

Let's Cope Together

Managing Anxiety and Uncertainty

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Anxiety versus Fear

- Fear is a reaction to a **specific** threat by some observable danger(attached to a specific thing that is happening)
- Anxiety is more a more **generalized feeling**, unfocused, future oriented
- Anxiety is driven by the “what ifs”. Things that are in the future and are therefore uncertain
- Anxiety is *an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes*
- Its normal to experience a small amount of anxiety each day
- A small amount of anxiety helps us survive
 - helps prepare you to deal
 - perform your best
 - motivates you to working toward your goals



Too much Anxiety

- Can make us feel restless
- Can cause us to ruminate and overthink
- Can make it difficult to concentrate
- Cause fatigue
- Interfere with our work and relationships
- Interfere with our ability to enjoy life
- Can contribute to health issues



Anxiety: THIS IS TOO MUCH

me: what is?

Anxiety: ALL OF THIS

me: im literally not even doing anything

Anxiety: TOO MUCH!!!!!!!!!!!!

Signs You May Be Experiencing Anxiety

- Feeling restless
- Ruminating and overthinking
- Sense of dread, or unease
- Increased irritability
- Trouble concentrating
- Trouble remembering things
- Physical symptoms such as racing heart, shortness of breath, difficulty sleeping, high blood pressure etc.
- Can affect you job, relationships, and ability to enjoy life



Why Are We Having So Much Anxiety?

Anxiety is worry about the future. Things that *may or may not* happen

All the “What ifs”

What Is Going On?

There are a lot of “What ifs” right now

Post
pandemic
issues

World
unrest/wars

Economy



Political elections

Climate change

The internet
(never ending news
and information
overload)

You Are Not Alone...

American Psychological Poll 2024- We are anxious about the following:

73% U.S. election

79% The economy

68 % Keeping themselves or families safe

63% Their health

63% Paying bills

69% Gun violence

63% Keeping identity safe

57% Climate change

50 % Opioid epidemic

45% Emerging technologies

www.psychiatry.org/news-room/news-releases/annual-anxiety-and-mental-health-poll-2024&ved. Harris Poll on 3,185 adults age 18+ who reside in the U.S. (i.e., a national sample). Oversamples allowed for increased totals by race/ethnicity: 805 Black, 811 Latino/a/e and 800 Asian individuals.

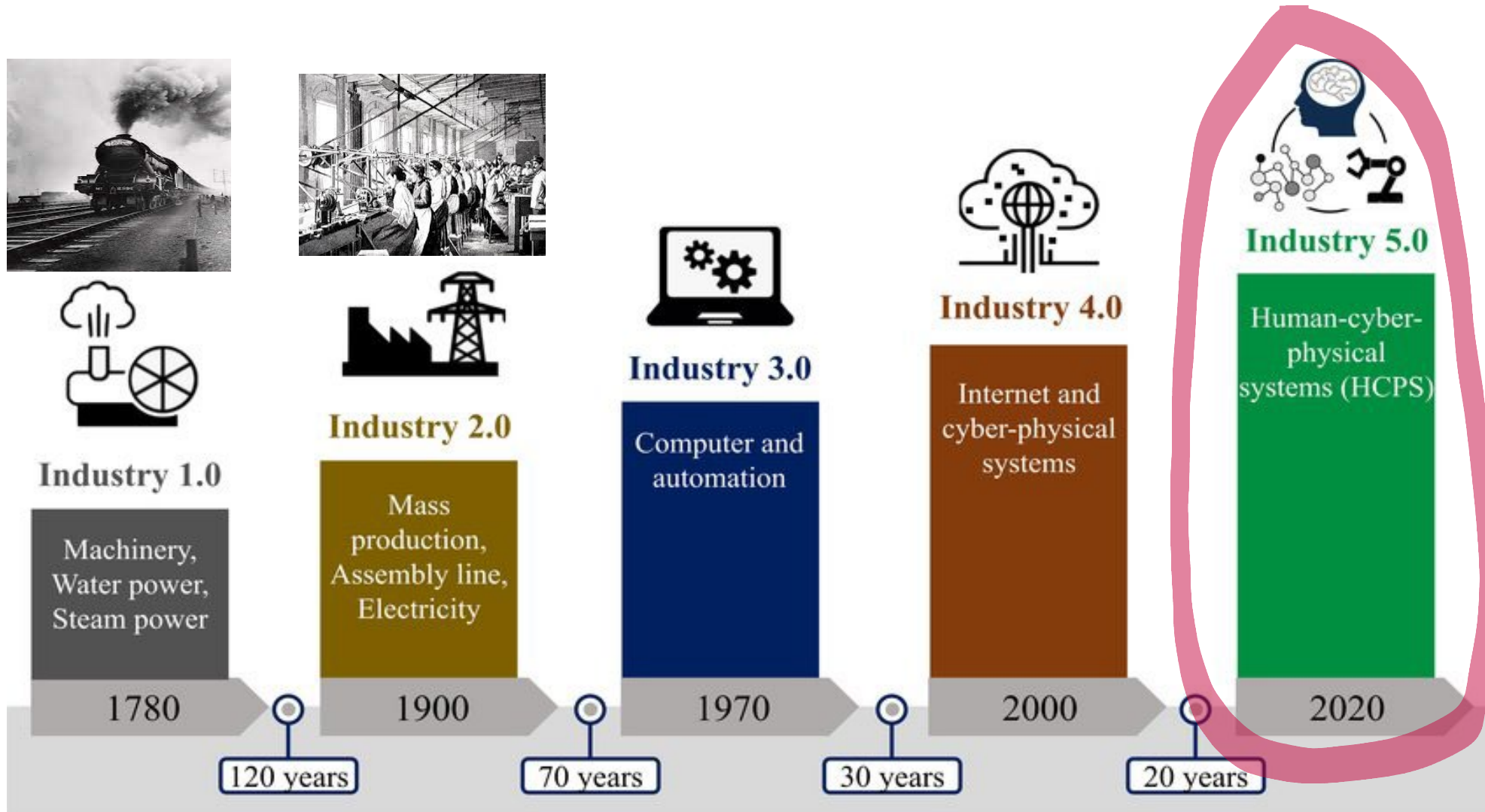
Also there are Big Transitions Happening... Emerging Technologies

Amy Webb- Strategic Foresight and Strategic Planning

- We are all part of a “Generation Transition”
- We are entering a Technology Supercycle (explosive technology innovation)
 - Long lasting changes in all areas of life including, everyday habits, global politics, healthcare, finance, personal and social dynamics, and industry



The Industrial Revolution



Generation Transition- That's us!

We are in a technology “Supercycle”

- **Artificial Intelligence**

Enables computers and machines to simulate human intelligence and problem-solving capabilities.

- **Biotechnology**

The development of insulin, growth hormone, molecular identity and diagnostics, gene and stem cell therapies and vaccines

- **Wearable Devices**

Electronic devices worn by individuals in order to track, analyze and transmit personal data via internet

These are all converging and will work together to change the way we live

Are there any “What ifs” involved in this supercycle???



Dealing with Uncertainty is the Whole Ball of Wax

What Helps?

- Challenge your need for certainty. Accept there will be uncertainty in life
- Develop and use stress-reducing habits
 - Exercise, mindfulness activities, music, mind games, reading, painting, journaling...
- Having purpose- yearning for new discoveries, growth
- Seek out community groups and activities like the CV Wellness Program
- Tune into your feelings and talk with friend or professional about them
- Be aware of your story

What Helps to Reduce Anxiety? Dealing with Uncertainty

Accepting Uncertainty:

- Uncertainty is natural and inevitable part of life
- Very little in our lives is constant or certain
- We can't control everything that happens to us or those we love
- Explore uncertainty- Ask yourself if x, y or Z happens can I cope with that?
- Don't assume bad things will happen just because the outcome is uncertain?

The only thing that
is constant is change.
~ Heraclitus



Dealing with Uncertainty

Challenge Your Need For Certainty

What are some advantages of uncertainty?

- When hard or bad things happen, many times a good thing happens unexpectedly too
- Having to face uncertainty and having even small successes gives you improved confidence and self-efficacy
- Facing and getting through uncertainty increases your resiliency and growth as a person

Dealing With Uncertainty

Practice Mindfulness and Meditation

- Practice being mindful which means paying attention to what is happening in the current moment. Be present.
 - Allow yourself to feel the uncertainty
 - Practice other mindfulness activities such as exercise, music, mind games, reading, painting, wood working, journaling etc.
- Practice meditation as a mindfulness practice
 - Be aware of your breathing. When you notice your mind has drifted to thoughts of uncertainty, just notice the thought, and then bring your attention back to your breathing
 - Meditation creates a stronger appreciation for the present moment
 - Allows you to learn you are resilient
 - Allows you to learn you have self-efficacy

Dealing With Uncertainty

Other Mindfulness Practices...

- Exercise
- Music
- Mind games- Mahjong, crosswords, wordle, scrabble etc.
- Reading
- Painting
- Journaling
- Qigong
- Tai Chi
- Others...

Dealing With Uncertainty- Having Purpose, Community, and Physical Challenge Lessons from "The Walking Pilgrimage"

-Ken Cross

Pilgrimage- A wandering or journey

Three pillars:

- Social awareness and connection- camaraderie and mutual encouragement
- Purpose- involves exploration and personal growth
- Fitness/Activity- A physical aspect or process



Social Connection

**NOTHING OF SIGNIFICANCE WAS EVER
ACHIEVED BY AN INDIVIDUAL ACTING
ALONE. LOOK BELOW THE SURFACE AND
YOU WILL FIND THAT ALL SEEMINGLY SOLO
ACTS ARE REALLY TEAM EFFORTS.**

- JOHN C. MAXWELL -

How To Have a Daily Pilgrimage

- A pilgrimage implies action. Be intentional. Decide to make today a journey
- Include the 3 pillars *plus a few more*:
 - Purpose: You define your purpose. e.g. A spiritual yearning for new discoveries about myself
 - Physical component- most pilgrimages involve a physical challenge
 - Social connection component
 - *Embrace uncertainty- Do or try something new, or take a risk socially or in some other way
 - *Open your heart to the blessings and peace of “not knowing” all the answers

The Cardiovascular Wellness Program- A pilgrimage



Seek Support

- Be aware and accepting of your feelings of anxiety or uncertainty
- Talk with a friend, pastor or mental health professional
- Reach out to staff in the CV Wellness Program anytime you need support, guidance or just someone to listen



Your Story Matters

- There is always more than one story to tell about what is happening
- Our thoughts create our behavior
- Work on finding a story that has some truth, power, and hope

Its always there.



Questions?

Comments?

Thank-you for being here today