

BEHAVIORAL HEALTH IMPACTS OF COVID-19
**Workplace Trends, Resources, and Strategies:
Disaster Cascade and Long-Term Recovery Management**

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Agenda



Behavioral health considerations for the next few months



Navigating the unknowns during the recovery process



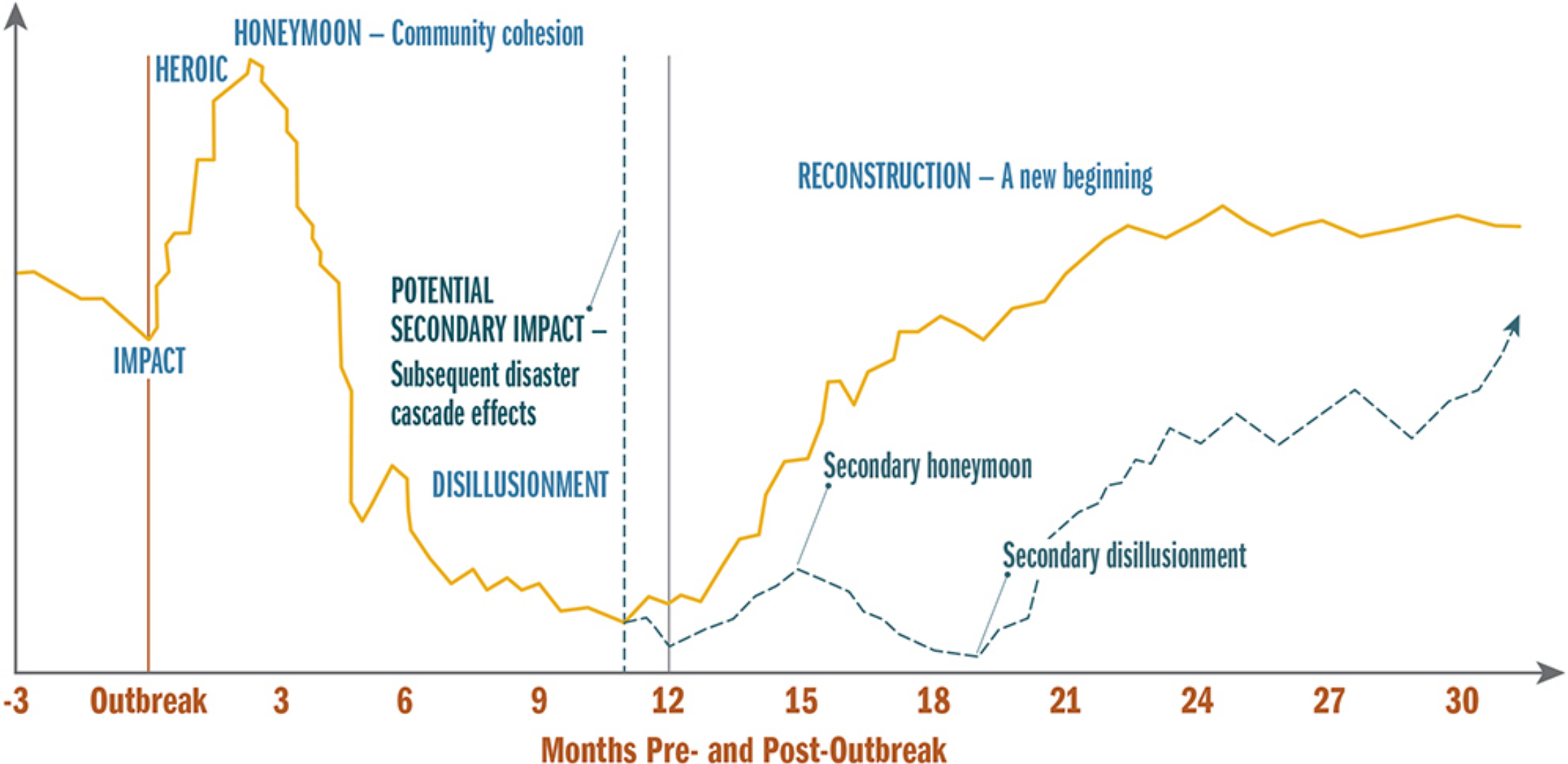
How to practice healthy boundaries and active coping



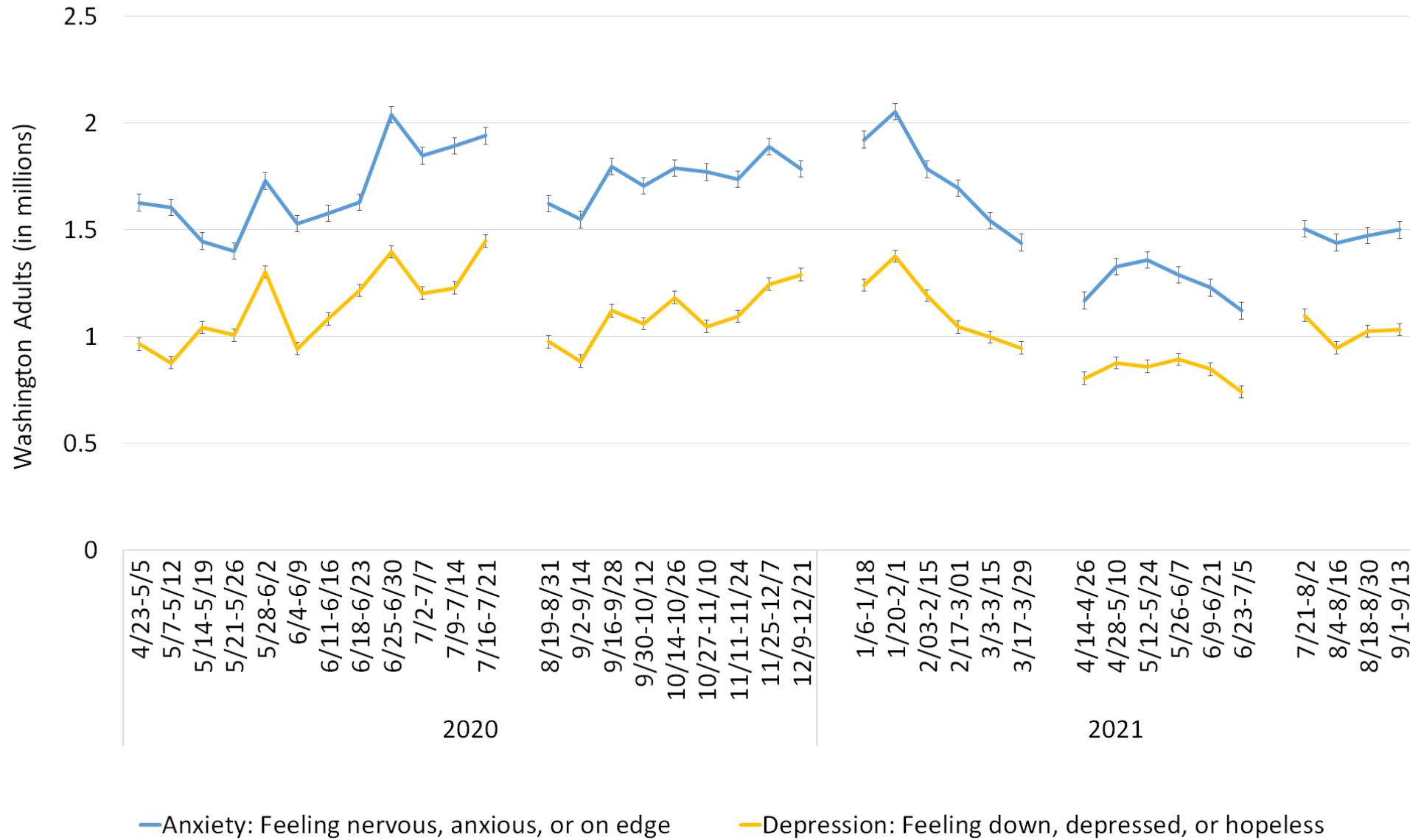
PEACE Model for resilience building

Reactions and Behavioral Health Symptoms in Disasters

Emotional Response – Lows to Highs



Anxiety and Depression- WA Adults



Key things to know

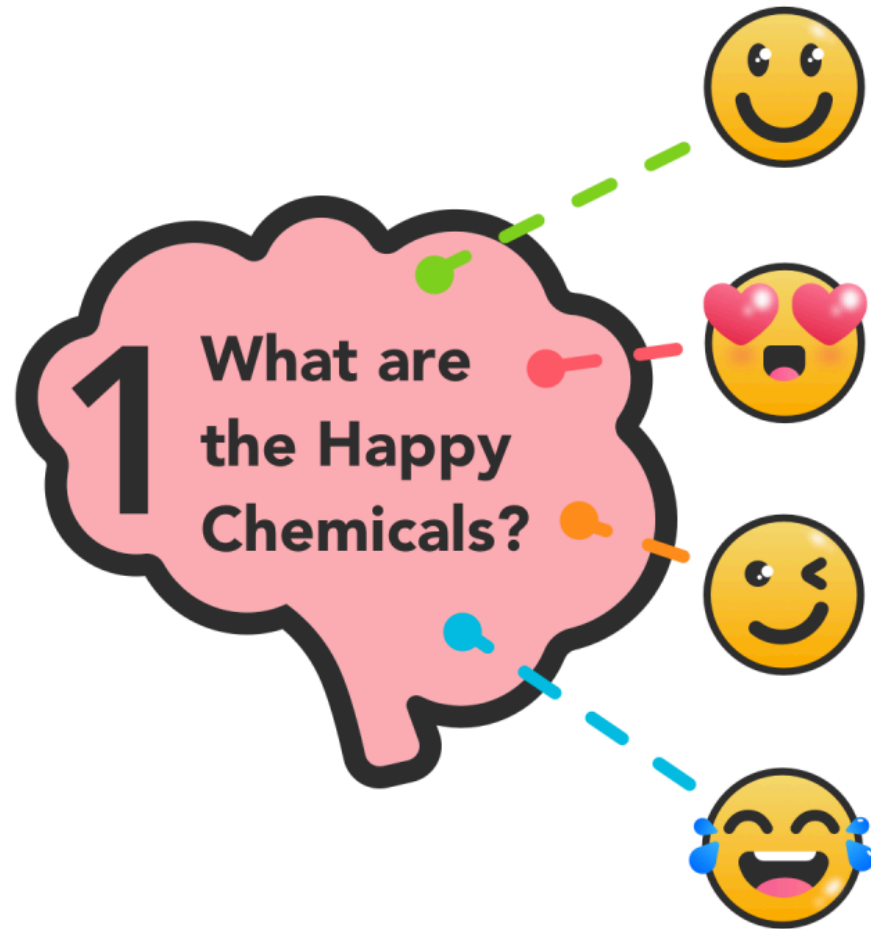
- Delta and the impacts of this variant are resulting in the **experience of a “disaster cascade” in some form for most people heading into fall / winter.**
 - A disaster cascade is defined as the experience of multiple disaster “Impacts” within a 12-18 month time frame (multiple waves of the same disaster, or different types – floods, hurricanes, etc)
 - Disaster cascades tax already depleted emotional, physical, social and economic resources.
 - As a function of the cascade effects, risks related to increased behavioral health symptoms go up for many people.
 - Burnout for healthcare workers, educators, those in public health and those in “response” to the pandemic are higher now (heading into fall) than at any other point in the pandemic so far. This includes higher risk for new incidence of behavioral health disorders including PTSD.

Key things to know continued

- There potential for violence and aggression increase with "hardening" of opinions, impulsivity, and sense (accurate or not) of being threatened (by changes, uncertainties, mandates, expectations, etc)
- Communication challenges will be significant due to general dysregulation: we all have difficulty interpreting others' motives and meanings.
- Planning, thinking through, and considering options ahead of time is a valuable part of the process as we move into fall quarter and 2022; it reduces the likelihood of making impulsive, risky choices.

GET YOUR DAILY HAPPINESS CHEMICALS

The happy brain chemicals that make you feel good



DOPAMINE

- Enables motivation, learning, and pleasure
- Gives you determination to accomplish goals, desires, and needs

OXYTOCIN

- Feeling of trust, motivates you to build and sustain relationships
- Known as "Cuddle or Love Hormone", plays a role in bonding

SEROTONIN

- Feeling significant or important among peers
- Calm form of accepting yourself with the people around you

ENDORPHINS

- Releases a brief euphoria to mask physical pain
- Response to pain and stress that alleviates anxiety and depression

How Deficiency Affects You

- procrastination
- low self-esteem
- lack of motivation
- low energy or fatigue
- inability to focus
- feeling anxious
- feeling hopeless
- mood swings

- feeling lonely
- stressed
- lack of motivation
- low energy or fatigue
- disconnect of relationships
- feeling anxious
- insomnia

- low self-esteem
- overly sensitive
- anxiety/panic attacks
- mood swings
- feeling hopeless
- social phobia
- obsession/compulsion
- insomnia

- anxiety
- depression
- mood swings
- aches and pains
- insomnia
- impulsive behavior

DOPAMINE

OXYTOCIN

SEROTONIN

ENDORPHINS

How to Increase Happiness Levels

- meditate
- daily to-do list
- long term goals
- food rich in L-Tyrosine
- exercise regularly
- create something: writing, music, or art

- physical touch
- socializing
- massage
- acupuncture
- listening to music
- exercise
- cold shower
- meditate

- exercise
- cold showers
- sunlight
- massage

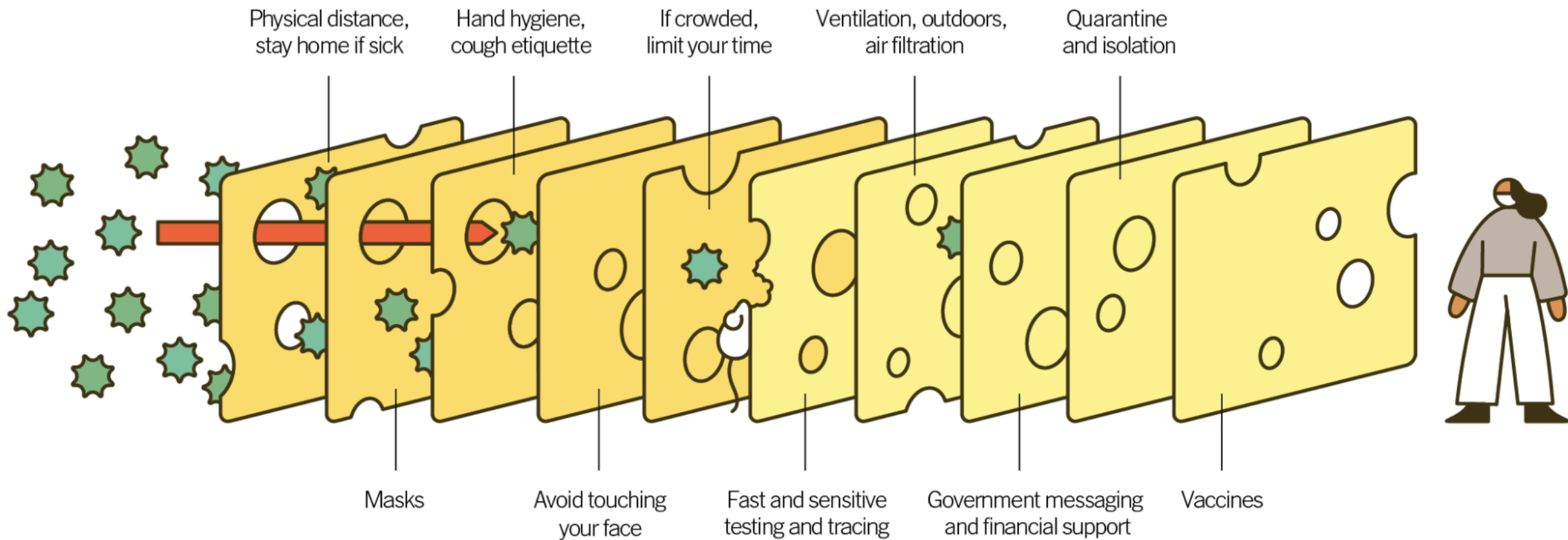
- laughter/crying
- creating music/art
- eat dark chocolate
- eat spicy foods
- exercise/stretching
- massage
- meditate

Multiple Layers Improve Success

The Swiss Cheese Respiratory Pandemic Defense recognizes that no single intervention is perfect at preventing the spread of the coronavirus. Each intervention (layer) has holes.

Personal responsibilities

Shared responsibilities



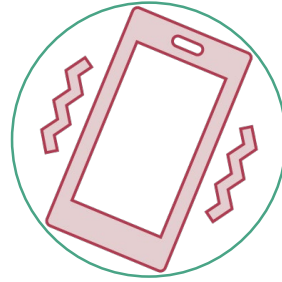
Key Issues for Fourth Quarter of 2021

- Individual level
 - Personal work/time boundaries and empowerment
 - Building self-efficacy
 - Active coping techniques
 - Grief and Loss
- Group and organizational level
 - Opportunities for healthy and resilient organizational culture
 - Active listening

Individual Level: Work/Time Boundaries



On-duty or at
work



On-call or
available



OFF



Individual Level: Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is the belief in your ability to achieve a particular goal or reach a particular outcome.

- Different kinds: Social, workplace, academic, etc.
- Sources of information about self-efficacy:
 - Performance attainment: “I did it!”
 - Vicarious experiences: “If they did it, so can I!”
 - Verbal persuasion: “You can do it!” (needs to be realistic and genuine)
 - Physiological and emotional arousal control: “Am I nervous?”



Individual Level: Active Coping Techniques



Anxiety

- Sensory interventions:
 - Frozen orange, ice
 - Music
 - Shower
 - Fuzzy slippers
- Apps
- Breathing = calming



Exhaustion

- Sleep hygiene
 - Same bed and wake times
 - Alcohol and sugar considerations
 - Notepad (not phone or laptop)
- Apps
- Boundaries



Depression

- Behavioral activation:
 - Small steps
- Get a “this makes me feel better” list made on a good day
 - 5 minutes to 5 hours
- Movement of any kind
- Connection and support from others

The collective experience of Loss

- Any loss right now is likely to touch on a deep well of loss that we all have experienced to some degree over the last year and a half.
- Emotional reactions and responses may be proportionally stronger to ANY loss right now.
- Emotion regulation is already a challenge when the brain is exhausted.
- There is no right or wrong way, or specific timeframe for people to process grief and loss. Increasing resilience and moving forward with recovery will also differ for each person.
- Focus on authentic reactions with the intention to support someone in pain, not to make them “feel better”.

Considerations for working with (or experiencing) grief, loss and bereavement

- Facilitate problem solving and decision making to **prevent impulsive or risky decisions** (e.g., precautionary health measures, burial decisions);
- **Modify coping plans** if traditional strategies aren't possible (e.g., gathering with family to grieve through facetime);
- Identify connections (relationships) of support for the person who is grieving
- Focus on engaging in the simpler, more concrete tasks and activities that are uplifting so that the effects of self-efficacy can grow.
- ACTIVE LISTENING is the recommended and preferred “intervention” to support anyone struggling with grief and loss.

Organizational and Team Level: Elements of Organizational Culture

- Leadership and modeling
- Workplace (environment/atmosphere)
- Values
- Tools (resources)
- Motivations (compensation/rewards)
- Technology



Opportunities for Organizational Culture in 2021-2022

Recovery from the pandemic provides unique opportunities to:

- **Redefine**

- Mission statement, values, leadership roles, expectations, and purpose/motivation

- **Emphasize**

- Communicate to all team members where the organizational priorities are from a top-down perspective, or ask them to contribute to defining those priorities from the middle out or bottom-up (what cultural structure works best?)

- **Orient**

- Shift resources, attention, communication, and decision making to align with new (or reinforce long-standing) organizational values

Active Listening



Clarify

Ask open ended questions



Reflect

Summarize what you think you heard



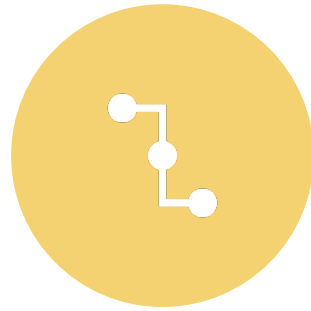
Express Empathy

Listen with the intent to Care,
not problem solve

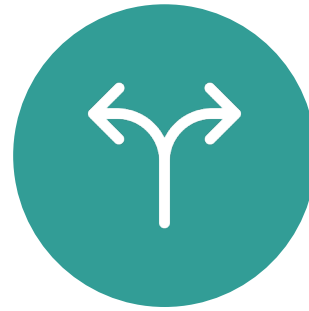
Resilience



Purpose



Connection



Flexibility/
Adaptability



Hope

What works for you?

- Identify things that have helped you before and make a list
- Be willing to try new things
- Don't dismiss outside time
- Any physical activity will help neurologically
- Try to engage in active coping strategies as much as you can (rather than passive / avoidant coping, such as substance use).

PEACE Model for Resilience Building

Process over content

Effort over outcome

Adaptability over rigidity

Connection over isolation

Empathy over judgement

Key takeaways

- Take time and pause before responding (via email, text, in person).
- Develop awareness of your personal physical response to unexpected, negative events; regulation can start with this insight.
- Work on practicing active listening skills when you have the capacity and energy.
 - Start with something that feels easy- not the most challenging conversations (or people) first.
- Resilience is a process, not an accomplishment or a badge to be won.

Resources

Training:

- Health Support Team (including train-the-trainer)
- PsySTART-Responder (frontline healthcare only)

Resources:

- MEDIC, REST, SAFE, and PEACE Models
- [Behavioral Health Group Impact Reference Guide](#)
 - Healthcare and behavioral health providers, outreach teams, post critical care individuals, etc.
 - Unique challenges and considerations
 - Support strategies (organizational, supervisory, and personal)
- Children and families: [Behavioral Health Toolbox for Families: Supporting Children and Teens During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#); Back to Classroom THINK toolbox for parents, teachers, caregivers and mentors: <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/821-148-BackToClassroomToolbox.pdf>
- Businesses and workers: [COVID-19 Guidance for Building Resilience in the Workplace](#)

Resources (continued)

Webpages:

- DOH – Forecasts, situation reports, guidance, and other resources:
 - [Behavioral Health Resources Webpage](#)
 - Children and families: [Behavioral Health Toolbox for Families: Supporting Children and Teens During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#)
- State – General mental health resources and infographics:
 - [Mental and Emotional Well-Being Resources](#)
 - [Infographic Library](#)

Looking for support?
Call Washington Listens at
1-833-681-0211





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