# 8

# Perceived Responsiveness, Stress, and Coping in the Workplace

Cameron T. McCabe, Sarah Arpin, and Cynthia D. Mohr

## Introduction

The experience of stress is ubiquitous in daily life, the consequences of which are well established in the organizational literature (Ganster and Rosen 2013; Sonnentag and Frese 2012; Taylor 2010). More specifically, the experience of stress and resultant strain may effect physiological and psychological well-being and performance proximally, in that they serve as a significant distraction and are often accompanied by a loss or perceived loss of resources (Hobfoll 1989; Muraven et al. 1998). In addition to health and performance decrements, resource depletion has been linked to increased hostility and aggression (Grandey 2000; Taylor and Kluemper 2012), and unsafe work behaviors that may lead to accidents and injuries (Nahrgang et al. 2011). In efforts to mitigate these risks, and in response to the ever-changing demands of today's workplace, occupational health psychologists have devoted significant attention to uncovering strategies and characteristics of the workplace (e.g., supportive work climate, proactive coping) that may avert or reduce the psychological, physiological, and behavioral consequences of occupational stress.

To date, much of the stress and coping literature within the realm of occupational health has addressed this process from either a physiological and/or cognitive perspective (Ganster and Rosen 2013). In contrast, the present chapter offers a *relational* approach to understanding the interplay between job stress and coping in the workplace. Specifically, while the experience of stress clearly affects the mind and body (from a physiological perspective), researchers such as Haslam and colleagues (2005) posit that stress is just as much a social process, in that it may be mitigated by interpersonal processes and positive social interactions. Previous research has examined the effects of interpersonal processes, such as social support, on the extent to which stress manifests in health outcomes. Moreover, supportive *behaviors* and relationships at work have been shown to be important for reducing conflict between work and family life, positive attitudes and perceptions of one's work, and the perceptions of one's health and well-being (Hammer et al. 2007; Hammer et al. 2009; Kirmeyer and Lin 1987).

The purpose of the present chapter is to propose a theoretical model delineating the importance of perceived responsiveness, the perception that one is genuinely cared for and

understood (Reis et al. 2004), as an invaluable resource for managing occupation stress. The authors seek to build on past research and theory by emphasizing perceived responsiveness and other supportive processes in the workplace as central to the development of trust within work relationships. Additionally, we propose perceived responsiveness as one potential mechanism through which social support and supportive behaviors lead to positive outcomes. Perceptions that others are attentive and responsive to one's needs provide a critical resource from which to draw from when experiencing stressful events. Subsequently, we posit the role of perceived responsiveness as a critical determinant of organizational and individual well-being. Additionally, we explore the possible role of responsiveness within various work–relationship contexts, as these processes may unfold differently depending on the distribution of perceived power and authority within the relationship.

## Social Support as a Resource

Conservation of resources (COR) theory (Hobfoll 1989) explains that stress arises from an actual or perceived loss of resources (e.g., time, energy, money). Individuals experience situations where the demands of one's job or a given task are perceived to exceed one's available resources. These demands are then perceived as aversive, stressful, and are accompanied by a negative affective state. That social support is an integral part of this process and has implications for stress, coping, and health is now beyond question (see Cohen and Wills 1985). Further, despite criticisms of COR theory's general definition of what may constitute a "resource" (e.g., Halbesleben and Wheeler 2012), social support remains a central component of resource-based models of job stress, such as the Job Demand-Control-Support Model (JDC-S; Karasek and Theorell 1990) and the Job Demands Resources Model (JDR; Demerouti et al. 2001). Indeed, evidence in support of these theories has shown that social support is a key predictor of positive employee and work-related outcomes, including positive affect (PA; Cohen and Wills 1985; Greenglass and Fiksenbaum 2009), health (Ikeda et al. 2008; Toker et al. 2012), lower levels of burnout (Halbesleben 2006; Haslam et al. 2005; Luchman and González-Morales 2013), work–family conflict (Kossek et al. 2011; Selvarajan et al. 2013), and higher levels of job satisfaction and commitment (Randall et al. 1999; Wayne et al. 1997). Support and other resources are thought to facilitate progress toward one's goals, personal growth, and development while also reducing perceived demands and potential consequences (Demerouti et al. 2001). By expanding one's pool of available contacts (i.e., people), social support provides a mechanism through which individuals gain new resources, and replace resources which may have been lost or depleted (Halbesleben 2006). As such, it is not surprising that support remains a fundamental resource in times of stress.

Beyond the inclusion of social support within resource-based models of job stress, perceived support has been thoroughly examined within psychological literatures as vital to individual health and well-being. Generally, social support is conceptualized as taking the form of one or more of the following: (1) instrumental support, (2) esteem or emotional support, (3) informational support, and/or (4) social companionship (Cohen and Wills 1985; Uchino 2004). Instrumental support is most often described as the provision of aid or tangible resources to directly address the problem at hand. When faced with high levels of job demands (e.g., workload, time pressure), instrumental support may take the form of the provision of necessary tools, supplies, or other resources to adequately complete a given task, or direct help and assistance to solve problems. Emotional support is more personalized, involving efforts to make the person feel cared for and acknowledging their experience with the goal of reducing the emotional toll a stressor may have. Informational support involves defining and providing strategies and guidance so that one

may successfully navigate a problem. In line with transactional theories of coping (e.g., Lazarus and Folkman 1984), informational support may provide an opportunity to reappraise a stressful situation, thereby facilitating effective coping and emotion-regulation (Dunkel-Schetter et al. 1992).

A fourth resource comes in the form of social companionship, or belongingness support, which involves spending time with others and feeling a sense of community and social connectedness. Traditionally, this form of support has received less attention within the organizational literature; however, we would argue its relevance to fostering a healthy and happy workplace. From a social psychological perspective, social integration and connectedness satisfy basic needs for contact and relatedness (Baumeister and Leary 1995), and evidence has shown that time with close others is fundamental to one's social and physical health and well-being. For example, relative to individuals who work in groups or who interact regularly with other employees, solitary workers (e.g., commercial drivers) who have limited social contact with their coworkers or supervisors may be at risk for negative mental health outcomes (e.g., loneliness, depression, anxiety) and subsequent physical health (e.g., reduced immune functioning, mortality, poor health behaviors) as a function of their experience of isolation at work. Indeed, research examining the negative effects of social isolation and loneliness has revealed that a perceived lack of connectedness to others is predictive of various negative health outcomes, as well as deficits in self-regulation and well-being (i.e., Berkman and Breslow 1983; Cacioppo and Hawkley 2003).

Research examining the effects of social support have uncovered two distinct pathways through which support influences individual health and well-being. Specifically, social support is thought to have a more direct effect on well-being, regardless of one's level of stress (direct effect), as well as a stress-buffering effect by reducing the negative impact of stress on well-being (Cohen and Wills 1985). Considerable efforts have since been made to determine which type of support is most effective in reducing different forms of stress, for whom, and when buffering effects are typically observed. Researchers have concluded that support is most beneficial at low or moderate levels of stress. Further, in order for support to effectively reduce the negative impact of stress, there must be a match between the type of support desired, the type of support provided (Cutrona 1990), and the specific demands of the stressor (de Jonge and Dormann 2006). Additional evidence has pointed toward the domain (e.g., work–family) and source of one's support (e.g., coworker or supervisor support) as being important for individual health and well-being (Halbesleben 2006; Hammer et al. 2011; Karasek et al. 1982). As such, in order to observe the positive benefits that resources such as support provide, it is imperative that they be congruent with the expectations and desires of the recipient, and also the demands of the situational context. To achieve this requires that those providing support be attentive, aware, and responsive to the needs, values, and expectations of the recipients. Additionally, individuals at the receiving end of responsive behavior should perceive this type of interaction as caring, understanding, and validating of the self. Such actions and related perceptions epitomize what researchers and theorists have described as responsiveness (Reis et al. 2004).

## Perceived Responsiveness in the Workplace

Drawing from work within the general social support literature, recent research and theory within social psychology has identified perceived responsiveness as an organizing construct in understanding interpersonal processes and interactions within personal relationships. Specifically, perceived responsiveness is defined as the process by which individuals believe that specific others attend to and provide support to defining features of the self (Reis et al. 2004), thus providing a sense of identity, support, and validation of the self. It is through this process that particular relationships are deemed as satisfying and through which an individual's needs in a

given relationship are met. As such, relationship theorists argue that responsiveness is a vital aspect of interpersonal relationships yielding benefits for both intrapersonal and interpersonal outcomes (Lemay et al. 2007; Maisel and Gable 2009). Indeed, research has shown that perceived responsiveness is related to increased self-esteem and feelings of self-worth, and that *receiving* responsiveness from others is related to increased well-being, coping (e.g., positive adjustment and reduced distress; Major et al. 1997), goal pursuit, and greater physiological health (Clark and Lemay 2010). Moreover, perceptions of responsiveness are linked with better relationship functioning (Collins and Feeney 2000), trust, and lower levels of conflict (Gable et al. 2004).

Perceived responsiveness within a relationship is distinguished from other forms of social support in that it consists of a broader array of behaviors, and represents an ongoing exchange, whereby one member's responsiveness (or lack thereof) to another facilitates or impedes the likelihood of future disclosure, trust, and liking within the relationship. This dyadic process is most clearly demonstrated by Clark and Lemay's (2010) integrative model of responsiveness, which describes an interactive process involving (1) the provision and receipt of responsive behavior, (2) desiring and seeking responsiveness, and (3) the benefits of responsiveness within a given relationship. For instance, theory and subsequent research have shown that the perceived receipt of responsive behavior predicts support-seeking behavior, and facilitates trust and liking within a relationship. Similarly, past experiences of responsiveness with an interaction partner (e.g., one's supervisor or coworkers) informs one's likelihood to seek support through emotional disclosure, and trust that another will act in a responsive manner.

As demonstrated in Clark and Lemay's (2010) model, responsiveness is a two-way street set in a relational context, where the attitudes, cognitions, and behaviors of all parties involved frame each social interaction. Expectancy confirmation processes (e.g., Darley and Fazio 1980) describe how previous interactions shape our perceptions and provide the interpretive filter through which we view the current situation. For example, if an employee experiences a general lack of support from one of their coworkers, they may anticipate that this coworker is unlikely to be responsive to future requests for support. Rather than seeking support, guidance, or other resources when faced with common job stressors (e.g., heavy workload, time-sensitive deadlines), employees may temper their reactions and choose not to reveal or disclose a problem at all. From the perspective of the coworker, a lack of such disclosure may signify that no problem exists at all, therefore the employee's struggles may go unnoticed and the necessary support will not be provided. Inaction on behalf of the coworker would then confirm the employee's early suspicions, thereby contributing to future perceptions of their coworker as being unresponsive.

## RESPONSIVENESS AS A RELATIONSHIP-SPECIFIC CONSTRUCT

Although perceived responsiveness has been primarily examined within close communal relationships, theorists have argued that it likely applies to other types of relationships within a given social network (Reis et al. 2004), including exchange relationships, where the exchange of task-oriented, personal, and tangible resources are based on a mutual expectation of reciprocity (Clark & Mills, 1993). These types of exchange-based relationships are inherent in relationships between employees and their supervisors (Hogg 2010; Sparrowe and Liden 1997).

Due to the dyadic nature of responsiveness, valuable information can be gleaned from the perspectives of both the support seeker as well as the individual providing subsequent support. Such models would be important to explore within the occupational health literature, given the implications for both employee and supervisor behavior and experiences in the workplace (Clark and Lemay 2010). For example, drawing from Clark and Lemay's (2010) model, it is possible that perceived responsiveness serves as a prerequisite for employees engaging in support-seeking

behavior in the workplace and within employee–supervisor relationships. More specifically, if an employee perceives that a supervisor is understanding and caring, and validates his/her sense of self, he/she may be more likely to engage in support-seeking behavior at work (e.g., asking for time off to visit a sick family member; requesting more flexible work hours to accommodate child-care needs). As mentioned, responsiveness from one's supervisor may provide benefits for the self (i.e., feeling validated and cared for), but may also influence positive job attitudes, increase satisfaction with one's work and supervisor, and improve work-life balance.

Other evidence suggests that in the initial stages of relationship formation within an organization, such as when one starts a new job or role within an organization, it may be the *employees* who are most responsive to their supervisors. Supervisors and other organizational leaders are incredibly influential in defining the norms, expectations, goals, and culture within an organization (Avolio and Yammarino 2003; Hogg 2010; Kabanoff 1991). Employees, particularly new hires, may be motivated to be increasingly attentive to the needs and expectations of their superiors. By satisfying or exceeding initial job requirements, employees may solidify their position as a "good" and dependable employee. Supervisors and employers who then believe in and rely on their employees may be more apt to give attention, support, and responsiveness to those who are high performers (Wayne et al. 1997).

It is important to note, however, that the benefits of perceived responsiveness and social support in general, are not restricted to hierarchically structured exchange relationships such as those between supervisors and their subordinates. Research has similarly shown coworkers to be significant support resources, providing benefits for strain and organizational outcomes (e.g., Beehr et al. 2000; Luchman and González-Morales 2013). Specifically, peer relationships with one's coworkers act as a form of social capital, and unlike supervisor–employee relationships where a clear power differential exists, these relationships are more likely to flourish among individuals at a similar level of employment. Relationships among coworkers are often based on common goals and mutual interests, thus promoting a feeling of solidarity and shared purpose (Kabanoff 1991). To the extent that one's relationship with a coworker(s) is valued, perceived responsiveness will be similarly beneficial. Moreover, having multiple coworkers with whom one shares a mutually responsive relationship provides additional supportive resources to draw from in times of need. By re-affirming aspects of the self, providing positive regard and caring (Reis et al. 2004), these resources may offset potentially negative consequences of having a non-responsive supervisor. Thus, it is critical to examine perceptions of responsiveness within a broad array of organizational relationships, as these processes may differ drastically. Doing so would provide insight into an important element of support processes in the workplace context.

## PERCEIVED RESPONSIVENESS, STRESS, AND COPING

In addition to the benefits that such supportive processes have for organizational, personal, and family-related outcomes, these processes have implications for how individuals manage and cope with stressful situations in the workplace. In the sense that responsiveness is an ongoing process that can fluctuate based on the nature of the relationship and situational context, it is akin to certain theories of leadership, such as leader–member exchange (LMX). Similar to relationships with high levels of responsiveness, high LMX relationships are characterized by feelings of trust, reciprocity, and a mutual sense of commitment. From a leadership perspective, high LMX relationships are associated with reduced role stress (e.g., role conflict and ambiguity) and subsequent burnout (Thomas and Lankau 2009). Harris and Kacmar (2006), however, described a curvilinear relationship between LMX and stress, in the form of job demands. In their study, it was *moderate* LMX relationships that were associated with the lowest levels of

stress (Harris and Kacmar 2006). They explained this effect as being a function of the increased demands and expectations placed on employees in high LMX relationships. Leaders tend to invest more energy and attention into developing stronger relationships with their high-performing employees (Wayne et al. 1997), and despite potential benefits of LMX, the norm of reciprocity may place additional burden on the employee to achieve and maintain a high level of performance.

In contrast, perceiving responsiveness from alternative sources, such as one's coworkers, where the relationship is based more on a social, rather than economical exchange may be better suited for navigating one's day-to-day stressors (Halbesleben 2006). Halbesleben and Wheeler (2011) argue that employees may become more economical with how they expend their limited resources when stressed or when they perceive a threat to self. Although this preservation motive may lead people to be more selective in their allocation of resources, they may be more likely to invest additional resources and engage in helping behaviors for other members of their social network as a means of "restocking" and increasing their relational value to others. They explain this effect as a function of desired reciprocity within a relationship (Halbesleben and Wheeler 2011, 2012). Although somewhat counterintuitive, as helping behaviors themselves may be experienced as depleting, this argument makes sense from a responsiveness perspective. One is more likely to invest resources in relationships that are perceived to be more equitable, and the provision of aid to others may indirectly act as a form of support seeking behavior (i.e., I am helping you today, hopefully you will do the same for me tomorrow). Within the realm of responsiveness, research and theory have shown that people are more likely to provide aid, support, and responsiveness to those that have been responsive to them previously (Reis and Shaver 1988).

By facilitating feelings such as liking, trust, and identification, we propose that perceived responsiveness may offset strain in two ways: (1) by promoting the experience of positive emotions, and (2) through the accruement of resources to be used to cope with or even prevent the experience of stress (see Figure 8.1). This view is consistent with the theoretical model proposed by Greenglass and Fiksenbaum (2009), which revealed that social support benefits well-being through the promotion of positive affect, and through proactive coping efforts which similarly promote positive affect.

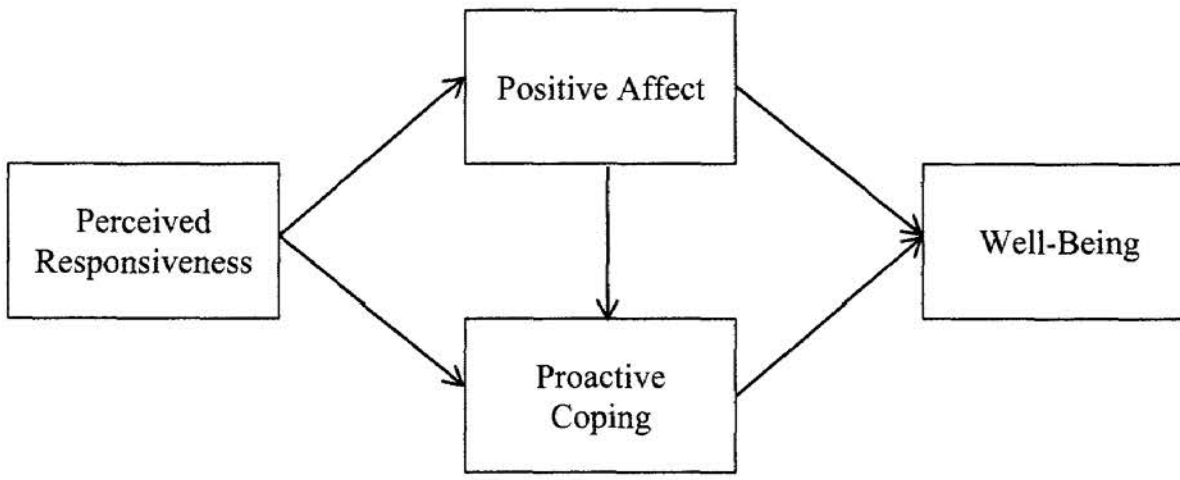


**Figure 8.1 Theoretical model of perceived responsiveness, affect, coping, and well-being**

According to broaden-and-build theory (Fredrickson 2001), positive emotions and experiences serve to inspire creative and flexible thinking, and to expand one's attention and ability to navigate problems. Moreover, discrete emotions such as happiness, joy, or contentment, may dampen one's physiological reaction following a stressful experience and aid in recovery (Fredrickson and Levenson 2000), while simultaneously promoting effective regulation of competing life demands (Aspinwall 2005), allowing individuals to "bounce back" from aversive experiences. To the extent that perceived responsiveness from others elicits positive emotion and experiences, it may aid in the down-regulation physiological reactivity, having significant implications for long-term physical health (Ganster and Rosen 2013; Melamed et al. 2006; Sonnentag and Frese 2012).

In addition to positive affect, perceptions of responsiveness may increase the likelihood that individuals may be able to offset or even prevent stressful work events from occurring, by adopting proactive coping strategies (Aspinwall and Taylor 1997). Relative to more traditional forms of coping (such as actions made in response to a perceived threat), proactive coping is anticipatory, and is motivated toward the *prevention* of stress rather than a reduction in one's emotional or physiological reaction to stressful events (Aspinwall and Taylor 1997; Greenglass and Fiksenbaum 2009; Taylor 2010).

Greenglass and Fiksenbaum (2009) applied a similar framework in an effort to predict positive well-being outcomes, showing that proactive coping is predictive of positive outcomes (e.g., lower levels of depression and absenteeism from work, greater functional independence) through increases in positive affect (Greenglass and Fiksenbaum 2009). Their model also emphasized the reciprocal influence of social support processes and proactive coping. While their model is based on perceived support (both general support and organizational support), it may also be relevant to the application of responsiveness to relationships within the workplace.

Responsiveness may also alter one's appraisal of forthcoming events. Specifically, perceiving that one has support from responsive others gives one a sense of control and access to additional support resources and perspectives which may alter one's initial appraisal of a stressful work event. The ability to reappraise a situation is particularly beneficial for individuals who tend to engage in proactive coping, who appraise events as challenging, and are thus capable of allocating resources toward facilitating goal-setting and efforts to prevent negative experiences (Greenglass 2005). For example, responsive supervisors are cognizant and aware of the demands placed on their employees. They may be able to anticipate the occurrence of future deadlines, and beyond the instrumental benefits of social support that supervisors provide (e.g., autonomy, control over work time, flexible scheduling), they may be able to provide valuable informational support, clarifying tasks and providing strategies with which their employees can anticipate and even prevent potential threats, thus offsetting potential strain outcomes before they occur (Aspinwall and Taylor 1997). By virtue of being exposed to comparable demands, coworkers and team members are similarly in a position to provide responsiveness in the form of emotional, informational, and instrumental support. In addition to the *intrapersonal* benefits with respect to the prevention of strain outcomes (e.g., burnout; Greenglass 2005; Schwarzer and Taubert 2002), and the promotion of physical health and well-being (Aspinwall 2005; Greenglass et al. 2005), responsive behaviors and personalized attention produce *interpersonal* benefits, such as perceptions of trust, commitment, and satisfaction in one's relationship.

## WHO IS RESPONSIVE?

A majority of research within the close relationships literature has emphasized the role of perceptions of responsiveness from close others as being an essential component for satisfaction within a relationship, positive affect, and well-being. However, *provision* of responsiveness and other supportive behaviors are equally important to consider (Reis et al. 2004). This then begs the question of *who* is more likely to be responsive. Moreover, which traits or characteristics are associated with a higher likelihood of being attentive, caring, and responsive to others?

An individual's ability to be responsive depends on many factors including qualities and characteristics of the individuals involved, characteristics of the relationship itself, and past interactions which inform expectations for responsiveness (Clark and Lemay 2010). Though various factors predicting expectations for the provision of responsive behavior have been examined in the close relationships literature (e.g., attachment and caregiving; Collins and Feeney 2000), specific personality traits which relate to responsive behavior have yet to be explored. However, one can glean the characteristics which make someone more or less responsive from the personality literature. Research has shown that relative to other dimensions of the Big Five (Costa and McCrae 1992), high levels of neuroticism (N) are associated with low quality social interactions and relationships. High levels of N are associated with the highest levels of negative affectivity, emotionality, and pessimism, and these individuals are unlikely to engage others on a personal level and are more likely to experience high levels of interpersonal conflict (Bolger and Zuckerman 1995). Moreover, supervisors fitting this profile often shirk their responsibilities as a leader altogether (Bono and Judge 2004). These individuals are less likely to be responsive, as they likely fear that others are similarly unresponsive to them.

Other characteristics, such as proactive personality, may play an important role in determining one's likelihood of being responsive to others, particularly during times of stress. Proactive individuals tend to show initiative, problem-solve and exert control over their surroundings environment (Seibert et al. 1999). These individuals may be more attentive to their environment, thus may be more apt to identify and implement strategies to offset potential challenges. Consistent with Halbesleben and Wheeler (2012), even under stress, proactive individuals may become more responsive to others in their social network, and engage in positive behaviors which benefit others. These actions build social capital and supportive resources which one can draw from in times of need.

Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that the provision of responsive behavior may differ based on power differentials between members of a given relationship (Chen et al. 2001). For example, one might expect to observe lower levels of responsive behavior in relationships characterized purely by economic exchange (relative to social exchange or communal-orientation). In their experimental study, Chen et al. (2001) were able to show that when primed with perceptions of power or authority, individuals who are more exchange-oriented tend to focus more on self-interest and goals, rather than what may benefit others, whereas those who are more communally oriented tended to be more attentive and responsive to the needs and demands of others. This research suggests that within exchange-based relationships which would perhaps benefit most from high levels of responsiveness among its members, those in a position of authority may feel less compelled to attend to the needs of their subordinates, and will prefer to act in a manner which satisfies their own needs. Conversely, more egalitarian and communal relationships, such as those among coworkers, may be more apt to engage in supportive and responsive behavior. Much work is needed to understand who is responsive and when within the workplace context, particularly given the unique nature of different relationships within the workplace.

## Implications and Future Directions

Drawing from prior empirical evidence and theory, we have proposed a theoretical model whereby perceptions of responsiveness from others (e.g., supervisors or coworkers) plays a significant role in how people cope with and manage work stress. Given the novelty of this concept within this context, it is not surprising that some questions remain unanswered. For example, is it the case that individuals desire or even expect responsive relationships in the work context? Past research and theory within the close relationships literature suggests that, yes, people desire responsiveness from others, as it makes them feel validated, understood, and cared for (Clark and Lemay 2010). However, the extent to which responsiveness is important in a given relationship depends on individuals' expectations of the relationship, norms within a relationship context, as well as the nature of the relationship as being communal or exchange (Clark and Mills 1993; Reis et al. 2004). Moreover, this process may function differently based on factors such as the cultural context (e.g., independent vs. interdependent cultures; Diener et al. 2003; Markus and Kitayama 1991), and the centrality of the relationship to one's self-concept and identity.

Whether responsiveness is expected or effective also likely differs based on the centrality or relative importance of a given relationship to the self (Clark and Lemay 2010). Relationships which are most central to our identities are those with which we invest the most time, energy, and emotion in cultivating. However, while much research and theory have described the benefits of social integration and connectedness, researchers such as Sani and colleagues (2012) have argued that while support processes such as responsiveness are clearly important for health and well-being (Cohen and Wills 1985), they may have unintended consequences for both the recipient (e.g., reduced sense of autonomy and competence) and the support provider (e.g., resource depletion and fatigue), leading to conflict (Sani 2012). However, to the extent that the relationship is central or important to one's self-concept, the potential consequences of receiving or providing support and responsiveness are likely mitigated (Sani et al. 2012). Future research should explore the role of centrality and identification with one's coworkers and/or supervisor as a potential moderator of responsiveness-stress and well-being outcomes.

Beyond the intra- and interpersonal benefits of responsiveness, a relational approach to understanding stress and coping has further implications for the organization as a whole. Perceptions that one is treated well and cared for is generally considered important to members of their organization as it relates to greater perceptions of justice and fairness. Given strong norms of reciprocity, it is likely that these perceptions will be accompanied by higher levels of performance, lower levels of turnover (Mitchell and Daniels 2003), positive job attitudes (Meyer et al. 2002), and organizational citizenship behaviors, beyond the scope of one's initial job description (Cropanzano et al. 2001). Moreover, to the extent that responsiveness elicits positive emotions, responsiveness may aid in one's recovery from stress (Fredrickson 2001). Over time, reductions in physiological reactivity may offset potential long-term health consequences associated with chronic stress (e.g., cardiocascular disease, hypertension; Ganster and Rosen 2013; Marmot and Wilkinson 2005), thereby reducing potential absenteeism and subsequent healthcare costs.

## Conclusions

A stress and coping framework which incorporates perceived responsiveness as a valuable resource would make a significant contribution to the organizational and occupational health literatures. The extant literature on perceived responsiveness reveals this process to be critical

for intra- and interpersonal health and well-being within close relationships, as it may facilitate both reactive and proactive forms of coping with stressors. However, this work has yet to be translated to other forms of social relationships typically experienced in the workplace context (e.g., economic and social exchange relationships). Further, this approach provides valuable insight into the perspective of both members of the relationship. Current models of responsiveness, such as Clark and Lemay's (2010) integrative process model of responsiveness, emphasize this as a dyadic process, informed by the characteristics of the individuals involved, the type of relationship in question, and the expectations they both bring with them based on previous interaction experiences (Reis et al. 2004). When examined within this theoretical framework, it is likely that supervisors and coworkers who are attentive and responsive to the needs of others provide critical resources (e.g., flexibility, control and autonomy, alternative perspectives and social support) which yield benefits for the employee (e.g., positive affect, lower levels of stress, improved health and well-being), the relationship (e.g., trust, liking, and identification), and the organization (e.g., commitment, satisfaction, performance).

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# *Coping, Personality and the Workplace*

## Responding to Psychological Crisis and Critical Events

*Edited by*

ALEXANDER-STAMATIOS ANTONIOU
*University of Athens, Greece*

CARY L. COOPER, CBE
*Manchester Business School, University of Manchester, UK*

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