

# What About Me?

## Guide to parenting stress and self-care

**WHAT ABOUT ME?**

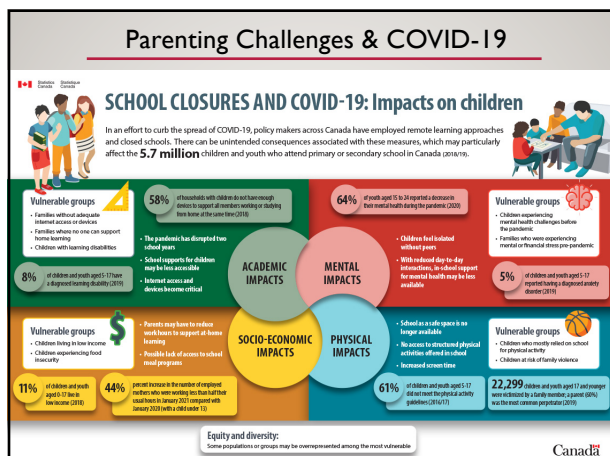
Guide to parenting stress and self-care

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### Parenting **CHALLENGES**: The realities of today's world

- Lack of time – dual working families
- Loss of the support 'village'
- Overload of divergent and conflicting information on raising children & parenting
- Culture which seeks for 'Band-Aid' solutions and 'quick-fixes'
- Impact of digital devices and social media on children and families



### Parenting **PRESSURES**: Fulfilling our role as an alpha provider

- Answering our children's attachment hunger and other basic needs
- Taking the lead and assuming responsibility for the child-adult relationship
- Orienting our children and keeping them out of trouble
- Setting boundaries and having them confront life futilities
- Providing our children with emotional support and comfort
- Modeling and inculcating family values, rituals and traditions

### Child's **WANTS** vs. **NEEDS**

The hardest thing about being a PARENT is having ***faith*** in ourselves and in our own ability to be a good parent.

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### Parenting **GUILT**: an unavoidable emotion

- **Guilt happens to ALL of us** – it comes with the territory.
- It stirs us up when we feel responsible:
  - ✓ for not doing enough or not doing things right
  - ✓ when something is not working
  - ✓ when bad things are happening
- It evokes powerful impulses in us to try to 'fix' things and make them better, to punish oneself, to aim for perfection.
- It has many origins, from internal to external expectations and pressures.
- It can feel unbearable, evoking impulses to numb or to get rid of it.

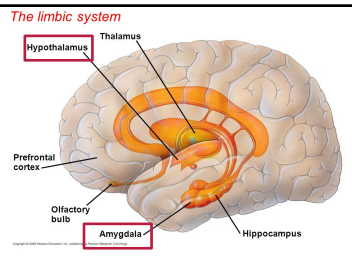


### Defining **EMOTION**

*We don't choose to be affected emotionally*

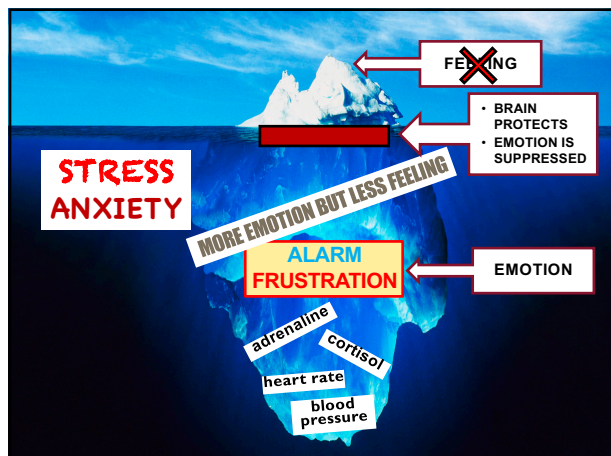
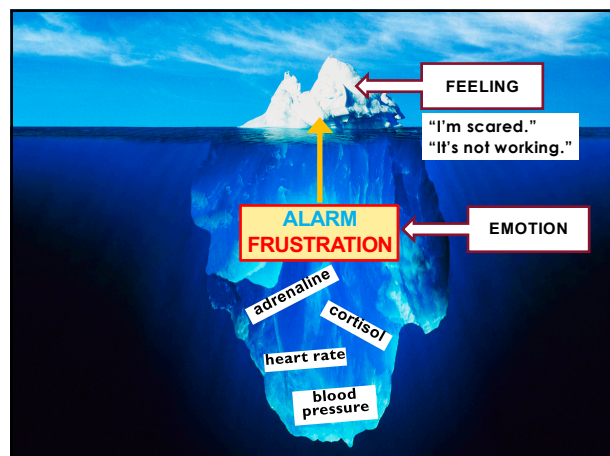
EMOTION (alarm, frustration, guilt, etc.)

- **Stirs us up:**
  - ✓ Happens to us as opposed to under our control;
  - ✓ Seems irrational at times, although the brain has its reasons.
- **Moves us:**
  - ✓ in ways that would serve us;
  - ✓ creates an action potential that seeks expression.



#### BRAIN'S ALARM SYSTEM:

- Mediated by the **LIMBIC SYSTEM**
- **Amygdala** registers the threat (like a smoke detector)
- **Hypothalamus** orchestrates the response (it links the nervous system to the endocrine system via the pituitary gland)
- Which triggers the **SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM**

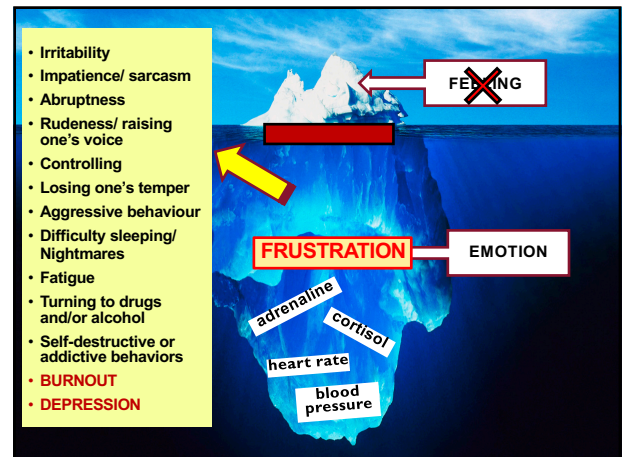
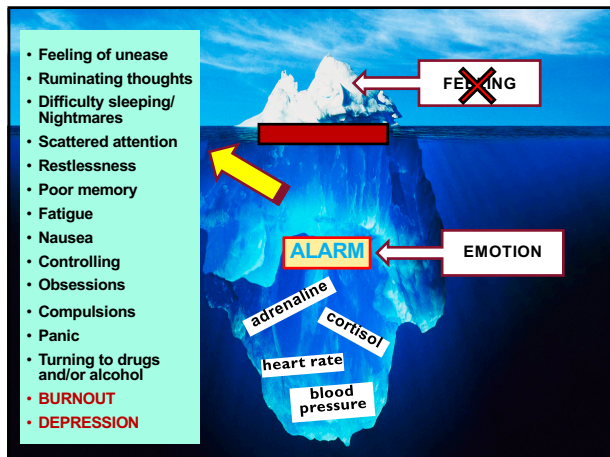


### What is the difference between?

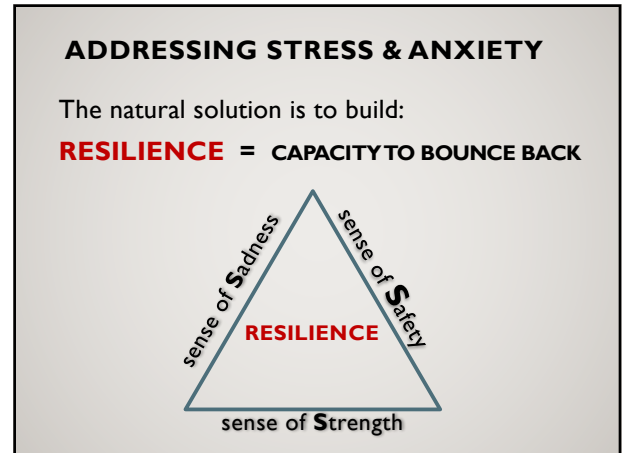
- **Stress:** neurological and physiological responses produced by the body when experiencing stressors (changes or challenges).
- **Alarm:** instinctive primal emotion in response to a danger or threat.
- **Fear:** feeling (emotional awareness) in response to a danger or threat.
- **Anxiety:** a vague sense of unsafety and unease, characterized by apprehension and restlessness.
- **Worry:** give way to anxiety; to torment oneself with or suffer from disturbing pervasive thoughts.

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Just because you've dealt with the stressor doesn't mean you've dealt with the stress itself.





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2<sup>nd</sup> key towards cultivating resilience:  
The sense of **SADNESS**

\* or any other emotional expression

**Sense of SADNESS**  
Recognizing one's  
**FRUSTRATION**

When things  
don't work

Helps when feeling  
comforted

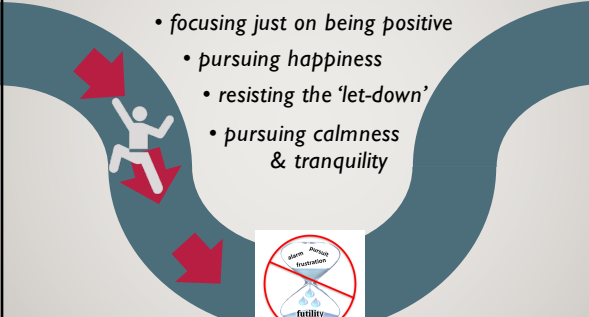


### Allowing emotions to **complete their cycle**

- Emotions are automatic and instantaneous.
- Emotions are like tunnels. If you go all the way through them, they will end on their own.
- Sometimes we get stuck in our emotional journey for different reasons.
- Emotions don't dissipate if we try to avoid them or make them go away.
- Completing the cycle isn't an intellectual decision; it's a physiological shift.

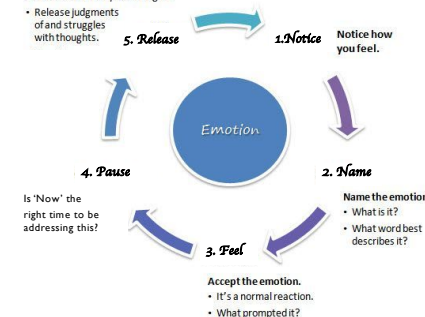
### The problem with 'right' thinking

- focusing just on being positive
- pursuing happiness
- resisting the 'let-down'
- pursuing calmness & tranquility



### Coming alongside feelings is to...

- accept their existence regardless of how irrational and unreasonable they may seem;
- normalize the feelings rather than treat their existence as a problem;
- Make room for the feelings rather than try to get rid of them.



**1. Notice** Notice how you feel.

**2. Name** Name the emotion.  
• What is it?  
• What word best describes it?

**3. Feel** Accept the emotion.  
• It's a normal reaction.  
• What prompted it?  
• Don't judge or condone, just let it be for now.

**4. Pause** Is 'Now' the right time to be addressing this?

**5. Release** Allow and release the emotion.  
• Notice and allow your thoughts.  
• Release judgments of and struggles with thoughts.

### Talking to someone

- **Talk to your partner** more, especially about the things you are worried about, but also about everyday issues so that maybe you can catch yourself before you start worrying about them.
- **Talk to other parents**, including friends and family members, about the parenting issues you are facing and things you are anxious about. It is often helpful to simply know that other people are going through the same things and have the same worries.
- **Consider seeking professional help** for yourself from your doctor or a psychologist if your stress and anxiety are causing severe or lingering symptoms so that it is hard to sleep or do your daily activities.

### The benefits of **VENTING**

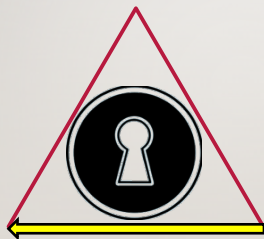


Sometimes, all we need is to let it out.

### Finding other ways to expressing ourselves and releasing emotion

- Walking in nature / Exercising
- Watching sad movies (having a good cry)
- Listening to music
- Dancing and movement
- Laughter and humour
- Journal writing and creative expression
- Enjoy your present hobby or discover a hobby
- Etc.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> key towards cultivating resilience: The sense of **STRENGTH**



Sense of **STRENGTH**

Find confidence in  
the face of adversity  
and discomfort

Helps when it's being  
reflected back

Courage is not the  
absence of fear, courage  
is acting in spite of fear.

Carly Fiorina

### Parenting is like walking a **MAZE**

