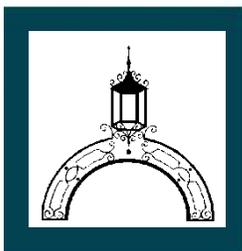


GORDON HOUSE SURGERY PATIENT FORUM



Living well
in Ealing



RESILIENCE & HELPFUL COPING STRATEGIES

DR K HARRISON
CONSULTANT PSYCHOLOGIST

Thursday 10th December 2020

HCAHealthcare uk

Who are we?

- Dr Kate Harrison Consultant Psychologist – Cancer Hospital in Manchester
- Helps people deal with the trauma of being diagnosed & treated for cancer and coping after treatment finishes, we have nearly 30 years of experience. Also help relatives - vicarious trauma
- The agenda today is:
 - How to recognise psychological concerns in yourself
 - How to recognise psychological concerns in others
 - How do we build it resilience by using 7 helpful coping strategies

74% of people have felt so stressed they have been overwhelmed or unable to cope (Mental Health Foundation, 2018)



Stress for individuals because of Covid-19 pressures

- People could be:
 - Anxieties and concerns
 - Frustrated with the current situation
 - Feeling more distress and pain
 - Feeling out of control
 - Isolated, lonely or bored
 - Losses in 2020
 - Struggling financially or worried about their job in the future
 - Struggling with a loss of coping mechanisms (e.g., socialising)

So how do you recognise psychological concerns **in yourself?**

Are you?

- Constantly angry, anxious, teary or irritated
- Low mood for a long time
- Becoming a pressure cooker, feeling agitated
- Drinking too much regularly
- Sleeping less or too much
- Not eating or eating too much
- Having suicidal thoughts

Big life events – retirement, divorce, illness, redundancy, loss

If things become overwhelming - Don't suffer alone, please reach out:

- **A trusted friend or family member or work colleague**
- **Mind, Anxiety UK, Samaritans**
- **Your GP, a health care professional, a psychologist, a counsellor**

How to recognise psychological concerns **in others**?

- Emotional outbursts
- Constantly fatigued / sleep problems
- Weight or appetite changes
- Quiet or withdrawn
- Feeling worthless
- Irritated by others to an extreme extent
- A person becoming overwhelmed by a small problem

Listen without judgement

Ask them what would help

Sign post

Avoid confrontation

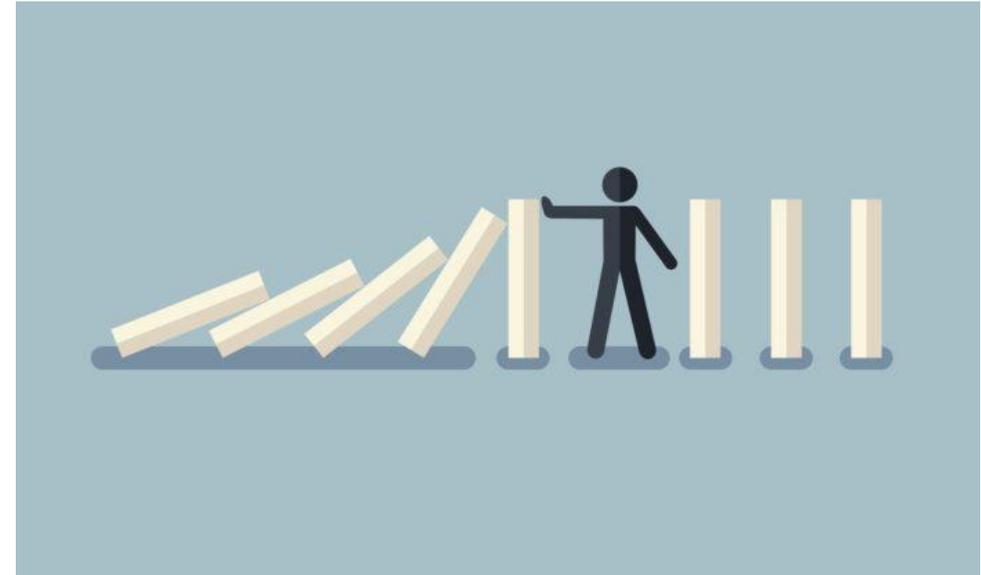
Ask if there is someone they would like you to contact

What is resilience?

‘Of all the virtues we can learn, no trait is more useful, more essential for survival, and more likely to improve the quality of life than the ability to transform adversity into an enjoyable challenge. (M.CSIKSZENTMIHALYI)’

- ‘Resilience is endurance with direction’
- Ability to deal with and recover from difficult times
- ‘Resilient people do not bounce back from hard experiences; they find healthy ways to integrate them into their lives’

- **‘You are the place you need to start if you want to become stronger in the face of adversity’**
- **No-one can build resilience for you it is up to you’**



(Greitens, ‘Resilience: Hard won wisdom for living a better life’, 2015)

Why may we find it hard to be resilient or cope?

- Blame others for our choices
- Feeling we don't personal control over our life or don't have control
- Don't have social support, poverty
- Early experiences, frontal cortex developing, our caregivers may not have shown flexible coping mechanisms in response to life events = child doesn't learn from their caregivers
- If we experienced criticism or neglect growing up
- Adverse childhood trauma
- Acute trauma – can knock the functioning of the prefrontal cortex offline



4 Types of Coping Strategies

- Continuous effort to resolve stress or a difficulty.
- It can be conscious or unconscious & helpful or unhelpful

1 **CHANGE THE WAY YOU THINK** – change your mindset
e.g., unhelpful - denial that you're in debt / helpful -
reframe your thinking to be more helpful about a work
issue

2 **HELPING TO PROCESS YOUR EMOTIONS** – Manage
the emotions that accompany the stress
e.g., helpful - talk about how you feel with a trusted
person / unhelpful – bottle things up

3 **TRY AND PROBLEM SOLVE** – Try to deal with the cause
e.g., helpful - finding out information about a physical
illness from a trusted source

4 **SEARCH FOR MEANING IN ADVERSITY** – Derive meaning
from this event
e.g., helpful - what can I learn from this in the future?



Resilience can be cultivated

Top 7 helpful coping strategies



'You can't stop the waves, but you can learn to surf.'
SWAMI SATCHIDANANDA

1. Mindfulness (emotion focused)

- Focus on the present – aware and engage in what's happening right now
 - Don't live ruminating about the past or catastrophising the future
 - Be non-judgmental about yourself and others
 - Be curious, notice how you feel, notice what you are thinking, you are not your thoughts
 - Your thoughts are not always facts, notice thoughts, don't get tangled up in them
 - What are your mindful activities? Listening to music, singing, creative hobbies, gardening, walking, running...
 - Research has shown it helps reduce anxiety and depression
-
- *Exercise – 'Rectangular breathing' – inbreath; through nose short side of a rectangle for 4-5, outbreath; with pursed lips through mouth for 6-7*
 - *Mindfulness meditation app 'Relax & Rest' one of cost by Meditation Oasis £1.79*
 - *Book 'Practical Mindfulness' by Ken A Verni £11*

2. Self care should be a mandatory (emotion focused)

Set time aside for yourself and what you need / enjoy

- Exercise / active / outdoors – where you can & how best for you
- Seeking and maintaining a social network :
 - **Radiators** (surround self with these they give you energy) & **Drains** (manage) – can be work colleagues, family or friends
- Not drinking alcohol to excess / drink free days – 14 units a week guideline – keep a track of it (Drinkaware app)
- Healthy eating with the occasional treat – helps immune system
- Sleep & rest: 7-9 hours – reduces stress, anger & sadness
- Routine / structure

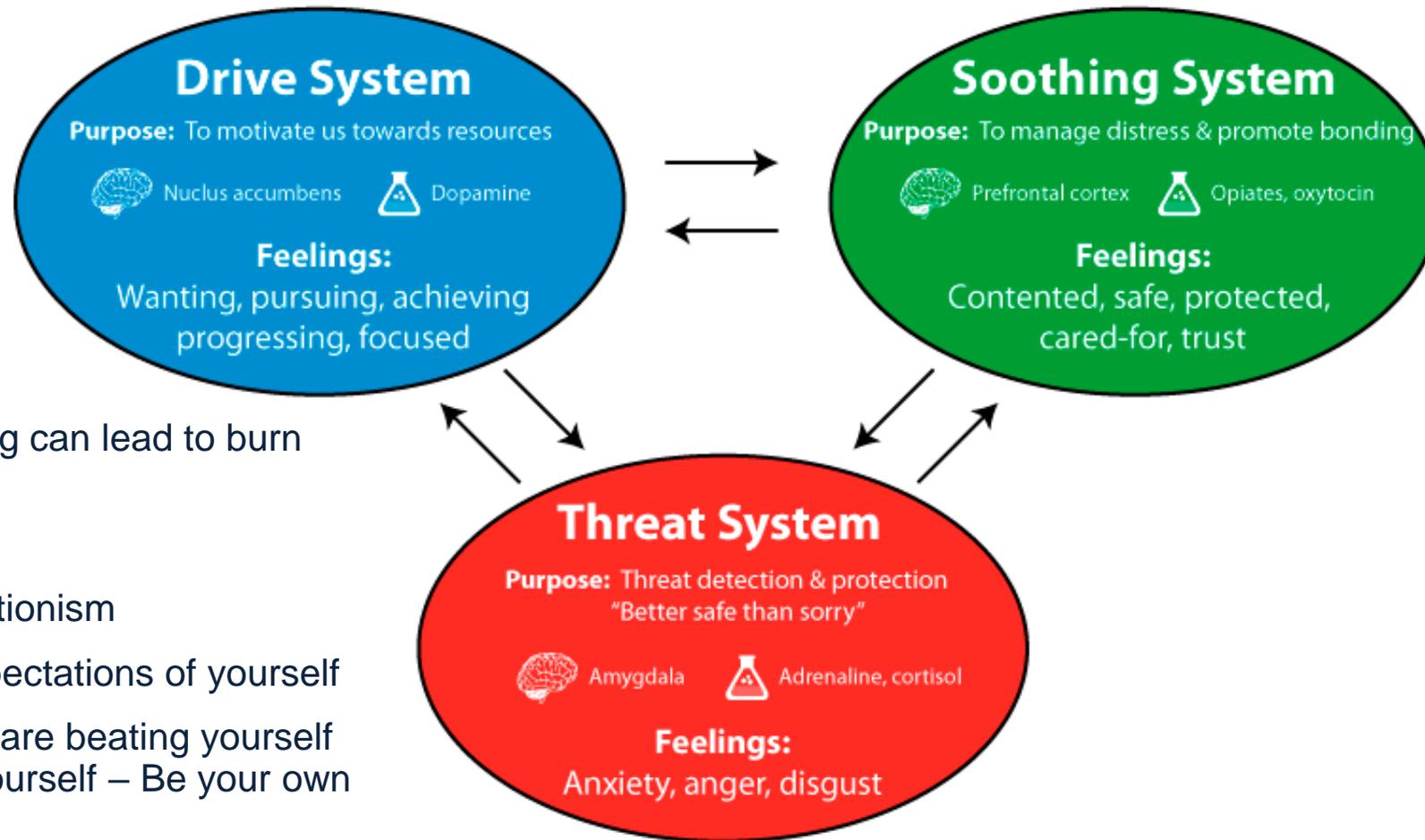


Creates 'Feel good'

chemical/neurotransmitters:

- ✓ Endorphins (exercise) – help you deal with stress
- ✓ Serotonin (exercise, healthy diet)– regulates mood, calmer

3. Self-compassion (emotion focused)



- Constantly striving can lead to burn out / exhaustion
- Self acceptance
- Challenge perfectionism
- Manage your expectations of yourself
- Notice when you are beating yourself up - Be kind to yourself – Be your own best friend

4. Gratitude (meaning focused)

- What are you grateful for? 3 things write them down every night – gratitude journal
- Become more pragmatic about life
- Sense of perspective – ‘don’t sweat the small stuff’
- Accept and cope with the fact that life isn’t always fair
- Deal with uncertainty and discomfort
- Acceptance and Commitment to what’s important to you



5. Safe place imagery

Using your imagination to help you feel safe

- We can learn to stimulate our soothing system by using imagery to create a **safe place in our mind**.
- Can be an ideal version of somewhere real or somewhere imaginary
- It is a place that brings a sense of contentment and connection

Sight- e.g. colours, textures, the play of light

Sound- e.g. birdsong, laughter, a fire burning, music

Smell- e.g. the saltiness of the sea

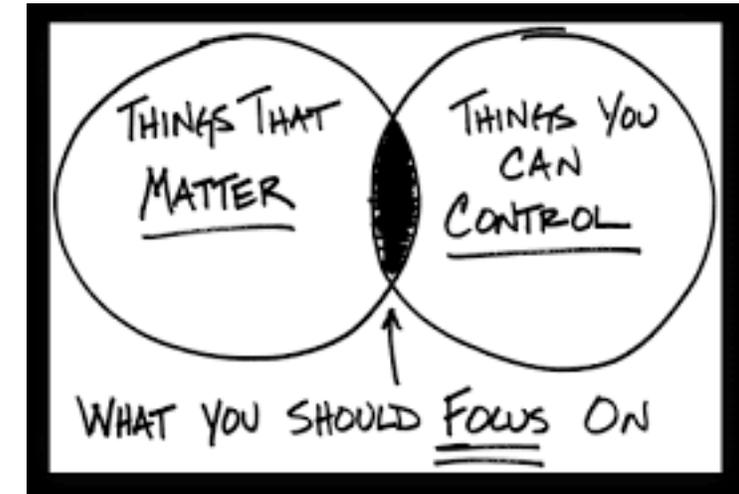
Touch- e.g. the heat of sunshine or the cosiness of bed

Taste- e.g. the warmth of a hot drink

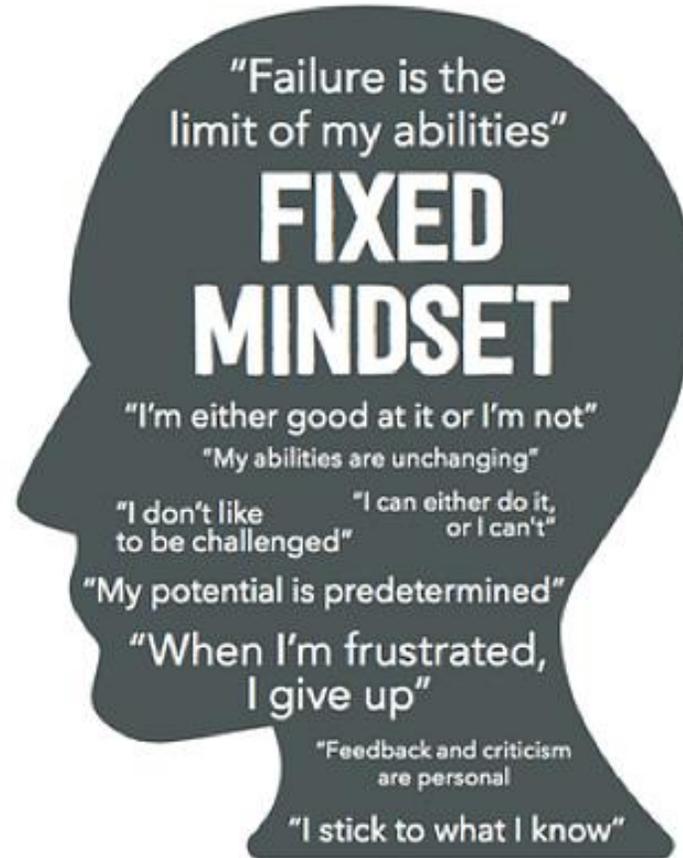
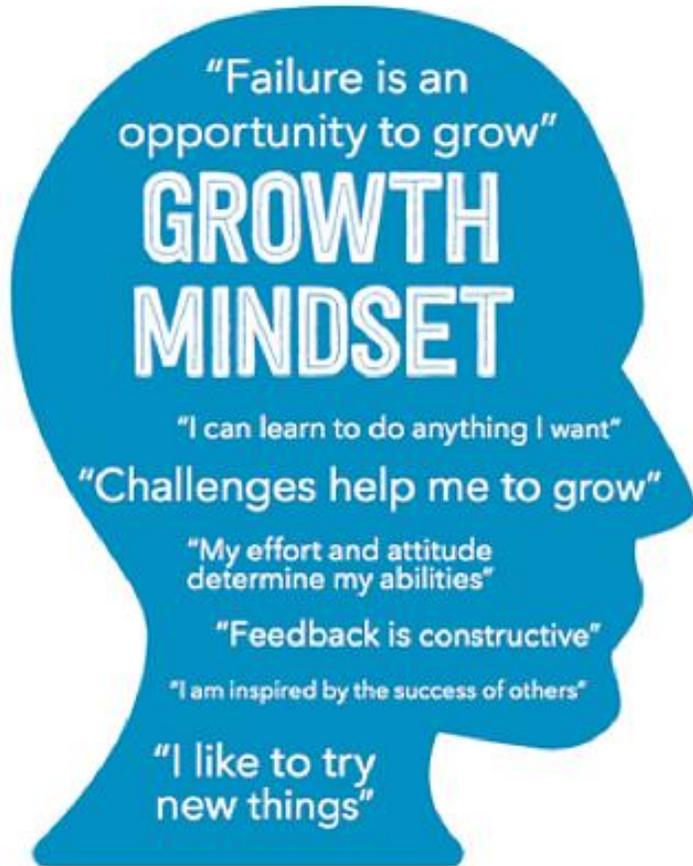


6. Focus on what you can control and what you can do (problem focused)

- **Get the facts** on an issue from trusted sources
- **Focus on what you can control and what you can do** – problem solve here and park what you can't control. Cease rumination and procrastination
- Try and reflect when your mood changes, track back what are you thinking, what is really getting to you, and what can you do about it
- **Don't take too much responsibility for other people's issues** – everyone is responsible for themselves and for making their own choices in their life
- **Say 'No'** - don't over commit or you could become exhausted and feel resentful.
- **Be assertive and establish boundaries** – clear straightforward communication, leave out the emotion & accept help



7. Have a growth mindset rather than a fixed one (change the way you think):



How you respond to the issue ...is the issue (F.Perez)

Thinking affects your mood

- Embrace challenges
- Persist in the face of set backs
- See effort as the path to mastery
- Learn from criticism
- Find lessons in the success of others

Commit to what's important to you: Put first things first (Steven Covey, 2004)

In conclusion

- The good news is that resilience can be cultivated
- You can also try some of the Top 7 coping strategies to help yourself build your resilience
- To create ways to help you maintain your psychological health to help avoid a crisis in the future
- **Be patient with yourself in building these new skills**

1. Mindfulness
2. Self care
3. Self compassion
4. Gratitude

5. Safe place
6. Focus on what you can control
7. Growth mindset

Thank you for listening

**Hopefully you can take at least one thing away
from today to help yourself**

Take care

Dr Kate Harrison Consultant Psychologist

www.hcahealthcare.co.uk

242 Marylebone Road London, NW1 6JL

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