



JANUARY: STRESS

– What Educators Need to Know –

The Basics

Working in a school is a stressful environment, and school staff are often experts at navigating stressful and chaotic situations. Stress is often unavoidable at work, and sometimes lesser amounts of stress can positively influence us, say, to meet a deadline or stay vigilant on field trips. Even those who are used to performing in stressful environments have limits, and knowing our limits is key to preventing burnout and achieving life balance. When stress begins to cause avoidance, consistently affects our daily mood, and does not seem to go away, it may be time for a closer look.

Is this stress or anxiety?

Stress and anxiety can look remarkably similar, but tuning in with yourself about how it is impacting your life can help you decide the best course of action to take. So, what is the difference between stress and anxiety?

Stress	Both Stress and Anxiety	Anxiety
<p>Goes away once the situation is resolved.</p> <p>Can be positive or negative (might cause us to lose sleep, or might help us finish a task)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excessive worry • Uneasiness • Tension • Headaches or body pain • High blood pressure • Loss of sleep • Irritability 	<p>Persistent feelings of tension or dread that do not go away and interfere with how you live your life are constant, even if there is no immediate external cause.</p>

Additional Resources

- Article: [Growth Mindset](#)
- Video: [Self Compassion Meditation](#)

Role modeling in the classroom

1. **“Name it to tame it”:** The ability to name our feelings is a skill that serves us in our professional and personal lives. Normalize talking about stressors and naming the feelings and sensations that come with them. Your students may recognize
2. **Lead in using coping skills:** Movement, laughter, exercise, and getting outside are great outlets to release stress. Stretch or dance breaks, walking a lap in the hall, watching a brief funny video, or doing schoolwork outside can help students find out what coping skills work for them.
3. **Positive Self-talk:** Help students produce alternative, positive thoughts for the common ones that may arise in class “I can’t do this,” “This is too hard,” “I am terrible at math.” Students can help produce replacement thoughts, “I’m learning every day” or “My best is enough” and post them around the classroom for reminders.