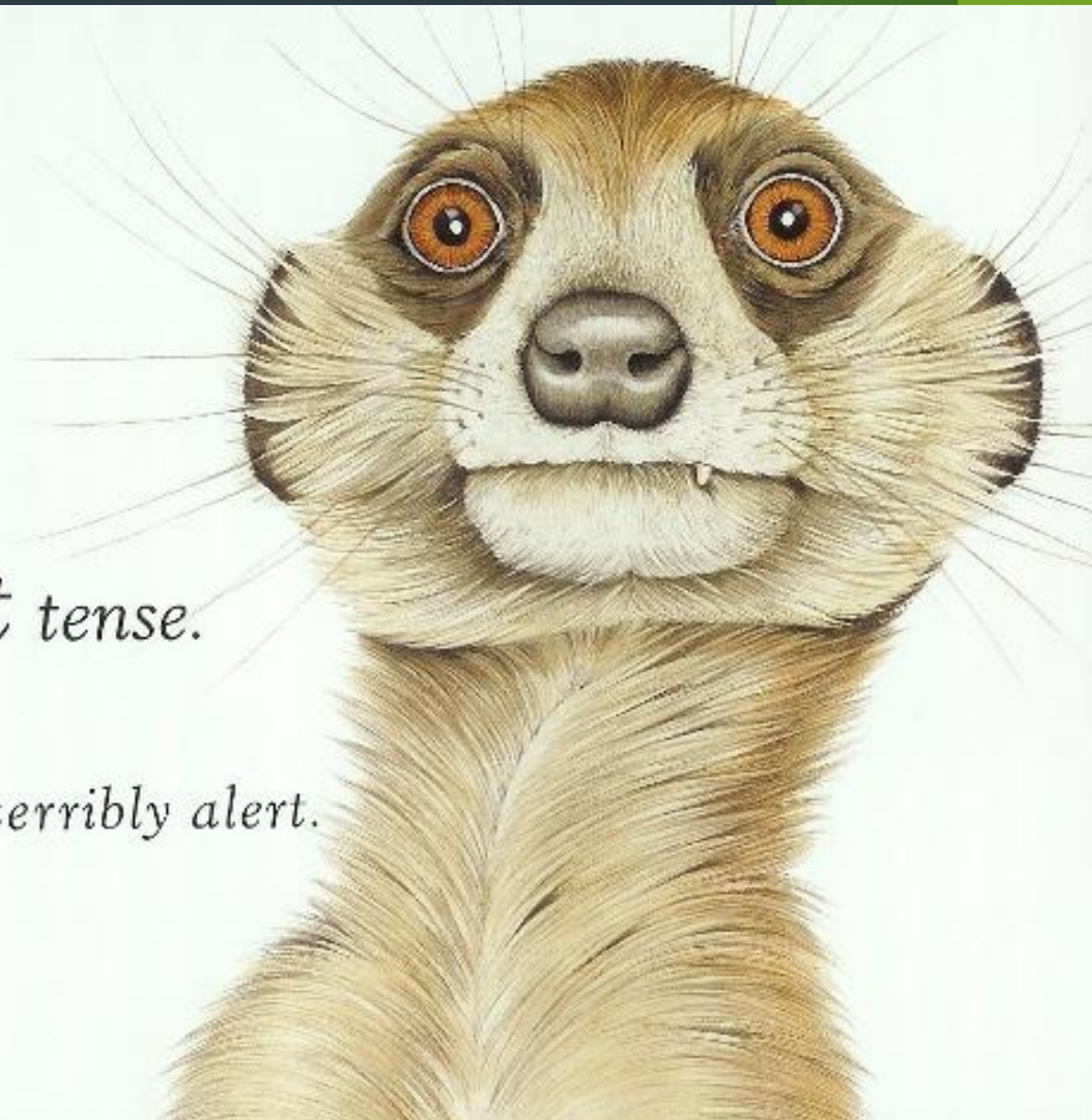


Mental Wellness: Managing the Cost of Caring

Boost Child & Youth Advocacy Centre

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Crossroads Therapeutic Solutions



I am not tense.

Just terribly, terribly alert.

Mental Wellness

Learning Objectives

- ▶ Resiliency: how do we not only survive but thrive amidst the adversity and the challenges of child advocacy work.
- ▶ The impact of difficult work; identify the signs which highlight that impact, and explore the strategies for mental wellness.
- ▶ The stigma of being human and struggling.

Mental Wellness



Who is with me today?

- ▶ Bright
- ▶ Passionate
- ▶ Doers
- ▶ Capable and able people
- ▶ People who choose to see and respond

I'm Fine

- ▶ F Freaking Out
- ▶ I Insecure
- ▶ N Neurotic
- ▶ E Emotional

Who runs into trouble

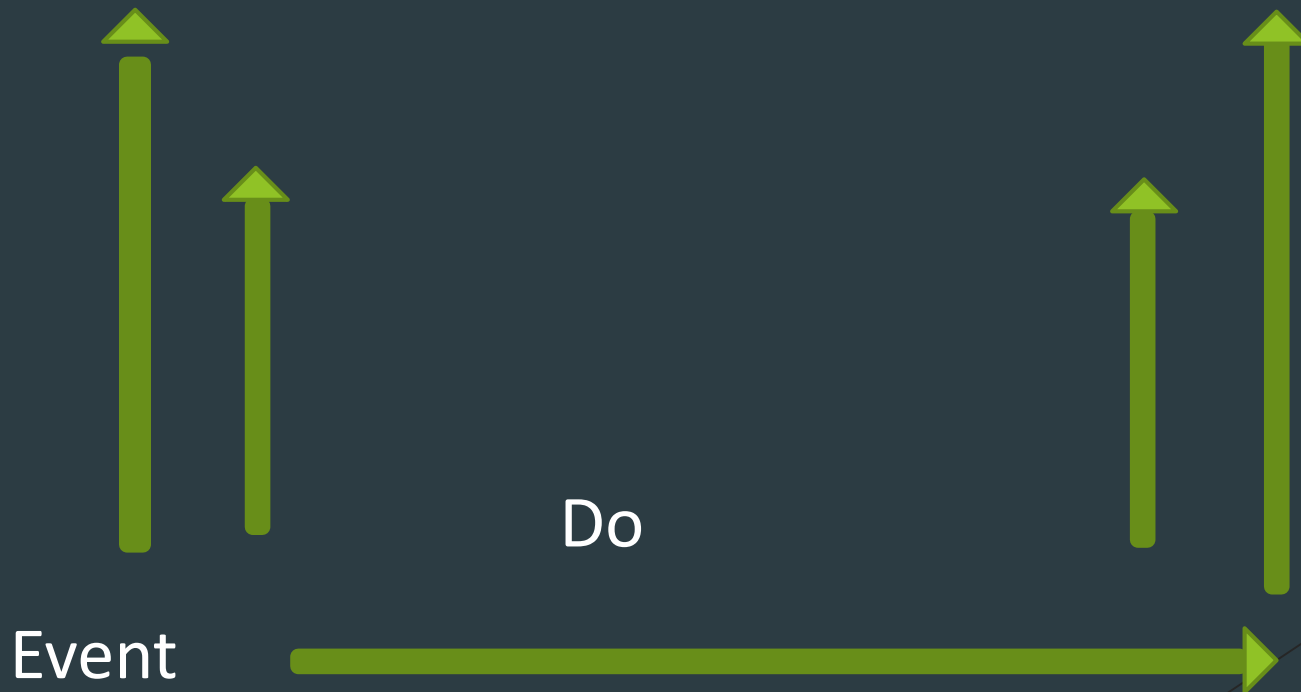
Stigma and stereotypes

- ▶ Weak people
- ▶ Stupid people

Events Have Impact

Immediate
Impact

Future
Impact



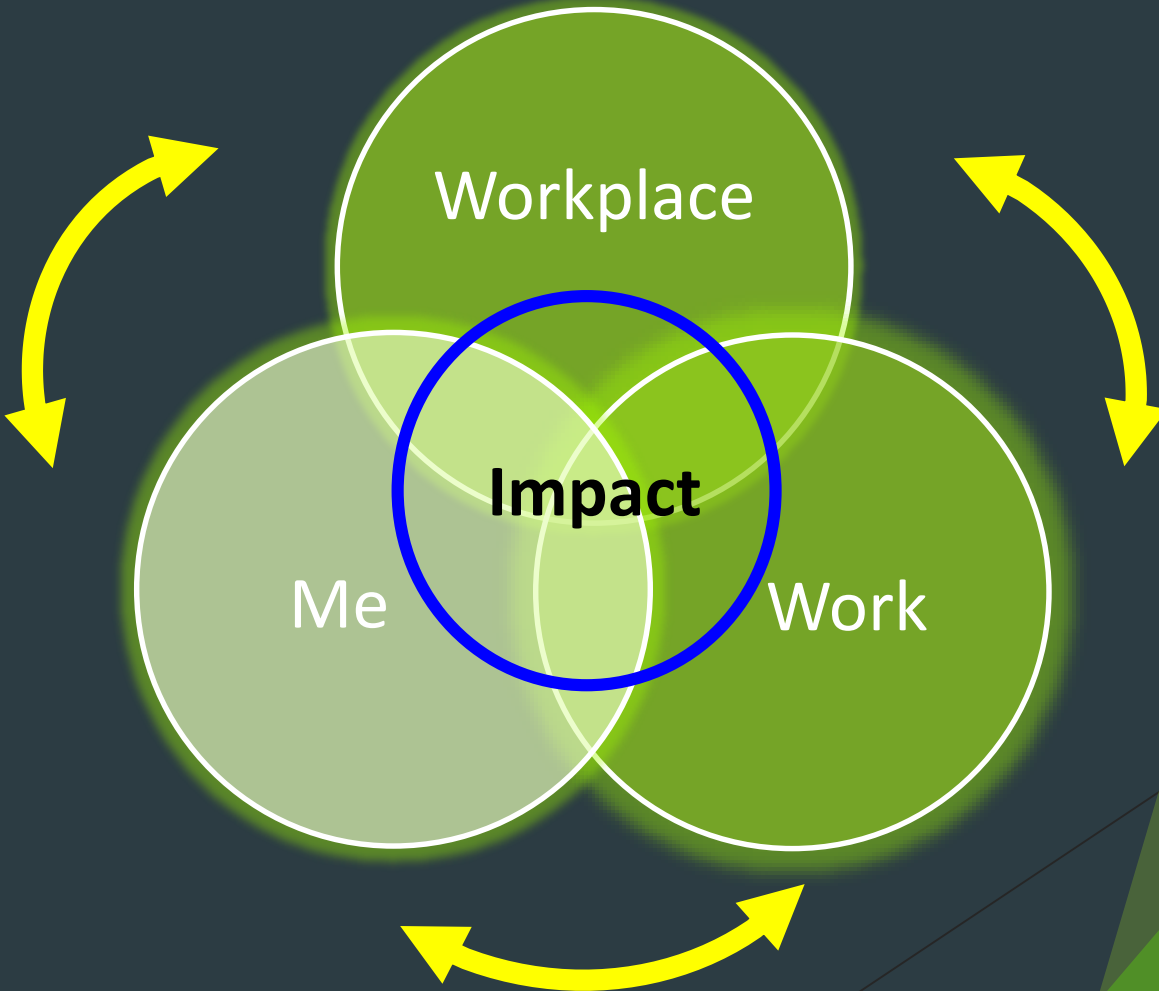
Good New / Bad News

- ▶ Bad news first
 - ▶ You are human
- ▶ Good news
 - ▶ You are human

What at work has Impact ?



Impact



Impact



You mean Me?



Capacity

- ▶ We have a finite capacity for everything:
 - ▶ Eating, Lifting, Carrying, Walking, Crying, Yelling, Talking, Running, Drinking, even sexual activity,
 - ▶ Brutality, cruelty, and pain

EVEN ROCKS GET TIRED!

EVEN ROCKS GET TIRED



When our *Capacity* runs out:

- ▶ Burnout
- ▶ Vicarious traumatization
- ▶ Compassion fatigue

There is a point of too much for everyone.

Compassion Fatigue

The “cost of caring for others”

Also known as Burnout

Vicarious Traumatization

What is it?

The impact of the stories we hear:
sharing the lives and journeys of the
people we work with!

- ❖ Stories from those who have been harmed.
- ❖ Stories from those who harm.

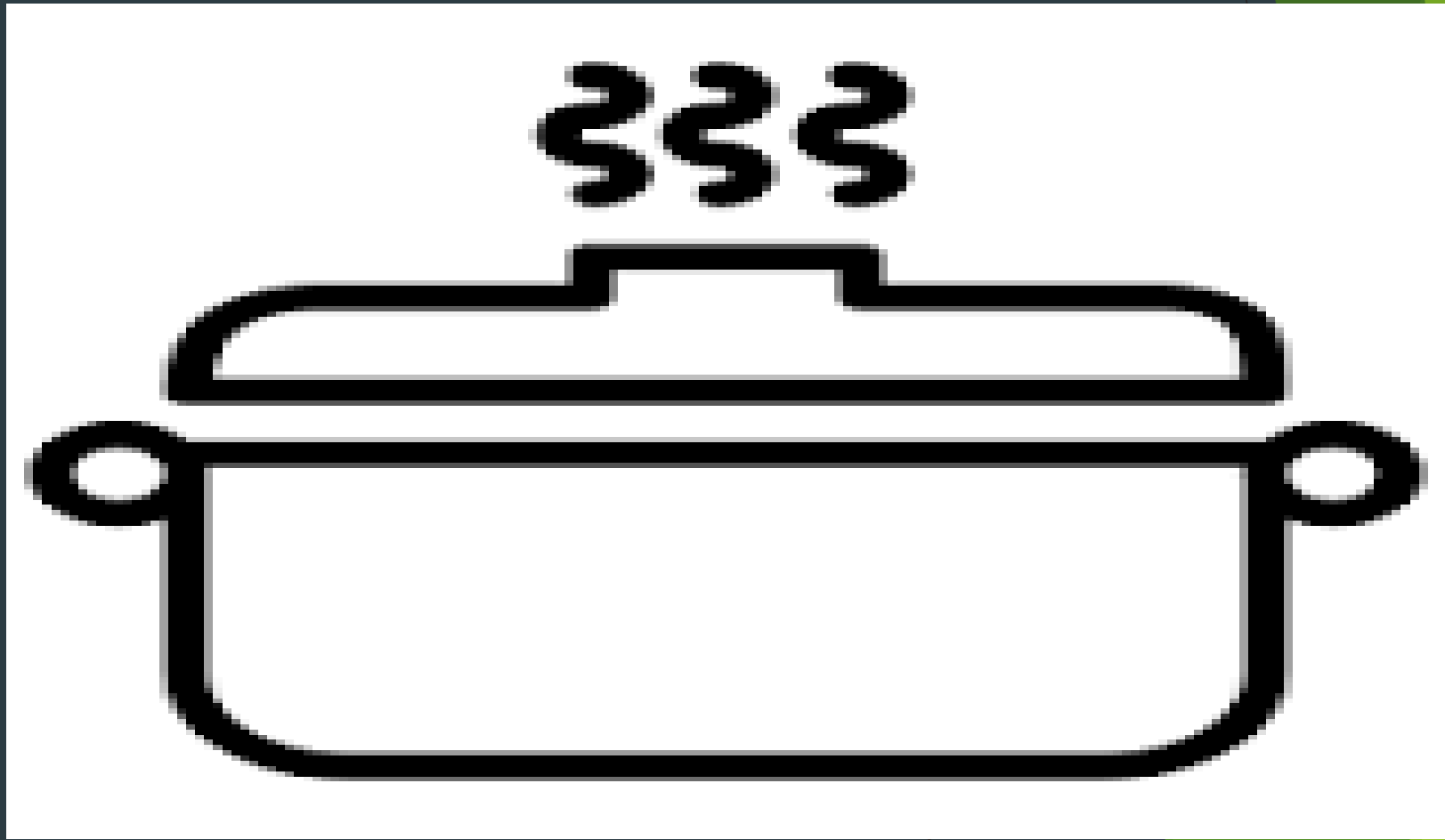
Our Response to the Impact

- ❖ When things affect us, what do we do?
 - ❖ What does our work environment encourage us to do?

Taking Care of Ourselves

❖ **Try Not To Think
About It**

Put a lit on it!
Stuff It Down



Put a lid on it!
Stuff It Down!



But, it...

Blows
Out



Leaks
Out

How do you know you
are in trouble?

▶ What does it look like?

Four Primary Casualties

1. **Patience**
2. **Sleep**
3. **Appetite**
4. **Dread returning to work**

Physical Signs

- ❖ Fatigue, tension, sleep disruption, headaches, sick time, aches and pains, you catch everything going by
- ❖ Listen to your queasy stomach or stiff neck or insomnia
- ❖ What is your body telling you?
 - ❖ Everything is fine?
 - ❖ You are just getting old?
 - ❖ Or is there something you need to be taking care of?
- ❖ Your body will tell you when enough is enough:
Are you listening?

Cognitive Signs

- ❖ Images and sounds you cannot get out of your head
- ❖ Difficulty making decisions
- ❖ Uncertainty & Confusion
- ❖ Cynicism
- ❖ Blaming
- ❖ Ruminating
- ❖ A changed World View

Emotional Signs

- ❖ Overwhelmed
- ❖ Anxiety
- ❖ Depression, sadness
- ❖ Apathy
- ❖ Irritable,
- ❖ When your moments of peace are rare and your moods are as unpredictable as the weather HUMMM, what does this tell us?

Behavior

- ❖ Avoidance/ withdrawal
 - ❖ Turn down invitations, not answer the phone
- ❖ Increased use of alcohol
- ❖ Increased spending
- ❖ Increased or decreased eating
- ❖ Pushing in your exercise to injury
- ❖ Irritable & less patient

Self Care

*Making sure that the best
part of you is still there*

*For you and the people
around you*

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or significant sources of **STRESS**. It means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences.

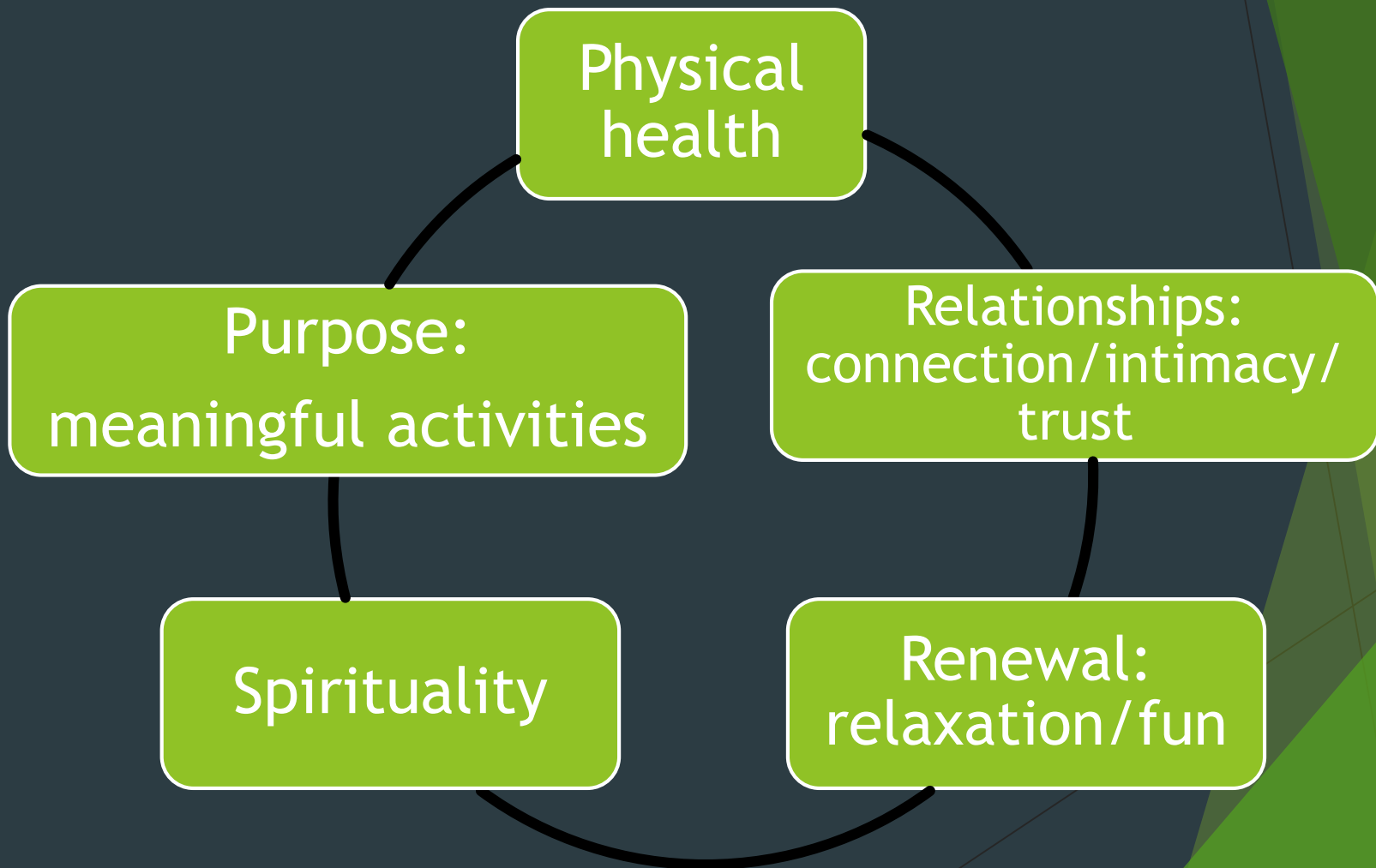
*Resilience is **ordinary**,
not extraordinary.*

***People commonly
demonstrate resilience.***

*Resilience is not a trait
that people either have
or do not have.*

*It involves **behaviors** &
thoughts that can be learned
and practiced by anyone.*

Anchors to Mental Health: the foundations of Resiliency



Coping Strategies

- ❖ *Taking care of*
 - ❖ *Emotional needs*
 - ❖ *Physical needs*
 - ❖ *Relationship needs*
 - ❖ *Renewal*
 - ❖ *Tasks which need to be done*

Emotions

❖ What takes care of the Emotional impact of your work?

True False

❖ Eating chocolate chip cookies?

❖ Drinking alcohol?

❖ Avoiding people from work?

Expression

Talking

▶ Relief

▶ Build-up

Talking

▶ Relief

▶ Build-up

- ▶ Negative

- ▶ Repetitive

- ▶ External

- ▶ What others
said or did

- did not say or do

- ▶ Problem Solving

- ▶ What everyone else needs to do

W

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Talking

- ▶ Relief
 - ▶ Our experience
 - ▶ Thoughts
 - ▶ Feelings
 - ▶ Hopes/
expectations
 - ▶ What is going
on for us
- ▶ Problem Solving
 - ▶ What we can do
- ▶ Build-up

Talking

▶ Relief

- ▶ Our experience
 - ▶ Thoughts
 - ▶ Feelings
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- ▶ What is going on for us
- ▶ Problem Solving
 - ▶ What we can do

▶ Build-up

- ▶ Negative
- ▶ Repetitive
- ▶ External
 - ▶ What others
 - said or did
 - did not say or do
- ▶ Problem Solving
 - ▶ What everyone else needs to do

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Writing

Similar to talking

- ▶ Journaling can be a log of events used as evidence to prove why we feel the way we feel: angry or upset
 - ▶ External, negative
- ▶ Or, it can be used to express our experience to give us relief
 - ▶ Internal, reflective, expressive

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The Positive things about Your work and Workplace?

❖ What are the Good things?

Summary

- ▶ Showing your colleagues the same compassion you show the children you advocate for.
- ▶ Showing yourself the same compassion that you show for the children you advocate for.