IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING STRESS

TIPS FOR EDUCATORS WHILE COPING WITH STRESS THROUGH A PANDEMIC
DR. TOYA JONES, EdD, LCSW

OBJECTIVES

At the conclusion of this session, participants should be able to:

1) Identify how stress affects the brain, body, mood, and behavior
2) Discover evidence-informed strategies for identifying, managing, and preventing stress
3) Use mobile apps and mindfulness techniques to manage stress through a personal plan
WHAT ARE COMMON STRESS RESPONSES?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body</th>
<th>Mood</th>
<th>Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headache</td>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>Overeating or undereating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Muscle tension or pain</td>
<td>Restlessness</td>
<td>Angry outbursts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chest pain</td>
<td>Lack of motivation or focus</td>
<td>Drug or alcohol misuse</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fatigue</td>
<td>Feeling overwhelmed</td>
<td>Tobacco use</td>
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<tr>
<td>Change in sex drive</td>
<td>Irritability or anger</td>
<td>Social withdrawal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upset stomach</td>
<td>Sadness or depression</td>
<td>Lack of exercise</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleep problems</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL STRESS TRIGGERS?

30 SECOND SPRINT

Write down your stress triggers as quickly as you can in 30 seconds!
SOURCES OF STRESS

Students/Clients

Co-workers

Home

Life Events

SELF-INDUCED STRESSORS

• Rescuer
• Perfectionism
• Fear of failure
• Self-doubt
• Need for approval
• Emotional depletion
• Unhealthy lifestyle
• Workaholism
• Blurred boundaries
• Isolation
HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN I’M HAVING A STRESS REACTION?

USE YOUR MINI-ME TO SHOW WHERE YOU FEEL STRESS IN YOUR BODY

WHERE DOES MY STRESS RESIDE IN MY BODY?
WHAT IS HAPPENING IN MY BRAIN?

5 SENSES

- Sight
- Smell
- Hearing
- Taste
- Touch

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YOUR BRAIN EXPERIENCING STRESS

- Brain stores the information
- After the stressful situation, any similar situation can reactivate the brain
- Sensory stimuli similar to the information makes the person feel like they are re-experiencing the distress
- The person is remembering – not re-experiencing

THE STRESS RESPONSE SYSTEM

Neocortex
“Thinking brain”

Limbic System
“Emotional brain”

Brainstem

FIGHT, FLIGHT OR FREEZE

THE STRESS RESPONSE SYSTEM

1. The brainstem detects that the cell phone is missing. “This is a problem!”
2. Amygdala senses threat and sets off the alarm.
3. Thinking brain goes off-line. Emotional brain takes over and activates fight, flight or freeze response.
4. Goal: Thinking brain helps shut off the alarm and helps us to calm down.

**AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM**

- **Sympathetic branch:**
  - Faster respiration
  - Quicker heart rate
  - Increased blood pressure
  - Pale skin color
  - Sweating
  - Cold skin
  - Digestion decreases

- **Parasympathetic branch:**
  - Slower, deeper respiration
  - Slower heart rate
  - Decreased blood pressure
  - Flushed skin color
  - Dry skin
  - Digestion increased

**WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MANAGE YOUR STRESS REACTIONS?**
MANAGING STRESS

DON'T FORGET TO RATE YOUR LEVEL OF DISTRESS
OTHER APPS

- COVID Coach
- Nature Sound
- Calm
- Insight Timer

Do you have a favorite app?

DR. TOYA’S SELF-CARE TIPS

Based on your reactions to distress, create your personal customized Tip Sheet

Domains of Life:
- Biological
- Psychological
- Interpersonal/Social
- Intellectual
- Spiritual

Identify one or two domains that need your attention today!
DR. TOYA’S TIPS

**Body/Behavior Reactions**
- Take a walk
- Body scan
- Leisure activities
- Soothing audio (or music)
- Soothing images
- Grounding

**Brain Reactions**
- Deep breathing
- Affirmations
- Observe thoughts
- Thought shifting
- Ambient sounds
- Change your perspective
- Mindfulness
- My feelings
- Schedule worry time

**Mood Reactions**
- Connect with others
- Grounding
- Positive imagery
- Seeing my strengths
- Soothe the senses
- Time out

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HEALING LIGHT EXERCISE

- What color is your healing light?
- What color is the stress?
- Breathe deeply (5-2-5)
- Let the healing light melt the stress away
- FB: Healing Overflow with Dr. Toy

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ART EXPERIENTIAL
EXPLORING OUR BODY’S STRESS RESPONSE THROUGH LINES, SHAPES & COLORS

STRESS

REST

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SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. What tool did you use?

2. Did you remember to rate your distress level before and after you used the tool?

3. Note changes (if any) in your body (ex. breathing, thoughts, heart rate…)

4. Was the tool helpful in reducing distress i.e. do you think the tool will help you when you are experiencing distress?

PREVENTION

• Maintain a balance of work, play, and rest
• Schedule regular breaks
• Be involved in creative activities
• Be physically active
• Listen to your body
• Seek help sooner rather than later!

(JOURNAL OF COUNSELING & DEVELOPMENT • WINTER 2004 • VOLUME 82; Pearlman, 1995).
THANK YOU!

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