



Your Ethical Duty to Self-Care: Invisible Effects of Working in Corrections

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01

Describe the effects of secondary and vicarious trauma on staff working in corrections

02

Examine self-care within an ethical framework.

03

Discuss strategies for coping with secondary and vicarious trauma in correctional health care



Objectives:



Be present

Let go of before and after

Accept inner voice but don't be distracted by it



Practice effective communication

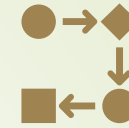
Speak your truth, your intention

Listen with an open heart

Trust others are doing the same



Be kind



Co-create our time

Practice together

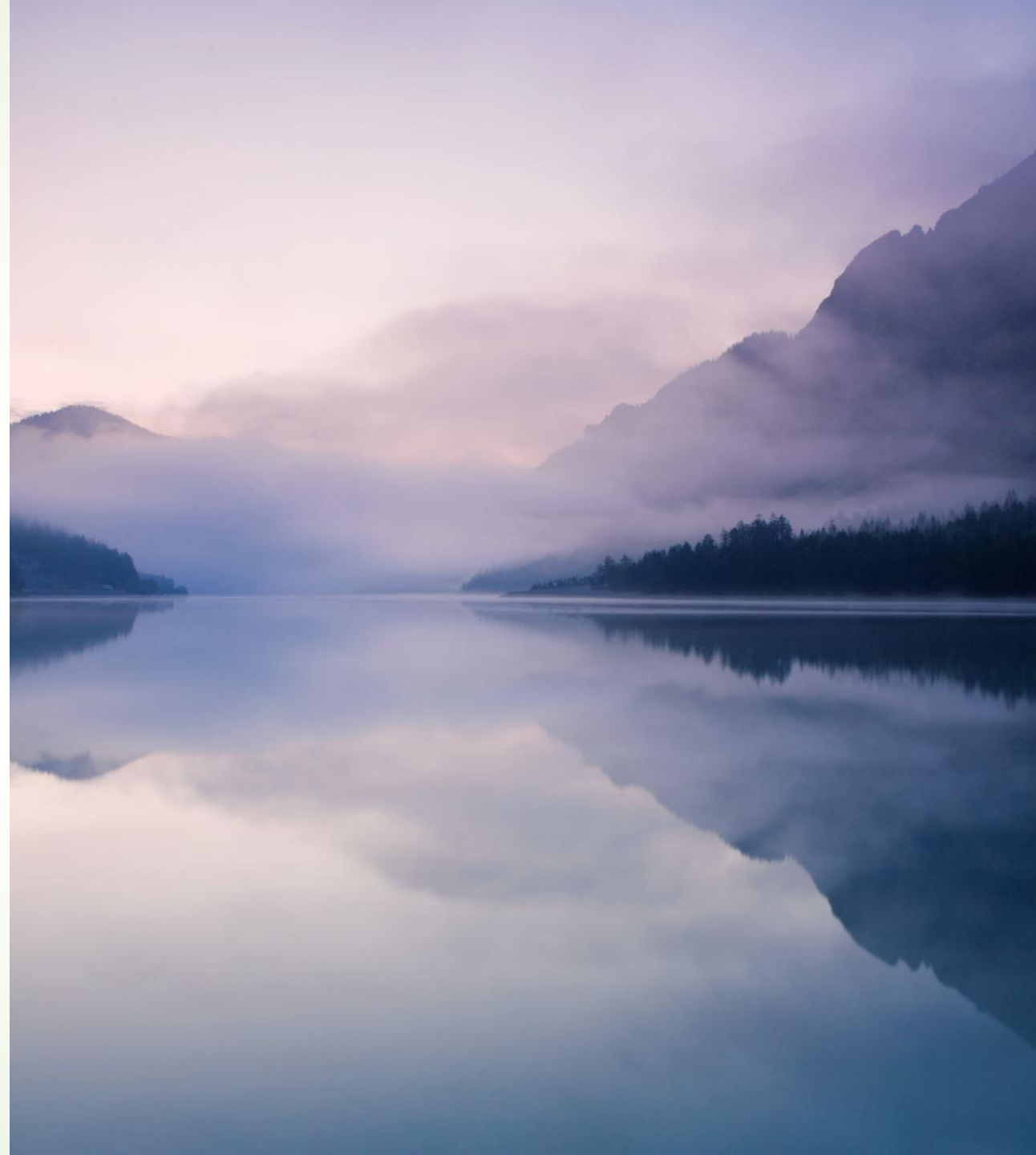
Learn from each other

None of us can do this on our own

Ground Rules for Our Time Together



Breathe...





What does it
mean to be
“Unethical”



Definitions &
Synonyms:

Not morally correct

Immoral

Unprincipled

Dishonorable

Wrong



What does it
mean to be
“Ethical”



Definitions & Synonyms:

Pertaining to or dealing with morals or the principles of morality; pertaining to right and wrong in conduct

Being in accordance with the rules or standards for right conduct or practice, especially the standards of a profession

Moral

Upright

Righteous

Virtuous

Ethical or Unethical?

- ▶ A mental health clinician working at a women's facility has a caseload of 126 patients. Many of her patients have histories of sexual trauma. Recently, she has had intrusive thoughts about the stories her patients have shared with her. She finds herself being stricter than usual with her teenage children, not allowing them to spend time with their friends or sleep outside the house, despite knowing the families of her children's friend quite well.
- ▶ Today, she is assigned to conduct an intake mental health assessment with a patient who was recently incarcerated for sexually abusing two children.
- ▶ She reports to her supervisor that she is unable to complete the assessment with this patient after reviewing the file.



APA Ethics Code

Principle A: Beneficence and Nonmaleficence

- Psychologists strive to be aware of the possible effect of their own physical and mental health on their ability to help those with whom they work.

Principle B: Fidelity and Responsibility

- Psychologists consult with, refer to, or cooperate with other professionals and institutions to the extent needed to serve the best interests of those with whom they work. They are concerned about the ethical compliance of their colleagues' scientific and professional conduct.



APA Ethics Code

2.06 Personal Problems and Conflicts

- (a) Psychologists refrain from initiating an activity when they know or should know that there is a substantial likelihood that their personal problems will prevent them from performing their work-related activities in a competent manner.
- (b) When psychologists become aware of personal problems that may interfere with their performing work-related duties adequately, they take appropriate measures, such as obtaining professional consultation or assistance and determine whether they should limit, suspend or terminate their work-related duties.



NASW Ethics Code

4.05 Impairment

- (a) Social workers should not allow their own personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties to interfere with their professional judgment and performance or to jeopardize the best interests of people for whom they have a professional responsibility.
- (b) Social workers whose personal problems, psychosocial distress, legal problems, substance abuse, or mental health difficulties interfere with their professional judgment and performance should immediately seek consultation and take appropriate remedial action by seeking professional help, making adjustments in workload, terminating practice, or taking any other steps necessary to protect clients and others.

Ethical or Unethical?

- A nurse is about to begin his third mandated double-shift of the week. He has been trying to balance childcare responsibilities with his partner, who is also employed full-time. The night before his shift, he was only able to sleep for 3 hours because he had to help his daughter with her homework and make lunches for his kids before coming to work. He is irritable, short-tempered and exhausted. When he gets to work, he learns that he is assigned to work in the infirmary in a role he is not typically assigned to fulfill, but there is no one else available.
- He feels like he might lose it, so goes to the restroom, splashes water on his face, looks at himself in the mirror and says, "You got this. Pull yourself together and get out there."
- He starts his shift



Code of Ethics for Nursing



► Provision 5

- The nurse owes the same duties to self as to others, including the responsibility to promote health and safety, preserve wholeness of character and integrity, maintain competence, and continue personal and professional growth.

► Section 5.2

- As professionals who assess, intervene, evaluate, protect, promote, advocated, educate and conduct research for the health and safety of others and society, nurses have a duty to take the same care for their own health and safety.
- Fatigued and compassion fatigue affect a nurse's professional performance and personal life. To mitigate these effects, nurses should eat a healthy diet, exercise, get sufficient rest, maintain family and personal relationships, engage in adequate leisure and recreational activities, and attend to spiritual or religious needs.
- Nurses in all roles should seek this balance, and it is the responsibility of nurse leaders to foster this balance within their organizations.

Trauma in Corrections

Vicarious & Secondary Trauma

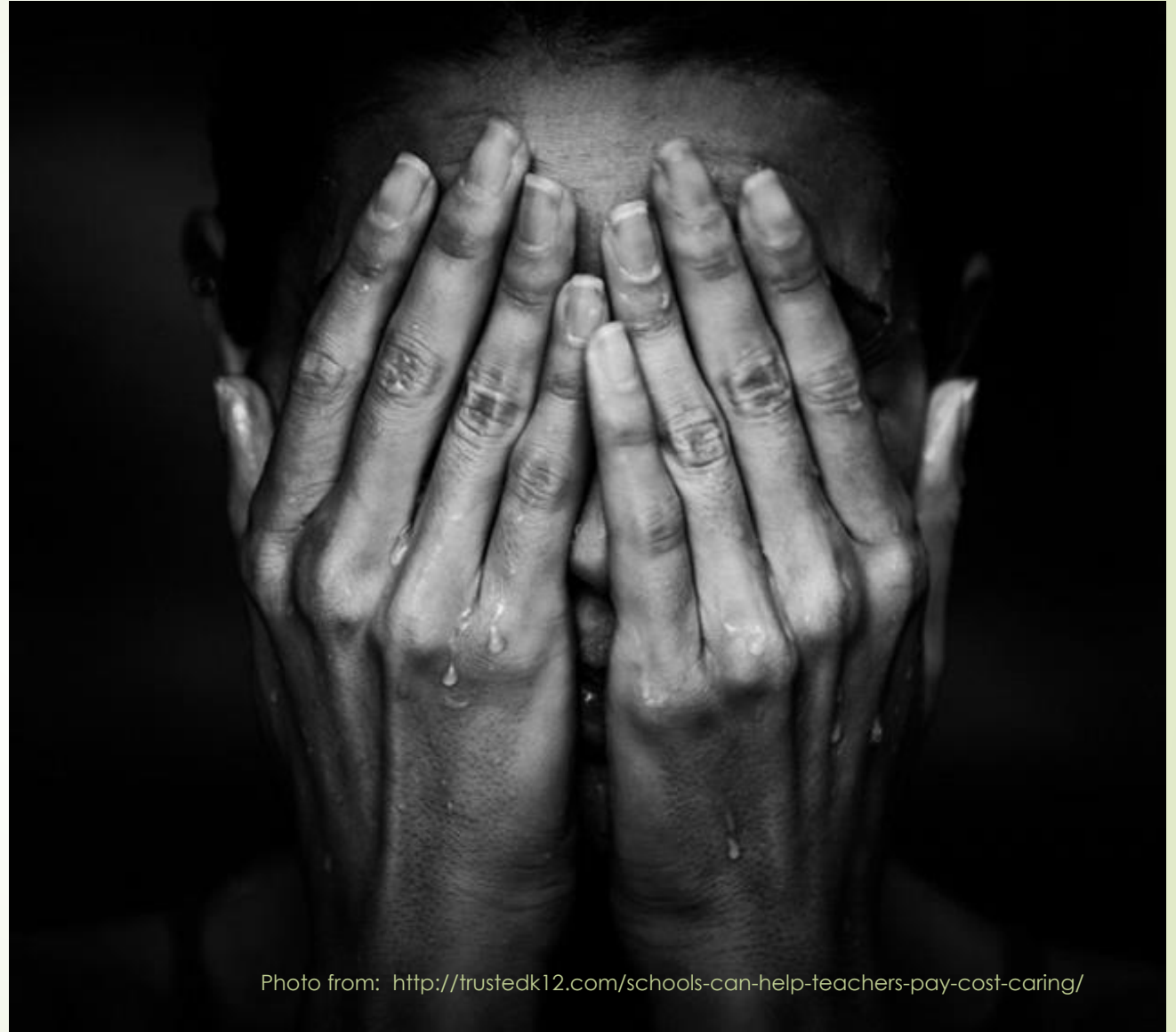


Photo from: <http://trustedk12.com/schools-can-help-teachers-pay-cost-caring/>

Correctional Stress



Photo from <https://news.berkeley.edu/2018/08/23/california-correctional-officers-at-high-risk-for-depression-ptsd-and-suicide-new-survey-finds/>



Risk Factors

Forced overtime

Responding to fights

Responding to emergencies

Use of force

Unable to take breaks

Limited support from peers, supervisors

Code of silence



Risk Factors

Substantial involvement in direct treatment

High caseloads with trauma histories

High exposure to inmates with trauma

Negative coping strategies

Personal Stress

Female gender



Protective Factors

Professional experience

Training

Social engagement/support system

Balanced lifestyle

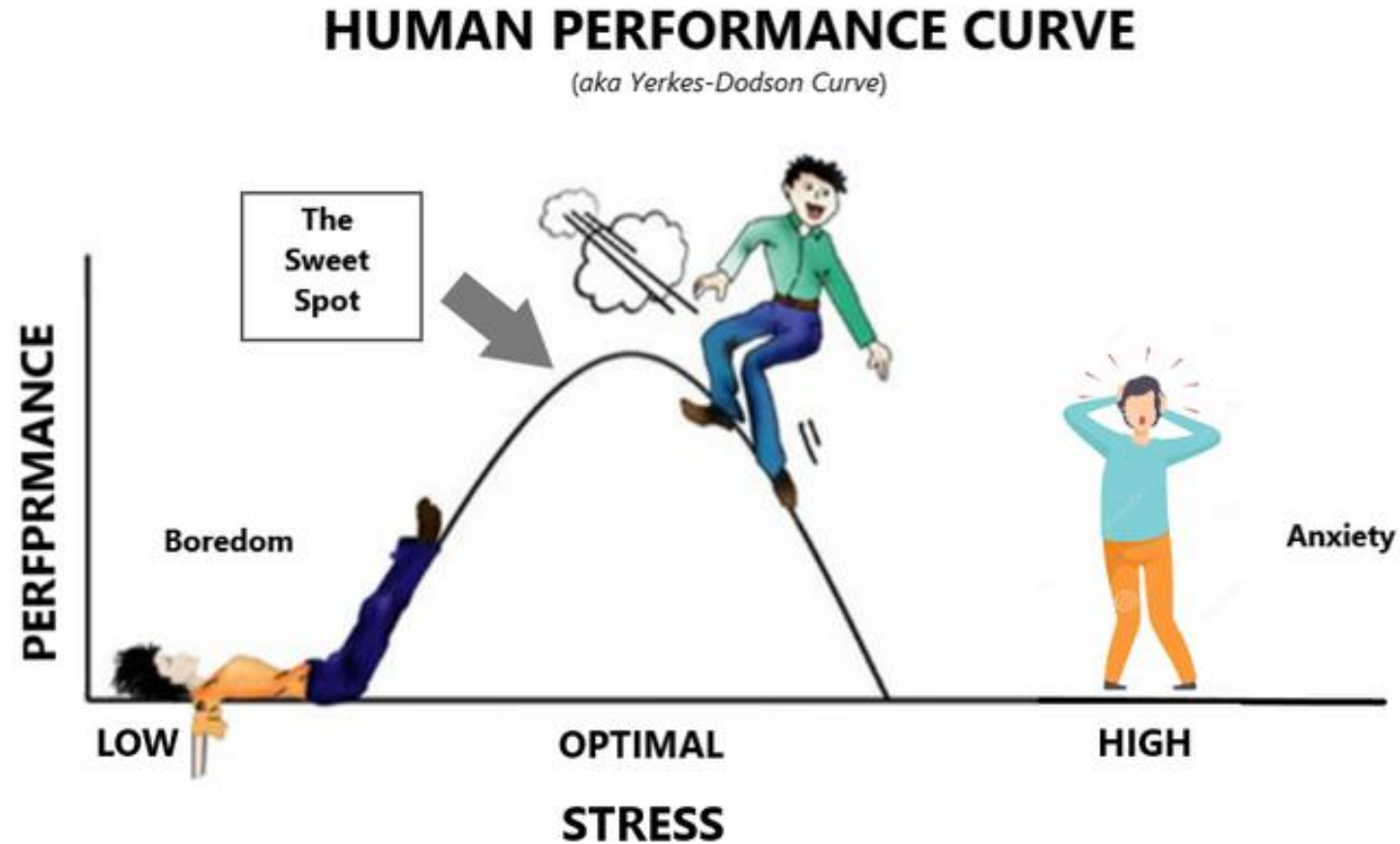
Capacity for realistic optimism



Let's Talk About Stress...

- ▶ Normal and natural reaction to triggers of risk or threat
- ▶ Our sympathetic nervous system kicks in (flight or fight)
- ▶ Our parasympathetic nervous system (rest or digest) shuts down

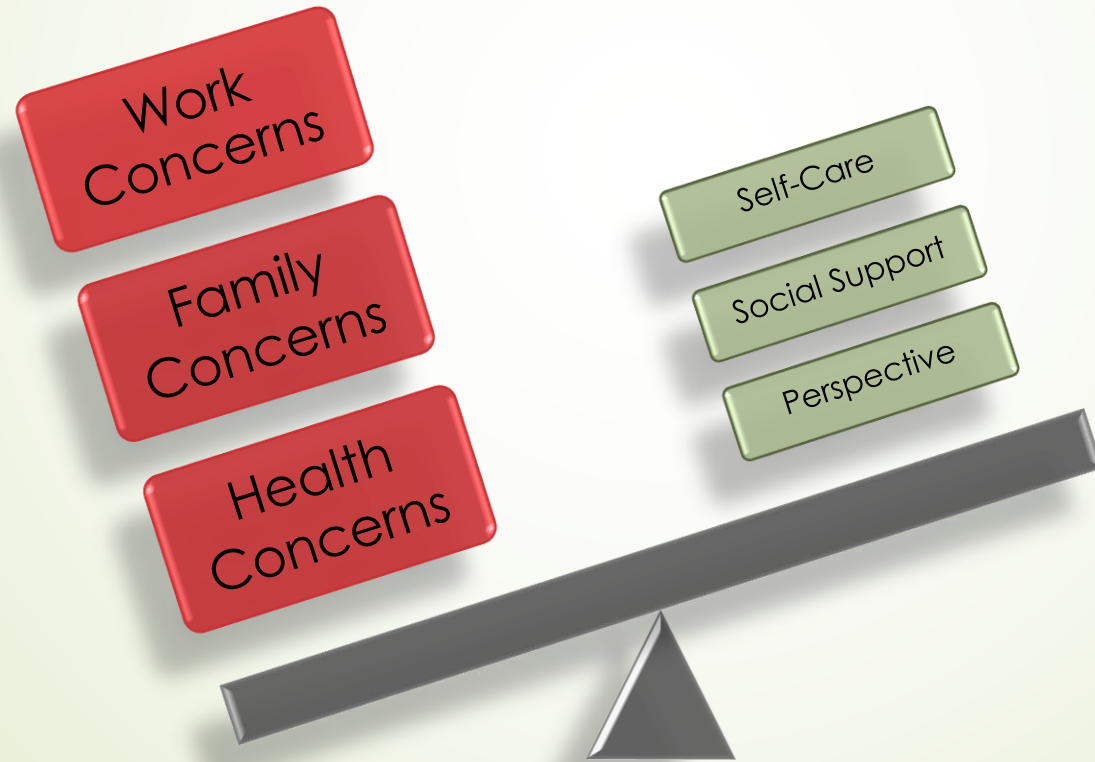
We actually need stress



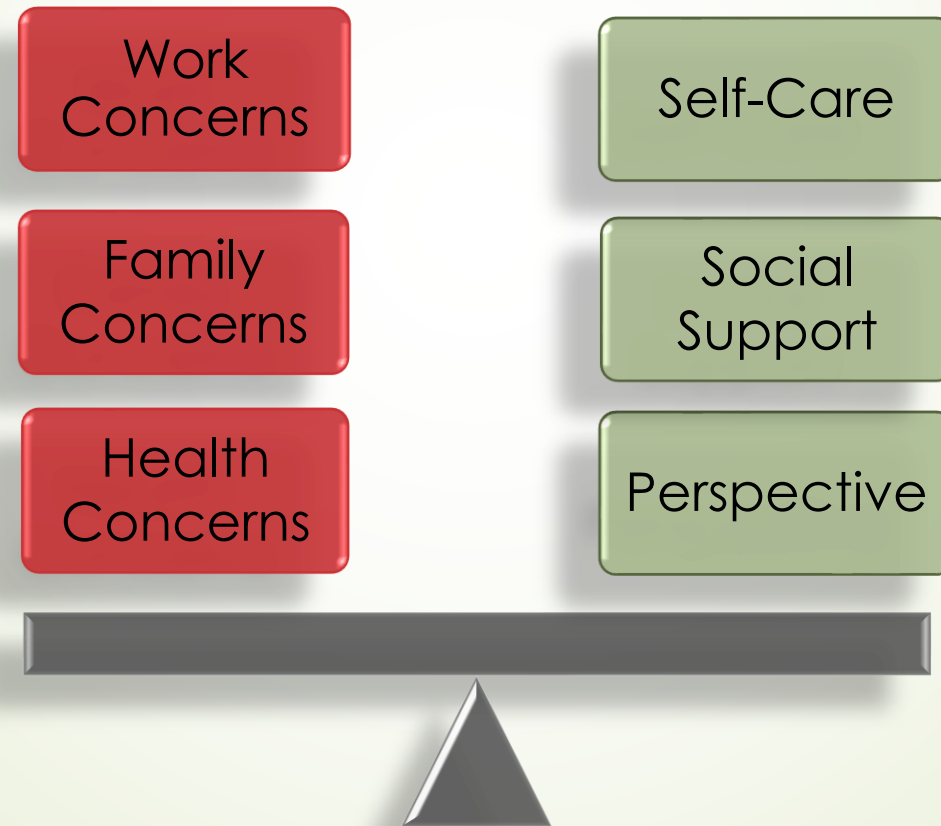
Source: Modified from Dr. Alex Hunt, dreamstime.com

- <https://thriveglobal.com/stories/we-are-human-beings-not-human-doings>

Balance – Stress and Resources



Balance – Stress and Resources



Perception and stress

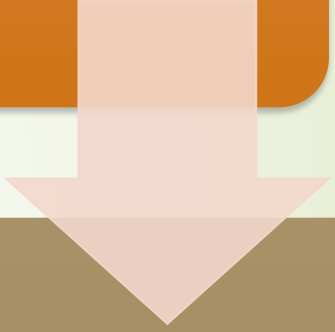


- https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend?language=en#t-437314



Consider

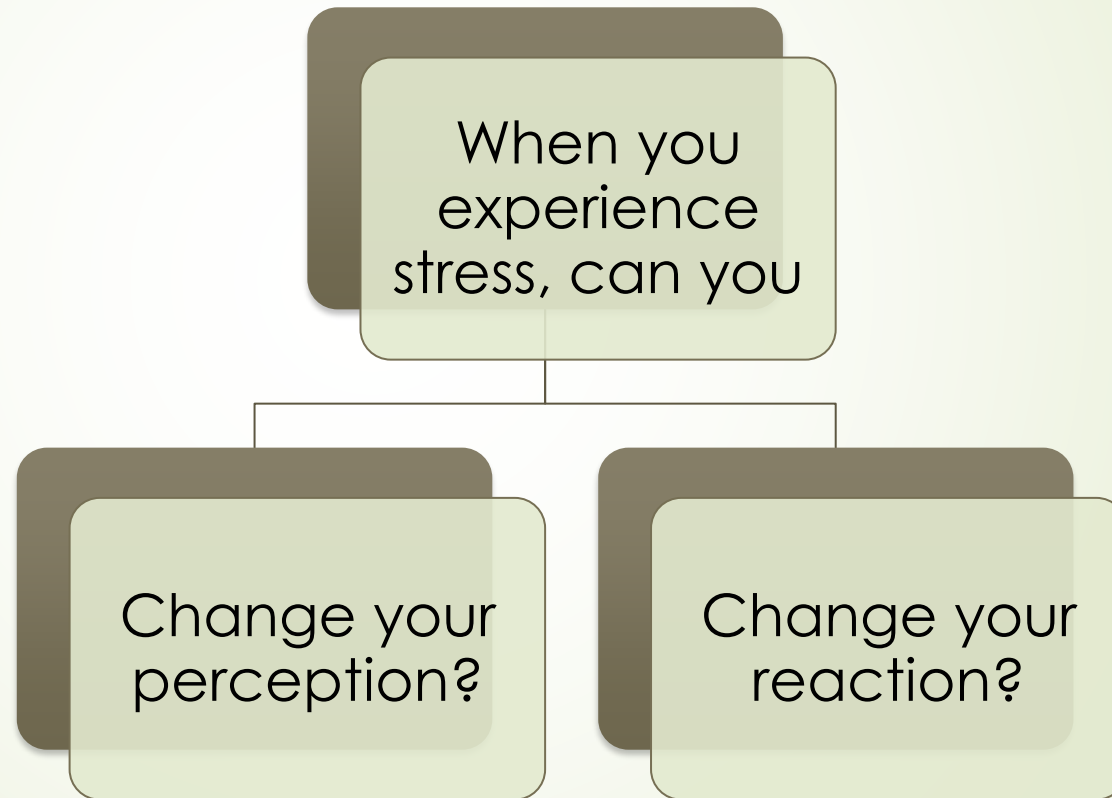
When have you
experienced a
“stress” as
positive?

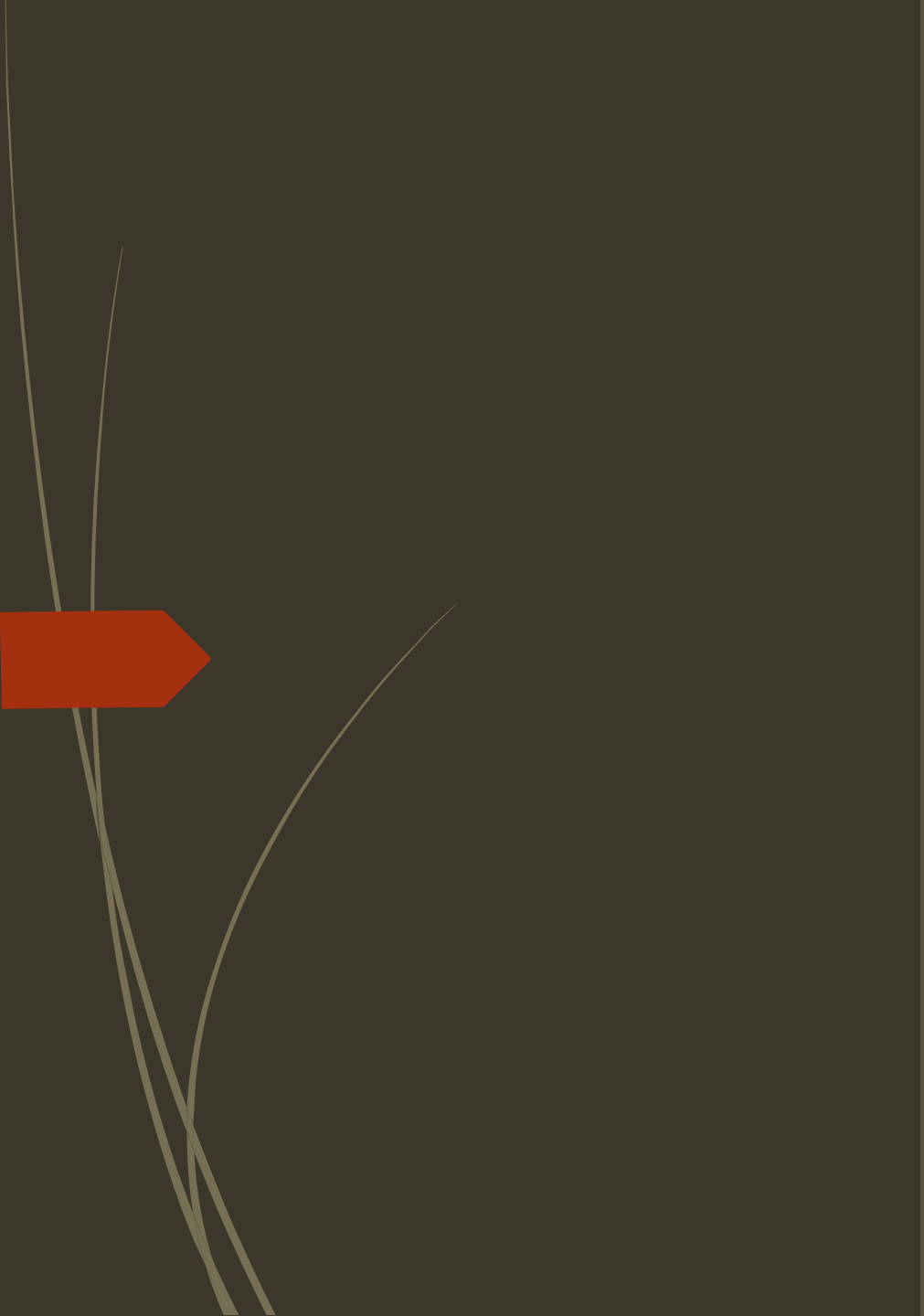


What allowed
you to do
that?



Hmmm...





Strategies to Reduce Impact of Secondary and Vicarious Trauma

Personal Preventive Strategies



Self-care



Balance of work and
private lives

Avoid professional and
personal isolation



Sense of spirituality



Sense of humor



Ability to maintain realistic optimism



Make time to relax

Prevention...



Manage workload



Diversify work and roles

Treat
Teach/Train
Promote accepting
environment



**Provide/seek
supervision (including
peer)**



Debrief

Self-Care Foundation: Four Principles



Focus on “flourishing” not merely “surviving”



Intentionally choose self-care



Engage in reciprocity with others around beneficial lifestyle attitudes and practices



Integrate self-care (rather than “add” it)

Cognitive Coping



Do puzzles to keep brain active

Sudoku, crossword, word search, jigsaw



Choose positive interpretations of events



Remind yourself that you are not alone in having these reactions



Maintain clear boundaries



Develop mindful self-awareness



Mindfulness Exercise

Three-part breath

Emotional Coping



Acknowledge your emotions



Acknowledge
your limits

Take a “time out” if
you have to
(breathe)



Maintain
boundaries

Don't confuse
others' emotions with
your own

Think of yourself as a
screen door not a
wall

Know Your Emotional Self

- ▶ Anger, sadness, fear, love, joy, shame:
 - ▶ How do you know you're feeling them?
 - ▶ Where to you feel them in your body?
 - ▶ Which ones are easier to feel? To express?
 - ▶ Which ones are more difficult?



@AVANMUIJEN



Coping Through Behavior

Eat healthy

- Food is fuel, sustenance, nutrition

Watch your substance use

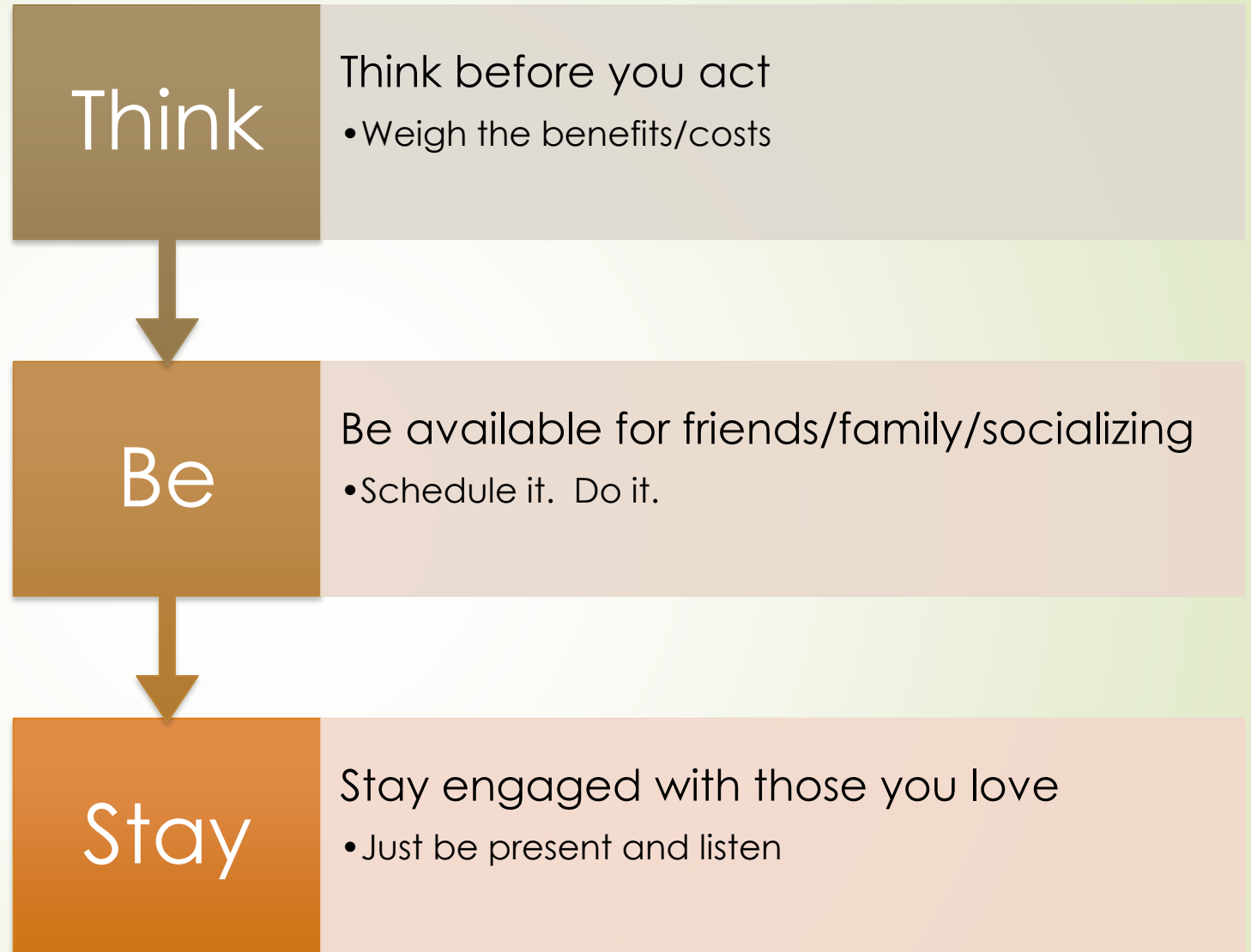
- Moderation to enhance the good, not to drown the bad

Exercise

- Breathing is good, strengthening your heart is good



Coping Through Behavior



Behavioral Coping



Get/get back to a hobby

Set a goal and go for it!



Laugh more



Say "no" more



If you need to talk, talk.

Colleagues, friends, family,
supervisors
Professional help



Get enough sleep

Spiritual Coping

- Be amazed by the resilience of the human spirit (others & your own)
- Regain a sense of competence
 - “Watch” yourself do good
- Find meaning/purpose in your work
 - What did you solve? Who did you help?
- Choose compassion over cynicism
 - Everyone does the best they can with what they’ve got

Unplug but Don't Disconnect



Separate from work

Use music
Use ritual



Separate from trauma

Remind yourself it did NOT happen to you



Connect with your “non-work” self

Relationships
Hobbies, exercise



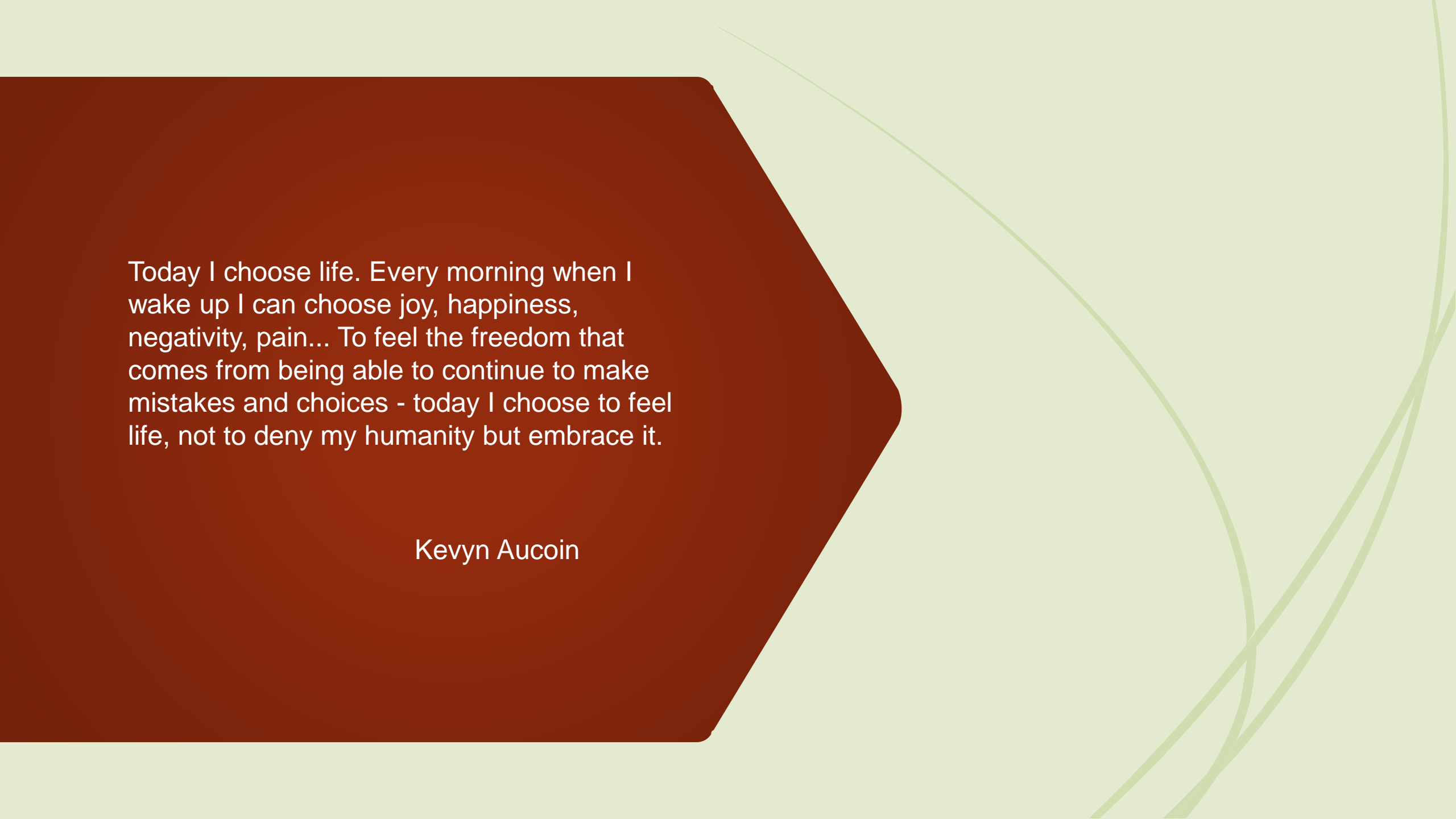
Seek help when you need it.



IF SELF-CARE AND
WORK/LIFE BALANCE ARE
NOT ENOUGH



SEEK PROFESSIONAL HELP
OR PEER SUPPORT



Today I choose life. Every morning when I wake up I can choose joy, happiness, negativity, pain... To feel the freedom that comes from being able to continue to make mistakes and choices - today I choose to feel life, not to deny my humanity but embrace it.

Kevyn Aucoin

Questions?

Thoughts?

Ideas?





Codes of Ethics

<https://www.nursingworld.org/>

<https://www.ama-assn.org/delivering-care/ethics/code-medical-ethics-overview>

<https://www.apa.org/ethics/code>

<https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics/Code-of-Ethics-English>



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