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No Worries!
Stress Relief Strategies for Kids
Presented by
Cindy Clark MS, OTR/L, BCP, CIMI/L

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Agenda

- Introductions
- What is Stress?
- What causes stress?
- How stress affects children
- Strategies to relieve stress
- Resources

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Introductions

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

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What is Stress?

Stress is a state of mental tension and worry caused by problems in your life, work, etc.

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

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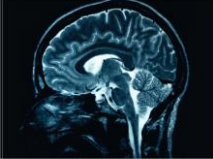
Causes of Stress

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

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Brain Structures

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




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How Stress Affects the Body

"Fight, Flight or Freeze" Reaction

Autonomic Nervous System
Sympathetic
Parasympathetic

HPA Axis
Hypothalamus
Pituitary
Adrenal glands - Cortisol



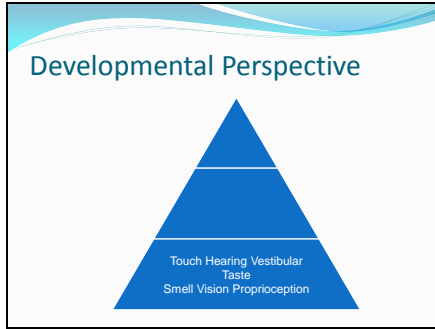
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Behavior and Body Signals

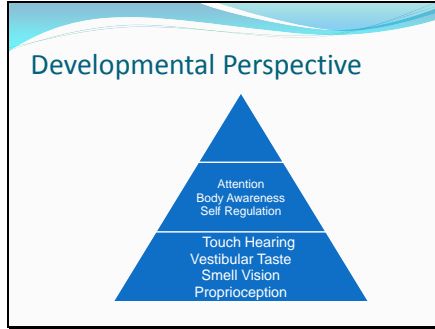
- Dull, unsparkling eyes
- Body arching
- Avoiding eye contact
- Limp, floppy body
- Inconsolable crying for long periods
- Long and frequent temper tantrums
- Overly anxious or overly compliant with adults

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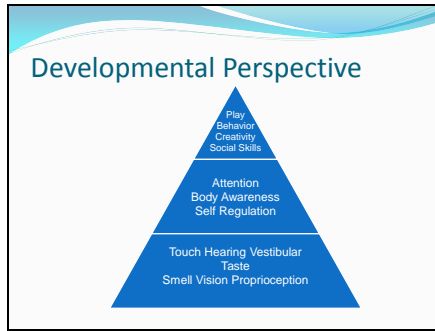
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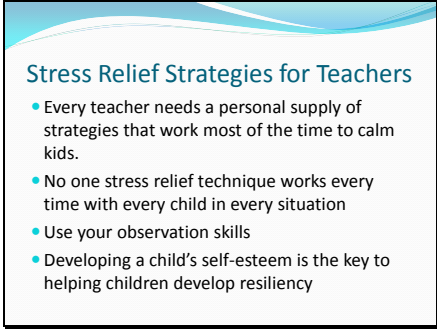


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Stress Relief Strategies for Teachers

- Every teacher needs a personal supply of strategies that work most of the time to calm kids.
- No one stress relief technique works every time with every child in every situation
- Use your observation skills
- Developing a child's self-esteem is the key to helping children develop resiliency

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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

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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

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Stress Relief Strategies for Individual Children

- Provide soothing physical contact
 - Massage and touch
 - 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

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Stress Relief Strategies for Groups of Children

- Circle Time
 - Movement based learning activities
 - 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

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Stress Relief Strategies for yourself

- Breathe
- Mindfulness – guided visualization, prayer, put your phone away!
- Physical Activity
- Movement Based Learning Activities

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Stress Relief Strategies for yourself

- Sleep
- Experience flashes of beauty
- Do an activity that makes you feel personally competent
- Practice forgiveness – including yourself

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Resources

- Link to 16 minute guided relaxation by Cathy Holway DPT <http://bit.ly/1e6ZXZp>
- www.zerotothree.org
- www.ChildTrauma.org
- www.creativetherapystore.com
- www.FunandFunction.com

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Resources

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- Stamm, J. (2007). Bright From the Start. New York: Gotham Books.
- Medina, J. (2010) brain rules for baby.
- Witkin, G. (1999) Kid Stress: What it Is, How it Feels, How to Help. New York: Viking.

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Thank You!
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