



# **“STRESS” MANAGEMENT FOR TEACHERS**

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# UNSCRAMBLE THE WORDS

- A L M C :    \_ \_ \_ \_
- E T R S :    \_ \_ \_ \_
- E C P E A :    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_
- I M E S L :    \_ \_ \_ \_ \_

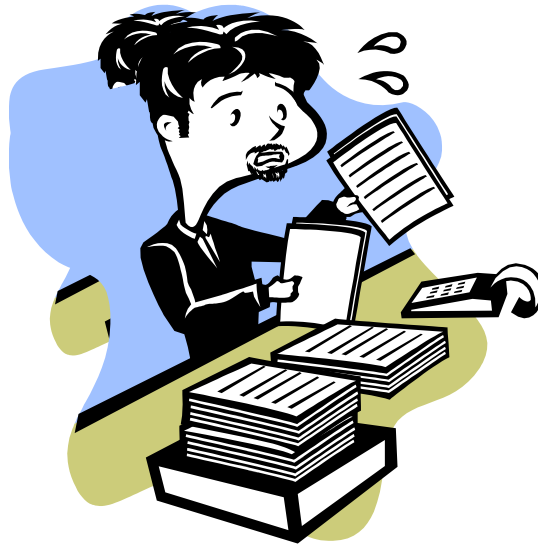


# “STRESS” MANAGEMENT FOR TEACHERS

- Goals, overview
- Set an *Intention* for this session.



# GOT “STRESS”?



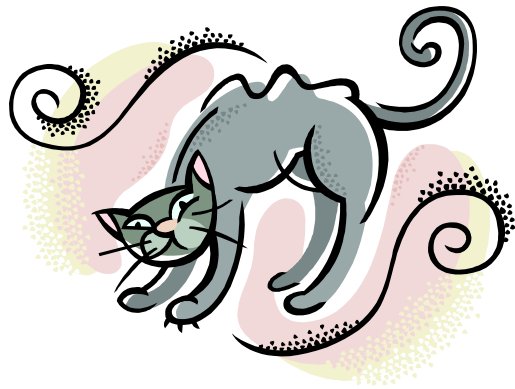
# HOW DO WE KNOW WE'RE "STRESSED"?

- Imagine the last time you were “stressed.”
  - How were you *feeling*?
  - *Where* were you feeling it?
  - What were your *thoughts*?
  - How did you *behave*?



# HOW DO WE *NOTICE* STRESS IN:

- Our students?
- Our spouses, significant others?
- Our children?
- Our pets?



# WHAT IS “STRESS”?

- Stress is a bodily and/or mental tension resulting from factors that tend to alter an equilibrium.
- Two aspects:
  - *Stressor* – a stimulus event that challenges the integrity, or health, of the body/mind. STRESS TRIGGERS!
  - *Stress response* – the body/mind’s compensatory reaction to the challenge.



# IMPACT OF THE CURRENT STRESS EPIDEMIC

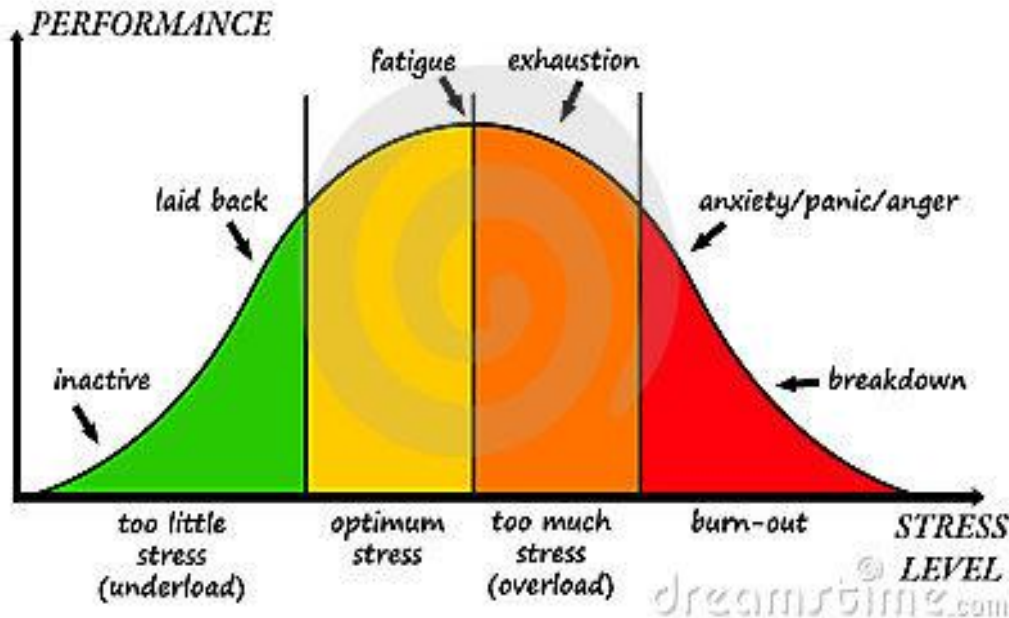
- According to *APA Stress in America* (2010, 2011)
  - 70 – 80% of doctor visits have a basis in stress.
  - CDC Data suggest that 80 – 90% of medications are due to stress-based illnesses.
  - 70% of Americans identify work as the major source of stress in their lives.
  - 67% of Americans stated they were not dealing effectively with stress.
  - Relationships can be stress-reducing OR Stress-enhancing
  - Meta-analysis: work stress contributes an extra 50% excess CHD risk.
  - Children surveyed about parental stress indicated their parents' stress was impacting their family.








# STRESS AND PERFORMANCE CURVE

## STRESS CURVE



# ALL “STRESS” IS NOT BAD

- Good Stress            Bad Stress
- (Eustress)            (Distress)
  
- Acute Stress            Chronic Stress



# TYPES OF STRESS

## ○ **Eustress – good stress – sometimes seen as a challenge.**

- Motivates, focuses energy
- Is short-term
- Is perceived as within our coping abilities
- Feels exciting
- Improves performance



# TYPES OF STRESS

- **Distress – bad stress – sometimes seen as pressure.**
  - Causes anxiety or concern
  - Can be short- or long-term
  - Is perceived as outside of our coping abilities
  - Feels unpleasant
  - Decreases performance
  - Can lead to mental and physical problems
- Individual differences in response to stress.



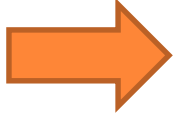

# HOW DOES “STRESS” AFFECT US PHYSICALLY?

- Physiological fight, flight or freeze response (also Tend and Befriend)
- Shifts blood to extremities, away from core, shuts down digestion, narrows cognitive focus, reduces problem solving.
- Acute stress responses are normal and beneficial!
- Chronic stress responses can lead to major health issues.
- Daily Hassles Model (allostatic load): Charles Strobel (MD) : we experience an average of 30 “heart hassles”/day – “irritating, frustrating, or distressing mini-crises.”



# HOW DOES STRESS AFFECT US COGNITIVELY?

- Interactive role of Control, Efficacy

- Self-efficacious  challenge
- Lower efficacy  threat



# HOW DOES “STRESS” AFFECT US PSYCHOSOCIALLY?

- Impacts personal relationships. Stress - Outward
  - Family of four: 11 interrelationships
  - Class of 20 ( 2- 5 grps): 16,644 interrelationships
  - Class of 30 ( 2 – 5 grps): 174,406 relationships
- Influence our sense of self (identity). Stress-Inward
- Influence our degree of engagement with life (avoid and restrict our life space)
- Influences our choice of goals and behaviors
  - Operating from a set of CORE VALUES



## *DIRTY LITTLE SECRET*

- There is no such thing as  
○ **STRESS!**





# IT'S ALL IN OUR HEADS!

- Nun Study: Happy Nuns make Older Nuns!
- Telomeres and the 2009 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.
- “...perception is key: The amount of stress people in the study *felt* they were under, not external circumstances, correlated with how close their cells were to the end of life.”
- (*Stress Less (2010)*)



# STRESS IN THE CLASSROOM

- “Stressed teachers make poor role models for students”
- Research on teacher stress within the first 3 years:
  - Classroom management
  - Student issues (diverse & challenging learners; behavioral problems) – “emotionally contagious students”
  - Parents
  - Administrative support
  - Accountability
  - Planning
  - Time Constraints
  - Balancing life outside of school



# STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES: TWO APPROACHES

- Building Resiliency & Protective Factors – Proactive Approach: Primary Prevention
  - (Takes time & PRACTICE)
- Managing Stress – Reactive Approach: Secondary or Tertiary Prevention
  - (Effective, if temporary)



# STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

## REACTIVE APPROACH

- Exercise (if you did nothing else do this – for your cells, too!)
- Relaxation strategies
  - Progressive relaxation
  - Body scan



# STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

## REACTIVE APPROACH

- Breath work (engaging parasympathetic)
  - Equal Ratio Breathing
  - Breath Retention
  - Choo-choo breathing
  - Three-part breath
  - 1:2 Ratio Breath
  - Belly Breathing (putting the cat to sleep)
  - Breath of Joy
  - Crying Breath
  - Bees Breath



# STRESS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

## REACTIVE APPROACH

- Visualization (Leaves on a Stream)
- Pass it on – figuratively & literally – Stress Dumpster!
- Humor: positive not negative
- Journaling
- Gratitude Journal
- Talk it out/act it out
- Catastrophize to the EXTREME!
- Make a plan/list
- Cognitive re-frame (only with practice)



# BUILDING STRESS RESILIENCE

- Mindfulness meditation
- Being mindful is the ability to be nonjudgmentally present to the here and now.
- It is about controlling attention
  - We are often asked to “pay attention,” but seldom given strategies for doing so.
  - Particularly effective for executive control function issues



# WHAT MINDFULNESS MEDITATION IS AND IS NOT

- Not having a blank mind or stopping all thoughts from showing up.
  - Mindfulness practices help us see our thoughts and mind more clearly.
- Not about seeking blissful states.
  - Mindfulness practices help us accept all of our experiences instead of just clinging to those we enjoy and avoiding those we dislike.
- Not becoming emotionless.
  - Mindfulness practice enables us to more fully bear a full range of emotional experiences.
- Not withdrawing from life.
  - Mindfulness practice attunes us to others, assists us to become more compassionate.
- Not about escaping pain.
  - Mindfulness practice helps us recognize our pains, sufferings and diseases and allows us to embrace them.
- Not about converting to a new religion.
  - Mindfulness practices can support our efforts in any spiritual or psychological condition.





# TYPES OF MINDFULNESS PRACTICES

## ○ Formal

- Sitting
- Walking
- Prone
- Eating
- Standing

## ○ Informal

- Everywhere!
- Mini mindful moments



# BUILDING STRESS RESILIENCE

- Humor – laugh every day!
- The Power of NO! Time Management IS Priority Management!
- Avoid *TOXIC PEOPLE* – they are STRESS DUMPERS
  - “Energy Vampires!”
  - Nattering Nabobs of Negativity
- Positivity Ratio of 3:1
- Operate from a base of CORE VALUES



# TIME WASTERS

- Lack of Goals
  - “paralysis of analysis”
  - Fear of making a wrong decision
  - Ruminates to death



# TIME WASTERS

- Too many goals

Inability to say “NO”

Pareto principle: 20% of the people do 80% of the work.



# TIME WASTERS

- Procrastination
  - The thrill of brinkmanship
  - Low priority items/tasks
  - Too many commitments



# TIME WASTERS

- Perfectionism
  - Paralyzed perfectionists
  - Common among highly gifted people with contingent self-worth



# TIME WASTERS

- Work Interruptions
  - Co-workers
  - Family
  - Cyber-Monday shopping....



# TIME MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

- Keep a daily time log – where did it all go?
- Establish goals and PRIORITIES based on Core Values
- Make use of the Pareto Principle: 20% of my time to get 80% of my tasks.
- Prune and Weed – Three Piles
- Delegate when feasible (let go)
- Set Boundaries and Manage Technostress (schedule email response time; limit *digital fog*, *data smog*, *screen sucking*, *frazzing*)
- **Schedule Relaxation Time**






## A NATIVE AMERICAN STORY

- There is a Native American legend which tells of a grandfather teaching his grandson about life. He said to him, “A fight is going on inside all of us. It is a fight for our souls. It rages within all of us daily. It is fought between two wolves. One wolf represents anger, greed, hatred, envy, fear, arrogance, resentment, self-pity, guilt, lies, and ego. The other wolf stands for peace, love, patience, joy, compassion, generosity, humility, kindness, friendship, truth, and faith.”
- “Which wolf will win, grandfather?”
- “The one you feed.”



# OPERATE FROM YOUR CORE VALUES

- Define/select your CORE VALUES – 3 – 5.
- Re-framing involves defining the situation in terms of YOUR CORE VALUES
- Operating from your CORE VALUES shifts from:
  - STRESS  GROWTH



# FINAL MEDITATION

- Compassion or Loving Kindness Meditation
- Four People (yourself, loved one, neutral person, difficult person)
  - May I have happiness and the causes of happiness.
  - May I be free from suffering and the causes of suffering.



# SO, AT THE END OF THE DAY, WHEN ASKED: HOW WAS YOUR DAY, DEAR?

- \_\_\_\_\_ I survived.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I was busy.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I was productive.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I made a difference.



# CONTACT ME

- Questions?
- Feedback?
- Suggestions?
- Send large sums of money!
  
- [smhoover@stcloudstate.edu](mailto:smhoover@stcloudstate.edu)



THANK YOU!

