

Mind Body Skills Group Didactics

From the Center for Mind-Body Medicine (www.cmbm.org)

Stress:

- Autonomic Nervous System
 - Sympathetic: Arousal. Blood moves to large muscle groups away from skin and digestion. Increased heart rate, breathing, muscle tension, coldness, sweating, pupil dilation, decreased digestion.
 - Parasympathetic: Relaxation Response: Decreased heart rate, blood pressure, muscle tension, relaxation, peacefulness.
- Fight, Flight, or Freeze
- Acute versus chronic stress:
 - Acute: Gazelle grazing in a field. Lion arrives on the scene and gazelle runs as fast as she can until she escapes. Moments later, she is grazing happily again. Situation is different for humans with a cortex.
 - Chronic: prolonged fight or flight. The cortex internalizes and makes associates with whatever is stressful. We remember, which returns us to the stressful situation and we get stuck.
- The nervous, immune, and endocrine systems adapt to chronic stress:
 - Body's regulatory mechanisms elevate: blood sugar, cholesterol, adrenalin, blood pressure, breathing, muscle tension, cell death.
 - Disease: heart, diabetes, cancer, chronic pain, anxiety, depression, decreased immune function.
 - Our minds/emotional bodies significantly and directly impact physiological functioning. Mind-Body connection.
 - Ramifications for those on medications: may need more with chronic stress and less with increased relaxation.
- Self-Regulation: While much of our NS is automatic, it can come under conscious control. Activation of parasympathetic NS. Mind Body skills help to balance two parts of the NS.