



Teacher Mental Health: Let's Be Real

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Ingrid Weiss Slikkers, LMSW, CCTP, CCTS-I, CFTP

Hope Malabrigo, BSW Intern

A Study of Kids and the Pandemic

- Case of depression rose from **12.9% to 25.2%**
- Anxiety cases increased from **11.6% to 20.5%**

Resilience

- Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors.

The Stress Response

- When stress presents itself, the amygdala reaches out to the hippocampus and cortisol is released
- Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn, Flock

Cortisol Flooding

- A little cortisol released in a crisis is calming, but too much can cause flooding.
- When the brain is flooded with cortisol, it pools on the frontal cortex, this leads to changes in attention, impulse control, sleep, fine motor control, dysregulation in many functions and can affect the frontal cortex from fully developing.
- Cortisol levels that remain too high for too long can lead to depression and decreased pre-frontal cortex functioning.

The Brain is an Organ

- The brain is an organ and we need to do things in order to take care of our brain
- Things that will benefit our brain
 - Sleep
 - Exercise
 - Nutrition
 - Water
 - Sunshine
 - Nature

Faith Based Optimism vs Toxic Positivity

- Signs of Toxic Positivity:
 - Being unable to share your true feelings
 - Being ashamed for having negative emotions
 - Constantly hiding how you genuinely feel
 - Comparing the situation with someone else who 'has it worse'
- To name it is to tame it

How to Tell if your Cortisol is Flooding

- Overreacting
- Misdirected emotional outbursts
- Being "checked out"/numbness
 - Binging Netflix/YouTube/Facebook/Tik Tok, etc.
 - Sports
 - Video games
 - Food
 - Substance use/other addictive behavior
- Isolating
- Overwhelming feeling that does not decrease

Community

- Survey in June 2021 showed that close to half of North Americans report having 3 or fewer close friends
- SAFE, vulnerable community is a necessity!
- <https://www.americansurveycenter.org/research/the-state-of-american-friendship-change-challenges-and-loss>

Nervous System

- Sympathetic: Fight or Flight
- Parasympathetic: Rest and Digest (Restore)

Breathing Techniques

- Businessman posture
- Inhale grace, exhale praise
 - Exhaling is longer than when you inhale

The Vagus Nerve

- What is the Vagus Nerve
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a-NCs11OU5w>
- Stimulating the Vagus Nerve
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QSAvPgqQ2L0>

Gratitude

- <https://lifesolutions.io/gratitude-can-heal-trauma-and-change-your-life/>
- <https://why.org/segments/your-brain-on-gratitude-how-a-neuroscientist-used-his-research-to-heal-from-grief/>

Brain Breaks

- <https://www.weareteachers.com/brain-breaks-for-kids/>
- <https://www.pgsd.org/cms/lib07/PA01916597/Centricity/Domain/43/Brain%20Breaks.pdf>

Other Resources:

- Gentry, J. E., Baranowsky, A.B., & Rhoton, R. (2017). Trauma competency: an active ingredients approach to treating posttraumatic stress disorder. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 95*, 279-287. Doi: 10.1002/jcad.12142..
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/09/well/mind/breathe-exhale-repeat-the-benefits-of-controlled-breathing.html>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/workings-well-being/201703/how-heal-the-traumatized-brain>
- <https://www.goodtherapy.org/learn-about-therapy/types/breathwork>
- https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/hands_on_research
- <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/1088868316650307>
- <https://reader.elsevier.com/reader/sd/pii/S1878929317301962?token=320B9922F0728663DA8A4923EB0BCB7DE83E27EF41786018A6985E54993CB6B1C955F9579F6F30F99377AA423D41168A>