DEFINITION

Stress is the body’s instinctive response to protect itself.
Stress
Stretch
Comfort

Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenal System

I. Releases steroid hormones, i.e. corticoids:
   body: fight or flight
   &
   II. Neurotransmitters:
       Dopamine, norepinephrine, epinephrine
THE BRAIN RESPONDS TO NEUROTRANSMITTERS!

Activates the amygdala

Signals hippocampus to store emotionally loaded experiences in long-term memory

 Suppresses activity in frontal cortex: short-term memory, concentration, inhibition, rational thought....

TYPES OF STRESS

ACUTE
It comes from demands and pressures of the recent past and anticipated demands and pressures of the near future.

EPISODIC ACUTE
Those who suffer acute stress frequently: Type A personality, ‘worry wart,’ perfectionist.

CHRONIC
This is the grinding stress that wears people away day after day, year after year: poverty, abuse, social outcast, war.... No light at the end of a long tunnel.
SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

**ACUTE**
- Tension headaches, upset stomach, sleep issues, emotional distress, ‘clammy hands’…

**EPISODIC ACUTE**
- Short tempered, irritable, hostile, insecure, control issues, high blood pressure…

**CHRONIC**
- Seriously depressed, suicidal, homicidal, stroke, cancer, flat affect, damaged neurons…

What to do: general recommendations:

**ACUTE**
- Walk into it, just do it! [approach.avoidance gradient]
- Support

**EPISODIC ACUTE**
- Coping mechanisms [living with your temperament, or, trying to change it]
- Support

**CHRONIC**
- Change the system
- Support

WHAT TO DO

☆ Remove extraneous stress

★ Reduce over-all stress

😊 Increase coping strategies
This means you need to know what is stressing your constituents [students, teachers and parents].

ASSESS
    ASK
    COLLECT DATA

Your turn!
For the next two examples, think of ways to:

REMOVE      REDUCE
Or
INCREASE COPING STRATEGIES

Middle school example

What worries you most about going back to school?

- Schoolwork issues: 32%
- Social issues: 30%
- Extracurricular issues: 3%
- Appearance issues: 25%
- Nothing: 10%
Collect calendar data to find ‘hot spots.’

- e.g. number of visits to nurse, absentees, calls from parents, ‘loaded’ time periods...

Research supported strategies of stress reduction or coping:

- Yoga/meditation/exercise
- Sleep/nap/rest
- Time out [late start, no homework weekend]
- Self talk...chanting...pep rallies
- North Star
- Music