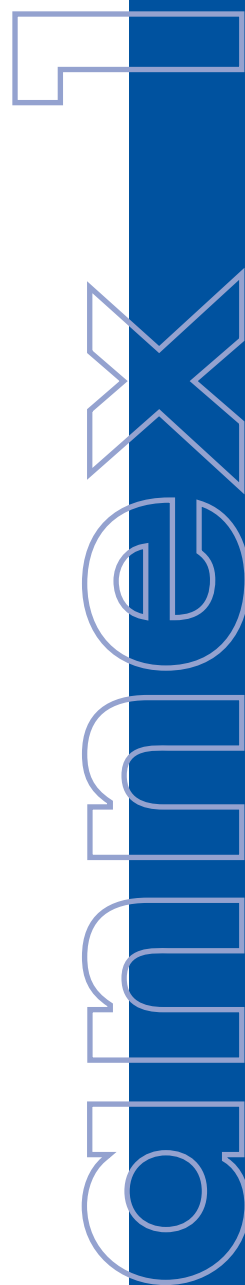


Annex 1

Terminology of stress and coping

Stress	This is a very broad term referring to the effect of anything in life to which people must adjust. For instance, anything we consider challenging causes stress, even if it is something we willingly choose to do. The key is that stress requires us to adjust our attention and behaviour and makes demands upon our energy.
Stressor	Quite simply, a stressor is anything that has the effect of causing stress. The Module 2 example, rain, is the stressor that causes stress.
Stress capacity	While it is unclear precisely how much stress a person can carry, since each person has some stress in their lives, we say he/she has a capacity for stress. This idea can be compared to a water jug. A small jug might have only a capacity of one litre, whereas a larger jug might carry ten litres. If you try to pour a full ten-litre jug into an empty one-litre jug, you will quickly exceed the smaller jug's capacity for holding water. Similarly, once a person has absorbed a great deal of stress, they may have very little remaining stress capacity.
Stress-load	Everyone, even children, must carry some amount of stress in their daily lives. When we think of stress as having an amount, or quantity, we refer to this as the person's stress-load. As in the example of the water jugs, stress-load is like the amount of water already in the jug. Any increase in a person's stress-load will mean a decrease in that person's remaining stress capacity.
Coping	<p>Coping is a broad term, referring to anything people do to adjust to the challenges and demands of stress. At the very least, coping consists of any adjustments made to reduce the negative impact of the stress. In this way, coping can succeed in reducing the stress-load.</p> <p>For example, if a jug is nearly full, one way of coping would be to pour some of the water into another container, drink it, or give water to plants or animals. These would all be constructive ways of coping before the jug became too full and began to spill.</p> <p>Another constructive approach might be to acquire more jugs or a larger jug, a strategy that would increase capacity. In this way, no water is wasted and the total holding capacity for water (or for stress) is not exceeded.</p>



It might also be the case that the jug is ignored and overflows. Or possibly, the water could be wasted by being poured out anywhere. In other words, the way of coping is ineffective or causes other problems. This is also an option, as not all coping is constructive. Typically, however, people cope well with stress either by reducing their stress-load or by increasing their stress capacity, which can also be called their coping capacity. Stress capacity equals coping capacity because a person can sustain the same amount of stress as they can cope with at any given time.

Emotion-focused coping These are coping techniques that are directed inwards in order to strengthen the emotional response to the stressor. Examples of emotion-focused coping include:

- Body awareness (e.g. listening to the signals your body gives you about breathing, muscle tension, exhaustion)
- Giving yourself permission to feel certain emotions (e.g. it is normal to feel a little queasy)
- Give yourself positive feedback and reinforcement (e.g. I am doing fine)
- Downgrading the experience (e.g. it could have been worse)
- Redefining the experience (e.g. seeing the event as an opportunity to develop or use new skills or to shut off temporarily any overwhelming feelings).

Problem-focused coping These are coping techniques that are directed outwards in order to change the environment. Examples of problem-focused coping include:

- Eliminating hazards such as clean-up following a disaster
- Rescue activities aimed at reducing risk to life and health
- Recovery activities aimed at providing affected people with resources to rebuild and replace their losses.

Adaptation Much of the coping and adaptation of people affected by disaster will require some form of personal transformation before they are fully able to recover and return to their previous level of functioning. Adaptation refers to an improvement in the relationship between people and their altered circumstances. This is accomplished by forms of coping that result in people regaining their equilibrium and becoming accustomed and successful in their new reality, which may include changes in some of their previously held beliefs.

