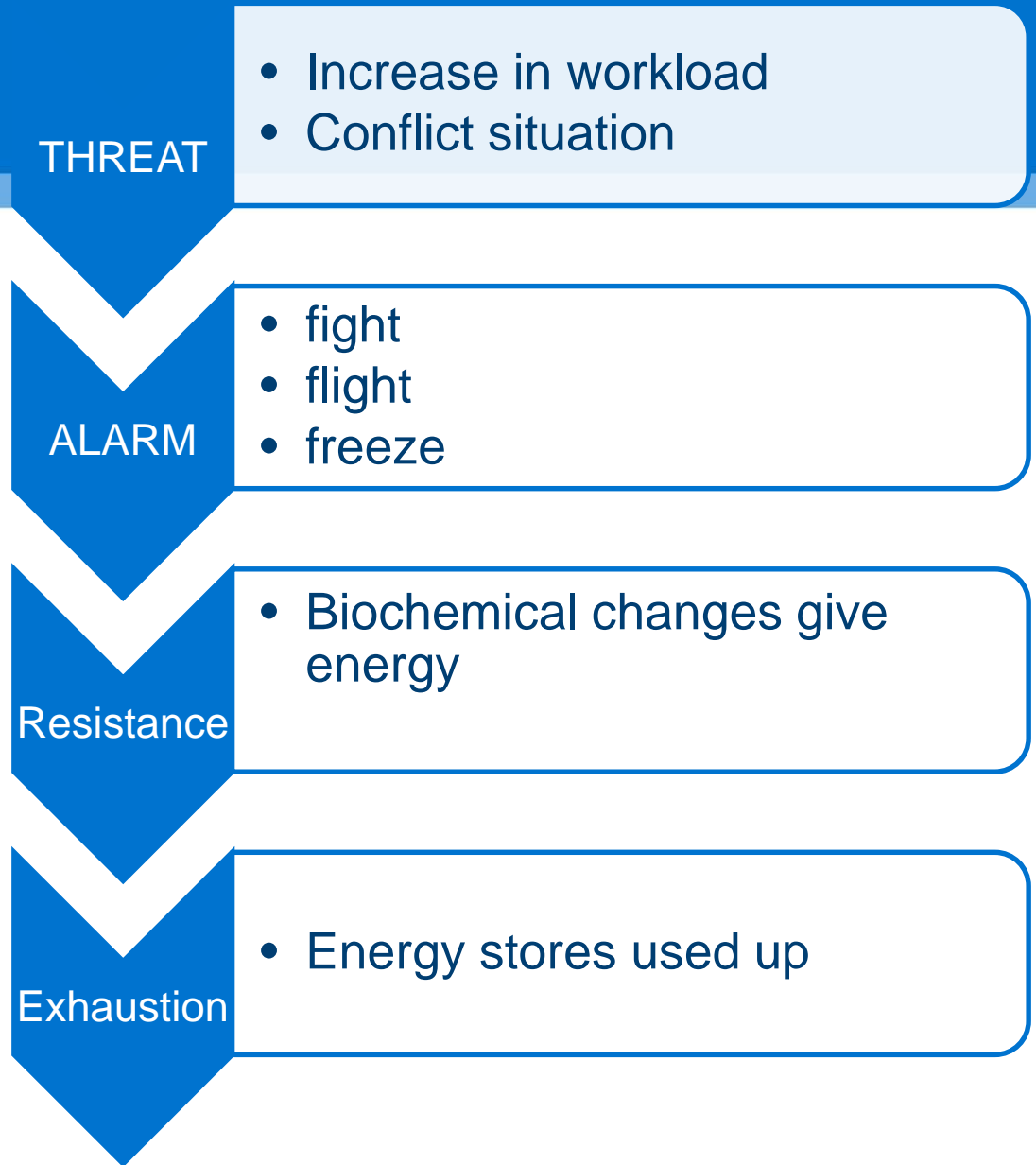
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Stress = response to perceived threat

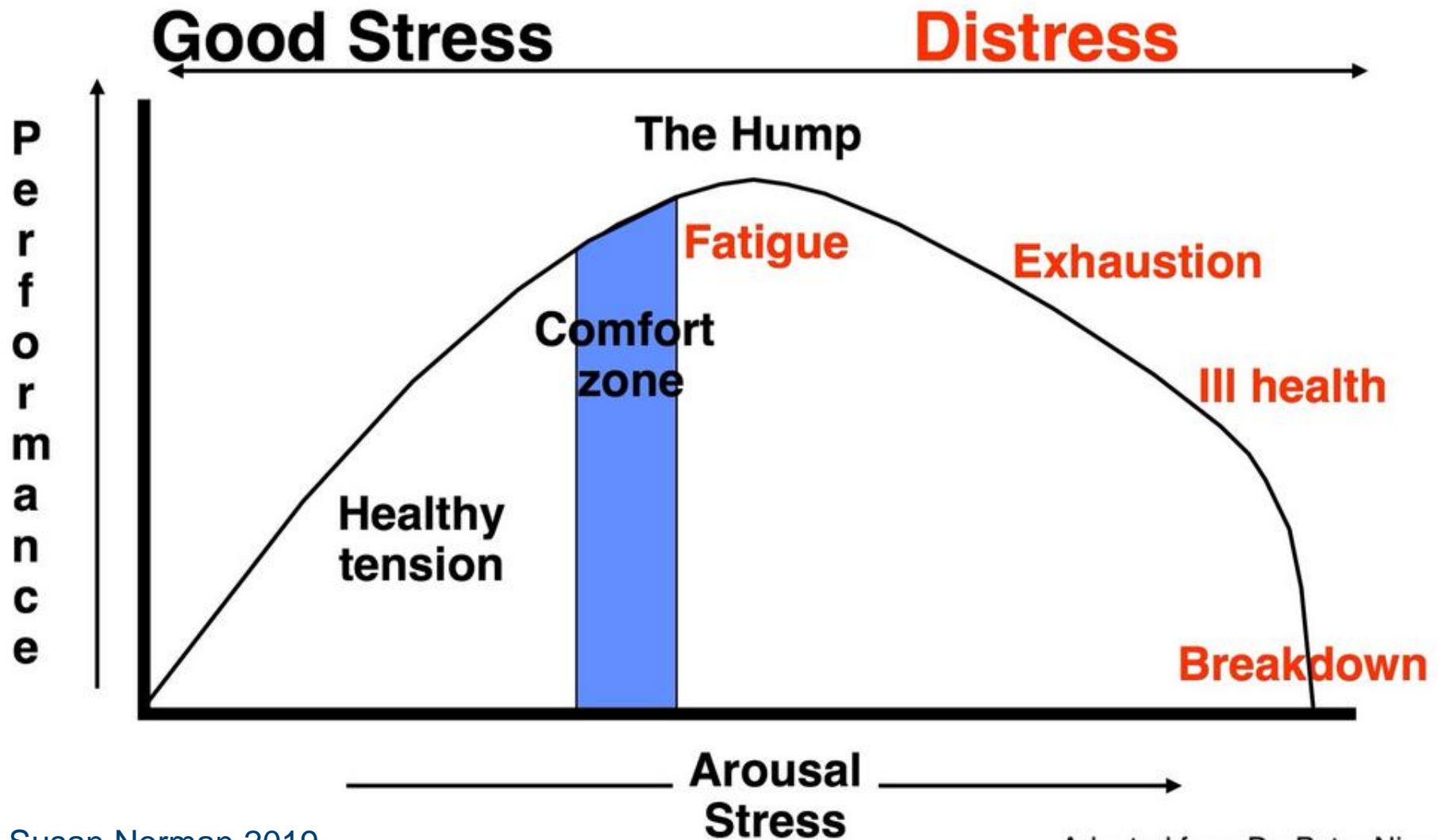


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Stages of the stress response



The Human Function Curve



Stress continuum

- Moderate stress levels improve performance
- Too much stress impairs performance
- Too little stress stifles motivation



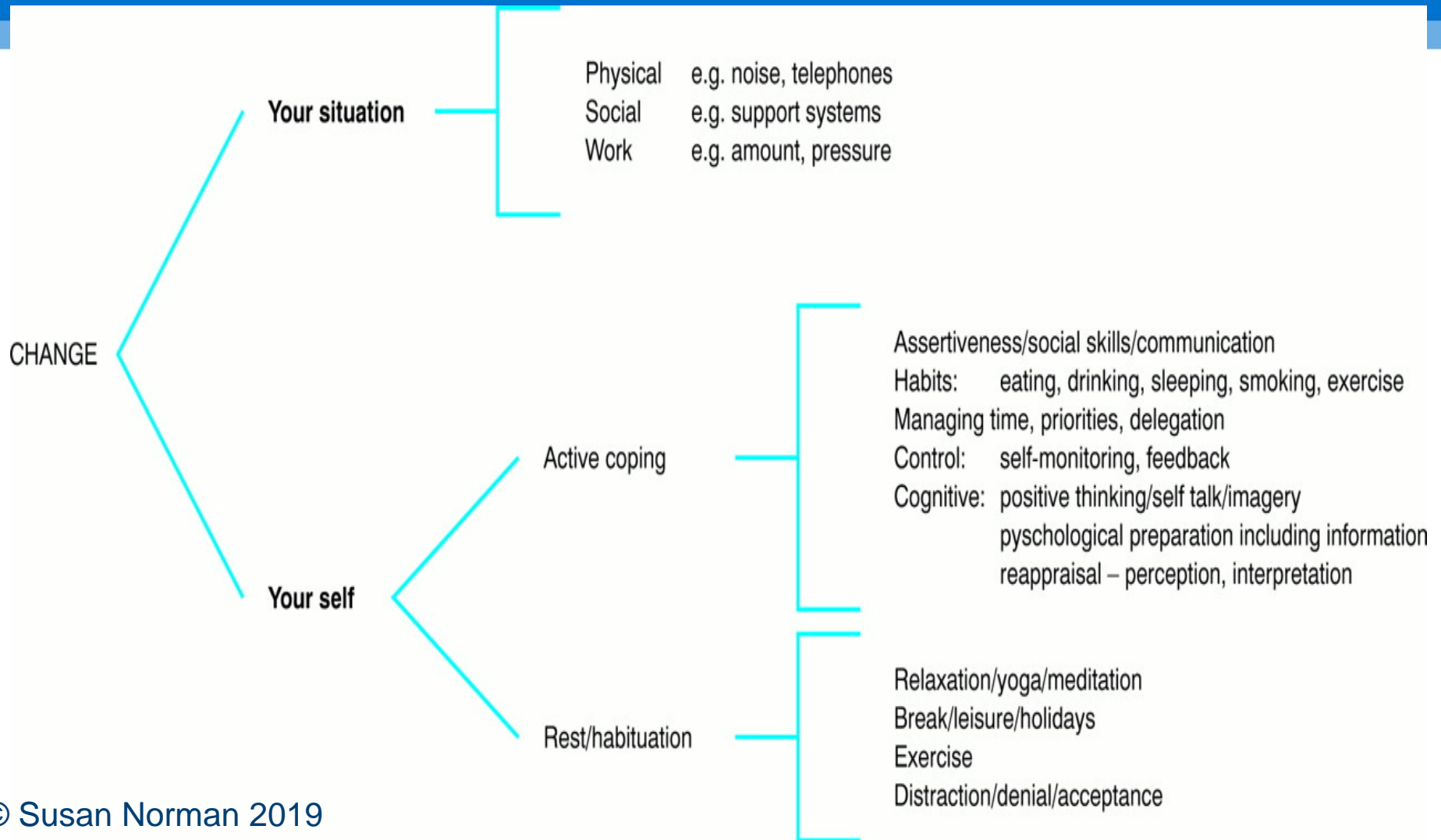
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Identifying stress

- stress in individuals can be assessed scientifically by measuring the levels of two hormones produced by the adrenal glands:
- cortisol and DHEA (dehydroepiandrosterone)
- most of us do not have ready access to these methods so must rely on other signs.

When am I most vulnerable to dis-stress?

- Particular time of the day (8.00; 16.55)
- Particular day of the week (Monday or Fridays)
- Particular time of the month - bills at end of month, hormonal cycle
- Particular time of the year – winter blues, Christmas, anniversary of significant events



Inner dialogue

- What we tell ourselves during stressful situations
 - *There's too much for me to do: I can't cope with this work load*
- Re-frame
 - *I have a number of demands and may want some support*
 - *I feel excited about this challenge*

Desk stress

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6uGyxVxgJ4>

What we can do (1) short term stress: sudden, provokes a reaction

- identify the cause, change that if possible
- talk to manager/colleague/friend/family
- take deep breaths, go for a walk
- make a plan on how to deal with the situation - take control
- get support from manager/colleagues etc.

What we can do (2) long term stress: ongoing situation, draining

- identify the cause, change that if possible
- talk to manager, colleagues, friends and family
- take control - prioritise, make a plan, set achievable targets
- exercise
- sleep
- have a balanced diet
- actively relax - meditate, breathe, practice mindfulness - apps for this
- take time off
- help others - ask for help - seek support

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What we can do

- Find something to laugh about - laughter and stress don't mix - stress loses
- Take some physical exercise every day. Brisk walks between meetings; walking up stairs instead of lifts
- Choose a place on your journey home to leave work issues – pick them up there again in the morning
- Practice mindfulness
- Re-frame how we see situations
- Recognise what we can and can't change

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Sleep apps (Google Play)

- Calm: sleep aid and meditation app
- Headspace: guided meditations for stress and sleep problems
- Pzizz: meditations and dreamscapes to aid rest and capacity to focus

Sources of support

- Line manager
- Mentor
- University Counselling Service - 01223 (3)32865,
<http://www.counselling.cam.ac.uk/>
- Occupational Health Service - 01223 (3)36594,
<http://www.oh.admin.cam.ac.uk/>
- GP
- HR Office – hr-office@eng.cam.ac.uk
- PPD – <https://www.ppd.admin.cam.ac.uk/>

Further training: Managing Stress During Times of Uncertainty

Judge Institute, 19 March 2019 at 2pm

The University Staff Counselling Service is offering this workshop for all staff.

By attending this workshop you will learn:

- why you feel anxious and stressed and what is happening in your body
- what you can do about anxiety in the short-term
- how to spot medium and longer term symptoms of stress in yourself and others
- how to take responsibility for yourself when stressed
- sources of support in the university and outside
- Above all you will come away with a new way of thinking about stress.

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Summary

- Stress is a natural element of our lives
- Perceived lack of control can cause stress
- Building personal resources to counter-balance demands will minimise stress levels
- Seek help if necessary

