Mismatched: Your Brain Under Stress

Educational Unit

Overview

People today understand and experience stress in a variety of ways. This concept is not a new one, but one that each of us can relate to and have experienced. Stressors are everywhere, presenting themselves in a variety of forms. We can experience stress at work, at home, at school, and everywhere in between. Stress can be caused by the people around us or created inside our own minds.

Stress is defined as our reactions to change. Stress turns on our 'fight or flight' response creating a physiological response including the release of hormones designed to keep us alert and ready to deal with whatever is happening or about to happen. While this natural response can be appropriate for short-term stress that requires a physical response, we were not designed to continually experience and manage long-term, high-stress situations. Our brains have evolved, but not as fast as our world is changing. This creates a mismatch with our environment. While we cannot always control the causes of our stress, we can control the way we react to it. *Mismatched: Your Brain Under Stress* is designed to help understand stress and learn effective techniques to manage stress, in order to live a more peaceful, productive life.

Produced by The American Institute of Stress, the video series called *Mismatched: Your Brain Under Stress* is a six-part documentary by Justin Smith featuring some of the world's leading experts on stress. Their collective experience stretches from the first experiments done on the mind/body connection to the latest research into unravelling the unconscious mind.

These modules will introduce you to ways to recognize and cope with stress. Each module contains a description, learning objectives, vocabulary terms, discussion topics, a video covering a different topic, and a quiz to check for understanding.

These lesson plans for educational and corporate use were developed by Susan R. Heckman, M.Ed.
Mrs. Heckman has a M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction, and another M.Ed. in Educational Leadership.
She is an educator for The School District of Palm Beach County, Florida, USA.

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Modules

Module 1: Stress and Health

Stress has always been a part of life, but is it getting worse? Are we more stressed today than before? Why are we mismatched?

Module 2: Mind/Body Connection

Our mind controls our physical health. Monks in the Himalayan mountains can use their mind to control their body temperature so much so that they are able to dry soaking wet sheets on their backs in a freezing cold room.

Module 3: Mind/Body Connection II

We are all different. What one person finds stressful; another person finds exhilarating. When we do find something stressful, what are the cascade of events that can ultimately destroy our health? This process starts in the brain with our perception of stress.

Module 4: Resilience for First Responders

What are the unique stressors experienced by police officers and other first responders? The tools and techniques discussed here can also apply to all of us.

Module 5: Stress is a Funny Thing

Humor is one of the best ways to combat stress.

Module 6: Unlock the Power of the Unfocused Mind

Focus is great, and necessary, but it is during unfocused times that eureka moments occur.

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Introduction to Stress

The term STRESS, as it is currently used was coined by Hans Selye, MD, PhD, in 1936, who defined it as "the non-specific response of the body to any demand for change" (Selye, 1936).

Stress was generally considered as being synonymous with *distress*. Stress is difficult to define because it is a subjective sensation associated with varied symptoms. In addition, stress is not always a synonym for distress. Certain situations can cause fear and anxiety for some, yet prove highly pleasurable for others, such as riding roller coasters. Winning a race or election may be more stressful than losing it - although this is good stress.

Increased stress increases productivity – up to a point, after which things rapidly deteriorate, and that level differs for each of us.

The Effects of Stress on Your Body

Stress is a natural physical and mental reaction to life experiences. Everyone experiences stress from time to time. For immediate, short-term situations, stress can be beneficial to your health. It can help you cope with potentially serious situations. Your body responds to stress by releasing hormones that increase your heart and breathing rates and ready your muscles to respond. This is often referred to as the *fight or flight* response.

However, if your stress response does not stop and these stress levels stay elevated far longer than is necessary for survival, it can take a toll on your health. Chronic stress can cause a variety of symptoms and affect your overall well-being. Symptoms of chronic stress include:

1. Insomnia
2. Anxiety
3. Depression
4. Irritability
5. Heart palpitations
6. Inability to concentrate
7. Sugar cravings
8. Abdominal fat accumulation
9. Shortness of breath
10. Constipation and/or diarrhea

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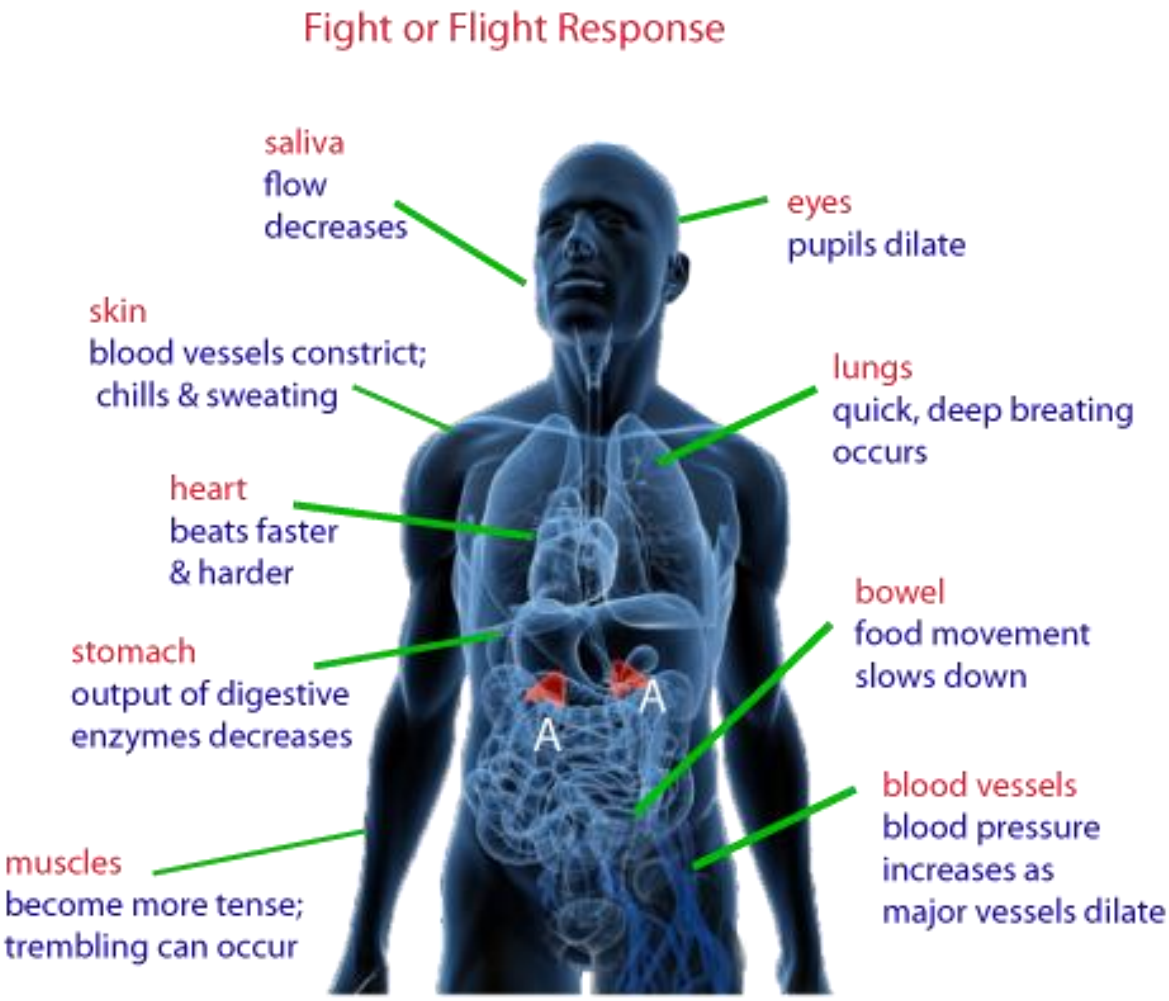

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Learning Objectives

Upon completing this course, the participant will be able to:

1. Demonstrate a basic knowledge of stress and it effects.
2. Identify the aspects of the 'Fight or Flight' response.
3. Show an understanding of the topics discussed in each module of the documentary *Mismatched.*
4. Discuss the effects of stress on our body and ways to combat stress effectively.
5. Understand the contribution to medical science made by Professor Hans Selye.

Vocabulary

Stress

Anxiety

Chronic

Eustress

Cortisol

Hypothalamus

Discussion Topics

Have you ever experienced situations you felt were stressful?

What emotional response(s) did you experience?

What physical response(s) did you experience?

Activities

Activity #1: Read and discuss the introduction to stress.

Participants will read the Introduction to Stress and discuss the questions.

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Activity #2: Complete the Pre-Test

Participants will complete the Pre-Test.
When the unit is completed, re-assess participants by administering the same test again.

Pre-Test/Post-Test Answer Key

1. A
2. C
3. A
4. B
5. B
6. A
7. A
8. D
9. A
10. B
11. D
12. C
13. D
14. A
15. C
16. C
17. A
18. B
19. C
20. D

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Pre-Test/Post-Test: *Mismatched*

Directions: Please circle the correct answer.

1. **The term STRESS, as it is currently used, was coined by:**
    a. Hans Selye
    b. Albert Einstein
    c. Louis Pasteur
    d. Jonas Salk

2. **Stress is difficult for scientists to define because:**
    a. It does not exist
    b. You cannot feel it
    c. It is a subjective sensation
    d. It has no side effects

3. **Many forms of meditation have a common feature at their core – the are designed to break the train of everyday thought facilitated using repetition.**
    a. True
    b. False

4. **Continual activation of the HPA axis in modern society is caused by:**
    a. Acute stress
    b. Chronic stress
    c. Consistent Stress
    d. Obtuse stress

5. **"Stress is literally the _____ of life."**
    a. Death
    b. Spice
    c. Love
    d. Stress

6. **One top sign/symptom of negative stress is:**
    a. Heart palpitations
    b. Slow calm breathing
    c. Lack of anxiety
    d. A good night's sleep

7. **Yoga is a movement practice with regulated breathing where the breathing helps to still the body and the mind.**
    a. True
    b. False

8. **What is a gland that releases the stress hormone?**
    a. Thyroid
    b. Adrenal
    c. Parathyroid
    d. Hypothalamus

9. **One of the first things you notice when you are stressed is:**
    a. Muscle tension
    b. Headache
    c. Sleepiness
    d. Earache

10. **People in the workplace are working less and enjoying life more.**
    a. True
    b. False

11. **Sleep is major concern for first responders because:**
    a. They must work nights
    b. They must work rotating shifts
    c. They are not as attentive if sleep deprived
    d. All of the above

12. **The 'Fight or Flight' response is an automatic physiological reaction to an event perceived as:**
    a. Enjoyable
    b. Imaginary
    c. Stressful or frightening
    d. Calming

13. **How old is meditation said to be?**
    a. 50 years
    b. 500 years
    c. 1000 years
    d. 7000 years

14. The part of the body that reacts to stress first is:

a. The brain
b. The heart
c. The feet
d. The liver

15. The Amygdala plays a role in:

a. Releasing hormones directly into the bloodstream
b. Making the heart beat faster when stressed
c. Processing emotions
d. Activating the mind/body connection

16. What are the forms of mindfulness?

a. Resistance and exclusion
b. Alarm reaction and calm reaction
c. Focus awareness and open monitoring
d. Adaptation and response

17. Teaching people how to harness humor and leverage laughter can be an effective strategy for relieving stress in the workplace.

a. True
b. False

18. How does humor effect stress and pain?

a. It increases stress and pain
b. It decreases stress and pain
c. It has no effect on stress and pain
d. Stress and pain stay the same

19. What is one disadvantage of being focused?

a. It makes us more productive
b. It can be painful
c. It drains energy
d. It can cause us to have too much energy

20. What does NOT decrease during Meditation?

a. Blood pressure
b. Heart rate
c. Oxygen use
d. Blood sugar levels

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Lesson Plan Module #1: *Stress and Health*

Overview

Stress is a natural mental and physical reaction to life experiences. Everyone experiences stress from time to time. Anything from everyday responsibilities to serious life events can trigger stress. For immediate, short-term situations, stress can be beneficial to your health. It can help you cope with potentially serious situations. Your body responds to stress by releasing hormones that increase your heart and breathing rates and ready your muscles to respond. This is often referred to as the 'Fight or Flight' response.

If you are constantly under stress, you can have physical symptoms, such as headaches, upset stomach, high blood pressure, chest pain, and problems with sex and sleep. Stress can also lead to emotional problems, depression, panic attacks, or other forms of anxiety and worry.

Lesson Objectives

After viewing Episode 1: *Stress and Health*, participants will be able to:

1. Identify who discovered the General Adaptation Syndrome (GAS).
2. Report what the percentage of emergency room visits that are estimated to be due to stress.
3. State the type of stress more adapted to humans and explain why this causes a mismatch.
4. Explain the 'Fight or Flight' response and give examples.
5. Summarize the stages/phases of GAS and explain why this was an important discovery.

Vocabulary

Eustress

Distress

Sympathetic nervous system

'Fight or Flight' response

Acute Stress

Chronic Stress

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Lesson Discussion Points

- Stress has always been a part of life. But is it getting worse?
- Are we more stressed today than before?
- Why are we mismatched?
- What is the difference between acute and chronic stress?
- What were the findings of Hans Selye? Why are they important?

Activities:

Activity #1: Complete the attached Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory.

Participants will complete the inventory and discuss.

Activity #2: Watch Video

View Episode #1: *Stress and Health* and discuss content using the discussion questions above.

Module 1 Quiz Answer Key

1. A
2. B
3. B
4. A
5. A
6. D
7. B
8. D
9. C
10. B

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The Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory

The Social Readjustment Rating Scale

INSTRUCTIONS: *Mark down the point value of each of these life events that has happened to your during the previous year. Total these associated points.*

LIFE EVENT	MEAN VALUE
1. Death of spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital Separation from mate	65
4. Detention in jail or other institution	63
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Major personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Being fired at work	47
9. Marital reconciliation with mate	45
10. Retirement from work	45
11. Major change in the health or behavior of a family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sexual Difficulties	39
14. Gaining a new family member (i.e. ... birth, adoption, older adult moving in, etc.)	39
15. Major business readjustment	39
16. Major change in financial state (i.e. ... a lot worse or better off than usual)	38
17. Death of a close friend	37
18. Changing to a different line of work	36
19. Major change in the number of arguments w/spouse (i.e. ... either a lot more or a lot less than usual regarding child rearing, personal habits, etc.)	35
20. Taking on a mortgage (for home, business, etc. ...)	31
21. Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30
22. Major change in responsibilities at work (i.e. promotion, demotion, etc.)	29
23. Son or daughter leaving home (marriage, attending college, joined mil.)	29
24. In-law troubles	29
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Spouse beginning or ceasing work outside the home	26
27. Beginning or ceasing formal schooling	26
28. Major change in living condition (new home, remodeling, deterioration of neighborhood or home etc.)	25
29. Revision of personal habits (dress manners, associations, quitting smoking)	24
30. Troubles with the boss	23
31. Major changes in working hours or conditions	20
32. Changes in residence	20
33. Changing to a new school	20
34. Major change in usual type and/or amount of recreation	19
35. Major change in church activity (i.e. ... a lot more or less than usual)	19
36. Major change in social activities (clubs, movies, visiting, etc.)	18
37. Taking on a loan (car, tv, freezer, etc.)	17
38. Major change in sleeping habits (a lot more or a lot less than usual)	16
39. Major change in number of family get-togethers (**)	15
40. Major change in eating habits (a lot more or less food intake, or very different meal hours or surroundings)	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Major holidays	12
43. Minor violations of the law (traffic tickets, jaywalking, disturbing the peace, etc.)	11

Now, add up all the points you have to find your score **TOTAL** ____

150pts or less means a relatively low amount of life change and a low susceptibility to stress-induced health breakdown.
150 to 300 pts implies about a 50% chance of a major health breakdown in the next 2 years.
300pts or more raises the odds to about 80%, according to the Holmes-Rahe statistical prediction model.

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Lesson Plan Module 2: *Mind/Body Connection*

Overview

Numerous studies have shown that meditation is an effective stress-management tool, ultimately reprogramming the brain to the extent that meditators end up with more capacity to manage stress (when meditation is a consistent, daily practice).

Meditation is also a practice where an individual uses a technique – such as mindfulness, or focusing the mind on a particular object, thought, or activity – to train attention and awareness, and achieve a mentally clear and emotionally calm and stable state.

Scholars have found meditation elusive to define, as practices vary both between traditions and within them. Meditation is practiced in numerous religious traditions. The earliest records of meditation are found in the ancient Hindu texts known as the Vedas, and meditation plays a role in the contemplative repertoire of Hinduism and Buddhism. Since the 19th century, Asian meditative techniques have spread to other cultures where they have also found application in non-spiritual contexts, such as business and health.

Meditation may significantly reduce stress, anxiety, depression, and pain, and enhance peace, perception, self-concept, and well-being. Research is ongoing to better understand the effects of meditation on health (psychological, neurological, and cardiovascular) and other areas.

Lesson Objectives

After viewing Episode 2: *Mind/Body Connection*, participants will be able to:

1. Demonstrate and explain an understanding of the mind/body connection.
2. Analyze a meditation technique.

Vocabulary

Meditation

Stress Response

Relaxation Response

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Lesson Discussion Points

- What are different types of relaxation?
- Why is muscular relaxation helpful?
- When should someone control over-breathing? Why?
- What effects do stress create in our bodies?
- What is the relaxation response? Why is this useful?
- What is meditation and why is it important?
- After completing the meditation technique, how did it make you feel when you were done?
- Does a focus on breathing and repetition relieve stress? Why or why not?

Activities

Activity #1: Employ a Meditation technique.

To use the 4-7-8 technique, focus on the following breathing pattern:

1. Empty the lungs of air.
2. Breathe in quietly through the nose for four seconds.
3. Hold the breath for a count of seven seconds.
4. Exhale forcefully through the mouth, pursing the lips and making a "whoosh" sound, for eight seconds.
5. Repeat the cycle up to four times.

Activity #2: Watch Video

View Episode #2: *Mind/Body Connection* and discuss content using discussion questions.

Module 2 Quiz Answer Key

1. D
2. D
3. B
4. C
5. A
6. D
7. A
8. A
9. B
10. A

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Lesson Plan Module #3: *Mind/Body Connection II*

Overview

We are all different - what one person finds stressful; another person finds exhilarating. When we do experience stress, a cascade of events can ultimately destroy our health. This process starts in the brain with our perception of stress.

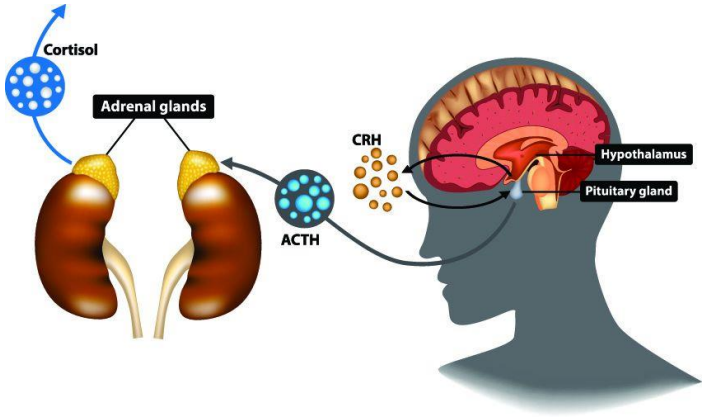
When the brain interprets a situation as a threat or a stressful situation, the hypothalamus is activated. A signal is sent to the pituitary gland, which in turn sends a signal to the adrenal glands to produce hormones such as cortisol. These hormones are designed to help the body deal with the perceived threat. This is referred to as the Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal, or HPA, axis, and is part of the 'Fight or Flight' system.

The release of cortisol during times of stress is useful if the threat requires a physical response. Cortisol prepares the body by raising blood sugar levels and retain salt to maintain a fluid balance. Once the threat is eliminated or escaped, cortisol returns to normal levels.

However, most of us are under chronic stress not requiring a physical response. This type of stress also raises cortisol levels, but since the stress never goes away, cortisol levels stay high. Prolonged high levels of cortisol can eventually lead to weight gain, specifically fat gain around the belly. This type of weight gain, called central obesity, is more dangerous than other types of weight gain. It is linked to type 2 diabetes, heart disease, and stroke.

The Amygdala, located in the brain, is also involved in the activation of the stress response as it processes emotions and can trigger the HPA axis to release cortisol. Sometimes, these reactions are conscious, but depending on the length of exposure to stimuli, these reactions can be unconsciously triggered.

To understand and manage personal stress, it is important to pay attention to cues, be authentic, and self-aligned to maintain a healthier response to stress.



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Lesson Objectives

After viewing Episode #3: *Mind/Body Connection II,* participants will be able to:

1. List experiences, classify them as stressful or exhilarating, and identify alternative ways to deal with those deemed stressful.
2. Analyze Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal axis and its relationship to cortisol production.
3. Explain the negative effects of over-production of cortisol.
4. Relate the effect of emotions to the Amygdala and it's connection to the 'Fight or Flight' response.

Vocabulary:

Hypothalamus

Pituitary Gland

Adrenal Glands

Cortisol

Chronic Stress

Amygdala

Lesson Discussion Points

- What types of situations make you feel stressed?
- Why is it important to know this?
- How can you help your body handle situations you interpret as stressful?
- Why would there be a strong correlation between a person's pay grade and their health?
- How does the body handle the over-production of cortisol?
- What negative effects are caused from prolonged high levels of cortisol?
- How does the amygdala affect our reactions to stress?
- How can someone overcome the personal reaction to another's negative emotions?

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Activities

Activity #1: Experiences Table

Make a table to list and classify experiences. Discuss results and possible solutions.

Experiences	Stressful or Exhilarating?	Alternative Reactions

Activity #2: Watch Video

View Episode #3: *Mind/Body Connection II* and discuss content using discussion questions.

Module 3 Quiz Answer Key

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. A
5. B
6. D
7. B
8. B
9. A
10. C

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Lesson Plan Module #4: *Resilience for First Responders*

Overview

What are the unique stressors experienced by first responders? First responders are more likely to suffer from psychological distress due to job stress, repeated exposure to trauma, lack of sleep, lack of resources, and working long hours or multiple jobs.

Throughout the years, our communities have experienced many natural and human-caused disasters. During and after these events, the affected communities rely heavily on an effective and efficient response from first responders to be able to recover. But who can first responders rely on to ensure they can recover too? First responders face many difficult and stressful situations as they are the first to arrive on the scene of events involving injuries and loss of life. They often provide emotional as well as physical support to traumatized survivors. These duties often put first responders at risk for secondary or vicarious traumatization.

Mindfulness practices, such as yoga and meditation, have distinct positive effects on physiology. However, these tools of self-regulation and self-healing need to be developed well in advance to promote resiliency and to avoid a traumatic response.

Lesson Objectives

After viewing Episode 4: *Resilience for First Responders,* participants will be able to:

1. Identify causes of stress response in first responders.
2. Define secondary or vicarious trauma.
3. Classify different forms of mindfulness and summarize positive effects.
4. Analyze heart rate variability and determine what characterizes a healthy heart rate.

Vocabulary:

Vicarious Trauma

Mindfulness

Focus Awareness

Open Monitoring

Heart Rate Variability

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Lesson Discussion Points

- What are the different types of stress first responders face?
- How does the physical and psychological strain of the job affect first responders?
- What are some reactions first responders might experience?
- How do mindfulness practices, such as yoga or meditation, help people handle stress?
- How is the heart rate variability affected by stress?
- Why is the heart rate variability a topic for concern with first responders?

Activities:

Activity #1: Relaxation Planning Chart

Take a few minutes to think about ways you relax. If you do not take time to relax, think about what stops you from taking time for yourself. What are some internal barriers you face? External barriers? Complete the table to brainstorm relaxation activities, challenges to relaxation, and possible solutions.

Some things I do now to relax:	**1.** **2.** **3.**
What internal barriers do I face?	
How can I overcome these barriers?	
What external barriers do I face?	
How can I overcome these barriers?	

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Activity #2: Watch Video

View Episode #4: *Resilience for First Responders* and discuss content using the discussion questions above.

Module 4 Quiz Answer Key

1. D
2. A
3. B
4. A
5. B
6. A
7. C
8. A
9. A
10. B

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Lesson Plan Module #5: *Stress is a Funny Thing*

Overview

Humor is more than just entertainment. There are three ways humor can help people deal with stress:

1. It can distract them.
2. It can reframe for them.
3. It can refuel them.

Short-Term Benefits: A good laugh has great short-term effects. When you start to laugh, it does not just lighten your load mentally, it induces physical changes in your body.

Laughter can:

- Stimulate many organs. Laughter enhances your intake of oxygen-rich air, stimulates your heart, lungs, and muscles, and increases the endorphins released by your brain.
- Activate and relieve your stress response. A rollicking laugh fires up and then cools down your stress response, and it can increase and then decrease your heart rate and blood pressure. The result? A good, relaxed feeling.
- Soothe tension. Laughter can also stimulate circulation and aid muscle relaxation, both of which can help reduce some of the physical symptoms of stress.

Long-Term Effects: Laughter is not just a quick pick-me-up, though. It is also good for you over the long term.

Laughter may:

- Improve your immune system. Negative thoughts manifest into chemical reactions that can affect your body by bringing more stress into your system and decreasing your immunity. By contrast, positive thoughts can release neuropeptides that help fight stress and potentially more-serious illnesses.
- Relieve pain. Laughter may ease pain by causing the body to produce its own natural painkillers.
- Increase personal satisfaction. Laughter can also make it easier to cope with difficult situations. It also helps you connect with other people.
- Improve your mood. Many people experience depression, sometimes due to chronic illness. Laughter can help lessen your depression and anxiety, which may make you feel happier.

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Lesson Objectives

After viewing Episode #5: *Stress is a Funny Thing,* participants will be able to:

1. Discuss how humor helps relieve stress.
2. Use/create personal reminders (photos, memes, trinkets, etc.) to help alleviate and navigate stress more effectively.
3. Understand how humor effects stress and pain.

Vocabulary:

Parasympathetic Nervous System

Limbic System

Neurotransmitters

Cognitive Capacity Cascade

Lesson Discussion Points:

- What are some of the short-term benefits of humor? Long term effects?
- How does humor help people deal with stress more effectively?
- What are some ways you can distract yourself when you are stressed? How does this alleviate stress?
- How does reframing help someone effectively handle stress? Can you think of a time or situation you used reframing in your own life?
- What are ways you refuel yourself?
- Why is smiling not always effective for dealing with stress?
- How does humor allow us to build the cognitive capacity with others?

Activities:

Activity #1: Progressive Relaxation Activity (Deep Muscle Relaxation)

Read and model the following instructions to your students:

1. Raise your eyebrows and wrinkle your forehead. Try to touch your hairline with your eyebrows. Hold for 5 seconds…and relax.

2. Make a frown. Hold for 5 seconds…and relax.
3. Close your eyes as tightly as you can. Draw the corners of your mouth back with your lips closed. Hold for 5 seconds…and relax.
4. Open your eyes and your mouth as wide as you can. Hold for 5 seconds…and relax. Feel the warmth and calmness in your face.
5. Stretch your arms out in front of you. Close your fist tightly. Hold for 5 seconds…and relax. Feel the warmth and calmness in your hands.
6. Stretch your arms out to the side. Pretend you are pushing against an invisible wall with your hands. Hold for 5 seconds…and relax.
7. Bend your elbows and make a muscle in your upper arm. Hold for 5 seconds…and relax. Feel the tension leave your arms.
8. Lift your shoulders. Try to make your shoulders touch your ears. Hold for 5 seconds…and relax.
9. Arch your back away from the back of your chair (or off the floor). Hold for 5 seconds…and relax.
10. Round your back. Try to push it against the back of your chair (or against the floor). Hold for 5 seconds…and relax. Feel the tension leaving your back.
11. Tighten your stomach muscles. Hold for 5 seconds…and relax.
12. Tighten your hip and buttock muscles. Hold for 5 seconds…and relax.
13. Tighten your thigh muscles by pressing your legs together as close as you can. Hold for 5 seconds…and relax.
14. Bend your ankles toward your body as far as you can. Hold for 5 seconds …and relax.
15. Curl your toes under as far as you can. Hold for 5 seconds…and relax. Feel the tension leave your legs.
16. Tighten all the muscles in your whole body. Hold for ten seconds…and relax. Let your entire body be heavy and clam. Sit quietly (or lie quietly) and enjoy this feeling of relaxation for a couple of minutes.

Activity #2: Watch Video

View Episode #5: *Stress is a Funny Thing* and discuss content using discussion questions above.

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Module #5 Quiz Answer Key

1. D
2. B
3. A
4. B
5. A
6. A
7. A
8. A
9. A
10. B

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Lesson Plan Module #6: *Unlock the Power of the Unfocused Mind*

Overview

We usually pride ourselves on our ability to analyze, plan, reason, and solve complex problems. The human brain, particularly our brain's pre-frontal cortex, enables us to do that. But where does innovation, life's "Eureka" moments, creative inventions, and spontaneous epiphanies come from? Surprisingly, they rise from our unfocused mind. We can harness our mind's natural tendency to wander, stall, rest and become more productive—in the boardroom, living room, or classroom.

Lesson Objectives

After viewing Episode #6: *Unlock the Power of the Unfocused Mind* participants will be able to:

1. Demonstrate how to do a breathing relaxation exercise.
2. Compare advantages and disadvantages of being focused and unfocused.

Vocabulary

Alpha State

Neurons

Amygdala

Lesson Discussion Points

- Have you ever experienced solving a problem or coming up with a solution to a situation when you were not trying to? Explain what happened.
- How does a focused brain positively affect a person?
- What are the disadvantages to a focused brain?
- What is meant by an unfocused brain?
- "To charge your phone, you must plug it in. To charge your brain, you must unplug it." What is meant by this quote?
- What are ways we can use to encourage our brains to enter an unfocused state?
- How does an unfocused brain help us with stress and stress management?

Mismatched: Your Brain Under Stress

Educational Unit

Activities

Activity #1: Breathing Relaxation Exercise

Directions:

1. Smile inwardly with your eyes and mouth.
2. Take one deep breath.
3. Visualize the air coming in through large pores in the bottom of your feet.
4. Imagine the warm air moving slowly up your leg and filling your lungs.
5. Now imagine the air leaving your body the same way.

Activity #2: Watch Video

View Episode #6: *Unlock the Power of the Unfocused Mind* and discuss content using discussion questions.

Module #6 Quiz Answer Key

1. C
2. B
3. A
4. C
5. A
6. B
7. A
8. A
9. C
10. B