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I MATTER

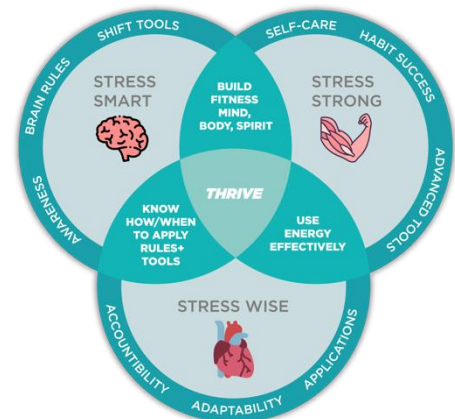
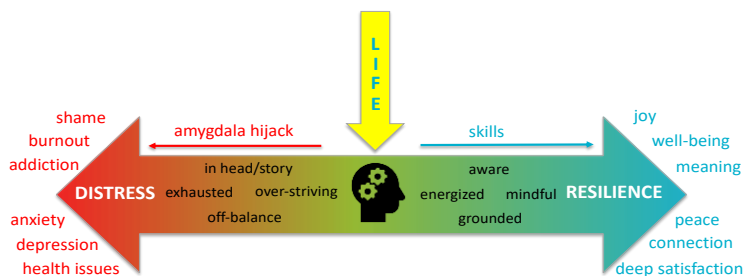
COMBATTING COMBAT FATIGUE
ON THE FRONTLINES OF EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT

Uncertainty, challenge, and stress are parts of real life, but the last 3+ years have dealt us more than many of us can handle and stay healthy and happy. We've experienced losses and trauma—first or second hand—and depleted most resources that help us heal. And sadly, most of us were never taught realistic, brain-friendly strategies to handle stress, how to work with our human wiring to manage our brainpower and our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual energies. Covid illuminated every hole in our systems—from what was missing in our education, to unrealistic expectations of our culture, to a diseased healthcare system. The costs are steep risking our safety, productivity, health, and happiness...and the finances of systems already in trouble.

But take heart! This isn't something else you have to get "right!" Your stress management should not stress you more! There are simple shifts and tools that you can start today to reclaim mind, body, and spirit, and energize your health and happiness, even under duress. Let this help you brainstorm some small tweaks with which you can "play" or experiment to boost your coping confidence, energy, and well-being. Become part of the cultural shift to creating workplaces and homes that supports the best of human thriving.

Stress Tool: Breathe... in 5... out 5- soft, belly breaths = Using your body to calm your mind

How humans process life's challenges (stressors) matters!



RESILIENCE is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands. A number of factors contribute to how well people adapt to adversities, predominant among them:

- the ways in which individuals view and engage with the world
- the availability and quality of social resources
- specific coping strategies – that can be cultivated and practiced!

Psychological research demonstrates that the resources and skills associated with more positive adaptation (i.e., greater resilience) can be cultivated and practiced.

STRESS is:

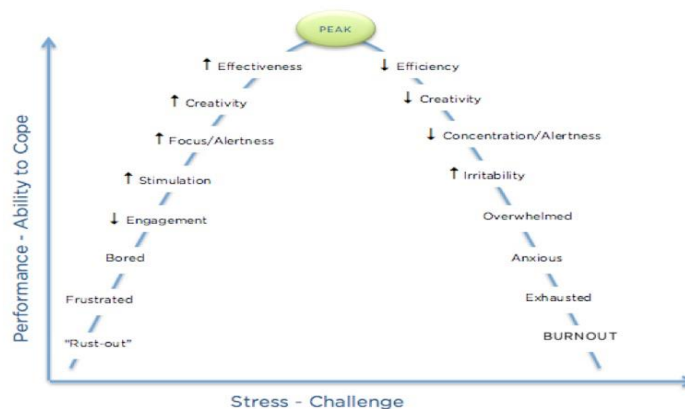
- the non-specific p_____ and mental response to a p_____ threat.
- What happens when perceived d_____ exceeds perceived c_____.
- Based on my r_____ with the circumstances of my life.

Your brain's priorities:

1. S_____
2. Satisfaction
3. Connection

Ways to increase vagal **parasympathetic tone**:

- Breathwork- Yawn
- Massage – ears/acupressure
- Hummmm...Music
- Pen in mouth- rub lips
- Gratitude
- so many more.... <https://www.stress.org/contentment-connection-easy-ways-to-nourish-your-vagus-nerve-to-become-more-content> ... fact www.stress.org has amazing resources!
- Sensory focus
- Mantra
- Meditation
- Movement- yoga, Qigong



Executive functions impaired by chronic stress:



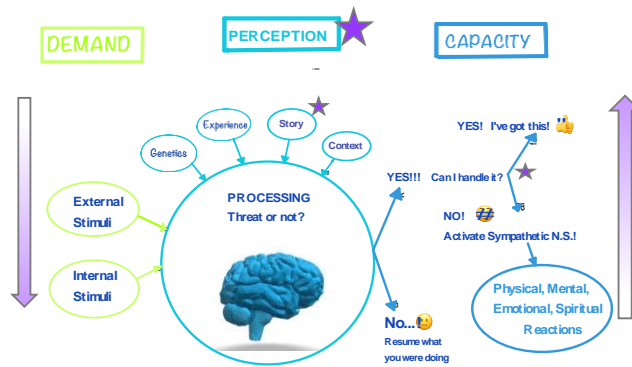
- Attention span
- Perseverance
- Judgment
- Impulse control
- Organization
- Self-monitoring and supervision
- Problem solving
- Critical thinking, creativity
- Forward thinking
- Learning from experience
- Regulate emotions
- Regulating all other brain systems
- Empathy

Our brains on stress

- More negative, defensive
- Less aware
- Less smart
- Perspective narrowed- things seem more pervasive, permanent, and personal
- Less creative – frontal lobe off
- Less able to regulate emotions
- Less immune to stress of others

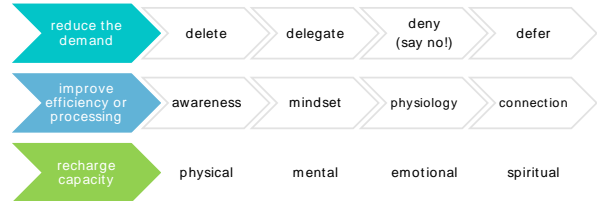


STRESS STRONG



STRESS STRONG

3 buckets of interventions to balance energy demand & capacity



STRESS STRONG STRATEGIES to play the GAME of life:

1. **GROUND**ED Grow your roots = GROUNDING
2. **AWARE**: Raise your SELF-AWARENESS
3. **MINDFUL**: Practice your MINDSET = mindfulness
4. **ENERGIZED**: Create RECHARGE HABITS

2. GROUND

W
H
O

1. Reflect on what matters most to you. Being intentional with your values builds motivation, gives you direction, and creates meaning which is a natural “stress antidote.” What are your **top values**? (sample list at end)

2. What is **your why, your purpose**?

3. **Whom** matters most to you? Your most important connections:

4. What **strengths** do you bring to challenges? [Strengths questionnaire](#)

5. What are your top **needs**? (list at end)

YOUR GROUNDING REMINDER: _____

(helping you remember who you are and what matters most to you in the heat of the moment – can be a mantra, image, movement, whatever brings your attention back to your intention)

2. AWARE – knowing your relationship with life/stress and how you are in the moment

- What tends to trigger you? _____

- What tends to work for you in stressful situations Your helpful stress responses:

- What typical response patterns don't really help you?

- What is your inner critic's theme? _____

- What would you gain if you spent less energy on repeat triggers?

- **How do you know when you are getting stressed?** = your best cues that you need recharging = your indicator light



HOW

- **Pause to check in.** You must interrupt your “busy” mind to build awareness. Experiment with your cell phone alarm or one of the many apps that help you build habits around self-care. When it dings, self-scan your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual energy in that moment. (= Energy audit) Make this a team habit or family habit.
- Learn to routinely ask yourself what you really need in that moment- a stretch, a break, some water, a connection? *What if you pay as much attention to your own energy needs as you do your cellphone battery?*
- Notice thought and behavior patterns/choices that ramp you up or calm you down.

BREATHE AGAIN: 5 in, 5 out and ask yourself 3 questions:

1. How am I physically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually?
2. What do I need or what is needed right now?
3. Who do I want to BE right now?

Staying Flexible: What is your **SNAP** tool of choice? _____

SNAP tool- Gratitude www.heartmath.com

3. MINDFUL Practice mindset superpowers! The 6 C's and a G.

- **Calm** – Use your body to calm your mind and reboot your brain to access your best thinking. Breathe! Learn a “SNAP” technique that works for you and practice it.
- **Clear** – Take a few moments and clear your thinking. What’s really at risk? What really matters in this moment? What values do you want to live by?
- **Curious** – Your brainpower, creativity, and ability to find solutions ramp up when you ask non-judgmental questions about your situation. What are you learning? What has worked for you before? How would advise a friend to handle this?
- **Creative** – Changing your story or situation takes creative juices to see other possibilities. Brainstorming will often shift you off of stuck.
- **Courageous** – Yup, it takes courage to improve self-care, to set boundaries, to stand up for your values, to take the risk of trying new things, to allow your emotions space, to stay focused on what matters most when the going gets tough. What gives you courage?
- **Compassionate** (especially self-compassionate) – Stress narrows your perspective, makes you more judgmental, self-critical, more “black and white.” Take a moment to find compassion for yourself and others. (Check out Kristen Neff's Ted talk!)
- **And Grateful!** Focusing on what you appreciate is a powerful stress antidote! When you take a few moments to really feel gratitude you improve your heart and brain rhythms and make it easier to get “unstuck.” Start or end the day with gratitude’s. Celebrate your wins—this actually wires your brain for more success.

STRESS TOOLS: 4 Questions, Circles of Control

3 WHAT'S 3 WHAT'S A WHO"

1. What is the DATA?
2. What STORY, ASSUMPTIONS, EXPECTATIONS, BIASES am I adding?
3. What is NEEDED now? (by me or situation)
4. Who do I want to BE?



4. ENERGIZED Create habits to build up and recharge your energy, your capacity.

You can increase your strength, fitness, and adaptability to meet the challenges of life by choosing habits that recharge your energy- physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. Humans (and brains!) have universal critical needs – nutrition, exercise, sleep, rest, play, social connection – that must be met to function well. In addition, you have individual needs that help you feel complete or energized. Just as stress is additive, so is every recharge!

- a. How can you shift the conversations (even the ones between your ears ☺) to energy management?
- b. How can you use feelings/emotions non-judgmentally as data for recharging?

- c. Brainstorm small shifts that you can make to meet your needs—go for at least 25 to spark your creative powers.
- d. Then experiment (with curiosity!) to find what works well to support your best life.

	Need more (energizers)	Need less (drains)
PHYSICAL sleep/rest/hydration nutrition/conditioning/ exercise		
MENTAL focus vs. distraction flexibility/creativity stimulation/rest time for processing		
EMOTIONAL mood regulation health		
SPIRITUAL meaning/purpose connection to others, bigger picture, and your why		

STRESS STRONG

RECHARGE HABITS

Brainstorm tiny shifts you can make in your day that will add up to more energy:

- physical – nap, water ,snacks, stretches, movement?
- mental – breaks, play, challenges, meditation
- emotional – meditation, connection, time to process
- spiritual energy – connect to your why, your people, community, and faith



EVIDENCE BASED

- * Mindfulness
- * Meditation
- * Movement
- * Nutrition therapy
- * Sound and music therapy
- * Massage, body work
- * Art therapy
- * Improv, drama, comedy
- * Humor, laughter
- * Spiritual development, religion, prayer
- * Journaling
- * Pets, equine therapy
- * Nature, eco-therapy
- * HRV heart rate variability
- * Breathwork
- * Visualization
- * Progressive relaxation
- * Aromatherapy
- * EMDR (eye movement)
- * TMS (magnetic)
- * Electrotherapy
- * Neurofeedback
- * And...



What habits do you commit to experimenting with after today to take better care of YOU?

What's your biggest aha/take-home/huh? With whom will you share it?

proven resilience strategies

- * Balance your energy drains with energy renewing activities–
Be creative! Add music, touch, movement, scents!
- * Take care of your body- exercise, nutrition, sleep hygiene,
preventive medical care
- * **PRACTICE ACTIVE RELAXATION DAILY!!**
- * Connect with nature
- * Connect with meaning – build rituals to remind you what matters to you
- * Train your physiology for resilience- breathwork, meditation,
biofeedback, mind/body work, massage
- * Nurture your connections- intimate, social, community, spiritual
- * Forgive (start with yourself!), laugh, play, love, celebrate!
- * Kindness – start with you, practice compassion, kindness, love

Never forget the your power to **Practice Kindness...** to others, to you, to the earth. This does NOT mean letting people walk all over you. Setting boundaries is kind. Speaking up for yourself or others is kind. Showing compassion and gratitude is good for your heart and mind.

Stay curious! Seek support! Never forget that **you truly matter**. Together we can help make the world more human friendly.

Check out www.stress.org and

Please join me on my website: www.cynthiaackrill.com I almost never post 😊 and never share my list.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION AND PARTICIPATION!

Cindi

Questions, comments, suggestions, stories, jokes... reach out!

If you know others who might benefit from upping their GAME of life... please let me know.

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Achievement	Freedom	Precision
Accuracy	Friendship	Recognition
Acknowledgment	Growth	Responsibility
Advancement	Integrity	Romance
Adventure	Independence	Risk-taking
Aesthetics	Intellectual status	Self-expression
Affection	Health	Spirituality
Authenticity	Help others	Success
Autonomy	Help society	Service
Beauty	Humor	Stability
Caring	Harmony	Time Freedom
Challenge	Honesty	Tradition
Change	Joy	Trust
Contribution	Knowledge	Vitality
Collaboration	Lack of pretense	Wealth
Community	Leadership	Wisdom
Connectedness	Leisure	Zest
Comradeship	Lightness	Add your own
Creativity	Location	
Directness	Loyalty	
Economic security	Nurturing	
Empowerment	Orderliness	
Excellence	Partnership	
Excitement	Participation	
Elegance	Performance	
Family happiness	Personal power	
Free spirit	Peace	
Free time	Pleasure	
Focus	Productivity	
Forward the action	Power	

Courtesy of College of
Executive Coaching

What do you value?

What are your super-powers?

appreciation- (of beauty and excellence)

bravery

creativity

curiosity

fairness

forgiveness/ mercy

gratitude

honesty

hope

humor

kindness

leadership

love

love of learning

modesty and humility

open-mindedness

persistence

perspective

prudence

self-control

social intelligence

spirituality

teamwork

zest

Reference:

VIA Institute - VIA Character Strengths Survey- well worth doing for yourself or as team of family- there is a kid's version.

NEEDS

CONNECTION

acceptance
affection
appreciation
belonging
cooperation
communication
closeness
community
companionship
compassion
consideration
consistency
empathy
inclusion
intimacy
love
mutuality
nurturing
respect/self-respect

CONNECTION continued

safety
security
stability
support
to know and be known
to see and be seen
to understand and be understood
trust
warmth

PHYSICAL WELL-BEING

air
food
movement/exercise
rest/sleep
sexual expression
safety
shelter
touch
water

HONESTY

authenticity
integrity
presence

PLAY

joy
humor

PEACE

beauty
communion
ease
equality
harmony
inspiration
order

AUTONOMY

choice
freedom
independence
space
spontaneity

MEANING

awareness
celebration of life
challenge
clarity
competence
consciousness
contribution
creativity
discovery
efficacy
effectiveness
growth
hope
learning
mourning
participation
purpose
self-expression
stimulation
to matter
understanding

Courtesy of [Center for Non-Violent Communication](http://www.cnvc.org) – excellent resource for learning effective ways to communicate needs and feelings