Health and Self Care
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How are you all today?
Psychological Protective Mechanisms

• Denial

• FINE = Fearful, Insecure, Neurotic and Emotionally Imbalanced

• (Feelings inside not expressed)

• Displacement
The 2 D’s can lead into Doctor’s D’s

- Depression
- Drink
- Drugs
- Divorce
- Disillusionment
- Despair
- Occasionally Death
- Unless we take care to avoid these (which is not complicated)
- A lot of the medical illness I see is decompensated physiology, and habituation to distress and misery
Society

• If asked whether health professionals understand health....

• Might be forgiven for saying: “Why yes, of course they do...” (A bit of British irony)
Health is not by Accident
Medical school trains us in...

• Car crashes and ‘bottom of cliff’ emergency care

• NOT

• Vehicle maintenance
• Wise driving
• Good navigation
• Safe road design
• Staying on top of the cliff safely
What do we learn about in medical school?

- Illness
- Pathology
- Pharmacology
- Death, Pain
- Catastrophes
- i.e. the whole picture of Car Crashes
What are we not learning about?(formally)

- Health and healing
- Physical health, sleep, food, herbs and spices, water
- Safety, Psychological health
- Human contact, Inter-personal psychology
- Self-care and self-maintenance
- Emotional self-regulation
- Meaningful purpose
- Lifelong learning
- Rest, recovery and renewal

- Sensible driving, vehicle maintenance, good navigation, fuel economy, road design
Personal renewal and refreshment

• Might be a good idea...

• Health and vitality does NOT happen by accident

• The 15 second ritual....
Exercise of inner stillness – The Bank of Health

- Diaphragmatic breath
- Spine comfortable, feet flat on floor
- Three relaxed breaths
- From inner stillness comes effective action...
What is health?

• In pairs, please discuss what ‘health’ means, and provide a definition
Health

• WHO definition (1948)

• Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity

Sleep

• The most marvellous medicine! And refreshment. Vitally important.
• www.aagbi.org/fatigue
• Deep relaxation first
• Avoid screens for 90 mins before sleep (blue light makes brain think sunshine – and Wide Awake)
• Wind down the busy brain
• Mammalian bodies work on circadian rhythms – honour these
• Switch off all EM fields – phones etc on airplane
Mammalian Bodies

• Autonomic Nervous System
  Social engagement

• Parasympathetic
  Rest and Digest, Chill and Repair – or Freeze

• Sympathetic
  Fight and Flight

• Which is the organism’s habitual state? – what is it designed to be in for the majority of the time?
• What are the neurochemicals involved?
BODY
- headaches
- breathlessness
- muscular twitches
- raised blood pressure
- frequent infections
- skin irritations
- fatigue

EMOTIONS
- anxiety
- more fussy
- irritability
- loss of confidence
- alienation
- depression
- apathy

MIND
- nightmares
- hasty decisions
- impaired judgement
- muddled thinking
- negativity
- indecision
- worrying

BEHAVIOUR
- insomnia
- restlessness
- increased smoking
- increased alcohol
- chaotic lifestyle
- reduced eating
- loss of libido

HEALTH & SELF-CARE
Life is a Journey of Learning

**EXPERIENCE**
- Each experience = event + emotion or = facts + feelings
- We learn attitudes, skills and knowledge

**LEARN**
- Left brain - logic, analysis, speech, detail
- Right brain - big picture, overview, creativity, intuition, inspiration

**REFLECT**
- Reflection needs
  1. time
  2. intention
  3. support

**COPING STRATEGIES**
- 1. resolve
- 2. externalise
- 3. internalise

**BAGGAGE PILE**
- Fears
- Worry
- Hurt
- Upset
- If baggage pile too full, either explodes or drop down into despair

**WISEDOM PILE**
- Wisdom: human beings are successful learners millions of times
- 10^8 adds up to...

**FINES (DENIAL)**
- Fearful
- Insecure
- Neurotic
- Emotionally imbalanced

**DESPAIR**
- Yin/Yang styles
  1. projection (Yang)
  2. blot out (Yang)
  3. distraction (Yin)
  4. comfort behaviour (Yin)

**HABITS**
- Addictions

**SUPPORT IS FROM**
- ‘Life’ people
- Nature
- Pets
- Music
- Telling our story
- Exercise
- Washing up (left brain busy, cannot be critical)
Turning Points as you Adjust to Change

**Recognise Loss**
May be difficulty in recognising loss, or even taking on-board the risk of loss.

**Prevent Loss**
A drive to control the situation takes over

**Recover Loss**
If it could not be prevented, there is a drive to recover the loss or replace it.

**Let go of Loss**
The whole person has grown through the loss.

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**The urge to change the world around you**

- **Denial**
- **Anger**
- **Bargaining**
- **Acceptance**

**The urge to change the person you are inside**

- **Shock**
- **Guilt**
- **Depression**

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**Means**

- "I am doubting my resources. "I don't know how to cope with this."
- "I can carry on regardless!" "If I ignore this it will go away."
- "I want to prevent the loss of something important to me."
- "I need to question if something I did caused it."
- "I must try doing something to get back what has gone."
- "I seem empty and powerless."
- "Recognise I am powerless over that particular loss, but have discovered that in other areas of life I am still creative and valued."

**Useful Purpose**

- "Stop what you are doing! Find a safe place to review your resources."
- "Shelve it for now, so I can keep my energy going for what else is important."
- "The energy to take action out in the world and change it."
- "Learning what else I could do that might prevent it happening again."
- "The energy to take risks to deal with situations in new ways."
- "Seeing my limits might allow me to stop trying for the impossible."
- "I can rejoin the human race more maturely using energy to explore life."

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**Growth cycle - repeatedly revisiting Bargaining and Acceptance**

*Health and Self-Care, Thanks to Alex Aylward with Acknowledgment to Emotional Logic Centre*
Shock and fears – the emotional cost of caring

• What healthy mechanisms can we use to minimise this cost to ourselves?

• (hint – long term denial and displacement are not healthy mechanisms)
Doctor’s Support – Safety Planning

• Remember your own oxygen mask

• If you ever find yourself (or a colleague) in desperation – PLEASE seek professional help and keep on seeking until the crisis has passed and life becomes normal again

• We owe it to the profession to normalise illness and to care for ourselves and others
The Drama Triangle (Karpman)

has three roles

Rescuer  Persecutor

Victim
It is very easy to be enticed into, and then chased around, this triangle of dependency
but that can easily exhaust us! – stealing our energy
Resolving the Drama Triangle

• Be authentic – be true to yourself

• To Thine Own Self Be True (Shakespeare)

• “Try to treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself”- the number one rule at Her Majesty’s Prison Guy’s Marsh, Dorset, UK

• Try to keep to the Five Agreements
The Five Agreements

• Be Impeccable with Your Word
• Take Nothing Personally
• Make No Assumptions
• Always Do Your Best
• Learn to Listen – but remain Sceptical

• The Four Agreements and the Fifth Agreement, Don Miguel Ruiz
Health and Self care is simple really

- [www.healthandself.care](http://www.healthandself.care)
- Book, free download to tablets, laptops, desktops
- Thankyou for your attention!