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# The Science of Resilience

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## Our Talk today:

- ▶ Nature of the problem and why burnout preventions is so hard...
- ▶ What are the most efficient, proven ways to address burnout?
- ▶ Specialty skills for those who witness suffering
- ▶ Action, troubleshooting & acceptance
- ▶ Further Resources

| Cognitive                               | Emotional                | Behavioral                | Spiritual                              | Personal Relationships                | Physical/ Somatic                                  | Work Performance        |
|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|--|-------------------------|
| Lowered concentration                   | Powerlessness            | Impatient                 | Questioning the meaning of life        | Withdrawal                            | Shock  | Low morale              |
| Decreased self-esteem                   | Anxiety                  | Irritable                 | Loss of purpose                        | Decreased interest in intimacy or sex | Sweating   | Low motivation          |
| Apathy                                  | Guilt                    | Withdrawn                 | Lack of self-satisfaction              | Mistrust                              | Rapid heartbeat                                    | Avoiding tasks          |
| Rigidity                                | Anger/rage               | Moody                     | Pervasive hopelessness                 | Isolation from others                 | Breathing difficulties                             | Obsession about details |
| Disorientation                          | Survivor guilt           | Regression                | Anger at God                           | Overprotection as a parent            | Aches and pains                                    | Apathy                  |
| Perfectionism                           | Shutdown                 | Sleep disturbance         | Questioning of prior religious beliefs | Projection of anger or blame          | Dizziness  | Negativity              |
| Minimization                            | Numbness                 | Nightmares                | Loss of faith in a higher power        | Intolerance                           | Increased number and intensity of medical maladies | Lack of appreciation    |
| Preoccupation with trauma               | Fear                     | Appetite changes          | Greater skepticism about religion      | Loneliness                            | Other somatic complains                            | Detachment              |
| Thoughts of self-harm or harm to others | Helplessness             | Hypervigilance            |  | Increased interpersonal conflicts     | Impaired immune system                             | Staff conflicts         |
|   | Sadness                  | Elevated startle response |  |                                       |  | Absenteeism             |
|   | Depression               | Accident proneness        |  |                                       |  | Exhaustion              |
|   | Emotional roller coaster | Losing things             |  |                                       |  | Irritability            |
|   | Depleted                 |                           |  |                                       |  | Withdrawal              |
|   | Overly sensitive         |                           |  |                                       |  |                         |

## Problems with common programming

- ▶ The illusion of balance
- ▶ Self-care as a cure all
- ▶ Misinformation about causes and solutions
- ▶ Focus on the individual with a lack of agency support

### Stressed? Try Empathy

By Arthur Ciaramicoli

Why empathic listening may be the key to reducing stress in our lives. [Read More >](#)



# The New Normal Work Force

- ▶ Is our work philosophy broken?
  - ▶ Schwartz, 2017
- ▶ Environmental Generational Amnesia
  - ▶ Kahn & Weiss, 2017



# Obsession with results & performance

We have these things:



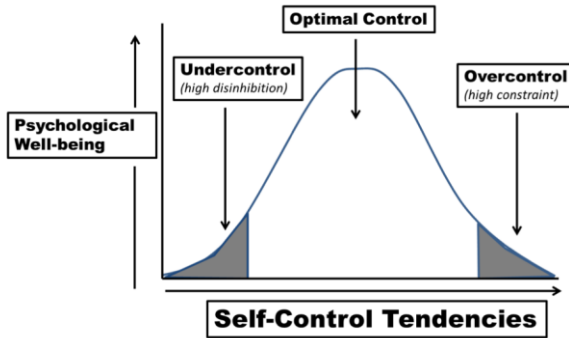
To be this thing:



# Stress and the Dialectic of Control

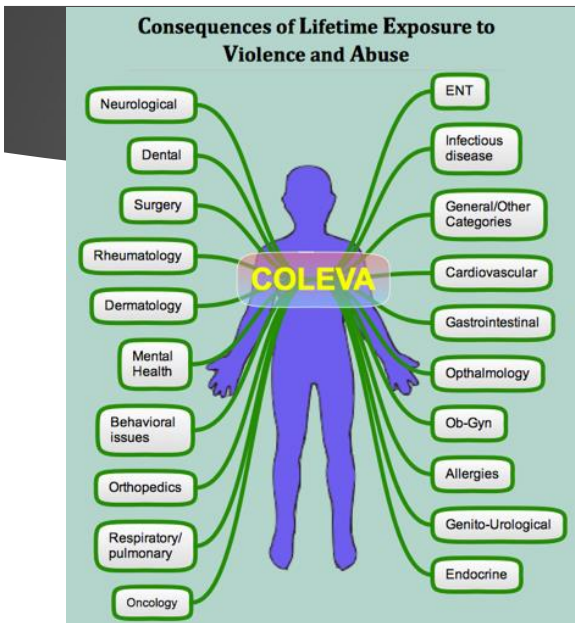
**Disinhibited:**

- Eating Disorders
- Substance Abuse
- Aggression
- Self-harm
- Impulsive spending



**Overcontrolled:**

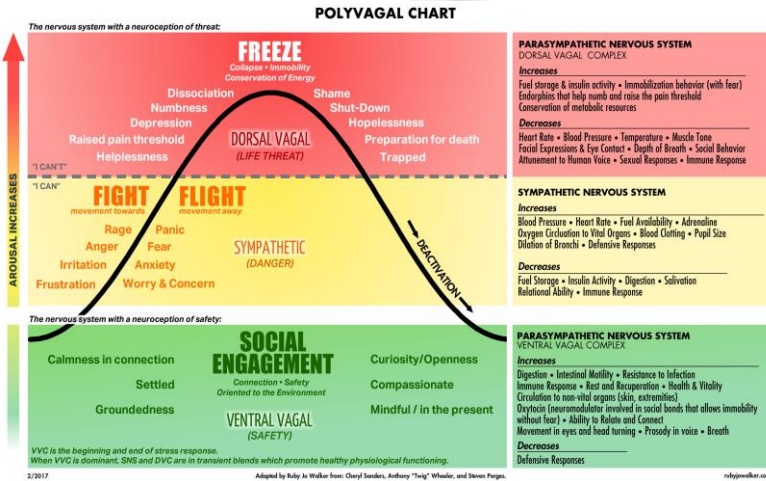
- Anorexia
- Maladaptive Perfectionism
- Depression
- Isolation
- Skin Picking
- OCD



# The Body and Stress

From COLEVA.com

# Autonomic Nervous System



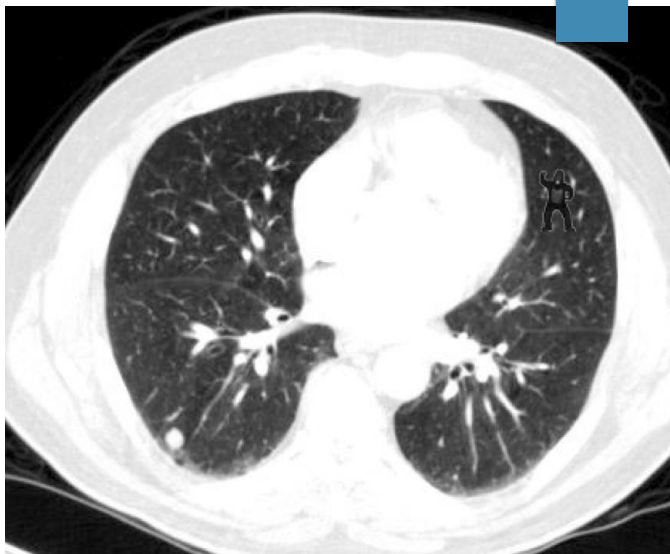
# Why is it so hard?

## 20 COGNITIVE BIASES THAT SCREW UP YOUR DECISIONS

- Anchoring bias.** People are over-reliant on the first piece of information they hear. In a salary negotiation, whoever makes the first offer establishes a range of reasonable possibilities in each person's mind.
- Availability heuristic.** People overestimate the importance of information that is available to them. A person might argue that smoking is not unhealthy because they know someone who lived to 100 and smoked three packs a day.
- Bandwagon effect.** The probability of one person adopting a belief increases based on the number of people who hold that belief. This is a powerful form of groupthink and is reason why meetings are often unproductive.
- Blind-spot bias.** Failing to recognize your own cognitive biases is a bias in itself. People notice cognitive and motivational biases much more in others than in themselves.
- Choice-supportive bias.** When you choose something, you tend to feel positive about it, even if that choice has flaws. Like how you think your dog is awesome - even if it bites people every once in a while.
- Clustering illusion.** This is the tendency to see patterns in random events. It is key to various gambling fallacies, like the idea that red is more or less likely to turn up on a roulette table after a string of reds.
- Confirmation bias.** We tend to listen only to information that confirms our preconceptions - one of the many reasons it's so hard to have an intelligent conversation about climate change.
- Conservatism bias.** Where people favor prior evidence over new evidence or information that has emerged. People were slow to accept that the Earth was round because they maintained their earlier understanding that the planet was flat.
- Information bias.** The tendency to seek information when it does not affect action. More information is not always better. With less information, people can often make more accurate predictions.
- Ostrich effect.** The decision to ignore dangerous or negative information by "burying" one's head in the sand, like an ostrich. Research suggests that investors check the value of their holdings significantly less often during bad markets.
- Outcome bias.** Judging a decision based on the outcome - rather than how exactly the decision was made in the moment. Just because you won a lot in Vegas doesn't mean gambling your money was a smart decision.
- Overconfidence.** Some of us are too confident about our abilities, and this causes us to take greater risks in our daily lives. Experts are more prone to this bias than laypeople, since they are more convinced that they are right.

## What do you see?

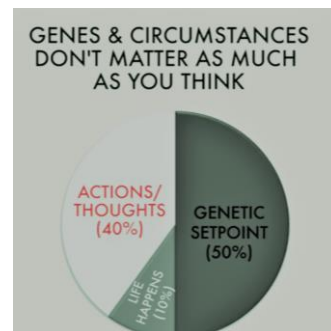
- ▶ *The negative screams the positive whispers.*
  - ▶ B. Fredrickson
- ▶ Attentional Bias for negativity
- ▶ What does your job train you to notice?



## Affective Forecasting

- ▶ What are we told will make us happier?
  - ▶ More money and getting stuff
    - (Nickerson, 2003)
  - ▶ Safety, avoidance of adversity and pain

| Nation        | WVS   |
|---------------|-------|
| Austria       | 0.07  |
| Brazil        | -0.02 |
| China         | 0.04  |
| Denmark       | 0.21  |
| Estonia       | 0.08  |
| Finland       | -0.02 |
| Italy         | 0.07  |
| India         | 0.17  |
| Japan         | 0.18  |
| Nigeria       | 0.21  |
| Norway        | 0.14  |
| Spain         | 0.13  |
| Turkey        | 0.17  |
| United States | 0.15  |

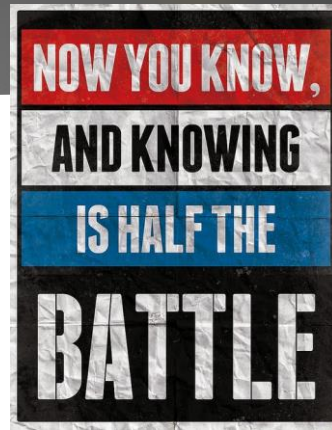


Santos, 2018

Ingelhart et al., 2014

## The GI Joe Fallacy

- ▶ Knowledge is **NOT** half the battle



## Troubleshooting change



## Stuck in the cycle of burnout

Client ID



## Burnout and Loss Spirals

- ▶ Cycles of loss of reserves and loss of replenishing
- ▶ Neuroticism and Perfectionism
  - ▶ Bakker & Costa, 2014
- ▶ Recovery
  - ▶ Counterintuitive process
  - ▶ Paradoxically punishing in the short run

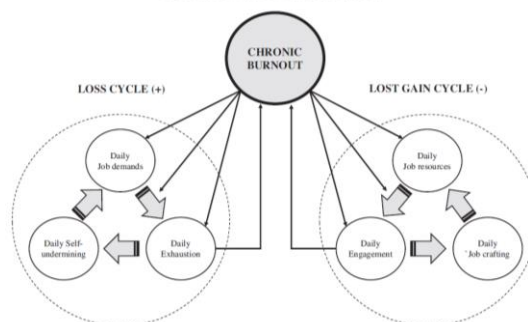


Fig. 2. Chronic burnout: a loss cycle of daily job demands and a lost gain cycle of daily job resources.



## How we can thrive



## Setting limits for self-care

- ▶ Takes skill, time, and energy. It is often punishing.
- ▶ Sustainably compassionate people are very skillful at setting and adjusting limits.



How's that donor retention report coming?

## The Nuanced No

- ▶ Rather not, but will
- ▶ Not now
- ▶ Not in the way that you are requesting
- ▶ Not in exchange for what you are requesting
- ▶ No, sorry.
- ▶ Not ever, don't ask again



## Social Support

Sexton, 2016

Social isolation is worse than smoking

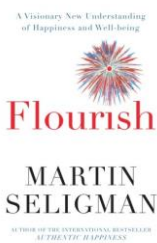
35% of people report 0 confidants in 2004

It's quality not quantity (>1).  
Tiny meaningful moments

Linking vs. ranking relationships

## Strategy: Notice the good with the bad

- ▶ Strengthening Optimism
  - ▶ 3 good things before bed
    - ▶ Seligman, 2008;
- ▶ Acknowledging Endings and Transitions

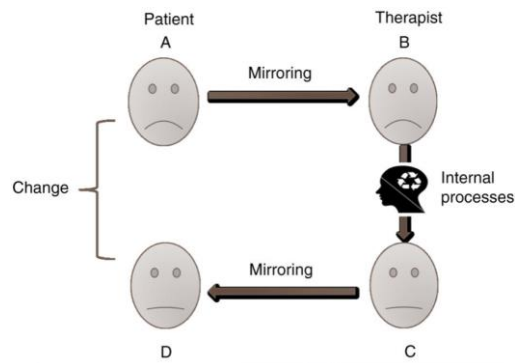


Awe

Keltner, 2003

# How can sitting with suffering affect us?

## *Lending out your frontal lobe*



## Emotional Contagion

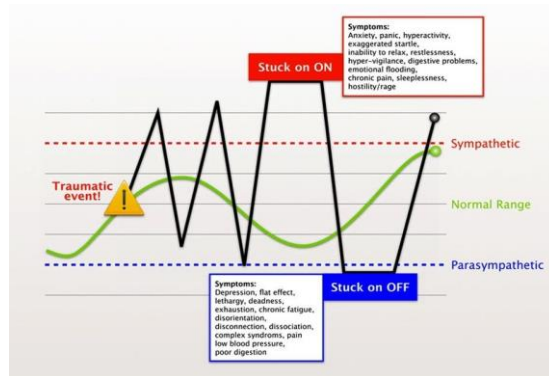


## The Spectrum of Sensitivity

- ▶ The case of mirror touch synesthesia



# Being with traumatized Individuals



Porges,  
2010



“

Empathy is always precariously perched between gift and invasion.

”

JAMISON, LESLIE FROM THE EMPATHY EXAMS

## Empathic Strain

Poorly regulated empathy does damage....

- ▶ Resource competition with other cognitive demands
- ▶ Increased sympathetic, cardiovascular arousal
- ▶ Increased depression/anxiety
- ▶ Increased vulnerability to burnout

▶ (Decety, 2012)



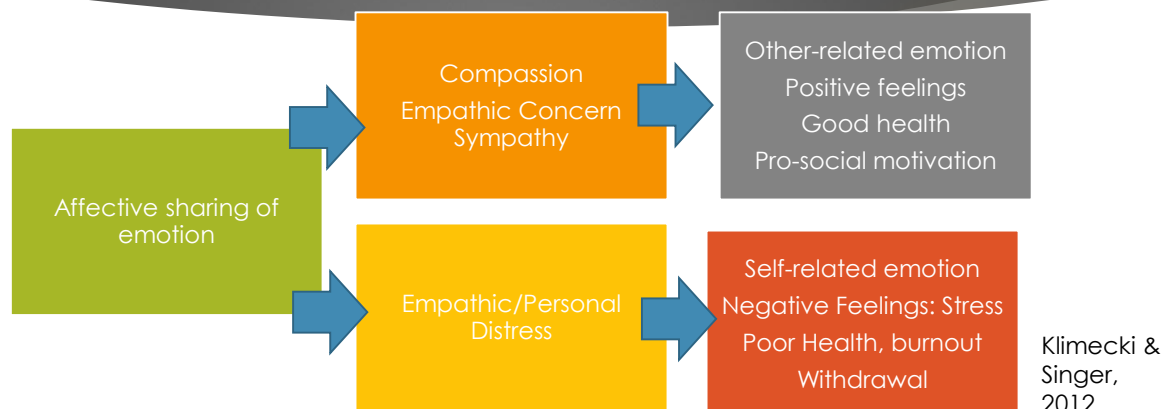


## What is Compassion?

- ▶ Not a mush-ball attitude.
- ▶ Strong back, soft front
- ▶ Awareness of another's suffering and a wish to relieve it.
- ▶ Sense of warmth and shared humanity towards **another's** pain.

- Neff, 2015

## Why not *Compassion Fatigue*?



## Tool: Mindfulness and Compassion Interventions

### GRACE/AWARE

- ▶ Attention
- ▶ Intention
- ▶ Attunement
- ▶ Discernment
- ▶ Action

▶ Halifax, 2018



## How about just faking and toughing it out?



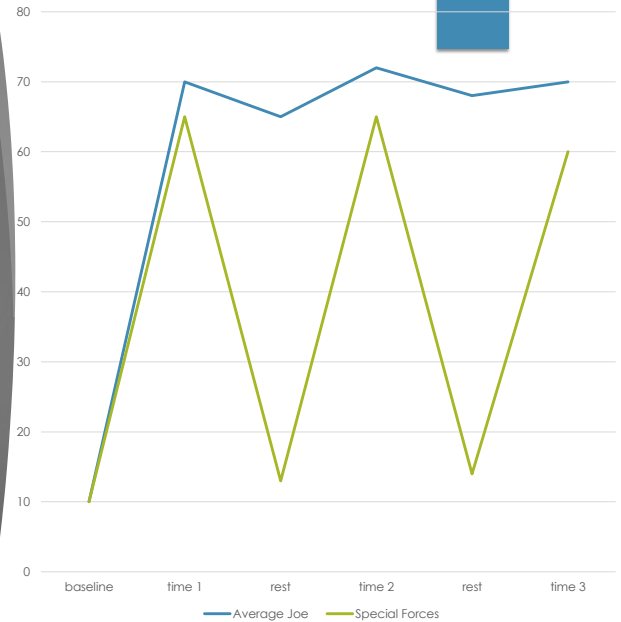
- Avoiding experiencing one's own emotions were associated with problems in empathy (Singer, 2014)
- Expressive suppression leads to adverse social outcomes. (Gross, 1998a),

## What is Resiliency really?

Rapid return to baseline after a stressor

- ▶ How you recharge
- ▶ Interoception

▶ (Phillips & Seiler, 2005; Haase et al., 2016).



## Family and Loved Ones



## Acceptance

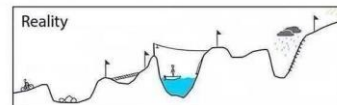
- ▶ Emotional Olympians need special treatment.
- ▶ Just because you can, doesn't make it a good idea.
- ▶ Your superpower comes with a cost for you (and possibly your family).

$$2 + 2 = 5$$

Your plan

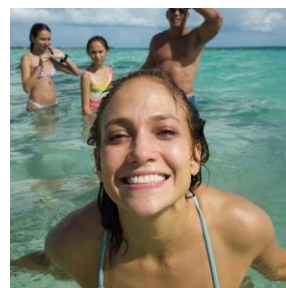
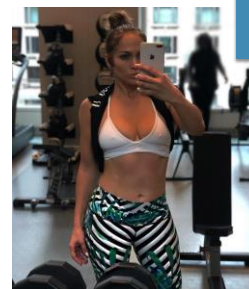


Reality



## Reasons for Hope

- ▶ There are natural feedback loops in place.
- ▶ Workplaces are getting on board to support their employees.
- ▶ You can find stillness between difficult moments.



## Selected Resources

- ▶ The Duke Patient Safety Center
  - ▶ [www.dukepatientsafetycenter.com](http://www.dukepatientsafetycenter.com)
- ▶ Standing on the Edge
  - ▶ Halifax, 2018
- ▶ Doctors for Doctors Burnout Questionnaire
- ▶ CD-RISC 25
- ▶ Whole Health Survey



## Activity: Assess the Barriers

- ▶ Do I know when I'm burned out and need to address it?
- ▶ Am I really willing to take the necessary steps to make the changes?
- ▶ Do I know how I want things to be and what will help (i.e. specific goals)?
- ▶ Do I have the skills to get there?
- ▶ Does my current environment incentivize and deter the right things?
- ▶ Are the factors that I need to change actually within my control?
- ▶ Am I too overwhelmed by emotions to take skillful action?
- ▶ Do unhelpful beliefs block me (e.g. it's wrong to prioritize my needs)

Linehan, 2014

# Action Plan for Wellbeing

## BURNOUT AWARENESS AND ACTION PLAN

|        | Thoughts | Behaviors | Sensations/Feelings | <b>SKILLFUL RESPONSES</b> |
|--------|----------|-----------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| Green  |          |           |                     |                           |
| Yellow |          |           |                     |                           |
| Red    |          |           |                     |                           |

Utah Center for Evidence Based Treatment (2016)

www.ucebt.com



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