



Medical Emergencies
PSYCHOLOGICAL
FIRST AID

Psychological First Aid Medical Emergencies



Establish a human connection in a non-intrusive, compassionate manner.
Enhance immediate and ongoing safety, and provide physical and emotional comfort. Calm and orient emotionally-overwhelmed or distraught survivors.



Psychological First Aid

Goals

“Psychological First Aid (PFA) is an evidence-informed modular approach to help children, adolescents, adults, and families in the immediate aftermath of disaster and terrorism. Individuals affected by a disaster or traumatic incident, whether survivors, witnesses, or responders to such events, may struggle with or face new challenges following the event.

PFA was developed by the National Child Traumatic Stress Center for PTSD, with contributions from individuals in disaster research and response.”

-NCTSN

- Designed to reduce initial and late stages of stress injury formation
- What are stress injuries?
- Identify early stress response reactions that lead to stress injury and illness
- Stress continuum; developed by the marines adapted by Laura McGladrey
- How do you get back to your “normal” self?



Psychological First Aid

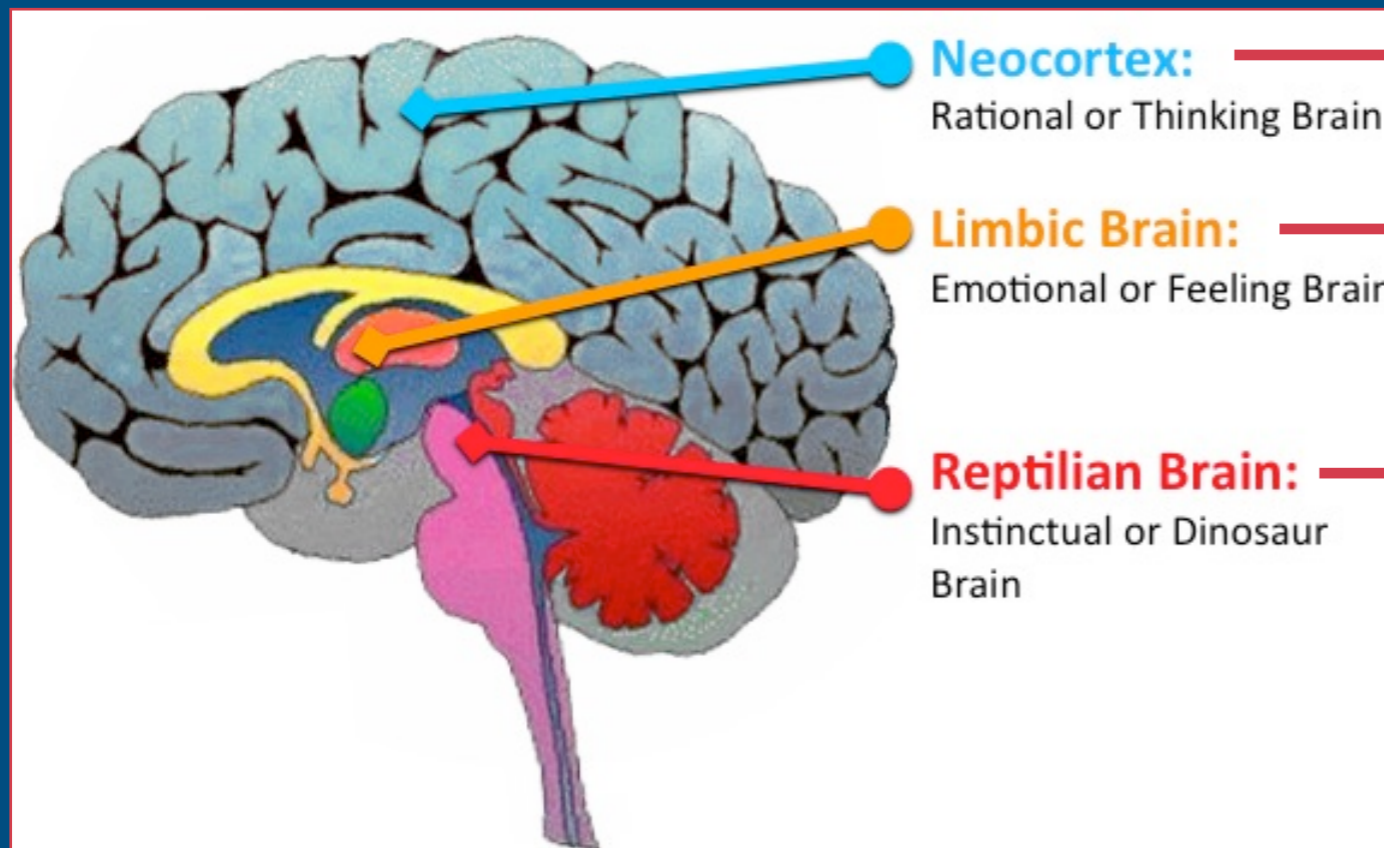
Stress injury background

- Are more likely to occur in a state of stress
- Are physical injuries caused by increased cortisol levels
 - Pathological fractures
 - Hypertension
 - Increased inflammation
 - Abnormal/decreased sleep
 - Anxiety
 - Cancer
 - Diabetes
- Occur on a continuum
- When recognized, can be supported



Psychological First Aid

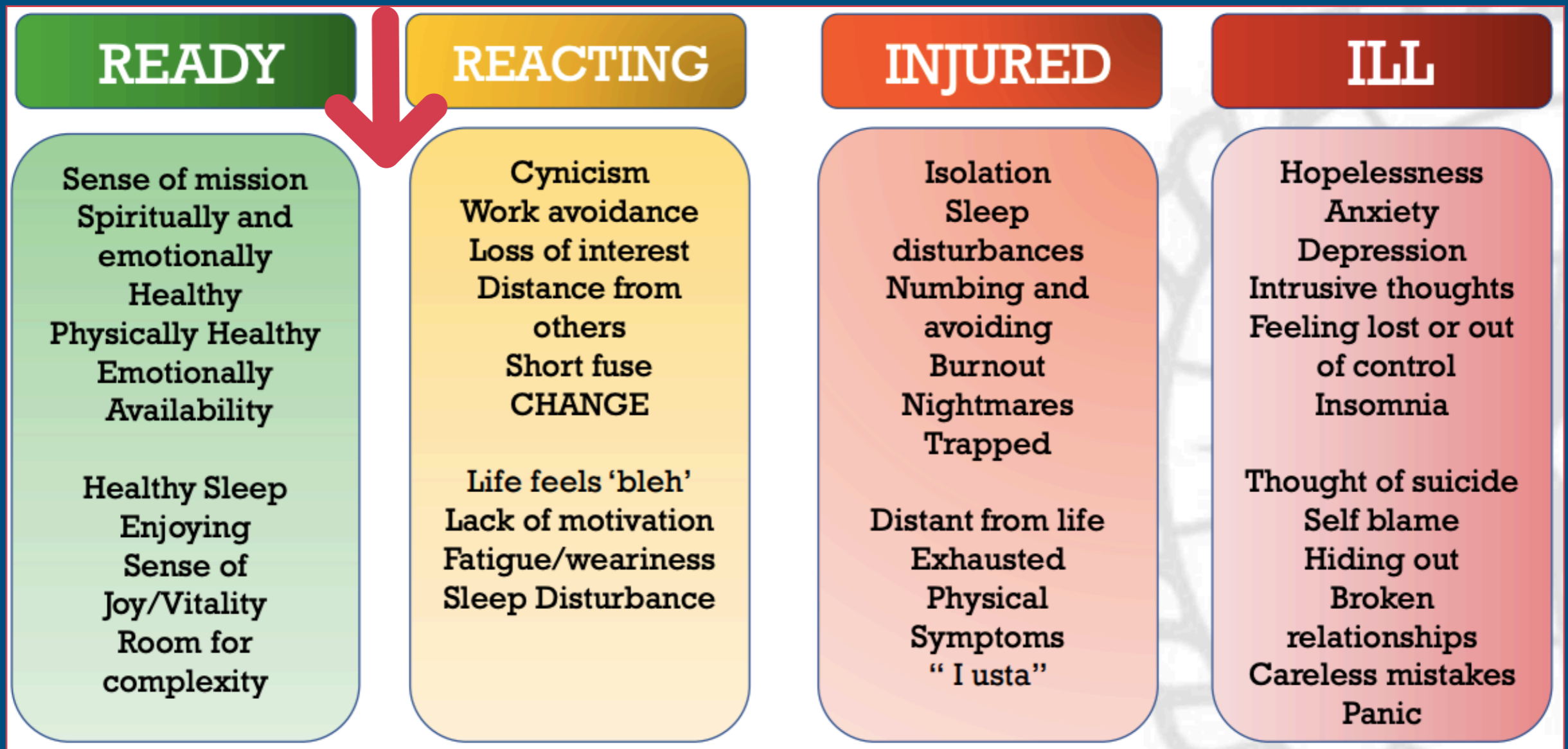
Stress injury anatomy



- Built-in response system is overwhelmed
- Emotionally disconnected & Isolated
- Contains: Brainstem & Cerebellum
 - Poor reflexes, “rest & digest” system overloaded

Psychological First Aid Stress Continuum

Stressor

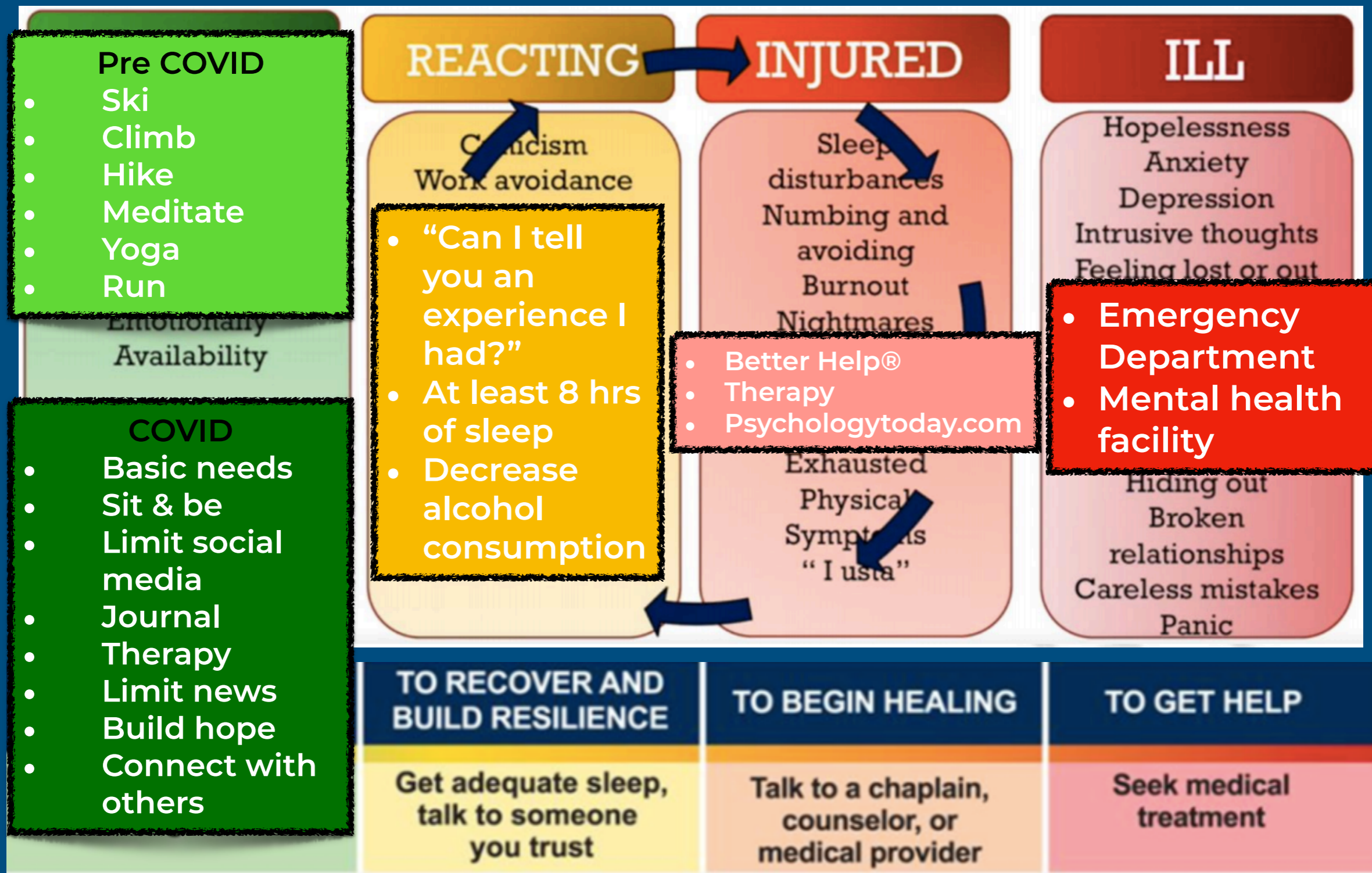


Nash, W. P., Westphal, R. J., Watson, P. J., & Litz, B. T. (2010). *Combat and Operational Stress First Aid: Caregiver Training Manual*. Washington, DC: U.S. Navy, Bureau of Medicine and Surgery



Psychological First Aid

Stress Continuum Baseline



Psychological First Aid Components

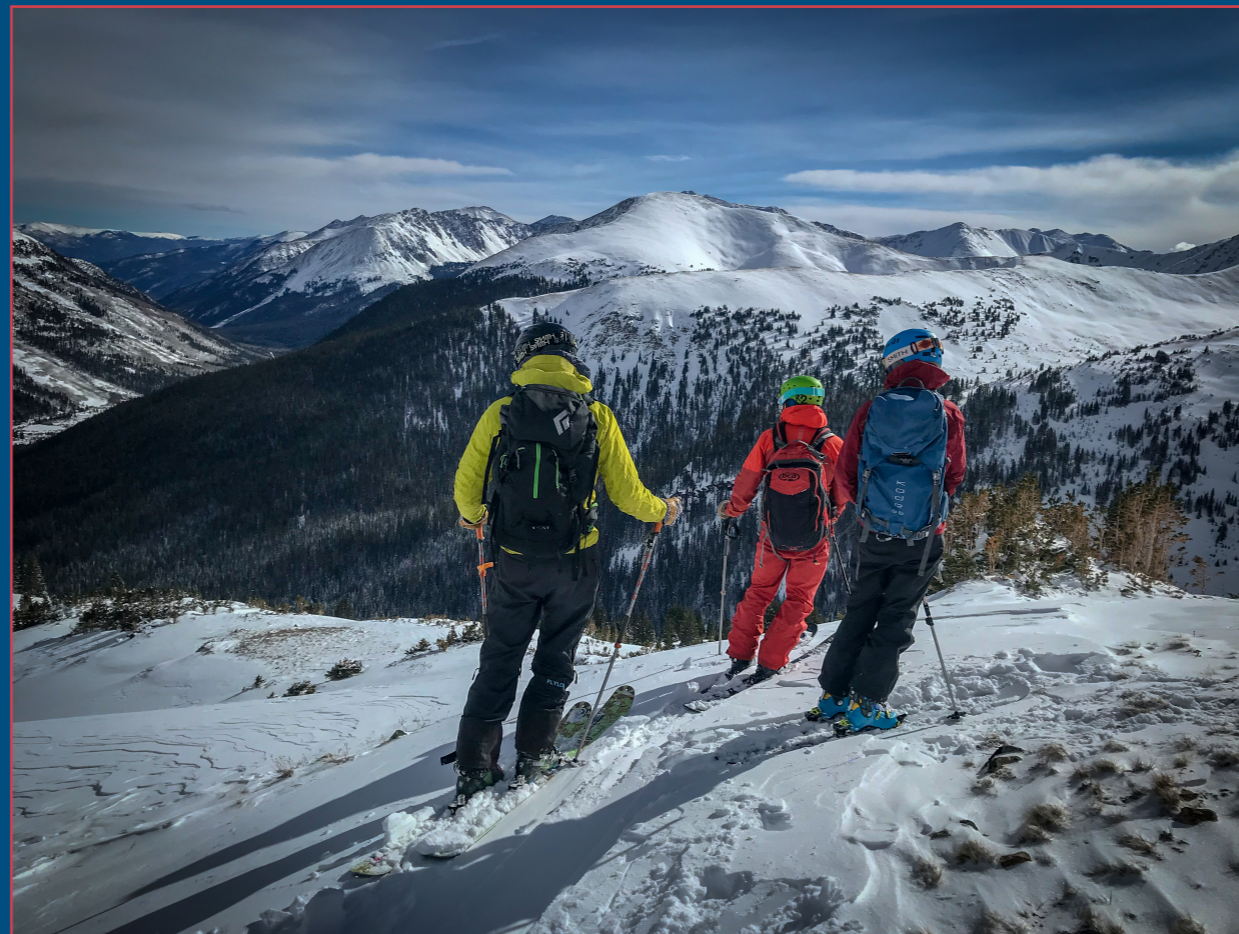


1. Safety
2. Calm
3. Engagement
4. Connection
5. Hope

Psychological First Aid

Take-aways

- Stress injuries are common and predictable
- Stress injuries are treatable and reversible if recognized
- Stress injuries occur from direct involvement or near miss incidents
- “Individuals and teams who work to connect with each other, support each, know each other, and encourage each other to take space, set boundaries, and care for each other will be able to integrate more traumatic stress, remain situationally aware and offer their best to each other and the public they serve.” -Laura McGladrey



Response to COVID-19

Stress Continuum and Resilience Resources

COVID-19 Stress Continuum			
Minimize exposure – Avoid unnecessary exposure. Schedule exposed check ins.			
Potential – Awareness of stress injury formation [MOI: overwhelmed, emotional connection, helplessness, error/guilt, isolation, near-miss, fatalities]			
Signs & Symptoms – Ready Reacting Injured Critical (See below)			
Follow up – On-site debrief, one-on-one, peers/leadership, incident support			
Plan for exposure – Utilize peer, leadership and provisional help (for you & team members)			
IMPACT → INJURY			
Signs & Symptoms			
READY	REACTING	INJURED	CRITICAL
COVID-19; This is going to be hard, but we can do this.	COVID-19; and the government isn't doing anything.	COVID-19; I'm going to hide until this is over.	COVID-19; My life is over.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm concerned (and I'm going to look for resources) • Sense of Mission • Realistic, concerned but moving forward • Appropriate cleaning and social distancing • PBR – Pause, Breath, Repeat • Supporting other team members • Creative connection • Outward focus • Motivated to respond • Awareness and planning • Solution Driven • Kindness to self/others • "We're all in this together" • Practicing Gratitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm alarmed (and there's not enough to go around) • I don't like Teleworking • Short Fuse • Fear based cleaning and isolation • Communication breaking down • Feeling there is a lack of communication • Changes in personality • Fatigue/weariness • Teamwork breaking down • Decrease in high performance • No longer sharing ideas or • Temporary sleep issues, eating issues, distress • Spinning at work, not able to complete tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm scared (and I can't stop watching the news) • Lack of motivation to leave the house • Physical symptoms • Exhaustion • Withdrawal • Emotional numbness • Increased use of numbing tools such as alcohol. • Performance degrading • Defeatist attitude • Complaint Driven • AVOIDANT- "this doesn't involve me, so I don't need to engage." • "This is never going to end." • Highly Individualized-every person for themselves." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm terrified (and I can't breathe) • Hopelessness • Can't sleep • Depression • Thoughts of Suicide • Damage to relationships • Feeling lost or out of control • Unable to work • Complete disengagement • Giving up • Paranoia and Isolation • Panic • Can never get enough supplies • Feelings of scarcity • Blaming others • Panic • Beating yourself up

Stress Impact Mitigation (PPE)
<p>SAFETY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address identified safety concerns proactively- Encourage planning for personal life • Encourage teams to be creative and make decisions to increase their safety • Protect people from additional stress exposure when possible • Establish a clear plan and communicate it often, through many channels • Protect from rumors, continuous news updates by scheduling updates
<p>CALM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe zones: Create windows of time when folks can work uninterrupted by news, and allow for creativity, effective work, calm and connection during these times. • Demonstrate and model calm & empathy • Adjust priorities as needed to reduce conflicting demands • Prioritize importance of teamwork and building morale • PBR - Pause Breath Repeat
<p>EMPOWERMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide sideboards and resources for decision making and encourage/foster creative solutions • Seek ideas and input from the team • Permission to be creative with work assignments and flexibility • Create structure: Including sleep and mealtimes, new work routines, plan for work from home or established practices, planned connection via meetings and check ins • Encourage self-advocacy
<p>CONNECTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in with individuals regularly • Acknowledge the impacts to family and communities. Plan for sustaining connection. • Encourage new and creative means of connections with peers, family, others. • Practice "social distancing" without creating "social isolation"
<p>HOPE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lay out the path ahead, even if just short-term steps • Model and encourage individual and shared gratitude practice. • Sustain a resourced view that this will end • "Lend" hope/if when someone runs out
<p>RESOURCES</p> <p>www.responderalliance.com</p> <p>www.samhsa.gov www.ptsd.va.gov</p> <p>https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/nmh05-0210.pdf</p> <p><i>*based on COSFA stress continuum, adapted by Laura McGladrey With contribution from National Parks Service</i></p>

Stress injury and recovery is a two-way process. Identify strategies, tools, and activities to get people to move back towards green. Leadership responsibility to monitor self and others to detect signs of stress injury to individuals and teams and take action. Leadership responsibility is to set the tone, more than ever people are seeking guidance and reassurance.

Psychological First Aid Resources

- Psychological First Aid <http://learn.nctsn.org>
- National Center for PTSD at <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/>
- The Sharp End Podcast Ep. 34 PFA
- <https://responderalliance.com/>

