ease the stress

Stress and the body

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Summary:**

In the first session of Ease the Stress, we discussed the body’s physical response to stress call the *Fight, Flight or Freeze response* by the sympathetic nervous system and the work of the parasympathetic nervous system using the *Rest and Digest* response return to balance. Although stress is a natural response to protect us from danger, we learned how the long-term, chronic stress cycle can have negative effects to all systems and functions of the body including memory and immune system. We explored the signs and systems of chronic stress and three healthy coping strategies to keep the body and mind in balance including tips for nutrition, exercise, and sleep.

*“Exercise in any form acts as a stress reliever. Being active can boost your feel-good endorphins and distract you from daily worries.” – Mayo Clinic*

# NOTES:

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Stress and the Body

# **Fight, Flight or Freeze Response**

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**Nutrition**

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Stress and the Body

Mindful Relaxation Activity
 By: Danielle Palli
 Overview: Guided progressive relaxation exercise for greater wellbeing.

1. Lie on your back with your arms at your side (palms up), and your legs straight in front of you, about hip’s distance apart, allowing your feet to relax wherever they fall.
 2. Begin with a few deep breaths.
 3. Scrunch up your facial muscles as if you’ve eaten something sour. Inhale, pause, exhale and relax your muscles, as if they were melting.
 4. Next, imagine you are lifting your head off the floor by making the motion of lifting (but keep your head touching the floor), so that your neck muscles are engaged. Inhale, pause, exhale. Relax your head and neck. Rock your head gently from side-to-side.
 5. Draw awareness into your left arm. Make a fist with your left hand and tighten the arm up through the shoulder. Lift as if to bring the arm just a millimeter from the floor. Inhale, pause, exhale and allow your arm to drop to the floor and release your fist. Stretch your left hand open as wide as possible and then relax it. Allow the arm to feel heavy and weighted into the floor.
 6. Repeat #5 with your right hand and arm.
 7. Draw awareness to your left leg. Scrunch up the toes and tighten the entire leg up through your left glute. Lift as if picking the leg up just a millimeter off the floor. Inhale, pause, exhale and drop the leg to the floor. Intentionally stretch the toes of your left foot and then relax them. Rock the leg slightly from side to side and then let it completely relax into the floor.
 8. Repeat #7 with your right foot and leg.
 9. Draw your awareness into your belly. Inhale as if filling up a balloon. Pause at the top of the breath. Open your mouth and exhale the air out as if someone popped that balloon. Repeat two more times. Allow your breathing to return to normal, in and out through your nose.
 10. If needed, rock your hips slightly to relax your hips and low back. Scan your body for any left-over tension. With each exhale, relax more deeply into the floor, feeling the weight of your arms and legs completely supported by the Earth beneath you. Relax here for a few minutes before opening your eyes.

Ease the Stress

kaizen step

1) Goal I want to accomplish: (example: sleeping better)

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2) One step I could take toward that goal: (example: practice relaxation techniques)

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3) Ways I can break this step (#2) into smaller actions: (Earthing for five minutes most days, read over mindful relaxation technique, practice the breathing techniques tomorrow night, etc.)

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