

# Morningstar

Counseling





# 7 Generations

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

The 7 Generations Behavioral Health Center of Excellence aims to improve behavioral health for American Indian and Alaska Native community members by:

Soliciting Guidance from National Experts, Holistic Healers and Community Members

Providing Training and Offering Technical Assistance

Developing Leaders

Impacting Policy



# Centering Collective Wellness: Identifying and Implementing Wellness Approaches for System and Community Healing

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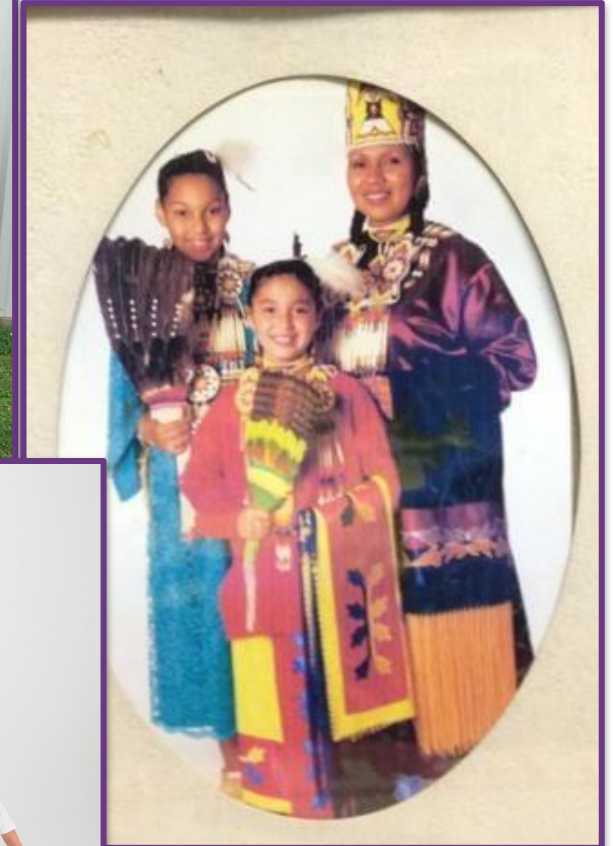
04/30/2026

[www.morningstar-counseling.com](http://www.morningstar-counseling.com)



# Introduction

- Ponca Tribe of Oklahoma
- Daughter, Sister, Mother, Aunt, Wife, Grandmother
- Personal Interest in Psychology
- Morningstar Counseling & Consultation, PC



# Introduction

- Biracial (Omaha Tribe of Nebraska)
- Daughter, Big Sister, Dog Mom
- Personal Interest in Psychology, Community/Youth Work



# Morning Objectives

- Understand how past trauma can directly affect the workplace, communication, trust, and services.
- Identify barriers that make it hard to use trauma-informed and culturally respectful practices.
- Recognize how cultural identity and community values can strengthen healing and resilience.

# About this Space

At Morningstar, we strive to create an inclusive and respectful space where everyone's experiences are valued. We recognize that language and experiences may impact each of us differently. While we do our best to communicate with care, we may not always get it right--please know any mistakes are unintentional and we welcome your feedback to help us learn and grow. Your well-being is our priority, so please take care of yourself as needed. Thank you for helping us build a community where everyone belongs.



# Group Norms: Safety Inclusion Choice Respect

# Culture Matters

## Honoring/Give away

Within Ponca culture, it is customary to give away. Poncas have four types of giveaways (Headman, 2020):

1. To give away (done anytime)
2. To cause someone to have (typically done at dances)
3. To give away everything (in response to death)
4. Of the deceased (giving away only the items used by the deceased)



# Why is this Important?

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## **From Family Scars to Organizational Dysfunction**

- Generational trauma can stem from various experiences, including war, abuse, racism, or historical oppression. These events leave deep scars that unconsciously shape behaviors and communication patterns within families. The same is true for organizations, particularly when viewed as a kind of "family" with hierarchical structures mirroring generations.

## **The Ripple Effect: How Trauma Travels Down the Hierarchy**

- Think of a workplace with a manager who constantly criticizes or micromanages, similar to a parent using harsh words. This creates a culture of fear and negativity that affects everyone. Employees under constant pressure experience

# Trauma Overview

SAMHSA (2022) describes trauma as “an event or circumstance resulting in:

- Physical harm
- Emotional harm
- and/or life threatening harm

The event or circumstance has lasting effects on the individual's:

- Mental health
- Physical health
- Emotional health
- Social well-being
- and/or physical well-being”

***An event that overwhelms a person's capacity to cope***

# Three Types of Trauma (CPI, 2022)

**Acute:** single overwhelming event

- Car accident
- Natural disaster
- Death

**Chronic:** long term exposure to traumatic events

- Violence, bullying
- Multiple out of home placements

**Complex:** traumatic with long term effects

- Mass casualty
- Refugee dislocation
- Boarding Schools

**Historical Trauma**

# Historical Trauma and the Impacts

One of the most systematic and successful programs of ethnic cleansing the world has seen

Relocated, starved, neglected, and forbidden to practice religious beliefs

Children were taken from them and “reeducated” so that their language, culture, and kinship patterns were lost to them.

There was no safe place to return or immigrate to. All were forced to relocate to areas that had no economic value to Europeans

Reservations “residents” were dependent on the government for food, shelter, and health care

Traditional ways were eradicated, and “residents” were forced to learn new ways of surviving that was often against cultural beliefs and practices, or impossible given the quality of lands they were placed upon.

# Historical Trauma and the Impacts

How does this impact our Tribal Communities?

Intentional

Intergenerational Trauma

Social Determinants of Health

Health Disparities

# Historical Relevance

## Historical Trauma

- Forced removal
- Boarding Schools
- Assimilation
- Sterilization
- Dehumanizing

## Historical Resilience

- Culture
- Collectivism
- Relationships
- Endurance
- Adaptability

# **Intergenerational Trauma**

Intergenerational trauma is the transmission of historical trauma effects across generations. It manifests in various ways, including psychological issues like depression and anxiety, substance abuse, and difficulties in forming healthy relationships. This type of trauma can be passed down through behavioral patterns and even genetic changes, as suggested by some research

# Intergenerational Impacts

Unresolved trauma/grief

Culture dismantled

Families and communities torn apart

Forced Culture

Parenting

Personal Example

# Intergenerational Impacts

## Impact of Intergenerational Trauma

- Substance abuse
- Low self-esteem
- Psychosomatic disorders
- Hypervigilance
- Unhealthy relationships
- Dysfunctional parenting



# Impact on Tribal Workplaces

## Emotional and Psychological Effects

- Window of Tolerance
- Emotional numbness, depression, anxiety (Thinking styles)
- Difficulty with concentration, decision-making, time management

## Interpersonal Relationships

- Difficulty with effective relationships with peers and instructors
- Mistrust and difficulties in collaboration and teamwork
- Conflict resolution difficulties

## Self-Esteem and Confidence

- Low self-esteem and self-doubt
- Not seeking growth opportunities and limiting potential for professional development

# Impact on Tribal Workplaces

## Burnout and Absenteeism

- Reduced engagement and increased absenteeism
- Lack of progress towards goals
- Lower organizational commitment
- Higher turnover rates

## Chronic Stress

- Difficulties concentrating and making decisions
- Difficulty managing time effectively
- Increased illness

## What do you see in your community?

- How do you see the impacts of intergenerational trauma in the community/classroom?

# Protective Factors

- Identification with Culture
- Family
- Connection with the Past
- Traditional Health Practices
- Adaptability
- Wisdom of Elders
- Spiritual Orientation

[www.psych.org](http://www.psych.org), 2010

- Enculturation
- Interconnection
- Tribal Language
- Ceremony and Pow Wow
- Spirituality
- Ethnic Identity

Henson, Sabo, Trujillo, & Teufel-Shone, 2017

## Case Study

Charles is a 47 year old BHA Trainee. During a class on Family Systems, Charles shared his experience being in foster care and how he struggled in school as a result. He reports this lived experience will help him in this role because he understands the system and the needs of the children in the community. When Charles received guidance on partnering with a program he attended while in foster care, he became angry and stated “I know who to partner with for the youth!” Later, Charles was also asked to participate in a training for self-care and he refused stating “my culture is all I need”. Now, he seems to be working alone more in class, rarely shares his opinion, and has directly questioned you about your own cultural involvement.



# 15 Min Break

# Strategies for Healthy Communication

## Trauma-Informed Communication:

- Safety and Trust
- Empathy and Respect
- Active Listening

## Intergenerational Communication:

- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Avoiding Stereotypes

## Cultural Consciousness and Allyship:

- Cultural Awareness
- Allyship

## Non-Judgmental Interactions:

- Focus on behaviors not attributes
- Use calm, controlled communication

# Post-Traumatic Growth Defined

- Negative experiences can spur positive change
- Including a recognition of personal strength, the exploration of new possibilities, improved relationships, a greater appreciation for life, and spiritual growth.
- Posttraumatic growth often happens naturally, without psychotherapy or other formal intervention, it can be facilitated in five ways: through education, emotional regulation, disclosure, narrative development, and service.
- One can emerge stronger

Growth After Trauma, Harvard Business Review, 2020

# Historical Trauma and Posttraumatic Growth Framework

(Ortega-Williams, et al 2021)

- **Collective Strength**
  - “...social cohesion and mutual aid”
- **Collective Spiritual Change**
  - Ceremonies and rituals for restoration of hope
- **New Possibilities for Our Destiny**
  - Decolonization
- **New Relating to our Ancestors and Culture**
  - Connection to ancestors
- **Appreciation for Our Lives**
  - Interconnectedness of mass group





# Historical Trauma and Posttraumatic Growth Framework

(Ortega-Williams, et al 2020)

- Social Transformation
- There is no “Post”
- Systemic violence and discrimination
- Mass group-level growth and healing

# Posttraumatic Growth Studies

Post-traumatic growth (PTG): theory that explains this kind of transformation following trauma

Developed by psychologists Richard Tedeschi, PhD, and Lawrence Calhoun, PhD, in the mid-1990s

Holds that people who endure psychological struggle following adversity can often see positive growth afterward



Posttraumatic Stress and Posttraumatic Growth Among Low-Income Mothers who Survived Hurricane Katrina (2013)



new appreciation for life, a newfound sense of personal strength and a new focus on helping others

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# PTG is Different than Resilience

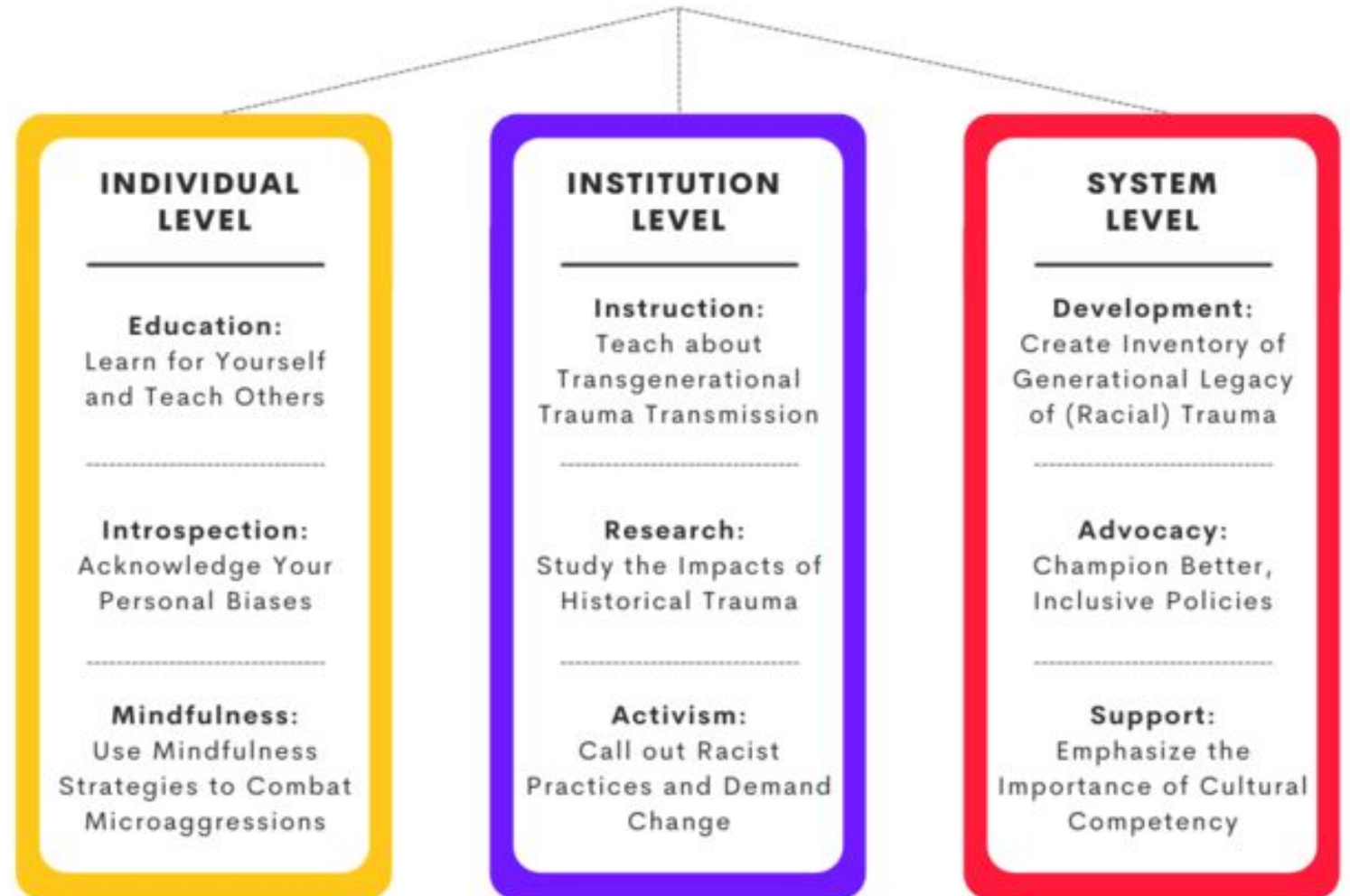
- Resiliency is the personal attribute or ability to bounce back
- PTG can occur when someone who has difficulty bouncing back experiences a traumatic event that rocks them to their core
- PTG people experience:
  - challenge to their core beliefs
  - psychological struggle to make sense of the
  - and
  - ultimately find a sense of personal growth

HEALING FROM AND DEALING WITH

# Generational Trauma

## Guidance for Action Plan

## Communication Interaction Environment



# Guidance for Action Plan

Communication  
Interaction  
Environment

## ACTION PLAN GUIDANCE

ADDRESSING  
GENERATIONAL TRAUMA  
IN THE WORKPLACE

| FEATURES      | INDIVIDUAL | PROGRAM | TRIBAL/VILLAGE |
|---------------|------------|---------|----------------|
| Communication |            |         |                |
| Interaction   |            |         |                |
| Environment   |            |         |                |
|               |            |         |                |
|               |            |         |                |

# What are values?

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- Values themselves are neutral and provide guidance on how we understand and move through the world, however we often measure our expressions of values as “good” or “bad”
- Cultural values are often taught long before we have language for them
- Values are created and passed down through:
  - Family roles
  - Stories
  - Expectations
  - Observation
  - Strategies for coping and survival
- What origin stories do you know about your cultural, family, or personal values?

# Honoring the Value or Surviving the System?

**When we do not take time to understand the impact of trauma, the survival behaviors we learned can become rooted as values, traits, and ways of doing and thinking**

When attempting to balance and heal, we have to recognize the push and pull from:

- Historical and Intergenerational Trauma
- Colonization and Systemic Oppression
- Cultural and Family Values/Roles
- Gendered Roles
- Financial Resources
- Personal Values, Goals, and Responsibilities



**MINUTE TO  
WIN IT!!!**

# Value Examples

Humility

Kindness

Stability

Family

Community

Generosity

Resourcefulness

Humor

Responsibility

Respect

Nature

Honesty

**What do words like strength and weakness mean to you?**

**How were those values learned or discussed in your family/community/personally?**

**What are the benefits and challenges of upholding that value?**

**How do you make decisions on when values are/are not prioritized?**

# Expressions of Values

## Healthy

- Allows for the space needed to meet personal and community needs
- Encourages connection without self-erasure
- Supports emotional expression
- Adjustable and develops across life

## Unhealthy

- Causes harm to yourself or others
- Pressured consent/lack of consent (increased feelings of obligation)
- Increased feelings of guilt, shame, or isolation
- Erasure of the self

# How to Address and Reframe Values

- **Name the origin without blame**
  - “This made sense for times of survival, but it may not work the same way now.”
- **Reframe boundaries to forms of personal and community protection**
  - Boundaries are a way of honoring relationships, not abandoning them
- **Separate the value from the behavior**
  - The value remains while the expression changes
- **Invite choice and agency**
  - Is this value being lived? From fear, obligation, or connection?
  - How might I express this value?

# Values on a Spectrum:

## Examples of Protective Values

- **Collectivism:** giving & receiving support, shared responsibility without self-erasure
- **Interdependence:** strength in community not isolation, knowing when to lean and when to lead
- **Storytelling:** process hardships through humor and teaching with community rather than in isolation
- **Respect:** consent, emotional safety, and accountability (not compliance)

**What protective values do you see in your communities?**

# How to Values Become Protective?

- Reduced isolation and shame
- Stronger identity and self-worth
- Increased help-seeking and support utilization
- Healthier boundaries across generations
- Community resilience and sustainability
- **Examples of Values in Action:**
  - Responsibility: A student asking for help
  - Leadership: A staff member modeling rest and boundary-setting



# Lunch

Morning Session -Centering  
Collective Wellness: Identifying  
and Implementing Wellness



Health Aide Forum

# Afternoon Objectives

- Use trauma-informed ideas when writing notes and working with clients.
- Learn the difference between stress, burnout, compassion fatigue, and secondary trauma, and create a self-care action plan.
- Create a brief plan to support wellness, fairness, and cultural safety in their workplace.



# Group Norms: Safety Inclusion Choice Respect

# Documentation...

- Discussion
- Trauma informed
- Language
- Skills for timely completion



# Documentation...

- How can documentation be trauma informed?
  - Safety
  - Trustworthiness & Transparency
  - Peer Support
  - Collaboration & Mutuality
  - Empowerment Voice and Choice
  - Cultural, Historical, Gender Issues

# Documentation...

- Language
  - Awareness of stigmatizing language
    - See handout (Stigmatizing Terms)
  - Objective
    - Observable facts (Nonjudgmental language)
  - Culturally Responsive Language
    - See handout (Word Bank)

# Stigmatizing Language

| Terms that Stigmatize               | Alternatives                                | Rationale                                                                                                                 | Cultural Lens Considerations                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Committed Suicide                   | Died by Suicide                             | Negative connotation as a crime or that they have done something wrong and overlooks the needs or state of the individual | Understand the language used across cultures and adapt language to their beliefs                                                   |
| Suicide victim                      | They died by suicide                        | Person-first language and respects their experience rather than labeling.                                                 | Understand the language used across cultures and adapt language to their beliefs                                                   |
| Completed suicide                   | Died by suicide                             | Suggests that their death by suicide was a positive                                                                       | Understand the language used across cultures and adapt language to their beliefs                                                   |
| Jane/John is suicidal               | Jane/John is experiencing suicidal thoughts | The individual is not defined by these thoughts. They are more than these thoughts alone                                  | Consider the impacts to identity and this unintentionally naming this person.                                                      |
| Failed/unsuccessful suicide attempt | Suicide attempt                             | Implies success or failure is associated with suicide                                                                     | Consider the oppressive nature associated with the language of success or failure in response to the potential death of a relative |

# Objective Language

## Objective

- Fact Based
- Observable
- Neutral

*The house was quiet and four adults were present.*

## Judgmental

- Opinion
- Biased
- Conclusion/Interpretation

*The room was unwelcoming and felt awkward.*

# Culturally Responsive

| Area of Functioning and Development | Cultural Activity                                                                               | Intervention                                                                                          | Theory(ies)                                            |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Emotional</b>                    | Prayer Ceremony: Smudge, Sweat, Singing/Listening, Beading, Sewing, Regalia Making              | Affective Regulation, Relaxation Skills, Distress Tolerance, Grounding Techniques, Mindfulness        | CBT, DBT, Mindfulness-Based Therapy,                   |
| <b>Behavioral</b>                   | Sweat, Clanship Systems, Protocols of Give-away, Dancing, Singing, Traditional Meal Preparation | Self-Regulation, Self-Advocacy, Safety Planning, Behavior Modification, Modeling, Behavioral Momentum | CBT, Behavioral Theory, Social Learning Theory         |
| <b>Relational/Social Skills</b>     | Give-away, Memorial/Culture Protocols, Storytelling, Community Gatherings                       | Communication Skills, Self-Advocacy, Boundary-Setting, Assertiveness Training, Conflict Resolution    | CBT, DBT, Family Systems Theory, Interpersonal Therapy |
| <b>Contextual Environmental</b>     | Protocols of ceremony, Clanship System, Community Rituals                                       | Boundary-setting, Safety Planning, Identifying Safe Adults/Peers,                                     | Ecological Systems Theory, CBT                         |

# Application/Practice

Rephrase with facts and observations:

Every room in the house was a mess and the baby is obviously neglected.

The mother was rude and disrespectful to the BHA during the interview.

# Documentation... Final Note

- Skills for timely completion
  - *Discussion/Collective Wisdom*
  - Additional Considerations:
    - During meetings or Window Rule
    - Templates
    - Dedicated writing time
    - Group writing

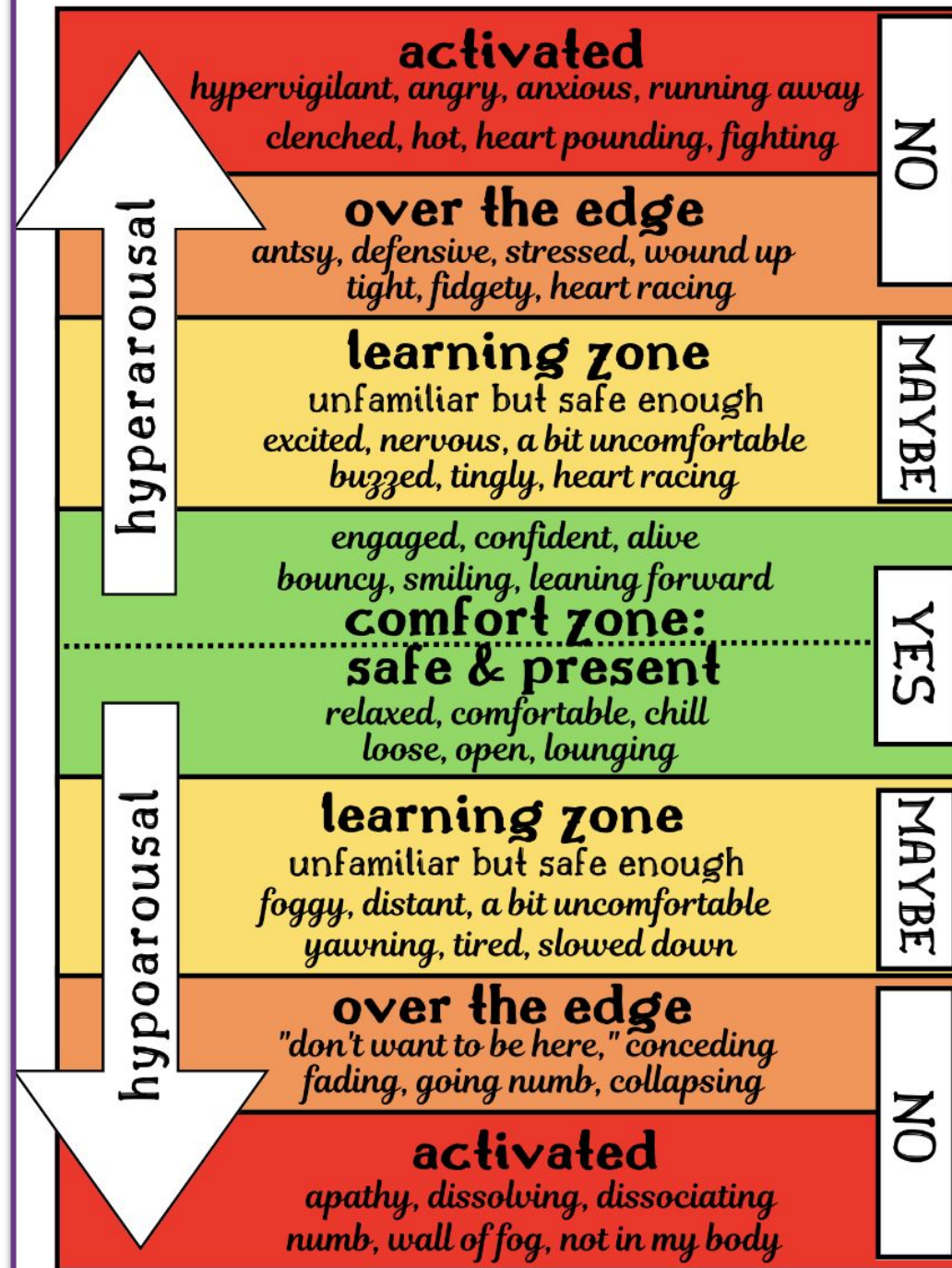
I wish i was this happy about washing dishes 🥰😊



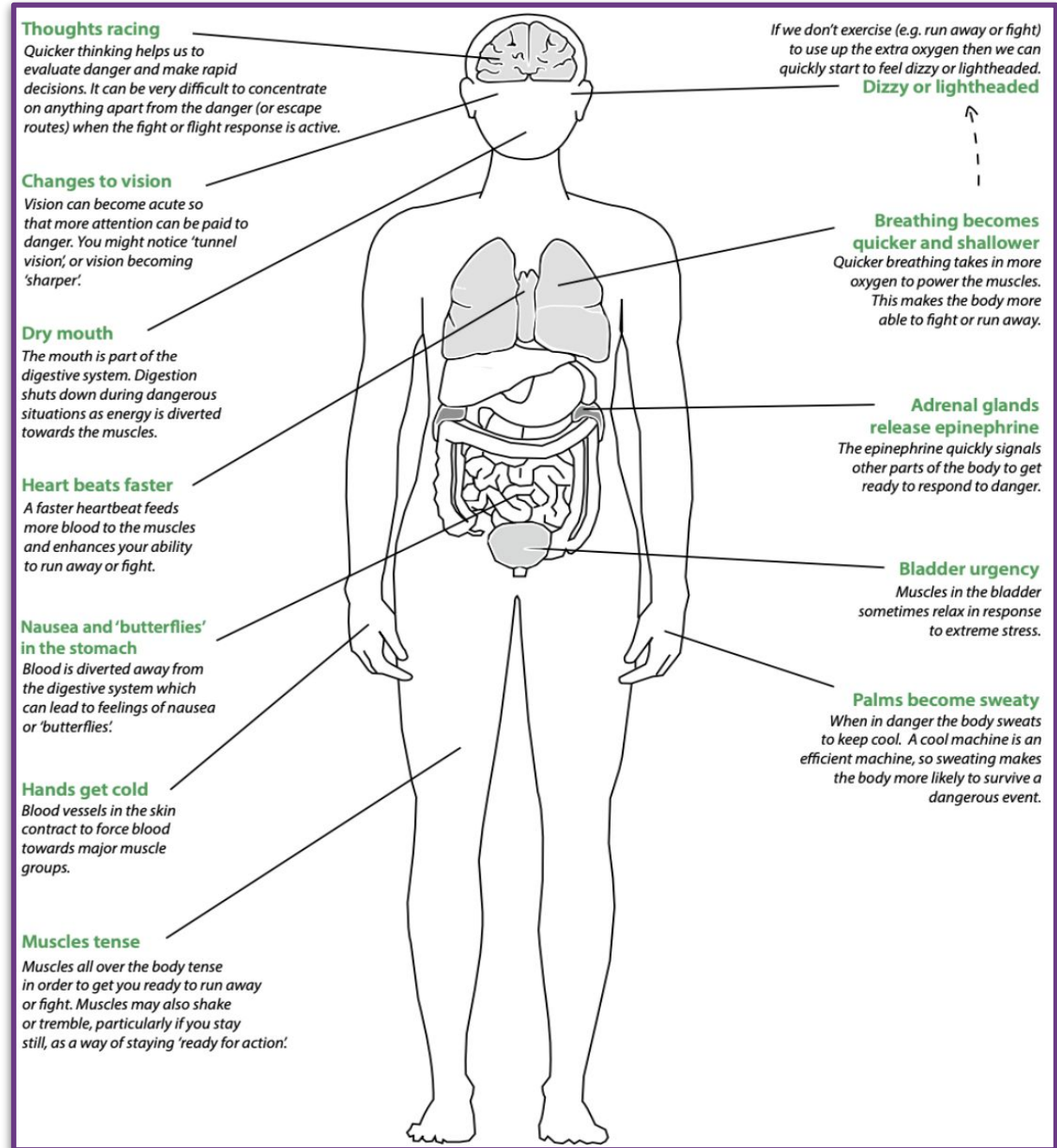
# What is stress?

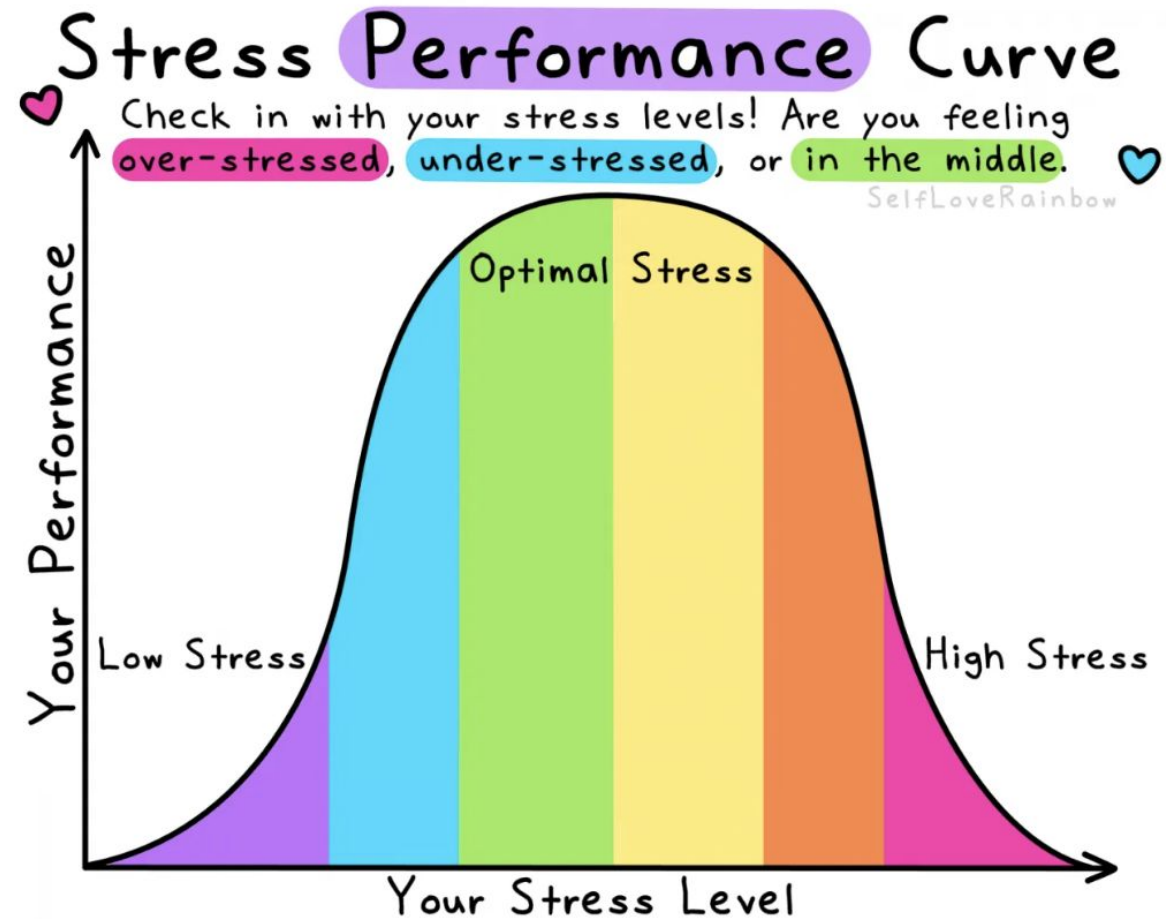
- Both a psychological and physical response
- Necessary, it's how we adapt to changes (real or imagined)
- Unavoidable, can be a normal, healthy part of life
  - Motivation
  - Productivity
  - Survival
- Stress vs. Distressed
  - Distressed: BAD stress that impairs your regular functioning, especially when chronic

# Window of Tolerance



# Impacts of Fight/Flight on the Body

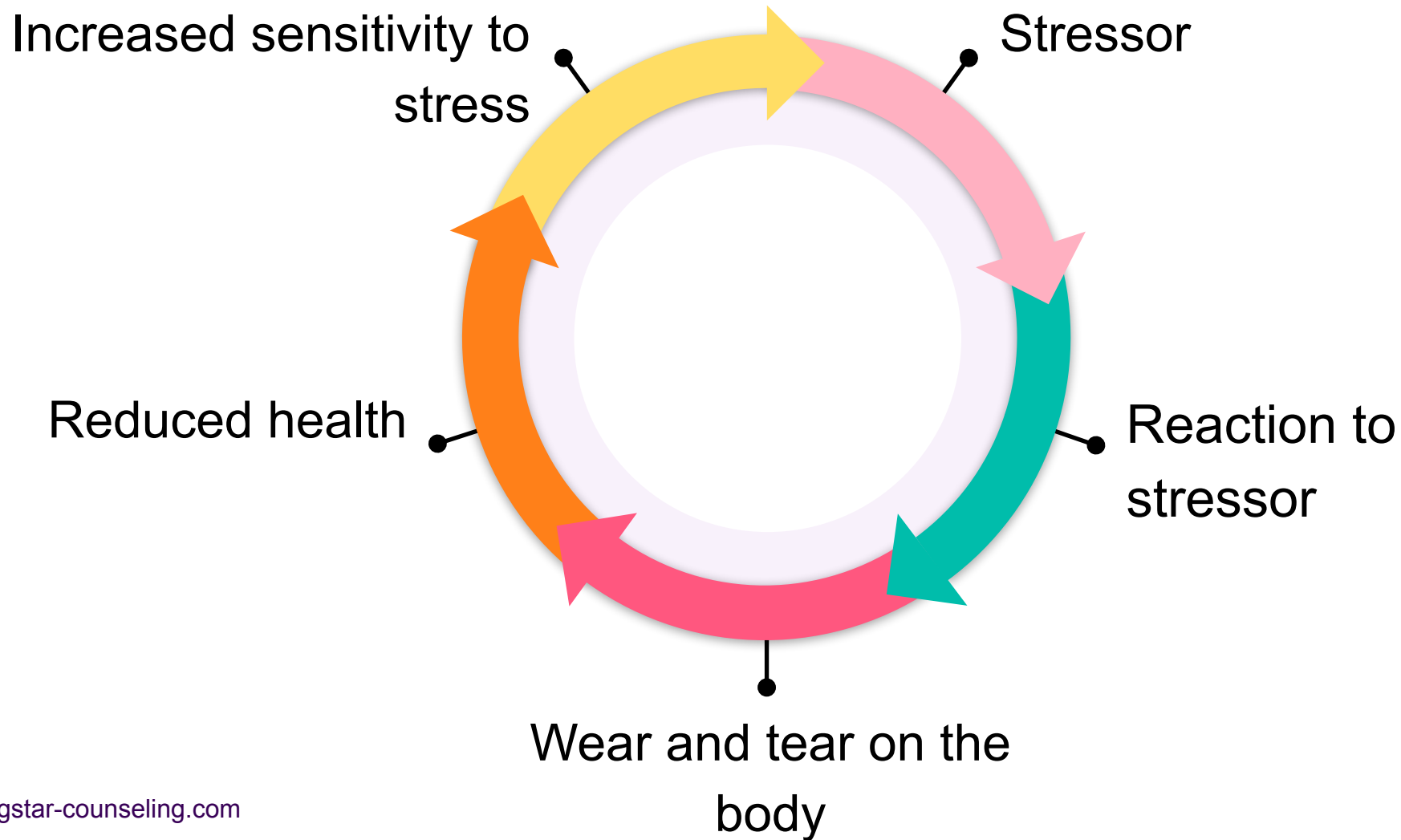




| Under-Stressed |             | Optimal Stress |             | Over-Stressed |         |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|-------------|---------------|---------|
| Bored          | Unmotivated | Creative       | Productive  | Overwhelm     | Burnout |
| Inactive       | Listless    | Focused        | Motivated   | Exhaustion    | Anxiety |
| Relaxed        | Laid Back   | Engaged        | In the Zone | Breakdown     | Panic   |

<https://www.selfloverainbow.com/the-stress-performance-curve/>

# Chronic Stress Cycle





# 15 Min Break

# What's the Difference?

## **Burnout**

Chronic stress leading to emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced motivation and productivity

## **Compassion Fatigue**

A reduced capacity to care due to chronic exposure to others' suffering

## **Secondary Traumatic Stress**

Trauma symptoms resulting from indirect exposure to others' trauma

## **Empathy Fatigue**

Emotional exhaustion from over-identifying with others' feelings without adequate boundaries

# Compassion Fatigue vs. Burnout

|                            | Compassion Fatigue                                                 | Burnout                                                              |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>How does it happen?</b> | Heavily reduced emotional resources and ability to feel compassion | High demand from stressors with little resources, support, or breaks |
| <b>Thoughts</b>            | “I have nothing left to give.”<br>“I’m numb to other’s pain.”      | “What’s the point?”<br>“I’m so drained.”                             |
| <b>Feelings</b>            | Numbness, irritability, sadness, detachment                        | Exhaustion, frustration, hopelessness, resentment                    |
| <b>Actions</b>             | Withdrawal from others, reduced empathy, avoidance                 | Decreased productivity, avoidance, disengaged                        |

# Empathy Fatigue vs. STS

|                            | Empathy Fatigue                                                          | Secondary Traumatic Stress                                         |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>How does it happen?</b> | Intense feelings for others without emotional regulation or boundaries   | Exposure to another's experiences of trauma                        |
| <b>Thoughts</b>            | "I feel everything they feel."<br>"I can't turn this off."               | "That could happen to me or my family."<br>"This world is unsafe." |
| <b>Feelings</b>            | Emotional overwhelm, body tension, fatigue, anxiety, over-identification | Fear, anxiety, intrusive distress, hypervigilance                  |
| <b>Actions</b>             | Over-involvement, difficulty separating work/home, emotional flooding    | Avoidance, trouble sleeping, intrusive thoughts, distress          |

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# How Do We Recover?

## **Burnout**

Addressing workload, boundaries, systemic change, intentional rest

## **Compassion Fatigue**

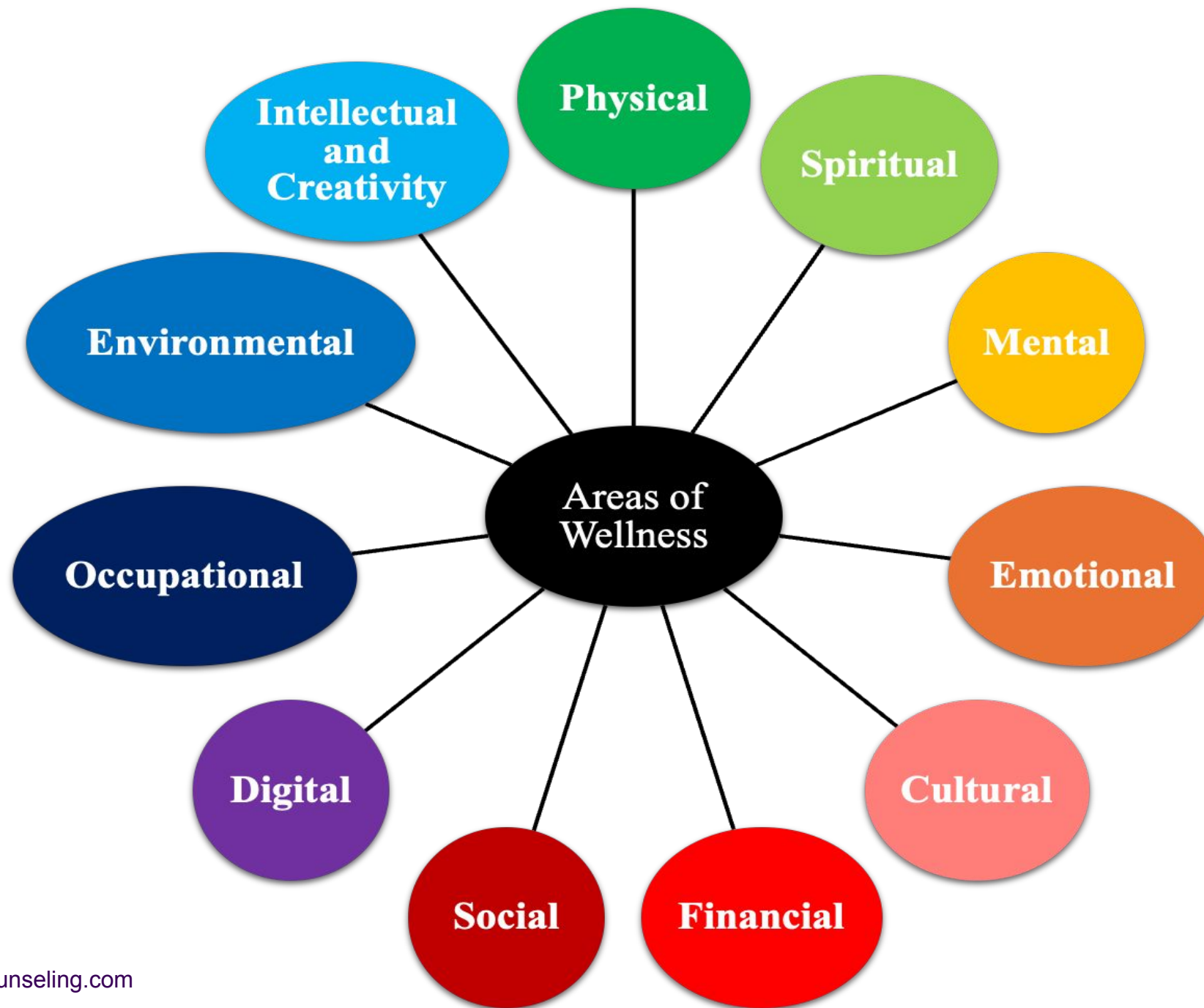
Explore and engage in ways that restore capacity for compassion, boundaries, meaning-making, self-care

## **Secondary Traumatic Stress**

Processing of experiences, grounding, therapy

## **Empathy Fatigue**

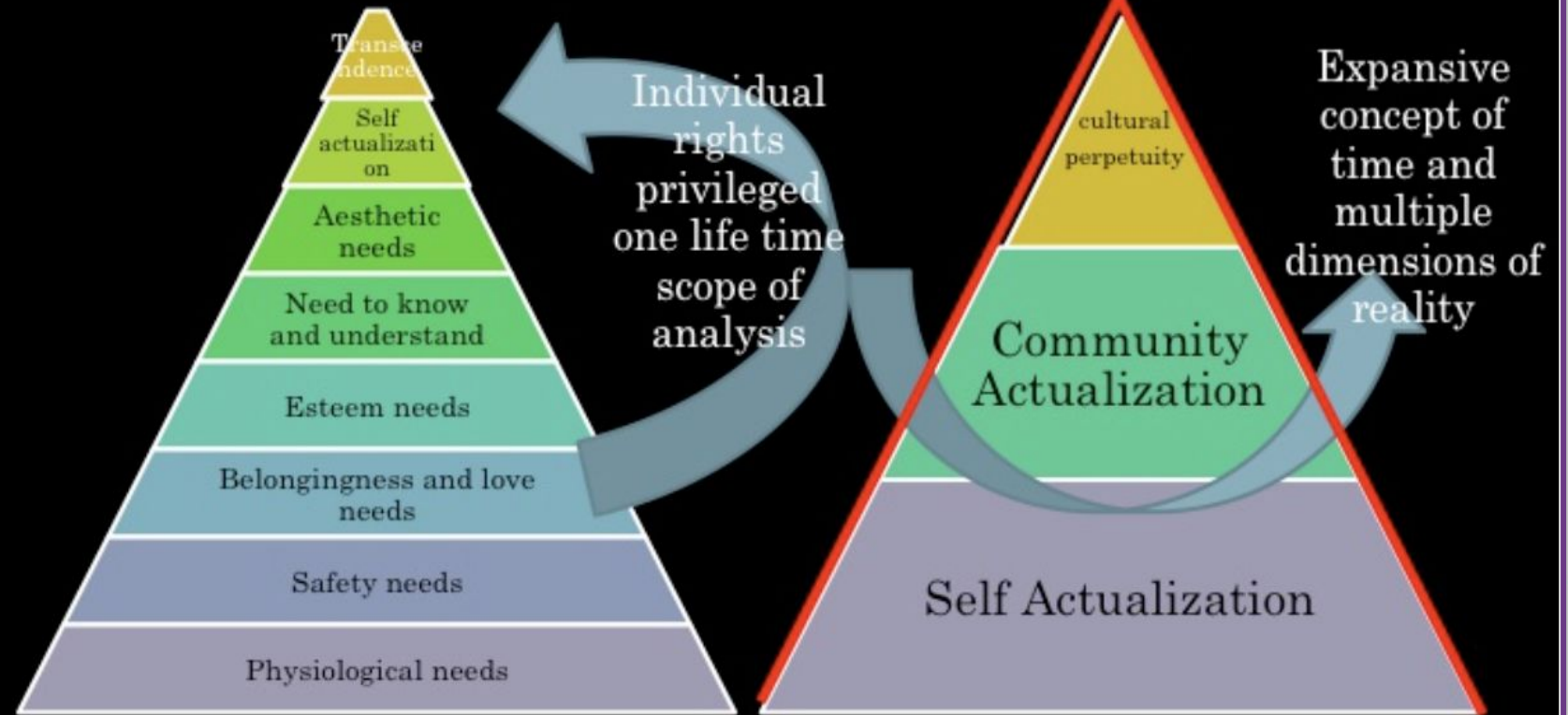
Establish emotional and social boundaries, learn healthy coping skills for emotions and stress



# MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS (INFORMED BY BLACKFOOT NATION (ALTA))

## Western Perspective

## First Nations Perspective



Huitt, 2004; Blackstock, 2008; Wadsworth,

Slide by Cathy Blackstock,  
professor at the University of  
Alberta

(2014 conference of the  
National Indian Child Welfare  
Association)

# Self-Care Examples

**Crafting:** Weaving, Sewing, Carving, Beading

**Ceremony & Rituals:** Age-Related, Medicinal, Seasonal, Funeral/Mourning

**Nature:** Gardening, Preparing Food Items, Cooking, Medicine Making

**Gatherings:** Spending time with family and friends, Community Doings, BHA Forum

**Body/Movement:** Singing, Drumming, Dancing



**“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it  
is self-preservation, and that is an act of  
political warfare”**

**-Audre Lorde**



# Empowered Self-Care

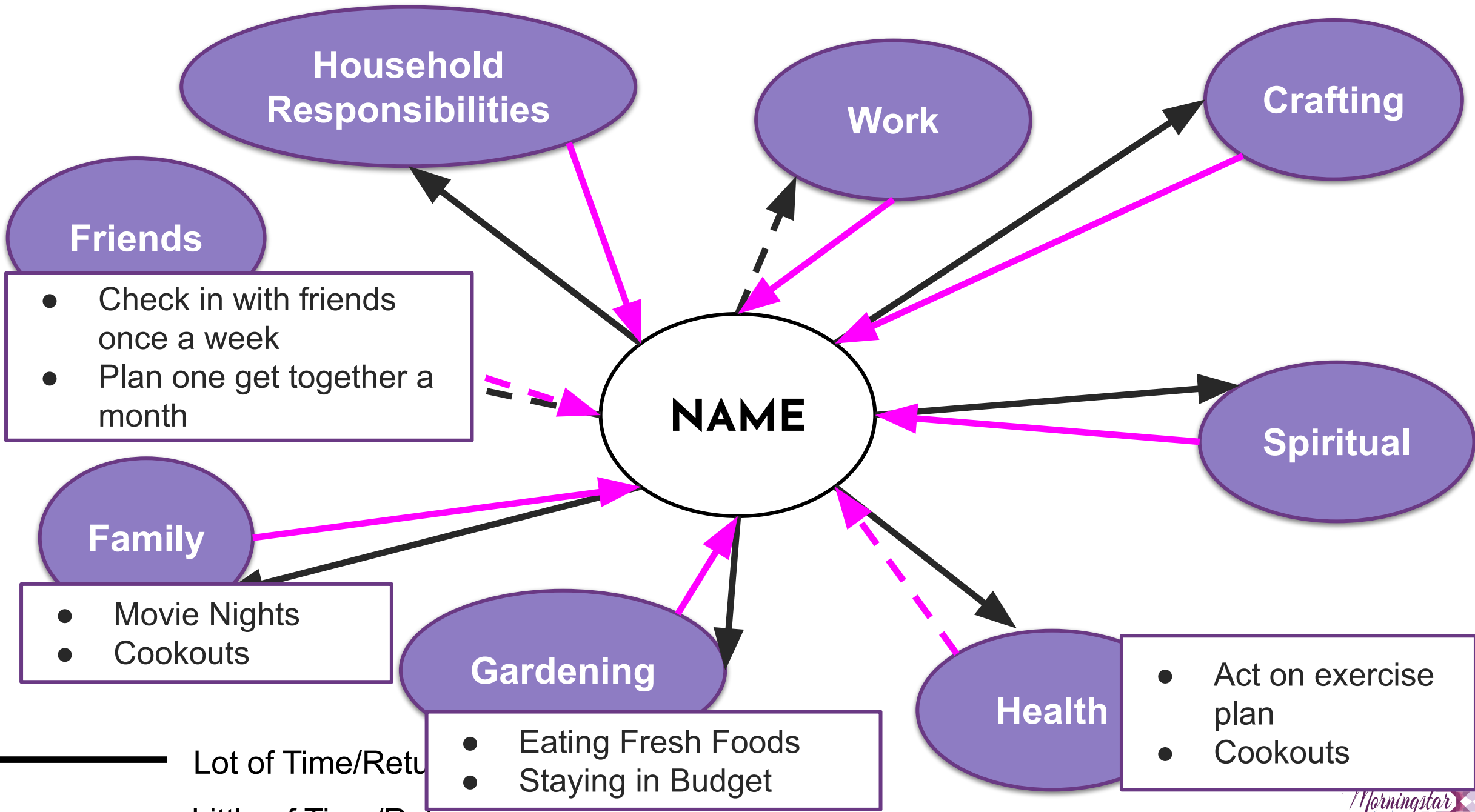
- Radical self-care means being intentional in caring for your entire being
- Goes beyond surface-level forms self-care to addresses deeper needs by healing from systemic oppression, historical and personal trauma, or burnout
- Focus is on honoring worth, respect, and intentionally balancing your time, energy, and wellness
- Seen as a form of self-empowerment by expressing that health, happiness, and peace of mind are essential and not secondary



# **Activity:** *Group* *Wellness Mural*



# Activity: *Individual Self-Care Map*





# Activity: *Applying Self-Care Case Study*

## Case Study

Charles is a 47 year old BHA Trainee. During a class on Family Systems, Charles shared his experience being in foster care and how he struggled in school as a result. He reports this lived experience will help him in this role because he understands the system and the needs of the children in the community. When Charles received guidance on partnering with a program he attended while in foster care, he became angry and stated “I know who to partner with for the youth!” Later, Charles was also asked to participate in a training for self-care and he refused stating “my culture is all I need”. Now, he seems to be working alone more in class, rarely shares his opinion, and has directly questioned you about your own cultural involvement.



# Give Away

[www.morningstar-counseling.com](http://www.morningstar-counseling.com)





# THANK YOU! QUESTIONS?



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[www.morningstar-counseling.com](http://www.morningstar-counseling.com)

Afternoon Session -Centering  
Collective Wellness: Identifying  
and Implementing Wellness



Health Aide Forum

