



# Coping with Stigma & Other Stressors

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# Disclosure



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# Learning Objectives



- Discuss Stigma and related stressors
- Describe the biobehavioral conceptualization of stress and coping in HIV
- Explain the coping process in the context of stigma
- Define Healthy Coping Strategies



# What is Stigma?



- Stigma is characterized by associations with physical imperfection and membership in a negatively regarded social group.
  - Enacted stigma refers to acts of discrimination such as social rejection
  - Perceived stigma refers to the extent that one is aware of negative societal attitudes



# How Does Stigma Show Up?



- Physical
- Social
- Behavioral
- Psychological
- Cognitive



# Physical



- Fast heartbeat
- Stomach problems and indigestion
- Headaches
- Backaches
- Muscle pain and tension



# Social

- Pulling away from others/social withdrawal
- Easily Irritable with others
- Social Isolation





# Behavioral



- Problems sleeping
- Using alcohol or drugs
- Overeating and comfort foods





# Psychological

- Get angry easily
- Feel fearful
- Feel blue and depressed
- Feel irritated or hostile
- Feel bad about yourself





# Cognitive



- Feel worn out/unmotivated
- Feel overwhelmed
- Negative Thought Spirals

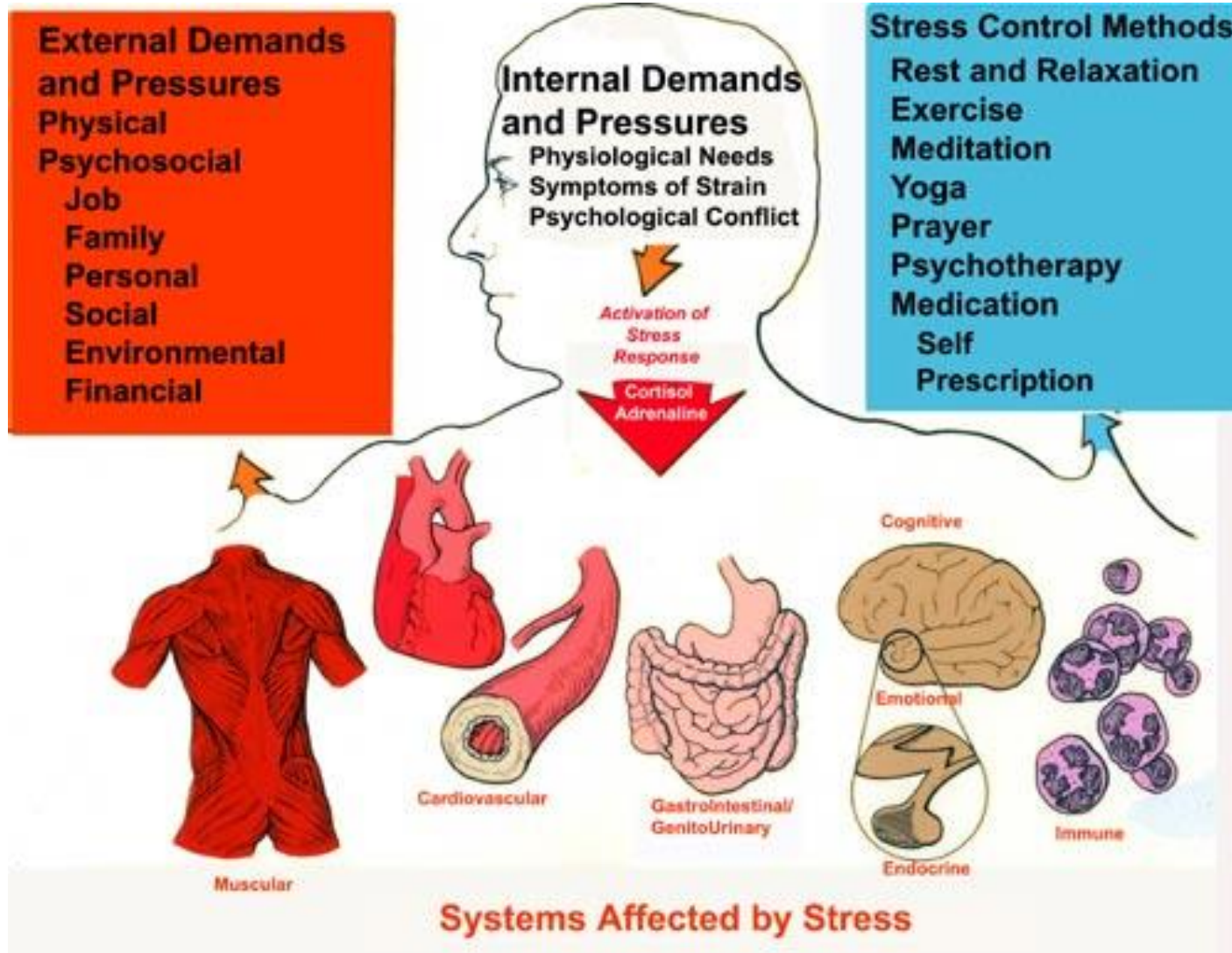


# What can we do?



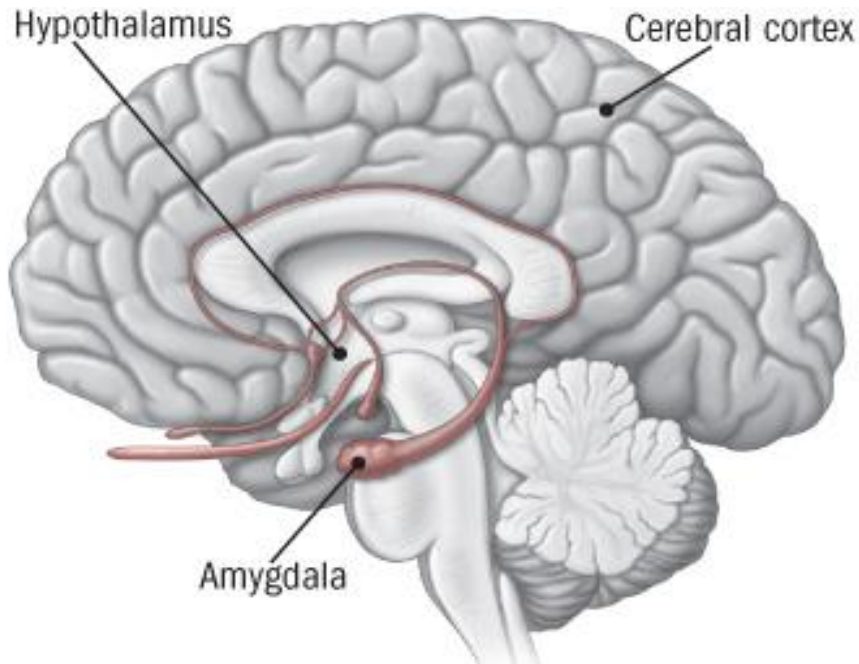
- Understand
- Identify
- Adjust

# Biobehavioral Model



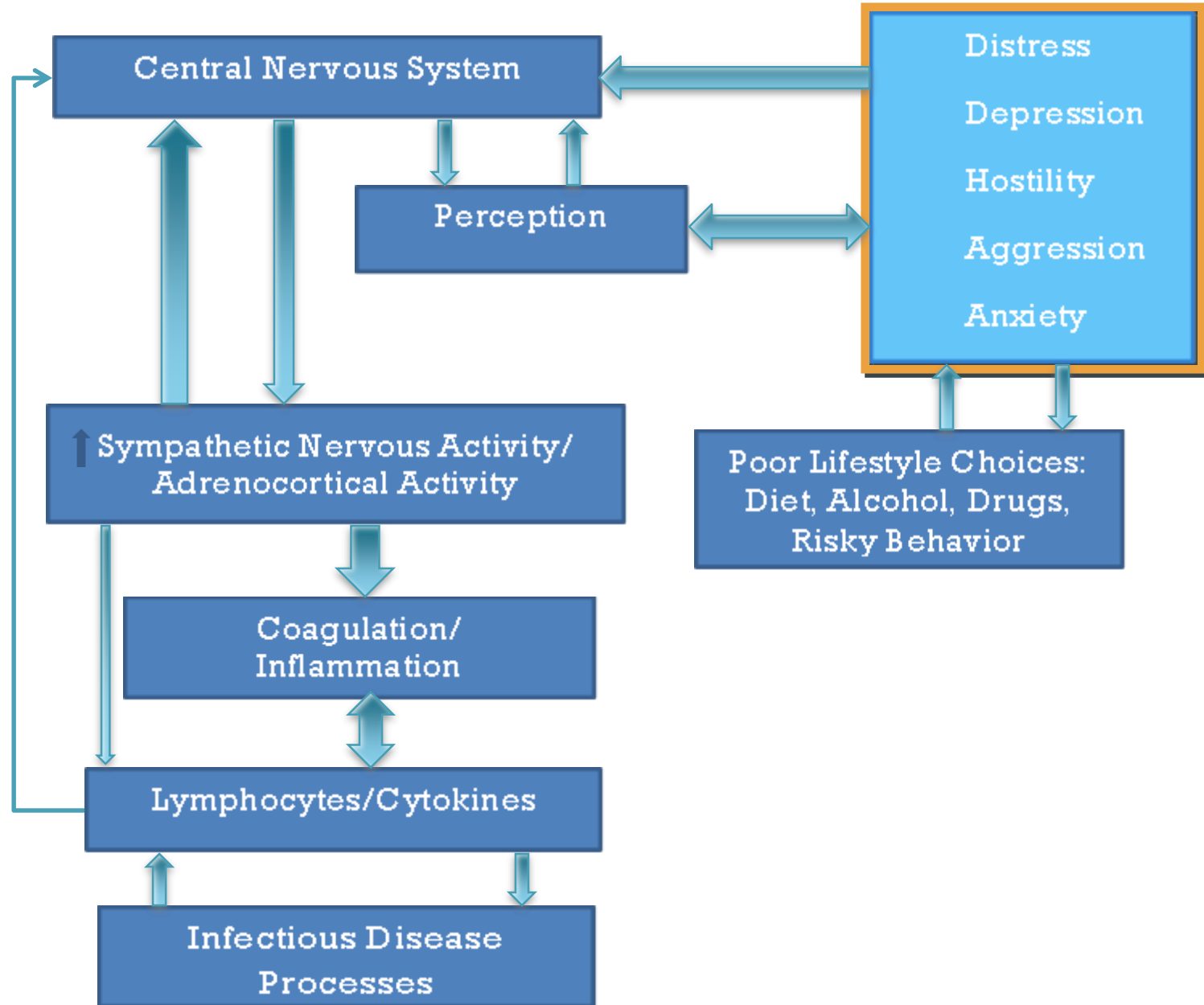


# Stress Response



When someone experiences a stressful event, the amygdala, an area of the brain that contributes to emotional processing, sends a distress signal to the hypothalamus. This area of the brain functions like a command center, communicating with the rest of the body through the nervous system so that the person has the energy to fight or flee.

# Pieces of the Puzzle





# Biological Resilience



- Determined (in any given moment) by the interaction of our genetic endowment and our environment





# Cognitive/Psychological Processes



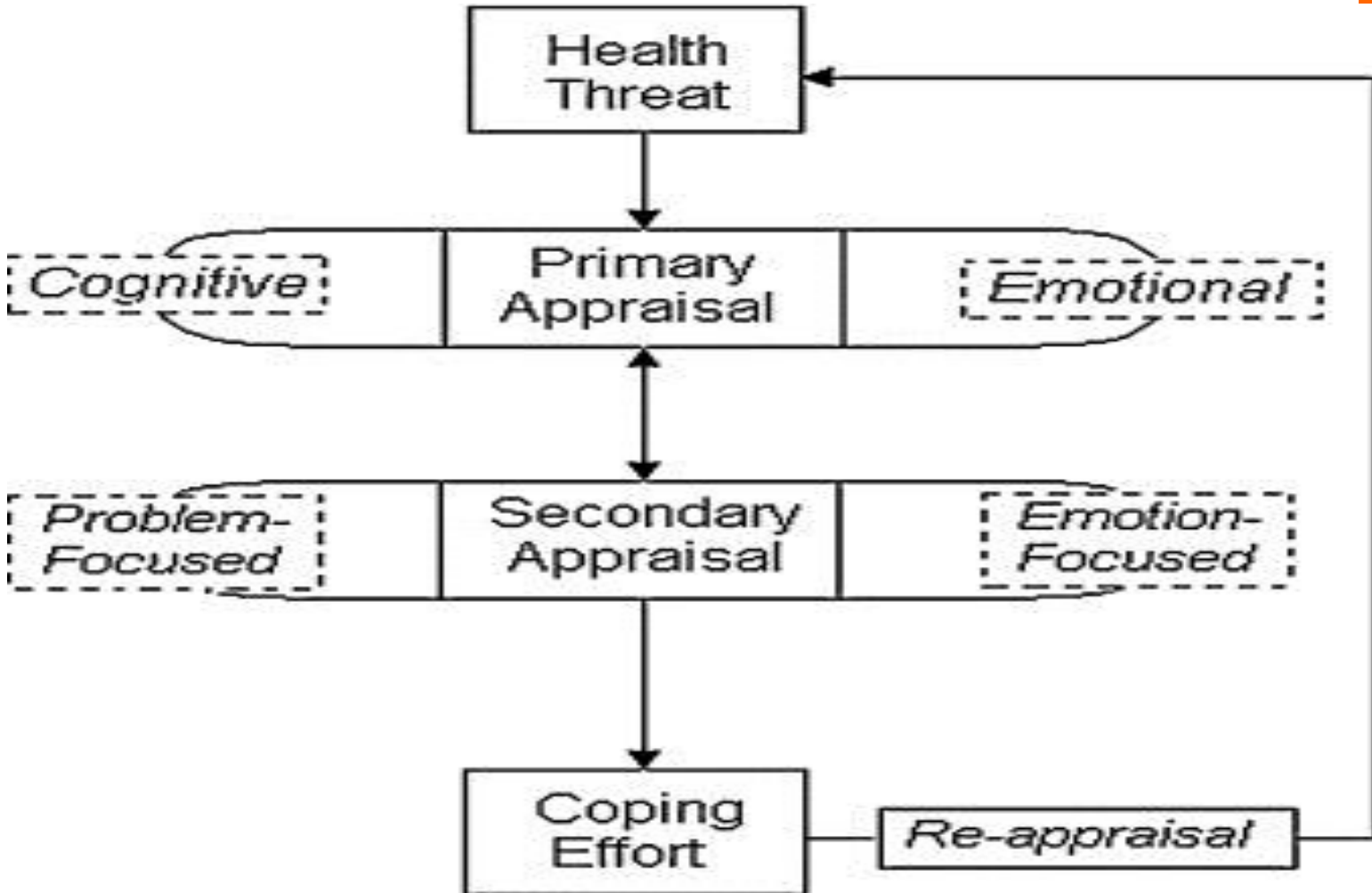
- Thoughts
- Feelings



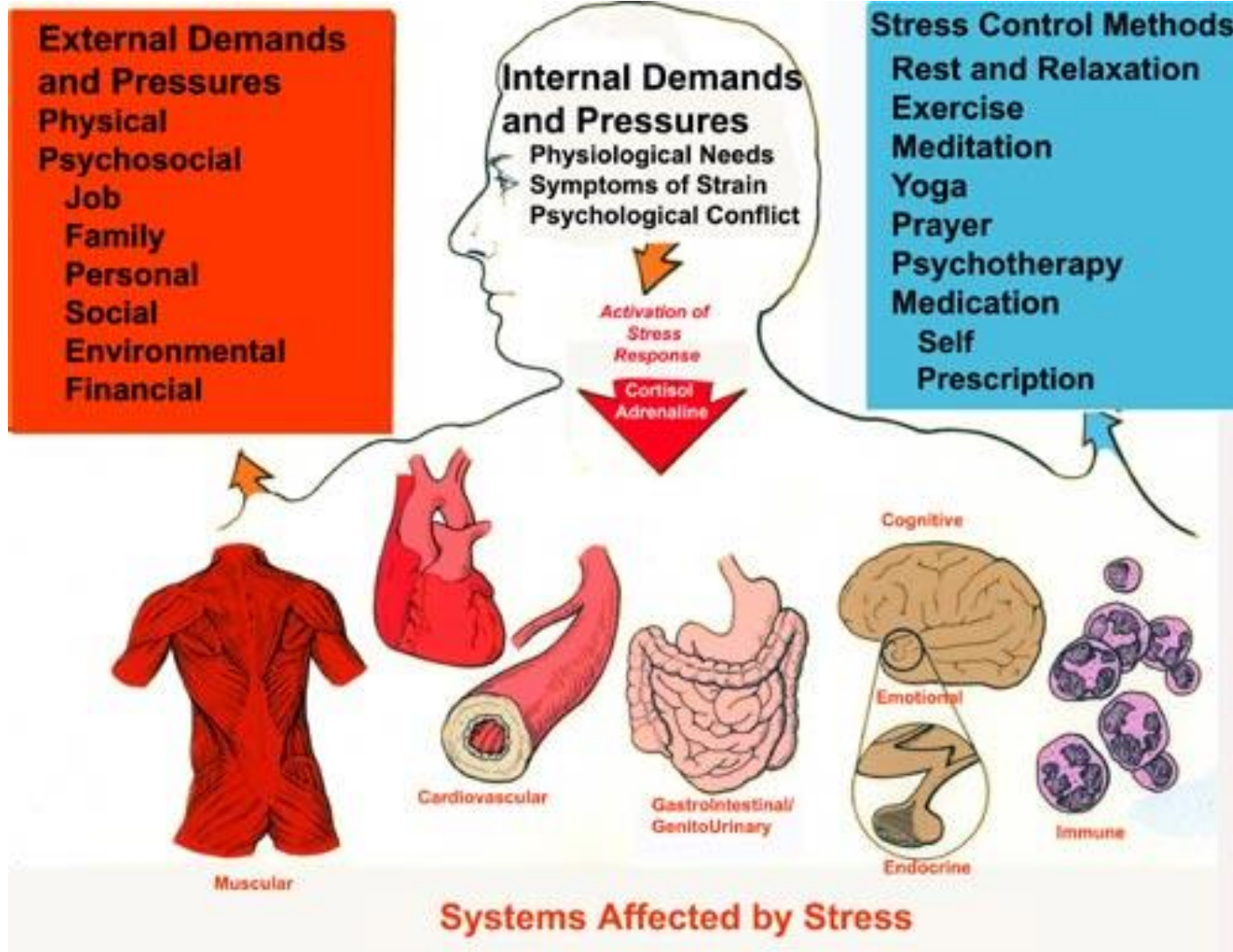




# Coping!

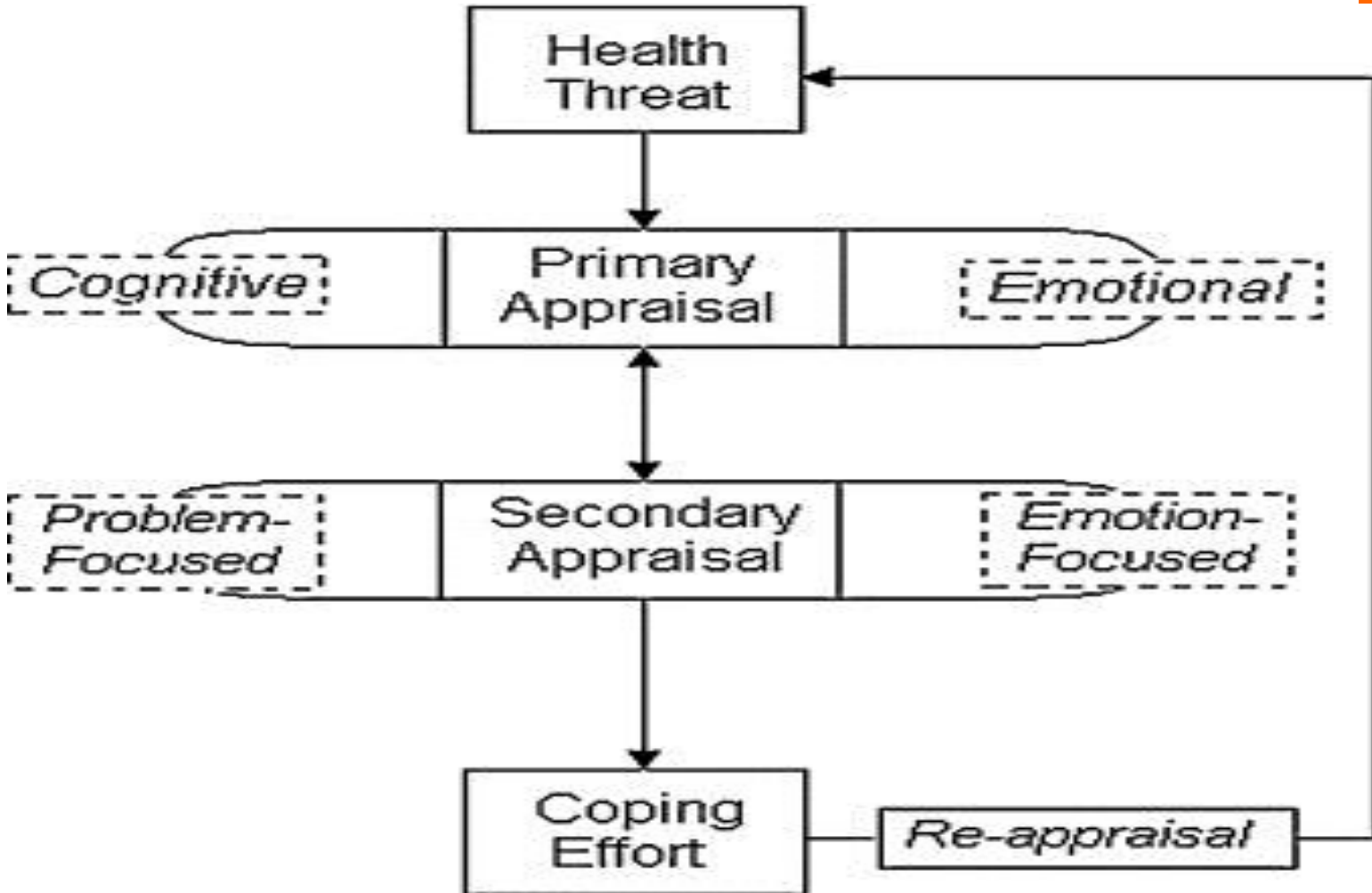


# Biobehavioral Model





# Coping!





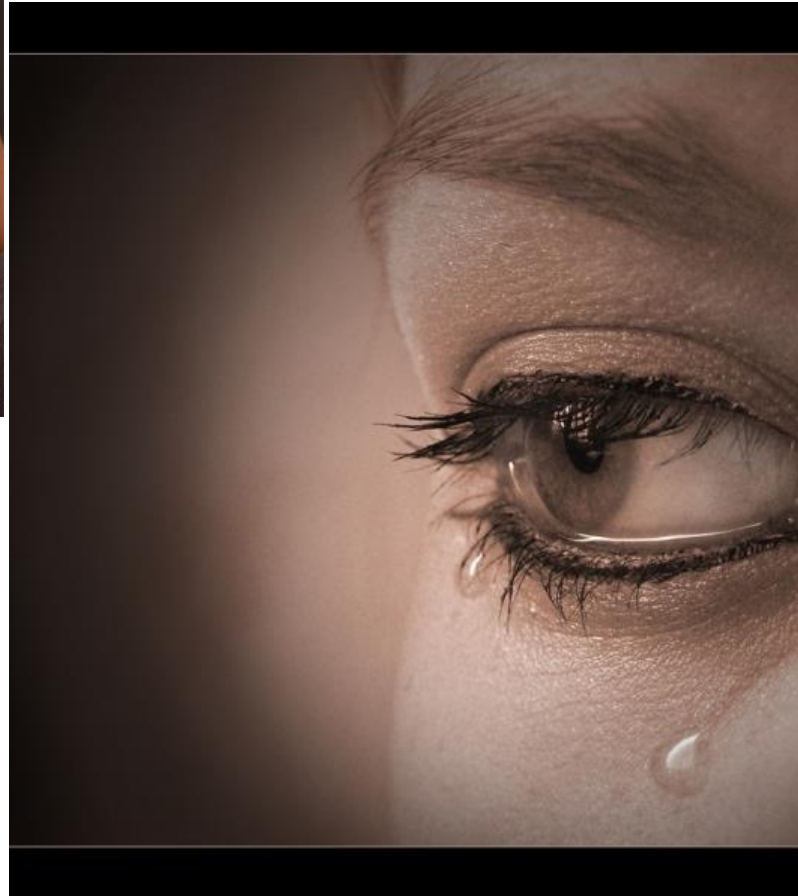
# Cognitive Appraisal



- **Primary Appraisal: Perceiving the Threat**
  
- **Secondary Appraisal: Process of Bringing to Mind a Response to the Threat**



I just coped with it!





# Coping



- An individual's *efforts to manage demands that are believed to exceed available resources*
  - (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)
  
- By changing the way he/she *thinks* about the situation (*cognitive appraisal*)
  
- or
  
- By altering their *behaviors* in the situation



# Coping Processes



- Can Be:
  - Emotional
  - Behavioral
  - Social
  - Cognitive
  
- Create A:
  - Physiological Response



# Problem-Focused Coping



- Changing a problem, or aspect of a problem causing distress.
- Problem-focused coping may involve:
  - decision making
  - conflict resolution
  - information or advice seeking
  - goal setting
  - problem solving







# Emotion-Focus Coping



- regulating the emotional response connected to a stressful situation.
- Emotion-focused coping strategies could involve:
  - cognitive reappraisal and reframing
  - emotional expression
  - behavioral changes (i.e., engaging in pleasant activities)
  - physical stress reduction (i.e., exercising, meditation, deep breathing)

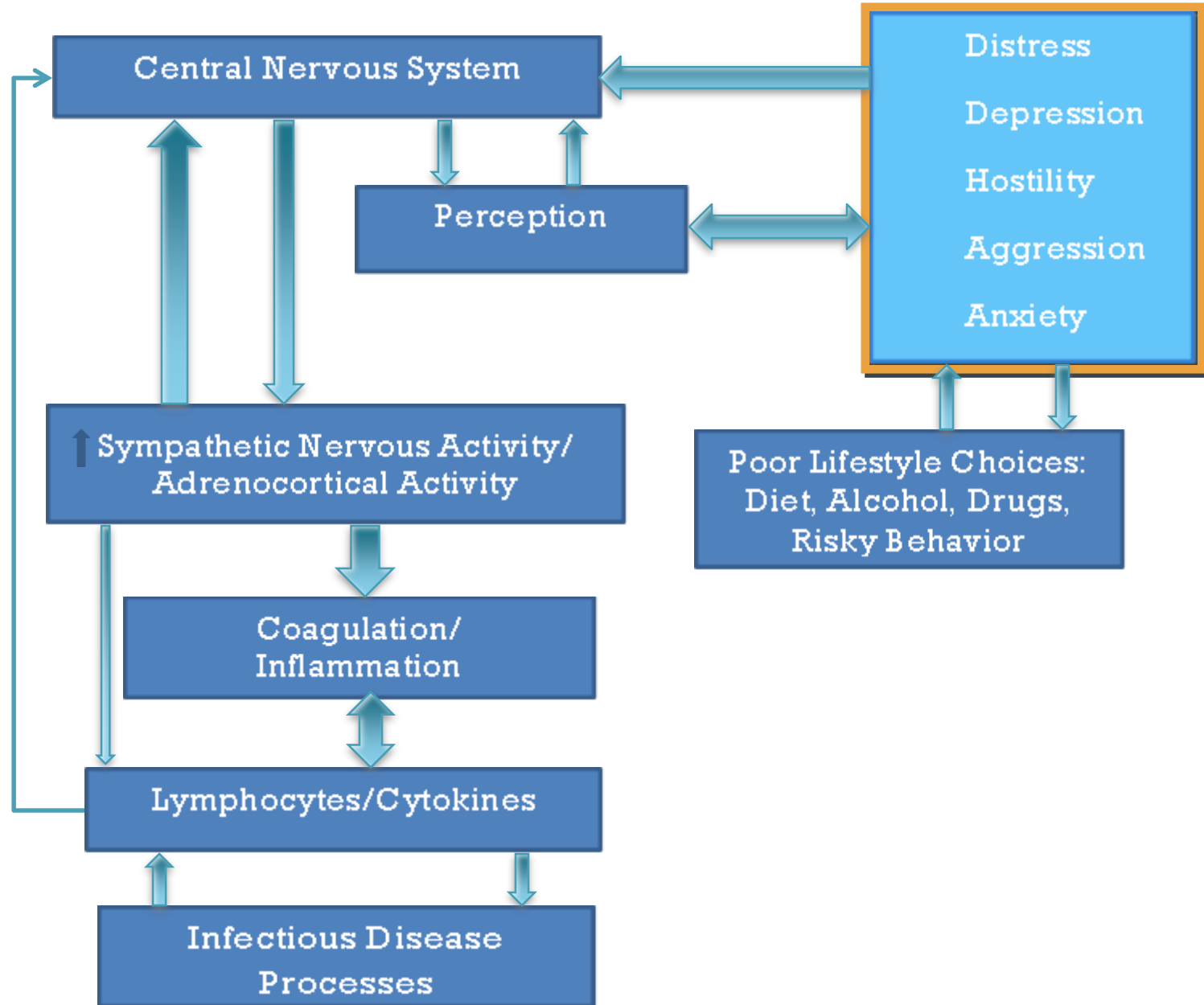


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<b>Use:</b>	<b>Problem-Focused</b>	<b>Emotion-Focused</b>

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<b>Passive:</b>	Cognitive and Behavioral Avoidance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• denial</li> <li>• not thinking about it</li> <li>• procrastinating</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Smoking, eating, drinking alcohol, doing drugs</li> <li>• Not taking medication</li> <li>• Missing doctor's appointment</li> <li>• Stuffing feelings, giving up</li> </ul>

# Pieces of the Puzzle





# Focus: Quality of Life (QOL)



- **QOL In Question:**
  - Medical Complications
  - Co-morbidities
  - Substance Use
  - Poorer Mental Health
  - Social Isolation





# Lack of Social Support



- High levels of:
  - Loneliness
  - Depression
  - Insufficient instrumental and emotional support



# Depression



- Estimated Prevalence -50%
- Depression linked to: poor HAART adherence





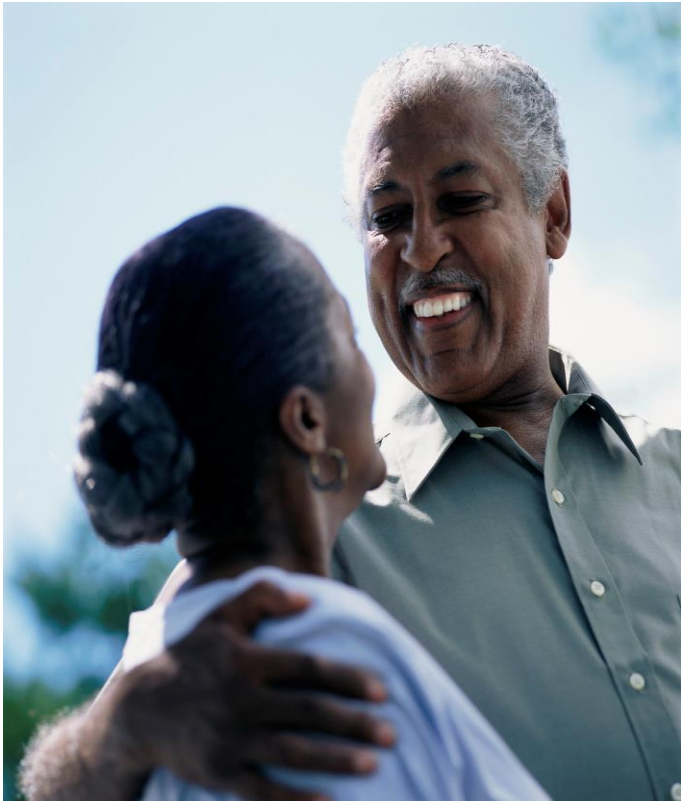
# The Aging Process



- Associated with:
  - Increased Social Isolation
  - Greater Depressive Symptoms
  - Transition from informal to formal care settings



# Active Coping



- Social Support an essential coping skill



Thank You!



QUESTIONS?