MINDFUL AND COMPASSIONATE RESPONSE TO STRESS

Reacting VS Responding

UNAWARE
STRESS REACTION
AUTOPILOT

Fight, flight, or freeze

Sympathetic Activation
Hypothalamus, pituitary & adrenals
Increased cortisol, adrenaline, noradrenaline

Acute Hyperarousal
Increased heart rate, blood pressure, inflammatory markers
Activated amygdala

Chronic Stress Reaction
Chronic hyperarousal, inflammation, pain, asthma, heart disease, irritable bowel, insomnia, anxiety, depression, decreased immune function

Maladaptive Coping
Denial, isolation, overworking, overeating, substance & technology overuse

BREAKDOWN
Physical/psychological breakdown, burn-out

EXTERNAL STRESSORS
(Perceived/Real)

Calm & connected

Awake & Present

COMPASSIONATE & MINDFUL RESPONSE
PAUSE

Calm & connected

Parasympathetic Activation
Hypothalamus, pituitary & adrenals
Increased oxytocin & endorphins
Reduced cortisol

Open, Receptive & Curious
Reduced heart rate, blood pressure & inflammatory markers
Increased prosocial brain activity

Seeing New Possibilities
Growth & Regeneration
Improved wound healing, immune function & sleep, prosocial & nurturing (kindness, gratitude, generosity, helping, joy), improved relationships, reduced pain

Well-Being
Physical & Mental Health, RESILIENCE

AWARE

COMPASSIONATE & MINDFUL RESPONSE
PAUSE

Cardiovascular
Digestive
Immune
Musculoskeletal
Nervous Systems

Internal Stressors
Thoughts, Emotions, Pain, Self-Criticism

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Adapted from J. Kabat-Zinn’s Full Catastrophe living (2013) and N. Bardacke’s Mindful birthing (2012)