



**Darlene A. Hall, Ph.D.**

Intersections Consulting

Psy #16666

[www.intersectionsconsulting.com](http://www.intersectionsconsulting.com)

[intersectionsconsulting@gmail.com](mailto:intersectionsconsulting@gmail.com)

415.297.7265

## **3 STAGES OF STRESS: GENERAL ADAPTION SYNDROME**

### **STAGE 1 – ALARM STAGE**

- alarm reaction has two substages
  - shock phase – decrease in body temperature, blood pressure, and muscle tone and loss of fluid from body tissues
  - countershock phase – increase in hormones triggering a defensive reaction such as fight/ flight reaction

### **STAGE 2 – RESISTANCE STAGE**

- also called “adaption stage”
  - stabilization of the increased physiological levels
  - in other words: the body is on hyper-alert as if it’s about to do battle
  - for example: high blood pressure can develop into hypertension, risking heart problems
  - as the body is in this heightened state, it is using up important resources (chemicals, balance), which can cause permanent changes in the body’s organs

### **STAGE 3 – EXHAUSTION STAGE**

- think “break down”
  - the body’s adaptations it has made to withstand this prolonged state of stress begins to fall apart
  - characterized by sleep disturbances, irritability, severe loss of concentration, restlessness, fatigue, trembling that disturbs coordination, jumpiness, low startle threshold/scare easily, anxiety attacks, depression, crying spells