

Self-Care and Stress Management

Date 30 December 2023 (Saturday)

Time: 10:30am-12:00pm

Speaker: Dr. Eunice Yim (Founder of EduCare-HK Charity)



I am...

- ▶ Founder of Educare-HK Charity Organization
- ▶ Chartered Psychologist
- ▶ Expertise:



Fb: EduCare-HK
Ig: educarehk

<u>Areas</u>	<u>Selected Activities</u>
Child and Whole Person Development (Mainstream and Special Educational Needs)	RTHK CIBS – Born Different (13 Episodes)
Children and Families in Need	Parent Education for Inmate mothers at Lo Wu Correctional Institution
Special Educational Needs	Programme and Training Development for Children at School and Home Settings
Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA)	Programme and Training Development for Children with Behavior Problems
Artificial Intelligence Application in Education and Psychology	ABA X AI Individualized Education Plan for Children Development Domain X AI Storytelling X AI Children Song X AI

Today



What is Stress?

Personality & Stress

Coping with Stress

Scenario

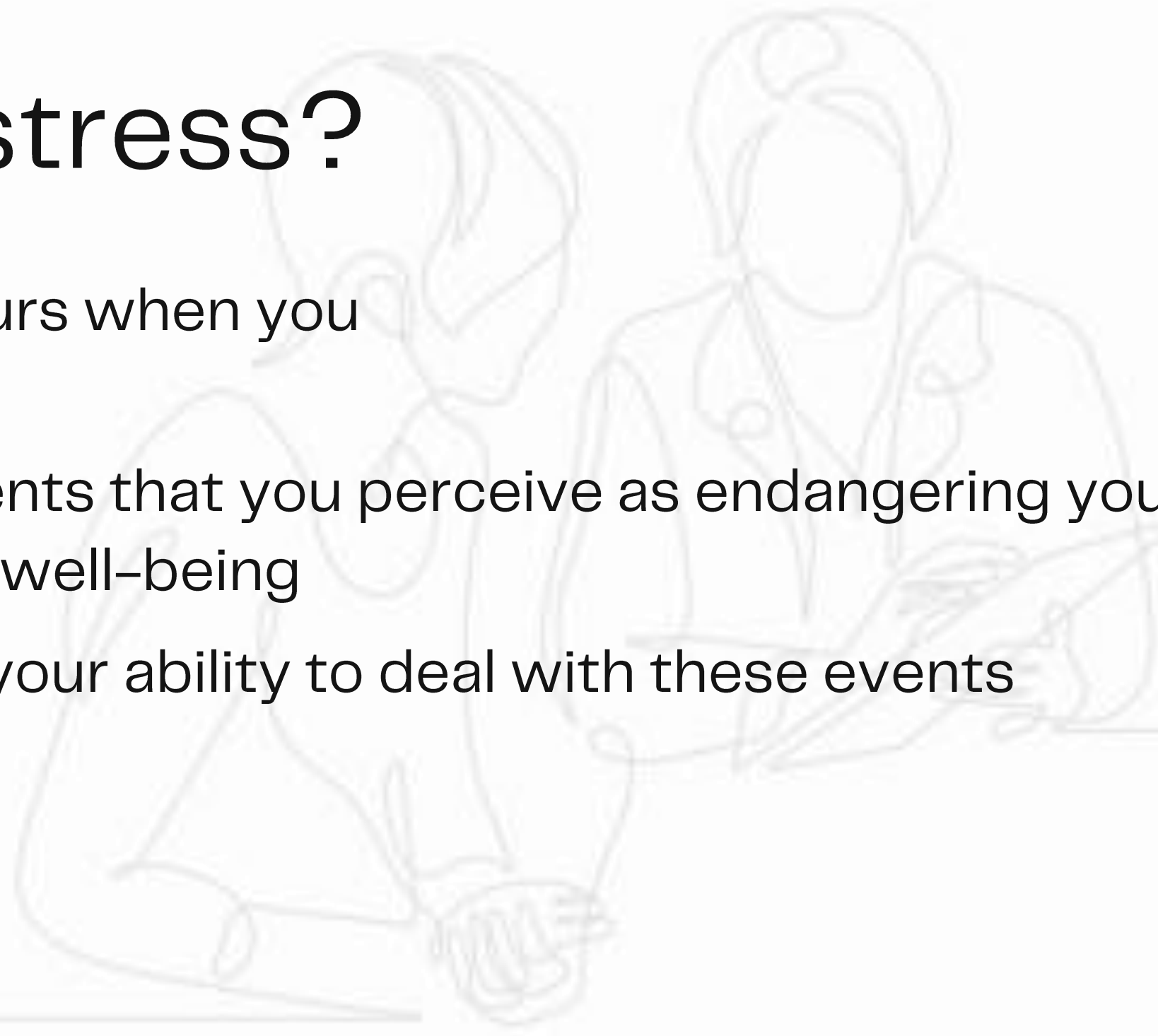
Recall a scenario/ event that you felt very stressed about it. How did you manage your stress?



What is stress?

A state that occurs when you

- encounter events that you perceive as endangering your physical or psychological well-being
- are unsure of your ability to deal with these events



Sources of Stress



External Stressors

- Demands from outside of self
- E.g., class presentation, meeting a new gal/ guy, conflicts with family members

Internal Stressors

- Those we created or magnify
- Self-imposed pressure, irrational thoughts, unrealistic expectation, for examples:
 - Strong people never ask for help.
 - Making mistakes is terrible.
 - Criticism must mean I did something wrong.
 - There is always a perfect solution.
 -

Social Readjustment Rating Scale

Several external stressors are listed in the social readjustment rating scale. It was found that the more stressors one encounters, the more likely one would experience illness shortly.

📌 Let's Try!





Responses to Stress

Responses to Stress



01 Physiological responses

The General Adaptation Syndrome (Selye, 1956, 1974)

- A model of body's stress response, consisting of three stages:

Alarm

- The body gathers its resources to combat the challenges, for example, the muscles tense, the heart beats faster, the breathing and perspiration increases etc.

Resistance

- Physiological changes stabilize, yet the arousal continues to be higher than normal

Exhaustion

- If stress can't be overcome, the body's resources may be depleted. The organism may collapse from exhaustion.

Responses to Stress



01 Physiological responses

The General Adaptation Syndrome
(Selye, 1956, 1974)

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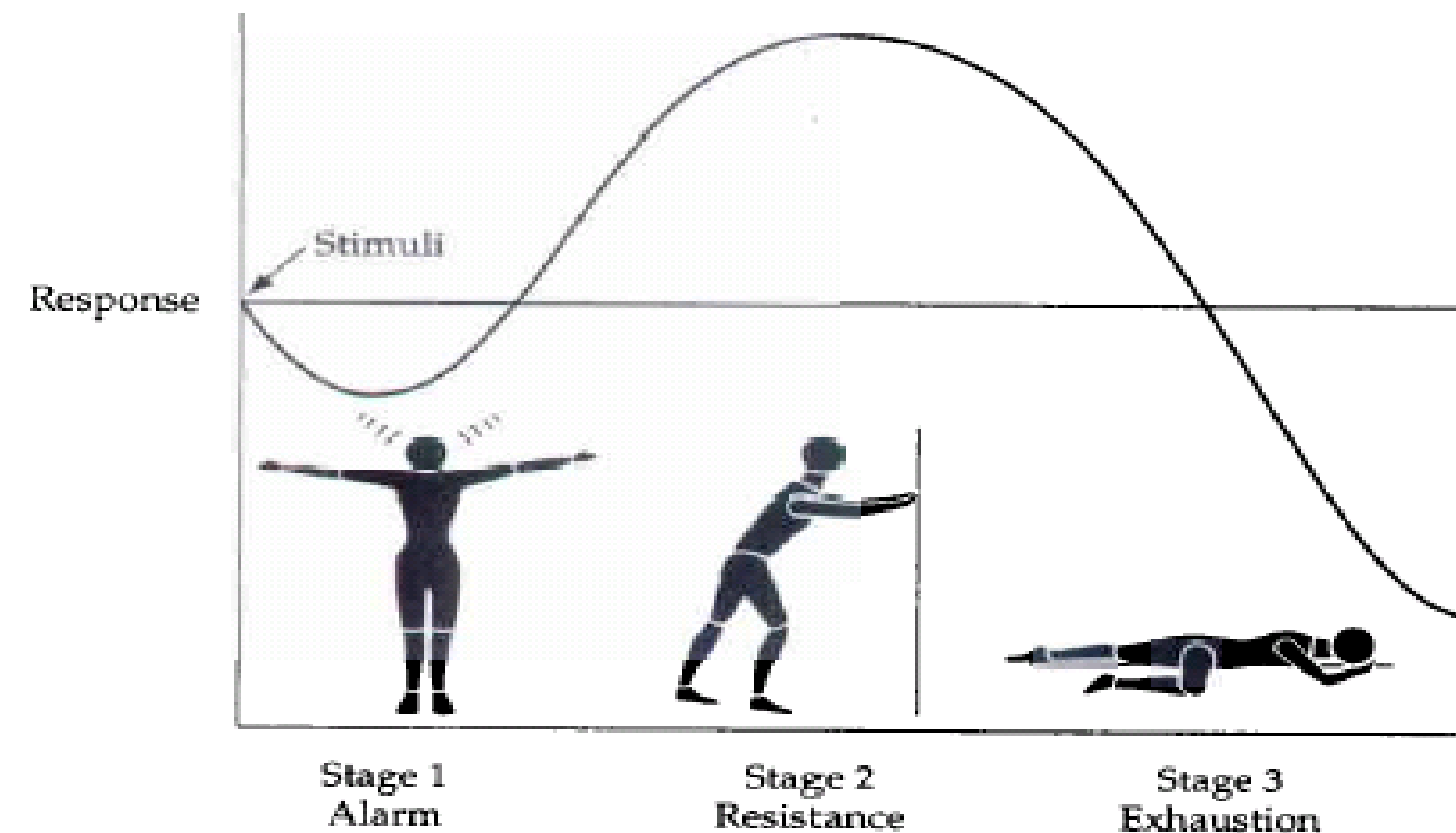


Figure 1-1 Stages of Selye's General Adaptation Syndrome

Responses to Stress

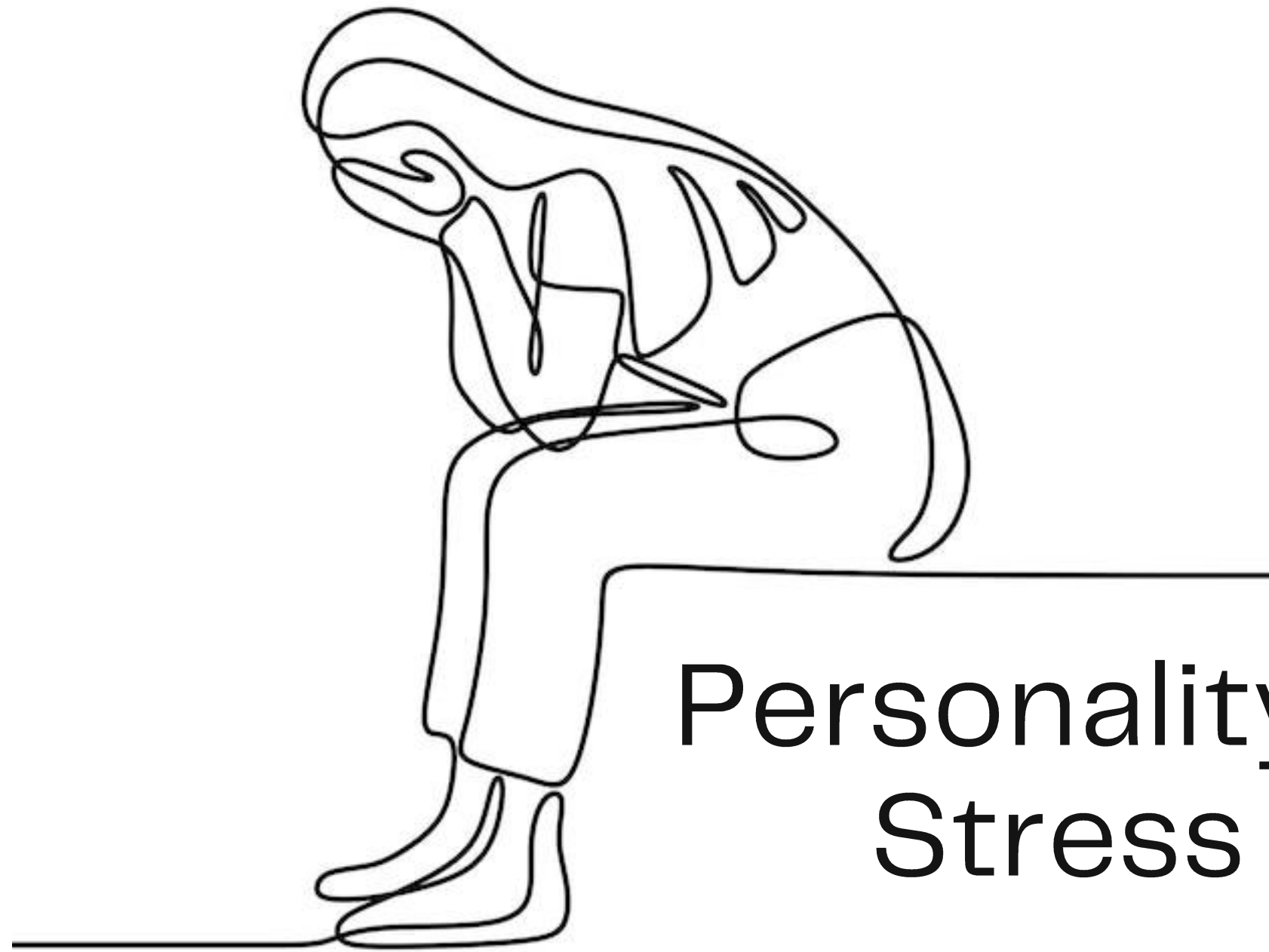


02 Emotional responses

E.g., anxiety, fear, annoyance, motivated etc.

03 Behavioral responses

- Seeking help
- Blaming oneself
- Solving problems



Personality & Stress

Personality & Stress

Do you have a personality type that is more prone to stress?

Let's try the following questionnaire.



Personality & Stress

- If the total number of your yes responses is more than 7, then you are more likely to be *Type A* in the orientation. The higher the score is from 7 to 13, the stronger is the likelihood of your Type A in the orientation.
- If you have lower scores, you are more likely to be *Type B* in the orientation.



Personality & Stress

The Type A personality includes 3 elements:

- a strong competitive orientation,
- impatience and time urgency, and
- anger and hostility.



Personality & Stress

The Type B personality is marked by relatively

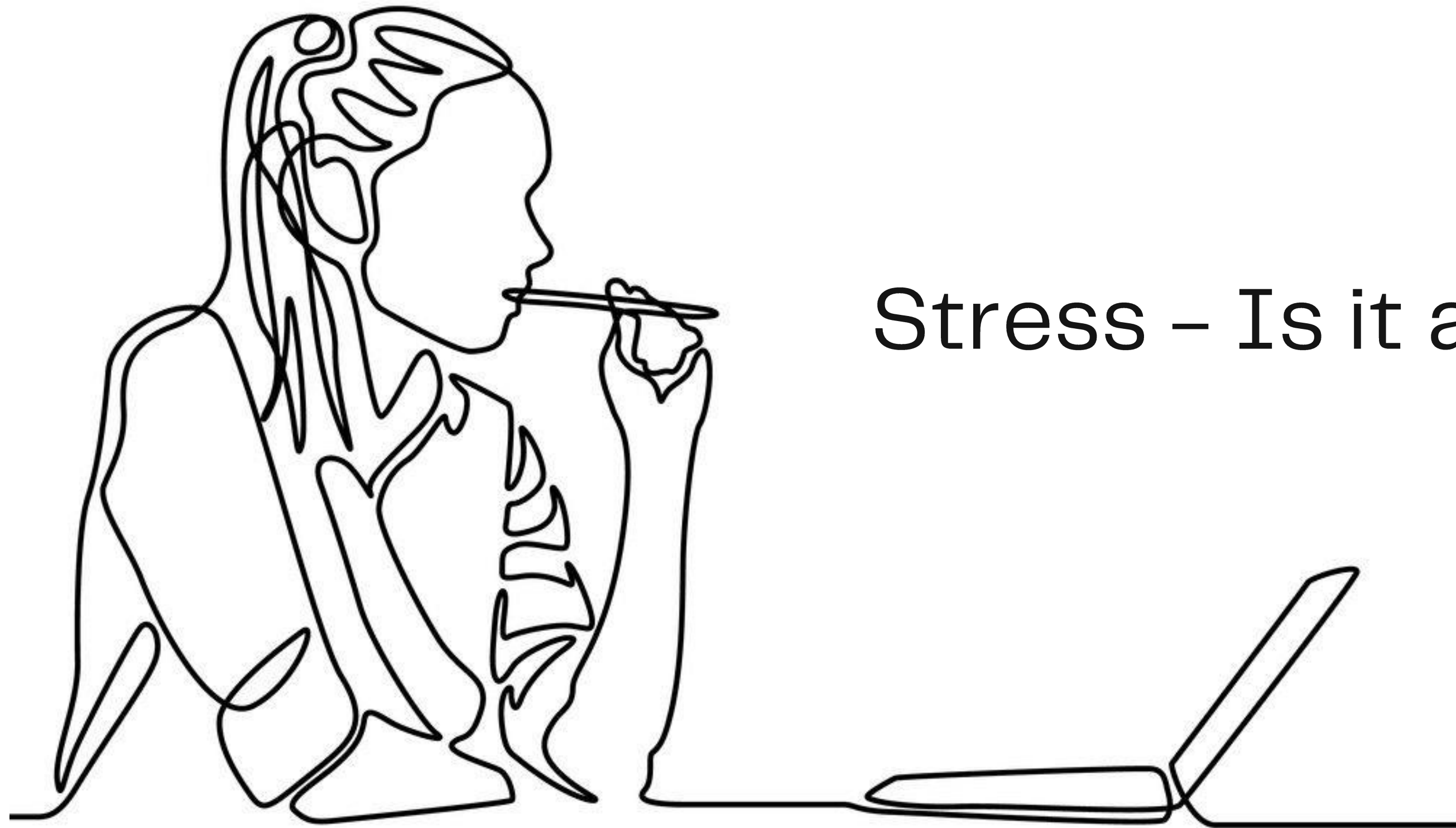
- relaxed
- patient
- easygoing behaviors



Personality & Stress

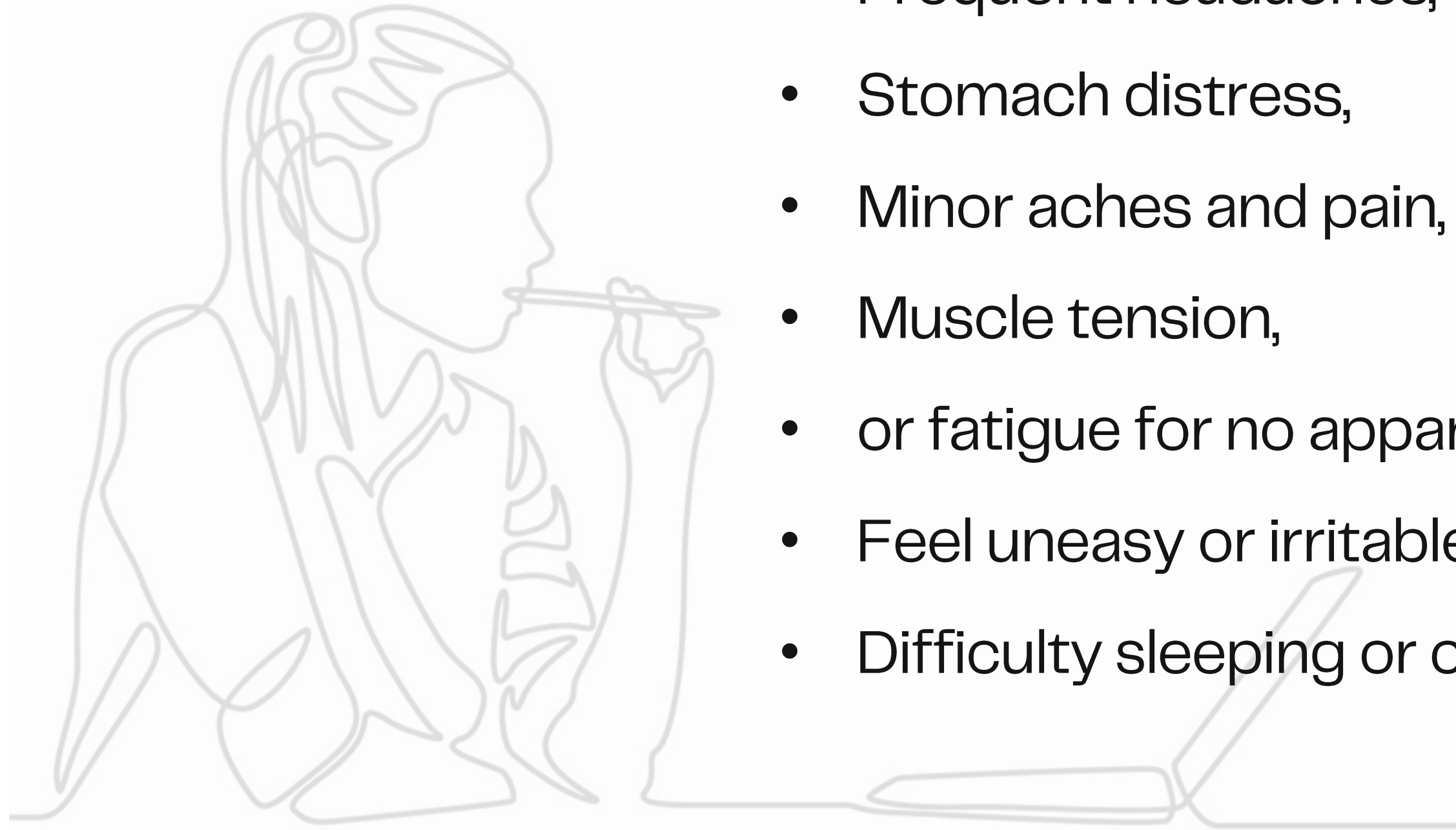
Research (Friedman & Rosenman, 1974) indicated that the Type A personality, which involves self-imposed stress, was associated with coronary risk.





Stress – Is it all bad?

Is your level of stress unhealthy?



- Frequent headaches,
- Stomach distress,
- Minor aches and pain,
- Muscle tension,
- or fatigue for no apparent reason?
- Feel uneasy or irritable?
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating?

(Hanna, 2003)

Stressors VS Hassles

Life's daily HASSLES

- ▶ Daily life hassles (the little and maybe ongoing things) can add up to create stress.
- ▶ E.g., concerns about weight, concern if you receive “Likes” for your posts on FB.
- ▶ Those who report more daily hassles report more psychological (Kanner et. At., 1981, cited in Kosslyn & Rosenberg, 2001) and physical symptoms (DeLongis et al., 1982, cited in Kosslyn & Rosenberg, 2001) that are related to stress. They are more likely to have suppressed immune system.



Coping with Stress

Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (TSC)

- The TSC (Folkman, 2008; Lazarus, 2006; Lazarus & Folkman, 1984) proposes that two prototypical states: 1) challenge and 2) threat, arise from cognitive judgments of the meaning of a situation and one's ability to respond to the situation.
- In the TSC, primary appraisal refers to the judgment of a situation as being benign or stressful. Benign situations are judged as requiring no instrumental action on the part of the individual to facilitate a positive outcome, whereas stressful situations are judged to require specific action(s).
- *Primary appraisal*, involves the analysis of whether an event is personally relevant. Events perceived as personally relevant can be appraised as either positive or stressful (the latter including possible harm, threat, or challenge). If individuals perceive events as stressful, they evaluate their own resources to deal with the demands. This constitutes the process of *secondary appraisal*.

Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (TSC)

- Secondary appraisals may, for instance, determine the initial relevance of a situation (e.g., Blascovich & Mendes, 2010; Jamieson, 2017). For instance, a fear appeal stating that effort may be required to avoid failure could be judged as irrelevant by a student who seems to find a subject naturally easy and seems to achieve high grades with little effort.
- The perception of challenge or threat is determined in a secondary appraisal of one's ability to cope with, and respond to, the stressful situation.
 - ✓ Challenge results from the judgment that one has the necessary resources to cope (e.g., I know this exam is important but I have belief in my ability)
 - ✓ Threat from the judgment that one does not (e.g., I know this exam is important but I do not think I have the skills to pass it).
- Subjective vs Objective

Multimodal–transactional Model

- Multimodal–transactional model developed by Palmer (1997) to guide health professionals in the selection of appropriate stress interventions.
- The model incorporates Arnold Lazarus' seven interacting response modalities comprising behavior, affect, sensory, imaginal, cognitive, interpersonal, and drugs/biology.

Multimodal–transactional Model

According to this model, stress and coping proceed in five stages.

- *Stage 1.* An external or internal stressor is perceived by the individual to be emerging either from an external source or from internal bodily sensations.
- *Stage 2.* The individual appraises his or her capacity to deal with the stressor. The person then decides whether he or she has the resources to cope. If the individual perceives that he or she cannot cope, stress may be experienced, and stress responses are likely to become activated. Appraisal of coping capacity is influenced by social and cultural beliefs and attitudes that determine the importance of an event. An example is the belief that one must meet every deadline. If individuals perceive that they cannot cope, they progress to *Stage 3*.

Multimodal–transactional Model

- *Stage 3.* Stress responses occur that include behavioral, affective, sensory, imaginal, cognitive, interpersonal, and physiological changes.
- *Stage 4.* The individuals appraise the effectiveness of the coping strategies they have used. If they perceive themselves to have been successful, they return to a state of equilibrium. If they believe, however, that they have failed to cope with the situation, this perceived failure exacerbates existing problems and turns into an additional strain.
- *Stage 5.* The continuing process and long-term consequences. If an individual uses strategies that alter the situation and reduce stress, he or she will return to a state of equilibrium. If the problems persist, however, eventually the person's health may be negatively affected.

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In sum,

Transactional theories of stress and coping focus on the cognitive and affective aspects of an individual's interactions with the environment and the coping strategies he or she uses or lacks.

Stress and Coping Perspectives

- Stress perspectives also help us to understand why might two people experience the same stressful event, yet one experiences serious depression and the other does not?
- Individuals differ with respect to the coping resources and strategies they can use to manage stress. *Coping* broadly refers to cognitive and behavioral strategies used to manage stress (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984).
- *Coping resources* are the personal and social attributes individuals draw upon when dealing with stress (Pearlin and Schooler, 1978). Two of the main resources adults may draw on are social support and a sense of mastery.
 - ✓ *Social support* refers to the instrumental, emotional, and informational assistance that one receives from others.
 - ✓ *Mastery* refers to one's belief that they can control and manage a stressful situation. A high sense of mastery has direct protective effects on mental health, and also buffers against (or moderates) the harmful effects of stress (Carr and Umberson 2013).

Stress and Coping Perspectives

- Social support is widely considered one of the most critical resources for adapting to stress. Social support refers to the instrumental, emotional, and informational assistance that one receives from significant others, including family, friends, and colleagues.
 - ✓ Instrumental, such as help with housework or rides to the doctor; financial, like helping to cover medical bills; emotional, such as listening to one's problems; or informational like providing advice; or emotional support from family and friends (Thoits, 1995).
- Stress and coping perspectives also provide a framework for identifying the personal traits and resources that may buffer against or intensify the mental health consequences.
- Coping resources encompass the social and psychological attributes one can draw on to manage either the stressor or one's emotional reactions to that stressor (Taylor and Stanton 2007)

Stress and Coping Perspectives

- Personal characteristics, including mastery, a sense of control over one's environment, and personality traits like extraversion, conscientiousness, and emotional stability also have been found to mitigate mental health symptoms in the face of bereavement (see Stroebe et al., 2008 for review).
- Pai and Carr (2010), applying the Big-Five model of personality, found that highly extraverted and conscientious widowed persons had fewer depressive symptoms post-loss. Extraverts are particularly good at marshalling social support during prolonged periods of spousal illness and after the loss, which enhances their mental health. Conscientious people tend to be reliable, future-oriented, and self-disciplined—characteristics that help them anticipate and plan for predictable stressors.
- those low on the trait of emotional stability were particularly vulnerable to intensive depressive symptoms (Wijngaards-de Meij et al., 2007). People low in emotional stability are prone to emotional distress and negative mood, which may alienate those friends and family members who could help them cope with their loss.

Stress and Coping Perspectives

- Meaning making is a set of beliefs and practices that are important resources facilitating adjustment.
- Meaning making refers to the processes through which an individual comes to understand, interpret, or make sense of life events, especially difficult or unfair events like a death (Coleman and Neimeyer, 2010).
- Meaning making is theorized to have three components: sense-making, benefit-finding, and identity reconstruction.
 - ✓ Sense-making refers to one's ability to understand and make sense of the loss, such as accepting that death is a universal and inevitable aspect of life.
 - ✓ Benefit-finding is the process of recognizing gains derived through of the process of loss, such as growing closer to a dying relative while providing care.
 - ✓ Identity reconstruction is the process of creating and embracing a new identity (Coleman and Neimeyer, 2010).

The Stress and Coping Paradigm

- The stress and coping paradigm (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984) focuses on the individual's perceptions of the illness—specifically, cognitive appraisals of stress—as essential predictors of coping efforts, which, in turn, affect psychological adjustment.
- Cognitive appraisals occur when individuals evaluate whether or not an adverse event is a stressor—that is, whether it poses a threat or harm to well-being (primary appraisal) and whether one has the resources needed to cope with the stressor (secondary appraisal).
- People appraise situations as stressful when environmental demands exceed their personal and social resources.
- Stress appraisals, in turn, determine how individuals choose to cope with the stressors, although other factors are also involved (e.g., past experience).

The Stress and Coping Paradigm

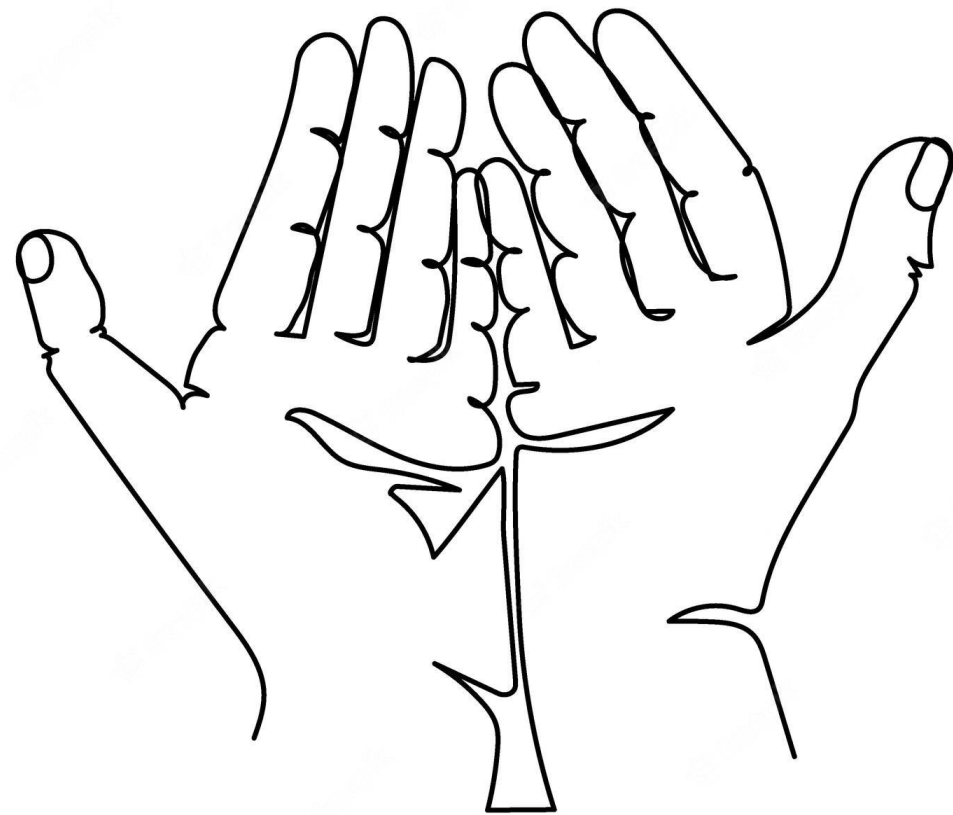
- Although there are many specific types of strategies, coping comprises both approach and avoidance strategies.
 - ✓ Approach strategies may involve seeking information about the illness to make good treatment decisions or planning how to reorganize one's life and work while undergoing treatment.
 - ✓ Avoidance strategies may involve minimizing the seriousness of a diagnosis to be able to deal with it in more manageable pieces or refusing to talk with others to make it less real.
- Research has shown that avoidance strategies may be helpful in the short term, when individuals are flooded with emotion and overwhelmed by what the future presents, but can be harmful in the long run if, for example, denial of the seriousness of the illness delays treatment or refusal to acknowledge it prevents one from getting needed social support.

The Stress and Coping Paradigm:

Two general coping strategies

Problem-focused coping

Tackling the problem or challenge in hands



Emotion-focused coping

Managing the emotions that arise in the situation

Include physical exercise, meditation, expressing feelings and seeking emotional support

(Lazarus & Folkman, 1984)

The Stress and Coping Paradigm

- Within the stress and coping paradigm, coping strategies were described originally as serving either a problem-focused or emotion-focused function.
 - ✓ Problem-focused coping efforts are aimed at managing or eliminating the source of stress; one tries to alter the situation that is causing the stressor (e.g., exiting a conflicted marriage) or preventing the stressor from recurring.
 - ✓ Emotion-focused coping is directed toward managing the emotional distress that arises from stress appraisals; one alters their reactions to and feelings regarding the stressor, such as finding the humor in the situation (Carver et al., 1989)
- Coping with a chronic illness involves both types of coping. Some adaptive tasks or stressors may require a solution and others may have to be accepted

The Stress and Coping Paradigm

- Most studies concur that problem-focused tactics are more effective than emotion-focused coping in warding off distress.
- Problem-focused strategies are associated with lower levels of psychological distress, whereas emotion-focused strategies are related to higher levels of distress and hopelessness (Billings and Moos, 1981).
- However, emotion-focused coping may be particularly effective when the stressor is permanent or irreversible (e.g., Reynolds et al., 2000).
- Longitudinal studies (i.e., research where the same individuals are studied repeatedly over time) have found higher emotion regulation, via emotional processing and expression, was related to lower depressive symptoms in adults when perceived stress was high. Thus, emotions clearly have an adaptive role in the coping process.
- Emotion-focused coping (which originally included strategies as diverse as taking one's mind off the stressor, expressing anger at loved ones, falling into fantasies about the illness and blaming others) is now conceptualized more broadly as emotion regulation (Scheier et al., 2012).

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Research on Stress Management

Effective Responses

- Seek help
- Take rational action
- Communicate feelings
- Keep confidence, self-efficacy, self-regulation

Ineffective Responses

- Hostility
- laissez faire
- Self-blame
- Avoidance and withdrawal



Coping with Stress

Identify the Stressors

- Family problems?
- Work problems?
- Your unhealthy thoughts?
- Etc....

Scenario

Remember the scenario/ event that you recalled at the beginning of today's session? How you would you manage your stress after this morning?



Coping with Stress

Positive Thinking Techniques

01

Take responsibility for your state of mind

Problems and difficulties are inevitable in our lives, but it is our perception and reaction that determines whether an event is stressful or not

Example

Whether it is stressful or not depends on how I perceive the individual presentation

02

Put a full stop to waste thinking

Get rid of the meaningless and unconstructive thoughts, such as

Example

I would look like a dumb in front of my classmates.

I would forget about every word that I want to say when I deliver the speech.

Coping with Stress

Positive Thinking Techniques

03

Talk to yourself in a positive way

Telling yourself that you can manage the task.

Example

“I can deliver a good speech if I have enough preparation.”

04

See the situation as an opportunity for growth

Perceive the situation as a chance to learn more about yourself and others. Each difficulty is a chance for personal growth

Example

I may understand whether I am a good speaker and where I need to improve myself.

Coping with Stress

Taking Positive Action

Develop new skills

Assess what you need in this stressful situation and find some self-help books on the subject or do a course to learn the appropriate skill to help you.

Example

Read the notes on delivering a good speech or consult your teachers.

Revising the Unspoken Rules

Unspoken rules are the ideas that we live by without questioning them

Some unspoken rules, to which can be hardly conform, make us stressful as we exaggerate the results of breaking these rules.

Example

I must never make a mistake.

I must never appear inadequate in front of others.

People should do what I ask.

Coping with Stress

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Coping with Stress

Taking Positive Action

Become aware of the unhealthy rules

Examine each stressful situation you experience and look for the must and should.

What demands am I making on myself? Are they reasonable?

Example

I must not make a mistake in my essay..

Examine the thinking that accompanies your rules

If I cannot live up my rule (e.g., I must never make a mistake), am I really a terrible or weak person? Would traumatic things happen?

Coping with Stress

Taking Positive Action

Talk it over with others

Share the rules with your friends, teachers, or family members and get their reactions. Expose the unreasonableness of the rules and cease taking them for granted.

Challenge the rules

Ask yourself,

- “Why must I think in this way?”
- “Is it so terrible if I don’t live up to the rules?”
- “Is it possible that my reactions are really overreactions?”

Coping with Stress

Taking Positive Action

Revise your rules

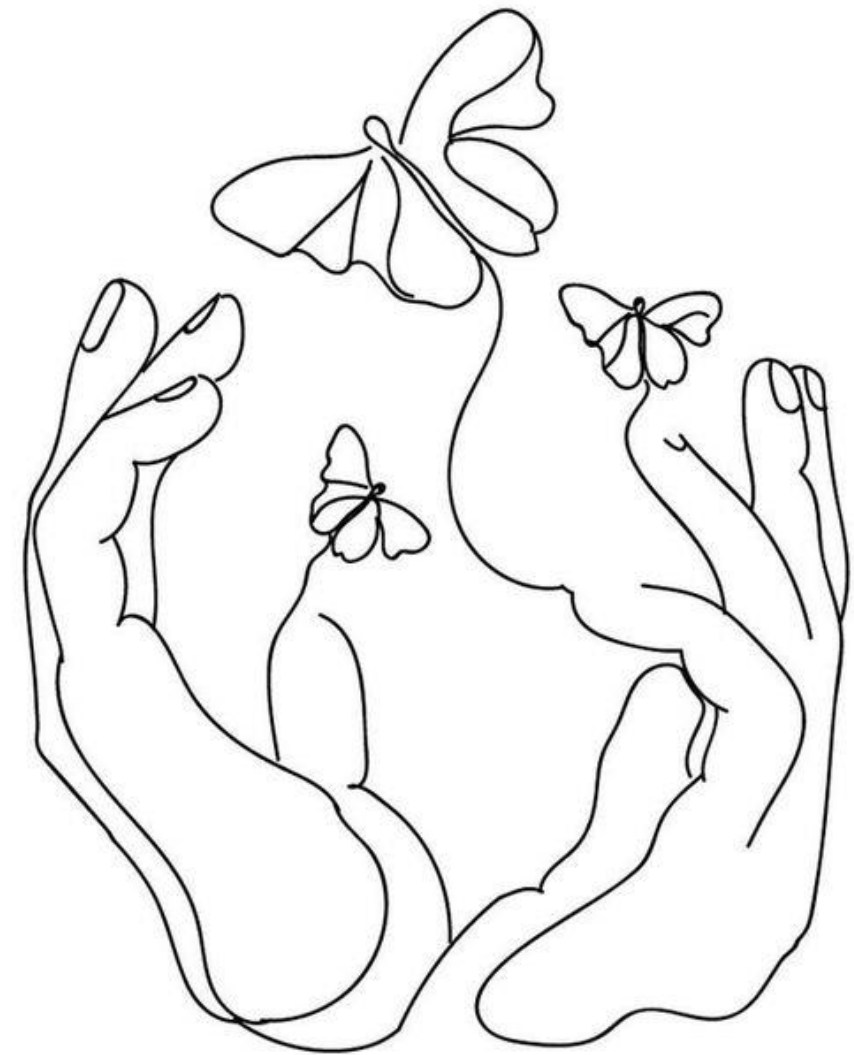
Substitute a reasonable, less harsh rule for the unhealthy one.

Example:

I must never make mistake ->

I'd like to minimize my mistakes

I must achieve my goal-> I prefer to do my best. I feel I when I do my best, but it is OK to be human. It is not so terrible when I fall short of my goal.



Coping with Stress

Establishing Support Network

- Emotional support and encouragement
- Logistical support
- Mentoring and Coaching
- Networking



Coping with Stress

Doing Exercise

- Exercise can serve as a buffer that reduces the potentially damaging physical effects of stress (J. Brown, 1991, cited in Weiten, 2001).



Coping with Stress

A Balanced Diet

- Food that helps you fight stress:
- fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat products, Vitamins C, E, Bs.



Coping with Stress

Assertive Skills

- learn to say “No” to some unreasonable requests that make you feel stressed.

Time Management

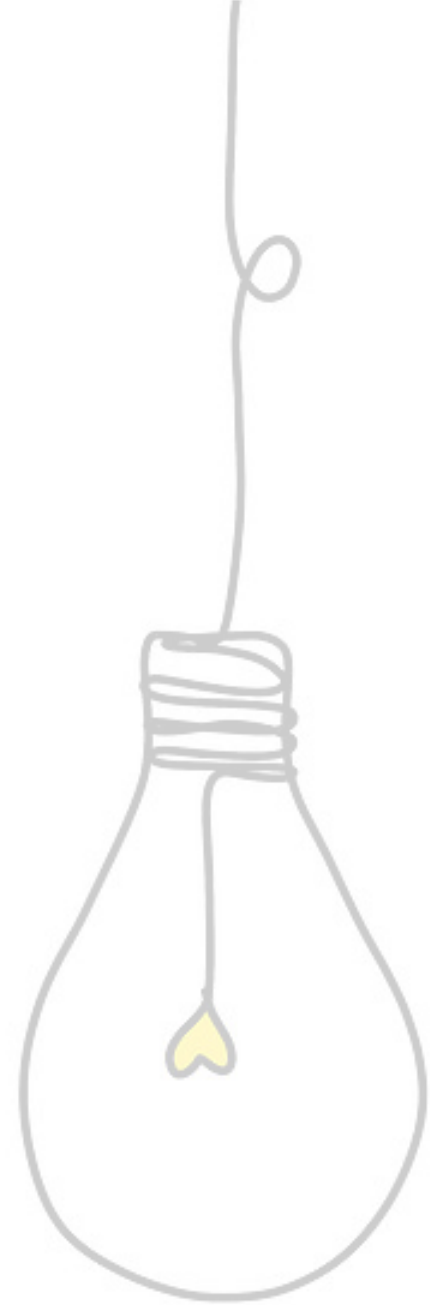
- Learn to manage time and to schedule, so you aren't rushing through life.



Reflection Time

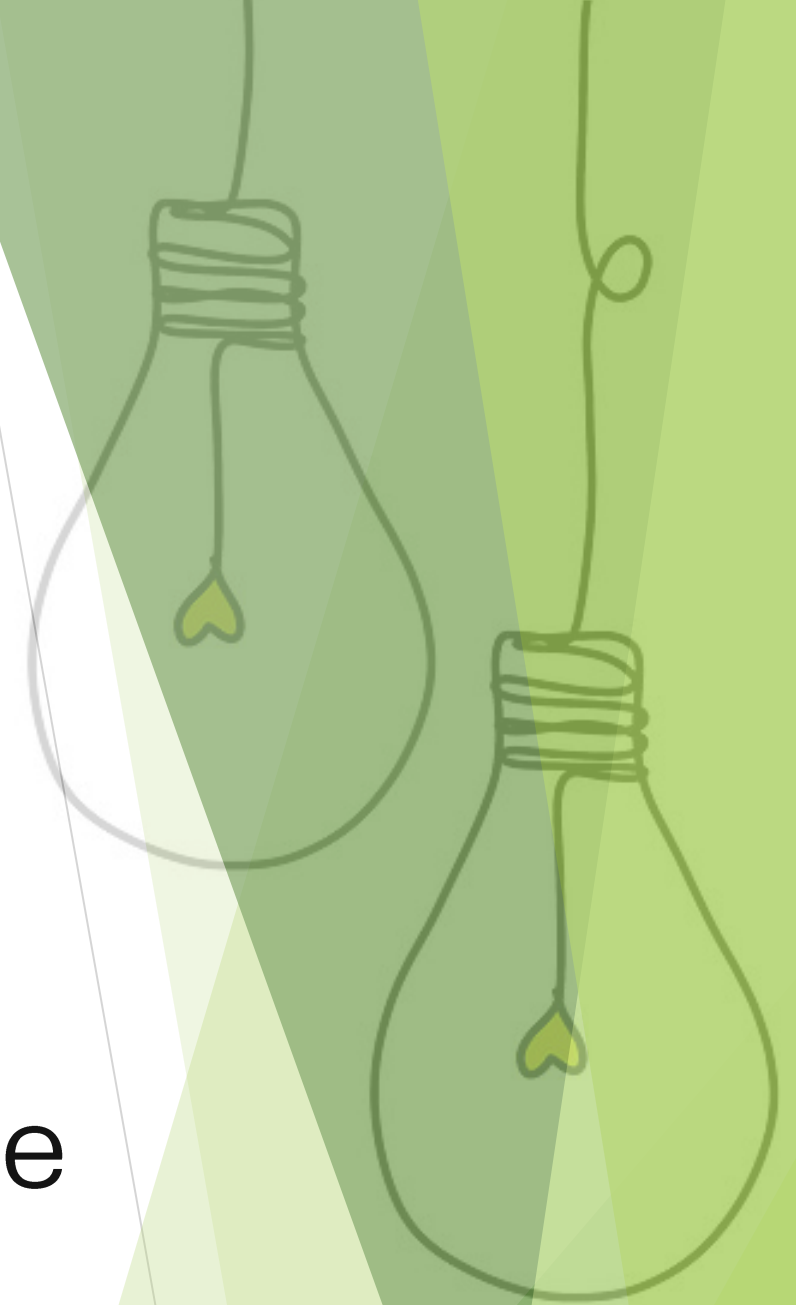
Identify your sources of stress and design an action plan to deal with it.





Stressors are in the eyes of the beholder!

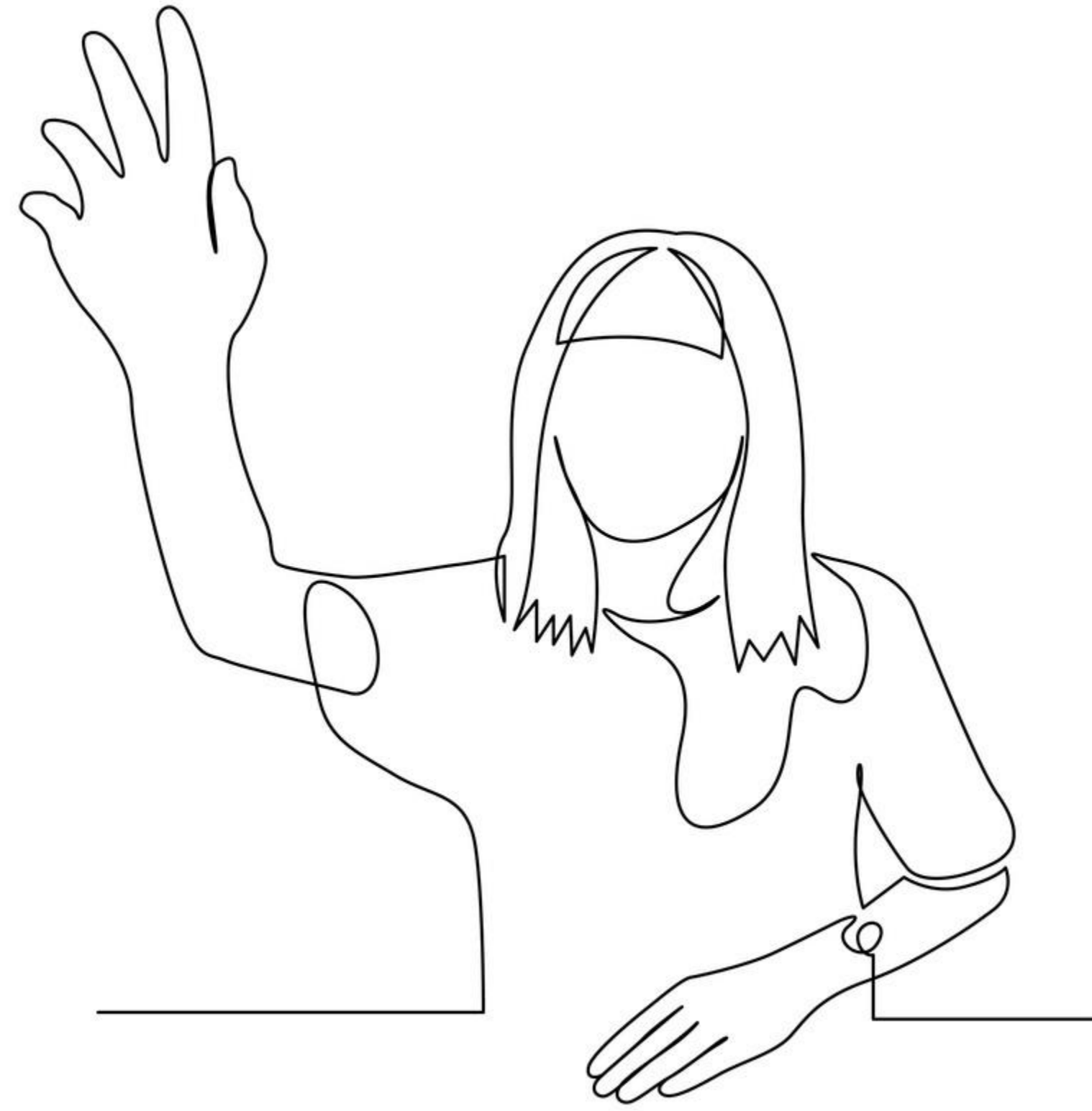
Learn to find out some means to overcome your stress!



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Questions?



Thank you 

