Getting Started:

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

2. Keep paper/pen near you 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 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.
Introductions

Respond to the poll to tell us a little about yourself.
Welcoming Activity

On the next slide, share which of the following images most accurately reflects your feelings right now.
Engaging Activity: Mindful Minute

• Start in Seated Mountain.
• Bring your attention to the present moment. We are going to start by taking a Mindful Minute.
• Start bringing your attention to the breath, noticing its qualities (fast, slow, warm, cool, shallow, deep…).
• Continue to focus your attention on the breath and notice how you are feeling. Just notice.
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

Anne Contreras
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Director of Programs & National Trainer

MACP, MFTi #87444
Doctoral Studies
Somatic Psychology (Embodied States)
Foundation – Trauma
Learning Objectives

• Recognize the physiological response to stress.
• Experience self-care practices throughout the session.
• Explore the interconnectedness of stress and one’s own self-care.
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.
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)

Racial and ethnic minority groups


This Photo by Unknown Author is licensed under CC BY-NC
For many parents, **it can feel overwhelming** to face competing demands at home and work along with possible financial challenges during this crisis.

~Dr. Arthur C. Evans Jr., CEO
American Psychological Association
Engaging Activity: Even In – Even Out

[Image of a person sitting in a chair with a frog illustration]

[Image of a person sitting cross-legged in a meditation pose]
• 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
**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
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.

Image Source: https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/peace/1964/king/biographical/
**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 they 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.
Stress Is Contagious

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

Researcher Kimberly Schonert-Reichl (University of British Columbia) urges educators to be aware of their own mindsets and to practice mental wellness exercises to reduce their stress levels.

www.tricitynews.com/news/stress-is-contagious-education-leaders-told-1.24030014
Children are keen observers and often notice and react to stress or anxiety of their parents, caregivers, peers and community.

~Dr. Arthur C. Evans Jr., CEO
American Psychological Association
**Stress Response**

Cortisol and adrenaline are released when our environments demand that we are alert and focused. 

Which can result in being “stressed out” = when our nervous system becomes accustomed to constant flow of cortisol and adrenaline.

Exercise and mindfulness practices/activities help flush excess cortisol from our systems.
In order to have an impact on others, you must first have an impact on yourself.
Engaging Activity: Brain Balance Sequence

1. Inhale, take the right arm overhead and the left foot slightly behind, placing only your toes on the floor.

2. Exhale, lift the left leg, knee bent, and touch the right hand to the inside of the left knee.

3. Inhale, return the right arm overhead and the left foot slightly behind placing only your toes on the floor.

4. Exhale and again lift the left leg, knee bent, and touch the right hand to the inside of the left knee.

5. Repeat on the other side.
Prefrontal Cortex: not fully developed until age 25 or so.

- This is the part of the brain that responds to situations with good judgment and an awareness of long-term consequences.

Children, teens, and young adults rely on the amygdala to process information; the emotional part of the brain.
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.
“Gas Pedal”
Sympathetic Nervous System:
Fight or Flight

“Brake”
Parasympathetic Nervous System:
Rest and Digest
What we hope to do

Respond Vs. React
Parents who cope with stress in healthy ways can not only promote better adjustment and happiness for themselves, but also promote the formation of critically important habits and skills for children.

~Dr. Arthur C. Evans Jr., CEO
American Psychological Association
Adult Modeling

Kids absorb the adults’ mannerisms, especially their **EMOTIONAL REGULATION** (the ability to manage their emotions).¹


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Engaging Activity: Guided Rest or Body Scan
Brain Breaks Implementation Tips

1. Establish A **Consistent** Routine
2. Start of Day/End of Day/Transitions
3. Start **Small**, Then Build
4. **Repeat, Repeat, Repeat**
5. Be Comfortable With the Exercises
Takeaways

• Stress/Stressors
• Nasal Breathing
• Allostatic Load
• Neuroscience: Brain, Vagus Nerve & Sympathetic vs. Parasympathetic.
• Taking in the Good
Brain Breaks Review

**Breathe**
- Mindful Minute
- Even In – Even Out

**Move**
- Chair Cat/Cow
- Brain Balance Sequence

**Rest**
- Guided Rest or Body Scan
Optimistic Closure: One word – how are you feeling?

Thank you for joining us!

Session: Neuroscience of Stress for Parents
Trainer: Anne Contreras, Director of Programs

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