

# YOU GOT THIS!

Knowing your inner strength, knowledge,  
and resilience to cope with life stressors

Natalie Deering, MS LPP CMI YT-200

# What is stress?

Emotional and/or physical tension. Occurs when the demands outweigh the means

## Examples?

- \* Paying bills when money is low
- \* Working long hours and not getting enough sleep

# Can stress be helpful?

Yes!

**Eustress**: Beneficial stress, either psychological, physical, or biochemical (coined by endocrinologist, Hans Selye)

Motivates, focuses energy

Is short-term

Is perceived as within our coping abilities

Feels exciting

Improves performance

# Can stress be non-beneficial?

Yes!

**Distress**: Non-beneficial stress

Causes anxiety

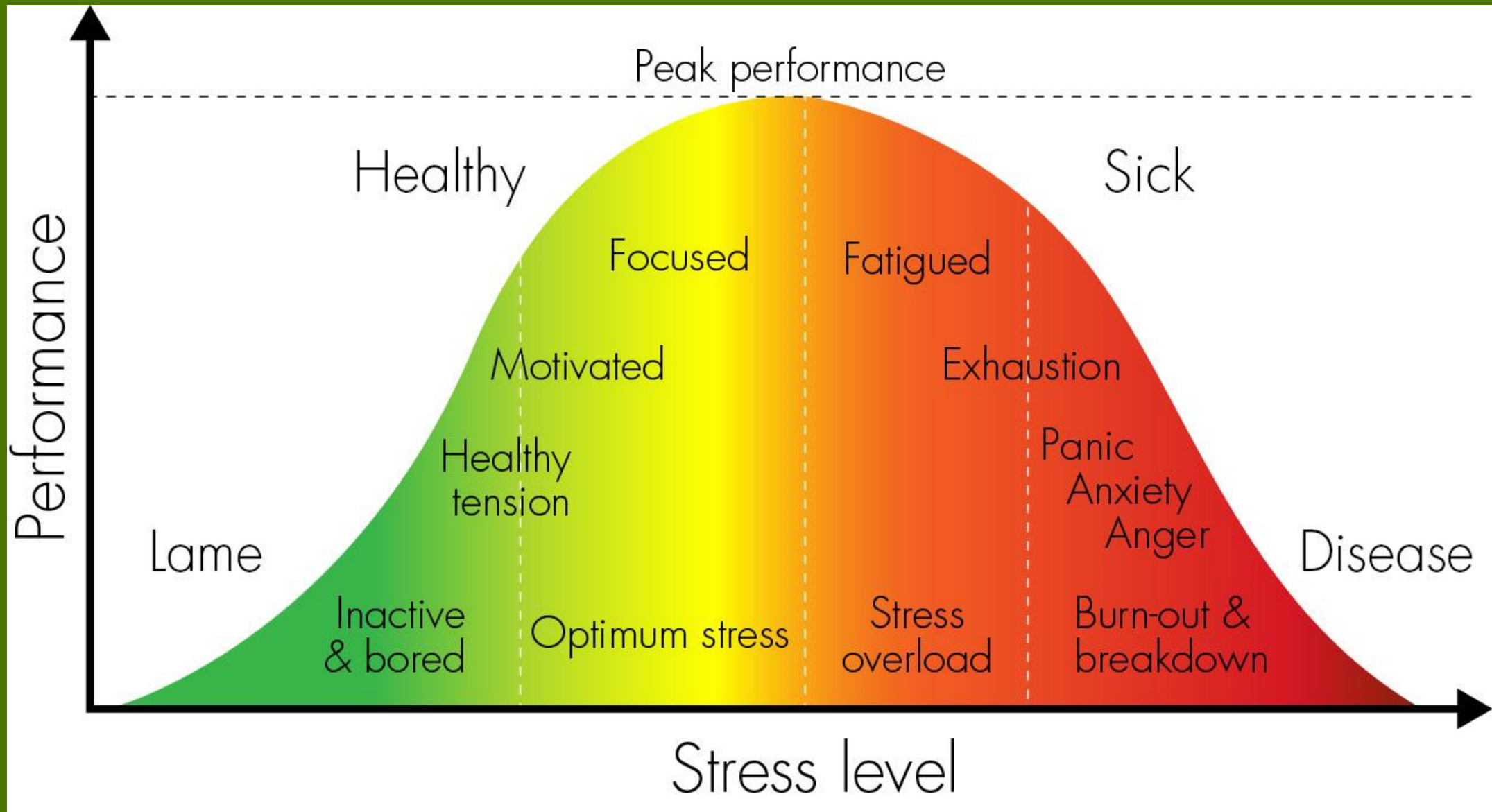
Can be short or long term

Is perceived outside of our coping abilities

Feels unpleasant

Decreases performance

Can lead to mental and physical problems



# What do you notice (physically or emotionally) when you are stressed?

Chest pains

Fatigue

Trouble breathing

Sleep issues

Irritability

Increased heart rate

Muscle tension

Fluctuate between flight, fight, or freeze response

# Why does the body experience these symptoms?

**Adrenaline and Cortisol**: Pumped through the body. If for long periods of time, it starts to take energy away from other resources in the body so that it can still have energy to escape, fight, defend itself

- The body is preparing itself for danger/threats in times of stress
- If experiencing prolonged stress, your body will prepare for a long term protective response which can lead to: Anxiety, Depression, IBS, Ulcers, Skin/Hair Problems

# Why does stress bring back or increase brain injury symptoms?

- A brain injury makes someone more susceptible to the symptoms of stress, and these symptoms make it more difficult for them to effectively use their coping strategies that they have developed to manage their symptoms
- Amygdala (alert system) over powers the pre frontal cortex (reasoning, problem solving) therefore making it harder to think through the situation
- Those with a brain injury need to focus on prevention and coping

Stress management needs to be practiced on a daily basis, not just in times of high stress!



# What in your life is currently causing you stress?

In your control? Out of your control?

Coping Strategy

**In our control**- What can you change or alter in order to make this less of a stressor in your life?

**Not in our control**- Acceptance of what we cannot change.

- Freedom to the present moment
- Let go of grasping and rejecting: Let it be
- Look at things with non-judgement

***“Pain is inevitable.  
Suffering is optional.”***

***- Buddhist teaching***

A decorative graphic consisting of several parallel white lines of varying lengths, slanted diagonally from the bottom right towards the top right, set against a solid green background.

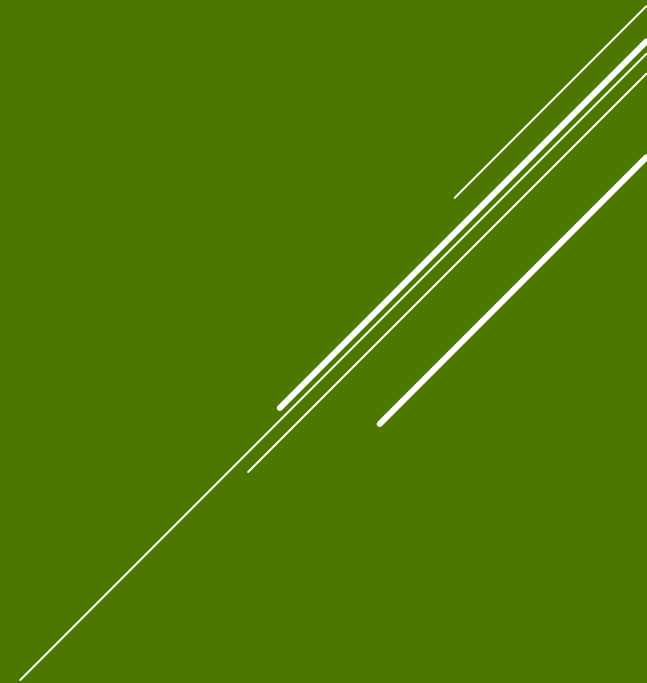
# Prevention: Mental Health Helpers

Food

Sleep

Physical Activity

Stress Management



# Food

- Nutrition plays a big role in our mental health: Second Brain
- Gut system is the main producer and regulator of the feel good hormone, serotonin (Regulates mood disorders)(Acts as both a hormone and neurotransmitter in the body)
- Brain and gut in constant communication: Vagus nerve
- Get food allergy/sensitivity test- Reduces chances of inflammation in the gut system which can cause mental health and physical illnesses



# Sleep

- Sleep in a comfortable and safe environment
- Give yourself the permission to go to sleep
- Have a bed time routine
- Find what amount of hours work best for you



# Physical Activity

- Must move the tissues to heal the issues!
- Move with purposeful attention
- Walking, running, stretching, yoga, tai chi, boxing, etc. with mindfulness
- Promotes fluid flow in the body which aids in healing, releasing toxins



# Stress Management

- Prioritize your self-care: You DESERVE it!
- Mindfulness and breath work strengthen the gray matter in the prefrontal cortex
- Meditation, massage, baths, pets, hobbies(use your hands), etc.
- Loving-kindness towards self and others “I/you are a beautiful living organism”
- Strengthen your connection to nature (walking/sitting outside, plants inside)
- Strengthen your social engagement/connections with others





# Exercises

1. Embodiment

2. Breathing

3. Mindfulness  
Meditation





## References

1. Kornfield, J. (2009). *The Wise Heart*. New York, NY: The Random House Publishing
2. Van Der Kolk, B. (2014) *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and body in the Healing of Trauma*. New York, NY: Penguin Books
3. Gunaratana, B. (2011). *Mindfulness in Plain English*. Somerville, MA: Wisdom Publications
4. Avison, J.S. (2015). *Yoga: Fascia, Anatomy, and Movement*. Scotland: Handspring Publishing Limited
5. Simpkins, C.A. & Simpkins, A.M. (2014). *Yoga & Mindfulness Therapy: Workbook for Clinicians & Clients*. Eau Claire, WI: PESI Publishing & Media
6. Treleaven, D.A. (2018). *Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness: Practices for Safe and Transformative Healing*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company