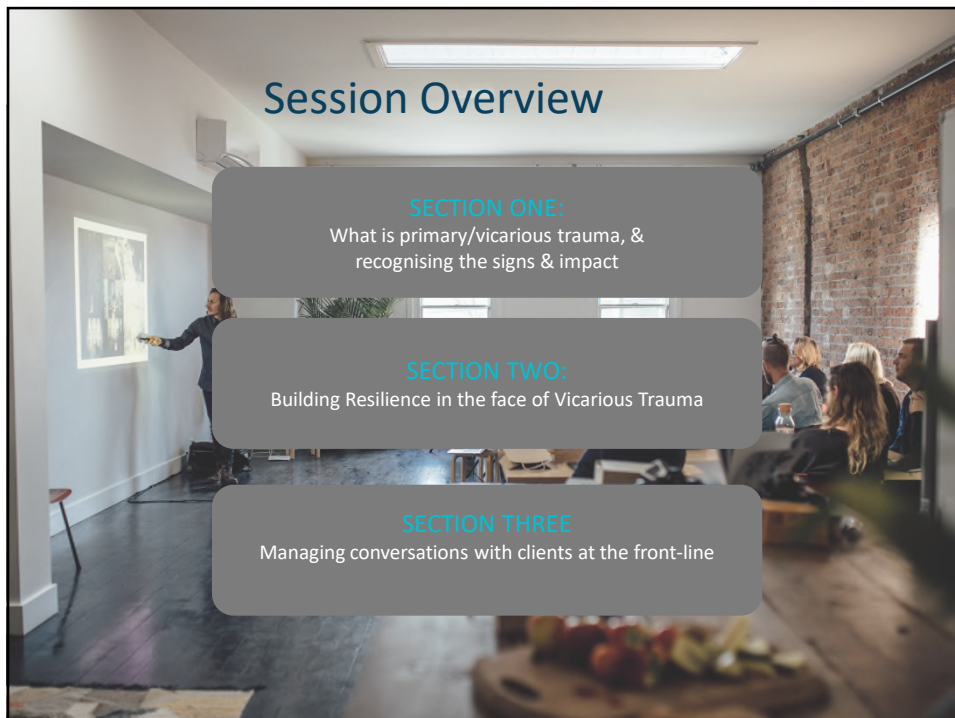


ASSURE
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RESILIENCE & MANAGING VICARIOUS TRAUMA OVERVIEW

DLAV

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Psychologist & State Mgr VIC
Assure Programs



Session Overview

SECTION ONE:
What is primary/vicarious trauma, &
recognising the signs & impact

SECTION TWO:
Building Resilience in the face of Vicarious Trauma

SECTION THREE:
Managing conversations with clients at the front-line



SECTION ONE:

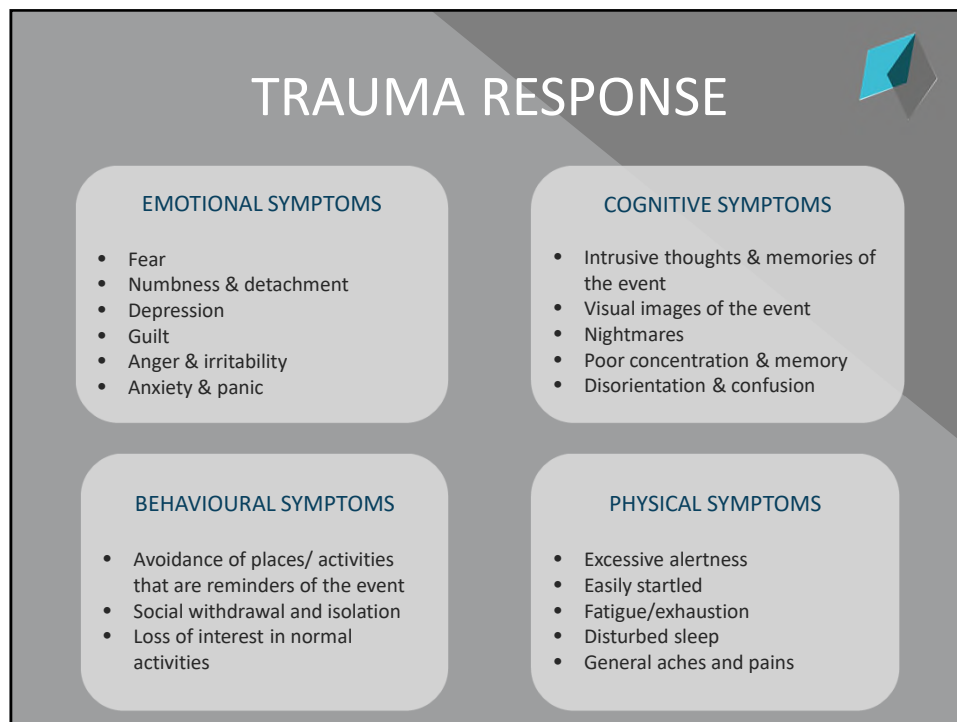
Primary & Vicarious Trauma



WHAT IS PRIMARY TRAUMA?

Primary trauma refers to a psychological response to having been directly exposed to a deeply distressing or disturbing event (e.g., death, serious injury, threats of violence).

Signs of primary trauma may appear a few hours or a few days later. Sometimes even weeks or months may pass before the reactions appears.



WHAT IS VICARIOUS TRAUMA?

Process of change that happens over time from hearing distressing stories through contact with people who have experienced trauma.

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“Vicarious trauma is the natural consequence of being human; connecting to and caring about our clients as we see the effects of trauma on their lives.”

(Saakvitne, Gamble, Pearlman & Tabor, 2000)

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WE ARE WIRED TO CARE

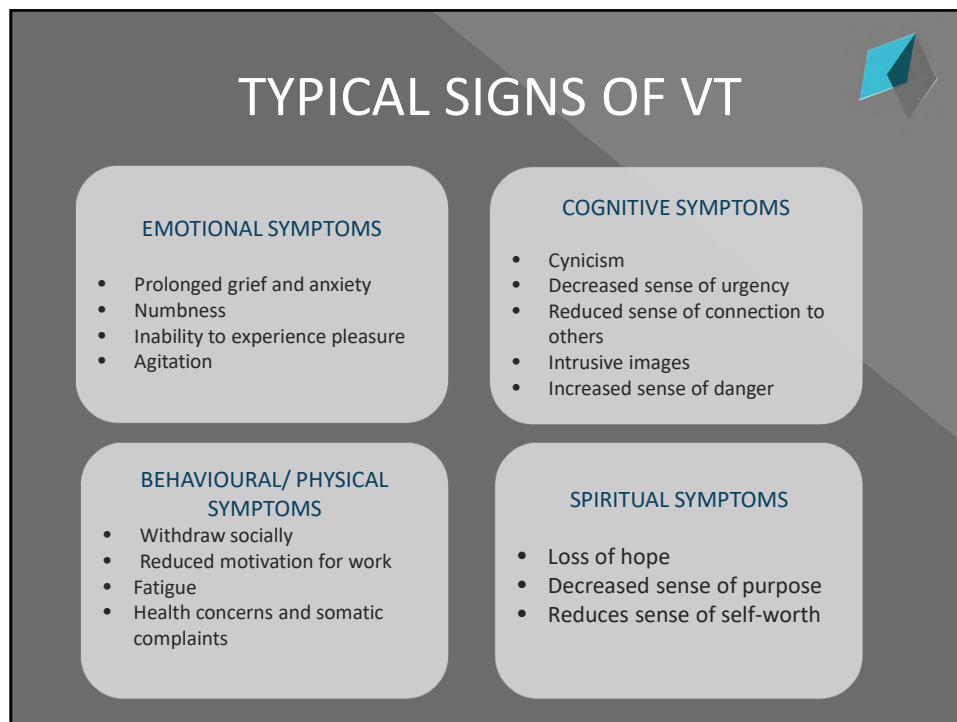
Mirror neurons fire as we experience an event or as we encounter other's experiences.

Mirror neurons activate when we see others perform movements.

This is the foundation of empathy

Empathetic people are at a higher risk of VT

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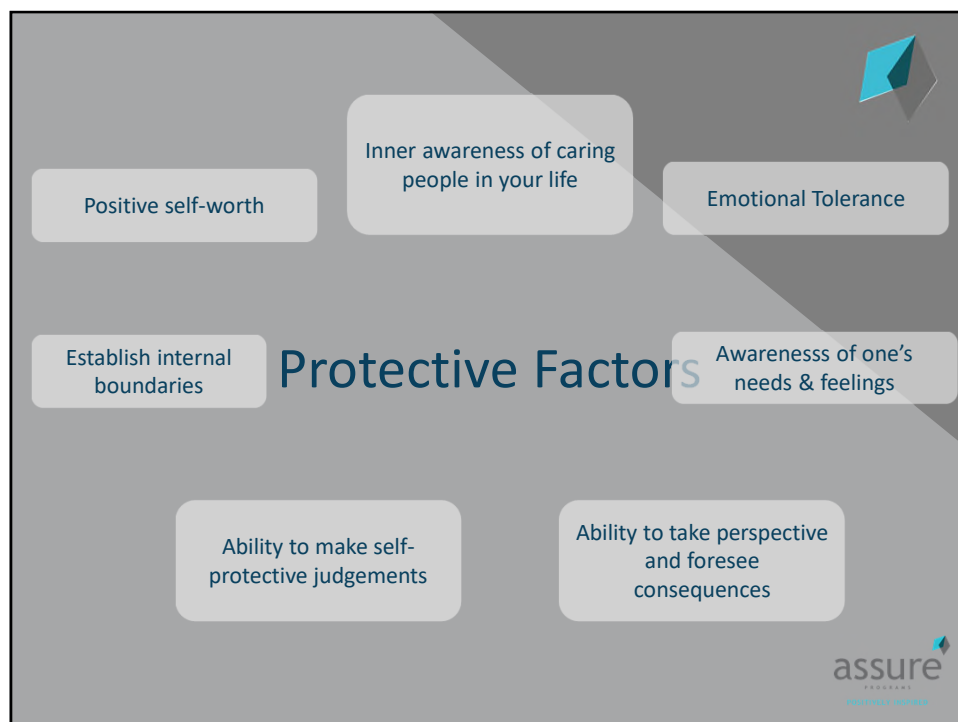
IMPACT OF VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Impacts on:

- Sense of safety
- Trust
- Esteem
- Intimacy
- Control

It impacts how we see the world, see others, experience relationships and our sense of personal control.

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WHY DO WE FEEL STRESSED?

A **NORMAL** reaction - not all bad.

When a threat is detected –
fight/flight/freeze response is triggered.

Excessive demands but not enough
coping resources.

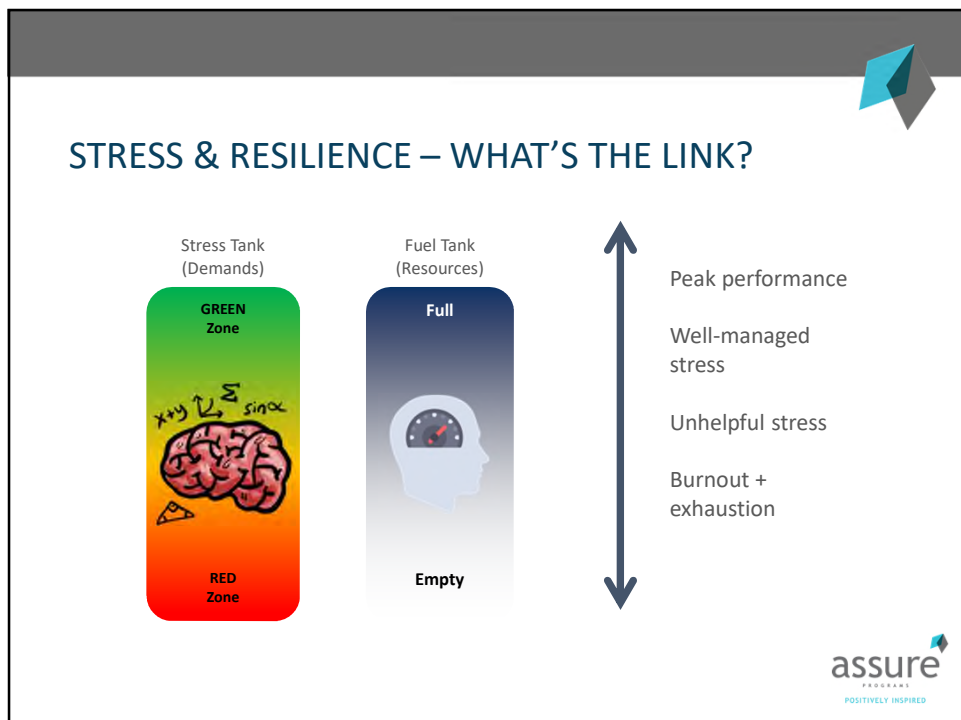
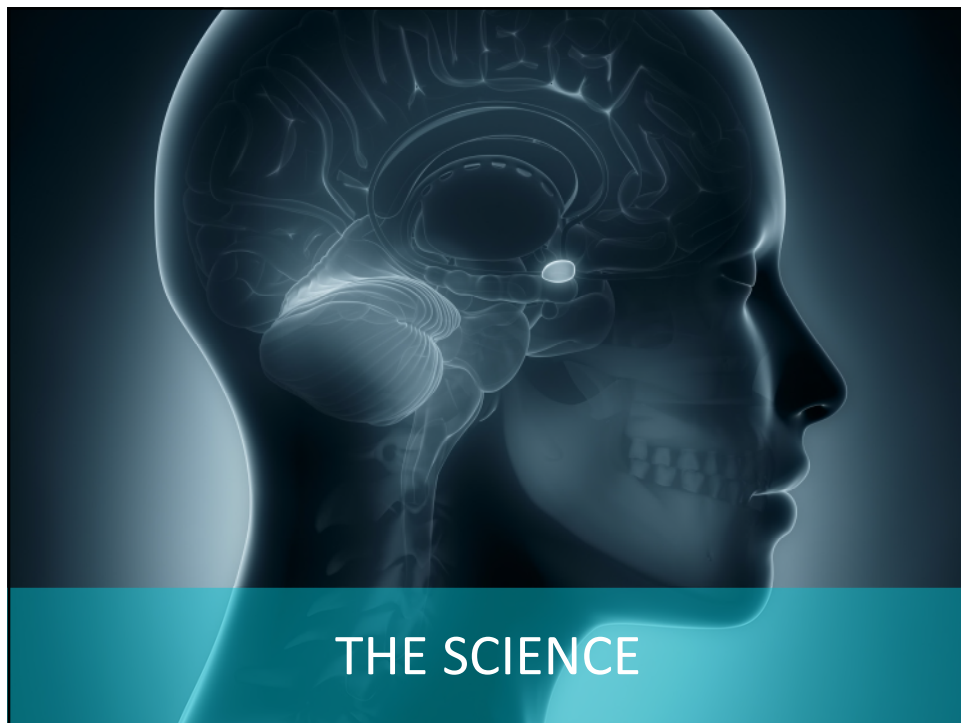


POST INCIDENT TRAUMA RESPONSE

FIGHT
May act aggressively, questions your authority, yelling, crying, physically lashing out

FLIGHT
Avoid you altogether, refuse to cooperate

FREEZE
Withdrawn, minimize responses, shut down emotionally



THE EFFECTS OF ONGOING TRAUMA EXPOSURE

- When we are exposed to excessive or long-term trauma – changes in brain neurotransmitters occur.
- Stress hormones are released and alter brain functioning including that of the amygdala and hypothalamus
- Chronic stress leads to changes in brain structure (e.g. abnormalities in grey matter – implications for cognitive performance)

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SECTION TWO

VICARIOUS RESILIENCE

VICARIOUS RESILIENCE

Resilience in the face of vicarious trauma is the ability to recognise when exposure is becoming overwhelming and to implement strategies to reduce the impact of the exposure.

- It is the ability to maintain a healthy world perspective.
- Coping constructively with adversities in the moment
- Building resources and strengths to manage vicarious trauma and stress over the long term

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VICARIOUS RESILIENCE

Key pillars of vicarious resilience

- 1. Develop personal awareness
- 2. Find balance
- 3. Connect with purpose and people

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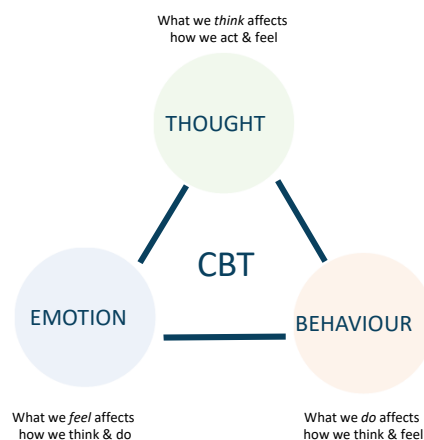



DO YOU KNOW YOUR SIGNS OF STRESS?

Cognitive Signs	Emotional Signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Memory issues Difficulty making decisions Increased negative thoughts Intrusive thoughts about stressful events Difficulty concentrating Worry, nervousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moody Feeling teary or easily upset Feeling numb Feeling low or down Low self esteem Anger or irritability
Physical Signs	Behavioural Signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High BP, heart rate Sweating Rapid, shallow breathing Muscle tension and stiffness Headaches, back aches Fatigue 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eating more or less Sleeping too much or too little Procrastination Nervous habits (nail biting etc.) Over-reacting to unexpected problems Isolating yourself from others

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THE COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL MODEL






AWARENESS OF THINKING HABITS

- Paying attention to self-talk
 - the brain generates constant dialogue
 - Some are useful and some are not
 - They can be negative and self defeating
- Use affirmations
- Challenge negative thinking styles
- Monitor thinking habits
- Engage in perspective – how you look at the world

UNHELPFUL SELF-TALK

- Mental filter
- Jump to conclusions
- Personalisation
- Catastrophising
- Black and white thinking
- Should-ing & must-ing
- Overgeneralising
- Emotional reasoning

How do you feel if you use these thinking styles?



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LIMIT EXPOSURE




- Prep before any sessions – what's the aim/purpose
- Establish and maintain healthy boundaries during the call/conversations e.g. time limits
- Use available supports during any interactions if needed & available
- View/review notes briefly and for a specific purposes only
- Don't leave notes in view as a reminder
- Take breaks
- Remind yourself why you are there (purpose)
- Write down concerns to get closure
- Schedule debriefing/download sessions
- Talk about your experiences with somebody you trust
- Avoid bringing the experience home



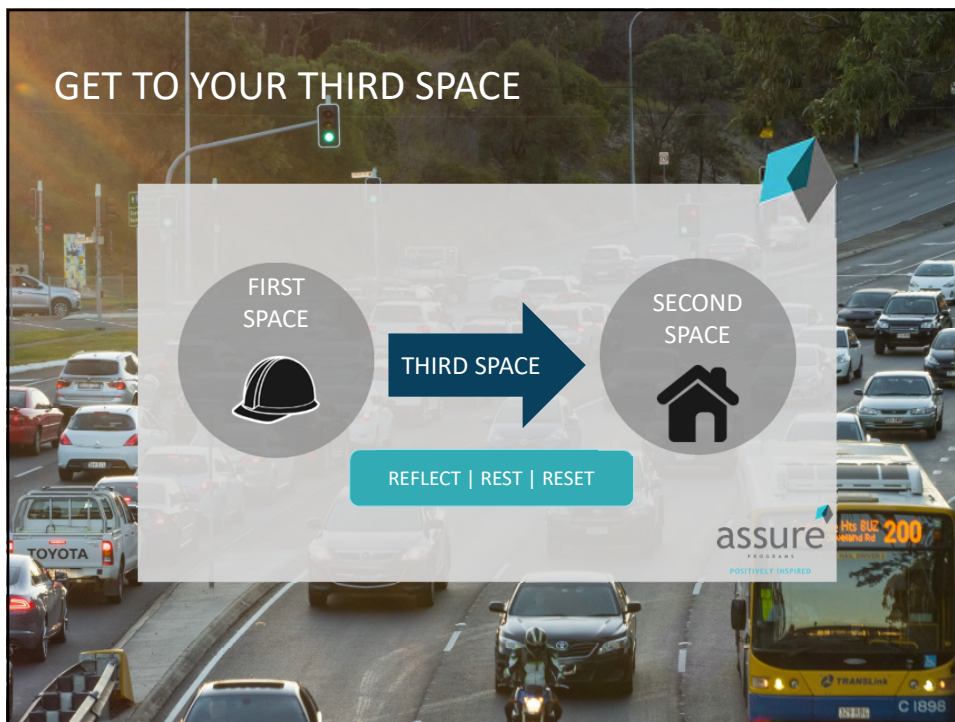
HEALTHY HABITS

- Nutrition
- Sleep
- Exercise
- Mindfulness/Breathing
- Detachment breaks
- Recovery time



GROUNDING ACTIVITIES

- Take 10 slow breaths
- Splash some water on your face
- Go for a walk outside
- Do a body scan
- Slowly sip a warm drink
- Label your surroundings:
 - 5 things I can see
 - 4 things I can feel
 - 3 things I can hear
 - 2 things I can smell
 - 1 thing I can taste



GET TO YOUR THIRD SPACE

FIRST SPACE

THIRD SPACE

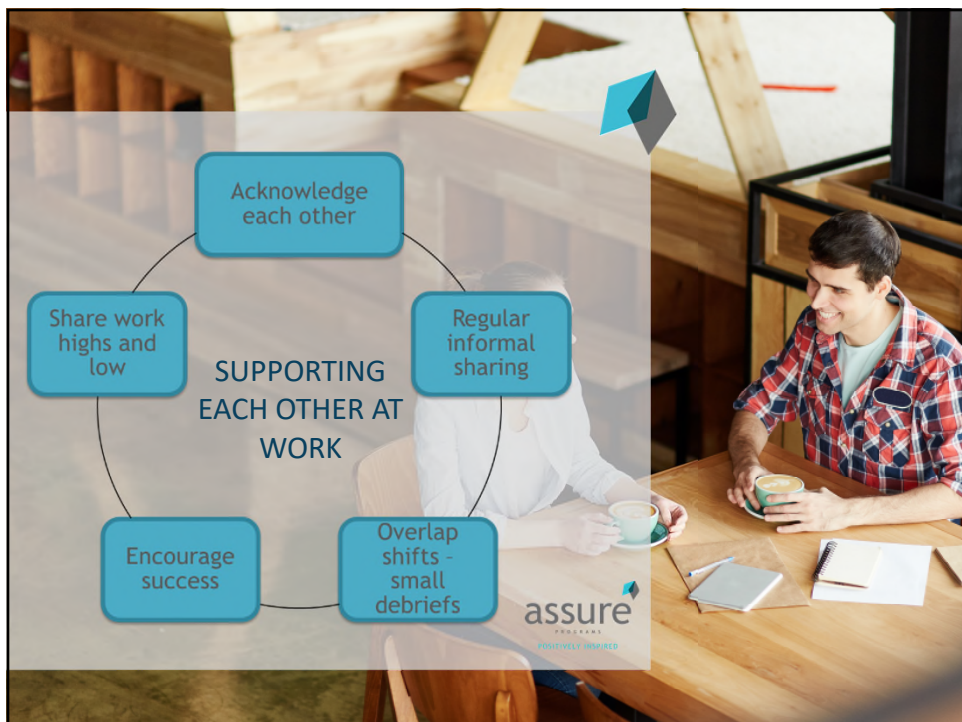
SECOND SPACE


REFLECT | REST | RESET

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THE BIZ
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**FIND PURPOSE
THROUGH VALUES**

Ask yourself this....

- Why do you do this work?
- How is it **important** to you?
- How do you **measure success** in your work?

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SECTION THREE

INTERACTIONS WITH
FRONT-LINE CLIENTS

OUR BRAIN & STRONG EMOTIONS

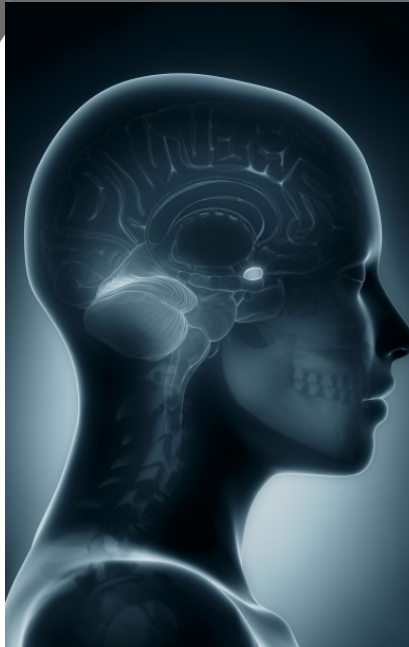
We are **hard-wired** to respond to threat.

Limbic system is activated and prepare the body for **fight or flight response**.

Under stressful situations, the emotional brain (limbic system) can kick in and override the prefrontal cortex (thinking brain).

When this happens, our **rational thinking ability is dominated by our emotions**.

Strong emotions are **contagious**.

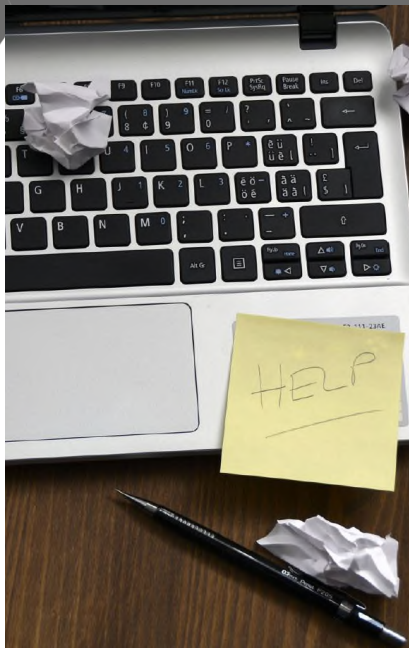


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SO... WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?

It is important to be able to:

- Recognise signs of escalation
- Develop an understanding of how the situation is affecting you
- Step back and control your own responses to 'challenging behaviours'



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Summary

- Preparation – purpose of interaction and reason you are there
- Listen (empathy>sympathy)
- Monitor and manage own emotions (pause and breathe)
- Focus on what CAN do
- Next steps
- Write down any relevant info e.g. other resources
- Learnings – include what went well
- Reset



MANAGING EMOTIONALLY CHARGED INTERACTIONS



1. Detect & Label
Recognise the situation is affecting you



2. Step back & manage your reactions
Get conscious about your reactions



3. Respond
Respond to de-escalate



4. Move forward
Reset after the interaction



STEP ONE: DETECT & LABEL

- Know your triggers
- Pay attention to your reactions
- Label the emotion:

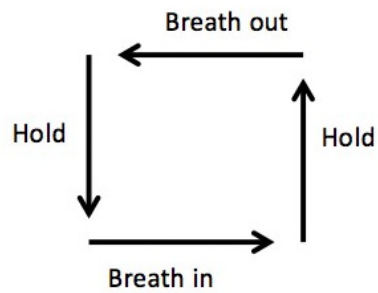
JOY	TRUST	FEAR	SURPRISE
SADNESS	DISGUST	ANGER	ANTICIPATION



STEP TWO: STEP BACK & MANAGE YOUR EMOTIONS

- Conscious decision to “let it go”
- Take a deep breath
- Focus on maintaining composure
- Remind yourself of your role in the situation (boundaries)

SWITCHING THE BRAIN ON



Mindfulness Apps



Calm



Headspace





Breathe



Smiling Mind





STEP THREE: RESPOND TO DE-ESCALATE

Your response is a **choice** within your control.

Remember that language is key.

F.I.D.O – feelings, information, decisions, outcomes

Responding vs reacting – a pause!



ANGER / AGGRESSION

- Try to understand the other person's perspective – be curious
- Ask questions & really listen
- Check what their expectations are
- Be assertive, not aggressive – firm & clear
- Don't block their complaint – let them vent to a point
- Don't take it personally
- Resist the temptation to avoid the "F" and jump to the "I"!
- Avoid "red flag" words and phrases



AVOID “RED FLAG” PHRASES

“You don’t seem to understand...”


“You have to...”

“It’s not our policy...”

“You need to...”

“Will you let me finish....”

These can **escalate** emotional situations!



DISTRESS / TEARS

- Show empathy
- Use a distractor – ask if they would like to get a glass of water to politely and sensitively allow time for the person to compose themselves
- Use silence or encouraging gestures to allow the person time to regroup
- Use supportive language
- Wait quietly until tears subside
- Check if the person is ok to continue
- Allow thinking time to process what is being discussed



STEP FOUR: MOVE FORWARD

What do I need to do to move forward after the interaction?

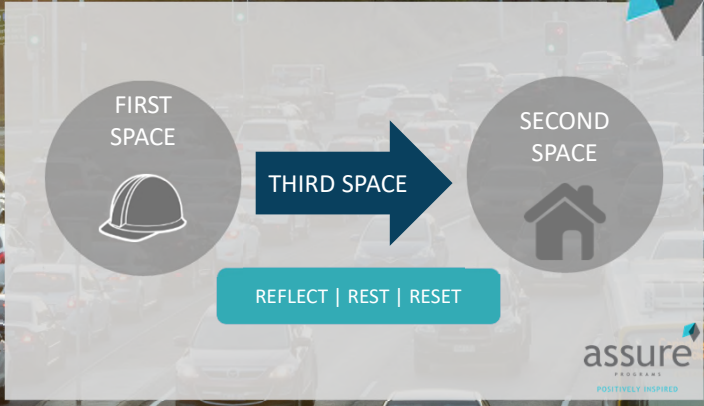
Reflect
How do I interpret what just happened here?

Rest
Can I be calm and present?

Reset
How will I 'show up' in the next conversation?



GET TO YOUR THIRD SPACE



FIRST SPACE

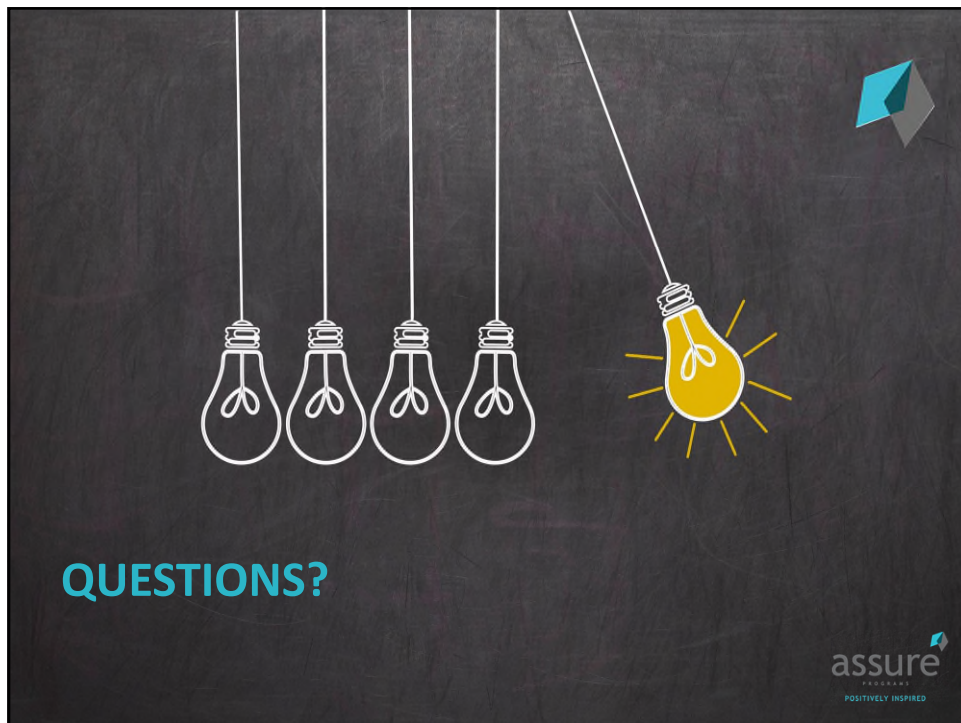
SECOND SPACE

THIRD SPACE

REFLECT | REST | RESET

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OTHER SUPPORTS

- Beyond Blue **1300 22 4636**
www.beyondblue.org.au
- Lifeline **13 11 14**

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ASSURE PROGRAMS SUPPORT OPTIONS

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
Confidential counselling
Phone or face-to-face appointments
Call: 1800 808 374

Manager Support Program (MSP)
Confidential support to address people issues
Quick response via phone appointments
Call: 1800 505 015

More resources available at
assureprograms.com.au

