



Session: Stress Management for High School Students **Trainer:** Anne Contreras, Director of Programs

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.

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Website: www.pureedgeinc.org

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Introductions



Please respond to the poll to tell us a little about yourself.



WelcomingActivity



On the next slide, share which of the following images most accurately reflects your feelings right now.







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

<u>anne@pureedgeinc.org</u> Director of Programs & National Trainer

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





Engaging Activity: Mindful Listening

- 1. Breathing in and out mindfully, tune into the sounds outside the room.
- 2. Once you feel as though you've observed all the sounds outside the room, move your awareness to the sounds inside the room.
- 3. After calmly noticing sounds inside the room, hear the sounds within your own body (thoughts, heartbeat, breath, digestion).

*Optional: Repeat steps in reverse, beginning with the body and progressively expanding attention to sounds inside and outside the room.





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.



Photo sources: www.discoveravalon.life/best-skiing-western-north-carolina/, www.visittucson.org/things-to-do/adventure-sports/rock-climbing, People Images/iStock

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STRESSOR: Pandemic (CDC)





https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html <u>This Photo</u> by Unknown Author is licensed under <u>CC BY-NC</u>

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Nearly half of teens (42%) reported they were not doing enough or were not sure if they were doing enough to manage their stress or bother to set aside time to manage it.

~American Psychological Association's 2014 Stress in America[™] survey.



Bethune Sophie, April 2014, Teen Stress Rivals that of Adults. American Psychological Association Online.



Engaging Activity: Breathing Ball



- 1. Take a breath in as the ball opens.
- 2. Breathe out as the ball closes.
- ♦ We use a Hoberman Sphere[™] as a breathing ball.
- * You can have learners take turns leading a few rounds with the breathing ball.
- Explain that the expansion and contraction of the breathing ball represents the change in size of the lungs as they fill with air on the inhalation and expel the air on exhalation.



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. <u>www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2016/12/161207093034.htm</u> <u>This Photo</u> by Unknown Author is licensed under <u>CC BY-SA</u>

Benefits

Detriments

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

- No relief in sight
- Makes us physically sick
- Weakens immune system
- Impairs performance



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.





McEwen, BS; Stellar, E (Sep 27, 1993). "Stress and the individual. Mechanisms leading to disease". Archives of Internal Medicine. 153 (18): 2093–101.

Stress Response



- **Cortisol** and **adrenaline** are released when our environments demand that we are alert and focused.¹
- 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.



Image Source: <u>https://www.valinschiropractic.com/blog/124988-balancing-hormones-for-energy-and-sculpting-your-perfect-body</u>

1: "Understanding the stress response," Harvard Health Publications, 2016. http://www.health.Harvard.edu/staying-healthy/understand-ing-the-stress-response



Engaging Activity: Chair Cat/Cow



- . Sit in Seated Mountain with hands on knees. You can either keep your hands on your knees throughout the exercise, or interlace fingers and press the palms away from you.
- 2. As you inhale, reach the center of your chest up toward the ceiling, and lift your chin so that you are looking at the ceiling. If you have interlaced your fingers, reach your arms overhead. (Cow)
- 3. As you exhale, round your spine and drop your chin toward your chest. If hands are overhead, in the same movement bring your hands forward until arms are parallel with the floor. (Cat)
- 4. Repeat for several breaths: inhale, chest up, gaze lifts. Exhale, round the spine, chin tucks, gaze drops.
- 5. Return to Seated Mountain.



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



Evans Jr., Arthur C. (2020). APA Stress in America Report ™: High Stress Related to Coronavirus is the New Normal for Many Parents. American Psychological Association Online.







Neuroscience

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.**





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

Engaging Activity: Brain Balance Sequence









Can be thought of as an unconsidered or abrupt behavior or action.¹

Often a reaction springs forth from a sudden strong emotion, or an accumulation of strong, unexpressed emotions.



1:<u>Reaction | Definition of Reaction at Dictionary.com</u>,

Image Sources: https://www.dreamstime.com/illustration/reaction-surprise.html, https://awwmemes.com/i/b6f341ca66f347718dbdf7946d3725ff

Reaction

When we feel intense emotions, we might experience **physical** clues:

- Shaking
- Heat in the face
- Tight muscles
- Rapid heartbeats
- Stomach aches
- The urge to hit, kick, or stomp

In **mindfulness practice**, we learn how to identify and work with strong emotions before they become reactions.





Image: Illustration by Joshua Seong. © Verywell, 2018; <u>https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-fight-or-flight-response-2795194</u>

What we hope to do







Engaging Activity: Chair Eagle





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Taking in the Good

"The brain is like Velcro for negative experiences and like Teflon for positive ones."1



- Meaning, unpleasant experiences stick to the brain's longer-term memory.
- While pleasant experiences are less likely to stay put.
 - It takes <u>2-3</u> seconds for one's brain to remember something unpleasant.

It takes <u>20-30</u> seconds for your brain to remember something pleasant.









Optimistic Closure: Taking in the Good



So this varies from **positive thinking methods** in which one hopes for a particular outcome.

- Taking in the Good entails focusing on the positive in what is occurring or has already occurred.
- Therefore, absorbing and appreciating the experience itself of a positive thought or memory in order to **cultivate resilience** and **gratitude**.



Rick Hanson and Rick Mendius, "Positive Emotions and Taking In the Good," 2007. http://www.wisebrain.org/PositiveEmotions,pdf

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





Flexing your mindfulness MUSCLE

by noticing when your mind veers off on a negative track:



Instead "invite" a positive thought.

Then, invest all your attention in that positive thought for at least 30-seconds.





<u>Please Note</u>: You will receive a follow-up email within 24 hours of this session. Please complete the survey presented.

Thank you for joining us! Session: Stress Management for High School Students Trainer: Anne Contreras, Director of Programs



