

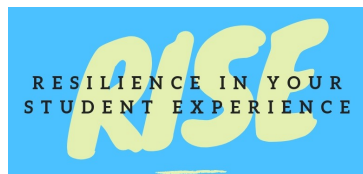


STRESS & ANXIETY TOOLKIT

A resource guide for the UCLA community to reduce stress and promote wellbeing

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MoveWell Pod Graduate Student Researcher

In Partnership With:



UCLA Campus & Student Resilience

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TITLE PAGE.....1

TABLE OF CONTENTS2

OVERVIEW.....5

 BACKGROUND OF PROJECT5

 PURPOSE.....6

 IMPACT7

FRAMING—SUGGESTED LANGUAGE AND APPROACH12

SAMPLE WORKSHOP PLANS.....14

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES AND FACILIATION GUIDE.....16

 WELCOME CIRCLE.....16

 Warm-up #1: Name/Pronouns/Fruit Gesture & Repeat (5-6 minutes).....16

 Warm-up #2: Pass the Stress Ball (5 minute).....16

 Activity A: Group Discussion: What is Stress & Anxiety? (15-20 minutes).....17

 Activity B: Co-Define Stress & Anxiety (7 minutes).....18

 Activity C: Introduce Stress & Anxiety Toolkit/Resilience Framework (5-7 minutes).....19

 Activity D: What is in your toolkit? Exploration and Share-out (10 minutes).....19

 Activity E: Explore Arts-Based Toolkit Methods.....20

GROUP GAMES/PLAY

 E.1 What’s one thing in your toolkit? (5-7 minutes).....20

 E.2 Send the Clap around the Circle (5-8 minutes).....20

Stress & Anxiety Toolkit

EGG SHAKERS

E.3 Pass the Shake (5 minutes).....21

E.4 Simple 2 minute timed egg shake meditation (3 minutes).....21

DANCE SCARVES

E.5 Basic Dance Scarves Games (10-15 minutes).....22

E.6 Dance Scarves—Group Dancing (3-5 minutes).....22

MINDFUL DRAWING

E.7 Crumple Sheet Drawing Meditation (5-7 minutes).....23

E.8 Recipe Cards for Stress Management (10 minutes).....23

E.9 Affirmation Cards (10 minutes).....23

E.10 Worry Strips (10 minutes).....23

E.11 Two-Sided Sheet: Worries/Alternative Thoughts (10 minutes).....24

E.12 Hand Trace Gratitude Mediation (10 minutes).....24

GRATITUDE PRACTICES

E.13 Awe Activity (20-30 minutes).....24

MOVEMENT PRACTICES

E.14 Brain Dance (Developed by Anne Green Gilbert) (7-10 minutes).....25

MINDFUL MEDITATIONS

E.15 Self-Compassion Guided Meditations.....26

E.16 Self-Compassion Break (5 minutes).....26

E.17 Mountain Meditation (10 minutes).....26

E.18 Grounding (5 minutes).....26

Stress & Anxiety Toolkit

E.19 STOP technique (3-4 minutes).....26

E.20 MELT technique (3-4 minutes).....27

CLOSING CIRCLE

E.21 Gallery Walk (10-20 minutes).....27

E.22 Group Discussion (5-10 minutes).....27

E.23 Closing One Word or One Sentence (5 minutes).....27

RESOURCES.....28

SURVEY TEMPLATE.....29

The mind is like the wind and the body like the sand; if you want to know which way the wind is blowing, you can look at the sand.

~Bonnie Bainbridge Cohen

Overview

What is a Stress & Anxiety Toolkit?

A resource guide for the UCLA community to reduce stress and promote wellbeing.

Most everybody experiences stress and anxiety to varying degrees. Each individual carries resources and knowledge to manage day-to-day experiences. These resources and knowledge have been shaped on the individual level by family, friends, mentors, and on a community level via culture, environments, and by the various systems which an individual interacts.

There are countless resources and practices that humans engage in to manage everyday stress and anxiety. This toolkit recognizes that each participant carries their own forms of knowledge and are the experts of their own lives. The toolkit presents a collection of practices and resources and seeks to inspire participants to gain a sense of their existing personal toolkits, and to further cultivate their toolkits through ongoing intentional practice.

The workshop is shaped by an empowerment approach that is:

- Strengths-based
- Arts and healing-informed
- Trauma-informed
- Focused on nurturing and celebrating resilience

Background of Project

The Stress & Anxiety Toolkit was developed as a project by the UCLA Semel Healthy Campus Initiative's MoveWell pod's graduate student researcher (GSR) Elisabeth Nails (UCLA MSW, 2019) with significant input by pod leader Angelia Leung and undergraduate student researcher Tracy Lahey, as well as from Allyson Pimentel, Director of UCLA Campus and Student Resilience.

The MoveWell pod works closely with UCLA Recreation to expand and "co-brand" physical activities both within and beyond the John Wooden Center and associated recreational facilities, with the aim of making movement "the easy healthy choice" for the UCLA community. Starting in 2013 MoveWell GSR Sarah Wilbur saw a need for stress-reduction efforts amongst graduate students campus-wide. MoveWell partnered with the Graduate Student Resource Center (GSRC) to develop movement-based workshops to address stress-reduction titled "Writing Ergonomics" and "Fitting Fitness In". Pod Leader Angelia Leung and GSR's Ellen Gerdes and Vanessa Perez continued GSRC partnership and expanded to UCLA Center for the Advancement of Teaching's TA Training Program. In 2017 GSR Elisabeth Nails met with

Stress & Anxiety Toolkit

stakeholders to assess needs. It was determined that an arts-based and movement-based approach to reducing stress and anxiety would be beneficial to pilot. The original workshops were adapted to include training for TA's and a new arts-based Stress & Anxiety Toolkit component. The workshop was piloted at the TA Training Conference in Fall 2017 and has steadily expanded.

UCLA Campus Partners

- UCLA Center for the Advancement of Teaching (formerly OID) TA Training Program
- UCLA Graduate Resource Center
- UCLA Office of Campus and Student Resilience
- UCLA RISE (Resilience in Your Student Experience)
- UCLA Mindful
- UCLA Counseling & Psychological Services
- UCLA Department of World Arts & Cultures/Dance
- UCLA Fielding School of Public Health
- UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music
- UCLA Luskin School of Public Affairs, Department of Social Welfare
- UCLA Center for Arts & Healing

Community Partners

- New Heights Charter School, South Los Angeles
- Violence Intervention Program-Community Mental Health Center, Boyle Heights
- Gratts Early Education Center, Downtown Los Angeles
- Castelar Street Early Education Center, Chinatown

Purpose

The following Stress & Anxiety Toolkit is intended to be harnessed as a resource by any individual or group seeking to engage in conversations about stress, anxiety, and resilience. The toolkit contains sample workshop plans, descriptions of additional activities, resources, sample surveys, and language to assist facilitators in framing their approaches to the topic. You are welcome to implement the toolkit as a full program, adapt portions of it, and/or use it as a guide in creating a program of your own. All of the wisdom in the toolkit comes from my own lived experience, lessons learned from piloting the workshop over the last two years, and from practices passed along by my teachers, mentors, peers and clients. In this sense, I see it as a living document that should be adapted to serve a multitude of contexts.

Impact

Over the last two years MoveWell has facilitated 12 on-campus Stress & Anxiety Toolkit Workshops for a total of 473 Participants: 382 Graduate Students (North & South Campus), 65 Undergraduates (Vocal/Opera Program), and 26 Staff and Faculty. An additional 504 participants were reached via community workshops in Boyle Heights, South Los Angeles, Downtown, and Chinatown.

Stress & Anxiety Toolkit

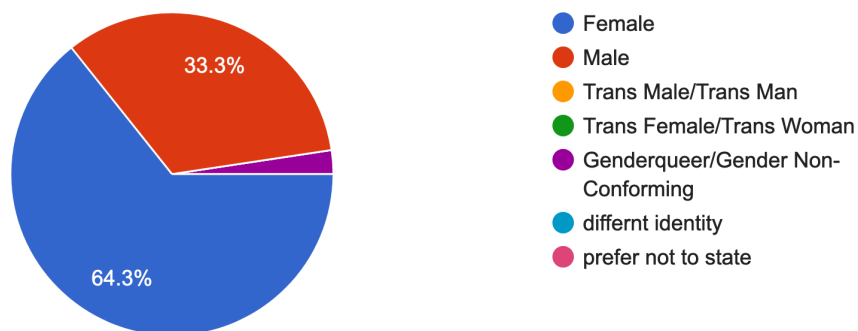
Thanks to partnerships with UCLA's TA Training Program, the Graduate Student Resource Center, and RISE the workshops reached a broad spectrum of participants from diverse fields of study including:

- Anthropology
- Archeology
- Art
- Biochemistry
- Biomathematics
- Chemistry
- Community Health Sciences
- Computer Sciences
- Ecology & Evolution
- Electrical & Computer Engineering
- English
- Epidemiology
- Gender Studies
- Geography
- Law
- Molecular Biology
- Music
- Music Performance
- New Genres
- Nursing
- Political Science
- Social Welfare
- Structural Biology
- Theatre

The following presents tables that summarize data collected from 2018-19 post-workshop surveys.

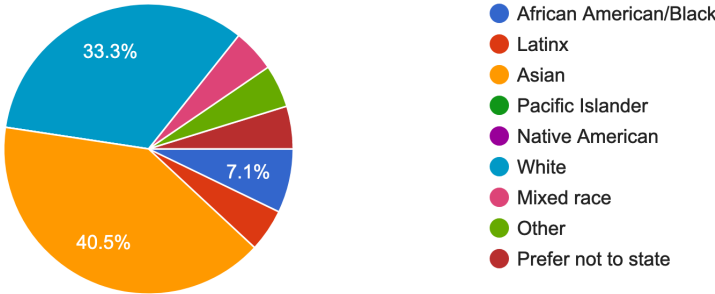
How do you describe yourself?

42 responses



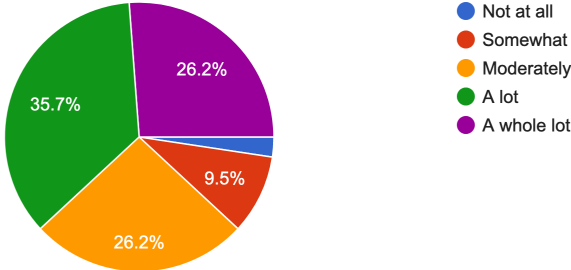
What is your race/ethnicity?

42 responses



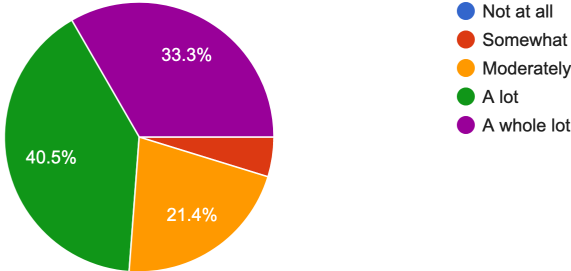
To what extent did this workshop expand your self-awareness about your own stress and anxiety?

42 responses



To what extent did this workshop provide helpful tools (or resources) to manage your own stress and anxiety?

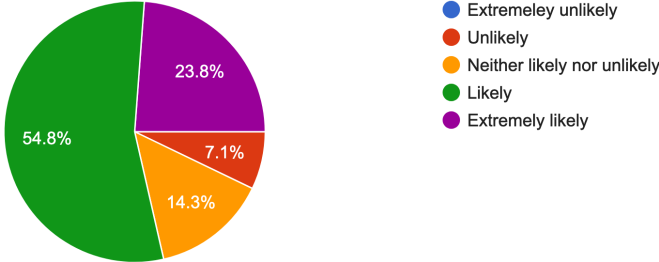
42 responses



Stress & Anxiety Toolkit

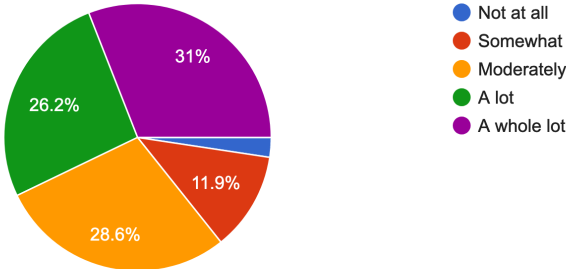
How likely are you to use any of the tools (or resources) presented in this workshop for your own stress management?

42 responses



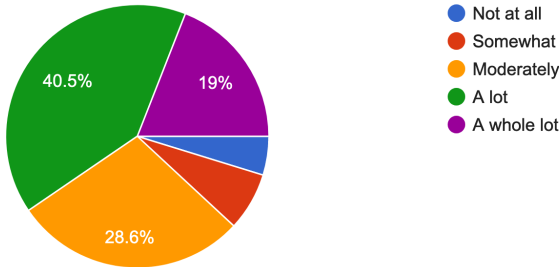
To what extent did the workshop increase your understanding of how stress affects the body and mind?

42 responses



To what extent did this workshop increase your understanding about how to support your colleagues, or students w...y be experiencing stress and anxiety?

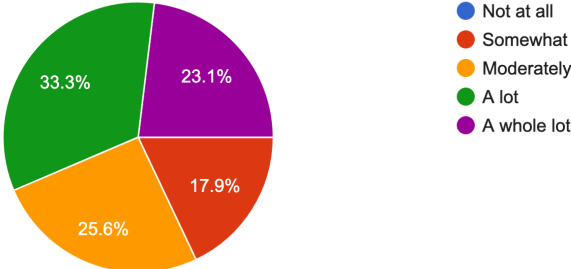
42 responses



Stress & Anxiety Toolkit

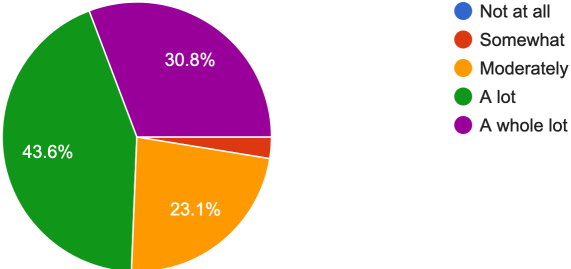
To what extent did the workshop increase your understanding about how individuals can create supportive environments for those who are experiencing stress and anxiety?

39 responses



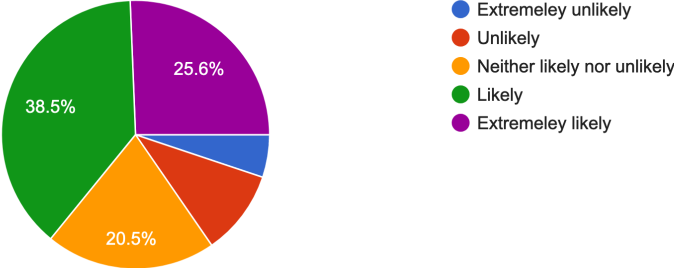
How prepared do you feel to use the tools shared for your personal stress management?

39 responses



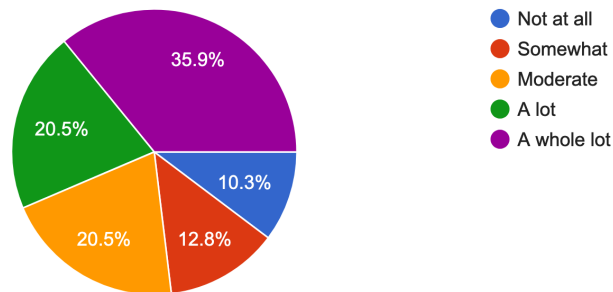
How likely are you to attend a follow-up coaching session for implementing tools like these in your work?

39 responses



How comfortable do you feel about advocating for incorporating any of these tools into class sessions or meetings?

39 responses



The survey data highlights the impact this workshop intervention typically has on a majority of participants including:

- Expanded self-awareness about one’s own stress and anxiety
- Exposure to helpful tools to manage stress and anxiety
- Increased understanding of the impact of stress
- Deepened understanding about how to support colleagues, students and friends who may be experiencing stress and anxiety

In post-workshop evaluations a majority of participants reported:

- They feel prepared to use the tools introduced for personal stress management
- They are extremely likely to attend a follow-up coaching session
- They feel comfortable advocating for incorporating any of the tools into class sessions or meetings

Framing—Suggested Language and Approach

The following offers suggested talking points to open up conversations about Stress & Anxiety as well as resilience. I have generally adapted this text as an introduction to the workshop and to frame the approach. Much of the following is inspired by the work of Dr. Lisa Damour, author of *Under Pressure*.¹

As I provide this suggested text, I will also disclose my positionality as a cis-gender white woman. My lived experiences and the assumptions and conclusions I have drawn from them are my own and are shaped by my identity. Stress and Anxiety impact individuals and groups in a number of ways. One person's truth may not translate to another person's lived experience or context. It is important to acknowledge that other considerations such as culture, social-economic status, race, age, and other factors may impact the way individuals or groups experience stress and anxiety, and may also reduce or increase barriers to resources for an individual. If questions emerge for you as you engage with this language, I encourage you to investigate their insights. It may be useful to include any questions or ideas that emerge into your own language and framing. Also, as facilitator I encourage you to acknowledge your own positionality, and to honor the individual and collective knowledge of workshop participants in the room as you invite them to discuss, expand and re-write the conversation as needed.

What is stress and anxiety?

- There seem to be some misconceptions in United States pop culture about stress and anxiety.
- We seem to look at every variety of stress and anxiety and see it as pathological, and “BAD”.
- However, anxiety up to a point is a totally normal and protective function.
- Stress up to a point is a totally healthy and productive function.
- No distinction is being made between a really anxious moment and pathological anxiety. And that may be creating way more stress and anxiety than is necessary and depleting our ability to recognize our own wisdom and resilience to manage day-to-day stress and anxiety.
- So much of the stress and anxiety that happens in the day-to-day falls into the manageable range, but many are forgetting that they have capacity and knowledge to manage.

¹ Damour, L. (2019). *Under pressure: Confronting the epidemic of stress and anxiety in girls*. Ballentine Books, New York. <https://www.dr lisadamour.com/under-pressure/>

Definitions

Anxiety: an alarm system that alerts us that something is amiss. It becomes a mental health concern when the alarm system is not working properly, when it is ringing all the time in response to nothing or minor concerns, or it is blaring over something that should be manageable

Stress: in its manageable forms, is any experience of change, anything that requires adaptation, stress comes with change (positive and negative).

Stress & Anxiety can be capacity building: This means that when people go through a difficult experience, the upshot is that they are potentially more durable because the experience has expanded their capacities for dealing with difficulty.

Resources: What resources does a person have on-hand to manage day-to-day stress and anxiety and not feel overwhelmed by it?

Recovery: Healthy functioning and sustainability are directly tied to RECOVERY. It's all about recovery. Consider lifting weights. You can't lift nonstop without major injury. You have to have periods of rest and recovery.

Life is often full of conditions that make individuals feel like they are "lifting weights" for extended periods of time. It is important to think through our day-to-day expectations and make sure there are opportunities for rest and recovery (individually and collectively).

It may be helpful to keep in mind 3 categories for stressors:

Things we like

Things we can handle

Things that are crisis

Building up your individual toolkit can help you get more in touch with when and how stress and anxiety are showing up, and raising awareness about your own need for recovery.

Ultimately, the goal of the toolkit is to help you handle more things and not plunge into crisis.

Stress & Anxiety Toolkit Sample Workshop Plans

(2-3 hours are recommended, but workshop can be adapted to 90 and 60 minutes)

The following are suggested sequences for workshops. Please feel free to mix and match activities, experiment, and adapt as you see fit. I encourage you to be creative and attuned to your workshop participants as you create your own plans.

Full Workshop Outline (3 Hours)

- Welcome Circle
- Warm-up #1: Name/Pronouns/Fruit Gesture & Repeat (5-6 minutes)
- Warm-up #2: Pass the Stress Ball (5 minutes)
- Activity A: Group Discussion: What is Stress & Anxiety? (15-20 minutes)
- Activity B: Co-Define Stress & Anxiety (7 minutes)
- Activity C: Introduce Stress & Anxiety Toolkit/Resilience Framework (5-7 minutes)
- Activity D: What is in your toolkit? Exploration and Share-out (10 minutes)
- E.1 What's one thing in your toolkit? (5-7 minutes)
- E.3 Pass the Shake (5 minutes)
- E.4 Simple 2 Minute Timed Egg Shake Meditation (3 minutes)
- E.5 Basic Dance Scarves Games (10-15 minutes)
- E.6 Dance Scarves—Group Dancing (3-5 minutes)
- E.7-12 Participant Choice (30 minutes)
 - Introduce activities and allow participants to pick at least 2-3:
 - E.7 Crumple Sheet Drawing Meditation
 - E.8 Recipe Cards for Stress Management
 - E.9 Affirmation Cards
 - E.10 Worry Strips
 - E.11 Two-Sided Sheet: Worries/Alternative Thoughts
 - E.12 Hand Trace Gratitude Meditation
- E.13 Awe Activity (20-30 minutes)
- E.18 Grounding (5 minutes)
- E.20 MELT technique (3-4 minutes)
- E.21 Gallery Walk (10 minutes)
- E.22 Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)
- E.23 Closing One Word or One Sentence (5 minutes)
- Post-workshop survey

2-Hour Workshop

- Welcome Circle
- Warm-up #1: Name/Pronouns/Fruit Gesture & Repeat (5-6 minutes)
- Warm-up #2: Pass the Stress Ball (5 minutes)
- Activity A: Group Discussion: What is Stress & Anxiety? (15-20 minutes)
- Activity C: Introduce Stress & Anxiety Toolkit/Resilience Framework (5-7 minutes)
- Activity D: What is in your toolkit? Exploration and Share-out (10 minutes)

Stress & Anxiety Toolkit

- E.2 Send the Clap around the Circle (5-8 minutes)
- E.3 Pass the Shake (5 minutes)
- E.7 Crumple Sheet Drawing Meditation (5-7 minutes)
- E.9 Affirmation Cards (10 minutes)
- E.13 Awe Activity (20-30 minutes)
- E.18 Grounding (5 minutes)
- E.20 MELT technique (3-4 minutes)
- E.22 Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)
- E.23 Closing One Word or One Sentence (5 minutes)
- Post-workshop survey

90-minute Workshop

- Welcome Circle
- Warm-up #1: Name/Pronouns/Fruit Gesture & Repeat (5-6 minutes)
- Activity A: Group Discussion: What is Stress & Anxiety? (15-20 minutes)
- Activity C: Introduce Stress & Anxiety Toolkit/Resilience Framework (5-7 minutes)
- Activity D: What is in your toolkit? Exploration and Share-out (10 minutes)
- E.2 Send the Clap around the Circle (5-8 minutes)
- E.5 Basic Dance Scarves Games (10-15 minutes)
- E.7 Crumple Sheet Drawing Meditation (5-7 minutes)
- E.12 Hand Trace Gratitude Meditation (10 minutes)
- E.18 Grounding (5 minutes)
- E.23 Closing One Word or One Sentence (5 minutes)
- Post-workshop survey

60-minute Workshop

- Welcome Circle
- Warm-up #2: Pass the Stress Ball (5 minutes)
- Activity B: Co-Define Stress & Anxiety (7 minutes)
- Activity C: Introduce Stress & Anxiety Toolkit/Resilience Framework (5-7 minutes)
- E.1 What's one thing in your toolkit? (5-7 minutes)
- E.10 Worry Strips (10 minutes)
- E.14 Brain Dance (7-10 minutes)
- E.16 Self-Compassion Break (5 minutes)
- E.23 Closing One Word or One Sentence (5 minutes)
- Post-workshop survey

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES & FACILITATION GUIDE

Welcome Circle (2 minutes)

It is recommended that you start and close each workshop with a circle to promote a feeling of connectedness and to allow everyone to see one another.

I often ask participants to take a few breaths to arrive and feel their feet on the ground and their bodies in the space (i.e. the workshop room) and to try and let go of any worries on their minds. Sometimes I transition and invite the group to try and take three breaths all together using only their 5 senses and no body language or spoken words.

Warm-up #1: Name/Pronouns/Fruit Gesture & Repeat (5-6 minutes)

Purpose: Supports basic introductions, introduces the idea of “play”, and social connection.

Invite participants to go around the circle one by one and share with the group their name, gender pronoun, as well as name a fruit they like and share a gesture for the fruit. A gesture is a simple movement that describes the feeling or experience of a thing using body language. Oftentimes people naturally begin to add sounds to their gesture and that often makes it even more fun.

**Note: I always kick this activity off by going first and demonstrating what it could look like. I invite the group to repeat the fruit and gesture together as a group.*

For example:

Facilitator: “My name is Liz, my pronouns are she/hers and I like grapes (shares a gesture of eating grapes off of a bunch like a queen).

Group: “Grapes” (and everyone repeats the gesture Liz created)

Warm-up #2: Pass the Stress Ball (5 minutes)

Purpose: Invites limbic system calming through play and allows for individual self-expression, to be seen and heard. It is also an embodied method to move stress from the internal realm (inside of the body) to the external realm (out in the open). It allows others to see that they are not alone in feeling the way that they do.

1. Invite the group to imagine and pretend that they are holding a ball in their hands.
2. Invite them to place as much stress and anxiety they can into the ball.
3. Invite them to mime holding the ball with all of this stress and anxiety. Ask them to notice if the ball wants to be still, or does the ball want to move? Does it move fast or slow? Is it small or large?

4. Invite everyone to mime throwing the ball to you (the facilitator)
5. Try to catch as many balls as you can.
6. Mime catching one ball and display it for the group, show how it moves and if it makes a sound, demonstrate the sound.
7. Invite the group to be ready to pass the stress ball one-by-one around the circle. Let them know that when they receive the ball, they should take a moment to hold it and to observe the stress and anxiety. As each person explores the ball, invite them to add some of their own worries and stress to the ball. If this causes the ball to change size or the way it moves or the sound it makes, that's totally great. Once they have explored the ball and added some of their own stress to it, they should pass it to the next person. The next person explores the ball, adds their own stress and worries and passes the ball. This repeats until the ball makes it all the way around the circle.

*At the end of each activity there is always the option of facilitating a quick check-in with the group by asking a neutral question such as: "What did you notice about that experience?"

Activity A: Group Discussion: What is Stress & Anxiety? (15-20 minutes)

Purpose: To open up conversations about stress, anxiety, and its impacts. Starting in pairs helps create a brave space where participants may feel freer to discuss these challenging topics. The following activity is inspired by a methodology called Liberating Structures.²

1. Invite participants to form groups of 2.
2. Ask groups to decide which member will talk first while the other listens. Explain that this activity is an opportunity for the "speaker" to practice taking space to share what you want to share, and an opportunity for the "listener" to listen deeply to their partner without interrupting or feeling pressure to respond.
3. Let the groups know that each group member will have 2-3 minutes to share anything they wish about stress and anxiety while the other group member practices listening with an open heart. Each group of 2 will have the opportunity to experience an intimate two-person conversation. All groups will be speaking/listening at the same time.

Suggested prompts (these can be pre-written on the board or a giant post-it):

What are the current stressors in your daily life?

How does stress impact your mind/body/spirit?

² <http://www.liberatingstructures.com/>

What is stress? What is anxiety?

4. Start timer for the first speaker round to begin. 2-3 minutes usually works well, but you can extend the time if needed.
5. Announce that it is time to switch and ask the person who has been the “listener” to now become the “speaker”. Remind the partner who was the “speaker” to now practice listening with an open heart.
6. Start timer for the second speaker round to begin. Try to give the second speakers the same amount of time as the first speakers.
7. When the timer is up, invite the groups to spend 3 minutes sharing their reflections about what they noticed during the activity (the words their partner said, the way their body felt when listening or speaking, the ease or challenge of speaking or listening, etc.)
8. Once the groups have had a few minutes to de-brief, bring the whole group back together and invite a few people to share back with the entire group a few sentences about anything they noticed about the activity. Encourage group members to focus on sharing their personal perspectives by using “I” statements and to be mindful to not share their partner’s story or words but rather how their partner’s story or words impacted them personally.

Activity B: Co-Define Stress & Anxiety (7 minutes)

1. Write (or have pre-written) 2 giant post-its: 1 labeled STRESS and the other labeled ANXIETY.
2. Invite participants to share definitions of what stress and anxiety mean to them. This can include many things: descriptive words; sensations in the body/mind/spirit; memories; things that were shared during Activity A, etc.
3. Write participants’ responses, or invite 2 volunteers to serve as scribes for this activity.
4. Review the lists. Ask if the group thinks the lists are missing anything? It may be helpful to repeat the definitions from the suggested language/framing:

Anxiety: an alarm system that alerts us that something is amiss. It becomes a mental health concern when the alarm system is not working properly, when it is ringing all the time in response to nothing or minor concerns, or it is blaring over something that should be manageable

Stress: in its manageable forms, is any experience of change, anything that requires adaptation, stress comes with change (positive and negative).

Activity C: Introduce Stress & Anxiety Toolkit/Resilience Framework (5-7 minutes)

Now that we have started playing and talking about stress and anxiety, we now have a foundation to discuss resilience. So, what can be done about all of this stress and anxiety? What is a Stress & Anxiety Toolkit?

A Stress & Anxiety Toolkit includes Tools and Resources that may already exist or be cultivated through intentional practice. Everyone in the room has a toolkit, and the goal of this activity is to raise awareness of some of the tools that might be useful in managing stress and anxiety.

Here are some examples of Tools in the Toolkit
(it's helpful to have this list pre-written on a giant post-it):

- Play (open-ended free play, structured play such as games, organized play such as sports)
- Mindfulness techniques (meditation, breathing techniques)
- Physical/Somatic Practices (yoga, tai chi, martial arts, dance)
- Cognitive/Thought Practices (watching one's thoughts, re-framing negative thoughts, mantras, affirmations)
- Time in Nature (relaxing, playing, simply being)
- Supportive Relationships
- Social Engagement/Connectedness (clubs, church, gatherings, volunteering)
- Time Management (breaks, micro-breaks, unplugging)
- Gratitude and Awe Practices
- Self-Care and Self-Love
- Built Environment (intentionally creating supportive spaces with lighting, comfortable furniture, aromatherapy, plants, etc.)
- Spirituality
- Music (listening and/or playing)
- Arts (witnessing and/or participating)
- And so much more.....

Ask group if there are other categories of tools that might be missing from the list. Include additions to the list. Invite folks to take photographs of the toolkit for reference, if they wish.

Activity D: What is in your toolkit? Exploration and Share-out (10 minutes)

The brain is dynamic and shaped by experience, relationships, and genetics. By using our toolkits we can train the brain to better process stress and anxiety. We can expand what Dr. Daniel Siegel calls the "Window of Tolerance" for stress and anxiety.³ By practicing with the

³ Siegel, D. J. (2010). *Mindsight: The new science of personal transformation*. Bantam.
https://www.drdansiegel.com/resources/everyday_mindsight_tools/

tools in our toolkits, we can build new neuro-connections or resources to help us to self-regulate stress and anxiety.

1. Pass out paper and markers/pens.
2. Invite participants to spend 5 minutes drawing, mapping or making a list of their toolkit. Invite them to be as creative or simple as they like. I find a mind map⁴ or pie chart template⁵ works well for this activity.
3. Share back: Invite 2-3 people to share their toolkit drawings with the entire group, OR if time allows invite each person to display their toolkit drawings by taping them to the wall or table and invite the group to do a “gallery walk” on their own time to visit and observe all of the drawings.

Activity E: Explore Arts-Based Toolkit Methods

(For the next section of the workshop, lead participants to explore one or as many of the suggested Toolkit activities as time allows. Try to budget for exploring at least 2-3 activities.)

Group Games/Play

E.1 What’s one thing in your toolkit? Movement & Repeat Game (5-7 minutes)

(Similar to the Warm-up activity #1.)

Invite participants to go around the circle one by one and share with the group a tool in their toolkit and share a gesture for the tool. A gesture is a simple movement that describes the feeling or experience of a thing using body language. Oftentimes people naturally begin to add sounds to their gesture and that often makes it even more fun.

*Note: I always kick this activity off by going first and demonstrating what it could look like. I invite the group to repeat the tool and gesture together as a group.

For example:

Facilitator: “One of my tools is writing poetry (makes a gesture as if writing dramatically in the air with a quill pen).

Group: “Writing Poetry” (and everyone repeats the gesture Liz created)

E.2 Send the Clap around the Circle (5-8 minutes)

Invite participants to ready themselves for this game by making sure there is bounce in their knees and that they are ready to pivot their torsos as they “catch” and “send” the clap around

⁴ <https://www.mindmapping.com/>

⁵ <https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Pie-Chart-Circle-Graph-Simple-Template-3118704>

the circle. Sending a clap consists of clapping one's hands and gesturing hands towards the receiver.

The facilitator begins by pivoting to the person next to them and passing the clap. The person catches the clap and passes it to the next person, and so on until the clap is passed around the entire circle.

Variations:

- Invite group to send the clap quicker and quicker each time
- Invite the group to change the direction of the clap at anytime
- Invite the group to pass the clap across the circle

Here is an example of how this might look: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCszYFU3F4>

Egg Shakers

Egg shakers are fun and portable props that also serve as a form of drumming meditation to soothe the stress-response system (limbic system). Search “musical egg shakers” on Amazon.com or make your own by filling plastic Easter eggs with dry beans and taping them shut with clear packing tape.

E.3 Pass the Shake (5 minutes)

(Similar to the Warm-up activity #1.)

Invite participants to go around the circle one by one and teach the group a way to shake the egg. Encourage the teachers to create shakes that are not too long and easy to remember and repeat. If you are working with a more advanced group, then you may naturally invite the group to offer challenges to the keep things interesting.

As a variation you can invite group members to say their name and then share a shake that represents some aspect of their personality. The group then repeats the person's name and shake.

E.4 Simple 2 minute timed egg shake meditation (3 minutes)

Invite the group to close their eyes or to practice a lowered and soft gaze down towards the ground. Set a timer for 2 minutes and Invite the group to explore and play together to create an egg shake meditation. Invite the group to find its own rhythm together and for no individual to attempt to lead the group.

Additional Ideas

Here's a wonderful example of how body-percussion and egg shakers can be introduced and layered into a full group activity by PlaySingLaugh.com

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee6rXH1sNyc>

Dance Scarves

Dance Scarves are another fun and portable prop to get people moving through exploration and play. The magic of the dance scarves is that when you invite people to focus on moving their scarves versus moving their own bodies it often frees people up to dance with less feelings of self-consciousness. Search “dance scarves” on Amazon.com

E.5 Basic Dance Scarves Games (10-15 minutes)

Pour a heap of dance scarves on the table or floor and invite participants to pick one scarf that they are drawn to for any reason.

Invite participants to make a circle. Invite them to explore “how does your color move?” Go around the circle and invite each person to share how their particular scarf moves and the group joins in to all replicate the movement for a few moments.

After everyone has shared how their scarves moves, invite each person to throw back their scarf and to pick another color. Invite them to explore “how does this new color move?” Go around the circle and invite each person to share how their particular dance moves and the group joins in to all do the movement for a few moments.

After sharing, you can lead the group in a discussion using these suggested prompts:

- What did you notice about moving with the dance scarves?
- Was there a difference between the two colors you selected?
- Was there a color that after seeing another person move it that you would like to try it out?

Variations:

You can invite people to pick a color and then name a feeling that goes with that color, i.e. red is angry; green is calm; blue is sad, etc. You can adapt the activity above with the prompt, “how does this feeling move?”

E.6 Dance Scarves—Group Dancing (3-5 minutes)

You can introduce the heap of dance scarves and invite the group to play follow the leader with the dance scarves.

You can put on upbeat music and invite the group to “free dance” exploring moving the dance scarves

You can lead the group in doing the “wave” with dance scarves around the circle (like we often do at baseball games in the United States).

Mindful Drawing

For all of the following activities you will need blank sheets of paper or index cards, pens, and markers.

Mindful drawing can be a wonderful way to relax, tune-in, and process stress and anxiety. Oftentimes the knowledge of our bodies and minds is released through mindful drawing and participants may find the activities useful for self-reflection, self-awareness and self-acceptance.

E.7 Crumple Sheet Drawing Meditation (5-7 minutes)

Invite participants to crumple up a fresh sheet of paper into a ball. Ask participants to unfold the crumpled wad of paper and smooth it out. Next, invite participants to begin using markers to trace and/or shade any lines or shapes they find on their paper. Set a timer for 5-7 minutes and play some calming music in the background while participants draw.

E.8 Recipe Cards for Stress Management (10 minutes)

Invite participants to create a “recipe card” for stress management on an index card. Participants can embellish the card with any symbols, doodles, or fancy calligraphy as they wish.

E.9 Affirmation Cards (10 minutes)

Invite participants to select 3-5 index card. Invite them to draw and decorate one word or phrase that they need to support self-care or stress-regulation, one word or phrase per index card. For example, an individual might create “swim”, “connect”, and the phrase “You can do anything that you want to do” on 3 separate cards.

Invite participants to keep these cards close and review them regularly as reminders and affirmations to practice their tools in the toolkit. Participants can add cards to the set anytime they need a new word or phrase.

E.10 Worry Strips (10 minutes)

Invite participants to tear 1 or 2 pieces of paper into strips of paper. On each strip of paper invite them to write a worry that is on their mind. Repeat until they have written down as many worries as time allows (3-4 minutes).

Invite participant to place their worry strips into a box (I have used a shoe box or a large basket). Reassure them that their worries are now known and you will hold on to them until they need them.

You can lead the group in “burying the box” under dance scarves, blankets or actually burying the box in the ground if possible. If a proper outdoor fire pit is available and you are knowledgeable about how to manage outdoor camping fires the group can elect to burn their box of worries in a bonfire.

E.11 Two-Sided Sheet: Worries/Alternative Thoughts (10 minutes)

Invite participants to fold a piece of paper in half to create two columns. Label one column “thoughts” or “counter positive thoughts” and the other “alternative thoughts” or “thought reframes”.

Invite participants to write a counter positive thought (or negative thought) that they notice they have in the first column. In the next column invite them to create an alternative thought that reframes the first negative thought.

For example, “I am too busy to meditate” and as an alternative “I am handling a lot right now, but my mind could recover and gain more focus if I meditated for 5 minutes twice a week”. Or, “I hate my body” and as an alternative “I have a body that serves me every day, I wonder how I could take better care of my body?”

E.12 Hand Trace Gratitude Mediation (10 minutes)

Invite participants to trace each of their hands, one hand per a sheet of paper.

Invite participants to write words or phrases on one hand for all of the things that they are grateful to have touched (i.e. a favorite pet, soft grass, dew, a loved one’s hand).

Invite participants to write words or phrases on the other hand for all of the things that they are grateful to have been touched by (the wind, a loved one, a favorite song, a laugh).

Invite participants to observe their completed drawings and to take three deep breaths to honor and experience their gratitude.

Gratitude Practices

E.13 Awe Activity (20-30 minutes)

Inviting participants to remember, relive and share moments of awe helps to build resilience and also calms the limbic system.

1. Invite participants to think about a time that they experienced awe.

2. Invite participants to either write or draw this moment of awe. Encourage participants to focus more on capturing the feeling or importance of the moment in a sketch-like form versus creating a polished piece of writing or drawing.
3. Invite participants to set their papers down and to stand up and create a gesture that they can perform that captures something about the feeling they remember from this moment. The gesture can be stationary or moving, performed one time, or performed and repeated several times.
4. Invite participants to form groups of 3.
5. Ask participants to take turns performing their gestures for each other. Encourage them to not use words, but to simply work non-verbally.
6. Ask participants to teach their gestures to their group members and to practice each person's gesture.
7. Invite each group to create a very short "dance" or "movement statement" that strings each of the 3 gestures together in some way. Each "dance" should have a beginning, a middle and an end.
8. Invite each group to share their "dance" with the full group.
9. Once each group has gone, you can invite participants to share their drawing or writing and to explain in less than 10 sentences or so what this moment was and why it impacted them.
10. If you have time, you can have individuals repeat their gestures after they explain their drawings.
11. Also, if you have time you can stand in a circle and have each person teach their gesture to the full group.

Movement Practices

E.14 Brain Dance⁶ (Developed by Anne Green Gilbert) (7-10 minutes)

Brain Dance is comprised of eight developmental movement patterns that healthy human beings naturally move through in the first year of life. As babies, we did these movements on our tummies, sides, and back on the floor. However, cycling through these patterns at any age, daily or weekly while sitting or standing, has been found to be beneficial in reorganizing our central nervous system. Repeating these patterns over time may help us fill in any missing gaps

⁶ <https://www.creativedance.org/about/braindance/>

Stress & Anxiety Toolkit

in our neurological system due to birth trauma, illness, environment, head injury or not enough floor time as a baby.

Here are the 8 movement patterns and here is a video that demonstrates one way to move through the patterns: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=09D6nzECac0> (there is no right or wrong way!)

- Breath
- Tactile (tap, brush, squeeze)
- Core/Distal
- Head/Tail
- Upper/Lower
- Body Side Left/Right
- Cross-lateral (creative thinking, focus, watch thumb cross body)
- Vestibular (spin, step in place)

After moving through the 8 patterns, invite participants to return to breath. Encourage participants to do a quick body scan and notice if anything has changed or feels different.

Mindful Meditations

There are myriad mindful meditation apps, audio files, videos, books and workshops available to explore. The following activities are ones that I have found helpful to introduce as part of the Stress & Anxiety Workshop.

E.15 Self-Compassion Guided Meditations

Dr. Kristin Neff has a wonderful selection of prompts and audio recordings here: <https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/>

E.16 A good 5 minute Dr. Neff activity is the Self-Compassion Break (5 minutes)

<https://self-compassion.org/exercise-2-self-compassion-break/>

E.17 Mountain Meditation (10 minutes)

A helpful script to facilitate a Mountain Meditation can be found here:

<https://palousemindfulness.com/docs/mountain%20meditation.pdf>

E.18 Grounding (5 minutes)

Dr. Sarah Allen provides 7 simple techniques to practice “grounding” to calm anxiety and worry:

<https://drsarahallen.com/7-ways-to-calm/>

E.19 STOP technique (3-4 minutes)

Here Elisha Goldstein presents a simple way to practice stress-reduction:

<https://www.mindful.org/stressing-out-stop/>

E.20 MELT technique (3-4 minutes)

Here is a simple practice to ease day-to-day stress and anxiety:

https://www.huffpost.com/entry/relieve-stress-with-5-minute-exercise_n_57f2a158e4b082aad9bc86db

Closing Circle

E.21 Gallery Walk (10-20 minutes)

If time allows, you can invite participants to display their various drawings by taping them to the wall or laying them out on tables. Invite participants to wander around and take in the work created by the group.

Variations:

Have a sheet of paper under each drawing and ask participants to write one word or one line in response to what they observe in the drawing. As people add words and lines this becomes a form of a collectively written group poem in honor of the drawing. You can close by having people read their poem to the group and share the drawing.

E.22 Group Discussion (5-10 minutes)

You can invite the group to return to the prompt “what did you notice” in today’s workshop?

Or, “what thoughts and/or feelings came up for you today?”

E.23 Closing One Word or One Sentence (5 minutes)

Invite participants to go around the circle and offer one word or one sentence that is reflective of something they experienced in today’s workshop.

Variations:

- Invite participants to offer one Stress & Anxiety tool for themselves and for the group
- Invite participants to share one word or sentence for “what tool/resource would you like to focus on next?”

Stress & Anxiety Toolkit

Resources

The following are some additional Stress & Anxiety Toolkit resources:

UCLA Counseling and Psychological Services: <https://www.counseling.ucla.edu>

Crisis Resources: <https://www.counseling.ucla.edu/services/are-you-in-a-crisis>

UCLA Healthy Campus Initiative (HCI): <https://healthy.ucla.edu>

HCI MoveWell Pod: <https://movewell.healthy.ucla.edu>

Active Minds: <https://www.activeminds.org/>

Minding Your Mind Resources: <https://mindingyourmind.org/resources/national-resources/>

Anxiety and Depressions Association of America Resources: <https://adaa.org/living-with-anxiety/ask-and-learn/resources>

Relaxation Response: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/heart-and-soul-healing/201303/dr-herbert-benson-s-relaxation-response>

Body Mind Centering: <https://www.bodymindcentering.com/>

Urban Bush Women: <https://www.urbanbushwomen.org/engage-with-ubw>

Mindful Listening to Music: <https://www.goodtherapy.org/blog/tuning-in-mindful-music-listening-to-reduce-stress-1011164>

Liberating Structures: <http://www.liberatingstructures.com>
<http://www.liberatingstructures.com/1-1-2-4-all/>

Dr. Dan Siegel/Mindsight: http://www.drdansiegel.com/resources/everyday_mindsight_tools/
http://www.drdansiegel.com/resources/wheel_of_awareness/
<https://www.mindsightinstitute.com>

Stress versus Anxiety: <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/external/2018/06/stress-vs-anxiety/>

How to Deal with Stress & Anxiety: <https://adaa.org/tips-manage-anxiety-and-stress>

Survey

*The following survey is adapted from the Healthy Campus Initiative's "Intercept" Survey and can be adapted as needed to support monitoring and evaluation of Stress & Anxiety Toolkit workshops. You can also adapt the survey in google form format [here](#).

Email (optional, for resource list): _____

UCLA Affiliation: __ Undergraduate __ Graduate __ Staff __ Faculty

Graduate Degree Program: __ Masters __ PhD __ Other

Program: _____

Are you a __ Current TA __ Future TA __ Not sure

How do you describe yourself? (Circle one answer)

Female

Male

Trans Male/Trans Man

Trans Female/Trans Woman

Genderqueer/Gender Non-Conforming

Different Identity

Prefer not to state

What is your race/ethnicity?

- Asian African American/Black Latinx White
 Pacific Islander Native American Mixed race Other: _____
 Prefer not to state
-

1. To what extent did this workshop expand your self-awareness about your own stress and anxiety?

1 2 3 4 5
Not at all Somewhat Moderately A lot A whole lot

2. To what extent did this workshop provide helpful tools (or resources) to manage your own stress and anxiety?

1 2 3 4 5
Not at all Somewhat Moderately A lot A whole lot

3. How likely are you to use any of the tools (or resources) presented in this workshop for your own stress management?

1 2 3 4 5
Extremely unlikely Unlikely Neither likely nor unlikely Likely Extremely likely

4. To what extent did the workshop increase your understanding of how stress affects the body and mind?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	A lot	A whole lot

5. To what extent did this workshop increase your understanding about how to support your students who may be experiencing stress and anxiety?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	A lot	A whole lot

6. To what extent did the workshop increase your understanding about how TA's can create supportive environments for students who are experiencing stress and anxiety?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	A lot	A whole lot

8. How prepared do you feel to use the tools shared for your personal stress management?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderately	A lot	A whole lot

9. How likely are you to attend a follow-up coaching session for implementing tools like these in your sections?

1	2	3	4	5
Extremely unlikely	Unlikely	Neither likely nor unlikely	Likely	Extremely likely

10. How comfortable do you feel about approaching the course's instructor and advocating for incorporating any of these tools into lectures?

1	2	3	4	5
Not at all	Somewhat	Moderate	A lot	A whole lot

Is there anything more you would like to share about today's workshop?

Other questions/comments?