Overview

Interactive

• Please participate! (mic’s, questions box)
• best if you can participate from a quiet place where you also have the ability to move

Trauma and the Brain

Wellness and the Brain

Exercises for building individual resilience
Understanding Our Brain

• Adapts to our Environment

• Is interactive – Serve and Return

• Uses a lot of energy to build a new pathway

• Conserves energy by wiring automatic responses
Our Brain and Trauma

We are wired for Fear and Survival

- Fight, Flight, Freeze, Faint
- Cortisol and Adrenaline increase strength, stamina, speed, reaction time and focus; decrease thinking capacity
- When exposed to repeated trauma our brain becomes hyper-vigilant and quick to respond to perceived danger.
Neocortex: higher mental functions, general movement, perception, and behavioral responses.

Corpus Striatum (formerly basal ganglia): connection between cerebral cortex and cerebellum; helps regulate automatic movement.

Amygdala: emotional responses; aggressive behavior.

Hippocampus: Memory of new information and recent events.
Stress: Neurological, hormonal and immune connections

- Fight,
- Flight,
- Freeze

- Rest,
- Digest
Relaxation

Techniques to Stimulate the Parasympathetic Nervous System

• Progressive relaxation
• Visualization
• Deep breathing techniques
• Meditation
• Music
• Yoga
• Tai chi/qui gong
• Creative Exercises
• Biofeedback
• Hypnosis
• Massage

Just as trauma manifests itself in the body, so too does relaxation
Six Dimensions of Wellness

1. Physical
2. Emotional
3. Intellectual
4. Interpersonal
5. Spiritual
6. Environmental

Examples of Positive Stress Management Strategies

- Exercise
- Nutrition
- Sleep
- Social Support/Communication
- Spiritual Connections
- Journaling
- Time Management
- Relaxation Training
- Counseling/Support Groups
- Creative Outlets
- Body Work
- Meditation
Our Brain and Movement

What Happens in the Brain when we do Physical Activities?
Physical movement - results in:

- “Parasympathetic rebound,” boosts the immune system;
- Acts as a moderator to stress resulting in improved brain function and learning;
- Balances insulin;
- Elevates mood by producing more dopamine receptors in the reward center of the brain;
- Decreases distraction; and
- Increase’s the body’s resilience to stress and decreases the likelihood of relapse during stressful life events.

Resource: BeFit on YouTube https://www.youtube.com/user/BeFit
“Freedom is the Ability to Pause between stimulus and response, and in the pause, to choose” – Rollo May

Self awareness is the first step in creating the PAUSE
Knowing and owning triggers

Self management creates space for the pause, resulting in having CHOICES on how to react
Emotional Intelligence

Self Awareness
Knowing when you're emotionally triggered and how you react to stress, work demands and forced change.
Seeing the effects of your reaction on others at work and home.
Acknowledging your strengths and limitations.

Self Management
Employing tools to counteract aggravation, uncertainty, and emotional triggers.
Harnessing your intuition and creativity.
Maintaining your resiliency in the face of pressure.

Awareness of Others
Tuning into where others are.
Showing empathy by sensing others feelings and perspectives.
Reading organizational currents accurately.

Relationship Skills
De-escalating conflict and resolving differences effectively.
Inspiring and influencing others.
Working collaboratively in teams.
Practicing Self Awareness and Self Management

- Notice and Ease Tool (www.heartmath.com)
  - Notice and admit what you are feeling
  - Try to name the feeling
  - Tell yourself to ease as you gently focus on your heart and breathe
  - Practice Notice and Ease Tool for one minute several times a day

- Self-management Life Hack: Power poses (Amy Cuddy – check out her YouTube videos by searching her name at www.youtube.com)
  – open and expansive
  – Increases testosterone, reduces cortisol = Calm and Confident
  – Fake it ‘til you make it
Yoga Practice: Movement and Mindfulness

- Sun Breaths
- Seated Neck Rolls
- Shoulder Circles
- Chair
- Cat/Cow

Additional Resources:
www.DoYogaWithMe.Com
https://www.facebook.com/OvercomingTraumaThroughYoga

Qigong on YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=lee+holden
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=qigong+for+beginners
Hardwiring Happiness

Our Brian is sticky for the negative and Teflon for the positive – but practicing noticing the positive helps make it stickier for the positive.

H – Have a Positive Experience
E – Expand it
A – Absorb it
L – Link it to a habit you are trying to change
  (note: new brain pathways often form along existing ones)

From *Hardwiring Happiness* by Rick Hanson
Brainstorming Physical Activity

American College of Sports Medicine – Types of Activity

- Cardiorespiratory
- Strength Training
- Neuromotor exercise involving balance, agility, and coordination
- Flexibility

What kinds of movement can easily be added to your daily routine? Link to Article:

Link to Article:
Open Loop System of the Brain
The Power of Connection: Support

- Our biology attunes to the people we are with
- Amygdala acts as a relay station in the emotional “open loop” between people
- “Limbic Resonance” is when our limbic states converge
- Studies show emotions are contagious, even when there is no verbal communications
- Studies show support has a positive impact on mental and physical health as well as behavioral change
- Recent data from Washington State: having at least two people who will come help you when in need reduces the likelihood of health and social problems linked with Adverse Childhood Experiences
Just Like Me

To build empathy and connection:
Throughout your day, with everyone you meet, think to yourself: “Just like me, they want to be happy; Just like me they want to be free from suffering; May they be well”

Source: Search Inside Yourself by Chad-Meng Tan
Guided Meditation: Quieting the Mind

Settle into a quiet space, sitting in a comfortable position.

Additional Resources:
http://www.innerhealthstudio.com
http://www.fragrantheart.com/cms/free-audio-meditations (free classes and audio meditations)
http://www.insightmeditationcenter.org/books-articles/meditation-instruction
Building a Coherent Narrative: What Happened to You?

“[E]arly experience is not fate. By making sense of your past you can free yourself from what might otherwise be a cross-generational legacy of pain and insecure attachment, and instead create an inheritance of nurturance and love for your children.”

Parents get clear on their past → Coherent Narrative → Kids with secure attachment to parents → Kids Thrive

“It’s never too late to begin working on your coherent life narrative, and as you do, your children will reap the rewards.”

What will you Practice?
Thank you!

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