

The 8 Dimensions of Well-being

Emotional Well-being

Introductions

Taming Our Fear of the Unknown: A Booster

Debbie Snyder, MSW, LCSW-C
Senior Advisor to the Clinical Director
National Institute of Mental Health

Character Strengths: Who Are You at Your Best

Jan Tortarella, MS, RD
NIH Wellness Program Coordinator
**Office of Research Services/Division of Amenities
and Transportation**

***Acceptance & Non-Judgment: Building Emotional
Resilience During Turbulent Times***

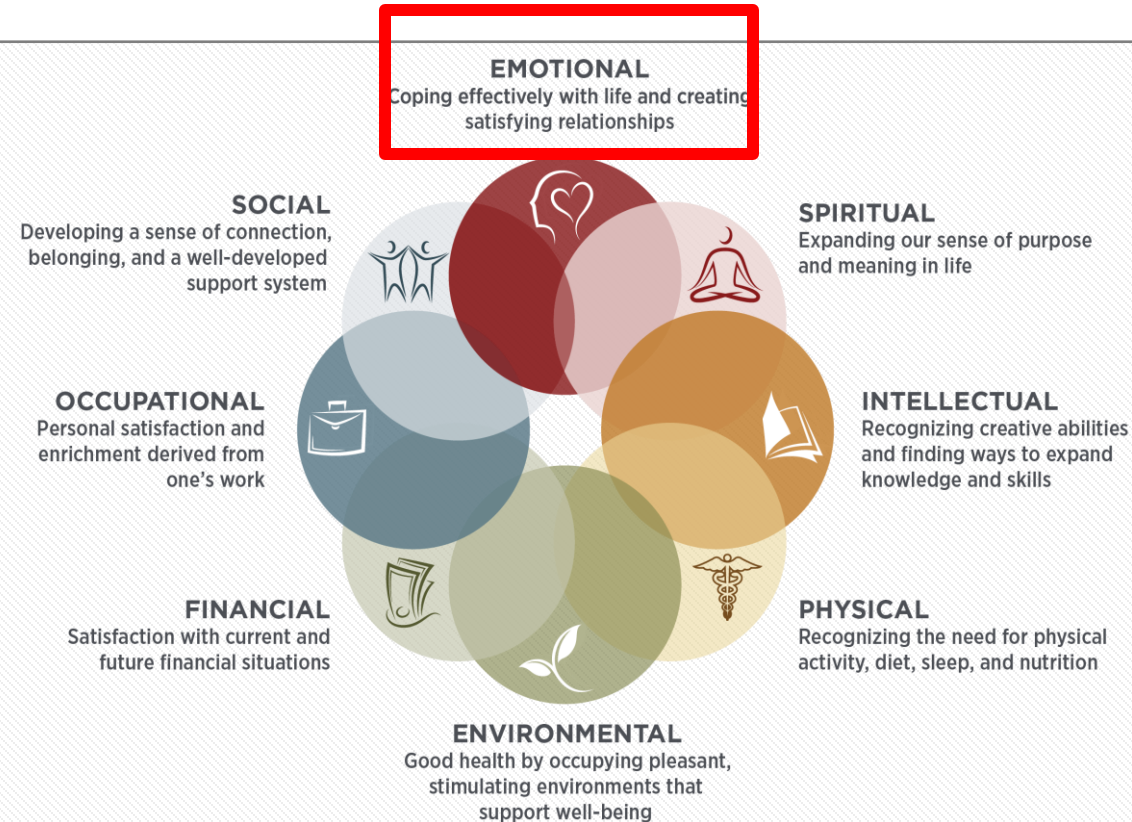
Alisa Turner Augustyn, PsyD
Licensed Clinical Psychologist
NIH EAP Consultant



Settling In and Checking In



Understanding the Eight Dimensions of Wellness



The Eight Dimensions of Wellness serve as a **framework that approaches wellness through a holistic, personal, and multidimensional lens**. Each dimension builds on the others to create a well-rounded mindset of resilience that you can leverage during difficult challenges.



Taming Our Fear of the Unknown: A Booster

Debbie Snyder, MSW, LCSW-C
Senior Advisor to the Clinical Director
National Institutes of Health
National Institute of Mental Health

May 13, 2025

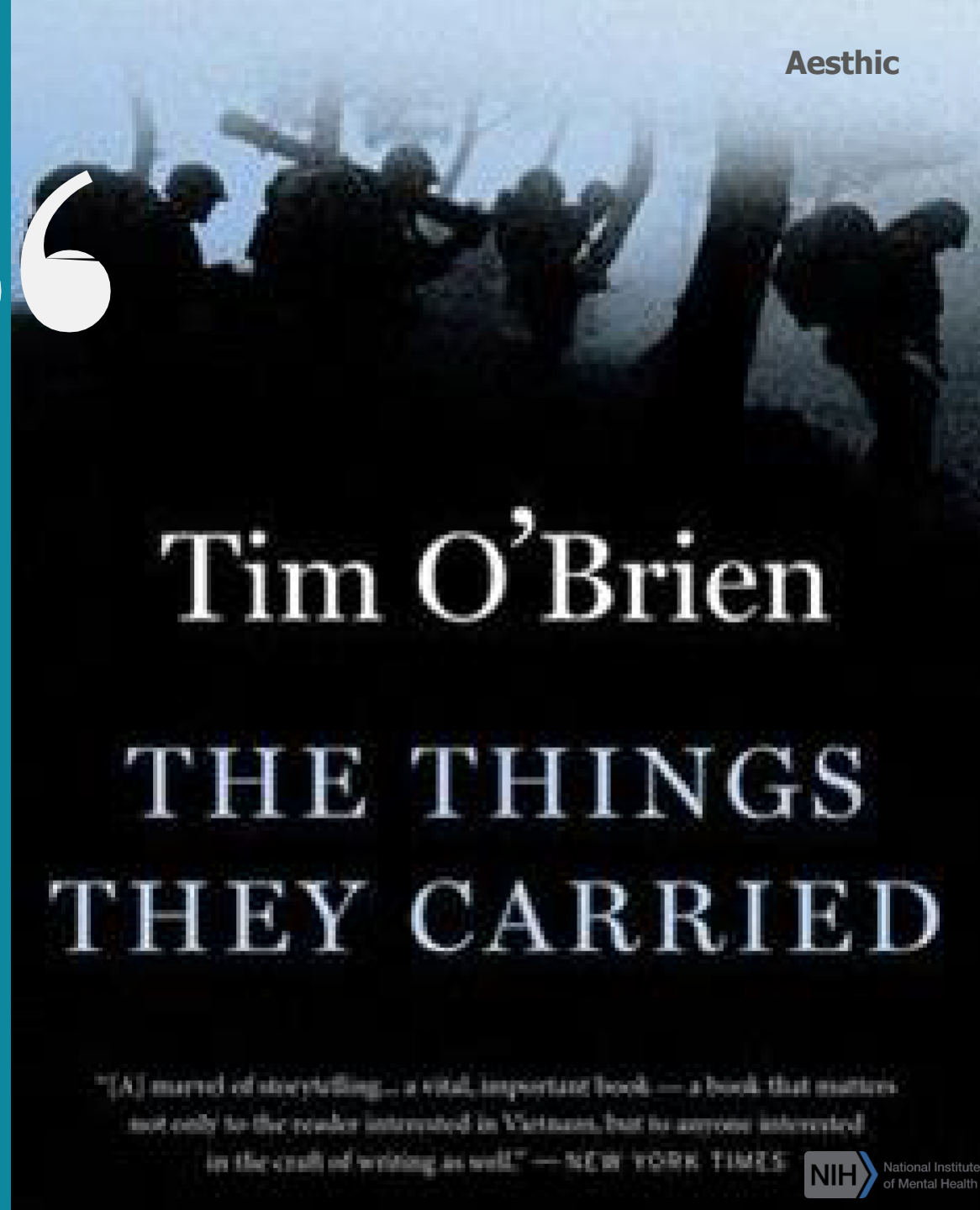


National Institute
of Mental Health

“They carried the sky. The whole atmosphere, they carried it, the humidity, the monsoons, the stink of fungus and decay, all of it, they carried gravity.”

“It’s a hard thing to explain to somebody who hasn’t felt it, but the presence of death and danger has a way of bringing you fully awake. It makes things vivid. When you’re afraid, really afraid, you see things you never saw before, you pay attention to the world. You make close friends. You become part of a tribe and you share the same blood- you give it together, you take it together.”

“They carried all they could bear, and then some, including a silent awe for the terrible power of the things they carried.”

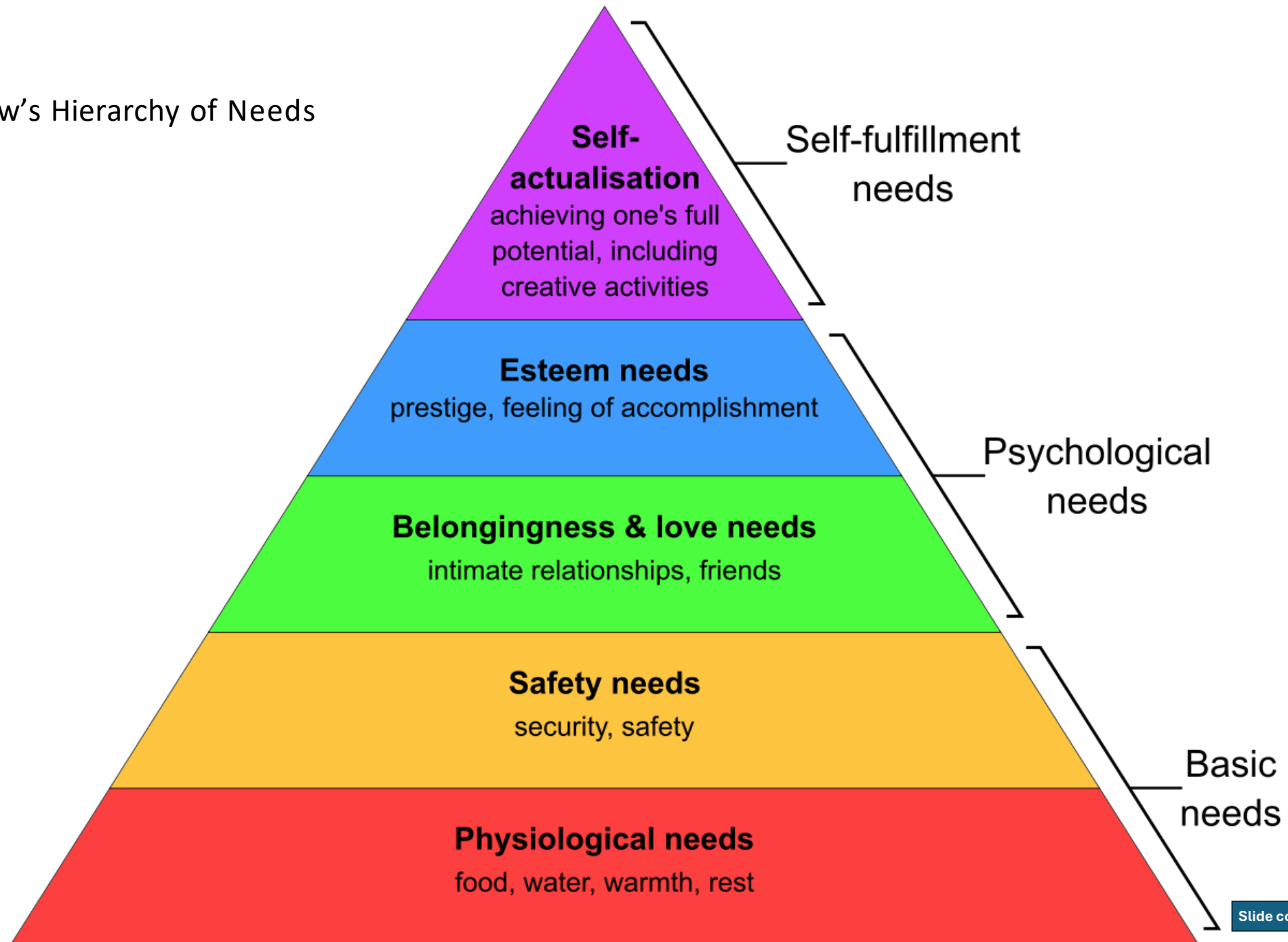


Tim O'Brien
THE THINGS
THEY CARRIED

"[A] marvel of storytelling... a vital, important book — a book that matters not only to the reader interested in Vietnam, but to anyone interested in the craft of writing as well." — NEW YORK TIMES



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

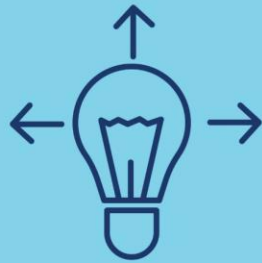




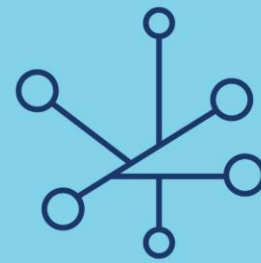
VUCA Model



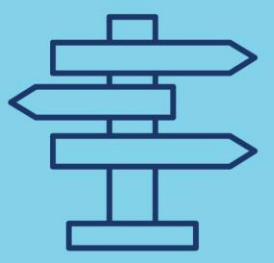
Volatile



Uncertainty



Complexity



Ambiguous

Stanford Model of Occupational Well-being



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Spectrum of mental health coverage





5 Things You Should Know About Stress

1.
Stress affects everyone.

2.
Not all stress is bad.

3.
Long-term stress can harm your health.

4.
There are ways to manage stress.

5.
If you feel overwhelmed by stress, ask for help from a health professional.



National Institute
of Mental Health

nimh.nih.gov/stressand anxiety



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of Mental Health

Functionality

- Showing up to work? On time?
- Not getting work done
- Appearance
 - Tired, disheveled, hygiene
- Persistent negative, irritable mood
- Change in personality
- Sleep, Weight changes
- Isolative (from peers, family)
- Previous history of mental health problems
- Drinking/smoking/partying too much
- Scary talk-voices, death, suicide
- Paranoid-people are talking about me

Depression: What You Need to Know



Depression
is serious.

Depression can
affect anyone.

Depression
doesn't just
go away.

Depression
can be
treated.

Talk to a provider—Learn how to find help at nimh.nih.gov/findhelp.

If you or someone you know is struggling or having thoughts of suicide,
call or text the **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** at **988** or chat at 988lifeline.org.



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of Mental Health

nimh.nih.gov/depression

Anxiety disorders involve **more than** temporary worry or fear. For a person with an anxiety disorder, the **anxiety does not go away** and can get worse over time.



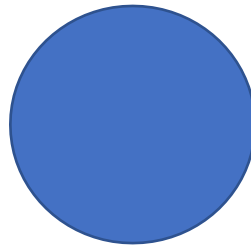
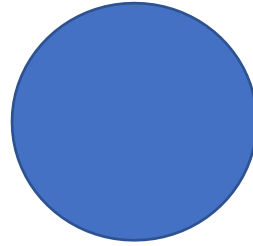
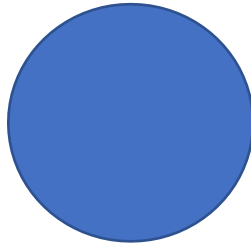
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nimh.nih.gov/anxietydisorders

Coping



Slide courtesy of Maryland Pao, MD





CHARACTER STRENGTHS

Who are you at your best?

Jan Tortarella, MS RD IFNCP
NIH Wellness Program Coordinator
Office of Research Services

WHY STRENGTHS MATTER

- Strengths have a direct effect on mental health.
- Strengths also have an indirect effect on perceived stressfulness of life events.

WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS?

Virtues

Wisdom	Courage	Humanity	Justice	Temperance	Transcendence
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Strengths

Creativity	Bravery	Kindness	Fairness	Forgiveness	Appreciation of Beauty and Excellence
Curiosity	Honesty	Love	Leadership	Humility	Gratitude
Judgment	Perseverance	Social Intelligence	Teamwork	Prudence	Hope
Love of Learning	Zest			Self-Regulation	Humor
Perspective					Spirituality

CONSIDER FOR A MOMENT...

- Which top strengths have you used optimally in past successes that would be beneficial in your current circumstances?
- Which situational strengths have you used when most needed?

Did you know?

2/3 of us don't know our own strengths.

STRENGTHS SPOTTING

- Character strengths are the most important aspects of one's personality.
- Recognizing and honoring someone's strengths helps them to feel seen and understood.
- Strengths Blindness

Did you know?

Your strengths can also be your emotional triggers.

Consider for a moment... a scenario that pushed your buttons

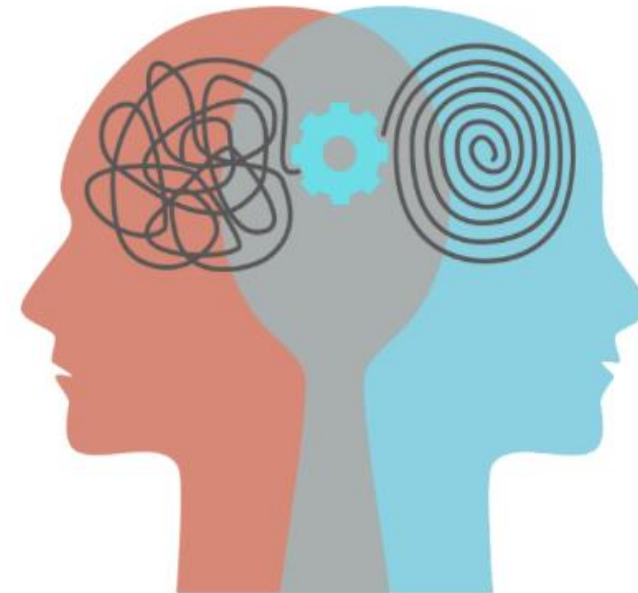
- Which of your strengths felt challenged?
- Would you recognize that strength showing up again if a similar scenario presented itself?
- In that particular moment of frustration, are you able to reflect on what the person said or did? What strengths did they demonstrate?
- If a similar scenario presented itself again, would you recognize the strengths of the other? Would this reframe how you view the situation? How might you relate to the person or situation differently with this awareness?

Acceptance & Non-Judgment: Building Emotional Resilience During Turbulent Times

Dr. Alisa Turner Augustyn
Licensed Clinical Psychologist and NIH EAP Consultant

Acceptance & Non-judgment: Foundations for Emotional Well-being

- **Core practices for resilience**
- **Grounded in research**
- **Useful in real, everyday moments**



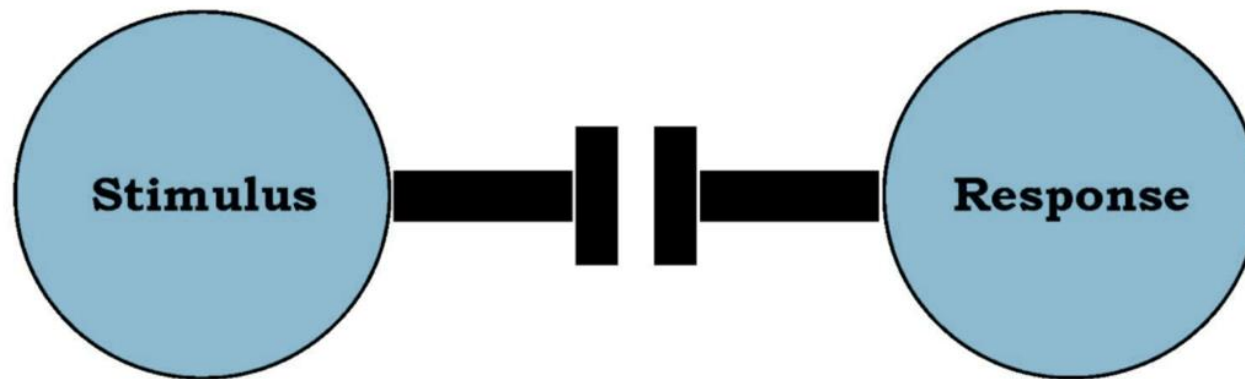
What is Acceptance?

- **Active recognition of reality as it is**
- **Creating space for difficult experiences**
- **Allows us to make wise decisions**
- **Not resignation or giving up**



What is Non-judgment?

- Observing without automatic evaluations
- Stepping back from “good/bad” labeling
- Judgments and assumptions limit us
- By noticing your judgments, you can decide what to do with them
- Cultivating curiosity rather than criticism



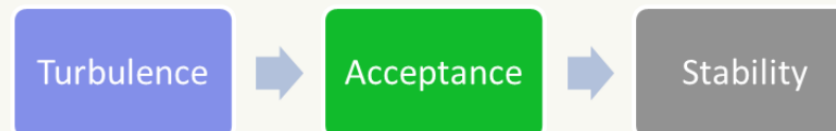
Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. ~ Victor Frankl

Why These Matter During Turbulent Times

Process of Resistance



Process of Acceptance



Let's practice!

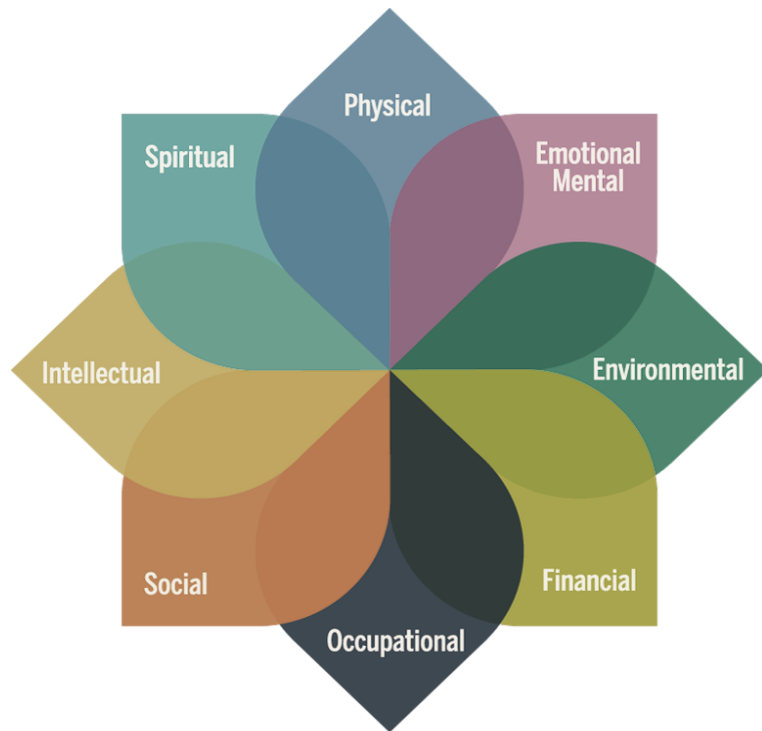
- Recall a moment when you felt stressed or reactive
- Notice any judgments – of yourself, others, or the situation
- What shifts if you respond with acceptance and curiosity instead of criticism?

- **Pause and breath** – Create space before responding
- **Say “This too”** – Allow what’s difficult without needing to fix it
- **Ask curiosity questions** – “What else might be true?”
- **Try “and” instead of “but”** – Hold multiple truths at once
- **Anchor in your body** – Return to the present through sensation
- **Practice self-kindness** – Stay on your own side when things get hard

- **A grounding tool to meet your experience with acceptance and non-judgment**
 - Notice what you're feeling
 - Where do you feel it in your body?
 - Breathe into that space – without trying to fix it

- **VUCA**
- **Mental health spectrum**
- **Character Strengths: Your unique resources**
- **Acceptance: Recognizing reality as it is**
- **Non-judgment: Creating space between stimulus and response**
- **Integration: Bringing these practices into daily life**

NIH EAP is a free, voluntary and confidential program that helps employees work through challenges that may adversely affect job performance, health, or personal well-being



EAP Contact Information

301-496-3164

www.ors.od.nih.gov/sr/dohs/eap

NIH MAIN CAMPUS
BUILDING 31, ROOM
B2B57



NIH Fitness Centers

April 2022: Opened and fully activated two new NIH fitness centers, Building 53 & Rockledge II

Building 53
"The Loft"
Spring 2022



Baltimore
BRC Fitness
Center
Upgrades
10/2023

Building 31
Re-opened
Fall 2023



Rockledge II
Spring
2022



NIH Sport Court Upgrades

- Building 60/Cloisters & Building 10
- New B'ball hoops (3) install complete (FY24)
- Replace Bldg 10 volleyball net (FY25 request)

NIH Clubs grew post-COVID:

- Hiking – new club, continuing to build momentum
- Pickleball – fastest growing new club on campus/meet weekly – 150 members
- Yoga - new club, continuing to build momentum/'25 launch
- Volleyball – longest standing movement club on campus. Over 50 members

Upgrades on Campus



Bethesda Main Campus

NIH Upgrading Sports Courts

Great news! NIH/ORS Amenities Branch has recently renovated the **Building 60/Cloisters Sport Court** to modify and expand for new play formats. [View the map](#) or scan the QR below to see bathroom and water fountain access. After COVID, the NIH community requested an upgrade to the sport courts as staff return to campus and increased activities outdoors. We hope you will join the fun.



SPORTS COURTS
Building 60

In addition, ORS Amenities Branch and the NIH Wellness Program are actively working on renovations to the **Building 10 Sport Court**. Renovations will replace inactive/broken basketball hoops, improve signage, and include new equipment to be installed in early Fall 2024. Stay tuned as updates continue! Contact Wellness@NIH for more details.



 Be well at work

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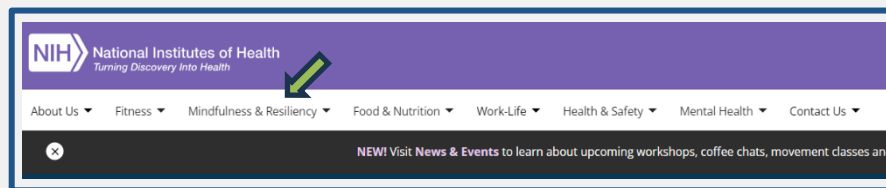
 Be well at work

Wellness at NIH website improvements: help staff achieve wellness goals and enhance well-being.

Areas of Support: Wellness Website

- [Fitness](#)
- [Work-Life](#)
- [Mindfulness & Resiliency](#)
- [Health & Safety](#)
- [Food & Nutrition](#)
- [Mental Health](#)

With a new **Mindfulness & Resiliency** page and a newsletter that's monthly, **Wellness@NIH** is ready to support you!



Workshops

Wellness Workshop: The Art of Intentional Communication

Sponsored by NIH Wellness Programs

Wednesday, Jan. 22
11:30 am to 12:30 pm



Join NIH Wellness and the NIH Ombuds Office for a workshop on active listening and conscious communication to benefit your work and personal well-being. This webinar will highlight and demonstrate the key aspects of being fully present, observant and purposeful in our words and actions with others.

Register here:



Wellness@NIH Resources: Find a Pause Flyer

*Find a Pause for Well-Being – 5 Simple ways to
find a pause, breathe, re-set and nourish yourself!*

Three-Breath Break

Pause several times during the day and bring your attention to your breath for three breath cycles. There is no need to change your breathing, simply notice your breath for the next three-breath cycles.

Eat Mindfully

See if you can eat one meal or snack per day without doing anything else. Try putting your fork down in between bites to really savor each flavor. Put away your phone or newspaper. Can you focus on your food or drink using all your senses?

Drop the Story

Much of our stress comes from the "story" we create in our minds about how things should be, how they will be in the future, or how they were in the past. See if you can notice when your mind is traveling beyond the "facts" and is creating a story. See if you can bring yourself back to the facts with the "three-breath break" or bring attention to your senses.

Practice Gratitude

The opportunity to spend a few extra minutes in nature, to connect with someone in your home, noticing the sun shining – each moment matters. Take a pause and find things to be grateful for—and name them or write them down each day to cultivate your well-being.

Bring Attention to Your Senses

Our sight, smell, hearing, taste and touch "senses" always reside in the present moment. Take a few moments and become aware of what you are sensing in each of these domains. Describe what you are experiencing to yourself in a few words and name them accordingly.



Wellness@NIH Resources: Strengthen Your Relaxation Response

Breath Awareness – take a pause to benefit the mind and body.

Take a Breathing Break

Box Breathing is a simple 4-step technique: Breathe in for 4, hold for 4, breathe out for 4, hold for 4. Pause several times a day to do this, repeating for three cycles. Visit us at one of our next events to pick up your own Box Breathing sticker.



Alternate Nostril Breathing

- Brings about calm, energizes and unites the left and right sides of brain
- Hold the right thumb over right nostril
Inhale deeply through left nostril
- At the peak of inhalation, close the left nostril with the ring finger, then exhale through the right nostril
- Continue the pattern, switching between the two fingers, closing off the right then the left
- Can also do one or the other, breathe through right for energy, left for calming
- Best to use to increase energy and focus

Quick Calm

- Take a slow deep breath
- Hold for the count of 4 and think "I am warm"
- Exhale while thinking "I am calm"
- Best to use before or after a presentation, difficult meeting, taking a test, or to bring anxiety down quickly



4-7-8 Technique

- Place the tip of your tongue so that it's touching the roof of your mouth
- Close your mouth and inhale through your nose for 4 counts
- Once you've reached the peak of inhalation, hold your breath for 7 counts
- Exhale completely for 8 count down quickly

[Breath Awareness Flyer link](#)

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
National Institutes of Health



What Is Stress?

Stress is a physical and emotional reaction that people experience as they encounter challenges in life. When you're under stress, your body reacts by releasing hormones that produce the "fight-or-flight" response. Your heart rate and breathing rate go up and blood vessels narrow (restricting the flow of blood). Occasional stress is a normal coping mechanism. However, long-term stress or chronic stress may contribute to or worsen a range of health problems.

The Effects of Chronic Stress on the Body

Chronic stress negatively impacts every organ system of the body, down to our cells and molecules: "fight or flight" response overdrive, elevated stress hormones, disrupted sleep, muscle tension, metabolic dysfunction, immune dysregulation, and inflammation. Chronic stress has been linked to the development of some diseases such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, autoimmune diseases, and mental illnesses such as depression and anxiety disorders. Using alcohol or drugs to dull the effects of stress can make the problem worse and interfere with sleep.



Acute Stress, Chronic Stress, and Anxiety. What's the Difference?

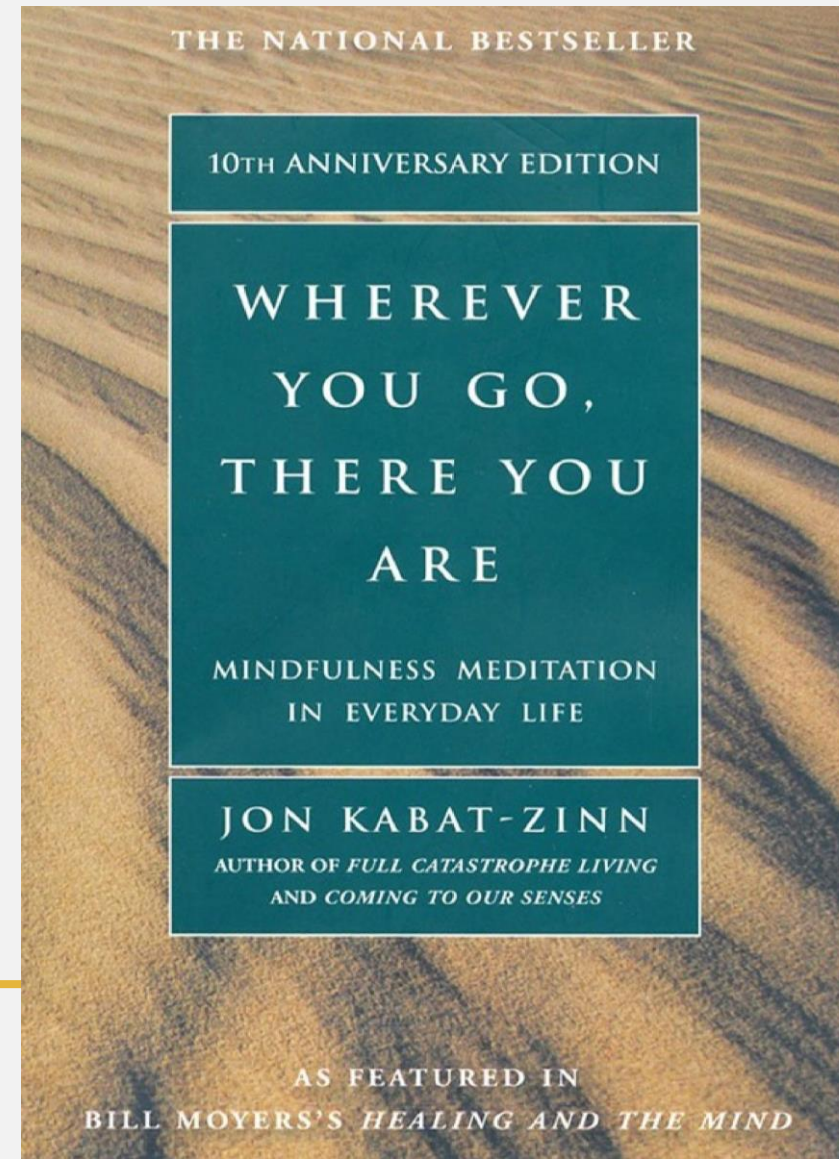
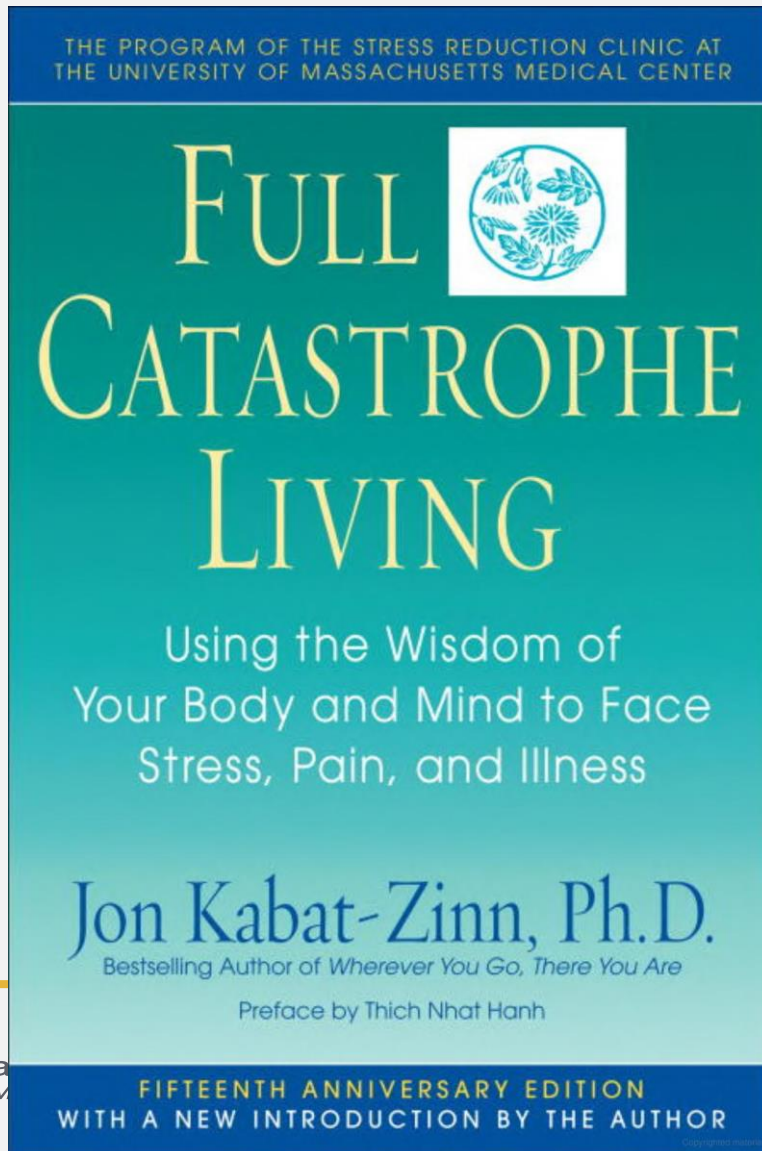
- 🕒 **Acute stress** is a response to an external event, such as taking a big test or arguing with a friend. Acute stress goes away once the situation is resolved.
- 🕒 **Chronic stress**, however, lasts for weeks, months, or longer. As you go about your life, your body is acting as if you're being threatened. Causes of chronic stress include routine stress from the demands of work or school; family or money problems; stress from sudden, difficult changes in your life, such as divorce or illness; and traumatic stress, which may happen when you're in danger of serious harm or death.
- 🕒 **Anxiety** is a common mental reaction to stress and can occur even if there is no current threat. Both stress and anxiety can affect your mind and body, and some of the symptoms are the same.

If anxiety doesn't go away or you are struggling to cope, it may be time to talk to a professional.

The National Institute of Mental Health at the National Institutes of Health has information on stress and anxiety. If you are in immediate distress or are thinking about hurting yourself, call, text, or chat 988. This three-digit number will route you to the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, which is now active across the United States. The Lifeline provides 24-hour, confidential support to anyone in suicidal crisis or emotional distress.

Whether you are suffering from acute stress, chronic stress, or anxiety, there are simple tools that can help.

Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD - based on MBSR



- **Apps:** Calm, Headspace, Ten Percent Happier
- **Books:** "Full Catastrophe Living" (Jon Kabat-Zinn), "Radical Acceptance" (Tara Brach)
- **Online Resources:** [Greater Good In Action](#), [Mindful.org](#), [Monterey Bay Aquarium Meditoceans](#)
- **Character Strengths:** [VIA Character Strengths Survey & Character Reports](#)

Wellness at NIH: Research Based Mindfulness Apps

UCLA Mindful (free for Android and iOS):

- Offers basic guided meditations for getting started, in 14 languages.

Healthy Minds Program App (free for Android and iOS):

- Features a full program for mental wellbeing based on research from the University of Wisconsin- Madison.

Read more about the study in [*Scientific American*](#).

Insight Timer (free for Android and iOS) Recommended teachers on Insight: (alpha order)

- [Jud Brewer, MD PhD](#)
- [Christopher Germer, PhD](#) (licensed clinical psychologist)
- [Bhanu Joy Harrison, LCSW](#) (licensed clinical social worker)
- [Kristin Neff, PhD](#)
- [Lama Rod Owens](#) (BIPOC, LGBTQ)
- [Sharon Salzberg](#), and [Diana Winston](#) (UCLA Health)

MASTER STRESS

Maintain healthy eating

Avoid isolation

Stay informed, not obsessed

Talk to others

Engage in mindfulness

Relax, play, exercise

Start journaling

Take deep breaths

Rest and sleep well

Engage in gratitude

Step outside into nature

Seek support from friends,
family, and professionals

Resources

- **Suicide Crisis Hotline:** Call or text **988**
 - 24/7, multiple languages
 - [Get Help - 988 Lifeline](#)
- **NIH Children and Family Program:** (301) 837-3250
 - <https://www.childfamilycare.ors.nih.gov>
- **Wellness@NIH**
 - <https://wellnessatnih.ors.od.nih.gov/>
- **National Institute of Mental Health**
 - <https://www.nimh.nih.gov>

NIMH

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/find-help>

National Organizations

[Mental Health America](#)

[Anxiety and Depression Association of America](#)

[Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance](#)

[Mental Health America](#)

[National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)