Self-care
What are we doing to look after ourselves and each other

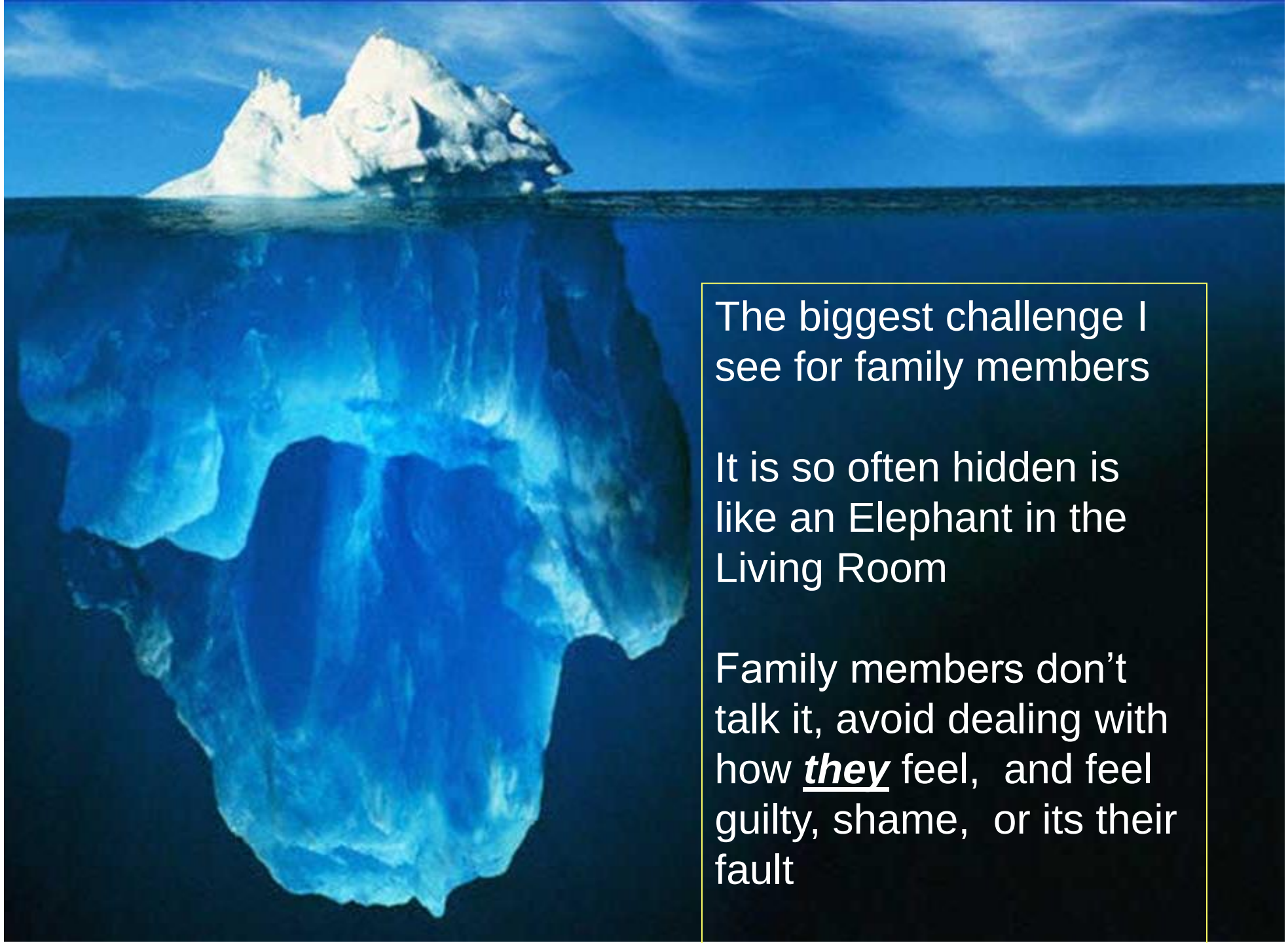
Ed Sipler

Based in Health Development but still working in Mental Health /additions and working with Staff Well Being in the South Eastern Trust

For this input from me I only have two requests

You don’t fall asleep during our session

What you take from this in entirely up to you. I don’t have all the answers to deal with stress. I do have ideas though.



The biggest challenge I see for family members

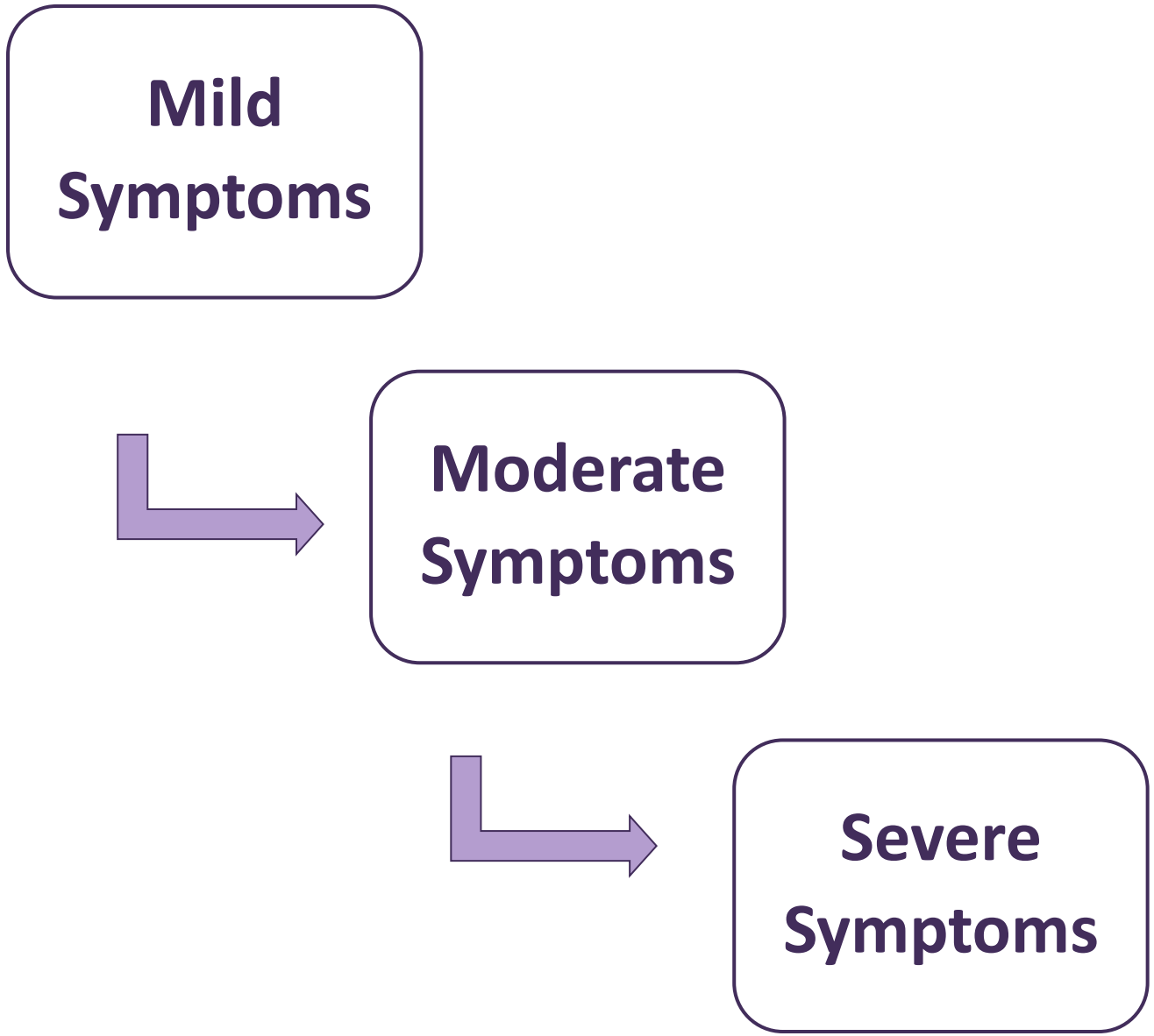
It is so often hidden is like an Elephant in the Living Room

Family members don't talk it, avoid dealing with how ***they*** feel, and feel guilty, shame, or its their fault

What do you do to de-stress?

How do you know your own stress levels?

When do you do something about it?



Why don’t people come forward for support is a universal question

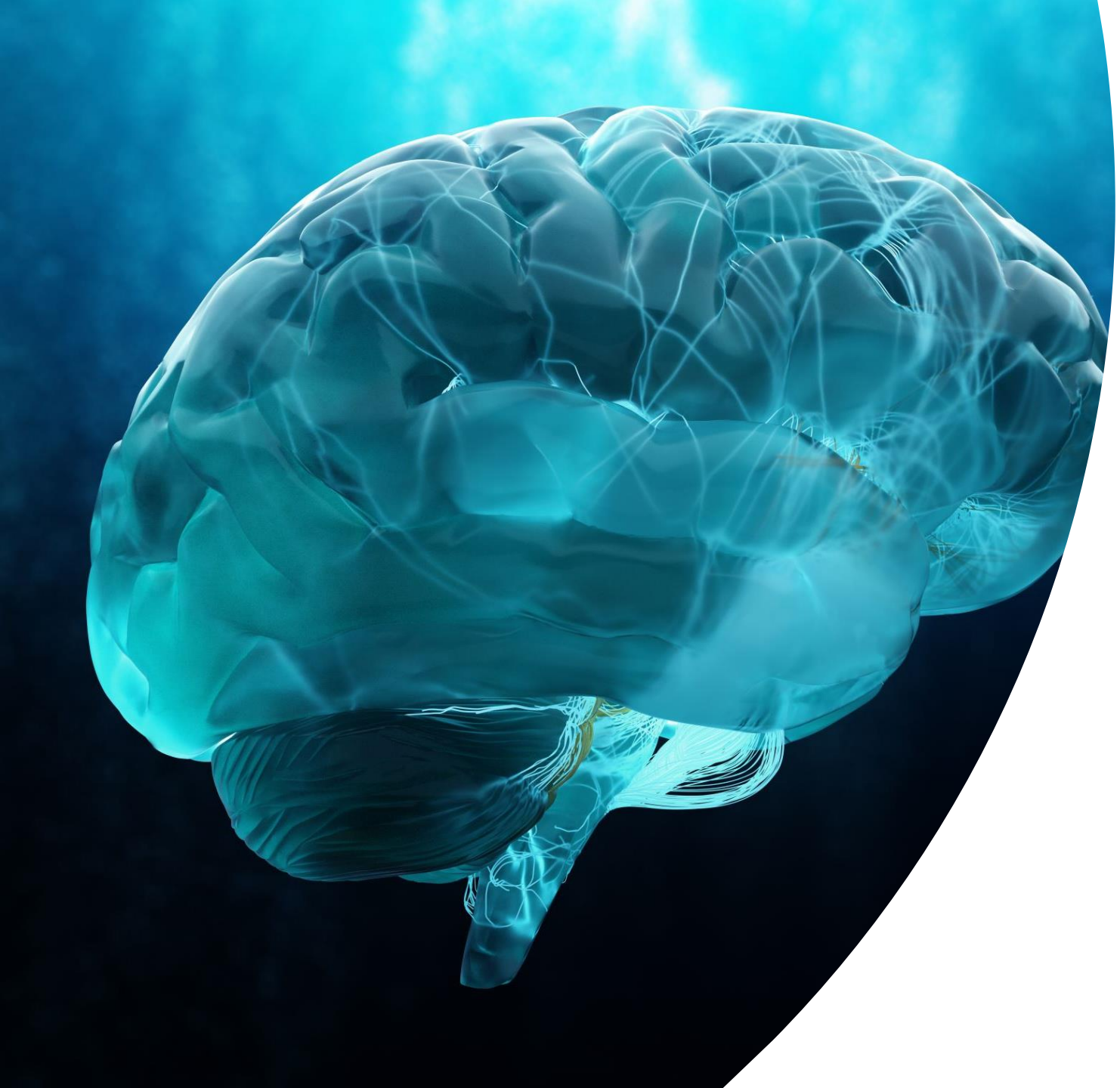
What was identified as barriers in responses received during this stage of the project included:

- Stigma, shame, embarrassment and cultures of blame remain significant barriers.
- Many AFM’s do not see the need for their own support as their main goal. A priority is to support the substance abuser.
- Where the person with the alcohol, other drug or gambling problem is in the recovery journey will have an impact. With the family member sober, many AFM’s don’t see the need for help for themselves as the crisis has passed.
- The opposite can be a factor. If treatment doesn't go well for the misuser, this can impact AFM’s reaching out in their own right.
- The situation can become **normalised** to the point that hope has been lost and families can’t imagine another reality.
- AFM’s just feel “weary and worn out.”
- The benefits of support are unknown and AFM’s only value the support once they have received it.
- The accessibility and visibility of support available to AFM’s is a huge issue with choice regarding the type of support limited.

How are you really doing? Are you -

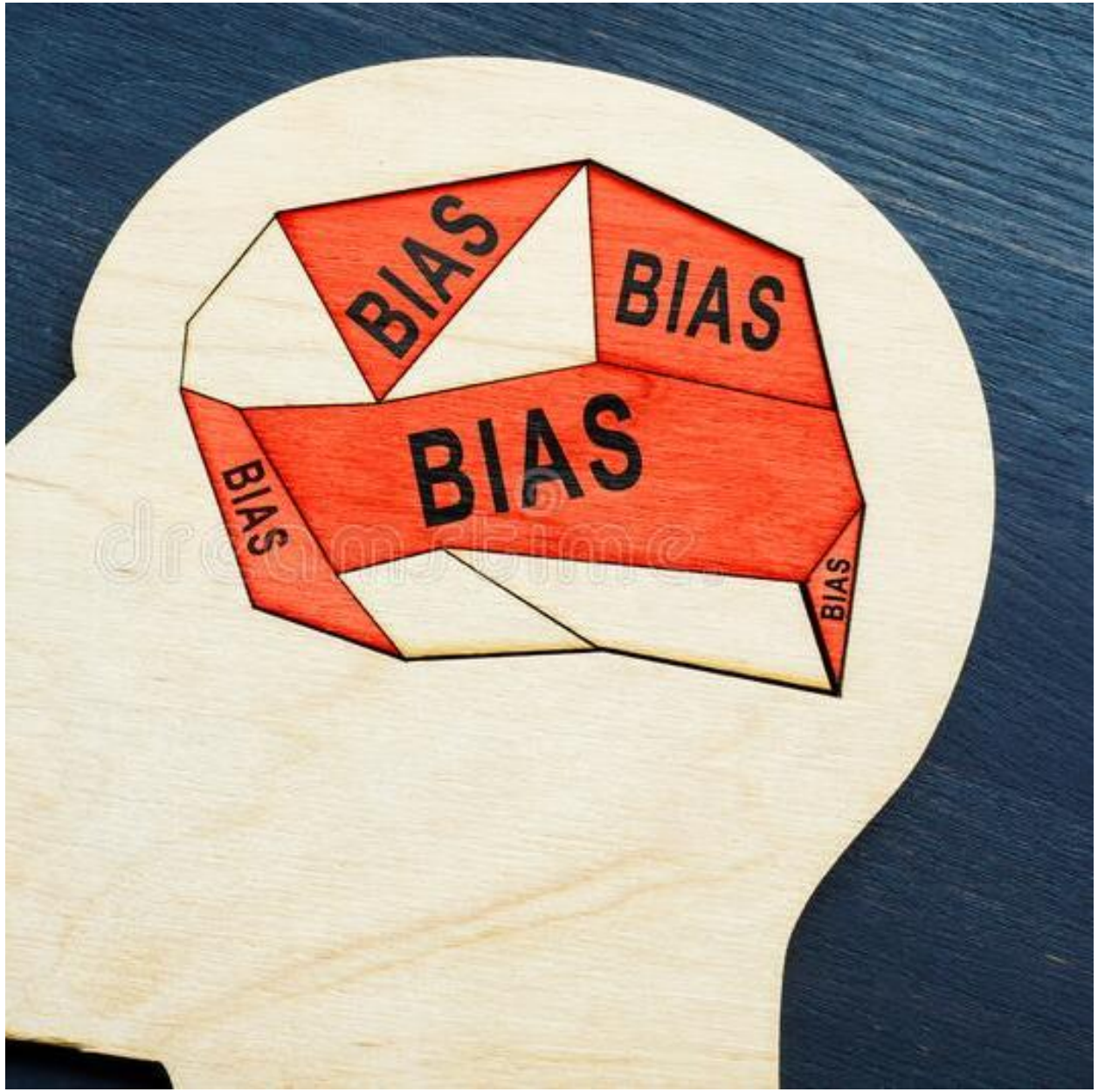
Thriving
Surviving
Struggling
In Crisis

If thriving, what do you to maintain your well-being
If surviving, how do you promote your well- being
If struggling do you focus on your well being
Is in crisis can you prioritise your well being



First let’s try and understand our nervous system and its reaction to stress.

When stress is high so is our negativity bias



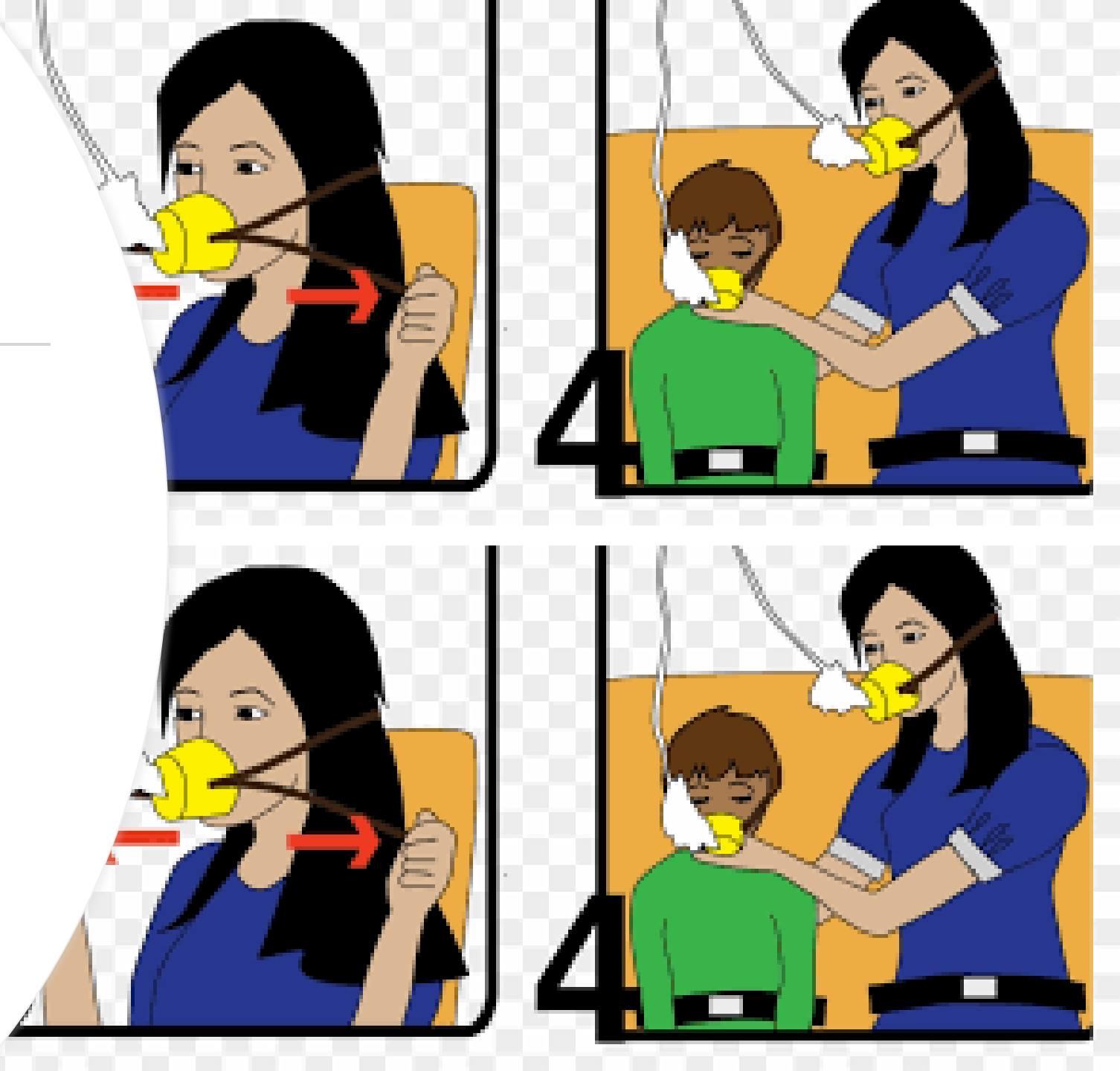
Self-care

When you hear someone talk about self- care what goes through your head?

“I don’t have time…” for self-care

What we talked about today we know.
The question is - do we do it regularly?

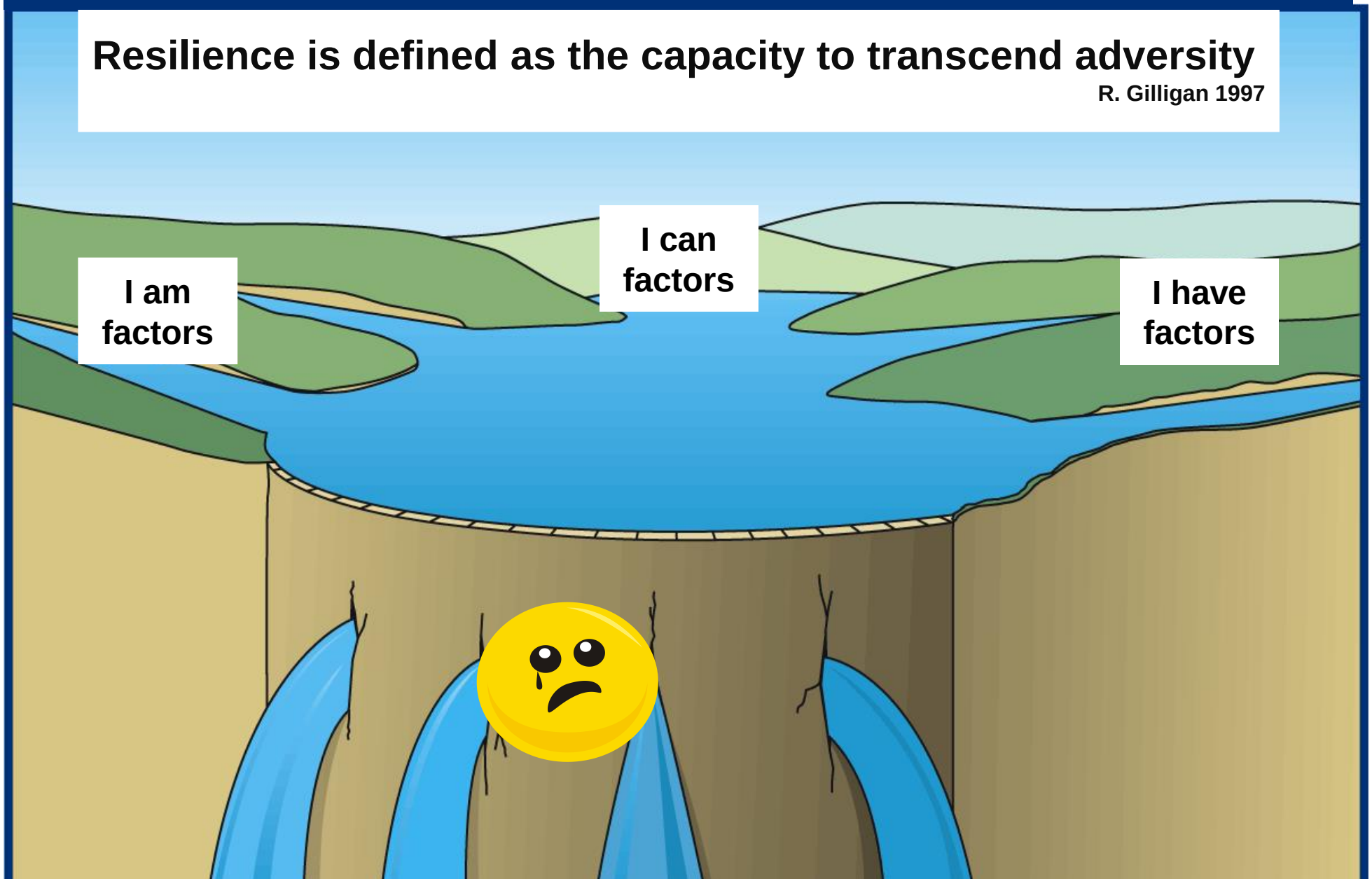
- *Prioritizing?*
- *Others are more important?*
- *Self Worth?*
- *What are we doing to support our resilience?*



What does resilience mean?

Resilience is defined as the capacity to transcend adversity

R. Gilligan 1997



What are the building blocks of resilience?

- A stable person in your life
- Feeling you can overcome hardships and guide your destiny
- Feeling equipped to mange your behavior and emotion
- Being involved and feeling connected

What strengthens resilience - Agency

The most significant source of that well-being is a person's sense of agency. (Tuason MT, Gu¨ss CD, Boyd L 2021).

The experience of agency refers to the experience of being in control both of one's own actions and, through them, of events in the external world.

Haggard P., Tsakiris M. (2009). The experience of agency feelings, judgments, and responsibility. *Curr. Dir. Psychol. Sci.* 18, 242–246

Agency is deciding what will work for you to support your well-being

As we said, the most significant source of that well-being is a person's sense of agency. And as Martin Seligman says has 3 parts.

***self-efficacy*, the believe and confidence you can do it**

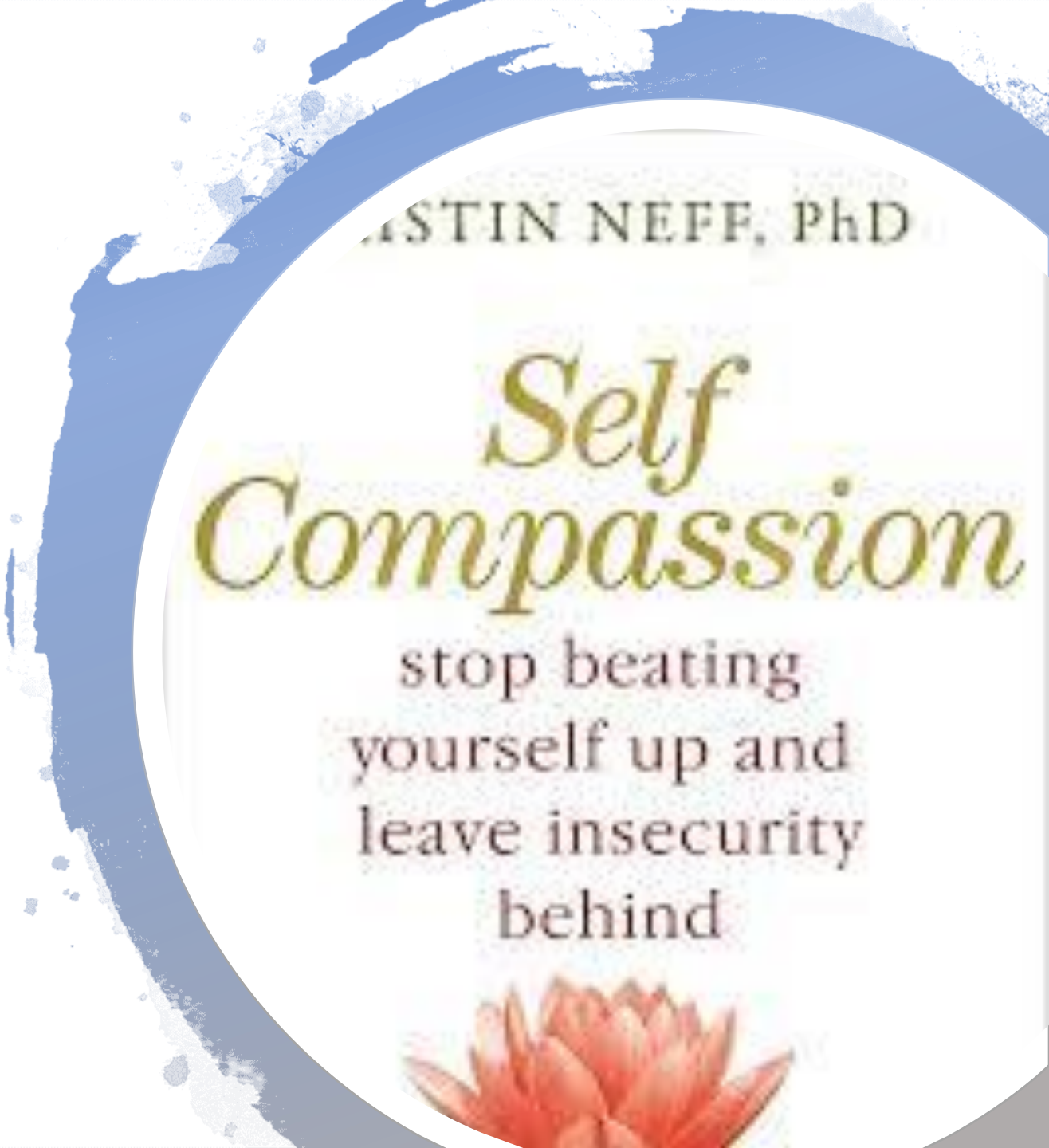
***optimism*, a belief it will helpful**

You are active is choosing and do what will help you.

Here are just a few techniques and resources that you may find helpful

Self-compassion has 3 parts:

- Being kind to ourselves as we make mistakes (self-kindness),
- Recognizing that difficulties are part of the human experience and applies to everyone (common humanity)
- Observing our emotions and thoughts in a manner that's non-judgmental (mindfulness).



IF STRESS CREATES CORTISOL
WHAT ARE WE DOING TO COMBAT THAT?

GETTING YOUR DAILY D.O.S.E.

DOPAMINE
OXYTOCIN
SEROTONIN
ENDORPHINS

The role of positive emotions,

Dopamine pathways are active when you are experiencing positive emotions

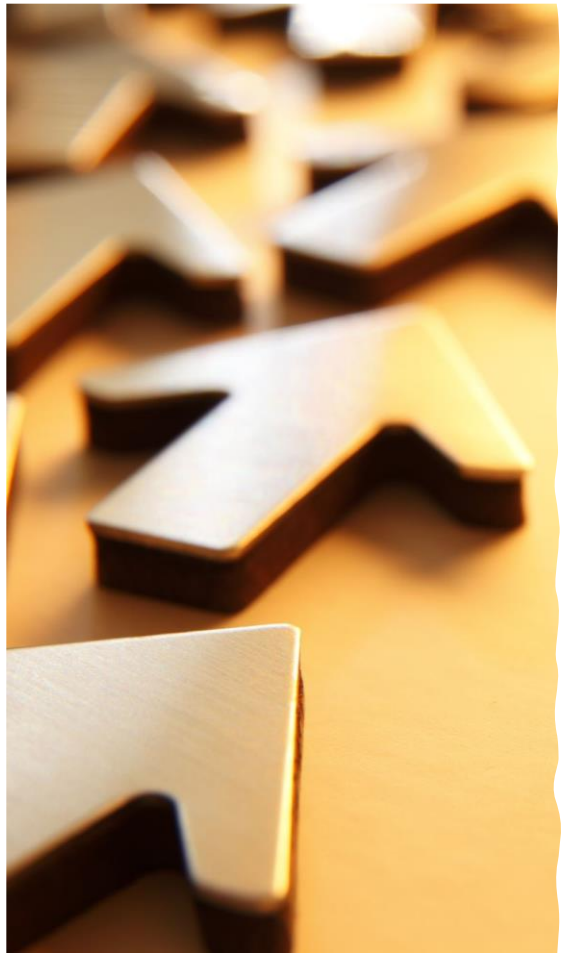
Broaden-and build theory (Fredrickson, 2001).

Dopamine pathways and receptors are improved
This increase cognitive flexibility

Positive emotions strengthens a broad-minded coping style seeing multiple angles to solve problems.

The practical application: workers in high stress work. ***So what are you doing each day to experience positive emotions?***

Using positive emotions to deal with stress builds on the levels of Dopamine



Here are 8 ways used to experience positive emotions:

- **Notice positive things**
- **Express these positive things**
- **Gratitude**
- **Mindfulness**
- **Positive Rethinking**
- **Focus on your strengths**
- **Attainable goals**
- **Acts of kindness**

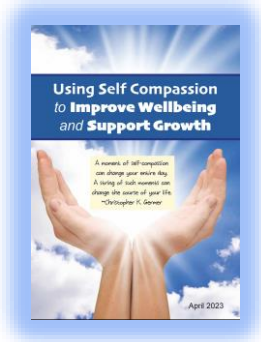
What supports across our teams
The power of laughter

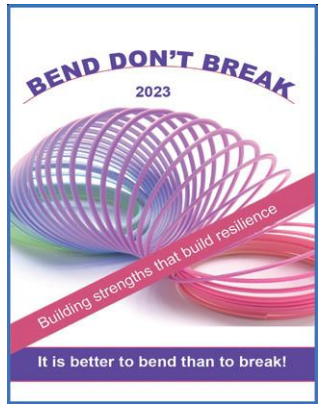
- Laughter – a good belly-up laugh will burn cortisol off and produce endorphins that block pain

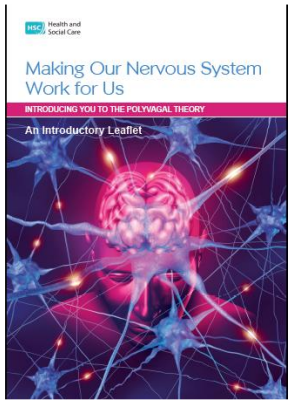
Grounding, calming skills to help us turn down the volume of our fight or flight response

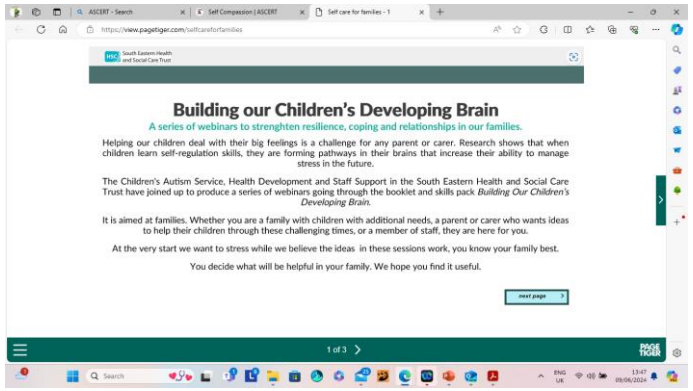
Riding the Waves of Change- Fight or Flight Workshop (youtube.com)

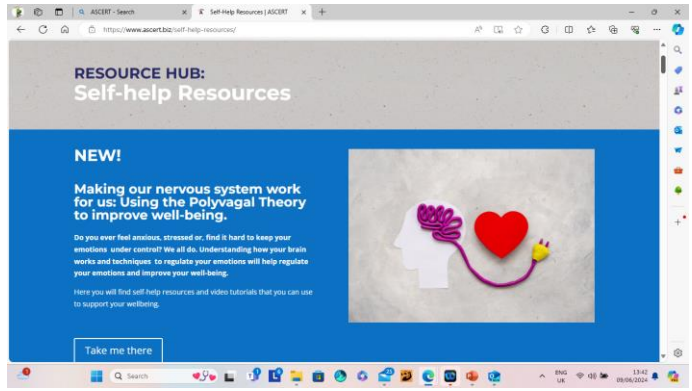
On-line self help available for you to make use of

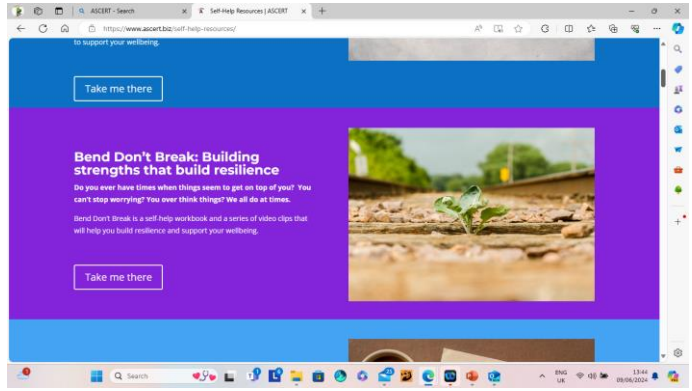












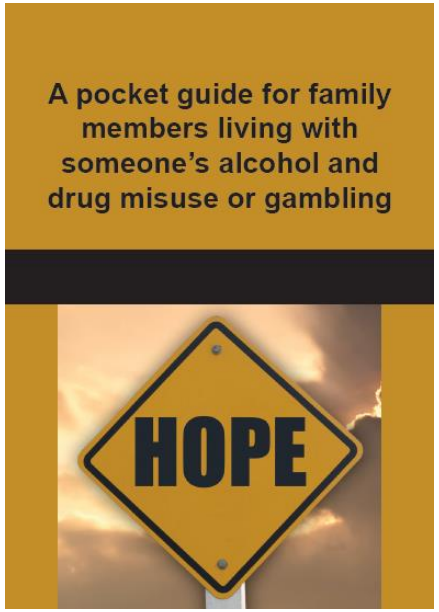
We now have a flyer (poster) we can send and 9 training session underway between September and March

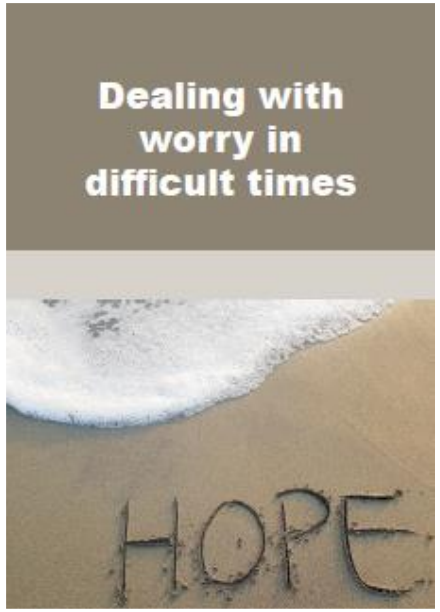
All we ask if anyone uses the on-line work, even some of it, they use the evaluation link on the webpage.

Lets finish today with one of the exercises in the self-compassion work- The Fist Clench exercise

My own use of You Tube has reached 15K views in a year – at 0 cost

Find them through searching Ed Sipler on You Tube





I couldn’t finish this without mentioning Motivational Interviewing and Steps to Cope

- Is there a stress to "fix" everyone.
- A concept that comes up almost always I hear in training from those who use this MI at the heart of their skillset is the taking that mantle of responsibility off their shoulders.
- It is the client’s / patients need to change: your job is explore

As one family member who availed of support in Northern Ireland said:

"It took me a long time to realize I needed help for myself. I was so preoccupied in" fixing" my family member that I ignored my needs.

I saw posters and leaflets continually that kept saying there was support there for me but the message was not heard for a long, long time.

One day the penny dropped and I'm so glad it did.

My message for you is keep getting your message out there in every way you can – drip, drip, drip because you never know when that message will hit home."

So taking all this in

What did you hear today that would make a difference for you or are there other things you would find helpful?

Now the big question- WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT?

- You decide if anything from today would be useful for you.
- Do not be alone. If your strategies are no longer helping, look for more support.
- Do you know where to go for support?

Thank you for having me today.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me
ed.sipler@setrust.hscni.net