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*for* Mental  
Wellbeing

# Isolation in COVID-19



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# Feeling Connected in the Work Place

*“The need to belong is often overlooked in the workplace. We don’t do enough to facilitate connection, while we often implement programs, systems, and structures that have a tendency to alienate and cause divisiveness.”*

*“The impact of failing to create a sense of belonging with our employees not only affects how much they enjoy their work; it has a significant effect on their ability to be productive.”*

*Why Belonging Is Key in Today’s Workplace, Switch and Shift, July 2016*



# What is Trauma?

## Definition (SAMHSA Experts 2012) includes three key elements

*Individual trauma results from an **event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as overwhelming or life-changing and that has profound **effects** on the individual's psychological development or well-being, often involving a physiological, social, and/or spiritual impact.*





# Survival Mode Response



# KEY FACTS ABOUT THE **FIGHT-OR-FLIGHT** RESPONSE



## 1. APPEARANCE OF THREAT



## 2. BRAIN PROCESSES SIGNALS

If the brain perceives a threat, the hypothalamus region would communicate with the autonomic nervous system to release stress response hormones

## 3. ADRENALINE & CORTISOL RELEASED

The adrenal glands release adrenaline and cortisol which transmit chemical messages telling the body how to respond



## INCREASED RESPIRATION

The air passageways to the lungs widen and the rate of breathing increases enabling more oxygen to enter the body



## INCREASED HEART RATE

More oxygen and nutrients will be sent to key organs and muscles resulting in enhanced performance



## INCREASED SHORT TERM ENERGY

Increased blood glucose synthesis in the liver releases glucose and fats into the bloodstream increasing short term energy supplies



## NON-VITAL ORGANS TONED DOWN

To maximise impact of critical organs and muscles, non-critical organs such as the stomach are toned down receiving less support



## ENHANCED CENTRAL VISION

To increase light the amount of light entering the eyes, the pupils would dilate and ciliary muscles relax. Peripheral vision and hearing may worsen



## OTHER

Other effects include relaxed bladder, shaking, sweating, feeling flushed and dry mouth

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<https://www.forchaps.com/blogs/learn/how-the-stress-response-of-your-hunter-gatherer-ancestors-helped-them-survive-and-why-it-may-now-be-damaging-your-health>



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# Physical Impact of Trauma

## Brain Architecture

Shrinkage in prefrontal cortex, corpus callosum, and hippocampus. Enlarged and more reactive amygdala. **Resolution:** safe and stable nurturing relationships, walk in nature, touch, exercise



## Neural Pathways

Need to 'rewire' our brain from old thought patterns and habits of mind, conscious, and unconscious. **Resolution:** neurofeedback, meditation/ mindful action, positive self-talk



## Brain Waves

Predomination of wrong brain waves in wrong part of the brain leads to anxiety, unable to concentrate, and seizures. **Resolution:** neurofeedback



## Neurotransmitters

Vulnerable to addiction because dopamine transmitters/receptors not developed or damaged. Reduces motivation & focus, creates fatigue. Low serotonin causes depression.



## Hormones

Prolonged high cortisol and ghrelin creates greater reactivity to stress. Long term damage to cells, structures of the body, and other hormone glands (thyroid). **Resolution:** oxytocin ("the love hormone")



## Toxin Elimination

Intestines and kidneys less able to eliminate toxins (slow gut or unbalanced flora). **Resolution:** salt baths, sauna



## Nervous System

Supercharged sympathetic nervous system. Parasympathetic nervous system not engaged to bring back into balance. **Resolution:** yoga, breathing, or other physical/emotional regulation



## Immune System

Resistance to cortisol or lower cortisol creates unchecked inflammation. Cause of many diseases: asthma, arthritis, etc.) **Resolution:** meditation/mindful action, walking in nature, diet, rest



## Cellular Change

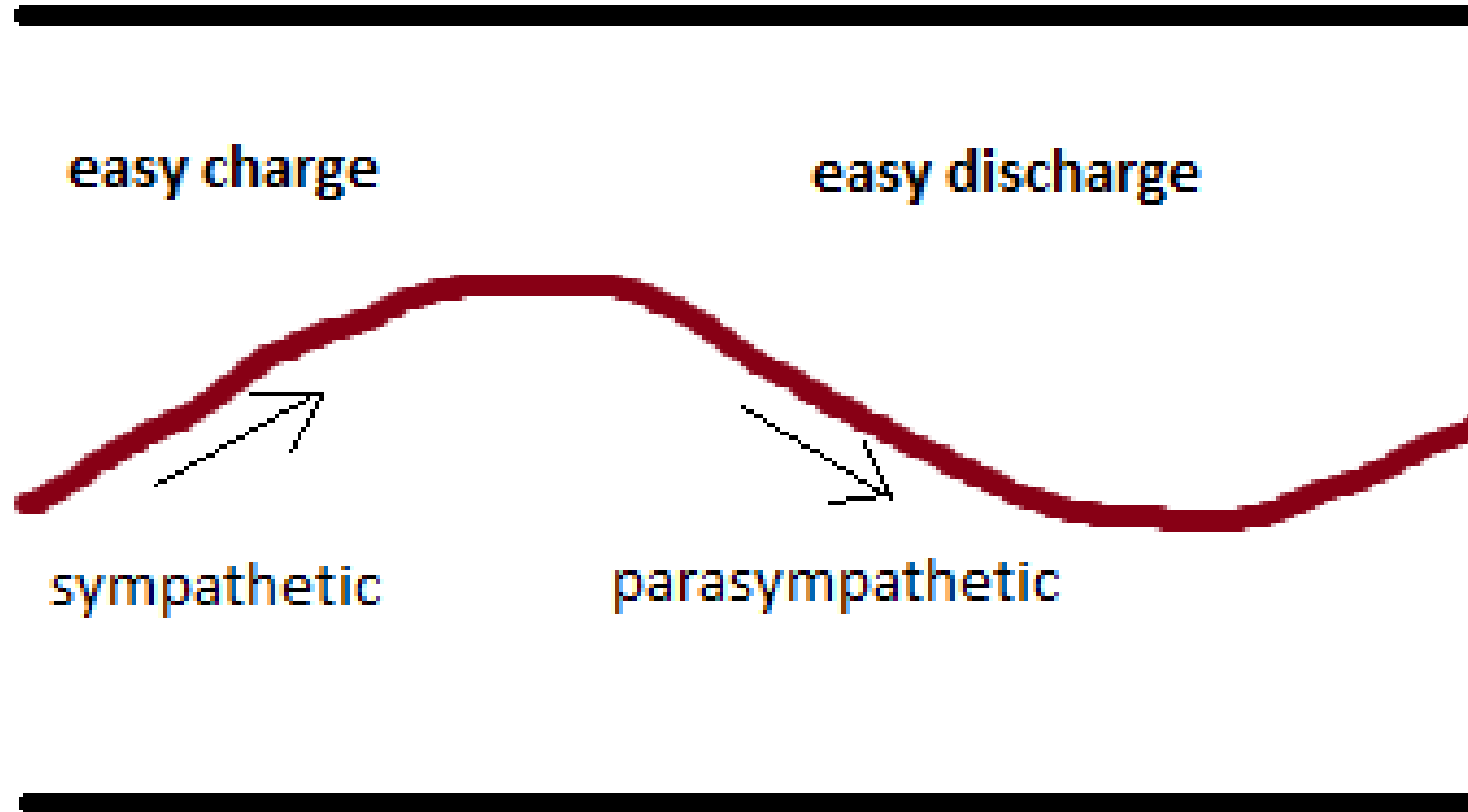
Shortens telomeres which prematurely ages and reduces reproduction of cells & can cause cancer. **Resolution:** social support

Epigenetics turns genes on or off in adaptation to dangerous environments. Effect can last generations. **Resolution:** Safer environment (perception of)





# Discharge of Trauma



# Parasympathetic (rest and digest)



# Sympathetic (fight, flight or freeze)

FIGHT



FLIGHT Oohlala!

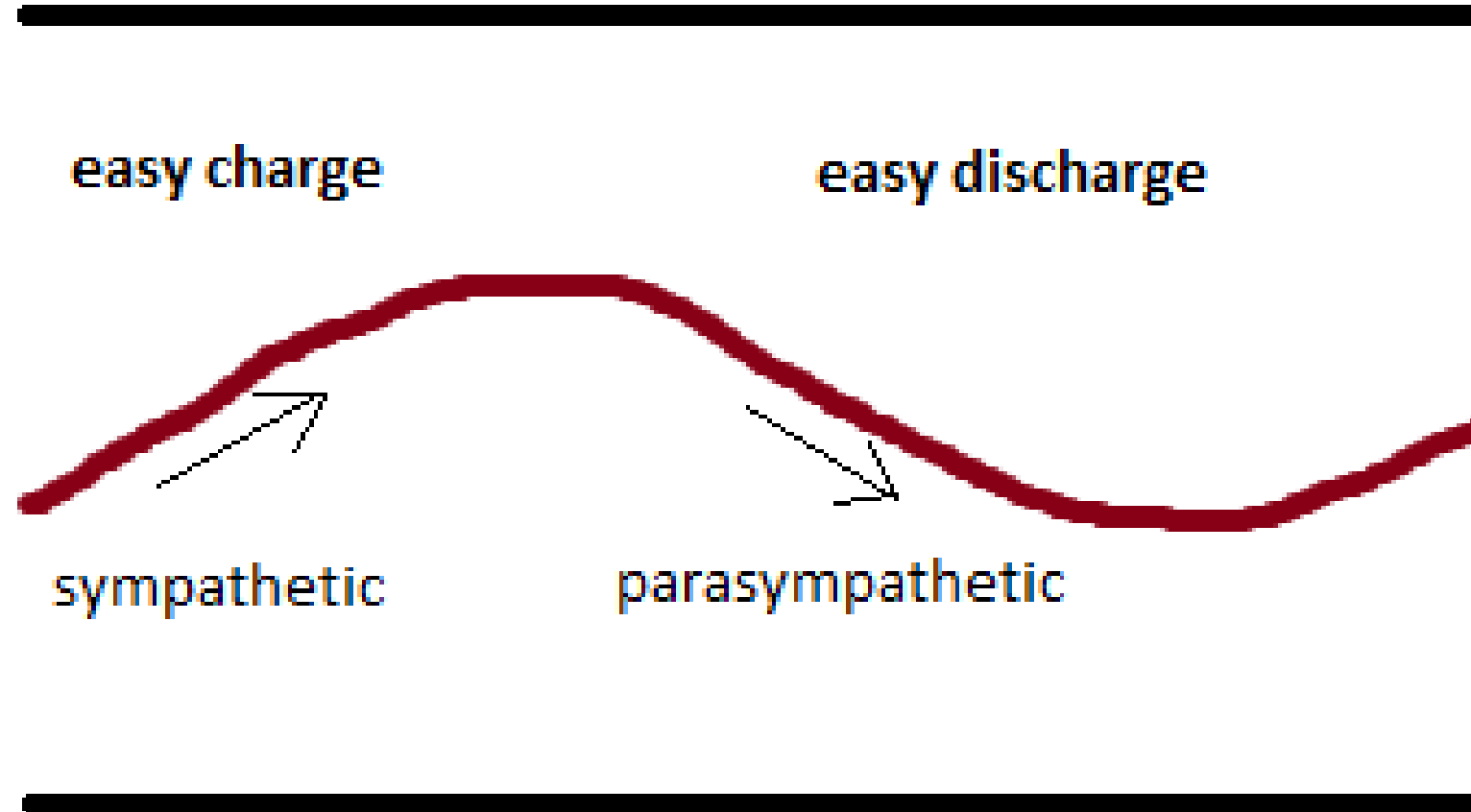


FREEZE





# Discharge of Trauma



FIGHT



FLIGHT Oohlala!

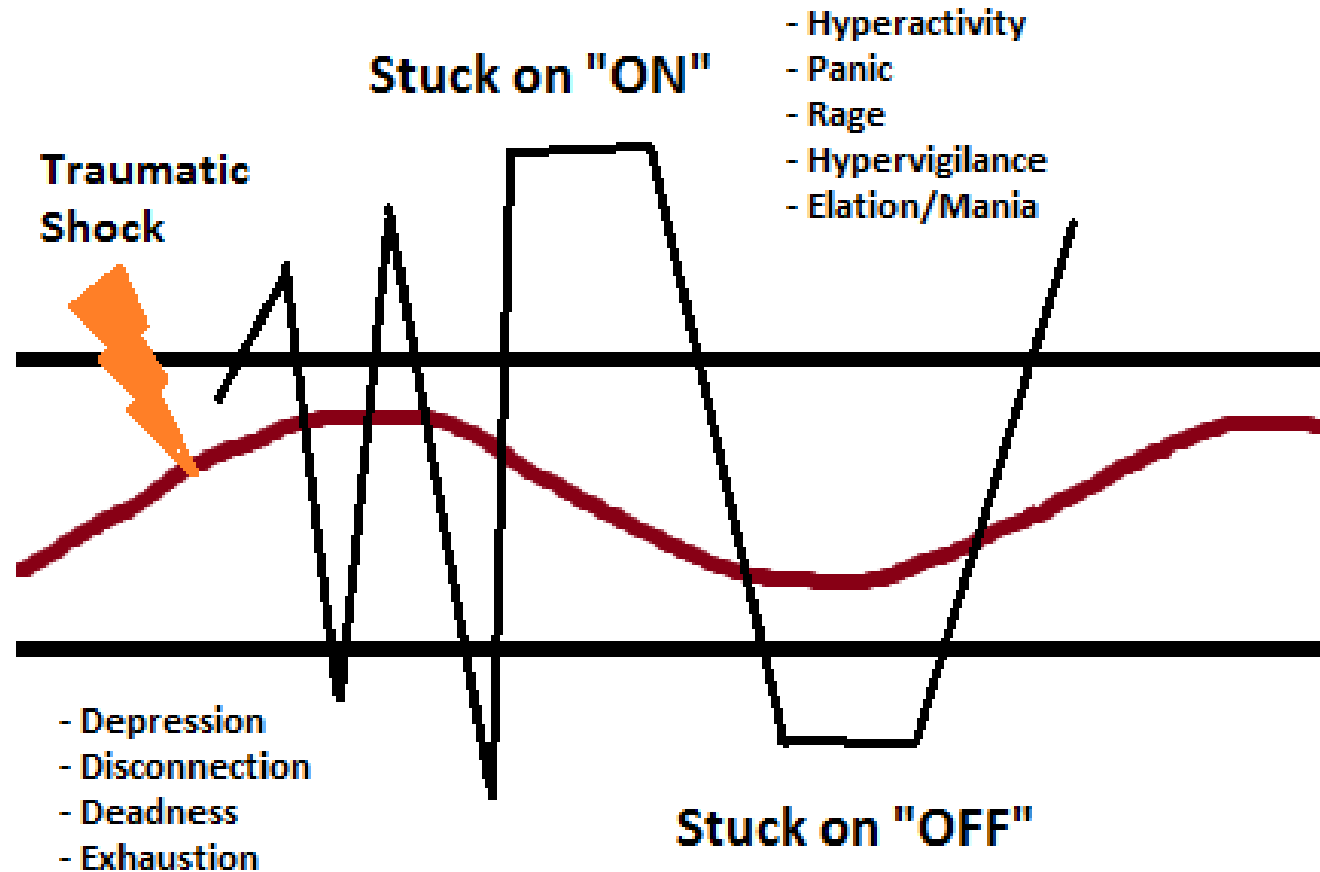


FREEZE



# When trauma is not discharged

## Overactivated Nervous System





FIGHT



FLIGHT Oohlala!



FREEZE



FIGHT



FLIGHT Oohlala!

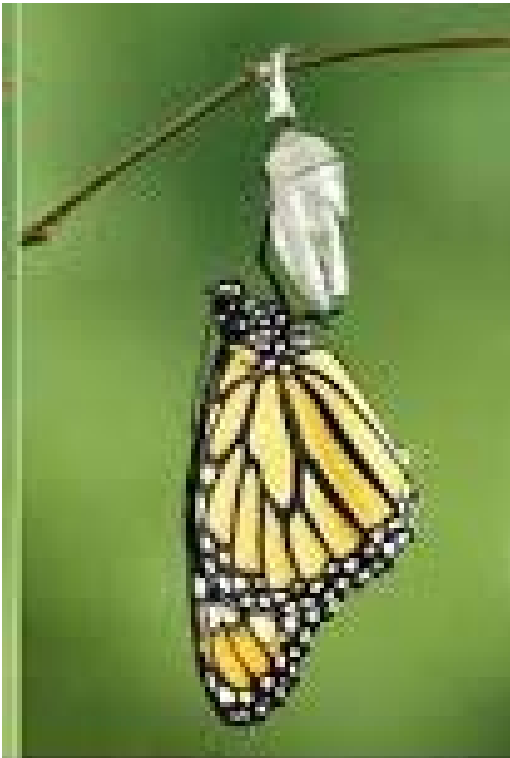


FREEZE



# Post Traumatic Growth vs Resilience

## Post Traumatic Growth



New belief  
System/worldview  
following traumatic  
event

## Resilience

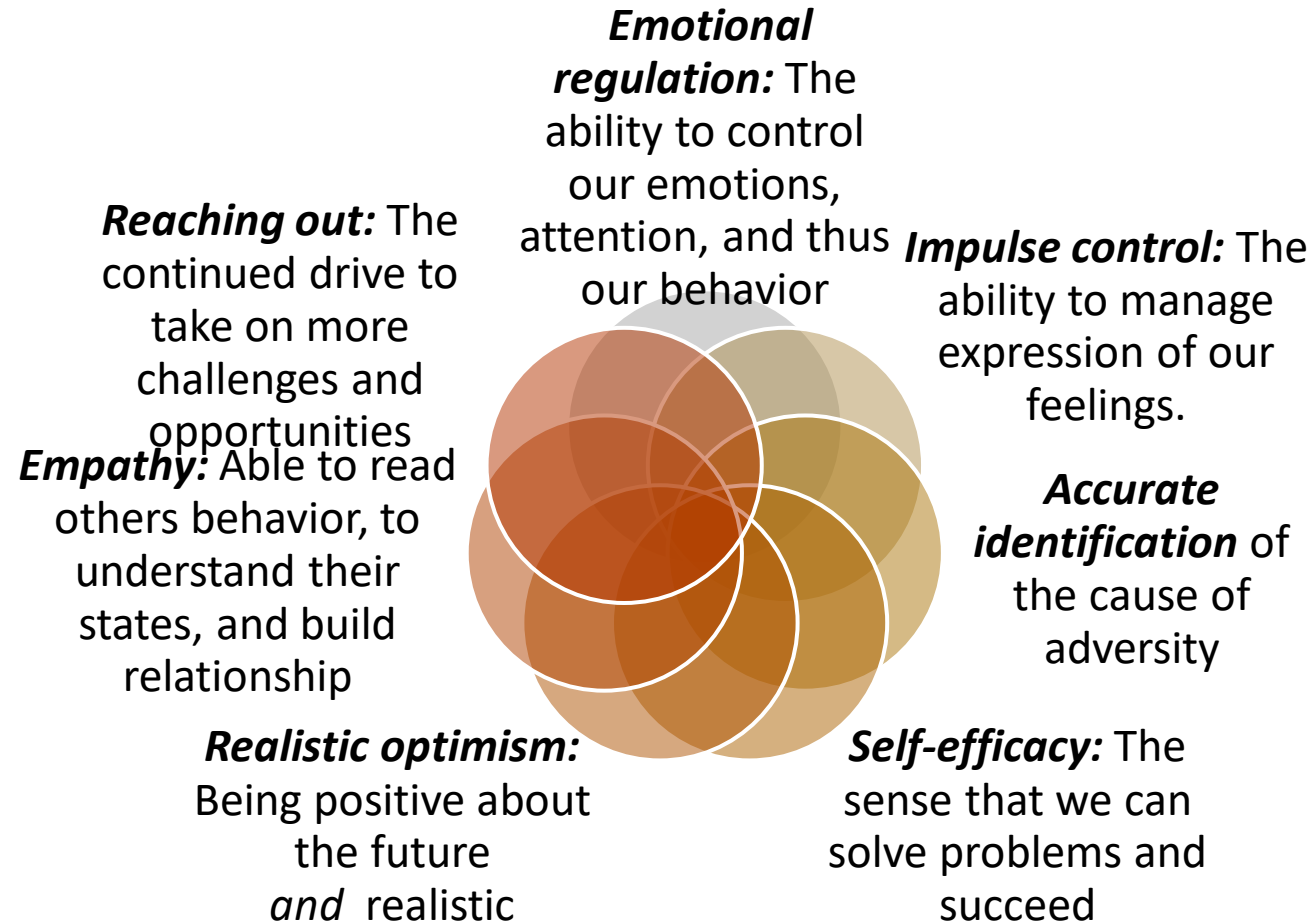


Ability to bounce  
back/personal  
attribute



# Resilience:

*Ability to adapt well to stress, adversity, trauma or tragedy*





# Impact the Lower Brain

**Rhythmic**

**Respectful**

**Rewarding**



**Repetitive**

**Relational**

**Relevant**

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# Coping with Stress and Fear

Stay informed—but don't obsessively check the news

Focus on the things you can control

- Plan for what you can
- Ground yourself when you start to feel “what-ifs” spiraling

Stay connected—even when physically isolated

- Emotions are contagious, so be wise about who you turn to for support

Take care of your body and spirit

- Be kind to yourself
- Maintain a routine as best you can
- Take time out for activities you enjoy
- Get out in nature, if possible
- Find ways to exercise
- Avoid self-medicating
- Take up a relaxation practice
- Help others (it will make you feel better)



# HOW TO DEAL WITH STRESS AND ANXIETY

## MIND



**Accept that you cannot control everything.**

Put your stress in perspective: is it really as bad as you think?



**Do your best.**

Instead of aiming for perfection, which isn't possible, be proud of however close you get.



**Maintain a positive attitude.**

Make an effort to replace negative thoughts with positive ones



**Learn what triggers your anxiety.**

Is it work, family, school, or something else you can identify? Write in a journal when you're feeling stressed or anxious, and look for a pattern.



**ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION  
ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA**

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[www.TheNationalCouncil.org](http://www.TheNationalCouncil.org)

Anxiety and Depression Association of America. (2018). Tips to Manage Anxiety and Stress. Retrieved from <https://adaa.org/tips>.



# BODY



## Limit alcohol and caffeine.

Alcohol and caffeine can aggravate anxiety and trigger panic attacks. Instead, drink water.



## Eat well-balanced meals.

Do not skip any meals and always keep healthy, energy-boosting snacks on hand.



## Get enough sleep.

When stressed, your body needs additional sleep and rest. It's important to get 8 hours of sleep per night!



## Exercise daily.

Exercising can help you feel good and maintain your health



# ACTION



## Take deep breaths.

Inhale and exhale slowly throughout the day when you are feeling stressed.

## 10

## Slowly count to 10.

Repeat, and count to 20 if necessary.



## Give back to your community.

Volunteer or find another way to be active in your community, which creates a support network and gives you a break from everyday stress.



## Take a time out.

Practice yoga, listen to music, meditate, get a massage, or learn relaxation techniques. Stepping back from problems helps clear your head.



## Get help online.

If you are struggling with stress and anxiety in your life, consider taking a mental health screen. Screening is an anonymous, free, and private way to learn about your mental health. [www.mhascreening.org](http://www.mhascreening.org)



## Talk to someone.

Tell friends and family you're feeling overwhelmed, and let them know how they can help you. Talk to a physician or therapist for professional help.



To access webinars, blogs, and other tools to help you manage stress and anxiety visit:  
[www.adaa.org](http://www.adaa.org)



[www.TheNationalCouncil.org](http://www.TheNationalCouncil.org)

Anxiety and Depression Association of America. (2018).  
Tips to Manage Anxiety and Stress. Retrieved from  
<https://adaa.org/tips>.

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The World's Largest Emotional Support System



180 professional therapists  
Over 300,000 trained listeners  
Helped over 25 million people

2016 Winner  
Stanford Medicine X Award

## About 7 Cups

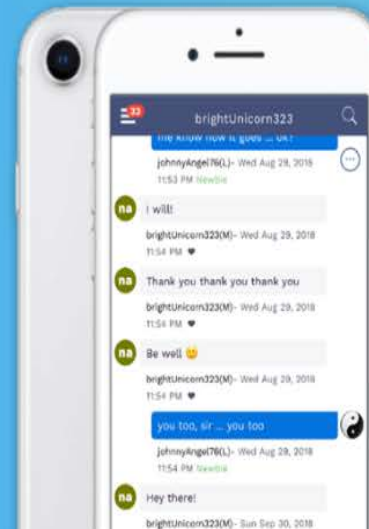
We live in a world where you can be surrounded by people, but still feel lonely, with nobody to turn to when things get rough.

But being heard is an important part of being human. Psychologist, Glen Moriarty saw that there was great power in listening, but he knew not everyone had someone to talk to. He started to wonder, "How can I make being heard a reality for everyone?"

### That's why 7 Cups was born.

Thanks to thousands of volunteer listeners stepping up to lend a friendly ear, 7 Cups is happy to say, "We're here for you!"

No matter who you are or what you're going through, this is a place where you'll be heard and cared for. We might be strangers on the surface, but underneath we're just the friends you haven't met yet.



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# Empowerment Tools That Can Be Taught

- Emotional regulation techniques such as breathing exercises
- Self-care such as sleep hygiene, good nutrition, exercise
- Cognitive approaches, visualization or meditation
- Body work such as Qi Gong, yoga stretching
- Creating a quiet, safe, comfortable space
- Music, art, dance and other creative endeavors

- Connecting with supportive family/friends virtually
- Creating structure, making the bed every day, getting out of pajamas
- Spiritual rituals
- Pleasurable activities







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[www.TheNationalCouncil.org](http://www.TheNationalCouncil.org)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RVA2N6tX2cg&t=12s>

# Contact Information

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# Thank You!

