



ASPR

How Long Has Your “Check Engine” Light Been On? Enhancing Your Understanding of Yourself and Stress During COVID-19

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Learning Objectives

- I. Identify challenges and stressors in the COVID-19 environment
- II. Understand burnout/compassion fatigue/caution fatigue/moral injury/complex grief
- III. Explore individual mitigation strategies and self-assessment tools

Who is this about?



Behavioral Health Federal Disaster Engagement

Primary Engagement

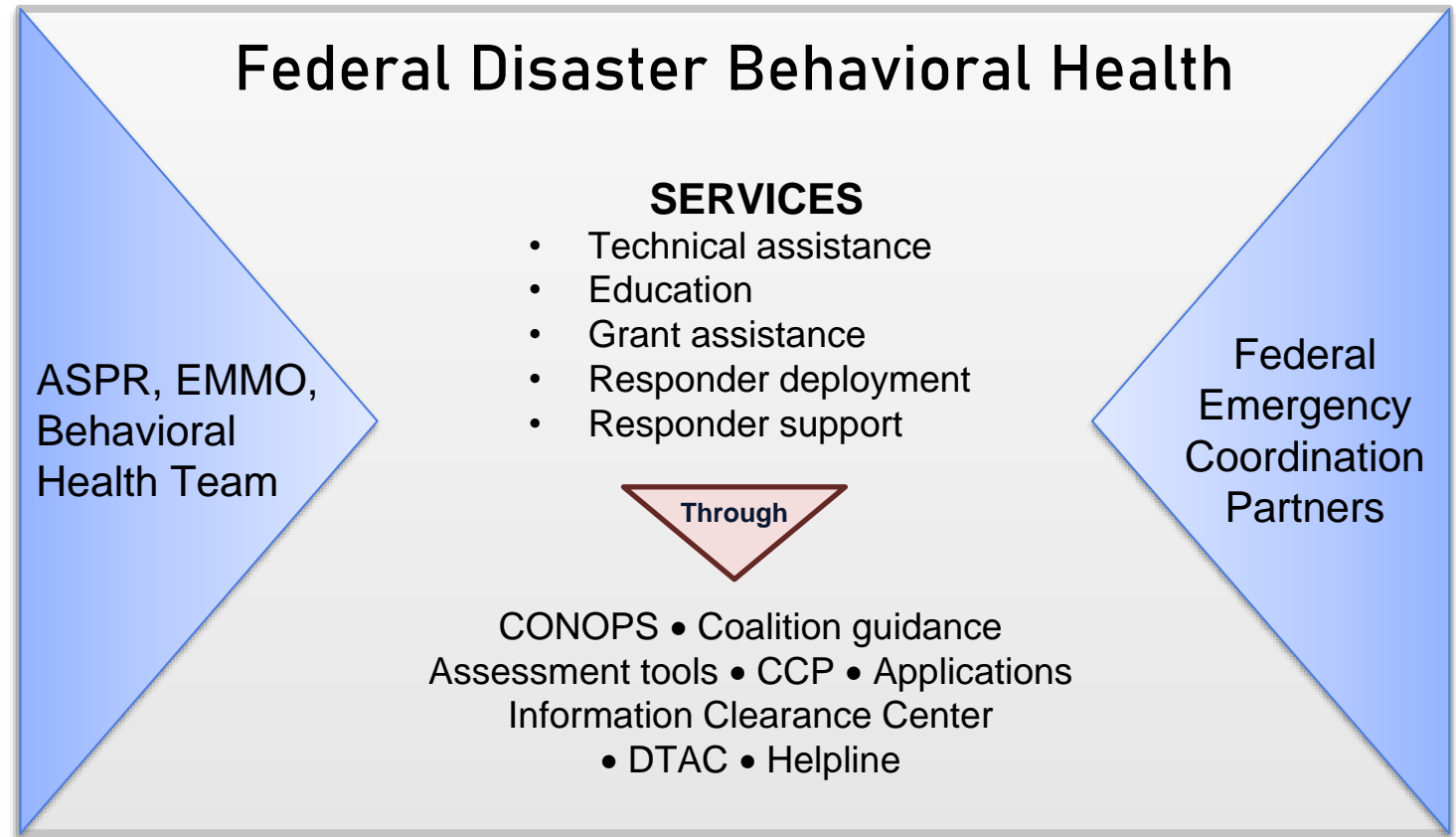
- State, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) entities
- Voluntary organizations active in disasters (VOADs)

Federal Engagement

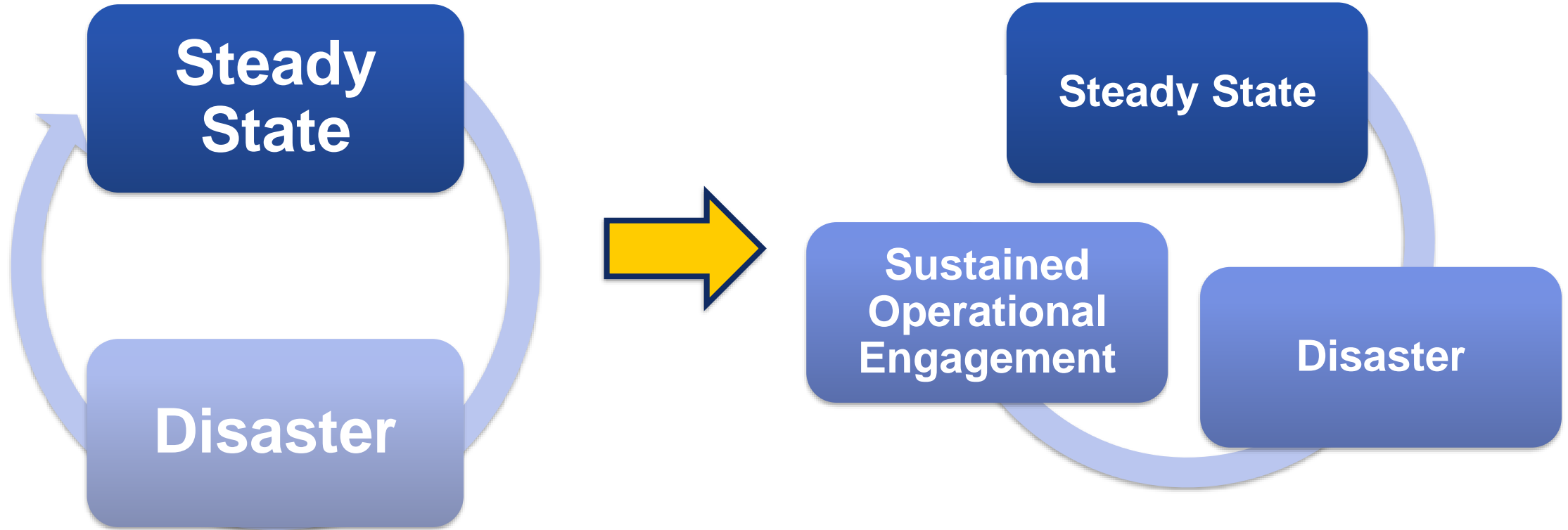
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

Disaster Behavioral Health

- ASPR
- SAMHSA



Where are we now?



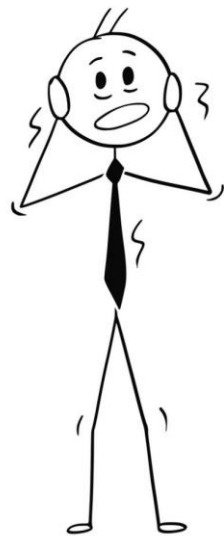
Individual COVID-19 Stressors

1. Long-term ambiguity	7. Increased workload
2. Isolation	8. PPE-related challenges
3. Risk of exposing self and others to the virus	9. Vaccine: "Should I?" "When will I be able to?"
4. Pressure to finish objectives quickly with limited resources	10. Changes in professional roles/responsibilities
5. Facility surges	11. Social distancing
6. Professional and personal responsibilities	12. Unclear/sudden changes to guidelines

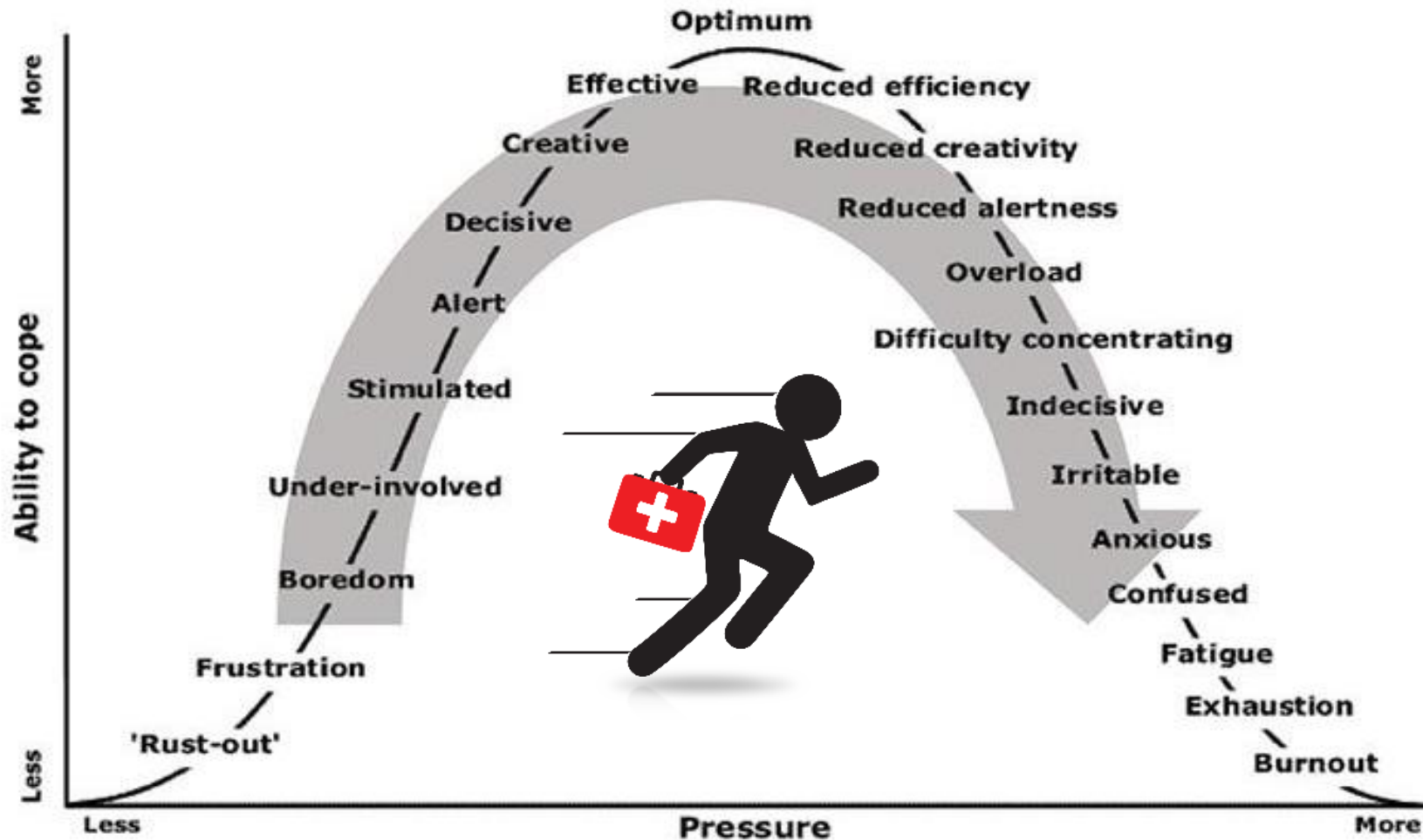


Stress: What is it?

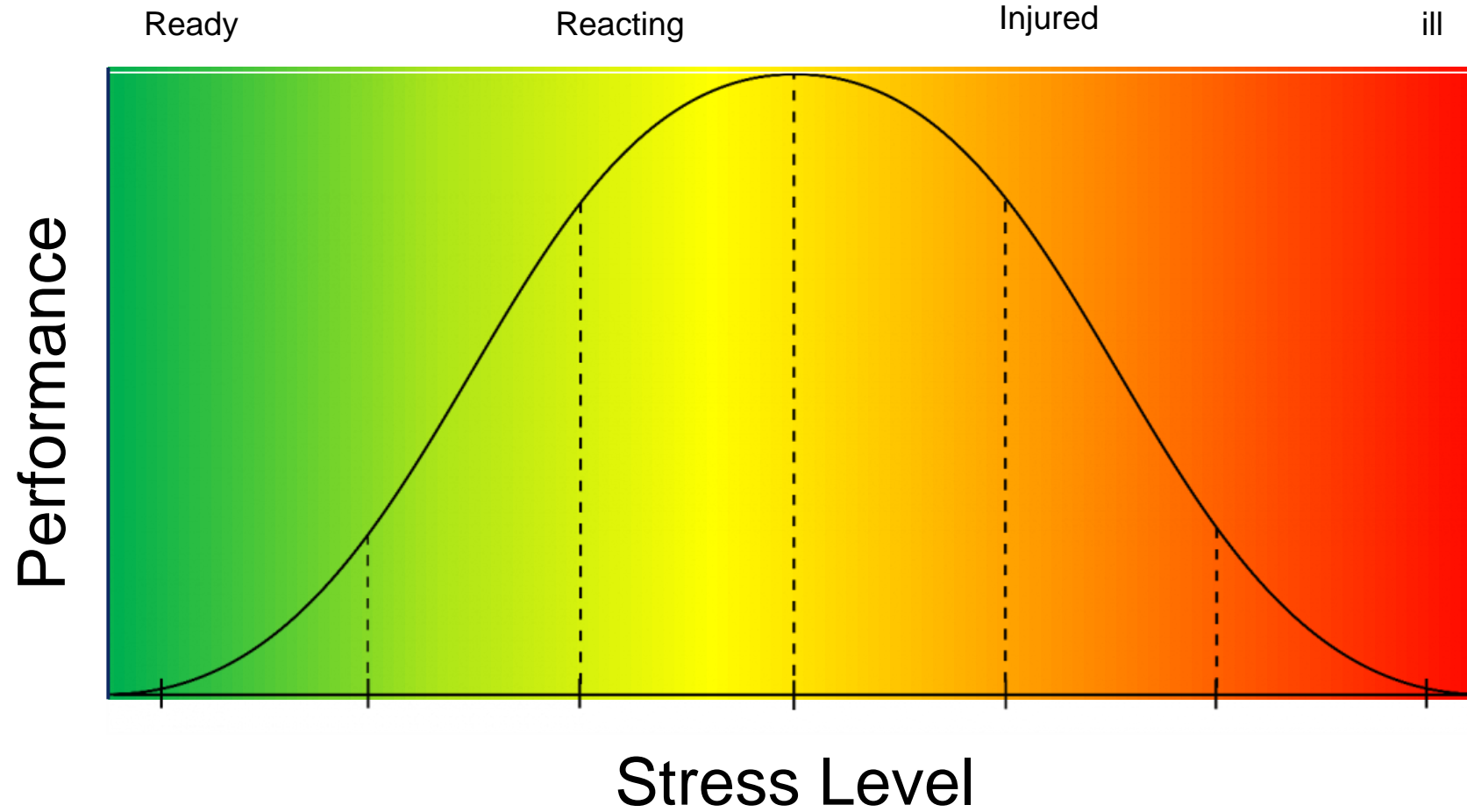
- A response characterized by physical and psychological arousal as a direct result of an exposure to any demand or pressure on a living organism.
- Stress is the response to a stressor and can be positive or negative.



Continuum of Stress: Where are you?



Continuum of Stress: Where are you?



Consequences for Responders/Providers

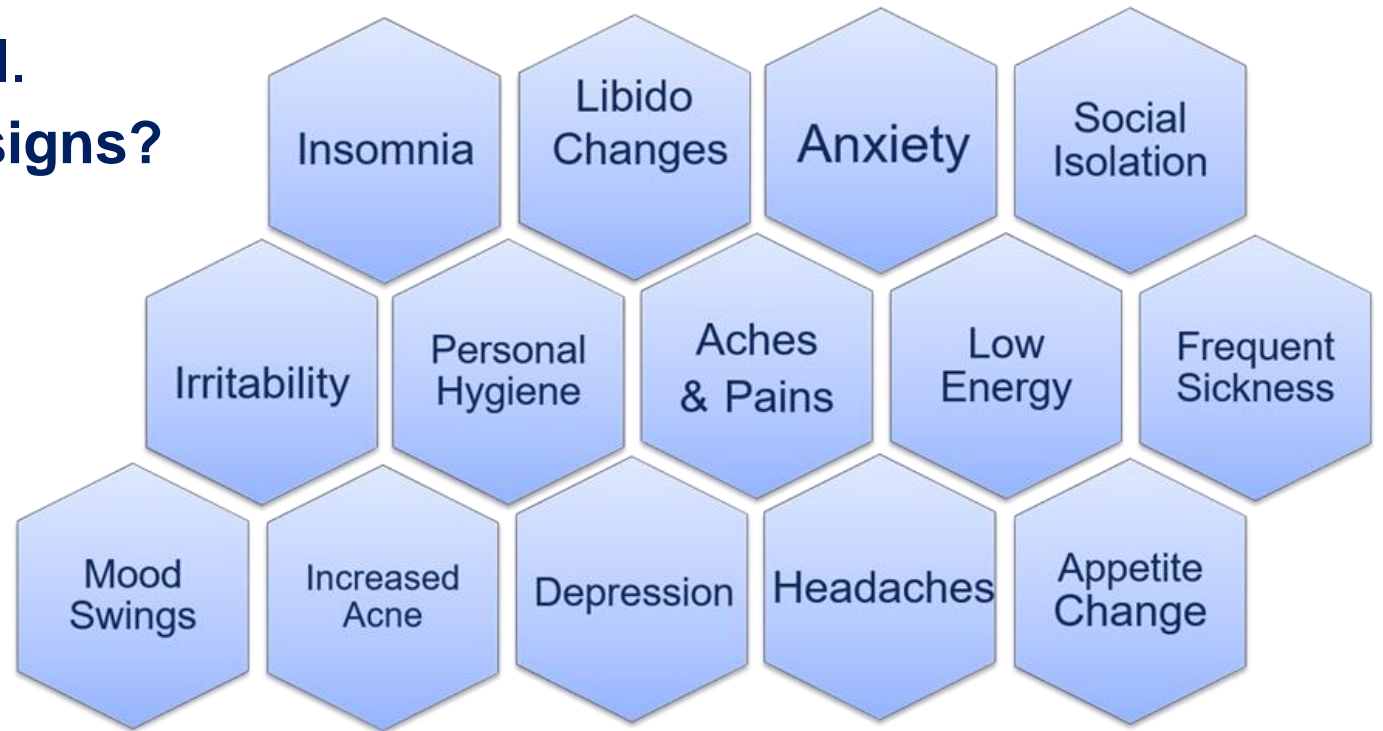
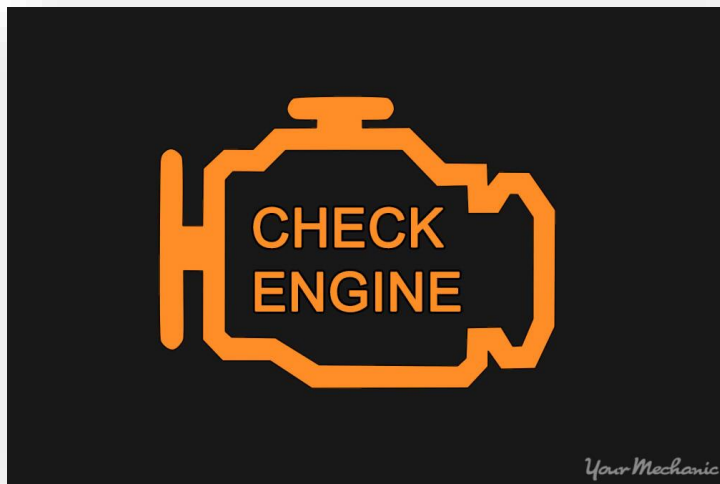
- Impacts on decision making
- Increased risk of mistakes
- Impact on systems outside of work (family, friends, etc.)
- Mental/physical health implications
- Substance use
- Professional burnout



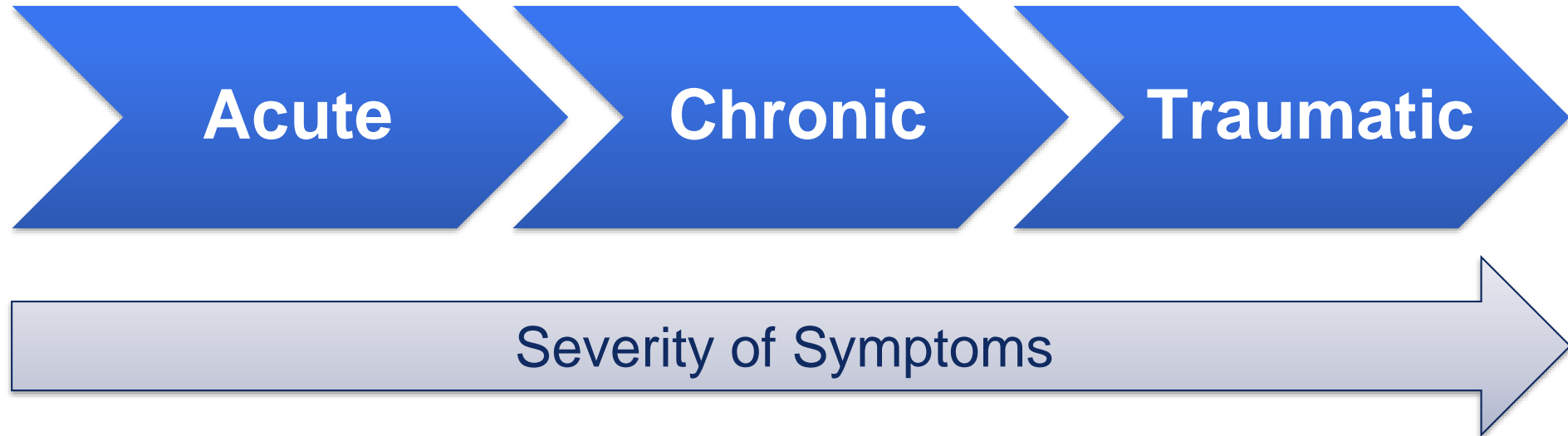
© Sarah Andersen

Building Awareness Signs & Symptoms of Stress

- Prolonged exposure to stress can present in a variety of symptoms and levels of severity.
- Active self-assessment as a tool.
- **What are your early warning signs?**



Stress Disorders & Adverse Conditions



Examples


- Acute Stress Disorders
- Anxiety
- Depression
- PTSD
- Burnout
- **Compassion Fatigue**
- **Caution Fatigue**
- **Complex Grief**
- **Moral Injury**

Consequences: Burnout

- Cumulative emotional exhaustion and withdrawal as a result of workload and institutional stress.
- Occurs over time.
- Presents:
 - Decreased performance
 - Increased absenteeism
 - Poor morale/attitude



Consequences: Compassion Fatigue

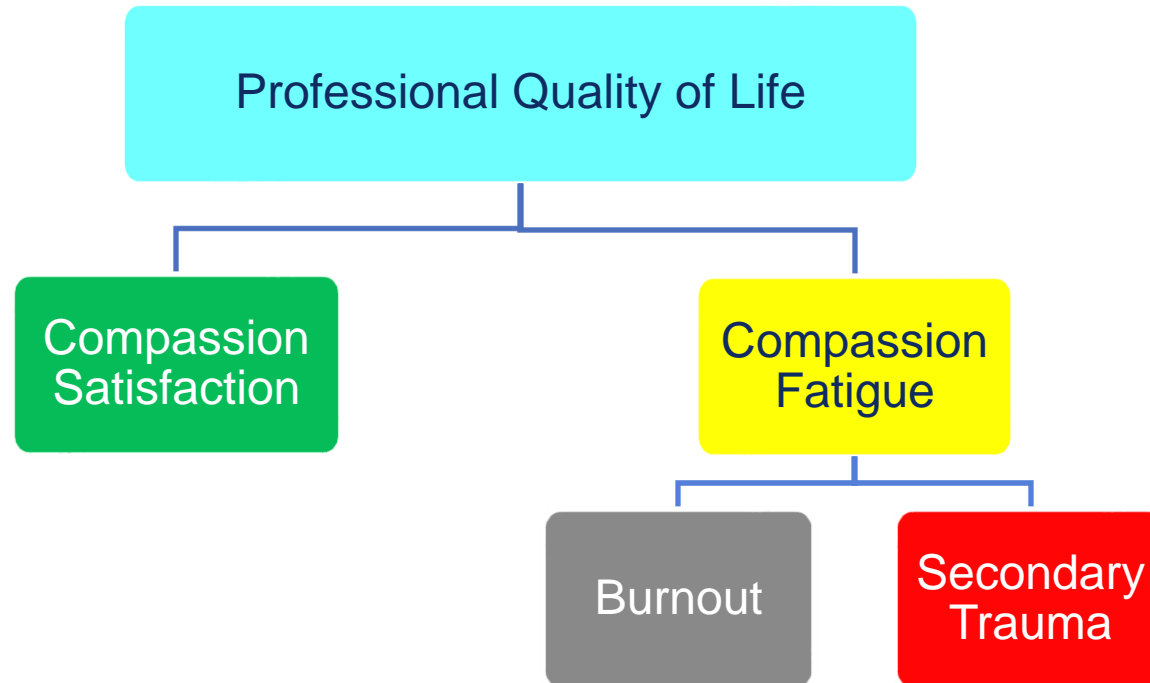
- Related to exposure working with those suffering from traumatic or distressing events.
- Prolonged exposure =  Risk for responders/providers
- Presents:
 - Detachment or numbing
 - Rigid thinking
 - Over-engagement
 - Blurred boundaries/roles
- Difficult to self-diagnose



Self-Assessment: ProQOL

A measurement of the negative and positive affects of helping others who experience suffering and trauma.

ProQOL Self-Assessment Tool



Caution Fatigue (Complacency)

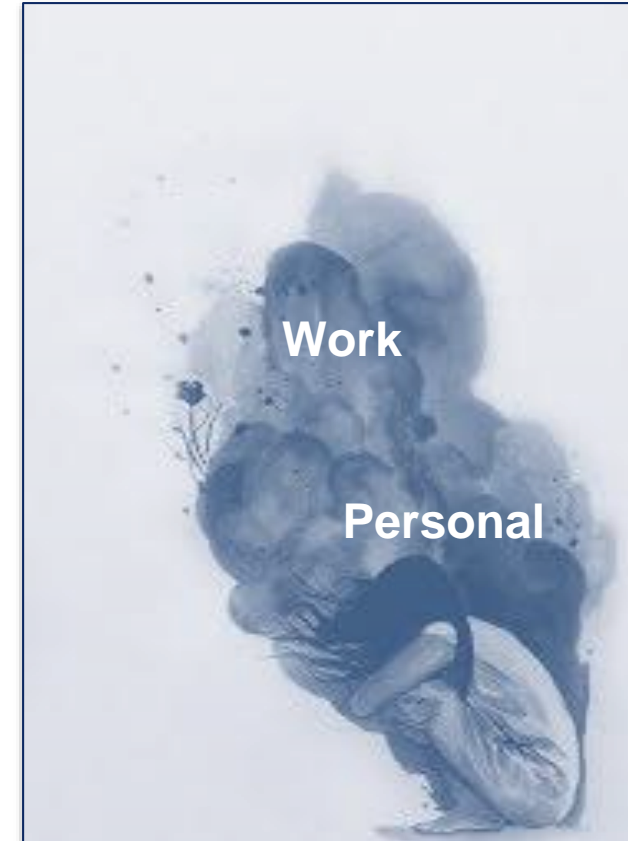
- When a person understands the actions needed to protect their health, but is willing to stop being careful because they believe it to be too exhausting.
- Why this happens?
 - It can be especially difficult to stay motivated to be cautious when nobody within a person's circle has gotten sick.
 - What are some indicators of Caution Fatigue?



Source: [MUSC](#)

Complex (Complicated) Grief

- A chronic, impairing form of grief
- Brought on by interference/interruption to the healing process
- COVID-19 impact on grief
 - Communication
 - Disrupted Processes
 - Isolation
 - Fear



[Mental Health Disorders Related to COVID-19-related Deaths](#)

Moral Injury

The psychological, behavioral, social, and/or spiritual distress experienced by individuals who are performing or exposed to actions that contradict their moral values.

I did something bad.

I feel disgusted and betrayed.



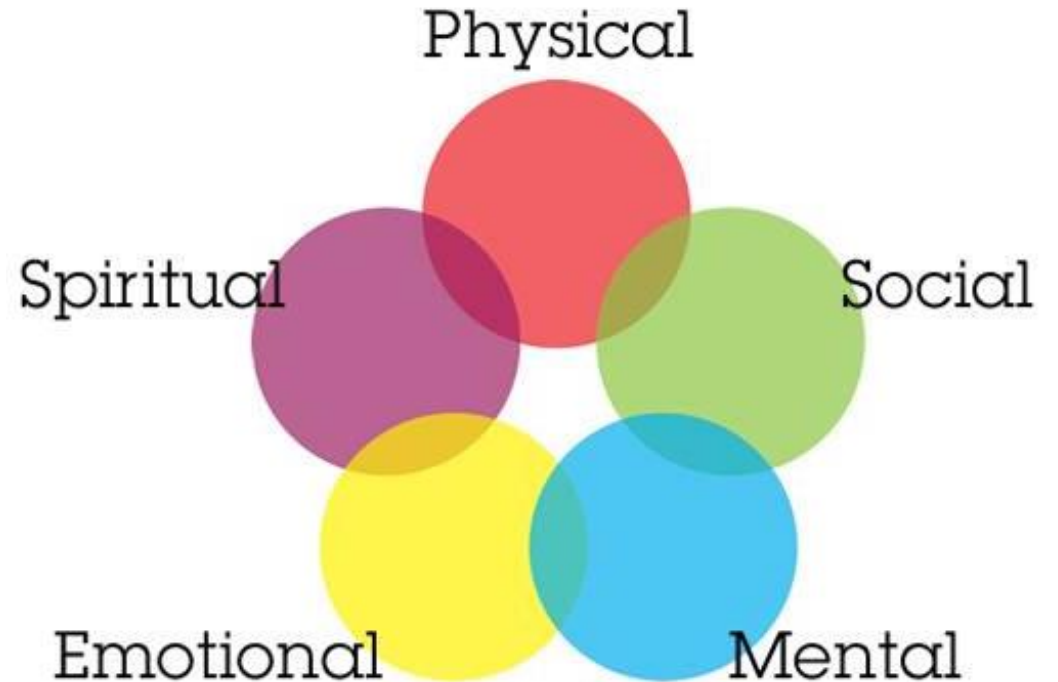
I cannot forgive myself.

I am bad because of what I did.

NCPTSD: [Moral Injury](#)

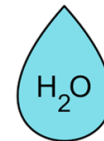
Self-Care: Individual Coping Strategies

- ***The Foundation:*** Sleep, Food, Movement & Hygiene
- Assess your self-care toolbox:
 - What do you use?
 - What kind is it?
 - What can you add?
- Manage news/social media exposure
- Increase support connections
- *Who* can you turn to for support?
- Know *how* and *where* to get help
- Are there resources you need?
- [Digital Psych App Evaluation](#)



Holistic Resilience Approach: Optimism



“The main concern of optimistic thinkers isn’t whether the glass is half full or half empty. Instead, they focus their energy where they have control to make a situation better”. - *Consortium for Health and Military Performance (CHAMP)*





Source: [CHAMP](#)

Self-Check Activity



1. What are your thoughts?

-  My thoughts are consumed with past negative events or potential worst-case outcomes.
-  My thoughts are focused on where I have control in this situation and how I can take action to improve things.



2. What are you saying to others?

-  The majority of my conversations involve complaining about things outside of my control.
-  Most of my conversations are focused on problem-solving and finding potential opportunities.



3. How are you spending your time?

-  I'm avoiding this struggle by procrastinating or distracting myself with unproductive behaviors (for example, social media, drinking, shopping).
-  I'm taking on this struggle by developing a plan of attack.

4. How are you persisting through this struggle?

-  If it gets hard, I'll likely give up.
-  I'm willing to push through adversity to find a way to grow.



5. How are you approaching others during this struggle?

-  I'm isolating myself from others and/or unintentionally lashing out.
-  I'm reaching out to others who can help and support me.



Source: [CHAMP](#)

Self-Check Activity Cont.



6. How do you see yourself in this struggle?

-  I'm a victim who lacks the ability to overcome an overpowering threat.
-  I'm a warrior with the strengths needed to overcome a tough challenge.



7. How are your emotions impacting your ability to navigate this struggle?

-  I'm overwhelmed with negative feelings that are blocking productive action.
-  I'm finding ways to generate moments of curiosity, gratitude, peace, or humor despite my struggle to stay energized.



8. How's this struggle affecting the rest of your life (for example, other relationships, work, hobbies, sleep, diet, etc.)?

-  This struggle is negatively impacting many parts of my life.
-  I'm finding ways to excel and find joy in other aspects of my life.

9. Where are you focusing your attention?

-  My focus is on the constraints that are limiting me in this struggle.
-  My focus is on those resources that can help me.

10. How is this struggle impacting your view of the future?

-  I have little hope the future will be better.
-  I'm hopeful and excited for the future.

Source: [CHAMP](#)

Optimism: How does it work?



- Where do I have control to make things better?
- What must I accept?
- How can I take productive action now?
- How can I keep one issue from affecting other parts of my life?
- What's good in my life?

Source: [CHAMP](#)

Create a Personal Resilience Plan - Activity

Identify 1 **resilience skill** and strategy you currently use.

Identify 1 **resilience skill** or strategy you would like to develop.

1. Engaging the support of others
2. Make connections and build your social support network
3. Personal or collective goals
4. Engaging in activities that are meaningful to you
5. Realistic sense of control/having choices - Focusing on what you can control
6. Faith/Spirituality
7. Not easily discouraged by failure and views it as a learning opportunity
8. Strong sense of purpose
9. Accept that change is an unavoidable part of life
10. Sense of humor
11. Optimism

Burnout/Compassion Fatigue: Cognitive Restructuring

Adaptive Engaging

- With others who understand and accept you
- In helpful activities
 - Increase coping skills
 - Build resilience
- Maintain integrity, dignity, and civility
- Avoid toxicity
- Avoid negative coping behaviors
- Use a buddy system



[ASPR TRACIE. Beyond the Response: Addressing Compassion Fatigue and Behavioral Health Needs for Healthcare Providers](#)

Moral Injury: Stress First Aid



[Stress First Aid](#): Patricia Watson, Ph.D.

Moral Injury: Intervention Strategies

Intervention	Sessions
<u>Trauma Informed Guilt Reduction</u>	6-8
<u>Adaptive Disclosure</u>	6-8 90 minutes sessions
<u>Impact of Killing Treatment Program</u>	10
<u>Prolonged Exposure (PE)</u>	2 - 15
<u>Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT)</u>	12
<u>Acceptance and Commitment Therapy</u>	Varies
<u>Building Spiritual Strength Therapy</u>	8



Strategies for Overcoming Caution Fatigue

- Understand *what* motivates your behavior.
- Consider who/what is important to you.
- Embrace the safety habits and routines you practiced earlier in the pandemic.
- When you forget to follow a guideline, simply correct it.
- Schedule news/social media intake at specific times of the day.
- Create a checklist.



Caution Fatigue: NIHB

Caution Fatigue: Communication Strategies

If someone says...

“It’s just a small gathering of 10/12 of us for the holidays”

“It’s been a long year and I haven’t seen my family for too long”

“I’m young and there’s a vaccine. Things can go back to normal now”

“The government can’t force me to wear a mask”



[Source](#)

You can respond by...

Emphasizing COVID-19 can be contagious before symptoms appear so all gatherings carry risk.

Recognizing the steps people have taken so far and **Discussing** ways to connect safely.

Acknowledging young people can transmit the virus to vulnerable persons and **Caution** it will take some time for everyone to get vaccinated.

Reminding that public health guidance and mandates are about protecting everybody.

Emergency Responder Self-Care Plan: Behavioral Health PPE



EMERGENCY RESPONDER SELF-CARE PLAN

Behavioral Health PPE

Based on the Anticipate.Plan.Deter™ Personal Resilience Plan and PsySTART Responder Triage System.
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SOURCES

- [CDC Traumatic Incident Stress: Information for Emergency Response Workers](#)
- [CDC Coping with a Disaster or Traumatic Event](#)
- [CHAMP 5 ways to power your performance with optimism](#)
- SAMHSA. (2014). [Tips for Disaster Responders: Preventing and Managing Stress](#). HHS Publication No. SMA-14-4873
- Ommeren, M. (2011). [A 1-day Orientation in Psychological First Aid \(PFA\) for First Responders](#). World Health Organization
- Schreiber, M. (2014). [Anticipate Plan Deter Responder Resilience System](#).

PREDICT
PROBLEMS

PRESCRIBE
PROTECTION

ENGAGE
YOUR PLAN

STRESS
MANAGEMENT
TIPS

BUDDY
SYSTEM

PFA &
RESOURCES

ASPR TRACIE: Emergency Responder Self-Care Plan: Behavioral Health PPE

Self-Care: Development/Learning and Growth

- [Skills for Psychological Recovery](#)
- [Mental Health First Aid Training](#)
- [Stress, Trauma, and Resilience \(STAR\) Brief Emotional Support Team \(BEST\)](#)
- [Emotional Consequences Of Public Health Emergencies](#)
- [ASPR TRACIE Mini Modules to Relieve Stress for Healthcare Workers Responding to COVID-19](#)



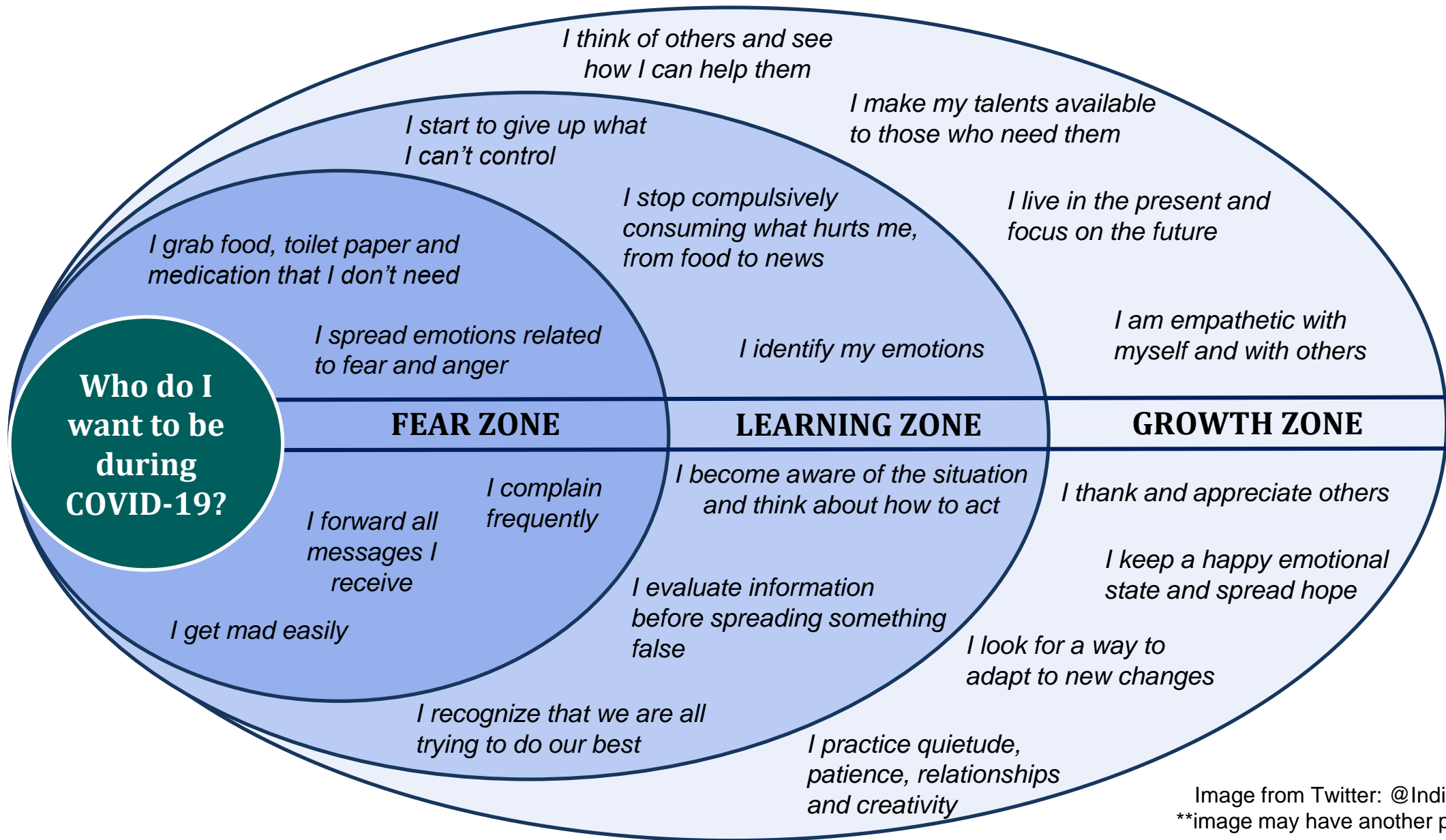


Image from Twitter: @IndigenousX
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When to reach out?

Symptoms ([Mental Health America](#))

- Confused thinking
- Prolonged depression
- Feelings of extreme highs and lows
- Excessive fears, worries and anxieties
- Social withdrawal
- Dramatic changes in eating/sleep
- Strong feelings of anger
- Delusions or hallucinations
- Growing inability to cope with daily problems and activities
- Suicidal thoughts
- Denial of obvious problems
- Numerous unexplained physical ailments
- Substance abuse

Have a **plan** and **know your options** (EAP, Hotlines, peer support, etc)

Call 911-if you believe someone is in imminent danger

National Suicide Prevention Hotline
Call 1-800-273-8255

Available 24 hours everyday

Disaster Distress Helpline
Call **1-800-985-5990** or
text **TalkWithUs to 66746** to connect
with a trained crisis counselor

Available 24 hours everyday

Questions?



Additional Resources

- [ASPR TRACIE: COVID-19 Behavioral Health Resources](#)
- [Preventing and Addressing Moral Injury Affecting Healthcare Workers During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- [Mini Modules to Relieve Stress For Healthcare Workers Responding to COVID-19: Stress Management Exercise](#)
- [NCPTSD: Moral Injury](#)
- [Learned Optimism \(Seligman\)](#)
- [CHAMP: 5 Ways Power Your Performance Optimism](#)
- [Talking with Others About COVID Safety](#)

At the end of the day... keep it simple

CARING FOR YOURSELF IN THE FACE OF DIFFICULT WORK

Our work can be overwhelming. Our challenge is to maintain our resilience so that we can keep doing the work with care, energy, and compassion.

10 things to do each day

1. Get enough sleep.
2. Get enough to eat.
3. Vary the work that you do.
4. Do some light exercise.
5. Do something pleasurable.
6. Focus on what you did well.
7. Learn from your mistakes.
8. Share a private joke.
9. Pray, meditate or relax.
10. Support a colleague.

**For More Information see your supervisor or visit www.istss.org,
www.proqol.org and www.compassionfatigue.org**

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