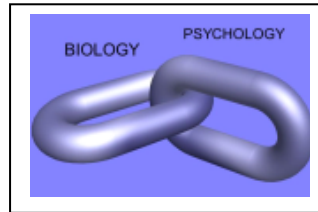


# Developing Your Child's Superpowers of Resilience and Stress Reduction

*Laura Kastner, Ph.D.*

## Health Basics (MENSSSAA)

Mindful calming skills  
Exercise  
Nutrition  
Secure attachments  
Sleep hygiene  
School thriving  
Social connections  
Adaptability  
Active engagement in positive goals

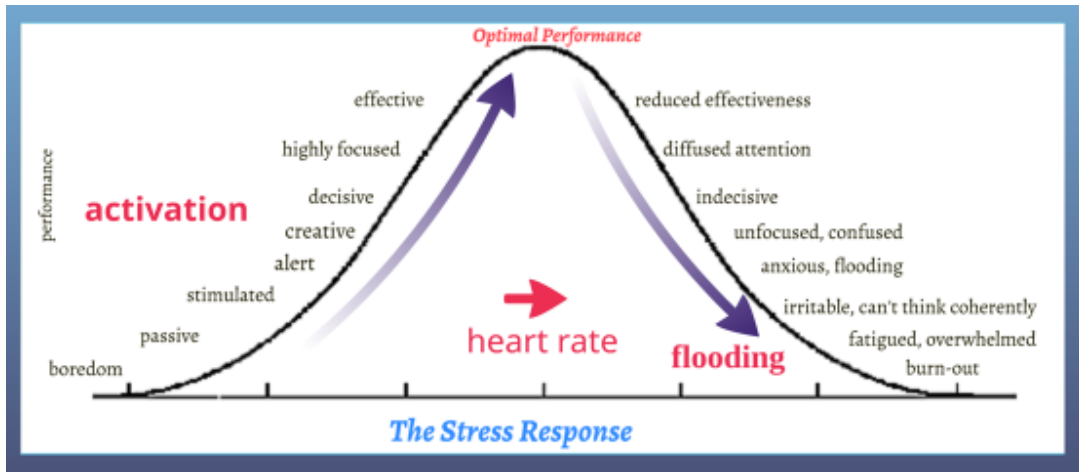


*“There is no health without mental health”*

*“The child is only as healthy as the family they live with”*

## Top Tips and Take Homes

1. Parents are advised to focus on their own health, not just their child's.
2. Develop a parent-peer group (with your kids' friends' parents, if possible). Consult, share information, and ask for help. Collective action on rules and policies is underrated! (e.g. substance use, phone use during carpools, etc.)
3. A mostly positive, accepting and secure relationship with your child is the lynchpin for building other strengths.
4. No matter how big the challenges are with your child, try to hit the 5:1 rule of positive interactions to negative ones.
5. Resilience develops from the goldilocks principle—enough challenge to build competences and enough support to avoid overwhelm.
6. Life is supposed to be stressful. The key is to build healthy coping and avoid overstress.
7. Beware of the “tail that wags the dog” problem among striving families. Over-focusing on grades and college can sabotage the “mostly positive” relating quotient.
8. Typical adolescent development includes increased moodiness, parent-child conflict and risk-taking. Effective parenting involves managing these challenges with positive parenting, radical acceptance, and the three pillars of authoritative parenting (authority + love + respect for their individual thoughts and feelings).
9. Remember the mantras “You might be right, but are you effective?” and “WAIT” (Why Am I Talking?) when you are engaged in power struggles.
10. Due to puberty and the pruning of the prefrontal cortex, teens can drive toward goodies like a Ferrari, but possess the brakes of old bike. Another mantra, “They are doing the best they can, given their emotional state. And they need to do better.” Skilled parenting is necessary (1-9)



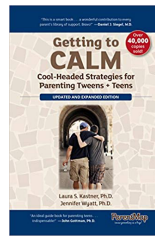
## Getting to Calm Protocol for Meltdowns

**C**ool Down; reduce heart rate

**A**ssess your options; get frontal lobe online

**L**isten with empathy; validation\*

**M**ap a plan; problem-solving



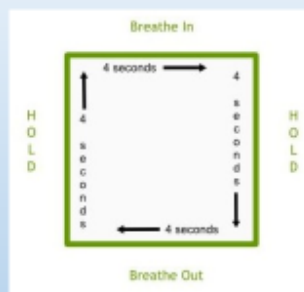
## Getting to Calm: Regulate heart rate\*

### 4-7-8 Breathing

1. Exhale completely
2. Inhale through your nose for the count of 4.
3. Hold your breath for the count of 7.
4. Exhale audibly through your mouth for the count of 8.
5. Repeat x 4.



### Four square breathing



### Five Senses Meditation



**Distress Tolerance (dive reflex)**  
Ice  
Cold Water  
Frozen Peas

## Positive Parenting



Listening, empathy, responsiveness, warmth, secure attachment, conversation, play

Praise, encouragement, rewards, collaboration, problem-solving

Routines, rules, consistent follow-through, limits

Consequences

Kastner (2017)  
Getting to Calm.

## Resilience factors - COPEs

**C**onnection

"HUMAN CONNECTION IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING WE HAVE"

**O**rganization of healthy routines



**P**erspective of a positive mindset about the future

We'll get through this. Together.

**E**ngagement in competence-building



"CONTROL WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL"

**S**elf-regulation: "Getting to Calm" gets your brain online again!"



## References

- Kastner, L. and Wyatt, J. (2002) *The Launching Years: Strategies for parenting from senior year to college life*. New York: Three Rivers Press (Imprint of Random House).
- Kastner, L. (2013). *Wise-Minded Parenting: The 7 Essentials for Raising Successful tweens and teens*. ParentMap Publishers.
- Kastner, L. and Wyatt, J. (2018), 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.) *Getting to Calm: cool-headed strategies for parenting tweens and teens*. ParentMap Publishers.