



# MINDING THE CHILDREN

Bringing Your Whole Healthy Self to  
Work and Home

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# Agenda

- Introductions
- What is Stress?
- Types of Stress
- What causes stress?
- How stress affects adults and children
- Strategies to relieve stress in children and yourself
- Resources



# Introductions

- All about you
- All about me
- What do you want to know?



# Breathe

Let's all take a  
breath.





# What is Stress?

Stress is a specific response by your brain and body to a stimulus, such as fear or pain, that interferes with the normal physiological balance of your brain and body.



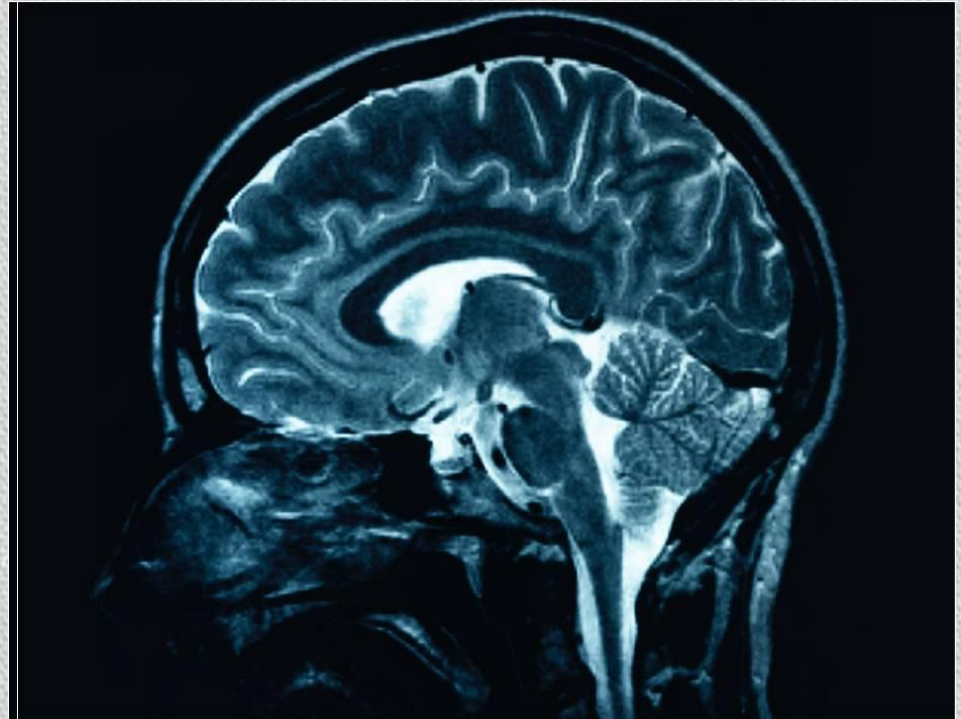
# Types of Stress

- “Fight or Flight”
- Toxic Stress -Is overwhelming, unavoidable, greater than your resources
- “Tend and Beneficial” – stimulates oxytocin
- Challenge response
  - similar to fight or flight but more focused than fearful
  - Helps the procedural learning part of brain



# Brain Structures

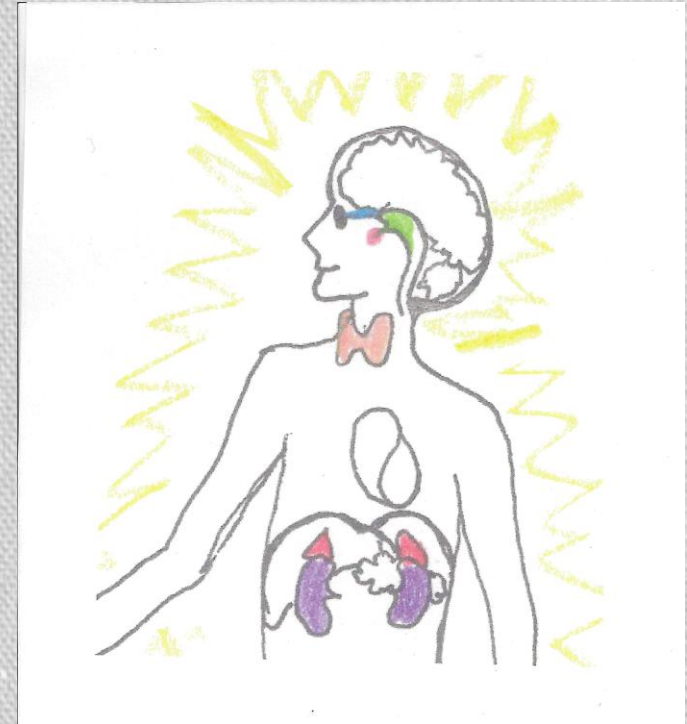
- Brainstem
- Limbic system
  - Amygdala
  - Hypothalamus
- Cortex
- Autonomic nervous system





# How Stress Affects Your Body

“Fight or Flight” Reaction  
Autonomic Nervous System  
    Sympathetic  
    Parasympathetic  
HPA Axis  
    Hypothalamus  
    Pituitary  
    Adrenal glands - Cortisol





# Causes of Stress

- Biological or medical
- Personal or social factors
- Family Circumstances
- Sociodemographic factors





# How Stress Affects Your Body

- Increases blood sugar
- Weight gain – initially fluid, then fat
- Memory loss and difficulty learning
- Muscle tension
- Insomnia
- Increases blood pressure



# Effects of Stress on Child Development

- Shortens telomeres
- Increased blood pressure and clogged arteries
- Increased aggression and predatory violence
- Increased depression and/or anxiety
- Decreased ability to learn
- Altered sleep patterns



# What Stress Looks like in Children

- Dull, unsparkling eyes
- Body arching
- Avoiding eye contact
- Limp, floppy body
- Inconsolable crying for long periods
- Long and frequent temper tantrums
- Overly anxious or overly compliant with adults



# Prevent Stressors for Kids

- Reduce clutter and over-stimulation
- Alternate space for children stressed by group play in the gym
- Tell children exactly what will happen ahead of time
- Redirect rather than reprimand
  - Create a diversion
  - Gentle magic
- Understanding a child's misbehavior



# Stress Relief Strategies for Teachers

- Developing a child's self-esteem is the key to helping children develop resiliency towards dealing with stress
- Show genuine pleasure in a child's source of interest and pleasure
- Provide unobtrusive help when a task is a little too hard
- Accept a child's self-comforting needs



# Stress Relief Strategies for Individual Children

- Provide soothing physical contact
  - massage
  - Lowered tone of voice
  - Use child's name frequently and lovingly
- Create a cozy corner
- Put a personal photo book in each child's cubby



# Stress Relief Strategies for Groups of Children

- Circle Time
  - Breathing
  - Jell-O eyeballs
- Accept the awesome physicality of young children
- Provide safe space for vigorous movement
- Bake “Get-Out-the-Mad” cookies
- Peace Rose



# The Oxygen Mask Theory



“In the event of an emergency, please put on your oxygen mask before assisting others.”



# Whole, Healthy Self

Let's breathe  
again!





# Whole, Healthy Self

- When you recognize you are bigger than your stress, you shift your biology
- Thoughts can change your body's stress response





# Whole, Healthy Self

## Mindfulness--

Awareness of present  
moment with  
acceptance

Ronald Siegel, PsyD

## Mindfulness Practices

meditation

prayer





# Whole, Healthy Self



Experience flashes of  
beauty



# Whole, Healthy Self

## Physical Activity





# Whole, Healthy Self



Sleep



# Whole, Healthy Self

## Put down your Smartphone!





# Whole, Healthy Self

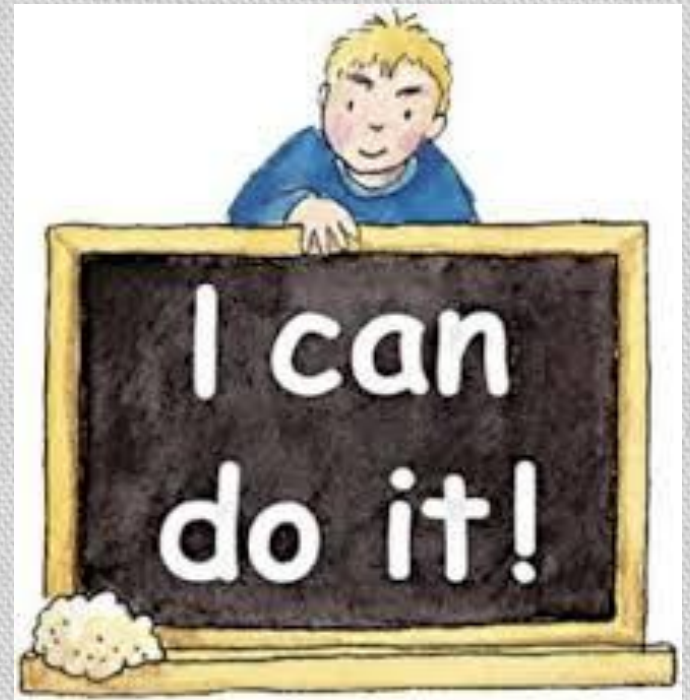
**SMILE!**





# Whole, Healthy Self

Do an activity that  
makes you feel  
personally competent





# Whole, Healthy Self

People who read for pleasure on a regular basis report less stress than non-readers





# Whole, Healthy Self

Practice forgiveness – including yourself





# Resources

- Link to 16 minute guided relaxation by Cathy Holway DPT <http://bit.ly/1e6ZXZp>
- *Breathe2Relax* App for guided belly breathing
- *Simply Being* App, guided meditation
- *Put on Your Oxygen Mask First: 6 Tips for Self-Care on the Job*, Amy Jen Su, Huffington Post 3/25/13
- Hong, A. (2010) *little kids, BIG WORRIES*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.



Thank You, Be Healthy!

