



# Mastering Stress and Boosting Resiliency: Session 5

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# Today's Class

- Welcome to the “Mastering Stress and Boosting Resiliency” class series
  - Tuesdays, 5:00 - 6:00 pm, Zoom Meeting
- Today's Topics
  - Dealing with Negative Thinking
  - Learning to Relax on Demand
    - *Guided Exercise: Guided Imagery - The Beach*

# What is Stress Management?

- Stress Management Training = Enhancing skills to withstand adverse situations by directly addressing problems, improving emotional flexibility, increasing the sense of control, cultivating optimism, and possibly finding greater meaning in life
- Stress management training is NOT:
  - Just for “mentally weak people”
  - Helpful only if you are overwhelmed

# Stress Management Training: 3-Month Series

- Build Stress Awareness
- Learn to Relax on Demand
- Identify and Change Unhelpful Thinking
- Build Coping Skills
  - Solving Problems
  - Managing Emotions & Acceptance
  - Making Sense and Meaning
- Improve Social Support
- Promote Lifestyle and Medication Treatments
  - Nutrition, Exercise, Medication Treatments

# Best Time To Reverse Chronic Disease is NOW

- Our Mission: Comprehensive lifestyle changes, with the high aim of reversing hypertension, diabetes, and atherosclerotic heart disease
- Directly targets the factors that appear associated with higher risk of severe COVID-19
- Reverse chronic disease for today's threat (COVID-19), and for the long-term threat of premature death and disability

# COVID Coach - Mobile Phone App

- The COVID Coach app was created for everyone, including Veterans and Servicemembers, to support self-care and overall mental health during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.
- Features include:
  - Education about coping during the pandemic
  - Tools for self-care and to improve emotional well-being
  - Trackers to check your mood and measure your growth toward personal goals
  - Graphs to visualize progress over time
- iOS: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/covid-coach/id1504705038>
- Android: [https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.va.mobilehealth.ncptsd.covid&hl=en\\_US](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=gov.va.mobilehealth.ncptsd.covid&hl=en_US)

# Dealing with Negative Thinking

Strategy #4

# Building Awareness of Thoughts

- The first task in managing unhelpful thinking is to build awareness that it's happening!
  1. Pay Attention to your thoughts (internal monologue), especially when you feel upset
  2. Learn the cognitive distortions (the most common ways that our thinking can become unhelpful, a.k.a. “thinking traps”)
  3. Keep track of your automatic thoughts (i.e., a log/diary) over time



# Assignment Option #1

- To help you get better at catching unhelpful thinking...
- Read this list of common cognitive distortions once every morning
- Notice when you feel stressed or upset during the week
  - Ask yourself, “What was going through my mind just then?”
- Decide:
  - Am I engaging in distorted/unhelpful thinking?
  - What do I have to do to deal with this situation?

# Assignment Option #2

- Every time you notice yourself feeling stressed or upset, stop and fill out a monitoring log, “3 component model”
  - Or, as soon as you are able after the situation
- Ask yourself, “What was going through my mind just then?”
  - Write down the situation
  - What you are feeling emotionally
  - Your automatic thoughts
  - What you feel physically in your body
  - What you did or want to do (or what you want to avoid)
- Decide:
  - Am I engaging in distorted thinking?
  - What do I have to do to deal with this situation?

# Why write down how I feel?

- Writing down forces us to clarify what happened
- Clarifies the different parts of our stress
- Allows us to stand back and have more perspective
- Builds our awareness over time to the subtle changes in our body, our emotions, and our internal dialogue
- This leads us to be less reactive, and more flexible in the moment
- Eventually stop keeping track (process becomes second nature)

# Evaluating Our Thinking

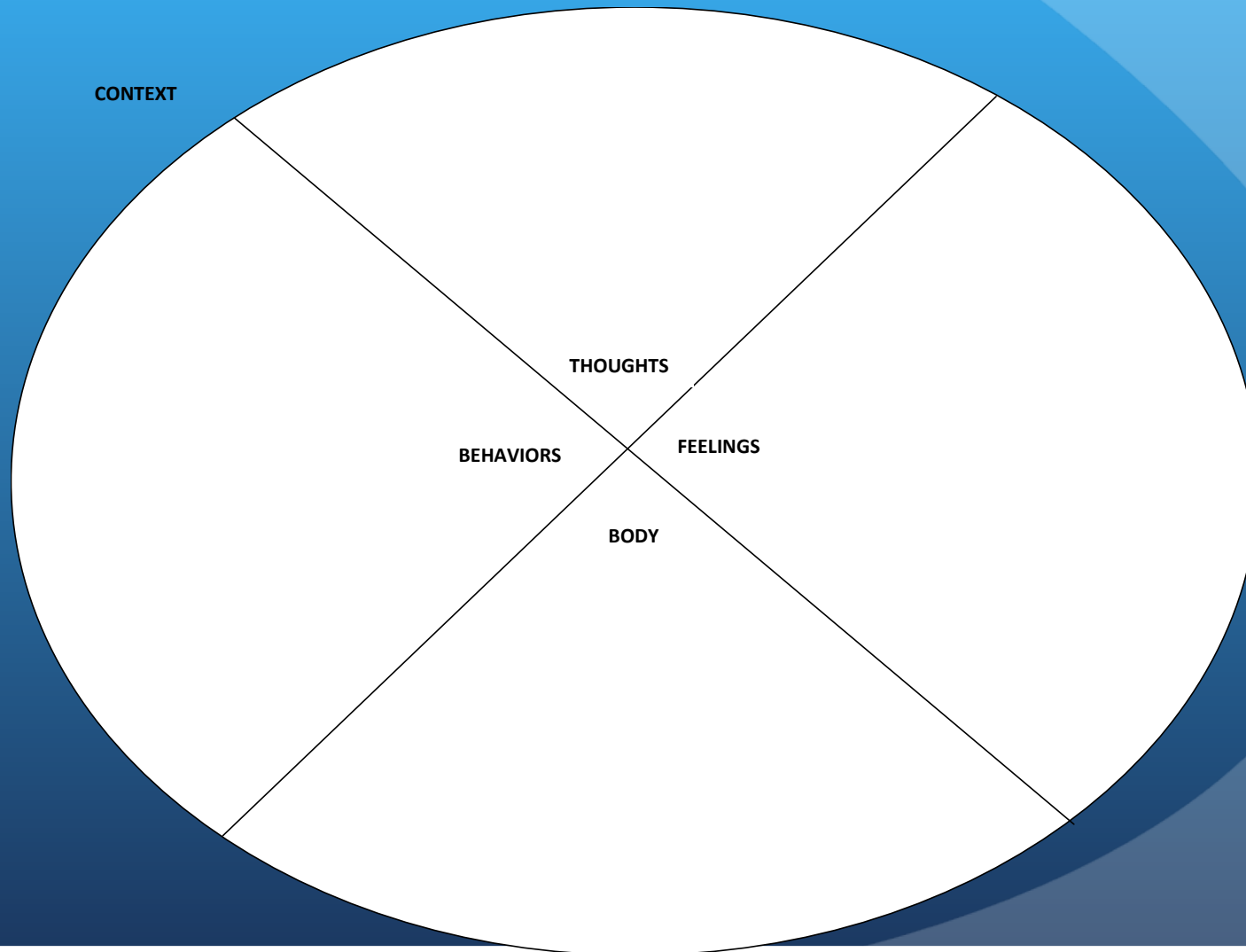
- Once you are aware of your thoughts, then you can evaluate whether they are:
  - Helpful or Harmful
  - Accurate or Inaccurate

# Testing Your Thoughts

- What is the situation?
- What am I thinking or imagining?
- What makes me think the thought is true?
- What makes me think the thought is not true or completely true?
- What's another way to look at this?
- What's the worst that could happen? What could I do then?
- What's the best that could happen?
- What will probably happen?
- What will happen if I keep telling myself the same thought?
- What will happen if I changed my thinking?
- What would I tell my friend (think of a specific person) \_\_\_\_\_ if this happened to him/her?

# Assignment Option #1

- Complete the “5 Factor Wheel” worksheet every time you feel stressed in the next week



# Other Assignment Options

- Compile a list of your favorite quotes, which convey wisdom and balance
- Compile verses from scripture or other spiritual/religious writings that provide guidance on how to deal with the stressors you are facing
- Find TED talks that are powerful, and promote a positive outlook

# Resources

Reminders for All



# Seek Professional Help When Needed

- Seeking treatment from a professional can help:
  - Counseling (marital)
  - Psychotherapy
  - Psychiatric medication
- UC Davis Behavioral Health Center (Adult/EDAPT Clinic): (916)734-3574
- UC Davis Children's Behavioral Health Center: (916)734-3574
- Psychology Today Find a Therapist:  
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>
- Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Find a Therapist: <http://www.findcbt.org/FAT/>
- Therapy Apps: Talkspace, BetterHelp, Regain - Couples Therapy

# Hotlines

- **Friendship Line (Institute on Aging)**
  - Toll Free 800-971-0016
  - Friendship and support for older adults who may be lonely, isolated, grieving, depressed, or anxious
- **Services & Advocacy for LGBT Elders (SAGE) Hotline**
  - Toll Free 877-360-5428
  - Offer support without judgment, answer questions factually and confidentially
  - Provide info about community resources such as healthcare, transportation, counseling, legal services, and emotional support programs
  - Available in English and Spanish, in 180 languages
  - [sageusa.org](http://sageusa.org)
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**
  - 800-273-8255, or online chat
- **Veterans Crisis Line (confidential, 24/7)**
  - [www.veteranscrisisline.net](http://www.veteranscrisisline.net)
  - 800-273-8255 (Press 1 at the prompt if you are a veteran)
  - Text 838255
  - Chat (connect online)
  - Support for deaf and hard of hearing: 800-799-4889

# More Hotlines & Other Resources

- For Caregivers

- CaregiverAction.org, free hotline 855-227-3640. Lots of resources related to caregiving during COVID-19
- The Family Caregiver Alliance: 800-445-8106
- Alzheimer's Association: if you are caring for someone with Alzheimer's or any type of dementia, they can help (24/7 Helpline: 800-272-3900)

- Domestic Violence

- **WEAVE 24 Hour Support & Information Line: (916) 920-2952**
- **Counseling and Service Locations:**
  - **WEAVE Midtown Counseling Center**  
1900 K Street  
Sacramento, CA 95811  
Phone: 916.448.2321
- **Other 24/7 Support Lines:**  
National Domestic Violence Hotline 1.800.799.7233  
National Sexual Assault Hotline 1.800.656.4673

# Guided Imagery - The Beach

Today's Guided Relaxation

## My challenge to you:

- What are at least 1-2 things you can do (from today's presentation, or your own ideas) to help you better manage stress, and/or help you be resilient moving forward?
- How can you use this time to make your life better, in some way?

# Your Stress Management Plan

- What are my most common sources of stress (triggers)?
- What are the signs and symptoms I get when stressed?
- What are my helpful ways of coping?
- What are my unhelpful ways of coping?
- What problem or source of stress have I been avoiding dealing with? Is it time to deal with it more actively?
- What resource(s) could I turn to for help with this problem?
- What are 1-2 practices I could start doing, to help me cope better with stress?

Questions and Comments?