

Nurturing mental health and wellbeing.

A guide for GCSE students.

During this session
we are going to
cover.

What is mental health?

Common mental health
challenges in the final year of
college.

Academic pressure.

Seeking support, connecting
with others.

Break the stigma.

Creating
a supportive environment.

Healthy Lifestyle Habits.

Power of hobbies.

Exam stress management.

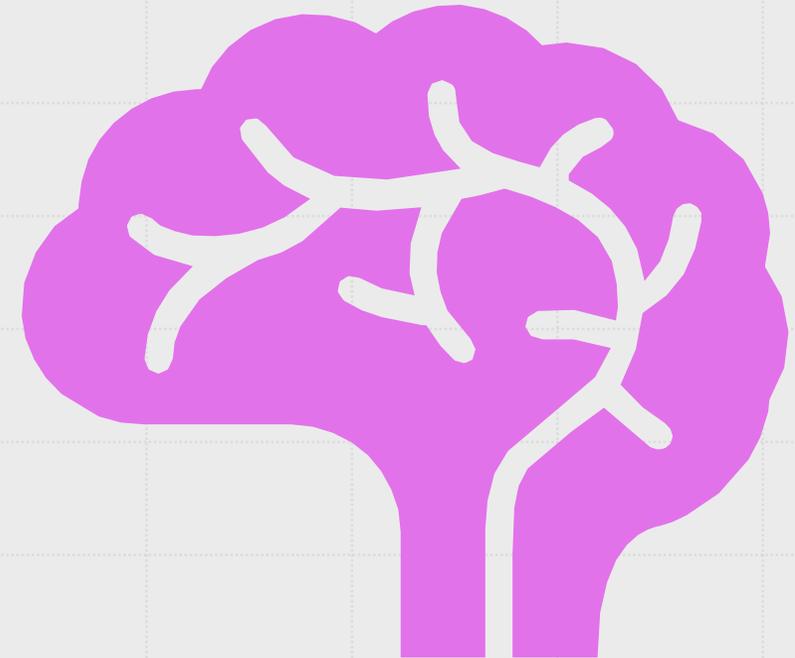
Coping strategies

Mindfulness and relaxation
techniques.

Online resources.

What is mental health?

- "Mental health is not just the absence of mental disorder. It is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community." (WHO)
- Some people have good mental health and some struggle with their mental health.



Good mental health is about your behaviors. What you do.

You care about yourself
and for yourself.

You love yourself not
being hard on yourself.

You look after your
physical health. (eat
well, sleep well,
move around).

Value yourself, you have
your own core beliefs.

Set yourself achievable
goals.

Remember mental
health is a continuum
it's part of the human
condition.

We have good days and
bad days and that's ok.

What is stress?

"Stress can be defined as a state of worry or mental tension caused by a difficult situation. Stress is a natural human response that prompts us to address challenges and threats in our lives. Everyone experiences stress to some degree. The way we respond to stress, however, makes a big difference to our overall well-being." WHO





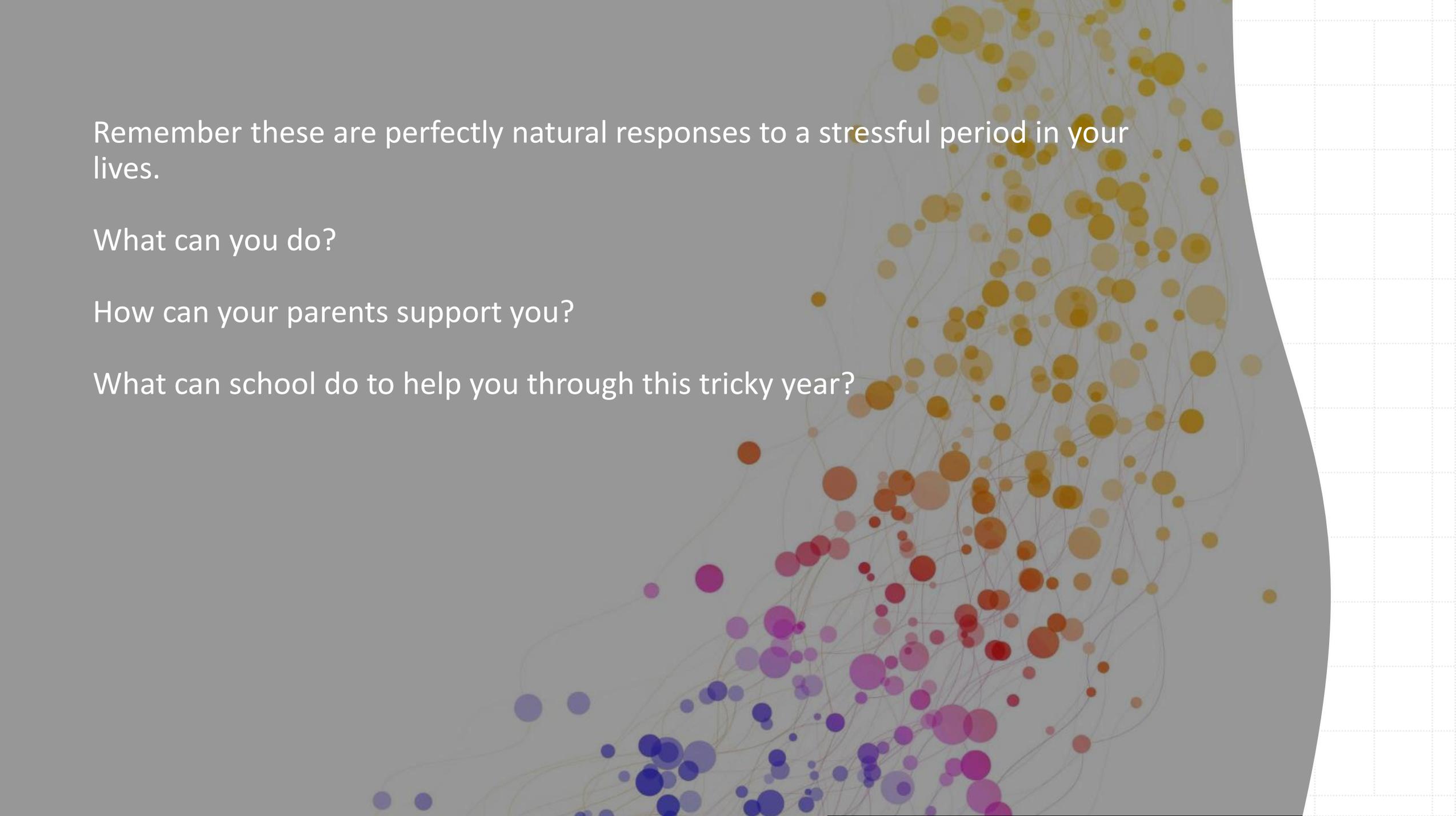
What are the main challenges and the biggest stressors in Y11.

- Important decisions need to be made, where to go next. What to study?
- Meeting college application deadlines.
- Leaving LVC.
- New school, new friends, different expectations.
- Workload and revision
- Exam - After 5 years and thousands of lessons you will face one of the biggest challenge in your lives yet.
- Prom...what to wear... how to make an entrance...
- And the wait....until result day.

What are the signs and symptoms of stress? How to balance academic stress and mental health?

- Everyone's experience is different.
- Some stress can help us to perform better.
- Some stress can make us feel low, moody, emotional, tearful, sad, overwhelmed, frustrated, anxious and worried
- Stress can cause physical symptoms; headaches, palpitation, sweating, muscle tensions, pain, or digestive discomfort.
- Stress can change our behavior; losing interest in going out or seeing friends, feeling angry and argumentative.





Remember these are perfectly natural responses to a stressful period in your lives.

What can you do?

How can your parents support you?

What can school do to help you through this tricky year?

Parents

Remember you cannot solve this, but you can be there for them.

Work with your child and check what they need and support them. Be flexible.

They may want to be left alone or want to tell you how frustrated they are. It is important to be heard and feel validated.

Regular meals and a good bedtime routine are important.

Encourage your children to take breaks during revision. Plan family activities.

Encourage your children to make time for things that they enjoy, listening to music, go for a walk...

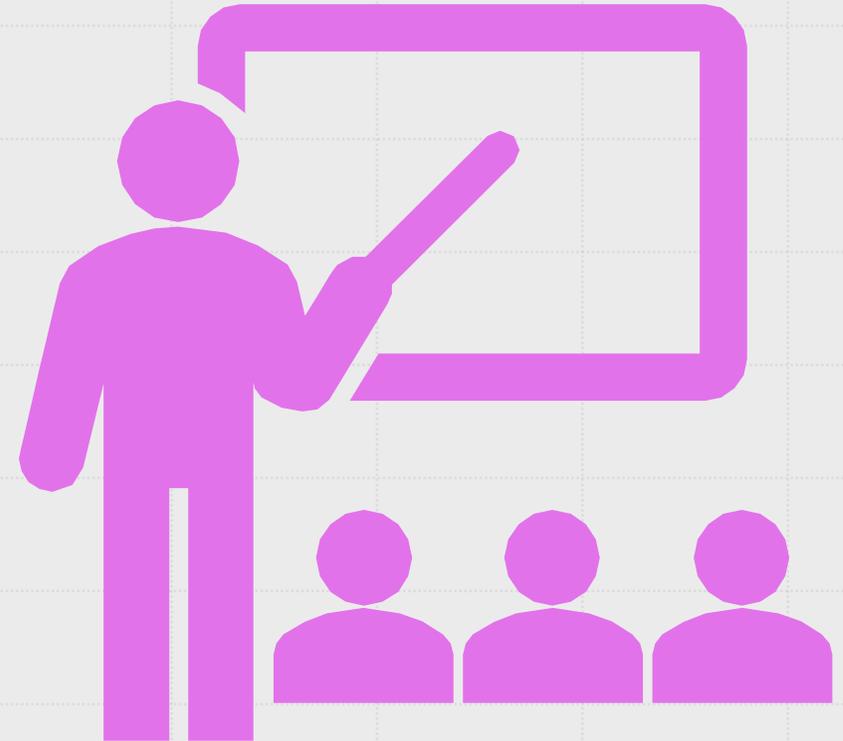
Reassure your children that you are proud of them no matter what.

Remain positive and hopeful – anxiety is catching (Secondary stress).

School

Resilience is all about communication and connections.

- There are people you can talk to- Form tutors, HOYs, Wellbeing mentors, subject teachers.
- You can get support with revision techniques, revision timetables and with coping strategies.
- Spend time with friends – connection is good - you are all going through the same thing.
- Find lunchtime clubs.
- Join revision sessions.
- Or make plans to revise with friends.



Students



Need to show up.



Break the stigma – it's ok to talk about how you feel and ask for support.



Accept that some things are out of your control.



However, you can control....



How much effort you put into your work.



What you chose to do for your own well-being. (limit social media use, who you spent time with)



To take care of your physical health. (food, water, exercise, sleep)

Tips to build healthy lifestyle habits.

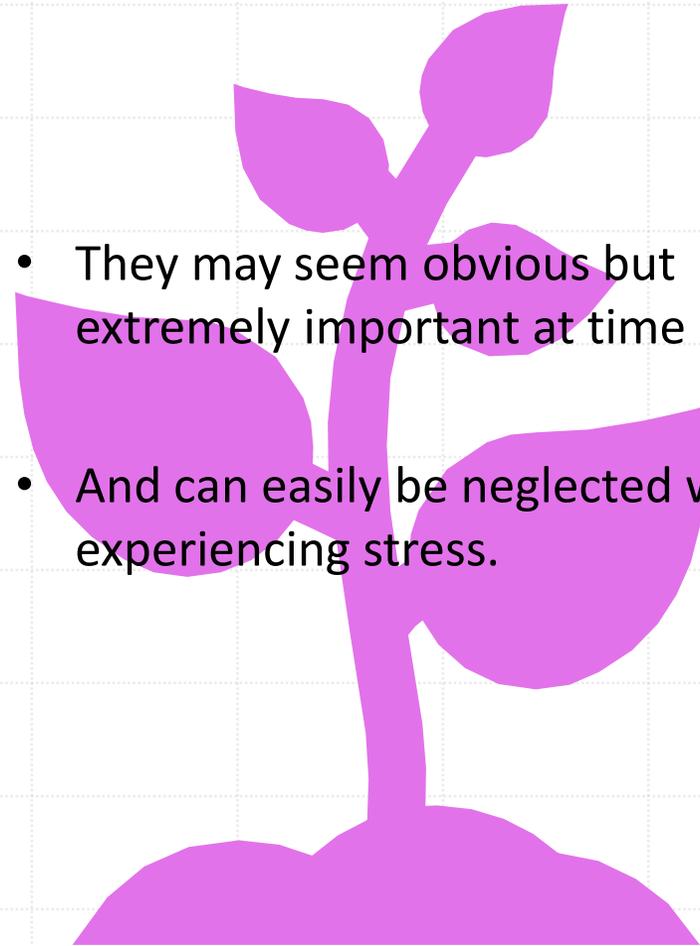
- Even small number of hormones can have a profound effect on our body functions.
- Increasing these hormones will lead to overall wellbeing.
- We feel better and more optimistic.
- Better able to cope with life's challenging situations.
- You may increase levels of these hormones with simple lifestyle changes.

 HAPPINESS CHEMICALS  (AND HOW TO HACK THEM)			
DOPAMINE THE REWARD CHEMICAL	OXYTOCIN THE LOVE HORMONE	SEROTONIN THE MOOD STABILISER	ENDORPHIN THE PAIN KILLER
Complete a task	Play with a pet	Meditate	Laughter exercise
Do self care activities	Hold hands	Go for a run	Essential oils
Eat some food	Hug your family	Sun exposure	Watch a comedy
Celebrate the little wins!	Give a compliment	Walk in nature	Dark chocolate
			

The four main elements of physical wellbeing.

- Sleep
- Eating well
- Drinking water
- Fresh air and exercise

- They may seem obvious but extremely important at time of stress.
- And can easily be neglected when experiencing stress.



How to manage stress?



Get active, it doesn't matter what you do. It will reduce stress and anxiety. Running, dancing or just going for walks will help to reduce the body's stress hormones (adrenaline, cortisol) and exercise will also help you to sleep better.



If you prefer something gentle, **yoga**, an ancient form of meditation, can relieve chronic stress, it can relax the mind and can help with concentration.



Mindfulness techniques involve learning how to remain focused on the present situation. Acknowledging what you are feeling and experiencing and managing thoughts in a rational way.



Breathing exercises are one of the best ways to reduce stress and anxiety. We underestimate the importance of breathing. When you get it right it makes a huge difference.

How to manage stress on the day of the exam.

Remember optimal level of stress is good.

If your body experiences an adrenaline rush, stretch it out move around or tap your arms and legs gently.

Grounding techniques help to calm the anxious mind. The 5-4-3-2-1 techniques is a simple yet effective method of regaining of your mind in stressful situation.

Breathing exercises will increase your intake of oxygen which helps to reduce blood pressure, slow heart rate and relive stress and anxiety.

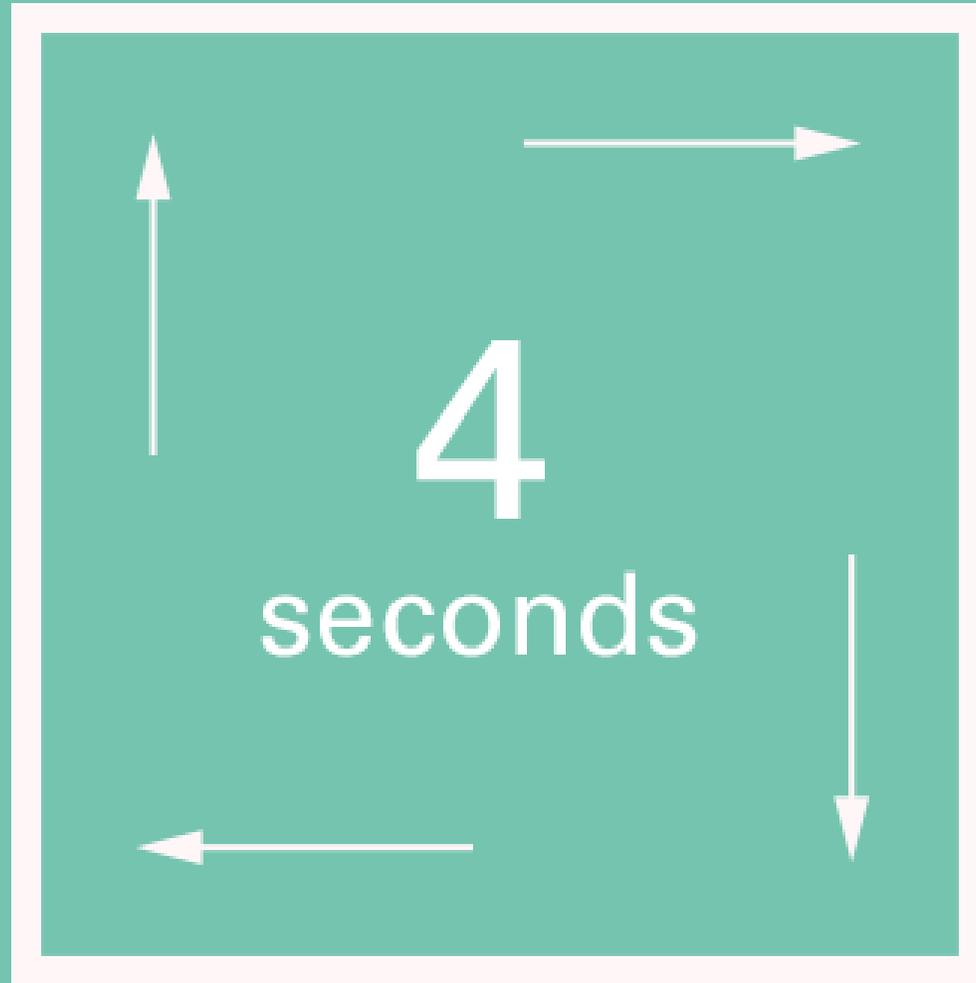
Choose a breathing technique that feels right for you. You should aim to allow your breath to flow as deeply as it feels comfortable. Your breathing should be gentle and regular.

Online resources



Breathe In

Hold



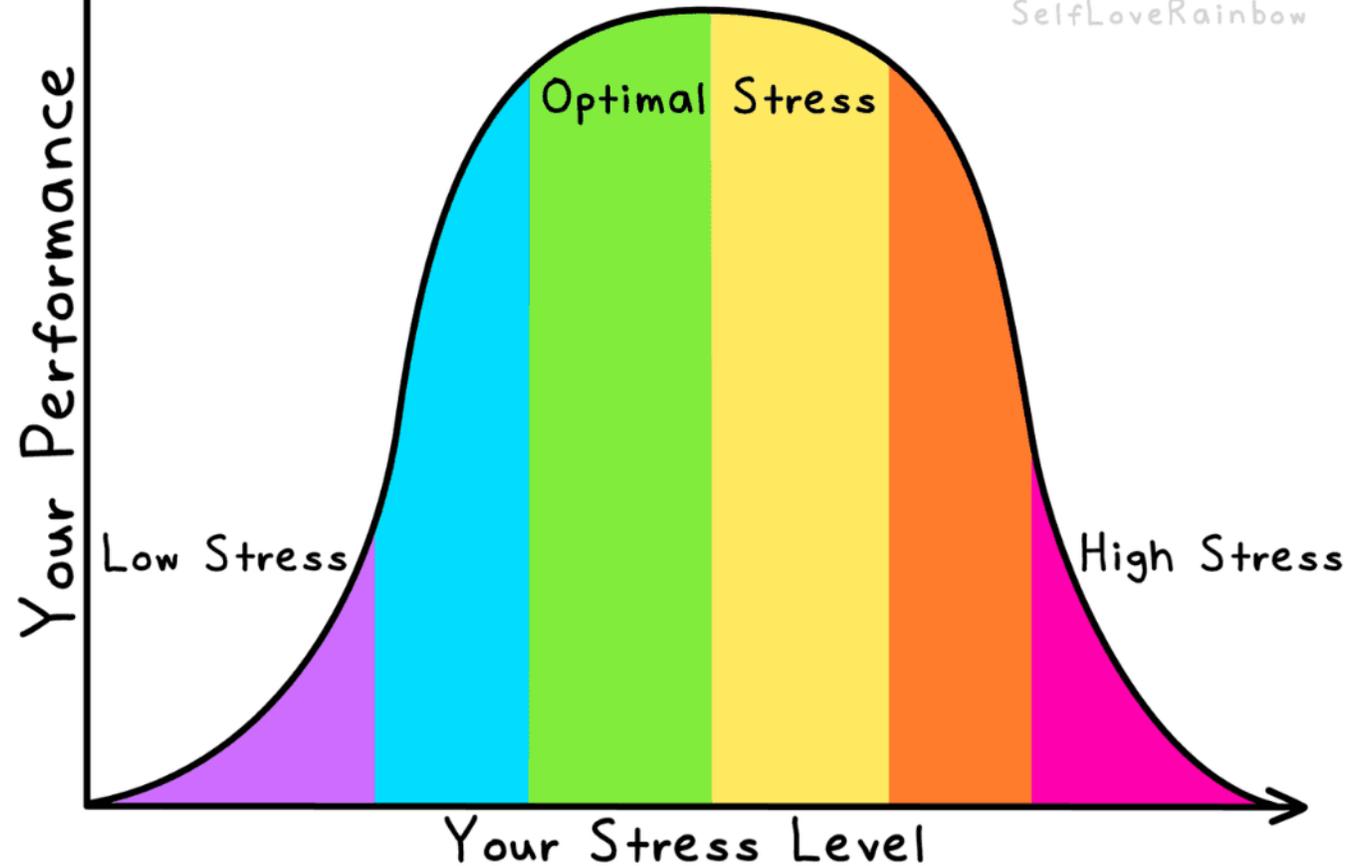
Hold

Breathe Out

Stress Performance Curve

Check in with your stress levels! Are you feeling **over-stressed**, **under-stressed**, or **in the middle**.

SelfLoveRainbow



Under-Stressed		Optimal Stress		Over-Stressed	
Bored	Unmotivated	Creative	Productive	Overwhelm	Burnout
Inactive	Listless	Focused	Motivated	Exhaustion	Anxiety
Relaxed	Laid Back	Engaged	In the Zone	Breakdown	Panic

20 TIPS FOR A BETTER SLEEP



Set an alarm to go to bed



Resist the urge to snooze



Keep your bedroom dark



Power down devices an hour before bed



Cut caffeine out by the afternoon



Exercise regularly



Ban pets from the bed



Make sure your mattress fits



Avoid heavy meals when it's late



Reduce your alcohol consumption



Nap wisely



Take deep breaths (meditate)



Try aromatherapy



Write down what's bugging you



Get checked for sleep apnea



Take a hot bath



Combat snoring



Paint your bedroom a tranquil colour



Try a new pillow



Avoid drinking too many liquids before bedtime



Teenagers need sleep to:

- maintain good physical health.
- regulate appetite and stay at a healthy weight.
- maintain energy levels.
- maintain good mental health, build resilience and reduce stress.
- learn, concentrate and remember things well.
- maintain healthy social relationships.

SLOW
DOWN

KEEP
CALM

BE
POSITIVE

TAKE
IT
EASY

UNPLUG

ENJOY
LIFE

HAVE
FUN

BREATHE

RELAX

GO
OUTSIDE

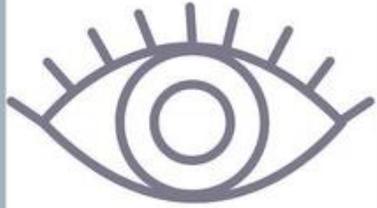


MEDITATE

5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1

GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

Experiencing your five senses is a calming practice that helps you stay in the present.



5

things
you can
see



4

things
you can
touch



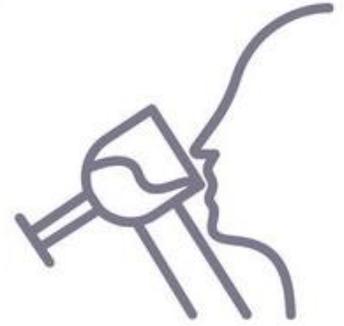
3

things
you can
hear



2

things
you can
smell



1

thing
you can
taste

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