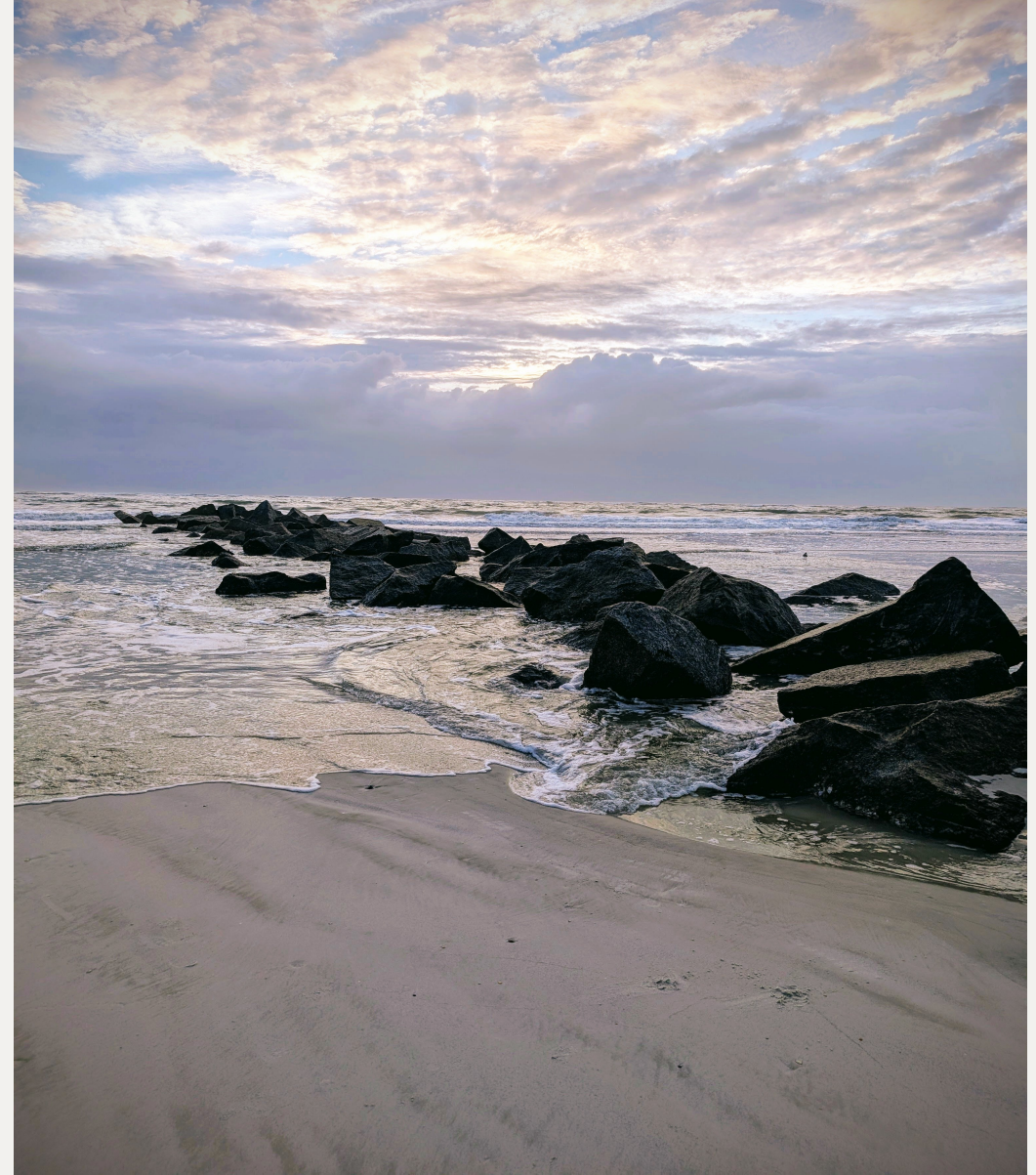


Self Care for Recovery Professionals

Katie Niebuhr, MS, ACSM EP-C

October 21st 2025



Physical Self Care

- Physical self care: practice that prioritizes physical health and well-being including but not limited to:
 - Intentional movement, stress management, exercise/physical activity, nutrition and body care.

While mental and physical self-care are important today, we will be practicing physical self-care

Objectives



Learn and understand the impact of stress on the body and the mind



Understand the signs of stress in **YOUR** body



Learn methods to control and reduce stress



Discuss how to implement stress reduction techniques

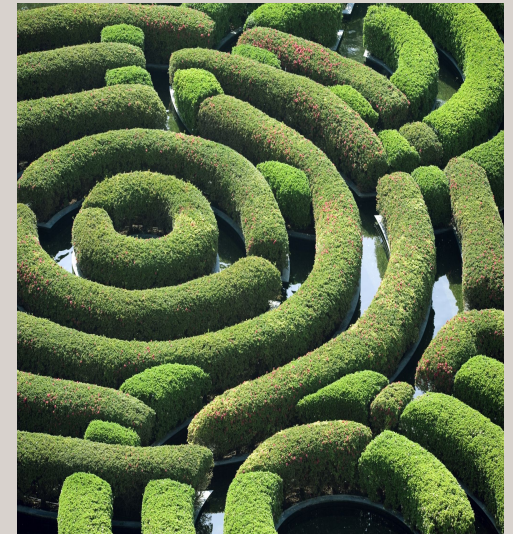


Resources

What is stress?

Acute Stress = an immediate reaction to a perceived (or real) threat, scare or challenge.

Chronic Stress = subtle reaction that can often go unnoticed and can tend to linger and accumulate.



Signs of Stress

Physiological Signs

- Increase heart rate and respiratory rate
- Changes in digestion (bloating, indigestion, constipation, diarrhea, etc.)
- Muscle tension, headaches, fatigue, etc.

Emotional Signs

- Irritability
- Loss of focus
- Anxiety



Burnout

An ongoing state of feeling overwhelmed, emotionally, and physically drained due to stress

- Usually tied to one's work or career
- Tied to chronic stress
- Can also be due to family or personal stress

Compassion Fatigue

An ongoing state of feeling overwhelmed along with a secondary traumatic stress

- Often tied to direct service and/or care positions (ex. SAPs, Guidance Counselors, Peer Counselors, etc.)

Burnout & Compassion Fatigue

Both Burnout and Compassion Fatigue are a result of CHRONIC STRESS



Signs of Burnout & Compassion Fatigue

Burnout

- Feelings of apathy, loss of interest
- Change in sleep habits
- Change in appetite

Compassion Fatigue

- Feelings of impatience
- Mood changes
- Feeling withdrawn
- Insomnia
- Changes in appetite

Messengers of Stress



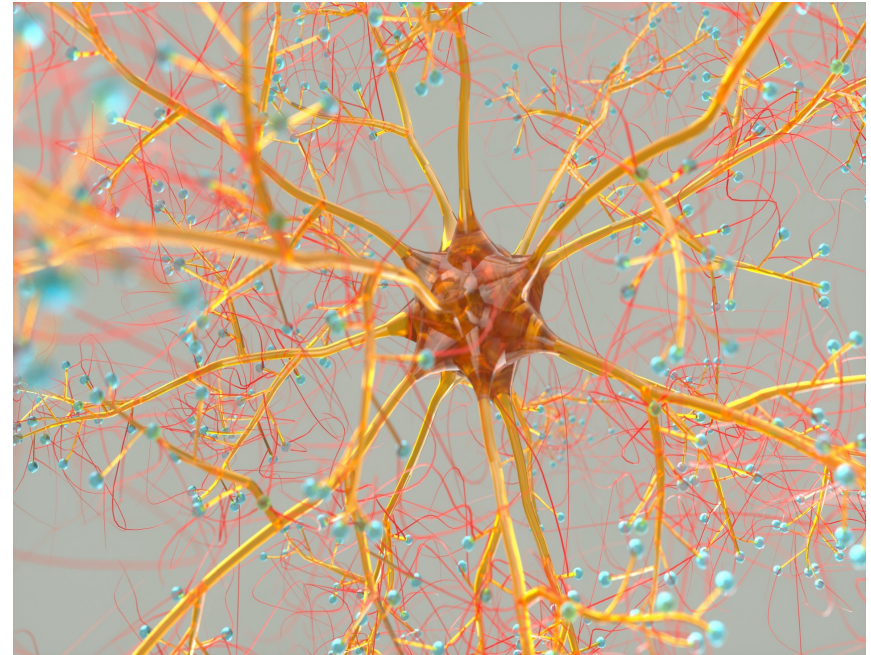
Adrenaline – released during stress



Serotonin – aids in mood, sleep and digestion



Dopamine – “the happy hormone”
motivation and mood



Stress Management

Understand your individual signs of stress

Find methods that work best for you to help manage stress

Make a plan to take control!



Mindfulness is your best defense!

- **Mindfulness** = "...moment to moment awareness of one's experience without judgement." (Davis, D.M. & Hayes, J.A. 2012)
 - State of awareness
 - In specific or present moment
 - Can improve focus, memory and help reduce depression and anxiety

Being mindful allows you to better understand your body and its signals



Breathwork



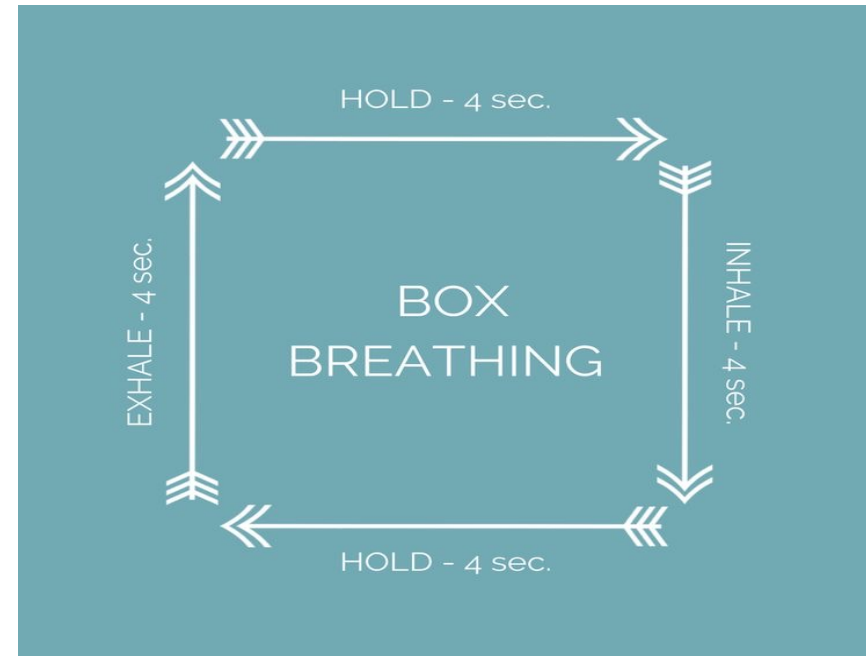
Can help regulate your body when you are feeling stressed



Help you better control the physiological responses to stress

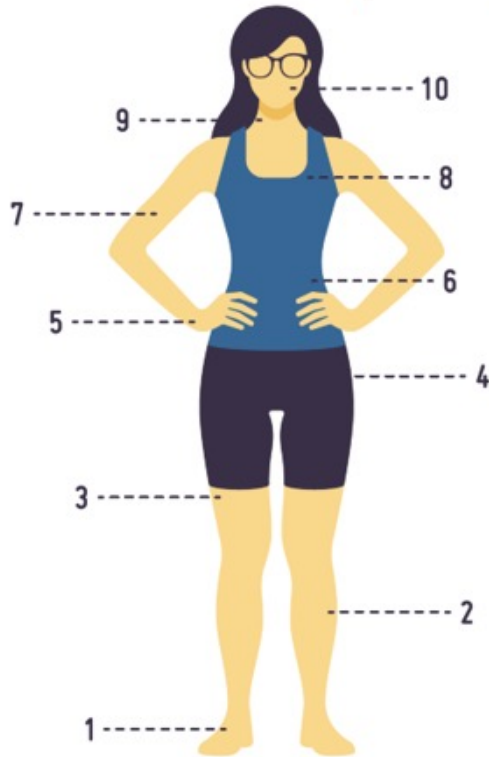


There is a breath work for everyone!



RELAX YOUR MUSCLES GRADUALLY TO RELIEVE STRESS THIS MONDAY

Progressive muscle relaxation helps you ease tension in every part of your body, one muscle group at a time. Tense up each muscle group for a few seconds, then release the tension and feel yourself let go.



DE STRESS
MONDAY

Body Scan/PMR

- **Body Scan** – a form of mindfulness and meditation focusing on a specific part of your body and working through (head to toes or toes to head)
- **Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR)** – a form of meditation similar to a body scan add tension to specific muscles and then releasing
 - Causes the activation of the parasympathetic system (rest and digest) and reduces cortisol

Find Your Glimmer!

The opposite of a “trigger”
coined Deb Dana, LCSW

Find those moments of joy
during the day that take you
by surprise

Glimmers can help you feel
grounded, relax and even
release dopamine!



Practice and Implementation

- 
- Stress management exercises are best done as **part of a routine** – pair a mindful practice with a daily task!
 - **Spread the word!** – Share your practice and exercises with others to keep yourself accountable and inspire!
 - **Lead by example** – create time and space for yourself – this will not only help you prioritize yourself but be an influence on those around you!
 - **Cultivate opportunities** for practice – for yourself and your community!

Resources



Curriculum: Headspace www.headspace.com ;The Monday Campaign www.healthymonday.com; [Nurturing vs. Depleting Activity Worksheet](#)



Self Compassion: Dr. Kristen Neff provides exercises and curriculum www.selfcompassion.org - great for coaches and clients!



Apps: Calm, Headspace, Insight Timer



Podcasts: 10% Happier (Dan Harris), Self Care IRL, Feel Better Live More, The Happiness Lab with Dr. Lauren Santos



YouTube: Yoga with Adriene, Calm, Headspace



Thank You

Connect: katie.niebuhr@vermont.gov