



Mental Health:

Practical strategies to manage emotions in our daily life

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Overview

- Understanding Mental Health
 - Definition of Mental Health
 - Relationship between Thoughts, Behaviors, and Emotions
 - Understanding the Nervous System
 - Imaginary Exercise to Identify Symptoms
 - Common Mental Disorders
- Promoting Mental Health
 - Strategies to Better Manage Stress
 - Healthy Lifestyle Choices
 - Setting Limits
- Resources & Support
 - Professional Help
 - Community Resources
 - Crisis and Helplines
 - Support Groups



Objectives

To know how to identify the symptoms of anxiety and depression

To know strategies that can be used to improve symptoms of anxiety and depression

To identify the importance of mental health in our overall health

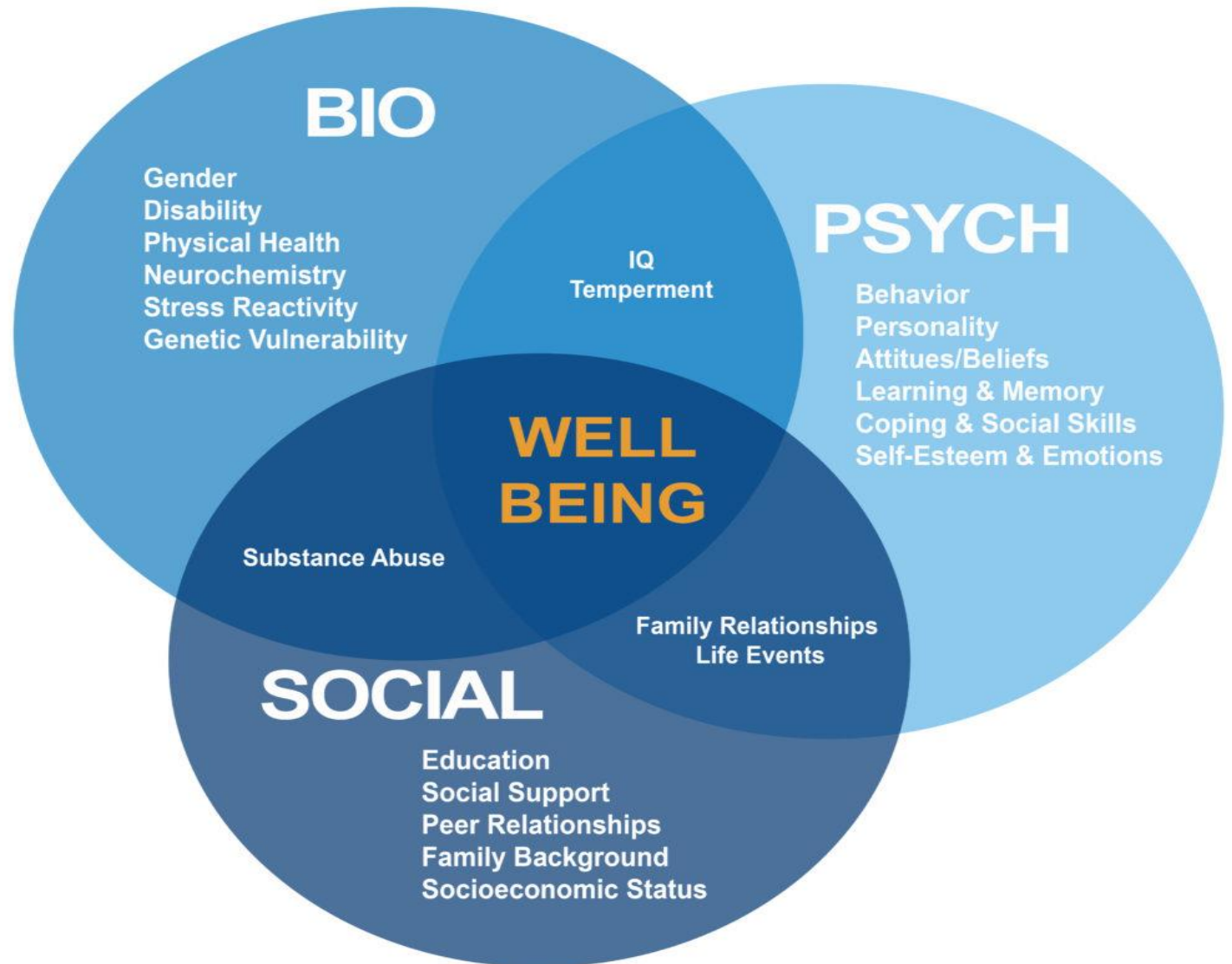
To know the importance of the nervous system in our mental and physical health

What is mental health?

- The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) defines mental health as:
 - Our emotional, psychological, and social well-being.
 - It affects the way we think, feel, and act.
 - It helps us determine how to manage stress, relate to other people, and make decisions.
- It is important to take care of and attend to your mental health since neglecting it can affect your functioning, your medical health and your relationships.
- (SAMHSA, 2023)

Biopsychosocial Model

- Health and disease are the result of the interaction of multiple factors and cannot be explained solely from one dimension.(Engel, 1977)



Mental Health



Mental health illnesses range from mild to severe and affect thinking, mood, and behavior.



They are multifactorial:

They are affected by biological factors (genes, brain chemistry)

Environmental factors (life experiences, traumas, abuse, stress, our beliefs and our behaviors)

Family history of mental health problems



Depending on the intensity of symptoms, patients can learn to manage them with practical tools, but for more severe symptoms, it is important to seek professional help.

(SAHMSA, 2023)

How to Identify Symptoms

Are you sleeping too little or too much?

Are you eating too little or too much?

Do you find it difficult to get out of bed, take a bath and are you neglecting yourself?

Do you not have the ability to perform your daily tasks, such as taking care of your children, going to work, or going to school?

Are you withdrawing from people or activities that once interested you?

Do you have little or no energy, and your interests no longer give you pleasure?

Are you more sensitive and think that nothing makes sense?

Do you have pain or discomfort that has no medical/physical explanation?

Do you feel hopeless or helpless?

How to Identify Symptoms

Are you smoking, drinking, or using drugs as a way to avoid your emotions?

Do you feel confused, forgetful, nervous, angry, upset, worried, or fearful more often?

Do you fight or yell with family and friends more often?

Do you have mood swings more often that cause problems in your relationships?

Do you have negative thoughts or unwanted memories that you can't get out of your mind?

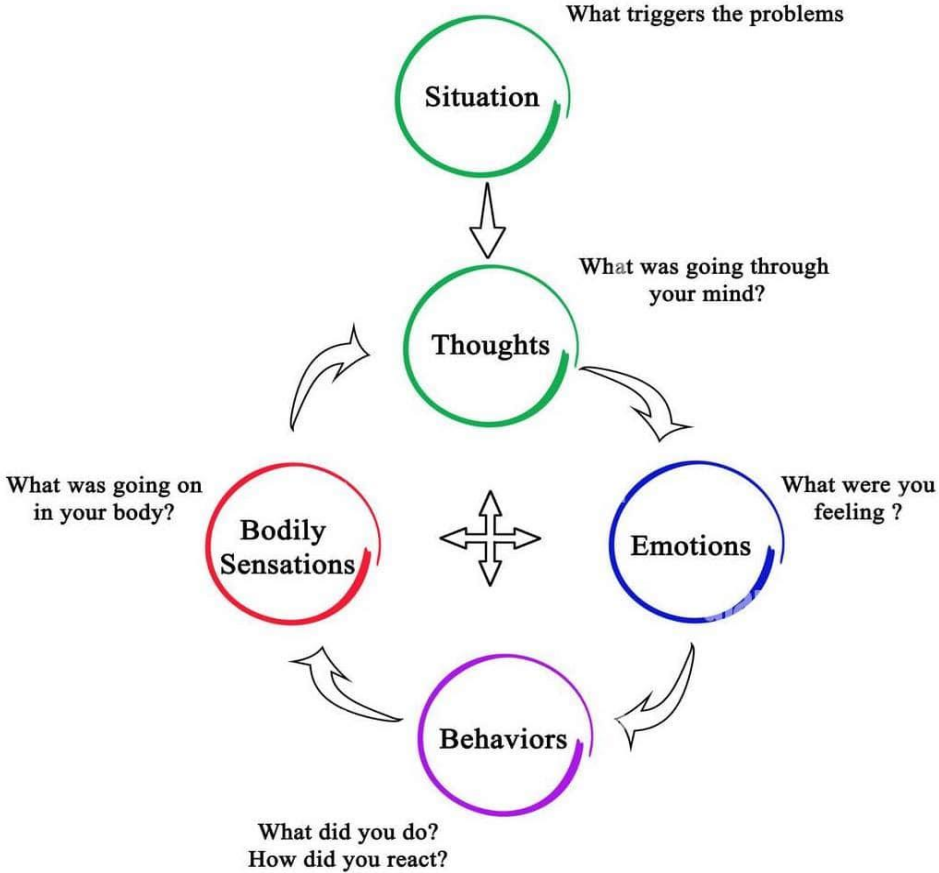
Do you hear voices or believe things that aren't true?

Are you thinking about hurting yourself or someone else?

(SAHMSA, 2023)

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

The relationship between thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and physical reactions



Main (2022)

Activity: Imaginal Exercise



Imagine that you are lost in an alley, in a part of the city that you do not know and you are trying to find your way out.

1. What are your physical reactions?
2. What are you thinking?
3. What are your emotions?



Now imagine that you have already left the alley and already arrived at your home.

How do you feel now?
What has changed in your body?

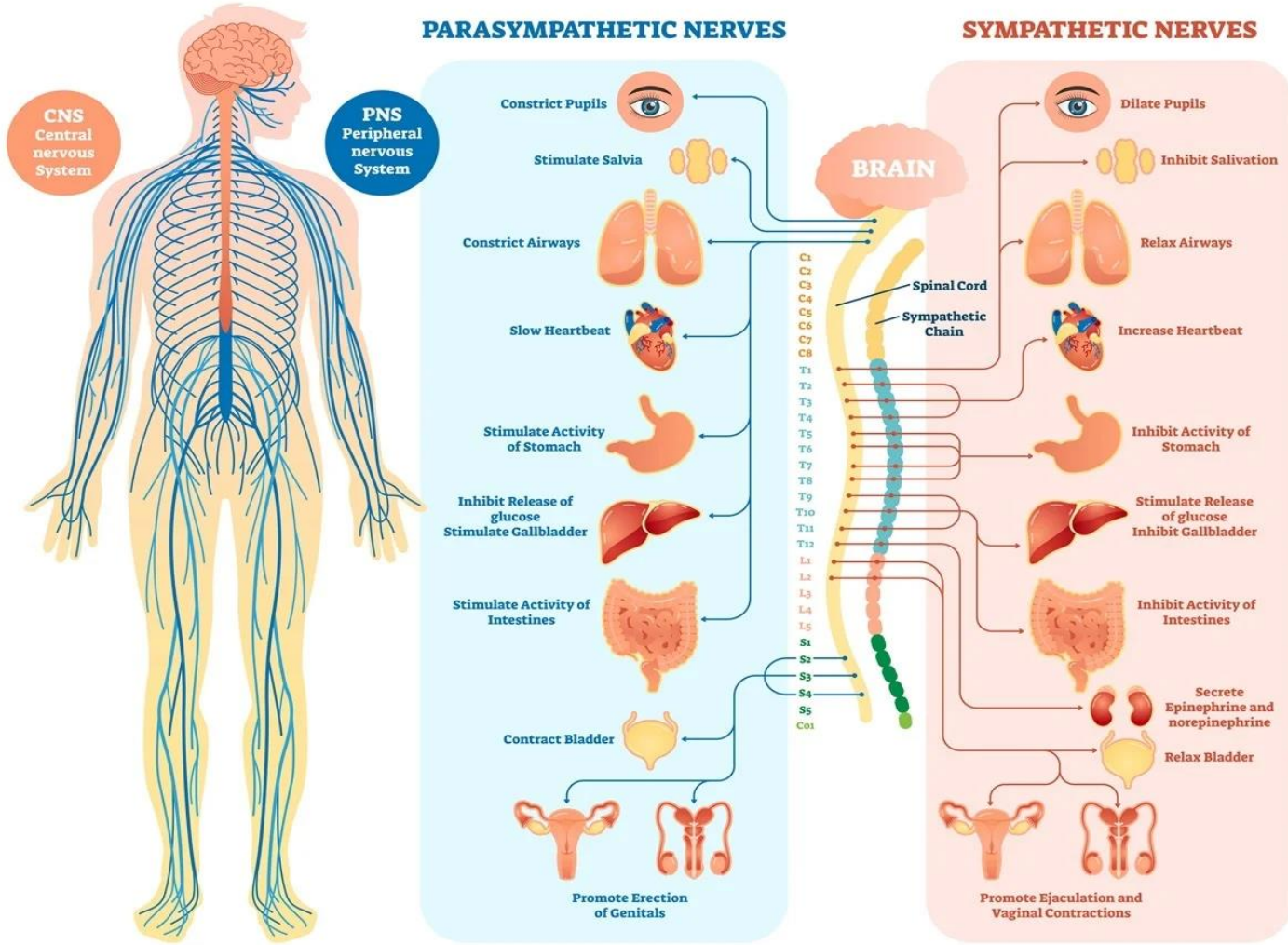
Fight or Flight Response



(Sánchez, 2019)

HUMAN NERVOUS SYSTEM

The Nervous System: Its Role in Emotions, Thoughts, and Physical Reactions



(VectorMine / Shutterstock.com)

Risk Factors

- Risk factors that can sensitize the nervous system and increase the possibility of generating mental illnesses:
 - Stressful or traumatic events
 - History of abuse, trauma, and deprivation in children
 - Housing and food insecurity
 - Loss of a loved one
 - Work stress
 - Relationship problems
 - Mental or medical illnesses of loved ones
 - Any other situation that makes you feel unstable, unsafe, or in danger (including having a negative thought pattern)



Work Stress

- Work helps us, not only financially, but also gives us satisfaction, makes us feel useful, and provides us with stimuli and social rewards
- However, it can also be a source of emotional stress:
 - Worries about projects
 - Feeling treated unfairly
 - Accepting more than you can handle in hopes of receiving a promotion or wanting to help
 - Having difficulty setting boundaries
 - Layoffs and restructurings can affect the perception of security
 - Sacrificing other important areas of your life for work can affect your personal relationships
- Studies indicate that just the rumor of a plant closing can cause changes in blood pressure and pulse
- Workplace accidents tend to increase when jobs reduce personnel

(Weiss & Molitor, 2010)

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The Body Reacts

- Stress can cause unhealthy eating habits and affect our activity levels, which will affect our physical and mental health and cause problems such as obesity, high blood pressure, cholesterol, anxiety, and depression
- Loss of mental energy:
 - Stress can cause emotional exhaustion and negative or cynical attitudes
- Laborers
 - Because they exert little control in their work environment, they are more at risk of cardiovascular disease than those who work in an office
 - Working long hours and having very low wages can also lead to cardiovascular and emotional problems

(Weiss & Molitor, 2010)

How to Manage Work Stress:

- Take breaks
 - 10 minutes of rest can help "reset" your emotional state
 - Take a walk
 - Get fresh air
 - Breathe
 - Have a social interaction with someone
- Walk away from the situation
- Set reasonable standards
 - Do you say yes to everything and don't know how to say no?
 - Do you feel responsible for everything that happens at work and take responsibility for things that are not yours?
- Set limits
- Don't expect perfection
 - People who are perfectionists and inflexible tend to have higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression
- Clarify your job description

(Weiss & Molitor, 2010)



The importance of our
identities

Who are
you?

Identities

- Aside from being a worker, what other identities do you have?
 - Dad, brother, son, friend, dancer, fisherman, runner, someone who likes to read.
- What hobbies or interests do you have and have stopped doing?
- Have you forgotten to nurture your other identities?



Common Mental Illnesses

- Anxiety disorders:
 - They are characterized by excessive fears and worries that cause changes in people's behaviors and functioning.
 - Includes: Generalized Anxiety (excessive worry), Panic Disorder (characterized by panic attacks), Separation Anxiety Disorder (fear of separating from people with whom you have a strong attachment)
- Depression Disorders:
 - It's not just being sad, or the normal mood swings in our day-to-day lives.
 - Depression can make you feel sad, irritable, empty, feel a loss of interest, and an inability to feel pleasure.
 - Other symptoms may include not being able to concentrate, feeling excessively guilty or feeling worthless, hopelessness about the future, thoughts about dying or suicide, trouble sleeping, changes in appetite and weight, feeling tired all the time or low on energy.
 - People with depression have a higher risk of suicide.
- Psychological treatment, and medication when the problems are severe are effective treatments.

Anxiety Iceberg

WHAT YOU SEE

WHAT YOU DON'T SEE



The Anxiety
Iceberg

mindmypeelings

Credit: Mindmypeelings.com

The Depression Iceberg

Depression

WHAT YOU SEE

Low mood

Eating a lot /
not eating at all

Sadness

Struggling to get
out of bed

Social withdrawal

Changes in weight

WHAT YOU DON'T SEE

Concentration
difficulties

Memory difficulties

Loneliness

Feel dissociated
from "who you were"
before depression

Self-hatred

Feeling
misunderstood

Not getting joy out
of anything

Extreme lethargy

Guilt

Believing things will
never get better

Grief

Fighting intrusive
thoughts

Feeling
disconnected from
the world

Shame

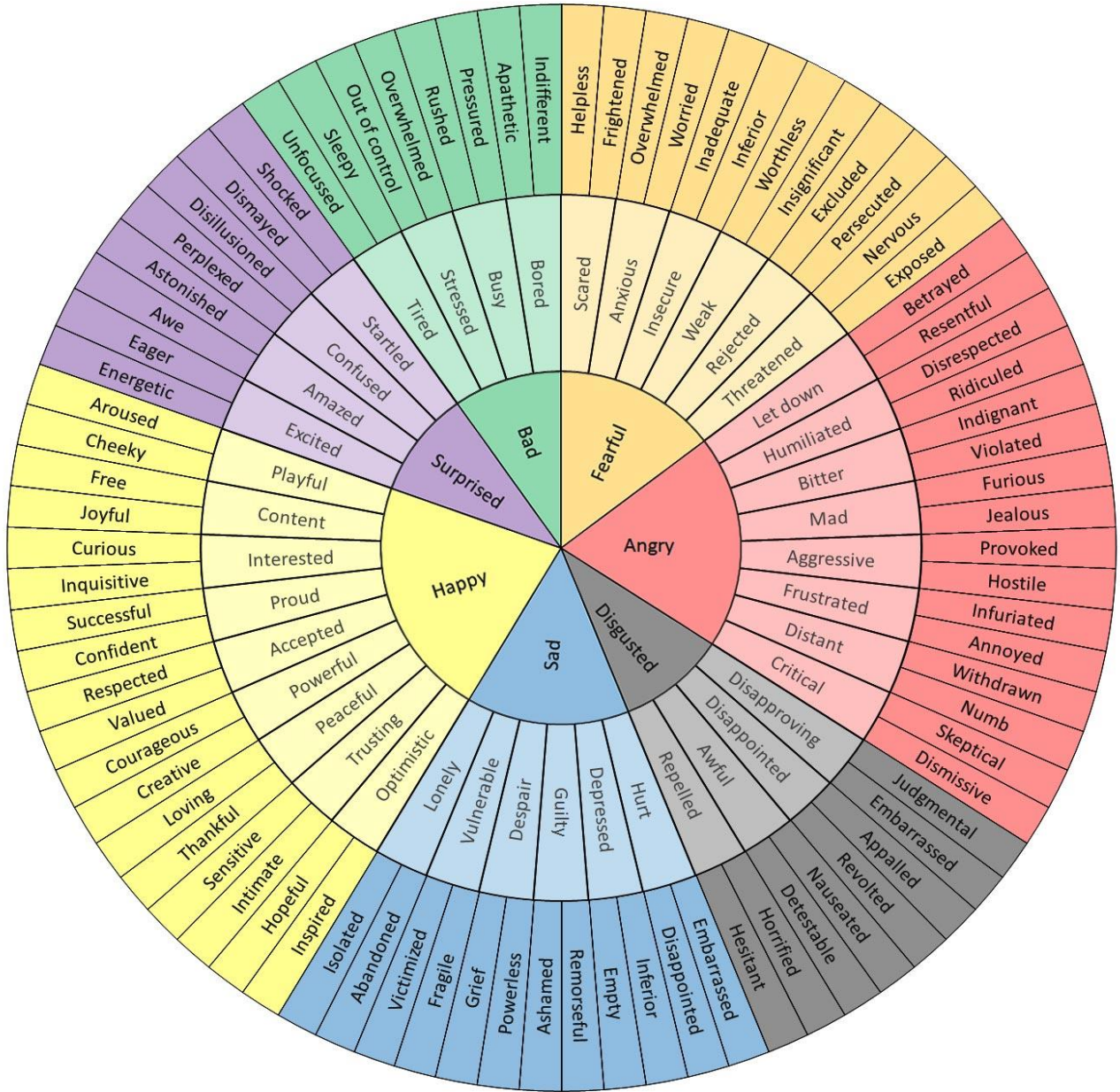
Suicidal thoughts

Worthlessness

Body image issues

Numbness

Emotions exist for a reason. They are all human and necessary in our lives, but we want to have a range of emotions, and not stay in one in particular



Credit: <https://imgur.com/a/emotion-wheel-CkxQC>

What can we do to manage stress?

Behavioral Activation

Increase Dopamine Production

Increase Serotonin Production

Paced Respiration/Diaphragmatic Breathing

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

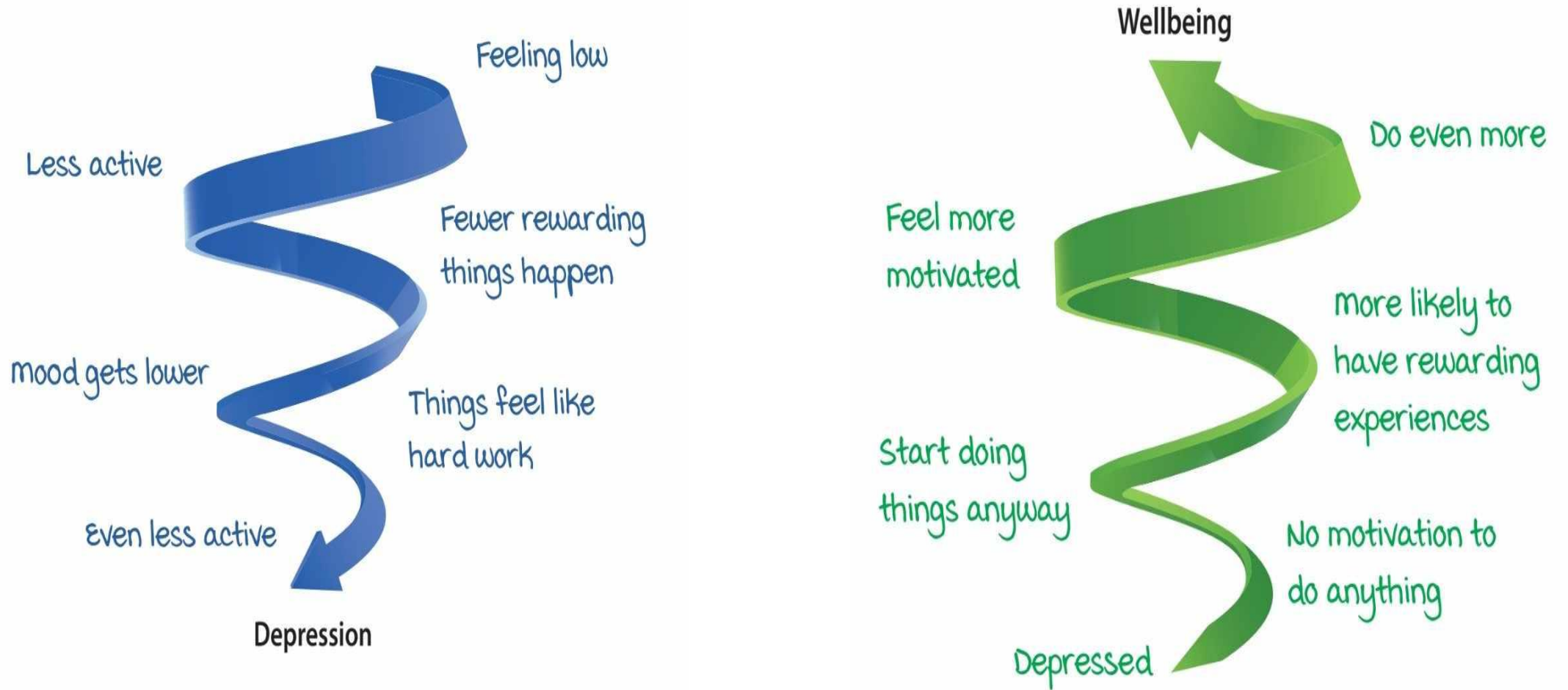
Grounding Techniques

Questioning our Negative Thoughts/Cognitive Distortions

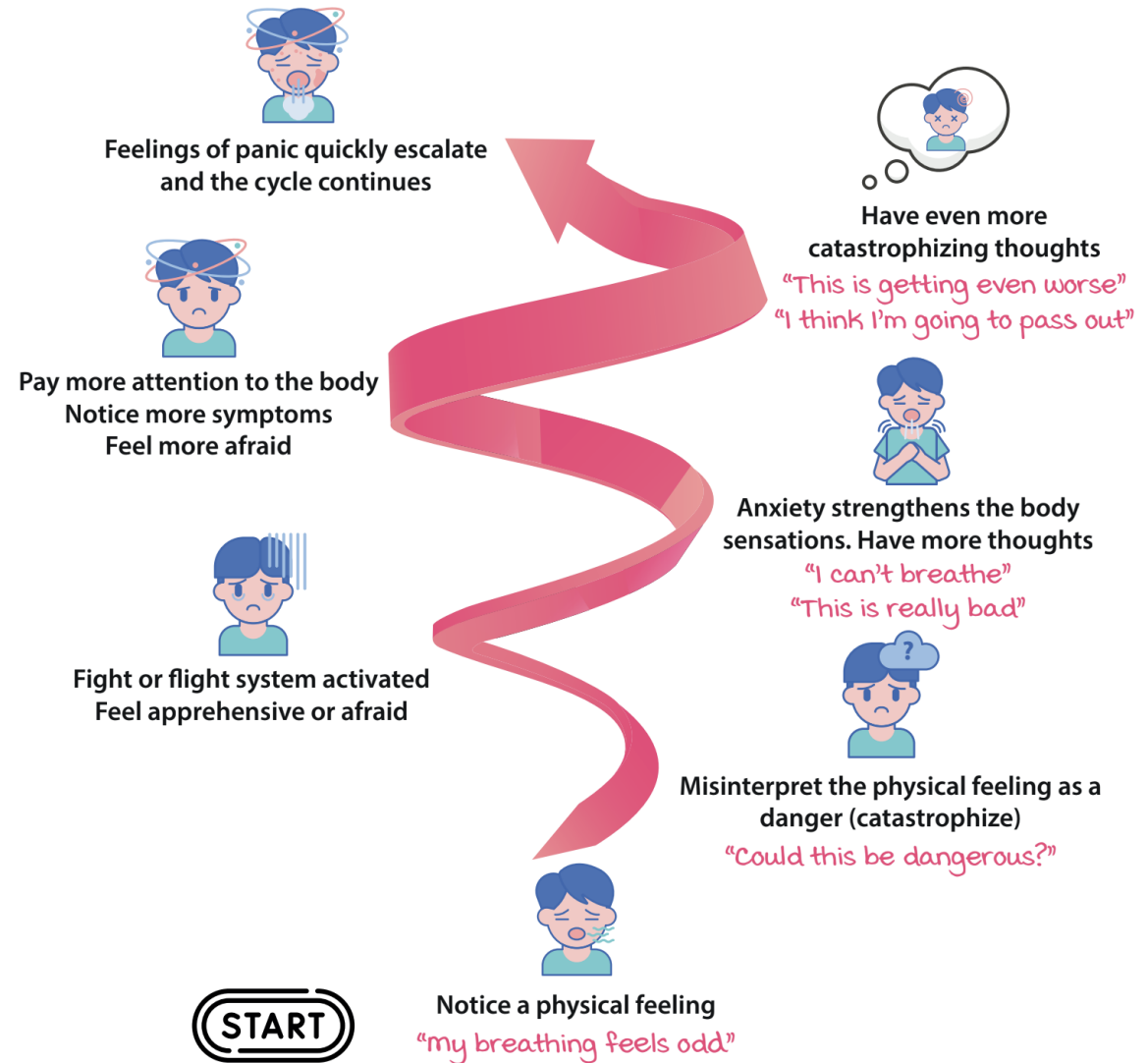
Practice Gratitude

Set limits, learn to ask for help and say "no"

Behavioral Activation



The Importance of Breathing



Question Your Cognitive Distortions

Cognitive distortions are erroneous thoughts based on our beliefs about ourselves, the world, and others, which lead to misinterpretations of reality and can cause psychological damage (Rnic, Dozois, & Martin, 2016).

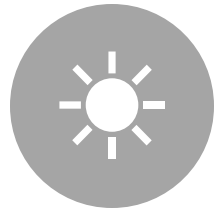
To better manage these thoughts, you can question your thoughts by asking yourself:

- Is it possible that I am misinterpreting this situation?
- Am I confusing a thought with a fact?
- Is this thought 100% true?

Produce More Serotonin



EXERCISE



SUNLIGHT



THERAPY



TALK ABOUT YOUR
EMOTIONS/JOURNAL

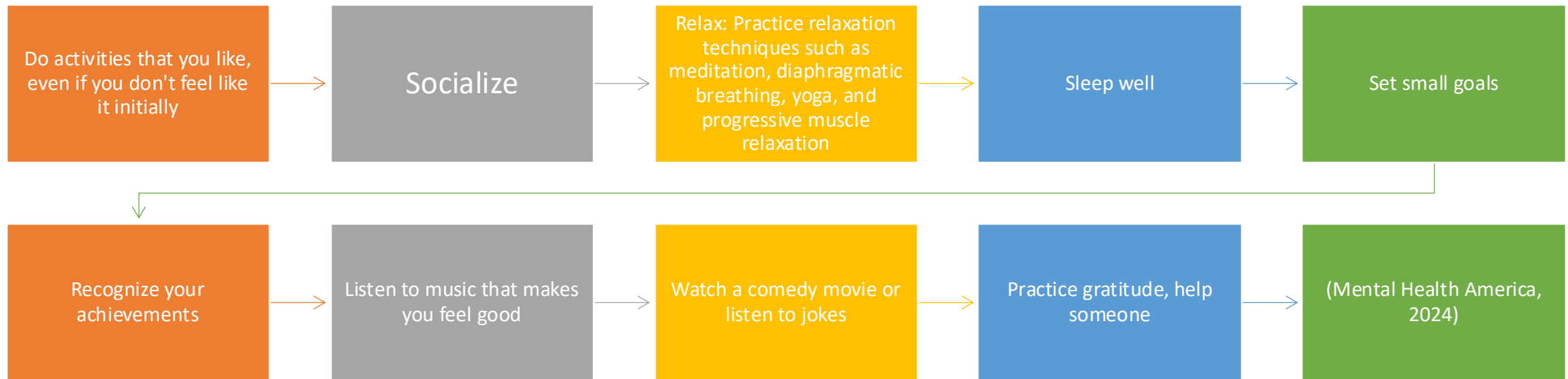


EATING A DIET RICH
IN TRYPTOPHAN



(YOUNG, 2007)

Produce More Dopamine





Relaxation Exercise

Resources

Directory to Find Mental Health Services

•<https://www.psychologytoday.com>

The Evolution of the Human Mind

•<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kv6HkipQcfA>

Anxiety explained

•<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdOf7WTf9DQ>

Dr. Russ Harris- Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Channel

•<https://www.youtube.com/@dr.russharris-acceptanceco972>

The National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI)

•Contiene grupos de apoyos para personas que tienen problemas de salud mental y para los familiares, con recursos en español
•<https://www.nami.org/>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA): Learn more about mental health

•<https://www.samhsa.gov/>

Resources

- To prevent suicide
 - <https://www.suicideispreventable.org/>
 - <https://988lifeline.org/>
 - <https://up2sd.org/>
 - Crisis Hotline: (888) 724-7240
- Easy and short articles on the latest research on psychology
 - https://www.sciencedaily.com/news/mind_brain/psychology/
- Books
 - “Why Has Nobody Told Me This Before?” by Julie Smith, PhD
 - “The Happiness Trap: How to stop struggling and start living” by Russ Hariss
 - “The Four Agreements” by Don Miguel Ruiz

Resources

- Neighborhood Healthcare Mental Health Clinic in San Diego County.
 - <https://www.nhcare.org/>
- Podcast sobre salud mental:
 - Dirigido a las mujeres: <https://somosestupendas.com/podcast-psicologia/>
 - <https://entiendetumente.info/blog/>
 - <https://open.spotify.com/show/1TDJJoHWEq7Nbh3yEBOJOj>
 - <https://open.spotify.com/show/7yxNkZufSfzCSfFIBEkStf>
- Jacobson's Progressive Muscle Relaxation
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=86HUCX8ZtAk>
- Guided Imagery Meditation
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZeEPo8w-n8
- Yoga With Adrienne: Yoga Channel
 - <https://www.youtube.com/c/YogaconAdrieneenEspa%C3%B1ol>

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Questions

1. How do you manage stress at work when balancing multiple projects and deciding which to prioritize?
2. How might we design content that speaks to this group specifically and appropriately?
3. Just curious how I can apply this more with my students and for myself?
4. What is the best practice to implement for situations when you are in public or interacting with others? (to make space for our emotions, without being overpowered by them)
5. As first generation, I have found that intergenerational trauma is passed down by not being able to cope with emotions and the stresses of our experience, how can this be mitigated and prevent passing it down to future generations?