



Thriving at Work
*The Key Factors for
Resilient, Engaged &
Connected Teams*



Provincial Cancer Care Conference 2022

*Presenter: Shannon Gander
Director, Life Work Wellness*

Presenter Disclosure

- *No disclosures*
- *No conflicts of interest*
- *No mitigating potential bias*



Background



Why this work & why this topic?

Objectives

- Explain Psychological Health & Safety in the Workplace and why it is so important now.
- List the top psychosocial factors for recovery after challenging times.
- Describe actions to integrate psychosocial factors in support of collective well-being and overall team resilience.
- Differentiate between work-life balance and work-life boundaries and the strategies for your own thriving while caring for others



Pandemic Impacts on Mental Health - Canadians

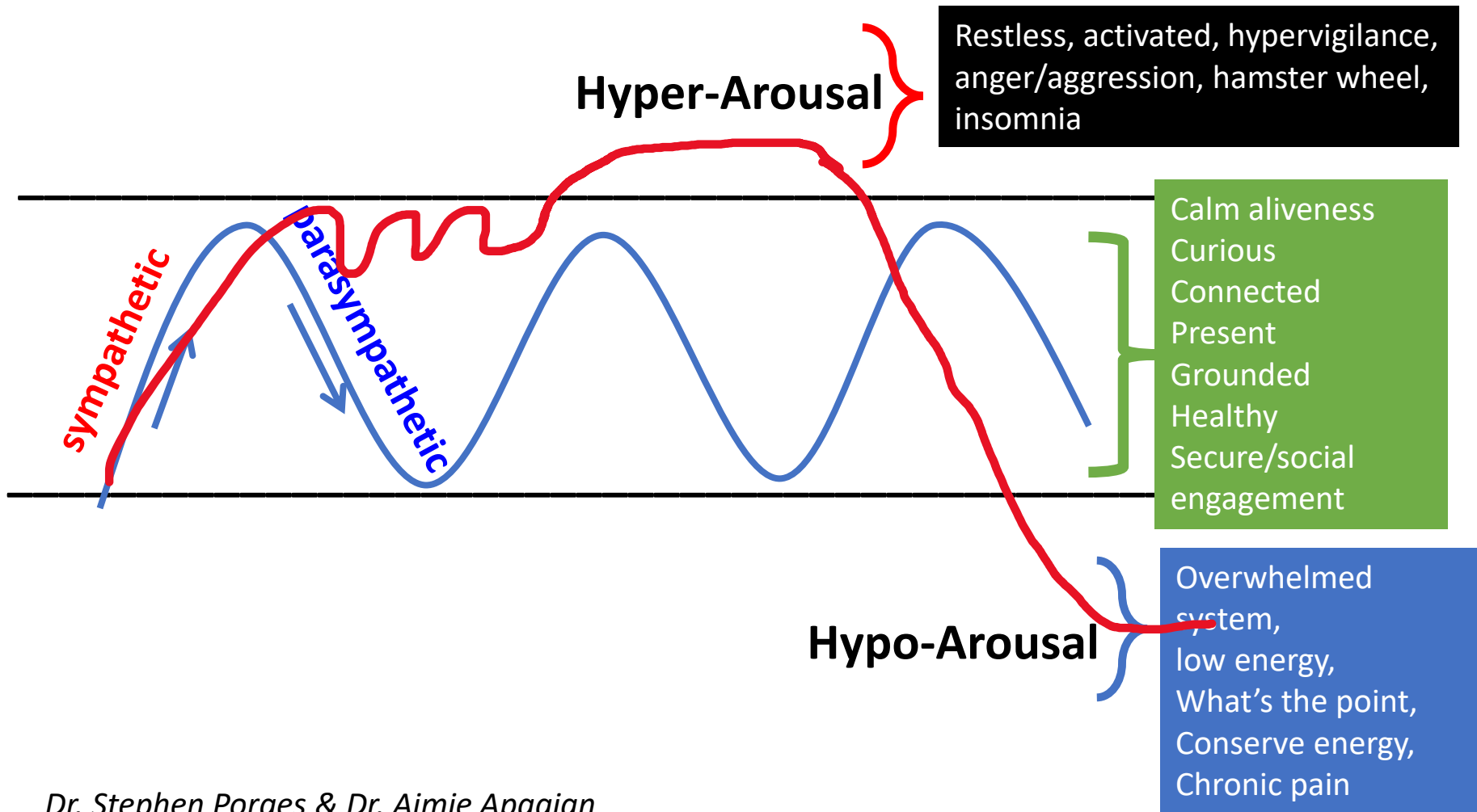
Anxiety

- 15% screened positive for Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)
 - Higher in women (18%) than men (12%)
 - Highest in ages 18-34yrs (24%)

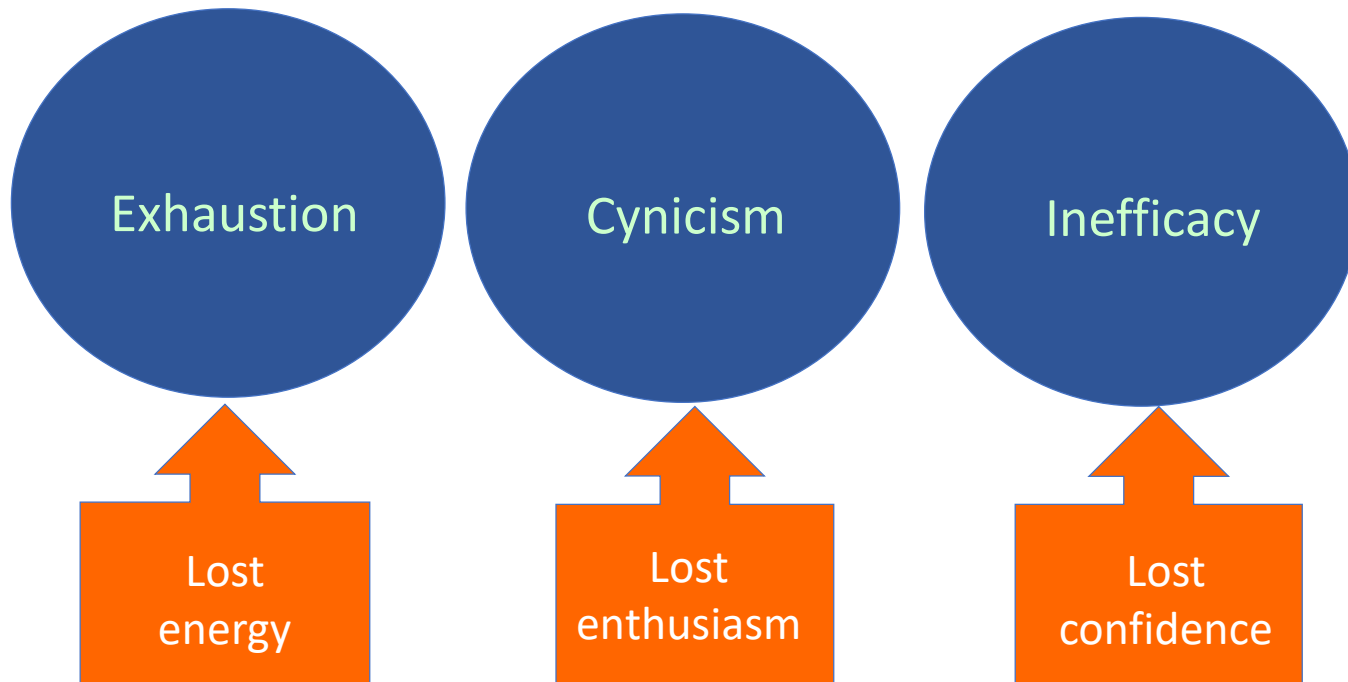
Depression

- 19% screened positive for Major Depressive Disorder (MDD)
 - Higher in women (22%) than men (15%)
 - Highest in ages 18-34yrs (34%)
- 23% screened positive for **both GAD & MDD**
- Women reported higher rates of anxiety and sleeplessness (49% compared to 33% of men)
- Higher incidence of compassion fatigue for essential workers
- Burnout has been reported in 42% of women & 35% of men.

Common Mental Health Pattern



Burnout – Top 3



Prevalence and Workplace Drivers of Burnout in Cancer Care Physicians in Ontario, Canada

- Cross-sectional survey study (Nov-Dec 2019). Practicing cancer care physicians (surgical, medical, radiation, gynecologic oncology, and hematology)
- 418 physicians completed the questionnaire (response rate was 44% among confirmed oncologists). Maslach Burnout Inventory.
- 73% (n = 264 of 362) of oncologists had symptoms of burnout
- Significant drivers of burnout included
 - *working in a hectic or chaotic atmosphere*
 - *feeling unappreciated on the job*
 - *poor or marginal control over workload*
 - *not being comfortable talking to peers about workplace stress*



How burnout shows up (signs & symptoms)

- Getting lots of little stuff done but not the big stuff
- Over-functioning, not delegating or asking for help
- Feel rushed when you aren't
- Increased irritability; emotions feel at the surface
- Self-soothing (through food, shopping, alcohol, etc)
- Desire to isolate
- Get through workday, nothing left for home
- Poor concentration & difficulty sleeping



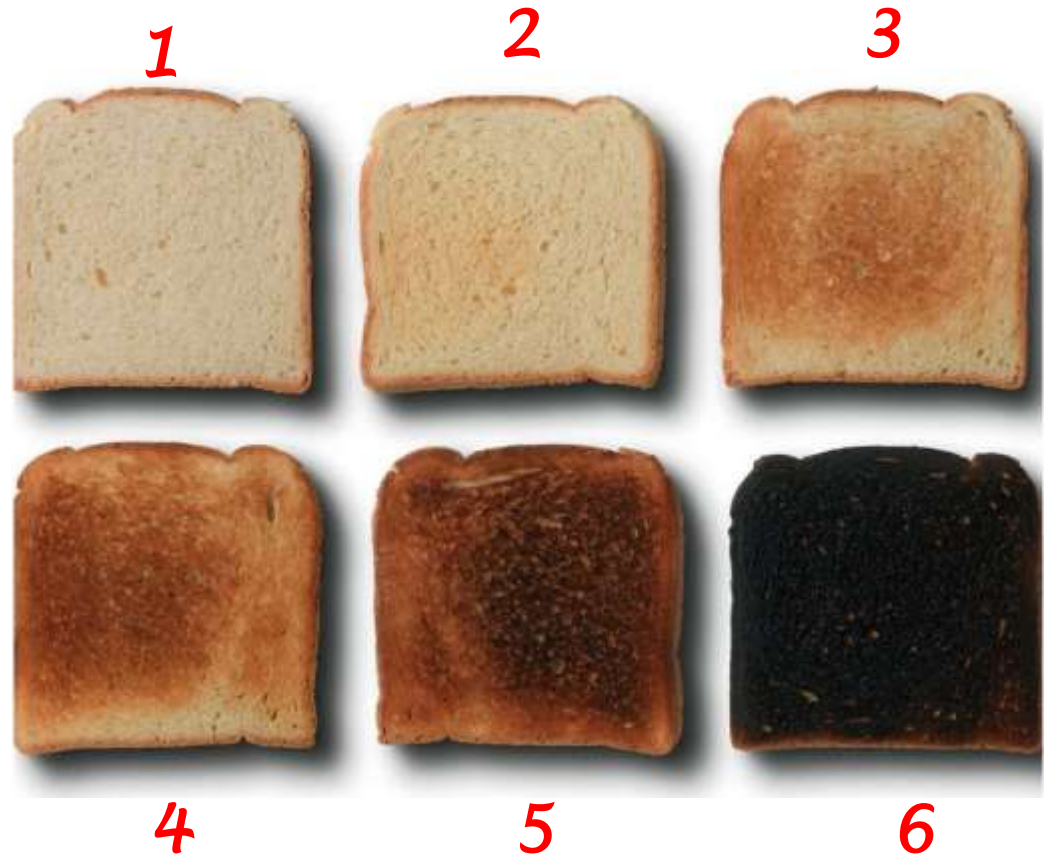
Add Compassion Fatigue

1. Reduced collegiality
2. Dreading work/people interactions
3. Feel more critical (self or others)
4. Easily irritated by other's emotions
5. Numb or feel everything
6. Little tolerance for needs of other people at the end of the workday (family/friends)



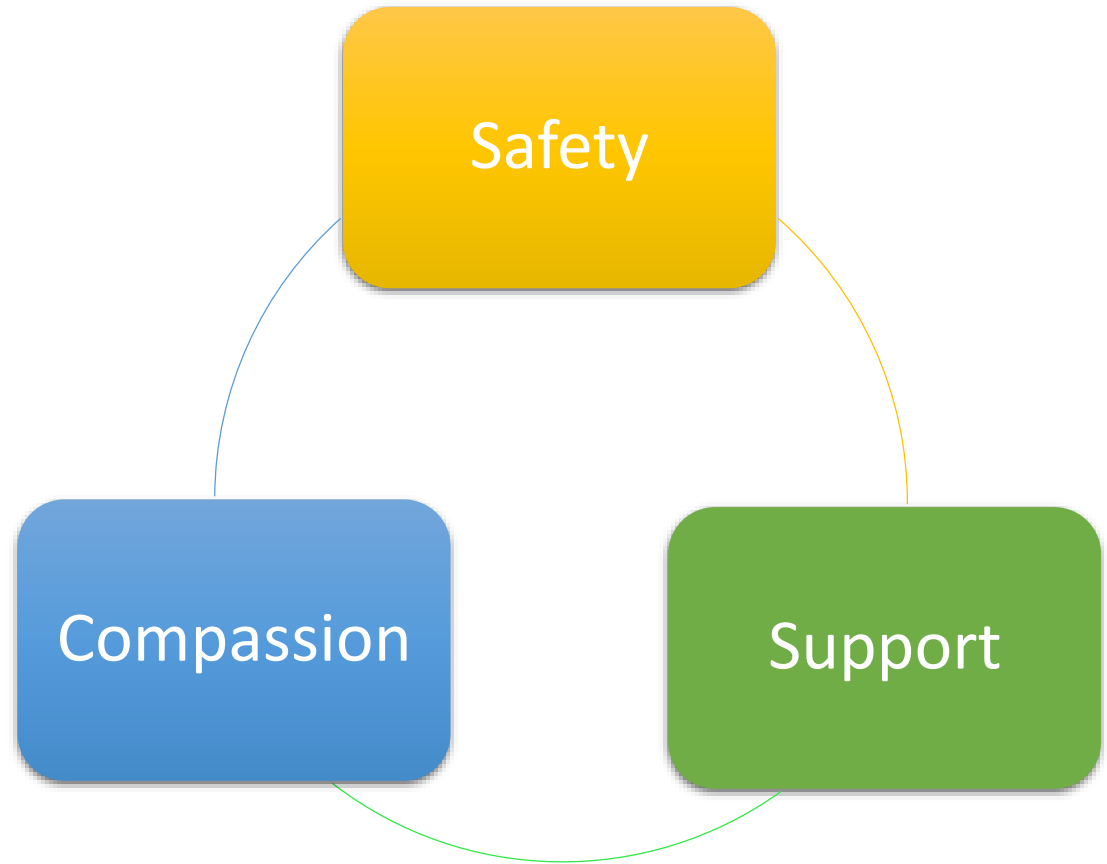
Hold the
number up
on your
fingers

Choose the
number that
best describes
how you
are feeling
lately?



Restoring Stability & Resilience

What do we
need now?



Psychologically Healthy and Safe Workplace



Definition:

A psychologically healthy and safe workplace is one that promotes employees' psychological well-being and actively works to prevent harm to employee psychological health due to negligent, reckless, or intentional acts.

The Benefits of PHSW

INCREASED	DECREASED
Employee & Patient Satisfaction	Health Costs due to Stress Leave
Sense of Pride & Feeling Valued	Isolation
Engagement & Morale	Employee turnover
Productivity	Burnout & Absenteeism
Adaptability to Change	Presenteeism
Recruitment & Retention	Workplace Conflict
Reduced Medical Errors	Grievances

The 13 Factors for PHSW

- 1. Balance**
- 2. Civility & Respect**
- 3. Clear Leadership & Expectations**
- 4. Engagement**
- 5. Growth & Development**
- 6. Involvement & Influence**
- 7. Organizational Culture**
- 8. Protection of Physical Safety**
- 9. Psychological Competencies & Demands (or job fit)**
- 10. Psychological Protection**
- 11. Psychological & Social Support**
- 12. Recognition & Reward**
- 13. Workload Management**

Question for you

Turn to the person next to you.

Brainstorm – based on company surveys, in which factor do you think Canadian companies are currently scoring the lowest?

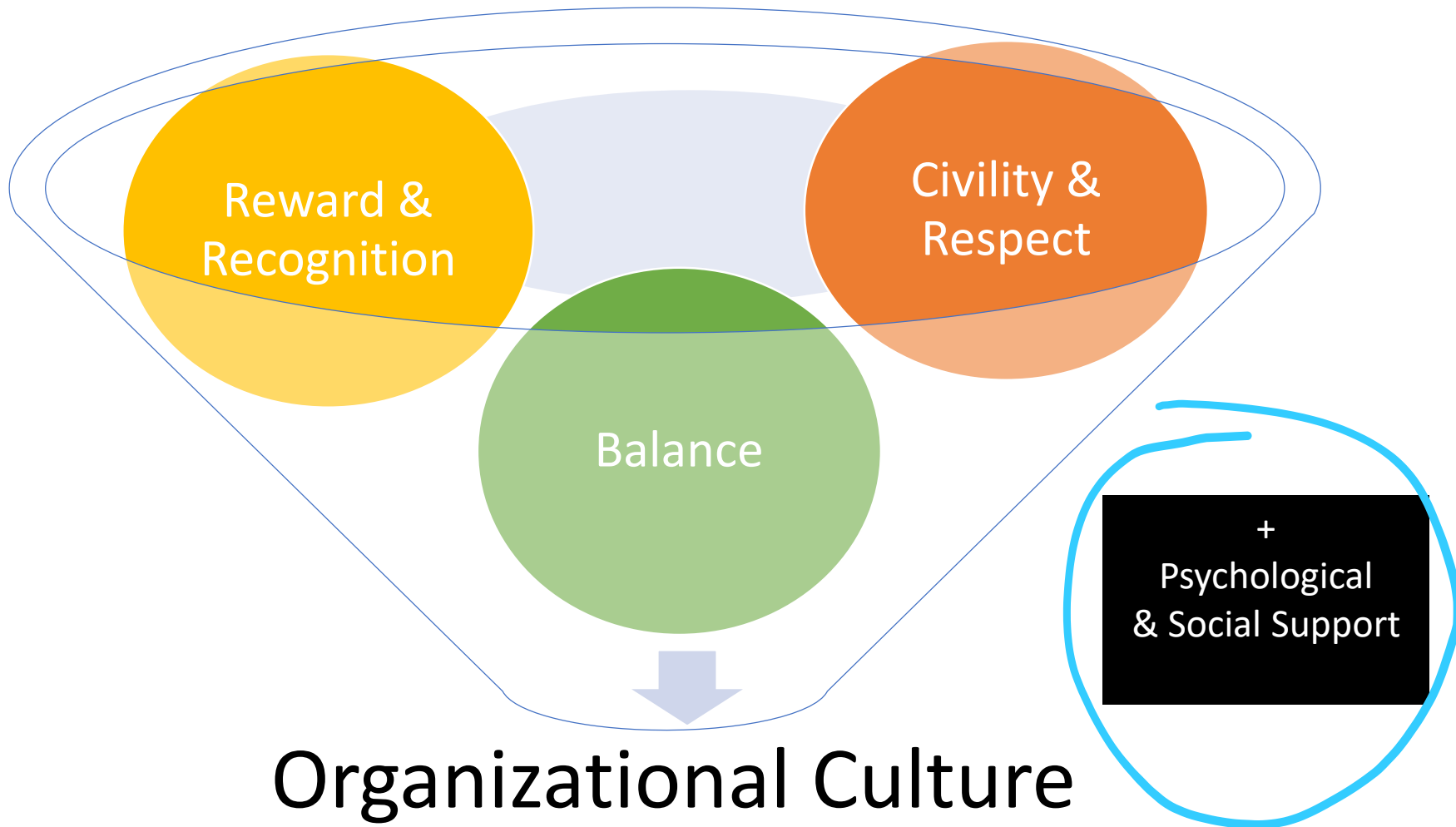
Share your thoughts?

Factors for
Attention

For recovery
& adjustment



Going Forward





Factor: **Reward & Recognition**

A work environment where there is appropriate acknowledgement and appreciation of employees' efforts in a fair and timely manner.



Guarding Minds at Work



Employee Needs

In times of instability or change, more than ever, staff need to know...

- *Am I valued?*
- *Do you see me?*
- *Do you get me?*
- *Am I safe here?*

Watch for: Proximity Bias

Unconscious tendency to connect with the people we see most often and forget to acknowledge other people and their teams.

This can lead to working in silos and not feeling connected to each other and the whole organization.





Cubicles

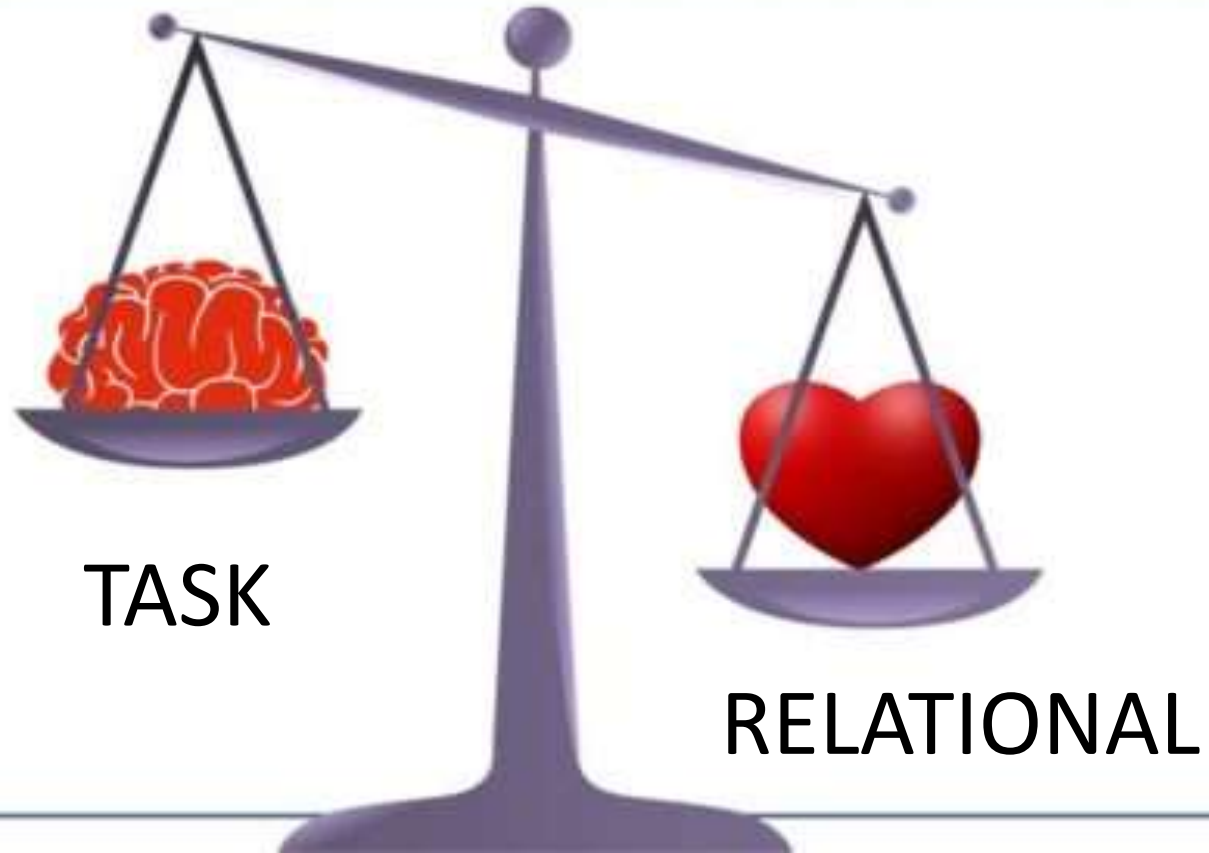
Don't Make Community

Recognition Contributes to Our Workplace Culture



Create a culture of “good morning”

We Can Be In Our Heads



*To increase connection, we need to get our
“right” brain on*



**I APPRECIATE
YOU**

How can we acknowledge each other?

Extend a thank you:

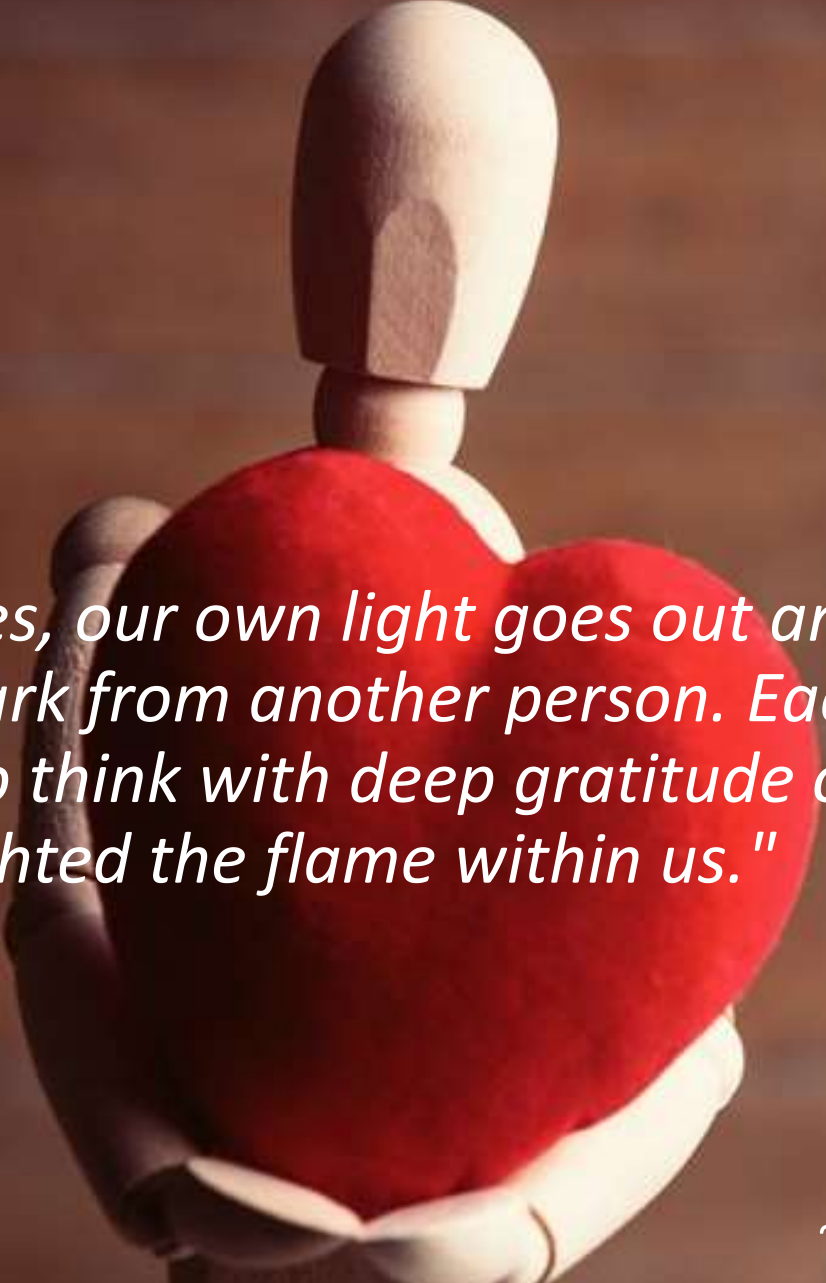
- *For talking to that patient.*
- *For noticing that I/we needed help.*

Share an observation:

- *Wow, you handled that situation really well.*
- *That wasn't easy, I noticed what you did there.*
- *You make this team even better.*

Check in:

- *Yesterday was pretty stressful, how are you this morning?*

A wooden mannequin figure is shown from the back, holding a large, plush red heart. The mannequin is positioned on the left side of the frame, and the heart is held in front of its torso. The background is a soft, out-of-focus brownish-gold color. The lighting is warm and directional, coming from the left, which casts a soft shadow of the mannequin and heart onto the background.

"At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us."

~ Albert Schweitzer



Celebrate the Good

As Teams, Too!



Factor - Civility & Respect

Civility and respect is present in a work environment where workers are respectful and considerate in their interactions with one another, as well as with customers, clients, and the public.

Respect and civility are based on showing esteem, care, and consideration for others, and acknowledging their dignity.



We try to be
congruent here

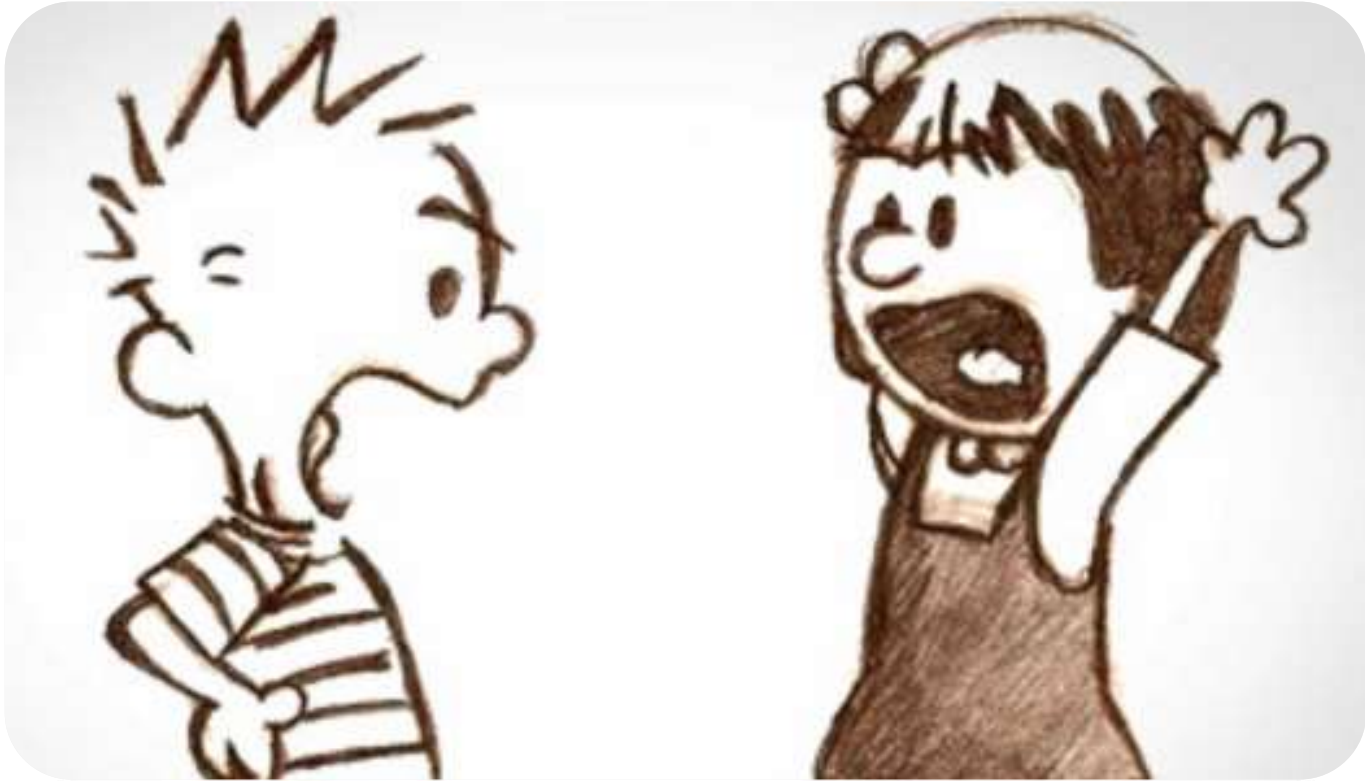
*It's when we practice with each other,
the same mission, vision and values that
we hold for our external stakeholders
(patients, families, funders, etc.)*

Stress, Communication & Conflict



These have been extraordinary times

Say What? *Are you kidding me?*



Defensive is our default

How are you Approaching Conversations?

Preparing?

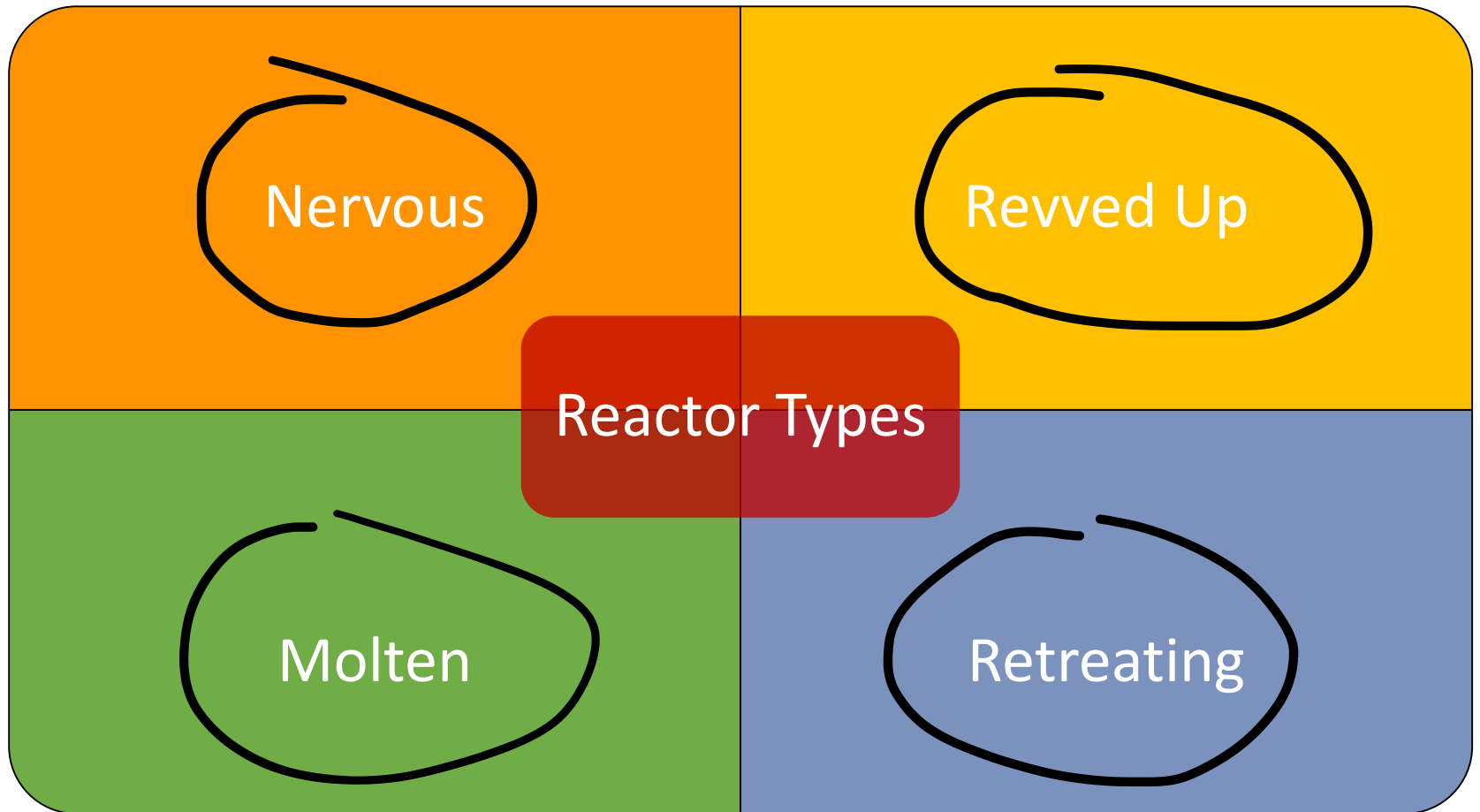
- ✓ Breathe & ground yourself
- ✓ Watch your own escalation
- ✓ Begin with the end in mind

Or Preloading?

- ✓ Escalated in advance (list)
- ✓ Dysregulated
- ✓ Disregarding the relationship



Compassion to Coping Responses



“When we learn that a person’s behaviour has more to do with their own internal struggle than it ever did with us...”

We learn grace



Enlightened Consciousness

The “Sh**ty” First Draft Conversation

By Tammy Lenski – writer & conflict mediator

The opportunity to have a “do-over” conversation where you give yourself permission to try again and say what you wished you had said the first time

We need to know how to & invest in repairing relationship ruptures

Factor: **Balance**

A work environment where there is recognition of the need for balance among the demands of work, family and personal life.



Guarding Minds at Work

Is this your Work-Life Balance?

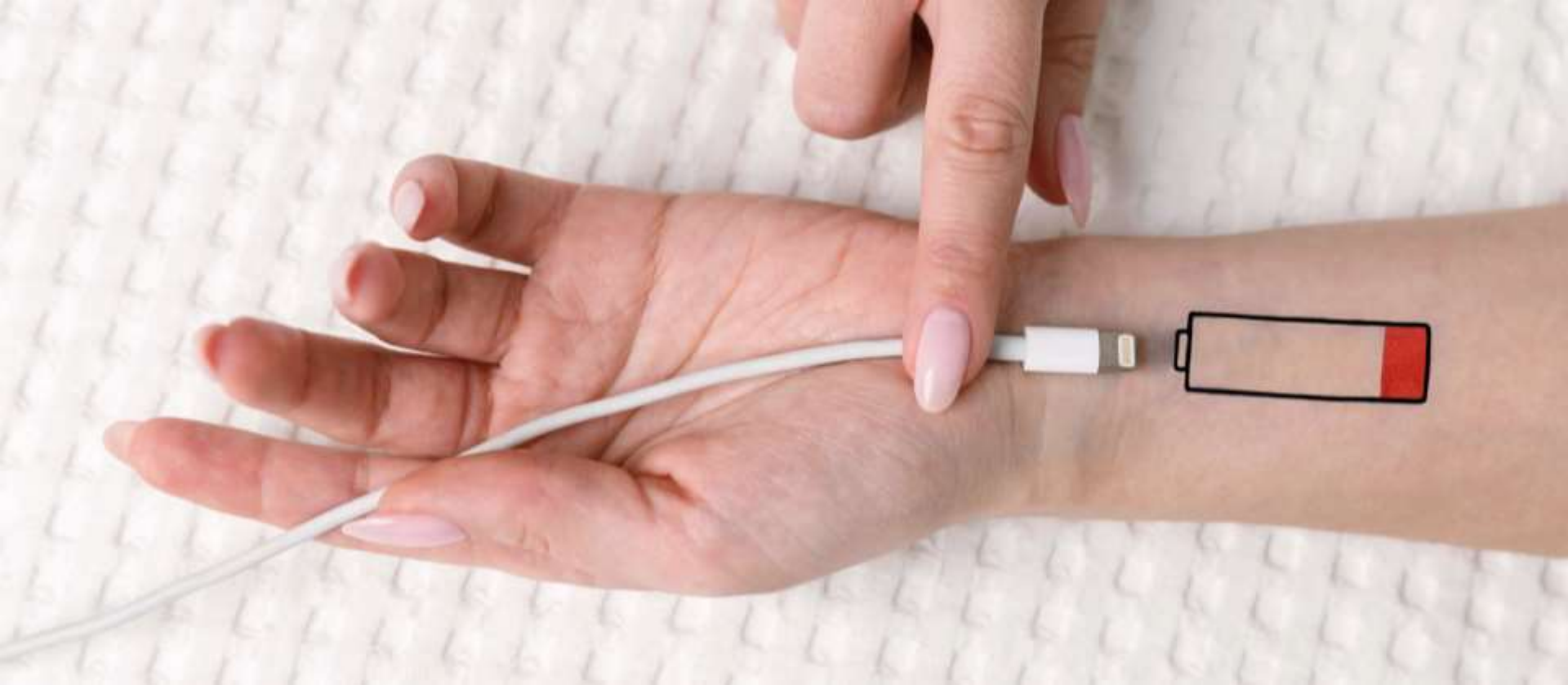


The Juggle - Between Work & Home

It's real!

How can we continue
to manage this?





We all want to
recharge

If only it was this easy!

Our Stressed Bodies Need to Complete the Cycle

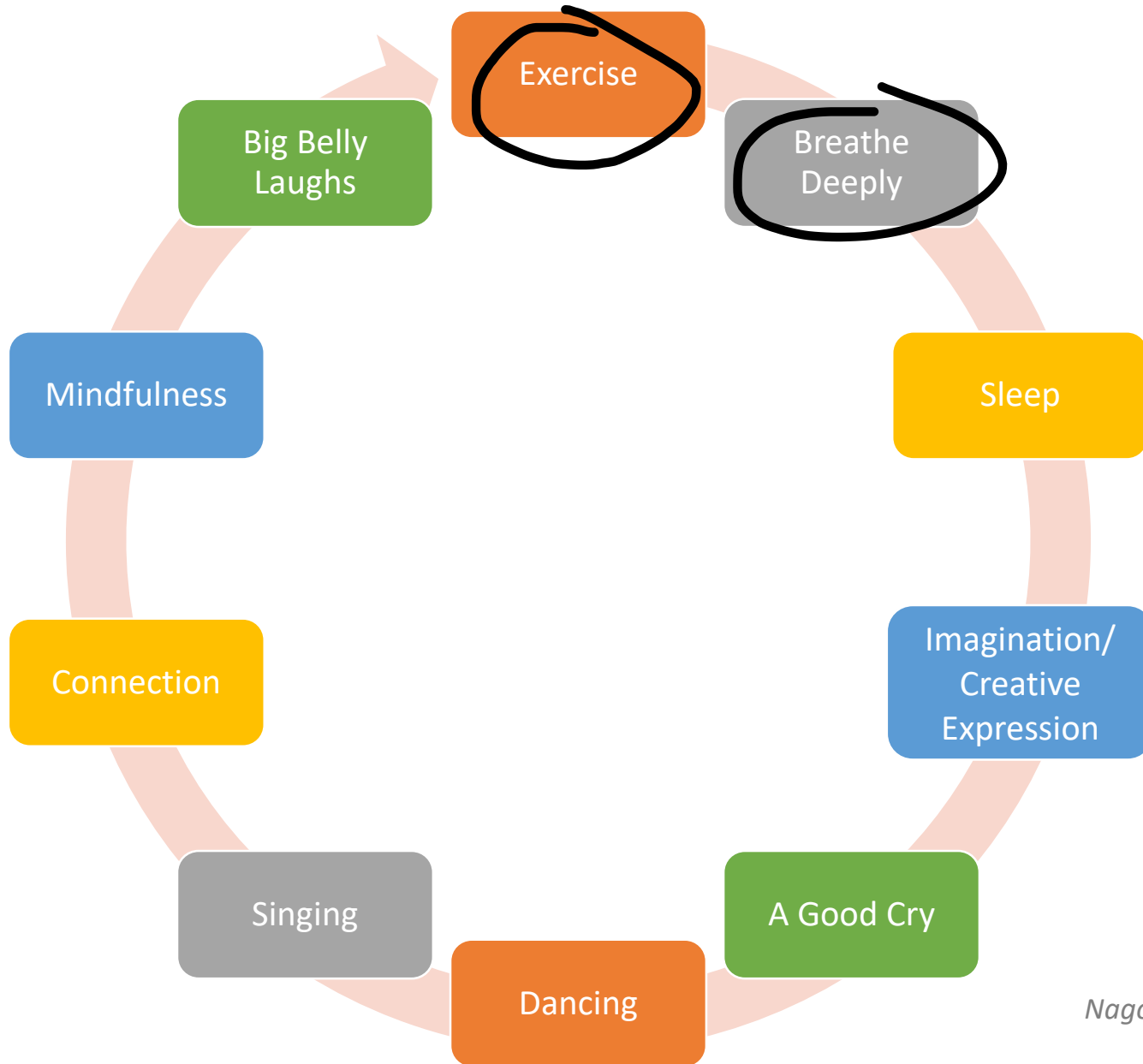


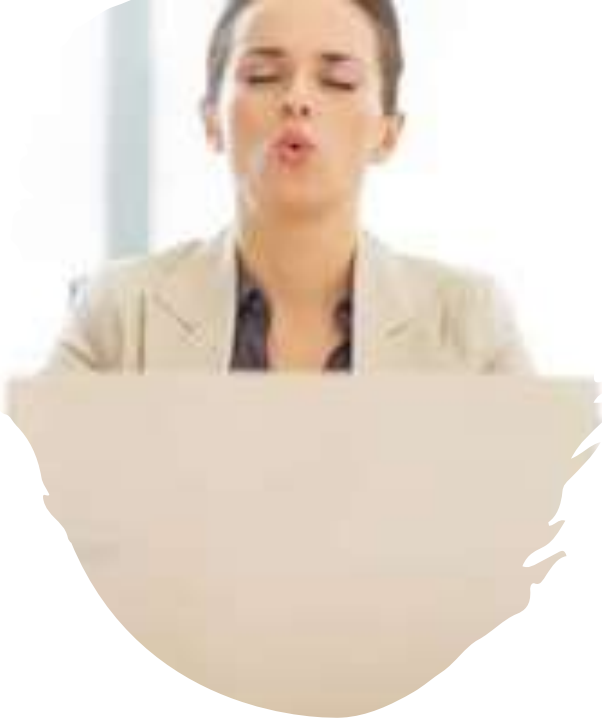
THE MOST HELPFUL THING THAT
WE CAN DO FOR A
STRESSED/ANXIOUS BODY IS TO
HELP IT COMPLETE THE STRESS
CYCLE.



WE WANT TO GET TO THE
STATE OF REST AND DIGEST.
“IT’S OKAY, THERE’S NO
THREAT HERE. I CAN RELAX
NOW”.

Completing the Stress Cycle – Top “10”





Are you taking time to
exhale?

A big exhale is one of the quickest ways to
get us to the “rest and digest” state

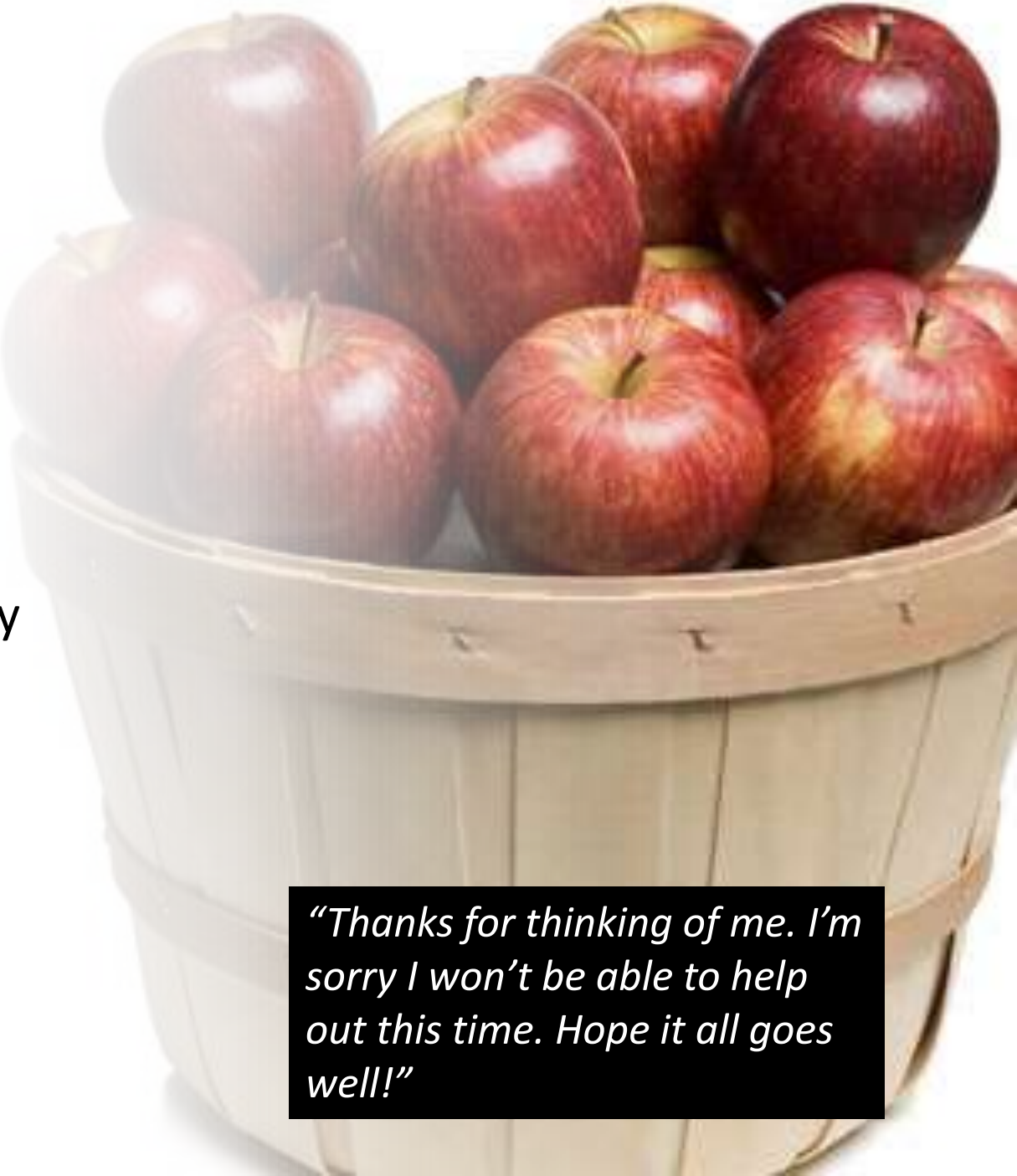
Work Life ~~Balance~~ Boundaries



Question: Do you have a transition ritual that helps you end your workday?

Resources, Resilience & Reviving

- Protect your apples
- Exercise your boundary muscle
- Learn to say “no” (sometimes) so that you can enjoy your yeses.

A wooden basket filled with several red apples, some with yellow streaks. The basket is made of light-colored wood with vertical slats and a wide rim. The apples are piled on top, some showing their stems.

“Thanks for thinking of me. I’m sorry I won’t be able to help out this time. Hope it all goes well!”

A hand is shown at the bottom right, holding a single red origami crane. Several other red origami cranes are shown in various stages of flight, scattered across the upper left and center of the frame. The background is a solid, light blue color.

To make room
for your self-care

Do you need to let go
of anything?

LETTING GO

A conceptual image featuring a compass rose in the lower-left corner. The compass has a silver base and a green arrow pointing towards the upper-right. The background is a light-colored surface with a faint clock face and the words "LETTING GO" written in large, bold, green, sans-serif capital letters, arched across the top.

Take a moment
to reflect

Sometimes we want things to
be a certain way and have
difficulty allowing others to step
in and help.

Get curious: ever feel this way?

A young boy with short blonde hair, wearing a blue short-sleeved shirt, is focused on cleaning a kitchen counter. He is using a yellow sponge to wipe the surface. On the counter, there are several clear glass tumblers and a stack of white plates. In the background, a chrome faucet is visible above the sink area. The kitchen has dark wood cabinets and a tiled backsplash. The scene is lit with warm, natural light from a window on the right.

Allow others to do things imperfectly

Balance - Self-reflection

What would it look like to:

1. Let go of 5%? ✓
2. Ask for 5% more help? ✓
3. Not multi-task for 5 mins each day? ✓



Pause and ask yourself:

Even though I usually do these tasks, do all of them need to be done by me?

Contribute to a Team Culture of Well-being

- Recognize **burnout is cultural**
- Model self-care – gives others permission to do the same
- Encourage wellness in each other
- Recognize your own self-care is good for everyone



Factor: **Psychological & Social Support**

A work environment where the organization is supportive of employees' psychological health concerns and provides assistance as needed.

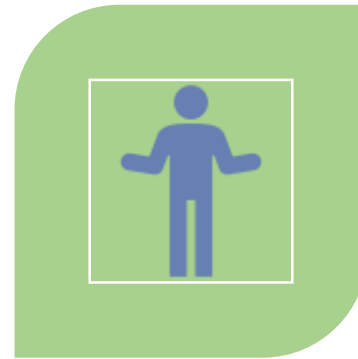


Guarding Minds at Work

Concerned about Someone? Check Ins (to reduce threat response)



I WAS NOTICING...



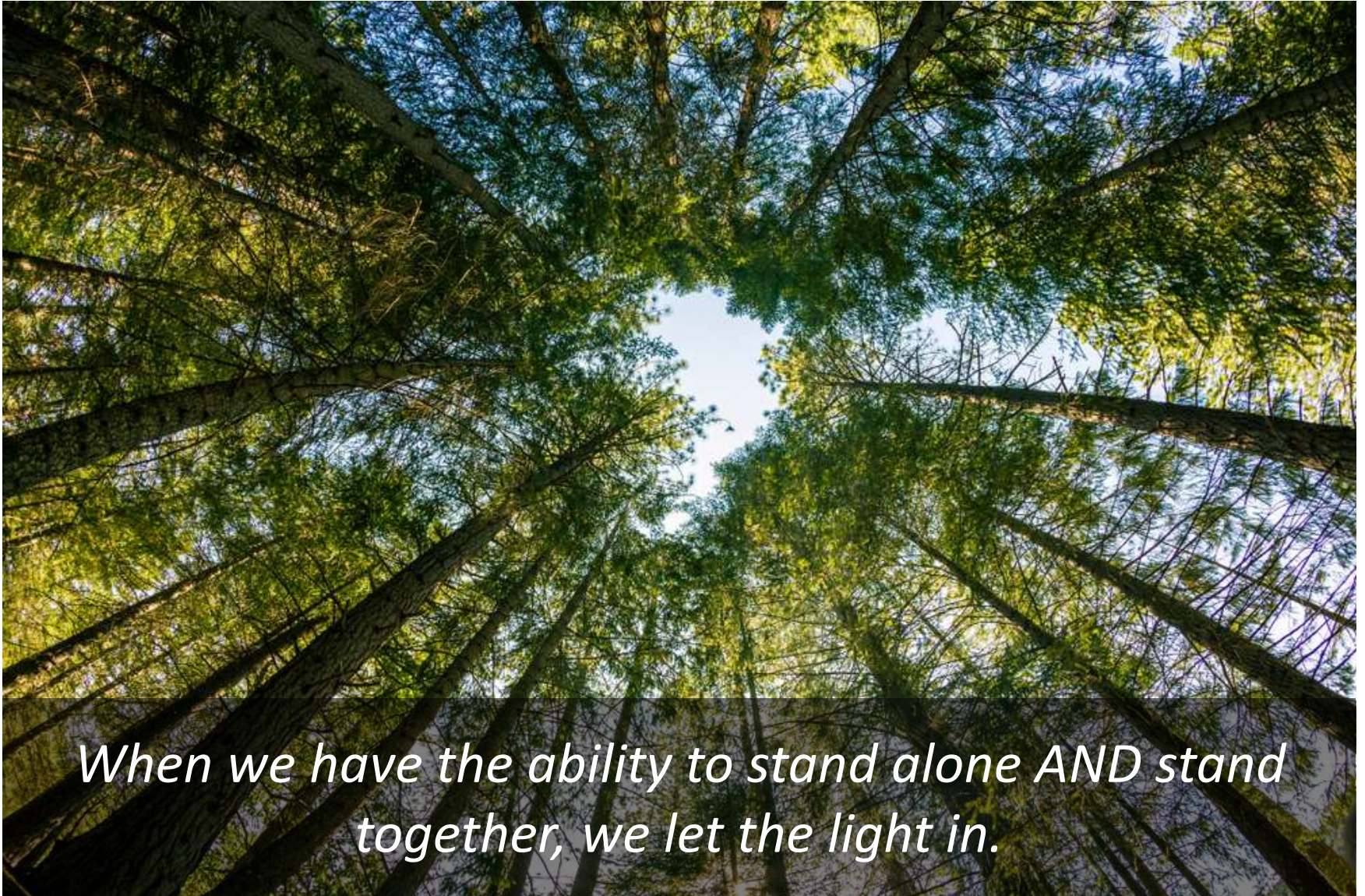
I'M WONDERING...



If Someone Open Up

1. Engage compassion
2. Listen with **empathy & non-judgment**
3. Give reassurance (but don't dismiss)
4. Encourage professional help & other supports
5. Check in soon after

Thriving is a Collective Effort



When we have the ability to stand alone AND stand together, we let the light in.



**What's your
takeaway?**
*Please share what
you most want to
remember.*

QUESTIONS?



Actionable Skills

1. Increase awareness to burnout
2. Watch task brain
3. Recognize co-workers (I see you!)
4. Self-compassion (drop second arrow)
5. Prepare versus preload for conversations
6. Depersonalize other's coping responses
7. Practice lousy first draft conversation
8. Complete the stress cycle
9. Exhale more often
10. Save some apples (be aware of your resources)
11. Drop "should" statements
12. Watch perfectionism
13. Let go of 5%
14. Model self-care/mentor balance
15. Seek an accountability buddy
16. Check in more with colleagues
17. Reach out for your own help

May We All Thrive Thanks So Much!

Shannon Gander, Founder &
Director, Life Work Wellness

E: shannongander@lifeworkwellness.ca

C: (204) 794-5874

Web: www.lifeworkwellness.ca



Resources

- Stats Canada
- Canadian Women's Network
- McKinsey & Company
- Dr. Emily & Amelia Nagoski – Burnout – Secrets to Unlocking the Stress Cycle
- Pittman & Earle – Rewiring Your Anxious Brain
- Dr. Aimie Napigian
- Dr. Stephen Porges – Polyvagal Theory
- Workplace Strategies for Mental Health
- Guarding Minds at Work
- Mental Health Commission of Canada
- NeuroLeadership Institute
- Government of Canada – Psychological Health in the Workplace
- Mindful Leader
- Rick Hanson – One Good Thing

