



Befriending The Tiger: Exploring Resilience and Wellbeing On The Frontline

Part 2

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Part 2

**Befriending the Tiger:
Exploring Resilience and Wellbeing
on the Frontline**

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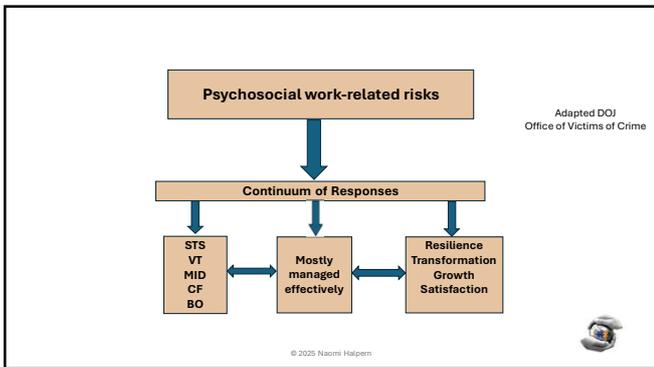
Outline Part 2

Exploring Resilience
4 domains of self care
Mind
Body
Closing meditation




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What does the word resilience mean to you?

“Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of stress..... it involves behaviors, thoughts, and accompanying feelings that can be nurtured, developed and learned.”

Donald Meichenbaum, PhD

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Contributing Resilience Influences



Individual Aspects

- Personality – Genetics
- Gender – Sexual orientation
- Age
- Race – Ethnicity
- Physical and Mental Health – past/present
- Values – Purpose – Belief systems

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Contributing Resilience influences



Life History & Experience

- Family history
- History of extremely stressful events
- Past social experiences
- Past cultural experiences
- Socio-economic background

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Contributing Resilience influences



Social and Financial Stability and Resources

- Family – Friends – Community – Colleagues
- Sense of security – personal / financial
- Access and capacity to connect to resources
- Resource and support to others



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7 factors of resilience



1. Emotion regulation
2. Impulse control
3. Empathy
4. Causal analysis
5. Self efficacy
6. Realistic optimism
7. Reaching out



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Personal warnings signs

Physical or mental numbness

Increase or decrease in appetite

Stress, anxiety or depression

Avoidance of reminders

Despair or hopelessness

Feeling guilty for pleasure and fun

Pessimism / cynicism

Relationship struggles / conflict

Using alcohol or drugs to numb/cope



Emotional exhaustion and fatigue

Overwhelming emotions

Insomnia or difficulty sleeping

Anger and irritability

Feelings of sadness or helplessness

Headaches

Nausea and digestive complaints

Intrusive thoughts and images

Nightmares

Memory or concentration difficulties



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Professional warning signs

- Decreased attentiveness
- Loss of confidence in skills
- Negative attitude
- Low motivation
- Missed deadlines
- Increase in work absences
- Lack of interest



- Avoidance of job tasks
- Withdrawal from colleagues
- Conflict with colleagues
- Poor communication
- Tardiness / absenteeism
- Presenteeism
- Making more errors (clinically / admin)

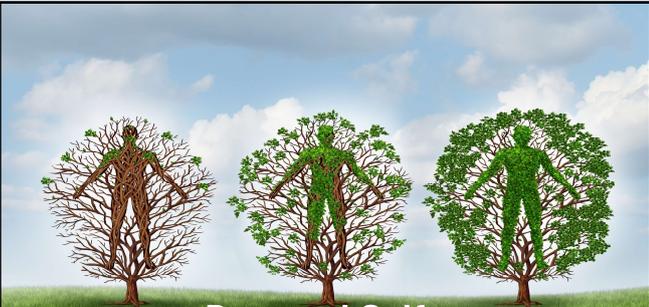
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| Survival – threat responses | How survival responses may present |
|--|--|
| Freeze: Hyper  | Protect self through dissociation: cold/frozen skin or parts of body, hold breath, racing thoughts, body rigid, increase heart rate. Can look like procrastination and indecisiveness. |
| Freeze: Hypo  | Protect self through dissociation: Numb, shut down, exhaustion, disconnected from self and emotions, immobile, decrease heart rate. Can look like disinterest, carelessness, aloofness or that you are coping. |
| Flight  | Protect self through escape: restless legs/feet, anxiety – panic, shallow breathing, darting eyes, fidgety, perfectionistic, over-think, comfort eating, substance misuse. Can look like perfectionism and/or avoidance. |
| Fight  | Protect self through conflict: clench fists / jaw, eyes glare, angry voice, rage, knotted or burning stomach, nausea, crying. Can look like defensiveness, aggression, passive aggression, blaming others. |
| Fawn  | Protect self through placation: difficulty saying no, excessive flattery, over apologetic, neglect own needs, pretend to agree. Can look like being inauthentic – people pleaser. |

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Personal Self-care

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4 domains of Self care

Don't have to focus on each domain all at once!

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4 domains of Self care

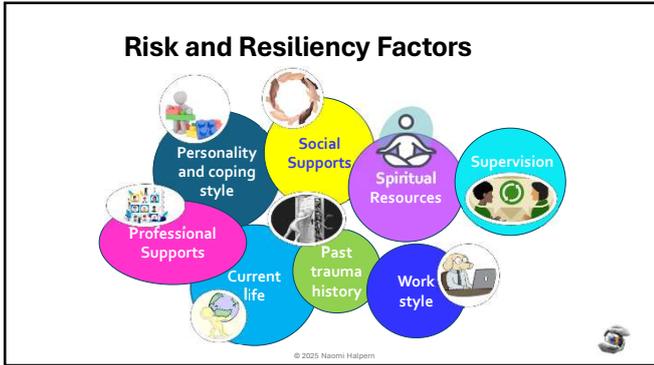
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Mind

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| Factor | How this factor operates or is experienced |
|----------------------------|---|
| Personality & coping style | Is it open, flexible? Do you reach out if you need help, support or assistance? |
| Trauma history | Have worked through it and/or know your triggers and how to support yourself? |
| Social supports | People in your life with who you feel safe, trust, can confide in and regularly have fun with. |
| Supervision | Your supervisor supports and encourages your professional development. |
| Spirituality | You have a philosophy or belief system that nurtures and sustains you. |
| Current life circumstances | Can manage whatever is currently happening in your personal and professional life. |
| Work style | Structure work to support you to best fulfil your work responsibilities and have flexibility when needed. |
| Professional supports | You have a network who encourage you to develop professionally and on whom you can rely on when needed. |

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- Am I experiencing work related worry, anxiety and/or intrusive thoughts / images?
- Do I take time regularly to reflect on how my work impacts me and conduct a self-care assessment?
- Am I having regular supervision / case consultation and is it meeting my needs?
- Am I pursuing professional development training to assist with developing my knowledge and skills in my work practice?
- Am I actively supporting and pursuing personal development (journaling, courses, therapy / other interests and activities)?

Mind reflection



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4 domains of Self care

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Body

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What's The Big Deal About The Gut?
Enteric Nervous System – 2nd Brain

- Contains **30 types of neurotransmitters**
- **500 million neurons** (Brain: 100 billion)
- **90% of serotonin** which helps produce **melatonin (sleep hormone)** located in gut
- **400x more melatonin produced in gut than brain**
- When gut microbiome is compromised has **major impact on physical and mental health**

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Poor gut health can cause or exacerbate physical and mental health issues

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Headaches, brain fog, memory issues
- Excessive fatigue
- Poor immune system
- Craving sugars or carbohydrates
- Chronic diarrhoea, constipation, gas or bloating
- Nutritional deficiencies
- Skin rashes, acne, eczema, or rosacea
- Arthritis, joint pain, inflammation
- Autoimmune diseases: rheumatoid arthritis, lupus, celiac or Crohn's disease



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Sleep hygiene



- ↓ caffeine, nicotine, alcohol
- Switch off devices (min 30 mins before sleep)
- Invest in mattress and block out blinds
- Fresh air in bedroom
- Practise deep breathing
- No exercise 3 hr before sleep (stretching / yoga OK)
- Sleep apps: white noise – nature sounds
- Warm (not hot) bath or shower
- Light snack / warm milk
- Magnesium / melatonin supplement, lavender oil

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Recalibrate your parasympathetic nervous system at work



- Slow breathing** (5-6 breaths/min)* Inhale through the nose, exhale longer than the inhale. **Activates the vagus nerve**, increases heart rate variability, helps reduce cortisol.
- Micro-recovery moments** between calls - tasks. **2-5 minutes** of silence, stretching, breathwork, or going outside reduces ANS activation.
- Ritualized endings.** Don't just finish the workday - exit it. Use a short neural reset ritual: walk, music, journaling, tea, or a body scan to signal safety to your system.
- Track internal cues.** Ask weekly, "How is my nervous system doing?" Watch for **red flags** - loss of empathy, disrupted sleep, increased irritability. These aren't personal flaws. They're **biological feedback**.

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Regular practices to activate parasympathetic nervous system

- Spending time in nature
- Massage
- Meditation
- Deep abdominal breathing
- Repetitive prayer / mantra
- Focus on a soothing word
- Play with animals or children
- Yoga, chi kung, or tai chi
- Reach out to someone you trust
- Gently touch lips – massage inner ear
- Activities you enjoy
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Visualisation
- Stop multi tasking!

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Body reflection

- Do I check in with my physiological arousal and how aware am I of what my body is communicating to me?
- Am I up to date with health checks and if not which one(s) is / are due?
- Do I take breaks during the day most days? If not, what are the obstacles?
- Do I have a regular exercise routine? How do I feel about what I am doing or not doing?
- How is my diet? Are there changes it would help to make?
- How am I sleeping? Do I have a good sleep hygiene practices?

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Closing meditation

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Risk and Resiliency Factors Exercise

Reflecting on the factors below, which of these factors are working well in your life and boost your resilience in the face of stressful situations and circumstances? Which of these factors do you feel you are challenged in some capacity? What would assist you to develop areas that are challenged? **IMPORTANT:** Being impacted by distressing stories and presentations of clients is normal - not a weakness. Addressing VT and Compassion Fatigue is also an organizational and cultural responsibility. This exercise focuses only on self-awareness, not what an organization can do and may need to address.

| Factor | How this factor operates or is experienced |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Personality & coping style | Your personality and coping style is open, flexible and you reach out if you need help, support or assistance. |
| Trauma history | If you have past trauma you have worked through it and/or know your triggers and how to support yourself. |
| Social supports | You have people in your life with whom you feel safe, trust, can confide and have fun with. |
| Supervision | Your supervisor is invested in supporting you and encourages your professional development. |
| Spirituality (meaning) | You have a philosophy or belief system that nurtures and sustains you and activities that nourish you. |
| Current life circumstances | You can manage whatever is currently happening in your personal and professional life effectively. |
| Work style | You structure work to support you to fulfill work responsibilities and have flexibility when needed. |
| Professional supports | You have a network who encourage you to develop professionally and who you can rely on. |



Resilience and Risk worksheet

| Factor | Resilience | Risk |
|--|------------|------|
|  <p>Personality & Coping Style</p> | | |
|  <p>Trauma history</p> | | |
|  <p>Social Supports</p> | | |
|  <p>Supervision</p> | | |

| Factor | Resilience | Risk |
|---|------------|------|
|  <p>Spirituality</p> | | |
|  <p>Current life circumstances</p> | | |
|  <p>Work Style</p> | | |
|  <p>Professional Supports</p> | | |



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Mind Reflection Exercise

Am I experiencing work related worry, anxiety and/or intrusive thoughts / images?

Do I take time regularly to reflect on how my work impacts me and conduct a self-care assessment?

Am I having regular supervision / case consultation and is it meeting my needs?

Am I pursuing professional development training to assist with developing my knowledge and skills in my work practice?

Am I actively supporting and pursuing personal development (journaling, courses, therapy, other interests and activities)?



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Body Refection Exercise



Do I regularly check in with my physiological arousal and how aware am I of what my body is communicating to me?

Am I up to date with health checks and if not which one(s) is / are due?

Do I take breaks during the day most days? If not, what are the obstacles?

Do I have a regular exercise routine? How do I feel about what I am doing or not doing?

How is my diet? Are there changes it would help to make?

How am I sleeping? Do I have a good sleep hygiene practices?
