WHAT’S IN YOUR FIRST AID KIT?
Resources and Tools to Help You Survive and Thrive
Disclaimer

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What’s in Your First Aid Toolkit?

Our Mission

To ensure that all people impacted by cancer are empowered by knowledge, strengthened by action, and sustained by community.
Preparing for the Next Storm
Resourcing Your Kit

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Clinical Psychologist, Massachusetts General Hospital
Director of Caregiving Research, Cancer Outcomes Research & Education Program
PRESENTER DISCLOSURE

Faculty: Jamie Jacobs, PhD

I, Jamie Jacobs, have no financial relationships or affiliations to disclose.
An individual cognitively appraises a situation as threat to the self and survival, and this threat exceeds their perceived coping resources.
1. Stress
   Understanding the stress response

2. Resilience
   Understanding the relaxation response

3. Expanding your Toolkit
   External factors to boost resilience

4. Self-Care
   Setting an intention for self-care

5. Q&A
Imagery Exercise
Physiological Response

Saliva

Physiological Response

Adrenaline
Cortisol
The Stress Response

**Fight or Flight Response**

- saliva flow decreases
- eyes pupils dilate
- skin blood vessels constrict; chills & sweating
- heart beats faster & harder
- stomach output of digestive enzymes decreases
- muscles become more tense; trembling can occur
- lungs quick, deep breathing occurs
- bowel food movement slows down
- blood vessels blood pressure increases as major vessels dilate
Stress = stress
1. **Alarm**: Readying the body for brief stress response – sympathetic nervous system activation

2. **Resistance**: Body resists and adapts/adjusts to stressor, maintains stress response

3. **Exhaustion**: Can no longer maintain stress response; depleted energy resources

**Chronic Stress: General Adaptation Syndrome**

Hans Salye, 1936
Responding to Disasters

- Witnessing human suffering
- Risk of personal harm
- Life and death decisions
- Intense workloads
- Separation from family
Concerns for patients with cancer

- Increased risk for COVID-19
- Increased risk for higher COVID-19 severity
- Deferral of routine screening
- Delays or omissions of cancer care depending on priority status
- Changes to surgery options
Stress and Trauma

• Stress as a result of experiencing or witnessing life threatening or traumatic events
  • Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
  • Acute Stress Disorder
  • Secondary traumatic stress
• Stress from providing care to others:
  • Compassion fatigue
  • Burnout
## Consequences of Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Consequence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness (depressive symptoms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worry (anxiety symptoms)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acute illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic illness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social isolation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weight gain</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sleep issues</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
• Intrinsic resilience and recovery
• There is a full range of responses to adversity
• Optimism contributes to resilience
• External factors boost resilience

Regulating the Stress Response
Adding to your toolkit…

1. Grounding Techniques
2. Relaxation Training
3. Active Coping
4. Reframing Thoughts
5. Maximizing Social Support
6. Acceptance & Mindfulness
7. Activity Planning & Pacing
8. Setting an intention for self-care
Grounding and Self-soothing Techniques

To use when in a state of panic, frantic, stuck in anxiety:

Sit comfortably and breathe slowly and deeply

1. Name 5 non-distressing things you can see
   -pause and breathe

2. Name 5 non-distressing sounds you can hear
   -pause and breathe

3. Name 5 non-distressing things you can feel
   -pause and breathe

Adapted from Trauma Research Interventions/ University of Washington School of Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences
Relaxation Training

Activate Relaxation Response

Dampen Stress Response
Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- **Hands and arms**: Hold arms at a 45-degree angle and make fists.

- **Face and neck**: Raise eyebrows, squint eyes, wrinkle nose, bit down lightly, pull back corners of mouth, and pull head slightly down to chin.

- **Chest, shoulders, back**: Take a deep breath, hold it in, pull back the shoulders and puff out chest. Careful of back issues.

- **Thighs, calves, feet**: Lift your feet off of the floor, flex slightly, and turn toes inward.
## Other forms of relaxation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Calm app</th>
<th>Guided visual imagery (e.g., special place)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td>Diaphragmatic breathing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meditation hotlines</td>
<td>Autogenic training</td>
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<tr>
<td>Walking meditations</td>
<td>Mindfulness meditation (e.g., body scan)</td>
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Active Coping

What action can I take to resolve the situation?

Problem-Focused Coping

If I can’t resolve the situation, what can I do to manage the stress/discomfort?

Emotion-Focused Coping
Active Coping

• Step 1:

Identify controllable and uncontrollable aspects of a stressor
Example stressor: snowstorm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Uncontrollable</th>
<th>Controllable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The fact that a snowstorm is coming and how much snow there will be</td>
<td>Stock up on supplies (food, water, batteries, shovel)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What areas will get hit the hardest</td>
<td>Stay with a friend closer to work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether there will be power outages</td>
<td>Leave early from work to avoid dangerous conditions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whether there will be road closures and delays in transportation</td>
<td>Move your car off the street to avoid towing or snow plow damage</td>
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Stressor: Think of your own

<table>
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<th>Uncontrollable</th>
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Active Coping

• Step 1:
  Identify controllable and uncontrollable aspects of a stressor

• Step 2:
  Choose problem-focused or emotion-focused techniques
**Choose coping strategy...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Problem-Focused Coping</th>
<th>Emotion-Focused Coping</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>What action can I take to resolve the situation?</strong></td>
<td><strong>If I can’t resolve the situation, what can I do to manage the stress/discomfort?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Make a decision</td>
<td>• Engage in enjoyable activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Resolve a conflict</td>
<td>• Relaxation, deep breathing, or massage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seek information or advice</td>
<td>• Acceptance and self-soothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Set a goal</td>
<td>• Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Engage in problem-solving</td>
<td>• Listen to or play music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Request help</td>
<td>• Take a walk, bike ride, or other exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Talk to a friend or relative</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Write in a journal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Change how I think about it</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Reframing Thoughts

(Thoughts ≠ Facts)

Is this thought accurate? How much do I really believe this is true?

What would a close friend or family member tell me in this situation?

What would I say to someone else in this situation?

What is the evidence that makes this thought true, or not true? Is there more evidence that it is not true?

Can I identify a plan of action?

What is the worst-case outcome here?

Is there language that is less extreme to describe the situation or how I feel?

Can I do this differently or break it up into manageable steps?
## Maximizing Social Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Practical</th>
<th>Emotional/ Psychological</th>
<th>Informational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>Love</td>
<td>Sharing of personal experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accompanying to medical visits</td>
<td>Encouragement</td>
<td>Guidance and advice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Household chores</td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>Knowledge and education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Errands</td>
<td>Sharing</td>
<td>Decision-making</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal Preparation/ Cooking</td>
<td>Talking</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child-care</td>
<td>Warmth</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Financial assistance</td>
<td>Intimacy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Validation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hope</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- I have _____ support
- I need more ______ support.
Sources of Support

- Friends
- Relatives
- Neighbors
- Acquaintances
Optimizing Social Support

1. What type of support do I need?

2. Who can I rely on for this type of support?

3. What are the barriers to me receiving the support I need?
   - Am I willing to ask for help?
   - Am I willing to accept help?
   - Do I think asking for help makes me seem weak?
   - Do I think I should be able to do it on my own?
   - Am I worried that asking for help will place a burden on others?

4. How can I reframe my thoughts around support?
   1. Is receiving support really a sign of weakness?
   2. If someone asked me for support, would I label them as weak?
   3. What would I tell a friend to do?
### Acceptance & Mindfulness

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Acceptance</th>
<th>Mindfulness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acceptance without approval</td>
<td>Awareness of the present moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letting go</td>
<td>Observe (notice/attend)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softening around resistance</td>
<td>Describe/label (expressed recognition)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It is okay to not be okay</td>
<td>Participate (engage fully)</td>
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- Acceptance
  - Acceptance without approval
  - Letting go
  - Softening around resistance
  - It is okay to not be okay

- Mindfulness
  - Awareness of the present moment
  - Observe (notice/attend)
  - Describe/label (expressed recognition)
  - Participate (engage fully)
Activity Planning & Pacing

![Graph showing activity planning and pacing]

- **OVERACTIVITY**
- **UNDERACTIVITY**

- **Activity Level**
- **Time**
Re-evaluate your pie

- Stay organized/re-organize
- Write (poetry, journal, diary, doodle)
- Delegate responsibilities
- Listen to music
- Dance
- Physical exercise
- Massage therapy
- Get information
- Acupuncture
- Yoga
- Go out for a meal
- Talk to friends
- Bike ride
- Seek advice
- Take a walk
- Self-care and grooming (e.g., pedicure)
- Clean

- Meditation
- Bake or cook
- Take a drive
- Pray
- Color or paint
- Complement someone
- Restore antiques, furniture, etc.
- Play a board game
- Play a musical instrument
- Learn to do something new
- Make a charitable donation
- Volunteer your time
- Walk barefoot
- Do a favor for someone
- Go to a play, musical, or concert

- Sing
- Solve a puzzle, crossword, etc
- Visit old friends
- Take a bath
- Be intimate with someone
- Bird-watch
- Write a letter or card
- Eat a snack
- Cry
- Cook a meal
- Explore (hike, walk around town)
- Go to a museum
- Laugh
- Watch a favorite TV show or movie
- Read a book
- Sing
- Resolve the conflict
Planning activities based on how you feel…

“A” day = able to participate in and complete at least 75% of usual activities

“B” day = able to participate in and complete at approximately 50-75% of usual activities

“C” day = able to participate in and complete < 50% of usual activities
### Self-care Reminders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical activity and sleep</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Healthy eating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precautions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pleasurable activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limit information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Support</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Setting an intention for self-care

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>What is something I used to like to do?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Can I incorporate it back into my life?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Do I need to do it differently? Be creative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>What might get in the way?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>How will I overcome that obstacle?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Make a plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Example

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Travel to new places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What is something I used to like to do?</td>
<td>Travel to new places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Can I incorporate it back into my life?</td>
<td>No, we cannot feasibly travel right now</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. If not, can I do it differently? Be creative</td>
<td>Watch a travel show on a country/city and order that country’s cuisine for dinner while we watch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. What might get in the way?</td>
<td>Not enough time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. How will I overcome that obstacle?</td>
<td>Block out one night every other week or once a month</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Make a plan</td>
<td>This week, Wednesday night, mother will watch kids, we will choose a show on Greece and eat food from a Greek restaurant while we watch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**First Aid TOOLKIT**
Congratulations for taking the time to focus on your self!

Set an intention for self-care after this session…
Get immediate help if you are in crisis:

• Call 911

• National Suicide Prevention Lifeline 1-800-273-8255 (TALK) for English, 1-888-628-9454 for Spanish

• Samaritans Hope Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-877-870-4673 (HOPE)

• National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233

• Disaster Distress Helpline: Call or text 1-800-985-5990
Thank you!
Sponsorship and Acknowledgement
## Stay Tuned for More Sessions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date and Time</th>
<th>Session Title</th>
<th>Speaker</th>
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</table>
| 4/24/21 1 pm – 2 pm EST | Keeping Your Battery Charged: Fortitude for the Wore Out | Jamie Aten, Ph.D.  
Founder & Executive Director of the Humanitarian Disaster Institute |
| 5/1/21 1 pm – 2 pm EST | The Best Surge Protector: Self-Compassion              | Emily Gentry, RN, BSN, OCN, HON-ONN-CG  
Navigation Director, Sarah Cannon Cancer Institute at Medical City Healthcare |
| 5/15/21 1 pm – 2 pm EST | GPS for the Soul: Moving toward your values             | Krista Nelson, MSW, LCSW, OSW-C  
Oncology Social Worker, Program Manager of Quality & Research,  
Cancer Support Services & Compassion, Providence Cancer Institute |
| 6/5/21 1 pm – 2 pm EST | Beyond Band-Aids: Growing Mighty as a Team             | Elizabeth M. Muenks, Ph.D.  
Psychologist, KU Medical Center |
| 5/26/21 1 pm – 2 pm EST | Behind the Mask: Moral Distress and Compassionate Care  | Lara Traeger, Ph.D.  
Assistant Professor, Psychiatry, Harvard Medical School  
Staff Psychologist, Department of Psychiatry, Mass General Hospital |
| 7/10/21 1 pm – 2 pm EST | There Is Nothing Wrong with Your Kit: It’s a System, Not a Self-Care Problem | Eucharia Borden, MSW, LCSW, OSW C  
Senior Director, Health Equity and Clinical Services, Cancer Support Community |
CONTACT US!

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