



MANAGING YOUR STRESS CYCLE

Inspired by the book, "Burnout:
The Secret to Unlocking the
Stress Cycle"

by Emily Nogaski, PHD and
Amelia Nogaski, DMA

Agenda

- Review of Stress Response Cycle
- Importance of Completing the Stress Cycle
- Identify Own Physical, Emotional and Mental Responses to Stress
- Ways to Complete Our Own Stress Cycles

Stressors Vs. Stress

- Stressors activate the stress response in our bodies.
 - External Stressors
 - Internal Stressors
- Stress is the neurological and physiological shift that occurs in our bodies when we encounter one of these threats.

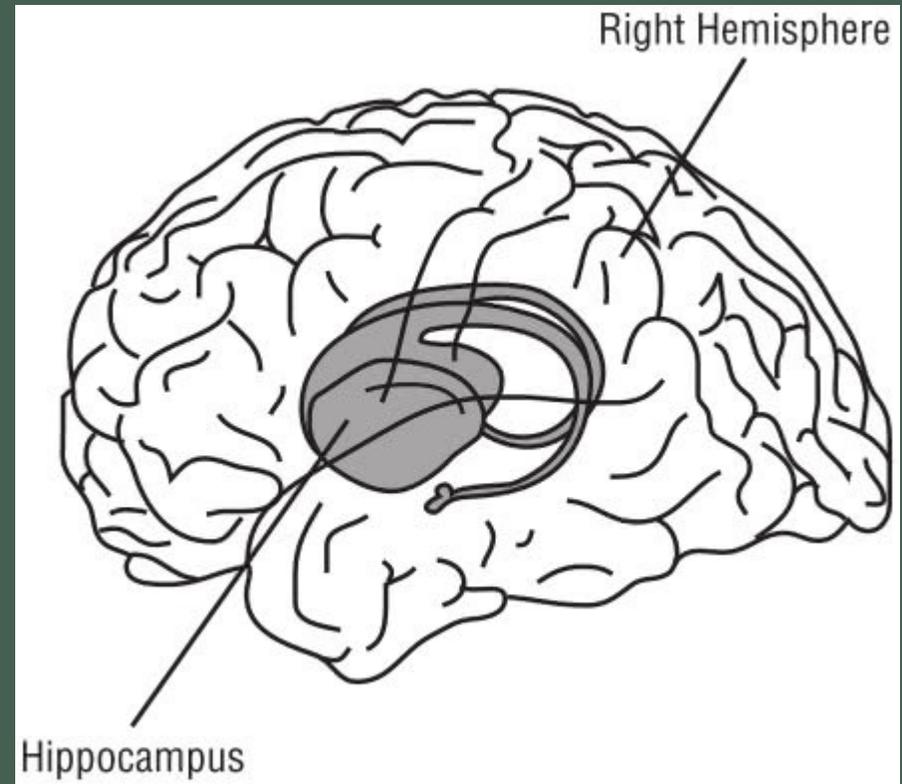
Stress Response Cycle

A **normal biological reaction** that occurs when the brain perceives a threat.

- Beginning
- Middle
- End

Stress Response

- Physiological response
- Fight, Flight or Freeze



Stress Cycle in Action

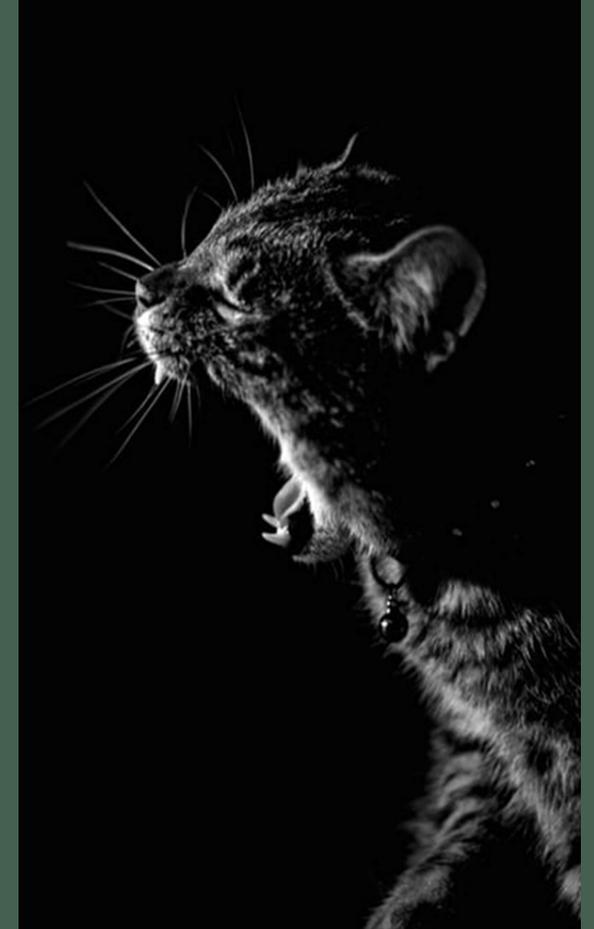
1. You see a lion. Your stress response is triggered. Heart beats faster, breathe harder, epinephrine pushes blood into your muscles, glucocorticoids keep you going, endorphins help you ignore how uncomfortable all this is, your muscles tense, you are insensitive to pain, your focus narrows, and your senses are heightened.
2. Lion chases you, you RUN to your village, yelling for help.
3. Everyone comes out, kills the lion and you are now safe. Together you all celebrate! Congratulations! You are alive and have completed your stress cycle!

Important Point!!!

Just because you have dealt with the **stressor** itself, it does not mean you have dealt with the **stress**. You have to do something that signals to your body that you are safe, or else you will stay in the stress response state with neurochemicals and hormones degrading, but never shifting into relaxation.

Stress In Today's World

- Financial Problems
- Work
- Personal Relationships
- Parenting
- Daily Life and Busyness
- Societal uncertainties



Stress Cycle as a Tunnel



Why We Get Stuck in the Stress Cycle

- Chronic Stressor → Chronic Stress
 - Our brain activates a stress response, we do the thing it says and it doesn't change the situation.
- Social Appropriateness
 - We can't do the thing our stress response tells us to do.
- It's Safer
 - It's simply not safe to react the way our brain tells us to.

Freeze

“Freeze happens when the brain assesses the threat and decides you are too slow to run or too small to fight, so your best hope for survival is to play dead until the threat goes away or someone comes along to help you. Freeze is your last-ditch stress response, reserved for threats that the brain perceives as life-threatening, when fight or flight don’t stand a chance. In the middle of the gas pedal of stress response, your brain slams on the brakes – the parasympathetic nervous system swamping the sympathetic – and you shut down.”

Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking The Stress Cycle, Emily Nagoski, PHD
and Amelia Nagoski, DMA

Signs You Need to Deal with The Stress Even if You have to Ignore the Stressor

- Notice yourself doing the same, apparently pointless thing over and over, or are engaging in self-destructive behaviors.
- Chandeliering
- You turn into a bunny hiding under a hedge
- Your body feels out of whack



Physical Signs of Stress

- Headaches
- Insomnia/Difficulties with sleep
- Digestive issues
- Teeth grinding
- Clenched jaw
- Body aches & pains
- Low sex drive
- Frequent illnesses
- Low energy/tired
- Muscle stiffness



Mental Signs of Stress

- Racing thoughts
- Difficulties concentrating
- Constant worrying
- Exhibiting poor judgment
- Memory issues
- Communication problems
- Feeling disorganized
- Focusing on the negative
- Decreased work productivity

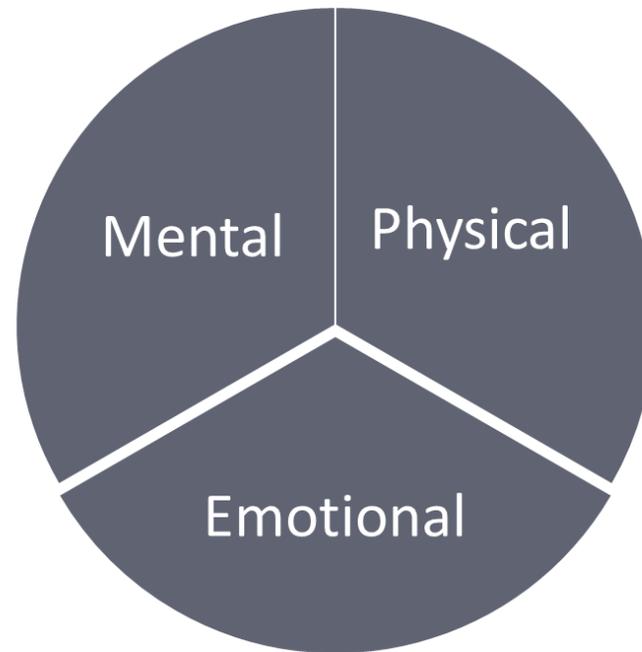


Emotional Signs of Stress

- Irritability and short-temperedness
- Difficulties relaxing
- Feeling down
- Difficulties making decisions
- Feeling defensive
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Excessive crying
- Feeling anxious
- Overreacting
- Not caring about appearance
- Mood swings

What are Your Signs of Stress?

- Physical
- Mental
- Emotional



Ways to Complete Your Stress Cycle

- Physical Activity
- Breathing
- Positive Social Interaction
- Laughter
- Affection
- Crying
- Creative Expressive

Completing the Cycle

How will you know you've completed the cycle?

- May experience a shift in mood or mental state.
- Body may feel more relaxed.
- You will feel it in your own way, you will just know.
- Keep in mind you may have years of uncompleted stress cycles built up that need to be completed.

What Is Your Plan?

- What are strategies you will use to complete your stress cycle:
 - Daily?
 - Weekly?
 - Monthly?

Choose things YOU want to do, look forward to and make them a priority!

Final Thoughts...

“I have come to believe that caring for myself is not self-indulgent. Caring for myself is an act of survival.” – Audre Lorde



Summary

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- Importance of Completing the Stress Cycle
- Identify Own Physical, Emotional and Mental Responses to Stress
- Ways to Complete Our Own Stress Cycles



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