

# Lesson 3

## Where Does Pain Live in Your Body? Confronting Stress and Trauma

### How to Survive Workplace Stress

Ligaya Franklin  
Jehan Senai Worthy

#### OVERVIEW

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*“Where does your professional problem live in your body” was a question asked of a fellow alumni in Jam #5. This led to a discussion on when your body tells you are at capacity. This question was so impactful that it was further discussed in Convocations #1 of Future Callings.*

*This lesson was designed to help students think about where they hold pain their body when they are stressed as a student and later when they are in their future profession. Its goal is to help students understand when they are at capacity, that it is normal to feel discomfort when you are at capacity, and what to do when you are at capacity. It is important to note that there are many indicators that let us know we are at capacity before pain sits in the body. You may wish to develop ways to get students to determine when they are at capacity that are not related to physical pain. You may also wish to include a list of mental health resources available to students on your campus, or maybe even include a video presentation from one of your campus’s trainings.*

#### MATERIALS

1. [The Jam #5: “Public Health as a Vocation” video](#)
2. [Convocations #1 video](#)

## ACTIVITIES

### INITIAL BODY SCAN (3-5 MINUTES)

*(From UC Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center) The body scan can be performed while lying down, sitting, or in other postures. The steps below are a guided meditation designed to be done while sitting.*

1. Begin by bringing your attention to your environment, slowly looking around and noticing that you are safe in this moment.
2. Bring your attention into your body.
3. You can close your eyes if that's comfortable for you or maintain a soft gaze, with your eyes partially closed but not focusing on anything in particular.
4. You can notice your body seated wherever you're seated, feeling the support of the chair or the floor beneath you.
5. Take a few deep, long breaths, within the range of what is comfortable for you.
6. And as you take a deep breath, bring in more oxygen, enlivening the body. And as you exhale, you might experience a sense of relaxing more deeply.
7. You can notice your feet on the floor, notice the sensations of your feet touching the floor. The weight and pressure, vibration, heat.
8. You can notice your legs against the chair, pressure, pulsing, heaviness, lightness.
9. Notice your back against the chair, supporting you. If you are not able to notice sensations in all areas of the body, that is okay. We are more connected to certain areas of the body than others at different times of the day.
10. Bring your attention into your stomach area. If your stomach is tense or tight, can you allow it to soften? Take a breath.
11. Notice your hands. Are your hands tense or tight? See if you can allow them to soften.
12. Notice your arms. Feel any sensation in your arms. Do your best to allow your shoulders to be soft.
13. Notice your neck and throat. Try to allow them to be soft. See if you can invite a sense of relaxation in.
14. Try to soften your jaw. Do your best to allow your face and facial muscles to be soft.
15. Then notice your whole body present. Take one more breath.
16. Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Take a breath. Slowly open up the eyes without focusing on anything in particular. Allow the head and neck to gently rotate, taking in the space you are in. When you feel ready, you can return to your normal gaze.

### JOURNAL ENTRY (3-5 MINUTES)

Where does pain rest in your body? While going through the meditation, did you notice any pain or discomfort in your body? Tension? If not in those moments, take a few deep breaths in and determine whether you feel any pain or tension in your body now. Where do you carry stress?

WATCH: [THE JAM #5: "PUBLIC HEALTH AS A VOCATION" \(34:39-39:55\)](#)

#### JOURNAL ENTRY

What stood out to you the most in Sarah's and Maya's responses to the question, "Where does pain sit in your body?"

WATCH: [CONVOCATIONS #1 \(7:00-9:30\)](#)

#### READINGS

*Students should choose at least two readings from the list below.*

1. Self-Care for College Students: ["Oops, I Did It Again: Activist Burnout and a Beginner's Guide to Activist Self Care" by Spencer Spotts](#)
2. Strategies for Sustainable Work-Life Balance: ["Tending Ourselves: Self-Care Strategies for Sustainable Work-Life Balance" by Bevin Clare and Camille Freeman](#)
3. Self-Care Resources When Dealing with Workplace Racism: ["Anti-Racism Resources: Resources for Self-Care and Black Healing" from Harvard University](#)
4. Understanding and Coping with Racial Trauma in the Workplace: ["Understanding Racial Trauma and Restorative Healing/Self-Care Strategies" from Hawkeye Community College](#)
5. Self-Care Resources and Tips for Black Women: ["35 Self-Care Tips" from the Dear Black Women Project](#)
6. Self-Care for Black Folks: ["Reimagining Self-Care for Black Folks" from the Mental Health Alliance](#)
7. COVID-19 & Trauma: ["Surviving the Trauma of COVID-19" by Roxane Cohen Silver](#)

#### FOCUSED FREE-WRITE

*Ask students to respond to the readings by answering the following questions:*

1. The readings offer strategies to cope when your capacity is exceeded and also how to build sustainable tools. What are some tactics you utilize in efforts to stay grounded?
2. How can connecting with your community help you to cope?

#### CLOSING BODY SCAN (3-5 MINUTES)

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2. Bring your attention into your body.
3. You can close your eyes if that's comfortable for you or maintain a soft gaze, with your eyes partially closed but not focusing on anything in particular.
4. You can notice your body seated wherever you're seated, feeling the support of the chair or the floor beneath you.

5. Take a few deep, long breaths, within the range of what is comfortable for you.
6. And as you take a deep breath, bring in more oxygen, enlivening the body. And as you exhale, you might experience a sense of relaxing more deeply.
7. You can notice your feet on the floor, notice the sensations of your feet touching the floor. The weight and pressure, vibration, heat.
8. You can notice your legs against the chair, pressure, pulsing, heaviness, lightness.
9. Notice your back against the chair, supporting you. If you are not able to notice sensations in all areas of the body, that is okay. We are more connected to certain areas of the body than others at different times of the day.
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13. Notice your neck and throat. Try to allow them to be soft. See if you can invite a sense of relaxation in.
14. Try to soften your jaw. Do your best to allow your face and facial muscles to be soft.
15. Then notice your whole body present. Take one more breath.
16. Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Take a breath. Slowly open up the eyes without focusing on anything in particular. Allow the head and neck to gently rotate, taking in the space you are in. When you feel ready, you can return to your normal gaze.