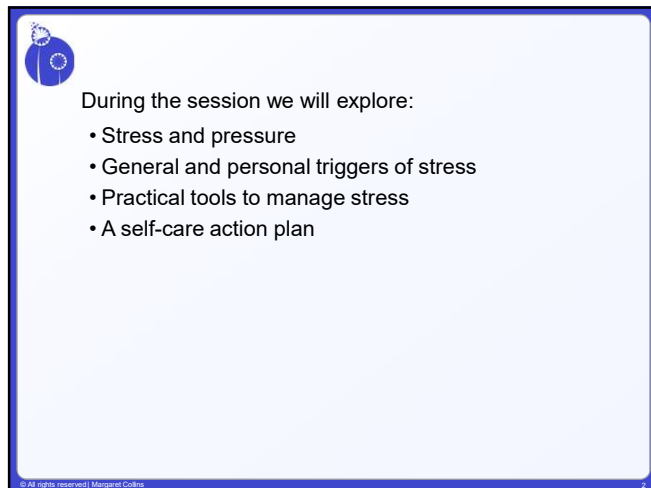




Managing Pressure Positively Stress Busting!

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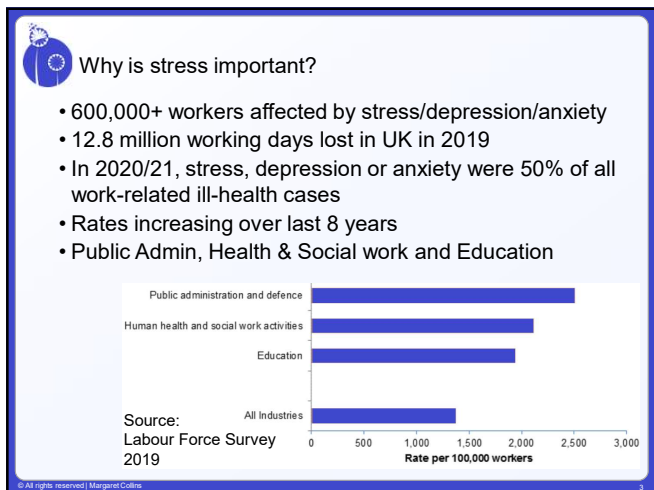
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During the session we will explore:

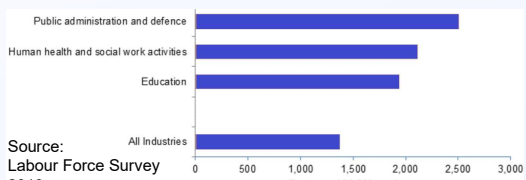
- Stress and pressure
- General and personal triggers of stress
- Practical tools to manage stress
- A self-care action plan

2



Why is stress important?

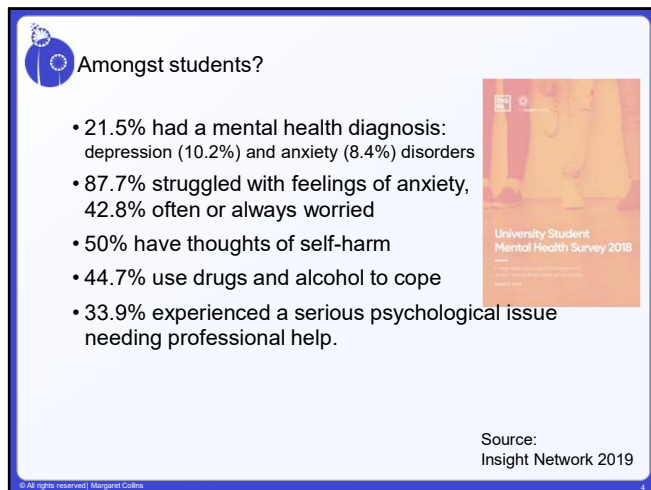
- 600,000+ workers affected by stress/depression/anxiety
- 12.8 million working days lost in UK in 2019
- In 2020/21, stress, depression or anxiety were 50% of all work-related ill-health cases
- Rates increasing over last 8 years
- Public Admin, Health & Social work and Education



Sector	Rate per 100,000 workers
Public administration and defence	~2,500
Human health and social work activities	~2,200
Education	~2,000
All Industries	~1,500

Source: Labour Force Survey 2019

3



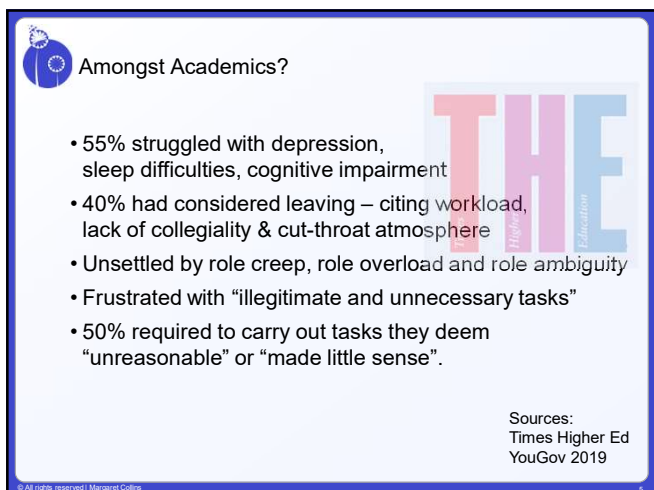
Amongst students?

- 21.5% had a mental health diagnosis: depression (10.2%) and anxiety (8.4%) disorders
- 87.7% struggled with feelings of anxiety, 42.8% often or always worried
- 50% have thoughts of self-harm
- 44.7% use drugs and alcohol to cope
- 33.9% experienced a serious psychological issue needing professional help.



Source: Insight Network 2019

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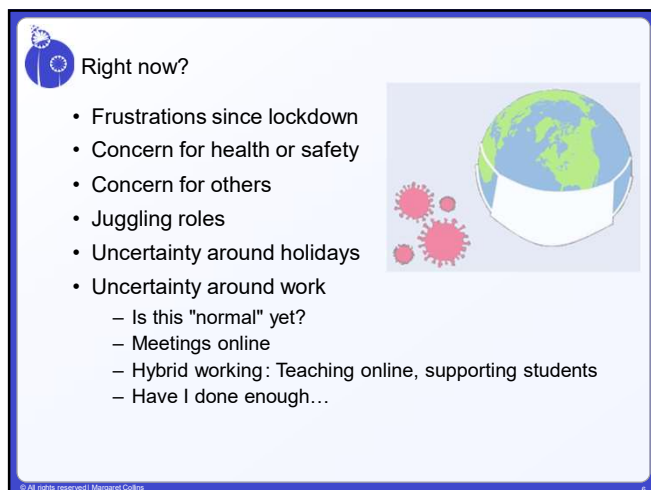


Amongst Academics?

- 55% struggled with depression, sleep difficulties, cognitive impairment
- 40% had considered leaving – citing workload, lack of collegiality & cut-throat atmosphere
- Unsettled by role creep, role overload and role ambiguity
- Frustrated with “illegitimate and unnecessary tasks”
- 50% required to carry out tasks they deem “unreasonable” or “made little sense”.

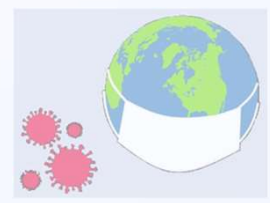
Sources: Times Higher Ed YouGov 2019

5



Right now?

- Frustrations since lockdown
- Concern for health or safety
- Concern for others
- Juggling roles
- Uncertainty around holidays
- Uncertainty around work
 - Is this “normal” yet?
 - Meetings online
 - Hybrid working: Teaching online, supporting students
 - Have I done enough...



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Stress and anxiety are not rare
They need not define you
They can be effectively managed

Worrying doesn't take away
tomorrow's troubles.
It steals today's peace

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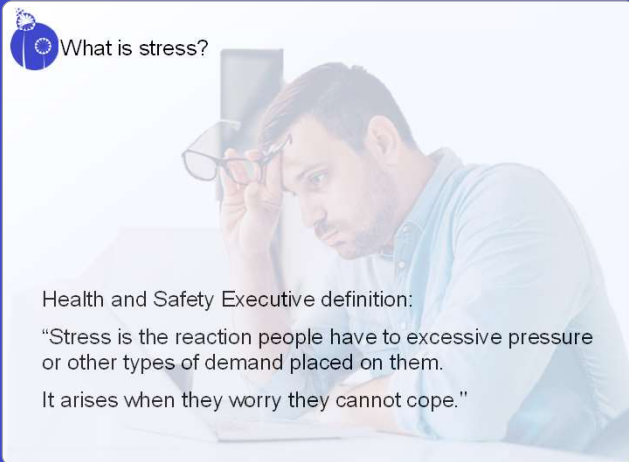
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What is stress?

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What is stress?

Health and Safety Executive definition:
"Stress is the reaction people have to excessive pressure
or other types of demand placed on them.
It arises when they worry they cannot cope."

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The biology of stress: "fight – flight – freeze"

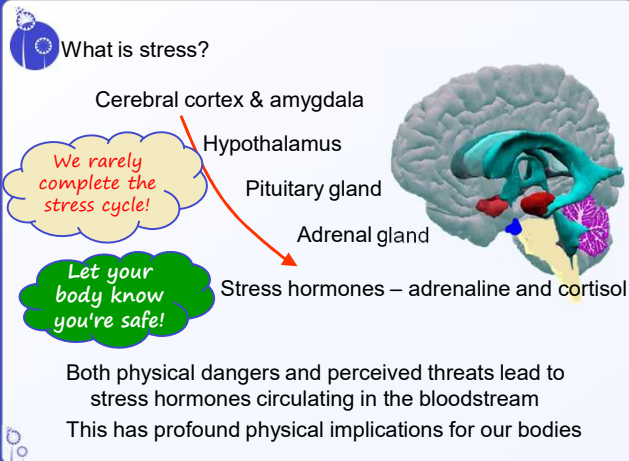
A specific focus,
trigger or threat

A place of safety
or security

Sometimes we don't run or fight, we simply freeze...

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What is stress?

Cerebral cortex & amygdala
Hypothalamus
Pituitary gland
Adrenal gland

We rarely complete the stress cycle!

Let your body know you're safe!

Stress hormones – adrenaline and cortisol

Both physical dangers and perceived threats lead to stress hormones circulating in the bloodstream
This has profound physical implications for our bodies

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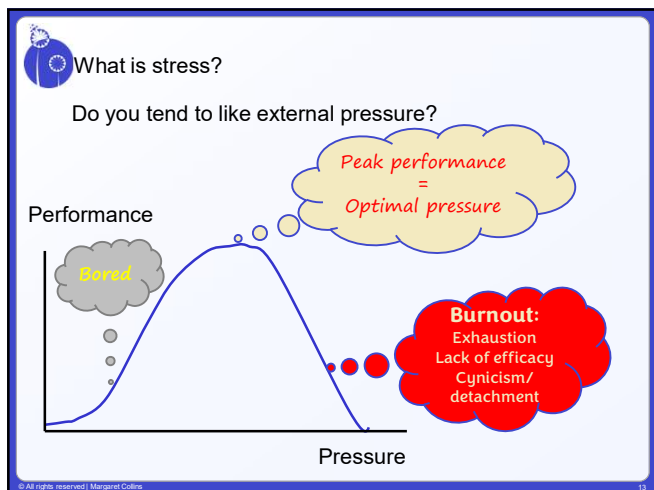
Stress and Pressure

It's what you hold
(the stressor)
and how you hold it
(the stress!)

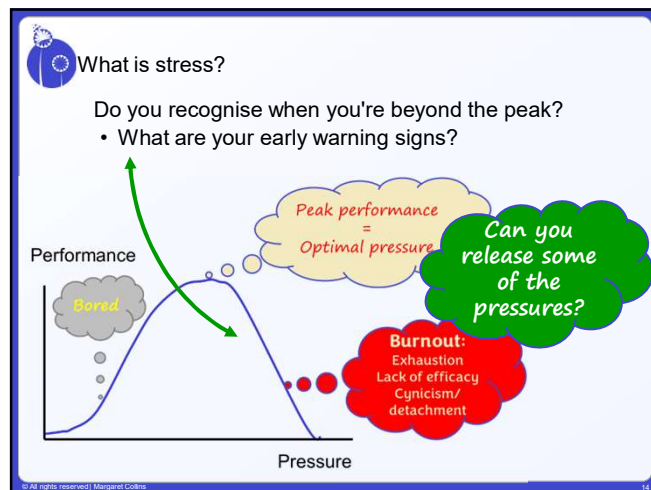
Deal with both!

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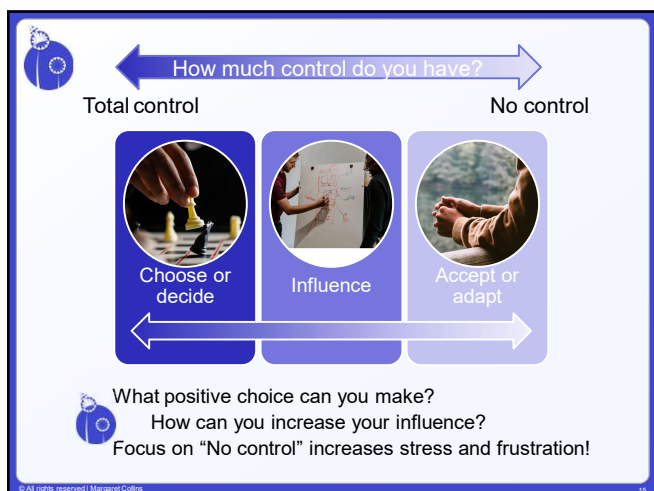
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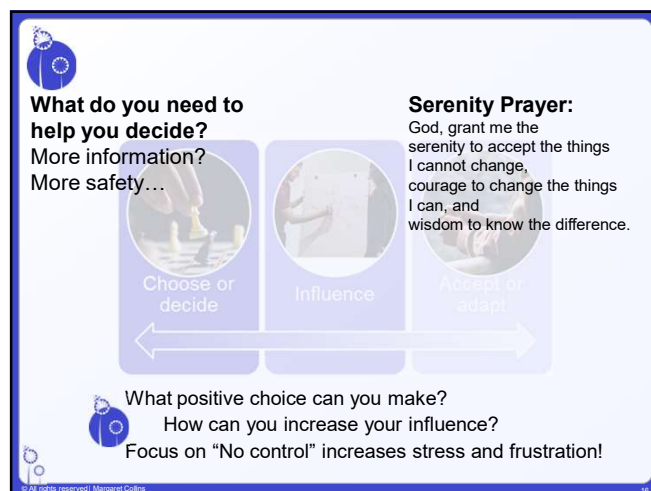
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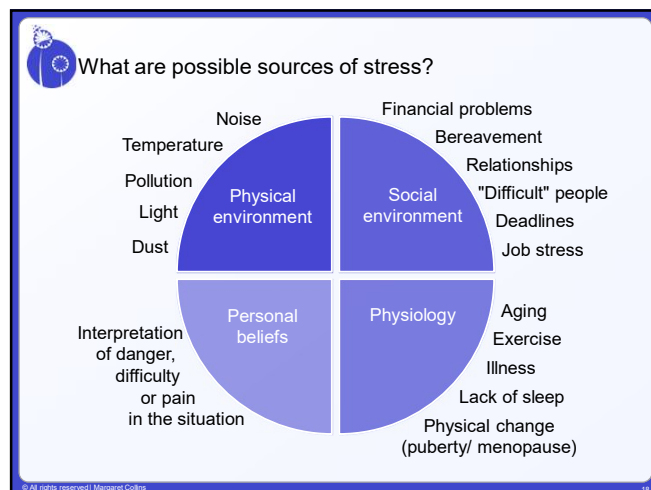
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 Possible sources of stress at work

- **Demands:** do you believe you can cope?
- **Control:** do you have a say over how you do your work?
- **Relationships:** you're not subject to unacceptable behaviour
- **Change:** can you comment on organisational changes?
- **Role:** do you understand your role and responsibilities?
- **Support:** do you get support from colleagues and superiors

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 "Any idiot can face a crisis.
It's this day-to-day living that wears you out." (Anton Chekov)

Misplacing keys	Arguments	Traffic jams
Time pressures	Office Politics	Gossip
Lack of sleep	Bureaucracy	Job dissatisfaction
Waiting	Loneliness	Queuing
Relatives/children	Inconsiderate people	Difficult neighbours
Car breakdown	Meal Preparation	Shopping...

- Personal health and safety – selves and family
- Work pressures
- Security, finance and timelines

 What are my sources of stress?

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 Prolonged exposure to stress results in...?



Confusion

Anxiety

Dizziness

Teeth grinding

Stomach, gut or digestive issues

Changes in eating or drinking

Aches, joint or muscle pain

Illness
Cancer

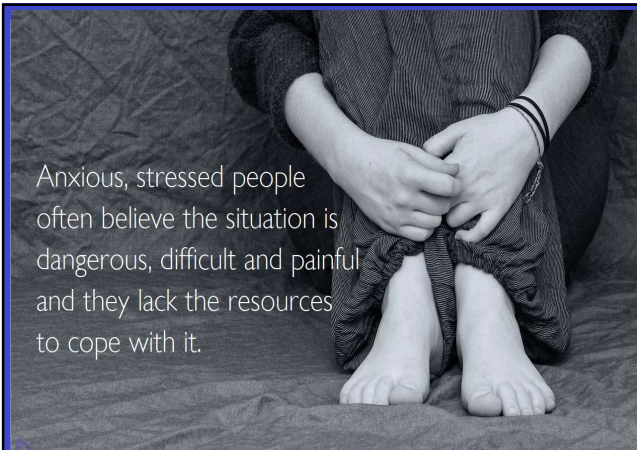
Fatigue
Sleep problems

Chest pain
Heart problems
High blood pressure

Mood changes
Anger

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Anxious, stressed people often believe the situation is dangerous, difficult and painful and they lack the resources to cope with it.

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Assessing risk

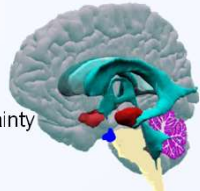


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 Assessing risk

Our amygdala works like radar...
Ever vigilant
Registering novelty, ambiguity, uncertainty
Asking "How important is this for me?"



Those hormone changes get us ready for action:

- Fight or flee?
- Engage or avoid?

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This is what uncertainty feels like!

Our thinking brain, our cerebral cortex, tries to make sense of these feelings, what do they mean?

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Our hormones prime our body:

- Am I ready and determined to tackle this task?
- Am I in danger, anxious or ready to run?!

We can choose how we give meaning to these feelings!

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Is there a different perspective?

I am stressed because I haven't asked for advice

I am stressed because I hate my job

I am stressed because I say "yes" without thinking

I am stressed because I'm still learning about my new role

Which view makes it easier for you to move forward?

27

Is there a different perspective?

I am stressed because I don't focus on a chosen task

I am stressed because I can't do my chosen work

I am stressed because I'm reading too much news & social media

I am stressed because I believe this is "forever"...

Which view makes it easier for you to take action?

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Is there a different perspective?

I am stressed because I believe it needs to be perfect

I am stressed because I don't have any help

I am stressed because I'm prioritizing everything as "urgent and important"

I am stressed because I'm trying to do it all myself

I'm the victim

I have to be the hero

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A different perspective - reframing

Helpful reframes might include:

"This is just overwhelming" to
"I'm going to break it down and take the first step"

"I'm completely exhausted" to
"I'll take a rest and come back to this tomorrow"

"I should write that report" to
"I could write that report or ... choose a different priority"

"The kids won't leave me alone" to
"I choose to care for kids who love, trust and need me"

What would help you most?

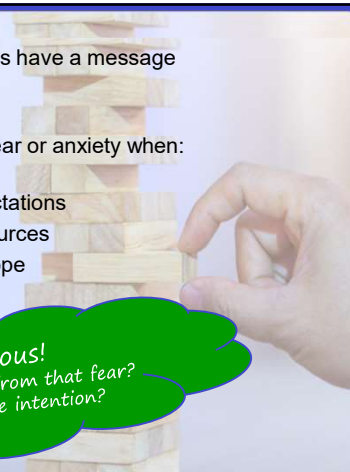
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Fear and other emotions have a message

We might experience fear or anxiety when:

- “reality” turns out different to our expectations
- we fear we lack resources
- we feel we cannot cope or have no control

Get curious!
What can we learn from that fear?
Is there a positive intention?



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Stress and Needs



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What do people do to relieve stress?

Learn to relax

Take up a hobby Learn to say no Be assertive

Learn yoga Be more realistic Listen to music

Talk with friends Go for a walk Be more active

Focus on what can be done Ask for help Take more breaks

Better time management Talk with Supervisor

What things will you do?

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We often feel stress when our needs are not met

A need – without this we are not OK

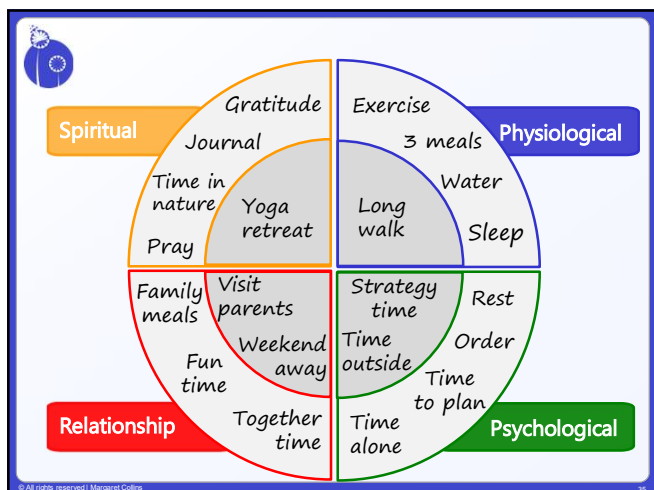
Getting needs met moves you from grumpy to OK...

What, specifically, do you need?

- Health: food, water, sleep, sunlight
- Activity: exercise, walking, running, dance
- Company: friends, family, partner
- Solitude: time alone, meditation, no social media
- Stimulation: learning, growth, challenge...

What do you need in order to be OK?

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What do you think?

If getting needs met moves you from grumpy to OK

- What do you need to be OK?
- What needs are not being met?
- What do you need to change?

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 Building resilience...

We may not be able to change or avoid external sources of stress, but we can learn to bounce back!

Simple and effective elements:

- Access to resources – personal & professional
- Sleep – you'll probably need more than you think!
- Exercise
- Support network – personal & professional

Remember to complete your stress cycle – you're safe now!

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 Building resilience...

1) Find something you can control or influence

Please, don't be a control freak but find something simple, satisfying and meaningful for you...

- complete a task, tidy your room, make a cup of tea
- try to avoid controlling other people!

What can you control?

- Your schedule – when you eat, work, play
- Your meals– what you cook/eat
- What you choose to do or focus on
- When you read social media/news...

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 Building resilience...

2) Focus on something good – be grateful – find meaning

We easily see things that are not working and overlook the good stuff

Remind yourself about the bits that do work:

- I have running water and a roof over my head
- I have a job/food/family/health
- The reason I'm doing this is...
- At least the internet works, the garden looks nice, the dog still loves me!

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 Building resilience...

3) Challenge negative thoughts

When we "catastrophise" we tend to

- blame ourselves
- assume the worst
- assume it will last forever and affect everything

Really??!!! Are you sure that's absolutely true?

What else contributed?

How bad is it?

What have you learned?

What can you do to make things better?

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 Building resilience...

4) Reach out to others

When times are tough, we may isolate ourselves...

- Reach out to others
 - who is in your community – personal/professional?
 - Can you schedule regular/as needed meetings?
- Ask for help – what would help, what do you need?
- Share the work – don't try to do everything yourself!

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 Building resilience...

5) Schedule time to "worry properly" – limit stressors

- Make an appointment with yourself and at the appointed time, worry! Feel free, indulge yourself but only for a short appointment!
- If reading news or social media is causing stress – limit your access or reading times
- When your time is up, stop and get on with the rest of your life/work.

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 Building resilience...

6) Choose your focus

Don't allow yourself to "wallow" in worry
– choose to engage fully in something different.

Focus on a task, on being grateful, being at rest...

When you notice you're thinking about "it" again, simply remember to return your focus once more to your chosen activity

 Will a mindfulness practice work for you?

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 Building your resilience...

What will help build your resilience?

What version of this would help you?

1. Taking control or using influence
2. Focus on the good – gratitude
3. Challenging negative thoughts
4. Reach out to others
5. Schedule time to worry – limit access to stressors
6. Develop a mindfulness practice?

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Mind and Body

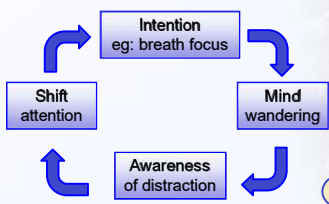


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 Mindful awareness or meditation

Begins with setting an intention to focus, typically an awareness of our breath or breathing, of our body or thoughts...



Develop awareness with curiosity, without judgment

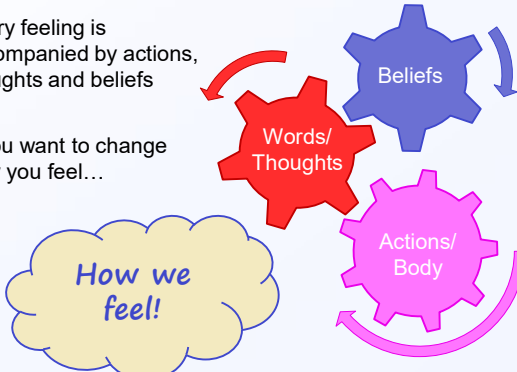
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 It's all in the mind...

Every feeling is accompanied by actions, thoughts and beliefs

If you want to change how you feel...



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 Mind – Body link

When things are really going well for you...

- What are you thinking?
- What are you doing?
- What is happening around you?

When things are not going well, what do you need to change?

How we feel!



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 Mind – Body link

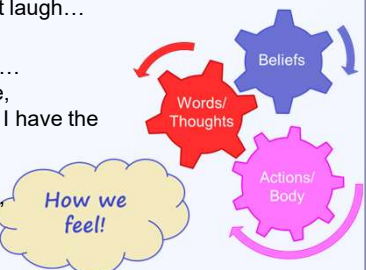
When I feel stressed...

- I can't cope, it's too much, I just can't do it all
- I'm tense, not sleeping, drinking caffeine
- I don't rest, relax, I don't laugh...

When I'm performing well...

- It's tough but I can cope, I'm up to the challenge, I have the resources I need
- I'm feeling energised
- I take time to rest, relax, to laugh with friends...

How we feel!



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 A different way to look at stress

Dr Kelly McGonigal – health psychologist...

National survey, 30,000 adults in the USA asked:

- How much stress have you experienced in the last year?
- Do you believe that stress is bad for your health?
- Who died over 8 years from national death records...

43% increased risk of dying –

- If you had a lot of stress in the last year AND
- If you believed that stress was bad for you

183,000 adults died from the belief that stress is bad for you!

How to make stress your friend
https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend?language=en

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 A different way to look at stress

National survey, 30,000 adults in the USA asked:

- How much stress have you experienced in the last year
- How much time have you spent helping friends, neighbours or community?
- Who died over next 5 years from national death records

30% increased risk of dying for every major stressful life event
 Except for people who cared for others – zero increased risk

Caring created resilience!

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 Knowing what we have discussed...

- Stress is personal
- Our reactions/beliefs make stress better or worse
- Meeting our needs reduces our stress
- We can change the way we feel
- We can choose different actions in & out of work...

My Self-Care Action Plan is...



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 During the session we explored:

- The relationship between stress and pressure
- General and personal triggers of stress
- Practical tools to manage stress
- A self-care action plan.

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