

Managing Stress and Anxiety Related to Covid-19

Dr. Alyssa Rheingold, Ph.D.
Professor
Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences



Objectives

- Define stress and anxiety and recognize causes
- Describe the relationship between resilience and stress.
- Identify 2-3 tips/skills to increase personal resilience.
- Describe mindfulness and ways to integrate in daily life
- Practice mindfulness skill in session.



Stress *is not necessarily something bad = it all depends on how you take it. The stress of exhilarating, creative successful work is beneficial, while that of failure, humiliation or infection is detrimental*

Seyle 1956



STRESS IS A CONDITION OR FEELING EXPERIENCED WHEN A PERSON PERCEIVES THAT DEMANDS EXCEEDS THE PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESOURCES THE INDIVIDUAL IS ABLE TO MOBILIZE

R.S. Lazarus



Anxiety

- Feeling/response to stressful event
- Physical sensations of flight or flight
- Feelings of apprehension, nervousness, or fear



Understandable and normal feeling during situations of uncertainty

Some anxiety is adaptive as it helps us prepare.

However, too much can interfere with our ability to cope.



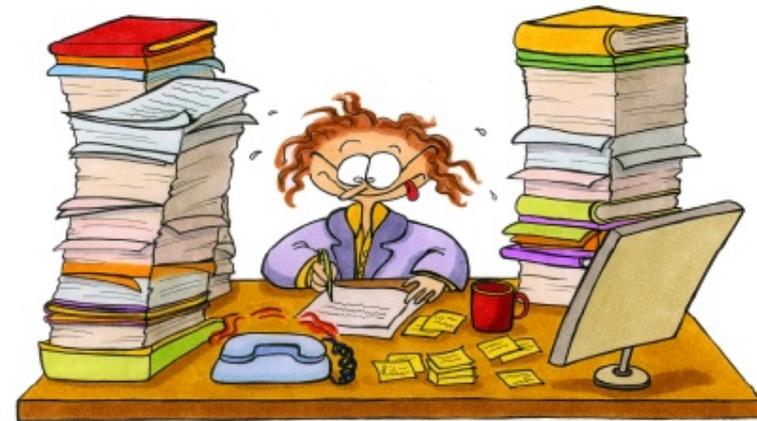
Underlying Mechanisms of Stress

“Fight or Flight” Response

“General Adaptation Syndrome”

- › Alarm Phase
- › Resistance Phase
- › Exhaustion Phase (Burnout)

Perceptions of Situations



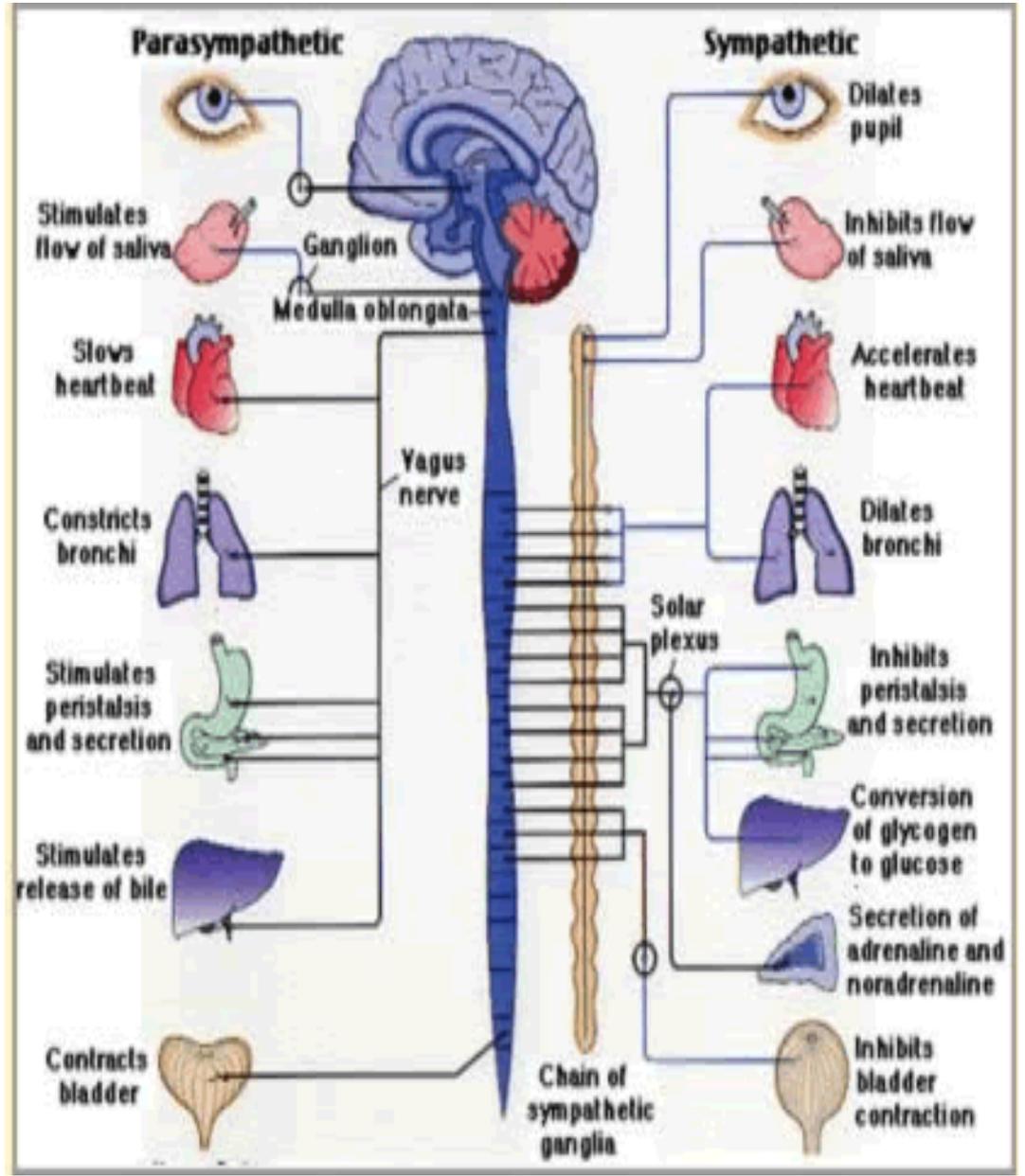
FIGHT or FLIGHT

NOTICEABLE EFFECTS

HIDDEN EFFECTS

- PUPILS DILATE
- MOUTH GOES DRY
- NECK + SHOULDER MUSCLES TENSE
- HEART PUMPS FASTER
- CHEST PAINS
- PALPITATIONS
- SWEATING
- MUSCLES TENSE FOR ACTION
- BREATHING FAST + SHALLOW - HYPERVENTILATION
- OXYGEN NEEDED FOR MUSCLES
- BRAIN GETS BODY READY FOR ACTION
- ADRENALINE RELEASED FOR FIGHT/FLIGHT
- BLOOD PRESSURE RISES
- LIVER RELEASES GLUCOSE TO PROVIDE ENERGY FOR MUSCLES
- DIGESTION SLOWS - OR CEASES
- SPHINCTERS CLOSE - THEN RELAX
- CORTISOL RELEASED (DEPRESSES THE IMMUNE SYSTEM)

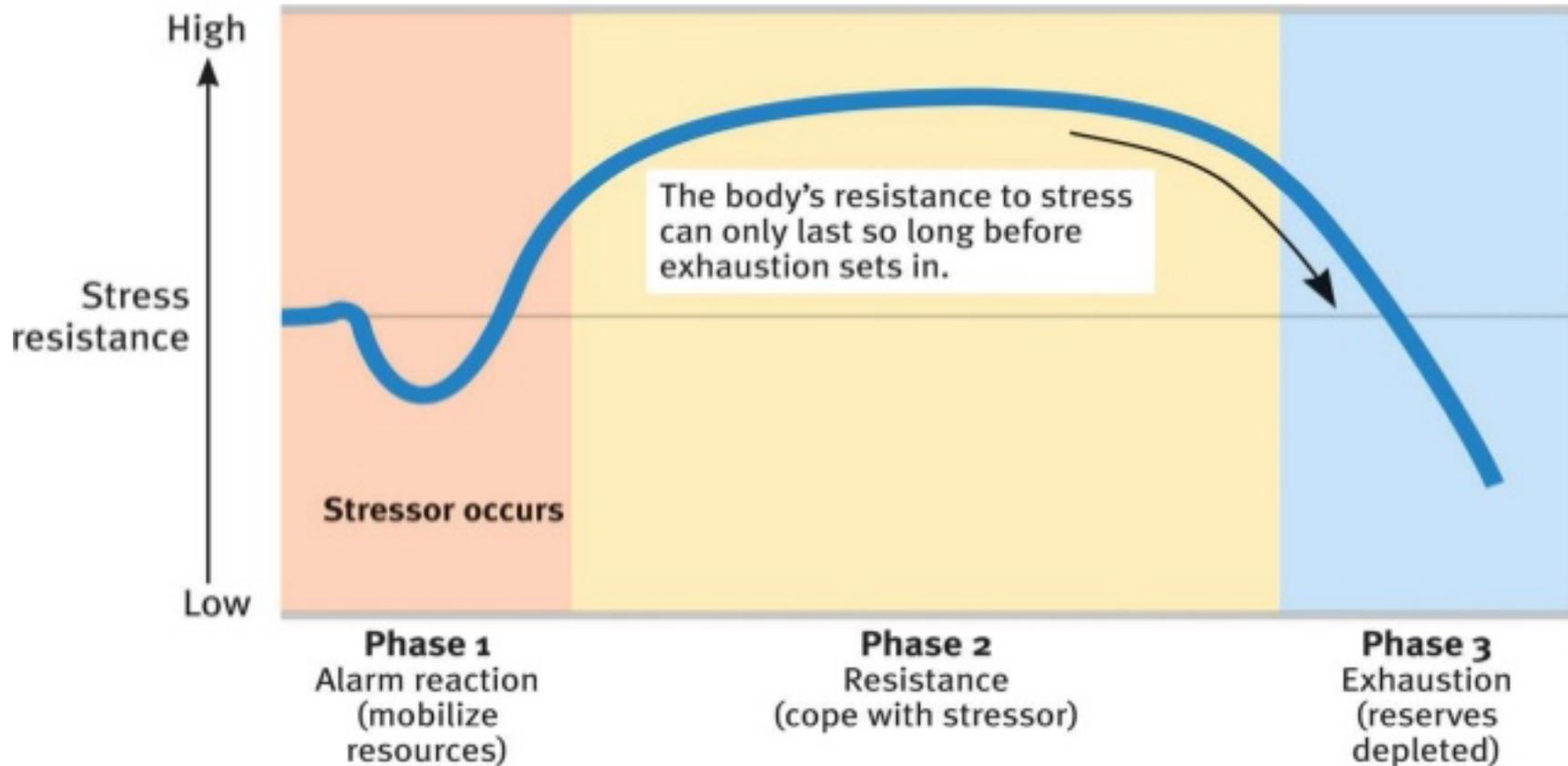
F. Hedges



General Adaptation Syndrome [GAS]

(Identified by Hans Selye):

Our stress response system defends, then fatigues.



Impact of Stress

Behavioral Effects

(drinking, smoking, eating)

Heart Disease

Immune System

Other physical effects:

headaches, IBS

Mental Health Problems:

Anxiety, Depression



UNDERSTANDING YOUR RESILIENCE



The Stress Resiliency Scale

Developed by Dr. Alma Dell Smith and Dr. Lyle Miller of Stress Directions: The Stress Knowledge Company.

TO DETERMINE YOUR SCORE:

TOTAL: To find out your score, add up the figures and subtract 20.

Any number over 30 indicates a vulnerability to stress.

You are seriously vulnerable if your score is between 50 and 75.

And extremely vulnerable if it is over 75.



Building Resilience

Talking to others

Value driven behaviors

Resting and eating healthy meals

Keeping a normal schedule

Taking regular breaks

Using humor

Scheduling pleasant activities

Focusing on something practical you can do right now

Using relaxation methods

Engaging in support groups/counseling

Exercising

Journaling

Kaysen, 2020



Adaptive coping strategies in the healthcare field

- Take more frequent breaks than usual
- Set timer for 3-minute breathing breaks
- Start shifts with group coping strategy/group words of support
- End shifts with group reflection
- Use restroom when needed
- Grounding item (stone in pocket, photo of loved one)



Key Action - Sleep Health

Establish

a regular sleep schedule and limit daytime naps

Reduce

alcohol

Eliminate

afternoon/evening caffeine

Increase

regular exercise

Cultivate

relaxation before bedtime by doing something calming

Kaysen, 2020



Healthy Connections



Get creative despite social distancing especially for those quarantined



- › Online interactive games (pool, darts, cards)
- › Facetime, telephone
- › Zoom get togethers with friends and families
 - › Zoom pet sharing
- › Sharing Memes/videos



EMOTIONALLY-Oriented Approaches

Rational Thinking: Challenge/reframe perceptions about situation

*I am not alone
in this.*

*I do not have control of
circumstances, but am
doing the best I can.*

*Although we have some
tough months ahead,
we can – and will –
overcome this virus.*

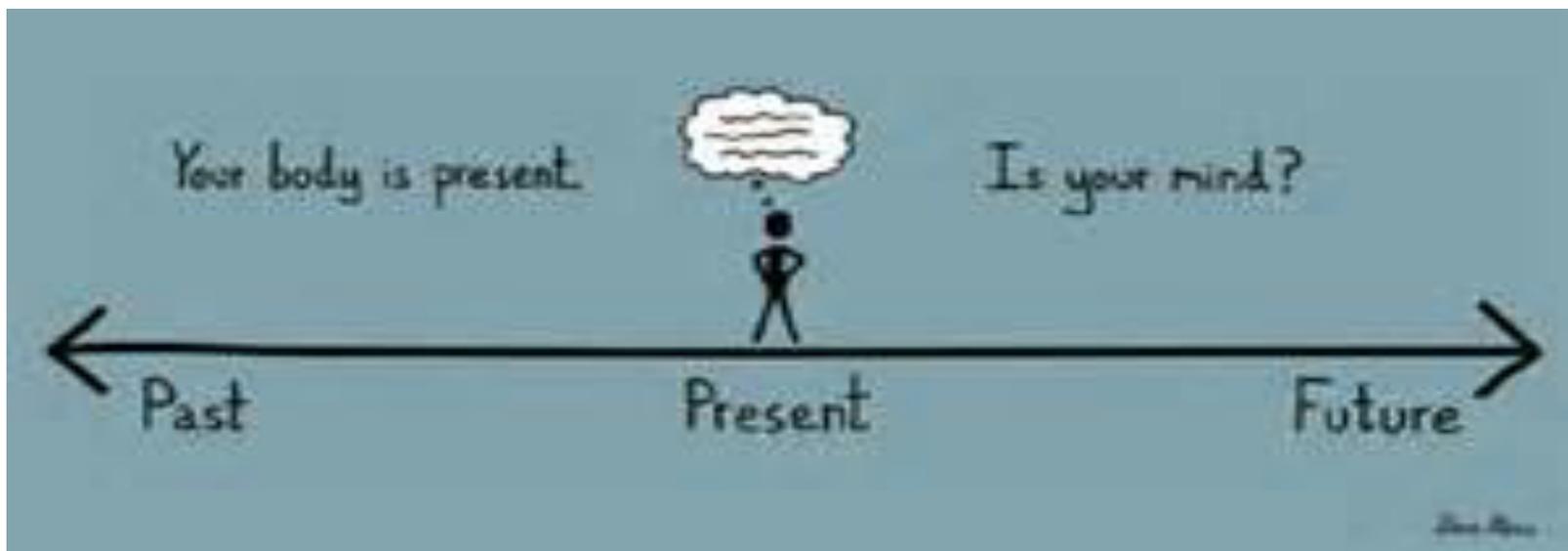


ACCEPTANCE-Oriented Approaches

Accept one's lack of power
Relaxation Techniques
Mindfulness Techniques



“Few of us ever live in the present. We are forever anticipating what is to come or remembering what has gone.”



Mindfulness

Paying attention, on purpose, without judgment, in the present moment

(Kabat-Zinn, 1990)

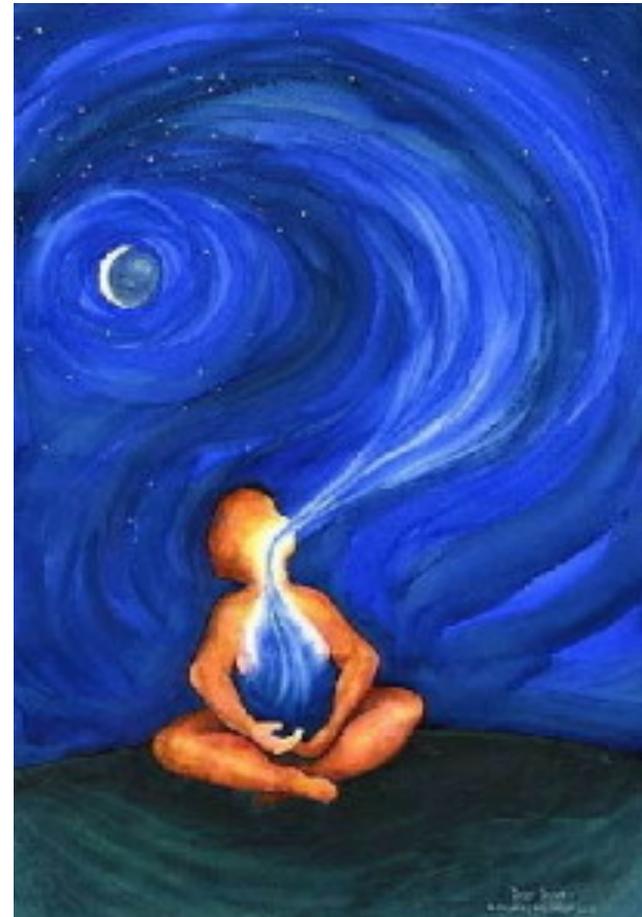
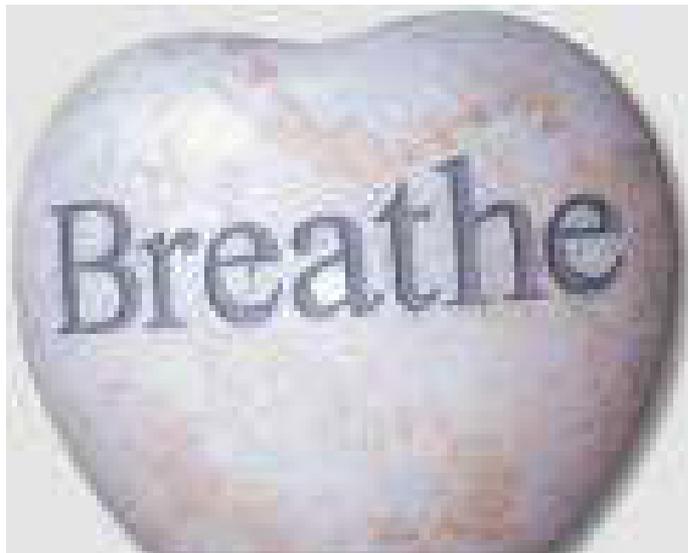


Mindfulness is simply being aware of what is happening right now without wishing it were different; enjoying the pleasant without holding on when it changes (which it will); being with the unpleasant without fearing it will always be this way (which it won't).”

-James Baraz”



Breathing Mindfully Exercise



How to incorporate mindfulness into daily life

Meditation, Yoga

Listening to music

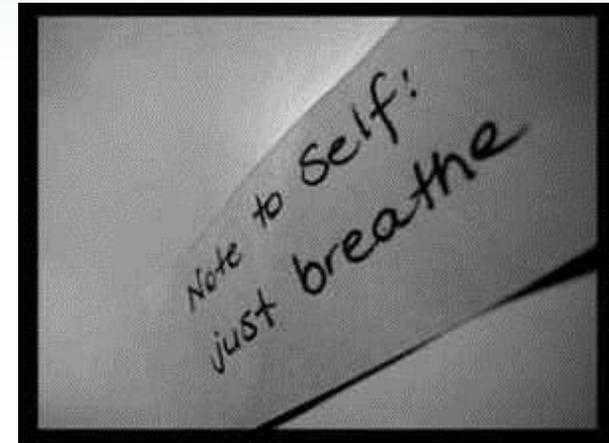
Making a cup of tea

Exercise

Breathing exercises

Daily activities:

- Taking shower
- Doing dishes
- walking to car





Resources

COVID-19 Resiliency Clinic

MUSC, MUHA, and MUSC-P faculty and staff can be seen for free brief COVID-19 specific stress management and resiliency bolstering coping strategies within one to four individual telehealth clinical support sessions. These sessions will focus on learning tools to manage and cope with stressors related to COVID-19 care.

Contact: Dr. Melissa Milanak milanak@musc.edu 843-792-0042

Sleep and Anxiety Research and Treatment Center

MUSC, MUHA, and MUSC-P faculty and staff are offered individual evidence based cognitive behavioral therapy and medication management currently via telehealth for sleep and anxiety related difficulties.

Contact: Dr. Melissa Milanak milanak@musc.edu 843-792-0042

MUSC Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

MUSC, MUHA, and MUSC-P faculty and employees and their families can be seen for free, short term counseling. An operator is available 8:30am-5:00pm, sessions are by appointment only.

Contact: Jeni Bowers-Palmer bowersj@musc.edu 843-792-2848





Questions?



The Stress Resiliency Scale

Indicate how often each of these statements is true of you. 1 is for Always, 5 is for Never, and 2, 3, and 4 are in between.

1=Always

5=Never

1. ___ I eat at least one hot, balanced meal a day.
2. ___ I get seven to eight hours sleep at least four nights a week.
3. ___ I give and receive affection regularly.
4. ___ I have at least one relative within 50 miles on whom I can rely.
5. ___ I exercise to the point of perspiration at least twice a week.
6. ___ I smoke less than a half a pack of cigarettes a day.
7. ___ I take fewer than five alcoholic drinks per week.
8. ___ I am the appropriate weight for my height.
9. ___ I have an income adequate to meet basic expenses.
10. ___ I get strength from my religious beliefs.
11. ___ I have one or more friends to confide in about personal matters.
12. ___ I have a network of friends and acquaintances.
13. ___ I regularly attend club or social activities.
14. ___ I am in good health (including eyesight, hearing, and teeth).
15. ___ I am able to speak openly about my feelings when I'm angry or worried.
16. ___ I have regular conversations with the people I live with about domestic problems, including chores, money and daily living issues.
17. ___ I do something for fun at least once a week.
18. ___ I am able to organize my time effectively.
19. ___ I drink fewer than three cups of coffee (or tea or soda) a day.
20. ___ I take quiet time for myself during the day.

TOTAL: To find out your score, add up the figures and subtract 20. Any number under 30 indicates very little vulnerability to stress. A score of 30-50 indicates some vulnerability to stress. A score of 51-74 indicates seriously vulnerability and you are extremely vulnerable if your score is over 75.

Authored by Dr. Alma Dell Smith and Dr. Lyle Miller of Stress Directions: The Stress Knowledge Company. For more information on the Stress Resiliency Scale (formerly called the Stress Audit) or for more information on the complete Personal Stress Navigator, please contact the authors at: <http://stressdirections.com>