

# MODULE 1: BEHAVIOR AND LEARNING



## Emotional Regulation

### LEARNING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE ACTIVITY:

#### Objective 1

What is Stress?

Introduction

Identifying challenging  
situations

#### Objective 2

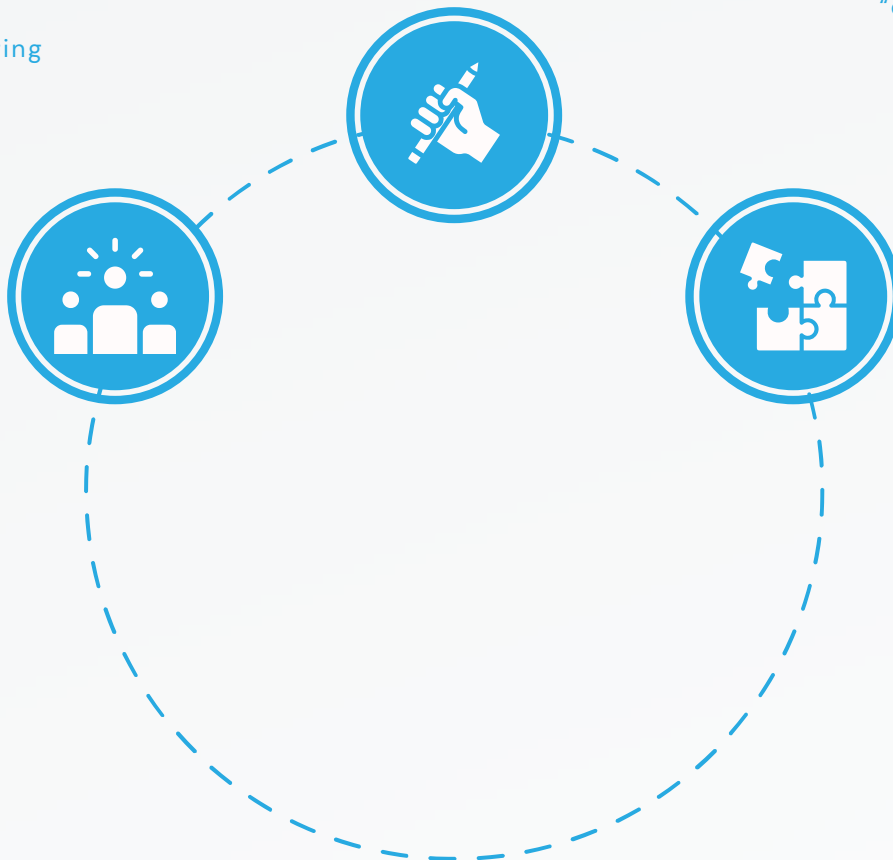
Exercise to deal with stress

different exercises to identify Stress  
and relax

#### Objective 3

personal choice of  
exercises

packing my  
"emergency suitcase"



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## Emotional Regulation

### ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION AND MATERIALS

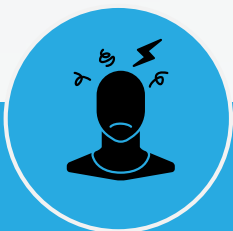
#### *Activity description*

1. Target group – adult educators, mentors of change
2. Time – 1 hour.

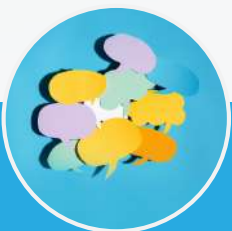
1. Activity description
2. Timer
3. a quiet and comfortable space to exercise
4. Pen and paper to write down exercises

#### *Materials*

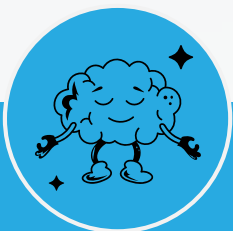
### METHODOLOGY USED FOR THIS ACTIVITY



Getting to know  
your stress  
response



Lecture:  
Stress



Exercises:  
"The short  
Jacob"  
"4 7 11"



My personal  
coping with  
Stress



packing my  
emergency  
suitcase



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## Emotional Regulation

The educator presents the training session structure and the objectives and expected outcomes.

1. Getting to know your stress response
2. Lecture: What is stress? How does it arise?
3. "The short Jacob"
4. Collection of different possibilities to react
5. "4 7 11" breathing exercise
6. Packing my emergency suitcase

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## Emotional Regulation

### GETTING TO KNOW YOUR STRESS RESPONSE

The instructor leads the following exercise:

Sit or stand comfortably.

Do a quick “check in” with your body – notice your breath and posture. Maybe you want to close your eyes for this.

Now think of something a bit stressful in your life. Nothing too hardcore or traumatic, but something a bit annoying or anxiety-provoking. After a few seconds, notice what happens in your body. Maybe you can feel some kind of tension or collapse. How is your breath now? Notice the changes in your body carefully.

Now, stop doing this. Do you feel parts of your body tense, like the shoulders, or neck? Try to relax them. Does your breathing speed up? Did it become shallower? Take a few deep long breaths. Simple practices like these ones can help you. Very simple, isn't it?

You just got to know your stress response and managed to reduce it. The stress response of our body is, in many cases, not useful, as it makes us less healthy, less smart, less creative and less kind.

Inspired by the book “Embodiment – Moving beyond mindfulness” by Mark Walsh, Unicorn Slayer Press

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## Emotional Regulation

### WHAT IS STRESS AND HOW DOES IT ARISE

Stress is a natural reaction of the body to challenges or strains.

It arises when internal or external stressors disrupt the balance of the body or the psyche. Stress can occur both in the short and long term and can affect people in different ways.

Stressors are all stimuli or situations that are perceived as stressful. They can be of a physical nature, such as noise, time pressure or high work demands, but also of a psychological nature, such as worries, conflicts or high expectations of oneself. The perception of stressors is individual – what is stressful for one person may be motivating for another.

The stress reaction is the body's response to this strain. Stress hormones such as adrenaline and cortisol are released, the heart rate increases, breathing speeds up and the muscles tense up. This reaction helps us to perform better and overcome challenges in the short term.

However, if stress persists over a longer period of time, it can have negative consequences, such as exhaustion, concentration problems or physical complaints.

Stress is therefore a natural mechanism that helps the body to adapt to difficult situations. The decisive factor is which situations a person perceives as stressful and why, how they deal with stress and whether they find effective strategies to relieve it in order to prevent long-term damage to their health.

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### EXERCISE: “THE SHORT JACOB”

Quick relaxation exercise

Introduction:

1. Sit comfortably and upright
2. Take a deep breath
3. Close your eyes

Exercise:

Focus your attention on your right hand, move your fingers a little, to feel the hand better.

Close your hand and tense your hand- and lower arm muscles a little bit.

Maybe you want to imagine you caught a little butterfly and want to bring it outside.

Hold the tension for about 20 seconds; keep on breathing calmly.

5- 4- 3- 2- 1 – let go! Relax! Place your arm loosely on your thigh .... Feel for yourself, how does it feel?

(after about 20 seconds)

Stretch the fingers of your hand, raise your hand slightly as if you were greeting someone ... hold the tension a little (20 seconds)

5- 4- 3- 2- 1 – let go! Relax! Place your arm loosely on your thigh .... Feel for yourself, how does it feel?

(after about 20 seconds)

Repeat both exercises with the other hand.

End of exercise:

1. Breathe deeply in and out for two or three times.
2. Clench your fists and bend and stretch your arms!
3. Open your eyes and get in contact with your surroundings.

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### COLLECTION: DIFFERENT POSSIBLE REACTIONS TO STRESSFUL SITUATIONS

Get together in the group and reflect about the exercises.

Collect stressful situations from your everyday life (maybe you want to use the one you imagined in the first exercise "Getting to know your stress response")

Discuss in the group two or three of the gathered situations, using questions like:

- What other possible reactions are there for this situation?
- What inner assumptions and rules of life are causing me stress in this situation?
- How would someone else react in this situation?
- What advice would someone who is friendly and sympathetic to me give me in this situation?
- What would an objective observer see in this situation?
- How can I create relief for myself in this situation?



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### 4 - 7 - 11

The 4-7-11 breathing exercise is a simple yet effective technique that promotes relaxation, reduces stress, and calms the mind by slowing your breath. By focusing on controlled inhales, holds, and long exhales, this exercise helps to activate the parasympathetic nervous system, which encourages a state of relaxation.

Here's how to do it:

1. Get comfortable: Sit or lie down in a relaxed position. Make sure your back is straight, and your shoulders are loose.
2. Inhale for 4 seconds: Breathe in slowly and deeply through your nose for a count of 4. Focus on expanding your belly first, then your chest.
3. Hold for 7 seconds: Once your lungs are full, hold your breath gently for a count of 7. Try not to strain—this should feel calm and controlled.
4. Exhale for 11 seconds: Slowly release your breath through your mouth for a count of 11, making the exhale longer than the inhale. Focus on emptying your lungs completely.
5. Repeat: Continue the cycle for several minutes or until you feel calm and centered. Aim to complete 4-6 rounds at a time.

Tips:

- Breathe smoothly, without forcing any part of the process.
- If 11 seconds feels too long for the exhale, adjust slightly but maintain a slower exhale compared to the inhale.

This technique helps to reduce anxiety, promote relaxation, and can be particularly useful before sleep or during stressful moments.



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### CLOSING OF SESSION: PACKING YOUR EMERGENCY SUITCASE FOR CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

If you could pack an exercise and / or insights and new ideas into an emergency suitcase, what would you pack?

