



RESILIENCE IN A TIME OF CRISIS

Dr. Marion Borcherds
Ms. Radhi Vandayar

COVID CAME INTO OUR LIVES...



Can infectious diseases affect mental health?

Infectious disease outbreaks, such as COVID-19 can be scary and can affect our mental health.

- Current mental health stats: 1 in 4
- Global megatrends causes heightened fear
- Overall increase in anxiety levels
- It is natural to feel overwhelmed, vulnerable, stressed and anxious.
- Additional risk factors: a trauma or a mental health problem in the past, or if you have a long-term
- Physical health condition that makes you more vulnerable to the effects of COVID-19.



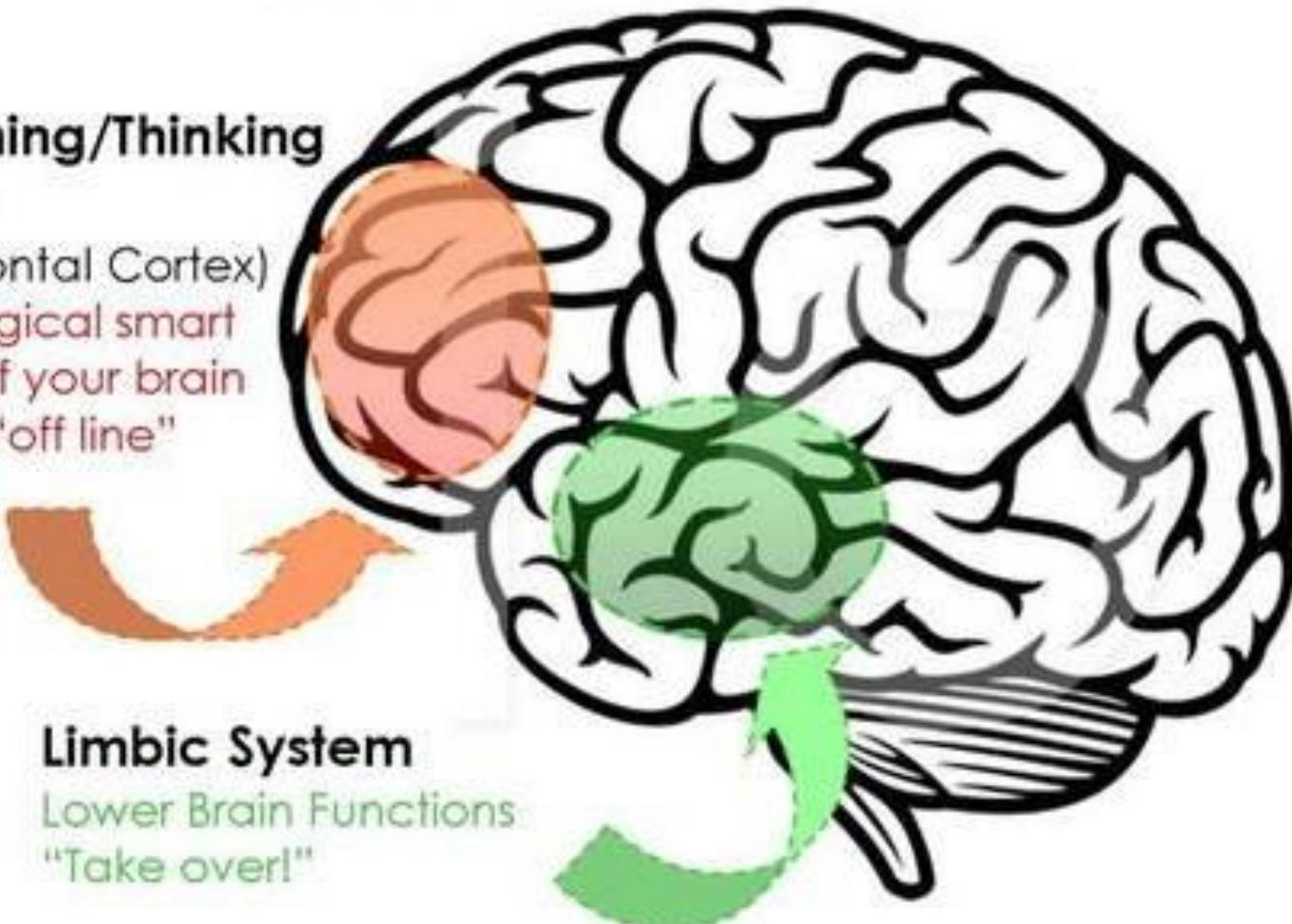
How does a traumatic event play out in the brain?

FIGHT - FLIGHT - FREEZE
What's really happening when we go into
"Survival Mode"

**Learning/Thinking
Brain**

(Prefrontal Cortex)

The logical smart
part of your brain
goes "off line"

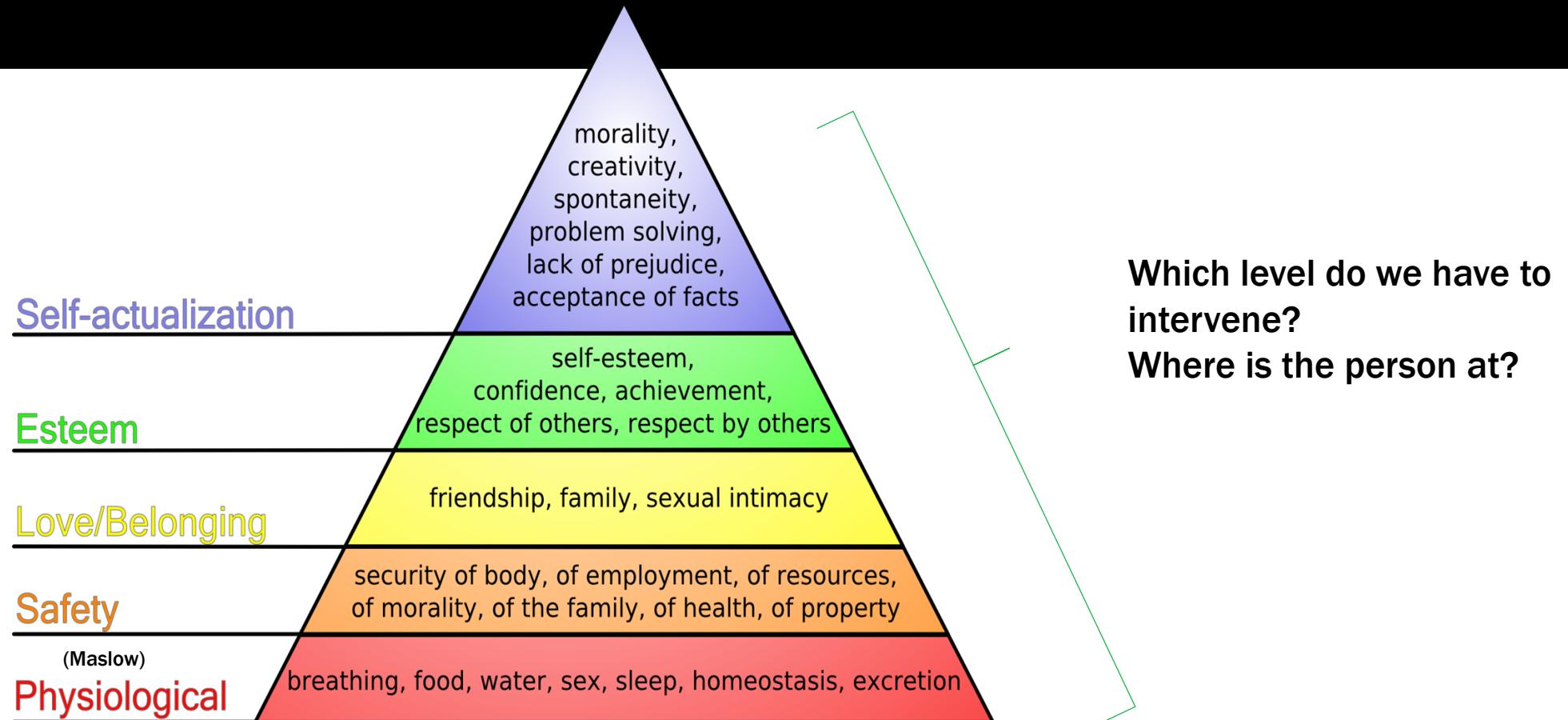


Limbic System

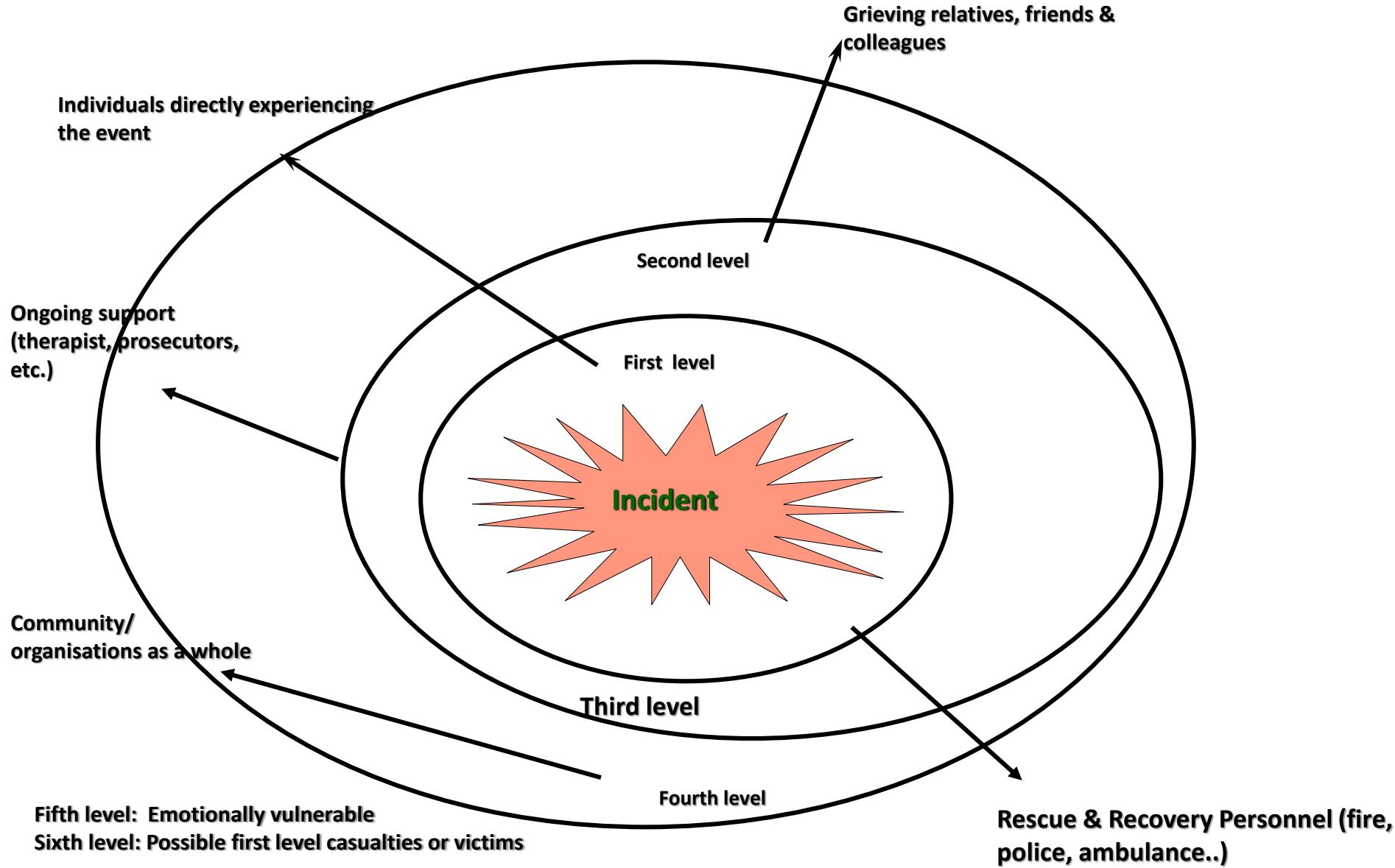
Lower Brain Functions

"Take over!"

STRESS AND TRAUMA AFFECTS US AT A BASIC LEVEL



THE RIPPLE EFFECT OF TRAUMA



**SO WHERE ARE WE
NOW?**

PANDEMIC FATIGUE:

- ✓ We have become desensitised to what is happening to us
- ✓ A demotivation to follow recommended protective behaviours, emerging gradually over time and affected by a number of emotions, experiences and perceptions (WHO)
- ✓ Pandemic fatigue is an expected and natural response to a prolonged public health crisis



I'm
sick & tired
of being sick
and tired



PANDEMIC FATIGUE:

- ✓ A natural and expected reaction to sustained and unresolved adversity in people's lives.
- ✓ Expresses itself as emerging demotivation to engage in protection behaviours and seek COVID-19-related information and as complacency, alienation and hopelessness.
- ✓ Evolving gradually over time and affected by a number of emotions, experiences and perceptions as well as the cultural, social, structural and legislative environment.



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PANDEMIC FATIGUE:

What causes pandemic fatigue?

- ✓ Constant state of high alert and uncertainty is exhausting
- ✓ Restriction to life/activities/normality
- ✓ Conspiracy theories
- ✓ Continuous loss of lives and increase in infection
- ✓ Continued impact on our mental health
- ✓ Fear of the unknown (restrictions/vaccine/2nd wave)
- ✓ You can expand if there is more

WHAT'S THE IMPACT OF PANDEMIC FATIGUE ON OUR HEALTH / MENTAL HEALTH

- Complacency
- Negative attitudes (we will all die anyway)
- Increased risk of infection
- Desensitisation / Numbness of feelings & emotions
- Self-neglect
(emotionally/psychologically/physically)
- Risky behaviours
- Lack of empathy for other



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Results in:

- Mental ill health- depression, PTSD,
- Isolation,
- Financial problems,
- High levels of conflict,
- Abuse,
- Schooling problems,



STRESS AND WARNING SIGNS

Stress Warning Signs and Symptoms	
Cognitive Symptoms	Emotional Symptoms
Physical Symptoms	Behavioral Symptoms
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Memory problems→ Inability to concentrate→ Poor judgment→ Seeing only the negative→ Anxious thoughts→ Worrying constantly→ Memory problems→ Inability to concentrate→ Poor judgment→ Seeing only the negative→ Anxious thoughts→ Worrying constantly	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Moodiness→ Irritability or short temper→ Agitation, inability to relax→ Feeling overwhelmed→ Sense of loneliness and isolation→ Depression or general unhappiness
<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Aches and pains→ Diarrhea or constipation→ Nausea, dizziness→ Chest pain, rapid heartbeat→ Loss of sex drive→ Frequent colds	<ul style="list-style-type: none">→ Eating more or less→ Sleeping too much or too little→ Isolating yourself from others→ Procrastinating or neglecting responsibilities→ Using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relaxNervous habits (e.g. nail biting, pacing)

WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

The ability to:

- *Persevere or adapt when things go wrong*
- *Overcome obstacles*
- *Bounce back from major setbacks*
- *Adapt to stressful situations*
- *To ‘roll with the punches’*
- *Adapt to diversity*

- “***spring back to its original*** form after being bent or stretched; readily recovering from X” – Oxford Paperback Dictionary
- “bouncy, elastic, ***flexible, pliable***, supple, irrepressible, ***quick to recover***”
- “the ability for ***physical, psychological and spiritual recovery*** and renewal in the face of adversity” Wikipedia

THOSE WHO ARE MORE RESILIENT ...

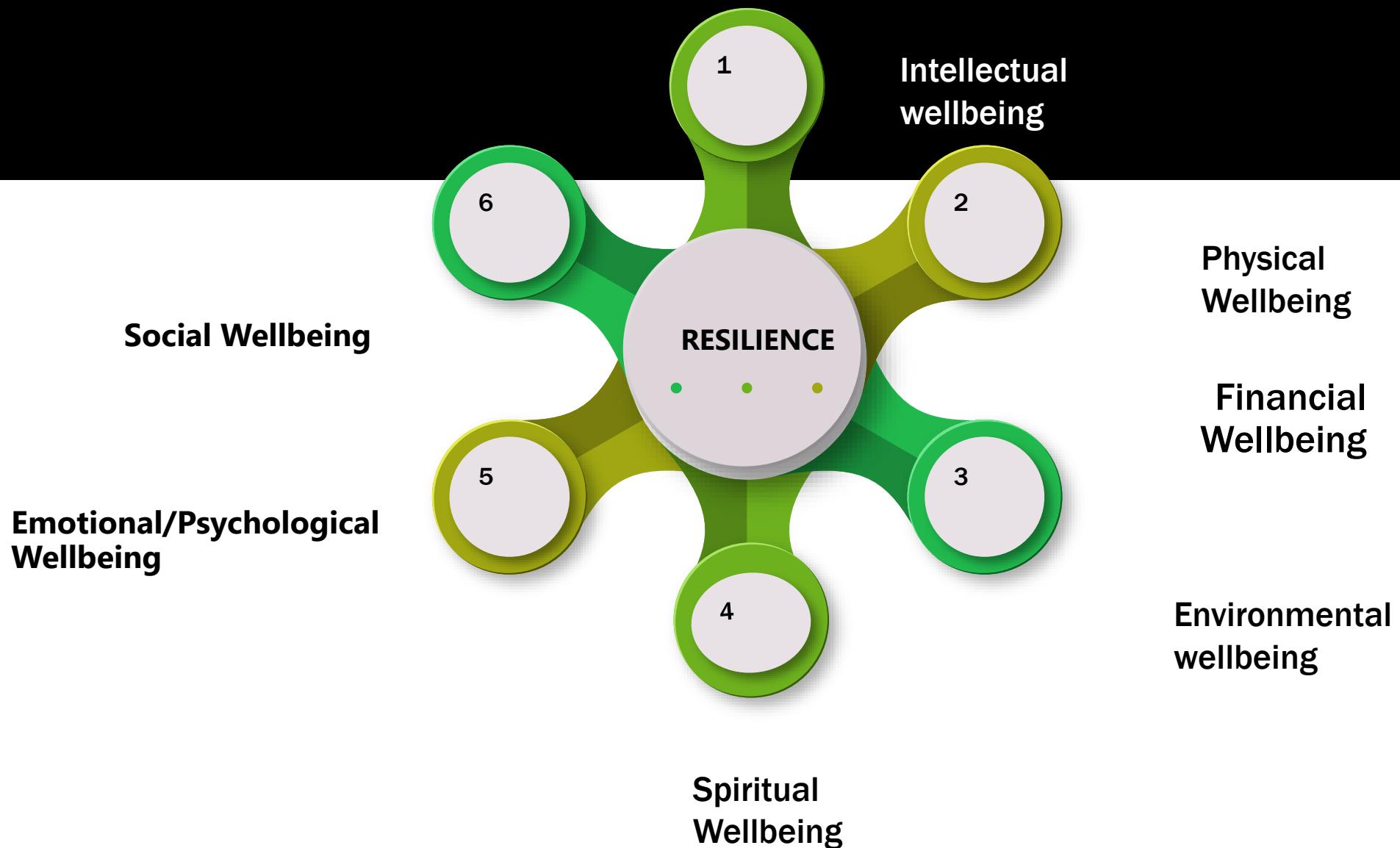
- Less resilient people have a harder time coping with stress and life changes , both major and minor .
- Those who manage minor life crises more easily can also manage major life crises with greater ease.

- Defined as a set of traits, by others as a process and even by some as an outcome
- To some degree something you are born with . Some people by nature are less upset by changes or surprises .
- Emotional resilience is also related to some factors that are not under your control, such as age , gender and exposure to trauma.
- Can be developed over time .

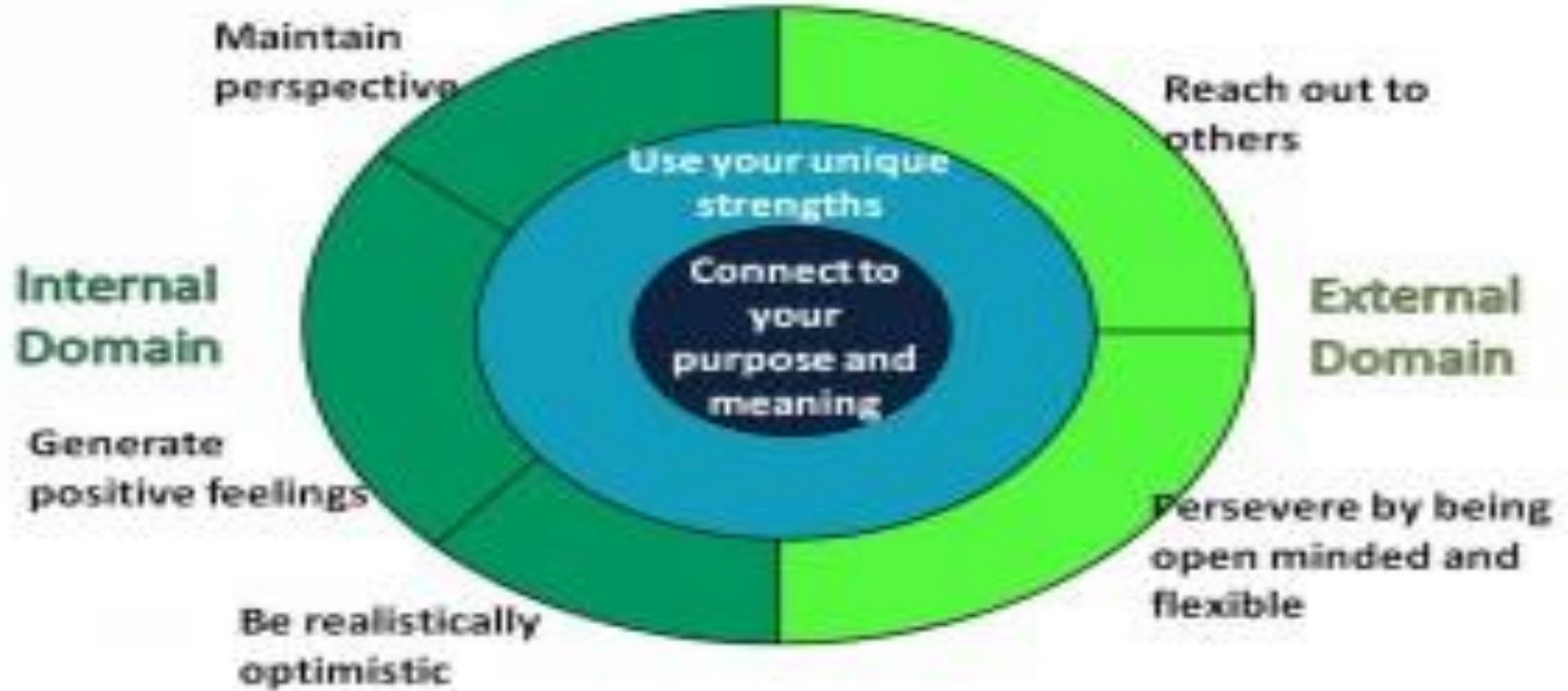
FROM STRESS TO RESILIENCE

Why is this important ?

Non-Resilient Thinking (Thinking ‘Ruts’)	Resilient Thinking
Developed over a long period of time.	Creative problem solving
Unproductive habits	Move on despite obstacles
Often illogical and irrational	Flexible and accurate
	Able to see others points of view
	Can be learned anytime



Personal resilience building blocks



SELF- AWARENESS



PRINCIPLES OF BUILDING RESILIENCE

Use your Unique Strengths

- Realistic self insight into one's own character strengths and vulnerabilities is the basis for understanding one's capabilities and limits when dealing with adversity.
- Use your natural character strengths to problem solve, devise creative solutions and reach out to others during adversity. Accurate self insight enables the development of a realistic recovery strategy and expectations from adversity.

Persevere by Being open minded and flexible

- Allowing for listening, consideration of differing views and being open to a change of tactics or even strategy.

Reach out to Others

- Reaching out to others to ask for help, as well as reaching out to others to offer help

PRINCIPLES OF BUILDING RESILIENCE

Maintain Perspective

- Maintain perspective by engaging in enjoyable, relaxing and recharging activities. Taking steps to change the way I think, the relationships and work context to weigh in other options/ways of looking at or addressing challenges .
- Reframe negatively biased thinking and persistent negative self talk

Generate Positive Feelings

- Negative feelings are in themselves not “bad”, but in excess they can lead to substantially reduced mental and even physical functionality and thus the capability to deal with the adversity. Control negative feelings – generate positive feelings
- Exercise: reflect daily on three good things which you have done each day and their impact on others.

Be Realistically Optimistic

- Victor Frankl: "...everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms - to choose one's attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one's own way". Don't get stuck in the mind-set of persistently seeing doom and gloom. Reframe the adversity and thus choose a more balanced and positive outlook on life.
- Reflecting on the good that has happened to you over the past 24 hours and reflecting on what you are really grateful for and why.

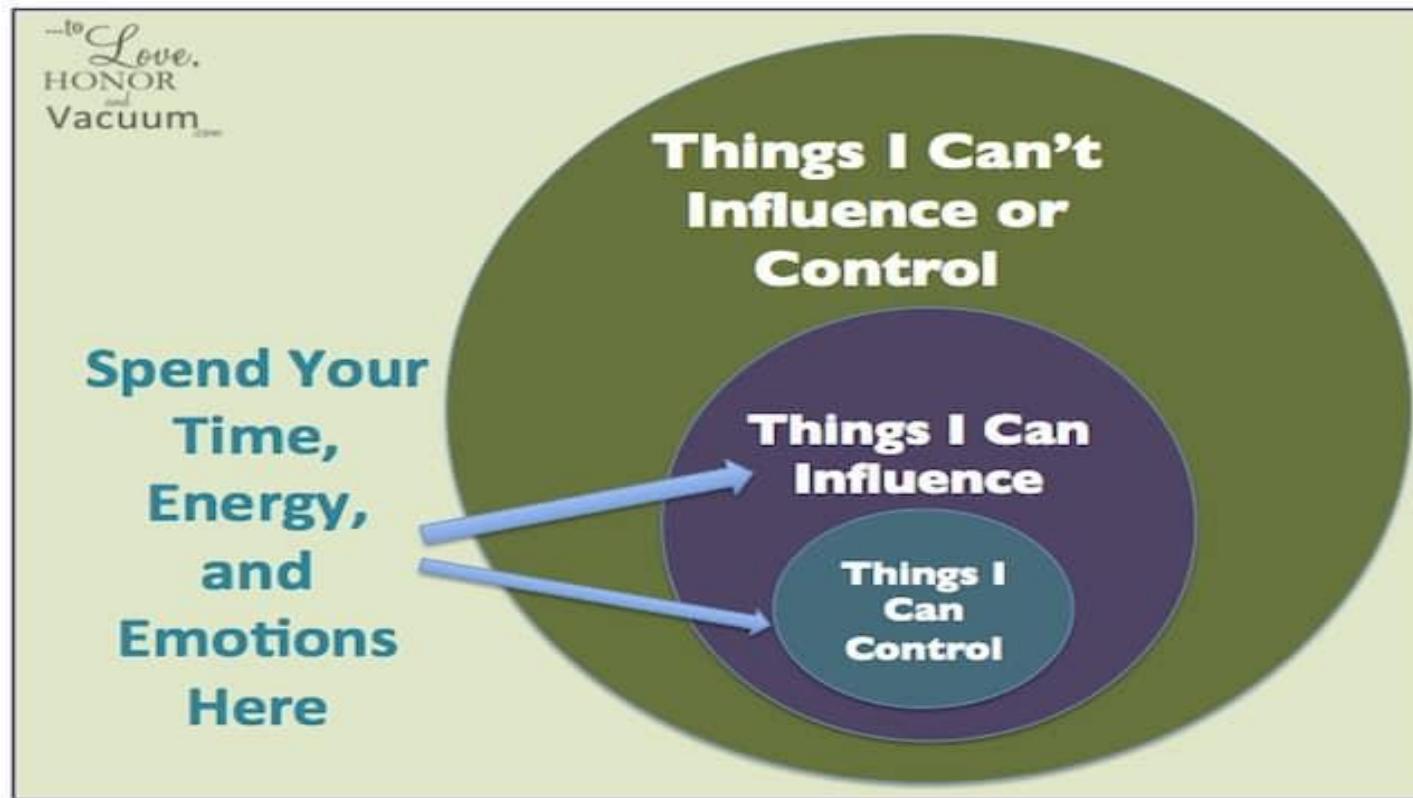
SOCIAL NETWORKS



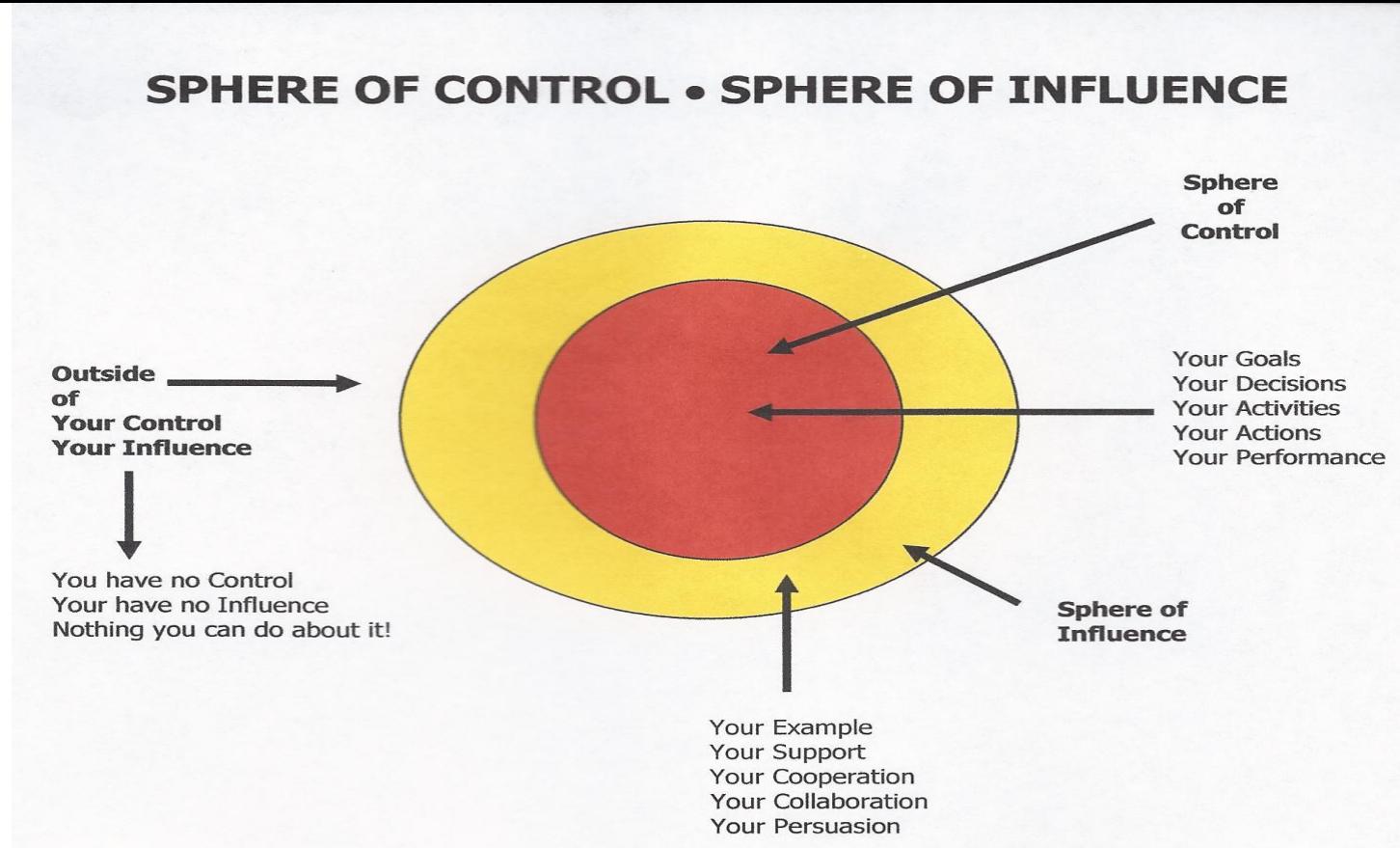
Our Social Networks are an important part of our Resilience plan . The strength of our social networks and the quality of our relationships is critical to our sense of wellbeing and fortitude

Resilient people surround themselves with strong social support networks .

ASSESS AND STRATEGISE SPHERES OF CONTROL

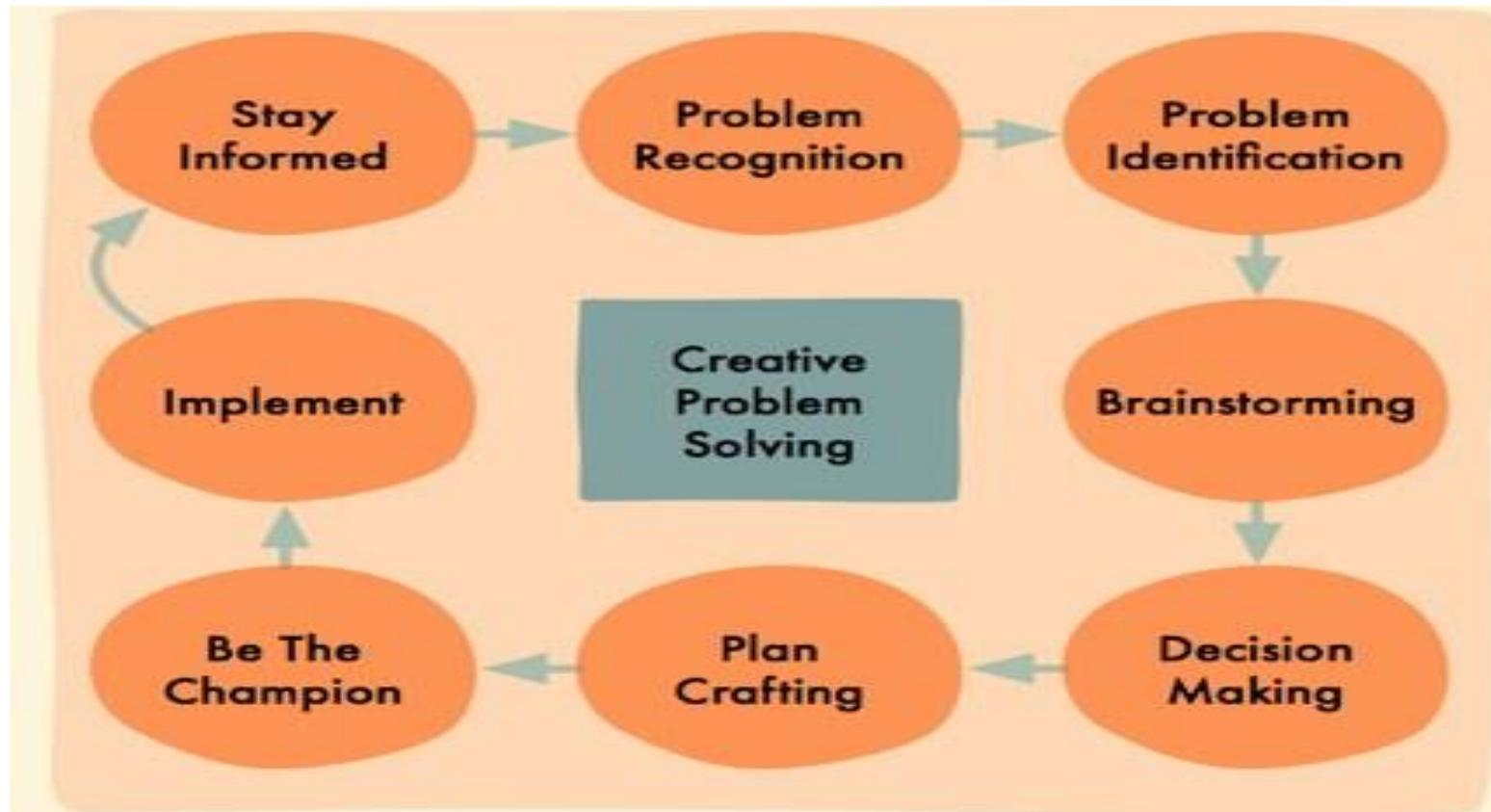


EXPLORE THE SPHERES OF INFLUENCE & CONTROL



ASSESS, PLAN AND ACT USING PROBLEM SOLVING

No action no happiness



HOW RESILIENT ARE YOU?

Rate yourself from 1 to 5 (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree):

1. I'm usually optimistic. I see difficulties as temporary and expect to overcome them.
2. Feelings of anger, loss and discouragement don't last long.
3. I can tolerate high levels of ambiguity and uncertainty about situations.
4. I adapt quickly to new developments. I'm curious. I ask questions.
5. I'm playful. I find the humor in rough situations and can laugh at myself.
6. I learn valuable lessons from my experiences and from the experiences of others.
7. I'm good at solving problems. I'm good at making things work well.
8. I'm strong and durable. I hold up well during tough times.
9. I've converted misfortune into good luck and found benefits in bad experiences.

RESULTS – YOU CAN BUILD RESILIENCY!

Less than 20: Low Resilience — You may have trouble handling pressure or setbacks, and may feel deeply hurt by any criticism. When things don't go well, you may feel helpless and without hope. Consider seeking some professional counsel or support in developing your resiliency skills. Connect with others who share your developmental goals.

20–30: Some Resilience — You have some valuable pro-resiliency skills, but also plenty of room for improvement. Strive to strengthen the characteristics you already have and to cultivate the characteristics you lack. You may also wish to seek some outside coaching or support.

30–35: Adequate Resilience — You are a self-motivated learner who recovers well from most challenges. Learning more about resilience, and consciously building your resiliency skills, will empower you to find more joy in life, even in the face of adversity.

35–45: Highly Resilient — You bounce back well from life's setbacks and can thrive even under pressure. You could be of service to others who are trying to cope better with adversity.

TOOLS TO SUPPORT EMPLOYEES-CONTAINING & DEFUSING

The FOCUS is upon the immediate need and concerns of the person in crisis.

NB. DETAILS of the Event are not as important as defusing the person's stress and orientating them.

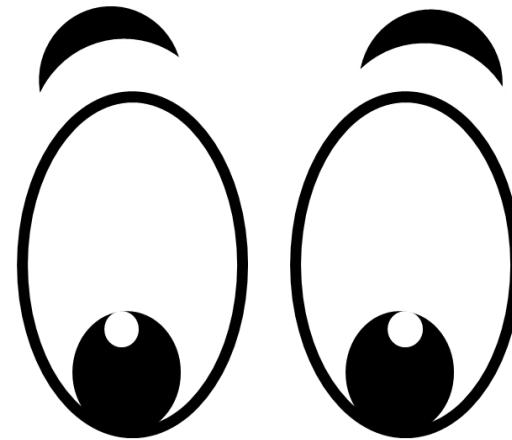
KEY GUIDELINES:

- Wherever possible offer the person PRIVACY
- Ask HOW you may help
- Provide PHYSICAL and PRACTICAL assistance first
- Be prepared for FLOODED CONTACT or AVOIDANCE of CONTACT
- Speak calmly, be patient, focused, responsive, and sensitive
- Offer measures of SUPPORT:
 - ✓ "I'm available." "We have Counsellors here."
 - ✓ "We can make you comfortable."
 - ✓ "We will get hold of your family."
- Ask:
 - ✓ "Is there anything you'd like to say?"
 - ✓ "Is there anything you want to know?"
 - ✓ "Is there anything you don't understand?"

Under the COVID-19 restrictions of physical and social distancing - offer these support guidelines online and have the necessary professional referral resources available.

ISSUES TO WATCH OUT FOR & PERSONAL TRIGGERS

- Rescuing
- Over-identifying
- Role confusion
- Unclear boundaries
- Unmanaged emotions
- Over-reaction on trigger issues
- “Delusions of omnipotence”
- Lack of skill



POTENTIAL RISKS IN HELPING

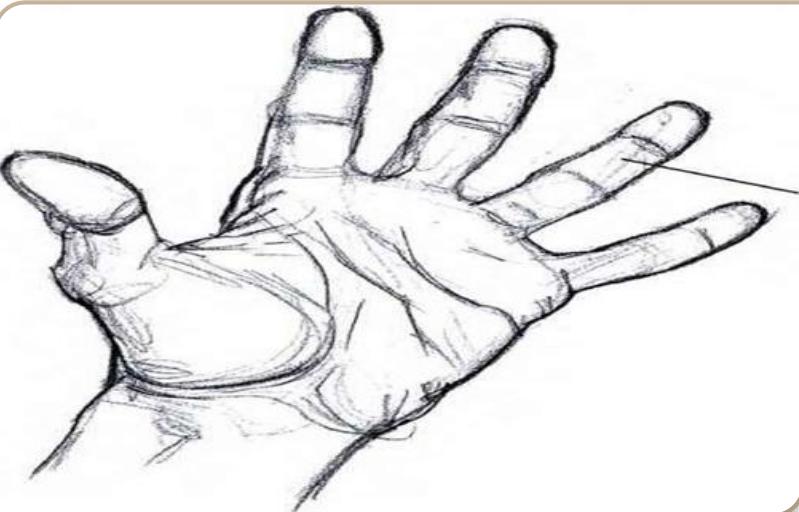
- Post traumatic stress-like symptoms
- Difficulties in personal or professional relationships
- Difficulties in managing boundaries
- Difficulties in dealing with emotions
- Withdrawal from others, families, friends and colleagues



SELF-CARE TOOLS ON HELPING WITH COMPASSION/COVID FATIGUE



SELF-CARE: 5 STEPS TO BUILD A PERSONAL SELF CARE PLAN



Assess

- Assess your own selfcare level

Develop

- Develop your personal self care strategy

Incorporate

- Incorporate your plan in everyday life

Monitor

- Monitor your progress

Practice

- Practice, practice, practice

QUESTIONS?