Emotional wellness in this crazy time

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While in quarantine for physical health of our families and communities

Emotional, mental and social health needs are also critical
How to take care of emotional, mental and social wellness

Number one

Create structures in this time of chaos
Create structures

Source: Open source wellness
We have very quick response to stimuli.

Stimuli activate us into anxious or dampen us into depressive state. Bodily sensations can be leading indicators of stress, anxiety, fear and depression.

We act with greatest clarity when in resilient zone. Body can also alert us to states of joy, calm and clarity.
Understanding the basics of stress

- **Ideally** we operate in “resilient zone”

- In “resilient zone” we feel clarity and calm despite what happens in the external world

- We are capable of making decisions in a rational way and not get thrown off balance
Understanding the basics of stress

- In a healthy person, body naturally cycles back and forth between SNS and PNS activation in the day.
- The problem comes when body is dysregulated because one system is activated for too long or intensely.
- “Fight or flight” is evolutionarily adaptive when a tiger is about to attack, but debilitating when remains activated for extended period due to work, relationship or financial stress.
Understanding the basics of stress

- Our body does not seem to distinguish between physical threat and psychological or social threats.

- Fear of embarrassment, failure or social rejection perceived as just as threatening as physical danger.
Identifying signs of stress

ANS evolved long before higher regions of brain, such as the cortex, so we are not always aware whether we are exhibiting SNS or PNS activation.
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What tells us whether we are in resilient zone or not?
- Body sensations
  - Examining sensations taking place in our body provides good clues.
    - "the body speaks the language of sensations"
- Thoughts
- Behavior
Identifying signs of stress in the body

Tracking is the practice of noticing physical sensations occurring within the body in the present moment

- Recognize if pleasant, unpleasant or neutral.
- If sensation is pleasant or neutral, simply notice the sensation and remain with it for a few moments. This helps our body recognize well-being.
- If sensation is unpleasant, we can redirect our attention, finding a place in the body that is pleasant, neutral or somewhere that is less unpleasant than original sensation.
Identifying signs of stress in the mind
Awareness of thoughts and feelings

CULTIVATE PRACTICE OF NOTICING
THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS IN THE
PRESENT MOMENT

WHAT AM I THINKING?

HOW DO I FEEL RIGHT NOW?
What can we do to manage stress
A few evidence based tools

- Tracking
- Mindfulness
- Emotional Awareness
- Connecting
What can we do to manage stress
A few evidence based tools

- Mindfulness

5-minute mindful breathing audio
http://mindfulnessforteens.com/guided-meditations/
(click on number 2 when site opens)
What can we do to manage stress
A few evidence based tools

- Emotional awareness: checking in with self daily
- One way to do this is to:
- Learn and practice the language of emotions
- Using mood meter
- And list of feeling words
Emotional awareness

Mood meter

Source Yale University
Emotional awareness

Feeling words

Yellow Zone (high energy, high pleasantness): pleasant, happy, joyful, hopeful, focused, optimistic, proud, cheerful, lively, playful, excited, thrilled, inspired

Green Zone (low energy, high pleasantness): at ease, calm, easygoing, secure, grateful, blessed, satisfied, restful, loving, balanced, comfy, cozy, carefree, mellow, thoughtful, serene

Red Zone (high energy, low pleasantness): peeved, annoyed, irritated, worried, frightened, jittery, tense, troubled, angry, furious, panicked, stressed, anxious

Blue Zone (low energy, low pleasantness): apathetic, bored, sad, down, uneasy, miserable, depressed, disheartened, exhausted, hopeless, alienated, despondent, despair
Emotional awareness
*Use Mood meter and list of feeling words to locate*

- Step 1 Where you are 😞
- Step 2 Where you want to go 😊
- Step 3 How to get there
What else can we do to manage stress
A few other evidence based tools that are preventive

Gratitude practice
Sleep
Thank you for attending & listening!

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