

Boys and girls react differently to stress

13th November, 2016



A study from Stanford University in the USA suggests that very stressful events affect the brains of boys and girls in different ways.

Researchers say that girls suffer more after

traumatic events and are more likely to develop post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). They also say that because of this, girls and boys should be treated differently by doctors during the recovery process from PTSD. Lead researcher Dr Megan Klabunde said: "It is important that people who work with traumatised youth consider the sex differences. Our findings suggest it is possible that boys and girls could exhibit different trauma symptoms and that they might benefit from different approaches to treatment."

The research focused on a part of the brain that deals with emotions and empathy, called the *insula*. The smaller the *insula*, the more likely it is that someone will suffer from PTSD. Researchers discovered that the *insula* was particularly small in girls who had gone through a traumatic event. It was larger than usual in boys who had experienced a distressing, shocking or frightening event. Post-traumatic stress disorder is a mental disorder that can develop after traumatic events, such as sexual assault, warfare, traffic collisions, or threats on a person's life. Symptoms may include disturbing or suicidal thoughts, nightmares related to the events, and alterations to how a person thinks and feels.

Sources: BBC.com / Stanford.edu / Wikipedia.org

Writing

Stress is good for us. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

study / stressful / suffer / traumatic / recovery / differences / symptoms / treatment / brain / emotions / empathy / frightening / mental / assault / warfare / suicidal

True / False

- The research was from Oxford University in the UK. T / F
- The research says girls are more likely to suffer from PTSD. T / F
- Boys and girls should be treated differently for stress. T / F
- Boys and girls show different symptoms when stressed. T / F
- The research focused on a part of the brain that deals with trauma. T / F
- A part of the brain called the *insula* was bigger in girls. T / F
- PTSD is a physical disorder. T / F
- Symptoms of PTSD include having suicidal thoughts. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------|
| 1. study | a. disturbing |
| 2. affects | b. healing |
| 3. likely | c. report |
| 4. recovery | d. crashes |
| 5. treatment | e. probable |
| 6. deals with | f. changes |
| 7. traumatic | g. therapy |
| 8. develop | h. influences |
| 9. collisions | i. evolve |
| 10. alterations | j. handles |

Discussion – Student A

- What damage does stress do to the body?
- How does stress change people?
- Who are emotionally stronger, boys or girls?
- Are there any advantages of feeling stressed?
- What is the world's most stressful job?
- What stress do you cause other people?
- Why is it difficult for us to deal with stress?
- What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. girls suffer more after | a. thoughts |
| 2. during the recovery | b. symptoms |
| 3. people who work with | c. collisions |
| 4. girls could exhibit different trauma | d. with emotions |
| 5. benefit from different approaches | e. process |
| 6. the brain that deals | f. traumatic events |
| 7. sexual | g. how a person thinks |
| 8. traffic | h. to treatment |
| 9. suicidal | i. assault |
| 10. alterations to | j. traumatised youth |

Discussion – Student B

- What makes you stressed?
- Why are some people better than others at dealing with stress?
- Why might stress affect boys and girls differently?
- What would life be like without stress?
- What's the most stressed you've ever been?
- How do you think doctors deal with stress?
- Is life becoming more stressful? Why?
- What's the best way to manage stress?

Spelling

- post-traumatic stress ordsrdie (PTSD)
- girls and boys should be ttaeedr differently
- during the ercevyro process from PTSD
- roecsind the sex differences
- exhibit different trauma ymmsstpo
- benefit from different eochrppaas
- deals with emotions and ymhapet
- the insula was ayrpllrctaiu small in girls
- sexual utsasla
- traffic oiosilscnl
- disturbing or cduaiis| thoughts
- reialsantot to how a person thinks

Answers – Synonym Match

1. c	2. h	3. e	4. b	5. g
6. j	7. a	8. i	9. d	10. f

Role Play

Role A – Exams

You think worrying about exams is the most stressful thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as stressful. Also, tell the others which is the least stressful of these (and why): traffic jams, money or the future.

Role B – Traffic Jams

You think being stuck in traffic is the most stressful thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as stressful. Also, tell the others which is the least stressful of these (and why): exams, money or the future.

Role C – Money

You think money is the most stressful thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as stressful. Also, tell the others which is the least stressful of these (and why): traffic jams, exams or the future.

Role D – The Future

You think the future is the most stressful thing. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as stressful. Also, tell the others which is the least stressful of these (and why): traffic jams, money or exams.

Speaking – Stresses

Rank these with your partner. Put the best stresses at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| • dating | • exams |
| • social media | • traffic jams |
| • school / job | • family fights |
| • the future | • money worries |

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	F	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.