

Benefits to your staff from attending:

The Science and Practice of Stress Proofing Your Brain

April 28, UC Hopland Research and Extension Center

Goals for the class

- Short term: Identify stressors how you respond and learn tools to manage stress through nervous system regulation
- Long-term: make changes to the structure and function of the brain and nervous system to create more physiological and emotional resiliency in the face of stress.

Content Outline:

1. An Overview of the Short and long term effects of stress on body and brain:

- Fight flight or freeze
- Effect on cognitive function, emotional regulation, response flexibility,
- Other physiological effects: heart, inflammation, immune,
- Stress as a contagious and heritable - Epigenetics, methylation

2. Learning the five steps for stress proofing your nervous system. Each of the steps will be a blend of learning and doing. Exercises are evidence based and draw from range of disciplines including: interpersonal neurobiology, cognitive neuroscience, psychology, and neurobiology of attachment, yoga and mindfulness.

- Recognize: identify stress triggers and personal patterns of stress response
- Reset: using evidence-based practices to bring nervous system back to balance
- Renew: learning to replenish a your depleted system
- Re-Wire: intentionally creating new neural pathways that build resilience
- Live Free: applying the steps to a range of roadblocks to see that you can create a more balanced and joyful life regardless of your circumstances.

Outcomes:

As a result of this workshop participants will:

- Have a basic understanding of the short term and long term effects on the brain and body.
- Identify their personal top 3 stress triggers
- Identify 3 patterns of their systems stress response
- Learn at least 3 tools to meet courses short and long term goals
- Have a 6 week plan to implement changes

“Stress and its related comorbid diseases are responsible for a large proportion of disability worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) Global Burden of Disease Survey estimates that mental disease, including stress-related disorders, will be the second leading cause of disabilities by the year 2020. Although the term “stress” is used in a wide variety of contexts, it has consistently been demonstrated that individuals with stress and related disorders experience impaired physical and mental functioning, more work days lost, increased impairment at work, and a high use of health care services. The disability caused by stress is just as great as the disability caused by workplace accidents or other common medical conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and arthritis.” – M. Kalia

In the United States, over half of the lost workdays each year are stress related. The estimated cost of these approximately 550 million days is \$602.00 per worker per year. This may not sound like a lot for one worker, but for large employers like the UC system, the price tag adds up quickly. In addition to absenteeism, stress has also been linked to poor performance, lowered ability for creative problem solving, less emotional regulation. In this era of having to do more (more programs, more outreach) with less financial resources, the importance of creativity, collaboration and efficiency are critical to an organizations success.

In addition, stress is contagious. While we might know this intuitively, (just think about walking into your bosses office when they are really stressed and imagine your visceral response), it has only been recently that we have research to help us understand why. So if we can't change our work environment, what can we do? We can build a more resilient brain and nervous system so that even under stressful conditions we can weather the storm with more calm, creativity and compassion.

In the last ten years, there has been a body of research built that shows how mindfulness, mindsight, yoga and mediation can build the parts of your brain essential for this kind of resilience. This program, takes that body of knowledge and integrates research from interpersonal neurobiology and creates simple, effective, evidence-based practices to reduce stress immediately, while creating new neural networks for increased resiliency over time.

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