## Module Summary

In this module, teachers will:
- Explore how stress affects teachers.
- Identify the causes and symptoms of teacher stress.
- Explore strategies to help cope with stress.

### Module activities:
The teacher will practice coping strategies to address stress and observe interviews with educators affected by stress.

## Module Key Takeaways

### Essential knowledge:
Stress is an interaction between a person and his environment where he perceives that interaction to be overwhelming. (Montgomery & Rupp, 2005; Rajala, 1988; Roeser et al., 2013; Singer 2010).

Twenty to twenty-five percent of teachers experience high levels of stress (Kipps-Vaughn, 2013). Stressed teachers will not be as effective in the classroom and may seek a change in profession (Kipps-Vaughn, 2013). They are less likely to provide support to students, and more likely to be absent from work (Haberman, 2004; Kipps-Vaughn, 2013).

### Essential skill:
Teachers will learn how to identify stress symptoms they are experiencing and possible causes of that stress. With this knowledge in hand teachers will explore targeted strategies that they can use to cope with stress. These include:
- **Relaxation strategies:** Practicing relaxation techniques, like abdominal breathing and muscle relaxation, can be especially effective for those individuals experiencing anxiety and/or having sleep trouble.
- **Exercise and nutrition:** Exercising regularly and eating a healthy diet can help lessen the effects and prevent the onset of all types of stress.
- **Positive self-talk:** Self-talk refers to the messages we give ourselves. Countering negative thoughts with positive self-talk can improve mood and decrease stress levels.

### Essential mindset:
It is important that teachers experiencing stress realize that they are not alone. Stress affects almost every teacher and they should not be ashamed of it. It is not something to ignore and view as a problem that will eventually just go away. Having some stress in one’s life is not a bad thing, as long as you use targeted coping strategies.

If the stress a teacher is experiences leads to thoughts of self-harm or suicide the teacher needs to seek medical help immediately. Serious anxiety and stress is a medical concern and cannot always be dealt with without the help of professionals.

## The Skill in Action

As a coach you may notice a teacher showing signs of stress before even he does. Read over the signs of stress in the resource and look for the presence of these in your teachers. Those teachers who have gone through the module recognize that stress comes with teaching. They are able to identify what specifically causes them stress and how it affects their body and mind. These teachers have a plan specifying what coping strategies they will try out for the foreseeable future. Practicing positive self-talk and taking time for relaxation and exercise become a regular part of these teachers’ schedule. They know they are not alone and seek to help other educators dealing with stress.
## Questions for Discussion

The following is a list of suggested questions for engaging in a reflective dialogue with the teacher, either before or after he or she attempts to implement the skill.

- What are your key takeaways from the module?
- How will the knowledge and skills from this module directly benefit you and your students?
- What has been causing you stress?
- How has stress been affecting you?
- What struggles or challenges do you think you may encounter attempting these strategies?
- What strategies do you plan on trying over the next few weeks?
- Do you believe you can cope with your stress?
- How can I support you?

## Coaching Moves

**Situation:** A teacher comes to you after attempting some of the strategies from the module feeling just as stressed and also depressed.

**Ask:**
- Which strategies did you try and for how long?
- What do you think is the cause for your stress?
- Are you having any thoughts of harming yourself?

**Suggest:**
- Take a personal day.
- Contact a therapist or psychologist.
- In case of suicidal thoughts seek help immediately. Contact a suicide hotline like the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255.