Getting Started:

1. If you have any questions, please type them into the Q&A box.

2. Place a pen/pencil/paper nearby to jot down your thoughts.

3. At the end of this session, when you leave the meeting, there will be a link that will pop-up asking you to complete the Session Quiz / Feedback Form.
Introductions

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Director of Professional Development &
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Who We Are

Pure Edge, Inc. (PEI) is a private operating foundation that provides direct service to organizations through professional development & strategy thought partnership.

PEI also provides grants to national organizations that advance the work of whole child development & SEL.
Introductions

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Learning Objectives

- Understand the impact of stress on educators and scholars.
- Understand how mindfulness can help educators and students manage stress and powerful emotions.
- Experience Brain Breaks exercises as a participant.
Engaging Activity

Please respond to the poll on the next slide to share which of the following images most accurately reflects how you are feeling right now:
Engaging Activity: Mindful Minute
In order to have an impact on others, you must first have an impact on yourself.
Nasal Breathing

Mouth Breathing
Benefits of Nasal Breathing

- Filters dust and impurities from the air
- Warms the air to body temperature
- The diaphragm is more easily controlled, which supports the development of internal core strength
- More control over lengthening the breath (extended exhalations help activate the parasympathetic nervous system)
- Increased oxygen from nasal breath increases energy and vitality

Northwestern University. “Rhythm of breathing affects memory, fear: Breathing is not just for oxygen; it’s also linked to brain function, behavior.” ScienceDaily, ScienceDaily, 7 December 2016. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/12/161207093034.htm
This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-SA
Engaging Activity: Even In – Even Out

1. Start in Seated Mountain with a tall spine, relaxed shoulders, and eyes gently closed.

2. Breathe naturally through the nose.

3. We are going to focus on making our inhales and exhales even.

4. Inhale deeply through the nose and exhale through the mouth for a count of one.

5. On the next breath, let’s count to two on the inhale and the exhale.

6. Repeat, continuing to extend the breath up to a count of five.
What is stress?

What is a stressor?

A physiological reaction that prepares an individual to respond to a stressor.

The stressor is usually something that threatens the well-being or homeostasis (stable equilibrium) of the individual.
Engaging Activity: Think–Ink–Share

Where do you feel stress in your body?

Where do you feel joy in your body?
Benefits

- Positive challenge
- Motivates us to take action
- Promotes well-being
- Enhances performance

Detriments

- No relief in sight
- Makes us physically sick
- Weakens immune system
- Impairs performance
STRESSOR: Pandemic (CDC)

- Health-related fear
- Sleep problems
- Eating problems
- Concentration problems
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
- Isolation
  - 50% of 20K responders reported feeling lonely (Cigna Survey)
Why Focus on School Stress?

In highly stressed school environments, teachers and learners pay the costs.

Teacher turnover: $2 BILLION each year

"Stress and disappointments": 49% of teachers say it isn’t worth it.

40-50% of new teachers leave within first 5 years.

High DAILY levels of stress: 46% of teachers

New principals NOT retained beyond third year: 50%

When teachers are highly stressed, students show lower levels of both social adjustment and academic performance.

Sources (clockwise from 40-50%): Ingersoll, Merrill & Stuckey (2014); Greenberg, Brown, Abenavoli (2016); School Leaders Network (2014); Rentner, Kober, Frizzell, (2016); Alliance for Excellent Education (2014).

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Engaging Activity: Starfish Breathing or Take Five

1. Make a starfish with one hand, fingers spread wide.
2. Put the index finger from the other hand on the outer base of the thumb.
3. We are going to trace the outline of our starfish hand. Keep looking at your pointer finger while you do your breathing.
4. Inhale (finger traces to top of thumb).
5. Exhale (finger traces down the other side of thumb).
6. Repeat until you have traced the outline of the starfish hand.

*Learners are synchronizing their movement, breath, and gaze. On the inhale, index finger and eyes trace upward along a finger; on the exhale, index finger and eyes trace downward along a finger. Each upward movement is coupled with an inhale, whereas each downward movement is coupled with an exhale.

*After Starfish Breathing, you can have learners rest their hands on their chest, continuing to breathe mindfully, as they silently recall three things for which they are thankful.
Issues we face...

- Working from home
- Increases in screen time
- Anxiety when outside
- Lower physical activity levels
- Difficulty getting to sleep
- Missing family and friends
- Lack of social contact

Sources: CDC YRBS 2015; https://www.kidsdata.org/; Cavanaugh et al., 2016
Allostatic load is "the wear and tear on the body," which accumulates as an individual is exposed to repeated or chronic stress.
Impact of Stress & Trauma on the Heart

After his death, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's autopsy found that while he was just 39 years old, he had the heart of a 60-year-old.
What we hope to do

Respond vs. React
Engaging Activity: Chair Twist

1. Sit in Seated Mountain.
2. Inhale, sit up tall.
3. Exhale, touch your right knee with your left hand and put your right hand on your hip (or the back of the chair).
4. Inhale, sit up tall.
5. Exhale, look over your right shoulder.
6. Stay still and take 3 relaxed breaths.
7. Inhale, come back to Seated Mountain.
8. Exhale, repeat to other side.

*When teaching learners, if you are facing them make sure you mirror them (e.g., use your right hand when you instruct them to use their left hand).

*If seated on the floor, start from crisscross position and follow the same directions.
It is essential for adults working with young children to be well physically and emotionally.

Better health enables better relationships with children, and research has long demonstrated that good relationships are crucial for children’s learning and social-emotional development.

Dr. Kate Gallagher
Director of Research and Evaluation,
Buffett Early Childhood Institute, University of Nebraska
Stress Is Contagious

Higher cortisol levels were found in students whose teachers reported high levels of stress and burnout.

Researcher Kimberly Schonert-Reichl urges educators to be aware of their own mindsets and to practice mental wellness exercises to reduce their stress levels.
Engaging Activity: Seated Figure Four

1. Begin in Seated Mountain Pose.
2. Inhale, cross the right ankle over the left thigh, just above the knee. Place the right hand on the right thigh and left hand on the right foot.
3. Exhale, fold torso forward and relax the head down. Take 2-3 breaths here.
4. If it’s easier, you can hold the legs of the chair as you fold forward.
5. Inhale, come back to Seated Mountain.
6. Switch legs and repeat on the other side.

*Use this sequence to release the back, which can get tired from sitting.
Self-regulation & the Brain

Prefrontal Cortex

Amygdala
THE VAGUS NERVE

How to Hack Your Nervous System

The vagus nerve, the tenth cranial nerve, is the superhighway of the nervous system that connects the body and brain. We can tone the vagus nerve through deep breathing exercises.

http://depressivedisorder.blogspot.com/2015/09/7-ways-to-stimulate-your-vagus-nerve-to.html
**Engaging Activity: Chair Cat/Cow**

1. Sit in Seated Mountain with hands on knees.
2. As you inhale, stretch your arms overhead and interlace fingers. Reach the center of your chest up toward the ceiling, and lift your chin so that you are looking at the ceiling. (Cow)
3. As you exhale, in one movement bring your hands forward, round your spine and drop your chin toward your chest. (Cat)
4. Repeat for several breaths: inhale, arms up, gaze lifts, chest up. Exhale round the spine, chin tucks, hands forward.
5. Return to Seated Mountain.

*You can have young learners moo like a cow and meow like a cat. Just make sure the do a few rounds moving with the inhale and exhale first.

*If on the floor, learners can come to hands and knees. Inhale, the belly drops down toward the floor and we look up toward the ceiling (Cow). Exhale, look at your belly button and round your spine (Cat). Repeat for several breaths.*
“The three most important aspects of learning—attention, focus, and memory—are all controlled by our emotions, not by cognition.”

~Marc Brackett
Neurochemicals

Endorphins

Neurotransmitters

Improved mood

Improved memory

Stress Response

“Gas Pedal”
Sympathetic Nervous System:
Fight or Flight

“Brake”
Parasympathetic Nervous System:
Rest and Digest

https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/understanding-the-stress-response
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Blue Zone

Blue Zone Image: https://www.shutterstock.com/video/clip-1007757856-worried-stressed-man

Red Zone

Red Zone Image: https://www.shutterstock.com/search/man+yelling
Engaging Activity: Mountain/Chair Strength Sequence
Did you know?

Give yourself time to develop these new patterns/habits. There's a wide range (18-200+ days) in how long it takes to develop a new habit; average time being 66 days.

Engaging Activity: Guided Rest
Brain Breaks Review

**Breathe**
- Mindful Minute
- Even In – Even Out
- Starfish Breathing or Take Five

**Move**
- Chair Twist
- Seated Figure Four
- Chair Cat/Cow
- Mountain Chair Strength Sequence

**Rest**
- Guided Rest/Body Scan

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Takeaways

- Stress impacts us physically and mentally.
- We can use the breath and body to decrease Allostatic Load.
- The “Brain” muscle needs exercise too.
- Self-care strategies build resilience.
HEADSPACE: Mindfulness On Demand

Headspace is donating their app to all Educators.

go.headspace.com/pureedge

Use your work email address
Optimistic Closure: One Word Takeaway
Thank you for joining us!

Session: The Neuroscience of Stress and Educator Self-Care
Trainer: Gill McClean, Director of Professional Development

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