

Calm in the Midst of Chaos

Resilience Training for Judges

Brought to you by:
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NC Lawyer Assistance Program
& LAP Foundation of NC, Inc.

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1




2019 Judicial Wellness Survey

- An impressive 1,034 judges responded, making this the largest wellness survey of U.S. judges to date.
- State Court Judges were the most represented

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2

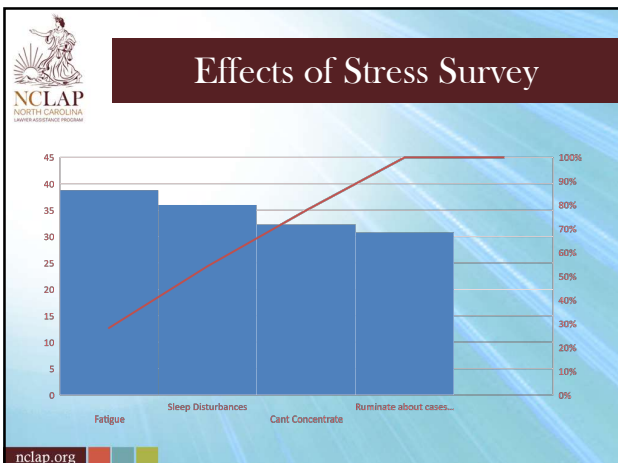


Sources of Stress Survey

- 1. (79.7%) Importance/Impact of Decisions
- 2. (73.2%) Heavy Docket of Cases
- 7. (53.5%) Long hours w/o a break
- 14. (45.9%) Cases involving severe trauma/horror
- 22. (32.2%) Complex scientific or ethical issues

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3



4

Then a Capital Trial

- Impaneling a jury
- Extreme attention to detail when considering aggravating factors
- Managing media
- Heavy toll on both your emotional and mental limits

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5

Dual Consciousness

- Nancy Gertner, a former Massachusetts federal judge who now teaches at Harvard Law School, said that judges sometimes develop "dual consciousness" when forced to confront criminal justice policies, including capital punishment, that clash with their ideological and political beliefs.

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6



“Flipping Our Lid”

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7




Defining Resilience

- George Valliant (1993) defines resilience as the "self-righting tendency" of the person, "both the capacity to be bent without breaking and the capacity, once bent, to spring back"
- "the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or even significant source of stress, such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors, it means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences." (American Psychological Association)
- Resilience is primarily defined in terms of the presence of protective factors (personal, social, familial and institutional safety nets) which enable individuals to resist life stress

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8

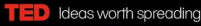



In Good News!

- Resilience is not a personality factor but a set of skills--- and skills can be learned.
- How we perceive a situation or event strongly influences our response and how it impacts us. Obstacle or opportunity?
- How we think/talk about a situation or event is a choice. We can change our thoughts and language. "This is the end of my career!" vs. "This is a disappointing and challenging turn of events and I can find my way through it." **See TED Talk.**

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9


WATCH
DISCOVER
ATTEND
PARTI



Kelly McGonigal | TEDGlobal 2013

How to make stress your friend


14:17

This TED Talk is great!!! Please take 15 minutes to watch it.

How we view stress directly impacts how we experience it.

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10




Brain Change

- Neuroplasticity: We can rewire our brains
 - Chemically (increase good hormones)
 - Structurally (change our neural pathways)
 - Functionally (make it easier to use certain parts of the brain)

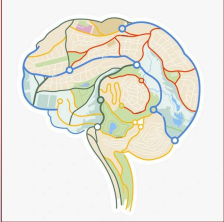
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11



Neuroplasticity at work


London Cab Drivers Big Hippocampi



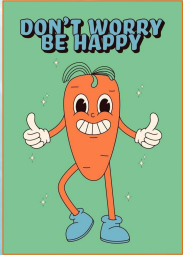
Caveat: Takes Time and Effort and Repetition


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12


 **Happiness and Wellbeing**

- Not the Same
- Pleasure Plus
 - Purpose
 - Relationship
 - Meaning
 - Accomplishment





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13


 **Not a Shaming Exercise**


- During last year's survey of UCI law student wellness, an anonymous respondent noted about classes on wellness topics, *"None of these help, dude. All they do is make you feel like you're also bad at managing your stress. It feels like victim blaming."*




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14

 **And...Not a Competition**



"I woke up at 4:54, a full 5 minutes before my alarm, so I ran a half marathon instead of my normal 10, meditated, ate my keto breakfast and got to the office 15 minutes early, pumped and ready to go!
How was your morning?"

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15



Important Disclaimers

- Not “toxic positivity”
- Finding ways to help people stay happy & healthy in an unhappy & unhealthy profession.
- These practices are not a substitute for professional intervention or treatment
 - You can’t cure cancer by quitting smoking
- *If you need help, it is not a sign that you aren’t doing well-being well enough.*

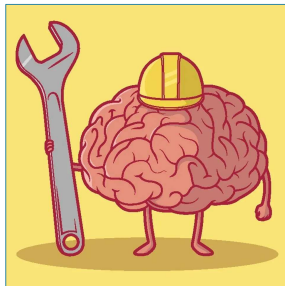
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What to do?



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17



Resilience Activities and Interests

Current Activity Item	% Active (rank)	% Interest (rank)	Difference Active/Interest
Physical exercise (walk, jog, bike, swim)	82.3 (2)	98 (2)	15.7
Relaxation, stretching (yoga, tai chi, etc.)	51.3 (10)	89.7 (9)	38.4
Meditation, mindfulness, mind-quieting	35.9 (13)	81.4 (12)	45.5
Spiritual, faith tradition	49.3 (11)	70.9 (13)	21.6
Hobbies, pastimes	73 (6)	97.8 (3)	24.8
Adequate sleep, better habits	66.4 (8)	96.9 (5)	30.5
Balanced nutrition, better meals	88.7 (1)	99.4 (1)	10.7
Diverse friends outside of the field	73.4 (5)	97.4 (4)	24.0
Reading educational materials	77.3 (3)	94.5 (7)	17.2
Social support of trusted people	76.6 (4)	96.3 (6)	19.7
Asking for peer support	36.8 (12)	83 (11)	46.2
Personally support & confront colleagues	54.7 (9)	89.6 (10)	34.9
Involve staff in planning, scheduling, etc.	71.4 (7)	91.6 (8)	20.2

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18



Skills to Work On

- Pick 1 or 2 things only and
- Practice
- Practice
- Practice
- Consistency is more important than anything. Better to do a 2-minute exercise 3 x a day than 60 minutes once a week

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19



Adequate Sleep

- critical to good health
- flushes out toxins, replaces cells, repairs damaged tissues, restores energy supplies, **boosts immune system**, regulates hormone levels
- keeps neurotransmitters stocked and working properly
- stable moods, clearer thinking
- sleep deprivation drains glucose in the prefrontal cortex, thus our ability to exert self-control becomes depleted
- activity before bed that helps mentally break from the day - no electronics

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Sleep Hygiene


- Get a sleep divorce
- No Blue Light 30 mins before bed.
- Really really don't look at the phone.
- Go to bed around the same time each day.
- Don't force it
- Here comes the Sun and there it goes

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21

**Exercise**



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22

**Exercise**

- restores the balance in the flight or fight response
- releases neurotransmitters that enhance mood and help clarify thinking
- improves mild to moderate depression, stress, anxiety, ADHD, PTSD, and trauma
- nervous system gets “unstuck”

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23

**Healthy Eating**



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24



Benefits of Mindfulness

- Lessen anxiety and depression.
- Lessen rumination.
- Increased positive response to stress.
- Greater self-awareness and better emotional regulation.
- Greater self-compassion.
- See Paul Verhaeghen, *Presence: How mindfulness and meditation shape your brain mind and life* (2017).

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28



Meditation

- focus, pay attention and increase awareness
- brain stops actively processing information
- learn to observe thoughts/feelings without judgement
- **have to practice**
- numerous types
- quality over quantity

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29



Benefits of Meditation

Scientific studies have shown that the average trained meditator:

- has a higher perceived quality of life than 70% of nonmeditators;
- feels less anxiety than 75% of nonmeditators;
- feels less depressed than 63% of the general population;
- has higher immune functioning than nonmeditators;
- has greater empathy than 79% of nonmeditators.
- See Paul Verhaeghen, *Presence: How mindfulness and meditation shape your brain mind and life* (2017).

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30

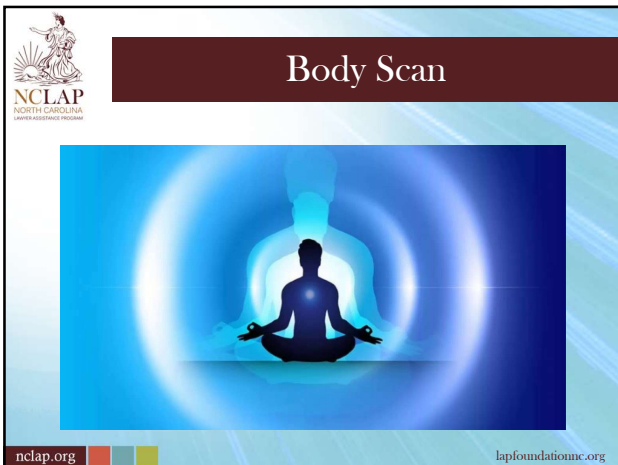


5-4-3-2-1 Grounding

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This slide features a collage of five polar bear images: a cub walking on snow, a bear swimming in water, a bear with a cub, a bear's face, and a bear sticking its tongue out.

31

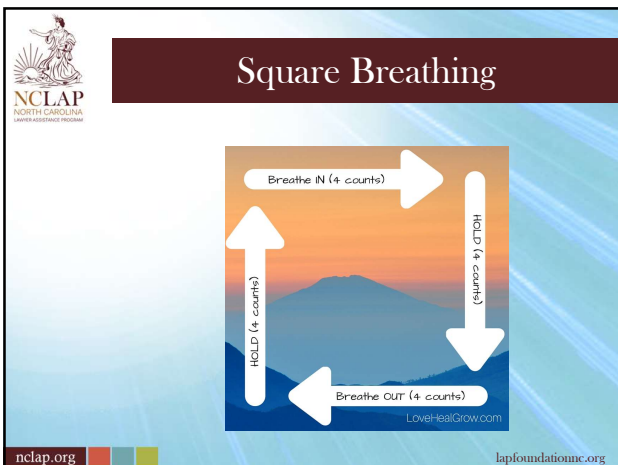


Body Scan

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The slide shows a silhouette of a person in a meditative lotus position, surrounded by a glowing blue aura. At the bottom, it includes the website nclap.org and lapfoundationmc.org.

32



Square Breathing

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The slide illustrates the square breathing technique with a diagram showing four directions: Breathe IN (4 counts) to the right, HOLD (4 counts) down, Breathe OUT (4 counts) to the left, and HOLD (4 counts) up. The background features a mountain range. At the bottom, it includes the website nclap.org, lapfoundationmc.org, and Love-Heal-Grow.com.

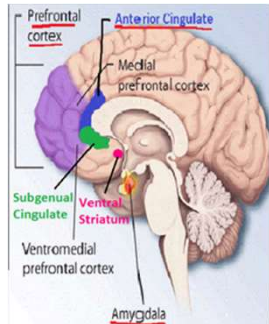
33



Acknowledge Your Stress

Labeling your stress consciously and deliberately moves neural activity from the amygdala, the center of emotion and fear, to the prefrontal cortex, which is responsible for executive control and planning.

If we can stop and identify the stressful situation we can stop operating from the "fight or flight" zone.



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37



Relational Connection Key

The Harvard Study of Adult Development

- Most comprehensive and longest running well-being study ever conducted.
- Starting in 1938, researchers followed two groups: 1) a group of 268 Harvard sophomores; 2) a group of 465 young men from one of poorest neighborhoods in Boston.
- Researchers conducted periodic interviews, took brain scans, did blood tests and collected information on the participants' personal and professional life.
- Most significant finding was that quality relationships and the best predictor of happiness and longevity.

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38




Relational Connection Key

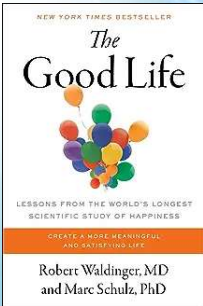
- Relational connection is even more important in times of difficulty or crisis. Isolating is the worst thing you can do.
- It is not the quantity of relationships that increases happiness. It is the quality (deep connection with someone you can trust and who is supportive).
- Studies show that being with close friends and family during difficult times can reduce stress hormone cortisol levels and increase happiness hormone oxytocin levels.

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39




The Good Life



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40




Service to Others

- Service, relationship & self care
- Taking you out of your personal tornado
- The “Helper’s High”
- Lower stress levels & symptoms of depression
- Increased endorphins

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41



Small Group Discussion

- Groups of 2 or 3...(5 min each)
- Where is one area that you find the source of your stress at work? Case management system, turning it off at night, etc....
- Discuss one tool you are currently using and one you are going to try to incorporate?

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42



In Closing...

National hotline out of Texas:
JUDGES: 800-219-6474

NC specific:
919-719-9290 (me)
We work with judges and have an active volunteer network.



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43



How the NC LAP Can Help

- educate – CLE's, website (articles, podcasts), consulting
- assist – you, a lawyer in your court
- assess/evaluate – dually licensed professionals
- refer – variety of resources
- support – individually, groups, judge volunteers

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44




How LAP Works


- Confidentiality - Rule 1.6 of the RPC
- Clinical Staff-Dually licensed in both mental health and substance use disorder
- Volunteers - a judge helping another judge
- Professionalism - a judge caring about a lawyer enough to make a referral

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45



Consider Donating Your Leftover Campaign Contributions



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46




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47



If you need to reach us

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Thank you!

48
