

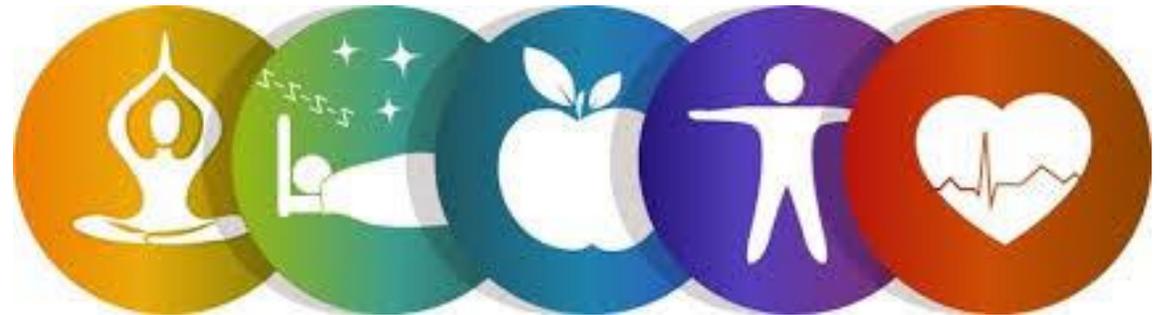
# Connecting ADHD and Wellness

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## Build a Healthy Foundation

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# Agenda



EXERCISE



NUTRITION



SLEEP



STRESS AND STRESS  
REDUCTION  
TECHNIQUES



WELLNESS PLAN



## What We Know

- ADHD is not **caused** by lack of sleep, sugar, stress or not exercising
- The symptoms of ADHD can be **improved** by building a firm foundation in these 4 key areas



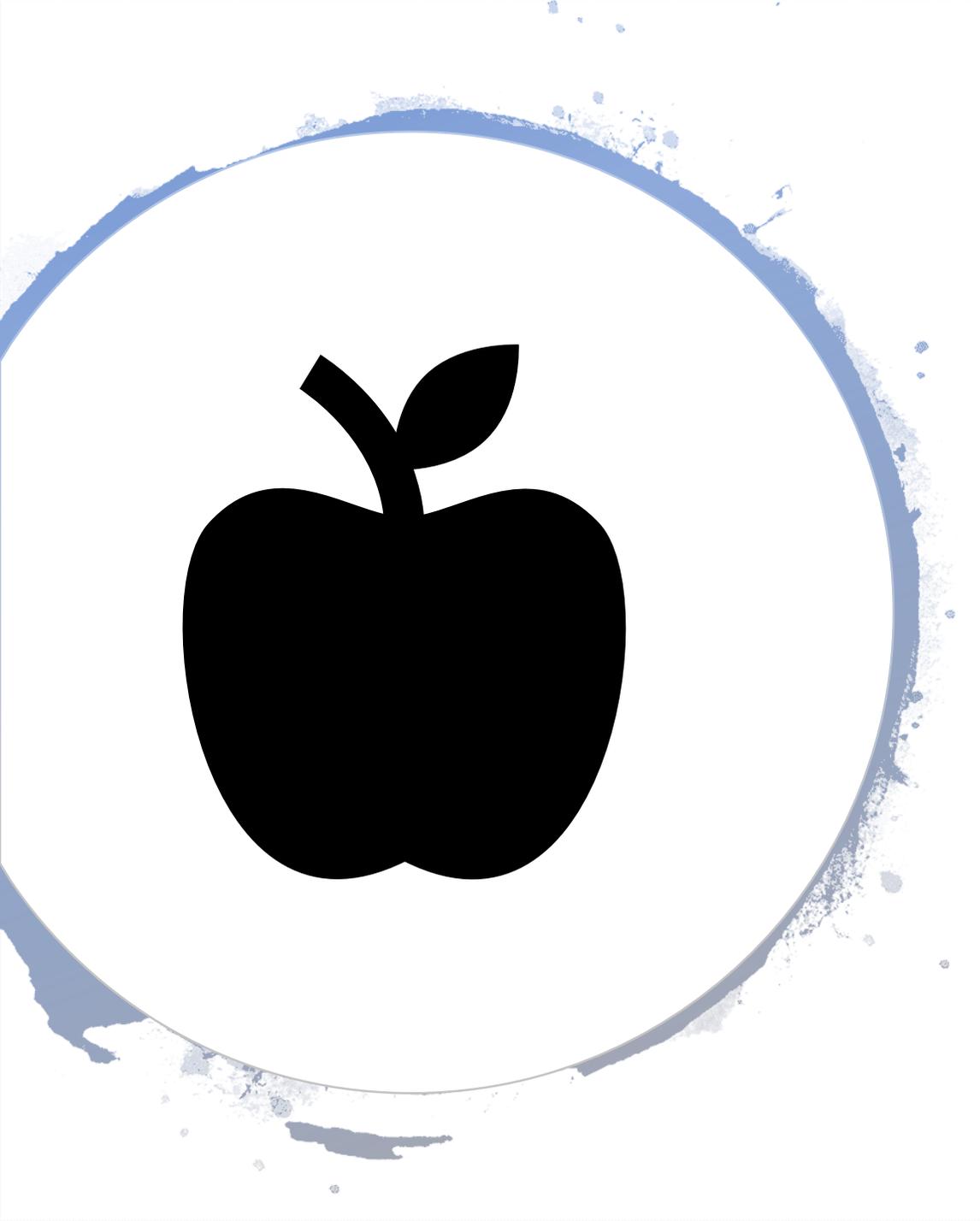
## Brain and ADHD

- ADHD brains have low levels of a neurotransmitter called norepinephrine. Norepinephrine is linked arm-in-arm with dopamine.
- Dopamine helps control the brain's reward and pleasure center.



## Medications Help with these Transmitters

- Stimulants help increase dopamine
- Strattera boosts the levels of norepinephrine
- Other “off-label” medications work on neurotransmitters
- Medications are often a necessary intervention



# Nutrition Why

**Nutrition affects the ADHD brain in three ways.**

- Brain cells
- The myelin sheath,
- Neurotransmitters — dopamine, serotonin, and norepinephrine



# How Food Impacts Neurotransmitters

- Serotonin impacts how you sleep, appetite control and mood. When it drops, we crave simple carbs, which helps it rise in short term. Better choices are complex carbs.
  - Dopamine helps increase focus and motivation. Small amount of protein throughout the day help boost dopamine and stabilize blood sugar.
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# Nutrition How

- High quality calories – not too many
- Water – brain needs hydration
- High quality, lean protein
- “Smart” Carbs – watch sugar
- Health fats – essential fatty acids, omega 3



# Nutrition How

- Set regular snack and meal times
- Medication can alter appetite. Plan meals accordingly
- Some evidence that food sensitivities cause brain fog. Consider elimination diet
- Eat from the rainbow
- Plan weekly meals
- Consider a nutritionist





## Sleep Why

- Regular, good quality sleep can lead to vast improvement in the symptoms of ADHD.
- Serotonin is responsible for sleep regulation.



# Sleep How

- Exercise
- Shut down screens
- Have a set bedtime and stick to it
- Sleep routines.
- Caffeine



Example of sleep routine -



## Exercise Why

- Exercising is one of the most effective ways to reduce the symptoms of ADHD.
- Physical activity boosts the brain's dopamine, norepinephrine, and serotonin levels—all of which affect focus and attention.

# Exercise Benefits

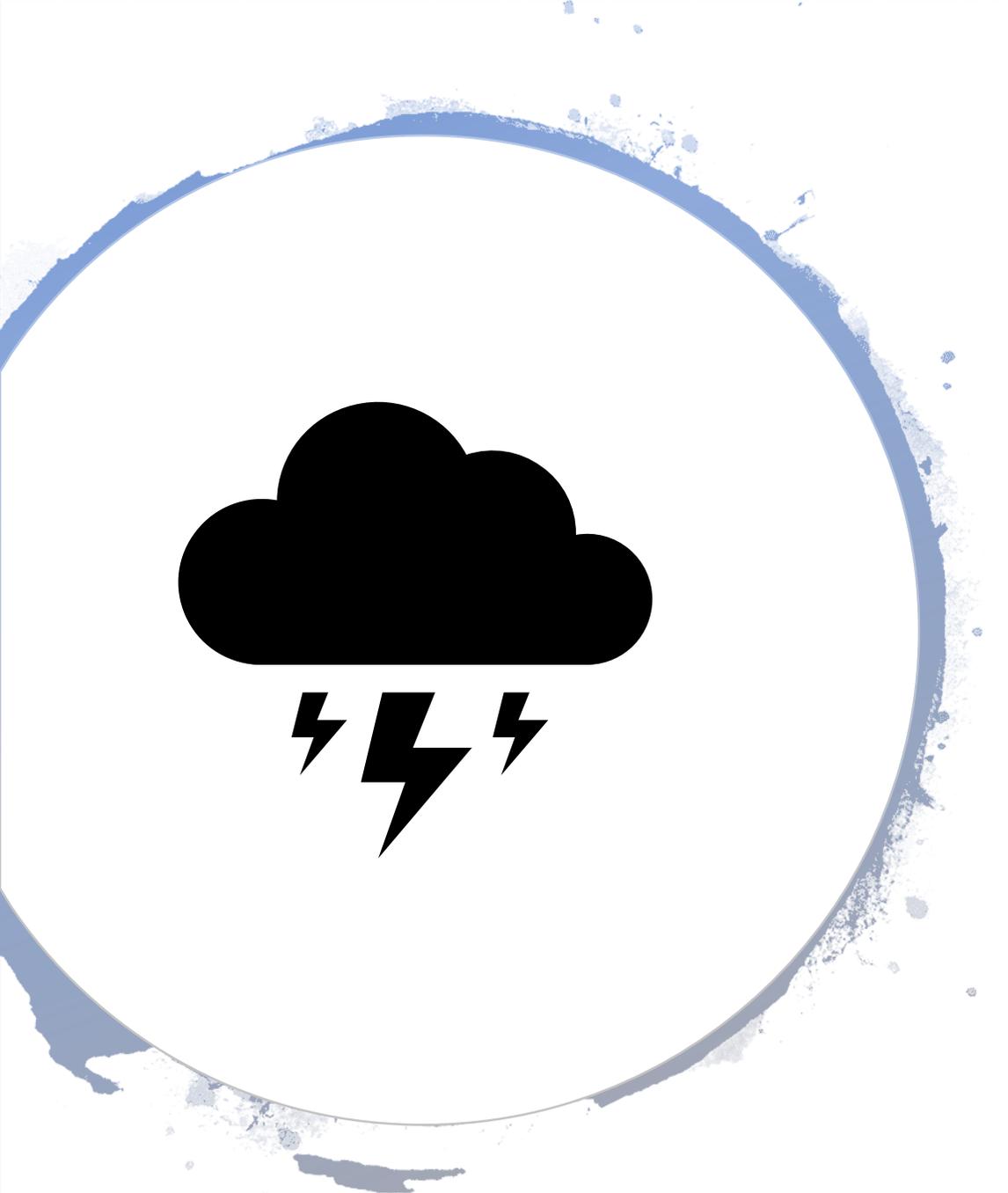


- Improves mood
- Improves concentration
- Reduces fidgeting
- Helps with coordination
- Team sports help with social
- Learning – biking
- Better, deeper sleep

# Exercise: How to Incorporate



- Try walking, skateboarding, hiking, dancing or playing a favorite sport.
- Encourage your child to put down the video games and play outside.
- Make it a family activity.
- Make it SMART

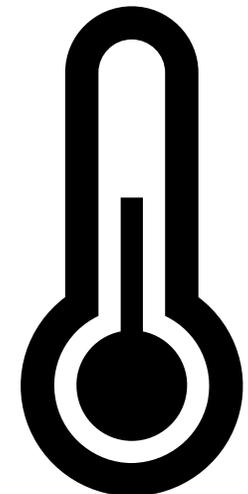


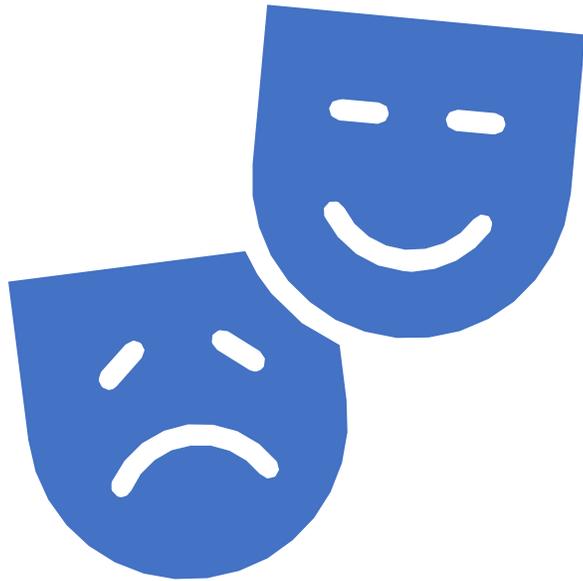
## Stress: Why

- ADHD symptoms, such as trouble focusing, short attention span, hyperactivity, and poor organizational skills, can be overwhelming.
- ADHD symptoms can lead to frustration and feelings of loss of control and hopelessness -- a sure set-up for daily stress.

# Stress –How to Manage

- Strategies for dealing with or avoiding stressful situations
- Developing more effective problem-solving skills
- Improving communication skills
- Learning to speak up for yourself and your needs (self-advocacy)





## Stress Strategies

- Mindfulness
- Breathing (Breathing Bears)
- Exercise
- Planning
- Writing
- Reframing

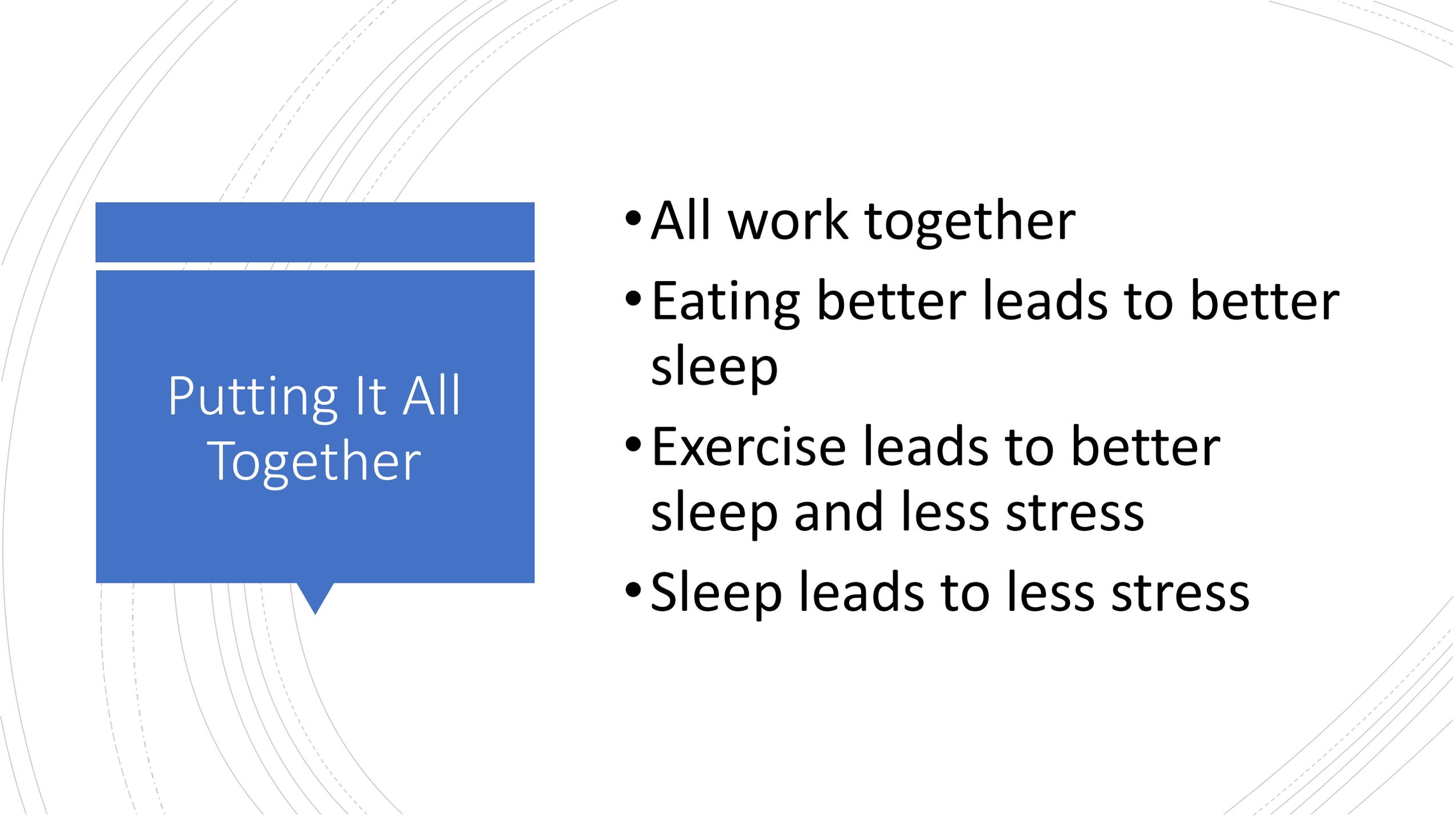
Let's practice!



Breathing techniques



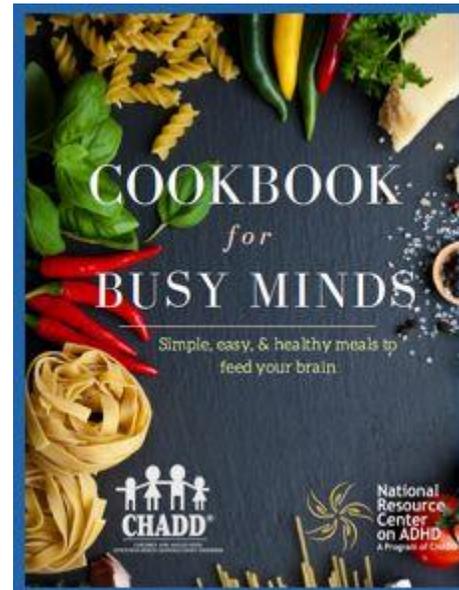
Walking meditation

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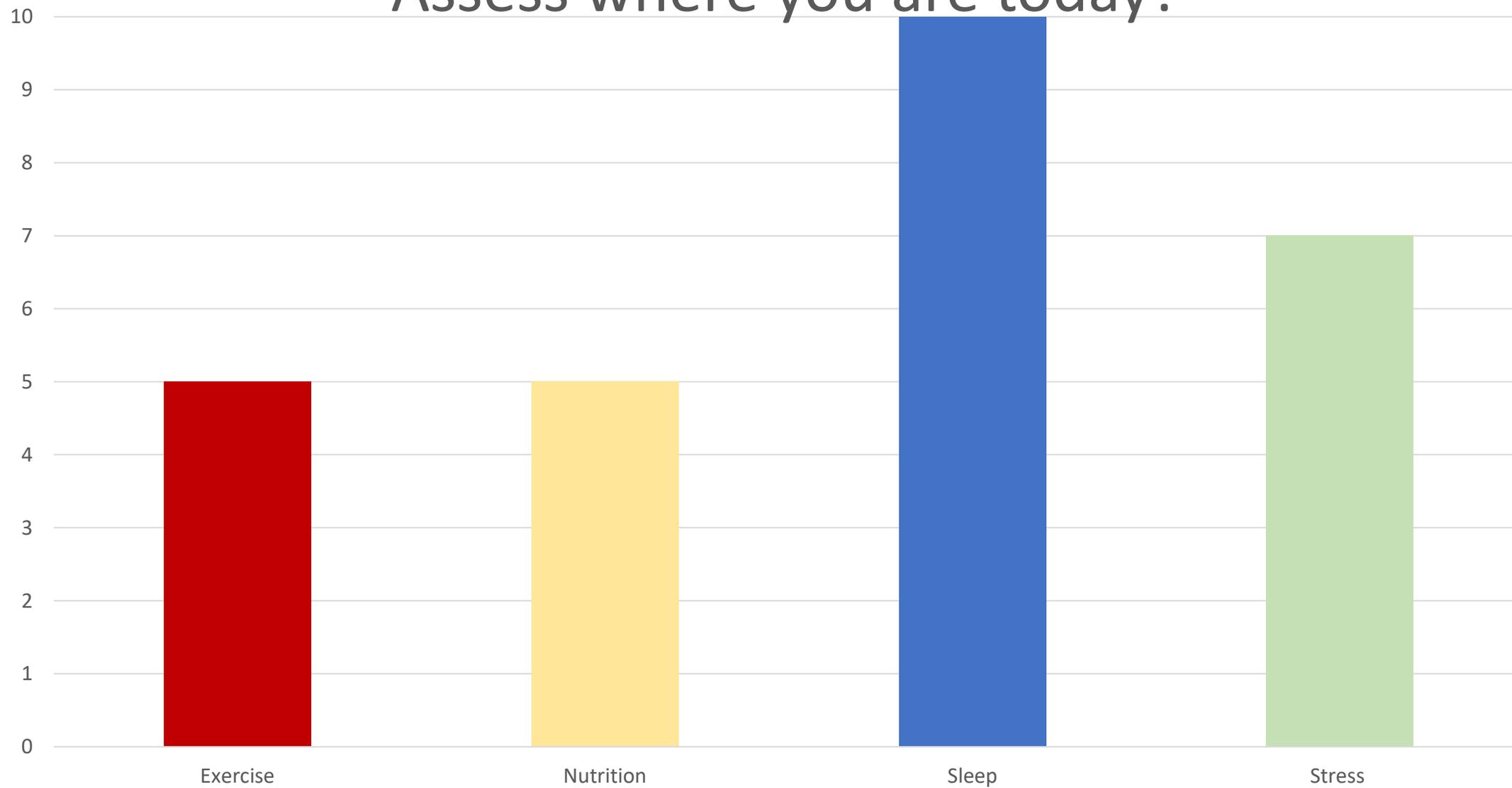
## Putting It All Together

- All work together
- Eating better leads to better sleep
- Exercise leads to better sleep and less stress
- Sleep leads to less stress

# Resources



# Assess where you are today?





# Crafting a Wellness Plan - elements

- Assess
- SMART goals
- Prioritize/define personal benefit
- Plan for obstacles
- Accountability
- Support
- Celebrate

# Wellness Plan



## Wellness Plan

### Define areas to change

What:

Why:

What are benefits:

When:

### Assess where I am now

Keep a log for a week for more data

### Roadblocks

What might be or has been an obstacle?

### Support

Who will support me?

Who will not?

### Accountability

How will I be accountable?

To whom?

### Lapses

If I lapse, then I will \_\_\_\_\_

### Celebrate progress

When I do \_\_\_\_\_, then I will \_\_\_\_\_.

GOAL – Make is specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time-oriented

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What:

When:

With who:



# Questions

- Follow up with me  
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