

# Brain Care is Self Care

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# Self Care

- Exercise
- Sleep
- Touch
- Nature
- Stress reduction
- Emotional Health
- Healthy relationships
- Meaningful work

# Brain Care

- Exercise – grow new brain cells
- Sleep – housekeeping; consolidate learning
- Touch – safety and trust; equilibrium
- Nature – reverie, insights
- Stress reduction – reduce damage to brain
- Emotional Health – antidote negativity bias; connect to resources
- Healthy relationships – develop inner secure base
- Meaningful work – thriving and well-being

# Human Brain: Evolutionary Masterpiece

- 100 billion neurons
  - Each neuron contains the entire human genome
  - Neurons “fire” hundreds of times per second
  - Neurons connect to 5,000-7,000 other neurons
- Trillions of synaptic connections
- As many connections in single cubic centimeter of brain tissue as stars in Milky Way galaxy

# Brain Care

- Recover from impact of stress and trauma
- Rewire automatic habits
- Resilience and well-being

# Conditioning

- Experience causes neurons to fire
- Repeated experiences, repeated neural firings
- Neurons that fire together wire together
- Strengthen synaptic connections
- Connections stabilize into neural pathways
  
- Conditioning is neutral, wires positive and negative

# New Conditioning

- Choose new experiences
  - Gratitude practice, listening skills, focusing attention, self-compassion, self-acceptance
- Create new learning, new memory
- Encode new wiring
- Install new pattern of response

# Cues to Practice - ANTS to PATS

- Identify habitual negative pattern of response
- Identify new, positive response to counter/replace
- Identify cue word or phrase to name negative and positive
  - Criticism - Compassion
- Use cue to break automaticity and change the channel
- Repeat the practice as many times as necessary



# Re-conditioning

- Memory de-consolidation – re-consolidation
- “Light up” neural networks
- Juxtapose old negative with new positive
- Neurons fall apart, rewire
- New rewires old

# Re-conditioning

- Resource with memory of someone's compassion toward you
- Evoke compassion for your self
- Evoke memory of someone being critical of you (or inner critic)
- Hold awareness of criticizing moment and compassionate moment in dual awareness
- Drop the criticizing moment; rest in the compassionate moment

# De-Conditioning

- Imagination
- Guided visualizations
- Guided meditations
- Reverie, daydreams
- Brain “plays,” makes own associations and links, connect dots in new ways
- Reflect on new insights

# Wiser Self

- Imagine being in your safe place
- Imagine meeting your Wiser Self who embodies all of your best qualities and strengths
- Ask your Wiser Self
  - How did you come to be wise, happy, content?
  - What did you have to overcome?
- Listen to words of advice for your journey
- Receive object to remember Wiser Self by

# Intelligences

- Somatic - body-based, rewire trauma
- Emotional - from survival responses to thriving
- Relational - heal heartache, access havens and resources, navigate peopled world
- Reflective – conscious awareness; catch the moment, make a choice

# Calm through the Body

- Hand on the Heart
- Body Scan
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Calm – and empowerment – through body

# Calm through Movement

- Body inhabits posture of difficult emotion (40 seconds)
- Body moves into opposite posture (40 seconds)
- Body returns to first posture (20 seconds)
- Body returns to second posture (20 seconds)
- Body finds posture in the middle (30 seconds)
- Reflect on experience
- “Power posing” – Amy Cuddy TED talk

# Compassion – Self-Compassion

- Compassion: care and concern in the face of other people's pain and suffering
- Self-Compassion: care and concern for one's own pain and suffering
- Mindful Self-Compassion:
  - Awareness of experience of suffering
  - Kindness toward self as experiencer of suffering
  - Felt sense of common humanity; all human beings suffer



# One for Me; One for You

- Breathing in, “nourishing, nourishing”
- Breathing out, “soothing, soothing”
- In imagination, “nourishing for me, nourishing for you, soothing for me, soothing for you”
- “One for me, one for you”
- Practice breathing “one for me, one for you” when in conversation with someone

# Emotions

- Signals to take action
- Adaptive action tendencies
  - Anger – protest injustice, betrayal
  - Sadness – pull in comfort
  - Fear – move away from danger, toxicity
  - Guilt – healthy remorse, make amends
  - Joy – expand, connect with others

# Left shift

- Positive emotions cause more neural firing in left hemisphere of brain
- Left hemisphere more oriented to approach stance toward experience, openness to learning
- Openness to learning, flexibility, options = resilience

# Gratitude

- 2-minute free write
- Gratitude journal
- Gratitude buddy
- Carry love and appreciation in your wallet

# Take in the Good

- Notice: in the moment or in memory
- Locate felt sense in the body
- Absorb: savor 10-20-30 seconds,

# Positivity Portfolio

- Ask 10 friends to send cards or e-mails expressing appreciation of you
- Assemble phrases on piece of paper
- Tape to bathroom mirror or computer monitor, carry in wallet or purse
- Read phrases 3 times a day for 30 days
- Savor and appreciate

# Relational Intelligence

- Asking for and receiving help
- Compassionate listening
- Setting limits and boundaries
- Negotiating change
- Resolving conflicts
- Repairing ruptures
- Forgiveness

# Wished for Outcome

- Evoke memory of what did happen
- Imagine new behaviors, new players, new resolution
- Hold new outcome in awareness, strengthening and refreshing
- Notice shift in perspective of experience, of self



# Mindfulness

- Pause, become present
- Notice and name
- Step back, dis-entangle, reflect
- Catch the moment; make a choice
- Shift perspectives; shift states
- Discern options
- Choose wisely – let go of unwholesome, cultivate wholesome

# Mindfulness

*Catch the moment; make a choice*

*- Janet Friedman*

*Every moment has a choice;*

*Every choice has an impact.*

*- Julia Butterfly Hill*

# Multi-tasking

- Focused attention – brain works well
- Spacious awareness – brain works well
- Multi-tasking
  - Switching attention requires metabolic energy
  - Switching fatigues brain
  - Brain becomes tired, confused, foggy

# Movement - Exercise

- Oxygen – brain is 2% of body weight, uses 20% of body's oxygen
- Endorphins – feel good hormones, brighten the mind
- Brain-Derived Neurotrophic Factor (BDNF) - grow new brain cells, will migrate to where needed

# Touch

- Hand on heart, hand on cheek
- Head rubs, foot rubs
- Massage back of neck
- Hold thumb as “inner child”
- Hugs – 20 second full bodied

# Sleep

- Housekeeping
- Reset nervous system
- Consolidate learning
  
- Take mental breaks

# Take Mental Breaks

- Focus on something else (positive is good)
- Talk to someone else (resonant is good)
- Move-walk somewhere else (nature is good)
- Every 90 minutes; avoid adrenal fatigue

# Nutrition

- Eat more
  - Protein
  - Vegetables
  - Supplements
- Eat less
  - Caffeine
  - Sugar
  - Allergens



# Laughter


- Reduces cortisol; lowers blood pressure
- Increases oxygen and blood flow; reduces risk of heart disease and stroke
- Triggers catecholamines; brightens the mind
- Promotes productivity, creativity, problem-solving
- Reduces mistakes; promotes efficiency

# Learn Something New

- Speak a foreign language
- Play a musical instrument
- Juggle
- Play chess
- Crossword puzzles when you don't know the words

# Hanging Out with Healthy Brains

- Brain is social organ; matures and learns best in interactions with other brains
- Social engagement regulates nervous system
- Resonant interactions prime the brain's neuroplasticity; promotes learning and growth



*There is a natural and inviolable tendency in things to bloom into whatever they truly are in the core of their being.*

*All we have to do is align ourselves with what wants to happen naturally and put in the effort that is our part in helping it happen.*

*- Dave Richo*

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