Health 12/05/18

EQ: What is Mindfulness?

CW: Mindfulness

Open Nearpod app or go to nearpod.com and enter code on board

HW: Signed Syllabus due Friday 12/07

Agenda

1. Writing Prompt

2. What is mindfullness

3. Cognitive distortions

Open Ended Question

What are you grateful for? Make a simple gratitude list of whatever you are grateful for in your life. Write whatever comes to mind for at least 3 minutes.

Please enter your answer here.

Collaborate!

What do you know about mindfullness?

Introduction to Mindfulness

Mindfullness

- Based on the premise that the mind and body are intimately interconnected. Utilizes techniques to optimize this relationship for improved health and wellbeing.

Mind-Body Skills

- Mindfulness
  - Practices to improve concentration, clarity, and equanimity. The common thread connecting all other skills.
- Relaxation
  - Techniques to elicit the relaxation response in mind and body
- Positive Psychology
  - Practices to cultivate and strengthen positive mind/emotional states.
- Resiliency Training
  - Techniques for balancing the nervous system, processing trauma, and strengthening the 'resilient zone'.

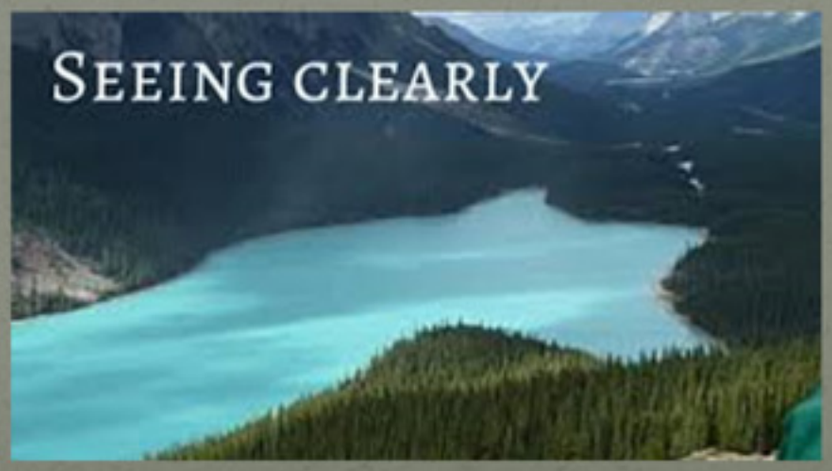
What is it?

"Mindfulness means paying attention in a particular way; On purpose, in the present moment, and nonjudgmentally."

-Jon Kabat-Zinn

3 Core Skills

- **Concentration**: The ability to focus and stabilize one's attention.
- **Sensory Clarity:** The ability to keep track of the components of sensory experience as they arise in various combinations, moment-by-moment.
- **Equanimity**: The ability to 'be with' experience with an attitude of gentle matter-of-factness.



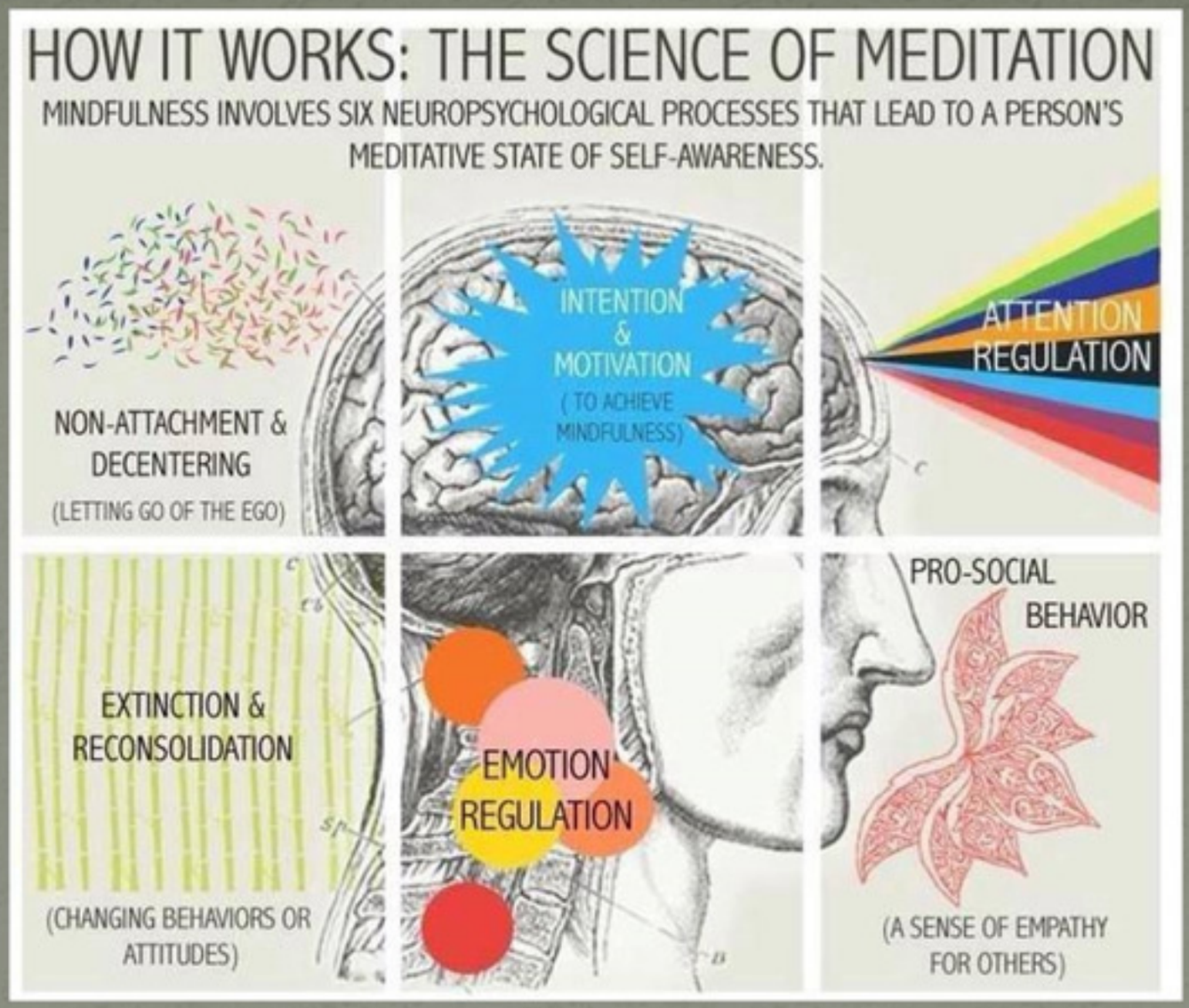
Mindfulness in Society

Increasingly, it is being understood that mindful awareness is a cultivatable skill with broad applications through all aspects of society, including education, prison system, politics, business, and even the training of soldiers.

The Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindfulness...

Changes the Brain in Positive Ways



Shows how the brain changes in positive ways with meditation!

Overcoming Fear and Anger

Neuroplasticity

- Recent research in neuroscience shows that we have the power to influence our brains.
- When we think certain thoughts, it strengthens those neural circuits. *Mental States Become Neural Traits!*
- Self-Directed Neuroplasticity =
  Nurture positive states of mind
  to strengthen and build those neural networks.

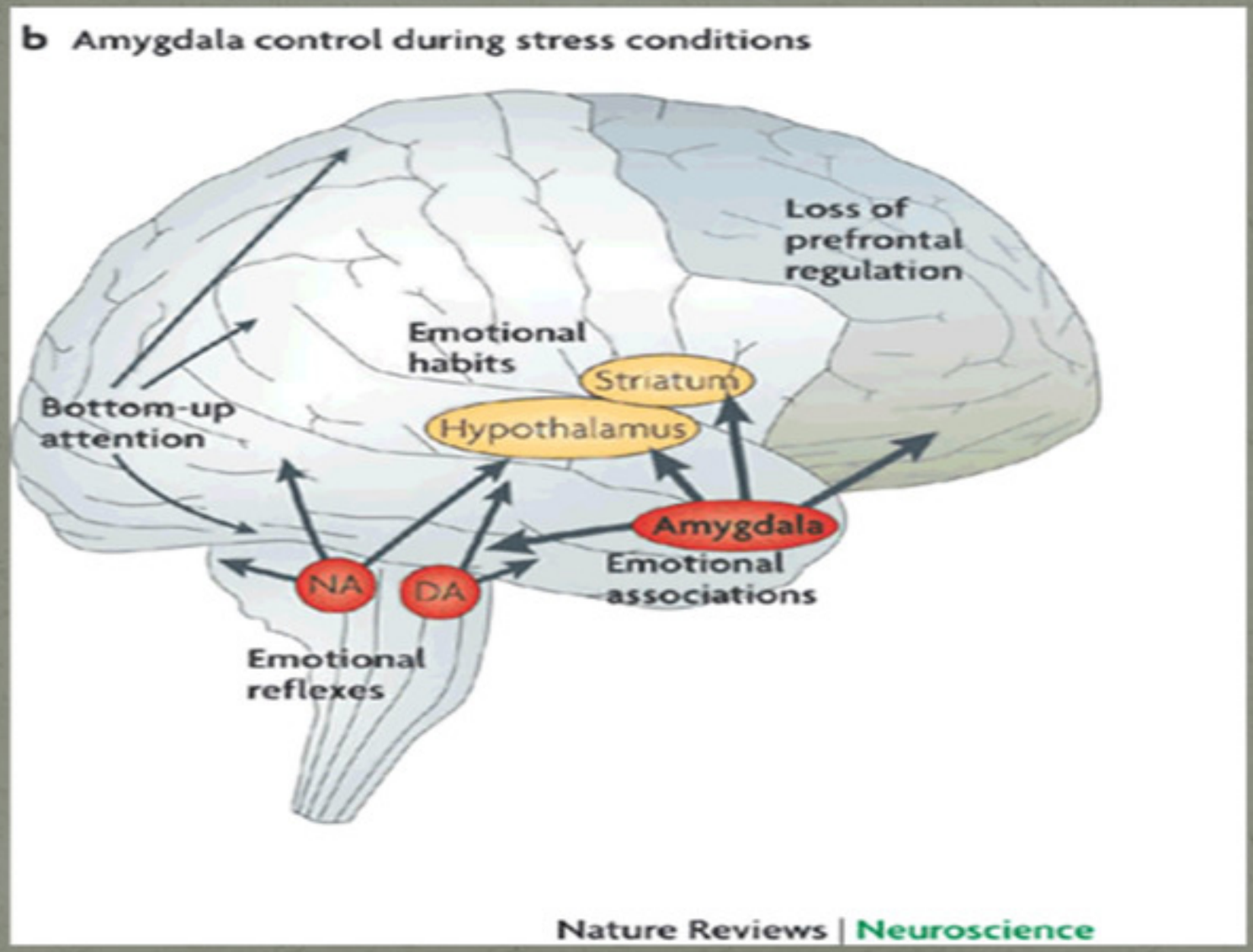
Pro-Social Behavior

- Impulse Regulation
- Emotional Awareness
- Compassion & Empathy
- Forgiveness

Mindfulness...

Helps Balance the Nervous System

Stress Response

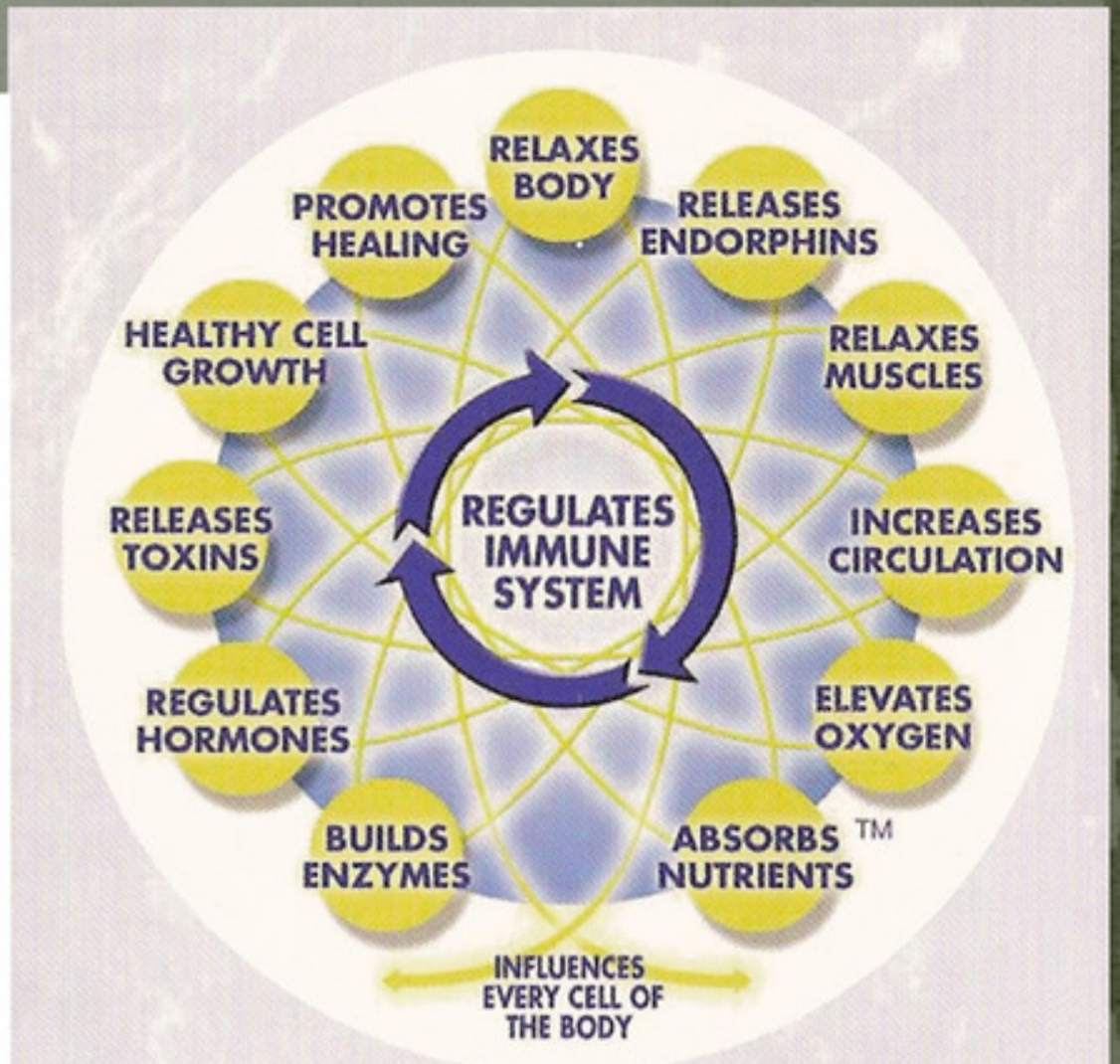


Relaxation Response

Relaxation

"The relaxation response is
a physical state of deep rest
that changes the physical and emotional
responses to stress... and the opposite of the
fight or flight response."

-- Herbert Benson, M.D.
Associate Professor of Medicine, Harvard Medical School



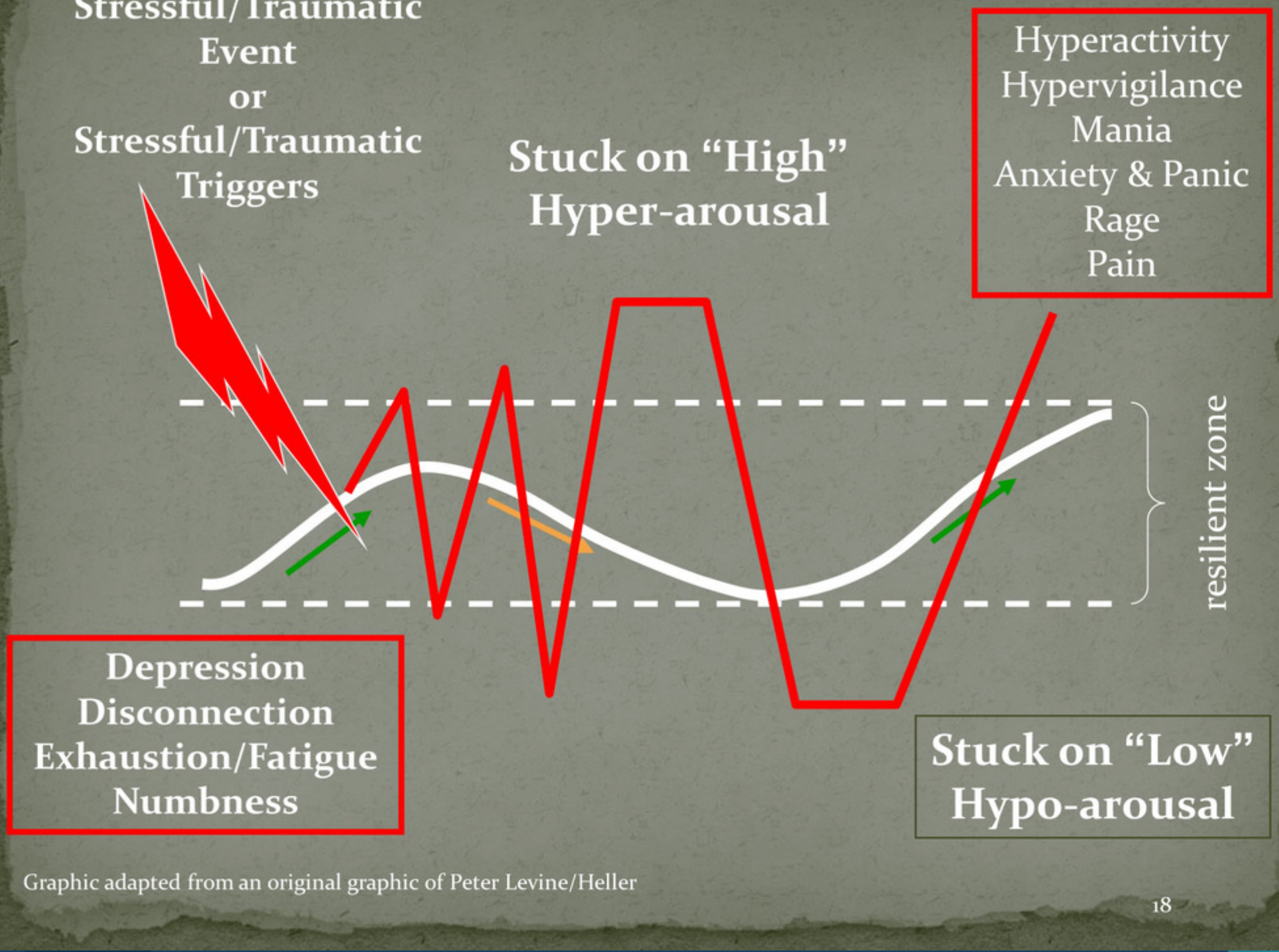
Mindfulness...

Improves Self-Regulation

The Resilient Zone

In our "Resilient Zone" we have the best capacity for flexibilty and adaptability in mind, body and spirit.

Mindfulness helps deepen the Resilient Zone



Graphic adapted from an original graphic of Peter Levine/Heller

Let's Practice!

Mindful Breathing and Body Scan

Trains the mind to settle, let go of mental clutter, and focus in the present moment. Connects mind with body.

- Find a comfortable position.
- Scan through the body and release unnecessary tension.
- Bring attention to the body with an attitude of friendly curiosity.
- Tune into the sensations of your body breathing and focus your attention on the feel of the breath coming in and out.
- When your mind wanders, notice, and gently guide attention back to the breath (over and over again).
- Practice for 5-30 minutes daily for lasting positive results.

Body Scan Meditation

Connects mind with body. Increases ability to track body sensations. Grounds attention in the present moment. Increases insight into changing nature of sensation. Trains mind to tolerate sensation with greater equanimity.

- Bring curious, friendly attention to the sensations in your feet. Feel vs think.
- Gradually move your way up the body...feeling the ankles, lower legs, knees, upper legs.
- Feel sensations in the lower back, middle back, and upper back.
- Notice sensations in the pelvis, abdomen, and chest.
- Sense the fingers, hands, wrists, forearms, elbows, and upper arms.
- Feel sensations in the shoulders. Notice any tension without judging it or trying to change it.
- Notice sensations in the neck, throat, jaw, and mouth.
- Sense the nose, eyes, forehead, ears, and head.
- Feel sensations in the whole body at once.

Next Steps

Regular Practice

- Create 'Mindful Pauses' throughout your day.
  - Take 1-5 minutes to practice slowing down, feeling the body, breathing more fully, letting go of thoughts, and returning to the present moment with gratitude and acceptance.

- Set aside 5-30 minutes a day for meditation, yoga, art, or another mindful activity you enjoy.

- Surround yourself with support. Get books, apps to learn more and keep you motivated the practice.