





Virtual School Leader Conference

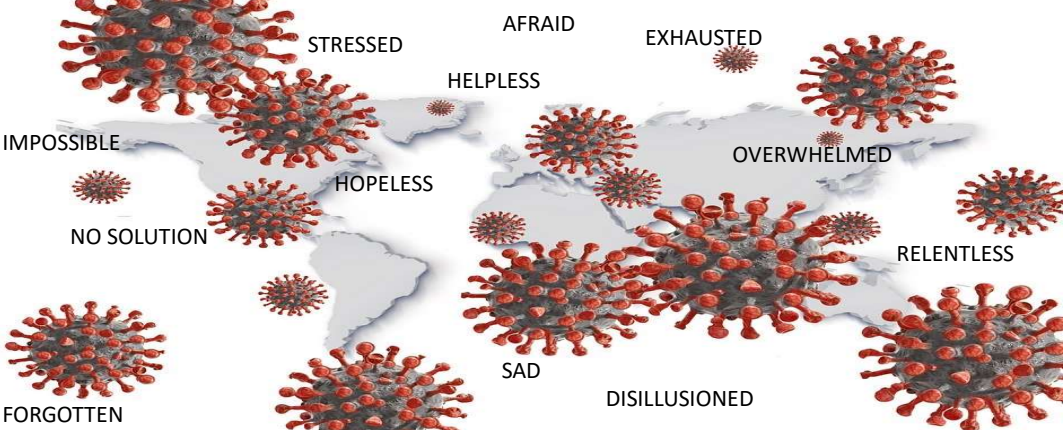
with **Kate Portman**
Psychotherapist
Friday 14th May
11:15-12pm

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2020 – 2021 LOSS OF ASSUMPTION



STRESSED AFRAID EXHAUSTED

HELPLESS OVERWHELMED

IMPOSSIBLE HOPELESS NO SOLUTION

RELENTLESS

FORGOTTEN SAD DISILLUSIONED

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Assumption

- “At the core of our internal world, we hold basic views of ourselves and our external world that represent our orientation....”

- The world is Benevolent
- The world is Meaningful
- The Self is Worthy
- Others are Reliable and Consistent

(Janoff-Bulman, 1992)



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- The world around us has changed
- Our sense of *Self* has shifted
- Others have challenged our unconsciously held assumptions

- Processes that were previously unconscious have become unrecognisable
 - Hand sanitising
 - Temperature checks
 - Sanitising equipment
 - Online learning/meetings



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- In the face of significant change; death, uncertainty &/or trauma disorientation can occur
- Pandemic has shattered our unconsciously held beliefs about our Self, the World and Others
 - Challenged beliefs about our own resilience, efficacy, ability to adapt, noticed aspects of our self that we were previously unaware of
 - Challenged beliefs about the world; it's predictability, safety, reliability.
 - Processes that were largely unconscious – walking into a shop – now hold a new weight of conscious processing
 - Challenged our beliefs about others; people may have behaved in ways that are surprising or upsetting, dissonance in social and family groups about adherence to distancing or vaccine uptake
- Everything that we held in our assumptive world view has been challenged in some way

Loss of Assumption

- In the event of trauma, or adversity, core assumptions are challenged
- Loss of the assumptive world can occur (Kaufmann, 2002)
 - The assumptions that have kept us steady are shattered
 - The world becomes an unpredictable, threatening place
 - Sense making is compromised
 - The reliance on *self* is diminished
- Sense of the future being predictable is compromised

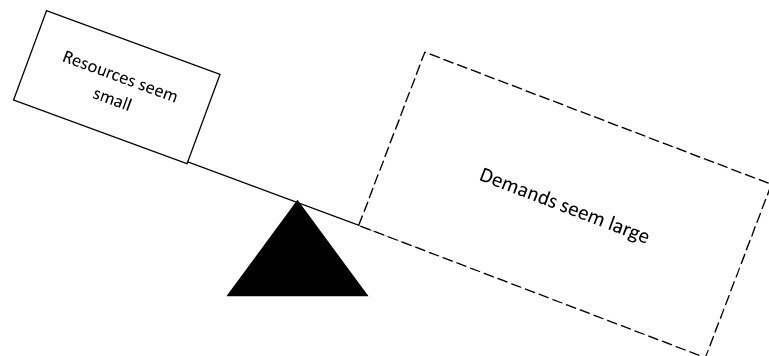
Disorientation = Dysregulation

- When the framework with which we unconsciously navigate our world is jarred a threat response is activated
- Threat response developed over millenia to preserve us as a species
- But.... It hasn't updated as quickly as we have evolved
 - Your brain struggles to distinguish between a physical threat & a threat to your ideals & assumptions



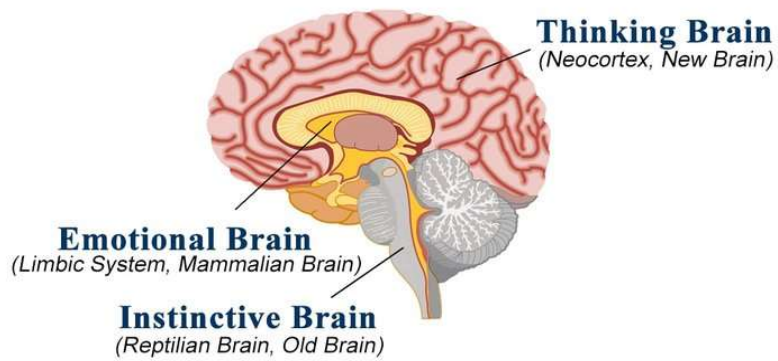
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Demands v's
Resources



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Meet your Three Brains



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- Brain stem and limbic system go into, & remain on, high alert
- Fight, flight or freeze
- Adrenaline
- Cortisol
- Areas of the cortex close down
- Unable to sooth and regulate
- Hyper Arousal = Hypervigilant
- Hypo Arousal = Dissociation



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Loss of Assumption - Fight, Flight, Freeze

- Cortisol and Adrenaline flood the brain and body to respond
- **Adrenaline** increases your heart rate, elevates your blood pressure and boosts energy supplies
- **Cortisol**, the primary stress hormone, increases sugars (glucose) in the bloodstream, enhances your brain's use of glucose and increases the availability of substances that repair tissues.
- Important that we return to baseline arousal



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De-Stress = Back to Baseline

- Activity
- Self-Care
- Social Connectedness
- Rest
- Relaxation



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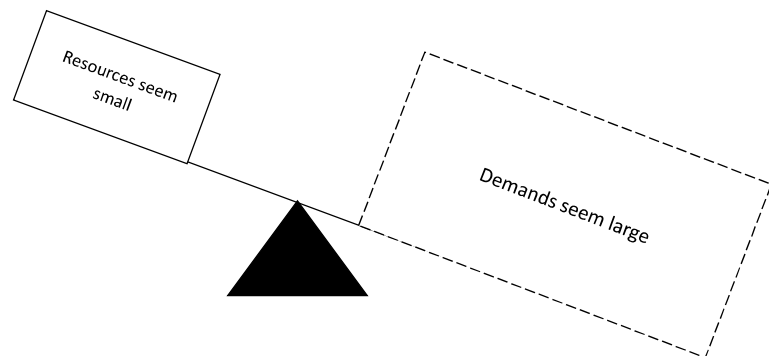
Usual Coping Responses Diminished

- Limited Exercise Options
 - Limited Social Contact
 - Vastly Reduced Opportunities for Self-Care
 - Limited Opportunities for Pleasurable Activities
- = Limited Psychological Capital

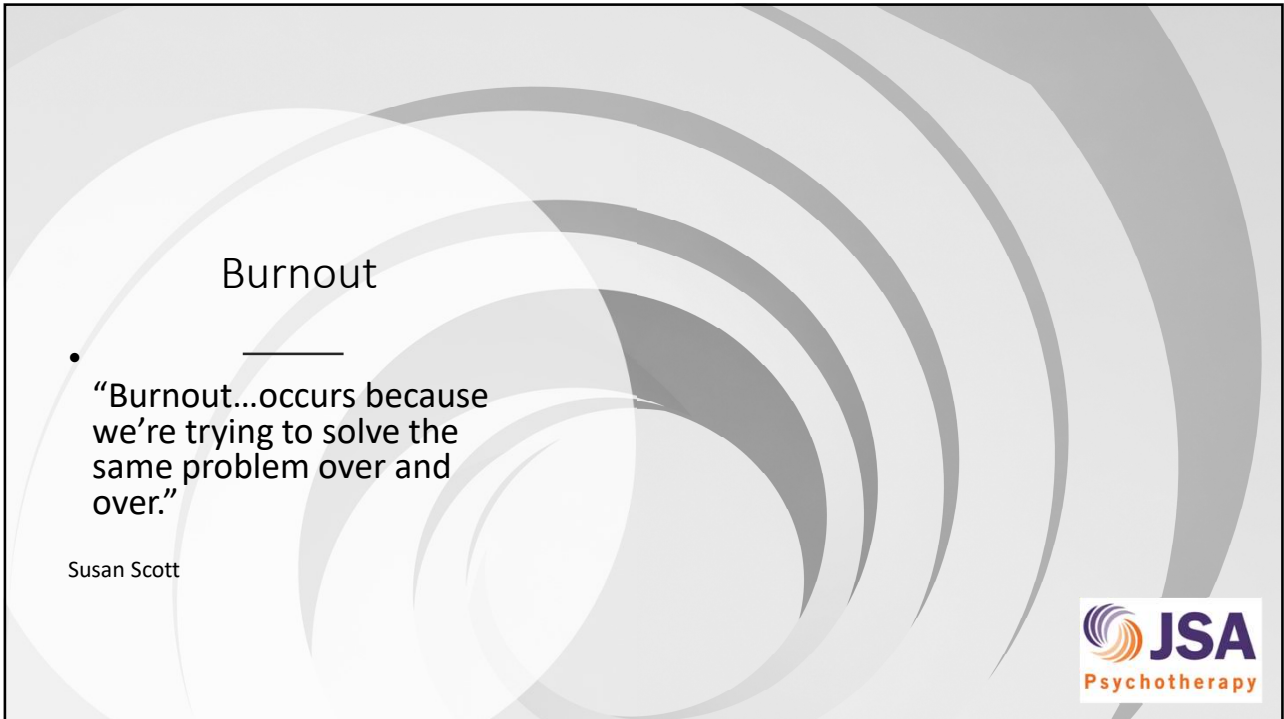


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Demands v's
Resources




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A slide with a background of overlapping, semi-transparent circles in shades of grey and white. The text is centered and left-aligned.

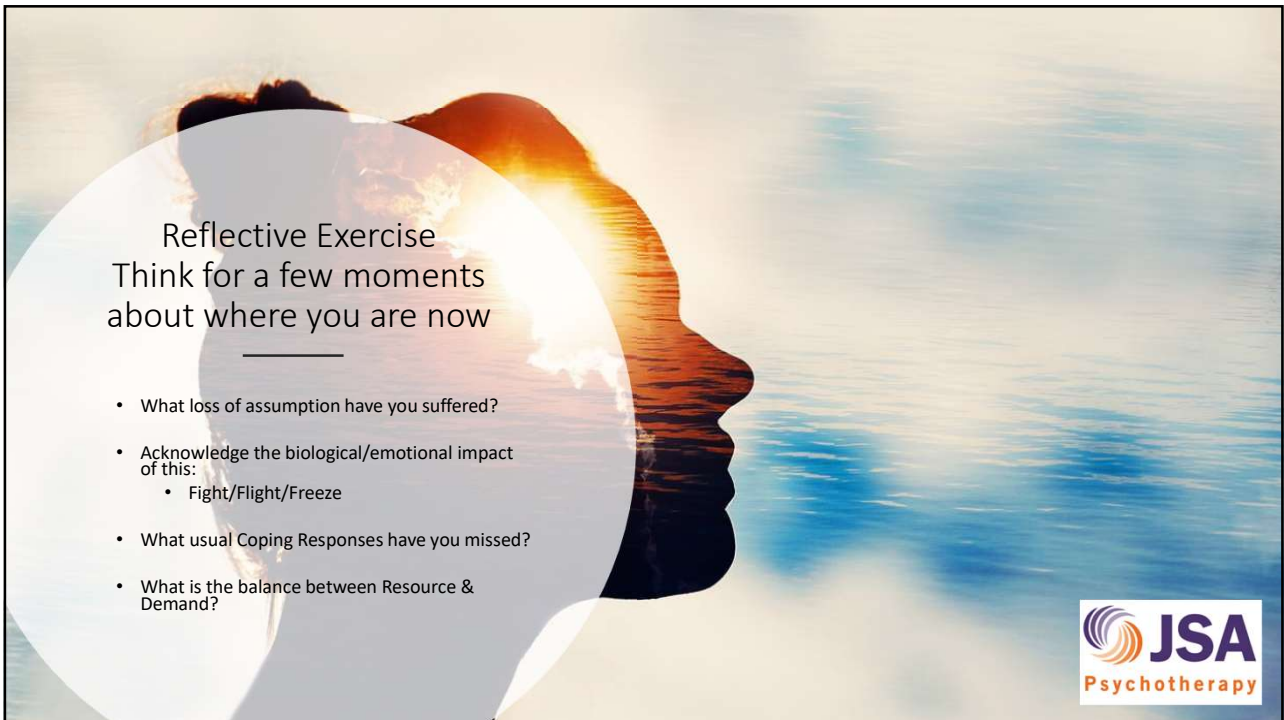
Burnout

- “Burnout...occurs because we’re trying to solve the same problem over and over.”

Susan Scott




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A slide with a background image of a sunset over water. A silhouette of a person's head is in profile, facing right. A semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the left side of the head, containing text.

Reflective Exercise

Think for a few moments about where you are now

- What loss of assumption have you suffered?
- Acknowledge the biological/emotional impact of this:
 - Fight/Flight/Freeze
- What usual Coping Responses have you missed?
- What is the balance between Resource & Demand?



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Watch Out.....Self and Others

- Small changes will have more impact than big events
 - Repeated 'snippy' emails, endless requests/demands, changes in routine
- Watch out for early signs
 - Poor sleep/early waking, reduced concentration, loss of motivation
- Reframe
 - Resilience is a skill set that needs to be exercised, some have more than others
- Individuals with strong sense of responsibility and/or perfectionism are more likely to burnout

(Dr Bill Mitchell, Armstrong & Partners, 2021)



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Finding a Way Out

- As lockdown eases the temptation will to return to *'normal'*
- Be vigilant for feeding the stress response by *'diving in'*
 - Pacing of activity & social contact important
- Self Care is important
- Supporting each other is important
 - Organisations have responsibility but managers are pivotal to supporting teams to recover



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Make Space for Connectedness



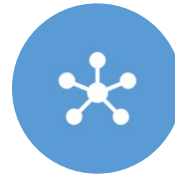
ACTIVITIES TO CREATE A SENSE OF INCLUSION AND CONNECTION



STRATEGIES TO CHECK IF PEOPLE ARE OK



SUPPORT IF THEY ARE NOT

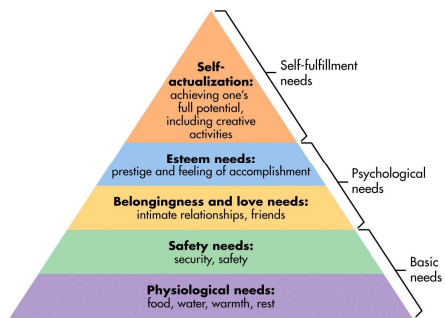


BRING THE FUN BACK – SOCIAL OPPORTUNITIES



- Need to Regulate
 - Speak to our Emotional Brain
 - Soothe Evolutionary System
 - Activate Compassion System
 - De-Activate Threat & Drive Systems

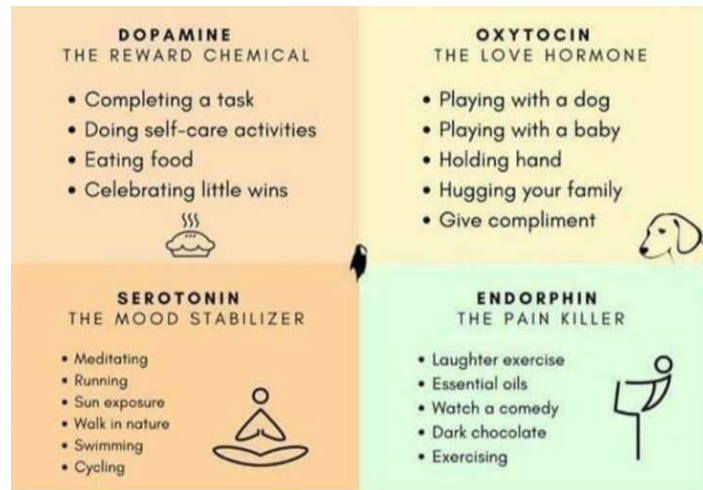
- Not a Linear Process



Suzanne Elliott & Marne Aston, 2020.



Emotion Regulation 'Hacks'



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Regulation Exercise

Focus on a time when you felt Safe & Connected or Calm & Centered

- Who are the people in your life who welcome & support this
 - At work, at home, in wider community, in your awareness
- What actions invite & nourish connection to this
- Where are the places where the felt sense of this is the strongest
- When are you most anchored in those states, bring those moments to your conscious awareness

- Now write them down
- Repeat the exercise & create a portfolio of safe, connected, calm, centered anchors
- Get in touch with them daily

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Regulate Self

- Noticing *Self*
- Self Care
- Noticing Others : Connecting
- Giving & Allowing Support
- Commitment to Valued Actions
- Build Psychological Capital
- Develops Resilience & Supports Regulation



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Regulate Self
to
Regulate Others

- Self Regulation promotes others Regulation
 - Humans synch
 - Leaders set the tone
 - Containing
 - Promotes Psychological Safety
- How can you build Regulation time/activities into your team?
- How can Regulation support team-working?
- How can Regulation support learning?



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JSA Training – Online Learning Platform

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- Auditing and assessment tools to help measure outcomes
- At least one title released per month
- Launching soon with at least 6 titles

