NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Pause – Reset – Nourish (PRN)* to Promote Wellbeing

Use as Needed to Care for Your Wellness!

All of us face a variety of stresses daily. Currently, you may be dealing with additional responsibilities at work and new challenges with parenting. Consider your level of distress before deciding what approach you'd like to take to address it. Gauging your level of distress is as important as practicing self-care strategies. The PRN framework is one such strategy and reminds us of the types of practices that help promote wellbeing and enhance resilience. Just like you would take a medication PRN, or as needed, to address unwanted symptoms, you can Pause-Reset-Nourish to help replenish yourself when needed. These practices can help to reset and rebalance your nervous systems, and can be done frequently throughout each day in just a few minutes. Consider these simple steps:

Pause:

Check in with your internal experiences or how your body is feeling at the present moment.

By taking a slow conscious (diaphragmatic) breath you can pause to check on how you are feeling inside. Repeat this at least 3 times. As you become more aware of what is happening inside your body, you might realize that you are anxiously ruminating over something, holding stress or tension in different parts of the body, feeling that your mind is cluttered, having intense emotions (e.g., frustration, anger, anxiety) or grieving the loss of a loved one, patient, or the loss of routines due to COVID-19. It may be more than one thing, making the need to pause all the more important.

There are many ways to do slow conscious breathing, click to watch a demonstration of the 4-7-8 technique or the square breathing technique.

*The PRN Framework was created by Diana Tikasz, Hamilton Health Sciences, 2020.

Reset:

Actively do something to help you feel steadier, more calm, confident or focused on your next task. Be kind to yourself and remember that these are difficult times.

- When you sense you are ruminating or your mind is full, try to reset by having a quiet moment. Consider continuing slow breathing (e.g., 3 minute breathing space), meditation, practicing mindfulness, petting an animal, taking a brief walk outside, or looking at a photo that puts a smile on your face.
- When negative experiences are overwhelming you, try to reset by focusing on a positive thing that happened or an affirmation, sharing gratitude, watching a short funny video or meme, talking with a colleague, or practicing grounding.
- When unsure of how you are feeling but recognize you are uncentered, try to reset by observing the feeling, acknowledging it, and letting it pass through your mind like it is on a conveyor belt. Accepting the current situation allows us to acknowledge our desire for things to be different than they are.
- When you become critical of yourself, try to reset by interrupting those thoughts with self-compassion or talking to yourself as if you were a caring supportive friend.

Nourish:

Soak in something positive that replenishes your mind-body-heart-soul-or spirit. Turn your focus towards something that helps you remember your own strength and resilience, or reminds you to take time to tend to yourself. You may ask yourself, "What do I need to nourish myself right now?"

- Think about something that has been rewarding or meaningful at work or at home. You might remind yourself of why you got into this profession, how you helped someone, or a meaningful moment with your family or loved ones.
- If a loved one has died, consider ways to honor them by reminiscing with others who knew them, reflecting on a positive memory you have of them, contributing to a cause they found important, or doing a kind act in their name.
- Consider affirmations or reminders that help you feel prepared to deal with the stress or challenges you are facing; this may help you harness your own strength and resilience.
- Consider engaging in moments of playfulness, light-heartedness, and creating meaningful social connection with others. This might include enjoying a family activity; laughing, singing or chanting; dancing, or other ways that bring you joy; engaging in meaningful cultural practices or rituals; connecting with a significant other or a beloved pet; celebrating a success at work or with loved ones; or doing something for others in need (donating time for charity, baking for a neighbor).

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Helpful apps to assist you in using the PRN framework:

Tips on Meditation, Mindfulness, Sleep, and Anxiety	**Headspace / Headspace Plus, Insight Timer, Simple Habit, Calm, Smiling Mind**
Brief, high intensity workouts	**7 Minute Workout**
Overall wellness during the pandemic	**COVID Coach**
For the BIPOC community to develop a daily meditation habit	**Liberate Meditation**

When you are needing more than a PRN:
Reach out to a peer support counselor, EAP service or manager; call a hotline; or speak to a mental health provider, health provider, or a trusted colleague.

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, Call (800) 273-8255, Chat with Lifeline
- Disaster Distress Helpline, Call (800) 985-5990, Text TalkWithUs to 66746
- 7 cups – Trained active listeners are available to chat with you via text or online to help you through difficult times.

With the PRN framework, you can insert your own strategies and practices according to what works best for you. Remember to be compassionate with yourself and honor your unique context, values, and needs. Some strategies can be done in the moment of a difficult situation and others can be done when you have more time. Adjust the strategies you use based on the situation. What matters most is that you intentionally create spaces to use PRN strategies frequently enough to make a habit of slowing down and listening to your body, resetting your nervous system from stress to safety or from crisis to confidence. Take a step back from work when you can to "rest and digest" and nourish yourself.

How stressed are you?

- Professional Quality Of Life (ProQOL) – includes a measure and resources for identifying and managing burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary stress. The Provider Resilience app includes this measure and stress-busting tips tailored to your self-assessment.
- Wellness in the Workplace – includes a questionnaire and provides guidance on creating resilience, balance, and meaning in high-stress workplaces.

Additional Resources

- Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction – free online training course and resources.
- TEND Academy – addresses the complex needs of high stress, trauma-exposed workplaces.
- Secondary Traumatic Stress Consortium – defines Secondary Traumatic Stress and resources to address it.
- Self-Compassion.org – learn about the 3 elements of self-compassion and how to give and receive it.

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