

A GUIDE TO COMPLETING THE STRESS RESPONSE CYCLE

Stress Response Cycle -

a biological reaction that happens when the brain perceives something that is threatening; this cycle has a beginning, a middle, and an end. The stress response is normal given the amount of stress we deal with.

It gets unhealthy when we don't know how to get to the end of the cycle -- and most of us usually don't get there. Even though we may spend hours, days, months and even years trying to come up with a solution to our stress, we tend to not address the stress that continues to build up in our bodies. If you are still feeling it, even though you think you may have solved the problem, you have not completed the cycle.

CHECK OUT THESE TIPS ON HOW TO COMPLETE THE STRESS RESPONSE CYCLE.

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

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PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

Research shows that physical activity is the best way to get through the stress cycle. You may be thinking, "UGH -- exercise and I are NOT friends." Think of any physical activity as movement. Maybe it is working in the garden, or washing the car -- any kind of movement will do. Consider tensing your muscles, from your toes to your head --that counts too.



BREATHING

A good practice of breath work can help you through the initial part of a difficult situation. Try inhaling slowly for 4 seconds, holding the breath for 7 and then slowly exhaling for 8-10 seconds. Hold for 4 and repeat the process two more times. A minute a day will feel great!

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Positive connections allow you to feel safe in the world. Intentionally interacting with others in positive ways can remind us there are really good people out there. It doesn't have to be a planned get together. It can be a simple phone call to a pal or even an "I like your shoes" to the check-out clerk.

A GOOD CHUCKLE

Good ol' belly laughing, according to neuroscientist Sophie Scott, is an evolutionary system that mammals have continuously used to make and maintain social bonds and regulate emotions through the release of endorphins. A jocular film, an hilarious novel, a silly thing your pet does... enjoy a good laugh to complete the stress cycle.



AFFECTION

Sometimes we need to call upon those whom we trust and respect. To help you through the stress cycle, grab someone who cares for you and give them a 20 second hug. Center your bodies and allow yourself the time to feel safe and connected. Not wanting to be with a human? Cuddle with a pet for a similar impact.

WEEPING

Completing the stress cycle is how you feel when you have a big cry... lighter, with a feeling of release. By crying, you didn't change the situation that caused the stress, but you have cycled through the process.

GET CREATIVE

Art lets emotions in. Music, theater, dance, painting... all allow us to feel. Being creative can help us complete the stress cycle by removing the emotion we were feeling and letting a new emotion in.