

Stress Model

Landmarks of Emotion

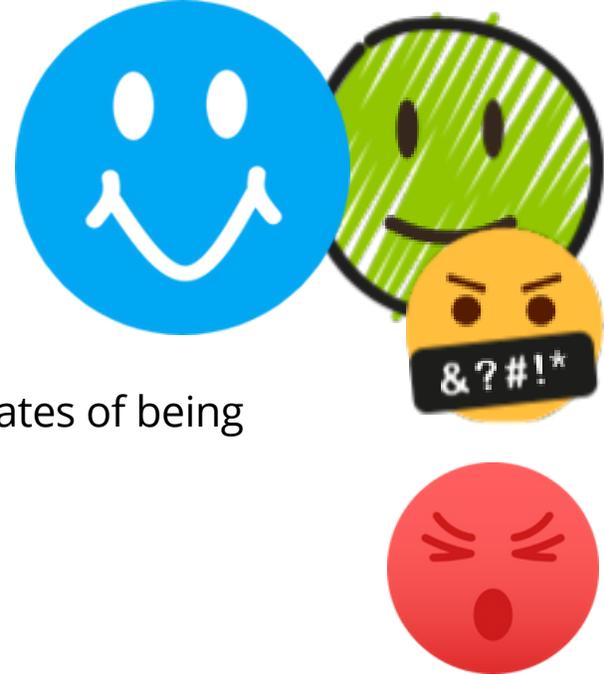
In this unit, we will learn the Flourish Empowerment model of emotional regulation.

Emotional regulation is necessary to decode our emotions, and managing stress is key. This model is based on Kristy Arbon's Somatic Self-Compassion Model, which helps us be more aware of our bodies and how to care for ourselves.

Knowing how to identify your personal landmarks of emotion and stress can help you understand when you are about to become overwhelmed. Then, you can take action to soothe and calm yourself, which helps with emotional regulation.

When you are overwhelmed, your brain may interpret it as a danger and cause you to go into fight-flight-freeze or fawn. You may find yourself in those old behavior patterns you might want to be doing less, like shutting down, hiding, pleasing, or perfectionism. The more you experience this stress pattern, the more likely you will feel drained and exhausted, have less control over your life, and have less self-confidence and self-trust.

The Four States



We can think of ourselves as having four states of being

- Rest
- Challenge
- Approaching Overwhelm
- Overwhelm

Rest

Rest is a calm and effortless state. Most behaviors we do when in this state are conscious and chosen.

Rest is a tricky state to recognize and stay in.

Our brain- survival bias might make rest dull and uninteresting, but rest is still important. This bias can make us notice all the unpleasant parts of our experience and disregard the signs that we are resting. We can recognize when we are resting and appreciate it when our needs are fulfilled. Life is not always about difficulty, and survival or negative bias is not always our reality. Noticing our resting states and adding more of them to our lives can help add more emotional regulation.

Noticing the Signs of Being At Rest



Breathing
calm and freely

Loose muscles

Feeling
spaciousness

Feeling
content

Thinking
clearly

Awareness of
your
spirituality

Noticing Your Signs of Being At Rest



Take a minute and jot down your signs of being at rest. You can focus on thoughts, sensations, feelings, what your body wants to do when you think of or are at rest, and images that come to mind.

Images

Body sensations

Feelings

Activities your
doing

Thoughts

What your body
wants to do

Challenge



Challenge is another state we can be in. When challenged, we use our resources successfully and learn and grow. We live our lives consistent with our values and usually maximize our strengths while in this state. In an upcoming unit, you will have the opportunity to explore your strengths and values.

When you are learning something new, you might be in a challenge state . For example, you might find yourself in a challenge during this course. Words like curious, excited, learning and growing, and fun can describe a challenge state, but you may also experience mild irritation.



Noticing the Signs of being in Challenge

Stress Model



When we are in a challenge state, we are doing something meaningful, but we can manage the stress and enjoy what we are doing without too much distress.

Alert

Curious

Mildly annoyed or irritated but determined to grow

Excited

Mild to moderate tension but still can learn

Engaged

Noticing Your Signs of

Stress Model

Challenge



Take a minute and jot down your signs of being in a challenge. Some key areas to pay attention to are. What are your thoughts, sensations, and feelings in challenge? What does your body feel like doing, and what images come to mind when you think of the challenge state?

Images

Body sensations

Feelings

Activities your
doing

Thoughts

What your body
wants to do

Challenge



While in challenge, the goal is to stay concentrated on the job in front of us, even when it is hard, and to prevent ourselves from becoming overwhelmed by the standards of perfectionism, shame what others demand of us , or our inner critic sets that are not being fulfilled . These are things that take us out of challenge into overwhelm.



Moving from Challenge to

Stress Model

Overwhelm



Once you start to feel like you are no longer making choices and things are happening too fast or without your awareness, your confusion can turn to panic.

For example, your mild irritation may become something you can't manage. You may want to run away and escape, avoid, argue, or lash out, or you may find yourself shutting down and dissociating. These are all signs of approaching overwhelm.



Moving from challenge to overwhelm



A great aim is to either remain in a state of rest or challenge and stay out of overwhelm. To live in a world of people with typical neurological development, you have probably been conditioned to ignore your body's signals and force yourself to do too much to survive.



There are better ways than this, so the goal is to give you the tools to take care of yourself in a manner that is more mindful of what your body needs.

Noticing the Signs of Moving from Challenge to Overwhelm



This is the hardest step of all, but if you can tune in to some of your body's signs that you may be starting to tip from challenge into overwhelm, you can take better care of yourself. Here are some typical signs.

Worrying

Mind becomes busy

Nausea

Heart is racing

Thinking is fuzzy

Muscles become tight

Thoughts start to become negative

Noticing Your Signs of Moving From Challenge to Overwhelm



What are some of your signs that you may be tipping from challenge to overwhelm?

Images

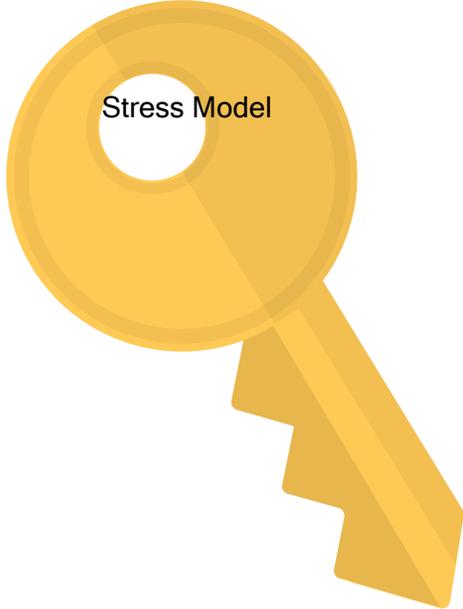
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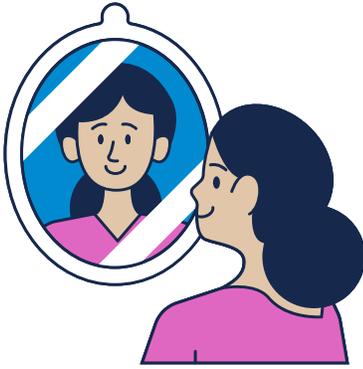


Remember, the more regulated you are, the more your brain can think clearly about your feelings to help you make decisions in your best interest.

This will build your self-trust and self-confidence—Something you have been deprived of.

You may never have been taught to pay attention to these signs. In fact, you've likely been taught to ignore them and push through them.

LOVE
YOUR
body
♥



Can you think of some ways and times that your family or societal structures have taught you to ignore the signs of your moving overwhelm?



You may have been taught that your feelings in your body don't matter or that they are unreliable, but now you know they are not. They are often signs of something happening in your environment to pay attention to.

Overwhelm



Now, let's talk about overwhelm.

Overwhelm is an innate response to protect you!!!

When we have been through more than we can handle, it is natural to feel overwhelmed and need a break.

It's very important to pay attention to overwhelm.

It is okay to experience this, and it is normal. We should be gentle with ourselves and take time to both push ourselves and rest.





Mildly difficult emotions will come up during our training.

You can practice these ideas moving forward by paying attention during our group sessions to whether you are at rest in challenge or in overwhelm.

If overwhelmed in our group, care for yourself by taking a break.



Noticing Signs of Overwhelm



Here are some of the typical signs of overwhelm.

Indecisive

Feeling disconnected or numb

Desperate

Teary and vulnerable

Tight muscles

- Want to
- hide
 - sleep
 - run away
 - fight
 - Procrastination or Paralysis

Noticing Your Signs of Overwhelm



What are some of your signs that you may be tipping from challenge to overwhelm?

Thoughts

Sensations

Images

What are you doing?

Feelings

What do you want to do?

Self Awareness Skills For Noticing Stress Signs

Rather than disregarding our needs and relying on old strategies to mask them, we must consider how to tune in and respond to ourselves by making wise choices.

Self-awareness skills, part of the new skills to replace masking behavior, help us tune in to our experiences.

Two excellent skills I recommend are timer check-ins and body scans.

Unfortunately, both of these are skills that require some practice.

Practice
≡ MAKES ≡
Progress

Identify your emotions and your feelings to help with stress



The following two pages, “ Body Feelings Words” and The Feelings Wheel,” will help you with your stress markers or the landmarks of rest, challenge approaching overwhelm and overwhelm.

These are valuable tools for identifying your emotions, helping you with stress regulation and knowing what you are feeling.



BODY FEELINGS WORDS

knotted neutral

tingly, open, clenched, tight, loose, heavy,

swirly, itchy, fidgety

Eyes feel stinging
blurry or focused

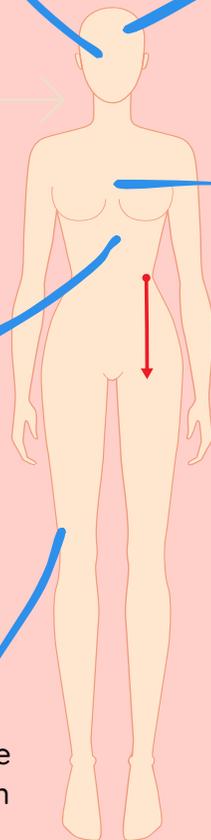
Head can feel buzzy,
neutral, clear, dizzy
swirly, heavy

Jaw can feel
clenched or tight

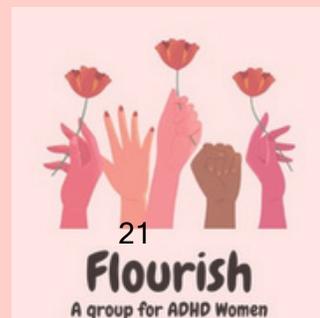
Chest
feels tight
fluttery
heavy
open
heart beating fast
heart beating slow
heart stopped

Stomach can feel
fluttery, calm,
neutral, knotted,
nauseous

Legs can feel
heavy, tingly like
they want to run
like they are
stuck
like they are
numb



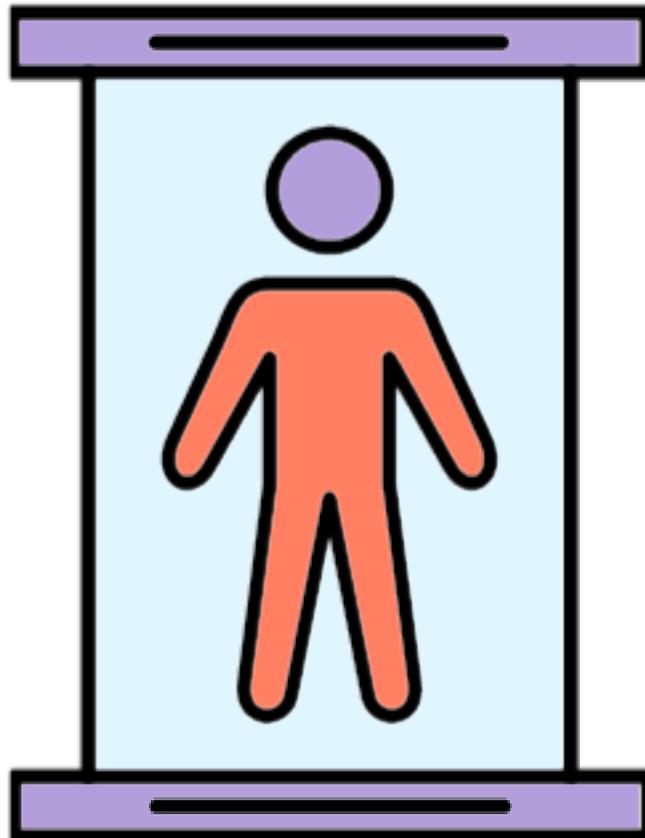
credit to Dr. Megan Neff for this idea



Body Scans



In our course there is a link to a recording where you can practice body scans. Body scans can help you become more attuned to the signs of the landmarks of emotions. The more you do them the more skilled you will become. They also are often relaxing.





Body scans are great for stress and emotional regulation. They help with the following:

- Enhanced Self-Awareness 🧠: Body scans encourage a deeper awareness of physical sensations, which can help you become more attuned to their bodies and recognize early signs of sensory overload or emotional distress.
- Reduction in Anxiety 🌊: By focusing on one body part at a time, this practice can help reduce feelings of anxiety.
- Improvement in Emotional Regulation ❤️: Regular practice of body scans can lead to better emotional regulation.
- Promotes Relaxation 😊: The systematic approach of body scanning calms the mind and body, which reduces restlessness.



By using a timer as many times a day as you'd like, you can build awareness of what you are feeling and help yourself know where you are in your emotional landscape.

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Set an alarm two to three times a day and ask yourself what you feel in your body. Try to put a feeling name to it and or match it to a state, rest challenge, or overwhelm. You can jot this down on paper, on your phone, in an audio file, or in a journal.

Other questions to build self-awareness:

- How do I feel
- What do I need
- What can I do?

Is there anything I need to do to help myself feel better in this moment?



Group Activity How society benefits from your overwhelm

Stress Model



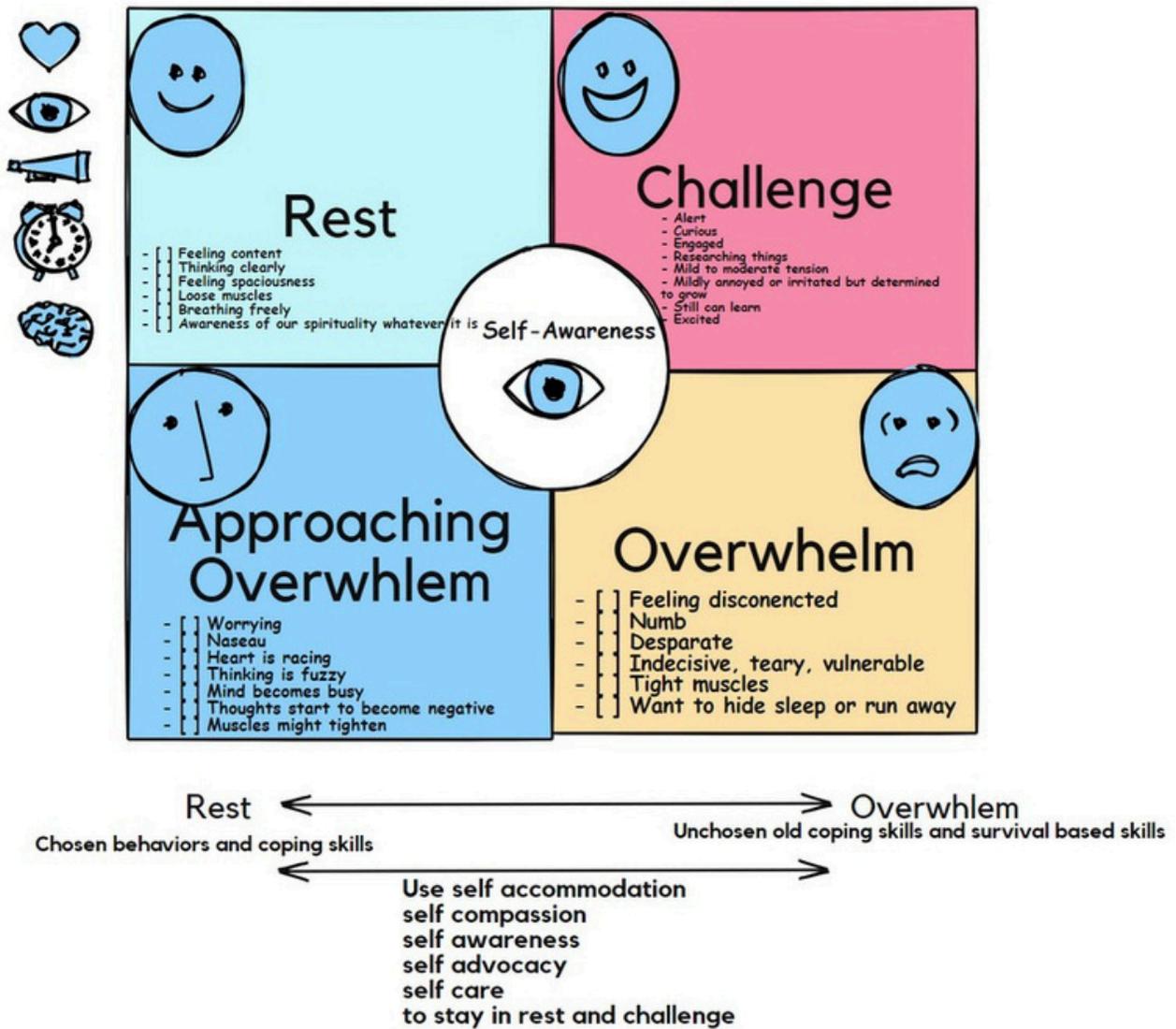
Many women with adhd struggle with moving from a challenged state into an overwhelmed state.

How do you think lack of understanding and support in a neurotypical world contributes to overwhelm and emotional dysregulation?

Have others benefited from ignoring your body's overwhelming signs, or did you learn to do this to please your teachers, family, or employers?

How the skills work

Landmarks of Emotion



credit to Kristy Arbon

