

# Addressing Impact of Chronic Stress on Learning

*OSSE PD Institute, June 8, 2022, 2:00 pm*  
*Presenter: Cynthia Peters from World Education*

# Welcome

*“Culture -- the way we express ourselves and understand each other -- can bind us together as one world.”*

Yo-Yo Ma

Listen and watch : Yo-Yo Ma playing Bach's Cello Suite #1 in G Major

# GRATITUDE



CONNECTION is

MEDICINE



According to the American Psychological Association, evidence links perceived social isolation with adverse health consequences including:

Depression

- poor sleep quality
- impaired executive function
- accelerated cognitive decline
- poor cardiovascular function
- impaired immunity

MEDITATION is

M E D I C I N E

BREATHE WITH THE HEART



According to the Mayo Clinic, meditation may help people:

- Gain a new perspective on stressful situations
- Build skills to manage your stress
- Increase self-awareness
- Focus on the present
- Reduce negative emotions
- Increase imagination and creativity
- Increase patience and tolerance
- Lower heart rate and blood pressure
- Improve sleep quality

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

01

WELCOME

Rose and thorn

02

STRESS

What is it?

03

PANDEMIC

How have the last two years affected us?

04

BREAK

LOL

05

STRATEGIES

Back in pairs to make a game plan.

06

CLOSING

Resources + thank you + something you are taking with you.



0 2

STRESS

What is it?

Stress is how we react when  
we feel under pressure or  
threatened. It usually  
happens when we are in a  
situation that we don't feel we  
can manage or control.

-- [mind.org](http://mind.org)

# DIFFERENT TYPES of

# STRESS



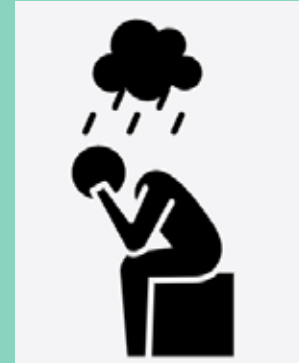
## Good Stress

Also known as “eustress,” good stress is akin to excitement.



## Acute Stress

Acute stress can be beneficial. It can help you react in time and relax afterwards.



## Chronic Stress

Chronic stress is not good for your health or wellbeing.

# HOW CHRONIC STRESS AFFECTS YOUR BRAIN

A TEDEd lesson by Madhumita Murgia



Article from [Psychology Today](#) with similar content.

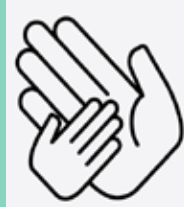
# THE AREAS

## Individual



You face personal responsibilities or challenges that feel unmanageable.

## Family or Group



Your family or friend group faces bereavement or hardship.

## Community



Your work, religious, or ethnic community faces stigma or discrimination.

## Society



Your entire society faces a natural disaster, pandemic, or other unrest.

UPSHOT: Managing  
chronic stress is ...

**Non-Negotiable**

03

# THE PANDEMIC

What specific stressors has it brought to our field? How have we risen to the challenge?

# THE CAUSES

## Drowning Without a Life Jacket

A therapist uses a Liberation Health approach to look at all the factors and develop an action plan.

*Mahlet Meshesha*

**BEFORE YOU READ:** Think about the word *factors*. What factors contribute to the challenges you face? Define *personal, cultural, and institutional* factors.

### Sleepless Nights

*"Ugh, it's 3:15 am. I am never going to fall asleep. Only two more hours until my alarm goes off. I have to remember to pick up Dad's prescription. I wish my brother would pick it up! I really hope Dad just has a cold... Maybe we should get him tested for Covid-19? But he can't go alone... No one there speaks Somali, and I can't take work off again. What*



# A NEW PERSPECTIVE



From the Mental Health issue of  
The Change Agent (pp. 17-18):  
<https://changeagent.nelrc.org/drawing-without-a-life-jacket/>

## Liberation Health Triangle

Personal Factors

Institutional  
Factors

Problem  
Statement

Cultural  
Factors

<https://www.bostonliberationhealth.com/liberation-health-model>

PERSPECTIVE is

MEDICINE

### What Happened to Aisha?

She could see that stresses she was experiencing were not her fault, and so she felt less guilty.

- She came up with an action plan, including finding more “life jackets” for when she feels like she is drowning. For example, is there a neighbor, community resources, co-workers experiencing similar struggles, a local immigrant organization that could support her...

“When Aisha first came to me, she felt like she was drowning without a life jacket. Now, life is of course not perfect, but she has more tools to keep her head above water. The Liberation Health Triangle is a reminder that she is not alone, and that in itself is part of the healing process.”

WHAT DO STUDENTS

SAY?

Issue #52 of *The Change Agent* :  
“Mental Health:  
Learning, Coping,  
Healing”



## **The Ripple Effects of Attending Book Club**

*Tweety Hsiao*



## **Art as Therapy**

Ebru, a traditional Turkish art form, reduces stress and boosts self-confidence.



## **Slaying the Depression Dragon**

*Michael Streets*



## **The Power of Prayer and Affirmation**

*Dorothy Johnson*

## **I Am a Survivor and an Advocate**

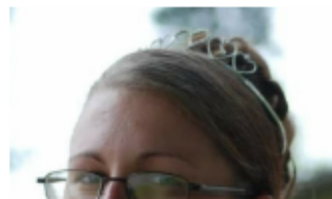
Peer specialists in prison help others and themselves

## **Endorphins – A Natural Remedy**

*Tyese Dowe*

## **Having Anxiety Does Not Mean I'm Weak**

*Samantha Mohn*



# Explore Student Writing



Endorphins :  
A Natural  
Remedy

<https://bit.ly/endorphinsremedy>



No Paid Sick  
Days ?

<https://bit.ly/sickdaysno>

0 4

BREAK

Clip of Lucy and Ethel in the chocolate factory

LAUGHTER is

MEDICINE



According to the Mayo Clinic, laughter has numerous short-term benefits (relieving tension, causing “eustress,” etc.), and many long-term effects, from boosting the immune system to relieving pain.

0 5

# STRATEGIES

A re-cap + a few more + small groups  
to sort them out...

Strategy	Break it down; make reasonable goals	What gets in the way?	How can I get past the barriers?
Exercise	Walk daily, even for 15 minutes Stretch breaks; dance party in the kitchen; <i><b>pickleball!!</b></i>		
Eat healthy	Less sugar; less coffee; more water		
Set boundaries	Don't engage with students or staff after xx PM; turn off notifications on devices	Mindset	Enlist buddy help, Lock up computer!
Join with others to do something	Make short lunch dates/walking dates; try out a new activity; volunteer in your community		
Laugh more; more joy			

0 6

# CLOSING

Resources + Thank you + Put in the chat: one word or phrase you are taking with you.

# MORE RESOURCES

The Change Agent's issues on:

- Mental health
  - The Pandemic
  - Resilience -- esp. this article on allostatic load, "Such a Heavy Load" (pp. 50-51)
- NELRC's website: Managing Stress to Improve Learning
  - On forming new habits: <https://jamesclear.com/new-habit>
  - Forest bathing (*aka* hang out in the woods):  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/22840583/>

Benefits of being in nature: <https://positivepsychology.com/positive-effects-of-nature/>

Find out more about the Liberation Health Model [here](#)

Get started meditating: <https://www.mindful.org/how-to-meditate/>

Play pickleball: <https://usapickleball.org/play/places-2-play/>

# THANKS !

Please write to me with questions or  
comments!

[cynthia\\_peters@worlded.org](mailto:cynthia_peters@worlded.org)  
[changeagent.nelrc.org](http://changeagent.nelrc.org)

*Big shout - out to Lenore Balliro for her work in this area  
and her guidance for this workshop!*

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by Slidesgo,  
including icons by Flaticon and infographics & images by Freepik