

## What is stress?

### Stress:

A negative emotional state occurring in response to events that are perceived as taxing or exceeding a person's resources or ability to cope. (page 489).



# Stress and Appraisal

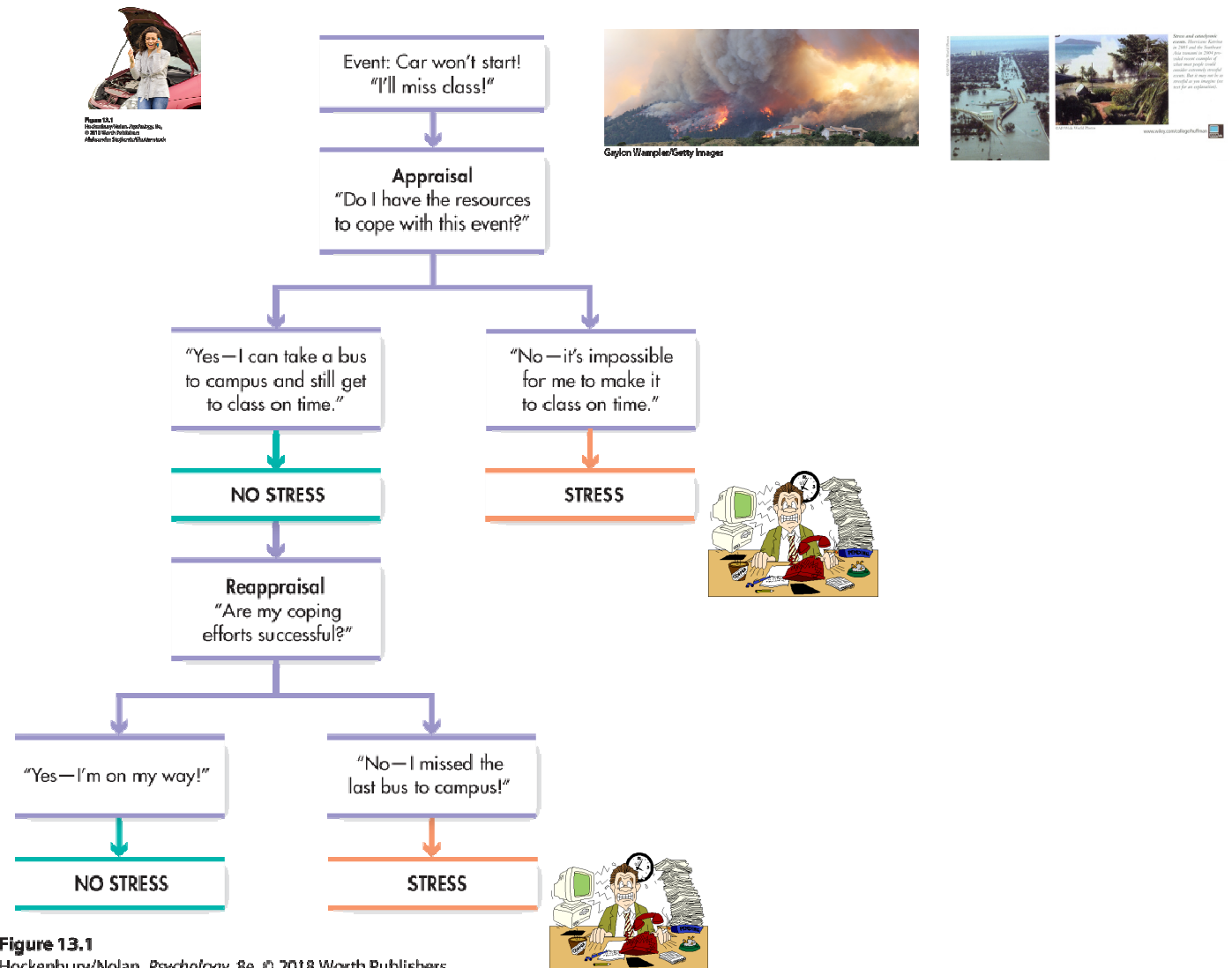


Figure 13.1  
Hockenbury/Nolan, *Psychology*, 8e, © 2018 Worth Publishers

# Stress and Appraisal

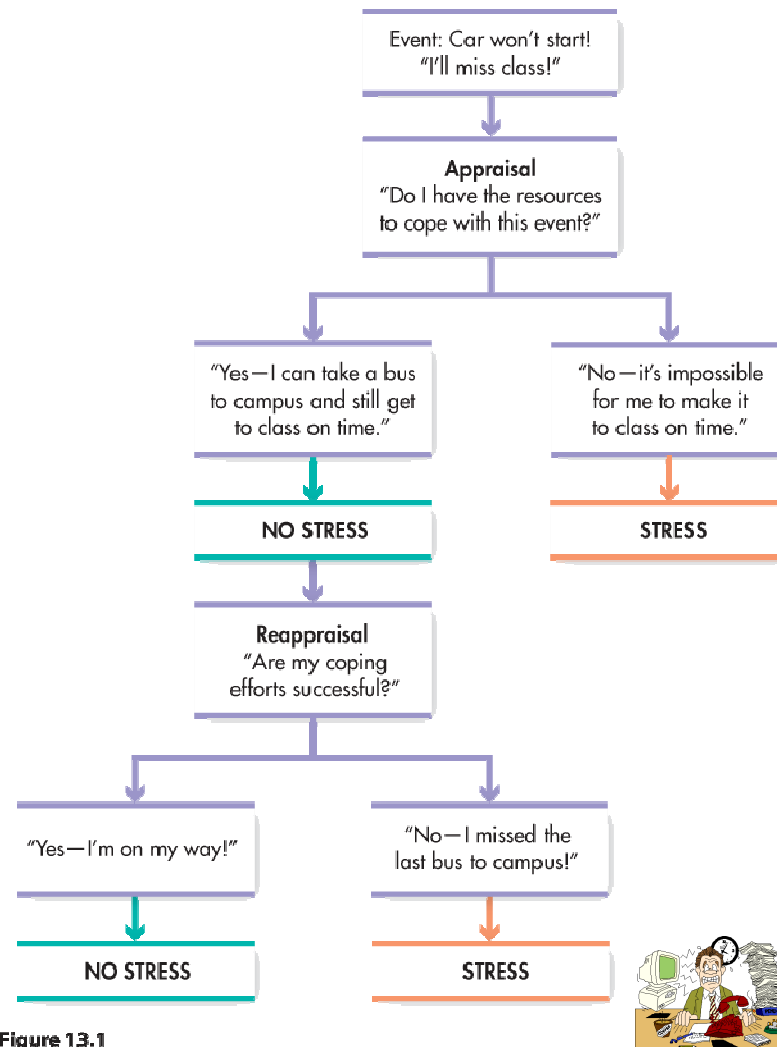
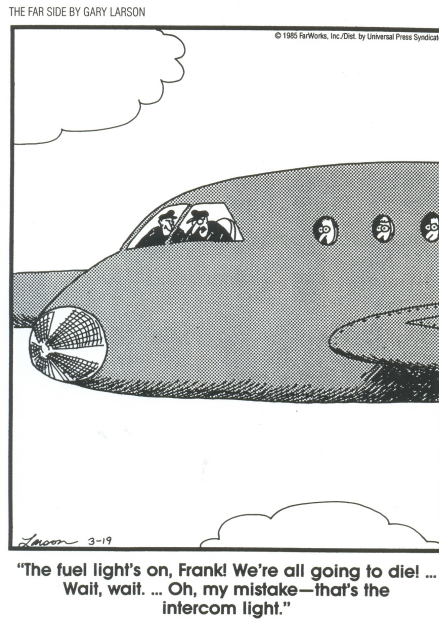


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Hockenbury/Nolan, *Psychology*, 8e, © 2018 Worth Publishers

## **Psychological Reactions: Stress Interpretation**

The interpretation of whether or not an event or stimulus is stressful is called the primary appraisal.

- Is that a safe falling from the sky?
- Is the car really out of gas?
- Did I leave my homework at home?

The secondary appraisal is determining whether the stressor is something you can cope with.

- I wore my hard hat vs. I left it at home
- I have 5 gallons of gas for the lawn mower vs. I have no money, no gas and no one to call
- I can email it or it's 7:00 pm and I'm on a plane to Antarctica.
  
- If you believe you cannot handle it, you view the event or stressor as a threat.
- If you believe you can handle it, you view the event or stressor as a challenge.

## Stress: Warning Signs

How do we recognize when someone (including ourselves) is experiencing stress?

### Emotional signs

- Anxiety
- Apathy
- Irritability
- Mental fatigue

### Behavioral signs

- Avoidance of responsibilities and relationships
- Extreme or self-destructive behavior (e.g. cutting oneself)
- Self-neglect
- Poor judgment

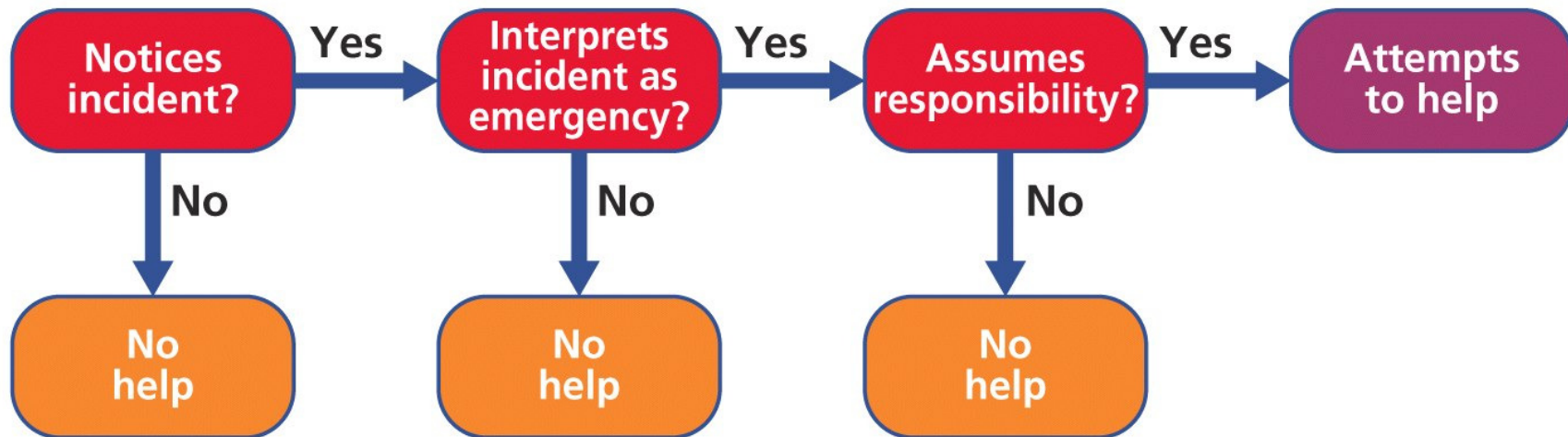
### Physical signs

- Frequent illness
- Exhaustion
- Overuse of medicines
- Physical ailments and complaints

Source: (Doctor and Doctor, 1994)



## Why is it important to recognize being stressed?





## Sources of Stress

- **Life Event and Change**
  - College Undergraduate Stress Scale (CUSS)
- Traumatic events
- Developing resilience
- **Daily Hassles**
- Work Stress and Burnout
- Social and Cultural Sources



## Sources of Stress: Life Events and Change

One early approach looked how an individual's life events and changes in their life produce stress.

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1. Death of a spouse 	100	12. Pregnancy 	40	26. Spouse begins or stops work 27. Begin or end school 28. Change in living conditions 29. Revision of personal habits 30. Trouble with boss 	26 26 25 24 23
2. Divorce 3. Marital separation 4. Jail term 	73 65 63	13. Sex difficulties 14. Gain of a new family member 	39 39	31. Change in work hours or conditions 32. Change in residence 33. Change in school 34. Change in recreation 35. Change in religious activities 36. Change in social activities 37. Loan less than \$50,000 38. Change in sleeping habits 	20 20 20 19 19 18 17 16
5. Death of a close family member 6. Personal injury or illness 7. Marriage 	63 53 50	15. Business readjustments 16. Change in financial state 17. Death of a close friend 18. Change to different line of work 19. Change in number of arguments with spouse 20. Mortgage over \$50,000 	39 38 37 36 35 31	39. Change in number of family get-togethers 40. Change in eating habits 	15 15
8. Fired at work 9. Marital reconciliation 10. Retirement 	47 45 45	21. Foreclosure of mortgage 22. Change in responsibilities at work 23. Son or daughter leaving home 24. Trouble with in-laws 25. Outstanding personal achievements 	30 29 29 29 28	41. Vacation 42. Holidays 43. Minor violation of laws	13 12 11
11. Change in health of family member 	44				

**Figure 10.1** Forty-Three Stressful Life Events from the Social Readjustment Rating Scale. Scoring: Each event should be considered if it's taken place in the past 12 months. Add values to the right of each item to obtain the total score. Your susceptibility to illness and mental health problems: Low < 149; Mild = 150–200; Moderate = 200–299; Major > 300. (Source: Holmes & Rahe, 1967)

## Sources of Stress: Life Events and Change

The Social Readjustment Rating Scale was adapted for college students.

TABLE 16.1

College Undergraduate Stress Scale			
Event	Stress Rating	Event	Stress Rating
Being raped	100	Talking in front of class	72
Finding out that you are HIV positive	100	Lack of sleep	69
Being accused of rape	98	Change in housing situation (hassles, moves)	69
Death of a close friend	97	Competing or performing in public	69
Death of a close family member	96	Getting in a physical fight	66
Contracting a sexually transmitted disease (other than AIDS)	94	Difficulties with a roommate	66
		Job changes (applying, new job, work hassles)	65
Concerns about being pregnant	91	Declaring a major or concerns about future plans	65
Finals week	90	A class you hate	62
Concerns about your partner being pregnant	90	Drinking or use of drugs	61
Oversleeping for an exam	89	Confrontations with professors	60
Flunking a class	89	Starting a new semester	58
Having a boyfriend or girlfriend cheat on you	85	Going on a first date	57
Ending a steady dating relationship	85	Registration	55
Serious illness in a close friend or family member	85	Maintaining a steady dating relationship	55
Financial difficulties	84	Commuting to campus or work or both	54
Writing a major term paper	83	Peer pressures	53
Being caught cheating on a test	83	Being away from home for the first time	53
Drunk driving	82	Getting sick	52
Sense of overload in school or work	82	Concerns about your appearance	52
Two exams in one day	80	Getting straight A's	51
Cheating on your boyfriend or girlfriend	77	A difficult class that you love	48
Getting married	76	Making new friends; getting along with friends	47
Negative consequences of drinking or drug use	75	Fraternity or sorority rush	47
Depression or crisis in your best friend	73	Falling asleep in class	40
Difficulties with parents	73	Attending an athletic event	20

Source: Renner & Mackin (1998). Note: To compute your personal life change score, sum the stress ratings for all events that have happened to you in the last year.

Life events can cause stress in that your expectations and what is expected of you may change. For example, stress tends to increase in a family when the first child is born due to changes in roles and responsibilities.

## Sources of Stress: Daily Hassles

Chronic stressors are a source of stress that occurs continuously or repeatedly.

Those who report having a lot of daily hassles also report more psychological symptoms and physical symptoms of stress. These effects tend to have a greater and longer impact than major life changes.

### What are examples of daily hassles?

- Being late
- Losing your keys or wallet
- Waiting (in line for the bank, cash machine, for the doctor, at a traffic light)
- Cleaning up an unexpected mess
- Getting stuck in traffic
- Living near the airport



These stressors can be made more stressful when you are in a hurry.

## **Sources of Stress: Daily Hassles**

People who express negative emotions such as

- anxiety,
- depression,
- anger or
- hostility

report (perceive) more daily hassles than people who are generally in a positive mood, and they react much more intensely and with far greater distress to stressful events.

In addition, they may be more likely to experience an episode of absentmindedness.

## **Sources of Stress: Daily Hassles**

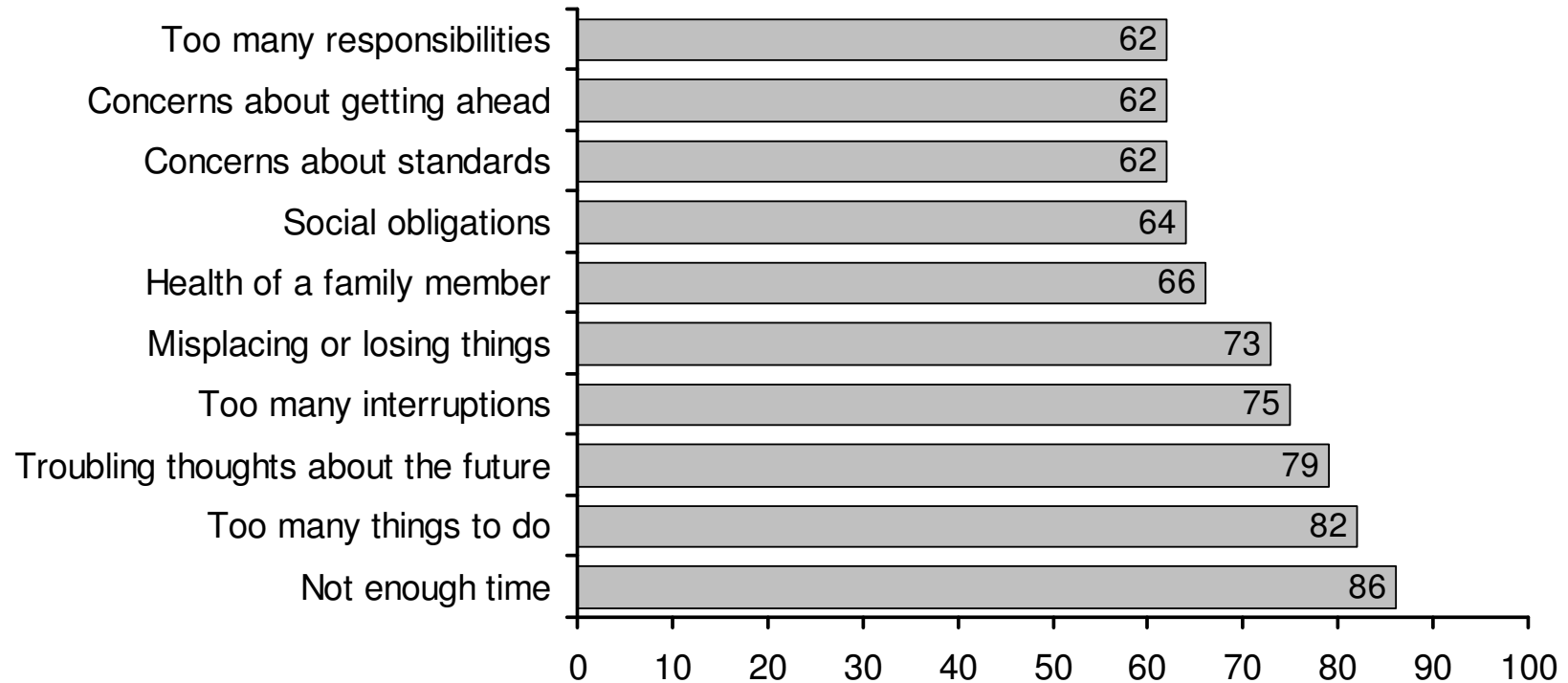
Married women experienced both more daily hassles than men and had higher levels of psychological stress than their husbands.

- For women, family demands and interpersonal conflicts were the most frequent cause of stress.
- For men, sources of daily hassles were financial and job-related problems.

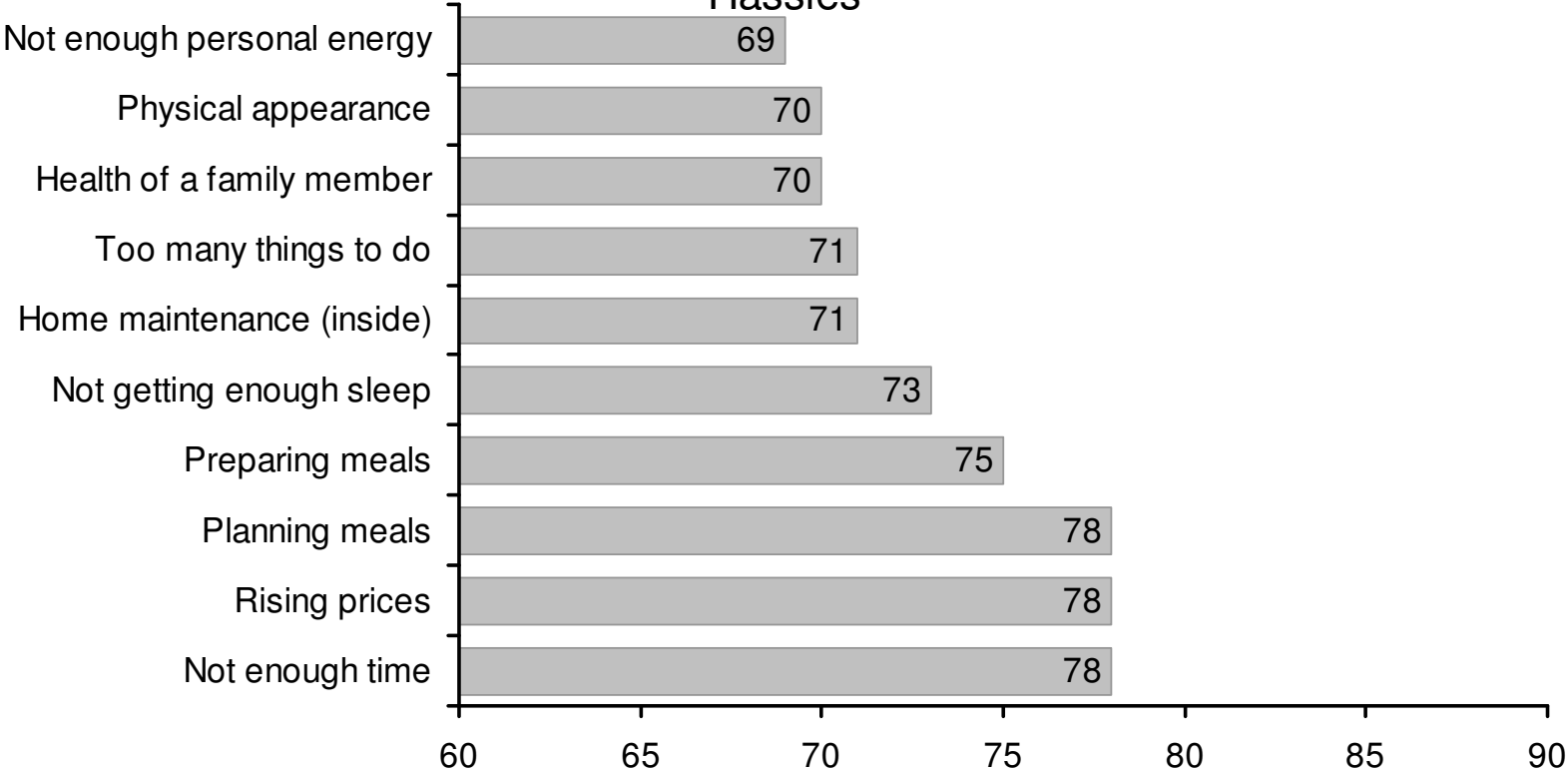
The frequency of daily hassles is linked to both psychological distress and physical symptoms, such as headaches and backaches. The number of daily hassles is a better predictor of physical illness and symptoms than is the number of life event changes experienced.

## Common Daily Hassles

Percentage of Students Experiencing the 10 Most Frequent Daily Hassles



### Percentage of Mothers Experiencing the 10 Most Frequent Daily Hassles





## 10 Most Common Uplifts

Percentage of People Experiencing the 10 Most Common Uplifts

