

The Best Way for Teachers to Manage Stress



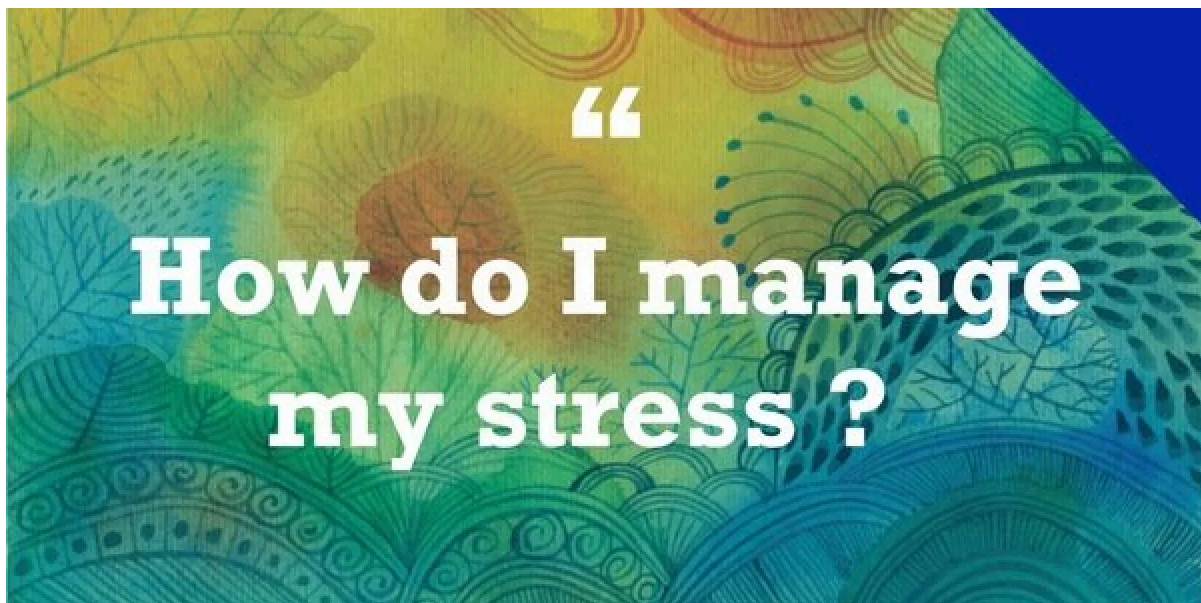
By [Angela Duckworth](#) — April 23, 2020 ⌚ 1 min read



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Angela Duckworth is a behavioral-science expert who offered advice to teachers based on scientific research for the [Ask a Psychologist](#) opinion blog.



How do I manage my stress so that I don't take it out on my students?

Stress is what we feel when we perceive challenges that outmatch our abilities. Feeling stressed is a completely natural response to adversity: It gears us up to respond to those challenges. The question is, what do we do with that feeling?

I see a lot of parents and kids trying to suppress the stress response, to deny it, or at least not talk about it.

My advice is to do the opposite.

Acknowledging that you're stressed—and, in fact, [naming your feelings](#) out loud—can be helpful. Maybe at dinner, you ask each person in your family, “On a scale from 0 to 10, where 10 is the most stressed out you can imagine ever being and 0 is complete calm, how do you feel today?”

And then, once you've admitted openly that you're all feeling some degree of stress, see if each of you can pinpoint what the ebbs and flows of stress are in your day. My family gave this a try last night, and here's what I learned.

For me, stress peaks when I'm overscheduled, with one meeting right up against another, no time set aside for lunch, and a backlog of emails all starred yellow for “urgent.” But doing yoga—my local studio figured out how to teach classes via Zoom video—is the opposite. I breathe. I stretch. I do what my yoga teacher says and focus on the moment.

Likewise, the next time you communicate with your students, find a way to help them acknowledge and explore their own stress levels. Send the message that in times like these, stress is natural, normal, and something we can learn from.

Angela Duckworth, the founder and CEO of the education nonprofit [Character Lab](#), is a professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. You can follow Character Lab on Twitter [@TheCharacterLab](#).

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