



## **Are you looking for a reliable measure and intervention for stress and well-being of your students and staff?**

Self-Questionnaires can be useful, but they are limited in their reliability and are heavily prone to bias. What else can we use to measure and alleviate stress?

Using heart-rate variability (HRV) can provide important insights into the emotional and physical well-being of students and staff in schools and districts. By monitoring HRV, schools and districts can identify individuals who may be at risk for emotional or behavioral issues, and provide targeted support to help them manage stress and build resilience.

Heart-rate variability (HRV) is a measure of the variation in time between consecutive heartbeats. It is an indicator of the body's ability to adapt to stress and can be used as a measure of stress and resilience. In recent years, HRV has been used in social-emotional learning (SEL) initiatives in schools and districts to help students develop emotional regulation and stress management skills.

Heart-rate variability (HRV) is considered as one of the best ways to measure the efficacy of social-emotional interventions (1), to measure the stress levels of students and staff (2), and as an intervention for emotional regulation (3). This is because HRV is a non-invasive measure of the body's ability to adapt to stress and is considered a reliable indicator of stress and resilience (4). By monitoring HRV, schools and districts can identify individuals who may be at risk for emotional or behavioral issues (5), and provide targeted support to help them manage stress and build resilience. Additionally, HRV can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of SEL programs (6), identify students who may need additional support with emotional regulation (7), and train students to monitor their own HRV and develop strategies for managing stress (8).

### **What is heart-rate variability (HRV)?**

HRV is a measure of the variation in time between consecutive heartbeats. It is an indicator of the body's ability to adapt to stress and can be used as a measure of stress and resilience.

### **How is HRV measured?**

HRV can be measured using a heart rate monitor or an electrocardiogram (ECG). It can also be measured through the use of mobile apps that use the camera on a smartphone or tablet to track heart rate.

### **How is HRV related to stress and resilience?**

HRV is an indicator of the body's ability to adapt to stress. When HRV is high, it indicates that the body is able to respond effectively to stress. When HRV is low, it indicates that the body is struggling to cope with stress.

### **How is HRV used in social-emotional learning (SEL) initiatives in schools and districts?**

HRV is used in SEL initiatives in schools and districts to help students develop emotional regulation and stress management skills. By monitoring HRV, students can learn to recognize the signs of stress in their bodies and develop strategies for managing stress.

## What are some ways that schools and districts can use HRV to support SEL initiatives?

- Use HRV to monitor student stress levels and adjust SEL programs accordingly
- Use HRV to evaluate the effectiveness of SEL programs
- Use HRV to identify students who may need additional support with emotional regulation and stress management
- Train students to monitor their own HRV and develop strategies for managing stress

### Takeaway:

HRV is a valuable tool for understanding and managing stress in students. By using HRV in SEL initiatives, schools and districts can help students develop the skills they need to manage stress and build resilience. This handout will provide some tips and tricks on how to use HRV in an educational context.

## What about Staff retention and wellbeing?

55% of educators are reporting burnout symptoms according to a recent NEA study. Here are some tips about how to use HRV to support student and staff wellbeing in an educational context:

1. **Incorporate HRV measurement into daily routines:** One way to use HRV in an educational setting is to incorporate HRV measurement into daily routines, such as morning check-ins or before and after class assessments. This can help students and staff become more aware of their stress levels and develop strategies for managing stress.
2. **Use HRV to inform SEL curriculum:** Schools and districts can use HRV data to inform SEL curriculum and activities, such as mindfulness and relaxation exercises, to support student and staff wellbeing.

3. **Use HRV data to identify at-risk students:** HRV data can be used to identify students who may be at risk for emotional or behavioral issues, such as high levels of stress. This information can be used to provide targeted support for students who may need additional help with emotional regulation and stress management.
4. **Provide professional development for staff:** In order for HRV to be used effectively in an educational setting, staff need to be trained on how to use the technology, how to interpret the data, and how to use the data to support student wellbeing.
5. **Create a positive culture of monitoring HRV:** Creating a positive culture around monitoring HRV can help to reduce the stigma around stress and mental health. Encourage students and staff to view HRV as a tool for self-awareness and personal growth, rather than as a tool for punishment or judgment.
6. **Use HRV data in conjunction with other data:** HRV data should be used in conjunction with other data, such as student performance data, teacher feedback, and student self-report data, to get a comprehensive understanding of student and staff wellbeing.

Please note that using heart-rate variability (HRV) as a measure of stress and resilience involves collecting biometric data and as such might require parental consent. It is also important to ensure that any data collection and use complies with all applicable laws and regulations, including those related to student privacy.

In addition, it is important to remember that HRV is just one measure of stress and resilience, and it should not be used as the sole determining factor in decisions related to student and staff wellbeing. It should be used in conjunction with other measures and professional judgment.

## About School Wellbeing Solutions

School Wellbeing Solutions is an educational consulting company that specializes in providing climate analysis, research-based resilience training, and organizational psychology services to help schools and districts increase retention and wellbeing of high-performing teachers and staff.

If you are interested in launching a HRV initiative in your school or district or in improving retention and wellbeing of staff through other means, please contact us at [info@schoolwellbeingsolutions.com](mailto:info@schoolwellbeingsolutions.com) or submit an inquiry form on our website at [schoolwellbeingsolutions.com](http://schoolwellbeingsolutions.com).

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