

# STRESS MANAGEMENT

---

Ms. Rabia Ijaz  
Lecturer (Psychology)  
Science and Humanities



# Learning Outcomes

---

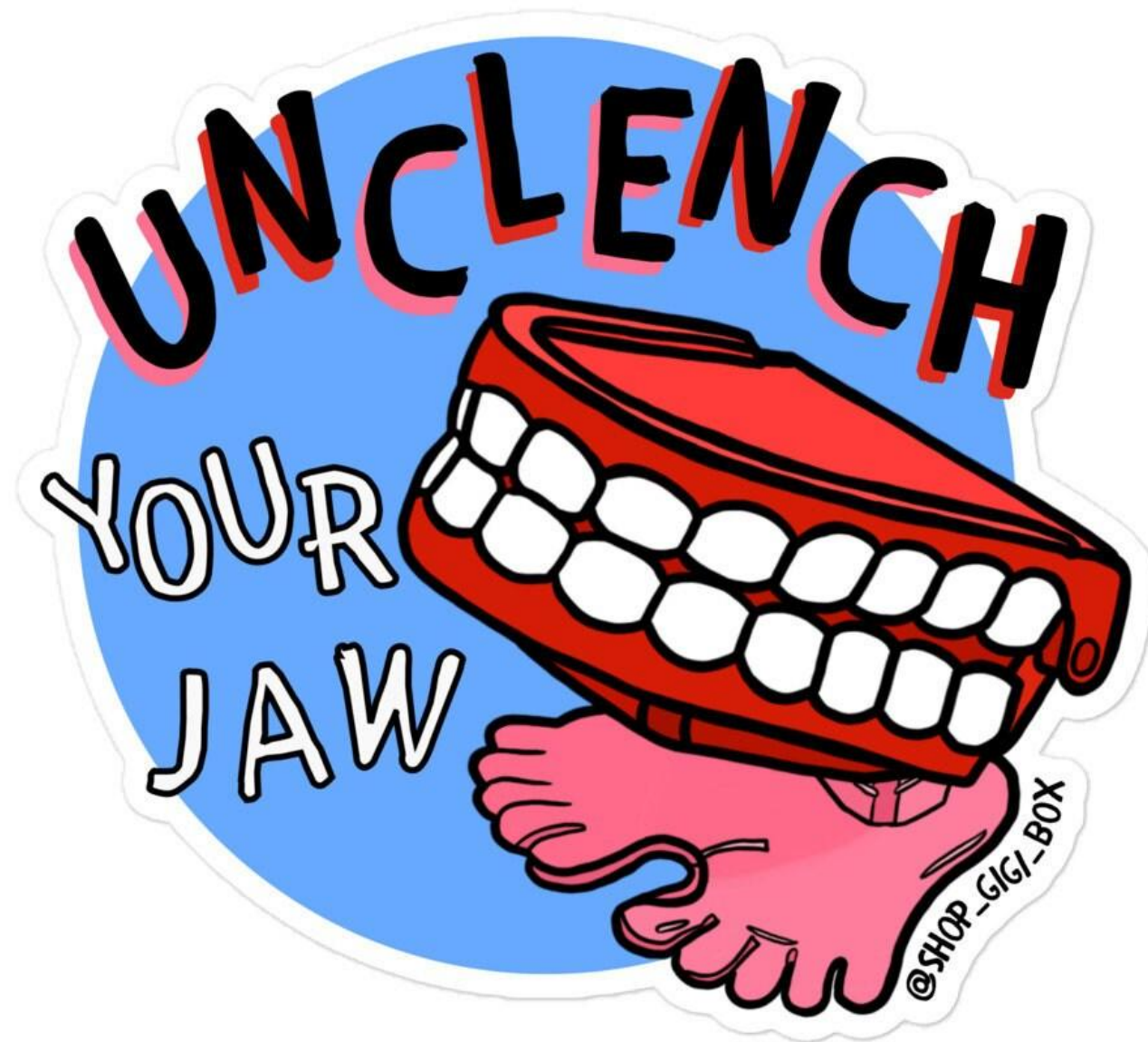
Understanding what stress is

---

Identification of stress triggers and implement de-escalation strategies

---

Ability to manage stress



SOFTEN YOUR FOREHEAD,  
UNCLENCH YOUR JAW,  
RELAX YOUR SHOULDERS.



THIS IS A REMINDER TO  
STOP HOLDING TENSION IN

# Stress Statistics

---

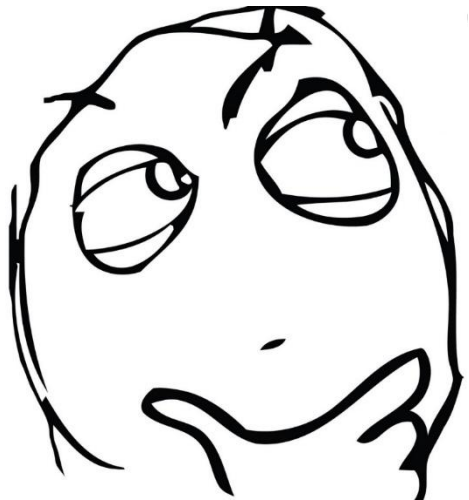
In APA's Stress in America 2020 Survey, **Gen Z is reported to be the most stressed generation**, scoring an average Stress level of 6.1 on a scale of 1-10.

---

Gen Z stressors include **high suicide rates (62%)**, **relationship problems due to the pandemic (63%)**, **changes in abortion laws (50%)**, and **sexual harassment and assault in the news (58%)**.

---

82% of Gen Z members want more support, and it's important to provide this through listening, promoting positivity, providing flexibility, maintaining social connections, and celebrating milestones creatively.



Gen Z is the newest generation, born between 1997 and 2012 as defined by the Pew Research Center.  
They are currently between 9 and 24 years old.

## Interpretation of online test

0-13

- Low Stress

14-26

- Moderate Stress

27-40

- High Perceived Stress

<https://www.bemindfulonline.com/test-your-stress>

# STRESS

---

Our **mental, physical, emotional, and behavioral reactions** to any perceived demands or threats.

---

Stress is not normally considered a mental health problem. But it is connected to our mental health in several ways.



---

Stress can cause mental health problems.

---

---

It can make existing problems worse.

# Types of Stress



## EUSTRESS (GOOD STRESS)

Stress that is deemed healthful or giving one the feeling of fulfillment. It helps to produce personal growth or accomplishment. Research has shown that moderate levels of stress can actually improve your ability to concentrate and perform at your best.

1. Short Term
2. Motivates, provides energy and increases focus
3. Excites the individual, feelings of excitement & anticipation
4. Creativity is heightened
5. Coping skills learned and adapted quickly
6. Ability to process information rapidly increases
7. Perception narrows, concentration increases
8. Heightened physical stamina



## **DISTRESS (BAD STRESS)**

Stress that causes pain, suffering, trouble, danger, etc.

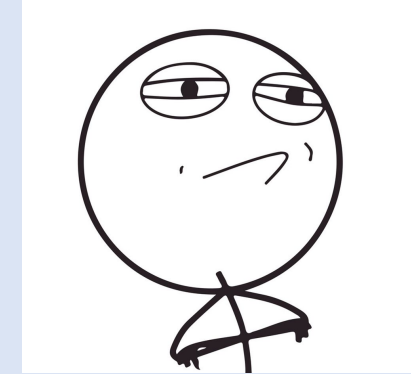
1. Can be short term or long term
2. Decreases performance
3. Demotivates the individual
4. Feelings of anxiety and uncertainty
5. Creativity is stunted
6. Coping skills are overwhelmed
7. Ability to process information is stunted
8. Perception narrows
9. Easily distracted by surrounding stimuli
10. Somatic symptoms



## Eustress

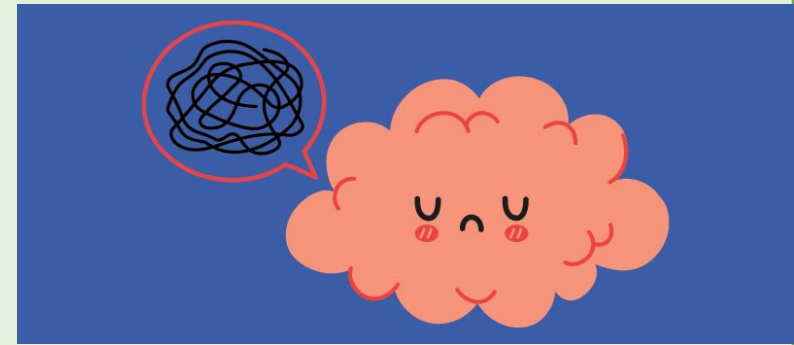
- **Impact on Perception**
  - Positive challenge
- **Impact on Emotions**
  - Excitement
- **Impact on Productivity**
  - Motivation
- **Impact on Performance**
  - Enhancement

**CHALLENGE ACCEPTED**



## Distress

- **Impact on Perception**
  - Negative threat
- **Impact on Emotions**
  - Anxiety
- **Impact on Productivity**
  - Procrastination
- **Impact on Performance**
  - Decline



---

Stress is typically an emotional response caused by an external trigger, the STRESSOR

---

The trigger can be:

**(a) Short-term**

- 1. Work deadline
- 2. fight with a loved one

**(b) Long-term**

- being unable to work
- discrimination
- chronic illness

**People under stress experience mental and physical symptoms, such as:**

- Irritability
- Anger
- Fatigue
- Muscle Pain
- Digestive Troubles
- Difficulty Sleeping



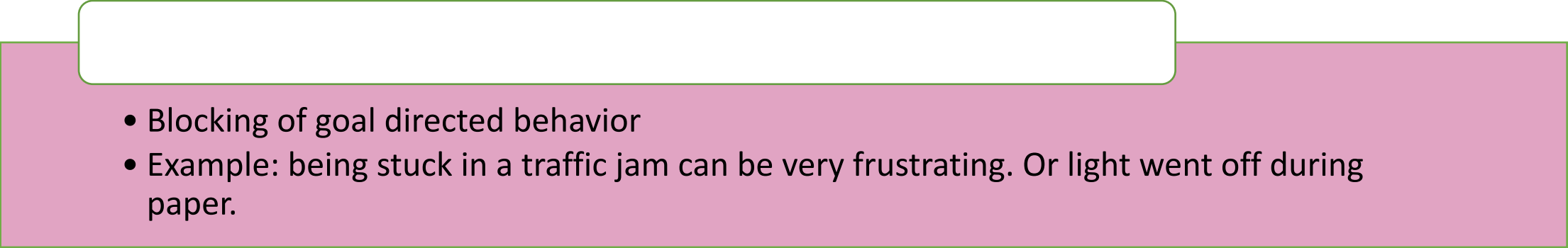
# Stressors

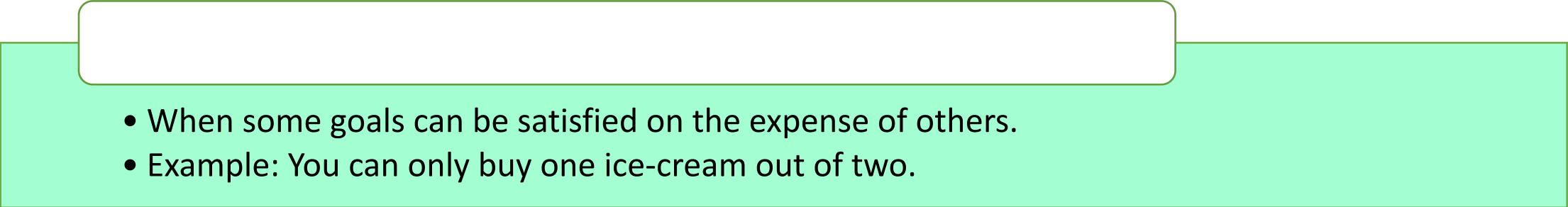
There are many circumstances or events that can produce stress. The sources of stress are called stressors.

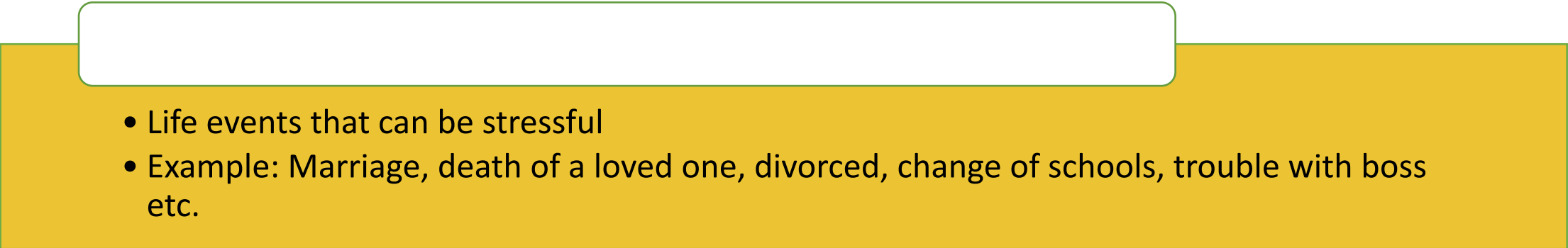


## 3 types of Stressors

- 1- Frustration
- 2- Conflict induced stress
- 3- Life induced stress

- 
- 
- Blocking of goal directed behavior
  - Example: being stuck in a traffic jam can be very frustrating. Or light went off during paper.

- 
- 
- When some goals can be satisfied on the expense of others.
  - Example: You can only buy one ice-cream out of two.

- 
- 
- Life events that can be stressful
  - Example: Marriage, death of a loved one, divorced, change of schools, trouble with boss etc.

# Why do we feel "Stressed Out"?

For two major reasons:

We *perceive* a situation as threatening, difficult, or painful.

We don't believe we have the *resources* to cope.

1. The unsettling effects of change
2. The feeling that an outside force is challenging or threatening you.
3. The feeling that you have lost personal control.



---

Stress hormones increase our heart rate blood pressure and blood sugar levels in stress.

Our bodies release these hormones in stress:

- 1. Epinephrine
- 2. Norepinephrine
- 3. Cortisol



- 1.increases blood sugar
- 2.boosts energy
- 3.suppresses digestion
- 4.suppresses reproduction
- 5.suppresses immunity
- 6.increase weight and depression and anxiety

Epinephrine

- 1. flight and flight response
- 2. increases heart rate
- 3. boosts energy
- 4. provide the muscles with the oxygen
- 5. decreases body's ability to feel pain



Nor  
Epinephrine

- 1. alertness, vigilance
- 2. increases heart rate
- 3. irritability sleep deprivation
- 4. increases attention and focus on performing a task
- 5. fight or flight response



---

**Have you noticed how your body reacts when you're surprised or nervous about something?** *It's trying to get you ready to properly react to the perceived threat.*

---

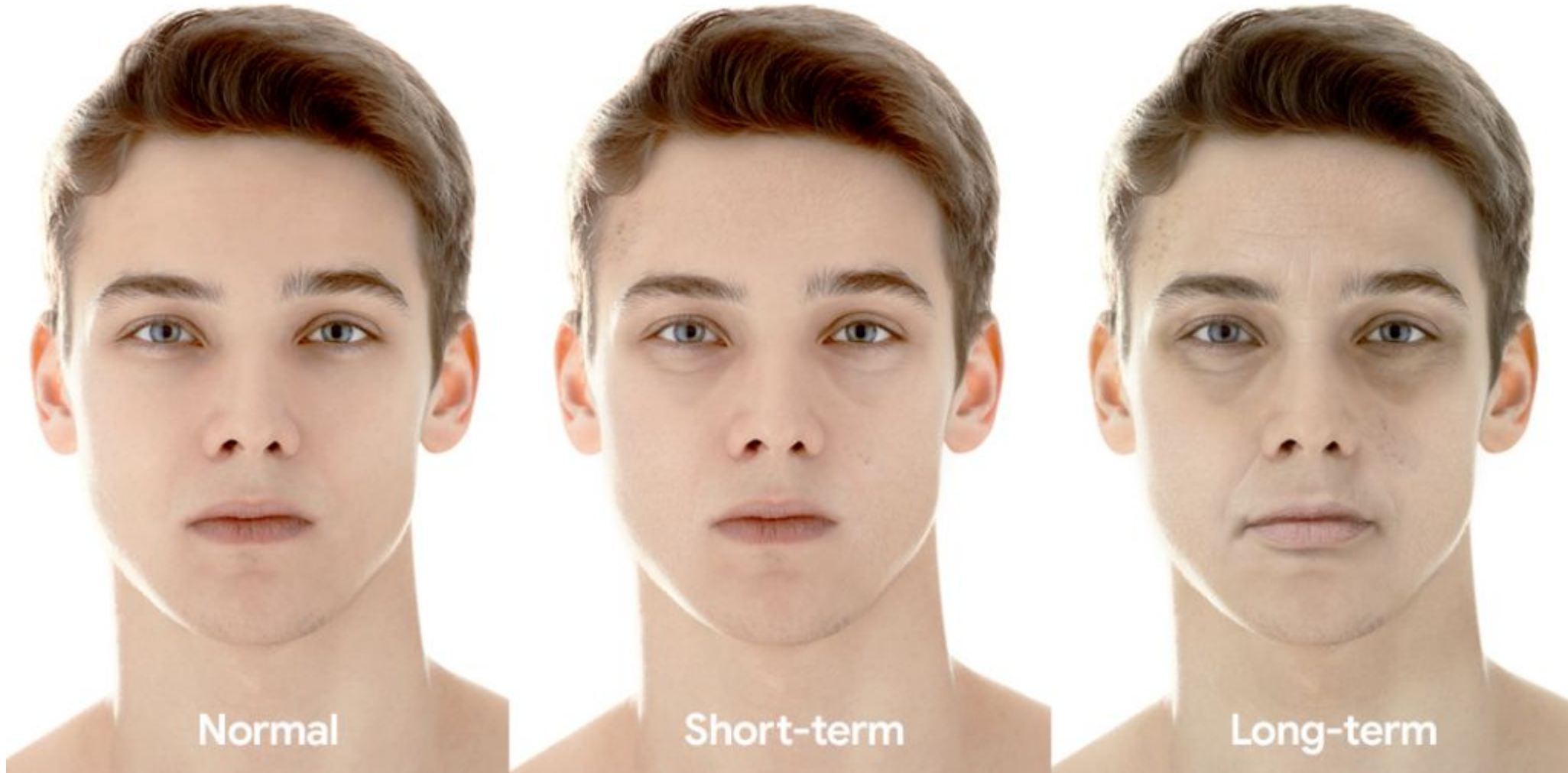
This is your *fight, flight, or freeze* response, also known as the *stress response*. It's a physiological reaction to something your body has perceived as a threat.

- 
- You fight the threat.
  - You flight from the situation.
  - You freeze and stay in place.



---

Just one week of sleeping fewer than six hours per night can lead to serious health issues, including the modification of over 700 genes, reports the *Huffington Post* on a study published in *PNAS* last year. Other symptoms of chronic sleep deprivation include everything from bloodshot eyes to quadrupled stroke risk.



# Causes of Stress in student life

The National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) notes some of the more common stressors for college students:

Increased academic demands

Being on your own in a new environment, Not getting enough sleep

Being lonely, Changes in family relations

Preparing for life after graduation, Financial responsibilities

Changes in your social life

Exposure to new people, ideas, and temptations, Too many things to do

# Symptoms of Distress

Longer recovery from injury

Headaches

Endocrine system problems

Fatigue

Sleep disturbances, whether it's sleeping too much or an inability to sleep

Gastrointestinal problems

Anxiety, Sweating palms/shaking hands

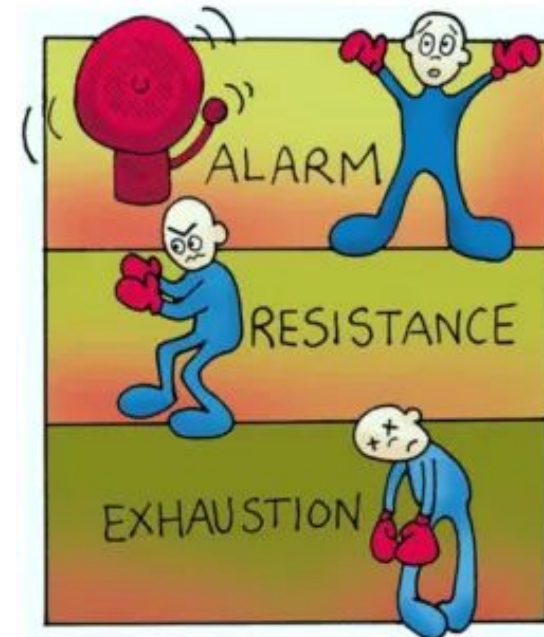
Vulnerability to heart problems and hypertension (high blood pressure)

Immune system less efficient

Inability to focus/lack of concentration

## Stress as a physiological Reaction: Han Selye's GAS (General Adaptation Syndrome)

Stressors produce a series of physiological reactions within us. The reaction to stressors occur in three stages:



Three reactions or stages of stress

### 1. Alarm

The alarm reaction stage refers to the initial symptoms the body experiences when under stress.

You may be familiar with the “fight-or-flight” response, which is a physiological response to stress. This natural reaction prepares you to either flee or protect yourself in dangerous situations. Your heart rate increases, your adrenal gland releases cortisol (a stress hormone), and you receive a boost of adrenaline, which increases energy. This fight-or-flight response occurs in the alarm reaction stage.



### 2. Resistance

After the initial shock of a stressful event and having a fight-or-flight response, the body begins to repair itself. It releases a lower amount of cortisol, and your heart rate and blood pressure begin to normalize. Although your body enters this recovery phase, it remains on high alert for a while. If you overcome stress and the situation is no longer an issue, your body continues to repair itself until your hormone levels, heart rate, and blood pressure reach a pre-stress state. Some stressful situations continue for extended periods of time. If you don't resolve the stress and your body remains on high alert, it eventually adapts and learns how to live with a higher stress level. In this stage, the body goes through changes that you're unaware of in an attempt to cope with stress.

Your body continues to secrete the stress hormone and your blood pressure remains elevated. You may think you're managing stress well, but your body's physical response tells a different story. If the resistance stage continues for too long of a period without pauses to offset the effects of stress, this can lead to the exhaustion stage.

Signs of the resistance stage include:

- irritability
- frustration
- poor concentration



### 3. Exhaustion

This stage is the result of prolonged or chronic stress. Struggling with stress for long periods can drain your physical, emotional, and mental resources to the point where your body no longer has strength to fight stress.

You may give up or feel your situation is hopeless. Signs of exhaustion include:

- fatigue
- burnout
- depression
- anxiety
- decreased stress tolerance

The physical effects of this stage also weaken your immune system and put you at risk for stress-related illnesses.

## Example

---

Zehra is a college student in the middle of her semester, she is strongly motivated to do well in her semester. One day she receives a call from her home that her friend is admitted in hospital. She leaves college and drives for 16 hours to hospital. Her friend is admitted, the shock and disbelief is very overwhelming for Zehra's initial alarm stage reaction.

---

Resistance stage: As her friend shows signs of recovery, but still will be admitted in the hospital for 3 days. There is little help Zehra can do about it and she feels she can't leave the situation and go back to college now. Every day she stays at hospital, she gets further behind in her classes.

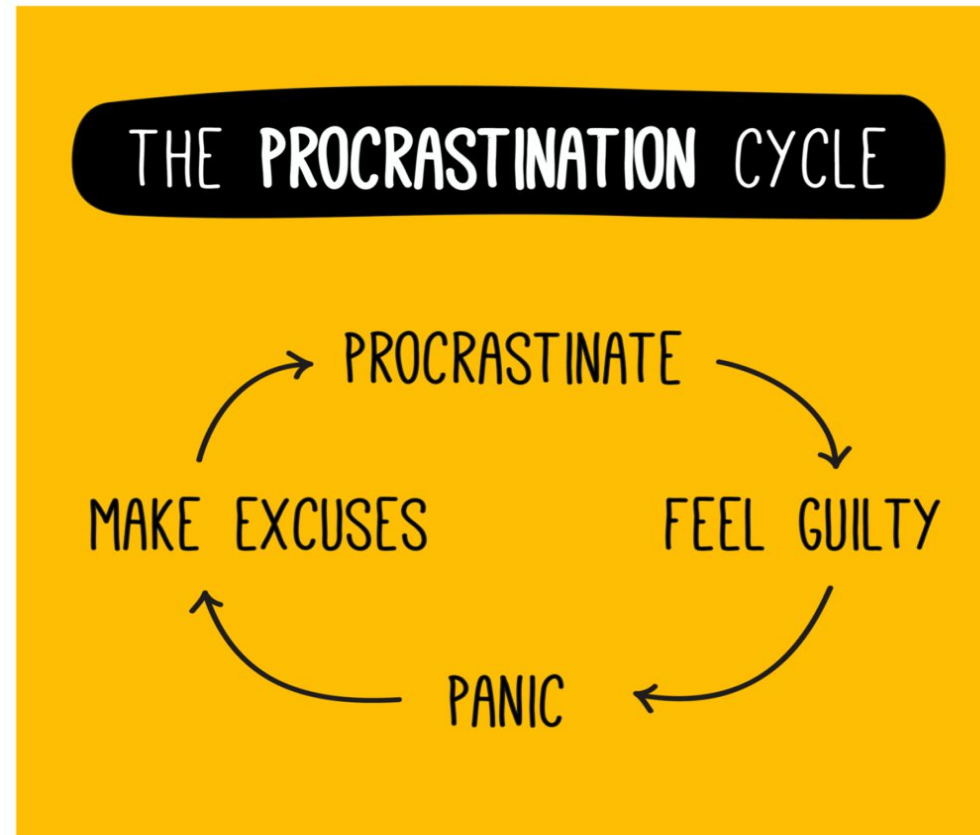
---

Zehra becomes more sensitive to her problems as she feels stuck. With time, she becomes vulnerable to physical disease or infections like respiratory difficulties, skin rashes high BP. If Zehra can not find any useful way to deal with the stress she is experiencing, her physical reaction on the still-present stressors may be exhaustion.

---

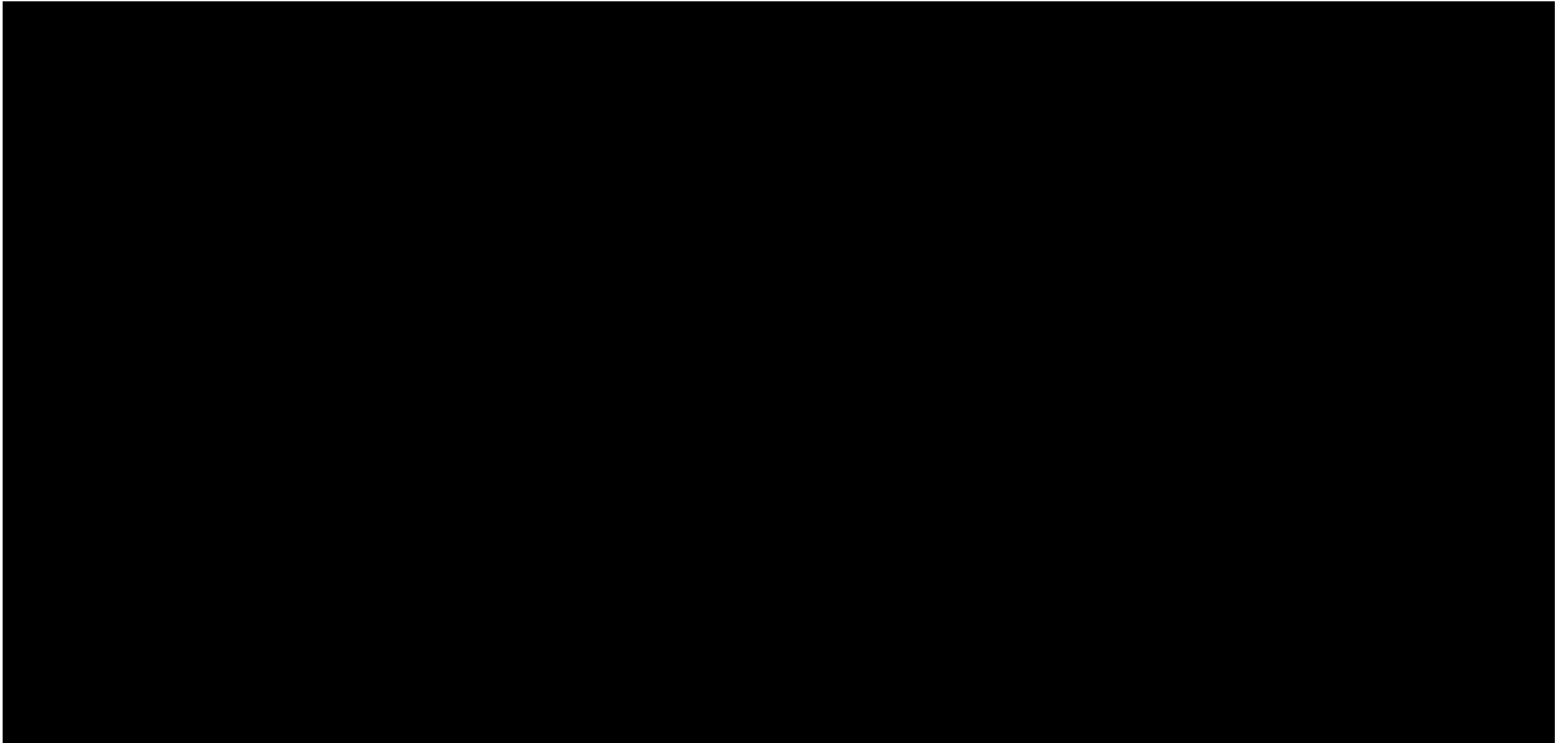
At this stage, her bodily resources are nearly depleted. She is running out of time and energy. She may break down psychologically-example depression or physically or both. In extreme situations if the exhaustion stage remains for a long time like years, can lead to death

## Ineffective strategies to deal with stressors



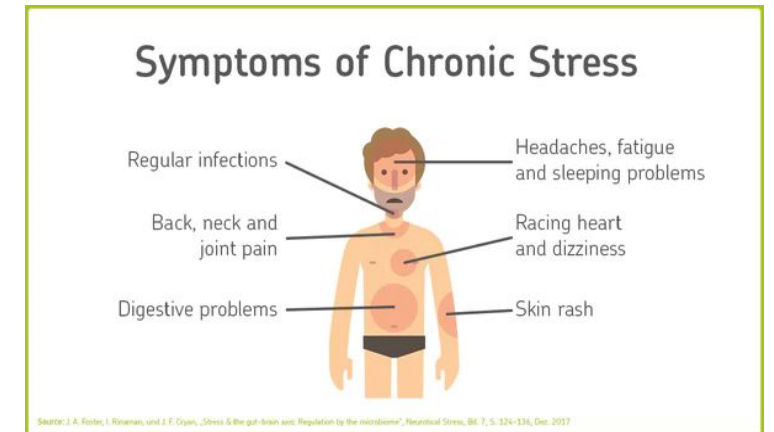


## **How stress affects your brain**



The long-term activation of the stress response system and too much exposure to cortisol and other stress hormones can disrupt almost all the body's processes. This puts you at higher risk of many health problems, including:

- Anxiety
- Depression
- Digestive problems
- Headaches
- Muscle tension and pain
- Heart disease, heart attack, high blood pressure and stroke
- Sleep problems
- Weight gain
- Problems with memory and focus



---

*That's why it's so important to learn healthy ways to cope with your life stressors.*

# How to deal with stress



# Effective strategies for coping with stressors

Identify the stressor

Reappraise the situation

Learn techniques of relaxation

Engage in physical exercise

Seek social support



30 minutes of daily moderate exercise



Mindfulness and meditation



Progressive muscle relaxation



Yoga



Visualization



Slow, deep breaths

---

When you know stress is coming, imagine yourself coping effectively

---

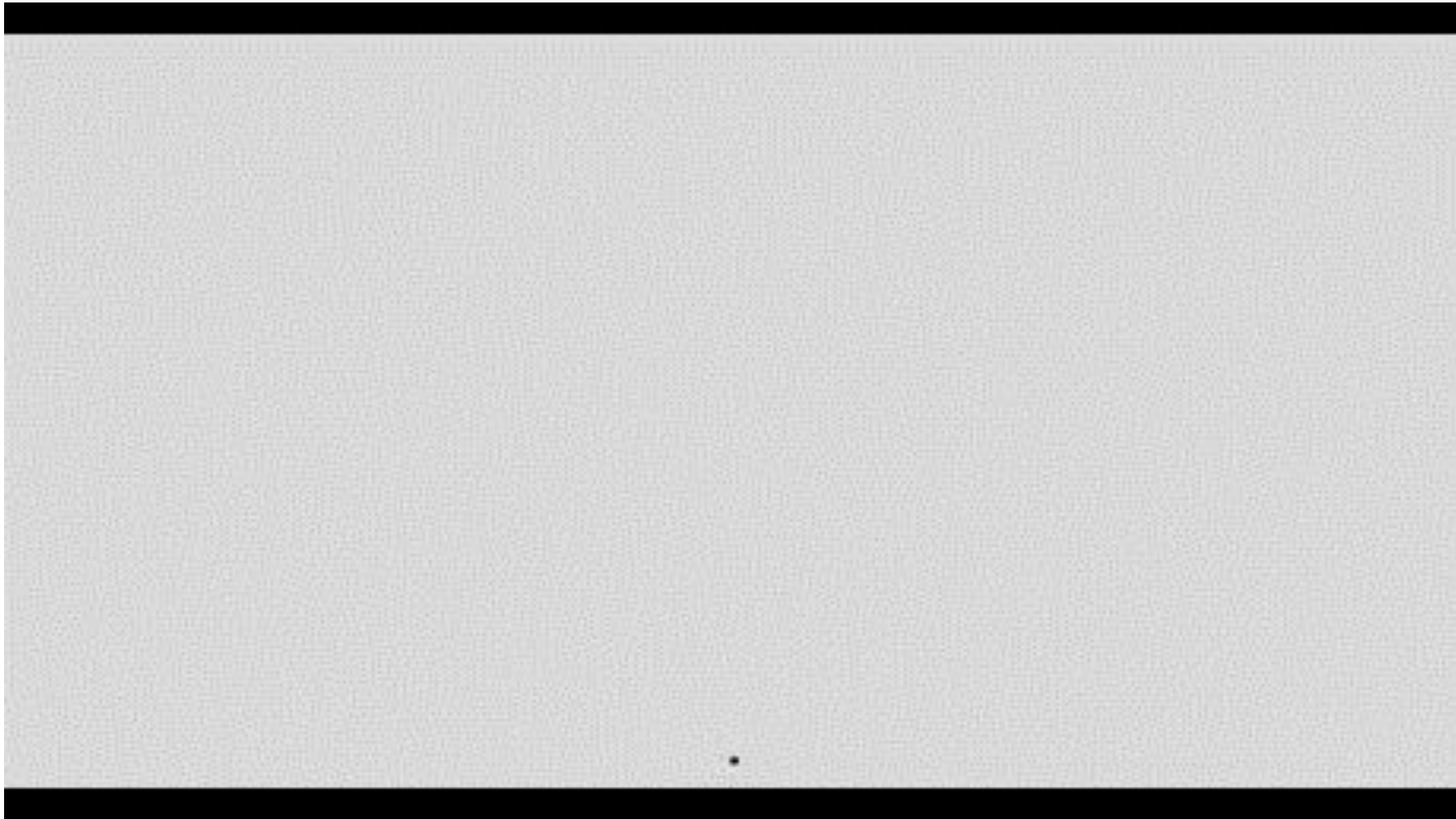
Only cope ahead for thing you know are coming (not "what ifs?")



### Steps to cope ahead

- Describe the situation
- Imagine the situation
- Imagine ways of coping effectively
- Imagine problems that could be barriers to coping effectively
- Imagine coping effectively with those barriers

# Deep Breathing Exercise



## Dealing with Stressful Situations: The Four A's

- **Avoid** the stressor.
- **Alter** the stressor.

- **Adapt** to the stressor.
- **Accept** the stressor.



# Healthy Ways To Relax And Recharge

Go for a walk.

Spend time in nature.

Call a good friend.

Sweat out tension with a good workout.

Write in your journal.

Take a long bath.

Light scented candles

