

WELLNESS AS A SURVIVAL MECHANISM

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WHAT IS WELLNESS?

- "the active pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health". (The Global Wellness Institute)
- "a way of life oriented toward optimal health and well-being in which body, mind and spirit are integrated by the individual to live life more fully within the human and natural community" (Myers, Sweeney & Witmer)
- "a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity." (World Health Organization)

WELLNESS MODELS

- Most models come from this list of dimensions: emotional, environmental, financial, intellectual, occupational, physical, social (connection), spiritual (essential), cultural, coping, creative.
- Many models have these eight dimensions: physical, emotional, social, intellectual, environmental, spiritual, vocational, financial.

RESEARCH ON WELLNESS FOCUSES ON

- › THE *CREATIVE SELF*
- › THE *PHYSICAL SELF*
- › THE *SOCIAL SELF*
- › THE *ESSENTIAL SELF*
- › THE *COPING SELF*

All survival mechanisms can be classified as either fight, flight, freeze or fawn.

True
or
False
?

WHAT IS A SURVIVAL MECHANISM?

- "a way of protecting oneself from being hurt by other people" (Merriam-Webster)
- "something you or your body does automatically, in order to survive in a dangerous or unpleasant situation" (Collins)
- "techniques employed to endure through adverse situations" (IGI Global)
- "engagement in activities and practices that assist in maintaining one's well-being while in an adverse environment."

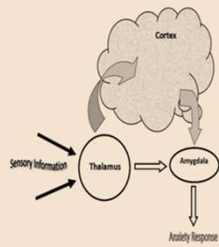
SURVIVAL MODE

Stressful stimuli cause a physiological and psychological response called our survival mode. This mode involves the release of stress hormones and the activation of our stress-response systems. Our mind and body become focused on combating danger.

Survival mode originally evolved to help us handle threats. When we cannot escape or fight, which are states of physiological hyperarousal, we are wired to freeze, a state of hypoarousal. Both hypoarousal and hyperarousal responses are highly effective for brief stressors. However, if the stress is constant, prolonged survival mode becomes maladaptive.

Dr. Gia Marson

TWO PATHWAYS TO ANXIETY



WHAT ARE YOUR FIVE SENSES TELLING YOUR BRAIN?

EVOLVING CAUSES OF ANXIETY

- › CLIMATE
- › POLITICS
- › RACE BASED STRESS
- › EMANCIPATORY STRESS
- › VIOLENCE

SECONDARY TRAUMA

The consequences of indirect exposure to the details of a traumatic event through close contact with the direct victim. The symptoms are essentially similar to those of the survivor's Post Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms.

DSM-5-TR: POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

A. EXPOSURE

- Directly experiencing the traumatic event.
- Witnessing the event as it occurred to others.
- Learning that the traumatic event occurred to a close family member or close friend
- Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event (does not apply to exposure through electronic media unless the exposure is work related).

HOW DOES A STRESS RESPONSE LOOK?

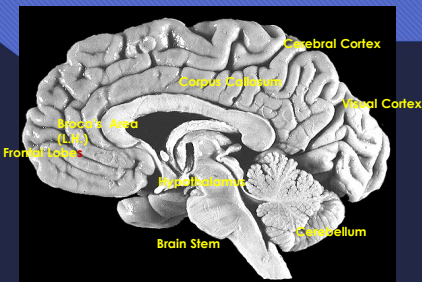
CONCENTRATION
MEMORY
LEARNING
REPETITIVE THINKING
ANGER
NEGATIVITY

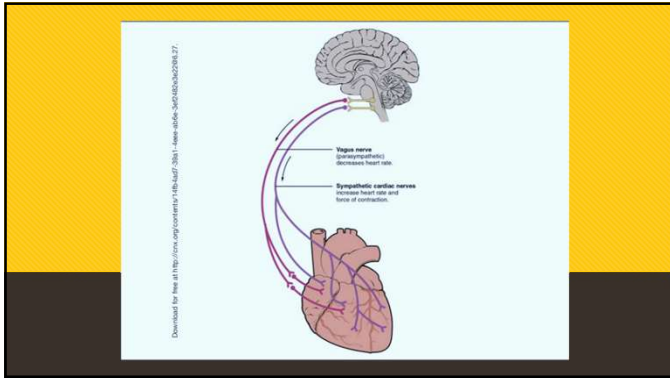
HYPERVIGILANCE
SLEEP
IMMUNE SYSTEM
DISSOCIATION
DETACHMENT
DEPRESSION

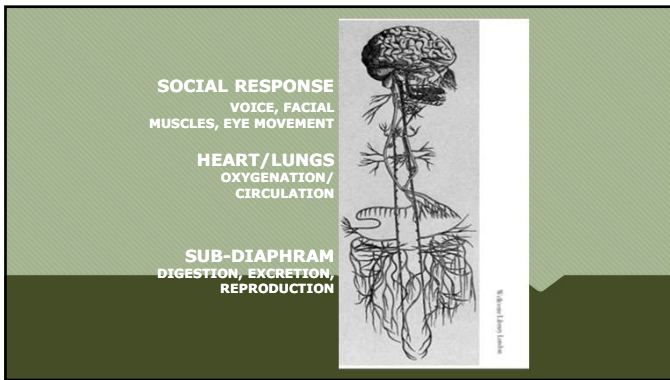
REDUCE CORTISOL

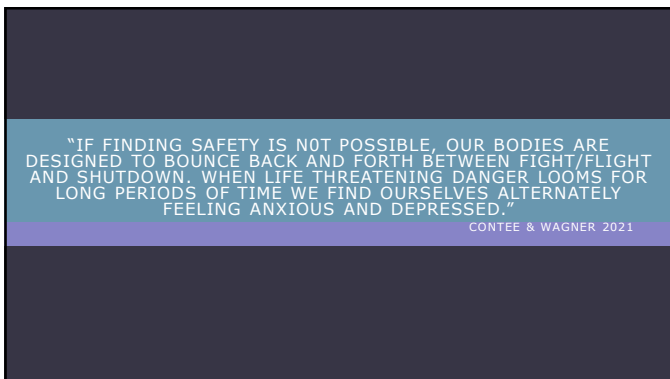
EXERCISE
LAUGH
FEEL NURTURED
FEEL GOOD ABOUT YOURSELF

BILATERAL BRAIN









▶ *WELLNESS – engagement in life-long activities and practices that assist in maintaining one’s well-being, and create supportive neuro-networks in the brain.*



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To nurture the creative self one should

- a) explore their natural artistic talents.
- b) be more aware of the beauty in their surroundings.
- c) develop their problem solving skills.
- d) a & b.

CREATIVITY

PROBLEM SOLVING OUTSIDE OF THE BOX

PHYSICAL SELF

Exercise
Sleep
Relaxation
Nutrition

Social interaction benefits us through

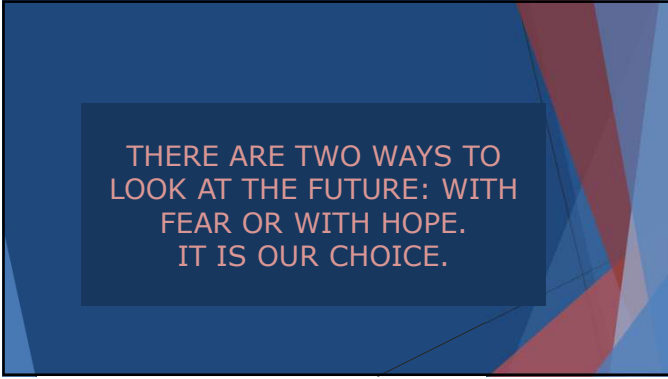
- a) reassurance of self worth.
- b) helping us organize our thoughts.
- c) providing problem-solving skills.
- d) all of the above.

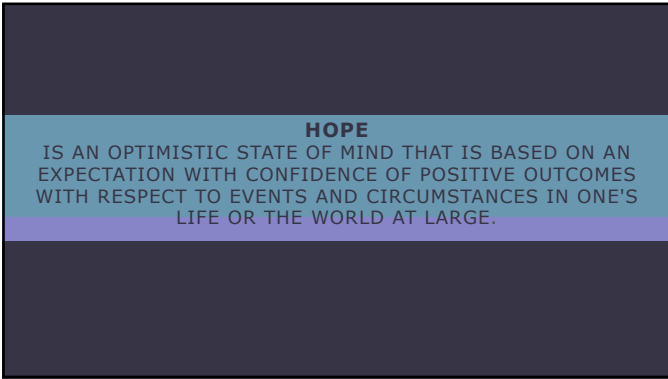
HOW WE BENEFIT FROM SOCIAL INTERACTION

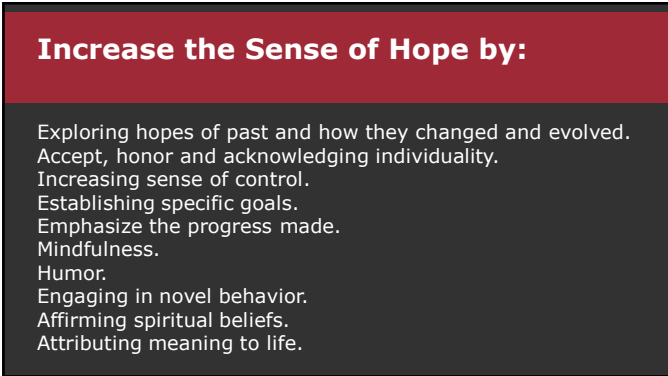
- ▶ Assists brain to organize thoughts
- ▶ Emotional understanding and acceptance
 - ▶ Feeling needed
 - ▶ You are valued
- ▶ Sharing of experiences and concerns
 - ▶ Feeling like you fit in
 - ▶ Empathy
- ▶ Normalization of reactions
- ▶ Reassurance of self-worth
- ▶ Mutual instruction about coping
 - ▶ Your way of reacting is normal
 - ▶ How to cope in positive ways
 - ▶ Having good examples to learn from
- ▶ Practical problem-solving
 - ▶ Help you do things

ESSENTIAL SELF

- ▶ SPIRITUAL – FULFILLMENT/GRATITUDE
- ▶ SENSE OF HOPE AND FUTURE
- ▶ PERSONAL SENSE OF MEANING
- ▶ PERSONAL SENSE OF VALUE







I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS WILL WORK OUT WELL.

Even with a fearful expectation of the future, hope is present.

True
or
False
?

STRESS	ANXIETY
External Source (remove source you remove the stress).	The meaning/value one gives their stress.
Focus on here and now.	Focus on future.
Limited mental processing.	Significant mental processing.

Research shows that rumination on the trauma contributes to the symptoms of and relationship between PTSD and depression.

Reduction of the physiological and emotional reaction to the trauma reduces the symptoms of and relationship between PTSD and depression.

Mindfulness exercises reduce the activity of the amygdala, and the secretion of cortisol – thereby reducing the symptoms of and relationship between PTSD and depression.

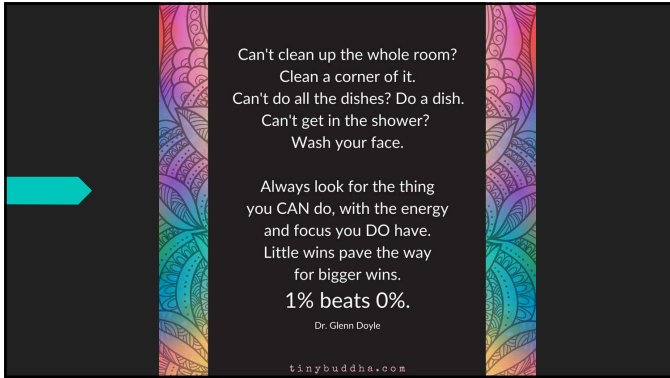
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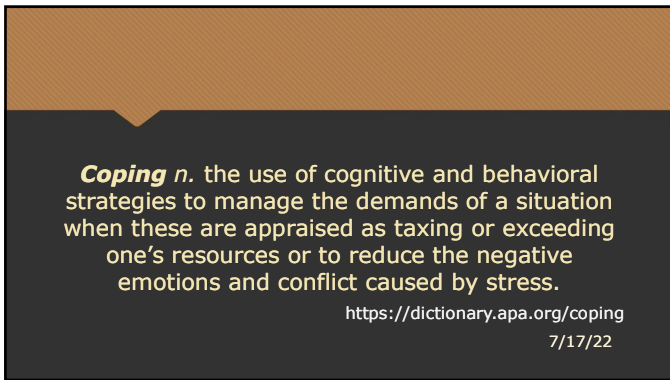
SENSE OF FUTURE – your vision about times to come. It motivates you to set goals, make plans, and look ahead with hopefulness.

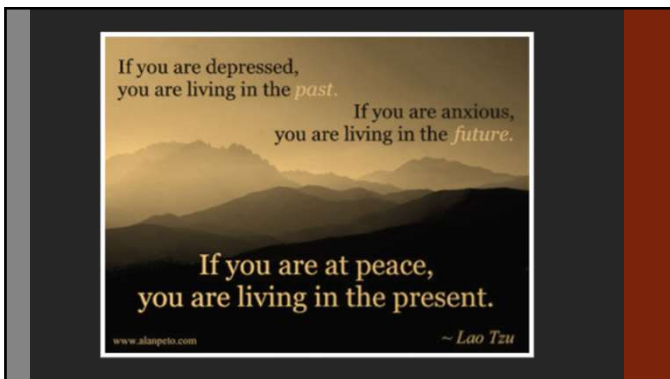
- ▶ Helps us to understand that the decisions we make now will affect who and where we are in the future.
- ▶ Allows us to predict what is likely to happen if we follow a course of action.
- ▶ Motivates us to undertake less pleasant tasks and situations now in order to enjoy more pleasant outcomes in the future.
- ▶ Helps us to remain hopeful in the face of unexpected challenges.
- ▶ Allows us to imagine possibilities and to make plans to achieve those possibilities.

Research has shown that goal setting can reduce the symptoms of trauma if the goals are SMART

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-based







Activating the Pre-Frontal Cortex helps to mitigate the symptoms of trauma and inhibit the amygdala.

Mindfulness activities activate the Pre-Frontal Cortex.

Pre-Frontal Cortex

- Impulse/social control
- Decision making – judgement – reasoning
- Problem solving – planning
- Executive function - comparison
- Personal empowerment
- Personality expression

SIMPLE MINDFULNESS EXERCISES


- FOCUS ON YOUR BODY
- FOCUS ON YOUR ENVIRONMENT
- FOCUS ON A THING
- PLAY PAT-A-CAKE
- DO THE HOKEY-POKEY
- MINDFUL DOODLING

THE BENEFITS OF BEING IN THE ZONE/FLOW/TRANCE-STATE OR MEDITATION

BODY	BRAIN
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LOWERS CORTISOL AND FREE RADICALS • DECREASE BLOOD PRESSURE • DECREASE CHOLESTEROL • IMPROVE AIR FLOW • DECREASE PAIN AND ENHANCE IMMUNE SYSTEM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DECREASE ANXIETY • DECREASE DEPRESSION • DECREASE IRRITABILITY/ANGER • IMPROVES LEARNING AND MEMORY • INCREASE SELF-ACTUALIZATION

MINDFUL DOODLING

**REPETITIVE
PREDICTABLE**



Today's Date			
	Activity	Duration (minutes)	
Exercise	11	11	
	21	21	
	31	31	
Problem Solving Exercises	11	11	
	21	21	
	31	31	
Mindfulness Practices	11	11	
	21	21	
	31	31	
Social Interaction	Who?	Duration	
	11	11	
	31	31	
Coping Mechanism Inventory	Mechanism Used?	Alternative to Consider?	
	11	11	
	21	21	
Gratitude Inventory	What?	Why?	
	11	11	
	21	21	
Plans for the Future	This Evening	This Weekend	
	11	11	
	21	21	

In all things -

HOW WE PERCEIVE THE PAST INFLUENCES THE WAY WE THINK IN THE PRESENT, AND HOW WE PLAN FOR THE FUTURE.

