

Workplace Mental Health: How Proactive Can You Be?

Disability:IN Greater Kansas City
5th Annual Disability Inclusion Summit
April 30, 2019



Nancy Spangler, PhD, OTR/L

My experience:

- **Occupational Therapy**: Pediatrics, rehabilitation, and psychiatry (pain & stress management)
- **Workplace Health Promotion**: Health risk reduction and population health management
- **Organizational Change & Stress**: What drives adaptive capacity? Influence of leaders/managers.
- **Brain Research**: What supports individual and organizational health?

My mission – To help build healthy and high-performing individuals and organizations.

THINGS I LOVE:



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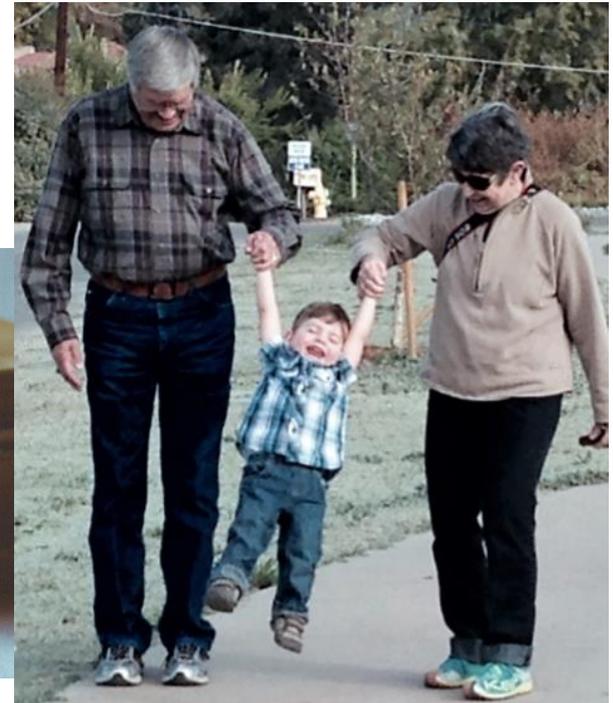
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Personal photo

My mother - Delphine

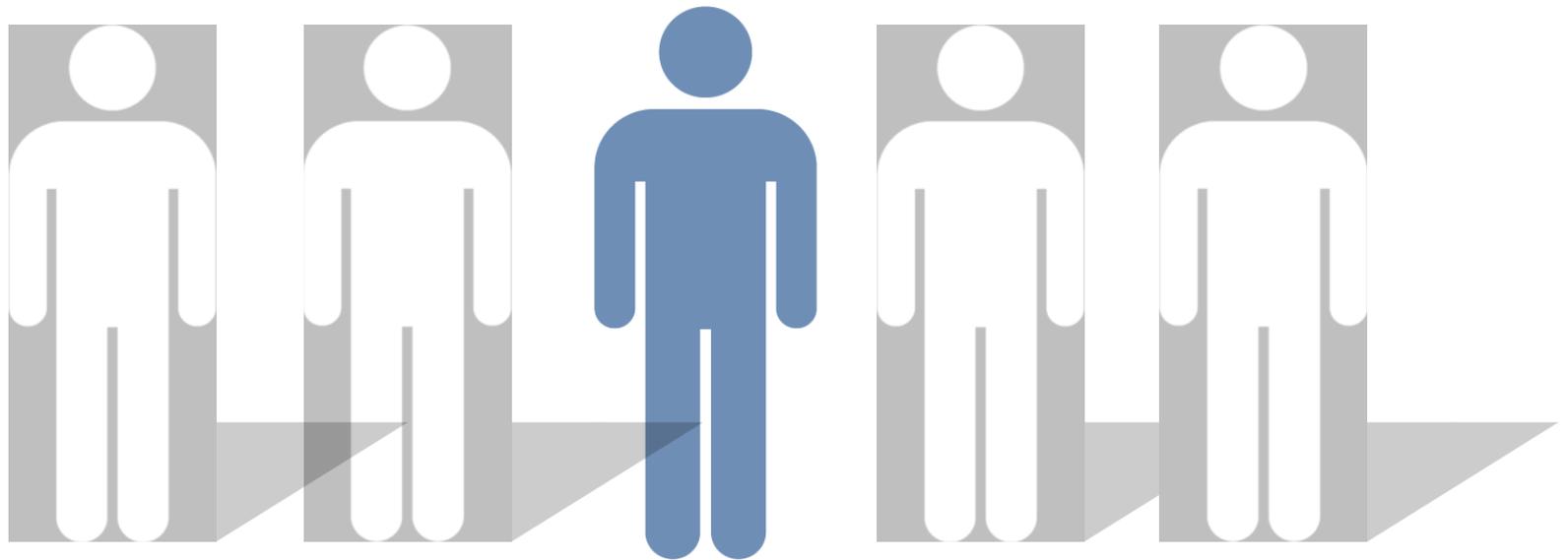


- Loved to laugh
- Loved her family
- Kind and compassionate

- Low self confidence
- Feared challenges
- Lost her sense of purpose
- Overcome by anxiety and fear of pain

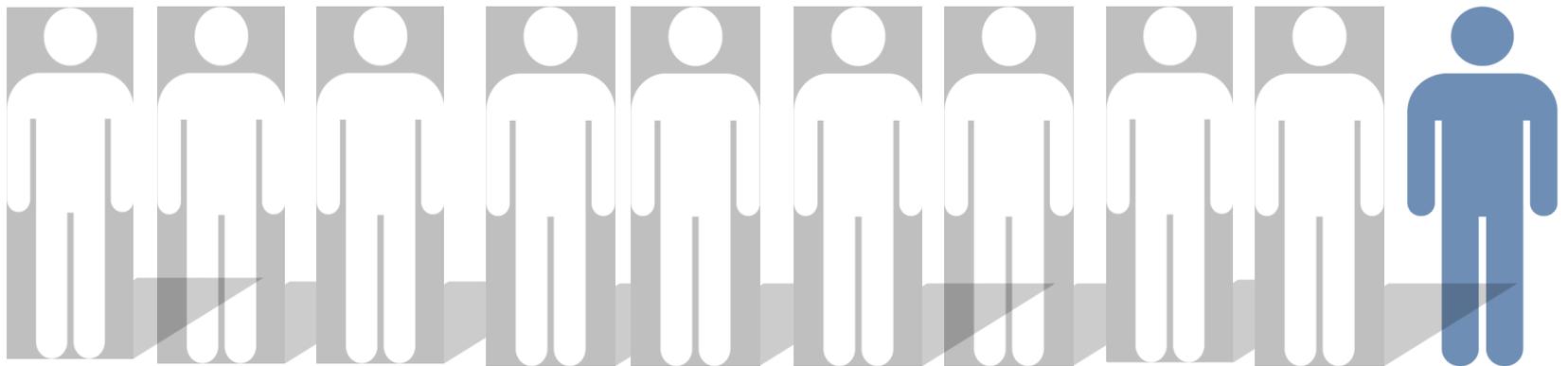
1 in 5 People

EXPERIENCES MENTAL ILLNESS EACH YEAR

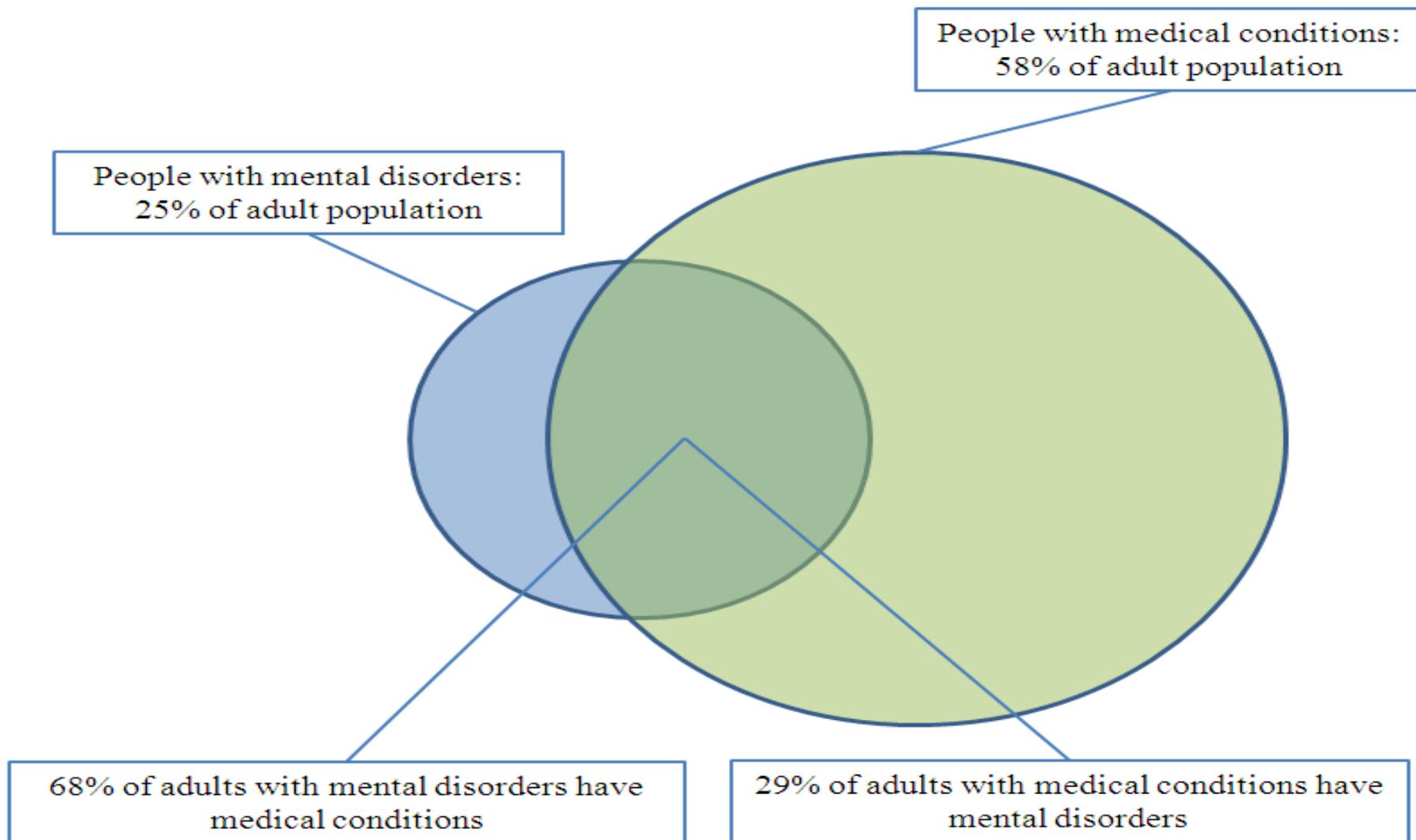


1 in 10

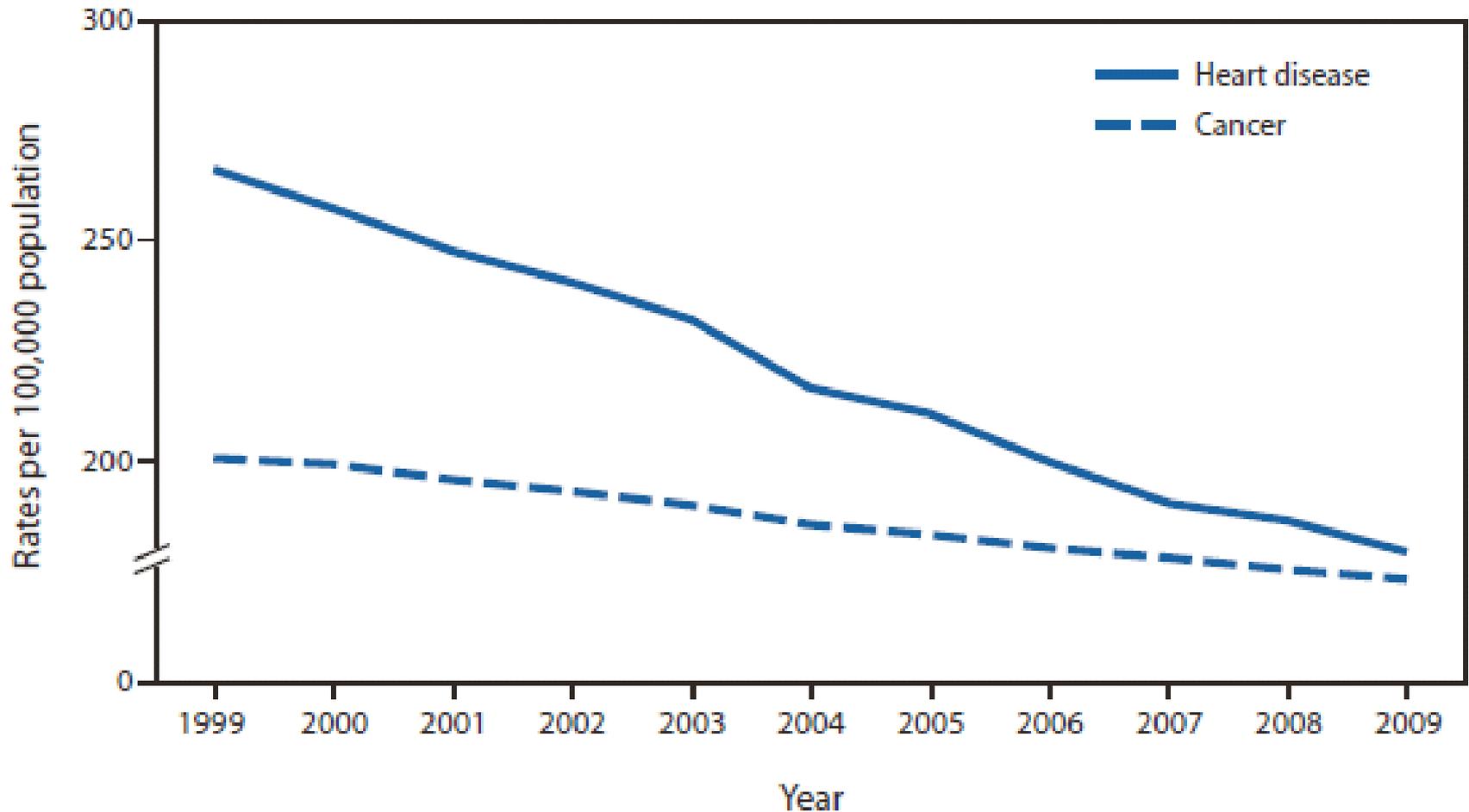
HAS A SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER EACH YEAR



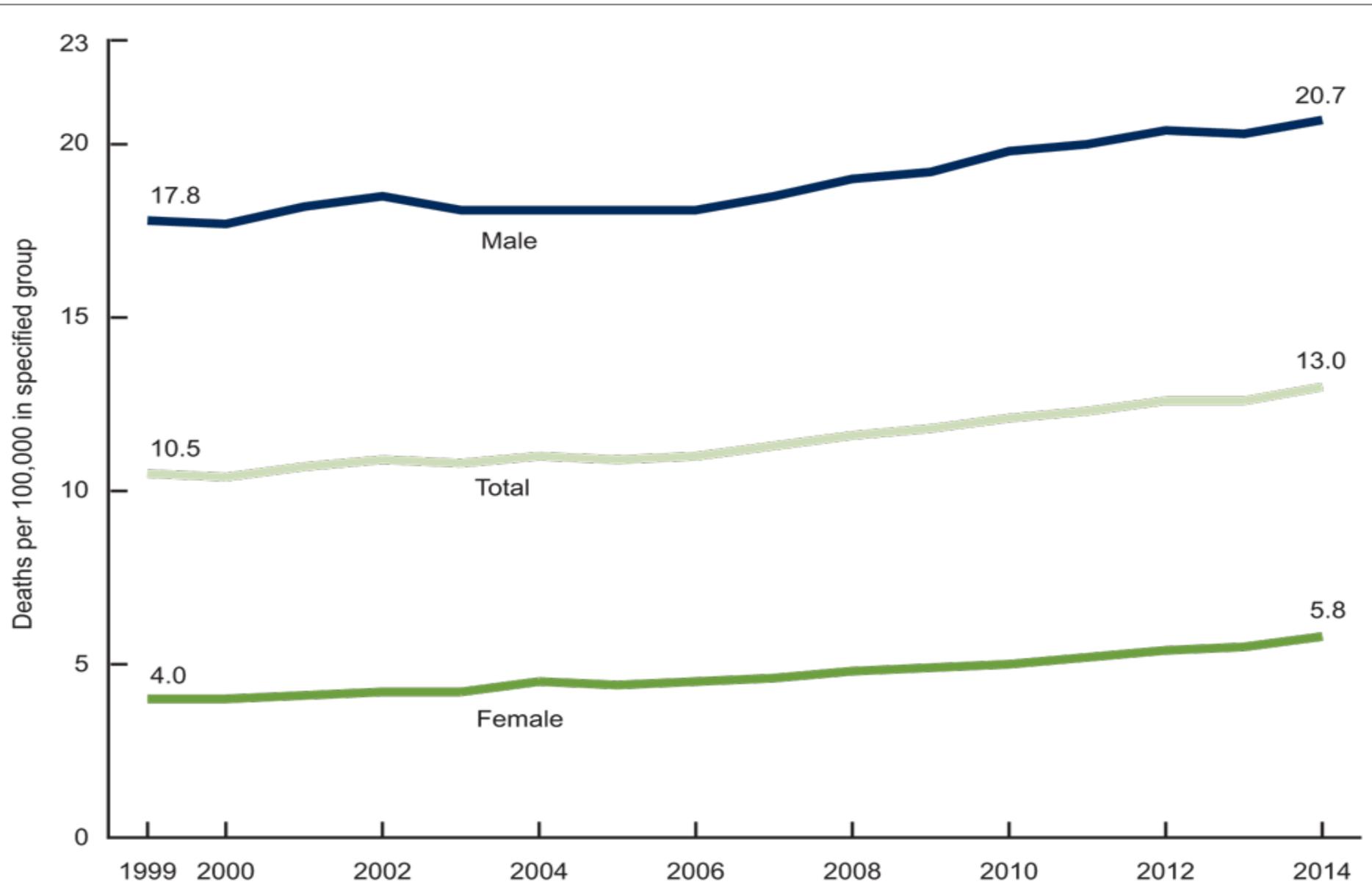
Percentages of Adults with Mental Disorders and/or Medical Conditions



U.S. Death Rates for Heart Disease and Cancer: 1999--2009



Suicide Rates, United States, 1994 - 2014



NOTES: Suicide deaths are identified with codes U03, X60–X84, and Y87.0 from the *International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, Tenth Revision*. Access data for Figure 1 at: http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db241_table.pdf#1.

Many workers and their family members face various levels of impairment from:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress disorders
- Autism spectrum disorders
- Substance use disorders
- Eating disorders
- Bipolar disorder
- Schizophrenia

Depression and Disability:

- Depression is the leading cause of disability among Americans age 15 to 44
- 80% of persons with depression report some level of functional impairment because of their depression.
- 27% report serious difficulties in work and home life.



Depression in the Workplace:

What depression feels like

Deep feelings of sadness

Loss of interest in work or social activities

Difficulty concentrating, slowed thoughts

Forgetfulness and trouble remembering

Trouble making decisions

Trouble sleeping or sleeping too much

Feelings of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt

Energy loss or increased fatigue

Irritability, anger or tearfulness

Weight or appetite changes

How it looks to co-workers

Withdrawal from team, isolates oneself

Indifference

Putting things off, missed deadlines, accidents on the job

Seems "scattered" or absentminded

Procrastination, indecisiveness, slowed productivity

Late to work, afternoon fatigue, accidents on the job

Unsure of abilities, lack of confidence

Low motivation, detached

Inappropriate reactions, strained relationships with co-workers

Change in appearance

Anxiety and Stress-Related Disorders:

What anxiety feels like

How it looks to co-workers

Heart racing, palms sweating, trembling

A loose cannon

Having a heart attack

Worrisome

Jittery, poor eye contact, restless

Anti-social, undependable

Dry mouth, lump in throat, can't speak

Aloof, uninformed, overly shy

Exaggerated startle, jittery, restless

Discomforting, annoying

Trouble sleeping, disturbing dreams

Late to work, afternoon fatigue, accidents on the job

Excessive worry, fear, preoccupation

Unsure of abilities, lack of confidence

Embarrassment, self-doubt

Incompetence

Anger, muttering, yelling

Bizarre, fear producing

Need to escape

Excessive drinking or smoking

Role of trauma

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are common
- Examples:
 - Neglect or emotional/physical abuse
 - Witnessing violence, substance abuse, mental illness
 - Abandonment or incarceration of a parent
- Increased likelihood of triggering fight/flight/freeze responses
- <https://acestoohigh.com/got-your-ace-score/>

Unmanaged distress and trauma may contribute to:

- Sleep disturbance
- Physical conditions
 - Chronic pain
 - Cardiovascular disease
 - Diabetes
 - Autoimmune disorders
 - Cancer
- May trigger depression, anxiety, and/or substance abuse

Unmanaged distress is costly

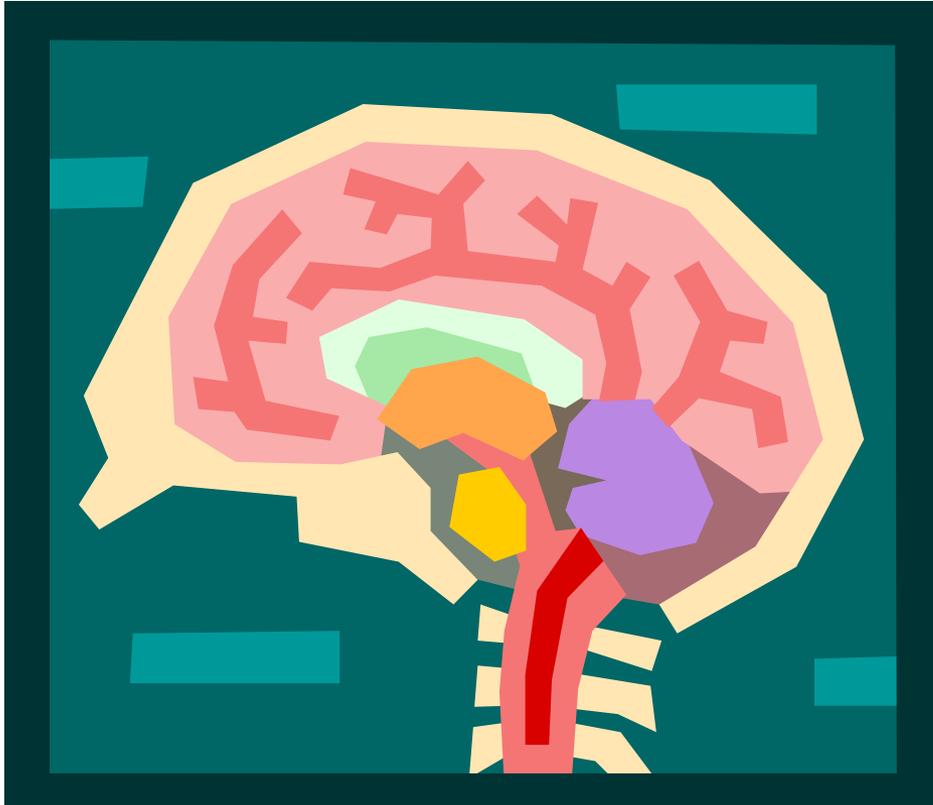
- Emotional fatigue and poor impulse control
- Eat, drink, and/or smoke too much
- Difficulty focusing, making decisions, managing work and life tasks
- 120,000 deaths and nearly \$190 billion in health care costs each year (Goh, Pfeffer & Zenios, 2015)
- Plus costs for absenteeism, presenteeism, disability, temp workers, re-hiring, re-training

STRESS = “The nonspecific response of the body to any demand made on it.” (Selye, 1956)

Distress = negative emotional state due to harmful stimuli or excessive demands

Eustress = euphoric effect of positive adaptation to demands or challenges

The stress response involves immediate APPROACH/AVOID reactions:



The brain's amygdala and limbic circuits set off the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis response to prepare the individual to:

Fight
Flight
Freeze

or SIEZE!

Like stepping on the gas pedal!

Hey, STRESS isn't all bad!

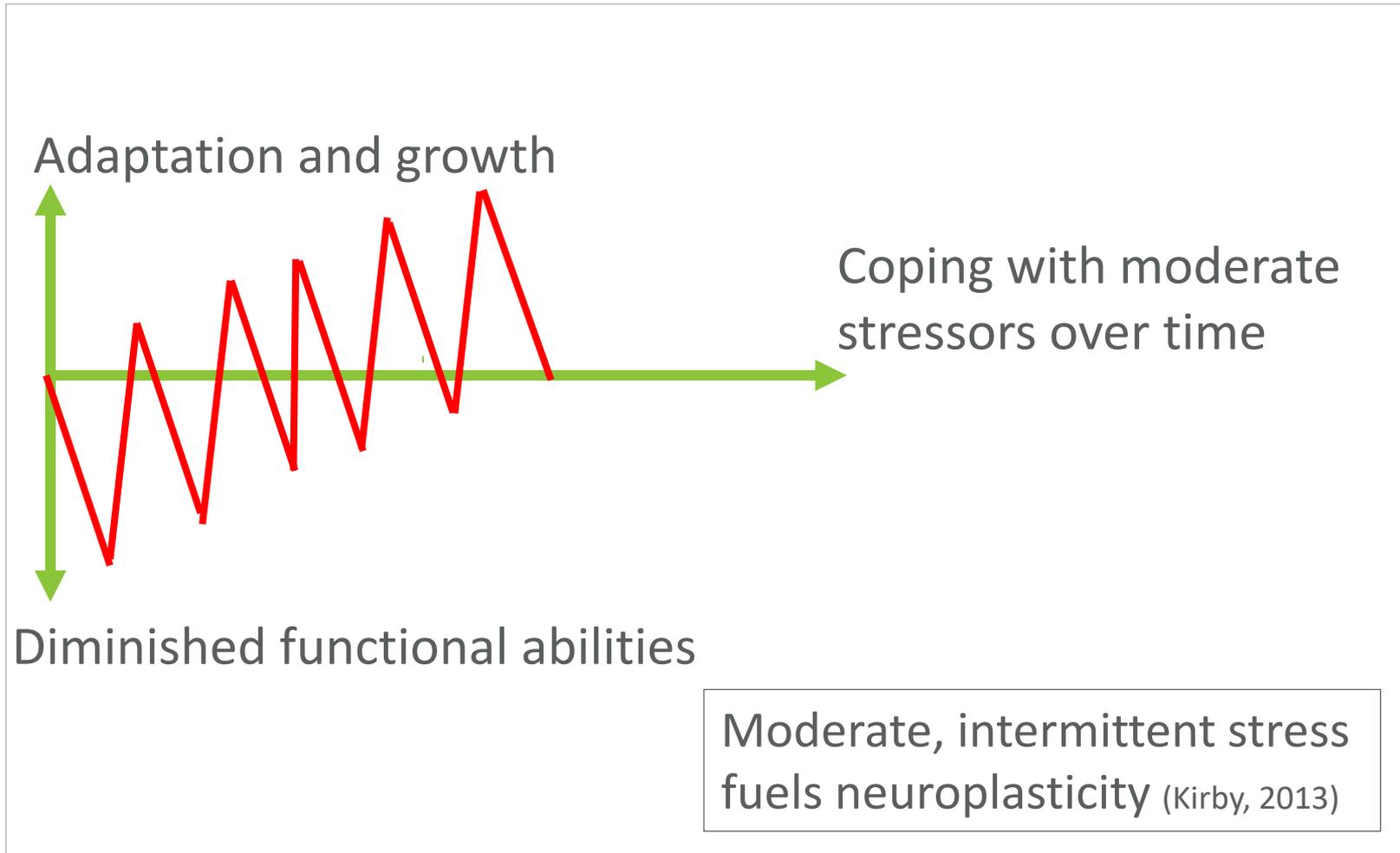
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Adaptation = Resilience

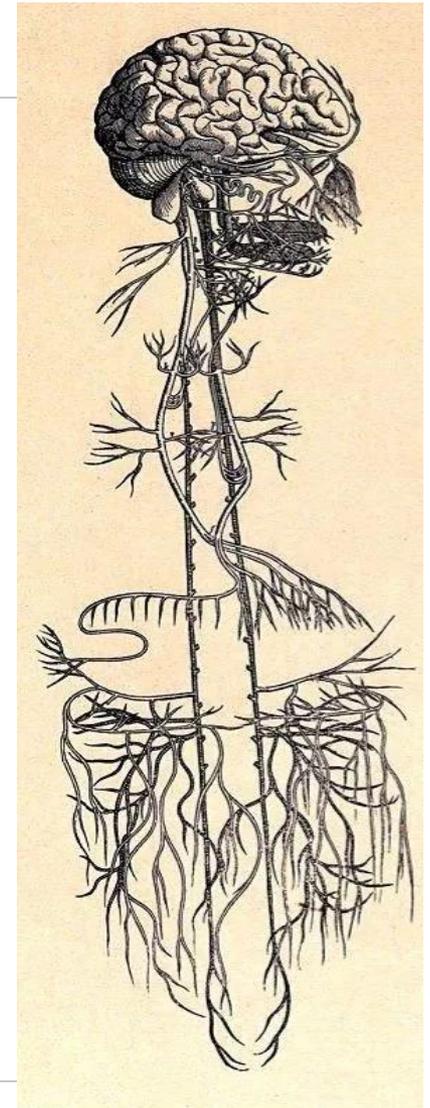
- Resilience is . . . “A process linking a set of **adaptive capacities** to a positive trajectory of functioning and adaptation after a disturbance.” (Norris, F.H. et al., 2008)
- Commonly known as the ability to bounce back, to bend rather than break, to grow.

Stress can stimulate growth and resilience



However, resilience requires recovery!

- The vagus nerve helps to shut down fight, flight, freeze (the “vagal brake”)
- Connections go to and from:
 - Heart, lungs, diaphragm, stomach, & bowels
 - “Rest-and-digest”
 - Face and throat
 - “Tend-and-befriend”
- APPROACH/AVOID is automatic and immediate; RECOVERY/REPAIR takes time.
- Oxytocin = trust hormone

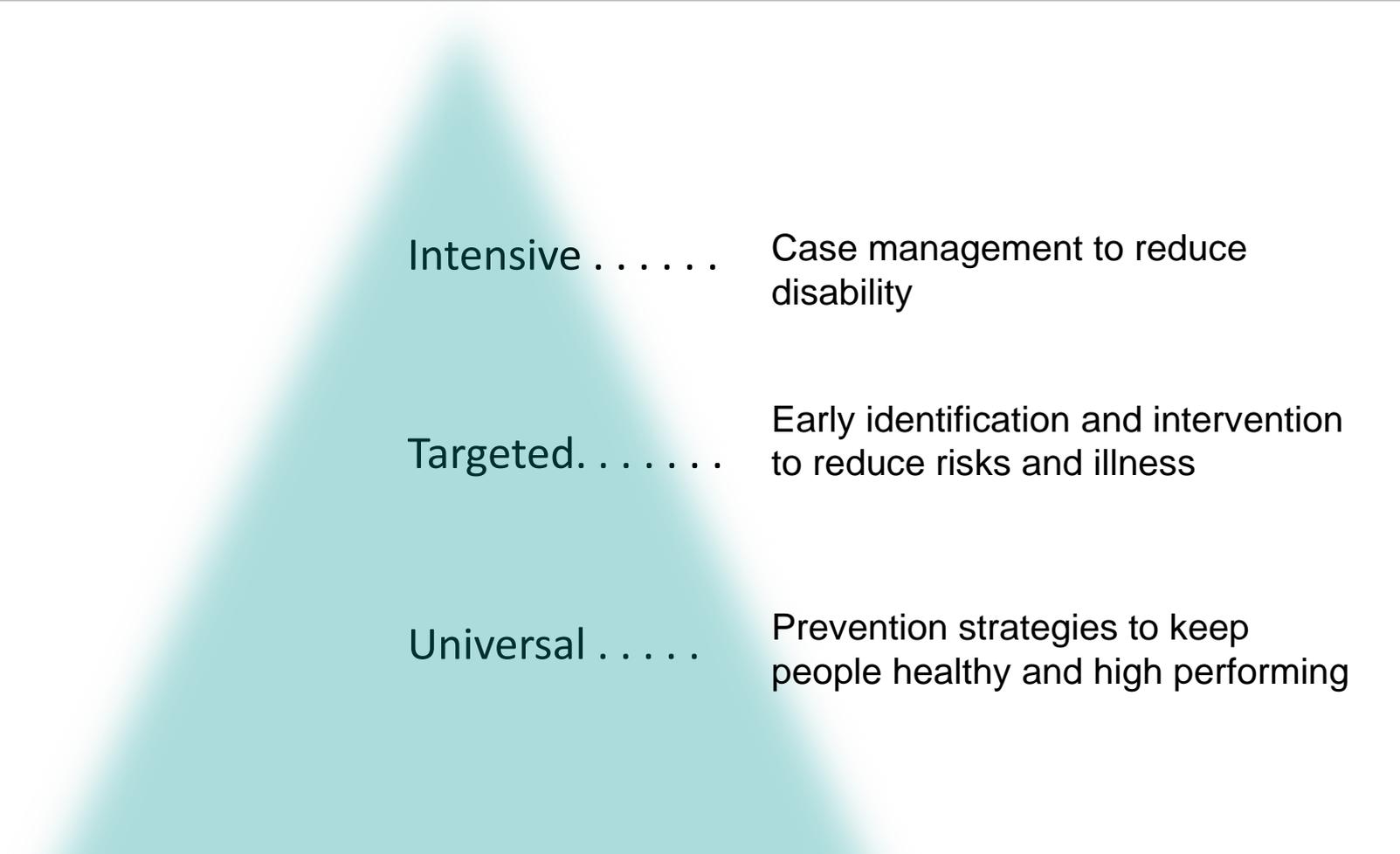


Source: Wellcome Library
<https://wellcomecollection.org/works/njv3mjbp>

Can we screen for resilience?

- Two question screening (CD-RISC)
 - “Able to adapt to change?”
 - “Tend to bounce back after illness or hardship?”
- Other potential questions:
 - How do you cope with pressure?
 - Tell me how you respond to critical feedback from a manager.
 - Tell me about a negative time in your life and how you dealt with it.
 - How do you deal with people you don’t agree with?

What can employers do to build resilience?



Intensive Case management to reduce disability

Targeted. Early identification and intervention to reduce risks and illness

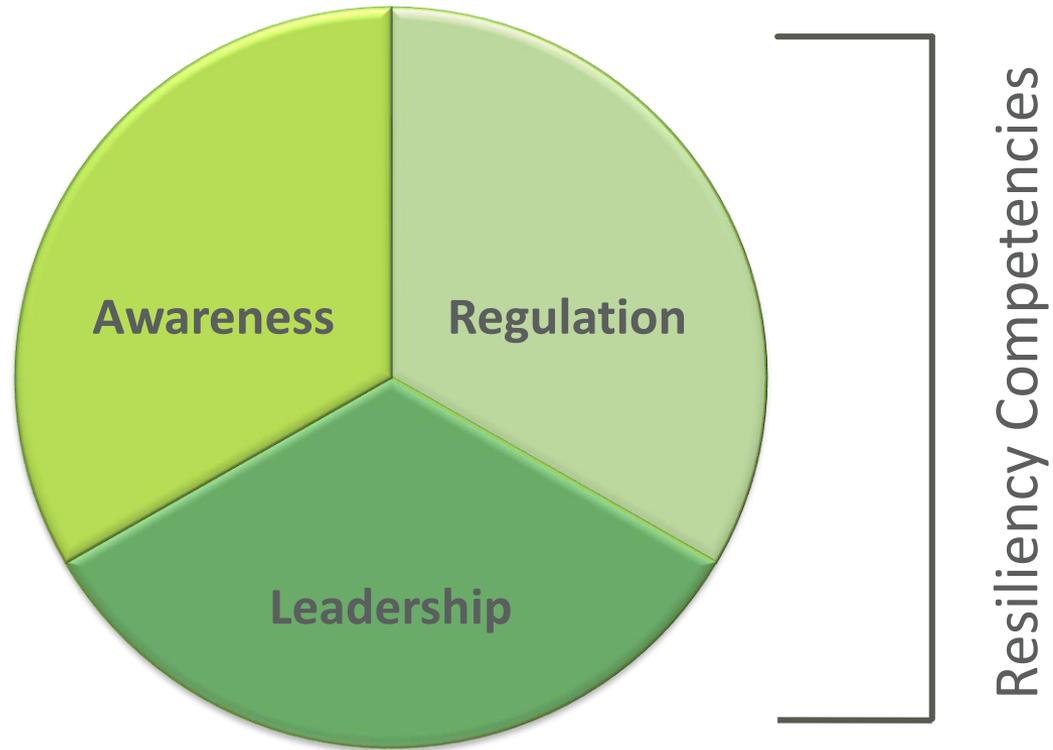
Universal Prevention strategies to keep people healthy and high performing

Micro practices: Self-care and Supports for Resilience-building

- Exercise, physical activity, yoga
- Nutrition
- Sleep routines
- Stress & resilience interventions
- Mindfulness and compassion meditation
- Therapeutic writing, journaling
- Social connectedness, conflict resolution, relationship repair
- Intensive outpatient for substance use
- Work focused intervention
- Psychotherapy – especially CBT
- Pharmacotherapy
- Smiling, laughter yoga, body posture (emerging research)



How do we build resilience?



Shared Responsibility



Workplace resilience requires shared responsibility for developing...

- Personal factors and skills
- Organizational benefits/policies and cultural practices

Employer Benefits and Practices:

Active, outbound intervention

(Intensive)

- Disease management/ Case management
 - Disability management (Return-to-work)
-

Screenings, information, resources, & benefits

(Targeted)

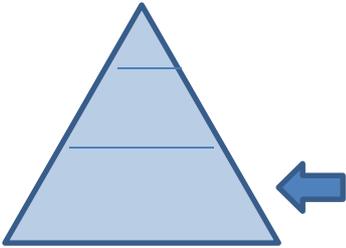
- HRAs/Screenings & coaching
 - Information, webinars, education
 - Medical and mental health benefits
 - Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
-

Organizational leadership, culture, & management practices

(Universal)

- Values, ethics, & mission/role alignment
- Communication (face-to-face, at multiple levels, conflict resolution, predictable structure)
- Career & life development/balance
- Training (Manager/supervisor & employee)
- Health champions
- Connectedness, meaning, belonging & **trust**

Preventing Distress and Building Resilience



- **Ethics, values, & missions help guide behavior**
 - Goal/role alignment, decision-making, trust building, ethics policies
- **Strong communication** (face-to-face, conflict resolution, predictable structure, multiple levels)
 - From senior leaders on business and finances
 - From supervisors on individual performance
- **Organizational culture & management practices**
 - Diversity, career development, job training/ mentoring
 - Manager/Supervisor Training (on mental health topics and support services)
 - Health champions
 - Connectedness, meaning, belonging, and **TRUST**

CDC Worksite Health Scorecard – Assessment and modules for improving:

- Organizational Supports
- Tobacco Use
- High Blood Pressure
- High Cholesterol
- Physical Activity
- Weight Management
- Nutrition
- Heart Attack and Stroke
- Prediabetes and Diabetes
- Depression
- Stress Management
- Alcohol and Other Substance Use
- Sleep and Fatigue
- Musculoskeletal Disorders
- Occupational Health and Safety
- Vaccine-Preventable Diseases
- Maternal Health and Lactation Support
- Cancer

Research on compassion in organizational systems:

- Emphasize roles, routines, social networks, and values. (Worline & Dutton, 2017)
- Develop positive leadership practices (Cameron, 2013)
 - Positive climate
 - Positive relationships
 - Positive meaning
 - Positive communications
- Compassionate organizations. . .
 - Are more adaptive to change
 - Have better customer service
 - Encourage innovation and creativity
 - Outperform their peers

Showing compassion through reasonable accommodations:

- Flexible work schedule or break changes
- Reduce distractions and stress triggers
- Supervisory changes
 - Written or recorded instructions, summaries of meetings, checklists
 - Assistance with goal setting, breaking down tasks
 - Coaching, positive feedback
- Rest/recovery/privacy areas
- Reassignment, working remotely
- Support animal or person

Resources

- EY Abilities Support -- <https://www.ey.com/us/en/about-us/our-people-and-culture/diversity-and-inclusiveness/unleashing-our-full-abilities--4--resources>
- Job Accommodation Network -- <https://askjan.org/disabilities/Mental-Health-Impairments.cfm#spy-scroll-heading-2>
- Boston University, Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation, Resources for Employers -- <https://cpr.bu.edu/resources/employment/employers/>
- Greenleaf Integrative – <https://www.greenleafintegrative.com/resources/>
- EEOC on reasonable accommodations
www.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/ada_mental_health_provider.cfm Screening for Mental Health -- www.mentalhealthscreening.org
- CDC Worksite Health ScoreCard
<https://www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion/initiatives/healthscorecard/index.html>
- Center for Workplace Mental Health, American Psychiatric Association – www.workplacementalhealth.org
- Center for Compassion and Altruism Research and Education, Stanford University -- <http://ccare.stanford.edu/>



Resources (continued):

- Healthy Arizona Workplace Program webinars --
https://healthyazworksites.org/events/categories/webinar/?doing_wp_cron=1555452201.9871180057525634765625
- Arizona State University Center for Mindfulness, Compassion, and Resilience --
<https://mindfulnesscenter.asu.edu/>
- MindShare Partners, Employee Resource Group webinar & guide--
<https://www.mindsharepartners.org/webinar-201903-ergs>
- Center for Organizational Excellence, American Psychological Association --
www.apaexcellence.org/resources
- American Cancer Society (2017) – *Working during and after treatment*.
<https://www.cancer.org/treatment/survivorship-during-and-after-treatment/staying-active/working-during-and-after-treatment.html>
- American Heart Association -- <https://ceoroundtable.heart.org/mental-health-a-workforce-crisis-report/>





www.workplacementalhealth.org

Purpose: Collaborate with employers to advance mental health.

1. Promote business case for early recognition, prevention, and effective, accessible treatment.
2. Highlight employer case examples.



3. Provide tools to increase awareness and help-seeking (cost calculators, Working Well Toolkit)



Greenleaf Integrative – Tools for Resilience-building

READY

- Good to go
- Adapting/
flexible
- Excelling at job

I am at the top of my game and adapting well to all pressures.

REACTING

- Mild distress
- Temporary symptoms
- Still getting the job done

Stress is affecting me but I can still get the job done.

INJURED

- Noticeable symptoms
- Personality change
- Erratic functioning

I have changed to the point that I am not in total control of my behavior or reactions.

ILL

- Severe impairment
- Extremely overwhelmed
- Possible danger to self/others

This worsening condition requires full attention before getting back to work.

Self Interventions

Social Support

Professional Care

Rest Strongly Recommended



Adapted with permission from U.S. Navy's COSC Doctrine

Reinforcing micro practices:

Self-Care Techniques

- **Monitor** personal stress indicators (sleep, eating, agitation, etc.)
- **Decompress** with healthy transitions (teatime, yoga, journal, breathwork, music)
- **Record** three good experiences today, savor those positive moments and plan for good experiences tomorrow
- **Speak** with trusted people, maintain social connections



Resiliency Competencies

- **AWARENESS** - noticing the right information (sensations, thoughts, environment)
- **REGULATION** - of self and others' stress reactions and emotions
- **LEADERSHIP** - toward meaningful personal and team actions

Mitigating Interpersonal Stress

- C**larity - on what you wish to achieve
- A**pproach - in ways to reduce triggering
- T**alk - with simple facts, not blame
- C**onsider - the demands on the other person
- H**andle - any remaining follow ups

New technologies increase access to help

View the live video presentation:
<https://vimeo.com/261960738>

info@x2ai.com | (415) 964-6874 | <https://x2.ai>

Affordable, quality mental health support
using psychological artificial intelligence.



Who has been a positive role model for you? How will you mentor for resilience?



Delphine



Leilla



Photo by [rawpixel](#) on [Unsplash](#)

How
proactive
can you be?!

Thank you!

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