



Naomi Ruth Cohen

Institute for Mental Health Education

at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology

WELCOME!

Land Acknowledgment

Before colonization and settlement by people of European descent, the place we know as Evanston was home to the Potawatomi, Odawa (Ottawa) and Ojibwe Tribes, also known as the Niswimishkodewinan (Council of the Three Fires), an alliance of Anishinaabeg peoples.



Untying the Human Knot:

Managing Stress and Anxiety in Today's World

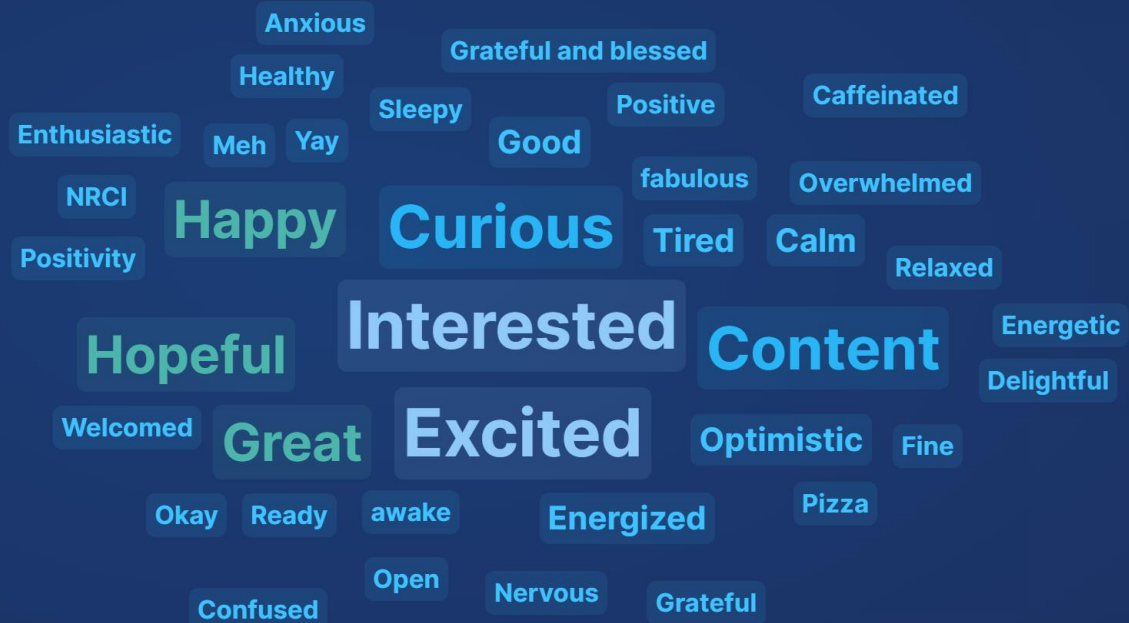
21st Annual
Community
Mental
Health
Conferenc
e



In one word, how are you feeling today?

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NRCI by the Numbers Since June 1, 2021

- Over 3000 participants
- Over 100 events

- 1046 Suicide Prevention Gatekeepers
- 363 Mental Health First Aiders, including 103 Evanston teens

- University and Community partners

Registration Survey Results

	Lived Experience	Cares for Someone with Lived Experience	Concerned Community Member	Mental Health Professional
Yes	50%	52%	94%	66%
No	50%	48%	6%	34%



Panel Presentation



Untying the Human Knot:

Managing Stress and Anxiety in Today's World

Untying the Human Knot: Managing Stress and Anxiety in Today's World

Paula R. Young, PhD
Senior Clinical Director
Rogers Behavioral Health

Naomi Ruth Cohen Institute Conference June, 2023

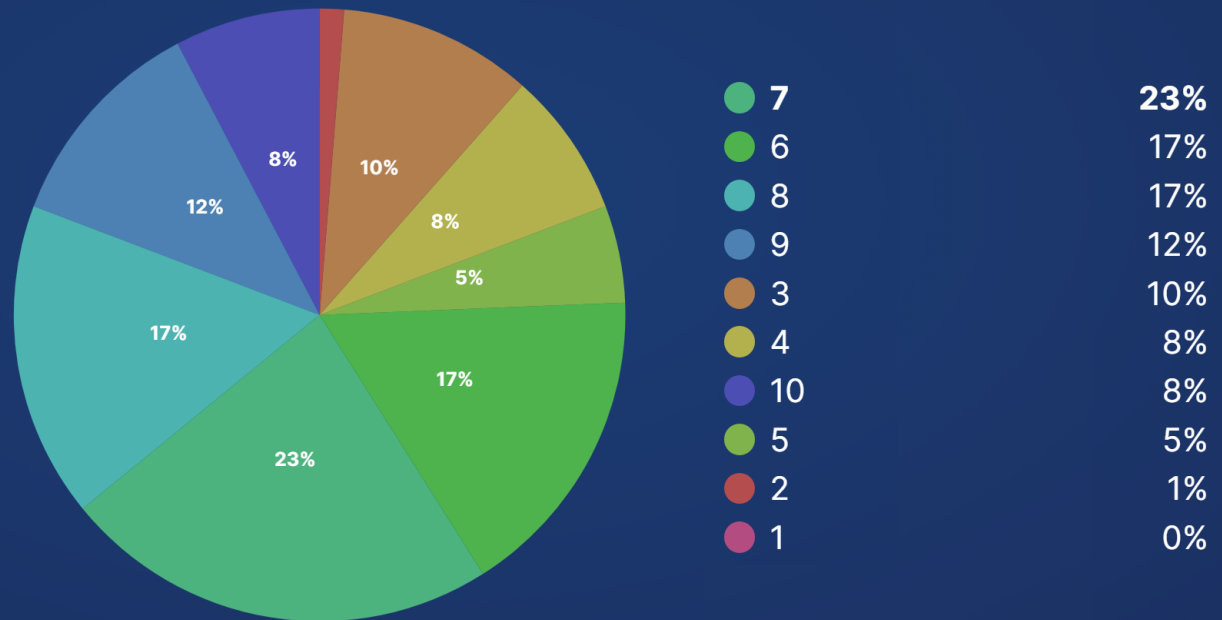




On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 means you have "little or no stress" and 10 means you have "a great deal of stress," how much stress have you experienced in the past month?

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76% reported aspects of their lives were negatively impacted

- mental health (36%)
- eating habits (33%)
- physical health (32%)
- interest in hobbies/activities 30%

76% said they have experienced health impacts due to stress

- headache (38%)
- fatigue (35%)
- feeling nervous or anxious (34%)
- feeling depressed or sad (33%)

72% have experienced additional health impacts due to stress

- feeling overwhelmed (33%),
- experiencing changes in sleeping habits (32%),
- worrying constantly (30%)
- using alcohol, cigarettes, or drugs to relax (15%)

27%: report that most days they are so stressed they can't function.

The Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory

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

- < 150 points : low susceptibility
- 150-330 points: 50% chance of a major health breakdown in the next 2 years.
- > 300 + points 80% chance of a major health breakdown in the next 2 years

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

Fight or Flight

- Part of the autonomic nervous system
 - “automatic”
- “survival mode”
- Prepares you to fight off attacker or run



Fight or Flight

The fight or flight response

Dilation of pupil

Dry mouth

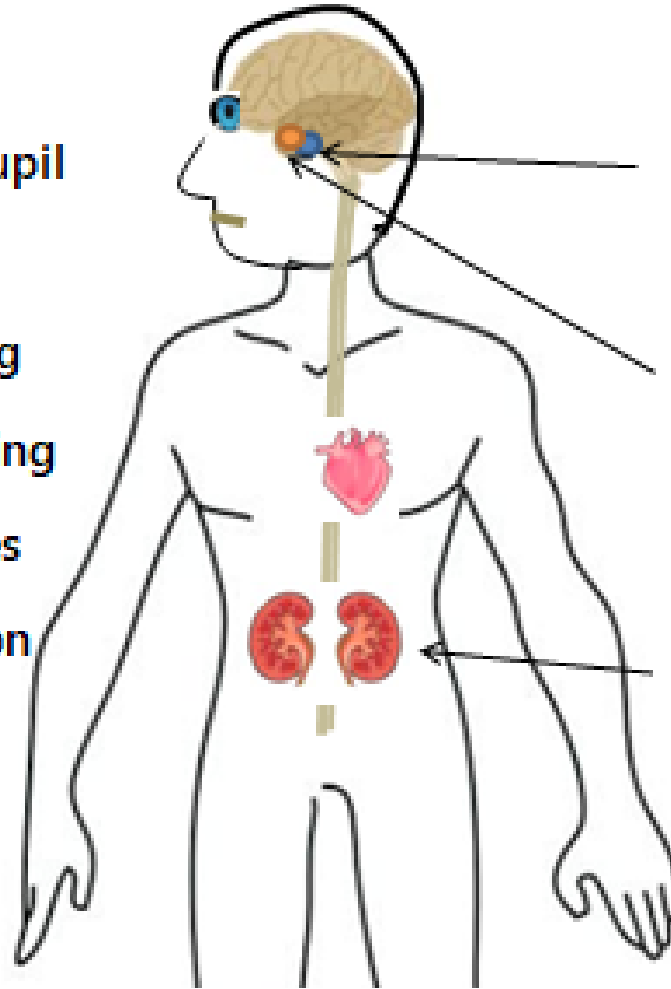
Fast breathing

Heart pounding

Tense muscles

Slow digestion

Sweating of palms



1. The amygdala reacts to threat

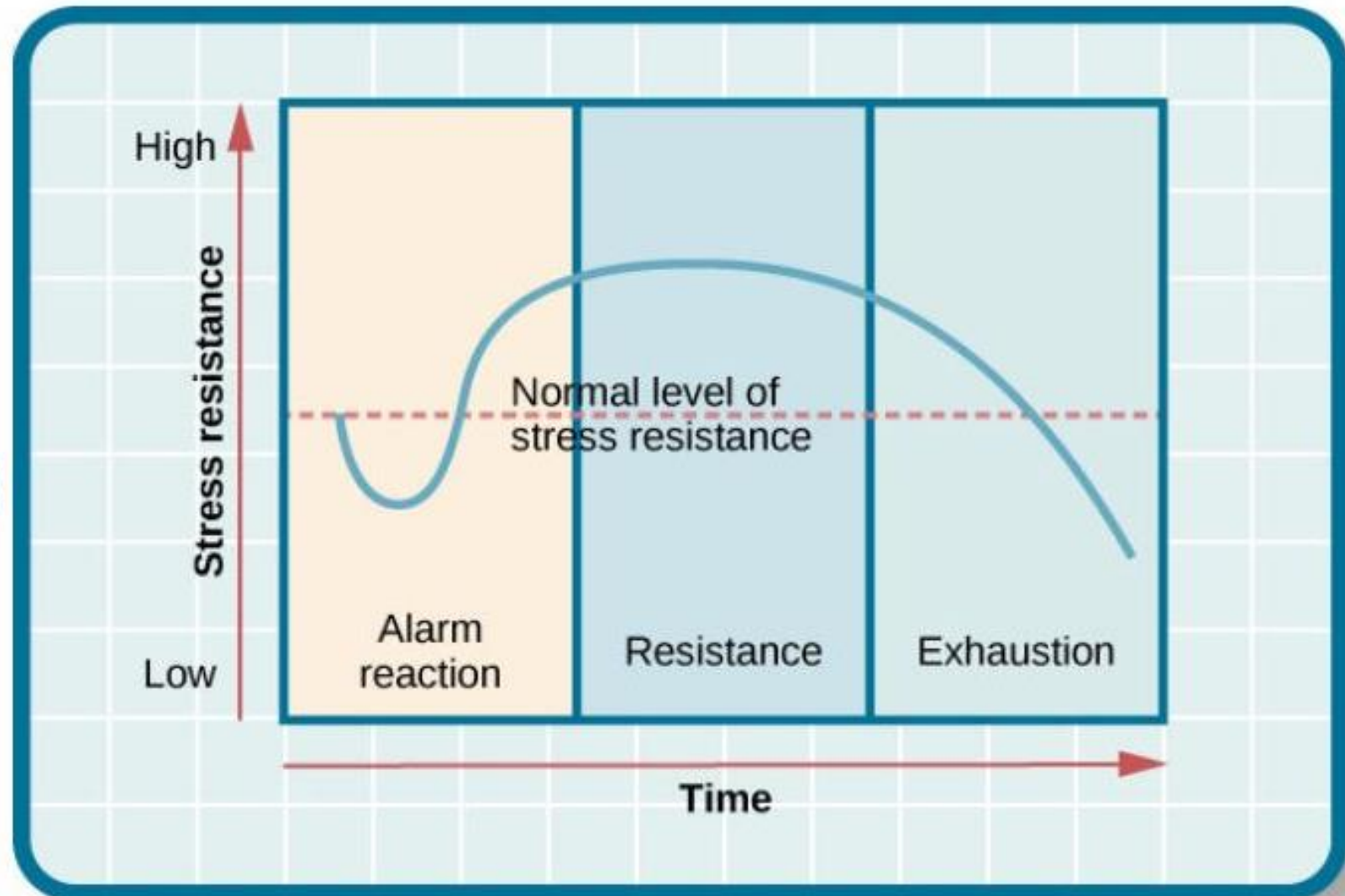
2. The hypothalamus activates the sympathetic nervous system, release of adrenaline

3. The adrenal cortex releases cortisol for continued alertness

Fight or Flight and anxiety



General Adaptation Syndrome graph and timeline



Downward Spiral of stress and unhelpful coping

- Overeating
- Substance use/abuse
- Increased social media use; ‘doom-scrolling’
- Binge-watching/ candy crush [inactivity]
- Bedtime procrastination (‘Revenge bedtime procrastination’)
- Irritability with others
- What other unhelpful ways can you think of?



Chronic stress & physical health

Over time, repeated activation of the stress response takes a toll on the body. Research suggests that chronic stress contributes to:

Hypertension

High cholesterol

Coronary heart disease

Stroke

Obesity

Autoimmune diseases

Migraines

Muscle tension and backache

Negative life events and mental health

Depression

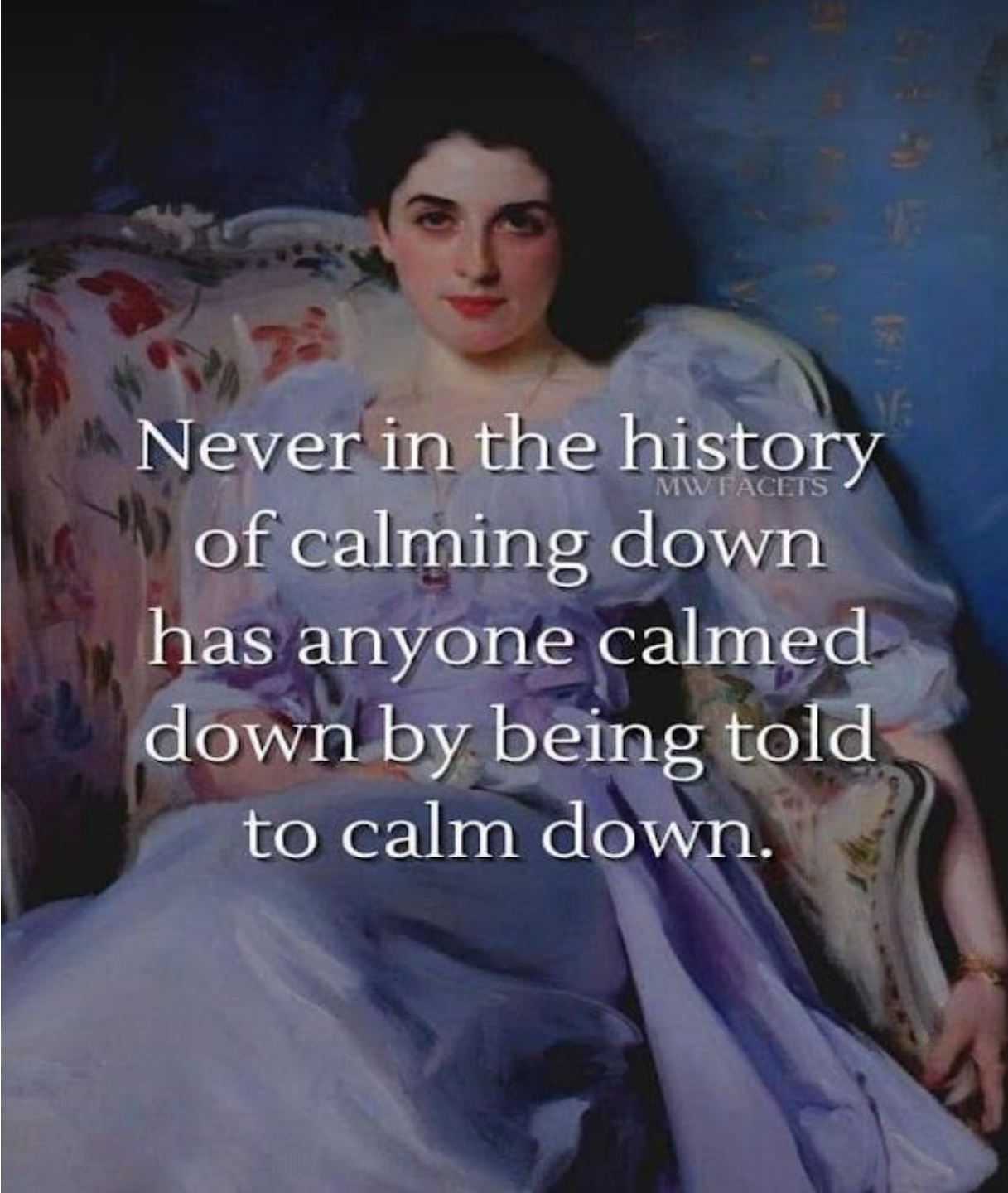
Panic Disorder

Post Traumatic
Stress Disorder

Insomnia

Eating Disorder
& Substance
Use Disorders

*Well, now what
do we do?*

A painting of a woman with dark hair, wearing a light blue, long-sleeved dress with a large bow at the waist. She is seated in a chair with a floral pattern. The background is dark blue with some faint, lighter patterns. The text is overlaid on the right side of the painting.

Never in the history
of calming down
has anyone calmed
down by being told
to calm down.

Change How you think

- Be aware of your thoughts and cognitive distortions
- Ask yourself, Is this a Threat or is it a Challenge?
- Tolerate Uncertainty



Automatic Thoughts and Cognitive Distortions

- How you think about things, influences your feelings, and your emotional response is based on how you interpret a situation.
- There are often other ways to interpret a situation that might be more accurate (and less stressful)

Situation: My boss asked me to do a time-study and write down everything I am doing during the day and how long I spent on it.

Thought 1: They are going to fire me-- they think I don't do enough

Thought 2: This is an opportunity to show them how much I do

Automatic Thoughts and Cognitive Distortions

In Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, people learn how to stop common thinking errors that contribute to misinterpretations of events (and feeling more stressed). Here are some examples of thinking errors:

Fortune-telling: “They are going to find errors on this”

Mind-reading: “They think I’m not doing enough”

Catastrophizing: “The company is going broke. I am going to get fired.”

All of Nothing thinking: “If I don’t do this completely, its worthless”

Stress: threat or a challenge?

How the body responds to stress might be different depending on how a person assesses the stressor

- From the Biopsychosocial model (BPSM) of challenge states (Blascovich, 2008)
- Popular in sports psychology

QUESTION: *“Do I have sufficient resources to cope with this demand?”*

- IF YES: it's a Challenge
 - Release of adrenalin improved blood flow and cardiac output
 - Better performance
- If NO: it's a threat
 - Release of cortisol, Constriction of blood vessels, less cardiac output
 - Worse performance



Intolerance of Uncertainty

- *Unforeseen events upset me greatly.*
- *It frustrates me not having all the information I need.*
- *Uncertainty keeps me from living a full life.*
- *One should always look ahead so as to avoid surprises.*
- *A small unforeseen event can spoil everything, even with the best of planning.*
- *When it's time to act, uncertainty paralyzes me.*
- *When I am uncertain, I can't function very well.*
- *I always want to know what the future has in store for me.*
- *I can't stand being taken by surprise.*
- *The smallest doubt can stop me from acting.*
- *I should be able to organize everything in advance.*
- *I must get away from all uncertain situations.*

*Change what you **do***

- Deep abdominal breathing
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Exercise
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR)
- Time Management aka Prioritize, don't 'Perfect'
- Social Support

Self care isn't just bubble baths...

- Saying 'no' to 'one more episode'
- Saying 'no' to 'one more drink'
- Taking care of your body and health
- Saying no to some requests
- Asking for help when you need it
- Ask if you can help – reach out, talk about it!



Thank You!

Paula R. Young, PhD

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800-767-4411 | rogersbh.org



Stress & Anxiety in Context: Safety & Belonging in Our Modern World

Dr. Orson Morrison, Psy.D.

Clinical Psychologist, Healer, Educator & Consultant

DePaul University & LifeSpan Counseling and Psychological Services, LLP



3 Realms Impacting Wellness



Our social, economic, and environmental experiences and milieu ultimately impact our overall health and wellness

The stories of stress & anxiety...

I am/We are unsafe

The world is unsafe

People are unsafe

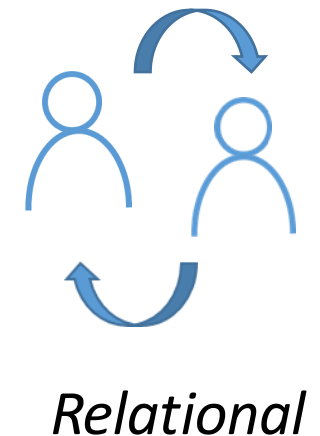
Our children are unsafe

Polyvagal Theory: A Science of Safety

Stephen W. Porges^{1,2*}

¹ Traumatic Stress Research Consortium, Kinsey Institute, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN, United States, ² Department of Psychiatry, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC, United States

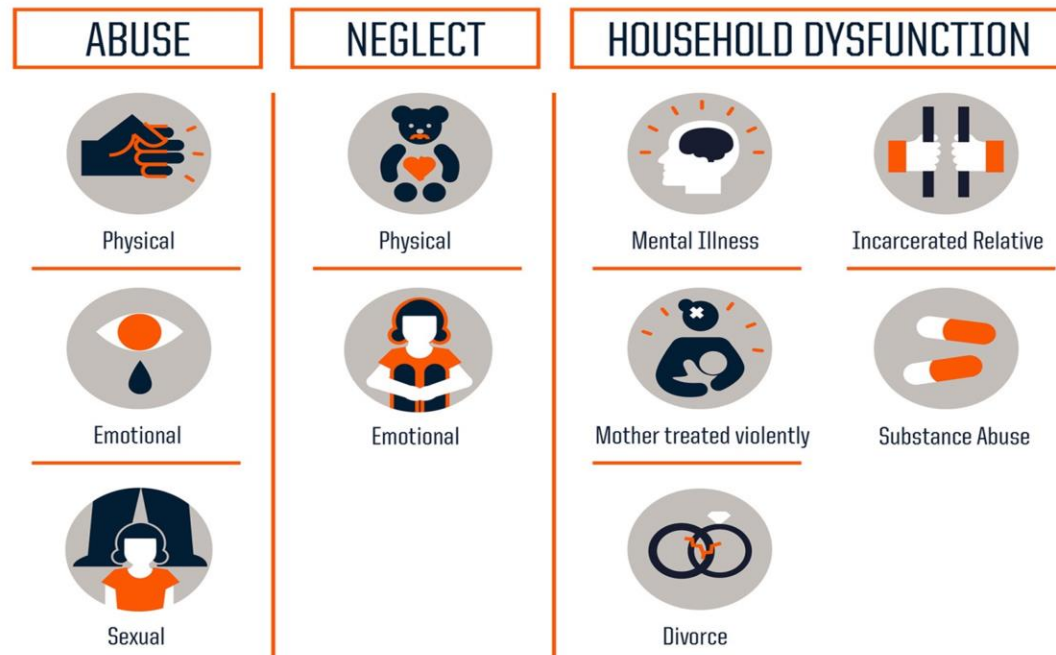
- Neuroception is process by which our neural circuitry helps our bodies assess and register whether an environment is safe
- Neuroception responds to various types of cues of danger and safety
- ***What cues are our nervous systems responding to in our modern world?***



Trauma & Relational Safety

We have a strong desire and need for connection for safety and co-regulation.

Trauma and environmental threats disrupt our regulatory systems.

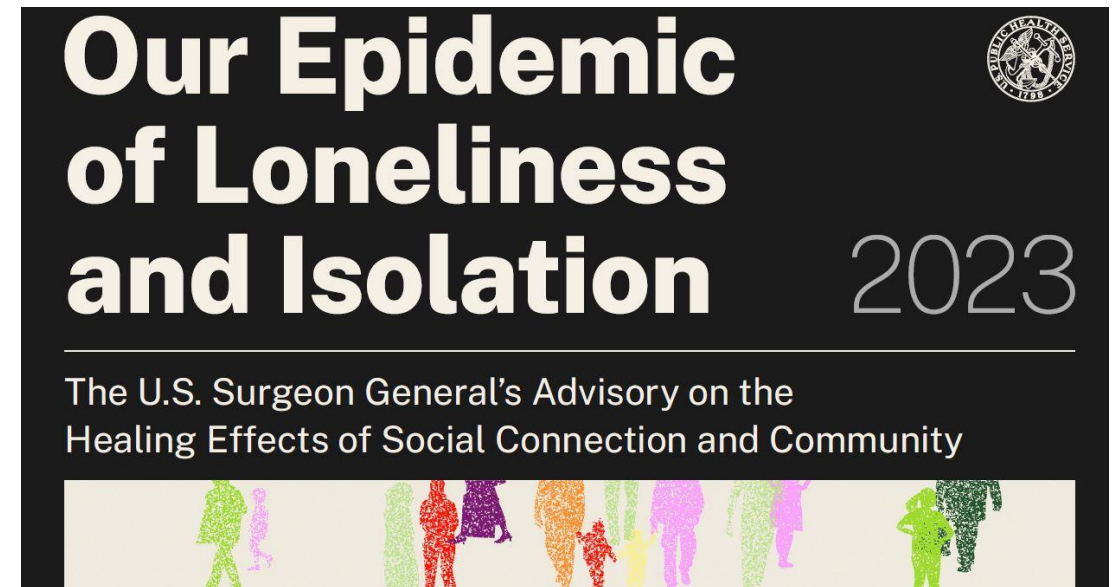


Adverse Childhood Experiences of Low-Income Urban Youth

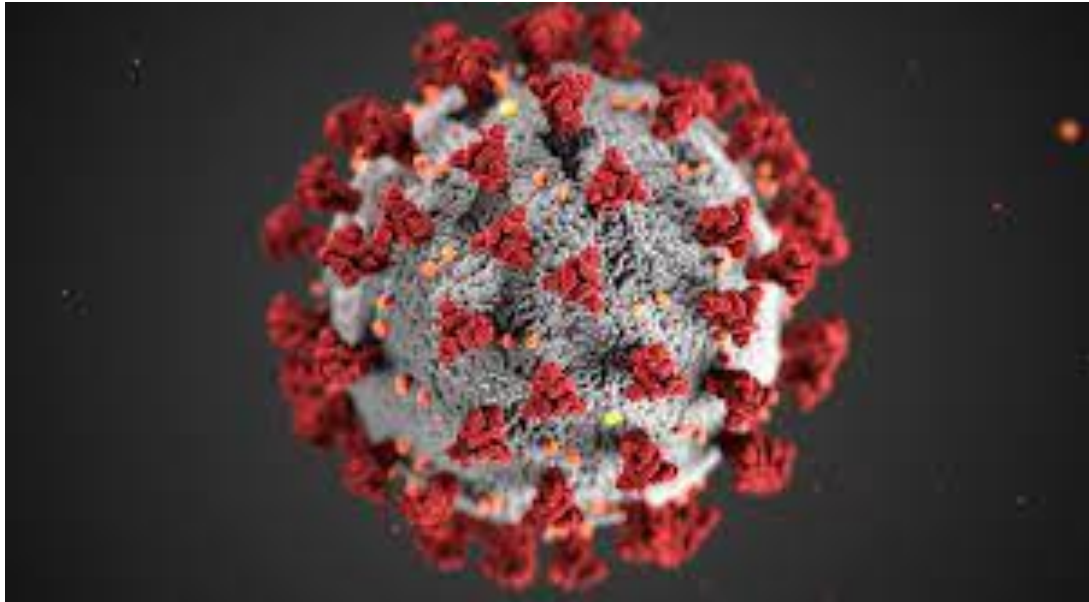
- Community stressors & violence
- Economic hardship
- Peer relationships & bullying
- Discrimination (Race, Gender, Sexual Orientation etc.)
- School
- Health
- Child welfare/juvenile justice systems
- Single-parent homes

Belonging

- Belongingness is a protective factor and shown to contribute to a wide array of health benefits.
- Loneliness has increased over the past 20 years and was named as a new public health epidemic (U.S. Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek Murthy, May 3, 2023)
- Loneliness and isolation are predictive of developing conditions such as anxiety and can worsen anxiety over time.
- **Social isolation is also a strong and reliable predictor of suicidal ideation, attempts and behavior** (2010 Study, “The Interpersonal Theory of Suicide”)



COVID-19 Pandemic

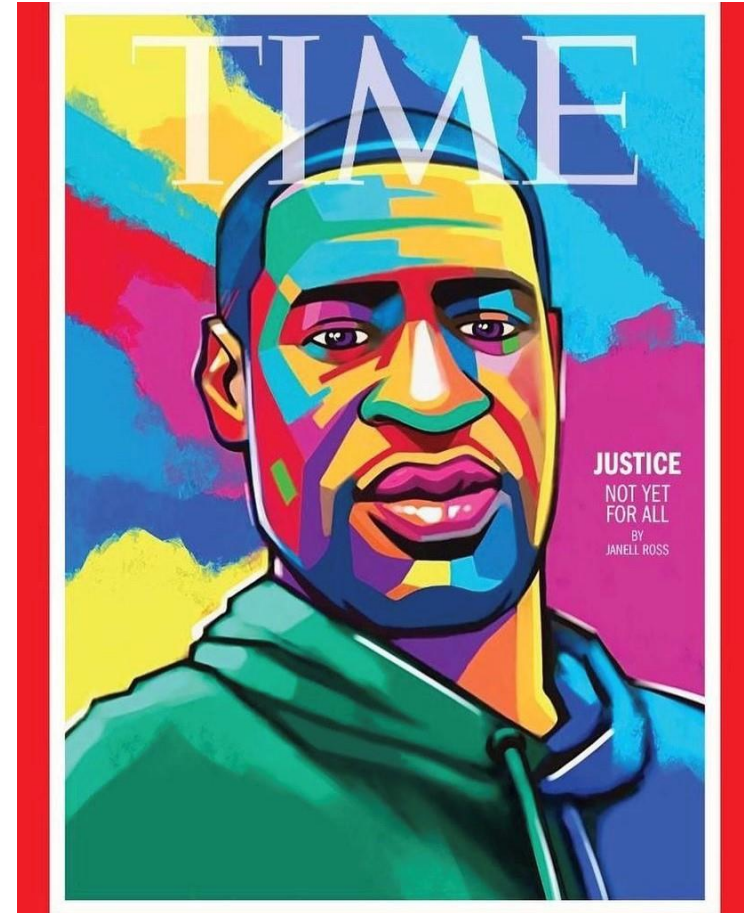


- Social distancing, quarantine, and restricted movement
- Reduced access to goods, services & systems-level supports
- Health related anxiety, job insecurity & financial hardship.
- Disparities: BIPOC & lower SES
- Stigma (anti-Asian sentiments, hate crimes)
- **During 2020 ER visits related to mental health increased 24% (ages 5-11), 31% (ages 12-17) compared to 2019. (CDC)**

The Pandemic of Systemic Racial Oppression

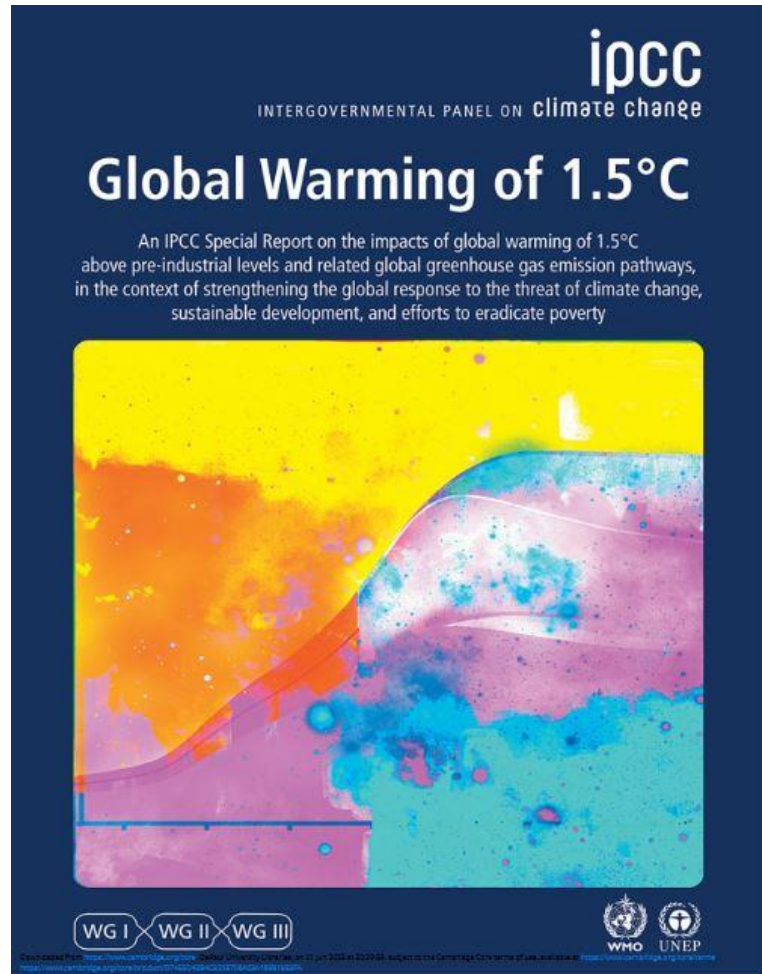
- Racial Trauma comes in various forms (direct cataclysmic, vicarious, pervasive experiences)
- Racial Trauma results in racial and ethnic disparities in anxiety, stress and other related health conditions
- The term “Racial Battle Fatigue” has been used to describe the physical, psychological and behavioral symptoms associated with racial trauma

William A. Smith, Walter R. Allen and Lynette L. Danley
American Behavioral Scientist 2007 51: 551



Painting of George Floyd by;
Ange Hillz for TIME Magazine,
May 2021

Climate-Anxiety



Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2022

- There is growing evidence that psychological distress about climate change exists and is increasing.
- Young people are particularly burdened by this form of anxiety





The Lancet Planetary Health
Volume 5, Issue 12, December 2021, Pages e863-e873



Articles

Climate anxiety in children and young people and their beliefs about government responses to climate change: a global survey

[Caroline Hickman MSc](#)^{a †}  , [Elizabeth Marks ClinPsyD](#)^{b †}, [Panu Pihkala PhD](#)^c, [Prof Susan Clayton PhD](#)^d, [R Eric Lewandowski PhD](#)^e, [Elouise E Mayall BSc](#)^f, [Britt Wray PhD](#)^{g h}, [Catriona Mellor MBChB](#)ⁱ, [Lise van Susteren MD](#)^{j k}

War, Humanitarian Crises and other Conflicts

The world is seeing record levels of humanitarian need because the guardrails that protect communities from humanitarian catastrophe are being weakened, leaving three key accelerators of humanitarian need — conflict, economic turmoil and climate change — unchecked:

The International Rescue Committee (IRC) 2023

SOMALIA
ETHIOPIA
AFGHANISTAN
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC
OF THE CONGO
YEMEN
SYRIA
SOUTH SUDAN
BURKINA FASO
HAITI
UKRAINE



New WHO prevalence estimates of mental disorders in conflict settings: a systematic review and meta-analysis



Fiona Charlson, Mark van Ommeren, Abraham Flaxman, Joseph Cornett, Harvey Whiteford, Shekhar Saxena

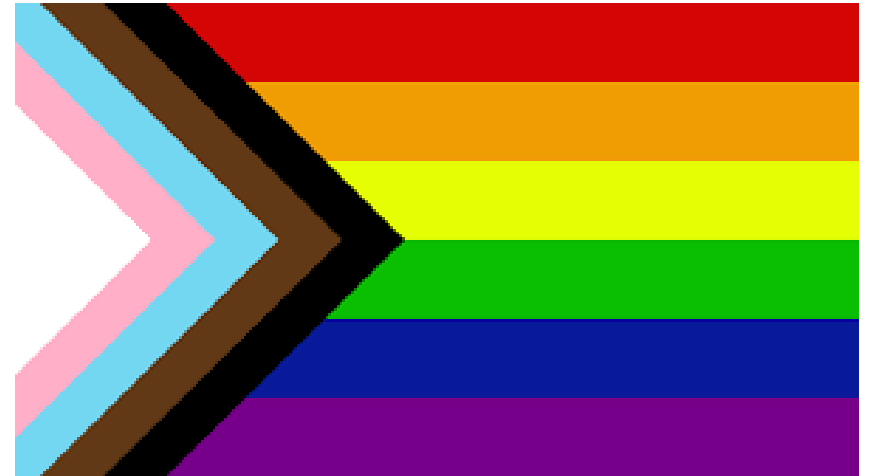
Gun Violence



- In **2021**, there were **48,830 gun deaths** among Americans of all ages – by far the highest yearly total on record and up 23% from the 39,707 recorded in 2019, before the pandemic.
- For the past 3 years, the U.S. has **averaged 600+ mass shootings per year** (Gun Violence Archive)
- Gun violence is now the **leading cause of death in children** and about a third of K-12 parents are extremely worried a shooting could happen at their children's school. (Pew Research Center, 2022 & 2023)
- Disparities: Gender, race and SES.

Sexuality & Gender

- A record-setting **400+ anti-LGBTQ+ bills** have been introduced in state legislatures in 2023 (American Civil Liberties Union);
- Social, political and legal discrimination has been documented to impact the mental health of the LBGTQIA+ community and others from marginalized identity groups;
- Minority stress theory: LBGTQIA+ and gender diverse populations experience mental health problems, including anxiety and depression, at an elevated rate as compared to their cisgender and heterosexual counterparts



Social Media



- Social Media & Technology use may displace other healthy activities such as in-person connection but may also offer benefits (Smith, Leonis, & Anandavalli, 2021)
- May contribute to a pressure to “curate” profiles and a social comparison phenomenon that increases stress and anxiety
- Constant access to information can create heightened fear/anxiety, (current focus on police brutality, political division, immigration, mass shootings, “othering”). ***This is particularly salient for those from historically oppressed/marginalized groups who have experienced racism, trauma, sexism, homophobia etc.)***
- 23% teens reported being cyber-bullied (Hamm et al., 2015)



Collective Care Activity

“3 Minute Breathing Space” (Modified)

Step One: Become **Aware**

Step Two: **Gather** and Focus Attention

Step Three: **Expand** Attention



(Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy ~ Z. Segal, M. Williams, and J. Teasdale) (Child Version ~ R. Semple & J. Lee)

Honoring the wisdom of stress and anxiety

To what is our individual and collective stress and anxiety calling our attention?

What actions can/must we take to address some of the contextual factors of our modern world?

How can we do this work together?

Thank you & enjoy the conference!

Orson Morrison, PsyD

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ERASING THE DISTANCE

DISARMING STIGMA ONE STORY AT A TIME

Gabriela Diaz

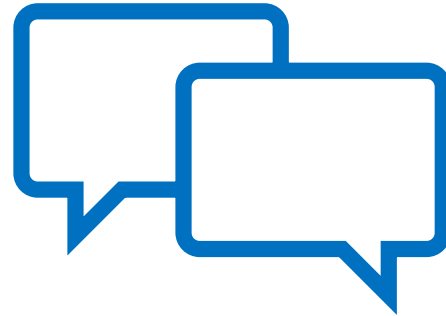


Moderated
Q&A

Untying the Human Knot:

Managing Stress and Anxiety in Today's World

Logistics





Naomi Ruth Cohen

Institute for Mental Health Education

at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology

Thank you for joining us!