



Understanding and Mitigating the Impacts of Stress on Student Performance

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Objectives

Participants of this workshop will be able to:

- ▶ Define stress and recognize the signs of stress in their students.
- ▶ Understand the various ways stress can impact a student's performance.
- ▶ Know how to perform a stress assessment for the purpose of identifying individual students' stressors.
- ▶ Identify a method of instruction that will benefit learners who are impacted with high levels of stress or a variety of stressors.
- ▶ Access resources that can be offered to assist students in stress management in and out of the classroom.

Welcome! Starting Off with a Self-Assessment:

- ▶ Take a moment to think about how you feel right now. The next slide will prompt you to scan a QR code. Scan the code and type in your response.



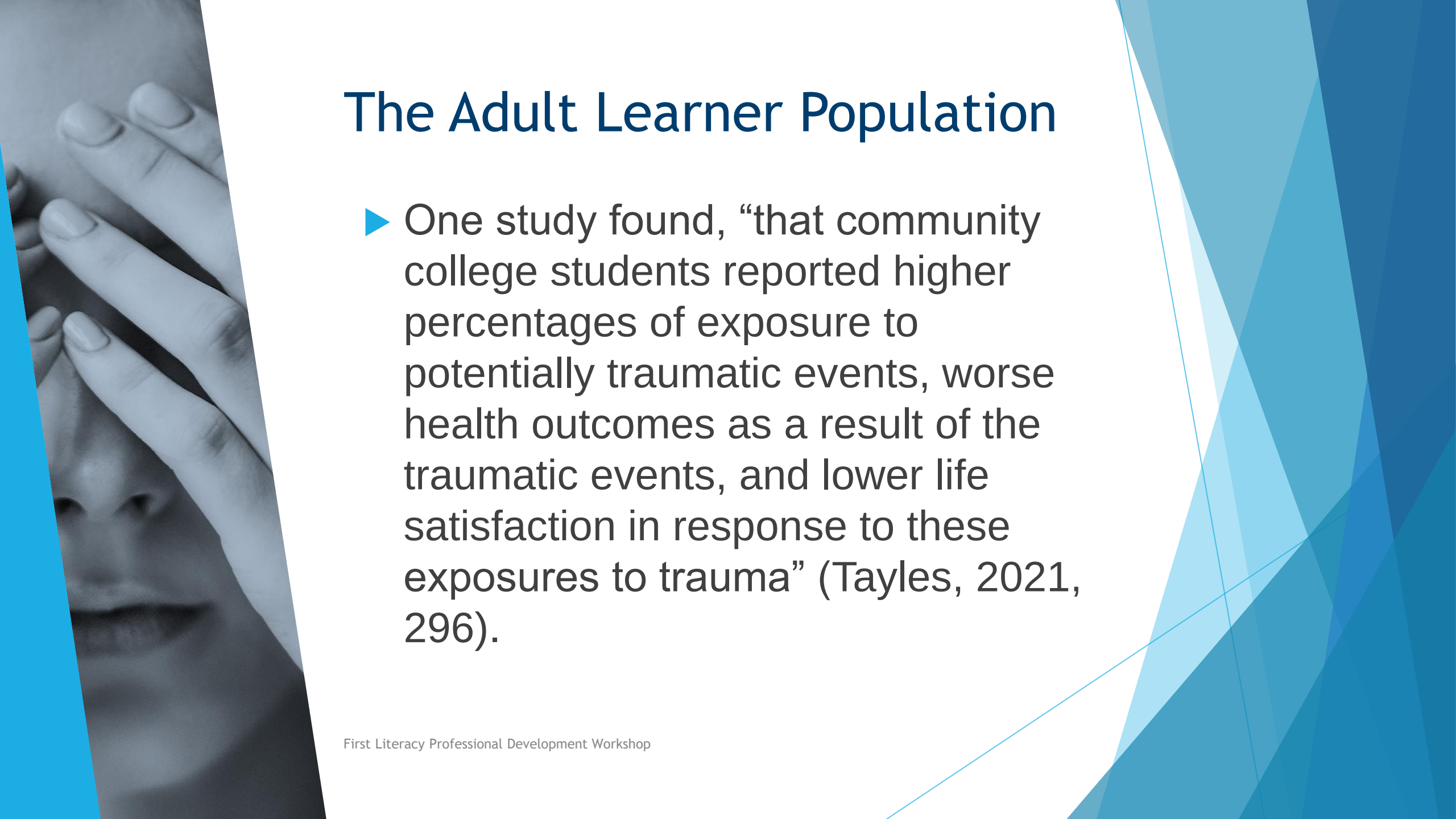
What is the Response?

- ▶ Happy
- ▶ Excited
- ▶ Nervous
- ▶ Stressed
- ▶ Content
- ▶ Curious
- ▶ Sadness
- ▶ Anxiety
- ▶ Fear
- ▶ Awkwardness



What does this tell us?

- ▶ Life is complex. We face many factors that may cause stress.
- ▶ Adults often have a variety of stressors that a younger population may not deal with directly. Example: paying a mortgage, going through a divorce, preparing for a new baby, caring for an ill parent.



The Adult Learner Population

- ▶ One study found, “that community college students reported higher percentages of exposure to potentially traumatic events, worse health outcomes as a result of the traumatic events, and lower life satisfaction in response to these exposures to trauma” (Tayles, 2021, 296).

The Workshop

Understanding Stress

Impacts of Stress

Mitigating the Impacts of Stress on Student
Performance

Questions to Consider



What is stress?



Is there such a thing as good stress?



What is a stressor?

Let's Define Stress



According to the World Health Organization, "Stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives."



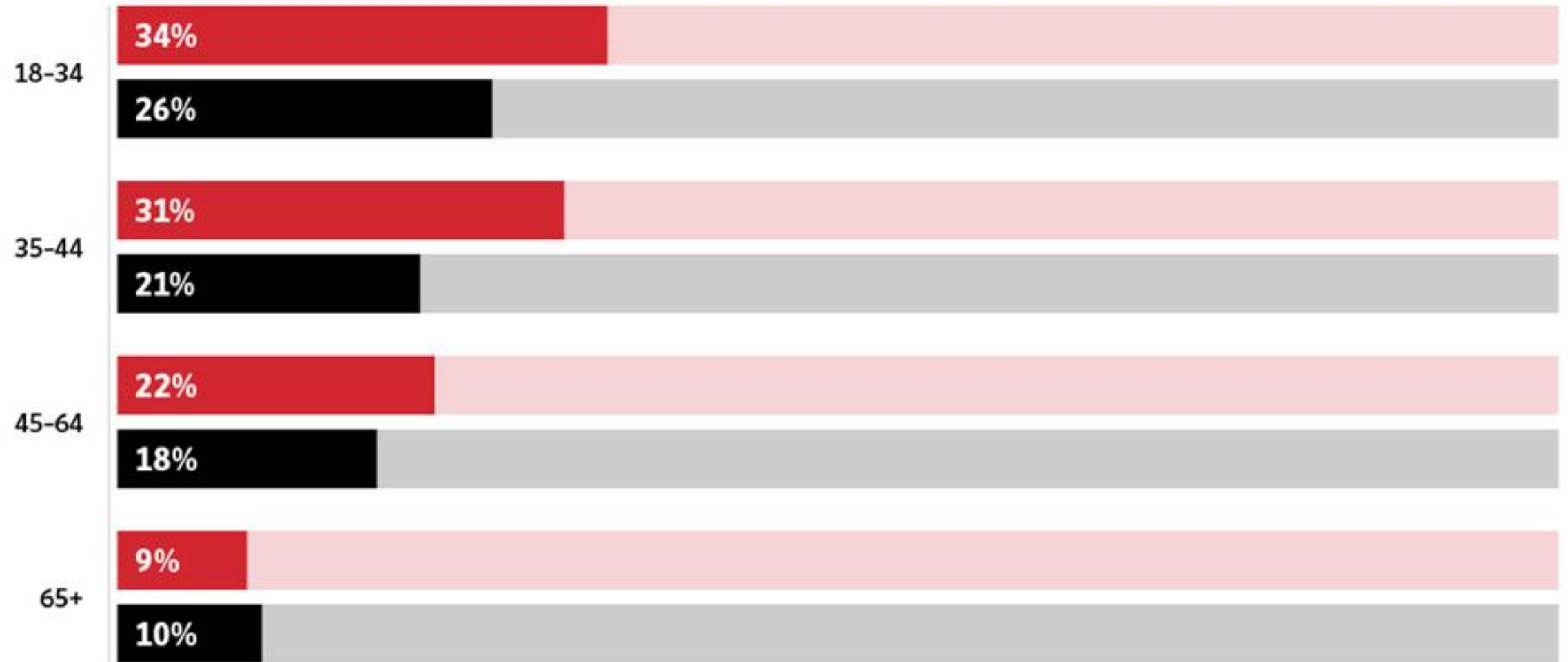
The American Psychological Association states, "Stress is a normal reaction to everyday pressures, but can become unhealthy when it upsets your day-to-day functioning. Stress involves changes affecting nearly every system of the body, influencing how people feel and behave. By causing mind-body changes, stress contributes directly to psychological and physiological disorder and disease and affects mental and physical health, reducing quality of life."

PRE- AND POST-PANDEMIC STRESS LEVEL COMPARISON BY AGE

% OF ADULTS WHO RATE THEIR AVERAGE STRESS BETWEEN EIGHT AND TEN*



■ 2023 ■ 2019



*Respondents were asked to rate their average level of stress during the past month on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means "little or no stress" and 10 means "a great deal of stress"

But wait....there is good stress. What is good stress?

It is the type of stress you feel when you are excited!

Pulse quickens

Hormones surge

Does not involve a sense of fear or threat

COMPETE IN
A GAME

RIDE A
ROLLER
COASTER

GO ON A
FIRST DATE

TRAVEL

GET A
PROMOTION

What are the impacts of these stressors?

- ▶ According to Ed Kissam and Holda Dorsey (1997) in *Dealing with Stress*:

Stress is one of the most serious threats to health and well-being which immigrants face in their daily lives. Everyone in an information-based society and economy must deal with stress. But immigrants run the risk of even higher levels of stress than people born in the U.S. -- because they have not yet learned the societal "rules of the game" of how people pursue their personal objectives, address their differences, resolve conflicts, and, ultimately, get along in the United States.

Coping with stress is a key competency for success -- at work, at home, and in dealing with the community one lives in. In the information society, everyone needs "high performance" skills, not just for the workplace and for getting ahead in a career but, also, for managing one's life and for living in tension-filled communities."

The Impacts of Stress

- ▶ What are the physical symptoms?
- ▶ Emotional and mental impacts?
- ▶ Immediate and long-term health impacts?
- ▶ What do we notice in the classroom?

Recognizing Stress



Physical: sweating, muscle tension, dry mouth, increased heartrate, clenched jaw, shaking



Emotional/Mental: racing thoughts, depression, anxiety, memory and concentraition problems



Immediate/Long-term: headache, irritable bowel, acne, chest pain; panic attacks, heartburn, sleep deprivation; high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity

Why is this important?

Recognize symptoms in our students:

- Stress impacts student performance in the classroom.
- A lack of attention may not be a sign of disrespect.

Knowledge is Power:

- We can use what we know to guide a conversation with our students.

Small Group Discussion



TALK WITHIN A SMALL GROUP ABOUT HOW THE VARIED SYMPTOMS OF STRESS MAY IMPACT A STUDENT IN DAILY LIFE.



CREATE A LIST OF EXAMPLES OF STUDENT PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS THAT MAY BE A RESULT OF UNMITIGATED STRESS.

What Do We See?

- ▶ Attendance problems: frequently tardy, absences, leaving early
- ▶ Memory or retention issues
- ▶ Lack of attention
- ▶ Minimal desire to engage
- ▶ Low test scores or inconsistent scores
- ▶ Test anxiety
- ▶ Behavioral issues

What have studies shown?

Adult students may or may not be aware of how stress and/or poor health impacts his/her academic performance. One study assessed learners' awareness of stress and reports that:

"students who said stress affected their performance reported more stress, less coping self-efficacy, less resilience, and less social support than those who said stress did not affect their performance, and those who said they did not experience stress; similarly, students who said that they had stress but that it did not affect their performance reported more stress, less coping self-efficacy, lower resilience, and less social support than those who said they did not experience stress" (Frazier et al., 2019, 5).

Ultimately, stress had an impact on these students' academic performance whether or not the student recognized this impact on performance or not.

Providing instruction to support learners' understanding and mitigation of stress and its impacts on academic performance is a worthwhile endeavor.

There are several options:

What you can do as an educator:

- ▶ Identify the individual learning style of your students: visual, auditory, read/write, kinesthetic.
- ▶ Differentiate instruction.
- ▶ Comfort in the classroom.
- ▶ Include a unit on stress in your curriculum.
- ▶ Incorporate stress management techniques in your class.
- ▶ Communicate with your students.
- ▶ Continue your professional development.

What a student can do for him or herself:

- ▶ Utilize a personal stress assessment.
- ▶ Examine and try different stress management techniques.
- ▶ Develop S.M.A.R.T. goals.
- ▶ Access resources.

Our Role as Educators



We can first address stressors in the classroom.

Working with Different Learning Styles



Visual

Offer these students images to compliment a text
Diagrams, charts, tables
Videos
use color coding



Auditory

Text to speech on the computer
Audiobooks
Music
Repetition
Mnemonic devices



Read and Write

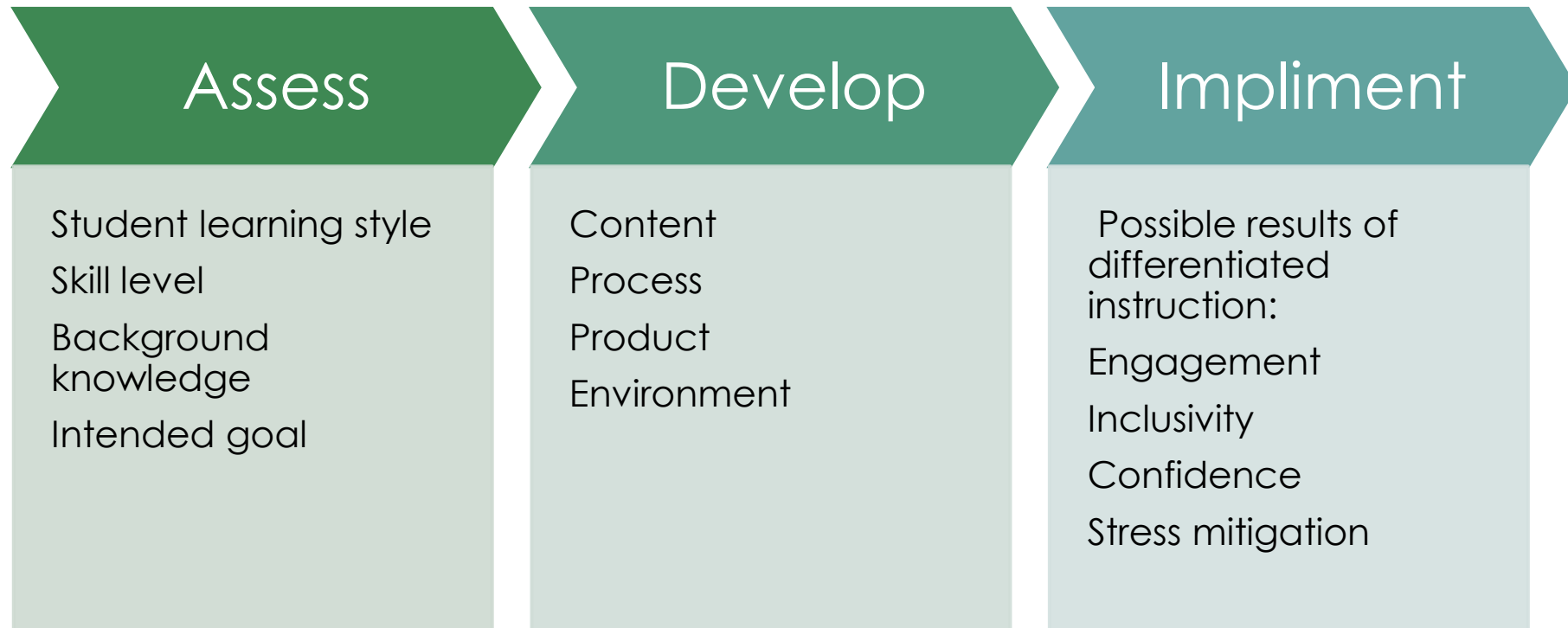
Reading / writing summaries
Flashcards
Visuals with ample text



Kinesthetic

Role playing
Experiments / projects
Field trips
Movement & breaks

Differentiated Instruction



Increasing the Comfort Level in the Classroom

► Provide multiple avenues for inquiry:

- Raise hand
- Question box
- Email
- Google Classroom
- Group generated questions

• Get students to know each other:

- "I agree" or "Me too" game
- Human Bingo
- Scavenger Hunt

Where does a unit about stress fit into the curriculum?

A unit on stress is cross-disciplinary and may be added in to an existing unit such as a reading unit or a science unit.

What can students expect from a unit on stress:

- ✓ Vocabulary expansion
- ✓ Develop reading skills & use context clues
- ✓ Writing
- ✓ Expand on biology or health topics
- ✓ Analyze visual data
- ✓ Problem solving
- ✓ Research scientific studies

Stress Management Unit

Stress Management	<u>Prioritized CCRS</u>	<u>Formative Assessments</u>	<u>Evaluation Tools</u>
	SL.9-10.1: Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. (Application: "Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions," (including one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led..."	Learners will participate in class discussions, group conversations, and peer to peer talks. Learners will also produce responses to task cards and an exit ticket. Learners will use an evaluation tool to measure his/her level of stress pre and post instruction of this unit.	Rubric for class participation and group work expectations. Stress Assessment Self-Evaluation Informal evaluation of comprehension of new terms and concepts. Task card

Stress Management Unit

	<u>Prioritized CCRS</u>	<u>Summative Assessments</u>	<u>Evaluation Tools</u>
Stress Management Continued	RI 11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) to address a question or solve a problem.	Learners will produce a written persuasive essay regarding the benefits of stress management skills. Learners will demonstrate an ability to comply with the writing prompt requirements and an understanding of the unit content.	BPS writing rubric for grade 8 will be used for the persuasive writing .

Resources Utilized in a Unit on Stress Management

- ❖ YouTube Video: "How Stress Affects Your Body and Mind." By Braive, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZTc8_FwHGM
- ❖ Perceived Stress Scale Tool from the State of New Hampshire Employee Assistance Program <https://das.nh.gov/wellness/docs/percieved%20stress%20scale.pdf>
- ❖ Prezi Presentation: "Stress Management." By Melissa Odira, 2018. <https://prezi.com/kxxeigjv40ur/stress-management/>
- ❖ Additional Resource for Research: https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/mind_brain/stress/

Beyond Academic Gains

Students will be more likely to manage stress using the knowledge gained from the lessons, such as:

- ▶ able to identify at least five indicators that confirm one is experiencing stress
- ▶ able to identify five ways that stress can negatively impact one's health
- ▶ able to diagnose personal level of stress
- ▶ able to write about three different stress management techniques: describe the technique, discuss how to perform the technique, and discuss the potential benefits of using the technique





What are some ways you try to manage your own stress?

- ▶ Type examples in the chat or raise your hand to add to the conversation.

Stress Management in the Classroom

Option	Timing	Description	Purpose
Positive Affirmation/Motivation	Opener	Play a YouTube video, or audio from another source, that states positive affirmation phrases and motivational content	Start class with positivity Shift attitudes Motivate Build confidence
Journaling	Start/End	Have students write in a journal for ten minutes or more. Free write or provide a focus such as gratitude.	Increase mindfulness Healthy self-talk Gratitude = positivity
Meditation	Any	Provide an opportunity for a mental break from stimulation.	Useful for kinesthetic learners Re-focus
Breathing	Any / Before an exam	Deep breathing for a period of no longer than five minutes	Calm the nerves Provides energy Manage anxiety
Move	Any	Take a walk, outside if weather permits. Stretch in place.	Improves circulation Occupies the mind Relieves stress

The Most Important Thing: COMMUNICATE

- ▶ Listen to learn.
- ▶ What are your students' stressors?
- ▶ Ask students about his/her life. Listen to what they are willing to disclose and learn about their lives.
- ▶ Never make a student talk about things he/she does not want to talk about, but always offer support.
- ▶ Offer resources when possible.



What can you do in your classroom?

Example Scenario

- ▶ You have a classroom with 25 students.
- ▶ You are aware that six students are preparing to go to college.
- ▶ Several students have test anxiety.
- ▶ There are eight students with children.
- ▶ One student is caring for elderly parents in his home.
- ▶ These students have identified their learning styles: five auditory learners, eight reading/writing learners, seven visual learners, and five kinesthetic learners.

How can you mitigate the impacts of some potential stressors?

- ▶ Work with a partner and discuss what stressors may exist for these students.
- ▶ Identify ways these stressors may impact the students' performance.
- ▶ Determine what in-class methods may work well for these students.

Ask yourself: What changes can I make within my class to mitigate the impacts of stress on the academic performance of these students?

Help Outside of the Classroom: Provide students with the tools to self-manage stress

- ▶ Provide students with a hardcopy of the Perceived Stress Scale Tool.
 - ▶ Go over the instructions on the document so that the student understands how to perform a personal stress assessment.
 - ▶ Offer the student the opportunity to share the results. If the student does not want to share the results you may make resources accessible.
- Let's take a few moments for each of us to perform a personal stress assessment.
 - The assessment can be found at this link: <https://das.nh.gov/wellness/docs/percieved%20stress%20scale.pdf>
 - Let's discuss our findings: Did you expect the results you received? Are you more or less "stressed" than you thought?

Suggest That Students Examine and Try Different Stress Management Techniques

More Intensive

Exercise

Alter Diet

Get More Sleep

Less Intensive

Meditate

Read or Write

Creative Activity

Simplest

Breathing

Aromatherapy

Positive Self-Talk

Suggest the Use of S.M.A.R.T. Goals

Specific:

- Focus in on one main objective.

Measurable:

- Identify how you will know when you have achieved your goal.

Action-Oriented / Achievable / Attainable

- Do you have the time and resources to accomplish this?

Realistic / Relevant

- Does this goal relate to your overall life goals?

Time-bound

- Have a deadline and include benchmarks for steps.

Benefits of Setting S.M.A.R.T. Goals

- ▶ Creates a sense of purpose
- ▶ Defines a concrete strategy and implementation timeline
- ▶ Reference Tool: a reminder
- ▶ Accountability
- ▶ The proof it works:

According to Michigan State University, "The results of [one] study showed that 76 percent of participants who wrote down their goals, actions and provided weekly progress to a friend successfully achieved their goals. This result is 33 percent higher than those participants with unwritten goals, with a success rate of only 43 percent of goals achieved. This study shows the value of taking the time to write down your goals, create an action plan and develop a system of support to hold yourself accountable for achieving your goals."

76% success rate vs. 43% success rate!

Offer Resources

This Stress Management Workbook offered by Penn State may be used in class during a unit on stress; or it may be offered as a personal tool for self-help. The workbook may be found at the link below.

<https://studentaffairs.psu.edu/sites/default/files/Accessible-online-version-Manage-Stress-Workbook-PennState-final-2i5sewu.pdf>



Resources for Independent Learning

- ▶ Google Classroom
- ▶ Khan Academy
- ▶ Workforce Atlas- Career Assessment
- ▶ Pro-Literacy: Pitney Bowes Workforce Collection
- ▶ Boston Public Library free resources for e-card holders
 - Press Reader- Newspapers (can be translated)
 - Mango Languages
 - Transparent Languages
 - Learning Express Library- Micro Lessons, Grammar, Vocabulary, Career Exam Practice Test
 - LinkedIn Learning
 - Skill Mill
 - Google Certificates

Additional Resource Options

- Art as therapy
- Local counseling centers
- Local groups that meet regularly



Adult Coloring Book

Stress Relieving *Patterns*

Blue Star

Resources to Manage Specific Stressors

- ▶ Struggles with childcare
 - ▶ Local daycare programs or low-cost/no-cost youth programs
- ▶ Struggles with food and groceries
 - ▶ Information to access local food pantries or financial support programs (WIC)
- ▶ Struggles with staying warm in the winter
 - ▶ Local resources for free or reduced cost home heating oil

There are many resources available in your area!

Credits

- Kissam, Ed, & Dorsey, Holda. (1997). *Dealing with stress*. California State University.
- Purdue University. (2020). *Manage Stress Workbook*.
<https://www.purdue.edu/recwell/pdf/wellness/manage-stress-workbook.pdf>
- State of New Hampshire Employee Assistance Program. (1983). *Perceived Stress Scale*.
<https://www.das.nh.gov/wellness/docs/percieved%20stress%20scale.pdf>
- Tayles, Melissa. (2021). Trauma-informed writing pedagogy: Ways to support student writers affected by trauma and traumatic stress. *Teaching English in the Two Year College*, 48(3), 295-313.
- Traugott, John. (2014). *Achieving Your Goals: An Evidence Based Approach*. Michigan State University Extension.
- <https://www.apa.org/topics/stress>
- <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/stress>
- <https://prezi.com/kxxeigjv40ur/stress-management/>



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Insert evaluation link

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