



Pure Community

# Thank you for joining us!

**Session 3: Stress and Allostatic Load**

**Trainer: Michelle Kelsey Mitchell & Douglas Gotel**

## 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.
4. You will receive a follow-up email within 24 hours of this session. That email will serve as your confirmation of attendance record for this session.

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# Culture of Care Series: Session 3

## Stress & Allostatic Load

# Introductions

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**Douglas Gotel, LICSW, RPT-S**

Director, Trauma Responsive Schools Initiatives  
DC Public Schools

**Michelle Kelsey Mitchell**

Director of Partnerships  
Pure Edge

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# Who We Are

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

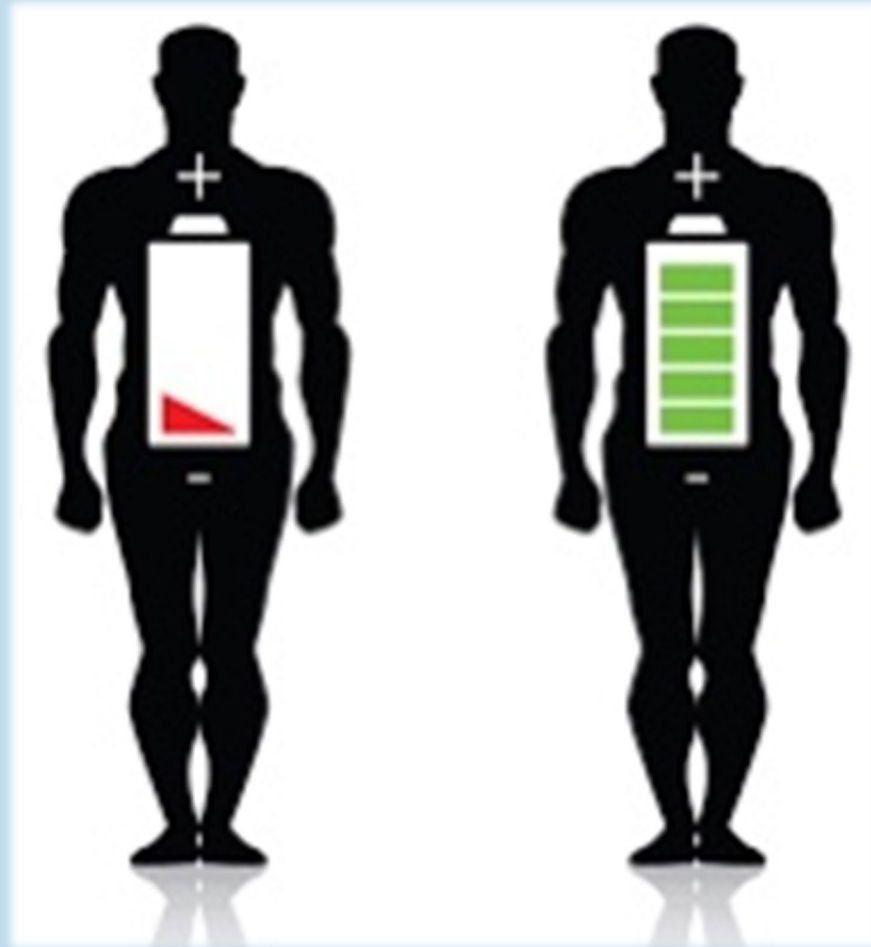
PEI also provides grants to national organizations that advance the work of whole child development & SEL.

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# Welcoming Activity

Please respond to  
the following poll

# What is your Energy Level right now?



# Culture of Care Objectives

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- ❖ Practice and implement Breathe, Move, and Rest strategies for Self-awareness and Self-management.
- ❖ Identify CASEL competencies.
- ❖ Acquire skills to train colleagues in SEL, evidence-based curricula.

# Session 3 – Learning Objectives

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- ❖ Explore the link between Stress and Allostatic load.
- ❖ Connect Pure Power curriculum to developmentally appropriate student "What is Stress" lessons.
- ❖ Illustrate the interconnectedness of SEL and self-care.



# Social and Emotional Learning Competencies

- Identifying emotions
- Self-perception/Identity
- Recognizing strengths
- Sense of self-confidence
- Self-efficacy
- *Integrating personal and socio-cultural identities*
- *Analyzing of beliefs, mindsets, and biases*
- *Social interdependence*

- Perspective-taking
- Empathy
- Appreciating diversity
- Respect for others
- *Recognizing setting demands and opportunities*
- *Determining common social goals and interests*



- Impulse control
- Stress management
- Self-discipline
- Self-motivation
- Perseverance
- Goal-setting
- Organizational skills
- *Personal and collective agency*

- Identifying problems
- Analyzing situations
- Solving problems
- Evaluating
- Reflecting
- Ethical responsibility
- *Co-creating a sense of belonging and thriving*

- Communication
- Social Engagement
- Relationship – Building
- Teamwork
- *Cultural competency*
- *Collaborative problem-solving*



# Guiding Questions

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What is stress?  
(Grades 6-12, Unit 3.9)

How can we distinguish between  
healthy and unhealthy stress?  
(Grades 3-5, Unit 1.5)

# Impact of Stress & Trauma on the Heart

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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.



# Breathe



# Move



# Rest



# Nasal Breathing

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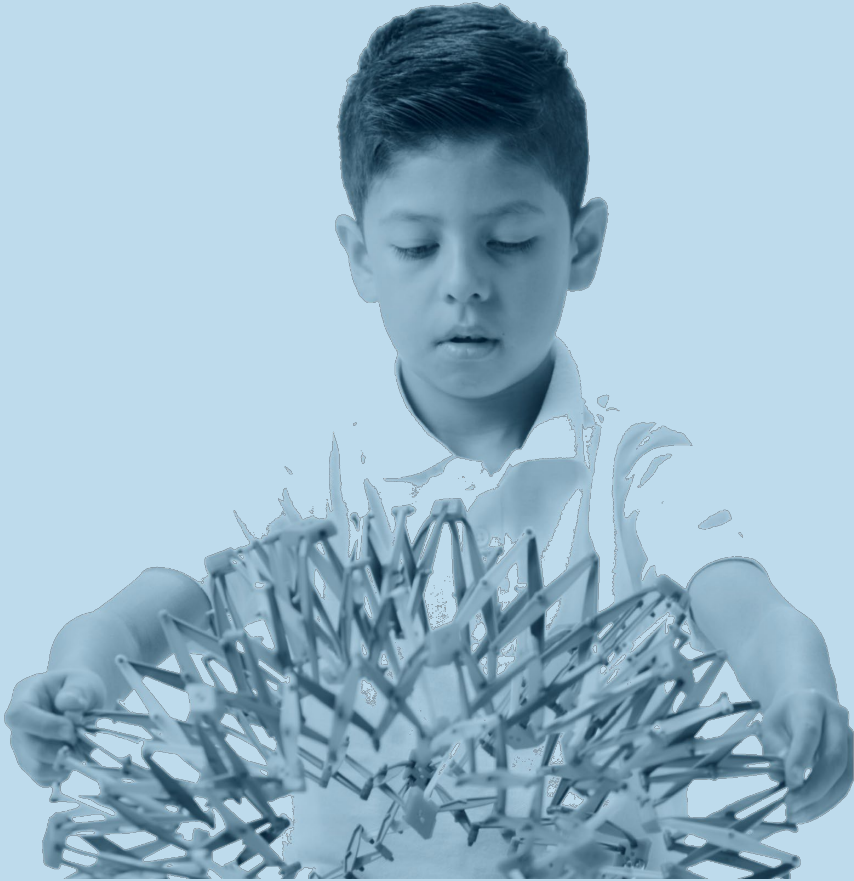
# Benefits of Nasal Breathing

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- ❖ 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

# Breathe

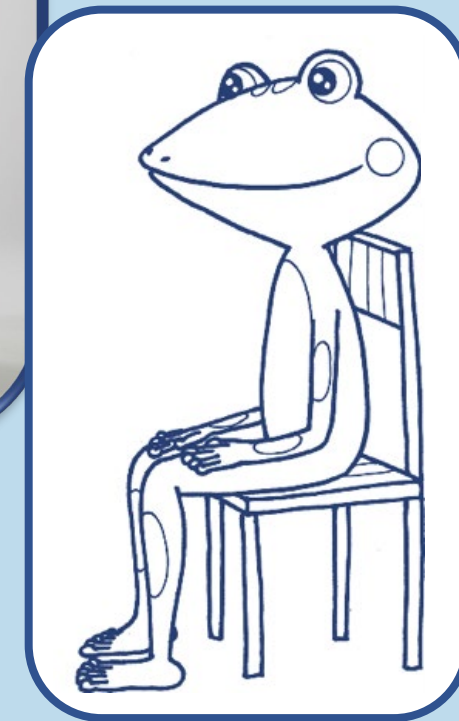


- Breathing effects change in the nervous system
- Sit up tall so lungs can fully expand
- Use props to make breath concrete
- Use nasal breathing (unless otherwise instructed)



# Engaging Activity: Even In – Even Out

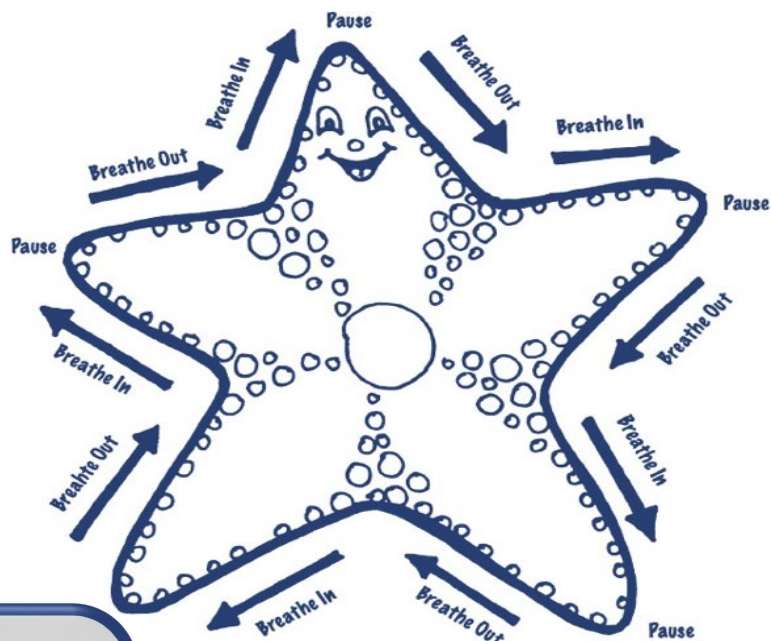
1. Start in Seated Mountain with a tall spine, relaxed shoulders, and eyes gently closed.
2. Breathe naturally through the nose.
3. We are going to focus on making our inhales and exhales even.
4. Inhale deeply through the nose and exhale through the mouth for a count of one.
5. On the next breath, lets count to two on the inhale and the exhale.
6. Repeat, continuing to extend the breath up to a count of five.







# Engaging Activity: Starfish Breathing or Take Five

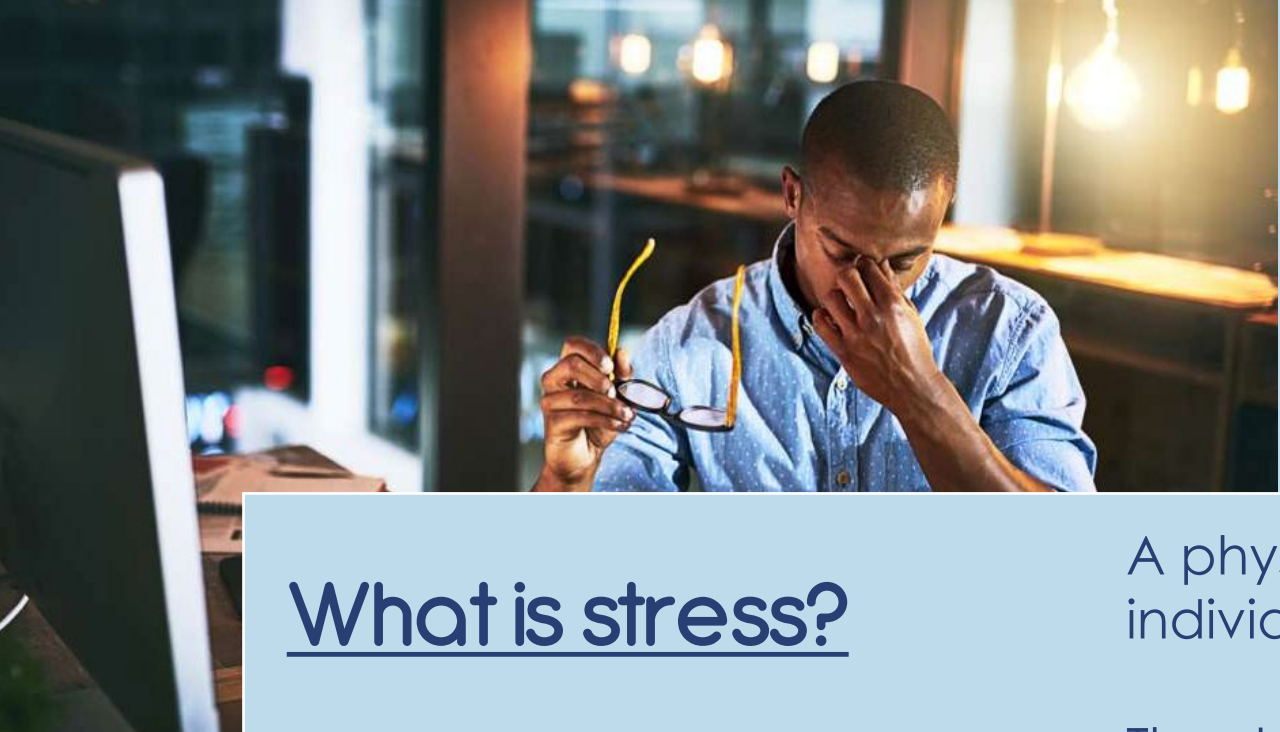


1. Make a starfish with one hand, fingers spread wide.
2. Put the index finger from the other hand on the outer base of the thumb.
3. We are going to trace the outline of our starfish hand. Keep looking at your pointer finger while you do your breathing.
4. Inhale (finger traces to top of thumb).
5.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



## What is stress?

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

## What is a stressor?

The stressor is usually something that threatens the well-being or homeostasis (stable equilibrium) of the individual.



## 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





# Engaging Activity: Think-Ink-Share



Where do you feel  
stress in your body?

Where do you feel  
joy in your body?

# Stress Accumulates ↔ Allostatic Load

**Allostatic load** is "the wear and tear on the body," which accumulates as an individual is exposed to repeated or chronic stress.



*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.





# Compassion Fatigue

## Secondary Trauma



- ❖ *1 in 5 adults in America experience a mental illness.*
- ❖ *Nearly 1 in 25 (10 million) adults in America live with a serious mental illness.*
- ❖ *Approximately 10.2 million adults have co-occurring mental health and addiction disorders.*





# 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.

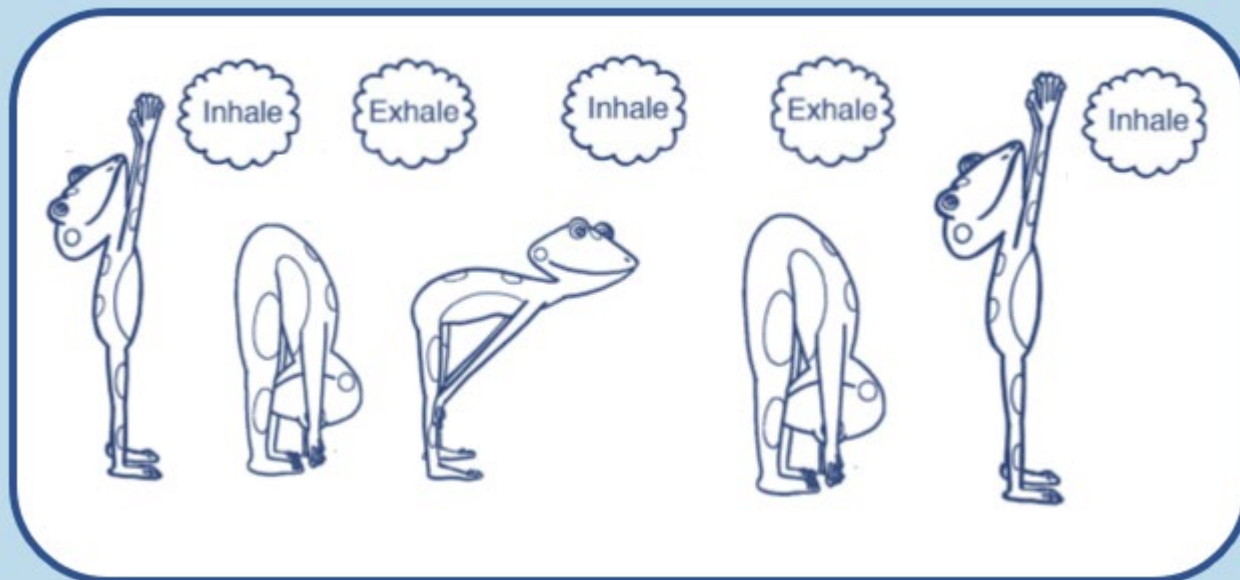
*\*When teaching learners, if you are facing them make sure you mirror them (e.g., use your right hand when you instruct them to use their left hand).*

*\*If seated on the floor, start from crisscross position and follow the same directions.*





# Engaging Activity: Recharge Sequence



1. Begin standing in Mountain with feet slightly apart, hands at your sides.
2. Inhale, take your arms overhead and look up.
3. Exhale and fold over your legs, bending the knees slightly to allow the hands to rest on the shins, the feet or the floor.
4. Inhale, place hands on shins, straighten legs and look up.
5. Exhale and fold over the legs once more.
6. Inhale, come all the way up to standing, arms overhead and look up.
7. Exhale, return to Mountain.

*\*This sequence can be done behind or in front of desks/chairs. It's useful to re-energize learners when they get tired.*

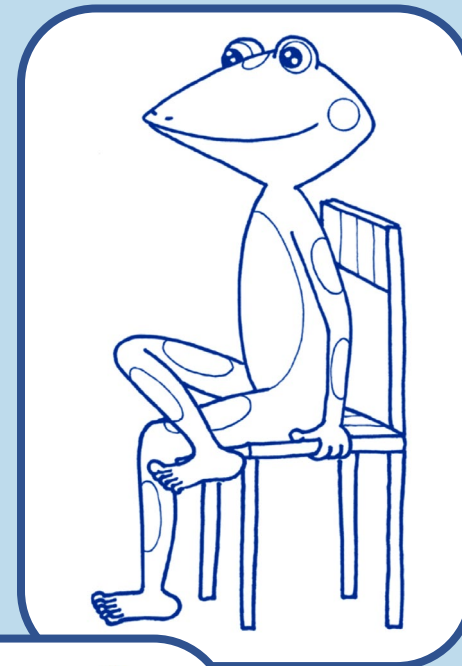


# Engaging Activity: Seated Figure Four

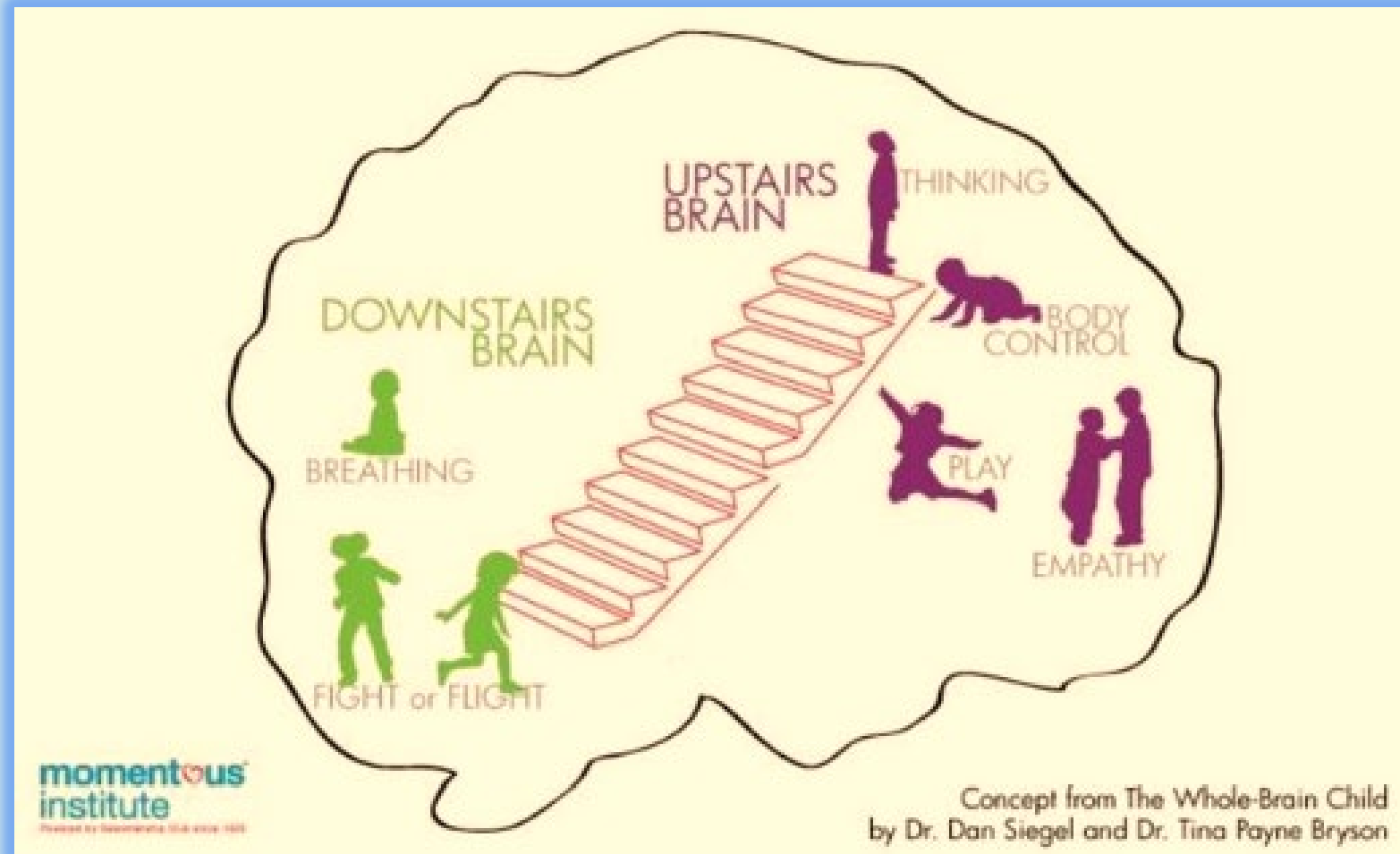


1. Begin in Seated Mountain Pose.
2. Inhale, cross the right ankle over the left thigh, just above the knee. Place the right hand on the right thigh and left hand on the right foot.
3. Exhale, fold torso forward and relax the head down. Take 2-3 breaths here.
4. If it's easier, you can hold the legs 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.*



# Upstairs Brain – Downstairs Brain



# Upstairs Brain – Downstairs Brain

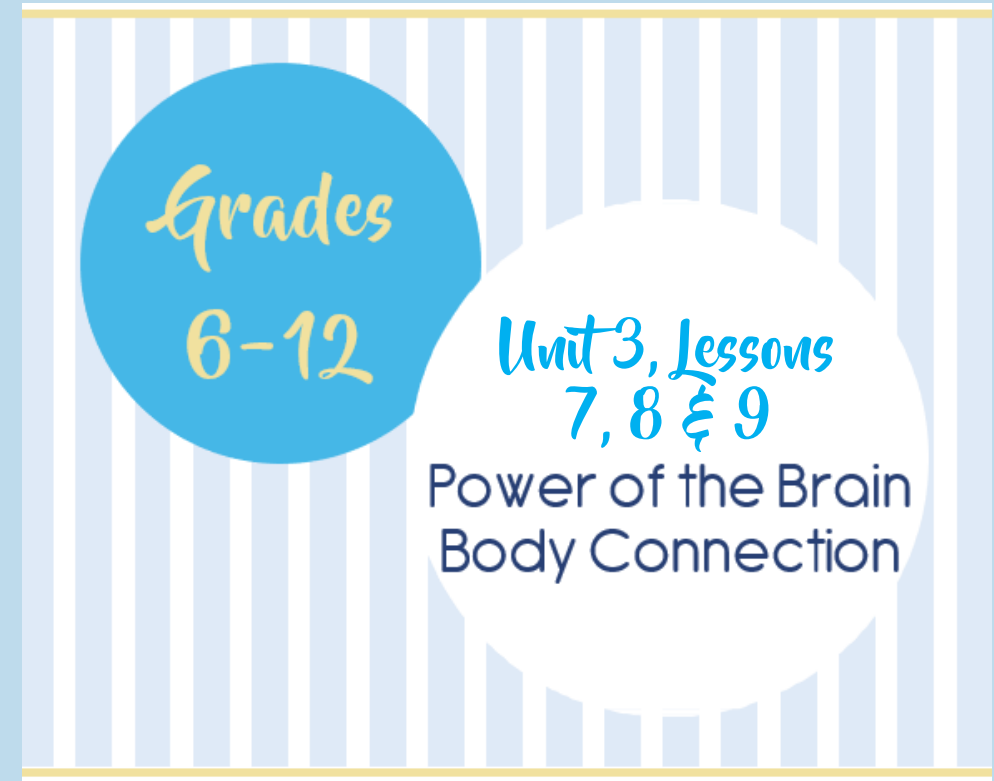
Integrating upstairs downstairs strategies:

1. **CONNECT, THEN REDIRECT:** Be present with your child's feelings, help them get into the “green zone.”
2. **Breathing** will help bring the prefrontal cortex (“upstairs brain”) back online.
3. **Move** it or lose it: Get child moving and their mood will change.

# Pure Power



- ❖ What does tension feel like in your body?
- ❖ When do you feel tension in your body?
  - ❖ Why is relaxation important?
  - ❖ What is stress?



- ❖ When do you feel exhilarated by stress?
- ❖ When do you feel depleted by stress?
- ❖ Can you name some wellness practices that help build resilience?





# Engaging Activity: STOP

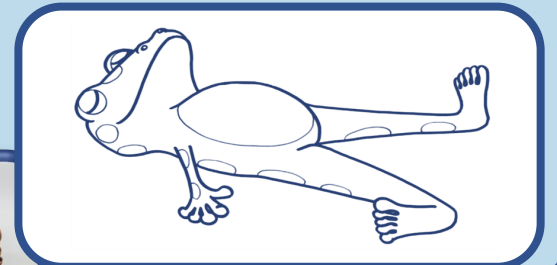
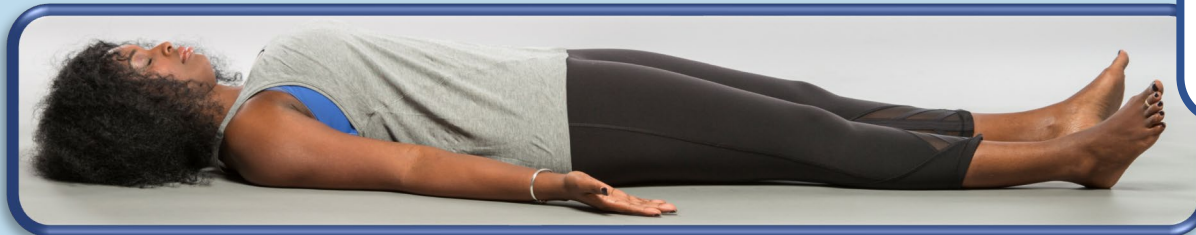
- ❖ STOP is an exercise designed to help learners practice self-regulation when they are experiencing strong emotions.
- ❖ Learners learn to go through the four steps: S-T-O-P
- ❖ It is a good idea to practice this exercise when learners are not experiencing strong emotions, so that they will be able to implement it when they are.
- ❖ The main focus is to hone learners' observation skills to help them make more mindful choices.
- ❖ When we observe, we are just noticing what we feel in our bodies, we are not saying if something is good or bad.
- ❖ For further exploration, ask learners how the quality of their breath changes when they are laughing, sobbing, anxious, frightened, angry, relaxed, surprised, or startled.
- ❖ Underscore two important features of mindfulness practice:
  1. Consistent practice—keep trying!
  2. Learn from unmindful moments, without being too harsh on yourself.





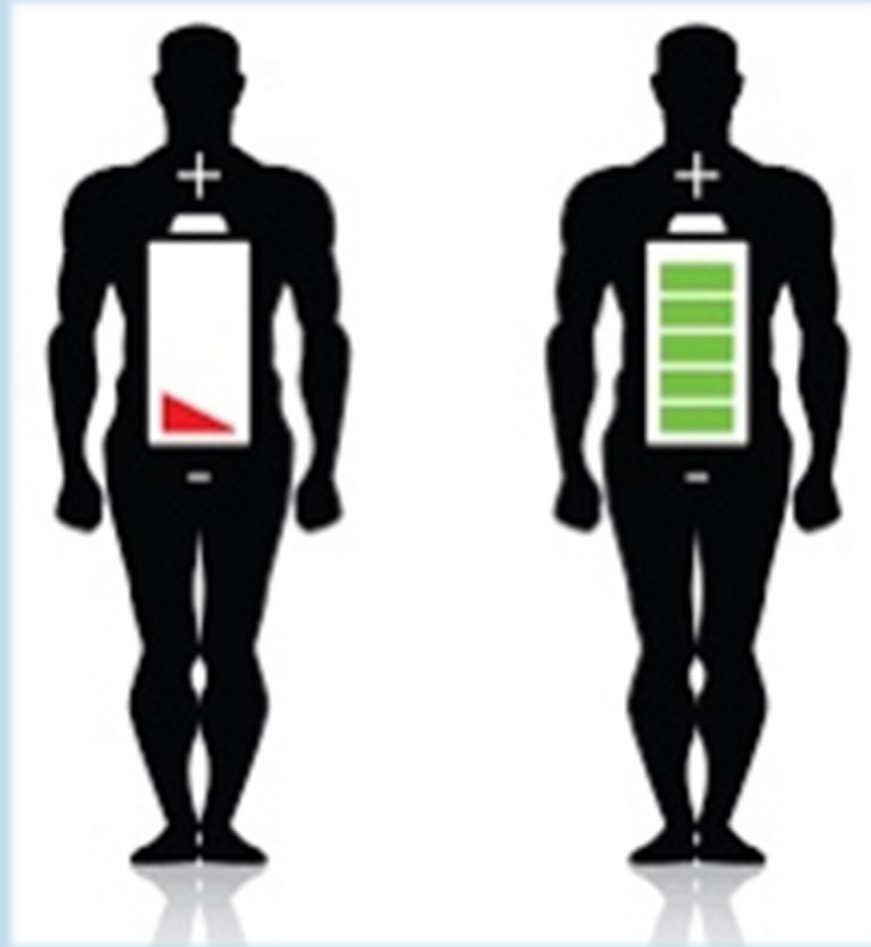
# Engaging Activity: Guided Rest / Body Scan

1. Lie down on the floor on your back. Spread your feet apart. Turn your palms up to face the ceiling and close your eyes.
2. Put your attention on your forehead. Feel your forehead relax.
3. Put your attention on your eyes. Feel your eyes relax.
4. Put your attention on your cheeks and jaw. Feel your cheeks and jaw relax.
5. Put your attention on your neck. Feel your neck relax.
6. Put your attention on your shoulders. Feel your shoulders relax. (Repeat for arms, wrists, hands, fingers.)
7. Put your attention on your chest. Feel your chest relax.
8. Put your attention on your back. Feel where your back touches the floor (or the chair).
9. Put your attention on your belly. Notice how the breath moves the belly softly up and down.
10. Put your attention on your hips. Feel your hips relax. (Repeat for legs, knees, ankles, feet, toes.)
11. Bring your awareness to your breathing and notice where you feel the breath in your body. Maybe you notice it in your nostrils. Maybe you feel it in your chest. Maybe you feel it in your belly.
12. See if you can get really quiet. Maybe you will even feel your heart beating inside your body.
13. Let learners rest in silence for a few moments.
14. Ring chime.
15. Slowly start to wiggle your fingers and toes. Take a deep breath in and stretch your arms overhead. As you exhale, relax.
16. Open your eyes and slowly return to a seated position.
17. Notice how you are feeling.





# What is your Energy Level right now?



# Optimistic Closure: Maintaining Relationships During Physical Distancing

1. Try to say hello frequently.
2. Show you care with a text, email, video, or note.
3. Try snail mail pen pals, phone pals, or virtual turn and talk.
4. Use online tools like Google Classroom to create “virtual tables” for small-group discussions
5. Consider including parents.
6. Ask your students what norms your class should follow as you work together remotely.
7. Invite your students to tell you how they think you can support them during their time away from school. Give them a voice and choice in shaping your new ways of working and being together.



# Brain Breaks Review



## Breathe

- ❖ Even In – Even Out
- ❖ Starfish Breathing or Take Five



## Move

- ❖ Chair Twist
- ❖ Recharge Sequence
- ❖ Seated Figure Four

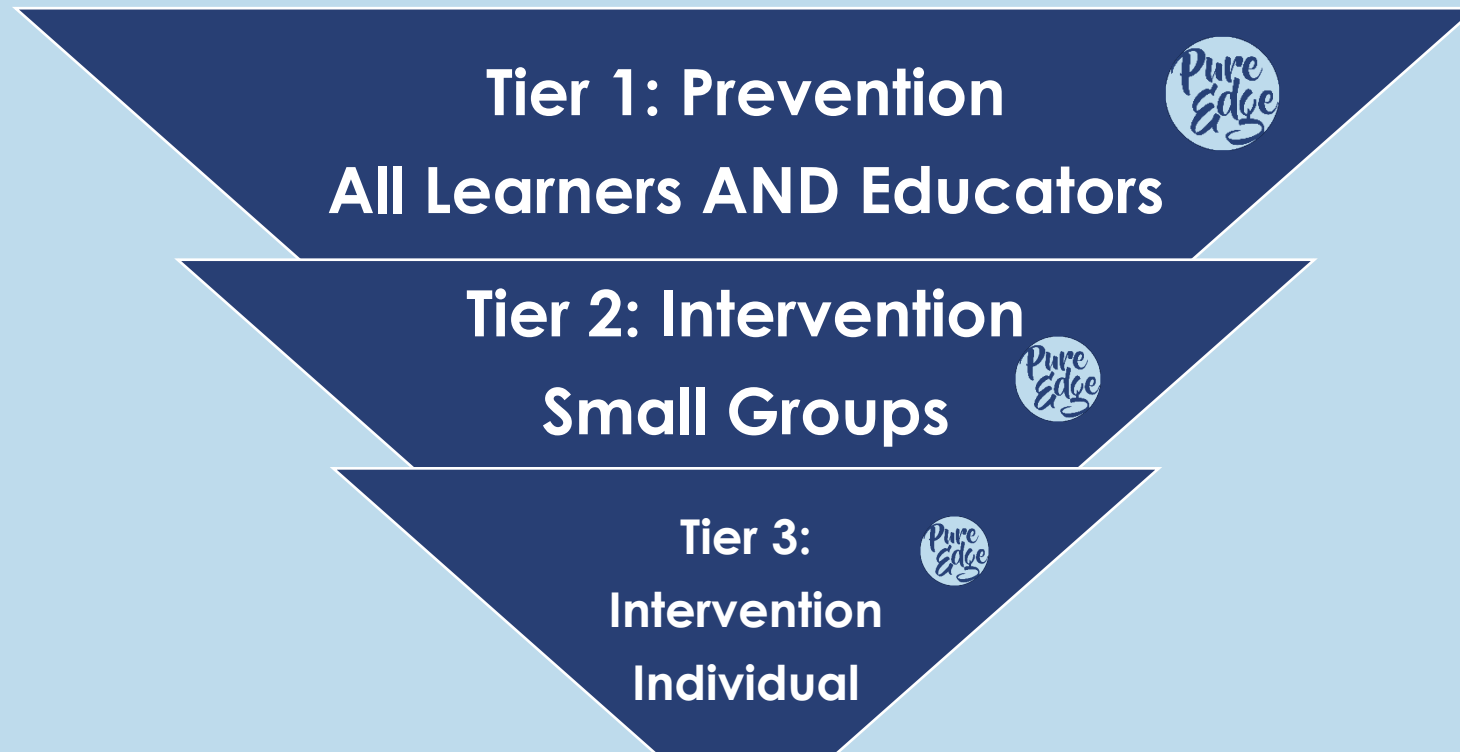


## Rest

- ❖ STOP
- ❖ Guided Rest/Body Scan

# MTSS: Multi Tiered System of Support

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# Takeaways

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- ❖ Stress impacts us physically and mentally.
- ❖ We can use the breath and body to decrease Allostatic Load.
- ❖ Kids need strategies to help them move between the upstairs and downstairs brain.

# Homework – Session 3

## **Self:**

Schedule a Mindful Minute every morning.

## **Online Class:**

- ❖ Identify two breathing Brain Breaks we practiced together and implement them during your online class with students.
- ❖ Implement one at the beginning of class (Welcoming Activity) and one right before the end of class (Optimistic Closure.)

## **Together in Class:**

Identify 1 Brain Break that can be used daily for stress management with your students.

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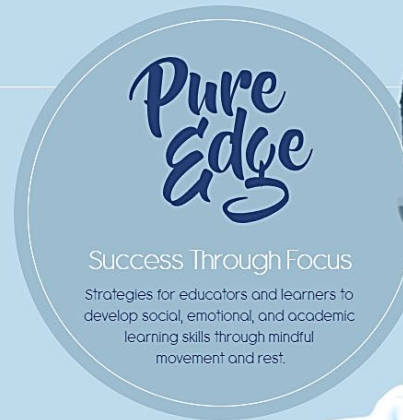
Evidence-Based Approach  
Thoughtful Partnerships  
Curriculum & Training



Online Curriculum

Log Out

+ MENU



•  
breathe

•  
move

•  
rest





Pure Community

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