



ADMINISTRATION FOR
CHILDREN & FAMILIES
Office of Family Assistance



**Regions IX–X
TANF Technical Assistance Virtual Meetings**

NAVIGATING NEW PATHWAYS TOWARDS BUILDING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

Monday, February 22, 2021 • 11:00 a.m.–2:00 p.m. PT
Adapting Client-Centered Approaches to a Virtual Environment

Tuesday, March 9, 2021 • 10:30 a.m.–1:30 p.m. PT
Interrupting the Impact of Traumatic Stress

Wednesday, March 24, 2021 • 8:30 a.m.–11:30 p.m. PT
How to Help TANF Clients Achieve Long-Term Goals

Regions IX-X TANF Technical Assistance Virtual Meetings



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Monday, February 22, 2021 • Tuesday, March 9, 2021 • Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Interrupting the Impact of Traumatic Stress

Tuesday, March 9, 2021
10:30 a.m. – 1:30 p.m. PT



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Bizzabo

- Agenda
- Speaker Information
- Session Materials



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Zoom

- Questions through chat box
- Session polls/surveys
- Breakout rooms



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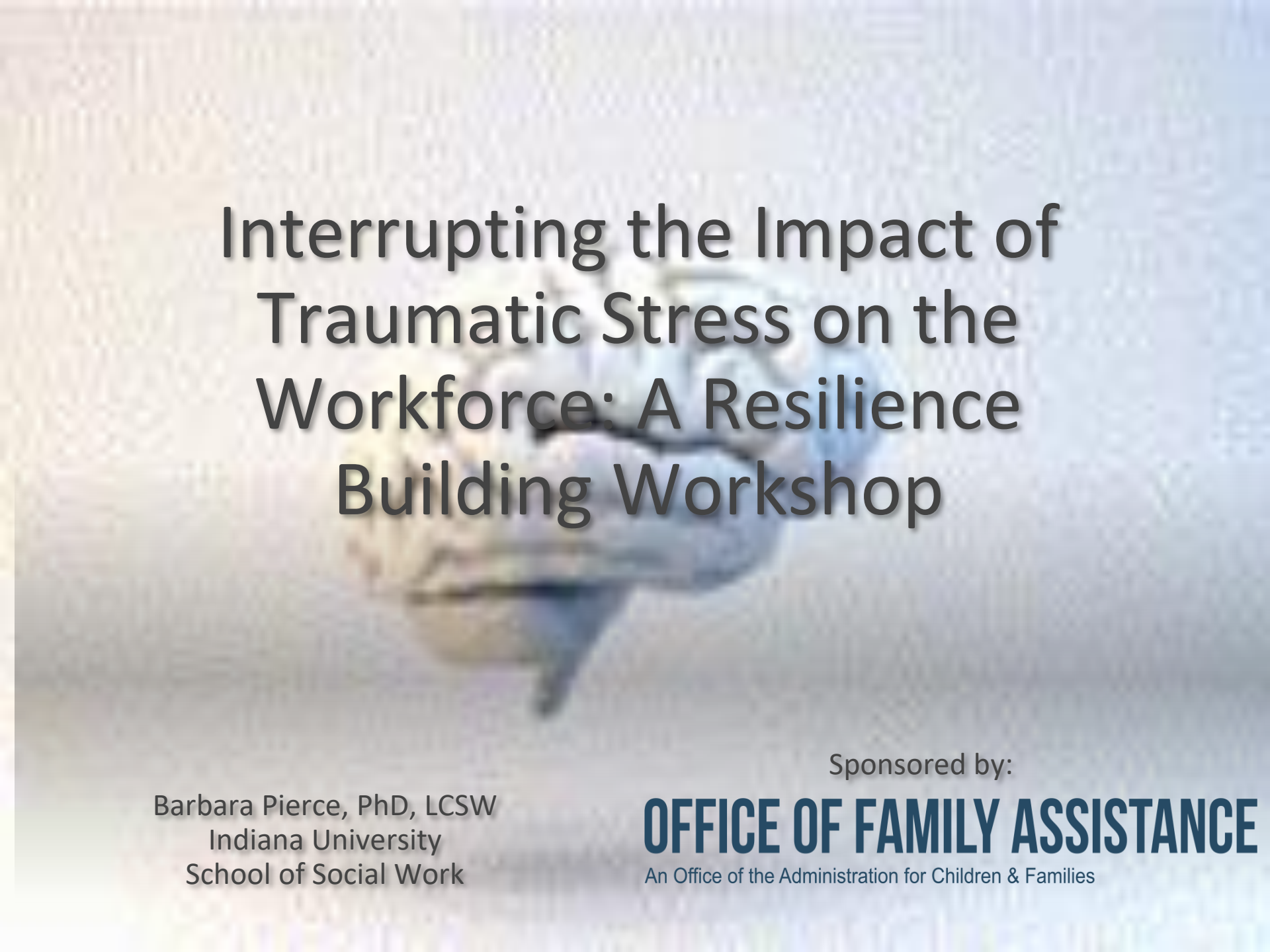
NAVIGATING NEW PATHWAYS TOWARDS BUILDING THRIVING COMMUNITIES



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Formal Welcome and Session Overview

- Julie Fong, Region IX TANF Program Manager, Office of Family Assistance
- Nicole Bossard, Ph.D., Consultant and Positivity Strategist, ICF



Interrupting the Impact of Traumatic Stress on the Workforce: A Resilience Building Workshop

Barbara Pierce, PhD, LCSW
Indiana University
School of Social Work

Sponsored by:

OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE

An Office of the Administration for Children & Families

Connecting People and Purpose



Why is it deeply meaningful or important to be in this conversation about interrupting the impact of traumatic stress on the workforce AND building resilience for...

...you, personally

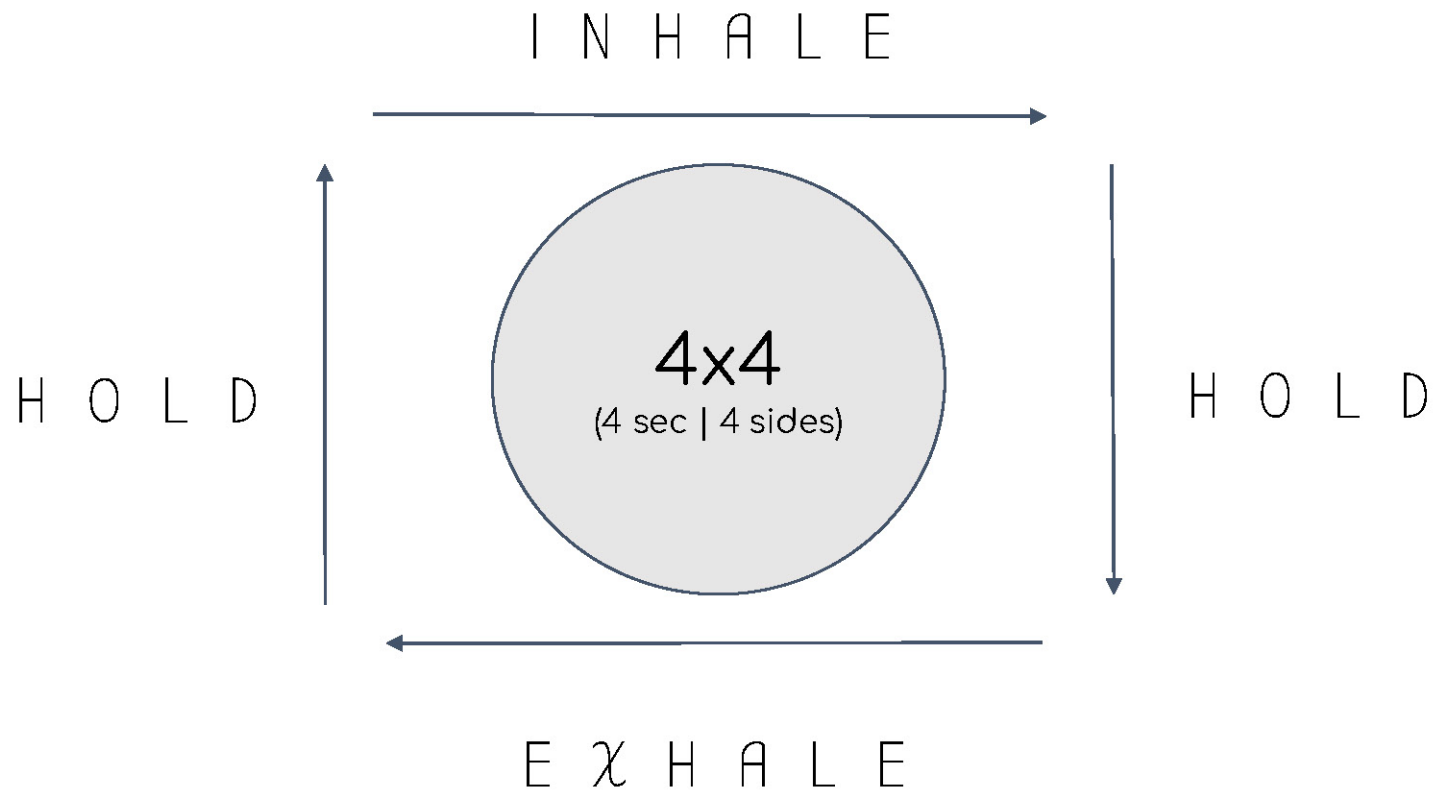
...the team you work with

...the organization you work in

...BONUS: the community and families you serve

Exercise

*Before we
begin...*





TRIGGER

Warning

Do what you need to do to
take care of yourself!



Overview

- Understanding the different types of Stress, Trauma, and ACES
- Identify the long-term effects of Stress, Trauma, and ACES
- Understand how the brain and body respond to trauma
- Understand symptoms of Secondary Traumatic Stress in individuals, teams, and organizations
- Identify strategies for building resilience and create a plan for yourself, team, and organization

Stress and Chronic Stress

When Stress Helps...

Positive stress produces the release of adrenalin at just the right moment to help us react quickly or concentrate more acutely when needed.

Ex. Situations can include

- Being cut off on the freeway, or
- Butterflies when speaking in public or test taking.

Stress and Trauma can be historic, primary, or secondary!

When Stress Hurts...

Repeated or chronic stress that piles up. Chronic stress means your body's adrenalin system doesn't return to normal, and you feel it. Any person can become the victim of chronic stress, especially now.

Ex. Symptoms can look like

Insomnia,

- Anxiety,
- Feeling keyed-up,
- Lack of concentration,
- Feeling depressed,
- Body aches, and even
- High blood pressure.



What is trauma?

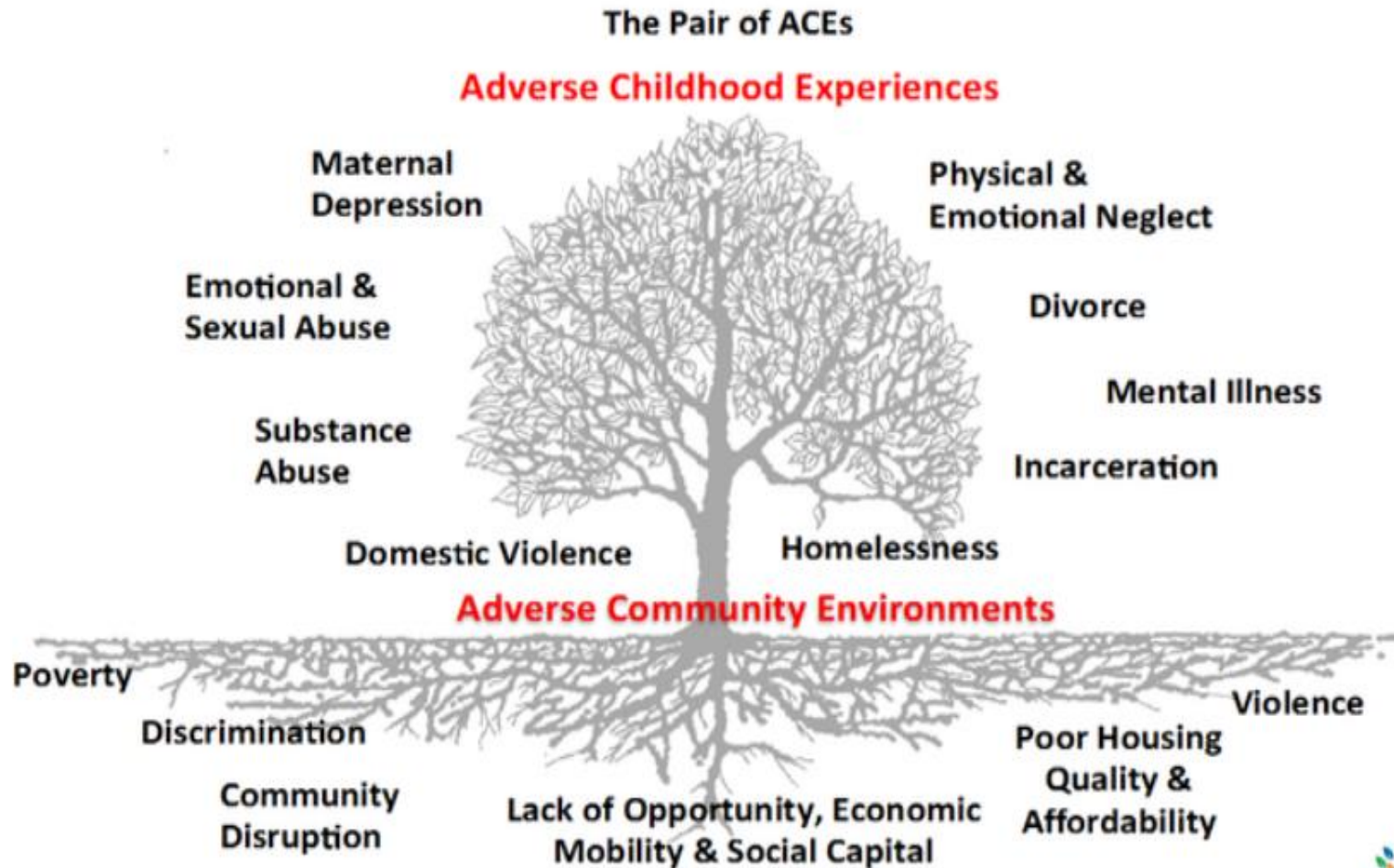
- ◆ SAMHSA (Substance Abuse Mental Health Services Administration--part of HHS) defines trauma as an event, or series of events, or **set of circumstances that is experienced by a person as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the person's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, and spiritual well-being.**
- ◆ Having an experience that causes extreme stress which **overwhelms a person's ability to cope with that stressor.** It is an individual, subjective perception and is **affected by having protective factors and resilience skills.** It can also be affected by others modeling for children the behavior of "hardy and resilient." (For example, there is some evidence that refugees experience trauma but exhibit resilience as they flee to safety.)
- ◆ **Psychological trauma** is the subjective experience of threat to life, bodily integrity, or sanity (Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995) such as **abuse, neglect, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, viewing domestic violence between parents, etc.**



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES)

- Occurring **before the age of 18**, adverse childhood experiences can be singular or multiple; simple or complex
- Adverse childhood **experiences can affect physical and emotional development of the child and also produce developmental delays**
- In the original ACEs study (Anda and Felitti, 1998), researchers just looked at everyday average people and were quite surprised at what they found: **25% had 4 or more ACEs, and over 60% of the population had at least 1**
 - Replicated all over the world with remarkable reliability and validity!

Layers of Adversity



Effects of poverty, community violence, racism

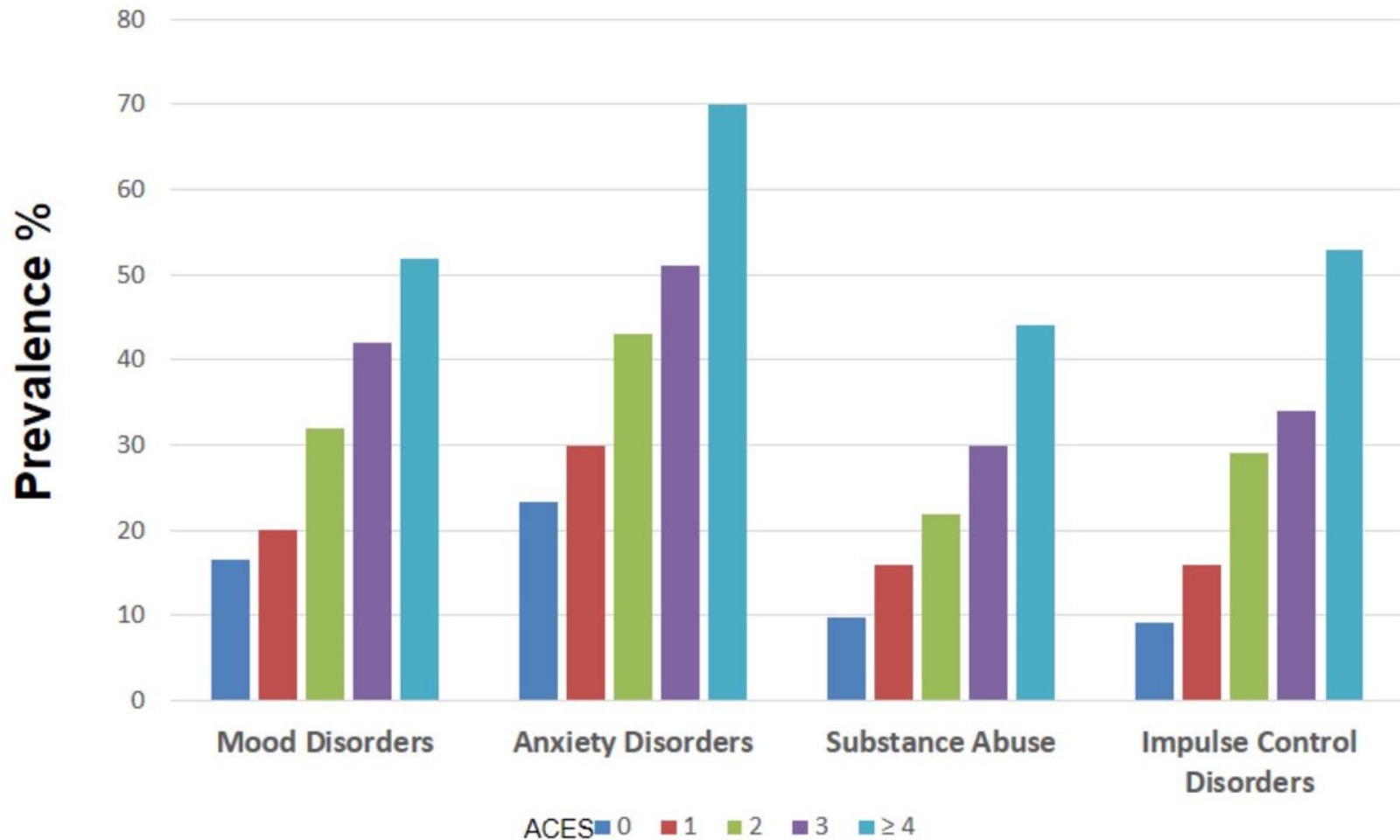
As with the **10 original ACES**, researchers are finding that the **cumulative effects of poverty, community violence, and racism have as much effect on the body as the original 10**. In some instances, adding these to the original 10 leads to way higher cortisol loads, which may be one reason why we see more cardiovascular and other disease states in African American and Native American populations in the U.S.

Long-term effects



Mental Health
Substance Use
Suicide
Physical Health

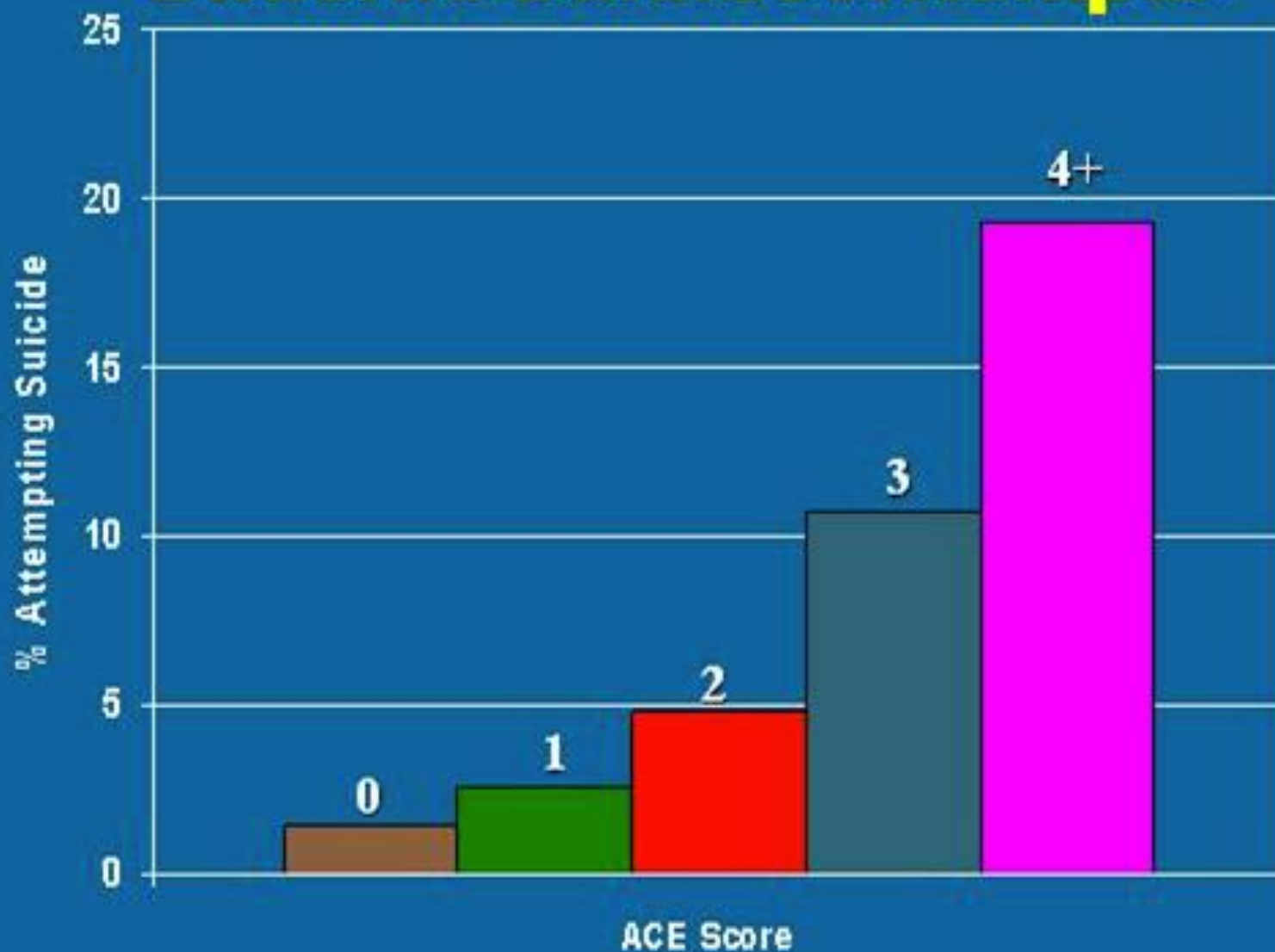
Cumulative ACES & Mental Health^{1,2}



¹Data from the National Comorbidity Survey-Replication Sample (NCS-R).

²Putnam, Harris, Putnam, J Traumatic Stress, 26:435-442, 2013.

Childhood Experiences Underlie Suicide Attempts

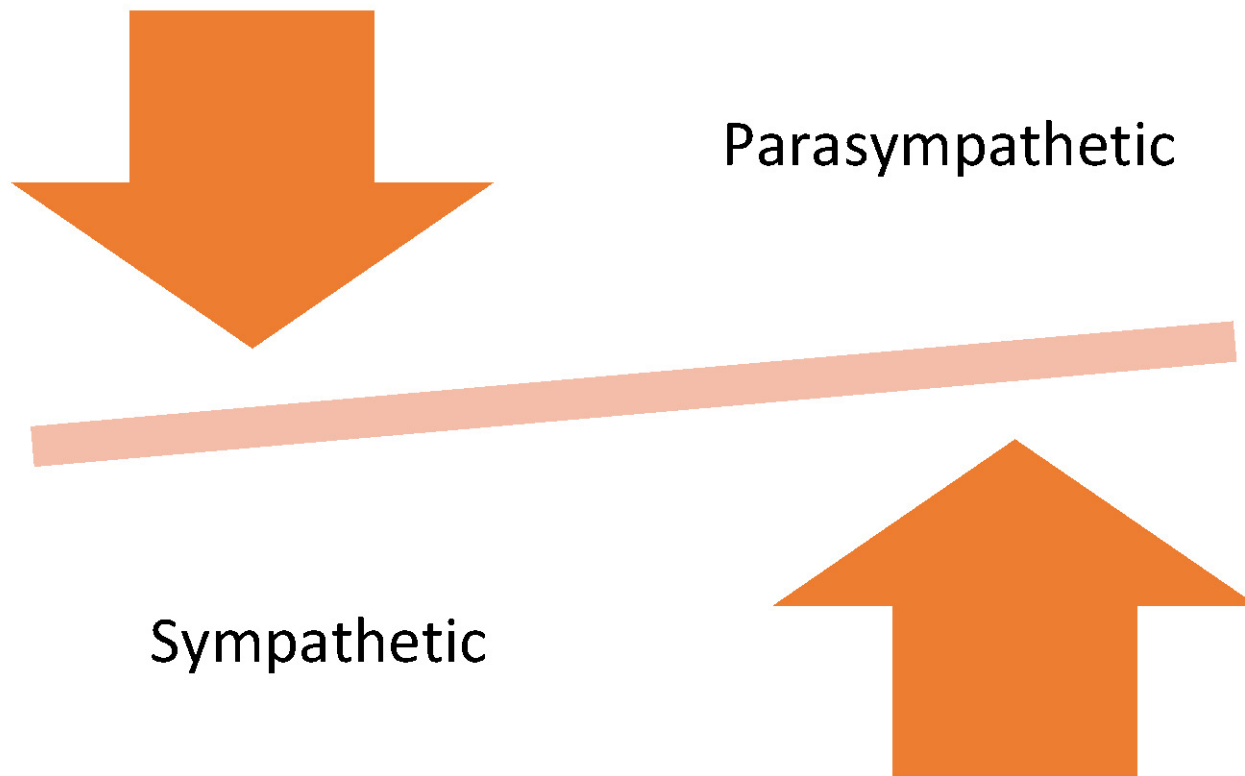


The background of the slide is a dark blue field filled with a complex network of glowing lines and dots. The lines are primarily a vibrant blue, with some segments appearing as thin, wispy trails. Interspersed along these lines and scattered throughout the background are numerous small, bright orange or yellow dots, which resemble neurons or synaptic points. The overall effect is one of dynamic, interconnected energy, suggesting the complexity of the human brain's neural pathways.

Brain Mechanisms

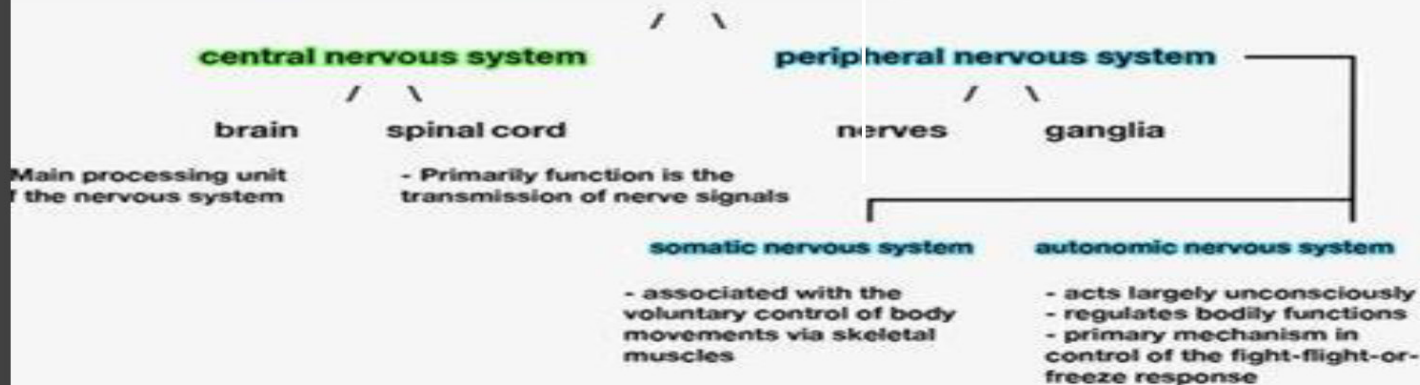
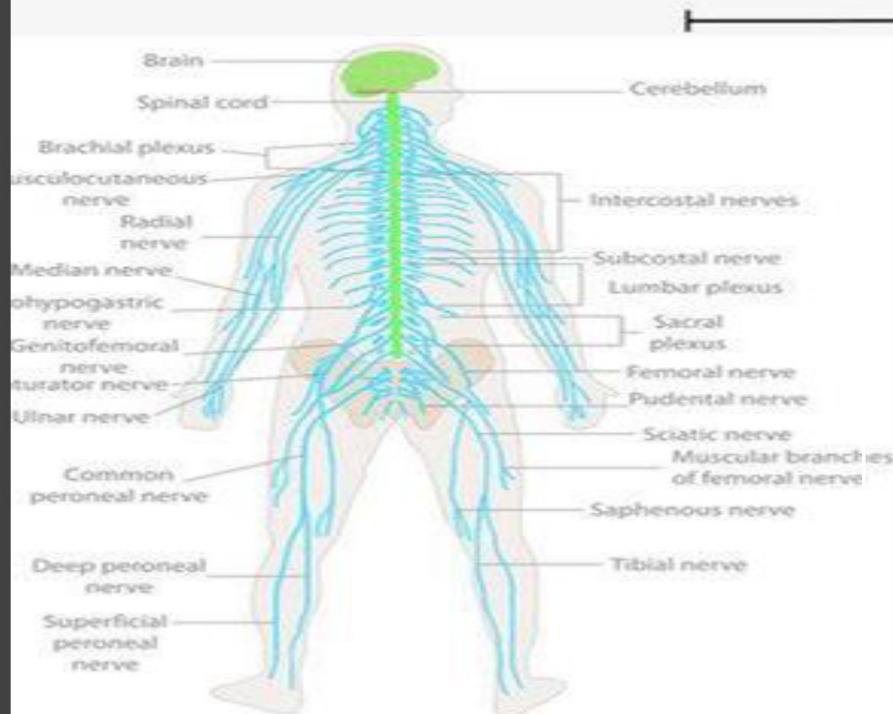
Fight, flight, or freeze and the effect of cortisol
on the body

Autonomic Nervous System is a balancing act! When the stressful event is over, and you are safe, your body calms because of the parasympathetic nervous system which can be willfully controlled!



Fight, Flight or Freeze Response

The body's automatic reaction to a perceived dangerous, threatening or traumatic event.

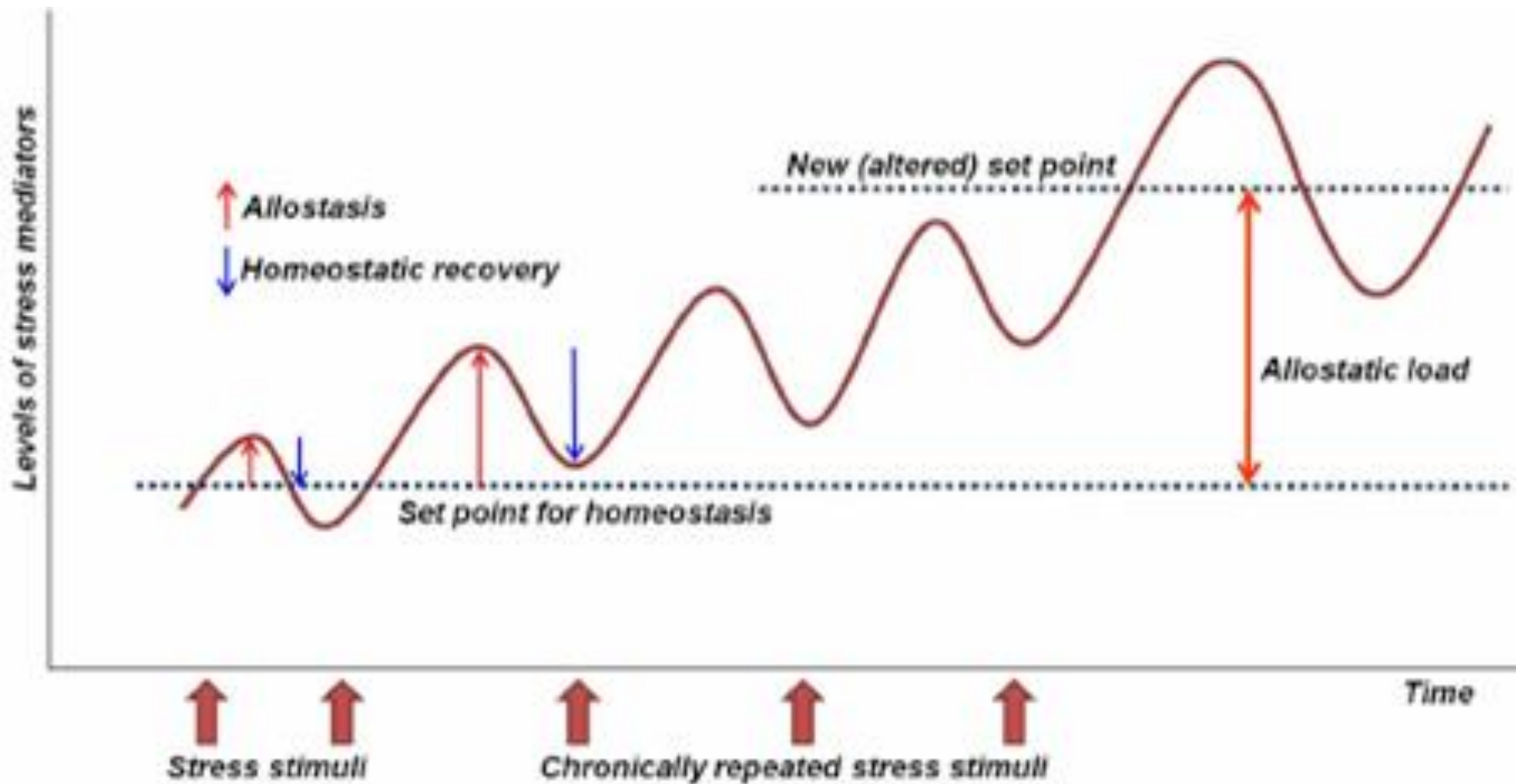


• Image source: [TheEmirr](#). This image has been adapted by PhotoandGrime and has been modified for educational purposes.

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From Stress to Relaxation: Fight, Flight, Freeze

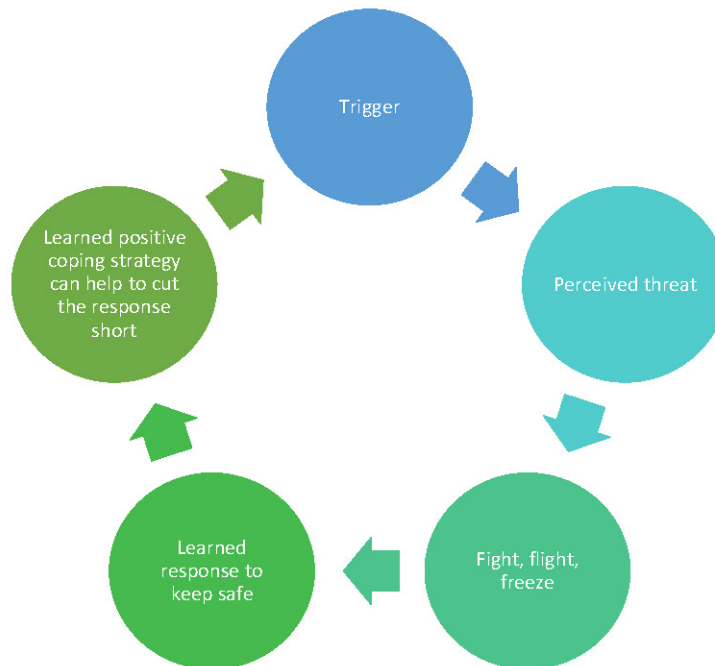




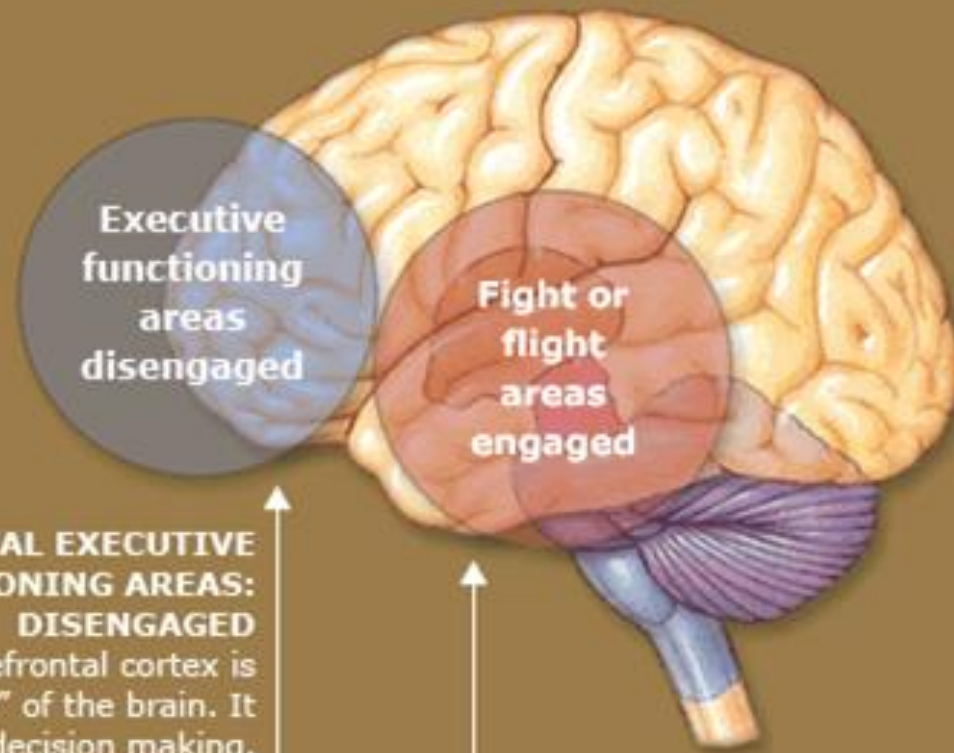
Repeated stress stimuli decrease the ability of the body to fully calm and return to set point homeostasis increasing allostatic load which increases wear and tear on the body because of increased cortisol output.

Triggering

- The split-second decision the amygdala makes in response to some external stimuli (usually a reminder of past trauma) to keep you safe....even when you may not need it!!!
 - Involves the senses (sights, smells, tastes, hearing certain words, etc.)
 - Can occur in situations where people perceive powerlessness or lack of control
 - Can happen in a split second
 - Essentially the amygdala hijacks the body because it thinks it is in danger



- Fidgeting
- Spaced-out look
- Clenched jaw or fists
- Faster breathing
- Tearing up
- Agitated speech
- Withdrawal



**FRONTAL EXECUTIVE
FUNCTIONING AREAS:
DISENGAGED**

The prefrontal cortex is the "CEO" of the brain. It regulates decision making, judgment, planning, moral reasoning, and sense of self. Stressful experiences (academic pressure, sleep deprivation, substance abuse, etc.) disengage the frontal lobes. Over time, this can lead to impulsive, short-sighted, even violent behavior; increased anxiety; depression; alcohol and drug abuse; learning disorders; and increased stress-related diseases.

**SUBCORTICAL FIGHT
OR FLIGHT AREAS:
ENGAGED**

The subcortical arousal system—thalamus, hippocampus, brainstem, and hypothalamus—mobilizes the body for action, increasing heart rate, respiratory rate, and muscle tone. The nature of this system is to bypass the frontal executive functioning and trigger the fight or flight mode.

When the amygdala is engaged, the executive functioning of the frontal lobe is less engaged, leading to poor choices

Strategies for coping with a Triggering/ Amygdala Hijack

- **Stop and breathe**
- **Name 3 things you can see, hear, smell, feel (as in tactile feeling) then use box breathing for a minute or two**
- **Use humor to neutralize the situation**
- **Reflect**
- **Remember the 6-second rule.** It takes the chemicals that are released during an amygdala hijacking about 6 seconds to dissipate. Take 6 seconds to take 6 deep breaths or focus on something funny you heard (anything that will help you focus on something else) until the initial overreaction reduces.
- **Mindfulness training.** Practices such as meditation also reduce the likelihood of an amygdala hijack

Making the Connection:

Peer Learning (Breakout #2)



Questions for Discussion

What symptoms of stress do you see in...

- ...Yourself?
- ...Team?
- ...Program or agency?
- BONUS: identify any common themes within the group responses

REVITALIZATION BREAK

15 MIN

Take a well-earned revitalization break....

- Move
- Hydrate
- Return



What is secondary traumatic stress (STS) or compassion fatigue?



- The emotional duress or stress that results from hearing about or seeing firsthand the trauma of others. Also called compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma.

Differentiate

STS

From

Burnout

- STS arises out of emotional labor which is the work that occurs within the framework of highly charged, emotional interactions with others. Emotions are involved in interacting with other and an inherent part of caring for and working with others. (Caringi, Lawson, & Devlin, 2012)
 - Positive emotional labor-satisfaction from work
 - Negative emotional labor-stress from work
 - When the work involves witnessing or bearing witness to trauma the result can be secondary trauma
- Burnout is the diminished interest in and exhaustion resulting from work over a period of time. Diminished engagement in the work results. Any worker can experience burnout.



Firefighters,
Police Officers,
EMTs

Social
Workers/Community
Workers



Medical
Personnel



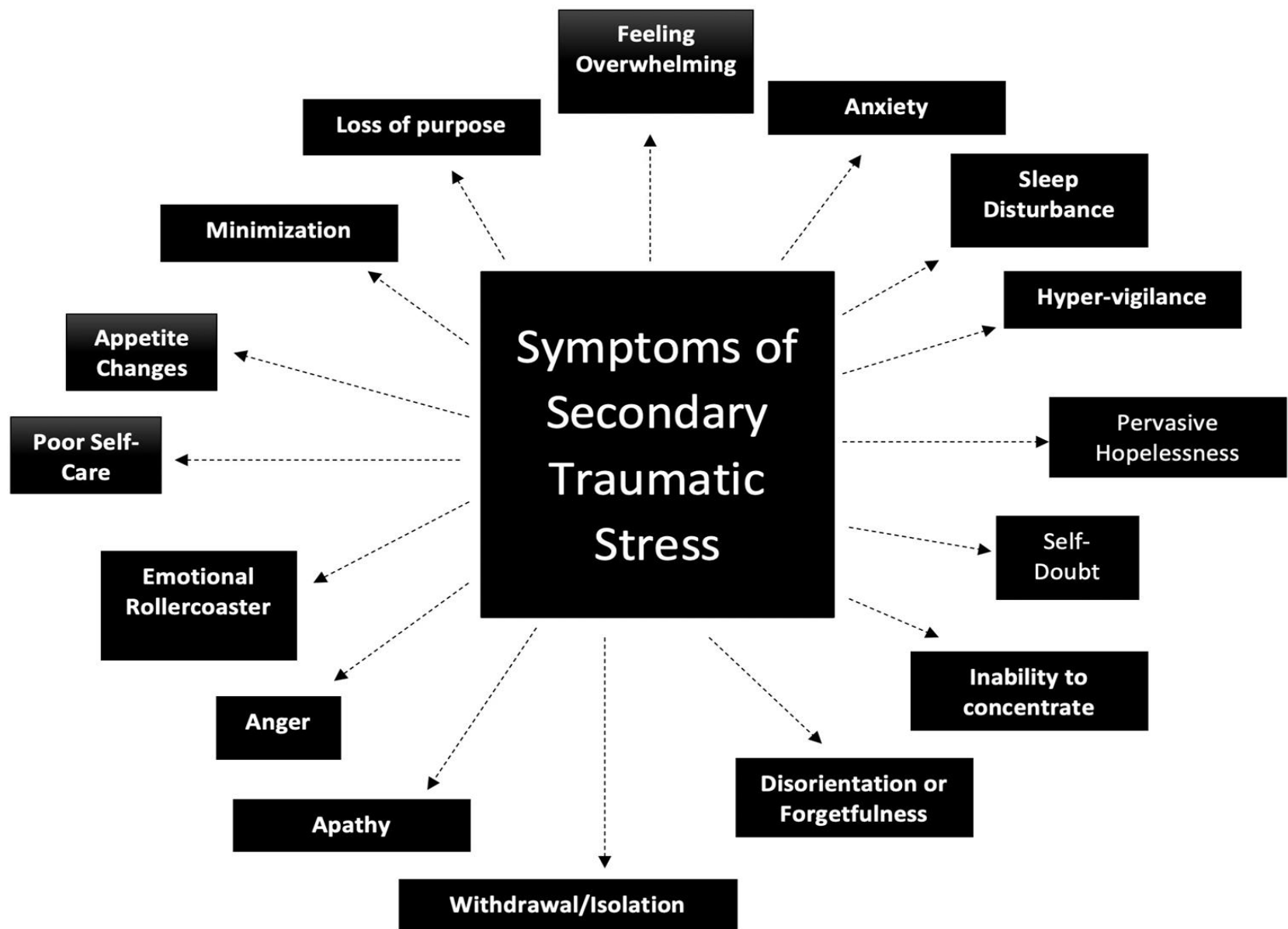
Teachers



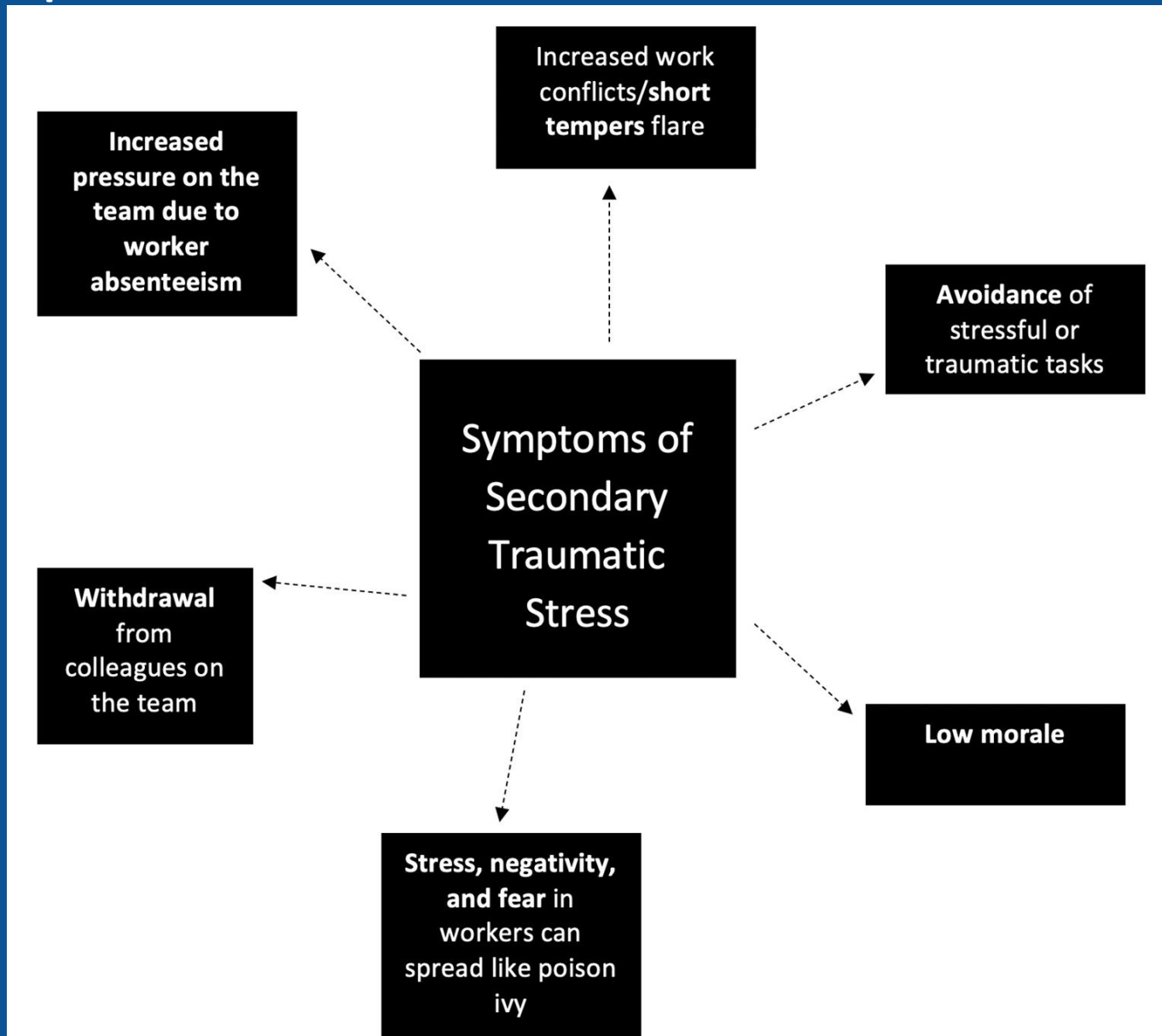
Pastors

Who gets STS?
The carers and responders!

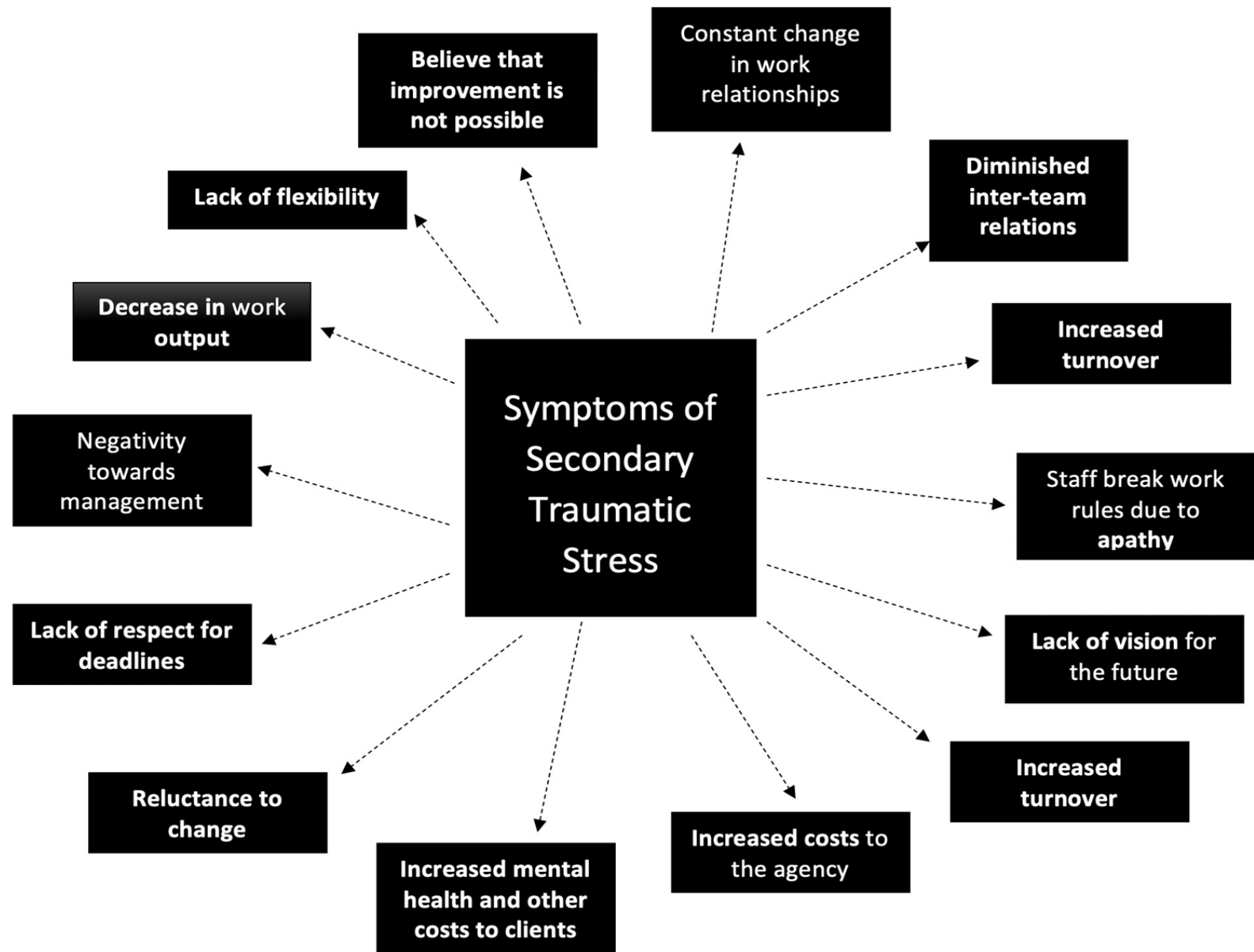
Symptoms of STS - Self



Symptoms of STS - Teams



Symptoms of STS - Organizations





Interventions: A multidimensional approach

Stress Thermometer





Resilience and Hardiness

“The dynamic ability to adapt successfully in the face of adversity, trauma, or significant threat.” (Horn and Feder, 2017)

Bouncing back

Potential to change depends on where a person is in their development and life circumstances

Horn, S. R., & Feder, A. (2017). Understanding resilience and Preventing and treating PTSD. *Harvard Review of Psychiatry*, 26, 3, 158-174.

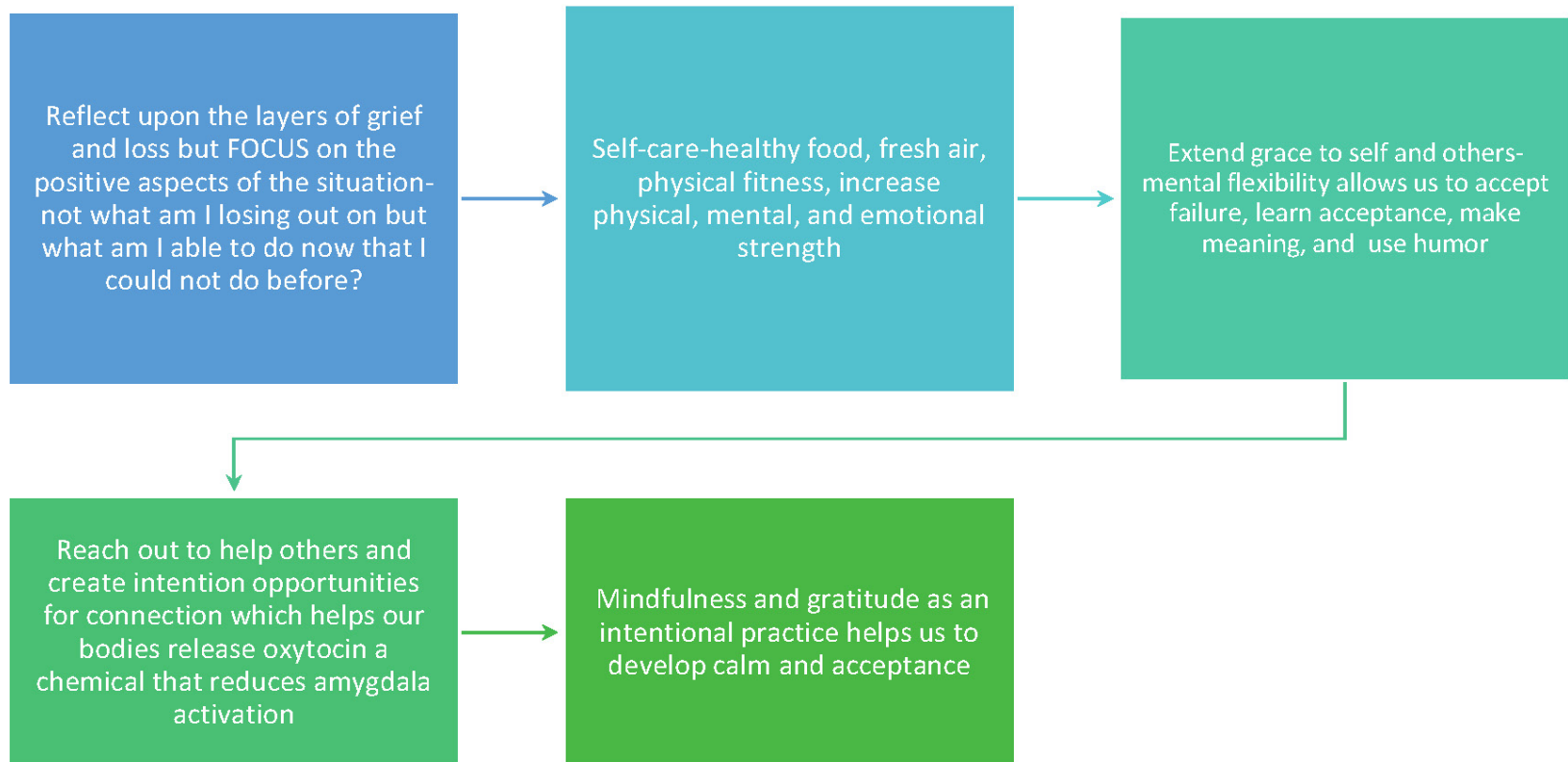
Cultivate Southwick and Charney's Essential Resilience Capabilities



Resilient people are able to:

- be optimistic and flexible
- harnesses social support
- regulate emotions/good executive function
- use cognitive reappraisal (conscious strategy to notice the negative but replace with a positive perspective)
- make meaning from negative circumstances

Positive Coping Strategies During Covid-Be Intentional



Is There
Oil In
Your
Lamp?

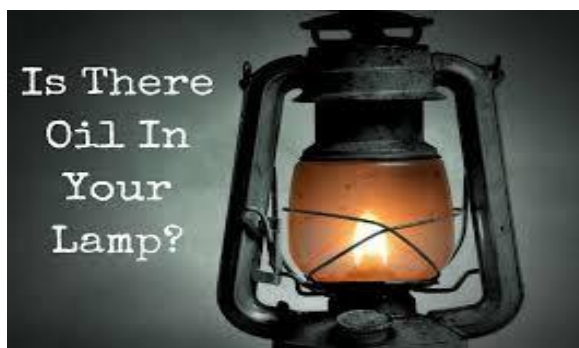


Self care is the fuel that
allows your light to shine

- Self care techniques (exercise, eat well, time-management, meditate or pray, relaxation and guided imagery)
- Be proactive rather than reactive-plan for what you will cope with during the day
- Healthy work-life balance including learning to set limits in both worlds
- Mindfulness training practices (many workplaces, IU for example, are offering this training to workers)
- Learn to look on the positive side of circumstances
- Use positive language
- Express gratitude daily
- Take time for reflection
- Vacations
- Take time off when needed (mental health day)
- Spend time with your friends and family to recharge your batteries
- Learn to reach out to others-Peer support is critical!

SELF-CARE WHEEL





Personal Responsibility Interventions

Physical

- Exercise
- Eat well
- Drink more water
- Get adequate sleep
- Midday walks

Mental

- Healthy work-life balance including learning to set limits in both worlds
- Mindfulness training
- Be proactive rather than reactive-plan for what you will cope with during the day
- Take time off when needed (mental health day)
- Time management

Emotional

- Learn to reach out to others particularly supervisor and co-workers
- Recognize the signs of STS and take responsibility for your own self care
- Relaxation and guided imagery
- Vacations
- Spend time with friends/family to recharge

Spiritual

- Meditate or pray
- Take time for reflection
- Connect to a larger purpose beyond yourself

Is There
Oil In
Your
Lamp?



Supervisory Responsibility (Team)

- Assess workers' STS and discuss what you see
- Encourage self care and use of EAP or professional assistance if available
- Flexible scheduling
- Encourage breaks and vacations
- Encourage weekly check-in or self-care sessions with the entire team
- Encourage a team approach to the job
 - Pair workers in difficult situations
 - Don't allow a worker to go it alone
 - Institute the "Self-care Buddy System"
- Clinical/reflective supervision!
 - The number one intervention that helps workers is clinical supervision. The supervisor can help to identify and ameliorate STS in workers during supervision. There MUST be a focus on the clinical/casework aspect of the job.
- Supervisory support helps with STS and retention!
- Supervisors get STS, too!
 - Take care of yourself and discuss with your manager.

Coping with Stress and Trauma: Ideas for Leaders

A special note to Supervisors, Managers, CEOs, etc.

- Provide a physically and emotionally safe work environment for everyone!!
- The most important aspect of coping with any trauma is to receive social support
 - Even with COVID-19, through virtual means, reach out to offer support
- Send out weekly coping tips or self care reminders
- Send a clear message from executive team expressing an esprit de corps, support, and acknowledgement of how difficult many things are right now
- Make sure all supervisors and middle managers understand de-escalation techniques
- Set up sacred safe space listening times or even social times for work teams using the “Vegas” rule
- Supervisors can have team meetings for listening and support specifically directed to what’s going on around you, i.e., racial concerns, COVID-19, etc.



What Can I Say To My Staff?

Acknowledge Pain and Trauma

"I hear your pain and acknowledge that this has been so hard and even traumatic. I see you doing the very best job for the families we serve. If you ever need to talk, I am here. If you feel you need other help, we can help you get it."

Empathize

"I hear your fears about COVID-19, and I see what it can do. We are doing everything we possibly can do to mitigate the spread and to keep you and all of our employees healthy."

Is There
Oil In
Your
Lamp?



Organizational Responsibility: Leaders Set The Climate!

- Be the person you want them to be!
- Be open and available
- Be supportive
- Be proactive rather than reactive
- Be a model
 - Positive emotional labor
 - Open communication
 - Culture of hope, meaning, purpose
 - Use humor and whimsy
 - Model appropriate supervision at each level
- Institute shared governance
- Always remember to be sensitive to a climate of trauma in which workers are and can be again traumatized by any given client interaction.
- Do not contribute to the trauma
- Advocate for mindfulness training
- Get to know everyone and take an interest in their work and their lives (FORM A SENSE OF COMMUNITY)

Unfortunately,
you can't just
wave your
magic wand
and make
changes!



Self-Care Plan

Aka, Put Your Mask on First

1. What does stress look like in me?
2. What are my best stress management practices?
3. What is my self-care plan?
4. How will I know my plan is working?

O



Making the Connection: Building your Resiliency Backpack (Breakout #3)



Guideposts:

1. Take a moment to reflect.
2. What 1-2 things will you do for...
 - ...Yourself.
 - ...Team.
 - ...Program.
3. Share 1 strategy for each level with your team.
4. BONUS: 1 thing you appreciate or admire about another in your group.



Today I am grateful for:

I saw beauty in:

*“An empty lantern
provides no light.
Self-care is the fuel
that allows your
light to shine
brightly.”*

U N K N O W N

When you are emotionally healthy and in control, you can sit with others who need time and space to heal. So, fill your lantern first so your light can shine and be a help to others!



Barbara Pierce, PhD, LCSW
Associate Professor of Social
Work
Robert Wood Johnson Clinical
Scholar Fellow
Indiana University School of
Social Work
barjpier@iupui.edu

May all that you do now be for love, and may you always be fiercely kind."

- Adapted from Bishop Mariann Edgar Budde

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Session Closing

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