

# Not All Heroes Wear Capes: Self-Care for a High-Stress Profession

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# Objectives

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## **Learning Objective 1**

Identify body cues and what they could mean for individual health and well-being.

## **Learning Objective 2**

Review the long-term effects of chronic and cumulative stress.

## **Learning Objective 3**

Create a personal “treatment plan” in preparation for times of stress and crisis.

**Life doesn't give you  
purpose, you give  
life purpose.**

**- The Flash**



**Politically  
Correct**

Don't Let  
This Be You



# You might work in corrections if...

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- Your chair must face the door
- Loud, sudden noises make you jump
- You tell your family your day was “fine”, no matter what you’ve witnessed
- You’ve been told “you’ve changed”
- You are always in a state of tension
- You never count on going home from work

# Staggering Statistics

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- 33.5% of all assaults in prisons and jails are committed against staff
- A CO will be seriously assaulted at least twice in a 20 – year career
- COs spend 40% more days away from work due to injury or illness than other occupations
- COs have 30% higher divorce rates
- Dissatisfied COs were 5x more likely to have a psychiatric disorder



# Staggering Statistics

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- Some of the highest rates of mental illness, sleep disorders, and physical health issues of all U.S. workers
- Increased stress and burnout in the past two years

**Higher risk for all  
correctional staff.**

# PEARLS OF WISDOM



**Draft your team**



**Check your mindset**



**Keep moving forward**

# Pearls of Wisdom



**Draft your team**

# Self-Care: The Basics

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- Exercise
- Eat well
- Get enough rest
- Find/engage in hobbies
- Reduce/avoid nicotine and alcohol
- Build healthy relationships
- Use PTO when you need time away

**Taking care of  
yourself not only  
keeps you healthy  
but will improve the  
overall quality of  
your life.**



# Burnout Reduction

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- You only have so much to give
- Improve your attitude
- Listen to others
- Practice self care
- Enjoy life

# Your Support System

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Family or  
Significant other

Supportive  
Friends

Mentor,  
Supervisor  
or Leader



Accountability  
Partner

Co-Workers

Therapist or  
Counselor

# Your Support System

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Family or  
Significant other

Supportive  
Friends

Mentor,  
Supervisor  
or Leader

**Don't have  
support in  
every  
category?**

Accountability  
Partner

Co-workers

Therapist or  
Counselor



**Who** do you trust?

**Who** do you lean on?

**Who** do you feel comfortable talking to?

**Who** sets a good example for you?

**Who** keeps you accountable?



**This TEAM is your  
SUPPORT SYSTEM.**

# **“I USTA” Syndrome**

# Microaggressions

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- Cues that demean, insult, or invalidate a person or group
- Can derail morale



# REMEMBER



**Draft your team**



**Check your mindset**



**Keep moving forward**

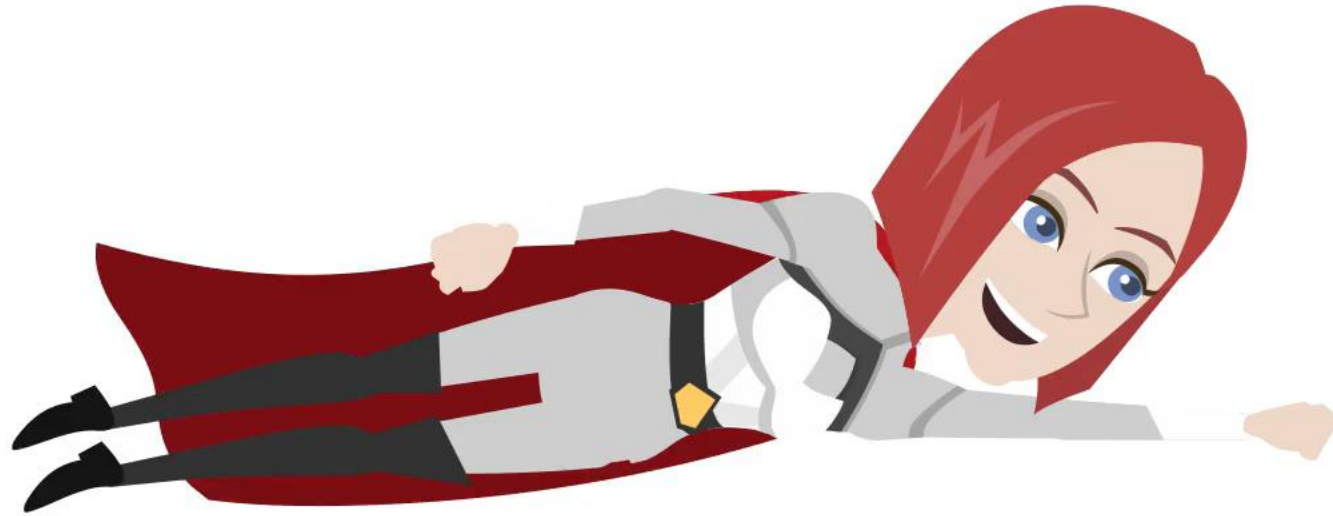
# **Pearls of Wisdom**



**Check your mindset**

# Resilience

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**An ability to maintain healthy psychological and physical functioning when faced with adverse events.**

# Resilient people...

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- Care for themselves and others
- Work efficiently
- Recover from stress reactions
- Work through emotions
- Support their team
- Feel satisfied with their job



# Dissect Your Mindset

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IMPAIRS

"I've worked every day  
this week...  
**this is the worst.**"

"No one else cares, so  
**neither will I.**"

"I hate my job."

"**These criminals  
deserve to be here.**"





# Dissect Your Mindset

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IMPROVES



"It's been a rough shift, **but tomorrow is a new day.**"

"**I can** control myself and my actions."

"I've been trained to deal with difficult detainees, **I got this!**"

"I've had traumatic experiences before, but **I know how to use my support system.**"



# Improving Your Resilience: The 7 C's

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**C**ompetence

**C**onfidence

**C**onnection

**C**haracter

**C**ontribution

**C**oping

**C**ontrol

# Improving Your Resilience: The 7 C's

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**C**ompetence

**C**onfidence

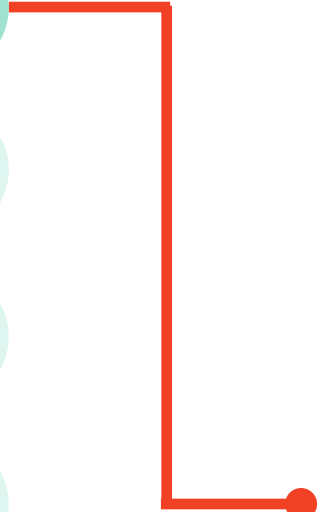
**C**onnection

**C**haracter

**C**ontribution

**C**oping

**C**ontrol



Learn and practice the skills to deal with stressful situations. Competence is the ability to do something successfully.

# Improving Your Resilience: The 7 C's

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**C**ompetence



**C**onfidence

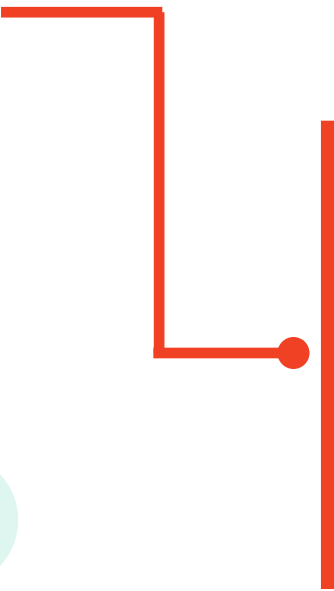
**C**onnection

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**C**ontribution

**C**oping

**C**ontrol



Believe in your ability to face challenges. Confidence starts with competence, and then trusting in your knowledge and skillset.

# Improving Your Resilience: The 7 C's

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**C**ompetence

**C**onfidence



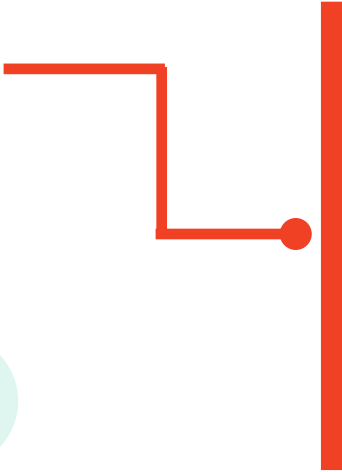
**C**onnection

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**C**ontrol



Connect with your support system in a meaningful way. Get face to face if you can.

# Improving Your Resilience: The 7 C's

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**C**ompetence

**C**onfidence

**C**onnection



**C**haracter

**C**ontribution

**C**oping

**C**ontrol

Identify your personal and professional values and stick to them. Make choices that move you toward your values, not away from them.

# Improving Your Resilience: The 7 C's

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**C**ompetence

**C**onfidence

**C**onnection


**C**haracter



**C**ontribution

**C**oping

**C**ontrol



Contributing to the world around you makes the world stronger because you are in it. Read that again.



# Improving Your Resilience: The 7 C's

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**C**ompetence

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**C**haracter

**C**ontribution



**C**oping

**C**ontrol



If you struggle to cope, seek help to learn strategies that will support you. Coping doesn't come naturally to everyone.

# Improving Your Resilience: The 7 C's

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**C**ompetence

**C**onfidence

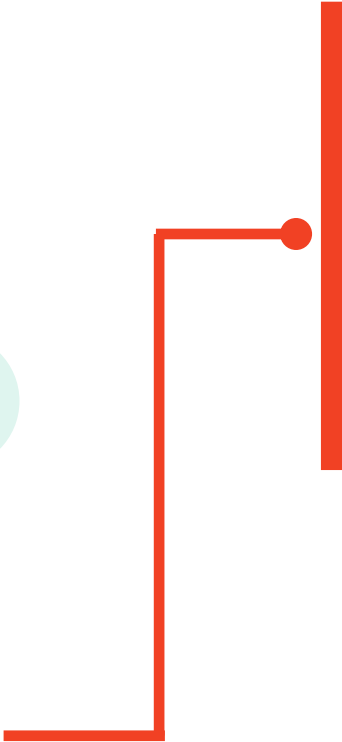
**C**onnection

**C**haracter

**C**ontribution

**C**oping

✓ **C**ontrol



Recognize that you CAN control your own actions, even when you can't control the actions of others.

# Job Satisfaction

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**Find the positive.  
What do you enjoy  
about your job?**



**Remember  
your “WHY”.**

**Remind yourself of  
your professional  
goals:**



**Show up for  
the job you  
want, not the  
one you have.**

**Use your training  
and trust your gut:**



**Be confident in  
what you know.**

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Show up for  
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want, not the

**Use your training  
and trust your gut:**



Be confident in  
what you know.

**Ask for additional training if you know you need it.**

**People who do not  
experience job  
satisfaction are more  
likely to have  
medical and mental  
health issues.**

# REMEMBER



**Draft your team**



**Check your mindset**



**Keep moving forward**

# Pearls of Wisdom



**Keep moving forward**

# Stress Index

- Predictor of illness/stress related disorders
- Different perceptions of stressors

## The Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory

### The Social Readjustment Rating Scale

INSTRUCTIONS: Mark down the point value of each of these life events that has happened to you during the previous year. Total these associated points.

Life Event	Mean Value
1. Death of spouse	100
2. Divorce	73
3. Marital Separation from mate	65
4. Detention in jail or other institution	63
5. Death of a close family member	63
6. Major personal injury or illness	53
7. Marriage	50
8. Being fired at work	47
9. Marital reconciliation with mate	45
10. Retirement from work	45
11. Major change in the health or behavior of a family member	44
12. Pregnancy	40
13. Sexual Difficulties	39
14. Gaining a new family member (i.e., birth, adoption, older adult moving in, etc)	39
15. Major business readjustment	39
16. Major change in financial state (i.e., a lot worse or better off than usual)	38
17. Death of a close friend	37
18. Changing to a different line of work	36
19. Major change in the number of arguments w/spouse (i.e., either a lot more or a lot less than usual regarding child rearing, personal habits, etc.)	35
20. Taking on a mortgage (for home, business, etc.)	31
21. Foreclosure on a mortgage or loan	30
22. Major change in responsibilities at work (i.e. promotion, demotion, etc.)	29
23. Son or daughter leaving home (marriage, attending college, joined mil.)	29
24. In-law troubles	29
25. Outstanding personal achievement	28
26. Spouse beginning or ceasing work outside the home	26
27. Beginning or ceasing formal schooling	26
28. Major change in living condition (new home, remodeling, deterioration of neighborhood or home etc.)	25
29. Revision of personal habits (dress manners, associations, quitting smoking)	24
30. Troubles with the boss	23
31. Major changes in working hours or conditions	20
32. Changes in residence	20
33. Changing to a new school	20
34. Major change in usual type and/or amount of recreation	19
35. Major change in church activity (i.e., a lot more or less than usual)	19
36. Major change in social activities (clubs, movies, visiting, etc.)	18
37. Taking on a loan (car, tv, freezer, etc)	17
38. Major change in sleeping habits (a lot more or a lot less than usual)	16
39. Major change in number of family get-togethers ("")	15
40. Major change in eating habits (a lot more or less food intake, or very different meal hours or surroundings)	15
41. Vacation	13
42. Major holidays	12
43. Minor violations of the law (traffic tickets, jaywalking, disturbing the peace, etc)	11

**Now, add up all the points you have to find your score.**

150pts or less means a relatively low amount of life change and a low susceptibility to stress-induced health breakdown.

150 to 300 pts implies about a 50% chance of a major health breakdown in the next 2 years.

300pts or more raises the odds to about 80%, according to the Holmes-Rahe statistical prediction model.



**Job satisfaction**

**Low wages**

**Inmate exposure**

**Understaffing**

**Lack of autonomy**

**Infectious disease**

**Lockdown**

**Perceived dangers**

**Reduced sense of purpose**

**Mandated overtime**



# Burnout

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**The result of prolonged exposure to excessive workplace demands and lack of available resources to meet these demands.**

# Burnout is...

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**Lost  
ENERGY**

**Lost  
ENTHUSIASM**

**Lost  
CONFIDENCE**

# The Impact of Stress

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## Long-Term Health Risks

- Higher risk of hypertension and heart attacks
- Digestive problems and ulcers
- Diabetes
- Strokes
- High cholesterol
- Migraines

# The Impact of Stress

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## Mental Health Risks

- Increased cynicism
- Memory impairment
- Emotional numbness
- Anger and irritability
- Seeing people as “less human”

# The Impact of Stress

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## Behavioral Risks

- Withdrawing from others
- Increased substance use
- Insomnia
- High risk behavior
- Decreased professionalism

# You Are Not Alone

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➔ Most corrections professionals, at some point in their life, have experienced:

**Depression/  
Anxiety**

**Substance  
Use/Abuse**

**Suicidal  
Thoughts**

# You Are Not Alone

---

➔ Most corrections professionals, at some point in their life, have experienced:

## **Depression/ Anxiety**

- Sadness
- Nervousness
- Loss of motivation
- Change in sleep
- Irritability

## **Substance Use/Abuse**

## **Suicidal Thoughts**



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## Depression/ Anxiety

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## Substance Use/Abuse

- Increased use
- Drinking to escape

## Suicidal Thoughts

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## Substance Use/Abuse

- Increased use
- Drinking to escape

## Suicidal Thoughts

- Hopelessness
- Isolation
- Withdrawal

# Critical Incidents

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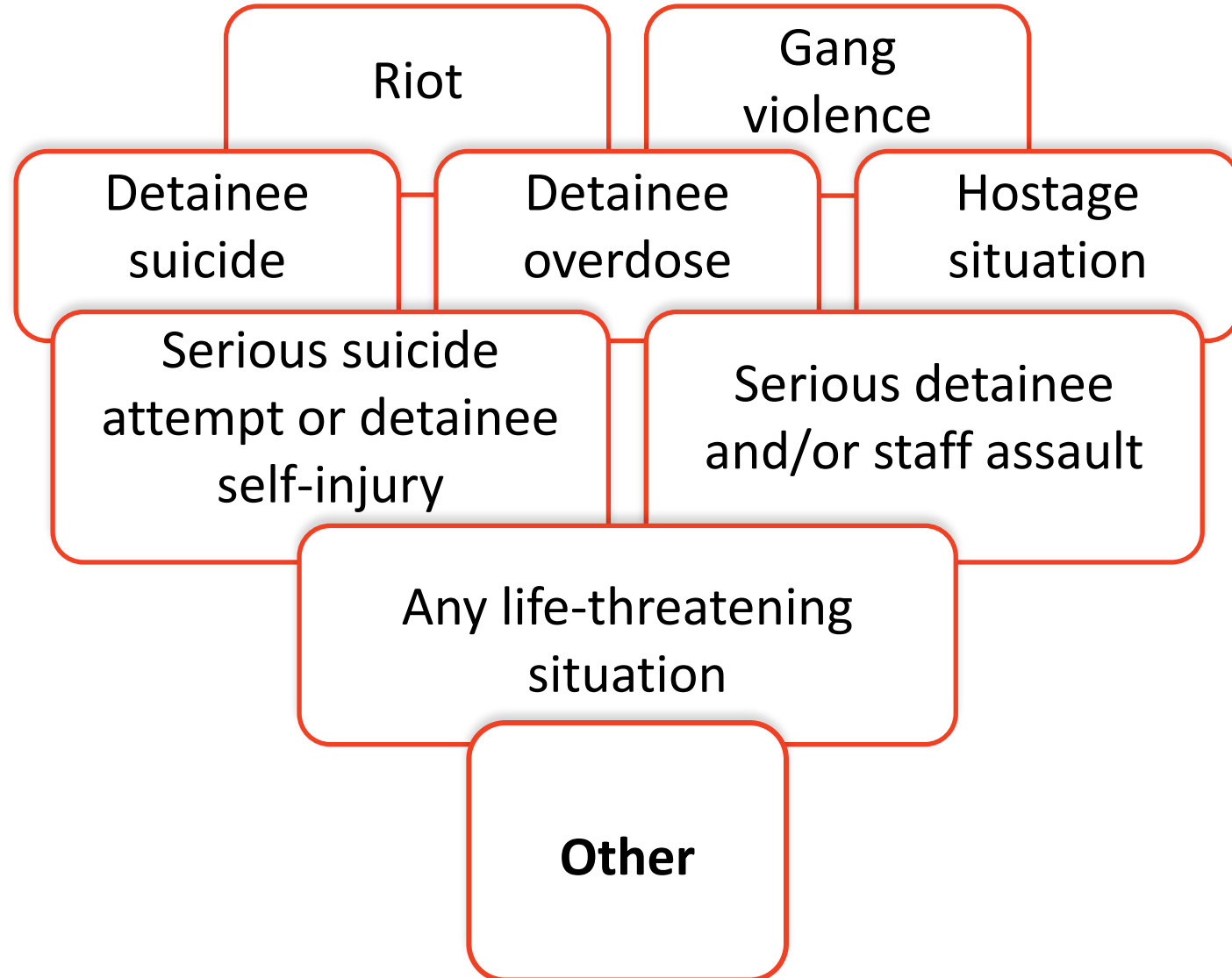
Critical incidents will impact you and generate a stress response.

It only takes 5% of a workload involving violent and traumatic events to create a stress response.



# Cumulative Stress

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# Stress Reactions

## PHYSICAL

Fatigue  
Chills  
Unusual Thirst  
Chest Pain  
Headaches  
Dizziness

## COGNITIVE

Uncertainty  
Confusion  
Nightmares  
Poor Decision-Making Ability  
Poor Focus & Memory  
Poor Problem-Solving Ability

## EMOTIONAL

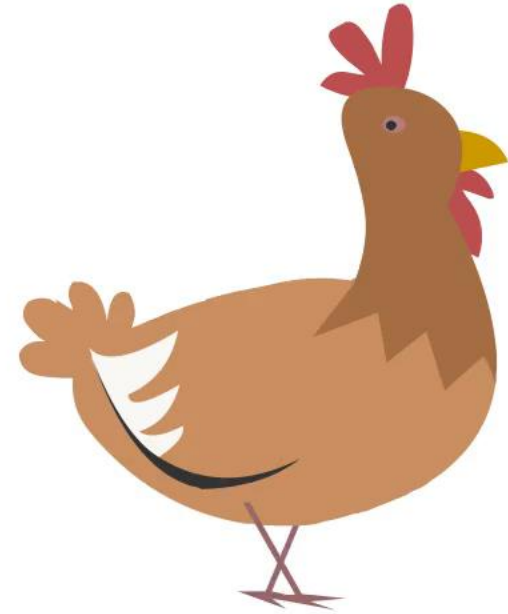
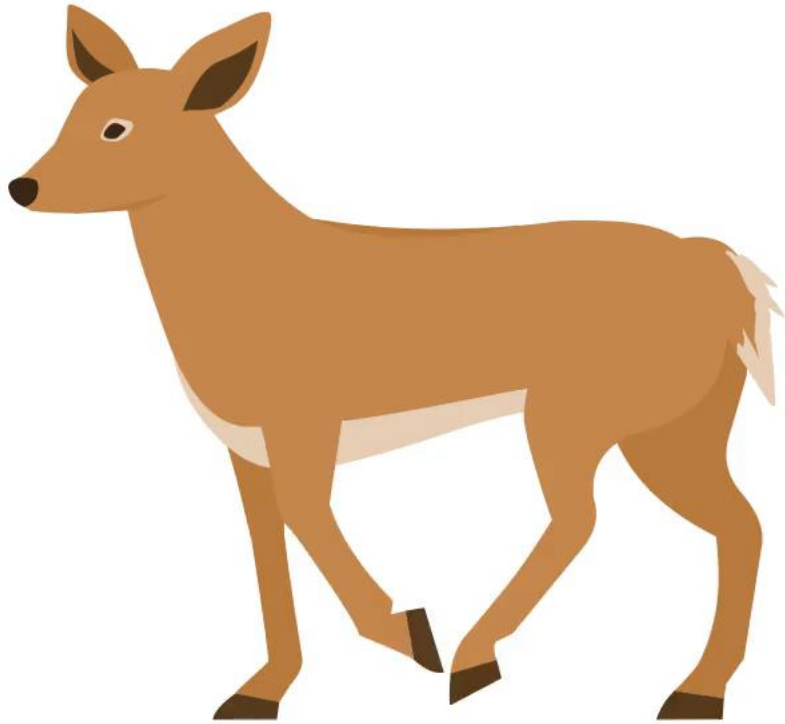
Grief  
Fear  
Guilt  
Intense Anger  
Apprehension and Depression  
Irritability  
Chronic Anxiety

## BEHAVIORAL

Inability to Rest  
Withdrawal  
Increased Alcohol Consumption  
Change in Communication  
Loss/Increase in Appetite

# The Chicken and the Deer

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## Don't Ignore Stress Reactions

Up to 70% of primary care  
visits are stress related.

**Take care of  
yourself.**

**Go to the  
doctor.**





# Making the Real-Life Connection

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- Acknowledge your body's physical cues
- Don't be defensive if those close to you point out changes

**Take some time to reflect  
before responding.**

# Making the Real-Life Connection

---

Do something about it



# Making the Real-Life Connection

---

Do something about it



Get back to the basics: **Self care**

# Making the Real-Life Connection

---

Do something about it



Engage your support system

# Making the Real-Life Connection

---

Do something about it



## Include your chain of command

- This may not always be easy or comfortable
- Your leaders should be invested in your success

# Making the Real-Life Connection

---

Do something about it



## Seek professional help

- Medical – schedule a doctor's appointment
- Mental – meet with a therapist



**If you find yourself in a moment of crisis, focusing on a sensory experience will help ground you and focus on the present moment.**

# In a Moment of Crisis... Focus on NOW



## Hear

- ✓ Call someone you love
- ✓ Listen to calming sounds/music



## See

- ✓ Get some sunlight if you can



## Taste

- ✓ Slow down chewing
- ✓ Eat a high-protein snack
- ✓ Suck on a peppermint



## Smell

- ✓ Use lavender spray or oil
- ✓ Open a window



## Touch

- ✓ Climb under a heavy blanket
- ✓ Take a hot shower
- ✓ Hold a comfort item



# Say Something

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- “I’m not sure what to ask for, but I don’t want to be alone right now.”
- “I’m in a bad place, but I don’t want to talk about it. Can you help distract me?”
- “I’m struggling right now. Can you call me?”
- “I’m suicidal. I need help now.”

# Those Who Offer Help

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# Where Do I Start?

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- Be sincere in your offer to help
- People tend to wait until someone asks how they are
- Focus on their feeling instead of trying to solve it
- Respect what they are saying, don't pressure them



# How Can I Support Them?

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- Listen
- Offer reassurance
- Stay calm

# Worst Case Scenario

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- Disclosure of self-harm
  - Be genuine
  - Stay with them
  - Ask what they need
  - Assist getting an emergency appointment
  - Call 911, request EMS

# Help Yourself

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- Reach out to someone you trust
- Peer-to-peer support program
- Contact therapist
- Call 911
- Call the Suicide Prevention Hotline (988)
- Visit the local hospital

# Wellness Program: CIERR

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- Critical Incident Employee  
Rapid Response
- Confidential
- Peer to peer
- Provides education and support
- Assists in minimizing the effects  
of stress

# Ask Yourself...

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- ? What did I do well today?
- ? What can I improve on?
- ? What will I do differently tomorrow?

**Keep moving forward  
with a growth mindset!**



# REMEMBER



**Draft your team**



**Check your mindset**

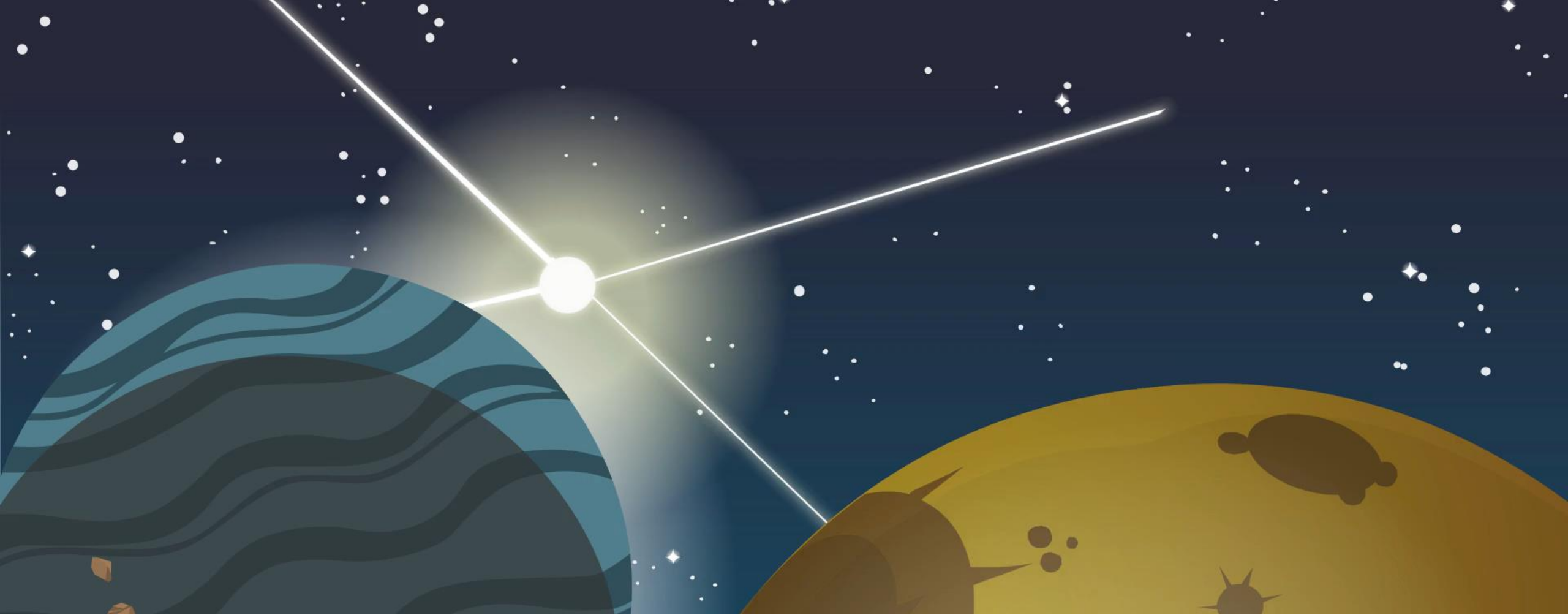


**Keep moving forward**



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**Thank you!**  
**What questions can we answer?**

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