



Managing Anxiety & Stress


587-287-1727

Ice breaker

- Name:
- What told you that you needed to come to this presentation? Or what drew you to it?
- What are your expectations of today?
- What do you hope to take home?

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Group Norms


- Hope to create a safe and supportive environment for you to share
- Privacy
- Class duration approx. 2 hours
- Feel free to stand up or move around if needed
- If you need to leave during the class, please let us know

Virtual Norms:

- By participating in remote learning today, you agree that you may not save, record, share, or post this session or any photos from this session.
- Participants agree to participate in these virtual sessions in a quiet, private area free of distraction.





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Zoom Basics (Virtual)


- You may have your video on or off.
- Please mute when your not speaking.
- Please feel free to ask questions either by unmuting or using the chat box.
- Any questions?



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What is the Highland Primary Care Network?

- A group of family doctors who work together with the Highland Health Team (Nurses, Social Workers, Dietitian, Kinesiologist, Pharmacist & Mental Health Therapist)
- **Covers area from Airdrie to Didsbury. Each doctor's office or medical home has a Nurse and Social Worker attached.**



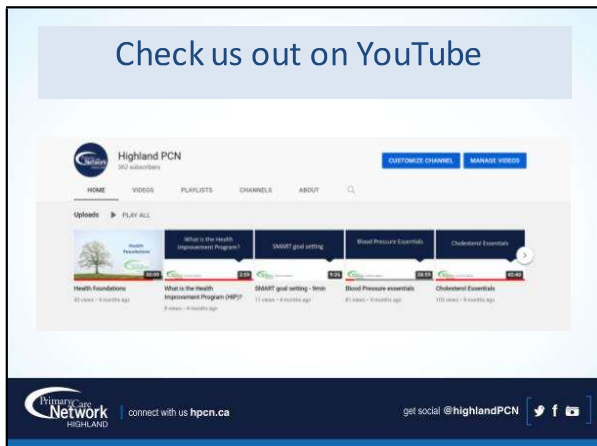
Doctors @work Network

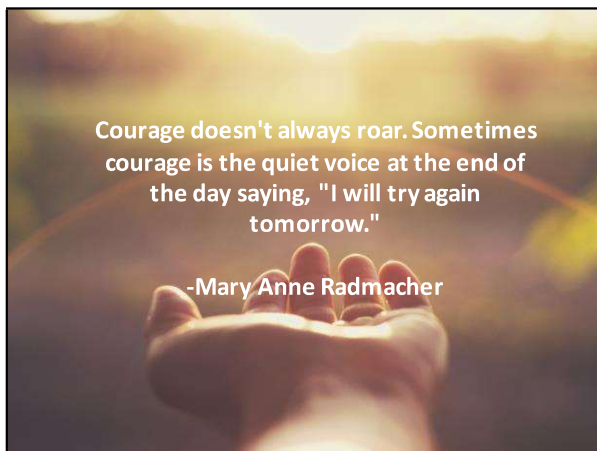
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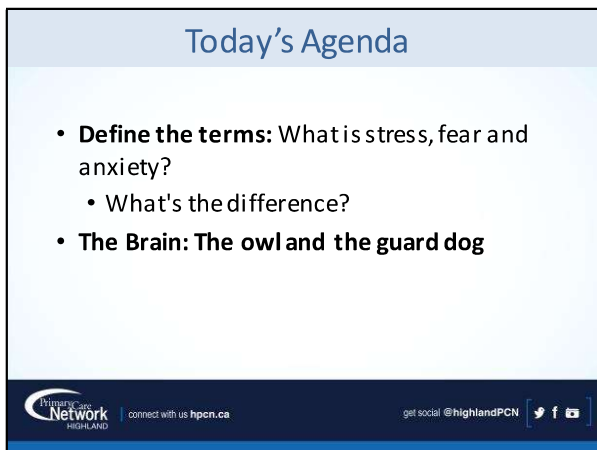
What is the Health Improvement Program?

- Guides individuals who are ready to take their health in their own hands and improve their quality of life.
- A variety of group classes you can choose what you would like to take when
- Flexible schedules
- Option of 1:1 visits in the medical home

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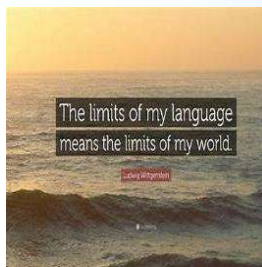


Today's Agenda (Continued)

What can we do:

- Get to know ourselves – pay attention to our thinking
- Mindfulness
- Thinking (cognitive) strategies: challenge worried or unhelpful thinking
- Distractions
- Approaching over avoiding
- Problem solving over worrying
- Building Resilience
 - Relaxation Response, Breathing, Grounding, Physical Activity

Words are important...



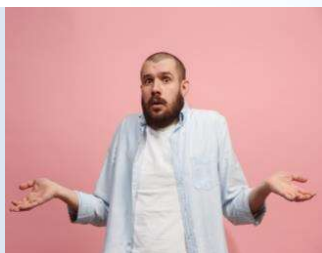
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Definitions

- Stressors
- Stress
- Overwhelm
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Worry
- What's the difference?



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Lots of times we mix up the words fear, stress and anxiety...

- Fear is short lived and happening now (a threat in the present.)
- Anxiety is responding to a threat in the future.
- Stress happens in response to a stressor.
- Anxiety can be a similar emotional response to stress, but typically in anxiety there is an absence of a stressor.

Words can be limiting.



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Purpose of Fear and Stress

- The fear/stress response has a purpose
- The fear response is there to keep us safe, gives warning bells
- The stress response is there to help us rise to challenges



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The stress response becomes problematic..

When stress becomes too intense or lasts for too long (overwhelm) it becomes out of balance and can have harmful effects in the body.




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Anxiety is problematic when...

- At times the guard dog of the brain (amygdala) is on overdrive and we can feel fearful or anxious for no reason (without a trigger)
- We cannot tell the difference between a real and perceived threat

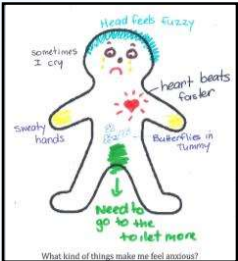


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When do you experience stress?



When do you experience anxiety?



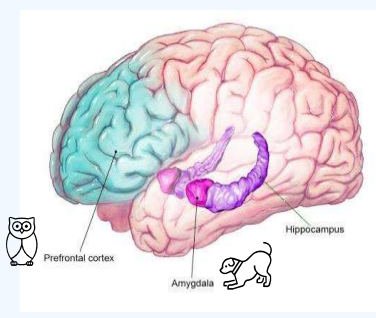
Where do you feel stress/anxiety in your body?

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Our Brain and Nervous System

- It can be helpful to know a little about what our body and brain are doing when we are feeling anxious or "stressed."
- Learning patterns can help us change our response
- There are 2 sides to our nervous system
 - Sympathetic: "Fight or Flight"
 - Parasympathetic: "Rest and Digest"

The Owl and Guard Dog



Symptoms

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| • Faster heartrate | • Trouble eating |
| • Feeling faint | • Trouble sleeping |
| • Muscle tension | • Digestive troubles |
| • Finding it hard to concentrate | • Overwhelming feelings of fear or panic |

The brain is powerful and loves to solve problems...

- Sometimes it creates problems to solve
- If it wanders to the past this can lead to sadness or depression
- If it wanders forward it can lead us to anxiety or fear



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What others see...

- Mostly nothing ...it's invisible to others
- People may see you are short tempered or that you are "not yourself" but they often will not know why
- Can also become our normal (we can become unaware of how our anxious thinking is affecting us)



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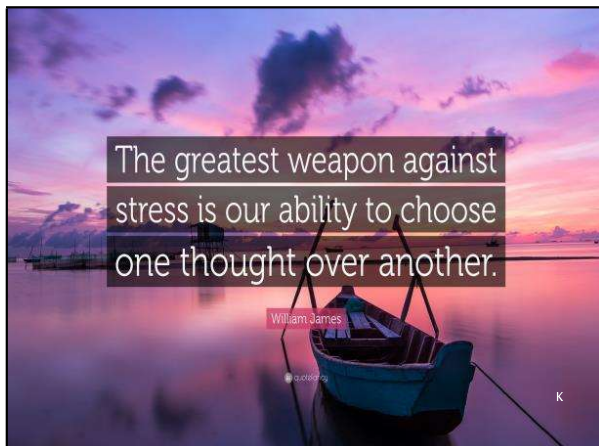
You are not alone...

- Everyone experiences stress and at some point everyone will experience stress that is out of balance.
- Anxiety is common - 1 in 4 Canadians and 1 in 3 Americans will experience irregular (out of balance) anxiety in their lifetimes
- Less than half of us get help

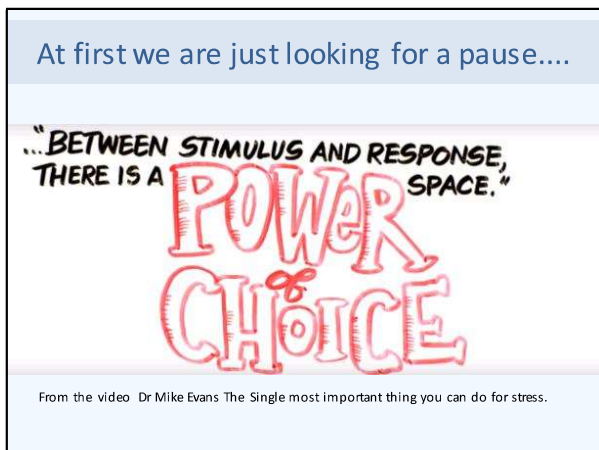


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Distraction

- Challenge your mind to shift your thinking
- Shift your location to get away from the trigger if possible
- Shift gears to an activity (eg. something fun and enjoyable)



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Mindfulness:
paying attention on purpose



Mind Full, or Mindful?

Awareness of our Thinking


- Helps us understand how our thoughts, feelings (emotions) and how behaviors/actions are connected
- If we can better manage our thoughts and feelings we can improve our quality of life



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 Awareness of our Thinking

- Can be challenging
- Is a practice
- May require more than one tool or technique.
- There is no right or wrong way.

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Another way to look at it : The Pain and The Dirty Pain



Is the problem the problem or is my thinking about the problem the problem?

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Quick Stretch



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We all have different tolerances for uncertainty

Some traits tend to cluster together. Folks who worry a lot and/or are anxious have the tendency to be:

- Perfectionist tendencies
- Like to be in control or at least have a sense of control
- Have a low tolerance for uncertainty
- Which may in turn cause some unhelpful strategies worry thinking, and avoiding



Cognitive (thinking) strategies

In the next slides we will discuss some common unhelpful behaviors and helpful strategies.

- Thinking errors and how to cope
- Problem Solving vs Worrying
- Approaching vs Avoiding




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Attention Shift Toward How We Are Feeling

- Instead of always trying to push it away:
 - Learn to pay attention to when and how problematic thinking shows up
 - Natural instinct is to want to avoid it and move away from it/trigger as quickly as possible
 - Instead try and understand it & “externalize it”


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First step is awareness notice common thinking errors....

- Over estimate the likelihood the bad thing will happen
- Catastrophizing
- Underestimating our ability to cope
- All or Nothing
- Fortune telling
- Worry thinking



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Strategies for Worried Thinking (Containment)

- What has worked for you?

Containment

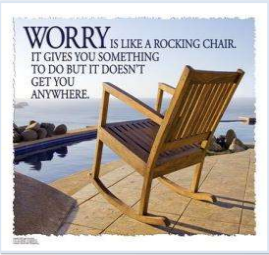
- The Worry Box
- Worry Journal
- Scheduling a Time to Worry
- Challenge Your Worried Thinking (next slide)



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Challenge thinking errors

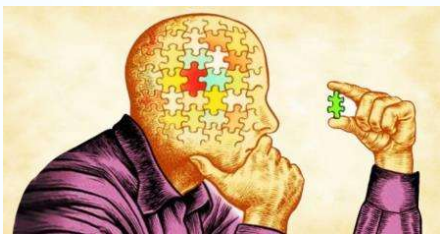
- What is the worst that could happen?
- Is it likely to happen?
- It's possible but is it probable?
- Am I problem solving or is it just worry?



WORRY IS LIKE A ROCKING CHAIR. IT GIVES YOU SOMETHING TO DO BUT IT DOESN'T GET YOU ANYWHERE.

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Effective problem solving can reduce the amount of problematic thinking

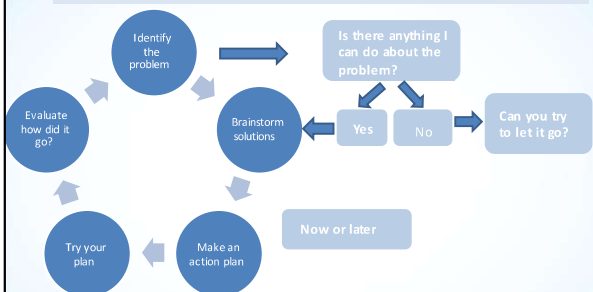


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Problem solving



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Avoidance



- Avoidance is another unhelpful strategy. Sometimes we don't even realize we are avoiding a behavior that scares us.
- Everytime we avoid a behavior we let the anxiety or the fear get bigger and bigger.

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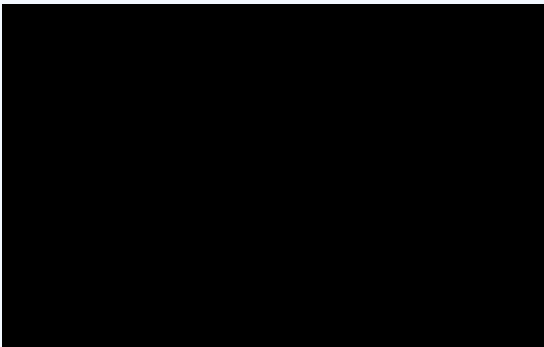
Approaching vs Avoidance

Any time you face your fear it's a win for you. You can jump in all at once or ease yourself in a little at a time.



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Externalizing Worry & Approaching




Optional video

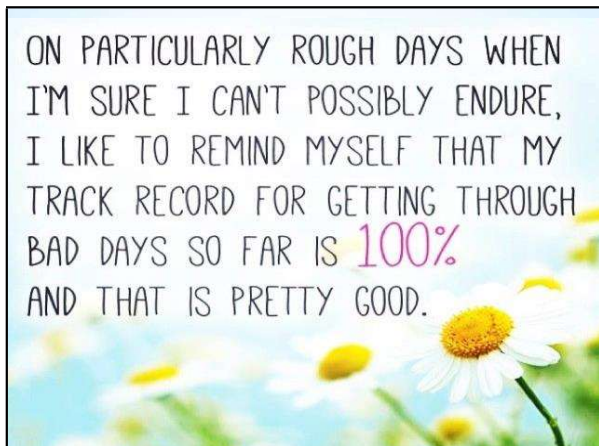
What is resilience?

Our ability to cope with all the ups and downs of life.

- Bouncing back after difficult times
- Dealing with challenges
- Trying your best
- Being strong on the inside



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 **Build Your Resilience**

There are many ways to build your resilience:

- Self care: what do you need to do to take care of yourself?
- Breathing, Relaxation Response, Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Focus on your strengths
- Gratitude
- Social support


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 **Self Care**




This Self-Care Wheel was prepared and adapted from "Self-Care Assessment Worksheet" from "Strengthening Self-Care: A Handbook on Personal Empowerment for Teachers, Teachers in Charge of 19th-21st Century Schools" created by The Ontario Teachers' Federation for Independent Schools. Downloaded at www.ottf.ca on 04/15/2024. All rights reserved.


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 **Relaxation Response**



- Causes the body systems to slow down and work in our favor.
 - brain
 - immune
 - hormonal
 - digestion
- Not automatic


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 **Deep Breathing**



- Belly Breathing (let's try it together)
- Heart Centered Breathing
- 4-7-8 Breathing


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 **Grounding**


- Goal is to bring one's full awareness to the present
- Deep/Belly Breathing (4-7-8)
- Mindfulness
- Come to NOW:
- 5-4-3-2-1


54321 Grounding Exercise















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 **Physical Activity**

- One of the best things we can do for stress
- Regular activity prepares and teaches our body how deal with stress (it's practice)
- Choose activities you find fun:
 - Mind-body Activities (e.g. Yoga and Tai Chi)
 - Dancing and Zumba
 - Walking and Hiking
 - Gardening or Yard work
 - Try something new

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 **When things get busy or overwhelming... keep it simple**

- Maintain good sleep habits – to give yourself the best chance of getting a good nights sleep
- Eat foods that help you feel your best
- Keep your feet moving
- Get outside

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What might balance look like?

- Being able to notice your thinking
- Noticing our worries but not letting them hold us back from trying
- Nurturing ourselves



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Resources

- Anxiety Canada
- Your medical home (Doctors Office)
- Airdrie Addiction and Mental Health
- Community Links
- Urgent Care



*It is only a thought
and a thought
can be changed.*

-Louise Hay



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Resources Important Numbers

If you need to talk, 24-hour help line:


- Mental Health Help Line at 1.877.303.2642
- Addiction Help Line at 1.866.332.2322
- Kids Help Phone at 1.800.668.6868

In the Calgary Health Zone you can also call:

- The Distress Center at 403.266.4357



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Airdrie Urgent Care

- Urgent mental health care is available at Airdrie Urgent Care Monday to Friday from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
- Individual counselling is available during this COVID-19 pandemic via zoom, telephone or in-person to help people address and manage their emotional, psychological, mental health and/or addiction concerns. We are seeing individuals across the life span from children to seniors and can provide a referral to appropriate services and/or initial consultation with clinicians to discuss options.
- For information and resources specific to addiction and mental health, please contact Access Mental Health at 403.943.1500.



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Anxiety to Calm 4 weeks


- Please check our website for the next class.


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