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Integrating Resiliency Into Everyday Practice


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Why do some people grow and thrive despite adversity whereas others experience debilitating distress and impairment?

The Interaction of Nature and Nurture



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Nature

- Personality factors
- Predispositions/family history

Nurture

- Loving, responsive, consistent,
- predictable conditions during childhood
- Reasonable opportunities to master challenges and stressors
- Supportive cultural, political, economic systems





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Strategies to Foster Resilience



At the Community Level...

- Develop policies and practices to ensure that basic needs are met and address health disparities
- Target resources towards most vulnerable youth
- Increase access to supportive and preventative interventions
 - Telehealth
 - School- and community-based options





Parental Support and Information



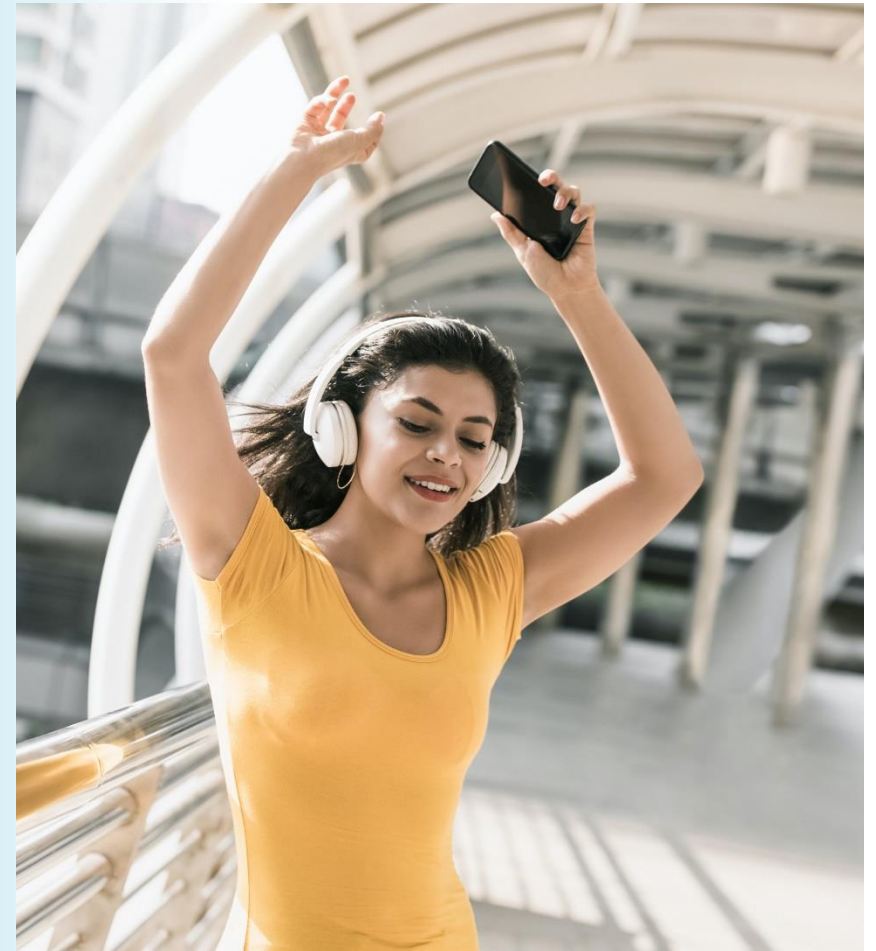
- Provide support for parents experiencing stress
- Enhance parental self-efficacy
- Increase social and community supports
- Enhance engagement with teachers and community leaders
- Model healthy coping by parents and other adults
- Limiting pandemic-related news/processing this actively

Wang et al. *Lancet*. 2020.



Increase Individual Skills

- Psychoeducation to help recognize emotions and stress-related symptoms
- Teach resiliency skills
 - Relaxation/mindfulness
 - Cognitive restructuring
 - Problem-solving
- Practice helpful behaviors
- Enhance social and community connections
- Enhance natural, innate sources of resiliency





Resilient Youth Curriculum

- Modular 12-Session Intervention
 - Module 1 (sessions 1-6): Core Relaxation and Cognitive Skills
 - Module 2 (sessions 7-12): Enhancing Well-Being and Positive Coping
- Can be administered in a group or individually (online or in person)
- For youth from first grade through high school



C.A.L.M.S. Practice

- C:** Coping Skills to Help my Body Relax
- A:** Actions I can Take
- L:** Looking at my Thoughts
- M:** Mindfulness
- S:** Social Support and Connection



Key Question: Is There Something I Can do About the Stressor?



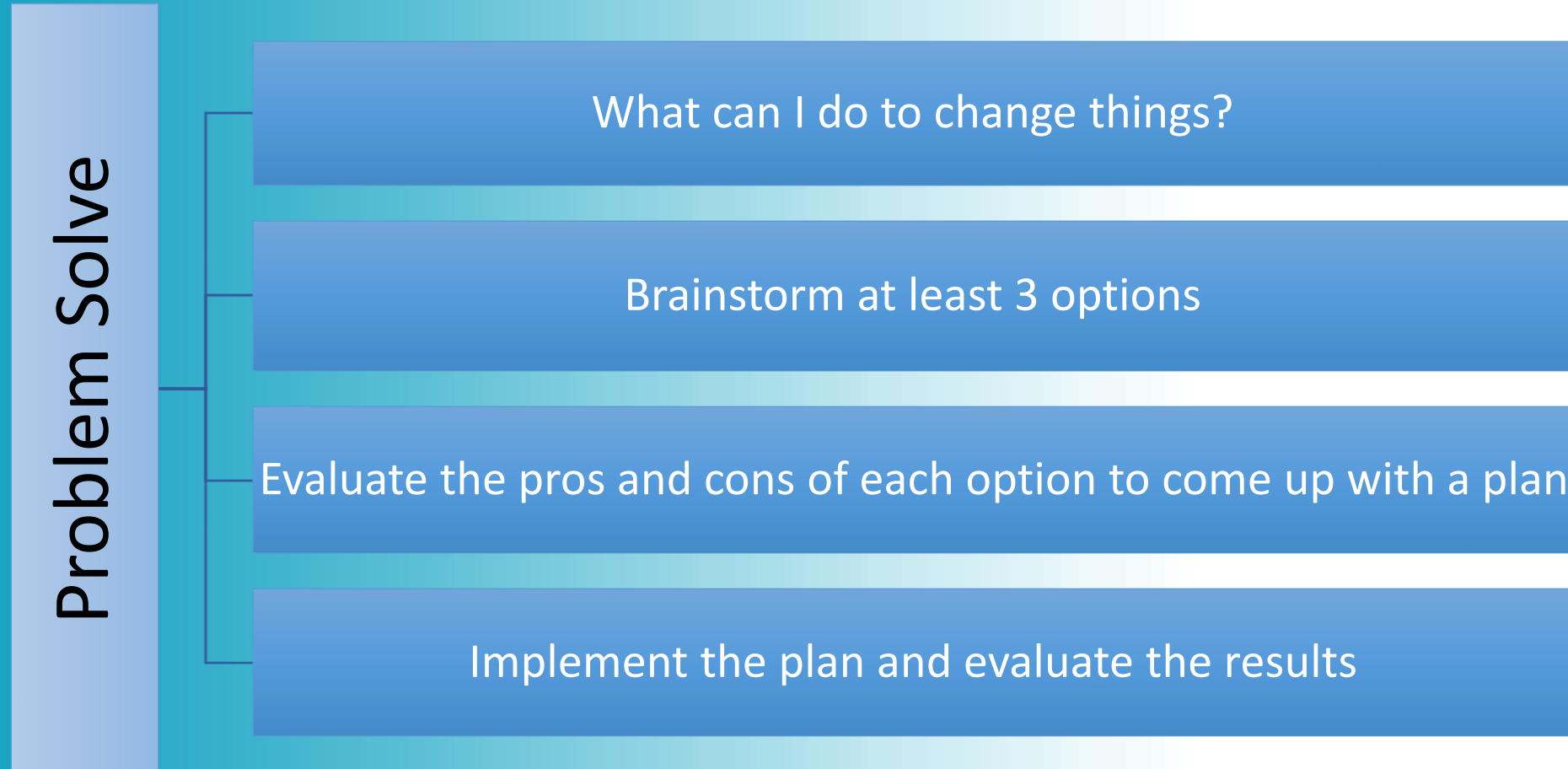
YES



NO

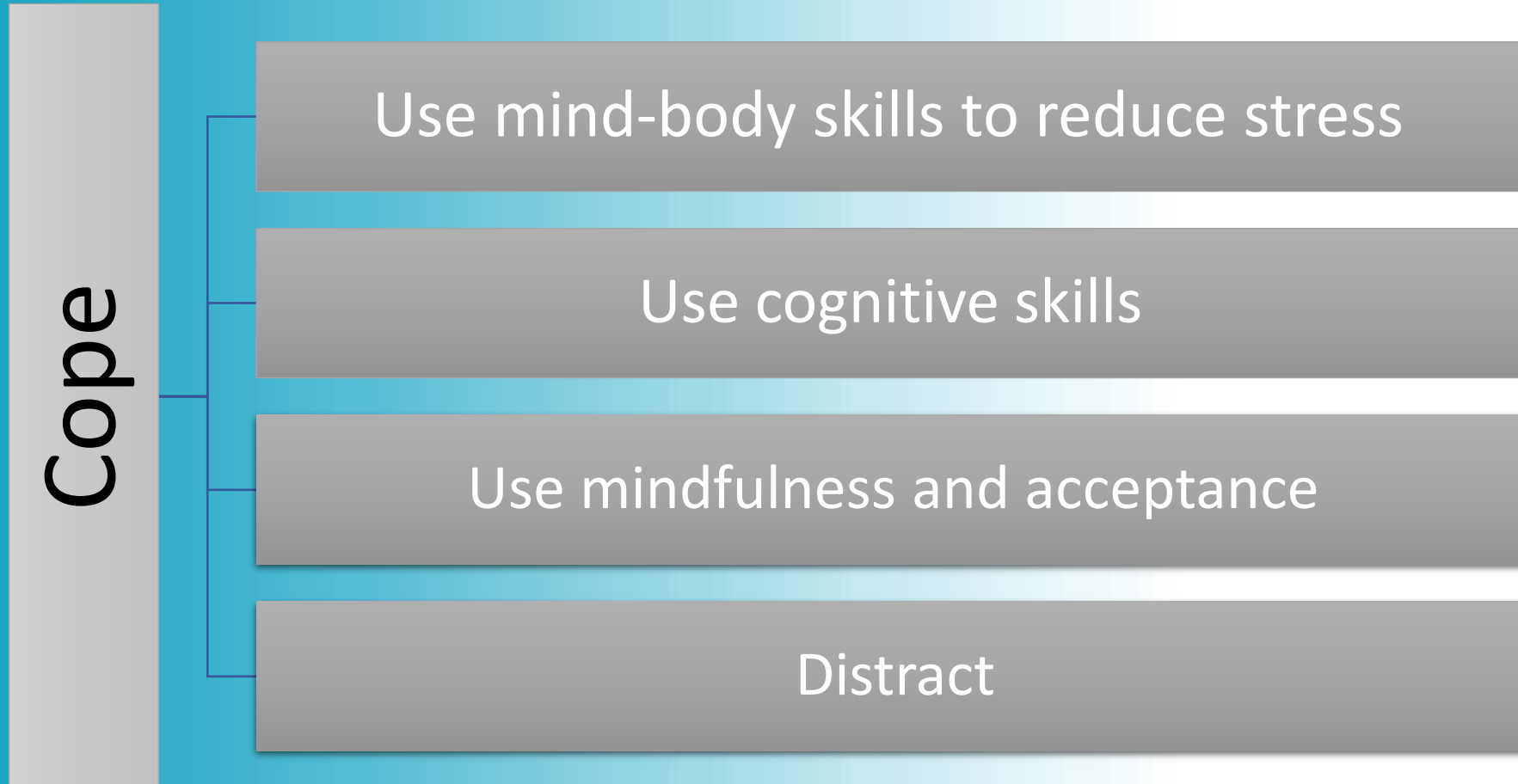


If YES...





If NO...



A photograph of a young child with dark hair, eyes closed, sitting in a meditative lotus position in a sun-dappled forest. The child is wearing a light-colored long-sleeved shirt and dark pants. The background is a soft-focus green forest with sunlight filtering through the trees.

Core Relaxation and Mindfulness Skills

The Relaxation Response (RR)

The Opposite of “Fight or Flight”



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Two Steps

1. The repetition of a word, a sound, a prayer, a thought, a phrase or a muscular activity
2. The passive return to the repetition when other thoughts intrude



What Type of Repetition Is Calming?





Remember

The stress response is usually automatic, BUT the relaxation response is voluntary and requires practice.



Evoking the Relaxation Response

- Diaphragmatic Breathing (Belly Breaths)
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation (imaginative exercises)
- Imagery (“special place”)
- Mindfulness (focusing in the here-and-now)
- “Mini”-relaxation strategies to use in the moment





Diaphragmatic Breathing



Just This



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Sensory Awareness



- Focusing on the here and now
- Using your senses to focus your attention
- Everyone is different in which sense(s) are most powerful



Using Imagery to Elicit the RR



Progressive Muscle Relaxation



- Tense and relax various large muscle groups
 - Hands and arms
 - Shoulders and back
 - Face and jaw
 - Chest and stomach
 - Legs and feet



Increasing Social Support and Connection



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How can you be in
service to others
(greater good)?





Increasing Social Support and Connection



Which forms of support are important?

- Emotional?
- Informational?
- Tangible?
- Self-esteem/affirmational?
- Belonging?

Being a Good Listener

Pay attention

- Mindfully listen to what the other person is saying. Be interested in what they are saying

Validate

- Show you understand the other person's feelings or opinions

Show interest with your body

- Smile, use humor, use open body language

