

OXYGEN

TRAINING SERIES

BRIDGING THE GAP

*Mitigating the Stress of Relationships
on the Job and At Home*



• STUDY GUIDE •

Manage stress and learn effective communication skills for on-the-job and at-home relationships



**STRONGER
FAMILIES**

WELCOME TO THE BRIDGING THE GAP TRAINING SERIES

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM TODAY'S SESSION ON BRIDGING THE GAP:

Learn helpful resources and tools to navigate workplace relationships.

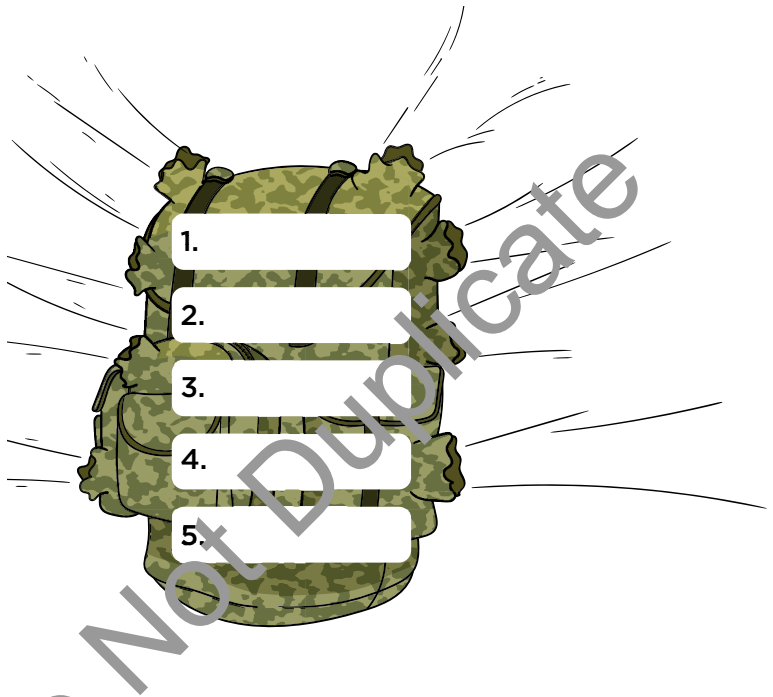
Understand how stress can negatively impact your relationships and what to do about it.

If you are not comfortable with sharing with the group, no problem.





UNLOADING YOUR RUCKSACK



Anger usually floats to the top of the rucksack and can build up. Many times leading to blow ups. Vulnerable feelings like sadness and fear are often underneath anger. Anger stands in the way of vulnerability and puts up walls. It protects us from being hurt, but in relationships it blocks us from intimacy and closeness. As First Responders and Military personnel, we often have full rucksacks. Notice that love and joy are at the bottom of the rucksack. It can become squished under the heavy weight of unprocessed and unexpressed feelings. It can stand in your way of connecting with your fellow First Responders and impact your relationships at home as well.

For some, their rucksack is dangerously full. They have spent their career witnessing trauma, high emotions, and years of pain. It takes a toll. The goal of this exercise is to help unpack some of the emotions stuffed in your rucksack.

BREAKOUT ACTIVITY: UNLOADING YOUR RUCKSACK



*IF YOU GET STUCK REFERENCE THE FEELINGS CHART ON PAGE 6

IDENTIFY THE TOP NEGATIVE FEELINGS IN YOUR RUCKSACK

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

WHAT IS THE KEY EMOTION CONNECTED TO THESE FEELINGS?

EXAMPLE: FEAR OR FRUSTRATION DUE TO LACK OF CONTROL

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Do Not Duplicate

NOTES

Do Not Duplicate

FEELINGS INVENTORY



FEELINGS WHEN YOUR NEEDS ARE NOT SATISFIED

AFRAID
apprehensive
dread
foreboding
frightened
mistrustful
panicked
petrified
scared
suspicious
terrified
wary
worried
ANNOYED
aggravated
dismayed
disgruntled
displeased
exasperated
frustrated
impatient
irritated
irked
ANGRY
enraged
furious
incensed
indignant
irate
livid
outraged
resentful
AVERSION
animosity
appalled
contempt
disgusted
dislike
hate
horrified
hostile
repulsed

CONFUSED
ambivalent
baffled
bewildered
dazed
hesitant
lost
mystified
perplexed
puzzled
tom
DISCONNECTED
alienated
aloof
apathetic
bored
cold
detached
distant
distracted
indifferent
numb
removed
uninterested
withdrawn
DISQUIET
agitated
alarmed
discombobulated
disconcerted
disturbed
perturbed
rattled
restless
shocked
startled
surprised
troubled
turbulent
turmoil
uncomfortable
uneasy

unnerved
unsettled
upset
EMBARRASSED
ashamed
chagrined
flustered
guilty
mortified
self-conscious
FATIGUE
beat
burnt out
depleted
exhausted
letargic
listless
sleepy
tired
weary
worn out
PAIN
agony
anguished
bereaved
devastated
grief
heartbroken
hurt
lonely
miserable
regretful
remorseful
SAD
depressed
dejected
despair
despondent
disappointed

discouraged
disheartened
forlorn
gloomy
heavy hearted
hopeless
melancholy
unhappy
wretched
TENSE
anxious
cranky
distressed
distraught
edgy
fidgety
frazzled
irritable
jittery
nervous
overwhelmed
restless
stressed out
VULNERABLE
fragile
guarded
helpless
insecure
leery
reserved
sensitive
shaky
YEARNING
envious
jealous
longing
nostalgic
pining
wistful

FEELINGS INVENTORY



FEELINGS WHEN YOUR NEEDS ARE SATISFIED

AFFECTIONATE
compassionate
friendly
loving
open hearted
sympathetic
tender
warm

ENGAGED
absorbed
alert
curious
engrossed
enchanted
entranced
fascinated
interested
intrigued
involved
spellbound
stimulated

HOPEFUL
expectant
encouraged
optimistic

CONFIDENT
empowered
open
proud
safe
secure

EXCITED
amazed
animated
ardent
aroused
astonished
dazzled
eager
energetic
enthusiastic
giddy
invigorated
lively
passionate
surprised
vibrant

GRATEFUL
appreciative
moved
thankful
touched

INSPIRED
amazed
awed
wonder

JOYFUL
amused
delighted
glad
happy
jubilant
pleased
tickled

EXHILARATED
blissful
ecstatic
elated
enthralled
exuberant
radiant
rapturous
thrilled

PEACEFUL
calm
clear headed
comfortable
centered
content

equanimous
fulfilled
mellow
quiet
relaxed
retrieved
satisfied
serene
still
tranquil
trusting

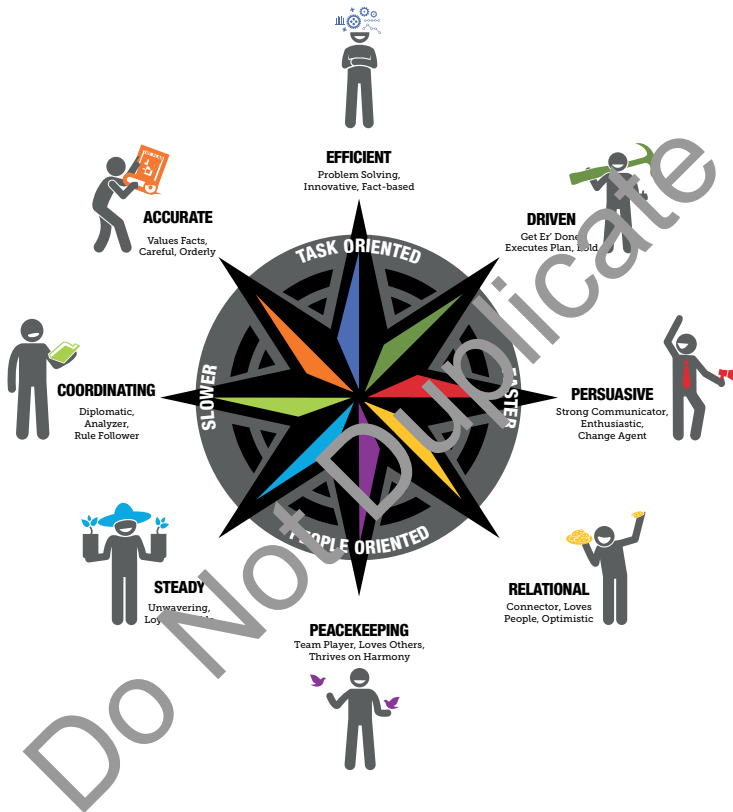
REFRESHED
enlivened
rejuvenated
renewed
rested
restored
revived

Reprinted with permission
©2005 by Center for Nonviolent Communication
Website: www.cnvc.org | Email: cc@cnvc.org
Phone: +1.505.244.4041





UNDERSTANDING STRESS & YOUR PERSONALITY



By reviewing our OXYGEN Compass, we can see how our unique personality traits can impact the relationships we steward. The profiles in this compass capture your unique personality type and how you show up at your best. However, there are times when we are not at our best, such as times of stress on the job or conflict at home. Each profile has a unique way of handling the tougher issues of life: stress, grief, loss, trauma, and conflict.

BREAKOUT EXERCISE: HANDLING STRESS



Understanding your stress response will help you be more aware of what you need when stress comes your way. Now that you've had a chance to self-assess what personality profile you are, take a moment and answer the questions below.

1. The OXYGEN profile I most identify with is

2. When I'm under stress I tend to....(circle one of the following):

- a. Need to vent to others
- b. Stuff my emotions and withdraw
- c. Blow my lid
- d. Get snarky and short with those around me
- e. Get intense and emotional about little things

THE THREE RS: RESPOND, RELATE, REINFORCE

To better understand others, the next step to mapping your OXYGEN Profile is to identify the "Three R's." By understanding how to Respond, Relate, and Reinforce others. This will give you an ultimate action plan to improve communication in your relationships.

The Three Rs include:

- 1. How to RESPOND to _____
- 2. How to RELATE to _____
- 3. How to REINFORCE _____



Download the Three Rs for each of the 8 OXYGEN Profiles. Scan the QR to gain access and discover the heart of your partner.

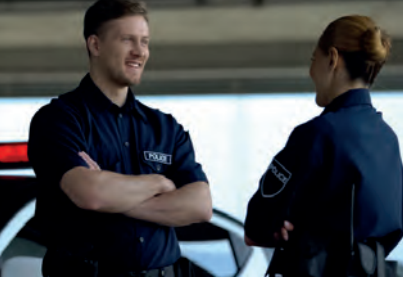
NOTES

Do Not Duplicate



BREAKOUT EXERCISE: EMOTIONAL CONNECTEDNESS

Unhealthy or toxic emotional connection	Inconsistent emotional connection			Healthy or mostly healthy emotional connection	
1. When I feel stressed, anxious, or nervous, I go to my partner...					
0 Never	1 Rarely	2 Every once in awhile	3 Often	4 Almost always	5 Always
2. When I feel excited, I go to my partner...					
0 Never	1 Rarely	2 Every once in awhile	3 Often	4 Almost always	5 Always
3. When I feel confused or frustrated, I go to my partner...					
0 Never	1 Rarely	2 Every once in awhile	3 Often	4 Almost always	5 Always
4. When I feel relaxed, I go to my partner...					
0 Never	1 Rarely	2 Every once in awhile	3 Often	4 Almost always	5 Always
5. When I feel disappointed or discouraged, I go to my partner...					
0 Never	1 Rarely	2 Every once in awhile	3 Often	4 Almost always	5 Always
6. When I feel happy, I go to my partner...					
0 Never	1 Rarely	2 Every once in awhile	3 Often	4 Almost always	5 Always



EMOTIONAL CONNECTEDNESS (CONT.)

Unhealthy or toxic emotional connection		Inconsistent emotional connection		Healthy or mostly healthy emotional connection	
7. When I feel angry, hurt, or upset, I go to my partner...					
0 Never	1 Rarely	2 Every once in awhile	3 Often	4 Almost always	5 Always
8. When I feel fun-loving, I go to my partner...					
0 Never	1 Rarely	2 Every once in awhile	3 Often	4 Almost always	5 Always
9. When I feel sad or depressed, I go to my partner...					
0 Never	1 Rarely	2 Every once in awhile	3 Often	4 Almost always	5 Always
10. When I feel sensual, I go to my partner...					
0 Never	1 Rarely	2 Every once in awhile	3 Often	4 Almost always	5 Always

Add up your scores for 1, 3, 5, 7, and 9, then for 2, 4, 6, 8, and 10.

Total for odd numbers: _____ **Total for even numbers:** _____



EMOTIONAL CONNECTEDNESS RESULTS AND REFLECTION

DO YOU TRUST YOUR PARTNER WHEN YOU ARE FEELING DOWN OR UPSET?

- 0-10:** No. You do not regularly seek out others for comfort or connection when you feel down. You may feel unsafe or fear intimacy and closeness with others. To create healthy emotional connection, it is very important to reflect on why you don't seek out others when you are down or upset. What can you do to improve on this?
- 10-17:** Sometimes. You inconsistently seek the support of others in low moments. Reflect on why you don't feel secure seeking support when you are down. What did you discover?
- 18-25:** Yes. You feel secure to approach others when you feel sad, angry and upset. You trust that people around you can offer comfort and support. What behaviors from others make you feel safe and accepted?

DO YOU TRUST OTHERS WHEN YOU ARE FEELING HAPPY OR DOING WELL?

- 0-10:** No. You do not regularly seek out others to share happy emotions, moods, and experiences. You may feel unwelcome to share joy and peaceful moments because you fear disapproval or connection. To create healthy emotional connections, it is very important to reflect why you don't seek out others to share happy emotions and feelings. What are those reasons? Write them down.
- 10-17:** Sometimes. You inconsistently seek support from others in positive moments. This may be due to the fact that you have received unpredictable responses when you have reached out. Reflect on what has impacted you reaching out and sharing your positive emotions with others.
- 18-25:** Yes. You feel secure sharing when you are happy, excited and relaxed. You trust others to share and validate your positive mood and experiences. When have you felt welcome and secure to share your feelings? What were the circumstances?

BREAKOUT EXERCISE: WEEKLY EMOTIONAL CHECK-IN



It is easy to avoid emotional vulnerability. We can tend to stay superficial to self-protect. Weekly check-ins are important to stay in check with emotional health.

Set aside 30 minutes in your schedule each week to evaluate. For your romantic relationship, take time to set aside at least 30 minutes a week to connect. No devices, kids, or distractions! Remember to make eye contact and be kind. And, don't forget to breathe!

Personal Check-In:

1. What did I handle well emotionally this week?
2. Were there any situations where my reaction surprised me?
What was the situation and which emotions did it make me feel?
3. Is there something that is frustrating me this week or that made me feel angry?
4. Think about the situations this week. What was a time where I felt validated, seen and happy? What were the circumstances?
5. What are 3 things I can do this week to give myself time to process how I am feeling? i.e. go for a walk, check out a funny movie, motorcycle ride.

Relationship Check-In:

1. **Appreciation.** What do you appreciate that your partner has done this week?
2. **New Info.** Big or small, what have you not shared with each other this week?
3. **Support.** What is on your mind that you are struggling with this week?
4. **Request for change.** Tell your partner 1 or 2 things this week that you would like to see change in how you both communicated. Why is it important to you?
5. **Wish, Hope, and Dream.** What are you looking forward to? What is a new hope or dream that you have this week for your family, relationship or yourself?

NOTES

Do Not Duplicate



RESOURCES

GET ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out our website where we've cultivated the best video, audio, and articles on communication. Head over to [strongerfamilies.com/first-responder](https://www.strongerfamilies.com/first-responder) to get started.

JOIN US ON SOCIAL

Find additional resources, stories and ideas on the Stronger Families Facebook or Instagram channels. Scan the QR code or go to www.strongerfamilies.com/social to find the latest!



ATTEND OUR FIRST RESPONDER OXYGEN RETREAT

If you're seeking to improve and strengthen your relationship, this retreat is for you and your significant other. Our retreat covers common relationship challenges, such as:



- Personality Differences
- Communication
- Conflict Resolution
- Intimacy
- Forgiveness

