

COVID 19: Resetting Mental Health in the Workplace

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Objectives

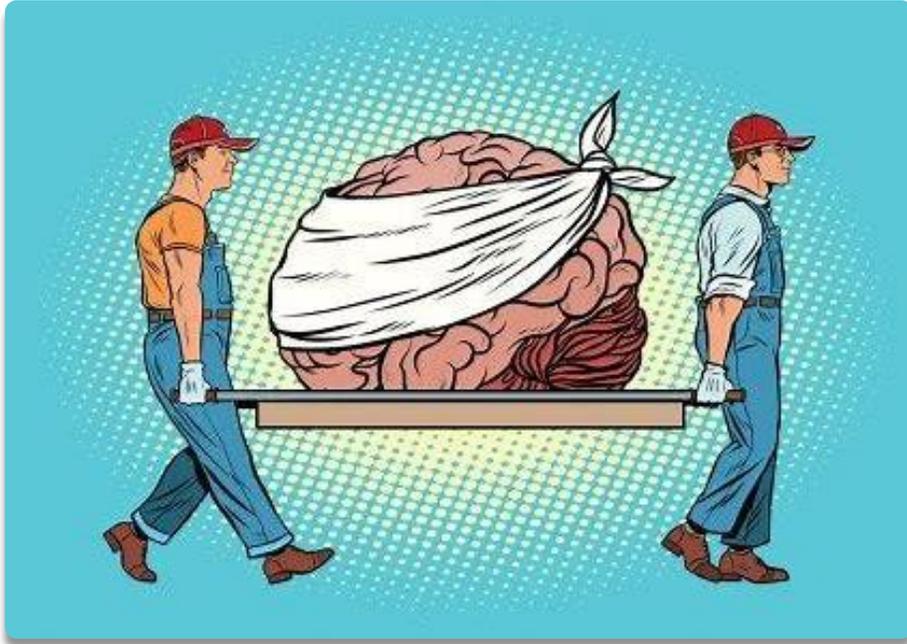
- ▶ How are you doing?
- ▶ Where are we emotionally and psychologically right now
- ▶ What emotions are workers experiencing
- ▶ Understanding the model of psychological safety risk
- ▶ Moving from negative emotions to positive emotion
- ▶ How to regulate difficult emotions
- ▶ How to address difficult emotions as a leader
- ▶ Leading with empathy, strategies, and effectiveness
- ▶ Tool and tips

What is Mental Health?

1. A sense of purpose and accomplishment
2. Strong relationships
3. Feeling connected to others
4. Having a good sense of self
5. Coping with stress
6. Enjoying life



Current State of Experiences



- ▶ COVID 'Fatigue' vs. COVID 'Relieve'
- ▶ Fear/Anxiety vs. Control
- ▶ Uncertainty vs. Stability
- ▶ Anger vs. Acceptance
- ▶ Frustration vs. Grounding
- ▶ Coping vs. Collapse

Emotional and Coping Overload



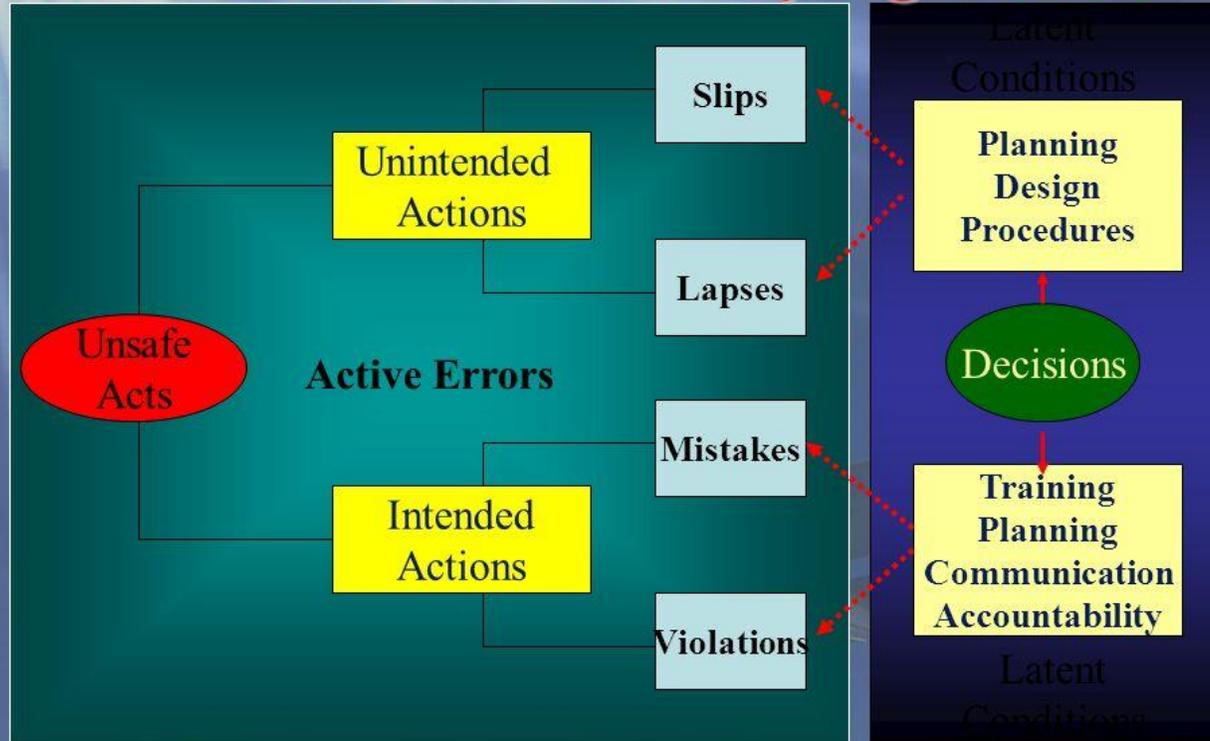
- ▶ Life is different
- ▶ People may be frustrated before they return and as the pandemic continues
- ▶ People may be tired
- ▶ People may be fed up
- ▶ People may feel 'discombobulated'
- ▶ Many feel broken
- ▶ You and your organization's efforts can help but may not eliminate this risk

THIS RESULTS IN IMPORTANT SAFETY CONCERNS

Coping Types

- ▶ Dismissive “COVID SHMOVID”
discussion about compliance
- ▶ Anxious/Fearful
discuss safety protocols, provide info
- ▶ Angry
keep focused on tasks and goals
- ▶ Stable
keep awareness of supports

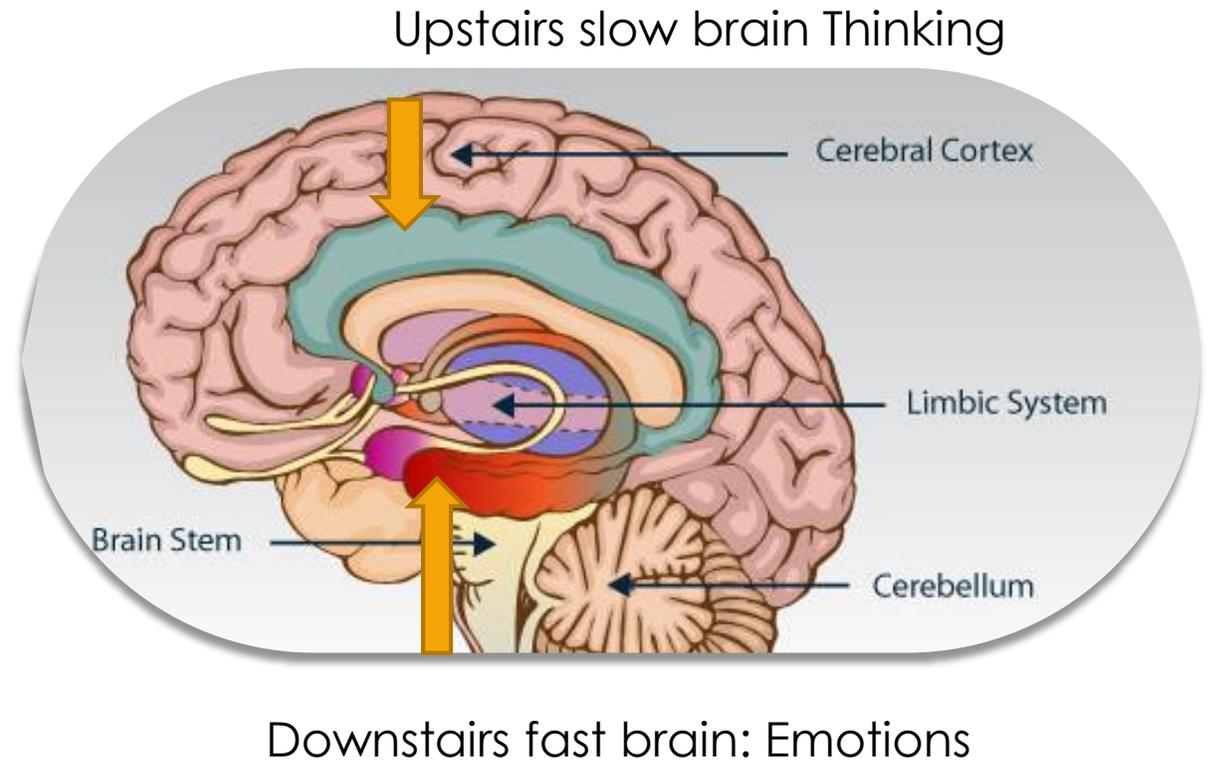
From Error to Underlying Cause



Different
Types of
Coping May
Result in
Different
Types of Errors

Your Brain On Emotions

- ▶ Emotions signal threats and rewards and guide decision making
- ▶ Basic emotions are 'fast system'
- ▶ BUT ... if emotions are too intense they can shut down systemic decision making
- ▶ Cognitive appraisal of emotions helps us decide what to do with emotions – can we cope. This is the 'slow system.'
- ▶ Emotions cause reductions in processing power

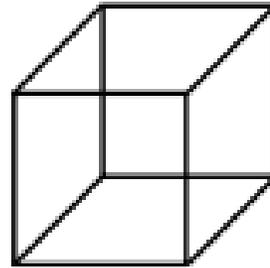
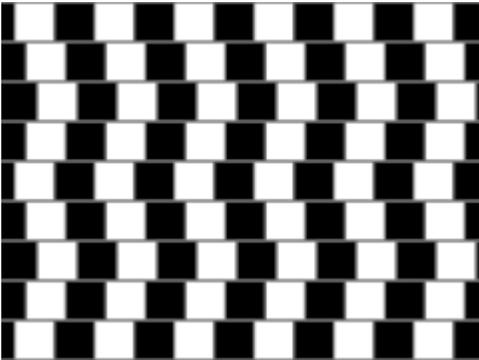


Human Processing Safety Risks



- ▶ Poor perception
- ▶ Inability to attend to risks or over attention to some risks
- ▶ Difficulty learning and remembering
- ▶ Depletion of will power
- ▶ Poor decision making and follow through

Perception: How is Yours Today?



<http://www.seenox.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/Mind-Blowing-Optical-Illusions-28.gif>

Controls sleeping, waking, and attention

A sophisticated filter

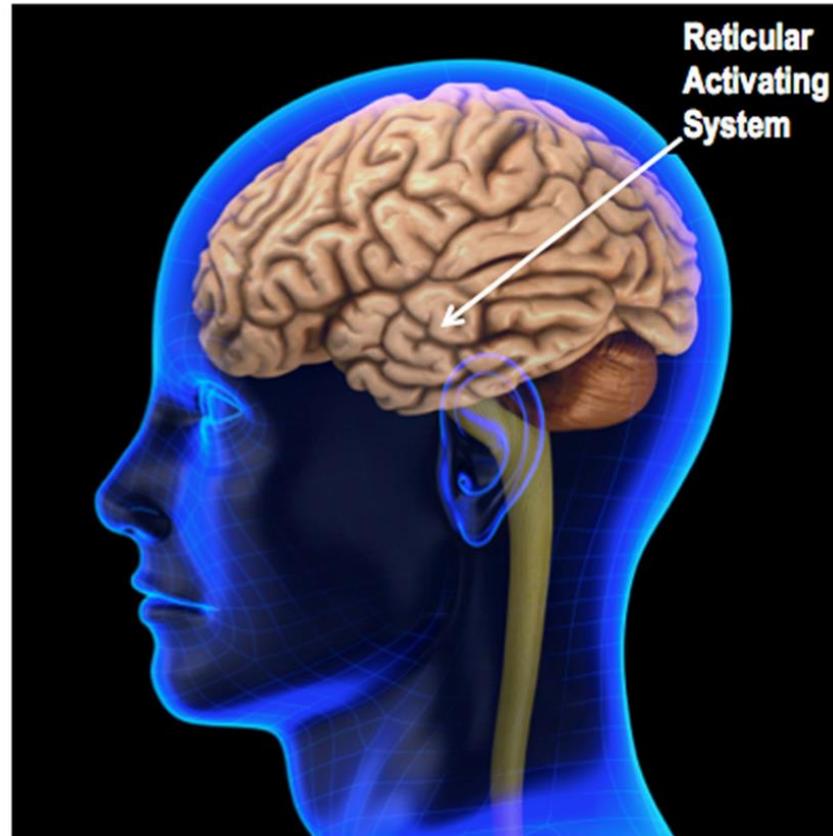
Screens out the junk

Acts like an Executive Assistant

Allows you to focus on what you
VALUE

Allows you to perceive a
THREAT

Supports you when you set
GOALS



Attention

Will Power

- ▶ A person's supply of willpower is limited
- ▶ After making tough decisions your willpower is depleted
- ▶ Willpower depletion is not easily sensed; there is no feeling of depletion



Fatigue



- ▶ Results in slower reactions
- ▶ Reduced ability to process information, memory lapses, absent-mindedness, decreased awareness, lack of attention, underestimation of risk, reduced coordination
 - ▶ 17 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.05
 - ▶ 21 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.08 (legal limit in Canada)
 - ▶ 24-25 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of .10*

*Worksafe B.C. **

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Setting Positive Emotions at Work

APPLYING MENTAL HEALTH FACTORS TO COVID STRATEGIES AT WORK

Create a Sense of Purpose

Create

Create meaning of day to day work – we want to stay in business and stay health

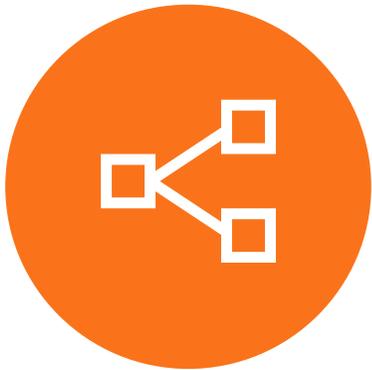
Contribute

Each employee will contribute to keeping the organization sustainable

Remember

Remember purpose of family, community, helping others

Create Strong Relationships



SHOW COMPASSION
AND EMPATHY



HELP EACH OTHER



PROVIDE RESOURCES

Create a Good Sense of Self

- ▶ Express value of employees
- ▶ Remember successes
- ▶ Vision the future



Create Coping Strategies



- ▶ Make it OK to have emotions slips, trips, and spills
- ▶ Have a 'recovery' area
- ▶ Allow employees to download coping apps such as 'Headspace'
- ▶ Allow for physical activity and provide resources for this if possible
- ▶ Keep an open door for discussion
- ▶ Ensure access to an Employee Assistance Program or counselling services

Create Enjoyment



- ▶ Share humor
- ▶ Share stories
- ▶ Eat together
- ▶ Share resource knowledge
- ▶ Allow flexibility of time and time off for recovery

Be There for Support



- ▶ Listen to understand and remain calm
- ▶ Create opportunities for people to be heard
- ▶ Engage with compassionate
- ▶ Reflect what you have heard
- ▶ Make it OK to have the emotions
- ▶ Don't quote policy
- ▶ Provide resources for help

Create Feeling Connected



- ▶ Virtual connections with those at home
- ▶ Communication with those on temporary lay off
- ▶ Careful about how much connection virtually and the requirement to attend
- ▶ For those on site – can you have socially distanced coffee/lunch
- ▶ Toolbox and other meetings as normally as you can

Getting back on the Horse: Getting Attention , Setting Emotional Stability



Provide details of steps taken to provide physical safety e.g., social distancing protocols, sanitizing, monitoring in email

We have based our safety plan on the latest information available and while it may change as updates and new information is available, we commit to providing a safe environment for our employees.



Be transparent about decisions and why these were made

"If you have any worries or



Ask what concerns or suggestions employees may have about returning to work safely

about these." (follow-up if changes are made)

Provide an email or confidential line where employees can express concern

Safety Leadership



Not a time for 'tough love'

Lead with empathy

Provide emotional support
and role modelling

Role Modelling



KEEP UP TO DATE ON
SAFETY AND PUBLIC
HEALTH RESPONSES



KNOW THE RESOURCES
AVAILABLE TO YOUR
EMPLOYEES



SET YOUR BOUNDARIES
AROUND WORK,
RESPONSE TIMES AND
DISCLOSURE AROUND
PERSONAL ISSUES



FOLLOW THE RULES



IF SICK, STAY HOME

Practice Your Own Emotional Regulation Skills

1. Self awareness: ability to notice what we feel and label it
2. Mindful awareness: ability to explore aspect of the external world and calm our inner experience
3. Re-appraising the way we think: the ability to gain a broader perspective
4. Adaptability:
5. Self compassion
6. Emotional support: both within ourselves and with from others

Tool Box: Safety Meeting



- ▶ Discuss how people are thinking and feeling
 - ▶ How are we doing with COVID and protocols
 - ▶ I am (sharing, modelling)
 - ▶ Do you have any safety concerns or worries
 - ▶ Our expectation is that you follow the protocols
 - ▶ These may change as information becomes available
 - ▶ We are all likely to feel fatigued at times

Topics To Discuss With Management



- ✓ Identify the safety risks of emotional overload (fatigue, poor attention, poor decision making)
- ✓ Discuss resources that should be available (EAP, apps, breaks, website information, how questions can be answered)
- ✓ Ask for management visibility and presence – invite to a toolbox
- ✓ Request timely, transparent communications to employees
- ✓ Request management open door to employees – help employees be heard
- ✓ Clarify how questions and concerns will be addressed

Keeping Emotions Positive Summary

- ▶ Keep employees informed
 - ▶ Get reliable information and Be careful how much YOU share
- ▶ Help people focus on things they can control
- ▶ Create self worth – positive feedback, encouragement, value
- ▶ Stop anxiety by grounding people – take a walk, talk, remind of support
- ▶ Stay connected – approach people, ask how they are doing
- ▶ Forgive emotional slips – these are going to happen
- ▶ Keep routine as much as possible, keep change to a minimum
- ▶ Keep the load and change as minimal as you can
- ▶ Start something to help others

Know When You/Others Need Help Counseling, Coaching, Consulting

Fatigue, exhaustion, worry, fear and sadness are present most of the time

Coping resources feel depleted

Sleep is chronically poor

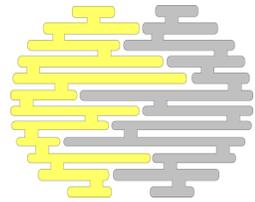
Substance increases substantially

Conflict is present

Want ideas

Want growth

Thank You!



Pat Ferris Consulting
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