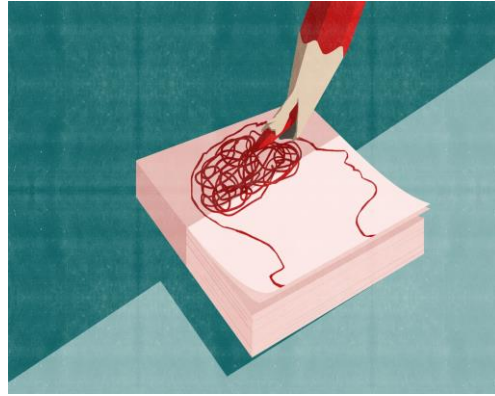


Stress and Remote Learning



Self-Awareness and Management of Stress!

Agenda and Objectives

By the end of this lesson, you will know or understand:

- Definition of Stress
- How to Identify Stress
- Coping Strategies for Stress During Online Learning
- Identify and Try One Coping Strategy

Picture This:

Your class assignment is due in an hour. Your Internet connection is down. Your little brother is making entirely too much noise. Sound familiar? You are stressed out!

Or This:

You've been on Zoom for four hours, have a headache, trouble focusing, and your teacher calls on you. You start sweating and your stomach is churning. When will this all be over!?

*Think of your own example of a stressful moment from remote learning? Who can share?

What is Stress?

- ★ Stress is a feeling of emotional or physical tension.
- ★ Stress can come from any event, situation, or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry, or nervous.
- ★ Stress is your body's reaction to a challenge or demand.
- ★ When people experience stress, the hormone cortisol is released in the body, producing the fight, flight, or freeze impulse.

Let's watch this quick overview video (1 min):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09Rnq-FhnGs>

How do we know if we are stressed?

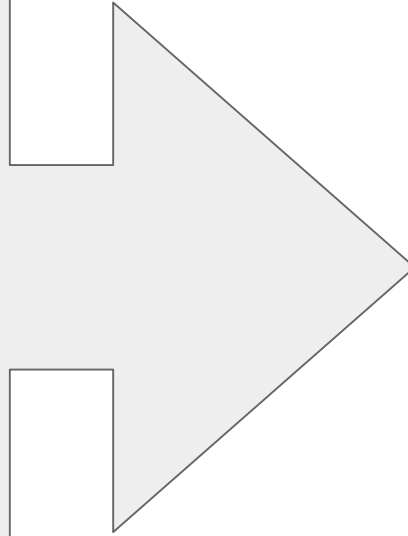
- ★ To manage stress, you first have to recognize when you are stressed and what is stressing you—your stress triggers, in other words.
- ★ It sounds counterintuitive, but sometimes we don't even know we're stressed out until we tune in to our own thoughts and bodies for signals.

Causes of Stress



Symptoms of Stress

- Homework/Academic Stress
- Fighting with friends and loved ones
- New online learning environment
- Pressure (from self and others)
- High expectations (from self and others)
- Overscheduled/Overloaded
- Death (or change) in family
- Fear of failure
- Uncertainty about future
- Change in routine



- Physical ailments: headaches, stomachaches, muscle pains, difficulty breathing, trembling hands
- Feeling nervous or jumpy
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Feeling tired all of the time
- Trouble concentrating
- Irritability and moodiness
- Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- Difficulty eating or eating too much
- Feeling sad, depressed, hopeless

WHY ARE WE STRESSED RIGHT NOW?

"In order to be safe and keep others safe from the virus, we must be physically distant. But that means disrupting the communities and relationships in our lives—classrooms, teachers, teams, coaches, churches, friends, extended families—that are the very connections we need to feel safe, to cope with stress, and to surmount this crisis," Dr. Pamela Cantor.

Q: Re-read the quote quietly. Think about what it means to you and what "safety" has been changed or taken away since COVID began.

Stress: What can we do about it?

- ★ Some stress may be useful in preparing us for challenging tasks like tests and performances.
- ★ BUT, persistently high levels of stress can become toxic, affecting attention and memory.
- ★ The hormone oxytocin, however, can help protect us from these harmful effects

So, what can we do about it right now?

Coping Strategy Focus Today: 3 R's

- Relationships
- Routine
- Resilience

#1 R: Relationships

Relationships that are strong and positive cause oxytocin's release, which helps produce feelings of trust, love, attachment, and safety."

"This not only helps us manage stress, but also offsets the damaging effects of cortisol and produces resilience to future stress."

1 R: Relationship Strategies

What can you try to maintain or strengthen relationships?

1. Check in one on one with your teacher, counselor, coach, or mentor: Share how you are coping with issues like homework, organization, and keeping up with the daily routine of online classes. Class check ins are not necessarily a time where you might feel "connected", so one on one will help.
1. "Oxytocin boosters"— Activities with another person, in person if it is safe to do so! Examples: Cooking a meal with your family, playing a board game, Taco Tuesday, share a meal via zoom with a friend or family member, etc.

2 R: Routines

Our brains are "prediction machines that like order, and when our environments are orderly, the brain is calmer."

2 R: Routine Strategies

What can you try to develop healthy routines?

1. Create a weekly schedule that includes time allotted for academics, unstructured time for playing or working on projects, and even regular family time.
1. Create a time in your day for daily exercise and/or mindfulness practices such as taking a walk, yoga, running, deep breathing and/or journaling. Set a timer to remind you!
1. Make lists and sticky notes, or put whatever type of reminders in your work space that help you to know what you need to do and keep you on track.

#3 R: Resilience

Resilience is the ability to spring back when we experience failure, roadblocks, and hurdles that impede progress on the path to success. Resilience means managing ourselves and our fears, every single day.

When we are not resilient, it may look or sound like: A defeated sigh, a sheepish glance at the floor, a demeaning self-directed comment like "I'll never be able to do this," "Forget it, I'm done," or "I'm not smart enough."

3 R: Resilience Strategies

What can you try to build resilience?

1. Express Yourself: Talking, journaling, art, music
2. Cut yourself some slack: emotions can be over the top; be prepared for it
3. Put things in perspective: Think about the important things that have stayed the same, even while the outside world is changing. When you talk about bad times, make sure you talk about good and so-so times as well.
4. Create a "hassle free" zone: Make your room or work zone stress free and fun! It's YOUR classroom!
5. Stick to routines that are working
6. Take control: Move towards your goals ONE step at a time
7. Turn it off: Take a break from news, social media, internet, etc. Set a timer for media free time.
8. Help somebody: Best way to get your mind off yourself is to help another
9. Problem solve: During a tough time, pause and brainstorm solutions before going straight to giving up

To sum it up...

There are several stress coping strategies for the 3 R's. Here is a video summary of some stress coping techniques.

Video (1 min):

https://youtu.be/qIkZCg_dNRA

You try!

- ★ We don't want you to just hear this presentation and never use these coping strategies. Try one!
- ★ Right now, in the chat, write ONE coping strategy you will try based on the 3 R's.
- ★ Take a look at each other's, and now that we've seen them, we expect you to go for it and help each other accomplish that strategy!

Need more ideas?

- Be realistic
- Take breaks on Zoom!
- Stretch or walk between classes!
- Decrease negative self-talk
- Reduce caffeine and sugar
- Sleep (at least 8 hours a night)
- Relax/Meditate
- Eat well
- Spend time with a pet
- Avoid illegal drugs and alcohol
- Put it in perspective
- Stay organized
- Help somebody else
- Journal
- Learn to say no
- Learn to forgive
- Practice gratitude
- 4As: Avoid, Alter, Adapt, Accept
- Take a fun class
- Avoid overbooking or overscheduling
- Listen to music
- Drawing, doodling, coloring
- Journal
- Stay off social media or limit time using electronics
- Create family or friend covid friendly activities

Resources

Don't forget, you have resources available if you need to talk it out, your stress persists, or coping with it yourself isn't going well. We all need help right now!

1. School counselor: Lisa Sheehy (lisa_sheehy@fuhsd.org)
2. School-based Therapist: Alisa Dunlap (alisa_dunlap@fuhsd.org)
3. Parents
4. Friends
5. Teachers
6. Can you identify one more?