



# Session aims

- to have an awareness of stress in yourself and others
- to be aware of stress risk factors
- to have a plan of action to detect and remedy excessive stress

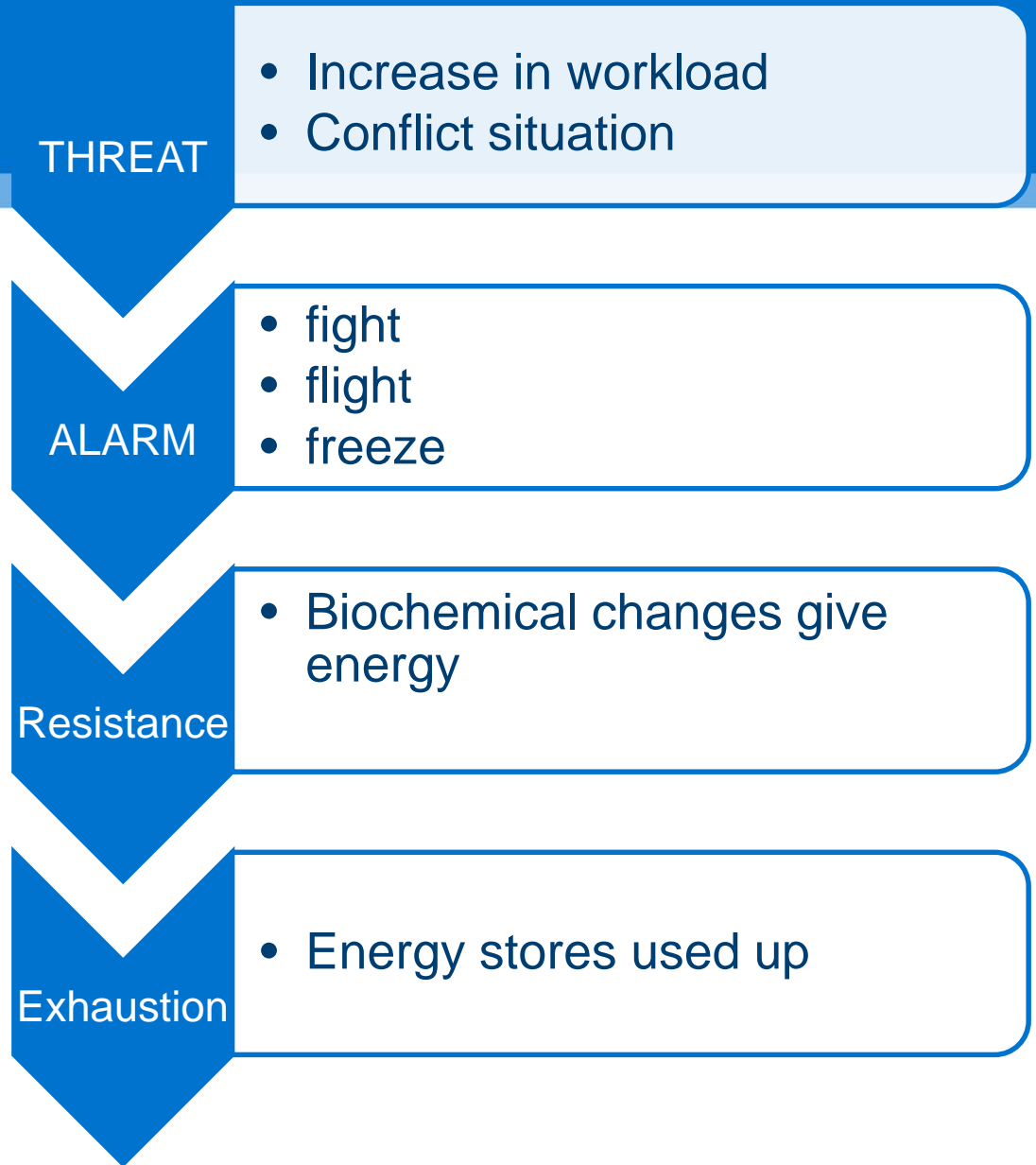
# definitions

- '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)

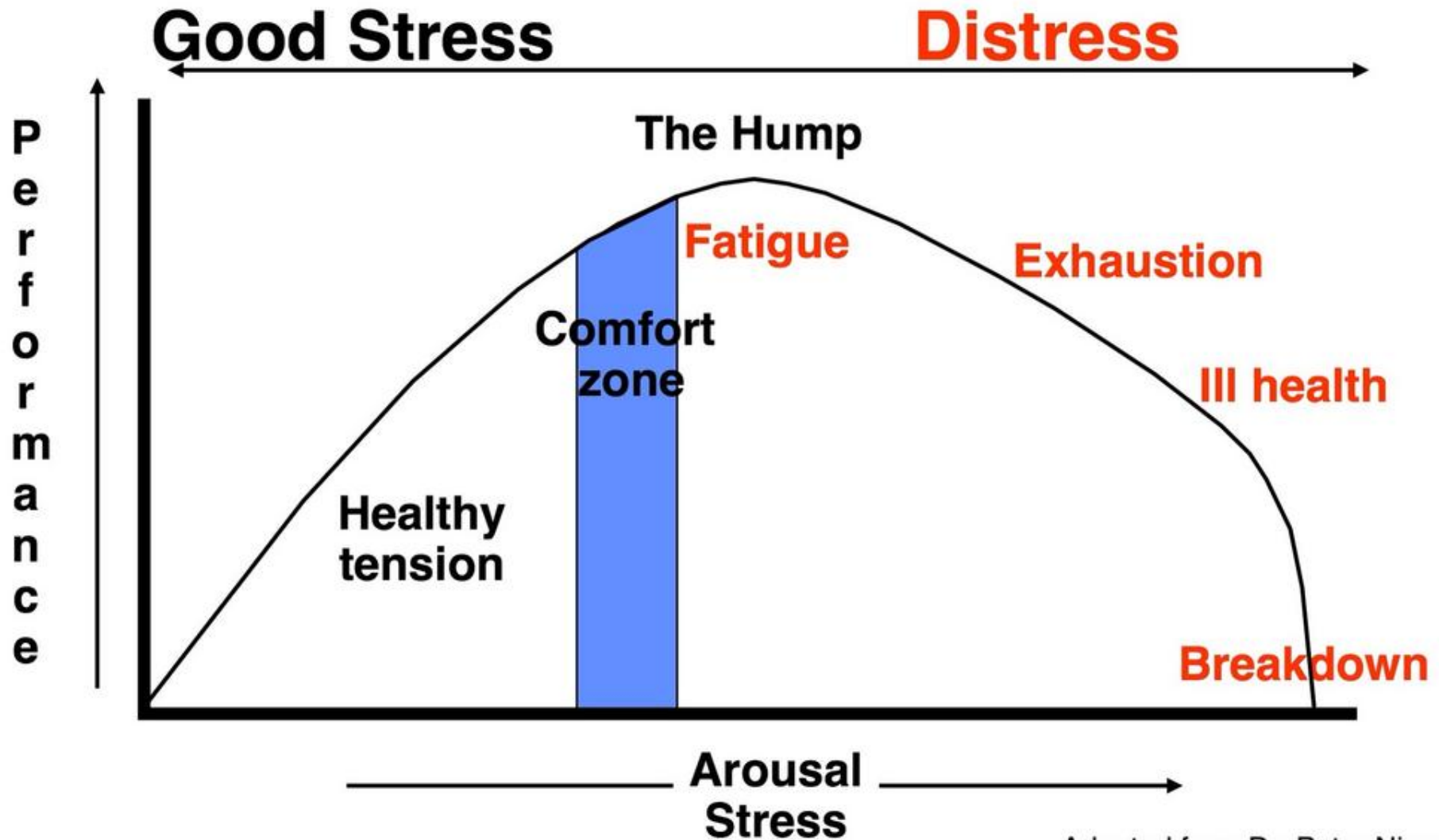
# Stress = response to perceived threat



# Stages of the stress response



# The Human Function Curve



Adapted from Dr. Peter Nixon

# Stress continuum

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



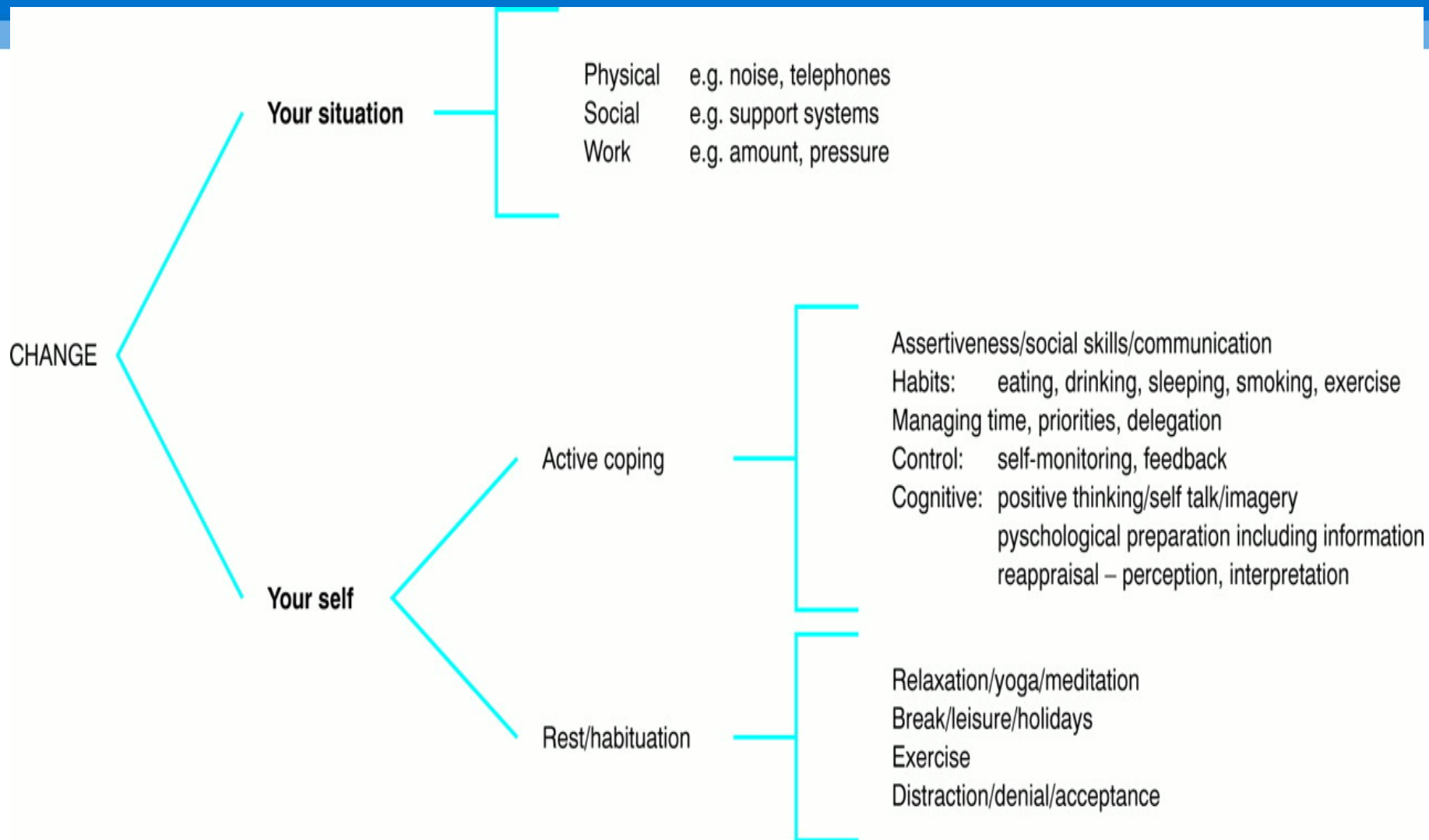
# Identifying stress

- 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*

# Desk stress

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

# 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
- Re-frame how we see situations
- Recognise what we can and can't change

# 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

