UC WellPro:
Reframing Stress & Suffering

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Agenda

I. **Grounding meditation**

II. **Stress**
   - Physiology
   - Reframing

III. **Suffering**
   - Train the brain
   - Stress cycle
   - 2 Arrows Practice

IV. **5 Breaths meditation**
GROUNDING MEDITATION

← Release what you carry. →
1. What was the thing you cared about?
2. What need was not being met?

STRESS
Safety
Avoiding harms
(threat response)

Satisfaction
Approaching rewards
(goal pursuit)

Connection
Attaching to others
(social engagement)
Hug the Monkey -- Feed the Mouse -- Pet the Lizard
1. What was the thing you cared about?

2. What need was not being met?

3. How did your body respond to the stress?
Vasoconstriction and vasodilation

- Normal artery
- Vasoconstriction artery
- Vasodilation artery
STRESS AS HELPFUL

VASODILATION

Normal Blood Vessel

Dilated Blood Vessel

Increased transport of $O_2$

Decreased Blood Pressure

Nutrients

Glucose

Removal of Cellular Waste
Stress as enhancing Hormones

Stress as enhancing
- Regenerates heart cells
- Natural anti-inflammatory and anxiolytic
- Lowers blood pressure
- Increases pain threshold
- Activates empathy
- Faster recovery from stress
"My heart is pounding because my heart is in it. Because I care. Because my body is getting ready to rise to this challenge."

—Kelly McGonigal, *The Upside of Stress*

Reframe those physiological cues as opportunity or challenge rather than threat...

What does each physical sensation signal now?
When you choose to view your stress response as helpful, you create the biology of courage. And when you choose to connect with others under stress, you can create resilience.

~ Kelly McGonigal

What is the opportunity/challenge in your situation?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OPPORTUNITY</th>
<th>THREAT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased cardiac efficiency</td>
<td>Decreased cardiac efficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vasodilation</td>
<td>Vasoconstriction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More favorable emotions</td>
<td>Less favorable emotions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher performance (accuracy,</td>
<td>Lower performance (impaired decisions,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>effectiveness, coordination)</td>
<td>cognitive decline, increased CV disease)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Green zone - Red zone

Sufficiency in place of the Negativity Bias
Complete the stress cycle by:

- Exercising
- Breathing
- Positive Social Interaction
- Laughing
- Affection/Hugging
- Crying
- Creative Expression

Arrows are the worst

I get hit with more arrows than other people

There must be something wrong with me

What if there’s another arrow?

I can’t handle another arrow

I am going to fall apart if there’s another arrow

I will disappoint everyone
Life is painful, suffering is optional.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Safety</th>
<th>Satisfaction</th>
<th>Connection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>See actual threats</td>
<td>Gratitude</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>See resources</td>
<td>Gladness</td>
<td>Compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grit, fortitude</td>
<td>Feel successful</td>
<td>Kindness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel protected</td>
<td>Healthy pleasures</td>
<td>Wide circle of “us”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alright right now</td>
<td>Impulse control</td>
<td>Assertiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relaxation</td>
<td>Aspiration</td>
<td>Self-worth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calm</td>
<td>Enthusiasm</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peace</td>
<td>Contentment</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chasing meaning is better for your health than trying to avoid discomfort.

Kelly McGonigal, 2013
5 Finger Breathing
QUESTIONS & IDEAS