



**GETTING
TO THE
POSITIVE
IN
UNCERTAIN
TIMES**



Introduction

- Consultant in the field of Behavioral Health, working locally and nationally. Based in Sonoma County, CA, where I have lived for 30 years.
- Consulted for Aurora Behavioral Health Hospital – which is part of the Signature Healthcare organization since 2017.
- Professional Background:
 - Hi-tech start-up businesses
 - Leadership team who opened a small district hospital start-up [one of the hats I have wore included managing a hospital Auxiliary group]
 - BD in mental healthcare
 - Chair the Health Action BH Task Force for West Sonoma County
- Academic background:
 - UCSB - BA in Philosophy
 - Graduate work in Communications and Clinical Psychology
 - Psych internship at Marin General Hospital in Transitional Services
- To be clear, I am not a clinical psychologist.
- The content of this presentation has been curated from:
 - Stanford Medical's– Dr. Victor G. Carrión, the John A. Turner, M.D. Professor and Director, Early Life Stress and Resilience Program
 - Cynthia Kane-Hyman, R.N. an experienced Director of Education, Educator and Process Improvement professional with expertise in behavioral trauma-informed care
 - Other noted sources on trauma-informed care and leadership self care. See resources and citations.



71%+ volunteers work with 1 organization

- Jean Bailey turned 99 in January and for more than a third of her life -- 37 years -- she's been helping at the hospital.
- "They are so good to me here. Always," she said while cutting and dishing out the birthday cake. "It's a part of my life. Lost my husband 30-years ago, so I got pretty independent."
- Every Monday she's here for a 3-hour shift.
- As part of her job, Jean Bailey comforts those who come to the imaging department.
- "It's a little bit of everything. Some come in scared to death. they need someone to talk to for a little bit. We can all handle it if we know what we're handing," said Bailey.



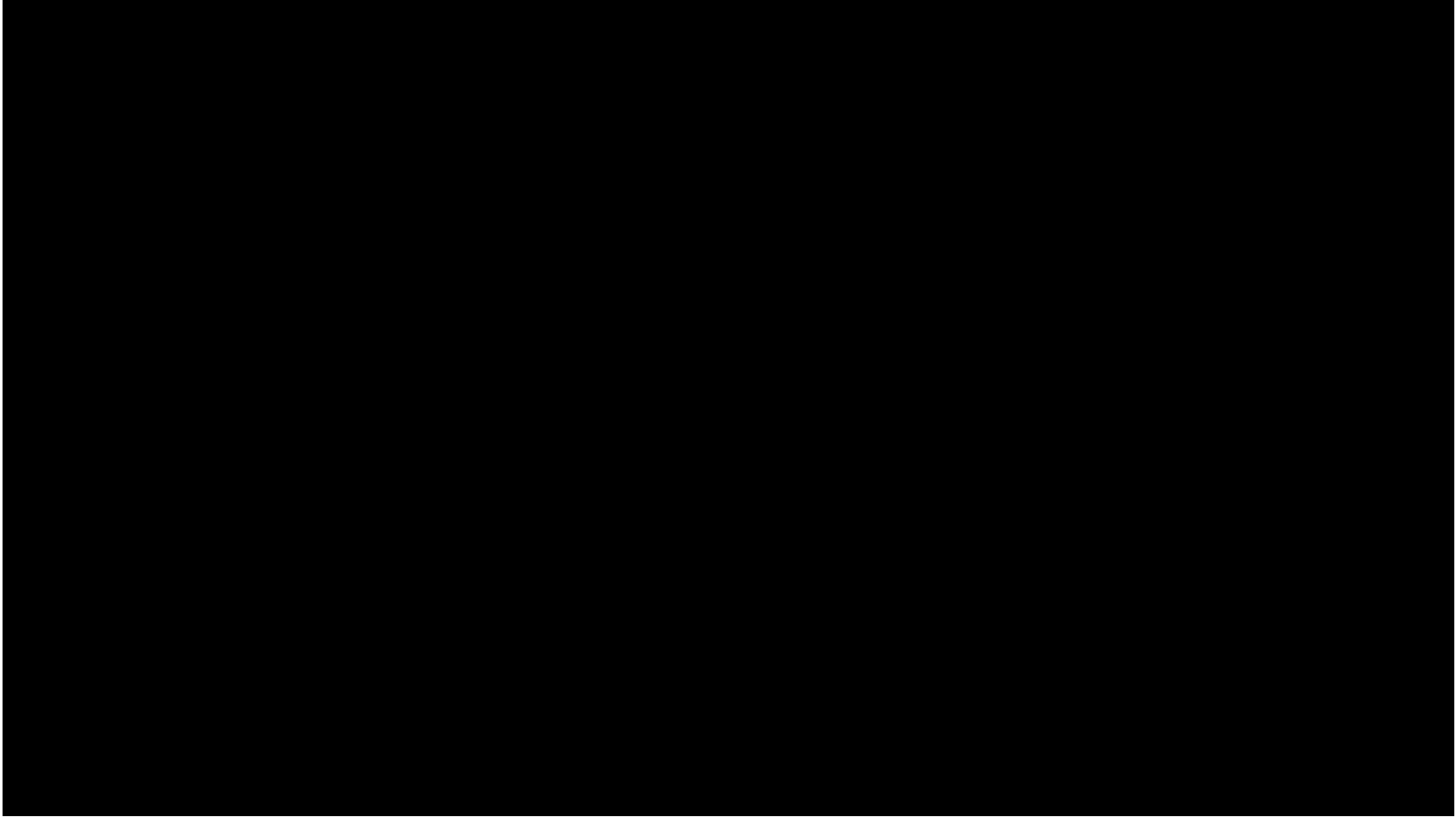
The Best Job

- Give back/get back
- Volunteering is a way to stay emotionally healthy
- What do we do when the best job is furloughed?
- How to get to – or stay with positive thinking when times are so uncertain?



Who me, stressed?

- Stress/anxiety are feelings that double down.
- What is baseline for me?
- Am I over the line right now?
- How can I get back to balance?



How are volunteers feeling?



Feelings causing stress:

- “Lost at sea”
- Isolated
- Useless
- Frustrated
- Anxious [will never return to ‘normal’]
- Fearful [of getting ill]

Feelings bolstering resilience:

- Taking care of self
- Taking care of others/home
- Engaged in other work - Busy
- Creativity
- Patience
- Stability

The Perceived Stress Scale

The Perceived Stress Scale is interesting and important because your perception of what is happening in your life is most important.

Consider the idea that two individuals could have the exact same events and experiences in their lives for the past month. Depending on their perception, total score could put one of those individuals in the low stress category and the total score could put the second person in the high stress category.

Disclaimer: The scores on the following self-assessment do not reflect a diagnosis or course of treatment. They are meant as a tool to help assess your level of stress.

If you have any further concerns about your current well being, contact your primary care physician, a therapist or your Employee Assistance Program.



Scoring

For each question choose from the following alternatives:

0 - never

1- almost never

2 - sometimes

3 - fairly often

4 - very often

Questions



In the last month, how often have you been upset because of something that happened unexpectedly? _____

In the last month, how often have you felt that you were unable to control the important things in your life? _____

In the last month, how often have you felt nervous and stressed?

In the last month, how often have you felt confident about your ability to handle your personal problems?

In the last month, how often have you felt that things were going your way? _____

In the last month, how often have you found that you could not cope with all the things that you had to do? _____

In the last month, how often have you been able to control irritations in your life?

In the last month, how often have you felt that you were on top of things? _____

In the last month, how often have you been angered because of things that happened that were outside of your control? _____

In the last month, how often have you felt difficulties were piling up so high that you could not overcome them? _____

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Figuring Your PSS Score

You can determine your PSS score by following these directions:

First, reverse your scores for questions 4, 5, 7, and 8.

On these 4 questions, change the scores like this:

0 = 4, 1 = 3, 2 = 2, 3 = 1, 4 = 0.

Now add up your scores for each item to get a total.

Let's say my total score is 27.

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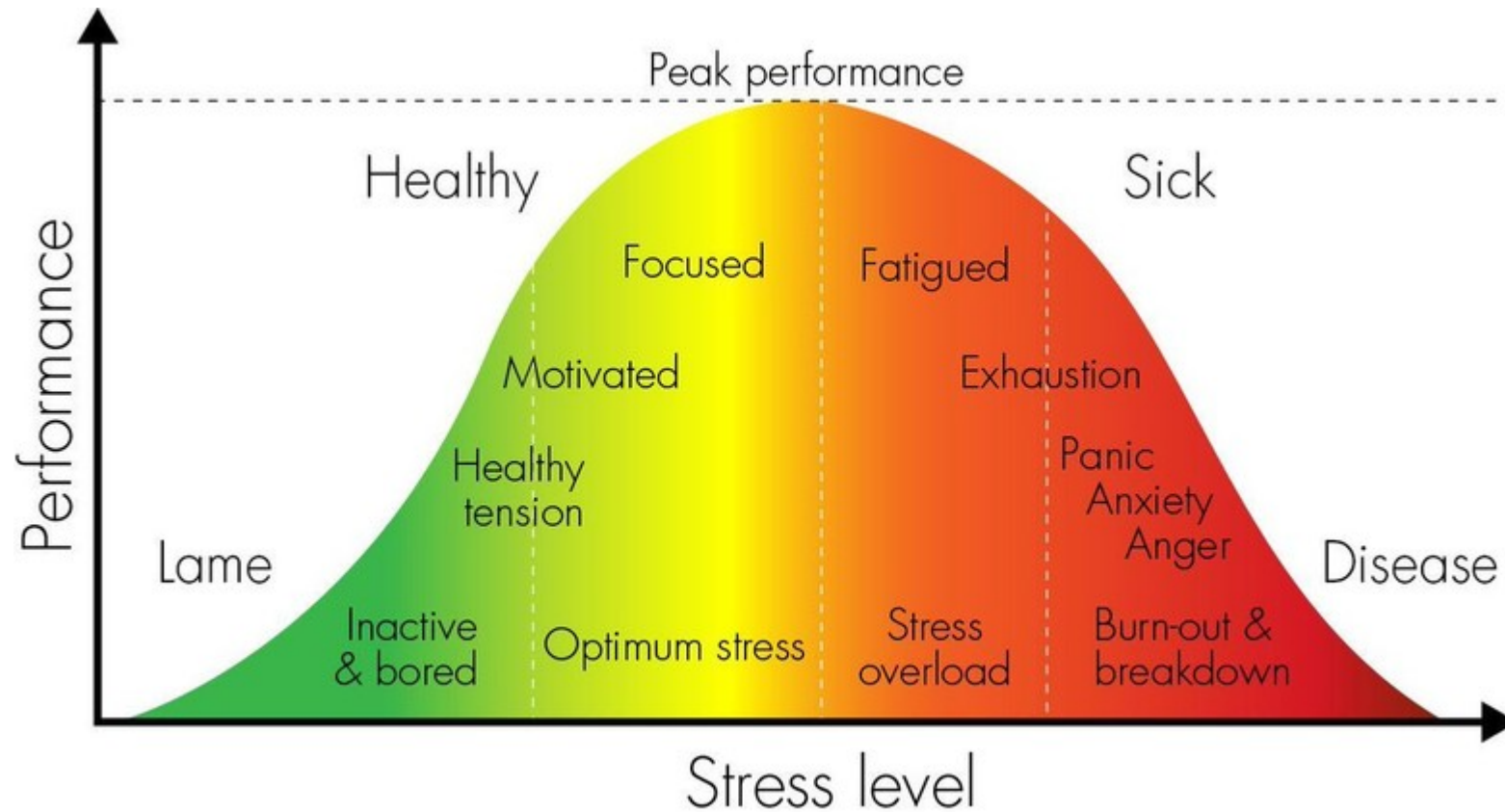
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Score ranges

Individual scores on the PSS can range from 0 to 40 with higher scores indicating higher perceived stress.

- ▶ Scores ranging from 0-13 would be considered low stress.
- ▶ Scores ranging from 14-26 would be considered moderate stress.
- ▶ Scores ranging from 27-40 would be considered high perceived stress.

Stress: The Good, Bad and Ugly



Yerkes-Dodson Stress Curve

MENTAL SHIFTS

By changing the way that we think about our stress we can impact the whole process in a more positive way.



Resilience – What's it all about?



Resilience is a strength that allows us to better withstand adversity.

Some people are more resilient than others. Why?

How can we build up our own resilience and help others build theirs?

"SELF-CARE IS IMPORTANT. WHEN YOU TAKE TIME TO REPLENISH YOUR SPIRIT, IT ALLOWS YOU TO SERVE OTHERS FROM THE OVERFLOW. YOU CANNOT SERVE FROM AN EMPTY VESSEL."

ELEANOR BROWN

Resilience tools

Self-care

Mindfulness

Breathing exercises

Physical exercise

Interpersonal connectedness

Flexibility [ability to adapt]

RESILIENCE: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope; Documentary film, 2016]



Promote Healthy Living

Healthy foods reduce stress.

"A healthy diet builds a solid, more enduring foundation for your body by reducing oxidation and inflammation and by helping to reduce weight gain."

Matthew J. Kuchan, Ph.D., Senior Research Scientist at
Abbott Labs.

Strengthen Yourself



Yoga is a practice that strengthens the body as well as the mind. The practice of “mindfulness” or meditation is begun easily through Yoga postures, deep breathing and other meditation skills. Yoga has been shown to mitigate feelings of depression. But all forms of physical exercise help strengthen us inside and out.

Voluntarily Suffer



Wim Hof, "Becoming the ice man."

- Can't control or avoid difficult times, but we can prepare our minds to better handle it.
- Voluntary suffering is a building block for spiritual health and mental toughness.
- Like exercise will strengthen your muscles, voluntary suffering will strengthen your mind to become more resilient to very real challenges ahead.
- Not sure where to start? Try a cold morning shower. That 30 seconds as the water transitions from warm to freezing will give you an extra jolt of energy and renewed sense of accomplishment and discipline to start the day.
- While we may not be able to predict the next natural disaster, global pandemic, or other challenge that will impact our businesses, we can prepare our minds to better survive it.
- Crenshaw wrote that "perspective from darkness, perseverance in the face of adversity, purpose through action, and optimism in the face of failure..." are a prescription for a happier life. I'd add, a healthier and more resilient business, too.

Fortitude: American Resilience in the Era of Outrage, by former Navy SEAL turned Congressman, [Dan Crenshaw](#).

Encourage conversation



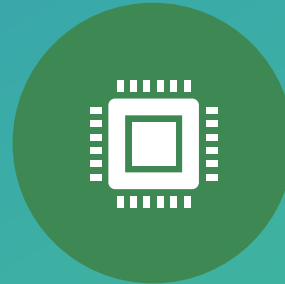
Depending upon the demographics in your volunteer group, you will want to devise communications tools each gen is comfortable with:



Gen Z: Internet

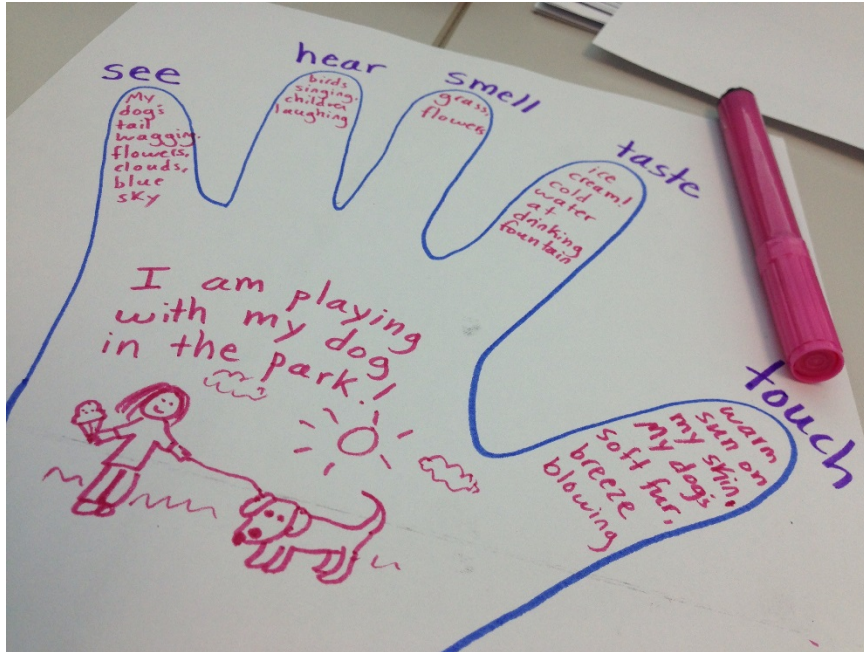


Gen X: Social Media



Baby Boomer: Face-to-face

Positive Memories Reduce Stress



Elizabeth V. Goldfarb, Monica D. Rosenberg, Dongju Seo, R. Todd Constable, Rajita Sinha. **Hippocampal seed connectome-based modeling predicts the feeling of stress.** *Nature Communications*, 2020; 11 (1) Yale University. "Where stress lives." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 27 May 2020. <www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/05/200527123327.htm>.

Without getting into the neuroscience – there are studies which show positive memories do reduce stress and allow us to adapt to “new normals.”

"Similar to recent findings that remembering positive experiences can lower the body's stress response, our work suggests that memory-related brain networks can be harnessed to create a more resilient emotional response to stress."

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Sweat the small stuff

- "If you allow yourself to sweat the small stuff, then you must try your hardest not to sweat the *big* stuff," Crenshaw.
- Crenshaw Example: "Focus on dry socks."
- Let off a little steam
 - Give trivial matters a solid moment of frustration if you feel the urge, and then move on.
- Go ahead - complain
 - Bad haircut
 - Parking ticket
 - Breaking a vase

The “get to” strategy

Reframe your mindset
when faced with
hardships from the
mentality of "I have
to" to "I get to."

The diagram consists of two circular nodes connected by arrows. The left node is a dark blue circle containing the text 'Reframe your mindset when faced with hardships from the mentality of "I have to" to "I get to."' A dark blue arrow points from this node to the right node. The right node is a light blue circle containing the text 'This simple shift in perspective will take you from feeling like a helpless victim of your life's circumstances, to owning your situation and feeling layers of healthy control.' A light blue arrow points from this node back to the left node, forming a clockwise cycle.

This simple shift in
perspective will take
you from feeling like a
helpless victim of
your life's
circumstances, to
owning your situation
and feeling layers of
healthy control.

Fortitude: American Resilience in the Era of Outrage,
by former Navy SEAL turned Congressman,
Dan Crenshaw.

Is Positive Thinking Realistic?

- Polly Anna vs Problem Solver
- Every situation teaches us how to do things differently for different outcomes
- What are some “I get to” statements about this scenario?
- Apply to your own circumstances



Helping others – Good Medicine

- Volunteers are self-actuating people
- Volunteers are reliable, ethical, compassionate, stable
- Volunteers have excellent resilience in the face of adversity

That's not coincidental.

Because:

- Volunteers want to help others
- Volunteers often know how to take care of themselves
- Volunteers have people they trust and reach out when they are in need.



BE SOMEONE YOUR VOLUNTEERS CAN TRUST.

Thank you!

Resources

[International Employee Assistance Professionals Association](#)

[The Stress Nest - The Resilience Factor](#)

[TedEd - How stress affects your brain - Madhumita Murgia](#)

[RESILIENCE: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope; Documentary film, 2016](#)

[7 Benefits of Cold Showers That You Probably Don't Know](#)

Contact

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