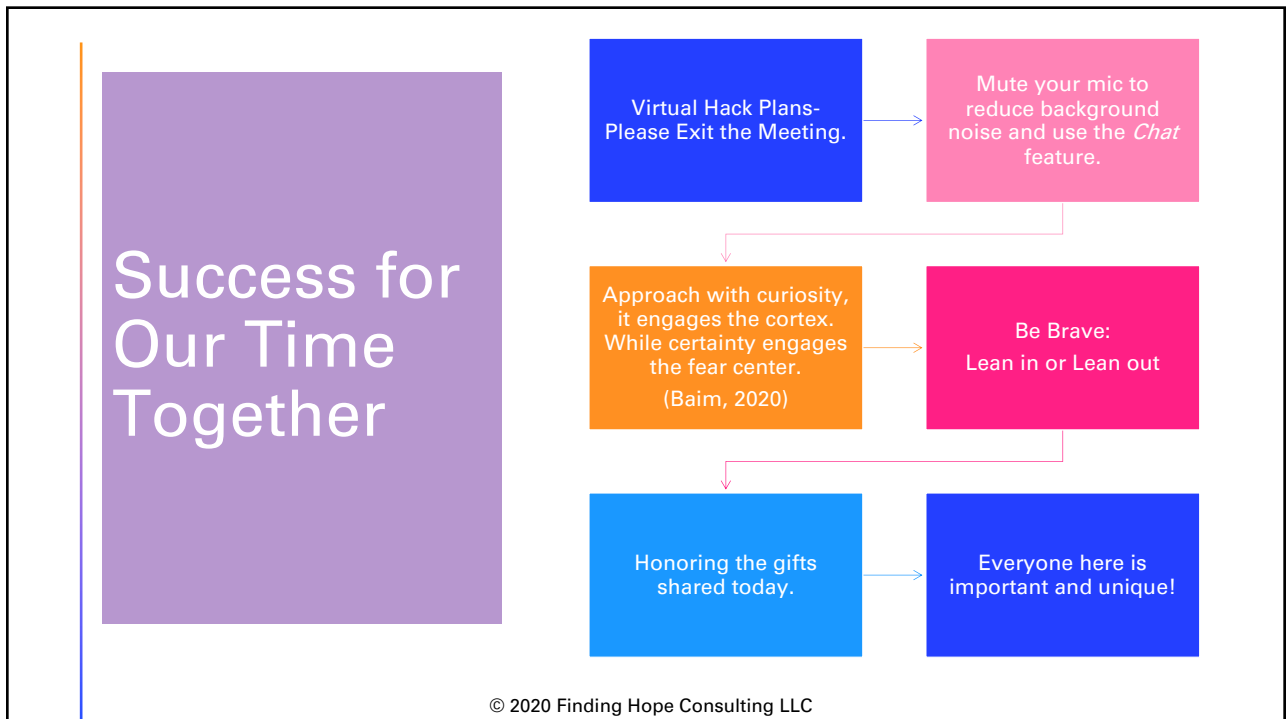


Fighting An Invisible Enemy: Building Resilience in Those We Serve and Ourselves During COVID- 19

Presented by:
Mary Vicario, LPCC-S
Certified Trauma Specialist
Finding Hope Consulting, LLC
www.findinghopeconsulting.com

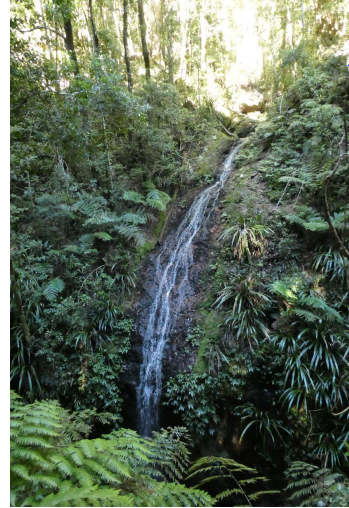
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Endurance does not come from hope alone. It begins with knowing, and having the courage to face and accept, the reality of the ground upon which we stand. Survival comes from balancing reality with optimism and hope.

~ Amy Acton, MD 4/21/2020



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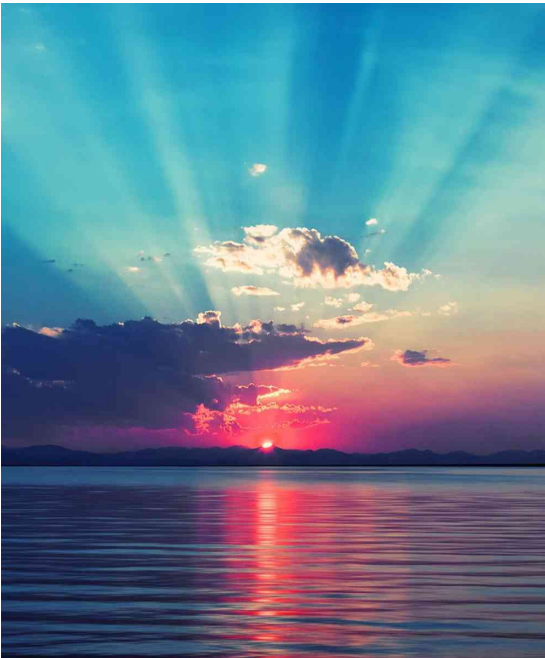
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Questions and Answers that Matter



What gives you a sense of hope?



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What We Will Cover

Objectives - Participants will:

- Identify COVID's impact on the Fear Cascade
- Identify and use resilience-based interventions to assist those we serve and ourselves in regulating during chronic, uncertain stress like COVID.
- Identify the five good things found in mutually enhancing relationships and how to accomplish them from a physical distance.
- Lead along the Cliffs of Safety and develop COVID specific resilience-based planning for themselves, a loved one or someone they serve.

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Confronting an Invisible Enemy

Objectives 1 & 2

Upon Completion of this training, participants will be able to

1. Identify COVID's impact on the Fear Cascade
2. Use resilience-based interventions to assist those we serve and ourselves in regulating during chronic, uncertain stress like COVID.

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Felt Safety:

What is it and Why Does It Matter?

Felt Safety is the Cornerstone of our ability to Connect & Regulate.

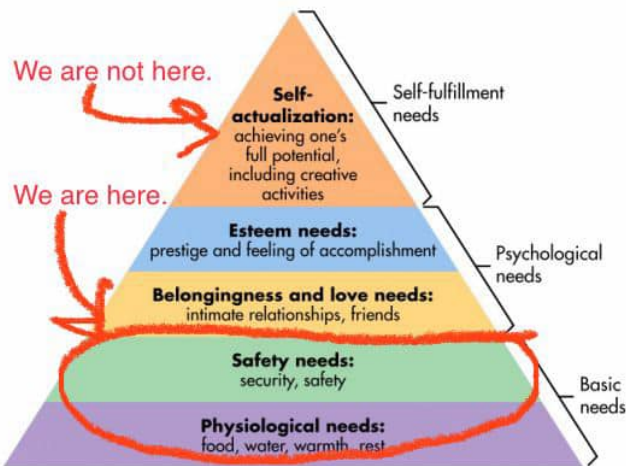
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Hierarchy of Needs

Adaptation of: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs / As seen on: Rachel Rhody, Facebook



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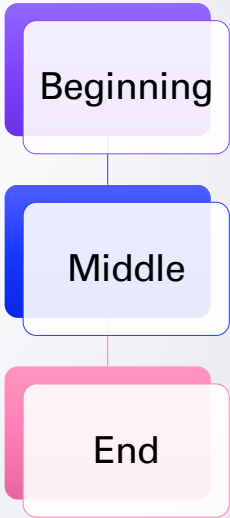


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So, how do we survive this time in between?



Stress that is tolerable has a clear



Quick Write! Starting on Solid Ground

What brought you to this work?


What keeps you in this work?

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The Hand Brain

“Flipping One’s Lid”



Thinking Brain (Cortex) = **Our Upstairs Brain**

→ Prefrontal cortex
P.F.C.
“THE WISE LEADER”



← “Flipped Your Lid”

← The big emotions, anger, fear, anxiety etc...
The **AMYGDALA** - The alarm center
Acts on instinct
fight, flight or freeze

Reacting Brain = **Our Downstairs Brain**
(Limbic System) The Fear Center

Palm of hand (Brain Stem), controls heart, Lungs, etc.

Wrist to elbow = Spinal Column & Vagus Nerve, which sends feelings to every organ in your body

Daniel Siegel, 2011 *Mindsight*


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Hand Model of the Brain

Dr. Dan Siegel (2010)

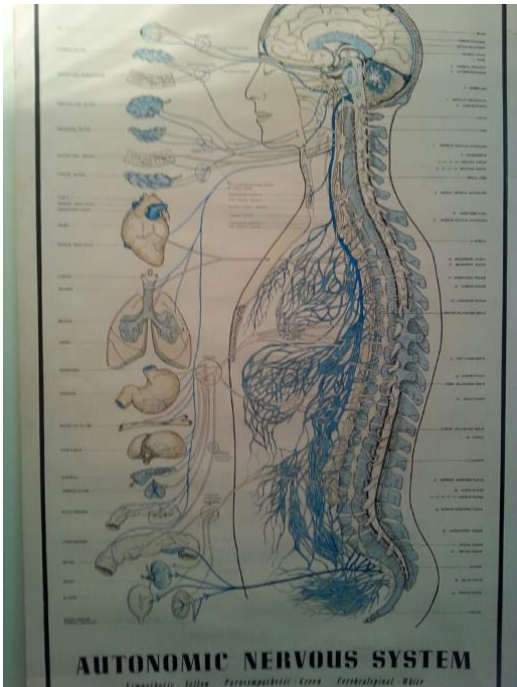
Vagus Nerve

- ✓ Wraps around every organ in body
- ✓ Sends feelings as sensations, to the body
- ✓ Controls our social engagement system
- ✓ Stores memories as physical sensations starting at 23 weeks gestation



*Information adapted by The Center for Family Safety and Healing;
Content Sources: Dan Siegel Mindsight (2011); Polyvagal Theory – Stephen Porges (2010); Finding Hope Consulting LLC*

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AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

Transmitter: Sympathetic - Parasympathetic - Vagus - Enteric - Brain

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Soul Nerve Activity

Pg. 30 – Noticing the Vagus Nerve
(Menakem, 2017)

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Hand Model of the Brain

Dr. Dan Siegel (2010)

© Mind Your Brain, Inc. 2018

Brain Stem:

- ✓ In charge of everything we do not want to have to think about like
- ✓ Breathing
- ✓ Digestion
- ✓ Bladder & Bowel Control
- ✓ Heart rate
- ✓ Blood pressure
- ✓ Arousal
- ✓ Let's information into the brain
- ✓ "Communicates" through body sensations



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Content Sources: Dan Siegel Mindsight (2011); Polyvagal Theory – Stephen Porges (2010); Finding Hope Consulting LLC

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Hand Model of the Brain

Dr. Dan Siegel (2010)

Limbic System (Fear Center)

- ✓ Felt Safety, Attachment, Regulation
- ✓ Sets off the **F**lock, **F**lee, **F**ight, **F**reeze, **F**aint (Submit) response
- ✓ No conscious control over this activation
- ✓ “Communicates” through sensations & pictures

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Content Sources: Dan Siegel Mindsight (2011); Polyvagal Theory – Stephen Porges (2010); Finding Hope Consulting LLC

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UNSAFE

Fear Cascade

SAFE

Flock: Gangs, violent or hurtful relationships, suicide attempts

Flee: running away, hiding, suicide attempts

Fight: all forms of aggression, suicide attempts

Freeze: depression, being stuck, Not protecting children, looks oppositional

Faint (Submit): Protecting perpetrators, Curling into a fetal position, Flopping

Flock: Safe relationships, clubs, church, teams

Flee: Leaving a problematic job or relationship

Fight: Assertiveness, Exercise, sports, dance

Yoga can connect action & stillness.

Freeze: Quiet time, prayer, meditation,

Submit: Breathing, Sleep

Please don't ask someone to risk their life to get connection.

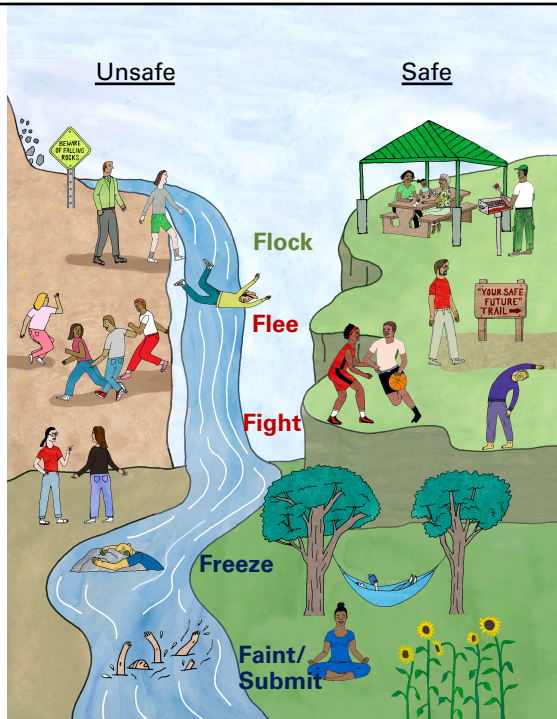
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The Fear Cascade for Students

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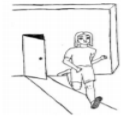
19

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The Fear Cascade

Unsafe

Safe



Flock



Cortex (Online)

Flee



Fear Center (Lymbic System)

Fight



Freeze



Brain Stem

Faint (Submit)

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Artwork © 2020 Mikayla Maidlow

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Hand Model of the Brain

Dr. Dan Siegel (2010)

The diagram shows two hands. The left hand is open with fingers spread, representing the 'Thinking Brain'. The right hand is clenched into a fist, representing the 'Feeling Brain'. Labels with arrows point to various parts: 'PREFRONTAL CORTEX' (top of the open hand), 'CEREBRAL CORTEX' (top of the fist), 'LIMBIC REGIONS (HIPPOCAMPUS & AMYGDALA)' (palm of the open hand), 'BRAIN STEM (BASE OF SKULL)' (wrist area), and 'SPINAL CORD (Vagus Nerve)' (arm). A yellow highlight is on the cerebral cortex of the fist.

Cortex (Thinking Brain):

- ✓ Executive Functions like planning, organizing creativity, and problem-solving
- ✓ Assists with Empathy/compassion
- ✓ *Not fully formed until we are in our mid-30s!*
- ✓ *“Communicates” through pictures & words*

Information adapted by The Center for Family Safety and Healing;
Content Sources: Dan Siegel Mindsight (2011); Polyvagal Theory – Stephen Porges (2010); Finding Hope Consulting LLC

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Hand Model of the Brain

Dr. Dan Siegel (2010)

The diagram is identical to the one above, but the limbic regions on the palm of the open hand are highlighted in blue, and the cerebral cortex on the fist is shaded grey.

Flipping Our Lids

When we experience big emotions or stressful situations, we can “flip our lids”.

Our fear center takes control, helping us to survive.

Our thinking brain goes “offline”.

We don’t have conscious control over this activation.

Information adapted by The Center for Family Safety and Healing;
Content Sources: Dan Siegel Mindsight (2011); Polyvagal Theory – Stephen Porges (2010); Finding Hope Consulting LLC

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Hand Model of the Brain

Dr. Dan Siegel (2010)

The diagram shows two hands. The left hand is open with the palm facing up, representing the prefrontal cortex. The right hand is clenched into a fist, representing the limbic regions. Labels with arrows point to the following parts: PREFRONTAL CORTEX (left hand), CEREBRAL CORTEX (right hand), LIMBIC REGIONS (HIPPOCAMPUS & AMYGDALA) (right hand), BRAIN STEM (BASE OF SKULL) (between hands), and SPINAL CORD (Vagus Nerve) (bottom of right hand).

Flipping Our Lids

- ✓ Sensory overload
- ✓ May experience:
 - Emotional rollercoaster
 - Feel out of control
 - Not aware of actions
 - "I don't know"
- ✓ Repeated activation

Information adapted by The Center for Family Safety and Healing;
Content Sources: Dan Siegel Mindsight (2011); Polyvagal Theory – Stephen Porges (2010); Finding Hope Consulting LLC

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Hand Model of the Brain

Dr. Dan Siegel (2010)

The diagram is identical to the one on page 23, but the right hand (fist) is shaded yellow to indicate it is 'online'.

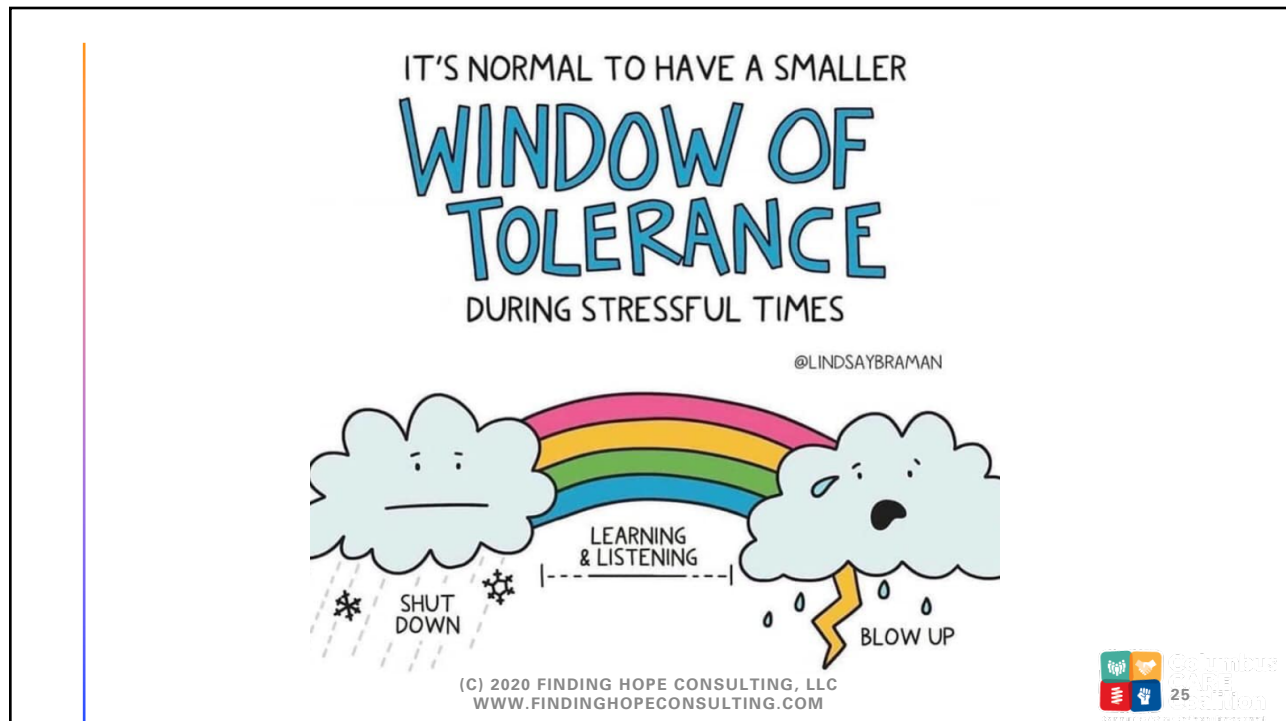
In order for our thinking brains to be "online" we need...

- ✓ **Felt Safety (Regulate)**
(comfortable, relaxed, mutually enhancing connection)
- ✓ **Safe Connection (Relate)**
(someone we can build/maintain trust with)

... before we can **Reason!** (Perry and Szalavite (2017)).

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Content Sources: Dan Siegel Mindsight (2011); Polyvagal Theory – Stephen Porges (2010); Finding Hope Consulting LLC

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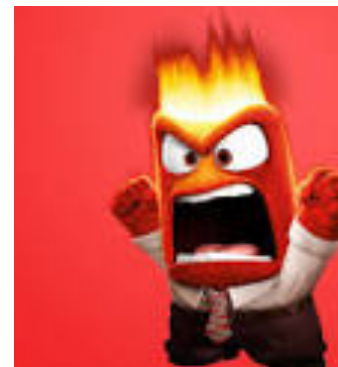


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What a pandemic does is far more than kill people. The threat is so much more extensive because it disrupts the organization of society.

~ Amy Acton, 4/21/2020

The chaos this creates, sets off ALL of our fear centers making us walking *anger onions* that are sliding all over the Fear Cascade.



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The Anger Onion

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In the brain...

Irritation & Uncertainty =
Fear

(Forbes & Post, 2007)

The first things you will see, or feel,
is **anger, aggression, risk taking & self-injurious behavior...**

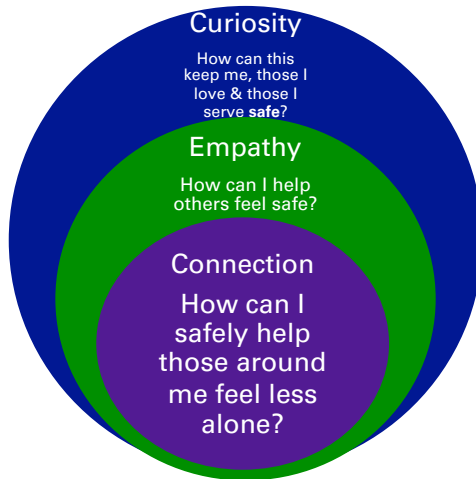
rather than the **sadness** or **fear** that
is beneath it.



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Using the Love Onion to Help Peel the Anger Onion



McKenzie, 2017



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The Fear Cascade and COVID 19

UNSAFE

Being closer than 6', Not wearing PPE. No one cares about me, why should I care about anyone else? No one knows what they're doing.

Going out to crowded places

"No one can tell me what to do." Snapping at others. "Why should I follow rules that keep changing?"

"This is not a big deal."

"I can't fix it, so I am not going to think about it."

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SAFE

Wearing PPE & physically distancing while finding new ways to connect. Reminding each other that you're a gift & a hero even when it doesn't feel that way. Writing to nursing homes, checking on neighbors.

Taking a walk, telling someone you need a break.

Finding a safe person to vent to. Recognizing that this is difficult. Asking how could this new rule help us fight the virus? Identifying what you can do that is safe. James Cordon – Shirt Off Shoot Out Challenge.

Yoga & dancing connect action & stillness.

Quiet time, prayer, meditation, breathing, taking a break, reading.

Following orders, wearing a mask

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The Challenge of Fighting an Invisible Enemy

Our fear center wants to have something to see, so it will create something or, worse yet, it will direct our fear (and anger) at those around us.

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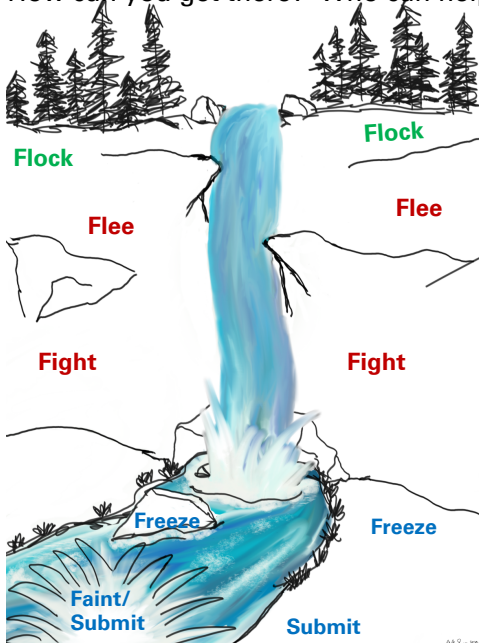
30

Where are you? Where would you like to be?
How can you get there? Who can help?

UNSAFE

SAFE





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Working With, Instead of Against, Our Fear Center

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When the fear center is set off, it wants to resist because **its job is to help us slow down** (it does this with fear, discomfort and uneasiness) so we don't rush into change.

↓

Unfortunately, at this time, we need to change and adapt quickly with ever changing information for our safety and others.

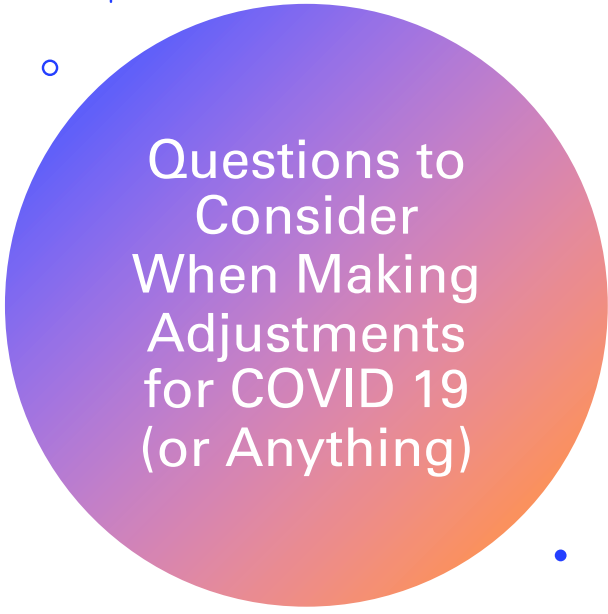
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So, helping our fear center stay calm and coordinate with our thinking, rational mind **is in the best interest of all of us.**

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Questions to Consider When Making Adjustments for COVID 19 (or Anything)

1. How do I connect this change directly with safety for those effected?
2. Who can best connect this change with safety?
3. How am I making those affected feel safe enough to express how they feel about the needed change?
4. Who can express their feelings in a way they can feel heard, understood and connected with a safe other?
5. *Remember: The less language someone has the more they must use actions to show how they feel.*
6. These questions will help you identify who has the best ability to adapt to the change.

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Delivering Information Our Fear Center Can Hear

Lead	Direct	Close
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead with safety • This calms the fear center, so it can hear what you are trying to ask of us 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct where to go with questions • This keeps the fear center online, so we do not feel a drive to go outside the organization when concerned or confused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close with gratitude • This releases oxytocin the hormone that drives cooperation whether we want to cooperate or not

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Clear is Kind

Validation and Hope	Toxic Positivity
This is hard. You've done hard things before and I believe in you.	You'll get over it!
I know there's a lot that could go wrong. What could go right?	Just be positive!
All vibes are welcome here.	Good vibes only!
It's pretty normal to have some negativity in this situation.	Stop being so negative!
It's probably pretty hard to be positive right now. I'm putting out good energy into the world for you.	Think happy thoughts!
Sometimes giving up is ok. What is your ideal outcome?	Never give up!
It's never fun to feel like that. Is there something we can do today that you'd enjoy?	Just be happy!
It's probably really hard to see any good in this situation. We'll make sense of it all later.	See the good in everything.

@sitwithwhit 35

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The Secret & Clarity of External Supports

An external support is anything we rely on for a sense of felt safety.
~ Sarah Buffie

↓

The brain cannot truly say yes, until it feels safe enough to say no.
~ Mary Vicario

Right now, we are in a situation where we can do very little to say, "No" to the virus. **So, we have to connect more intentionally with our external supports for that sense of felt safety.**
Or we will say, "No" to the very things we need to keep us safe.

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External Supports Self Care Activities

- Prayer
- Meditation
- Yoga
- Pal Dan Gum
- Capacitar
- Rainbow Dots: Recording Acts of Kindness
you did,
was done for you or
your witnessed
- Sports/ Hobbies

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Reflect, Honor, & Connect for Needed Unpopular Change

How am I making those affected feel safe enough to express how they feel about the needed change?

When they share their feelings be sure to

Reflect (their strong feelings),

Honor (thank them for letting you know how important or difficult this is for them) and

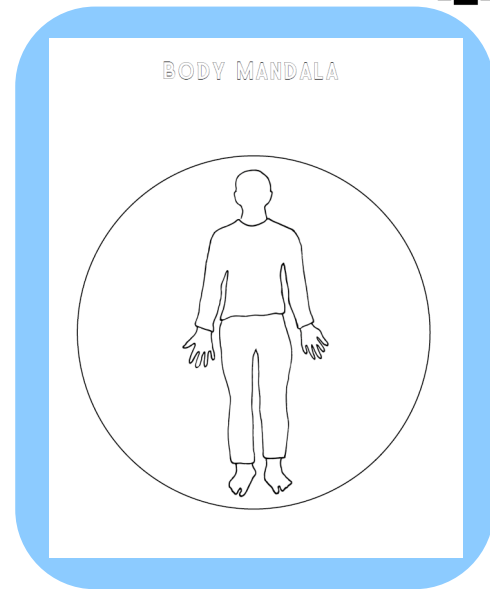
Connect (Offer how we can get through this together?)

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Person in a Mandala

- Identify what cues you get from your body when you start to experience stress?
- Using your art materials (markers, pens, pencils, crayons), give your stress a shape, size, and color and show where you feel it.



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Primary Traumatic Stress (PTS) Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

- If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, for example being verbally or physically attacked, this is **primary exposure** and can result in **Primary Traumatic Stress**.
- **Secondary Traumatic Stress** is the result of listening to or engaging with others who have experienced or are experiencing primary stress.
- PTS and STS can result from one isolated incident or from ongoing multiple exposures to traumatic incidents.

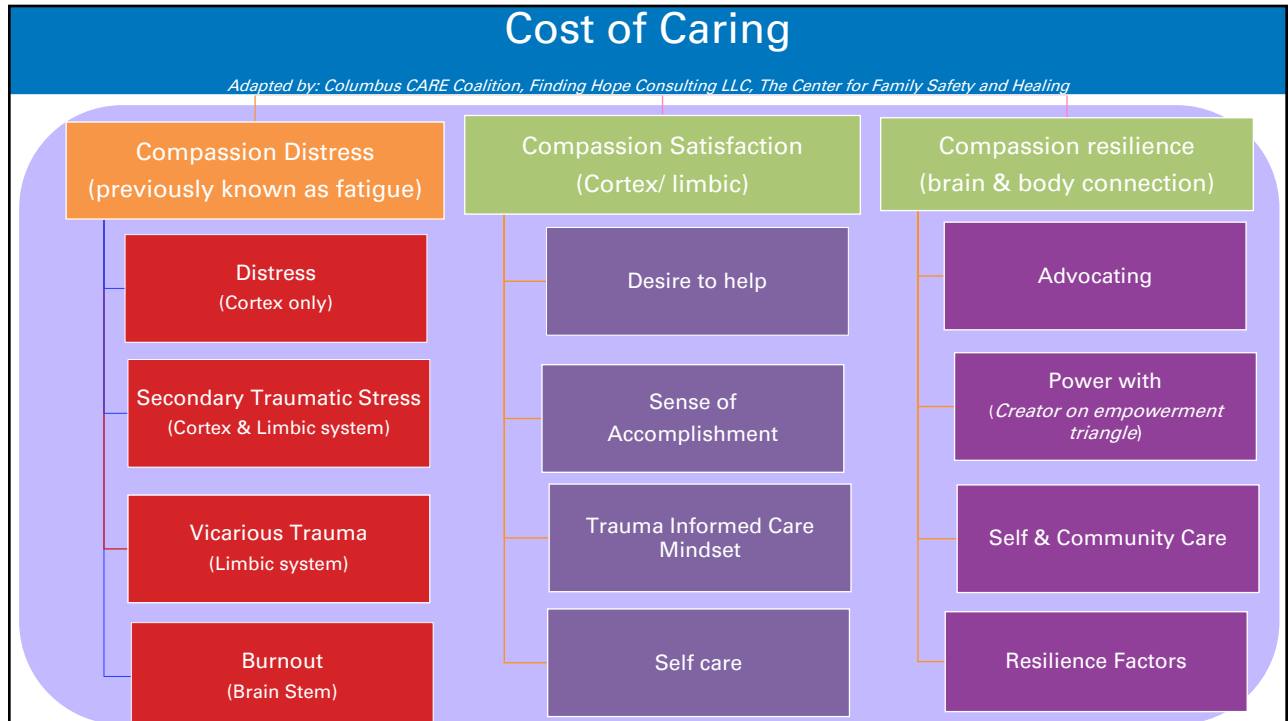
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Distress

(Savel & Munro, 2015)

- Occurs when we know what we want to do is, but we feel unable to take action due to internal or external influences.
 - Being in environments where there is a lack of actual or felt safety
 - Recognized in the cortex and then sent on
 - Key element is the sense of powerlessness
 - Common to experience in teams or when you are part of a large organization.
 - COVID is an ongoing source of distress for many reasons.

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Secondary Traumatic Stress

(Middleton, 2015) Jenkins & Baird, (2002)

- A neurological response to
 - frightening, terrifying, and shocking images or information.
 - Strong, chaotic affect; and intrusive traumatic memories.
 - Can come from one time or multiple exposures
 - Can be a result of direct or indirect exposure
- Could, but does not have to, result in the presence of PTSD symptoms.
 - Intrusive thoughts or nightmares
 - Hypervigilance (heightened arousal, easily agitated) (flee or fight response)
 - Numbing (freeze or submit response)
 - Avoidance of things that remind you of the stressors



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Secondary Traumatic Stress



Effective interventions include **recognizing and honoring what you did to survive** and engaging in self-care.

- **Debriefing must include recognizing and honoring survival experiences**, which helps the cortex and limbic system work together. Cozolino (2010). *The Neuroscience of Psychotherapy*
- When these are not included or debriefing focuses on the events that occurred, this can make the fear response stronger and can enlarge the fear center of the brain in the individual. van der Kolk, (2014). *The Body Keeps the Score*.



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Vicarious Trauma

(Middleton, 2015)



- Cumulative process of change
- Limbic system in charge
- The profound shift that workers experience in their world view when they work under chronic stress or support people under chronic stress.
 - What are some ways you have changed over time because of your work?
- Fundamental beliefs about the world are altered and possibly damaged.
 - How has your world view changed because of your work?



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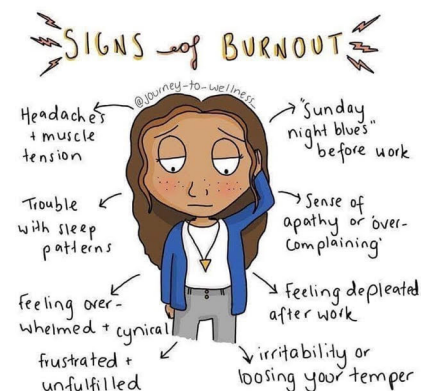


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Burnout

(Middleton, 2015) (Sprang, Clark, & Whitt-Woosley, 2007)

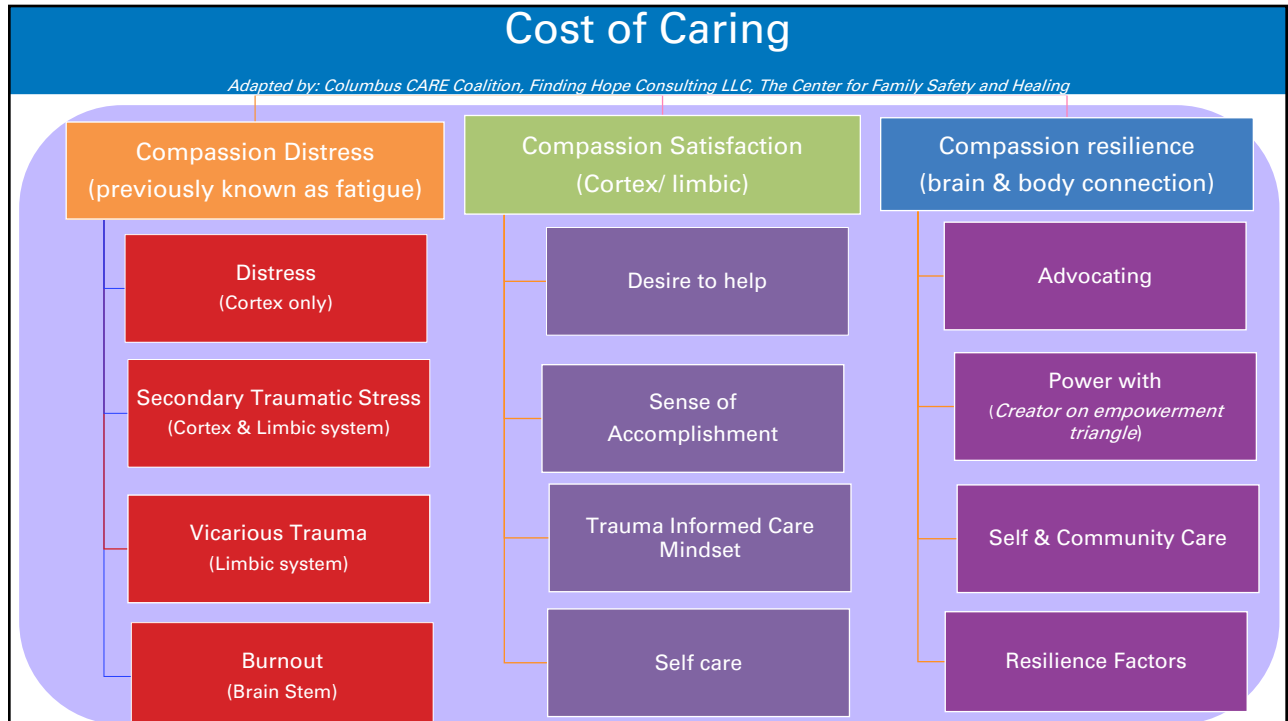
- Emotional exhaustion from organizational structure, not necessarily exposure to trauma.
 - Lack of or poor supervision
 - Lack of or poor resources or wages
 - Increased workload
 - Organizational stress
- Developed over a period of time.
- Operating in the brain stem, below the empathy center.



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Self-Care Invitation

Beginning: How might you use the values that brought you to your work

Middle: Those that keep you in your work

End: Those you want to pass onto the next generation

To keep you going when you are dealing with stressors that are out of your control?

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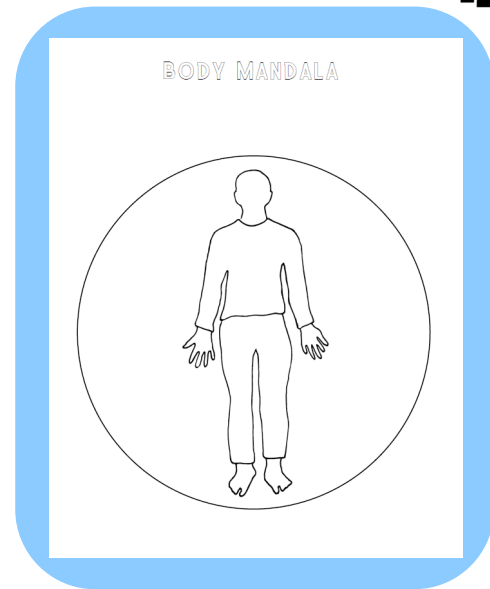
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Helping the Body Even the Score: Person in a Mandala



Using the values you just named, think about them and notice the feelings they produce.

Give those feelings a shape, size, color and place them on the person in mandala.



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Conquering an Invisible Enemy



Objective 3 & 4

Upon Completion of this training, participants will be able to

3. Identify the five good things found in mutually enhancing relationships and how to accomplish them from a physical distance.
4. Lead along the Cliffs of Safety and develop COVID specific resilience-based planning for themselves, a loved one or someone they serve.

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Leading Along The Fear Cascade to The Cliffs of Safety

UNSAFE

How can I help them feel safe enough to work with me or someone else?.

How can I help them find a safe place to go when they need a break?

How can I help them feel safe enough to let me, or others, know they disagree or are upset by something?

How do I help them feel safe enough to act?

How do I make sure they are not just submitting to me out of fear?

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SAFE

"I'd like your help with..."
Being asked to help means you matter, people believe you can help, they want to work with you, your part of a team. 😊

How can they let you know when they need a break?

How can they let you know that this is not fun or my first choice or something that makes me afraid I'll fail or get laughed at? What would a "Yes, when or a Yes, instead" look like?

How can I remember that being bored sets off a fear response?
How can I help them find something to do while they're waiting?

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The 5 Good Things Found In Mutually Enhancing Relationships

Jean Baker Miller (1976)

1. ZEST
2. CLARITY
3. INCREASED SENSE OF WORTH
4. CREATIVITY/PRODUCTIVITY
5. DESIRE FOR MORE CONNECTION

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Staying Physically Distant & Socially Connected

How do we (or can we) provide the 5 Good Things at a physical distance?

1. **Zest, energy, excitement:**

- Work with others to keep things fresh, new, interesting
- Find ways to connect with each other's interests
- Engage diversity as a resource –
- Challenge yourself & others to creatively take on the newest change or challenge

2. **Clarity**

- Give descriptive instructions
- Give descriptive praise
- Together explore what you know, what you do not know, where you can get answers and what you can do while waiting for answers.

3. **Sense of worth**

- Help everyone feel valued
- Notice how you helped others & how others helped you
- Highlight the positive impact of people's actions
- Remind each other of our united efforts, teamwork especially when we cannot connect in person.

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Staying Physically Distant & Socially Connected

How do we (or can we) provide the 5 Good Things at a physical distance?

4. **Creativity & Productivity**

- Break tasks into small pieces,
- Celebrate the steps along the way to successes,
- follow best practices for virtual meetings and trainings like taking a screen break every 60-70 minutes

5. **Create a Desire for and ways to have More Connection**

- Explore crazy, creative and unexpected ways to connect while remaining physically safe through virtual connection like Zoom
 - Scavenger hunts,
 - Social hours,
 - Shared meals,
 - Recipe exchanges, trivia,
 - self care breaks,
 - staff connection meetings,
 - sharing gratitudes & successes,
 - How to sessions where each person has a chance to be an expert at something.

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Whether we want to be or not...



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First Things First: Honoring Each Other

First, let's recognize this is a difficult time and that all of our focus and productivity naturally are reduced.

How do we want to center connection (power with) over control (power over)?



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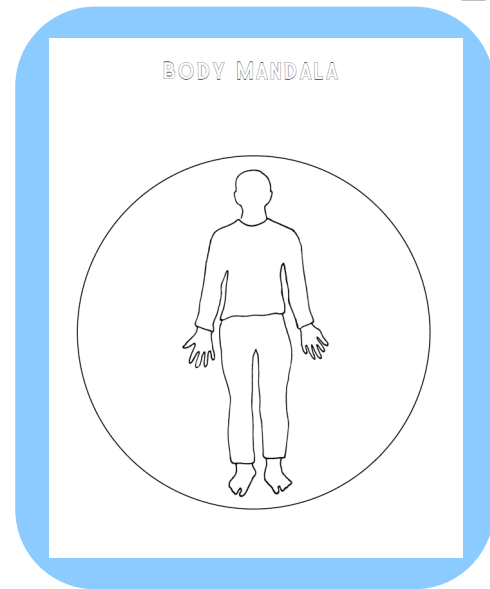
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Helping the Body Even the Score: Person in a Mandala



Think of the last time you worked cooperatively with others (power with).

- What did you have the power to accomplish?
- How did that experience feel in your body?
- Give those feelings a shape, size, color and place them on the person in mandala.



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Real power comes by empowering others

Denise Waitley

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Soul Nerve Activity

P. 53 – Courageous Ancestor
(Menakem, 2017)


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Quick Write

- Who are your mentors?
(Beginning)
- How do they inspire you?
(Middle)
- How do you pass on the inspiration they gave you to others?
(End)

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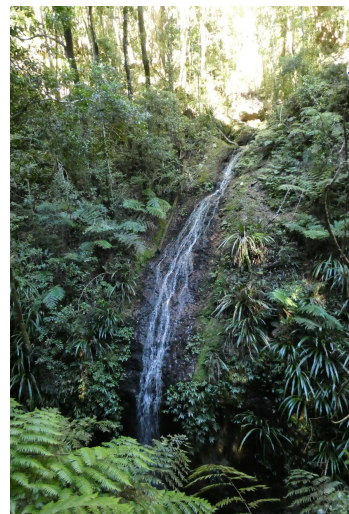
Artist- Ruchita Bait/Ashok Images source: www.Amplifier.org

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Endurance does not come from hope alone. It begins with knowing, and having the courage to face and accept, the reality of the ground upon which we stand. Survival comes from balancing reality with optimism and hope.

~ Amy Acton, MD 4/21/2020



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