AVSEC World 2004, Vancouver
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Remembering the Employees
 and the Passengers

Panel

Moderator: **Paul Behnke**, Director Security & Economics at ACI, Geneva

Panel: **Jessica Stockwell,** Travel author & Personal Safety & Security Editor.

   Keith MacDonald, Airside Duty Manager, Vancouver International Airport

   Dai Williams, Work Psychologist, Eos, UK

Managing stress, trauma and change in the airline industry: some human and psychological factors

Dai Williams, Chartered Occupational Psychologist, Eos, UK

Introduction

1. **Starting points – current realities**
2. **Operational threat levels**
3. **Human factors & groups at risk**
4. **Psychological processes**
5. **Target outcomes for attenders**

- A framework for exploring human issues for passengers and employees.
- Practical techniques from the psychology of managing stress and change.
- Practical suggestions for passengers, tactical issues for incident response and strategic issues for management.

AVSEC 2004 – Remembering the Employees and the Passengers

Starting points – current realities

Flying risk variables – terrorism & other real & perceived threats	Latent fear agencies (media) & effects	National & international agencies & resources – industry, security, govts	Existing wisdom & resources

Operational threat levels

	Ambient fear & vigilance	Alert & incident responses	Disaster response & aftermath

Human issues & groups at risk

	Passenger views & responses	Stress & trauma in management	Wider effects: *Social* - partners, health, families, community tensions & *Commercial* - sales, routes, carriers etc
Personal experiences	Staff & crew views & responses	Ancillary services (ATC etc)	

Psychological processes

Individual stress responses	Differing vulnerability	Trauma & change effects (transitions)	Stressed groups & populations

Target outcomes for AVSEC members

Awareness, curiosity, confidence, resilience	Personal health & survival toolkit	Incident & risk evaluation priorities	Strategic management, training & HR issues

1. Starting points – current realities

Flying risk variables –terrorism & other real & perceived threats

Latent fear agencies (e.g. media and politics) & their effects

National & international AVSEC agencies & resources

Existing wisdom & resources

2. Operational hazards and threat levels

Ambient fear & vigilance

Alert & incident responses

Disaster response

3. Human issues and groups at risk

Passenger views & responses

Jessica Stockwell
Personal Safety & Security Editor of TravelGirl magazine.

- Current issues for passengers

- Practical survival strategies

Author of "**Dare to Travel the World**," Sept 2001
& "**Live and Travel Well**", Nov 2003).   Website www.jessicastockwell.com

Staff & crew views & responses

Keith MacDonald, Airside Duty Manager, Vancouver International Airport, **www.yvr.ca**

- Operational issues facing airport staff and management.

- Safety alerts and incident response

- Personal and operational challenges.

Stress & trauma in management

Paul Behnke ACI, **www.aci.aero** and **Keith MacDonald, YVR**

- Pressures on managers to optimise cost and performance

- Psychological climate: organisations and personnel under moderate to severe stress, and recent traumas.

- Civil aviation - structured industry, needs and recognises managers who are practical, logical and well organized.
  BUT new challenges - rapid change, increased complexity and random threats of major disasters

- How can managers switch roles in crisis situations?

- Do new leaders emerge in different situations?

- Differences between operational manager -- strategic corporate planner -- trouble-shooter.

Wider effects of increased fear in aviation

- Anxiety levels for families of passengers and staff - effects on choice of routes, airlines etc.

- Pressure on family relationships and health, staff turnover, sickness absence, accident rates and recruitment.
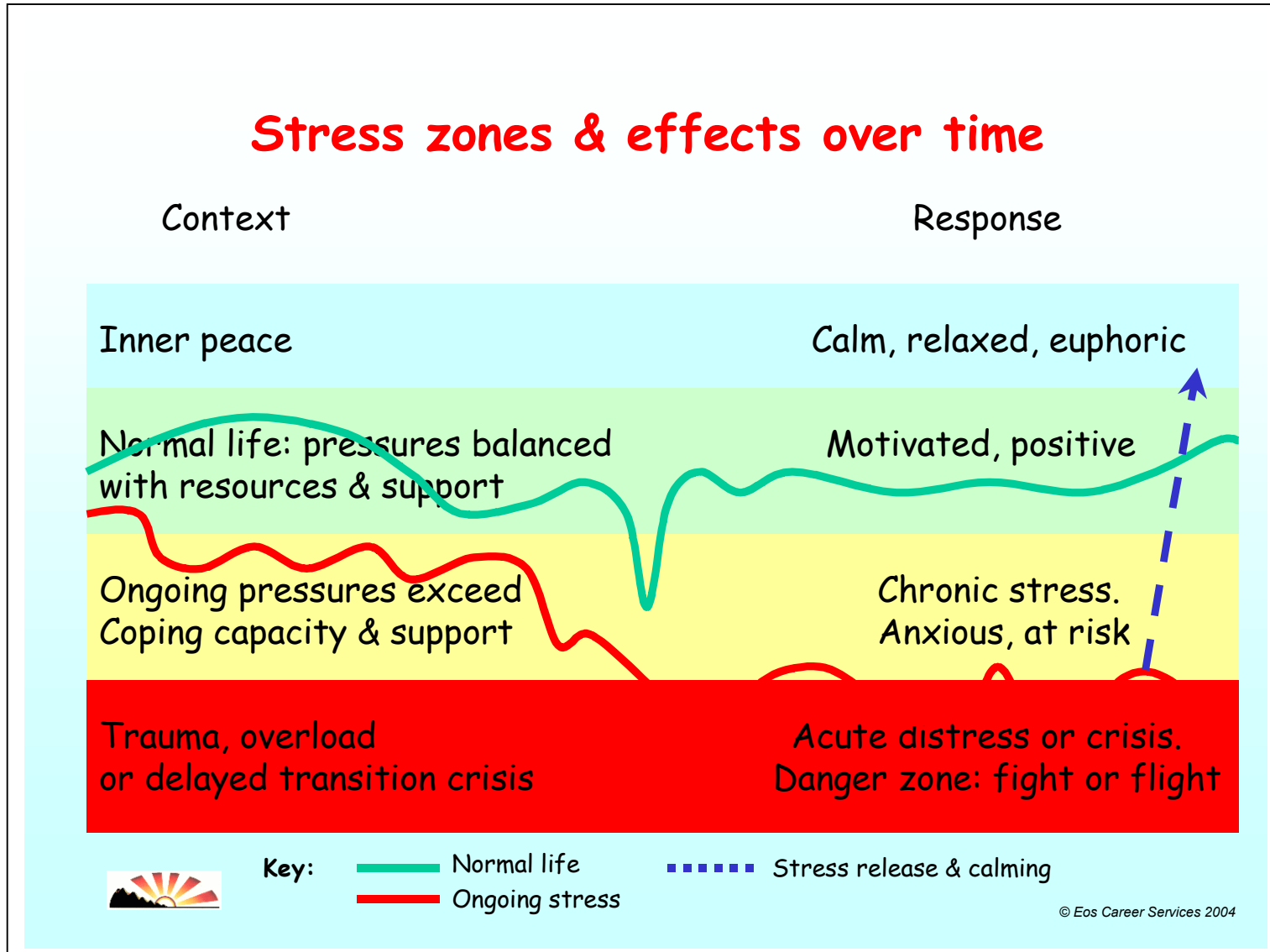
4. Psychological processes

Five psychological factors for surviving and thriving in aviation and other potentially hazardous environments:

- Individual responses to stress

- Delayed effects of trauma and change

- Personality differences

- Hazards and opportunities in group and organisations
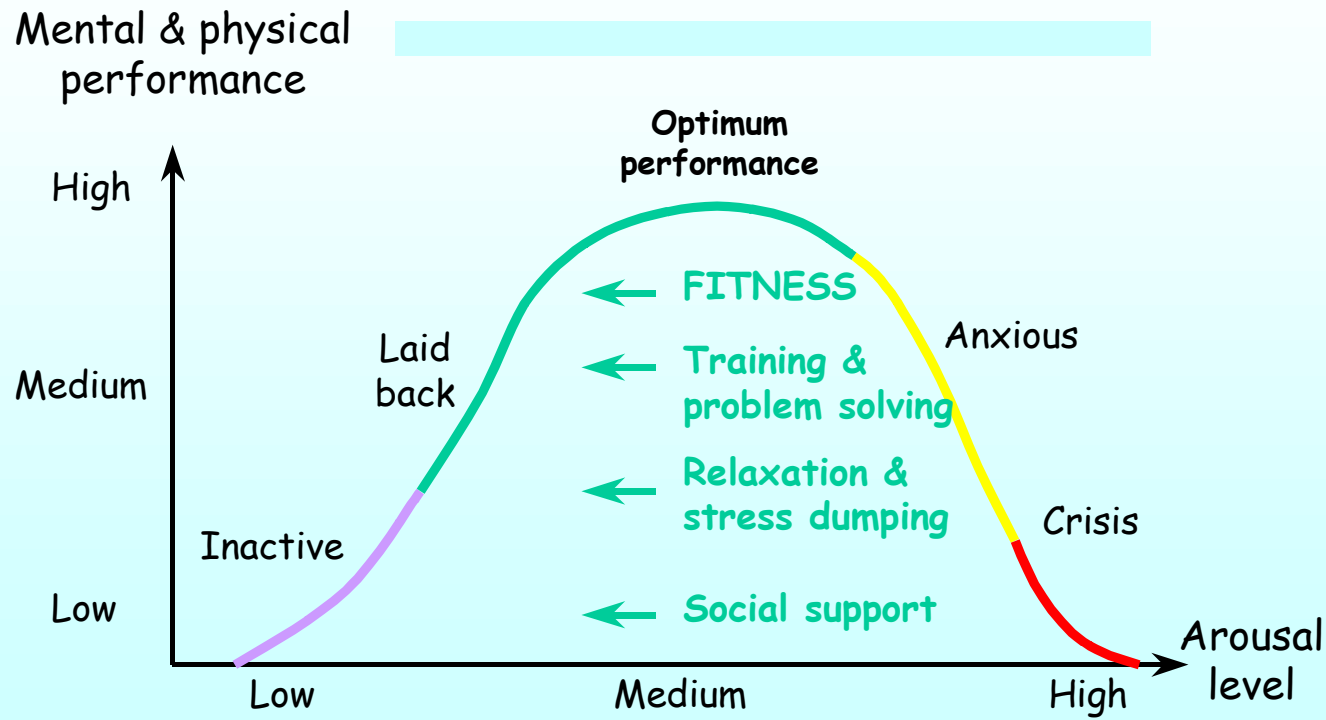
- Fear and violence in stressed populations
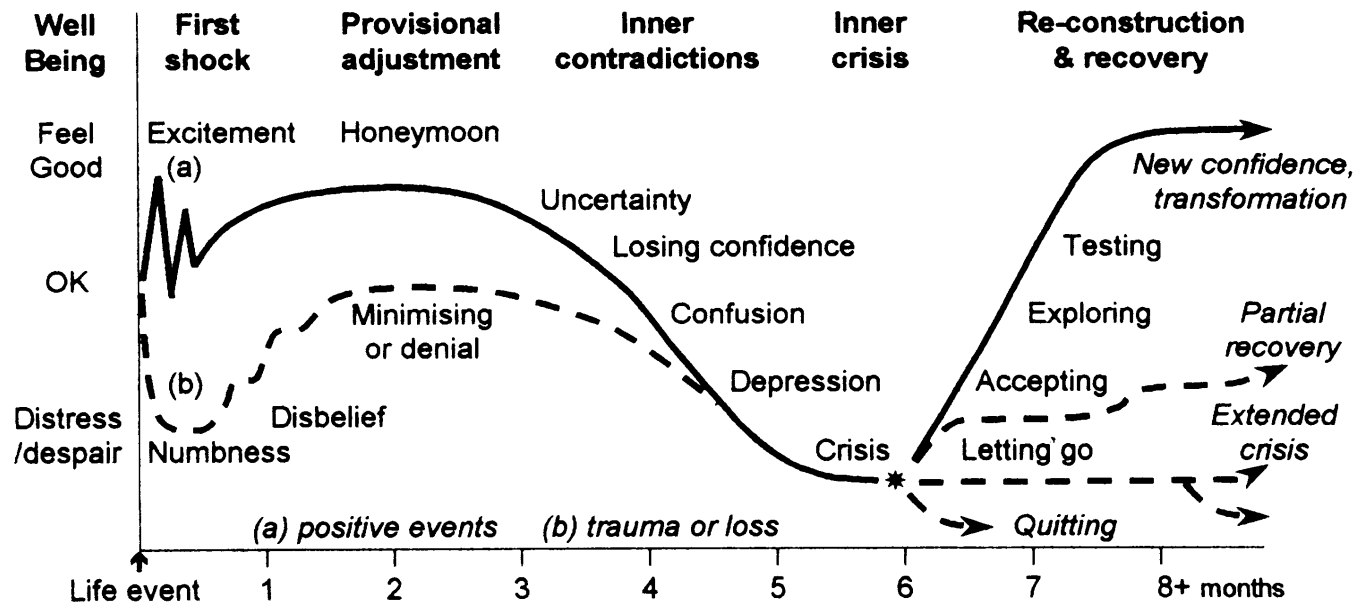
4.1 Individual responses to stress

Stress zones & effects over time

Context   Response

Inner peace   Calm, relaxed, euphoric

Normal life: pressures balanced   Motivated, positive
with resources & support

Ongoing pressures exceed   Chronic stress.
Coping capacity & support   Anxious, at risk

Trauma, overload   Acute distress or crisis.
or delayed transition crisis   Danger zone: fight or flight

Key: —— Normal life   ▪▪▪▪▪ Stress release & calming
     —— Ongoing stress

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Managing stress levels

Mental & physical
performance

**Optimum
performance**

High

FITNESS

Laid
back

Anxious

Medium

Training &
problem solving

Relaxation &
stress dumping

Inactive

Crisis

Low

Social support

Low Medium High

Arousal
level

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Individual responses to trauma and change:

The Transition Cycle

| Well Being | First shock | Provisional adjustment | Inner contradictions | Inner crisis | Re-construction & recovery |

(a) positive events (b) trauma or loss

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Personality differences in response to threats

The **Myers Briggs Type Indicator®**

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Extravert (E) People-people - like working & socialising in large groups or with the public. Good communicators but less reliable alone.	**Introvert (I)** More private people. Quality rather than quantity with people. Work well alone, 1 to 1 or in small groups. Good concentration.
Sensing (S) Practical realists. Hands on, reliable, good with facts and procedures. Efficient, enjoy operational service roles. Dislike change.	**Intuitive (N)** Ideas people, innovative, strategic. Good with projects, plans. Unusual insights. Thrive on change. Bored in routine roles.
Thinking (T) Logical, rational, analytical. Good in technical and commercial roles.	**Feeling (F)** Can be logical but value social, ethical factors - motivation, morale, confidence.
Judging (J) Well planned and organised. Organise self, others and fit well into larger systems. Need contingency plans & scenarios.	**Perceiving (P)** Flexible, adaptable, spontaneous, tolerant. Less organised but may excel in a crisis. Potential negotiators, trouble-shooters.

Hazards in stressed groups and organisations

Group think - Yale Psychologist Irving Janis includes several classic symptoms:

1. **Illusion of Invulnerability**: Members ignore obvious danger, take extreme risk, and are overly optimistic.

2. **Collective Rationalization**: Members discredit and explain away warning contrary to group thinking.

3. **Illusion of Morality**: Members believe their decisions are morally correct, ignoring the ethical consequences of their decisions.

4. **Excessive Stereotyping**:The group constructs negative sterotypes of rivals outside the group.

5. **Pressure for Conformity**: Members pressure any in the group who express arguments against the group's stereotypes, illusions, or commitments, viewing such opposition as disloyalty.

6. **Self-Censorship**: Members withhold their dissenting views and counter-arguments.

7. **Illusion of Unanimity**: Members perceive falsely that everyone agrees with the group's decision; silence is seen as consent.

8. **Mindguards**: Some members appoint themselves to the role of protecting the group from adverse information that might threaten group complacency.

Fear and violence in stressed populations
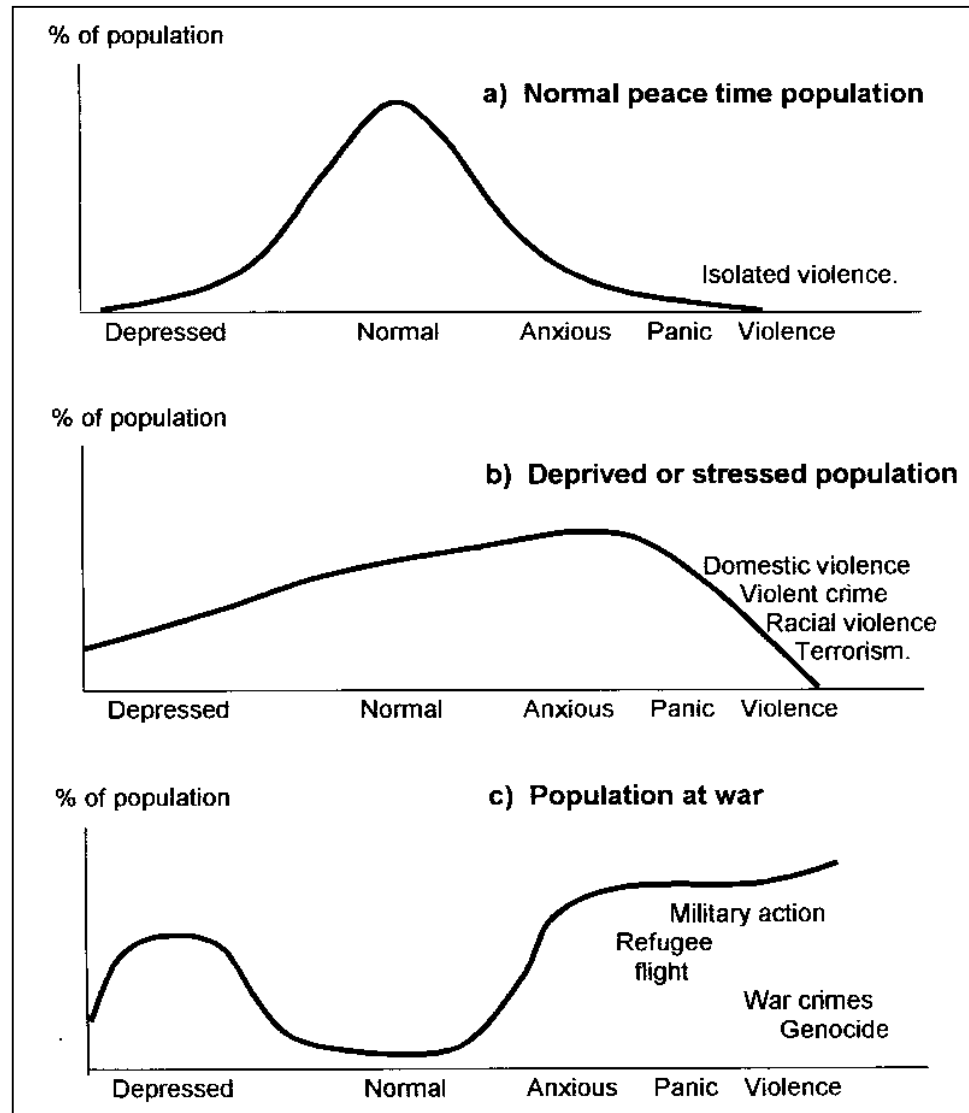
5. Target outcomes for AVSEC members

Personal health & survival toolkit for passengers and staff

- Jessica Stockwell's books cover many comfort & survival tips for passengers.

- Personal welfare issues for air and ground staff are important.

- Awareness of stress reactions and stress management techniques.

- Awareness of the transition cycle as a normal process that all adults experience after major life or career events, including hazards and recovery potential.

- Awareness of personality differences - "It is OK to be you"

2. Incident & risk evaluation priorities

(psychological aspects of do's and dont's in traumatic incidents) may include:

- effects of threat conditions and stress levels on staff and passengers

- effects of personality differences on behaviour in normal and crisis situations.

- effects of recent traumas or changes (transitions)

- profiling disruptive passengers or attackers during incidents - psychological factors to include in critical incident training etc.

- post-incident follow-up for staff may include transition support as well as PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), especially 5-6 months later.

3. Strategic management, training & HR issues
(psychological hazards for individual managers, management teams etc)

- Potential **effects of stress** on passenger and staff behaviour. Hazards of fatigue. Health, fitness, training for stress resilience.

- Potential 'shift to madness' in large groups or populations under extreme **fight or flight** conditions (primary concern in terrorist situations and disruptive groups or crowds).

- Stages of **transitions** after traumatic incidents (work & personal life). Potential effects on individual and group performance. Transition management, potential crisis points, and potential recovery periods.

- Effects of different **personality types** in routine and emergency situations with implications for staff and management selection, team development and emergency planning.

- Hazards of chronic stress for **management decision making** e.g. "group think" and antidotes

- International **trauma support resources** for HR and Occupational Health teams in many countries.

- Value of **scenarios for contingency planning** to develop adaptive emergency responses in structured organisations.

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www.eoslifework.co.uk

Dai Williams, M.Sc C.Psychol

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