
Student Mental Health

Solange Caovan-Hornbake, School Psychologist

— Bethany Banal, School Psychologist —

January 2021

Intro to Student Mental Health

- Monitoring mental health/well-being
- Recognizing signs of anxiety and depression
- How to respond when your student seems stressed
- Strategies for listening to your student in a helpful way that doesn't inflame their anxiety
- How to figure out how to help your student
- What to do if you believe that your student may be having suicidal ideation

EXPECTATIONS



REALITY



Monitoring Mental Health and Well-Being

- Some stress is normal
 - We are designed to think
 - Worry keeps us safe from perceived threat (fight, flight, or freeze)
 - Preservation of self, others, or status
- Expect stress to increase in high school
 - Media overstimulation, increased academic demands, social pressure, competition, executive functioning development, identity formation
- Mental health is essential to well-being
- Goal is empowering students to strive for balance, manage stress, develop coping skills, and feel comfortable accessing support

Be Mindful of the Message

- Failure is not an option
- Not achieving to his/her potential
- He/she has never had to work this hard
- He/she could be a straight A student
- We need to “fix” it
- Praise for achievement versus process
- Fixed versus growth mindset



Relationships

Peer Pressures

Fitting In

Decisions

School

Exams

Expectations

Competition

Career Choices

Bullying

Over Scheduling

Technology

Family Conflicts

College

Keeping Up

www.Bridget-Edwards.com

Stress Gone! How to Identify and Reduce Stress Easily

Stress and mental health awareness poll hosted by the social network After School

[National Student Stress Poll](#)

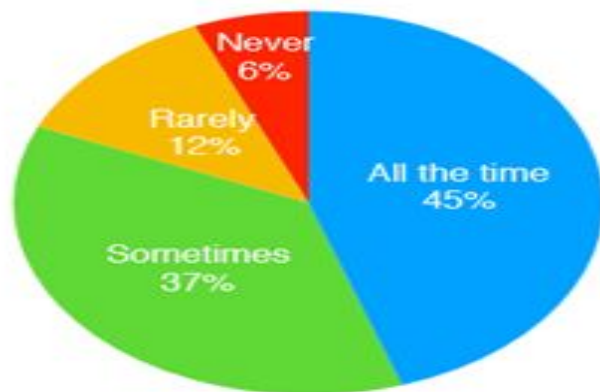
The poll, created to raise teens' awareness of mental health issues and available resources, was developed as part of After School's annual **Social Media Safety in Schools** conference.

The poll was taken by 35,878 teens spread throughout the United States. Questions asked included:

- How often are you stressed?
- What stresses you out the most?
- What are you most likely to do when you're stressed?
- What resources do you use to help?

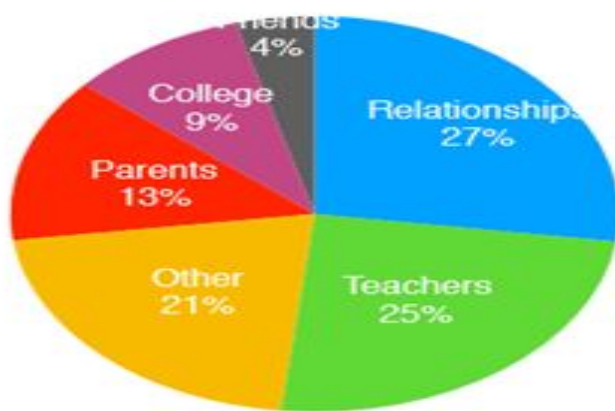
How often are you stressed?

Response	Total	Percentage
All the time	16,101	44.88%
Sometimes	13,146	36.64%
Rarely	4,370	12.18%
Never	2,261	6.30%



What stresses you out the most?

Response	Total	Percentage
Relationships	9,494	27.22%
Teachers	8,562	24.55%
Other	7,358	21.09%
Parents	4,695	13.46%
College	3,302	9.47%
Friends	1,470	4.21%



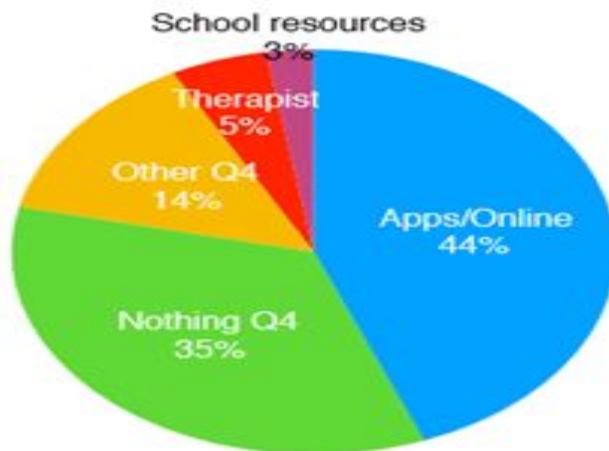
What are you most likely to do when you're stressed?

Response	Total	Percentage
Talk to Friends	7,469	22.43%
Eat	6,545	19.65%
Nothing Q3	5,618	16.87%
Other Q3	5,273	15.83%
Work-out	4,806	14.43%
Drugs/Drinking	3,595	10.79%

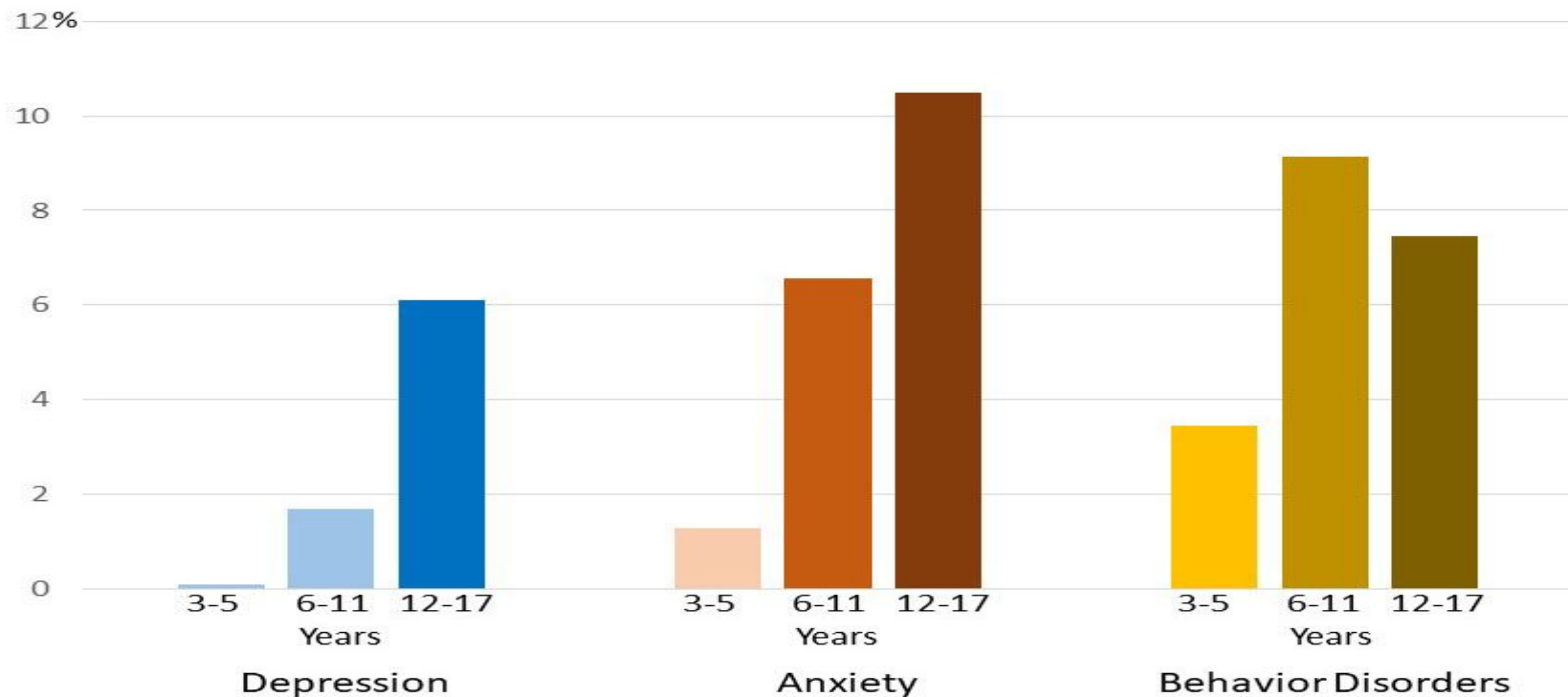


What resources do you use to help?

Response	Total	Percentage
Apps/Online	14,135	44.04%
Nothing Q4	11,082	34.53%
Other Q4	4,399	13.71%
Therapist	1,663	5.18%
School resources	816	2.54%



Depression, Anxiety, Behavior Disorders, by Age



Recognizing Signs of Anxiety and Depression

Physical:

- Headaches
- Stomach aches
- Racing heartbeat
- Shortness of breath
- Shaking
- Dizziness; feeling lightheaded
- Nausea
- Muscle tension
- Chest pains
- Changes in appetite
- Changes in sleep pattern



Recognizing Signs of Anxiety and Depression

Social-Emotional:

- Excessive worrying; nervousness
- Difficulty concentrating
- Sadness; moodiness; irritability; low frustration tolerance
- Indecisiveness
- Restlessness
- Fear or dread
- Feeling overwhelmed, inadequate, out of control
- Withdrawal from social interactions
- Avoidance of uncomfortable situations or tasks
- Loss of interest in enjoyed activities; lack of motivation



Recognizing Signs of Anxiety and Depression

Cognitive:

- Memory difficulties
- Difficulty shifting attention to relevant information
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty organizing and executing a plan
- Cognitive rigidity, mental inflexibility, getting “stuck”
- Perfectionism
- Compromised productivity
- Overthinking, impaired reasoning, cognitive distortions, creating distorted reality



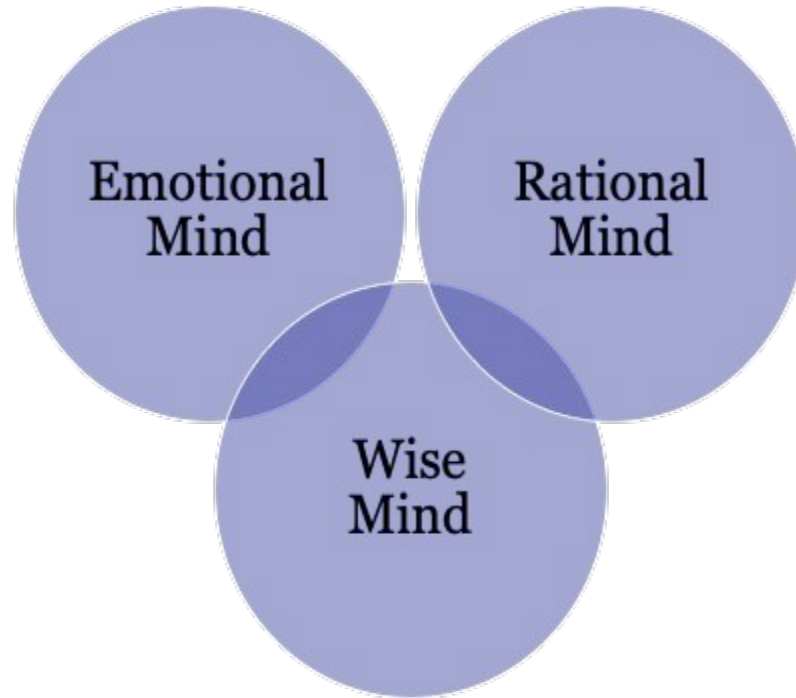
Cognitive Thinking Errors in Teens

- **Black and white/All or nothing thinking**
 - Seeing things in extremes, good or bad, perfection or failure, no middle ground
- **Catastrophizing**
 - Expecting the worst case scenario from a situation
- **Should/Shouldn't statements**
 - Putting pressure or unreasonable demands on self leading to guilt or inadequacy
- **Filtering**
 - Magnifying the negative aspects of a situation while minimizing the positive
- **Generalizing**
 - Concluding one bad event will result in a pattern of negative outcomes
- **Personalizing**
 - Assuming the blame even when you are not primarily responsible
- **Externalizing**
 - Blaming others when you are primarily responsible or ignoring your role
- **Minimizing**
 - Minimizing the importance or impact of something that did not go well
- **Mind reading**
 - Believing you know what others think or why they act as they do
- **Emotional Reasoning**
 - Confusing feelings with facts

Addressing Cognitive Distortions

- We ALL do it!
- **Self-defeating thoughts** can lead to **negative emotions**, which can lead to **self-defeating actions** and contribute to mental health concerns
- Teens often lack life experience to contradict negative thinking patterns
- **Goal:** Empower them to identify, challenge and restructure distorted thinking to help with emotion regulation
- Model working through your own
 - **Check** for distorted thinking;
 - **Collect** evidence to get an accurate picture;
 - **Challenge** the initial thoughts with the evidence
- Reality check/focus on the facts. “Is that a fact or your feeling?”
- Challenge conclusions. “Does all of the evidence fit that conclusion?” Encourage alternative outcomes.
- Encourage acknowledging shades of grey
- “How would someone else see it?” or “Would everyone see it this way?”
- “What would you tell a friend who...”
- Hold them accountable: “Did you or didn’t you?”
- Re-frame the impact: “If it had happened to me, i might feel...”

Encouraging Mindful Responding: The Three Minds



How to Respond When Your Student Seems Stressed

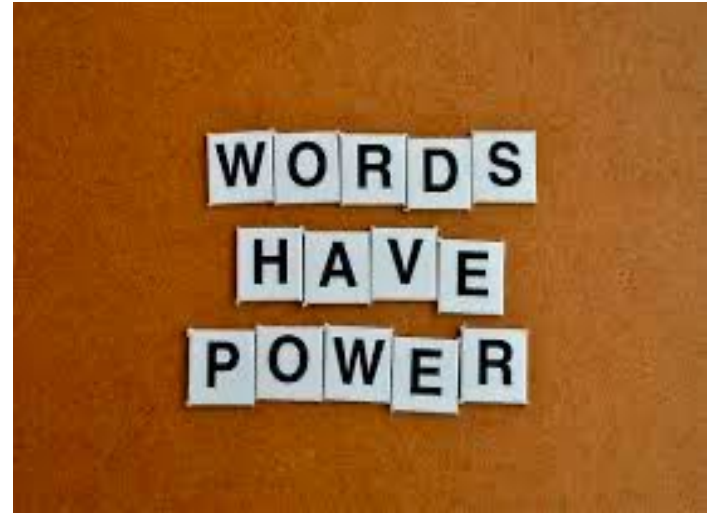
- Stay calm
- Expect pushback
- Validate without judgment
- Normalize
- Troubleshoot
 - Can't remove all of their stressors and avoidance is risky
 - Learning some distress tolerance is necessary
 - CAN help them to feel understood, empower them to use problem-solving and coping skills, and help them obtain additional support if needed
 - Not one size fits all
 - Home - school collaboration



Talking About It: Don'ts

- Avoid shooting down ideas right away
 - Take the time to listen to their POV and engage in a meaningful conversation if you disagree

- Avoid making assumptions, judgments, dismissing their concerns or invalidating their feelings:
 - "Don't worry about it"
 - "Just relax"
 - "It's not worth getting this upset over"
 - "You're only a teenager"
 - "At least..."
 - <https://youtu.be/1Ewwgu369lw>



Talking About It: Do's

- Stay calm, present and engaged
- Give them time to feel ready to talk
- Ask questions and have a conversation
 - Can you describe how you are feeling?
 - What do you think might be going on for you right now?
 - What do you need from me?
 - I'm here for you
- Try to see the situation from their POV
- Keep them in the present
 - Validate their feelings and reflect back
 - What can we do in the next __ minutes to help?
- Support talking openly about mental health, self-care and potentially seeking additional support



What to Do If You Believe Your Student May Be Having Suicidal Ideation: Warning Signs

- Talking about or threatening suicide
- Mood swings
- Changes in routine
- Withdrawal from family and friends
- Risky or self-destructive behaviors
- Giving away possessions
- Describing feelings of hopelessness, giving up, or feeling trapped
- Talking about being a burden

Suicide Risk Factors

- Psychiatric condition, such as depression or anxiety
- Family history of mental illness
- Previous suicide attempts
- Substance use/abuse
- Bullying issues
- Interpersonal stressors
- Social isolation
- Loss, rejection, or feeling unaccepted
- Impulsive tendencies
- Access to lethal means
- Barriers to accessing support
- Fear of stigma of accessing support
- Cultural or religious beliefs of nobility



Suicide Protective Factors

- Connectedness to others in family, peer, and community groups
- Healthy coping skills, problem-solving skills, and adaptability to change
- Self-esteem and a sense of purpose
- Access to effective medical and behavioral healthcare



What To Do If You Believe Your Student May Be Having Suicidal Ideations: Understanding

- Likely experiencing intense emotional distress
- Feelings of hopelessness
- Lack of control
- Unable to cope
- Likely not wanting to die, but seeing no other way to stop their pain

What To Do If You Believe Your Student May Be Having Suicidal Ideations: Talking About It

- [Teen Suicide Prevention](#)
- Take them seriously
- Don't dismiss it as attention-seeking or dramatic behavior
- Talking about suicide does not plant the seed; it can help them to identify the problem and start to address ways to get help



What To Do If You Believe Your Student May Be Having Suicidal Ideations: Talking About It

- **Ask your teen to share whether a specific incident led to suicidal thoughts.**
 - Ask a question such as, "What happened? I want to know more, it might help to talk about it."
- **Don't invalidate your teen's feelings.**
 - Avoid saying things that may be perceived as empty or unhelpful such as, "You should appreciate all you have in life," or "I think you're overreacting." Those reactions downplay your teen's pain.
- **Encourage your teen to describe what they're feeling.**
 - Say something like, "I had no idea things were so bad for you, talk to me about what's going on."
- **Show acceptance.** Listen without invalidating, judging or disagreeing with their statements or feelings.

What To Do If You Believe Your Student May Be Having Suicidal Ideations: Offering Emotional Support

- **Be specific, direct, and compassionate:**
 - Say something like "I do not want you to hurt yourself and will do everything possible to keep you safe."
- **Explain that you have heard them:**
 - Say something like "It sounds like you feel like there is no way out"
- **Let them know you are worried:**
 - Be clear about your concern for their safety and well-being
- **Provide them with reassurance and unconditional love:**
 - Say something like "You are not alone. I am here to help you now that I understand how bad things really are for you."

Safety is Priority

- Ask if they have a specific plan
 - A specific plan indicates higher risk for action
- Remove or secure any dangerous items in the home
- Do not leave them alone
- **If there is an immediate danger or life-threatening situation, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Room**
- If there is a psychiatric emergency, call [Emergency Mental Health Services, 703-228-5160](#) for Arlington Behavioral Healthcare Services
- For urgent mental health needs, contact [CR2](#) (844-627-4747) for Children's Regional Crisis Response
- Go to [In Crisis Need Help Now?](#) on the APS website for important phone numbers, tips for students and families, and links to emergency information.

Children's Regional Crisis Response (CR2)

CR2 Provides 24-hour rapid response to all youth (17 & younger) facing a mental health and/or substance use crisis. Their highly trained and compassionate counselors provide phone screening and face-to-face assessment, intervention, and support so that your child and family may continue with life as planned. Call 844-N-Crisis (844-627-4747) or visit <http://cr2crisis.com>

- Aggression or Self Harm
- Thoughts of Suicide
- Threatening Behaviors
- Dangerous Decision Making
- Extreme Social Isolation
- Property Destruction
- Hallucinations / Delusional Thinking
- Loss of Coping Skills



Arlington County Behavioral Healthcare Services for Children

- We promote the emotional and psychological well-being of Arlington County youth and families.
- We provide services to children, teens and their families to prevent mental health and substance abuse problems from developing or becoming more serious.
- We help your child/teen overcome problem thoughts, feelings or behaviors that interfere with daily life, and assist them in developing skills for healthy living.
- Learn more: ([English](#) / [Español](#))
- **Same Day Access Intake Assessments** (Hours: **Mon.** 10 a.m.-2 p.m./**Tues.** 8 a.m.-2 p.m./**Wed.** 10 a.m.-6 p.m./**Fri.** 10 a.m.-2 p.m.)
- **Same Day Access FAQs:** ([English](#) / [Español](#)), or call [703-228-1560](tel:703-228-1560).
- **NOTE:** Same Day Access resumed 4/13/20. Intakes, case management, and therapy appointments are conducted virtually (via Telehealth or phone). Families and partners, call [703-228-1560](tel:703-228-1560) with questions and to schedule an appointment for an intake. <https://family.arlingtonva.us/childrens-behavioral-healthcare/>

How to Figure Out How To Help Your Student

Worried your child may attempt suicide/self-harm? Not sure what to do? Call:

Crisis Link Regional Hotline: **703-527-4077** or Text: **CONNECT to 85511**

National Hope Line: **1-800-SUICIDE (1-800-784-2433)**

LGBTQ Lifeline: **1-866-488-7386**

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: **1-800-273-TALK (1-800-273-8255)**

SAMHSA National Helpline: **1-800-662-HELP (1-800-662-4357)**

School-Based Mental Health Resources



Each APS secondary school offers the support of a School-Based Mental Health Team, which includes school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and substance abuse counselors.

To contact a member of the School-Based Mental Health Team at your student's school, please [visit this page](#) and scroll down. You'll see each school and a link to their Counseling Department, which includes member of our Student Services teams. Additionally, here are lists of [school psychologists](#) and [social workers](#) for each school.

Basic Good Habits

- Healthy balanced diet
- Drink water
- Avoid caffeine
- Get enough sleep (10 - 12 hours)
- Follow a routine
- Exercise
- Spend time outdoors
- Explore mindfulness
- Practice deep breathing
- Spend time on enjoyed activities; try new ones
- Establish parameters around screen time
- Talk about it; family wellness time
- Focus on strengths and growth mindset
- Find what works for YOU



The Arts for Mental Health

- Releases feel-good chemicals in the brain
- Promotes:
 - Self-confidence
 - Self-expression
 - Creativity
 - Centering
 - Focus
 - Reduces stress
 - Cognitive skills
 - Sense of community
- [This is your brain on crafting](#)
- [Playing an Instrument Can Benefit Mental Health](#)



Music and Mood: Playlists and Playing

Sources of Strength Playlists:

[Calming](#)

[Coping](#)

[Connecting](#)

[Creativity](#)

[#WhatHelpsUs Soundtrack Request Line](#)



Mindful Movement

- Releases endorphins
- Benefits:
 - Boosts energy
 - Reduces muscle tension
 - Stress Reduction
 - Increases health and well-being
 - Interrupts immobilization stress response
 - Increases self-esteem
- [Mindfulness with JusTme](#)
- [Mindfulness & Meditation Videos for Stress Relief](#)
- [Brain Breaks](#)
- [Mental Health Benefits of Exercise](#)



Apps for Teens: Meditation, Mindfulness, and Relaxation



Calm



Aura



Headspace



Mood Track Social Diary



Stop Breathe Think



Relax Melodies



Simple Habit



Colorfy

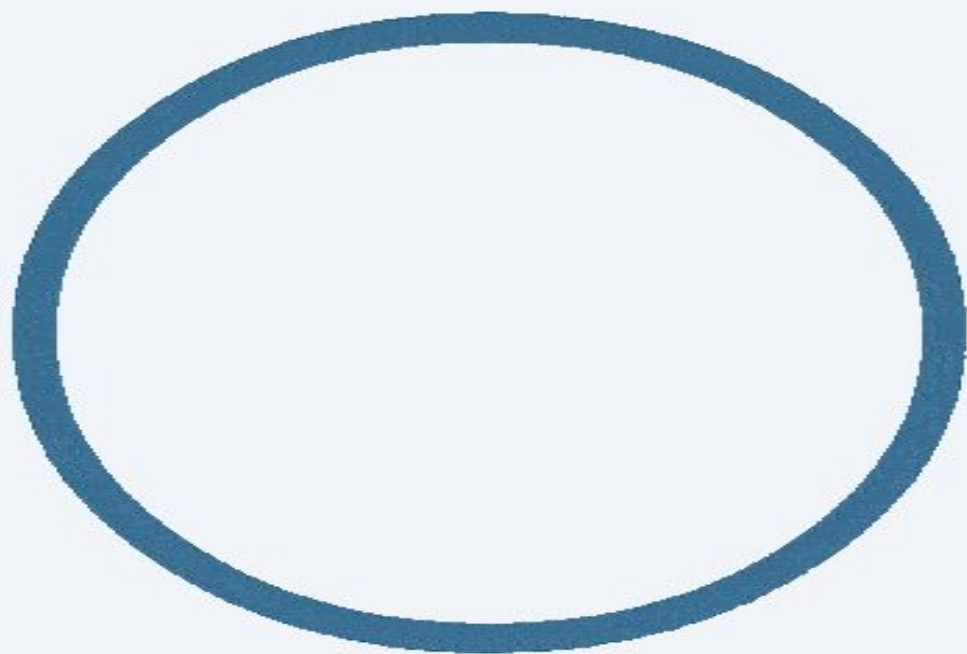
Virtual Calm Room

Virtual Calm Room

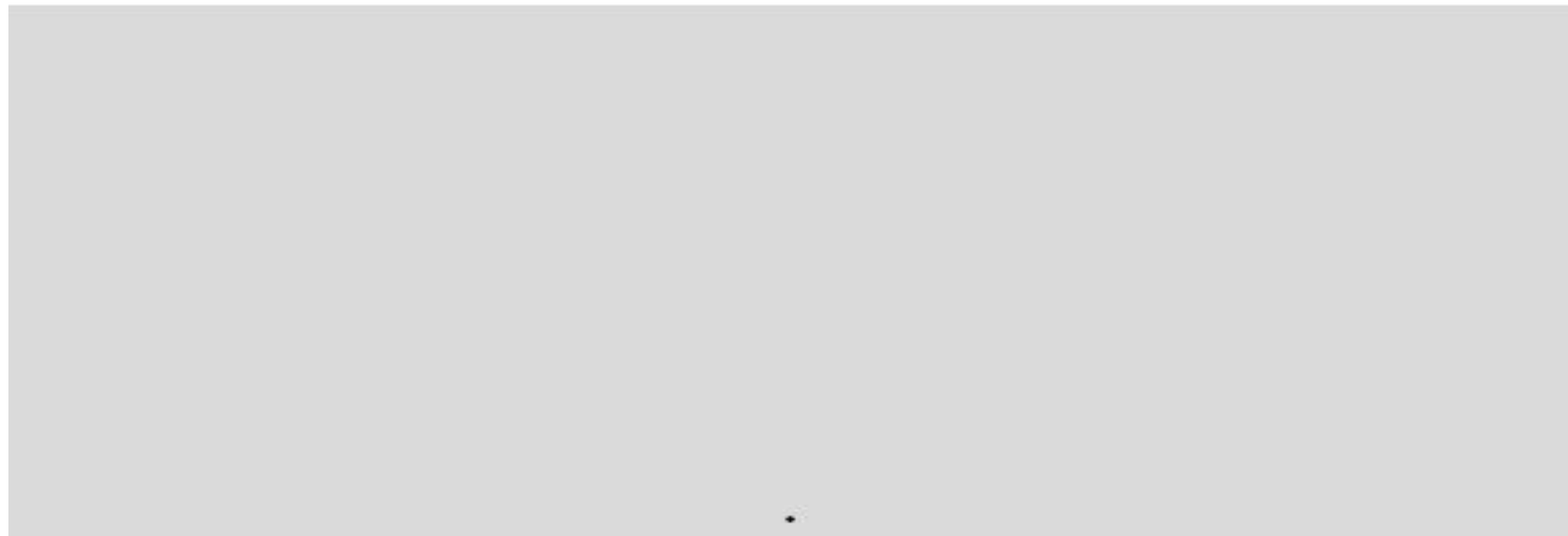
- Sounds and Music
- Visual Relaxations
- Guided Meditations
- Coloring and Create
- Live Animal Cameras
- Apps and Online Resources



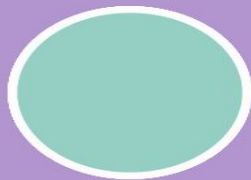
Practice this Exercise



**Sync your breathing with
this**



#DESTRESSMONDAY



BREATHE WITH THE SHAPE

INHALE



Resources for Families

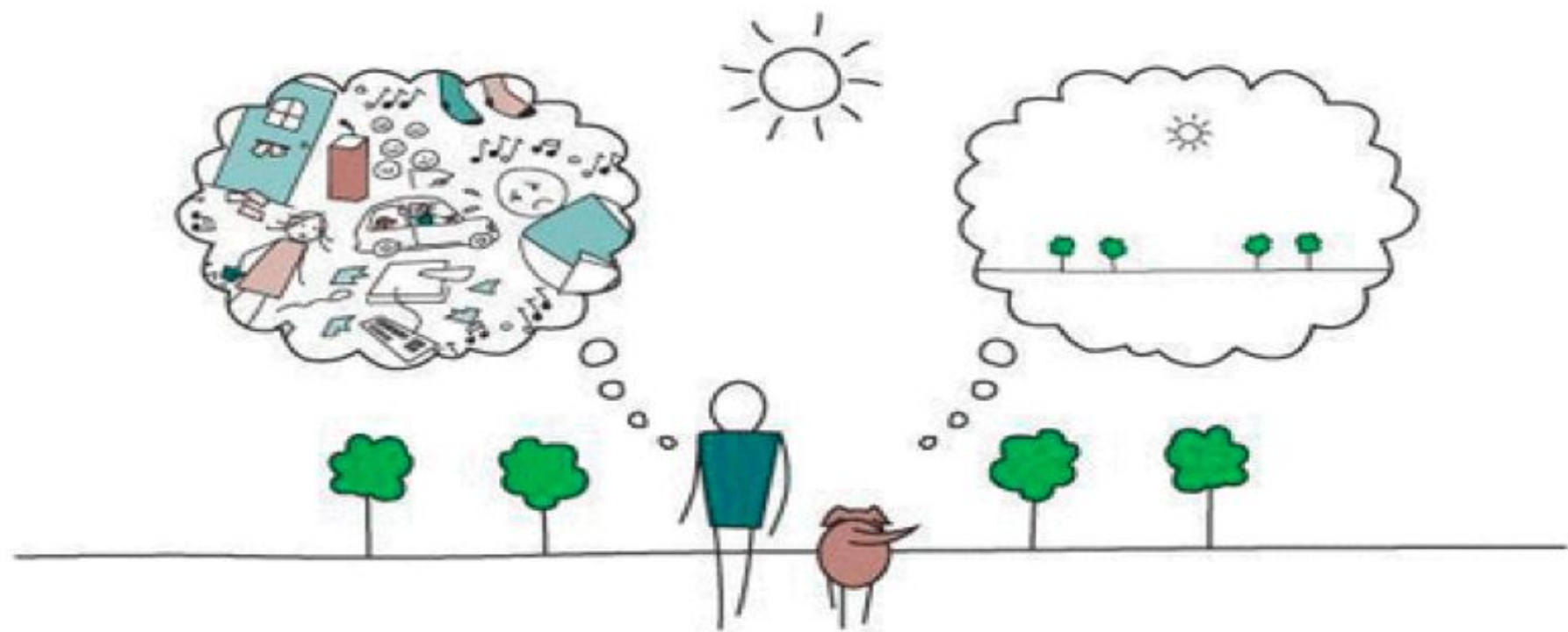
- Sources of Strength
 - Focus on Hope, Help, and Strength
- Family Resources
 - <https://sourcesofstrength.org/wp-content/uploads/Resources-for-practicing-Strength-at-home-copy-1.pdf>
- Daily Activities
 - <https://sourcesofstrength.org/wp-content/uploads/Daily-Activities-Checklist-Ordered-by-Strength-1.pdf>



Podcasts for Parents

- [Talking to Teens](#)
 - Parent-teen researcher Andy Earle talks with various experts about the art and science of parenting teenagers.
- [Parenting Great Kids](#)
 - Dr. Meg Meeker, the country's trusted authority on parenting, teens, & children's health, offers practical insights to help parents simplify. The pediatrician, mother, & best selling author engages with experts & parents to take on relevant issues, answer real questions, & provide simple hope & encouragement to every parent.
- [Their Own Devices](#)
 - Join Marc Groman, an Obama White House tech and privacy adviser, and David Reitman, an adolescent medical doctor, for candid discussions and helpful tips about screen time, social media, sexting, privacy, online gaming, and other challenges facing parents today.
- [Your Teen with Sue and Steph](#)
 - From interviews with experts and authors to discussions of trending topics and personal stories, Your Teen with Sue and Steph is an essential guide for raising teens today.





Mind Full, or Mindful?

Mental health is not a destination, but a process. It's about how you drive, not where you're going



HealthyPlace.com

Thank you to:

Yorktown PTA

<https://www.yhspta.org/>

Parent Resource Center

<https://www.apsva.us/special-education/parent-resource-center/>

Contact Us:

Solange Caovan-Hornbake solange.caovan@apsva.us

Bethany Banal bethany.banal2@apsva.us