MINDFUL EDGE

2. WHAT IS MINDFULNESS?

3. HOW TO PRACTICE MINDFULNESS?

4. WHAT IS THE NEUROSCIENCE OF MINDFULNESS?



5. HOW DO THOUGHTS IMPACT EXPERIENCE?

6. HOW DO EMOTIONS IMPACT EXPERIENCE?

7. HOW TO BEFRIEND STRONG EMOTIONS?

8. WHAT IS THE SCIENCE OF HAPPINESS?

My Mindful Journey Reflective Journal
Mindful Edge Interactive™
Skill for Being with the Ups and Downs of Life
(Stress Management and Life Strategies for Youth)
for use with MindfulEdge.ca interactive website for Youth

Curriculum Authors: Heidi Bornstein | Stephen Chadwick | Naomi Nurgitz | Natalia Fister
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WHAT IS STRESS?



LEARN

About Stress

Too much stress for too long can become harmful to the body, mind and heart.



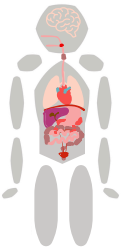
Recognizing the physical symptoms of stress and identifying stressors can help manage stress.

UNDERSTAND

How Stress Affects the Body

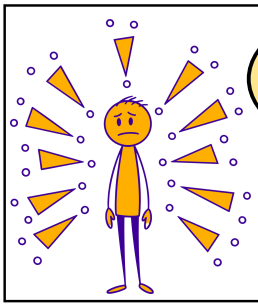
BRAIN
Poor focus, anxiety, irritability, brain fog

IMMUNE SYSTEM
Weakened defenses, increased illness, slower recovery



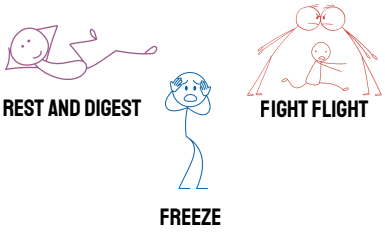
SKIN
Hair loss, brittle skin, acne, slow tissue repair

GUT
Poor nutrient absorption, indigestion, pain, bloating



WHAT IS HPPENING TO ME?

Stress and the Nervous System



Healthy vs Unhealthy Stress

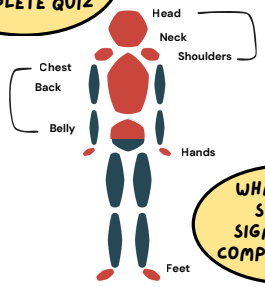
Unhealthy Stress:
Reacting to the stress as a threat that you feel you have no control

VS

IT'S OUR PERCEPTION AND RESPONSE THAT COUNTS!

Healthy Stress:
Responding to stress as a challenge that you are willing to face

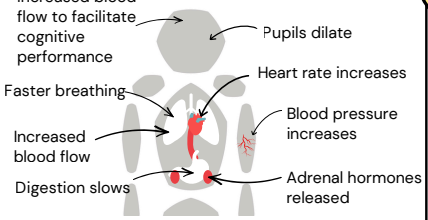
WHERE DO I FEEL STRESS IN MY BODY? COMPLETE QUIZ



WHAT IS MY STRESS SIGNATURE? COMPLETE QUIZ

WHAT IS HAPPENING PHYSICALLY?

Fight-Flight Acute Stress Physical Response



WHAT IS HAPPENING EMOTIONALLY? COMPLETE QUIZ

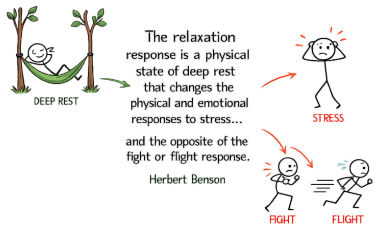
The Emotional Effects of Stress



STRESSFUL SITUATIONS CAN SOMETIMES BE BEYOND OUR CONTROL.

WHAT IS WITHIN OUR CONTROL, IS HOW WE CHOOSE TO RESPOND TO THOSE STRESSFUL SITUATIONS.

Activating the Relaxation Response of the Body



WHATE WORKS FOR ME?



Lesson 1: What is Stress?

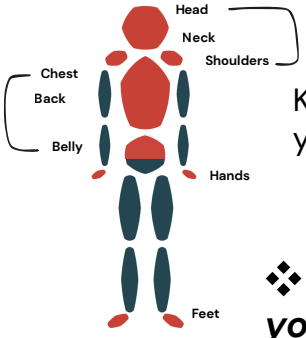


WHAT STRESSES YOU OUT? QUIZ

Stress is your body's way of responding to any kind of demand. Something that causes you stress is called a stressor. Finding out what your stressors are can help you manage stress in your life.

❖ ***Do you know what your stressors are? Chooose the ones that apply to you?.***

With Your Friends	In Your School Life	Family	Other
☐ Peer pressure (sex/drinking/drugs)	☐ Homework	☐ Illness	☐ Social media pressure
☐ Appearance or image	☐ Pressure to do well	☐ Parents / relatives	☐ Concerns about violence in and out of school
☐ Relationships in general	☐ Bullying	☐ Family responsibilities / obligations / expectations	☐ Religious / cultural issues
☐ Competition	☐ Rules	☐ Parents' financial problems	Time management
☐ Drama with friends	☐ Teachers or coaches		☐ Societal social problems such as racism, sexism, ageism, homophobia and other forms of injustice
☐ Relationship problems	☐ Grades		☐ Health and fitness
☐ Not fitting in	☐ Pressure about post-secondary or career		☐ Environmental concerns
☐ Lacking self-confidence	☐ Sports		
☐ Finding out who you are	☐ Classes		
	☐ No adult you can trust		
	☐ Future after high school and /or university		



WHERE DO YOU FEEL STRESS IN YOUR BODY?

Knowing how stress appears in your body can help you manage stress in your life.

❖ ***What are the some of the physical sensations of stress that you may experience in your body?***

☐ Shallow or rapid breathing	☐ Headaches	☐ Tense muscles in neck and shoulders
☐ Blushing	☐ Sweating Palms	☐ Anything else?
☐ Nervous stomach	☐ Tightness in chest	

WHAT IS YOUR STRESS SIGNATURE?

Knowing what your stress signation is let you know when you are stressed, and take actions to reduce your stress. recall a time when you felt overwhelmed and stressed out. What do you notice?

❖ ***Where do you feel stress in your body?***



☐ Head	☐ Neck & Shoulders	☐ Chest	☐ Belly	☐ Arms and Legs	☐ Everywhere



HOW DO YOU FEEL EMOTIONALLY WHEN YOU ARE STRESSED?

Understanding how stress impacts your emotions can help you determine which well-being strategies may be helpful.

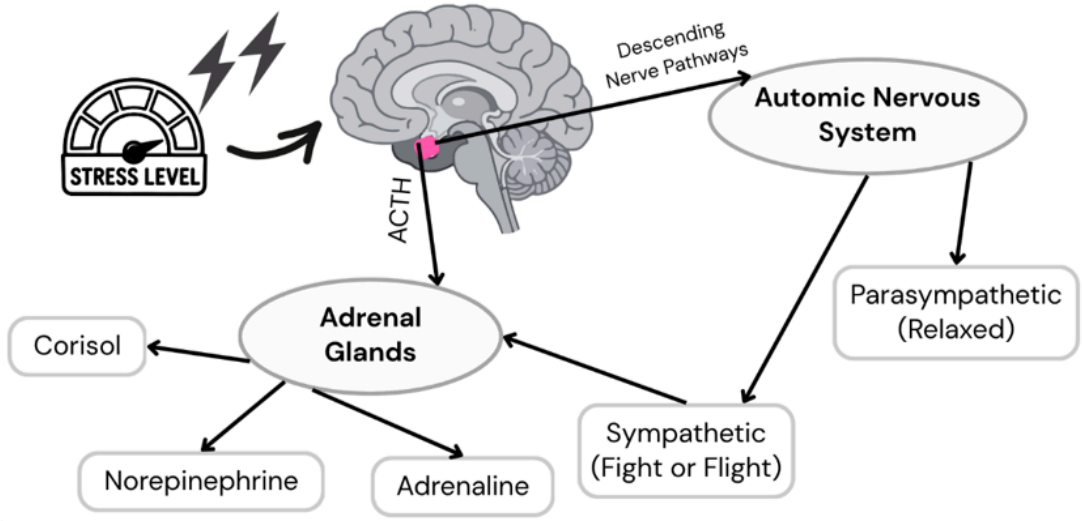
❖ ***How do you feel when you are stressed?***

☐ Nervous / worried (short term)	☐ Irritable	☐ Sad
☐ Anxious (longer term)	☐ Jumpy	☐ Suspicious
☐ Depressed	☐ Angry	☐ Worthless
☐ Despair	☐ Numb	☐ Lack of energy
☐ Fearful	☐ Overwhelmed	☐ Trouble concentrating
☐ Frustrated	☐ Panicky	☐ Memory problems
☐ Hopeless	☐ Restless	☐ Trouble sleeping
☐ Hostile		

STRESS AND THE BRAIN: GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Stress	is neither good nor bad; stress is the ability of the body and mind to respond to a demand. For instance, anything we consider challenging causes stress, even if it is something we willingly choose to do. The key is that stress requires us to adjust our attention and behavior and makes demands upon our energy
Stress Signature	a certain way that their body feels when they are stressed. Developing an awareness of your stress signature is one of the keys to relieving your stress.
Stressor	anything that has the effect of causing stress.
ANS (autonomic nervous system)	is part of the peripheral nervous system and it also controls some of the muscles within the body. We are often unaware of the ANS because it functions involuntary and reflexively. For example, we do not notice when blood vessels change size or when our heart beats faster.
Sympathetic Nervous System	"fight or flight response" prepares the body for intense physical activity and mobilizes body energy to respond to danger.
Parasympathetic Nervous System	"rest and digest response" occurs when the threat has passed and safety is restored, then the body can settle, recover and resume functions such as digestion.
Hybrid Nervous System Response	"freeze response" is a defensive response that is often a hybrid state where both systems fire at once—the sympathetic system pumps the body full of high-arousal energy/tension while the parasympathetic system pins it down, creating a feeling of being stuck, paralyzed, or numb.

THE THREE MAJOR STRESS HORMONES: ADRENALINE, CORTISOL, NOREPINEPHRINE



HEALTHY HABITS FOR BODY-MIND-HEART



❖ ***What are some "maladaptive" (unhealthy) things you might do to manage your stress?***

❖ ***What are 3 things you do to positively manage your stress?***

HEALTHY HABITS FOR MIND, BODY AND HEART – WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR OPTIMUM BRAIN FUNCTION

12 Habits That Support our Physical Bodies, Mental Bodies and Emotional Bodies

	Sleep Time: When we give the brain the rest it needs, we consolidate learning and recover from the experiences of the day.		Focus Time: When we closely focus on tasks in a goal-oriented way, we take on challenges that make deep connections in the brain.
	Healthy Eating: Healthy eating provides the sustained energy we need to be physically active. It helps us manage stress, relax, and supports good coping skills.		Reflect – Time In: When we quietly reflect internally, focusing on sensations, images, feelings and thoughts, we become more aware of the impact of situations on us and we make better choices.
	Move – Physical Time: When we move our bodies, aerobically, if possible, we strengthen the brain in many ways.		Creating Time: Connecting to our own creativity helps us live fuller and more meaningful lives, whether it be doodling, drawing, singing, coloring etc.
	Rest- Down Time When we are non-focused, without any specific goal, and let our mind wander or simply relax, we help the brain rest and recharge.		Kindness: When we do a good deed (or someone does one for us), our bodies release "feel good" hormones (serotonin and oxytocin) which reduces anxiety, calms us, and promote happiness.
	Play Time: When we allow ourselves to be spontaneous or creative, playfully enjoying fun and novel experiences, we help make new connections in the brain.		Gratitude: When we regularly practice gratitude by noticing and reflecting on things we're thankful for, we experience more positive emotions, feel more alive, sleep better, are more compassionate and kind, and even have stronger immune systems.
	Connecting Time: When we connect with other people, (ideally in person), and connect to and appreciate nature we activate and reinforce the brain's relational circuitry.		Self-compassion: Practicing self-compassion allows us to hold ourselves in love and connection, giving ourselves the support and comfort needed to bear the pain, while providing the optimal conditions for growth and transformation.

MY STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Having Stress Management Strategies in your pocket can help you manage stress in the moment.



❖ ***What are your stress management strategies?***

❖***What others would you be willing try?***

FOUNDATIONAL ATTITUDES OF MINDFULNESS FROM JON KABAT-ZINN



❖ ***How does each attitude apply to your life? Complete the following chart.***

Y = Yes | ½=somewhat | N = No

Mindfulness Attitude	Description	Y	½	N
Non-judgment	Notice when you label thoughts, feelings, or experiences as "good" or "bad." Instead, observe them with kindness and curiosity.	Y	½	N
Patience	Accept that growth takes time. Be gentle with yourself, especially when you're feeling stressed, upset, or afraid.	Y	½	N
Beginner's Mind	Stay open and curious. Approach each moment as if it's new, with a willingness to learn and see things differently.	Y	½	N
Trust	Trust yourself, your feelings, and your intuition. It's okay to make mistakes while learning and growing.	Y	½	N
Non-striving	Let go of the need to constantly achieve or be perfect. Focus on simply being present rather than always doing.	Y	½	N
Acceptance	Accept yourself and the present moment as they are. Growth comes from all experiences—pleasant, unpleasant, and everything in between.	Y	½	N
Letting Go	Release unrealistic expectations, judgments, and the need to control everything. Let go of what no longer serves you.	Y	½	N
Generosity	Share kindness, encouragement, time, and compassion with others. Generosity isn't just about giving things—it's also about giving yourself.	Y	½	N
Gratitude	Notice and appreciate the small moments of everyday life. Gratitude helps us focus on what is already good and meaningful.	Y	½	N

WHAT DID I LEARN ABOUT STRESS? QUIZ

1. Stress is the body's way of:

2. When confronted by a stressor, which nervous system responds?

☐ Sympathetic?	☐ Parasympathetic?

3. What is its nick name?

F	F	F

4. When the stressful situation passes, which nervous system can be activated to achieve a physical state of relaxation?

☐ Sympathetic?	☐ Parasympathetic?

5. What is its nick name?

R	D	

6. List 2 physical symptoms that increase when a person is under stress.

7. List 2 emotional symptoms that increase when a person is under stress.

8. True or False: The hormones adrenalin and cortisol speed up heart rate, breathing rate, and metabolism when a stressor appears.

☐ True	☐ False	

LESSON I: WHAT IS STRESS? EVALUATION

❖ ***Which idea(s) and practices from the What is Stress? lesson did you find supportive/helpful/interesting that you might try and incorporate into your daily life?***

Lesson Components	
Arriving	Mindful Listening to the Bell ☐
Check-in	Energy – Battery ☐
Breathing	Physiological Sigh ☐
Focus	Standing Like a Mountain & Vitruvian Man Balancing ☐
Movement	Conductor Breath & Movement ☐
Stress Information	• Autonomic Nervous System ☐ • Chemicals of Stress ☐ • Physiology of Stress ☐ • Perception of Stress ☐
Life Strategies	• Mindful Attitudes ☐ • Healthy Habits ☐ • Stress Strategies ☐

❖***Please list 1 – 3 things you might try to incorporate into your daily life.***

Closing Reflection - Complete this sentence:
"Learning how to understand and manage stress is a skill that I can practice and get better at...
One thing I want to remember is..."
