

# Stress Management



V's



# Aims of the group

- \* Ways to Manage your Stress
- \* What is Stress
- \* The Causes of Stress
- \* The Impact of Stress

# What is Stress?

- \* Stress means different things to different people
- \* What might be stressful for one person may not be stressful for someone else
- \* It is the reaction people have to excessive pressures or demands placed on them
- \* It arises when people worry that they can't cope with these pressures.

# The Body's Stress Response

- \* Perceived Threat



- \* Nervous system responds



- \* Stress Hormones released i.e. adrenaline and cortisol



- \* Hormones provoke the body for emergency action i.e. fight or flight

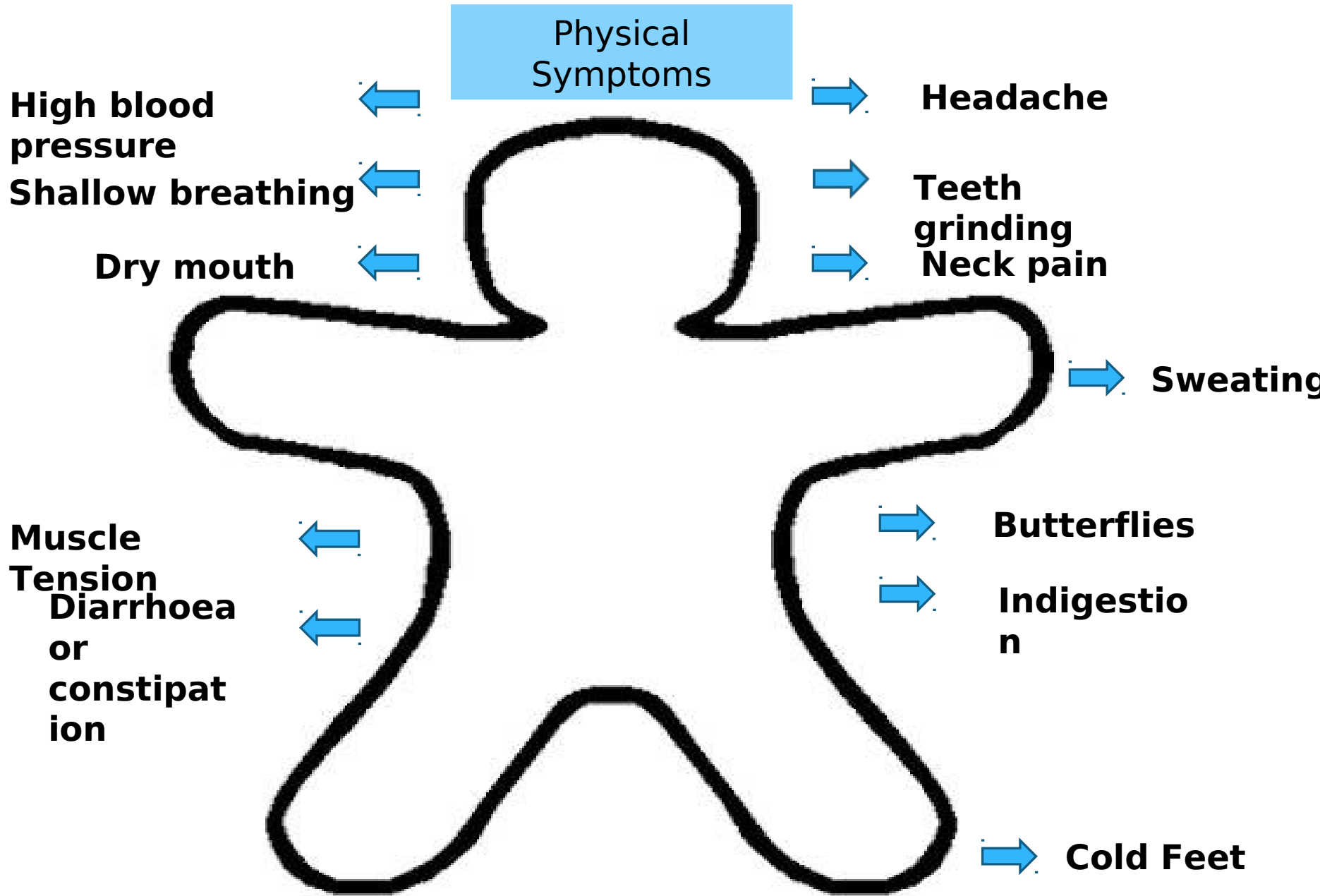


- \* Physical changes occur to support exertion

# Symptoms of stress



- \*Take a moment to think of your body and how it responds to stress...



# Other Symptoms of Stress

## Cognitive

- \* Memory problems
- \* Indecisiveness
- \* Poor concentration
- \* Racing thoughts
- \* Negative thinking
- \* Constant worry

## Emotional

- \* Moodiness
- \* Agitation
- \* Short temper
- \* Overwhelmed
- \* Unhappiness
- \* Fear

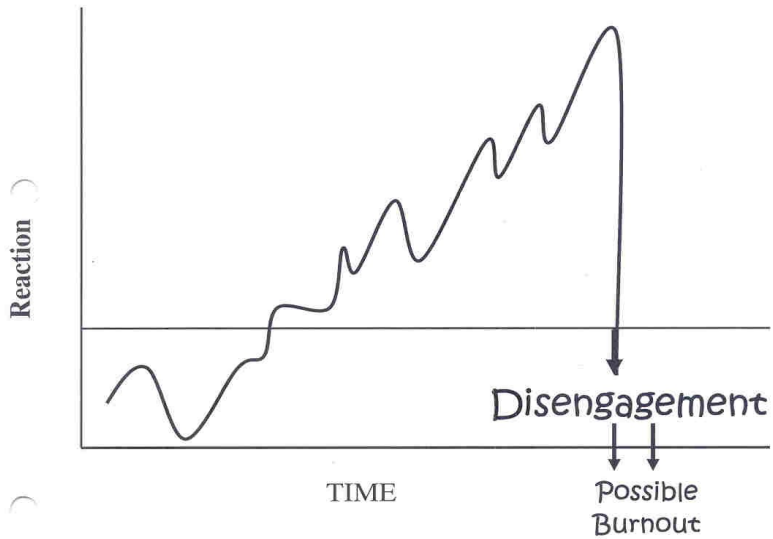
## Behavioural

- \* Disrupted sleep
- \* Eating more or less
- \* Social withdrawal
- \* Procrastination
- \* Picking fights
- \* Angry Outbursts

# Stress levels

Figure 2

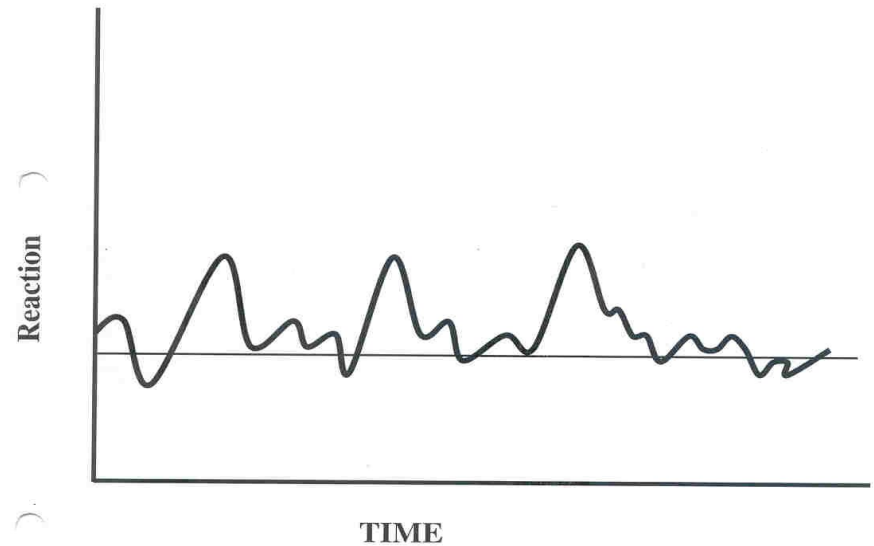
Stress Reactions



Unhealthy Bodily Stress Reaction

Figure 3

Stress Reactions



Healthy Bodily Stress Reaction



# High Stress → Strain → illness



Evidence suggests that stress increases the chance of ill physical or mental health.

# What are your stressors??



- \* Take a few minutes to reflect on what might be causing or contributing to stress in your life.
- \* Think about different areas of your life e.g. home, family, work, study, health, lifestyle, social, finances etc.

# Possible Stressors

- ❖ **Environment** : too much heat, noise, traffic etc
- ❖ **Body**: tiredness, aches and pain
- ❖ **Mind**: negative self talk, self doubt, anxiety, obsessive thinking

These categories are not really separate as they overlap and influence each other

How do you manage your stress????



# Stress Management

Leisure

Deep Breathing

Assertiveness

Positive Self  
Talk

Self  
organisation

Positive  
thinking

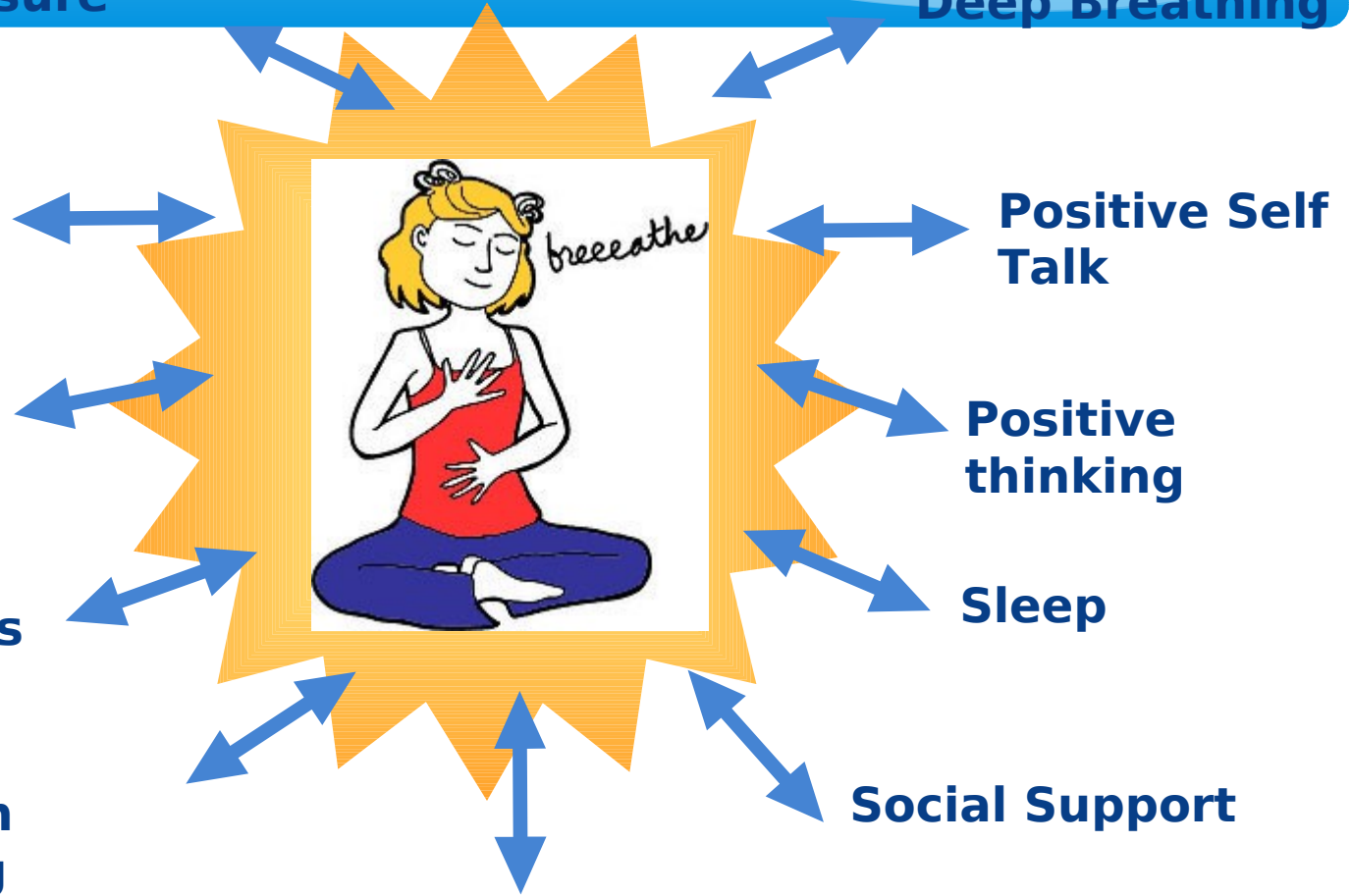
Medications

Sleep

Health  
Eating

Social Support

Exerci  
se



# Lifestyle

- \* Exercise regularly and eat a healthy diet
- \* Incorporate leisure into your daily routine. Pick something you enjoy doing and make it a priority.
- \* Balance rest and activity. Avoid 'overdoing it' on the days that you feel well and 'underdoing it' on the days that you feel poorly. Pace yourself.
- \* Time management. Plan ahead so that you avoid taking too much on. Use daily diaries/ calendars to help with this.
- \* Don't wait until you are stressed to relax. Make relaxation part of your daily routine. Choose something that works for you e.g. yoga, deep breathing, walking.

# Healthy Sleep Routine

- \* Avoid caffeine after midday e.g. tea or coffee
- \* Exercise early in the day. Avoid leaving this until the evening .
- \* Try to build up a regular sleep pattern i.e. go to bed and rise at the same time everyday
- \* Keep a sleep diary to record the time that you go to bed and the time you wake up. Make a note of any sleep strategies that you used. This way you will see what is working for you.
- \* Have a 'wind down' hour before you go asleep. Try listening to music or doing some deep breathing.
- \* If you wake during the night get out of bed and do something that helps you relax. When you feel sleepy return to bed

# Social Support

- \* When we are stressed or anxious we tend to avoid social situations. Try to avoid getting caught in this cycle.
- \* Talk to family and friends and build on these relationships.
- \* Look for formal supports such as local support groups. It can be helpful to talk or listen to people who understand what you are going through.
  - \* Grow ([www.grow.ie](http://www.grow.ie))
  - \* Aware ([www.aware.ie](http://www.aware.ie))
  - \* Arthritis Ireland ([www.arthritisireland.ie](http://www.arthritisireland.ie))



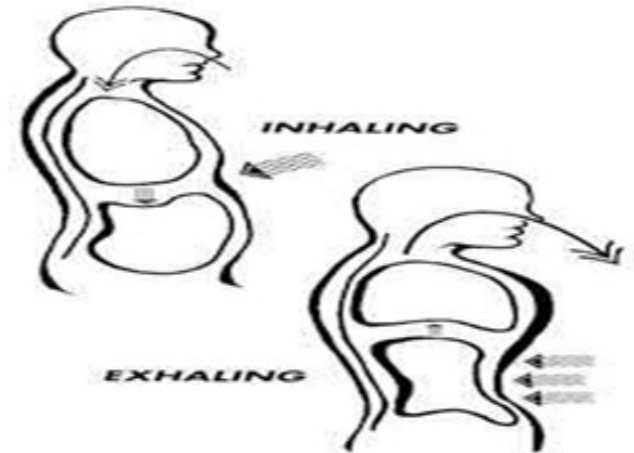


# Breathing

- \* Most of us do not fill our lungs with as much oxygen as they can hold.

*Deep breathing is good for us because*

- It gives us more oxygen
- It interrupts the accumulation of stress
- It stimulates our relaxing nerves
- It interrupts negative thinking

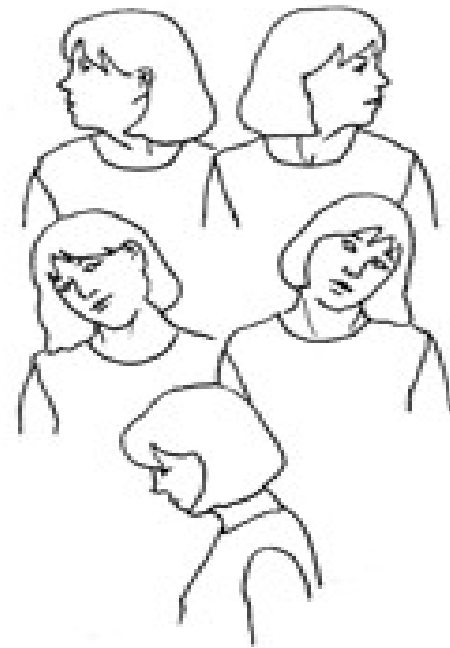


# Check your breathing

- \* Place one hand on your chest
- \* Place the other hand between your ribcage and your stomach
- \* Let your hands rest for a few moments
- \* Notice which hand moves the most
- \* For deep breathing the hand on your stomach should be rising higher than the hand on your chest!

# 60 second Stress management

- \* Simple breathing / Square breath
- \* Tension focus
- \* Neck stretches
- \* Shoulder rolls
- \* Head and neck massage
- \* Reminder dots!



Questions?????



# Feedback!

We would be very grateful if you would fill out our feedback form, as honestly as possible!



Thank you