



## SCREENING GUIDE

Available on HBO NOW / HBO GO / HBO ON-DEMAND

For more information, go to  
[www.hbo.com/documentaries/one-nation-under-stress](http://www.hbo.com/documentaries/one-nation-under-stress)

Invite your friends, family and colleagues to watch the film together, and then have a post-screening discussion.

### WHAT'S THE FILM ABOUT?

Despite spending more on healthcare than any other country, Americans' life expectancy is decreasing. In **ONE NATION UNDER STRESS**, neurosurgeon and investigative journalist Dr. Sanjay Gupta sets out to discover what is happening and why. His starting point is trying to understand the spike in so-called "deaths of despair" – opioid overdose, alcohol-related liver cirrhosis and suicide – primarily among middle-age, white working-class people.

### HOW DO YOU HOST A SCREENING?

Invite your group to a gathering spot - anywhere from your living room to a more formal space - to watch the film together.

Here are some tips for hosting a screening:

**1. Bring your group together.** Send out invitations and collect RSVPs. Here's a sample of what your invitation can say:

<HOST NAME> cordially invites you and a guest to a screening and discussion of

#### **ONE NATION UNDER STRESS**

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expectancy is decreasing. In ONE NATION UNDER STRESS, neurosurgeon and investigative journalist Dr. Sanjay Gupta sets out to discover what is happening and why. His starting point is trying to understand the spike in so-called “deaths of despair” – opioid overdose, alcohol-related liver cirrhosis and suicide – primarily among middle-age, white working-class people.

<TIME> WELCOME

<TIME> SCREENING (length <<>>h <<>>m)

Please RSVP to <EMAIL address> by <DATE>.

Create a Facebook event as well. Then, promote your screening to potential guests. Tag your tweets with [#OneNationUnderStress](#) and [@HBODocs](#). Share the poster (see the end of the guide). Send the link to the trailer too, available at <https://itsh.bo/2FrPgg3>

**2. Introduce the film.** Ask your group. ‘According to the CDC, life expectancy has decreased three years in a row in the US since 2015. Why do you think that is?’ Give everyone a chance to write or at least consider his/her responses before the film.

**3. Watch the film.** Resources are available at [www.hbo.com/documentaries/one-nation-under-stress](http://www.hbo.com/documentaries/one-nation-under-stress)

**4. Talk about what you saw.** What have they learned? Have their perceptions changed?

**5.** Invite guests to go to review the resources below. Also, urge people to tell their personal networks about the film, and the issues it raises.

**6. Thank your guests.** Send a thank you email the next day, and include some follow up comments on the discussion. You can include links to some of the groups listed below.

## How do I get the discussion going?

After the credits end, turn up the lights and kick off the conversation. Below are some discussion prompts to start you off. A good place to start is by asking your guests if they were surprised by what they saw.

### How is stress related to ‘deaths of despair’?

In the film, Dr. Gupta travels across the country, interviewing experts in a wide range of fields, who share their insights on why we’re experiencing so much stress, how it affects the brain, body and behavior, and the long-term consequences for the health of the nation. He also speaks candidly with Americans struggling with their own stress-related ailments and those who have lost loved ones to deaths of despair, particularly in communities facing economic and social instability.

“What we are looking at is an increasingly stressed society,” says forensic pathologist Dr. Cyril Wecht, who points to stressors like depersonalization, economic uncertainty and unstable family units, all of which can be deadly when coupled with self-medication or over-medication of prescription drugs. Gupta notes, “Ultimately, these premature deaths are all a reflection of the stress, the pain that comes with that stress, and the desire to, in some ways, medicate it away, even to the point it could be dangerous and it could end your life.”

## Can stress change your brain?

The prefrontal cortex of the brain plays a key role in helping such higher order cognitive abilities as impulse control. According to Dr. Amy Arnsten at Yale University, this area of the brain is especially vulnerable to stress. "With chronic stress, the synapses where cells talk to each other atrophy.... Their connections out to other cells wither away and that part of the brain loses its function." "At the same time, stress actually strengthens these primitive circuits that actually make us very emotional and very much strengthen habits like cravings." "When you are exposed to chronic stress, you get these changes in your brain that make it increasingly difficult to actually deal with more stress," observes Dr. Gupta.

## What is Mindfulness?

Source: "**MINDFULNESS AND YOU**" The **Yale School of Medicine - Yale Stress Center**

Mindfulness techniques can be used to help people reduce stress and improve health. It has been shown to be useful for many mental and physical health conditions, such as preventing relapse to depression, substance abuse recovery, pain management, weight loss, and smoking.

Mindfulness can be practiced in many ways. Here are some suggestions that only take a few moments:

- > Try giving yourself a reminder to take a mindful moment by placing a post it note somewhere in your house, saying, " pause and take a breath."
- > Pick an activity and try doing Just That One Thing. When you are washing the dishes, just focus on washing the dishes. When you are preparing dinner, bring your attention to each task as you are completing it. When you are taking a walk, notice the sensations of your body and footsteps as you walk.
- > Try doing a few shoulder rolls. While breathing in, bring your shoulders forward and up. As you exhale, bring your shoulders back and down.
- > Take a moment or two to pause during the day, put aside whatever you are working on or thinking about, and take in a few slow breaths. Just noticing the sensations of the air going in through your nose and exhaling out through your nose.

## Where can I learn more?

California National Primate Research Center  
[cnprc.ucdavis.edu/](http://cnprc.ucdavis.edu/)

Edge | Robert Sapolsky  
[www.edge.org/memberbio/robert\\_sapolsky](http://www.edge.org/memberbio/robert_sapolsky)

Rethinking Drinking (NIAAA)  
[Rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov](http://Rethinkingdrinking.niaaa.nih.gov)

Living Links Center  
[www.emory.edu/LIVING\\_LINKS/](http://www.emory.edu/LIVING_LINKS/)

National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)  
[www.drugabuse.gov](http://www.drugabuse.gov)

Sage's Army  
[www.sagesarmy.com/](http://www.sagesarmy.com/)

SAMHSA Treatment Navigator  
[findtreatment.samhsa.gov](http://findtreatment.samhsa.gov)

Yale Stress Center  
[medicine.yale.edu/psychiatry/stresscenter/](http://medicine.yale.edu/psychiatry/stresscenter/)

# ONE NATION UNDER STRESS

WITH SANJAY GUPTA, MD

CAN A SOCIETY GET SO STRESSED OUT  
THAT IT ACTUALLY STARTS TO BREAK?

HBO DOCUMENTARY FILMS presents a BLOWBACK PRODUCTION with SANJAY GUPTA, MD "ONE NATION UNDER STRESS" original music by GIANCARLO VULCANO  
director of photography DANIEL B. LEVIN edited by ASHWIN S. GANDHIR associate producer JULIAN A. GOLDBSTEIN co-producers JACKSON DEVEREUX ASHWIN S. GANDHIR ANTHONY PEDONE KARA ROZANSKY  
field producer JULIAN ROUTH executive producer SANJAY GUPTA, MD executive producers for HBO NANCY ABRAHAM LISA HELLER produced by DAPHNE PINKERSON MARC LEVIN directed by MARC LEVIN

PREMIERES MON MARCH 25, 9PM **HBO**