# Chapter 7 Conservation of Resources Theory Applied to Major Stress

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# Abstract

Conservation of resources (COR) theory informs our understanding of how individuals cope with major stress and trauma. COR theory asserts that traumatic stress occurs when events threaten and erode the basic resources human beings need for survival or self-integrity. This process occurs within an ecological framework, meaning that patterns of risk and resilience in the face of resource loss are intimately tied to an individual's family, community, and culture. The basic principles and corollaries of COR theory are reviewed to illustrate patterns of post-trauma adjustment over time. Finally, the use of COR theory in guiding individual and collective post-trauma interventions is explored.