Taking care of yourself during uncertain times:
Mindfulness and well-being for educators
April 2, 2020
Chat box dialogue

Link to slides:

Contact information for the panelists:

- Nilufar Rezai nrezai@cps.edu
- Meena Srinivasan meena@meenasrinivasan.com
- Heather Lageman heather.lageman@gmail.com

Resources and links from the panelists:

**From Nilufar Rezai**
- Belly breathing
- Journaling
- Self talk
- Brain breaks
- Empathy
- Service

**From Meena Srinivasan**
- Tree of contemplative practices
- Integrating mindfulness in digital spaces (includes links to exercises)
- Other resources at meenasrinivasan.com

**From Heather Lageman:**
available at https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1A2QTC6IaEaEhPQG02O-JgQ1- Yi4YE (note that Heather’s notes about the exercises can be found in here.)
- 5 senses grounding exercise
- Determining core values
- Good life buckets
- Community assets
- Gratitude letters

**Learning Forward resources:**
- COVID-19 online resource page
COVID-19 online community
COVID-19 webinars

Participants’ suggestions and comments about managing stress:

- Exercise
- Walks
- Yoga
- Meditation
- Pets
- Spending time with kids and other family members
- Sharing and receiving photos from family
- Music
- Video chats (e.g., calling a different friend every day, seeing students)
- Virtual happy hour
- Connecting with mentors and former colleagues
- Morning greetings or meetings via video
- Laughter
- Funny memes
- Prayer
- Healthy eating
- Baking / cooking
- Taking breaks (including digital breaks)
- Limiting news consumption
- Setting up environment in a conducive way (e.g., yoga mat next to workspace)
- Gratitude (e.g., counting blessings; exchanging gratitude texts with friends)
- Favorite treats
- Reading
- Puzzles
- Playing games
- Knitting
- Videogames
- Mindless TV shows
- Learning something new
- Having a schedule

Participants’ responses to panelists’ comments and strategies:

- We use breathing techniques and brain breaks daily with my PreK students
- I always feel better when laughing and smiling.
• Asking for help truly helps!
• I really like the idea of the Muse and Meditation Zoom. Great way to connect and be positive.
• I love belly breathing...it is so hard to ask for help. Working on this.
• I really like the idea of the muse and meditation zoom too and interested in learning more about how I might help to create that space for others I serve?
• Interbeing is the key to bringing the world together as one.
• Love the reframe
• Practice the reframe is a favorite! So helpful.
• I truly appreciate you sharing the slide on understanding that it really is too much and its okay to feel overwhelmed because it is overwhelming.
• 54321 has definitely helped me in the past. I usually repeat it until I feel like the calm has settled in.
• Gratitude is so important
• I try so hard to “appreciate out loud!”
• While I’m viewing this webinar I can see outside my window a mother and two young children walking the road picking up cans. These types of things are what keeps me up at night. Knowing that this situation is affecting us all so detrimentally.
• Life gets so busy with so many things going on, taking care of these many parts of us personally is an eye opener.
• I agree with the modeling of one self. Ask for help when you need it. Just as you enjoy helping others. Allow others the joy of helping. Took me a long time to ask for help from others.
• Calendaring time for yourself and protecting it. <3
• A close friend who unfortunately passed away taught me to see repeated numbers on the clock (11:11, 2:22, etc) as the moment to seize to list all that I am grateful for - I am finding this a very helpful practice these days. (And a way to honor him.)
• Such great reminders about how we need to treat ourselves and others. There are times you really need to put yourself first, just so you can take care of others. Leave those dishes and house tasks for later young parents. Believe me, time is precious. Take care of yourself so you can be your best.
• I am def. talking parents down. Messages come to me with lots of stress filled in them and exclamations. I need to calm down before I respond bc I can feel their stress.
• WE all need to calm down and HELP EACH OTHER!
• Every Friday, we 'gather' with our friends on Zoom to share a drink, talk about our week - share challenges, resources, etc.- it's been the bright spot of our week!
• Several faculty and staff members from my school are having a virtual block party this evening.
• School district providing mindfulness webinars.
• Thank you! Smile, breathe, and rest.