



**American
Red Cross**

Creating Calmness in Stressful Times

“We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope.”

– Martin Luther King, American Christian minister and activist

“Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass; it’s about learning how to dance in the rain.”

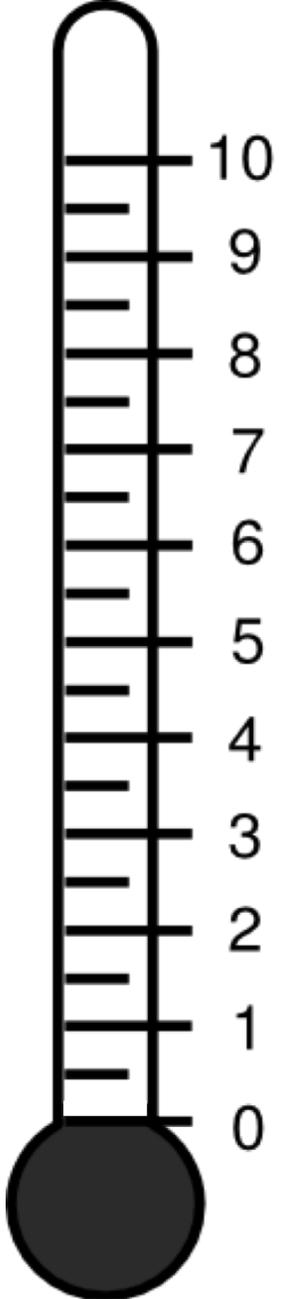
– Vivian Greene, American singer and pianist

Defining Stress

- What is stress?
- What does it mean to “be stressed?”
- Is stress the same for everyone?
- What is the opposite of being stressed?
- Do we need stress?
- Why do you think stress is so common?
- When you are discussing your day, what stands out more, the things that went well or the things that didn’t go well?
- In what ways is your stress heightened during certain events, scenarios or times of year?



How Stressed Am I?



**Most Stressed
Ever!**

**Not Stressed
at All**

Signs of Stress

Thinking

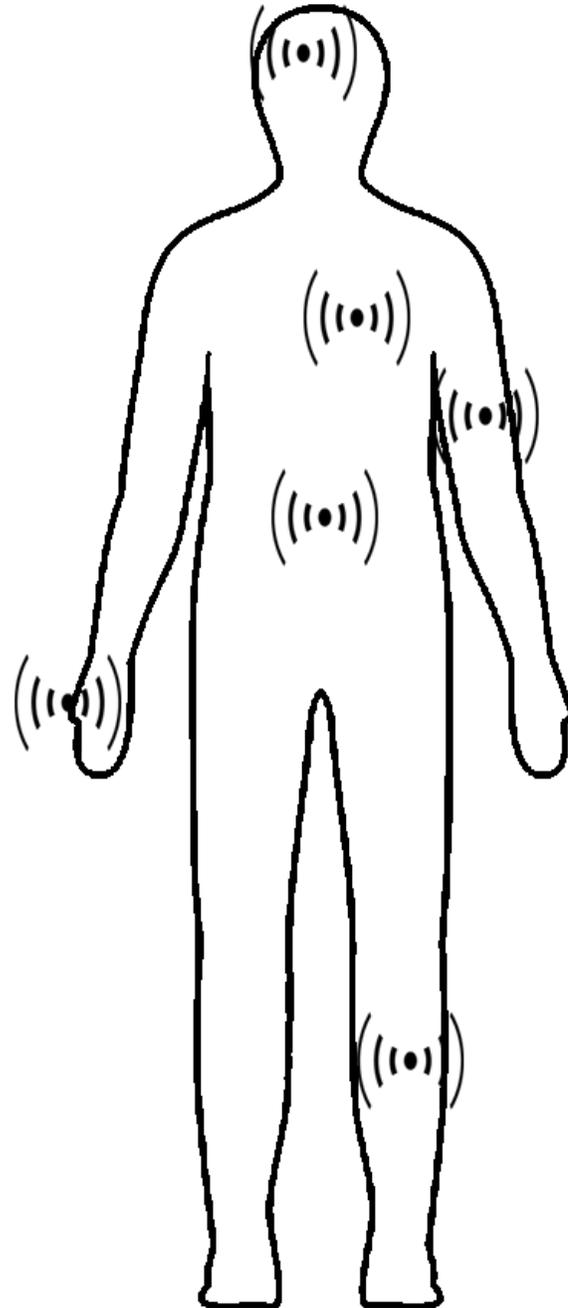
- Difficulty concentrating
- Poor memory
- Increased worry
- Preoccupation about a situation or event
- Focusing on the negative

Emotions

Anger
Agitation
Moodiness
Depression
Irritability

Behaviors

- Withdrawal from friends and family
- Starting arguments
- Changes in sleep
- Changes in appetite
- Clenching jaw/teeth grinding
- Substance use



Spirituality

- Loss of purpose
- Questioning the meaning of life
- Loss of faith
- Questioning belief system

Relationships

- Reduced intimacy
- Increased conflicts and fighting
- Impatience
- Feeling Isolated or disconnected

Physical

- Headaches
- Stomach pain
- Tense muscles
- Digestive issues
- Fatigue

Work

- Decreased motivation
- Task avoidance
- Low morale
- Frustration
- Burnout



Things I Can Try to Reduce My Stress

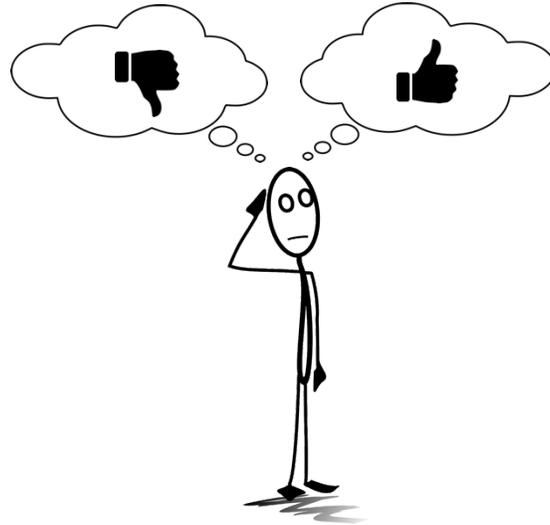
- Breathe in slowly for a count of 4, hold for a count of 7, release for a count of 8
- Prayer or meditation
- Massage your face, head or shoulders. Be sure to clean your hands before touching your face.
- Call or text someone who makes you feel good or laugh
- Take a hot shower or soak in the tub
- Listen to music
- Watch a clip of a comedian you like
- Read a magazine or book
- Think of a pleasant or funny memory
- Repair or tinker with things around the house
- Make something new out of something old
- Organize or clean something
- Start a new hobby
- Draw, paint or doodle
- Learn something new
- Knit, crochet or needle point
- Change the linens on your bed
- Rearrange a room
- Play an instrument
- Do a craft project
- Cook a new recipe
- Organize the “junk drawer”
- Watch a movie, concert or sport event
- Mail someone a card or letter
- Daydream
- Make a bucket list
- Dance, sing, act
- Make someone laugh
- Hold a virtual coffee chat with friends
- Play a game alone, with your family or virtually – try a social game app
- Do a quick stretch
- Look at photos
- Do a jigsaw puzzle, sudoku or crossword puzzle
- Savor a warm drink
- Find volunteer opportunities (volunteermatch.org)
- Take a continuing education course
- Make a “Top Ten” list of your favorite things (Ex: Favorite movies)
- Exercise
- Do something nice for someone
- Join an online discussion group or book club
- _____



EVENT



THOUGHTS



Check Your Thinking!

Besides my first thoughts about why this happened, can I think of 2 other reasons to explain it?

What is the evidence that my thought is true?

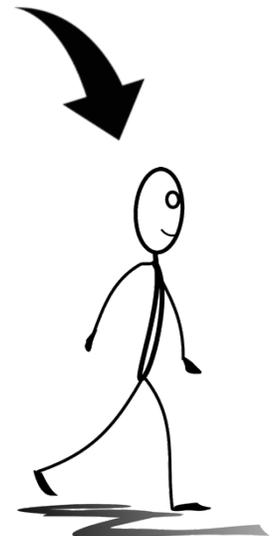
What is the evidence that it's false?

What is the worst thing that could happen?

Could I live through it?

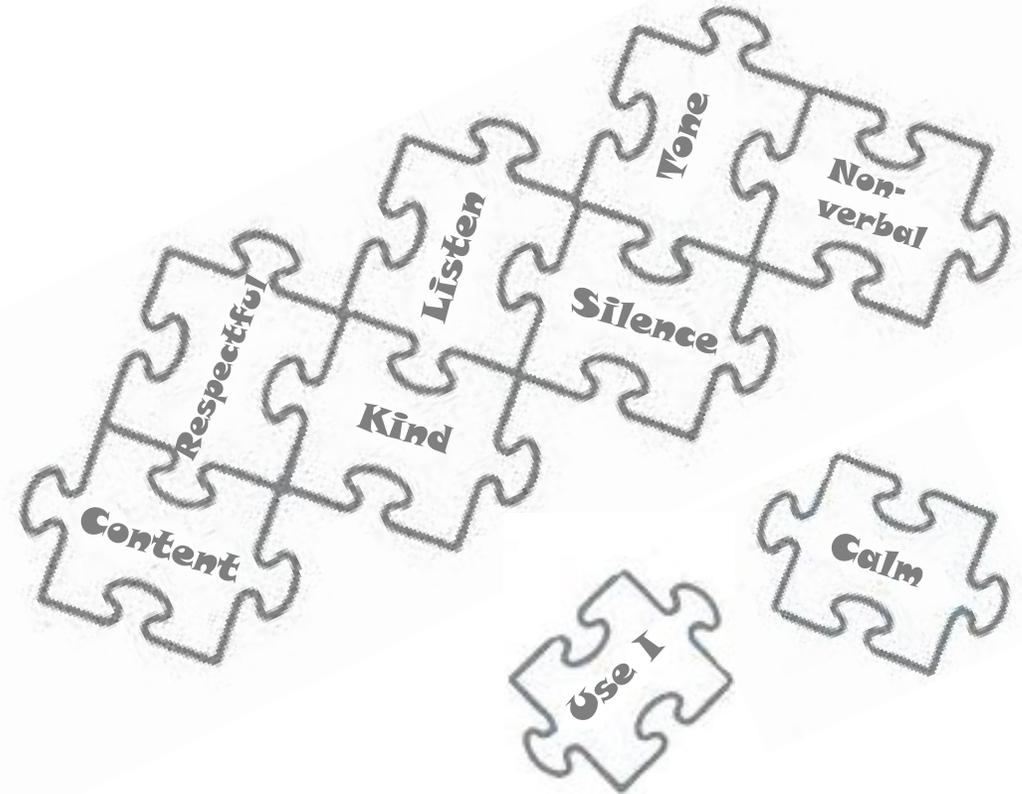


REACTION



General Points to Consider for Effective Communication

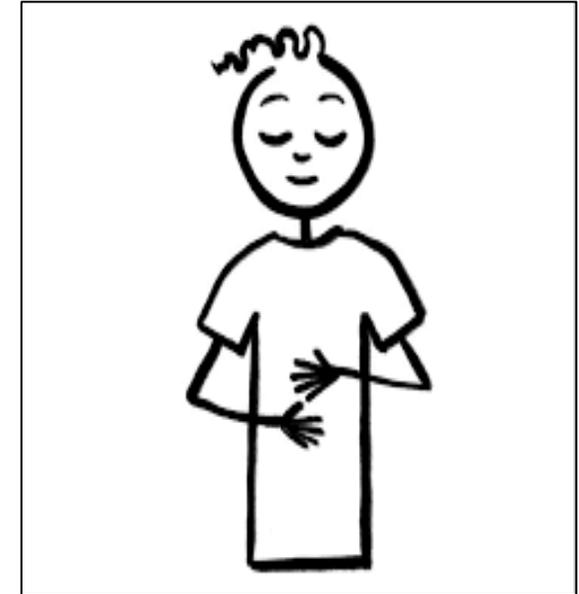
- Choose content carefully.
- Be respectful and calm.
- Listen.
- Be aware of your non-verbal cues.
- Be alert to your tone of voice.
- Be kind.
- Silence can be golden.
- Use Communication Basics.



Quick Relaxation Exercises

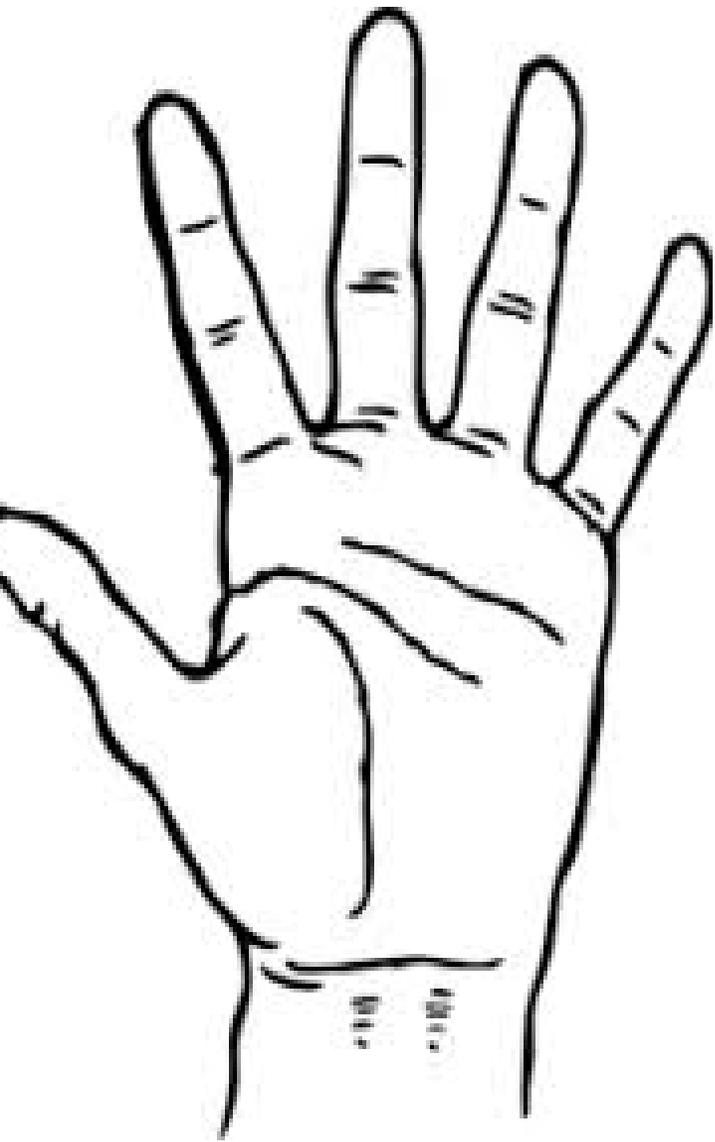
Deep Breathing

- Breathing out. Force all of your air out as you draw your belly in toward your spine.
- When you have breathed out all of your air, slowly breathe in, focusing on expanding your belly with air.
- Do this again several more times.



Tip:

It may help to place a hand on your belly to feel your stomach expand and contract.

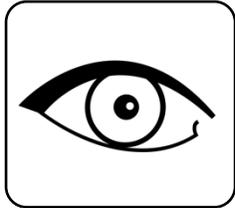


Quick Relaxation Exercises

Hand Trace:

- Hold out your left hand, palm up.
- Take your right index finger and run it along each finger on your left hand.
- Inhale slowly and smoothly as you move toward the tip of each finger.
- Hold your breath for a second or two at the top of each finger. Then exhale as you move back down toward your palm.
- Switch hands and repeat the exercise.

Soothing Stress with My Five Senses



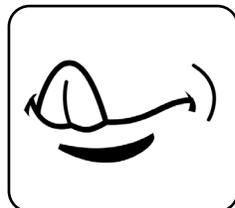
Things I Like to See

- Trees and flowers
- Art
- Family pictures



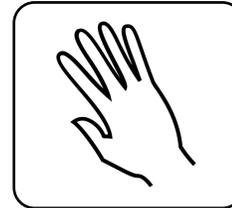
Things I Like to Hear

- My favorite playlist
- Birds chirping
- My favorite comic



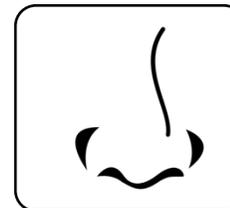
Things I Like to Taste

- Home baked cookies
- Hot cocoa
- Mint gum



Things I Like to Touch

- Hot shower
- Sun on my face
- Grass under my feet



Things I Like to Smell

- New rain
- Clean laundry
- Bonfire

Getting a Good Night's Rest: How to Become a Better Sleeper

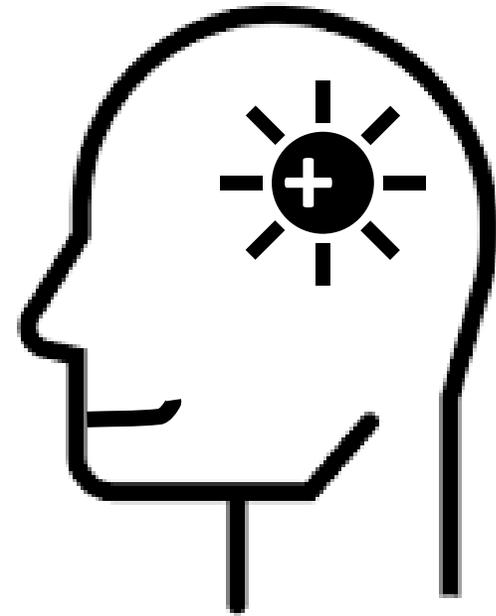
- Set your sleep schedule
- Monitor your use of screens
- Create a soothing sleep environment
- Pay attention to what you eat and drink
- Tips for when you toss and turn



The Power of Gratitude

Share:

- Three good things that you have experienced today
- One thing that you are looking forward to tomorrow



Quick review:

- Name one thing that you learned from today's discussion.
- State when, in the next week or so, you could use some of the skills we discussed and practiced today.
- Name one person you could talk to about what you have learned today.



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