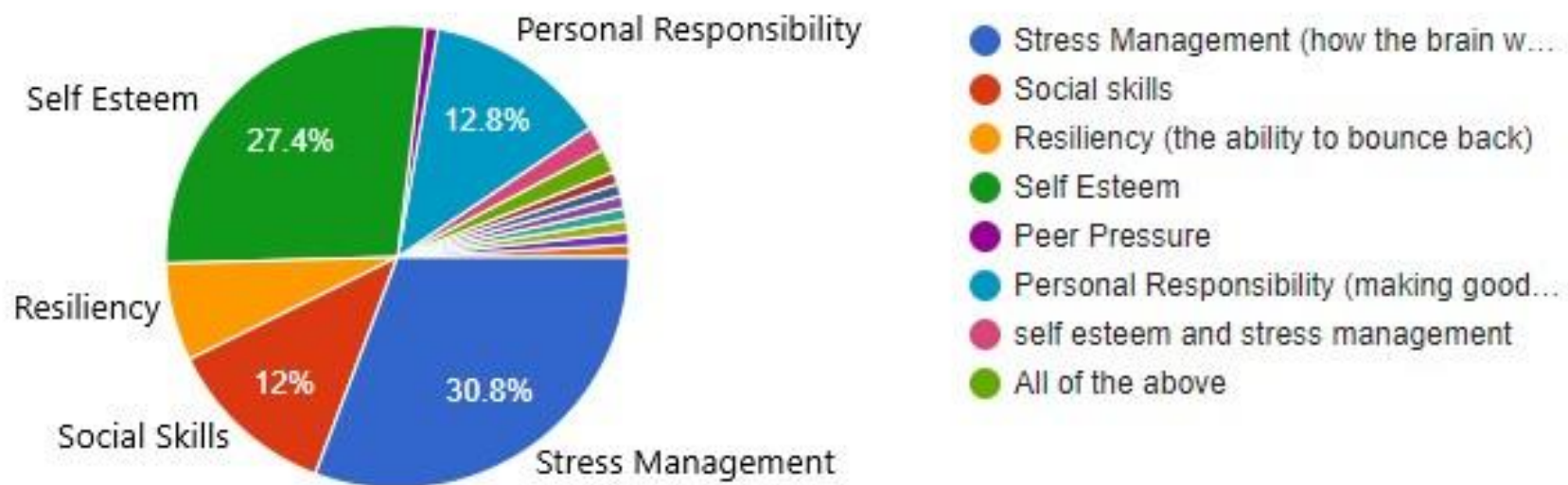
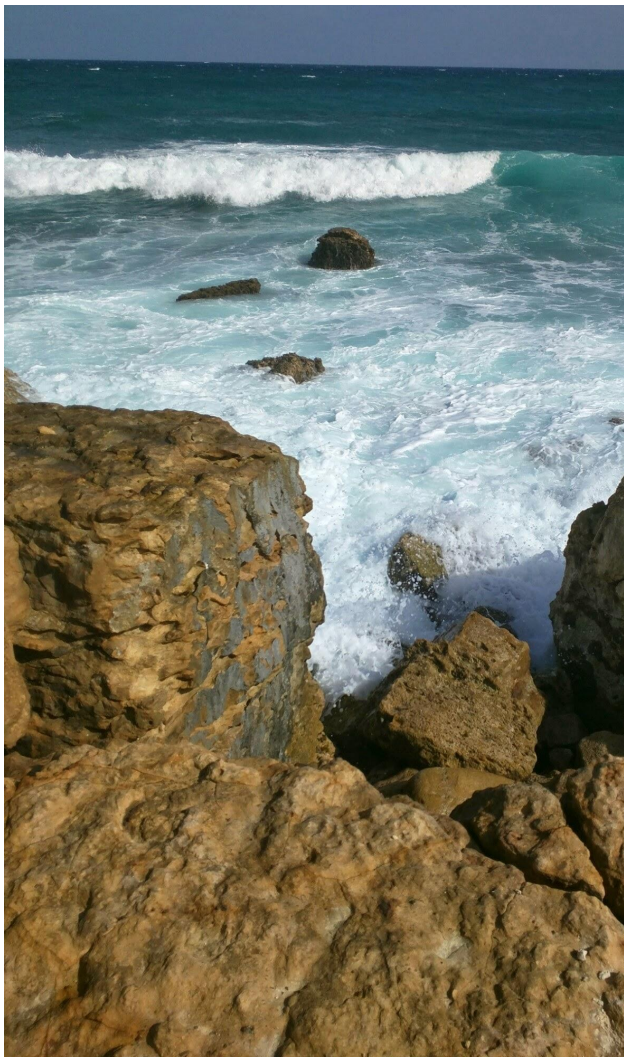


Managing Stress and Anxiety

What topic do you think is most needed by students in our high school right now?





Stress
and
Anxiety
are part of being
HUMAN





Good
Stress

Vs.

Bad
Stress

Some Stress is
AVOIDABLE

Some Stress is
PREDICTABLE





750 x 668



Stressed and Anxious Brain

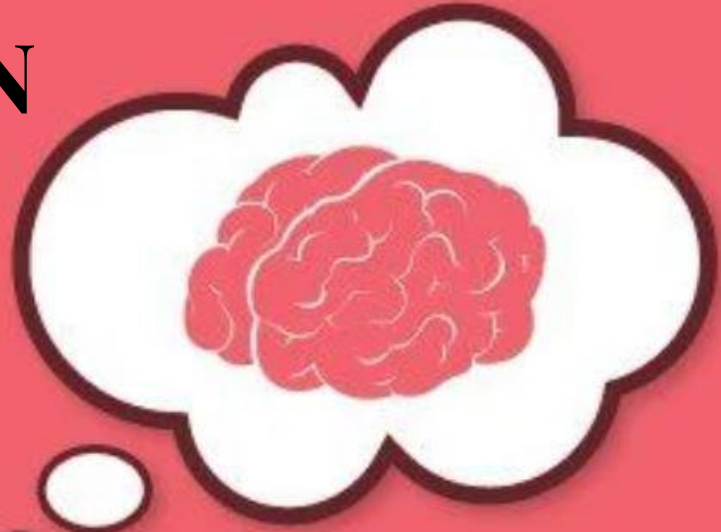
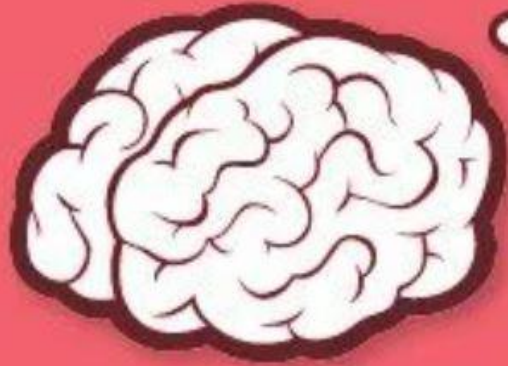
VS.

Safe and Secure
Brain



META-COGNITION



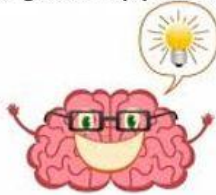
META-higher/beyond
COGNITION-thinking



THINKING
about your
THINKING

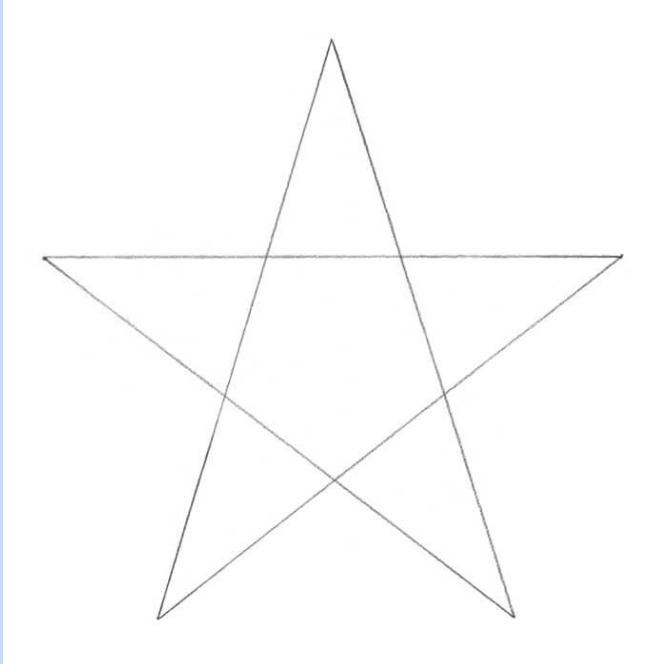


Strategies to help shift the brain from an ANXIOUS, STRESSED state to a SAFE, SECURE state:

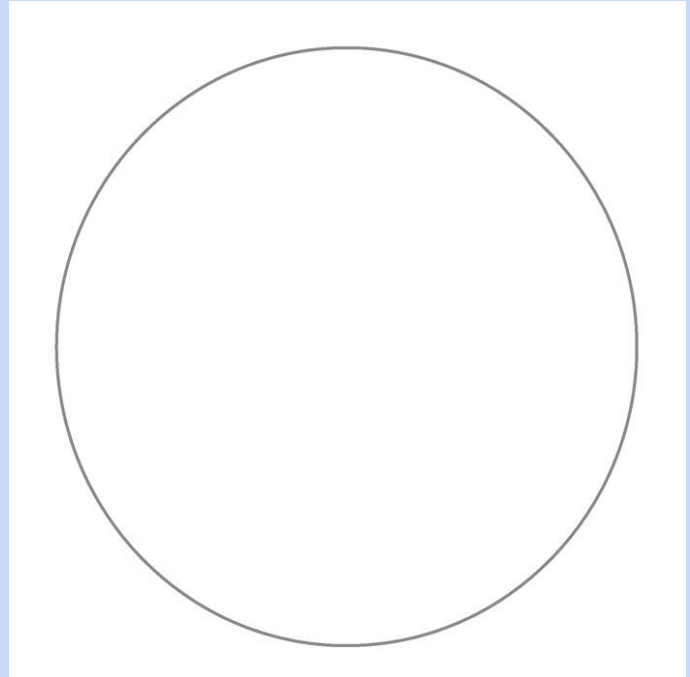
	 <p>Anxious and Stressed Brain</p> <p>Amygdala – buried deep within the brain, the survival part of the brain, triggered easily, takes over easily, and takes some work to get out of.</p>	 <p>Safe and Secure Brain</p> <p>Cerebral Cortex – outer layer of the brain, the rational, thinking part of the brain</p>	<p>Strategies to help your Brain</p>  <p>How to bring the brain from an anxious/stressed state to a safe/secure state where learning, creativity and love can exist and thrive:</p>
Physical Signs	Fight or flight response: Quick, shallow breathing, tense muscles, shaky and sweaty	Calm: Relaxed breathing Relaxed muscles	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Deep breathing exercises – slow, abdominal breathing in through the nose and longer breaths out through the mouth. (Start by tensing up the muscles then relax them while you close your eyes deep breathe.) 2. Physical exercise
	Sleep problems – can't sleep or sleep too much	Ability to sleep when needed and wake when needed	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. We handle stress better when we are well rested, and we recover from the damaging effects of stress while we sleep. To get enough sleep, go to bed at a regular time, have a routine to settle down and turn your phone off.
	Can't eat or eat too much or eat the wrong things (sugar, caffeine, alcohol or other drugs)	Normal eating	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Healthy eating! Eat your veggies and stay away from sugar and refined foods. We need the proper nutrients to recover from the damaging effects of stress and we handle stress better when we are well fed and not Hungry!
Mental Signs	Negative. Thoughts are heavy with a sense of doom.	Positive. Thoughts are light.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. Kick out the critic – invite in the gentle witness. Everyone has that mean voice in their head that criticizes, judges and is very negative. Kick that voice out and replace it with the gentle witness who just sees and does not judge, and who validates you. 6. List your strengths; the good things about you. 7. Positive affirmations about who you are or want to be: I am important. I am loveable. I am kind. I am friendly. I have a good heart. I do my best. Etc.....) Write them out and say them every day.
	Reactive	Deliberate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Observe don't absorb – helps keep you from reacting to the stress so you can step back from it and deliberately choose the way you want to handle it instead of falling back on knee jerk reactions.
	Learning is blocked. Relying on and reacting to old data. Not taking in new data or stimuli.	Ability to learn	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 9. Learn something – read, write, work a puzzle, pick up a new hobby or interest. Do what you can to get into your learning brain. 10. Journal - gets you into your thinking brain. Helps you be the observer of your thoughts/feelings/experiences.
	Creativity is blocked. Energy is put 100% into survival.	Ability to create	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Do something creative – build, play music, write a poem, journal, cook, paint, etc.
	Outcome oriented – Perfectionism is the name of the game. Can't deal with mistakes. Must be perfect or will not try. Can lead to underachievement.	Focused on the journey – able to live in the moment, ability to try new things and tolerate mistakes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Give yourself permission to live out loud! Permission to make mistakes and not be perfect because that's how you grow and learn. Practice "trying" and tolerating the mistakes that happen in the process of learning and growing.

	Hyper vigilant, disassociated from the moment, living in the past or in the future, stuck in the head, racing thoughts	Mindful, in the moment, present, grounded	13. Stay present in the moment and in the body through mindfulness exercises (there are apps you can use to help with this such as Headspace, Calm, and 10%). A popular mindfulness exercise is the 5 senses exercise - find something you can see, hear, smell, touch, and taste.
	Think in black and white (See option a and b and that is all)	Think in color (see all the options and possibilities)	14. Write out as many possibilities you can think of - all the ways of seeing the situation, all the possible reasons, explanations, all the possible solutions to a problem – even if they may seem a little “out there.”
	Dissatisfied with the self – not feeling enough.	Satisfied with the self – not because of being perfect, but because of feeling enough.	15. Practice self-compassion. Be as kind to the self as you would be to others in the same situation. (Is it ok to like the self? Who is going to be happier, more successful, more resilient, more willing to try things, more accepting of others – the person who likes themselves or the person who doesn't? One of the great paradoxes of life is that you can't grow until you accept your imperfect <u>self first</u> . You have to let yourself see where you need to grow. When you accept that you need to grow, you can develop the excitement to grow. When you reject yourself & don't accept yourself just as you are, you block your ability to see the growth you need and the excitement to make it happen.)
Emotional Signs	Fear of loving others and even of being loved because it may not be safe.	Ability to love (without serious attachment to the outcome)	16. Find someone to love. You can love your pet, give service, give a kind word, write a note of encouragement to someone else.
	Feel a sense of lack.	Feel abundant and grateful.	17. Look for abundance and list what you are grateful for. 18. Express gratitude to others verbally or in writing.
	Hyper aware of the bad things in the world.	Able to recognize and feel the wonder of the beauty in the world around	19. Look for the beauty around you. 20. Get into nature
	Agitated	Peaceful	21. Listen to peaceful music 22. Meditate (There are many guided meditations on YouTube that are excellent.)
	Tense/Hypervigilant	Relaxed/Playful	23. Distract your mind by doing something fun – spend time with friends or family 24. Work on a hobby or an interest of yours.
	Fearful	Excited	25. Reframe feelings of anxiety and fear as feelings of excitement.
	Emotions get hung up	Emotions flow	26. Try visualizations to help you to LET GO! i.e. Visualize yourself on a bridge overlooking a river. Watch the thoughts and feelings come down, pass under the bridge and flow away. Visualize negative thoughts, feelings and experiences as balloons. Observe them and then let them float away. Visualize laying a backpack full of your troubles down and walk away. Visualize burying your troubles and they spring up as flowers representing the good things you learned from those troubles.

I use this strategy & it
WORKS for me:



A strategy I want to
TRY:







It's ok to **Process Later:**

Allow feelings to come without judging yourself for them

Watch for

THINKING ERRORS:

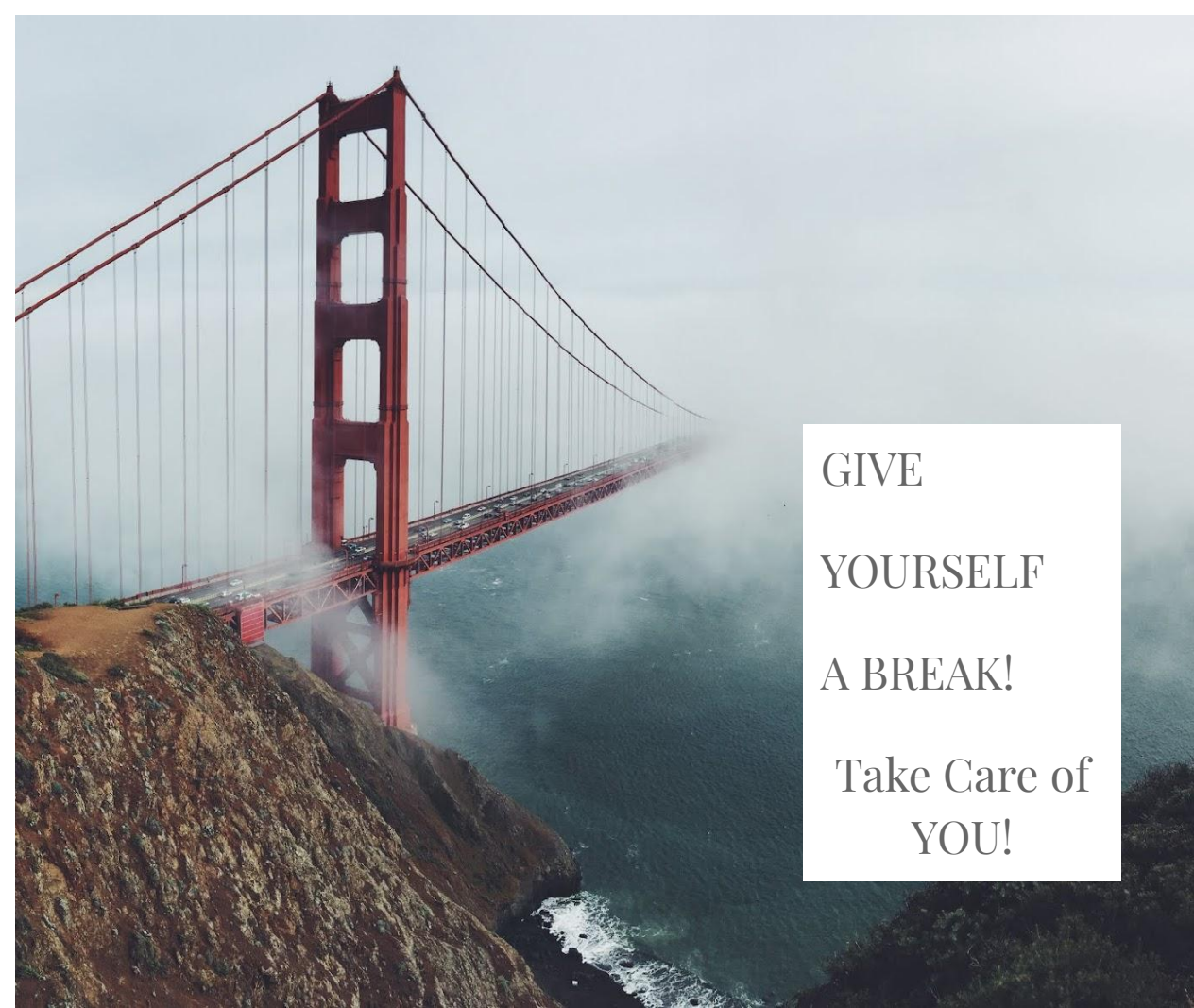
- Jumping to conclusions
- Maximising the problem
- Assuming the worst
- Trying to control things you can't



SHORT
Term

LONG
Term



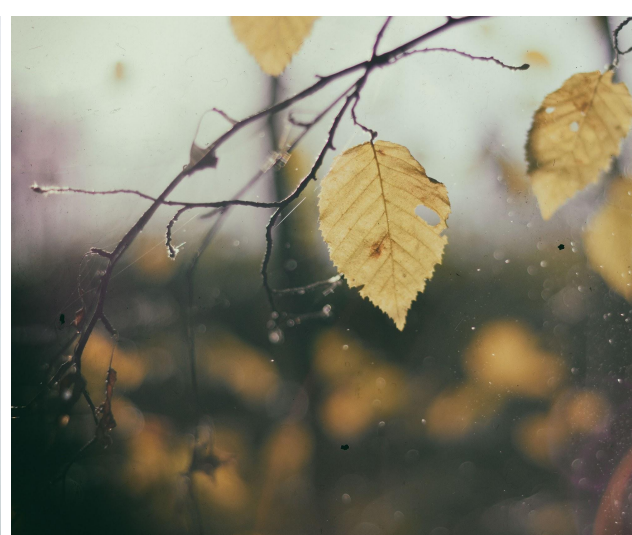


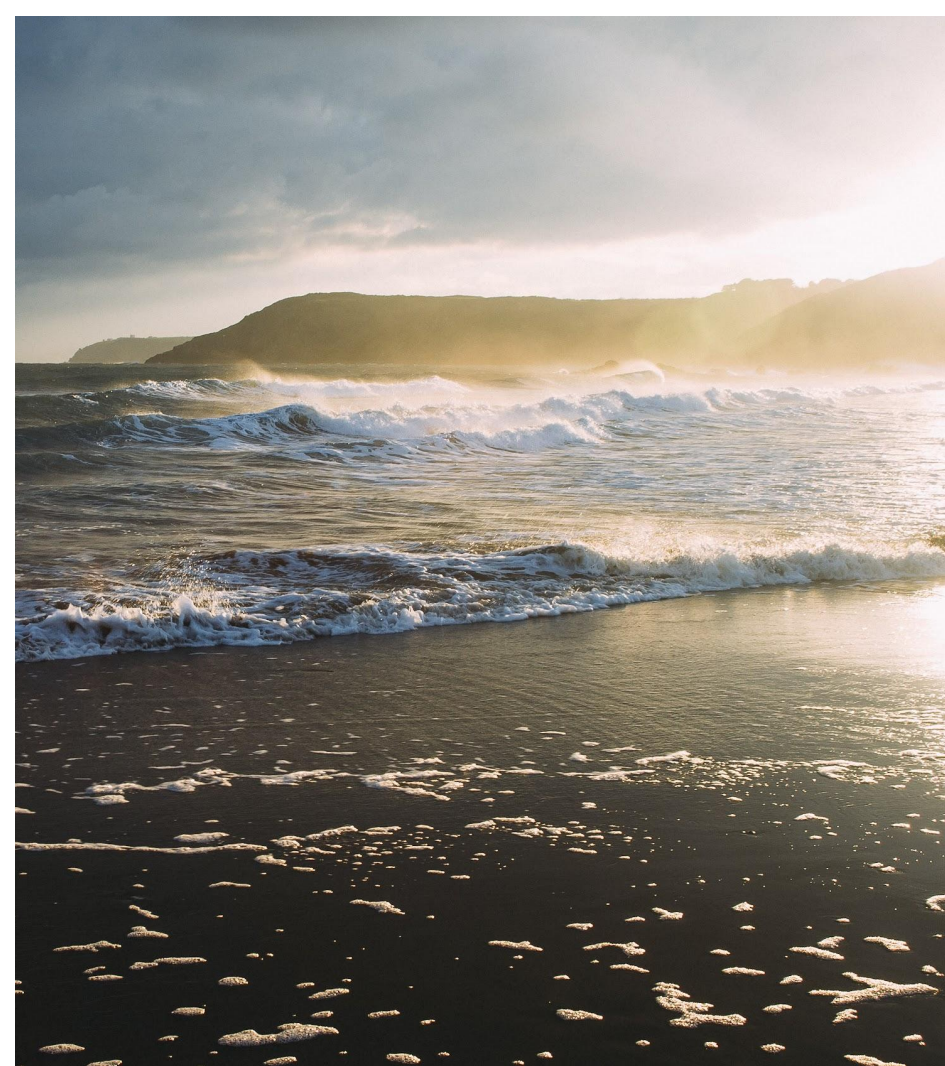
GIVE

YOURSELF

A BREAK!

Take Care of
YOU!





What does
not help
stress and
anxiety?



Come Talk to me!

Please go to your email.

Find the “Stress Management Presentation” Survey link.

Complete the survey!



Here is a copy of the link:

<https://forms.gle/oQ12ioCHocnsoCQT7>

Managing Stress and Anxiety Presentation Notes

Before we start - if you feel yourself triggered in anyway during this presentation, feel free to tune out or even leave the room.

Raise your hands if you have ever felt stressed or anxious?

If you experience stress and anxiety, you are **normal**. Stress and anxiety are a part of **being human**. Our job is not to get rid of stress and anxiety. They are never going away. The trick is learning how to **manage** it.

What does stress/anxiety feel like for you in your body? Can't breathe, sweaty palms, chest pressure...

What causes stress and anxiety for you? school, tests, assignments, friends, love relationships, public speaking...

What is the difference between good stress and bad stress? Good stress gears you up; helps you perform better. Bad stress shuts you down; you can't perform at all.

Some stress is **avoidable**. What is an example of avoidable stress? Staying away from the drama of toxic people.

Some stress is **predictable**. What is an example of predictable stress and how might you prepare for it?

You know there is a test coming up so you prepare for it. Procrastination=big stress!

Social situations are stressful - You think ahead of somethings you might want to say beforehand, so you are not caught off guard and feel more prepared to handle the situation.

There are times when stress just hijacks the brain. If the stress is too great, the brain perceives stress as a **life or death** situation and goes into survival mode - just as if there were a lion in the room. It goes into a part of the brain called the amygdala whose job is to save your life! This is not the thinking, reasoning part of your brain. The amygdala can't tell the difference between a real life or death threat (like the lion in the room) and a perceived one (like taking a test).

We are going to talk about the difference between a brain that feels safe and secure and a brain that is in survival mode and what strategies can you use to bring your brain back to safe and secure mode? Basic Brain Physiology (draw on the board the brain in its 3 basic parts):

Brain stem – automatic functions - heartbeat, breathing,

Lower brain (with a small circle in it for the amygdala) - basic survival (primitive brain)– fundamental needs of the body are

met – amygdala is the stress center of the brain - initiates fight, flight, or freeze (This is where stress, anxiety, phobias, PTSD, etc. all live)

Cerebral cortex (outer/larger part of the brain with lots of grooves) – thinking, reasoning, learning, creativity

The amygdala is small, but it is powerful, and it will take over if your brain perceives a threat. If somehow your brain got programmed to fear something like spiders, and there is a spider in the room, the thinking brain is done! The amygdala is in charge now and it's going to do its job of trying to save your life - it's going to ramp you up for fight or flight or have you freeze. Unfortunately, in this situation, with a little spider, this really does not help much. Test anxiety is like this. If you are so anxious about a test that the amygdala kicks in, you are no longer connected with your thinking brain. You are in survival mode (shallow breathing, sweaty palms, etc.) and how are you going to do on the test in this state?

So, what we have to do is use META-cognition to reprogram our brain. What is Meta-cognition? It's the ability to think about your thinking. Today, we are going to talk about tools, or strategies for doing this and calming your brain down, brining it out of the amygdala and back into the thinking, creative, happy cerebral outer cortex where you can actually think, learn and be creative.

Go through the chart handout if you have time: Have the students put a **star** by the strategies they already use, that work. **Circle** the strategies they want to try.

Strategy 1 - Work through the first strategy with the students. Have them think of a stressful moment, connect with how that felt and then tense up their muscles and then deep breathe from their abdomen as we do when we sleep (in through the nose, out through the mouth) very slowly. As they breathe, have them begin to release all the tension in their bodies – the jaw, neck, shoulders...

Strategy 13 - Hand out Jolly Ranchers and work through the 5 senses exercise while students incorporate deep breathing.

After going through the strategies, ask students - Which strategies did you star? Which did you circle?

Points to keep in mind:

These strategies don't take stress and anxiety away. They are tools that will help you to deal with it by using the power of your own mind (meta cognition) to step back from the stress, detach from the emotional reaction to it, and allow yourself to think through it and manage it in a healthy way.

It's ok to process stress and anxiety later – tell your brain to stay in safe/secure mode and that you will process the stress later. When later comes – allow yourself to process the experience. Allow yourself to feel your feelings without judging them. Look for possible thinking errors such as jumping to conclusions, maximizing the problem and assuming the worst.

Some stress is short term. Some stress is long term (like adjusting to life without a loved one). Give yourself a break and take the time you need and do the things you need to do to take care of you in positive ways and process your stress.

What things do not help stress? Negativity such as negative environments, negative people, negative music, negative news, bad movies, dulling it with alcohol or drugs, any addictions, self-harm, social media (unrealistic),.... Some may give temporary relief, but they come back to bite later.

Other things that do help stress: Talking can help. Being around other people can help some people or make it worse for others.

If anything from this presentation has triggered you, feel free to come talk to me, or you may want to talk to a friend or family member. Process the trigger (look at it, listen to it, learn from it and don't judge it) and it will have less power over you.