

## **Subject 2: The stress response**

Your body gets ready for “fight or flight” in response to a perceived threat (this is also referred to as the “acute” stress response). Stress hormones move through your body in order to help you respond to this threat effectively. Over a short period of time, this response could save your life (or enable you to perform better in a race!). It increases your blood supply to your muscles, and focuses your vision and hearing. The intensity of the emotion that is linked to the stressor determines the behavioural response, and is usually linked to anxiety (‘flight’) or aggression (‘fight’).

### **Sources of stress**

In earlier times in the history of humans, the stress response would be engaged in response to physical threats such as a lion or a tiger. That’s ok because the stress response is designed for short term survival. However, the modern world is designed to keep the stress responses constantly engaged. Common stressors now include:

- Excessive workload
- Job insecurity (or job loss)
- Marriage or relationship problems
- Recent break up or divorce
- Work relationship conflicts (including bullying and harassment)
- Death in the family
- Difficulty in school
- Busy schedule
- Keeping up with rapid changes (e.g. technology/work)

With how pervasive stress is and the known negative consequences of the chronically engaged stress response for physical and mental health, it is important to find simple strategies to turn this off and engage the relaxation response to promote recovery.

### **Do you want to find out more?**

The Generali Employee Benefits Network has partnered with FlourishDx to provide video and other resources on mental health and sleep health. Access these resources [here](#).