

WELL-BEING & SUPPORT

UW SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

Resilience and Emotional Intelligence

October 4, 2023

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Session One

Objectives: Develop understanding of resilience as a context dependent process and how emotional intelligence allows us to strategically choose how we respond to the world around us.

Content: Explore the keys to resilience, the behavioral practices that support individual resilience, our neurobiological response to stress and threats, how we can leverage emotional intelligence as a tool to disrupt our typical neurobiological response.

Take away: Gaining awareness of our emotional reactivity, learning how to increase the gap between stimulus and response, understanding the impact of our moods, learning to choose our responses.



Welcome to our 4-part series

- 1) Resilience and Emotional Intelligence
- 2) Compassion, Empathy, and Pursuing Kindness to Ourselves
- 3) Exploring Gratitude: Positive Emotions and Expansive Thinking
- 4) Coping with Uncertainty and the Effects of Chronic and Acute Stress on our Well-Being



Weather report

If you had to describe your current emotional state in terms of the weather, what are you experiencing right now?

Storms? Sun? Fog? Wind? Smoke?

We are going to practice with Slido to leverage some technology for interaction...



What is your internal weather report right now?

The UW Resilience Lab

Challenge, risk, and failure are essential to growth and learning

RESILIENCE LAB

UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

The greatest learning happens when you push yourself to the edge of what you are capable of doing.

On that edge, you will experience setback, struggle, and failures—all of which provide an opportunity for growth. Learn how to take risks, face challenges in and out of the classroom, and ultimately—*fail forward*.

UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

Tracie Jackson,
Louisiana
Justice Institute

Is Resilience a
Trait,
Characteristic,
or Process?

Stop calling me
RESILIENT.
Because every time you say,
“Oh, they’re resilient,”
that means you can do something else to me.
I am not resilient.

*Tracie L. Jackson,
Louisiana Justice Institute*

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RESILIENT.

The Resilience Trajectory

Evolving Conceptualizations of Resilience
Trait (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 1994)



Fixed Internal

Characteristic (Conner Davidson, 2002)



Dynamic internal

Process (Windle, 2011; Hjemdal, 2006)

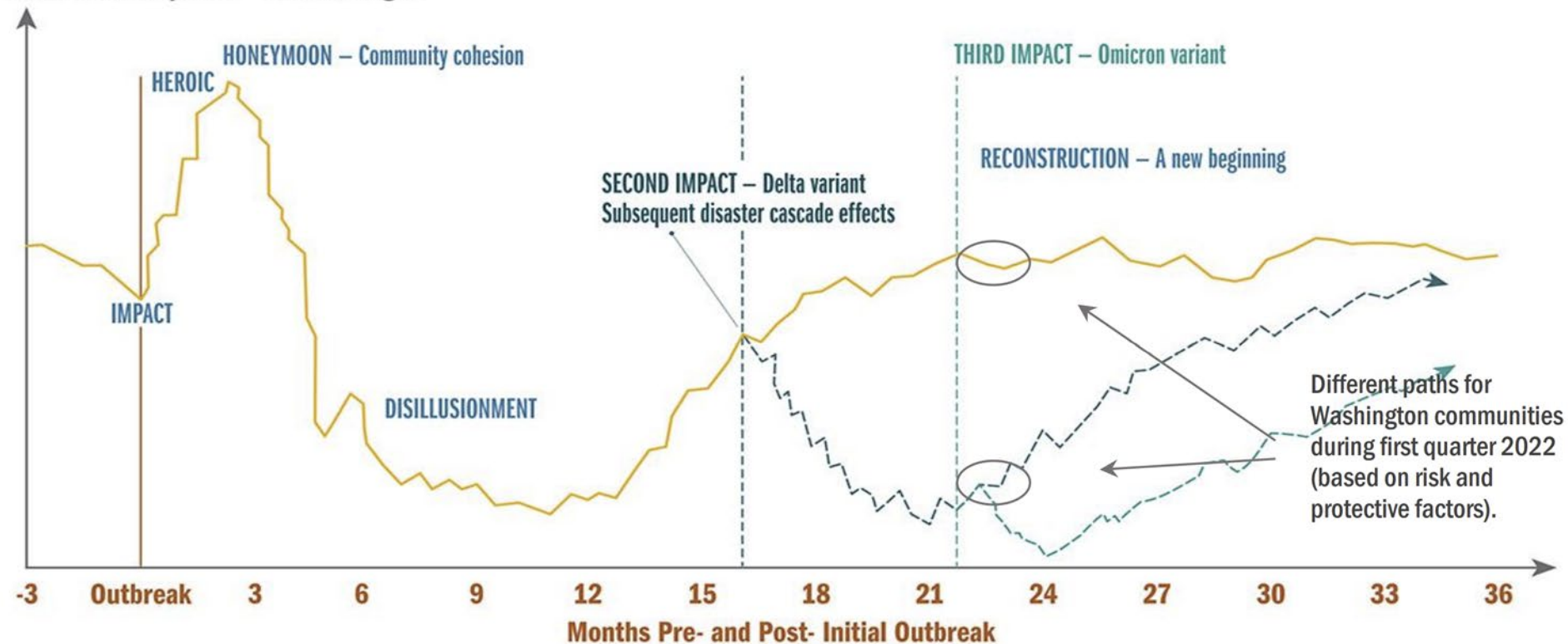
Dynamic experience of internal and
external assets and resources



Reactions and Behavioral Symptoms in a Disaster

Reactions and Behavioral Health Symptoms in Disasters – COVID-19

Emotional Response – Lows to Highs



It's important to note...

Chronic versus Acute stress

- COVID-19
- Racism
- Social and Political Divisions

Systemic Issues and Individual Response

- Individual coping skills cannot serve as Band-Aids for systemic issues

Malleability and Adaptability

—— Resilience coping is learnable!

Neuroplasticity of the Brain



What we think, do, and pay attention to
changes the structure and function on our
brains!

Why Study Resilience?

- Researchers started looking at ACEs
 - Adverse childhood experience
- For those who thrived in the face of adversity – what allowed them to beat the odds?

The Keys to Resilience

- Cultivating Healthy Attachments and Connections
- Cultivating Positive Emotions
- Cultivating a Sense of Purpose



Cultivate a Positive Lens

Practicing Gratitude

- What are you thankful for in your life?
- Write people thank you letters
- Keep a journal and write in it weekly

Why? Breaks a cycle of rumination on negative thoughts and feelings

Behavioral Practices for Resilience

R – Relationships

E – Exercise

F – Fun; Recreation & Enjoyable Activities

R – Relaxation & Stress Management

E – Eat Well – Nutrition & Diet

S – Sufficient Sleep

H – Helping others

E – Earth – Time in Nature

R – Reason – Sense of Purpose (Religiosity & Spirituality)



Reflections

- How do you cultivate each of the keys to experiencing resilience?
- What are the behavioral practices for resilience that you are working on improving / doing more of in your life?

The Keys to Resilience

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Cultivating Positive Emotions

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Behavioral Practices for Resilience

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Which REFRESHERs do you want to focus on doing more over the next two weeks?

How do we react to failure?

Our threat defense mechanism still relies on a reptilian brain

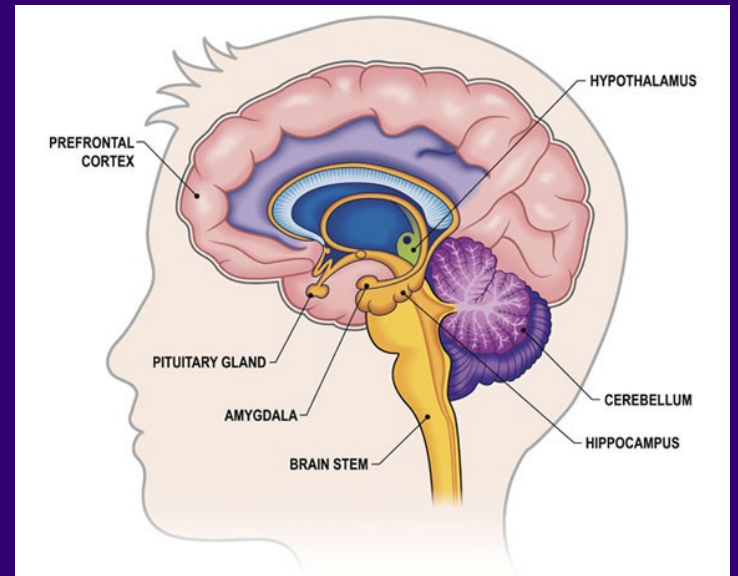
- Cortisol and adrenaline response
- A threat to our self-concept get the same reaction as a lion chase!

Amygdala Hijacking!

Fight: Self-Critique

Flight: Isolate

Freeze: Rumination



Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.

-Viktor Frankl

Emotional Intelligence

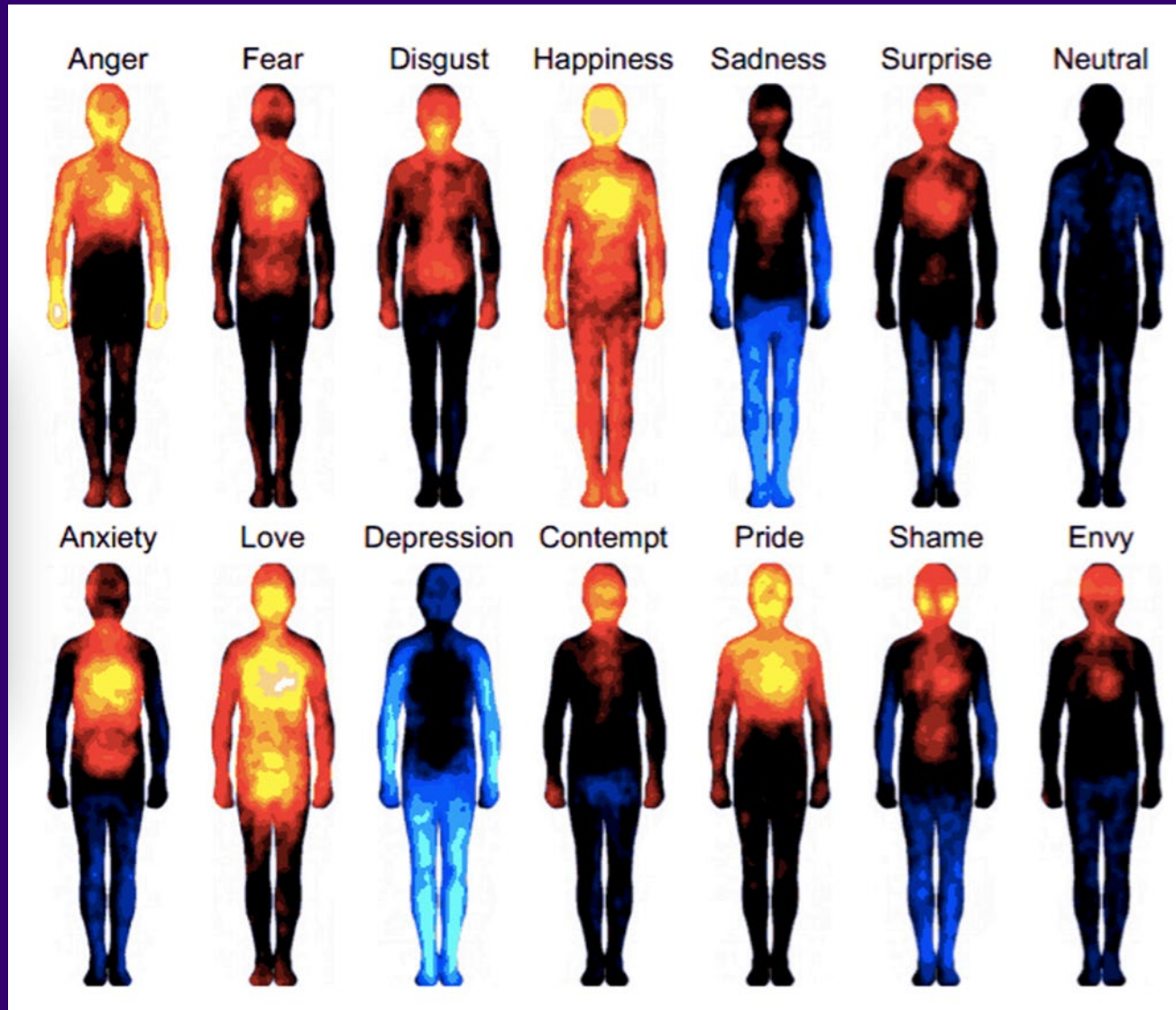
If you don't manage your emotions, they will manage you



Emotions are Information

- Emotions
 - Trigger a physical response, sudden and unexpected
- Feelings
 - Intellectual, private psychological experience
- Mood
 - Prolonged emotional state, defuse, stickiness of recent events
- Dispositional Affect
 - Usual or automatic response, how you move through the world

Emotions & Feelings in the Body



Existential to Experiential

“I am angry”

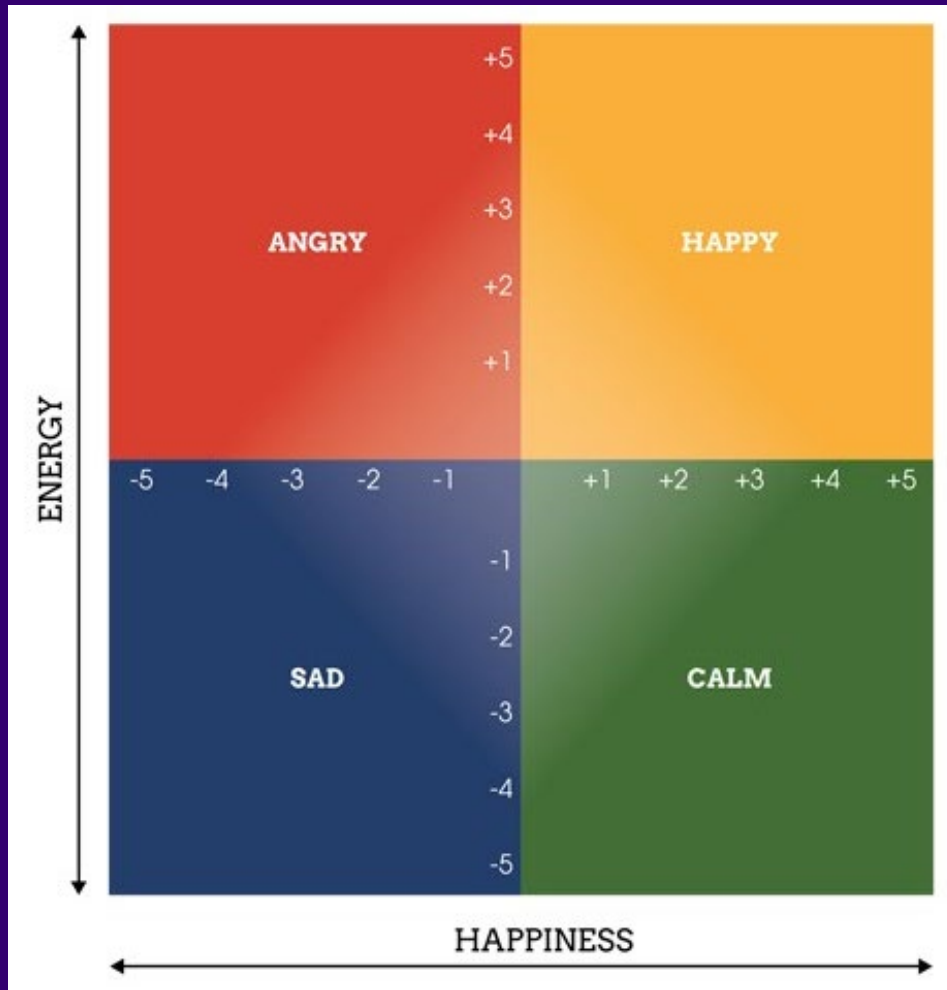
to

“I experience anger in my body”

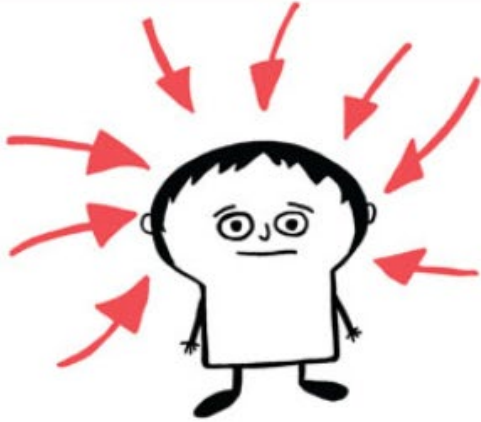


Mood Meter

Where are you right now?



Emotional Intelligence



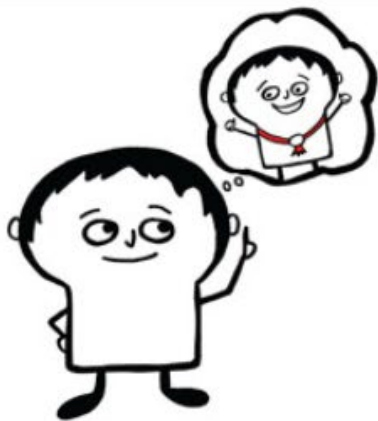
1. Something happens



2. Sense



3. Stop



4. See your best self



5. Strategize

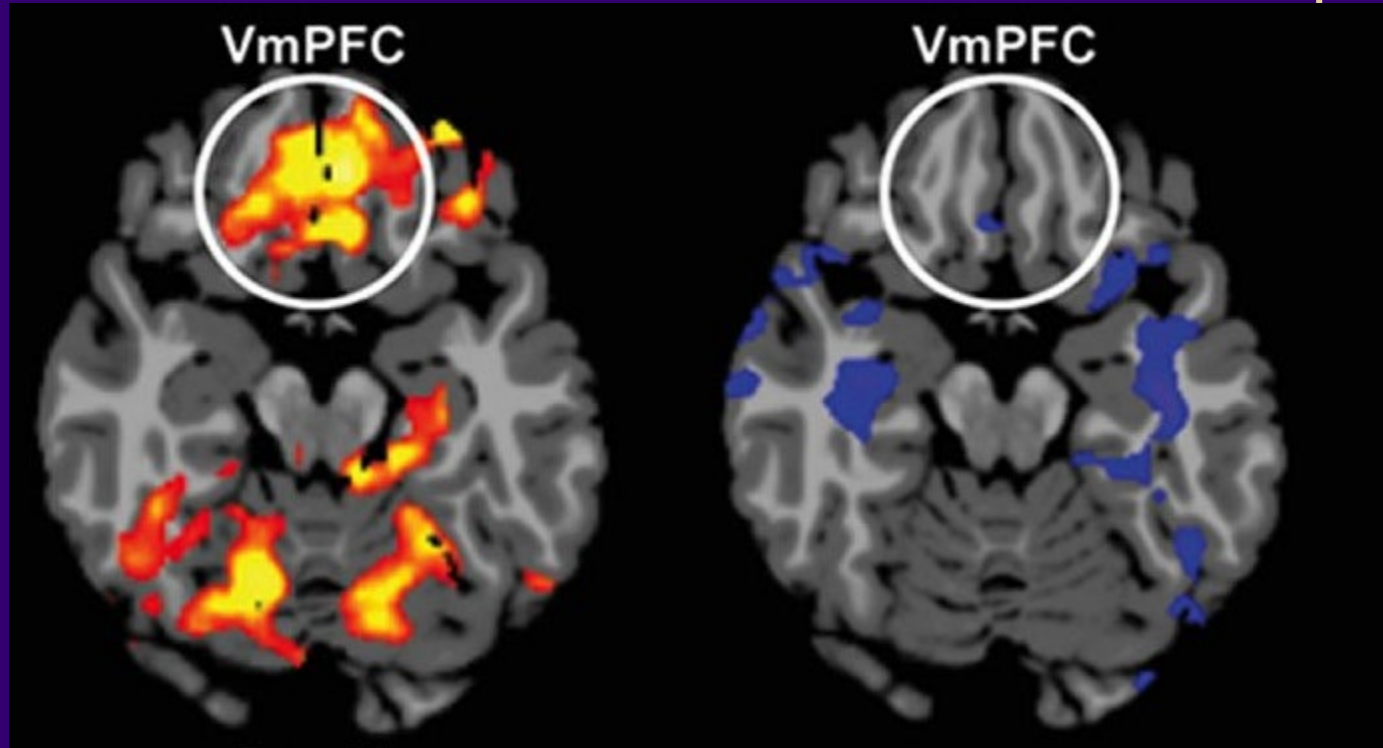


6. Succeed!

Dynamic Brain Changes During Stress

Resilience Coping

Non-Resilience Coping



Emotional regulation, decision making,
risk & fear processing

Changes in the Brain

Dr. Ralf Greenwald

CWU, Psychology, Veteran



- Brain plasticity: Can be good or bad. Bad Plasticity comes from frequently occurring or chronic stress, addiction, long term high cortisol levels = loss of neural branches.
- Good Plasticity comes from acute stress to strengthen your brain and nervous system.
- Stress-Inoculation develops an adaptive stress response to stressors and allows for emotional control during stress = neuroflexibility

Reflections

- What does fight, flight, and freeze look like for you?
- What do you feel in your body when you are under stress?
- Are you able to identify the emotions you are experiencing in real-time?



What does fight, flight, freeze look like for you?

Looking Forward

What do you take away?

- What stands out to you?
- How does this shift how you move through your work?
- What do you hope to share with others?



What do you want to take away from today's session?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

THANK YOU

Compassion, Empathy, and Pursuing Kindness to Ourselves

Wednesday, November 1, from 2-3pm PST by Zoom

Objectives: Explore how compassion for others and for ourselves can support our well-being through an exploration of research and practices.

Content: Revisit our neurobiological response to threats and stress through the lens of self-compassion as a way of disrupting our fight, flight, and freeze response with self-kindness, common humanity, and mindful awareness. Explore the differences between empathy and compassion and how the pro-social emotion of compassion is generative towards our well-being. Look at how mirror neurons operate and amplify emotions around us with a focus on how calm is just as contagious as fear and anxiety.

Take Away: Getting stuck in the experience of empathy while engaging in critical work of providing care for people and their families experiencing health challenges can lead to burnout. Supporting the growth of self-compassion will promote folks' ability to stay engaged with patients, families, and the broader community during challenging exchanges.