

# CA Conference for Women

January 2022

- It has been almost 2 years of anxiety and uncertainty – health, financial, environmental, racial, societal, and political.
- #wearealladenow
- A survey last month by the [American Psychological Association shows Americans are struggling](#) to make day-to-day decisions; millennials reported the highest levels of this stress, with “a disproportionate impact on parents, given changes to work, school, and everyday routines during the pandemic.

We have need to find new ways of doing things from work, school, socializing, and advocacy.

Let's take moment to just take a deep breath.

To be ok with the vulnerability, confusion, sadness, anger, grief about what we have gone through and the uncertainty about the future.

# Some Themes of Pandemic Living

- Zoom fatigue
- Home is no longer sanctuary
- Survivors guilt, mourning and fear
- Lack of forward orientation
- Confusion and anxiety on how to socialize, how and if to return to work
- Children – child care, home school, return to school, development

# What is stress?

Stress is when your body and mind don't feel good.

- Fear
- Worry
- Anxiety

Other feelings, particularly with COVID19, may include:

- Sadness
- Loneliness
- Anger
- Grief

# Stress in Your Body

When you are stressed, different things happen to you:

- You may have trouble breathing
- Your heart beats faster
- Your hands and body begin to sweat
- Your body tenses up
- Your mind gets foggy

Chronic stress leads to inflammation, weakened immunity, difficulty fighting viruses, high blood pressure, heart disease, depression, disruptive sleep, and IBS to just name a few health challenges.

# Stress and Executive Functioning

**Our executive, cognitive functions help us with daily skills:**

- Organization
- Planning
- Forethought
- Concentration
- Goal-directed actions

**What effect does stress have on executive functioning?**

- Stress causes adrenal glands to release high levels of catecholamines which impair the functions of the prefrontal cortex
- The prefrontal cortex is part of the brain that allows our executive functions to work properly
- When you are stressed, it disrupts executive functions such as *working memory* and *cognitive flexibility* which alter your ability to be organized, work productively and remember information

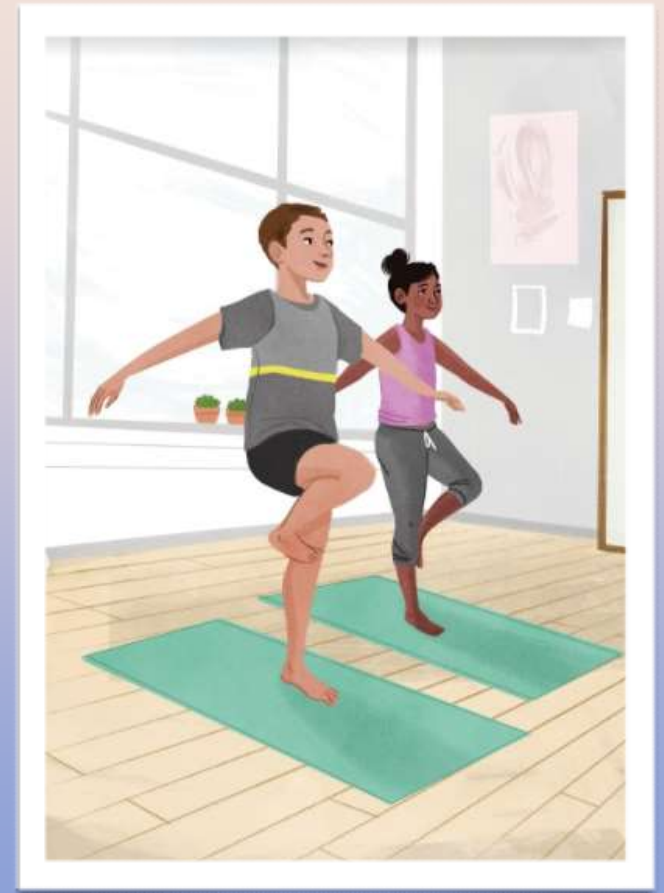
**Why this is important: it works both ways.**

Stress impairs our executive functioning, while decreased executive functioning can increase stress

\* Data from [https://connectionsinmind.com/stress\\_executivefunctions/](https://connectionsinmind.com/stress_executivefunctions/)

# Ways to Deal with Stress

- Movement
- Diet
- Sleep
- Mental Health
  - Mindfulness – Be more aware of your body, thoughts and surroundings
  - Quiet the Mind
  - Seek Help
- Meaningful, positive relationships
- Sense of Purpose





# Benefits of Meditation & Mindfulness

- Decreased blood pressure and hypertension
- Lowered cholesterol levels
- Reduced production of “stress hormones,” including cortisol and adrenaline
- More efficient oxygen use by the body
- Increased production of the anti-aging hormone DHEA
- Improved immune function
- Decreased anxiety, depression, and insomnia

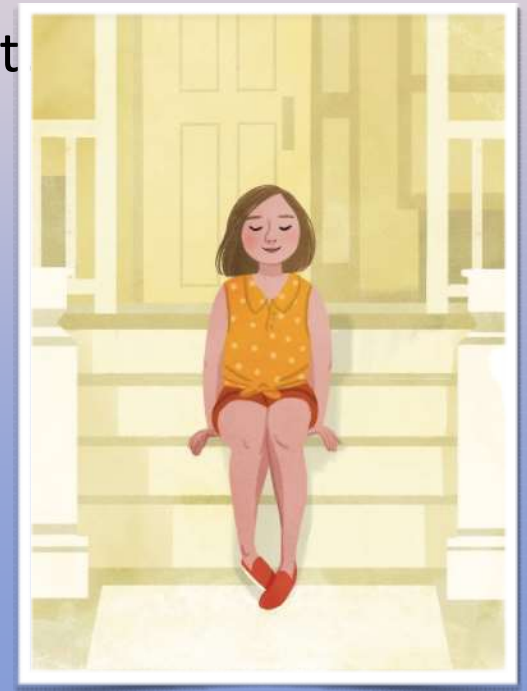
# Just Breathe

## One Breath

- One hand on stomach, other hand on your heart
- Take a deep breath - Breathe In. Pause. Breathe out
- Repeat

## Two Breaths

- Four Finger Exercise



# Intent & Gratitude

- Set an intent about how you want to feel or serve today?
  - This may be before you begin a meeting, interact with a parent or child, or before you start class or visit a home.
- 3 Deep Breaths
  - Go outside for this exercise, if you can. It is nice to get fresh air. (You can also do this inside any time, as well.)
  - Stand with both feet evenly on the ground beneath you. Set the intent to “feel grounded”. Take a deep breath, in and out, putting your attention on the solid space beneath you.
  - Put both hands on your heart. Feel your body and think about what you are grateful for today. Take a deep breath in and out.
  - Drop both hands to your sides and stand tall. Feel the space around you. Appreciate the expansiveness of the sky above and beyond.
  - Breathe deeply - in and out.



# LEADERS

- **L – LOOK and LISTEN**
- **E – EMOTIONAL BONDING**
- **A – AWARENESS**
- **D – DOING**
- **E – EMPOWER YOURSELF AND OTHERS**
- **R – RESPONSIBILITY**
- **S – SYNCHRONICITY**

# I AM Meditation

Take a deep breath, in and out.

Repeat, I AM. I AM.

When your attention drifts away from the words, gently come back to I AM.

Here is a simple question:

“What do I want?”

Think about the themes of this conference:

Renew, Re-Connect, Reignite

Just think of the first word that comes to mind.

Maybe it's a word like “fun”, “love”, “friends”.

This word – this feeling that you want – is your intention.

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## MY BALANCE WHEEL



### Rate Each Category

1-3 Struggling  
4-6 Surviving  
7-10 Thriving