



Take Care

SCIENCE-BASED STRATEGIES TO HELP STUDENTS MANAGE STRESS

ANXIOUS OR WORRIED?

Increased anxiety is common as we navigate COVID-19. Feelings of uncertainty and dealing with change are highly stressful. Action is one of the best treatments for anxiety. Share your concerns and problem solve with your teachers, family, and friends to plan coping steps.

BREATHE

Try mindful breathing several times a day. Take a moment for low and slow breaths before getting off the bus, when you enter the classroom, during class transitions or while on break. Breathing helps us to calm down and improves our concentration.

GOOD HEALTH HABITS

As stress and demands increase, health habits often take a hit. Bring healthy snacks to school, try to get enough sleep, prioritize aerobic exercise and get some sunlight.

PACE YOURSELF

Monitor yourself for disrupted sleep, excessive fatigue, irritability, poor focus and marked anxiety. If we run on empty, we can't be there for our friends and families. The school year is a marathon, not a race.

FLEXIBILITY IS ESSENTIAL

Increased safety requirements, such as mask use and physical distancing, and other unique stressors will test our flexibility and adaptability. We all have to work outside of the box—especially when things go wrong or feel overwhelming. It's okay. Ask for support, evaluate, adapt and move forward.

TAKE BREAKS

Take mini breaks to improve energy and focus. Plan down time at home. Exercise, a good book, movie, podcast, and mindfulness techniques help us refuel physically and emotionally.



Take Care

This school year has been challenging.
Take care and be kind to yourself so
you can be your best .

There are science-based things you can do
right now to keep yourself going and
manage stress.



CALM YOURSELF

Slowly breathe in for 4, hold it for 4, and then breathe out for 6. Repeat 10 times.



FOCUS YOURSELF

Slow racing thoughts by counting backwards by three in your mind from 100 (100, 97, 94, etc.).



RELAX YOURSELF

One by one, tense each muscle group in your body for 10 seconds and then release. Feel your muscles relax and the tension leave your body.



GROUND YOURSELF

Do a quick scan of your body and notice the air around you and any surfaces you are touching. If possible, close your eyes and focus on textures and temperatures.



CELEBRATE YOURSELF

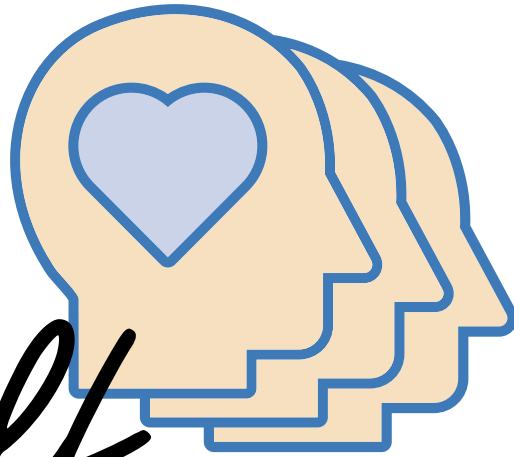
You are dealing with huge challenges. Think about 3 things that went well today. If they involved another person, recognize and thank them whenever possible.



TAKING A MOMENT FOR SELF-CARE CAN HELP YOU STAY PRODUCTIVE AND CALM AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL

Calm

Yourself



Slowly breathe in for 4, hold it for 4,
and then breathe out for 6.

Repeat 10 times.

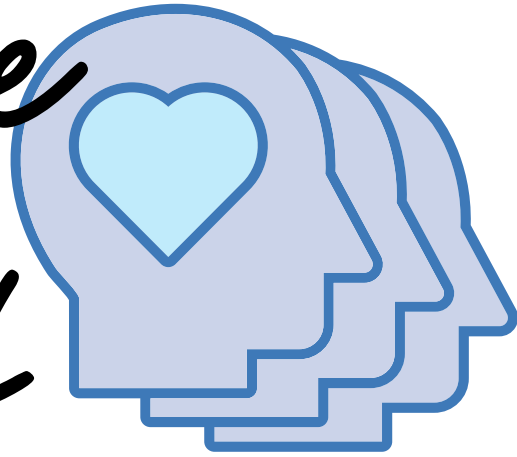
THE SCIENCE BEHIND WHY THIS WORKS

When we are stressed or overwhelmed, our physiology is often on high alert and all systems are functioning at capacity. This can help us face an immediate threat but wears us out over time. Slowing our breathing allows our bodies to recalibrate and lower our overall level of physiological arousal. This, in turn, reduces our experience of stress and improves our overall wellbeing and functioning



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*Celebrate
Yourself*



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THE SCIENCE BEHIND WHY THIS WORKS

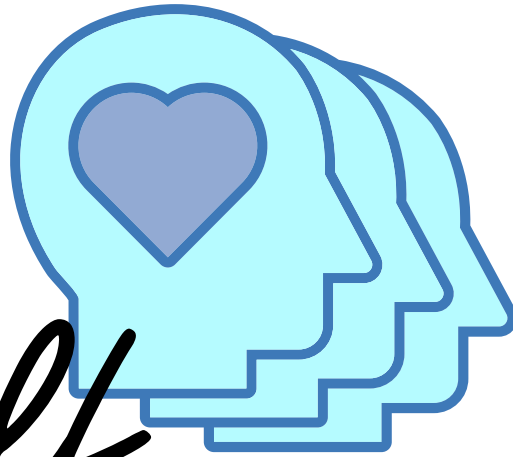
It is easy to ignore or forget the positives when we are surrounded by frustration and overwhelming demands that may feel impossible to address. Slowing down to recognize even small successes can underscore our ability to have some control over our environment. Sharing these positive moments with others promotes the feeling of being part of a team all striving to do well and be a friend to one another.



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Focus

Yourself



Slow your racing thoughts by counting backwards by three in your mind from 100 (100, 97, 94, etc.).

THE SCIENCE BEHIND WHY THIS WORKS

Our thoughts can race when we are stressed; conversely, we can become hyper focused and unable to think about anything other than immediate demands. Neither of these allows us to effectively problem solve. Focusing in a structured way and engaging your brain in a distracting and somewhat challenging task can disrupt unhelpful patterns. When you can settle your thinking, you can return to present demands with greater capacity to analyze situations and make decisions.



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Do a quick scan of your body and notice the air around you and any surfaces you are touching. If possible, close your eyes and focus on the sensations, textures, and temperatures.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND WHY THIS WORKS

When we are overwhelmed and stressed, we can disconnect from the world around us. By focusing on our physical surroundings, we can become more attuned to details and recognize the good, the pleasant, and the neutral in addition to the negative. This allows us to make a more balanced assessment of our environment, which we can carry into each situation we face.



TAKING A MOMENT FOR SELF-CARE CAN HELP YOU STAY PRODUCTIVE AND CALM AT HOME AND AT SCHOOL

*Relax
Yourself*

An illustration consisting of three overlapping pink heads in profile, facing right. The frontmost head is the largest and contains a yellow heart. The heads behind it are smaller and partially obscured, creating a sense of depth. The entire illustration is outlined in blue.

One by one, tense each muscle group in your body for 10 seconds and then release. Notice how it feels to let your muscles relax and have the tension leave your body.

THE SCIENCE BEHIND WHY THIS WORKS

We can hold tension and stress in our bodies. As this builds up, we can be more irritable and even more prone to physical injury. We need to release this tension to move more comfortably and accomplish our work. Actively relaxing our muscles can give us more energy, increase our flexibility, and help us feel calmer, which enables us to respond more effectively to demands.