

EXERCISE 1:

Take a moment to think about the emotions of stress.

Highlight or Circle any emotions that you have noticed in yourself when you think about school or exams, or that you have noticed recently, add in any others you can think of.

EMOTION	INTENSITY		
	(The bigger and longer lasting the emotion the bigger the rating)		
Worry	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Resentment	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Pressure	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Overwhelmed	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Out of control	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Numbness	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Impatience	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Isolation	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Loneliness	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Hopelessness	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Helplessness	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Frustration	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Fear	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Boredom	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Irritability	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Moodiness	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Agitation	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Anxiety	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Sadness	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG
Unhappiness	1 SLIGHT	2 MEDIUM	3 BIG

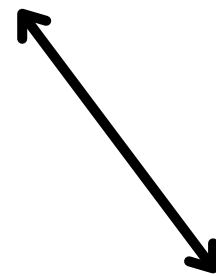
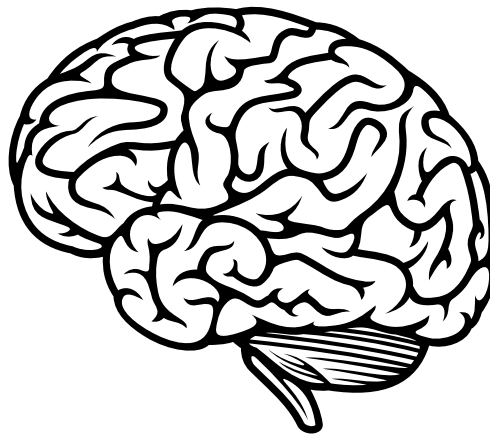
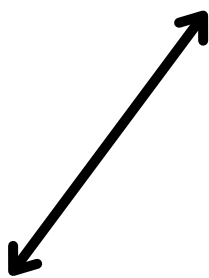
Now let's look at the other ways we notice stress in ourselves.

Highlight or Circle any that you have noticed in yourself when you are feeling overwhelmed, anxious or any of the other stress emotions.

Mental Signs of Stress	Physical Signs of Stress	Behavioural Signs of Stress
• Confusion • Difficulty focusing • Struggling with comprehension • Disorganization • Easily distracted • Forgetfulness – memory problems • Constant worry • Poor decision making • Poor judgement • Procrastination • Racing thoughts • Seeing only the negative • Dramatising situations	• Body aches and pains • Body tension – often in neck, back and shoulders • Rapid heartbeat • Breathless • Exhaustion, low energy, fatigue • Frequent colds and infections • Alcohol, drugs, or smoking • Nail biting, teeth grinding, hair twirling, pencil chewing, fidgeting • Difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much • Feeling nauseous or a little unsettled in the tummy	• Arguments • Procrastination or avoidance • Difficulty talking with others • Fighting/bullying • Frequent absences from school • Giving in to peer pressure • Easily irritated or annoyed with people • Lost friendships • Withdrawing from friends and family • Not eating, eating too much, or eating things that aren't good for you
"My grades started slipping at the end of the year because I felt so much stress." "I worry about everything and feel so confused." "It's hard for me to focus on my homework."	"I can't sleep, and I stop eating when I'm stressed." "I get acne and blemishes when I feel a lot of stress." "I have mini panic attacks and my throat feels tight." "I feel like I have a heavy weight on my shoulders."	"Family drama! We end up arguing all the time." "There's so much pressure to do drugs and have sex that I withdraw, and then I feel lonely." "When I get overwhelmed, I just want to leave the world behind and go play Xbox."

Thoughts

What we think affects how we feel and act
Thoughts are your interpretations of a situation. For example, if a stranger looks at you with an angry expression, you could think: "Oh no, what did I do wrong?" or "Maybe they are having a bad day."



Feelings

How we feel affects how we think and behave
Emotions can have physical components as well as mental, such as low energy when feeling sad, or a stomachache when anxious and butterflies when nervous.



Behaviour

What we do affects how we think and feel
Behaviors are your response to a situation. They include actions such as saying something or doing something (or, choosing not to do something).

As exams get closer, it's common to have thoughts such as, 'I haven't prepared enough' or 'it's going to be a really hard paper', triggering feelings of inadequacy, unease, and anxiety which can often lead to procrastination.



Fight, Flight, Flee Stress Response

The brains' main job is to , developing the fight, flight stress response as a survival mechanism many, many thousands of years ago.

When today's tiger, like a thought of worry, anger, frustration, fear or confusion happens, the body and brain still as if it was a real life threatening tiger.



Anytime our brain becomes aware of physical or emotional discomfort in our body, it looks for the cause and runs away from it, avoids it, because that is what the brain is designed to do.

Procrastination and avoidance is your brain trying to protect you from

Situation

An unexpected test

Feeling

Anxiety

Thought

I'm going to fail

Behavior

Not able to focus well on test

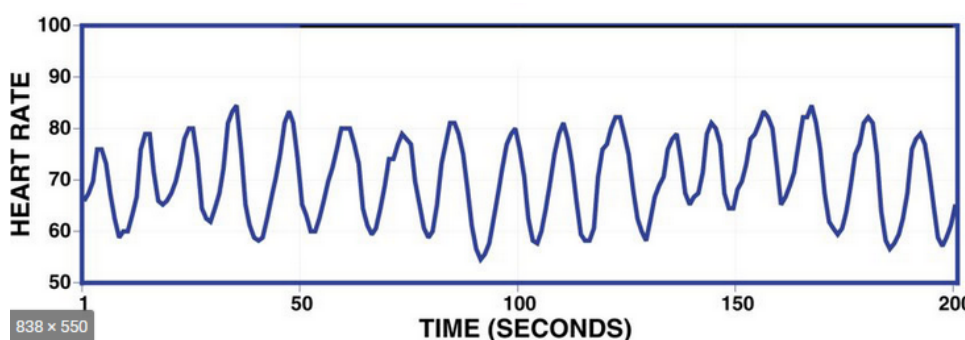
Allow yourself to feel all your feelings,
The good and the bad.

One of the easiest ways that scientists observe how feelings affect our body is the effect emotions have on our heart rhythms.

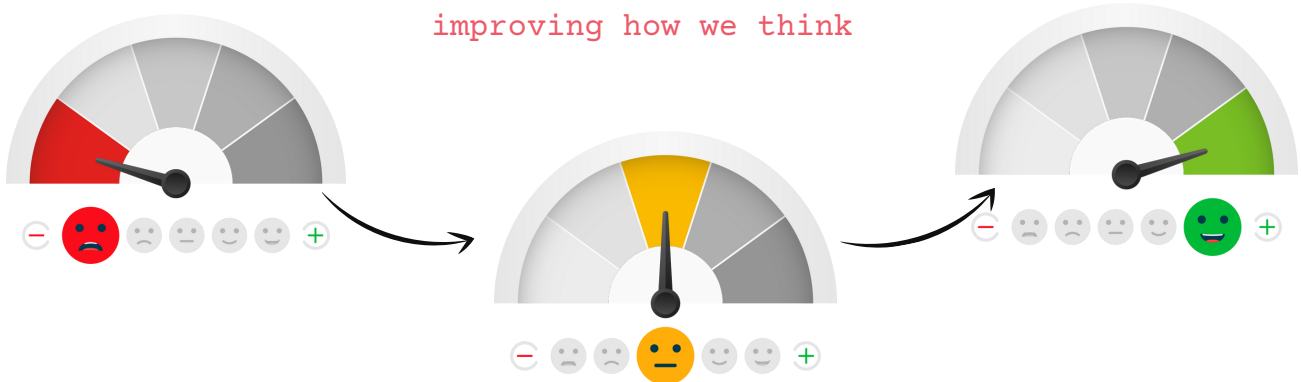
Strong emotions can be detected in the changing pattern of our heart rhythms. When people are frustrated, scared, worried, angry, or upset their heart rhythms are uneven and irregular.



However when we are feeling confident and secure, we're feeling cared for or appreciating someone or something, our heart rhythms are smooth and even.



Pretending to breathe through the area of the heart, reduces the intensity of emotions. From there we can use conscious thought to help generate positive, uplifting emotions. Changing the signal the heart sends to the brain, influencing perception and improving how we think



EXERCISE:

Make a list of situations, places, or events when you have experienced uplifting emotions. Name the emotion or feeling you experienced.

Situation, Place, Event		Uplifting Emotion
Hanging with my best friend	→	Appreciation, fun
Getting a good test score	→	Satisfaction, confidence
Playing with my pet	→	Love, happiness
Being out in nature	→	Peaceful, calm
Listening to music I like	→	Content, happy, inspired
Having someone stand up for you	→	Safe, accepted, appreciated

Heart Focus Breathing Technique

Technique developed by HeartMath Institute and adapted by GIRL. Rise and Thrive

Step 1

Start by noticing any emotions you may be feeling. Ask yourself – what am I feeling? Acknowledge any emotions that come up, remembering to use ‘I am feeling’ or ‘I am noticing I am feeling’. Silently in your mind is fine.

Allow yourself a moment to sit and feel. You don’t need to do anything with the emotion, just acknowledge and allow your body to feel it, allow it to flow through you – take as long as you need in this step.

Step 2

Focus your attention on the area of the heart.

Imagine your breath is flowing in and out of your heart area. Breathing a slower and deeper than usual, making the out-breath slightly longer than the in-breath. For example, your in-breath could be 4-5 seconds and your out-breath 6-7 seconds. Continue for 1-2 min or as long as desired

Hints and Tips:

- Don’t hold your breath. Be sure to breathe a little slower and deeper than usual.
- Pretend to breathe through your heart. Hold your hand over your heart to help focus. If your mind wanders gently refocus on your heart.
- Stay focused on your breathing, and be sure you’re not checking text messages while you’re doing the technique. 😊
- You might find that it’s helpful to close your eyes, but as you get used to doing it, practice with your eyes open. This is very important because you want to be able to do Heart-Focused Breathing wherever you are, and most of the time, closing your eyes won’t be appropriate (such as driving lessons). This is an on-the-go tool!

“I used Heart-Focused Breathing when I was in an embarrassing moment. I calmed down and then I handled the situation calmly.”

Inner Ease Technique

Technique developed by HeartMath Institute

Step 1:

Focus your attention on the area of the heart. Imagine your breath is flowing in and out of your heart area. Breathing a slower and deeper than usual, making the out-breath slightly longer than the in-breath.

Do this for one minute or more.

Step 2:

With each in-breath, imagine you are taking in love, ease, and compassion.

As you exhale imagine you are breathing out through your heart, now inhale love, ease compassion.

Think of a time that you felt that way or just silently say the words, love ease compassion as you inhale.

Step 3

Set an intention to anchor the feeling of inner ease as you engage in your tasks or interactions.



Quick Coherence Technique

Technique developed by HeartMath Institute

Step 1:

Focus your attention on the area of the heart. Imagine your breath is flowing in and out of your heart. Breathing a slower and deeper than usual, making the out-breath slightly longer than the in-breath. Do this for one minute or more.

Step 2:

Now, make a sincere attempt to experience a renewing emotion, such as appreciation or care for someone or something in your life. Do this for one minute or more.

Hints and Tips

- Try to re-experience the feeling you have for someone you love—a person, a pet, a special place—or for an accomplishment. Or, focus on a feeling of calm or ease.
- Try to genuinely experience the renewing emotion and not just think about the thing that makes you feel good.
- Practice even when you don't feel you need it so it becomes more familiar because when the heat is on it can be challenging to do it in the moment you need it the most. Don't give up trying, sometimes it can take quite a few goes to get the hang of a new technique. You will get it.

"I was feeling anxious before my math test. I wanted to feel calm so I did Quick Coherence and did the best I could to feel the calm feeling while I did the breathing. I remembered how I feel calm when I listen to quiet music, so I tried to experience that calm feeling again before the test. It took about three minutes to really feel calmer, but I kept trying and it worked."