

## EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EQ) & OWNING AND DEALING WITH YOUR STRESS



### WAYS TO OWN AND DEAL WITH STRESS

*by Brian Schank, Senior Education Programs Specialist*

Stress is the way that our body responds to events that threaten or challenge us. Our body does this physically with more blood to muscles, increases in blood pressure and heart rate, and raising adrenaline with higher cortisol levels. While stress can be positive and get us over the hump to complete a challenging task, take a test, or adjust to a new situation, prolonged stress can take a physical and mental toll on us and have long term effects on our life and health. Research indicates that we are more likely to be stressed when feeling uncomfortable emotions and navigating unpredictable situations and stressful demands. Owning your stress involves being able to identify, discuss, and deal with our emotions. In this issue we will offer ways to talk about emotions, and tackle stress head on for adults and children.

#### EARLY LEARNING

Children will begin to experience signs of stress at a very young age. The first thing we can do to help our children navigate and manage stress, is to teach them how to identify the signs. Some common symptoms include: mood swings, headaches, stomachaches, difficulty focusing and/or sleeping. As the adult, our job is to teach children how to manage their stress in a healthy way. Examples include: listening to calming music when it's time to focus, using a sound machine for sleeping, sensory activities such as Play-Doh, playing in a sandbox, painting, playing a musical instrument, or even using a weighted blanket or wobble stools in the classroom. It's also important to plan fun activities to do outside of school. Board games, movie nights, and trips to the park, are all ways to give your child a fun and much needed break!

#### ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Stress in young students is becoming more and more common. A global pandemic, with new routines, test anxiety, arguments with peers and/or siblings, and even just being plain tired can trigger feelings of stress for children. We want to help kids identify which coping skills help them manage their own unique type of stress. Some examples of helping children manage stress include: calmly discussing issues or events that may create stress, giving children a chance to talk about their feelings and to ask questions, reading children's books that relate to a child's stress, role-playing to rehearse upcoming events, and lastly, keeping all of the adults in your child's life updated on your child's stressors (and progress) so they can be aware and provide guidance and support. It takes a village!

#### MIDDLE SCHOOL

Owning and dealing with your stress is an important life skill. Practice naming that feeling with your kids. Saying that you feel stressed or overwhelmed is a good starting point. Take a moment to assess any needs that might not be met in that moment. Are we hungry, tired, do we need to pause and take a deep breath? Identify the things and situations that are causing the most stress. Accept the situation, look for the priorities, and look for areas where we can be supported. Make a game plan for moving forward. Afterwards reflect on strategies that were helpful.

#### HIGH SCHOOL

Stress can be overwhelming and distract us from all the good things around us. When every test seems to decide our future our kids can reach toxic levels of stress. Start a gratitude check in with them each day to help them highlight positive things that are happening around them. Have your kids look at how their time is spent during the day. Help them identify their values and set boundaries.

# CONTROLLING YOUR STRESS

by Eddie Underwood  
Education Program Specialist

Stress seems inevitable, and often it may seem like there is nothing that we can do about stress. Luckily, there are steps that you can take to manage or relieve the pressure and a sense of control. Stress can pose a risk when it comes to your emotional, mental, and physical health. Stress can limit your focus, lessen your drive to accomplish everyday tasks, and even stop you from enjoying life. The good news is you are in control and stress is actually more manageable than you think, and just like many things in life stress management is not a one-size-fits-all, you must try new and different ways to reduce stress and see what works best for you. Below are a few tips to help you manage your stress.

- Identify the source of stress; look at what caused your stress, how do you feel emotionally and physically, how did you respond to the stress, what made you feel less stress.
- Try some physical activity; simply going for a walk can release those feel-good chemicals called endorphins in your body.
- Do not isolate yourself; spend quality time with people who make you feel safe and will listen to you.
- Make time for fun and relax.
- Learn to relieve stress in the moment; use mindfulness techniques like deep breathing to help you cope.



# SIMPLE STEPS TO OVERCOME STRESS

by Jordan Sims  
Community Programs Specialist

At Frameworks, our go to phrase for regulating emotions and regaining control is : “name it, claim it, and tame it.”

This three-step process is great to help adults and children alike take ownership of their stress, and the emotions related to stress, so they can better manage it.

1. Name It – Ask yourself: “What am I feeling and where is it coming from?” We may think we just feel stressed but often we are feeling other things, too. When we can be specific about what we are feeling and their source, we have more information to use for steps two and three. *Example: I feel stressed and overwhelmed because I have so much to do.*
2. Claim It – Ask yourself: “What is in my control and what can I change?” This step is all about ownership. Even when it seems like nothing is in our control, we still have control of how we respond. When we recognize your control and claim it. *Example: How many obligations I take on, how I prioritize them, and my attitude about them is in my control.*
3. Tame It – Ask yourself: “How can I make this better?” Create an intentional action plan based on the information from steps one and two. Different strategies work in different ways, so don’t be discouraged if you go to Plan B or C to tame your stress. It’s all a learning process! *Example: I will create a prioritized to-do list and tell myself positive affirmations when I get discouraged. If that does not work, I will see what obligations I can say “no” to.*

To access additional free resources or purchase resources for home, classroom, or office use, please visit our website:



[www.myframeworks.org](http://www.myframeworks.org)

**MAKE AN IMPACT**



# RESOURCES AND READINGS

by Melissa Hartnett  
Education Program Specialist

Locus of control refers to a person’s beliefs about how much control they have over what happens to them in their life and how much influence they have over what happens in the world around them. It can feel very stressful when we feel the need to control everything in our lives because it simply isn’t possible.

A circle of control activity is a great way to take a moment to think about the difference between the things you can control vs. the things you cannot.

Following is a link to some circle of control activities:

<https://www.teacherspayteachers.com/Product/Editable-Things-I-Can-Control-Sign-5366157>

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relievers/art-20047257>

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/16-ways-relieve-stress-anxiety>

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/how-to-relieve-stress/>

There are times when we stop, we sit still. We listen and breezes from a whole other world begin to whisper.

James Carroll

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