

ANMA nordplusmusic 2024



Stockholm University



Student stress and health: implications for teaching and learning at university

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What do we mean?


stress?
health and well-being?

Really needed...?

Need to know to identify, monitor, and
perhaps set goals if aiming to
balance stress and health/well-being

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Stress


An **imbalance** between perceived **demands** and
perceived **resources** to meet these demands.

This means that stress may arise from such factors
as **overstimulation** caused by *work overload* and
too much responsibility, as well as from
understimulation due to *lack of meaningful
activities, monotonous and repetitive tasks, and
lack of development.*

Frankenhaeuser, 1989

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Stress

An **imbalance** between perceived **demands** and
perceived **resources** to meet these demands.

part of life both in daily life, including higher
education and leisure time 🧑🎓

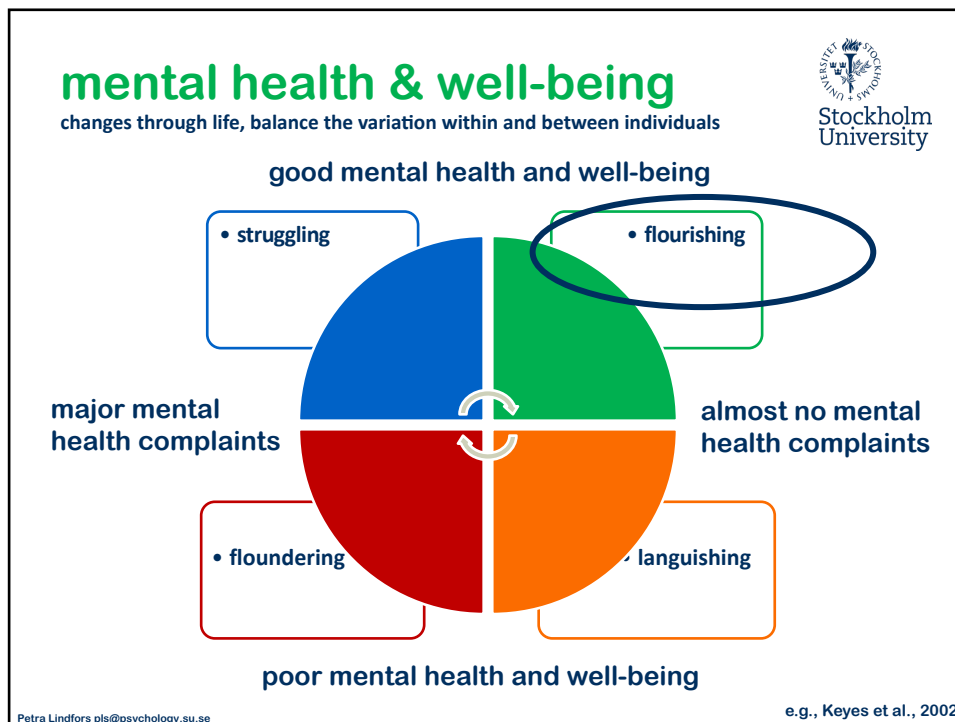
no danger
common complaint

problem if **chronic, high, no recovery, no sleep** 😞

Frankenhaeuser, 1989
McEwen, 1998

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Stress, health and well-being among university students (in Sweden)

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- Students in HE when compared to working groups
 - more stressful 🧑‍🎓
 - poorer health, poorer mental health 😞
 - weaker well-being 😞
- BUT: those with poorest mental health and well-being are outside HE and labour market: “marginalized groups”

e.g., Public Health Agency of Sweden

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Stress, health and well-being among university students (in Sweden)



- Students in HE when compared to working groups
 - more stressful 🧑🏫
 - poorer health, poorer mental health 😞
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- Still, higher stress levels have been linked to surface approaches to learning

Öhrstedt & Lindfors, 2016

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Stress, health and well-being among university students (in Sweden)




- Students in HE when compared to working groups
 - more stressful 🧑🏫
 - poorer health, poorer mental health 😞
 - weaker well-being 😞

- Is HE a **poor environment**...or?
 - individual development 👤
 - moving away from parents (and friends) ➡
 - becoming an adult: responsibilities and opportunities
 - contextual circumstances
 - housing conditions 🏠
 - finances (also with subsidized HE) 💰
 - work 🧑🏫

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Stress, health and well-being among university students (in Sweden)



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- Students in HE when compared to working groups
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 - moving away from parents (and friends) 🏠
 - becoming an adult: responsibilities and opportunities
 - contextual circumstances
 - housing conditions 🏠
 - finances (also with subsidized HE) 💰
 - work 🧑‍💻
- What characterizes HE?
 - challenges and demands
 - vs. individual responsibilities and opportunities
 - continuous learning and development
 - vs. individual success and disappointments
 - question assumptions (and one-self?)

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Stress, health and well-being among university students (in Sweden)


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HE can handle some of this 🧑‍💻
ie., contextual HE issues
without necessarily relaxing requirements

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what models?
models for teaching-learning
master/apprentice-relationship
individual and/or group setting
ideas and conceptions

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Factors linked to well-being among students

Summary of preliminary findings from Sweden


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promotes well-being	decreases well-being
individual demographics 👤	
having a partner 👤👤	international student 🌍✈️
	minority or uncertain sexual orientation ❤️?
mental health complaints 💙	
	symptoms of depression 😞
	anxiety 😟
	previous psychotherapy 🏥
contextual 🏢	
managing studies 🎓	poor social support in HE 👤 <small>(poor cohesion, no help, poor understanding of bad days)</small>
meaningful leisure time 🌿	poor effort/reward imbalance 🧑🎓

much effort into studies but poorly rewarded

prevalence of poor mental health comparable to that in other countries

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Stress, health and well-being among university students (in Sweden)



- What can be acted on?
 - teaching and learning environment
 - overall conditions: "milieu"
 - specifics: what do you do?

- What are the
 - challenges and demands
 - vs. individual responsibilities and opportunities
 - conditions for continuous learning and development
 - vs. individual success and disappointments

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Questions:



- What do you do when you teach, learn, plan for others?

- What can be done differently, if anything?
 - act as a "role model"?
 - are there tacit, unspoken, expectations?
 - are there ideals? successes only?

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Questions:



- **What safety nets are available for students?**
 - how to support?
 - do you know what to do if someone has difficulties balancing things in life?
 - are there ideals? Only the successful and busy?

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Stress, health and well-being among university students



promote long-term sustainable (mental) health and well-being

- do other things parallel to studies / training of skills!
- sustainable health behaviors
 - daily physical activity 🚴
 - exercise 🏃
 - ...other hobbies

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