

Parent/Carer Wellbeing Session



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Welcome and Introductions

Islington Community

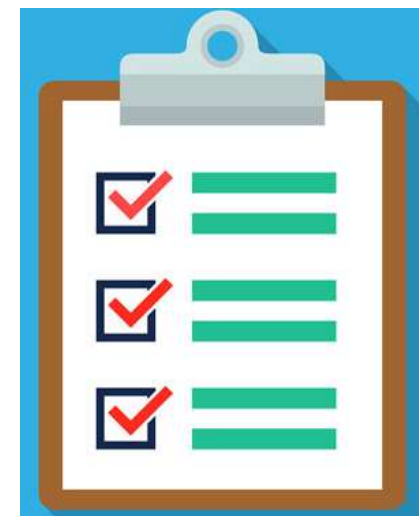


ISLINGTON



What we hope you can take away from this session...

- ✓ Why parent/carer wellbeing is important
- ✓ How our bodies and brains respond to stress
- ✓ Self-care ideas that you can build into your day to day



Group agreement

- What will help you feel safe to be in this session?
- What do you need from us and the other parents and carers?
- Ideas might include...
 - Confidentiality
 - Respecting difference
 - One person talking at a time
- Please take time out if you need it or need to move around.
- We will be available at the end to chat if you would like

On a scale of Cat, how are you feeling today?



- **Self-care** is a term that is used to remind ourselves and others that our own individual needs are important.
- We need to look after ourselves, to feel ok about ourselves, face challenges and meet our potential.
- We also talk about **Communal Care**, which means looking after each other, and allowing people to look after you - **it's not all up to you.**
- In different cultures, self care might mean different things.



Discussion:

Why do you think parent/carer wellbeing is important?

Some reasons why parent/carer wellbeing is important

- Parent-carer self-care is **crucial**
- There is a strong link between child wellbeing and parent/carer wellbeing
- Parent/carers play a vital role in helping their children to learn about and manage emotions
- Children learn by watching what we do
- There are strong links between how we manage stress, and longer term physical and mental health.



Put your own oxygen mask on first

For your children to be as ok as possible, you need to be as ok as possible.



What can get in the way of Self-Care?

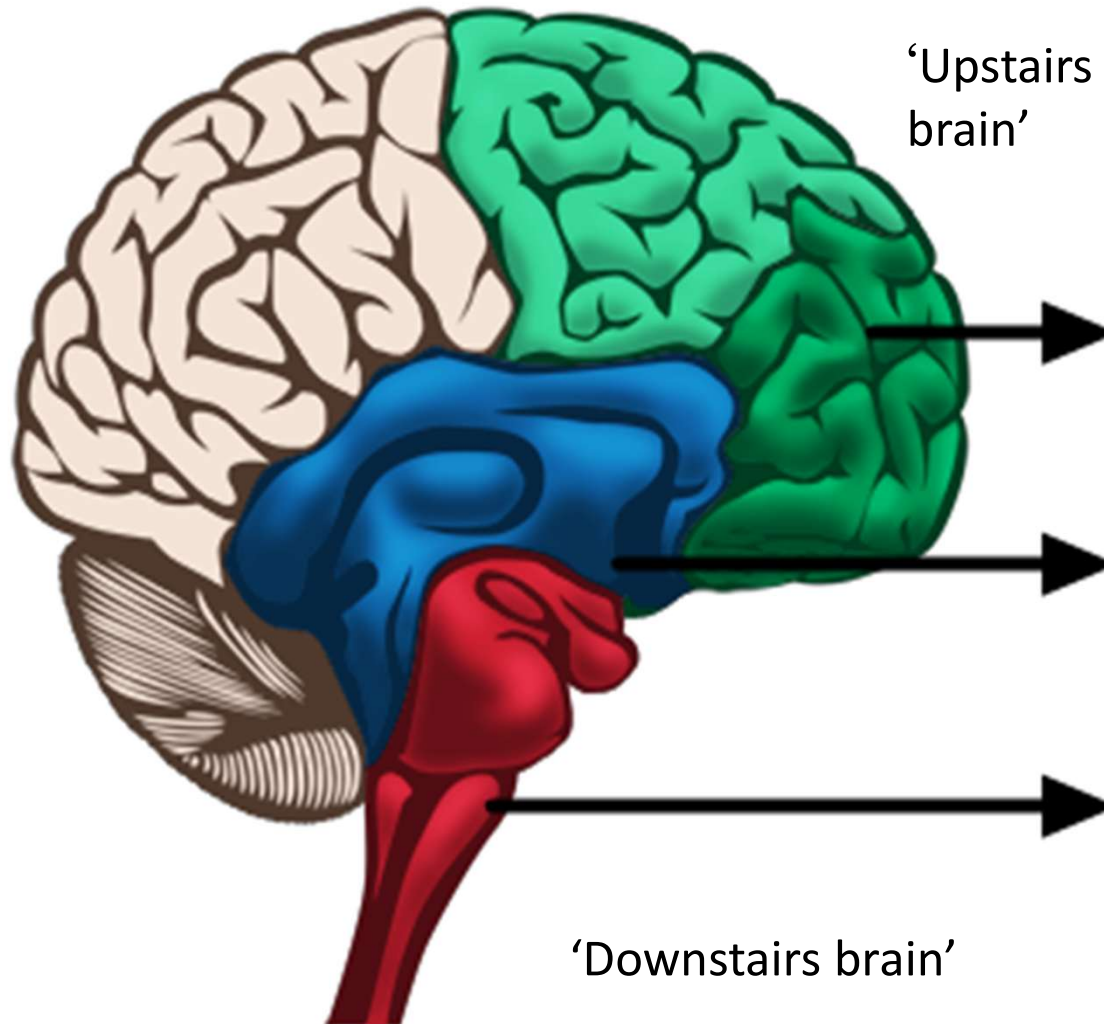
- Time
- Money
- Feeling we don't deserve self-care
- Avoidance
- Previous experiences/society/cultural pressures might make us feel that our job is to look after everyone else and not ourselves
- Not wanting to ask others for help with self-care as it might seem indulgent or selfish.

Mindful listening exercise



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Three Part Brain Structure



Prefrontal Cortex:

Thinking, problem solving,
planning, play, body
control, empathy

Limbic System:

Emotions

Brain Stem:

Survival and
automatic body
processes

Responses to danger – fight, flight, freeze and flop



All of these responses take up a lot of our body's energy

Hand Model of the Brain

Prefrontal Cortex – 'Thinking Brain'

Able to think and plan



Stress or
threat



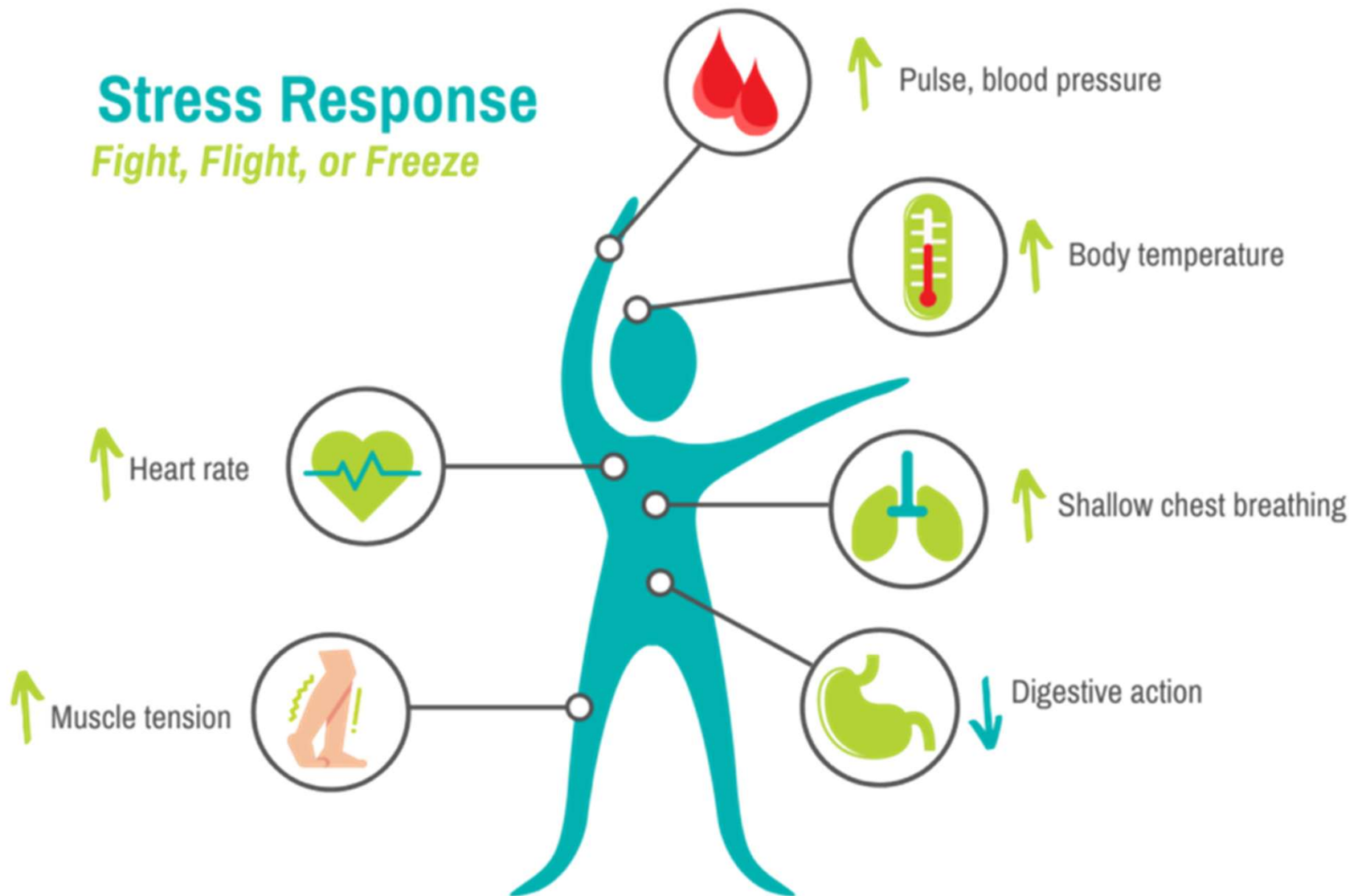
**Limbic
System –
'Survival
brain'**

'Flipping your
lid' – Hard to
think
rationally

(Dr Dan Segal)

Stress Response

Fight, Flight, or Freeze



Discussion – How do you notice that you are stressed?

- Where do you feel it in your body?
- What do you notice about your thoughts?



How can stress affect us?

Feelings:

Irritable
Impatient
Angry
Anxious
Scared
Racing thoughts
Low mood
'Switched off'
Sense of dread
Health worries
Lonely or ignored

Behaviour:

Hard to make decisions
Avoiding situations
Over-reacting
Trouble concentrating
Restlessness
Differences in eating
patterns
Smoking or drinking more
Being tearful or crying

Physical responses:

Shallow breathing
Tight chest
Muscle tension
Sleep problems
Tired all the time
Headaches
Clenching jaw
Nausea
Problems with digestion
Dizziness
Panic attacks

What can happen if our brains are often under stress, or we have had a lot of difficult life events?

Our brains are very clever at adapting to the circumstances they find themselves in. If you are often experiencing stress, your brain will **respond to situations with the expectation that they are dangerous**. This might include...

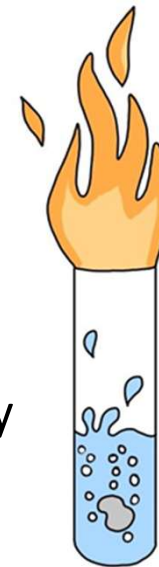


Hypervigilance

Avoidance



Physical symptoms



Reactivity

This can happen even if the situation is not objectively dangerous and can affect our responses to daily situations.

Discussion -

What do you notice about the impact on your child and your relationship with them...

- When you are happy and relaxed?
- When you are stressed?



What works for you?

In small groups/with the person next to you, discuss:

Coping strategies during a stressful situation:

1. In the moment

Something you do in the moment (e.g. deep breathing, self talk)

2. Afterwards/recovery

Something you do after a difficult situation (e.g. reaching out to someone, enjoyable activity, taking down time)

3. In anticipation of next time

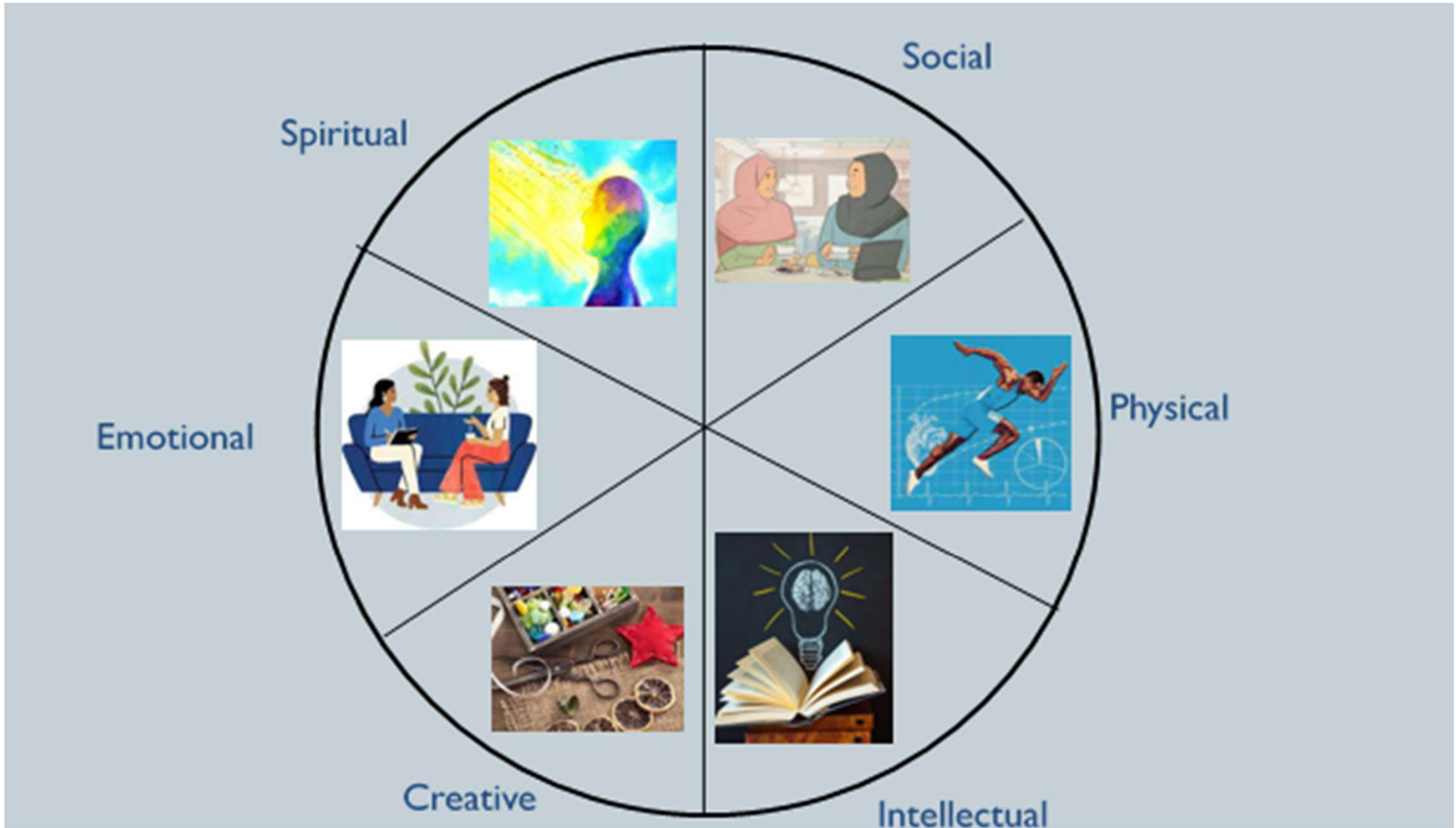
Something you do before a stressful situation (e.g. mental rehearsal, relaxation, seeking support)

4. Routines

Things you do regularly that reduce or manage stress



Self and Communal Care Wheel



Self Care – The Basics

- Be kind to yourself
- Make time for you
- Get outside/exercise
- Connect with others
- Ask for help if you need it – you deserve it
- Recognise your ‘stress triggers’ and plan how to respond





*"I have come to believe that
caring for myself is not self
indulgent.*

*Caring for myself is an act of
survival"*

Audre Lorde

My self-care plan

Physical

Chosen activities:

1.....

.....

2.....

.....

3.....

.....

Social

Chosen activities:

1.....

.....

2.....

.....

3.....

.....

Emotional

Chosen activities:

1.....

.....

2.....

.....

3.....

.....

Practical

Chosen activities:

1.....

.....

2.....

.....

3.....

.....

.....



Progressive muscle relaxation exercise



Calm Your Body

with this progressive muscle
relaxation (PMR) exercise

If you need a bit more help with coping with stress:

- Talk to your GP and ask how they can support you
- **iCOPE** <https://www.icope.nhs.uk/> 020 3317 6670
- NHS service for adults with an Islington GP experiencing problems such as stress, worry, depression and insomnia. Can self-refer online.

The Stress Project

<http://www.stressproject.org.uk/> 020 7700 3938

- This project is based on Holloway Road at the Old Fire Station, and offers stress relieving remedies, such as massages, yoga and meditation for reduced prices.

Maya Centre www.mayacentre.org.uk

020 7281 8970

- Women's counselling centre.

Bright Futures:

<https://directory.islington.gov.uk/kb5/islington/directory/service.page?id=txWgdPi-Gz0&localofferchannelnew=3>

020 7527 4343

- Bright Futures provide whole family support to families with school-aged children up to 19 years old/25 with SEND.

Mind Islington www.islingtonmind.org.uk

020 3301 9850

- Offers access to a range of community support and recovery pathways via resource centres in Islington for adults affected by mental health.

Family Lives www.familylives.org.uk 0808 800

2222 020 7553 3080

- Offers free confidential, 24-hour, parent-to-parent phone line for anyone in a parenting role.

Our Time <https://ourtime.org.uk/>

- A service for families to talk openly about mental health, including groups for parents and activities for children.

Solace www.solacewomansaid.org 020 7619 1350

- Services for women and children experiencing or escaping domestic violence. Available to all Islington residents.

And finally...

The “54321 game” is a common sensory awareness grounding exercise that many find a helpful tool to relax or get through difficult moments.



PROCEDURE

1. Describe 5 things you can see.
2. Name 4 things you can feel (“my feet on the floor” or “the air in my nose”)
3. Name 3 things you hear right now (“traffic outside”)
4. Name 2 things you can smell right now (or 2 smells you like)
5. Name 1 thing you enjoy tasting

Repeat the 5 steps more than once if needed.

