



Teacher's Care

COVID19

SELF-CARE SUPPORT FOR TEACHERS

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STRESS, WORRY & ANXIETY

Stress, worry and anxiety are all normal human reactions to danger and difficult circumstances. But they are not synonyms and they play different roles in our quest for survival. Can you differentiate among these?



STRESS is what happens in the **BODY**



WORRY is what happens in the **BRAIN**

WHAT IS STRESS?

- A physiological response to an external event
- The body's reaction to a stressor such as danger, changes in the environment or when we are faced with a demand that exceeds our own resources.

TYPES OF STRESS?

1. Acute stress response
2. Chronic stress response



WHAT HAPPENS IN THE BODY?

- It starts in our limbic brain, the part that deals with emotions & memory, by telling the body to release adrenalin & cortisol.
- These hormones activate the body-mind to deal with the threat by shifting its energy resources to help us fight or flee from the threat. It causes our:
 - Blood pressure & heart rate to speeds up to boost blood flow 
 - Lungs to dilate to improve breathing 
 - More glucose / blood sugar is released to make energy available to our muscles & other organs 
 - Eyes to dilate to improve vision 
 - Digestive system to slow down to save energy 

MEANWHILE IN THE BRAIN ...

While all of these things are happening in the body, our thinking brain has to decide how best to save us. Will we:

FIGHT

FLEE

NEGOTIATE



OR



OR



WHAT IS WORRY?

- Worry is a chain of negative thoughts & images about uncertainties & things that can go wrong.
- Repetitive, obsessive thoughts
- It happens only in our minds.
- It is difficult to control, can lead to rumination
- Closely related to anxiety but not the same.

WORRY

Resides in our minds



Is distinct, specific & concrete. reaction to recognised threat

Grounded in reality - you are trying to make sense of a real & present danger

We are able to make a plan to solve the problem

Has a logical component to it - worrying is the way your brain finds a solution

It doesn't last long

It doesn't impair our function

Encourages us to take action

ANXIETY

Resides in our bodies & minds



Is generally vague. We feel unsettled but not sure why. Unidentified trigger

Marked by catastrophic thinking

Makes it difficult to problem-solve

Strong emotional component to it. We overestimate risk but underestimate ability to cope.

Is long-standing & persistent

Can compromise our ability to function as it seeps into our psyches & can make it difficult to concentrate & get work done

Paralyses us

"Worry and anxiety are not all bad. In fact, they can motivate change. The key is using problem-solving skills to address what you're worried about and reduce the risk of your fears being realized."

Worry and Anxiety: Do You Know the Difference? Henry Ford Health



STRESS
Normal body-brain response to a threat.

WORRY
Natural short-term mental response to a solve a problem posed by a real threat

FEELING ANXIOUS
Normal physical & emotional reaction to a perceived threat

ANXIETY
Persistent physical & emotional reaction to perceived but non-existent threat, false alarm