The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of a wood grain, showing wavy, concentric patterns in shades of brown and tan. A dark blue rectangular area is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text.

# Stress and Its Impacts:

Ideas and strategies for  
managing

Bruce Cedar, Ed.D.  
CMG Associates



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# Learning Objectives

1. Understand the impact of stress on one's body, mind and spirit.
2. Provide an overview of trauma, secondary trauma/compassion fatigue
3. Learn and develop strategies that will reduce incidence of stress/  
STS/compassion fatigue
4. Identify and experience steps in building one's resilience

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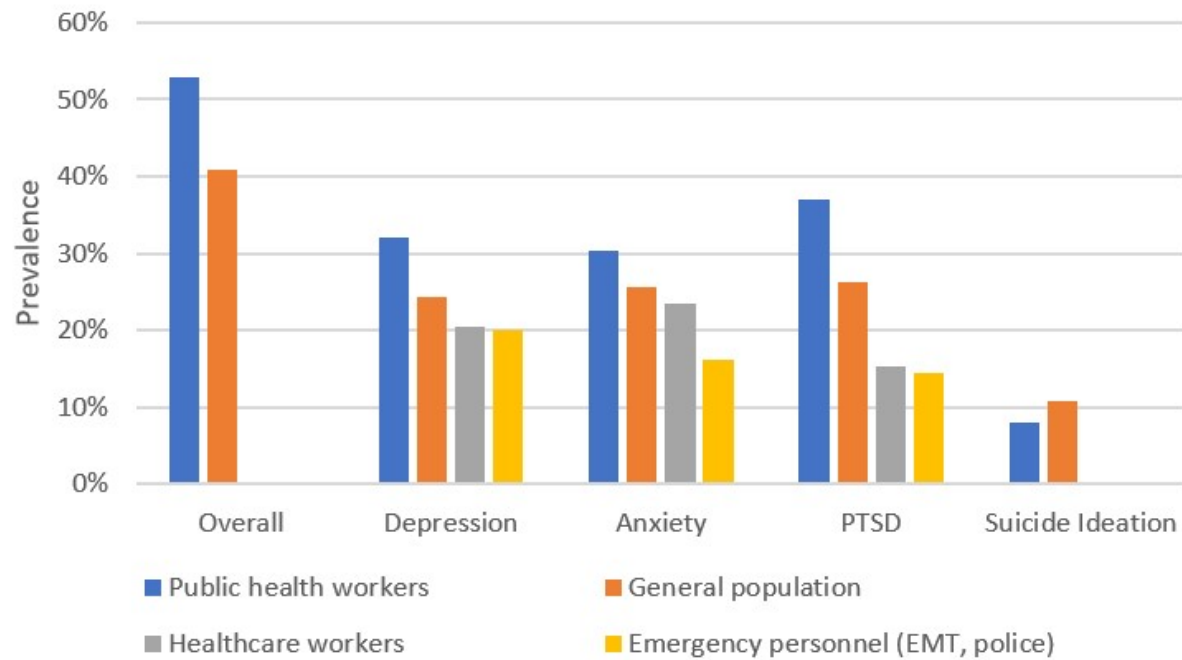
# How Bad Is It?

## **MMWR Study of more than 2600 public health workers (July 2021)**

- 53 % reported symptoms of one mental health condition
- 33% reported symptoms of depression
- 37% symptoms of PTSD
- 30% symptoms of anxiety
- 8% suicidal ideation

# How Bad Is It?

Mental Illness among Frontline Workers during the Pandemic



---

# How Bad Is It?

## **Those reporting inability to take time off - reported more adverse mental health symptoms**

- Highest incidence in those 29 years or younger
- 23% felt threatened bullied or harassed
- 12% job related threats
- 20% felt they needed mental health services but did not get them

---

# How Bad Is It?

## **In a study published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health**

- 66% of public health workers reported burnout
- 23% felt threatened bullied or harassed
- 24% fewer respondents planned to stay in Public Health compared to Jan. 2020

## **Consistent Risk Factors Emerged**

- Number of hours worked
- Inability to take time off
- Politization of work

---

# How Bad Is It?

## **Boston Globe 10/18/21**

- Over 500 top Public Health officials have left their job in the last 19 months
- Legislatures have approved more than 100 new laws
- Public has turned against agencies - voting in leaders who have run on reigning in public health
- Agencies have abandoned other priorities because of the coronavirus, causing a rise in cases of other health concerns
- Kansas passed laws severely limiting the authority and ability of Public Health to respond to crises

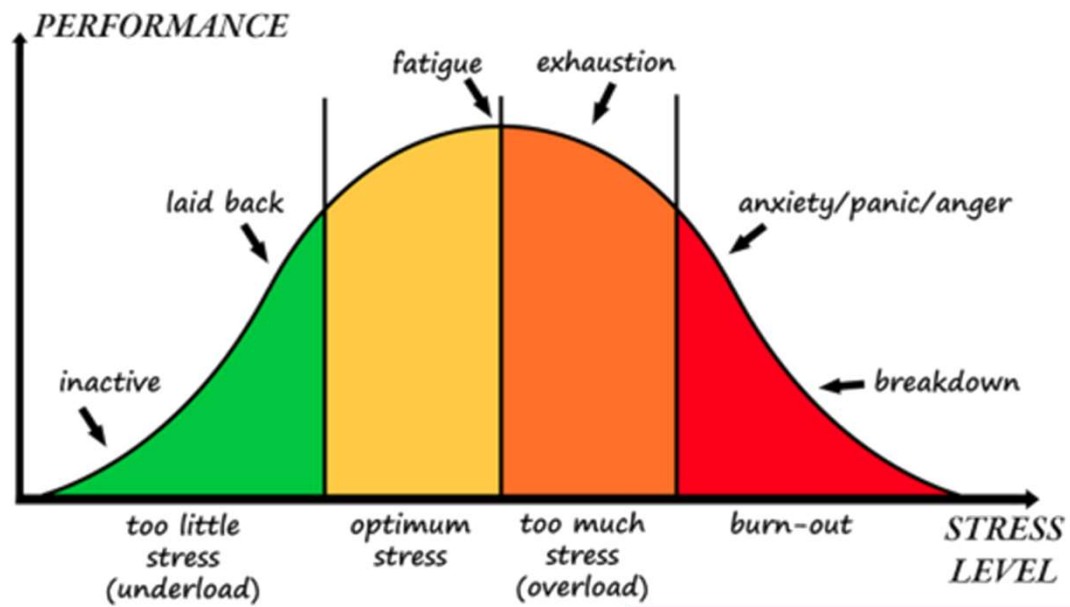
# Understanding Stress and Its Impact





# Stress

## STRESS CURVE



## The Body's Stress Response

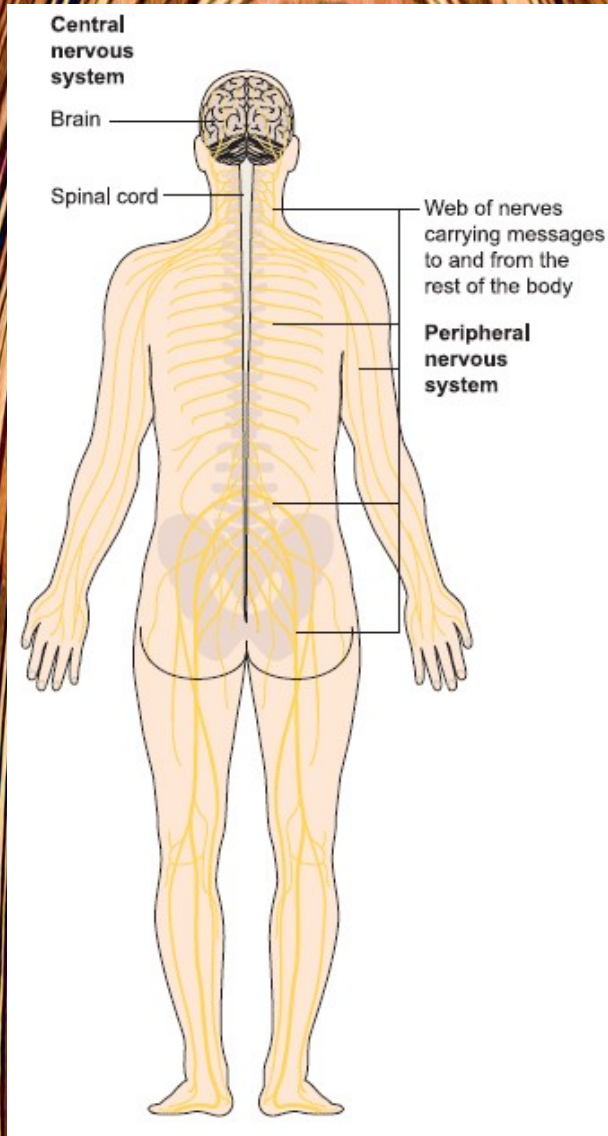
When you perceive a threat, your nervous system responds by releasing a flood of stress hormones, including adrenaline and cortisol. These hormones rouse the body for emergency action. Your heart pounds faster, muscles tighten, blood pressure rises, breath quickens, and your senses become sharper.

MIND BODY MEDICAL INSTITUTE



# The Stress Response





# Central Nervous System

## Perception

- Narrowed

## Memory

- Course, Imprecise

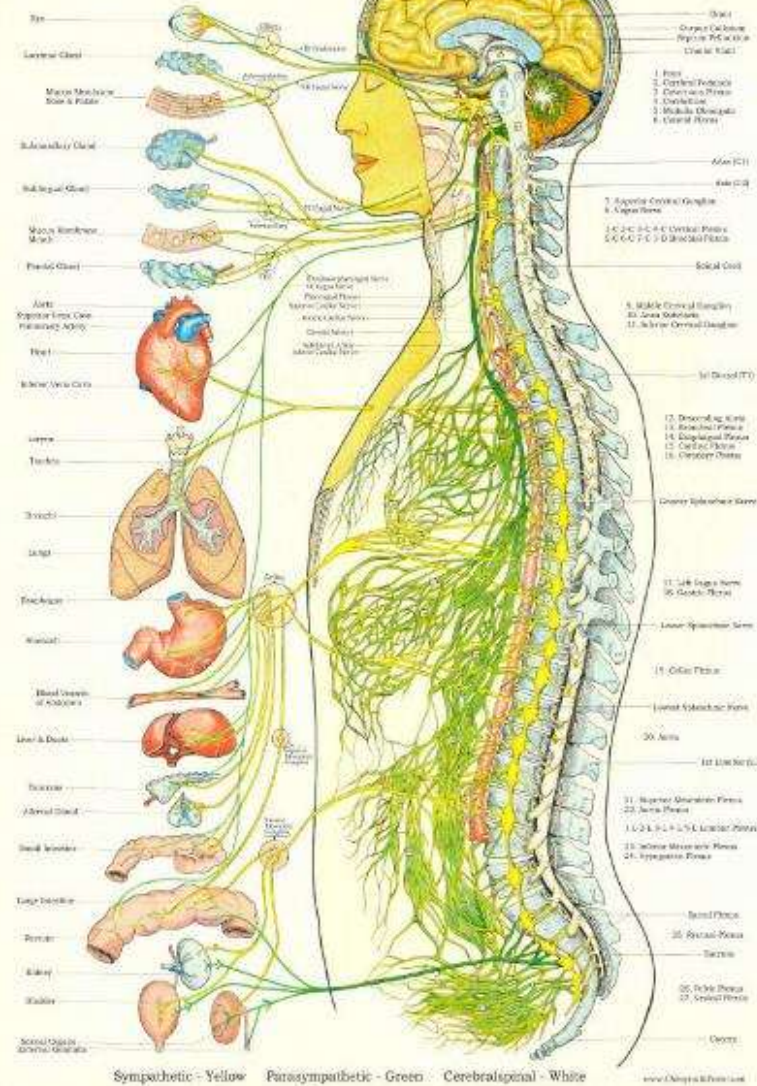
## Learning

- Blocked

## Condition and Tone

- Fight, Flight or Freeze

## Autonomic Nervous System

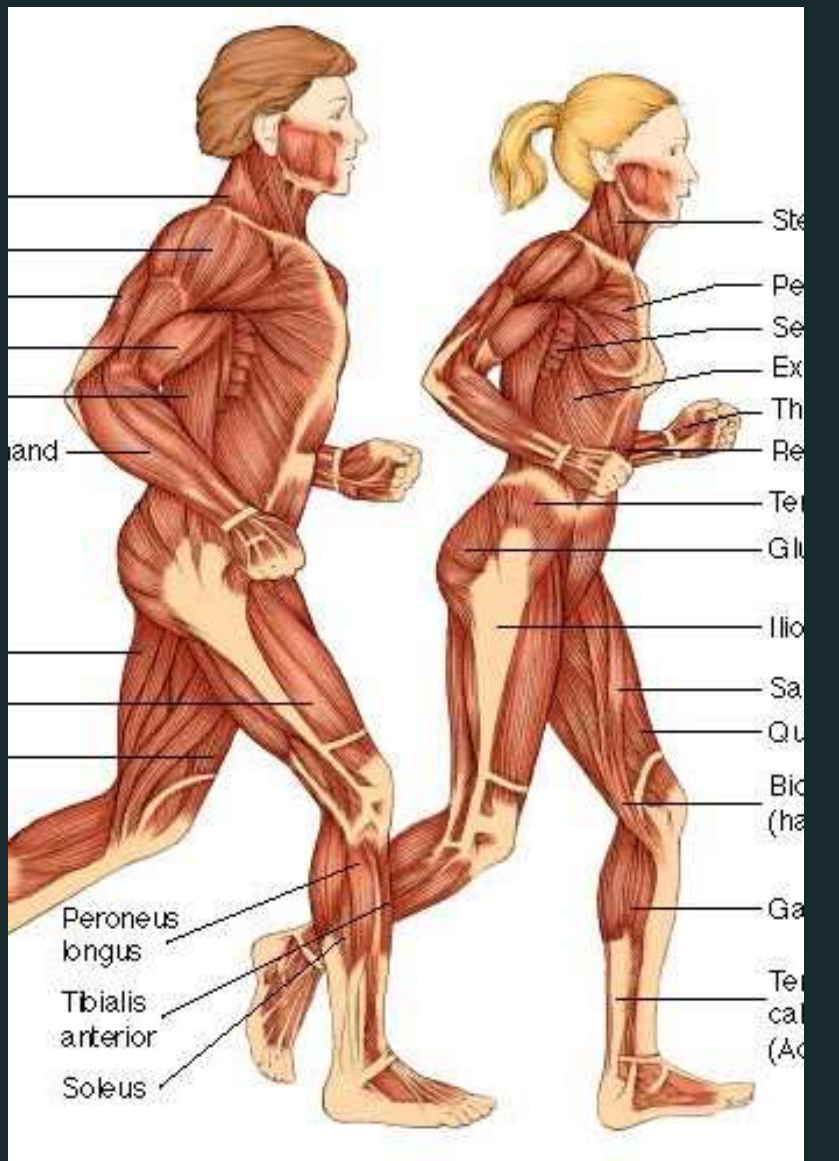


# Autonomic Nervous System

## Increase in:

- Heart rate
  - Blood pressure
  - Oxygen need
  - Breathing rate
  - Blood sugar
  - Sweat production
  
- Adrenalin flows
- Digestive tract shuts down
- Blood races to muscles
- Blood vessels constrict in hands & face

# Muscular System



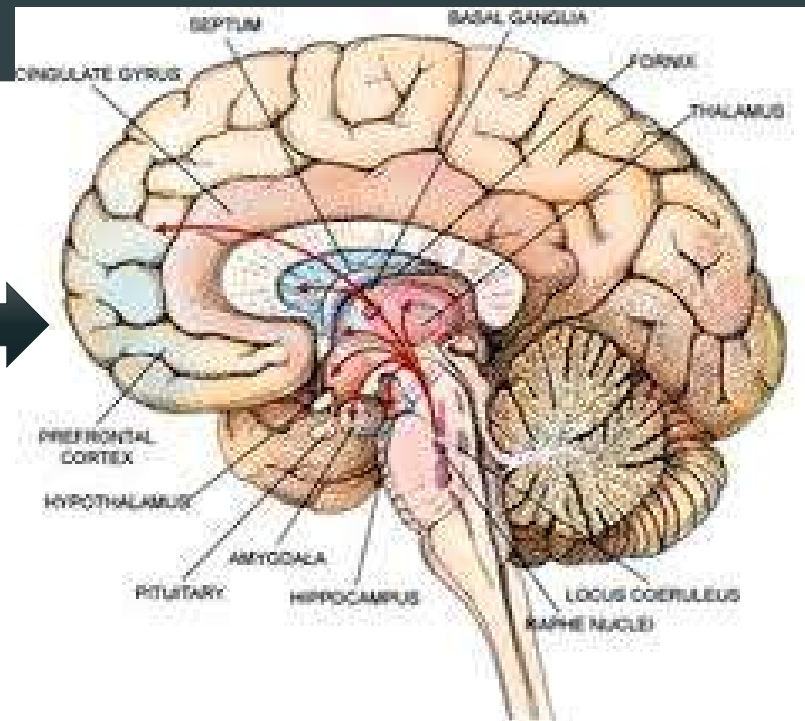
- Tension
- Ready for action
- Jaws clench
- Body braces for action

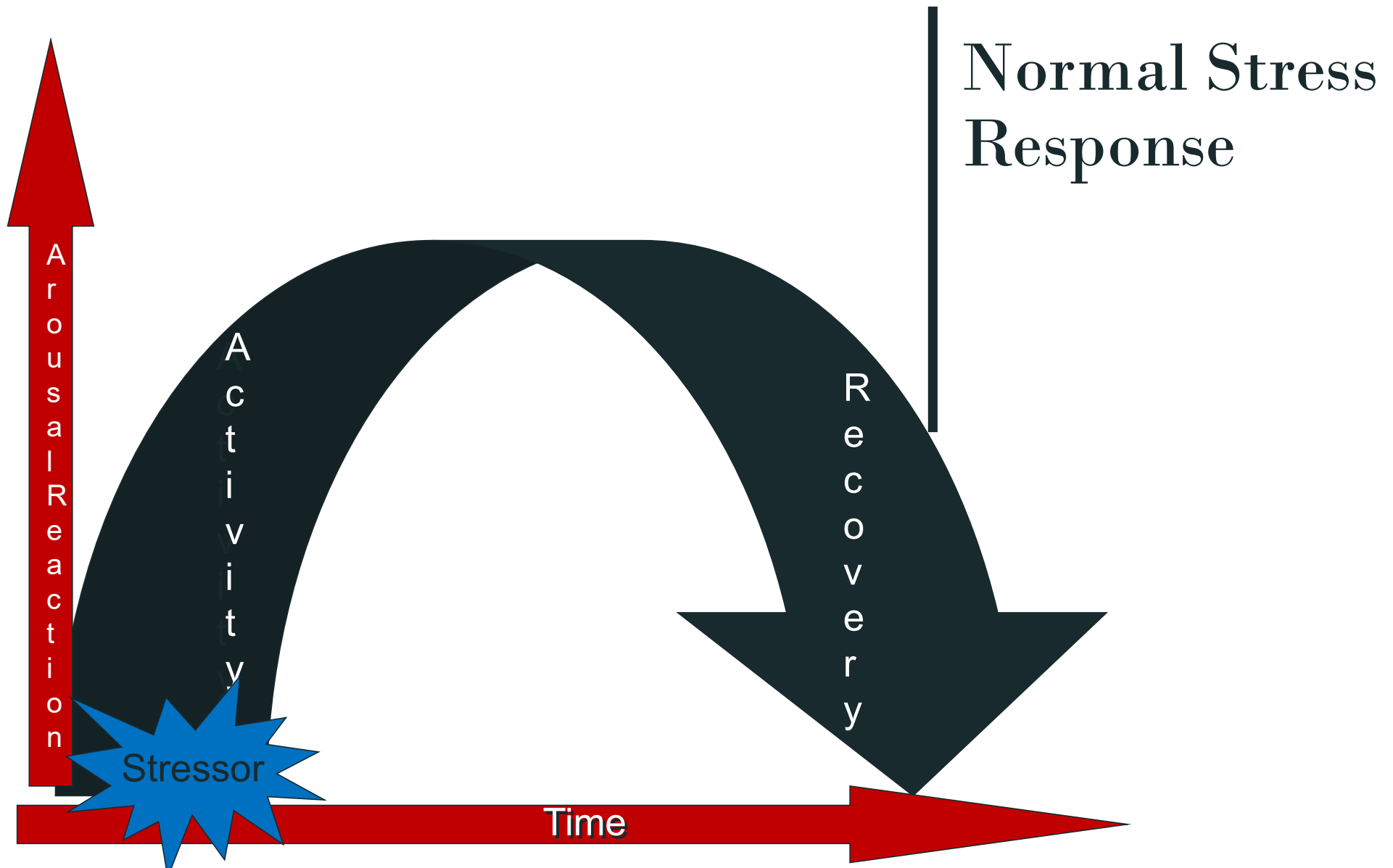
# Pre-Frontal Cortex

- Provides reason
- Controls impulses
- Contains emotions
- Plans ahead

“if this, that that...”

- Thinking Brain
- Executive Function





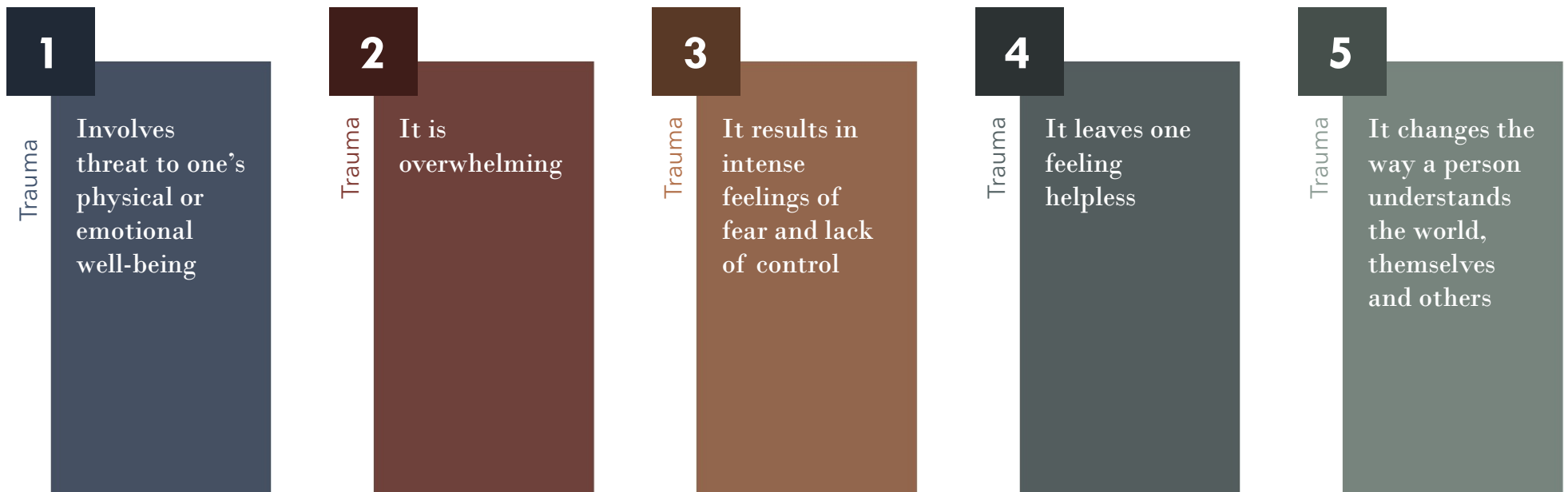




# Taking a closer look...

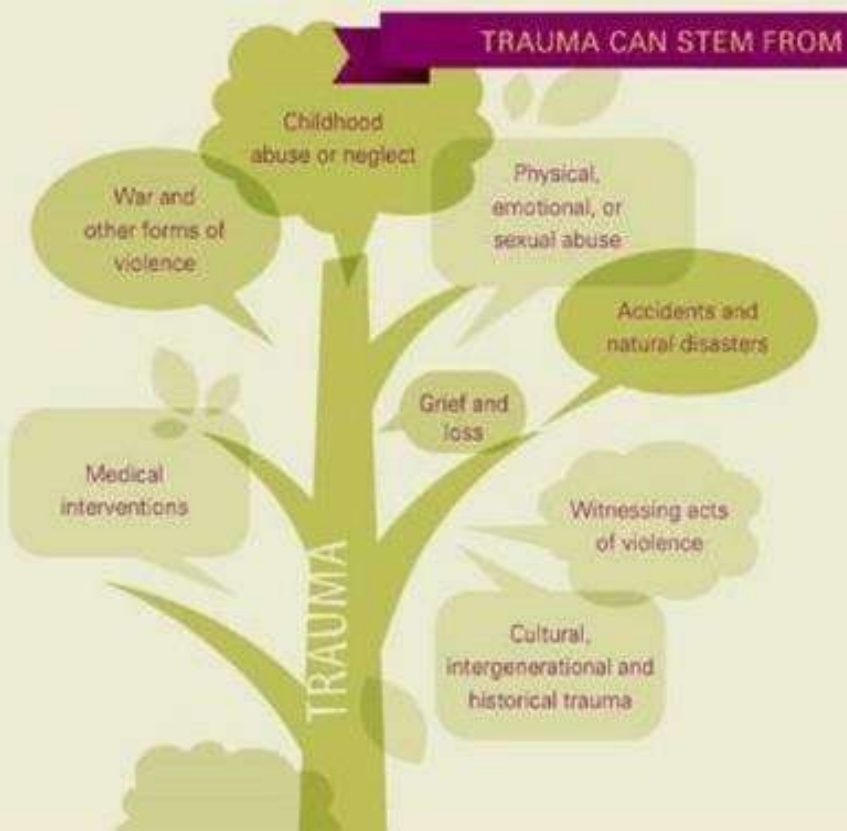
- ...at trauma
  - ...at traumatic stress
    - ... at vicarious traumatization

# What makes an event traumatic?





# Traumatic Events:



## Human

Homicide  
Sexual Assault  
War

## Natural Disasters

Hurricane  
Earthquake  
Flood  
Fire  
Volcano

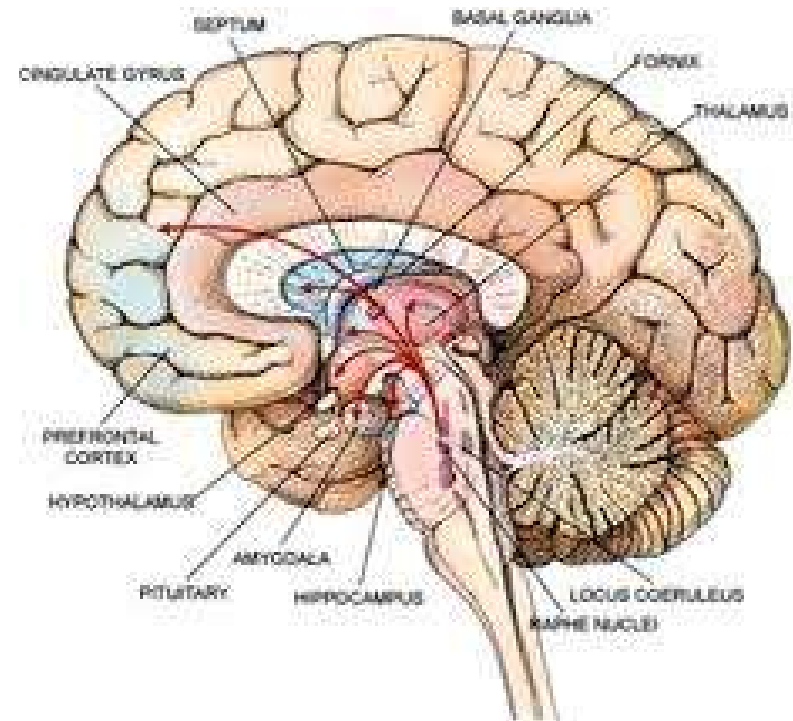
## Workplace Violence

Fight  
Physical Attack  
Threat of Physical Harm  
Accident

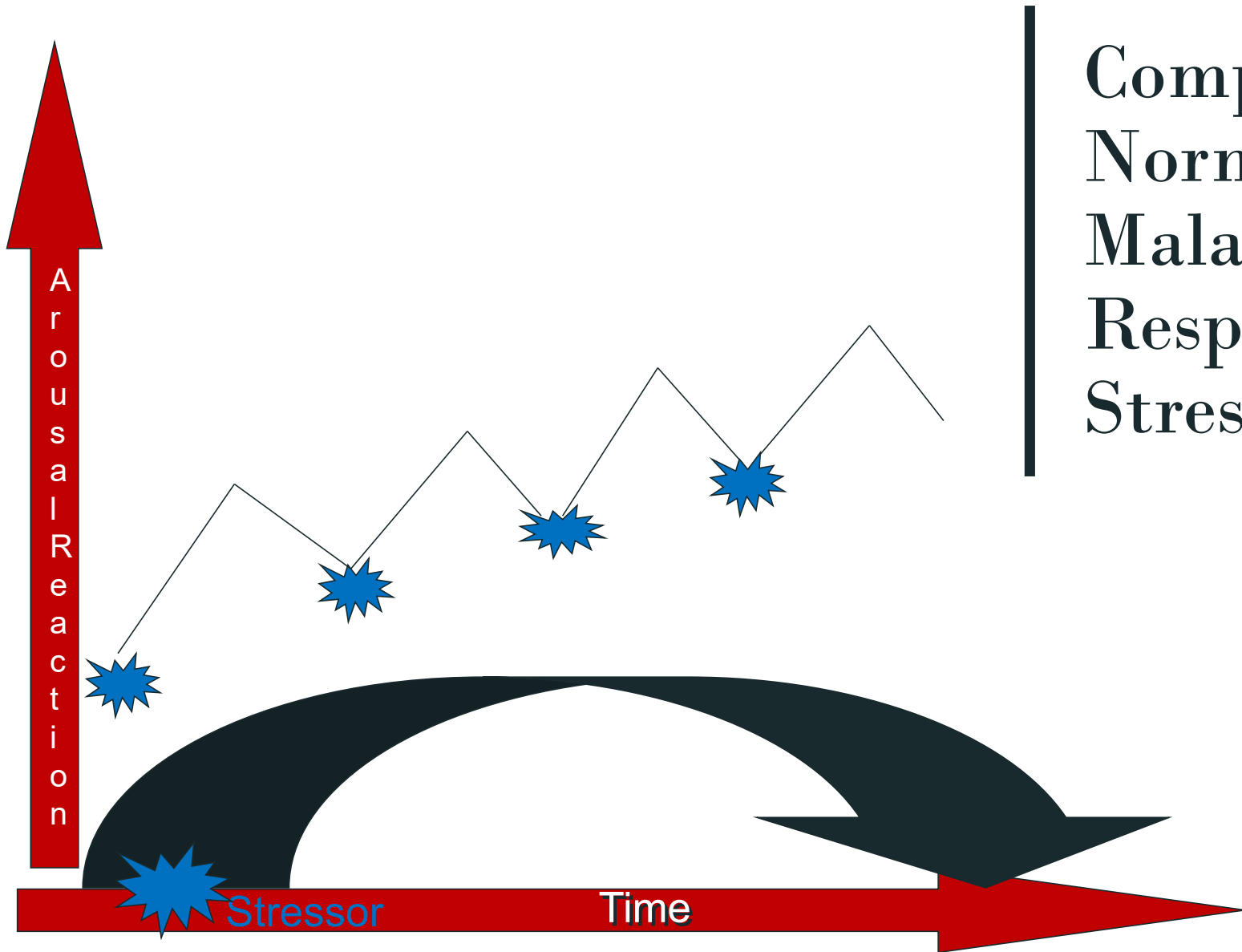
# The Limbic System “Paleomammalian Brain”

Focused on survival in the moment and survival for the future by storing memories of danger.

- Thalamus
- Hypothalamus
- Amygdala
- Hippocampus



# Comparing Normal and Maladaptive Responses to Stress



# Psychological impact of traumatic stress

- Re-experiencing
- Avoidance
- Negative Cognitions
- Negative Mood
- Arousal

▪ *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual 5, 2013*



STRESS AND ITS IMPACT

# Re-Experiencing

- Spontaneous memories
- Recurrent dreams
- Flashbacks or other intense, prolonged psychological distress



STRESS AND ITS IMPACT



# Avoidance

- Avoidance of distressing memories, thoughts, feelings
  - External reminders
  - People, places and things



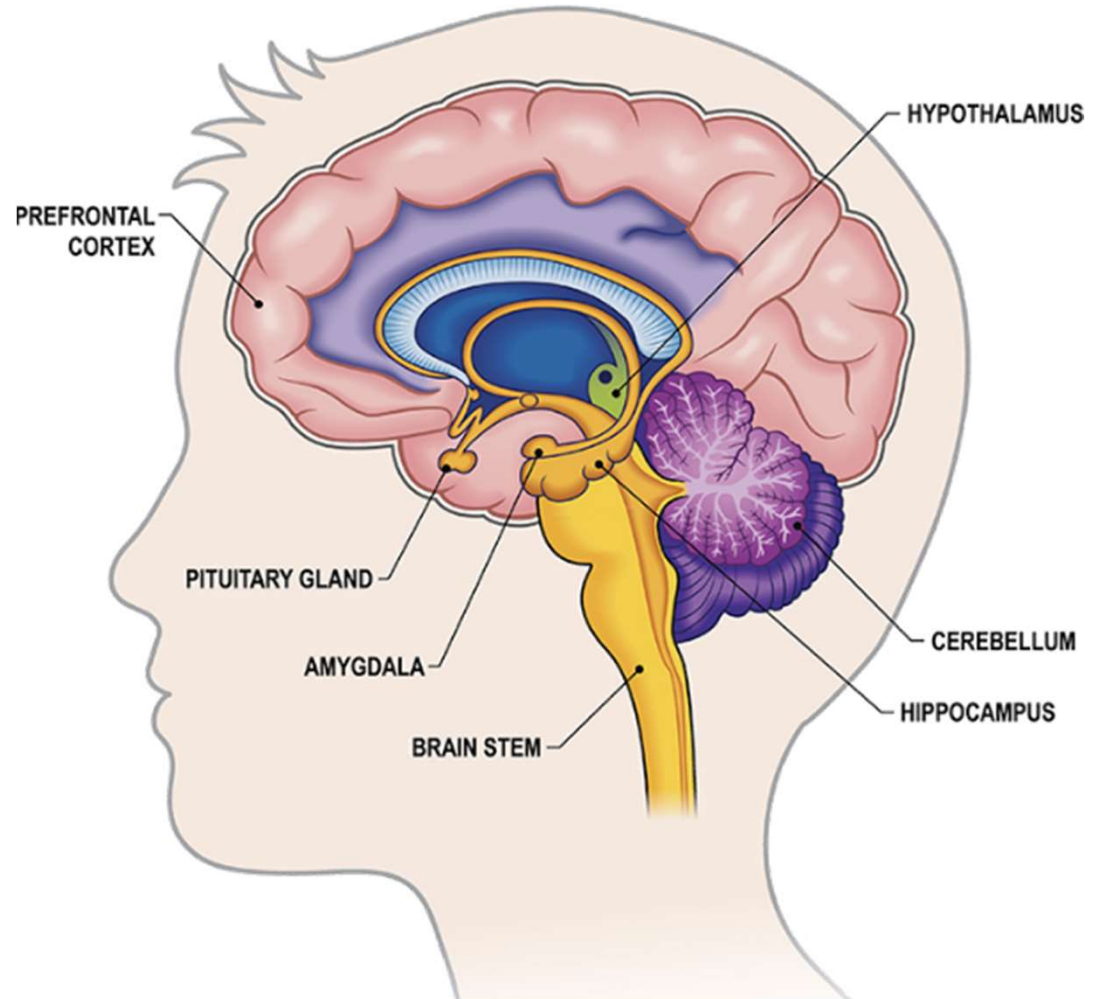
# Negative Cognitions or Mood

- Persistent and distorted sense of blame of self or others
- Estrangement from others
- Markedly diminished interest in activities
- Inability to remember key aspects of the event

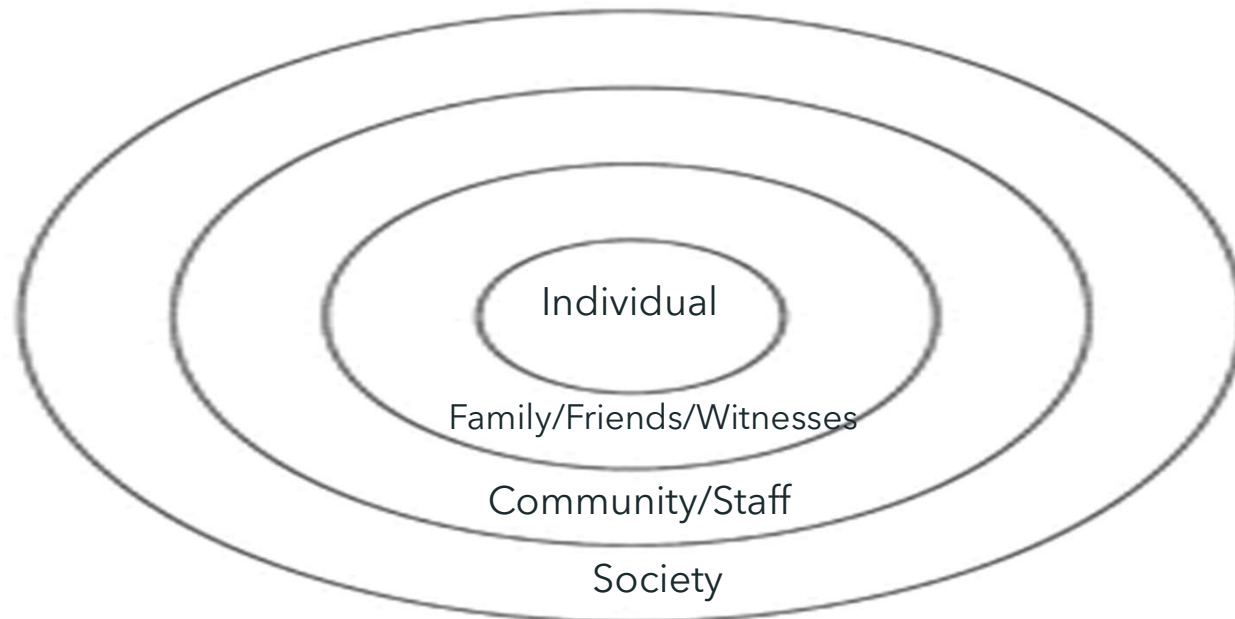


# Arousal

- Aggressive, reckless or self-destructive behavior
- Sleep disturbances
- Hypervigilance:  
Fight or Flight



# Who is Affected by Trauma?



# Why we are here?



*"The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet."*

Remen, 1996

## Defining Secondary Traumatic Stress



“...the natural consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced by another...the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person.”

Charles Figley, 1995, Compassion Fatigue

# Learning the difference between Traumatic Stress / Vicarious Traumatization

## **Traumatic Stress**

- Extreme emotionality OR absence of emotion
- Fearful, jumpy, exaggerated startle response
- Flashbacks

## **Vicarious Traumatization**

- Overly involved with or avoidance of victim /survivor.
- Hyper-vigilance and fear for own safety: the world no longer feels safe and people can't be trusted
- Intrusive thoughts and images, or nightmares from victims' stories

## Secondary Traumatic Stress on the Job

- An “**occupational hazard**” for those working with trauma survivors.
- Ethical mandate of “**duty to train**” where workers are taught about the potential negative effects of the work and how to cope.

Munroe, J.F., in *Compassion Fatigue*, 1995





# CONTEMPLATING THE EFFECTS:

# Contemplating the effects:

## **Personal Effects**

Physical  
Psychological  
Behavioral  
Spiritual  
Cognitive  
Relational

## **Professional Effects**

Performance  
Morale  
Interpersonal  
Behavioral

# Examples of Effect: Personal

- **Physical**
  - **Psychological**
  - **Behavioral**
  - **Spiritual**
  - **Cognitive**
  - **Relational**
- **Rapid pulse/breathing, aches & pains, shock, headaches**
  - **Feelings of powerlessness, numbness, anxiety**
  - **Irritability, sleep/appetite changes isolation, intolerance, substance abuse**
  - **Loss of purpose, questioning meaning of life, goodness/evil**
  - **Diminished concentration / self-esteem, traumatic imagery**
  - **Withdrawn/clingy; mistrust; lack of interest in sex**

# Examples of Effect: Professional

- **Performance**

- **Decrease in quality/quantity of workload; low motivation. Task avoidance or obsession**

- **Morale**

- **Decrease in confidence/interest; negative attitude; apathy**

- **Interpersonal**

- **Detached /withdrawn from co-workers; poor communication; conflict; impatience**

- **Behavioral**

- **Absent / tardiness; overwork exhaustion; irresponsibility**

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# Organizational Strategies

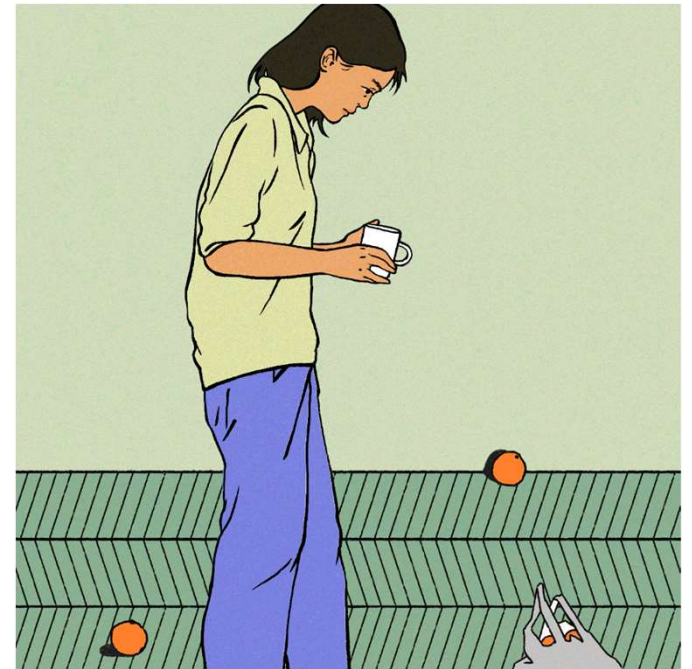
- Creating healthy work environment/organizational culture
- Supportive leadership
- Quality supervision
- Debriefing
- Staff/team meetings, retreats, opportunities to get together (formal & informal)
- Peer Support
- Acknowledgement of stress, STS, VT as real
- Training & education, including orientation to organization and role
- Staff health & wellness

# Have you been languishing?

## LANGUISHING...

- Trouble concentrating
- Lack of excitement
- Stagnation
- Muddling through

*“the pandemic has dragged on, and the acute state of anguish has given way to a chronic condition of languish”* (A. Grant)



## **Burnout: Definition**

state of physical, emotional and mental exhaustion caused by long term involvement in emotionally demanding situations.

### ***Symptoms include:***

- *Depression*
- *Cynicism*
- *Boredom*
- *Loss of compassion*
- *Discouragement*

## **Burnout?**



# Signs and Symptoms of Burnout

## Physical Signs

- Feeling tired and drained most of the time
- Frequent headaches or muscle pain
- Lowered immunity, frequent illnesses
- Change in appetite or sleep habits

## Emotional Signs

- Sense of failure and self-doubt.
- Feeling helpless, trapped, and defeated.
- Loss of motivation.
- Increasingly cynical and negative outlook.
- Decreased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment.
- Detachment, feeling alone in the world.



# Signs and Symptoms of Burnout

## Behavioral Signs

- Withdrawing from responsibilities
- Isolating yourself from others.
- Procrastinating, taking longer to get things done
- Using food, drugs, or alcohol to cope
- Taking out your frustrations on others
- Skipping work or coming in late and leaving early

# Stress vs Burnout

Characterized by over-engagement.

Characterized by disengagement.

Emotions are overreactive.

Emotions are blunted.

Produces urgency and hyperactivity.

Produces helplessness and hopelessness.

Loss of energy.

Loss of motivation, ideals, and hope.

Leads to anxiety disorders.

Leads to detachment and depression.

Primary damage is physical.

Primary damage is emotional.

May kill you prematurely.

May make life seem not worth living.

---

# Work Related Causes of Burnout

- Feeling like you have little or no control over your work.
- Lack of recognition or reward for good work.
- Unclear or overly demanding job expectations.
- Doing work that's monotonous or unchallenging.
- Working in a chaotic or high-pressure environment.

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# Lifestyle Causes of Burnout

- Working too much, without enough time for socializing or relaxing.
- Lack of close, supportive relationships
- Taking on too many responsibilities, without enough help from others.
- Not getting enough sleep.

---

# Personality Traits Related to Burnout

- Perfectionistic tendencies; nothing is ever good enough.
- Pessimistic view of yourself and the world.
- The need to be in control; reluctance to delegate to others.
- High-achieving, Type A personality.

---

# “Three R” Approach to Dealing with Burnout

Dealing with burnout requires the “Three R” approach:

## 1. Recognize.

Watch for the warning signs of burnout.

## 2. Reverse.

Undo the damage by seeking support and managing stress.

## 3. Resilience.

Build your resilience to stress by taking care of your physical and emotional health.

# What is Resilience?

## RESILIENCE...

- Internal and external factors
- Allows us to recover from difficult situations
- The strength to cope with trauma, adversity and hardship
- Ability to carry 'life's load'



*When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!*

## Resilience

All individuals have the ability to improve resilience following a traumatic event.

Individuals, families and communities can become stronger and have closer meaningful relations in the aftermath of a traumatic event.

Road to Resilience, Meichenbaum, 2012



# Resilience

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress.

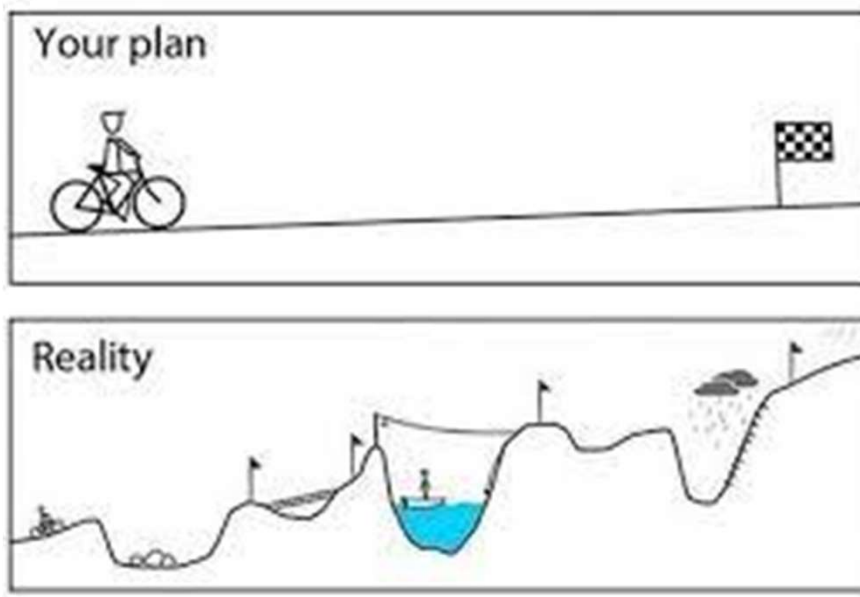
It means *"bouncing back"* from difficult experiences.

American  
Psychological  
Association



STRESS AND ITS IMPACT

# Why Is Resilience Important?



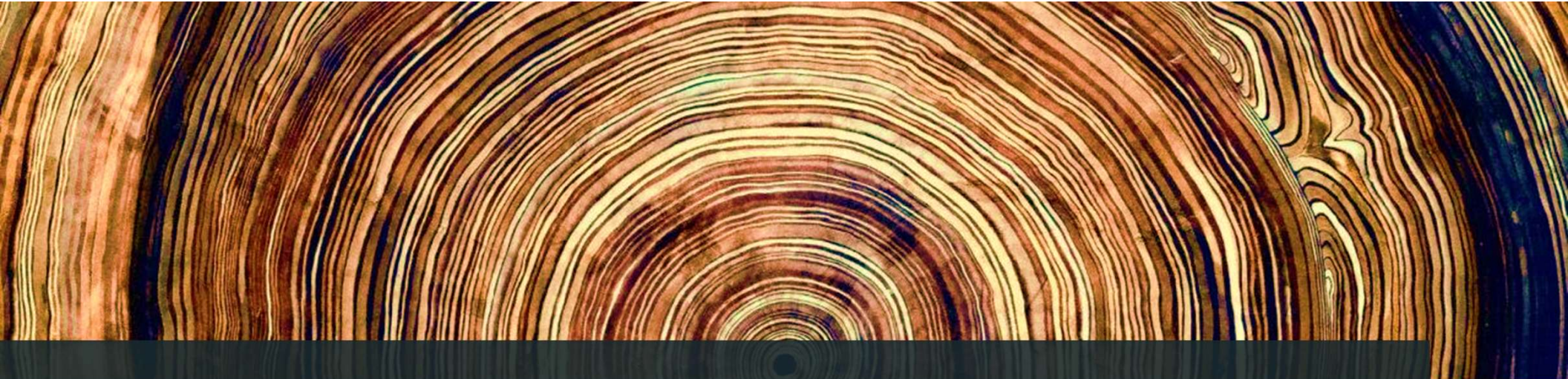
## RESILIENT PEOPLE

- Response better to stress
- Are less likely to be depressed
- Feel better about themselves
- Tend to be healthier
- Live longer
- Are more likely to achieve success

# You Can Strengthen Resilience

- It is a process
- It can be learned
- It takes time, repetition and practice





# Thank you

Bruce Cedar, Ed.D.

CMG Associates



The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of a wood grain, showing wavy, concentric patterns in shades of brown and tan. A dark blue rectangular area is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the text.

# Stress and Its Impacts: Part 2

Building  
Resilience

Bruce Cedar, Ed.D.  
CMG Associates



# Objectives

- Review the six components of resilience
- Brainstorm ideas for strengthening resilience in each of the categories (small groups)
- Review ideas with the larger group
- Take-Away: A start on a resilience plan that can be implemented



Meaning & Purpose  
Congruence  
Goals

Calm and In Control  
Regulate Emotions  
Self-awareness  
Manage Stress

Strong Relationships  
Support Networks  
Building Trust  
Teamwork



Adaptability  
Problem Solving  
Resourcefulness  
Anticipate & Plan

Persistence  
Bounce Back  
Realistic Optimism  
Staying Motivated

Quality Sleep  
Good Nutrition  
Regular Exercise

Think of a time when you  
overcame a setback or challenge in  
your life...





**VISION**

**COLLABORATION**

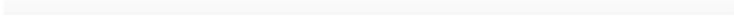
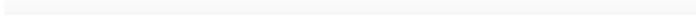
**COMPOSURE**

Your  
Resilience  
Plan

**TENACITY**

**REASONING**

**HEALTH**



**1. VISION: Your purpose; goals; what drives you**

**COLLABORATION**

**COMPOSURE**

**Your  
Resilience  
Plan**

**TENACITY**

**REASONING**

**HEALTH**

## VISION

**The most important of the domains,** Vision is about your sense of purpose, goals, and personal vision for yourself. The reason this is the most important domain is that all other domains are guided by what it is you want to achieve. Having clarity in this domain allows you to be decisive when facing tough choices, and to maintain perspective when facing challenges. Whether your goals relate to family, to work, or a side project, what's important is being specific and clear.

**Clarity keeps you focused.** It's easy to get distracted by unimportant details and events if you don't have anything specific you're working towards. After all, it's not like you had anything else planned, so why not binge on the new season of House of Cards? Vision is about having clarity so that when things get tough, you know what's important and what isn't in order to stay focused and achieve your goals.

**Congruence is the name of the game.** Congruence means all your actions are working together across your larger vision of yourself and sense of purpose, through medium and short terms goals. When you don't have clarity on these, it's likely that some of your goals may conflict with each other, resulting in frustration as moving towards one goal moves you further from the other. Instead, if your actions are aligned, everything you do slowly moves you towards your ultimate goals, helping you achieve feats that others deemed impossible.

✓ VISION

COLLABORATION

COMPOSURE

Your  
Resilience  
Plan

TENACITY

REASONING

2. HEALTH – Nutrition, sleep & exercise  
strategies

## HEALTH

**The foundational domain.** Good health means looking after your body through what you eat, doing exercise, and getting quality sleep. A healthy body provides a strong foundation for your own resilience so you can focus on your sense of purpose and goals. Good health is not the ultimate goal itself, but instead is an enabler to achieve your larger personal vision.

**Healthy nutrition.** It's not just about keeping lean, as nutrition also affects your brain health and mental performance. Regularly eating foods with a high combination of fats and sugars (like chocolate, ice cream, cookies, baked goods, burgers...) actually reduces the chemical in the brain that produces more brain cells. This makes the brain less plastic and reduces your mental adaptability.

**Quality sleep.** Lack of sleep results in more mistakes, reduced attention span, and a decreased ability to deal with stress. It also increases cortisol, the brain's stress hormone. The affects add up over time, compounding the toll on your body, brain, and performance. Sleep makes a big difference, but it's not just about quantity, it's about getting enough quality sleep.

**Regular exercise.** Also not just about being fit, regular exercise is proven to increase mental performance and increasing your ability to learn. It also protects against neurodegenerative diseases in the long term. So even if you are happy with your body, exercise is still crucial!

✓ VISION

**3. COLLABORATION:**  
Who you can call  
upon and in what  
context

**COMPOSURE**

Your  
Resilience  
Plan

**TENACITY**

**REASONING**

✓ HEALTH

## COLLABORATION

**We are social beings.** The brain has a deep fundamental need for connection with others to be able to thrive. The brain has dedicated neural structures to recognize facial expressions, while mirror neurons fire within the brain to help us empathize with others. We are, after all, in this together, so what we do and focus on is not just for us, but to help our communities together and improve our world. This connection is what the Collaboration domain is about.

**Support and be supported.** In a complex world, few of us can achieve anything meaningful alone, so it's crucial for us to build support networks so we can both have a safety net and also be that safety net for others. Interestingly, research shows that when it comes to peace of mind, it's not actual available support that matters, but instead it is the perception of available support that's important. So even if you have 100 people ready to support you, if you don't realize this, you will not feel supported. Keep this in mind for others as well, and show the people you care for that you are there to support them whenever they need you.

**Get the context right.** A key part of Collaboration is understanding the context of your interaction with people. Having a meeting with people at work and spending time with friends on the weekend are two very different contexts. For example, at work it's more important to focus on facts than on emotion, keep things professional and don't take anything personally. At home, it's not always about the facts, but very important to address emotions as it's a vital part of maintaining healthy relationships. Scoring high in Collaboration means being able to know what behavior is best in different contexts so you can keep things constructive and build positive relationships.

✓ VISION

✓ COLLABORATION

**4. COMPOSURE: The coping strategies you use to manage uncomfortable emotions**

Your Resilience Plan

**TENACITY**

**REASONING**

✓ HEALTH



## COMPOSURE

**It's about regulating emotions.** The fight-or-flight response of the brain loves to flare up when facing conflict or hearing about a sudden change at work. But being able to overcome that instinctive emotional response and maintain your composure often means being able to recognise hidden opportunities and solve problems in novel ways. This is because becoming emotional prevents you from properly accessing your ability to think critically.

**It's also the little things.** Composure is not just the big crises that we face, but also the little everyday things. Getting emotional in a traffic jam is never useful, so why bother getting worked up? Maintaining composure means keeping calm so you can save your energy for what is important.

**Interpretation bias is important.** Your boss walks up to you and says, "I need to talk to you. Come see me later". Do you panic? Do you worry about getting into trouble for something or getting fired? The statement from your boss in this example is actually neutral with no direct implied negativity. It could just as easily be good news! Research shows that a natural inclination to negatively interpret ambiguous situations makes people six times more likely to show symptoms of depression, while a positive interpretation bias results in higher resilience.

**You also need to be proactive.** Composure is not just about being able to return to a state of poise, but also about considering your own beliefs and expectations that produce emotions in the first place. For example, if you expect that nothing will ever go wrong with your project, then you're likely in for a big shock. Compare that with a healthier belief that, most likely, something will go wrong, and when it does, you'll manage it. It's easy – just expect that everything will be harder than you expect!

✓ VISION

✓ COLLABORATION

✓ COMPOSURE

Your  
Resilience  
Plan

**5. TENACITY: The  
wisdom or positive  
messages that help  
you persist in tough  
times**

**REASONING**

✓ HEALTH

## TENACITY

**Persistence is the key.** Einstein pointed out the importance of persistence for success when he said that “It’s not that I’m so smart, it’s just that I stay with problems longer”. In a globalised world, success is no longer a given. We need to be willing to work hard and smart and stay with a problem if we hope to achieve something, especially if you want to achieve something that no one else has.

**Learn from mistakes.** Rarely will we do things right the first time. And even when doing something we know well, eventually we will make mistakes. At home, with friends, at work. Mistakes creep in everywhere, so what is important is how we react to mistakes. Admonishing ourselves doesn’t help. Instead, it’s important to be able to objectively look at our mistakes, find lessons in them, and not define ourselves by them. The past is there learn from, not to dwell on.

**Don’t be naïve, have realistic optimism.** Research shows that people who are overly optimistic about succeeding are less likely to, since they tend to give up at the first sign of trouble. What is more useful for success is to have a sense of ‘realistic optimism’, meaning that you are hopeful about your ability to succeed, but you realise that the road will be tough and full of challenges. This realisation combined with the willingness to be persistent is what ultimately leads to success for individuals, teams and organisations.

✓ VISION

✓ COLLABORATION

✓ COMPOSURE

Your  
Resilience  
Plan

✓ TENACITY

**6. REASONING:**  
The actions you take  
to solve a problem

✓ HEALTH

## REASONING

**Creativity and innovative problem solving** is incredibly useful when facing challenges along the way. This is what the Reasoning domain is all about. This domain needs Composure for you to keep your cool, as well as Vision so you know what goals to direct your actions toward.

**Anticipate and plan.** Like Composure, it's not just about applying critical thinking during a crisis, but also about taking action ahead of time to prevent things from going wrong in the first place. In fact, it's mostly about proactive action. This is like going to the dentist regularly so you won't need a root canal later. Think proactively through how things may go wrong and take action ahead of time to prevent or minimize impact, and think through how you'll deal with different scenarios.

**Be resourceful.** Having the right information, tools, techniques and people available to you will help you solve problems more effectively and find more efficient ways to reach your goals. Resourcefulness is a skill we need to actively build, and the more resourceful we are, the easier it becomes to make unusual connections and find innovative ways forward.

**See opportunity in change.** A high Reasoning ability means that a changing environment is welcome since it always brings hidden opportunities. By maintaining your composure and knowing what you want to achieve, change is no longer a threat and you can look for things that others might have missed, helping you to succeed.

**VISION:** Your purpose; goals; what drives you

**COLLABORATION:**  
Who you can call upon  
and in what context

**COMPOSURE:** The  
coping strategies you use  
to manage uncomfortable  
emotions

Your  
Resilience  
Plan

**TENACITY:** The wisdom  
or positive messages that  
help you persist in tough  
times

**REASONING:** The  
actions you take to solve a  
problem

**HEALTH:** Nutrition, sleep & exercise strategies