



Managing Stress

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Purpose

- Participants will be able to understand what stress is and the long term effects of distress.
- Participants will learn their response style to stress and how to utilize strategies to cope with it.

INTRODUCTION GAME

*Show me an appropriate picture on
your phone that makes you happy*



Grounding activity

- I want you to stay in the present moment.
- Get still, and if you're comfortable, you might want to close your eyes or shift your gaze to the ground, and then ask yourself,
- “How am I feeling?”
- What physical sensations, thoughts, or feelings do you have right now in this moment?
- Scan your body, scan your mind, and take an honest look at how you are feeling at this present moment.

Grounding activity (cont.)

- After a couple of minutes, please share in one or two words how you are feeling right now...

What is stress?

- Stress can be defined as our mental, physical, emotional, and behavioral reactions to any perceived demands or threats.



Why do we stress?

- For two major reasons:
 - We *perceive* a situation as dangerous, difficult, or painful.
 - We don't believe we have the *resources* to cope.



Know your system

- What are your "red flags," or warning signs, that stress is creeping into your life?
- If we keep pushing ourselves, eventually something inside of use will send "red flags," or warning signs that stress is becoming a problem

SIGNS OF STRESS

Emotional

- sadness
- anxiousness
- irritability
- mood changes

Mental

- depression
- panic attacks



Physical

- aches and pains
- chest pains/heart racing
- exhaustion/low energy
- trouble sleeping
- muscle tension
- weak immune system

Behavioral

- overeating or eating less
- gambling
- compulsive activities
- smoking
- using drugs

Fight, Flight or Freeze Response

- When situations seem threatening to us, our bodies react quickly to supply protection by preparing to take action. This physiological reaction is known as the "fight or flight" response.
 - The physiological response to a stressor is known as reactivity
 - Physiological responses can accumulate and result in long-term wear on the body

Understanding Stress



Fight response

- Individuals who respond to stress or when they feel threatened in a fight mode may be screaming, crying, clenched fists, glaring, staring or use an angry tone
- “Fight” Individuals may become angry, agitated, or keyed up under stress
- This style will respond best to stress relief activities that quiet you or your colleagues down, such as:
 - Meditation/Prayer
 - Progressive muscle relaxation
 - Deep breathing or guided imagery

Fight response intervention

- **Deep breathing** also goes by the names of diaphragmatic **breathing**, abdominal **breathing**, belly **breathing**, and paced respiration. When you **breathe** deeply, the air coming in through your nose fully fills your lungs, and the lower belly rises.

Fight response intervention: Meditation

- **Meditation** is a practice where an individual uses a technique – such as mindfulness, or focusing the mind on a particular object, thought, or activity – to train attention and awareness, and achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm and stable state. (Wikipedia)
- Let's practice by watching this
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WBFgFEcmV_Q

Fight response intervention: Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

By tensing and relaxing the muscles throughout your body, you can achieve a powerful feeling of relaxation. Additionally, progressive muscle relaxation will help you be more aware of stress by teaching you to recognize feelings of muscle tension.

Fight response intervention: Guided imagery

- **Guided imagery** is a type of focused **relaxation or meditation**. Focused **relaxation** involves concentrating on a specific object, sound, or experience in order to calm your mind. In **guided imagery**, you intentionally think of a peaceful place or scenario.



Flight response

- “Flight” Individuals may tend to become depressed, withdrawn, or unfocused under stress
- Engage in physical activities to get you “unstuck”.
- When presenting with this style, the best way to regulate and reduce stress includes activities that are stimulating and energize the nervous system, such as:
 - Mindfulness
 - Rhythmic exercise such as Zumba, dance workouts, hula,
 - Power yoga

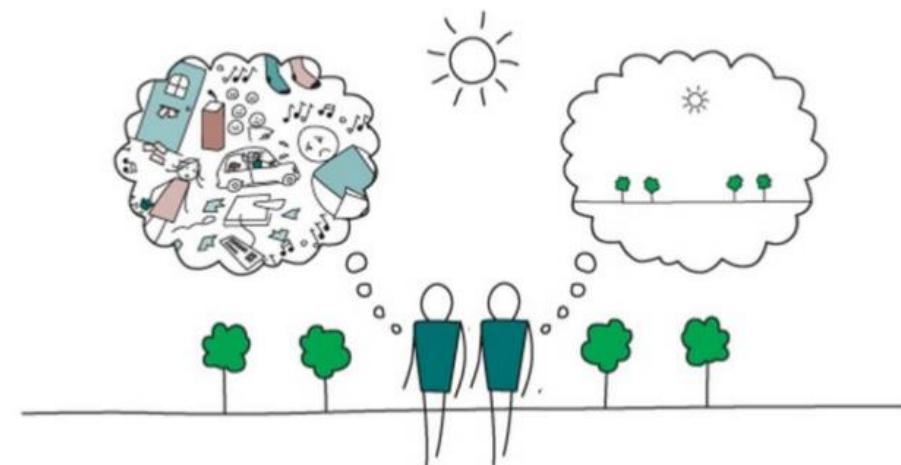
Flight response intervention: Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the practice of focusing on the present moment without judgment. Mindfulness means to deliberately pay attention to whatever you are doing, right now. Focusing on the *Here and Now* Focus on your breathing and just that. If your mind wanders, remind yourself of the task at hand and focus back on your breath.

Flight response intervention: Mindfulness

“ Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; On purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn



Mind Full, or Mindful?

“We’re so busy watching out for what’s just ahead of us that we don’t take time to enjoy where we are.”

- Calvin & Hobbes



Flight response intervention: Mindfulness exercise

Let's watch a video together to practice.

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WMssCCiN9AM>

Freeze response...

- “Freeze” Individuals may tend to “immobilize” or become “numb” under stress
- We need to bring our thoughts to what’s happening in our body so we can connect with what it is we need.
- If this is the response, the challenge is to first rouse your nervous system to a fight or flight response so you can employ the applicable stress relief techniques. To do this, choose physical activity that engages arms and legs, such as:
 - Running
 - Dancing
 - Tai Chi
 - Perform them mindfully, focusing on the sensation in the limbs as you move.

Freeze response intervention: Tai-Chi

- Tai-Chi is often described as "meditation in motion," but it might well be called "*medication* in motion." There is growing evidence that this mind-body practice, which originated in China as a martial art, has value in treating or preventing many health problems.
- Let's practice
- For this exercise, you will need to stand up and have some room to move around.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cEOS2zoyQw4>

Optimistic and Solution-Focused

- Not all stress is bad-eustress
- Solution-Focused
- Pessimism to Optimism
- Opportunities and Meetings
- Gratitude
- Compassion-for self and others

Create Self-Care

Many definitions exist, but generally refer to:

- Providing adequate attention to one's own physical and psychological health and wellness
- Taking an active role to preserve, protect, or improve one's own health and well-being
- Has also been described as an “ethical imperative” in many helping professions

Self-Care: Why?

- Burnout and Retention
- Prevents health problems- start taking care of your health now
- Student Outcomes
- Adult-Student Relationships (Empathy for Self and Others; Vicarious Stress and Trauma)
- Exacerbated by rising costs of food, gas, utility bills & other pandemic Stressors

We put students at the center of learning – so why should we make educators' self-care a priority?

Encourage Openness, Flexibility, Adaptability, and Humor

- Take physical and mental breaks. Schedule your breaks if needed.
- Find opportunities for laughter and finding humor.
- Mind-body activities – mindfulness, jogging, yoga, exercise, listening or dancing to music, walking outdoors, etc.
- Do one thing at a time.

Address nutritional and health concerns

- Get daily sunlight and ensure you are taking Vitamin D
- If you are feeling stressed, take some vitamin B1. You can also try nutritional yeast.
- Ensure you get quality sleep every night. If you are not sleeping well, please see your doctor.
- Get regular exercise. You can try mobility exercises or stretch on a regular basis.
- Drink water
- Avoid sugary foods and junk foods.

Work: Strategies for Yourself and Colleagues

- Create communication expectations – for yourself, colleagues, students, and families
- Provide clear and consistent messaging to students and families. Elicit feedback. Ensure communication is reciprocal.
- Be clear about when you are available and when you are not. We all need boundaries. Set official work hours.
- Set healthy boundaries for yourself.
- Create schedules for clarity and stability – for yourself and others.
- Create a workspace for yourself.
- Take more breaks. Schedule breaks.
- Make small, baby steps every day.

Create balance

- Be realistic (and gentle) and practice kindness with yourself, and encourage others to do the same
- Reduce the workload for yourself and others



Today, do something for you: Relax, clear your mind, take a break, go for a walk, watch the sunset...

