

Part II

The Treatment of the Human Stress Response

Part II is the second of three major sections in this book. It is dedicated to the presentation of not only reviews of therapeutic technologies but also does so in adherence to the overarching systems model of treatment that was introduced in Chap. 2.

Chapter 8 begins our description of therapeutic options by providing a brief overview of the role of psychotherapy in the mitigation and treatment of human stress. The reader should note that Chap. 8 is not a “how to” guide for conducting a psychotherapeutic intervention, rather that is reserved for original treatment manuals. Our goal is to simply sensitize the reader to the role that psychotherapy, from a cognitive perspective, may play in the overall treatment plan.

Chapter 9 entitled “A Neurophysiological Rationale for the Use of the Relaxation Response” is a unique foray into the scientific foundations of relaxation-based interventions, some of which have been employed for centuries.

Chapters 10–12 provide step-by-step guidelines for the use of meditation, respiration, and muscle relaxation.

Chapters 13 and 14 continue the discussion of specific therapeutic interventions such as hypnosis and biofeedback, respectively.

Chapter 15 “Physical Exercise and the Human Stress Response” reviews physical exercise as both preventive and therapeutic. As Walter Cannon noted, stress may be thought of as the “fight or flight” response, i.e., a mechanism that better prepares the individual for physical activity and exertion.

Chapter 16 reviews advances in the pharmacologic treatment of human stress.