

Better Emotional Health: Better Resilience against Suicide

E. Anthony Allen

MB,BS, MDiv, MRC Psych, DM (Psych)

Psychiatrist

**Consultant in Whole Person Wellness and Church-
Sponsored Health Ministries**


Website: www.growingbalanced.com

Who will benefit?

- All the suggestions given in this presentation are made to **all of us** ...
 - ✓ “persons who care or lead” in the service professions or in governance;
 - ✓ persons who are “at risk”; or
 - ✓ their loved ones or supporters;
 - ✓ just members of the public.
- As you will see at some time or other we all end up in the same boat of emotional crisis. So we all can grow together!

OUTLINE


1. Understanding Emotions and Emotional Health
2. Pre-requisites for Emotional Health
3. How to Achieve Emotional Health through:
 - Managing our *Negative Emotions*
 - Nurturing *Positive Emotions*
 - Protecting one another's *Emotional Balance* through mutually supportive relationships



Understanding Emotions and Emotional Health

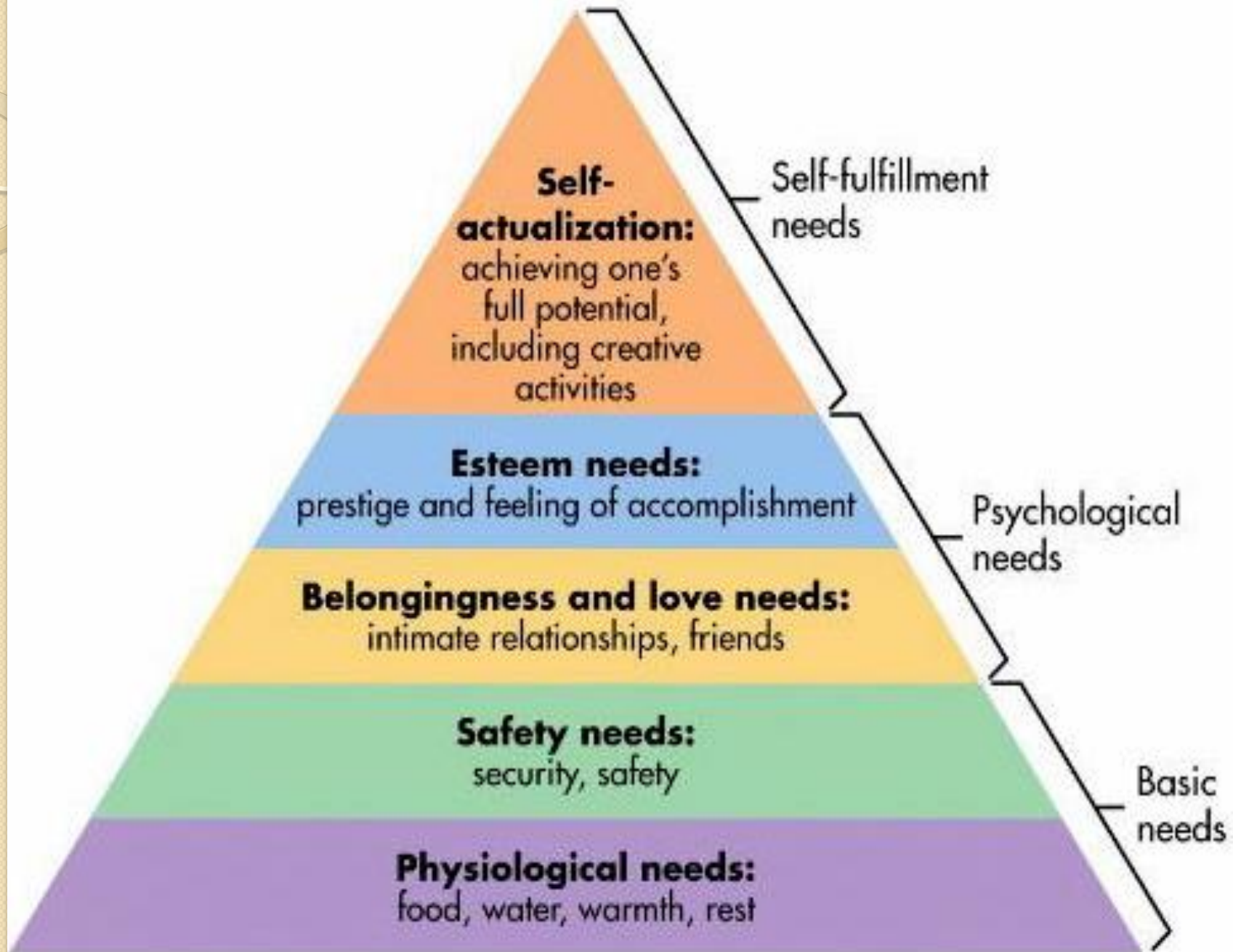
The Nature of Emotions

- Emotions involves experiencing feelings interpreted as pleasant or unpleasant.
- They induce *motivation for action.*
They provide a link between harmful or beneficial external events and our behavioural responses.



**They enable us to meet our
human needs**

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

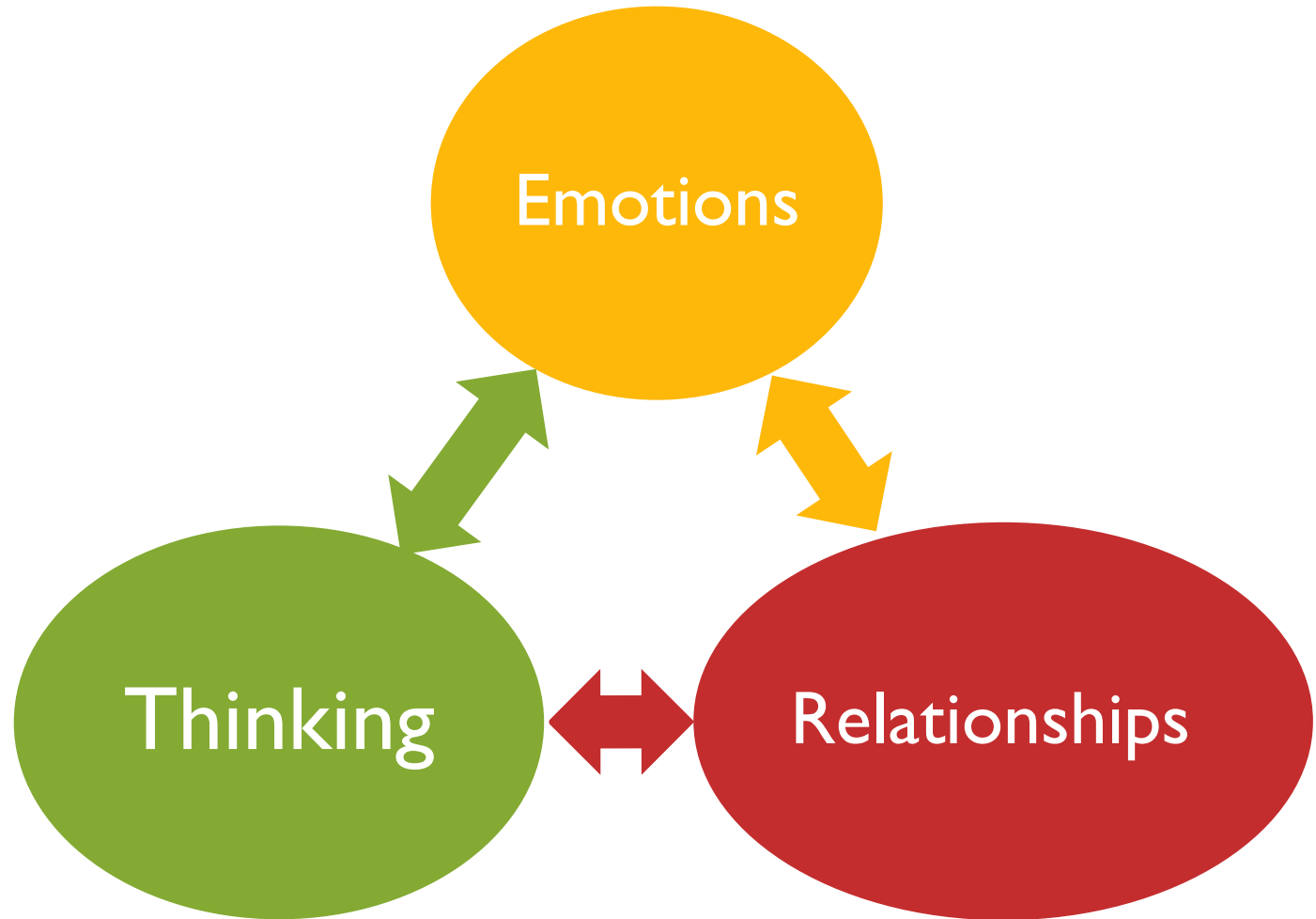


Emotions and meeting Needs


- Emotions modulate appropriate approach/avoidance behavior for protection of needs
- The arousal associated with emotions facilitates adaptive performance in meeting needs
- Acts as reinforcement to shape future habitual adaptive behaviour by enhancing memory and learning

THE EMOTIONAL TRIAD

Emotions are always accompanied by thinking and relationships

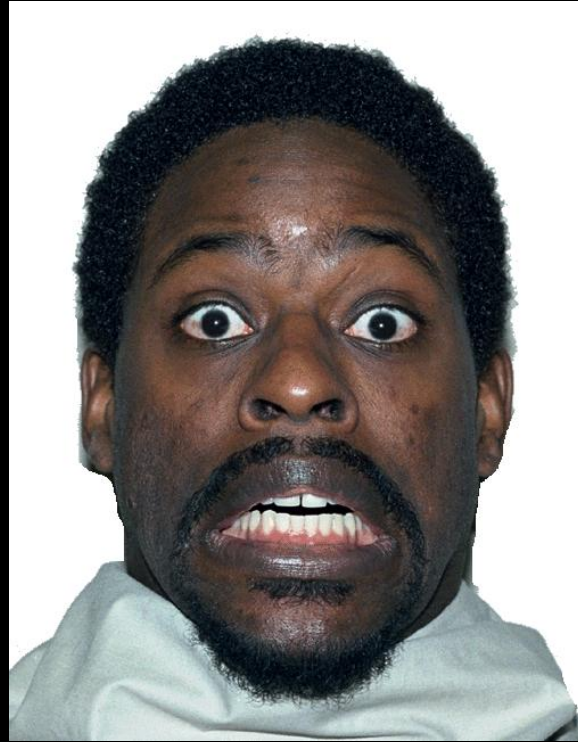


Each are interrelated to one another.



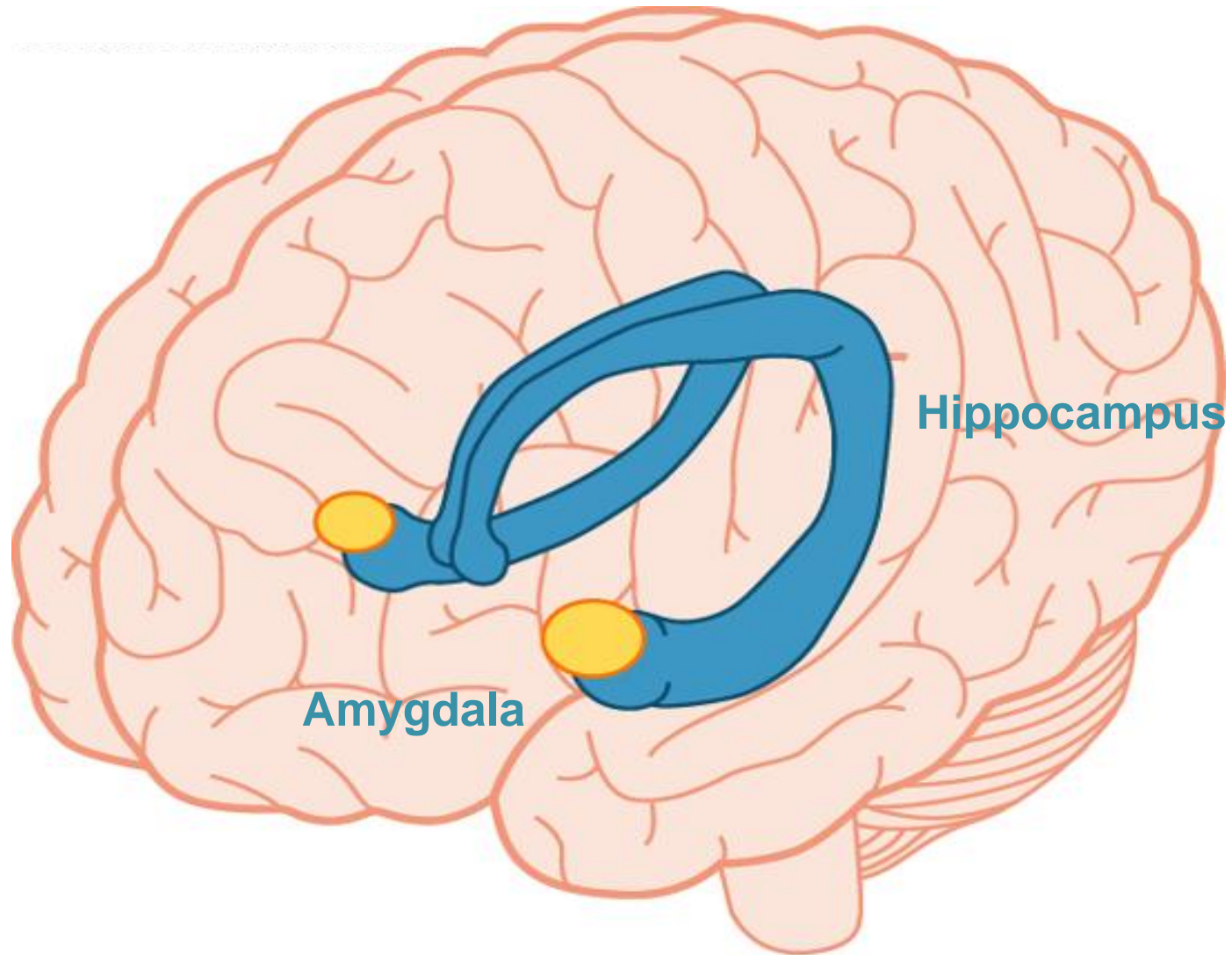
The Brain and Emotions

Processing emotional cues in the environment



Something really bad is going on near us, and you'd do well to find out what I know

The Amygdala and Hippocampus



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The amygdalae are almond shaped bodies located in bilateral medial temporal lobe.

- An intact Amygdala is *necessary* for the acquisition and expression of fear.
- It carries the more general role of detecting and learning about important information in the environment.
- This is assisted by the storing and retrieval of emotionally coloured memories stored in the Hippocampus.

Hormones and Emotion

- When experiencing an intense emotion, 2 hormones are released.
 - Epinephrine
 - Norepinephrine
- These result in increased alertness and arousal in our mind and body responses- (using the ***sympathetic nervous system***)
- At high levels, it can create the sensation of being out of control emotionally.

The Autonomic Nervous System

Sympathetic functions

Dilates pupils

Inhibits salivation

Increases respiration

Accelerates heartbeat

Stimulates glucose release

Secretes adrenaline and noradrenaline

Inhibits digestion

Relaxes bladder

Inhibits genitals

Parasympathetic functions

Constricts pupils

Stimulates salivation

Slows respiration

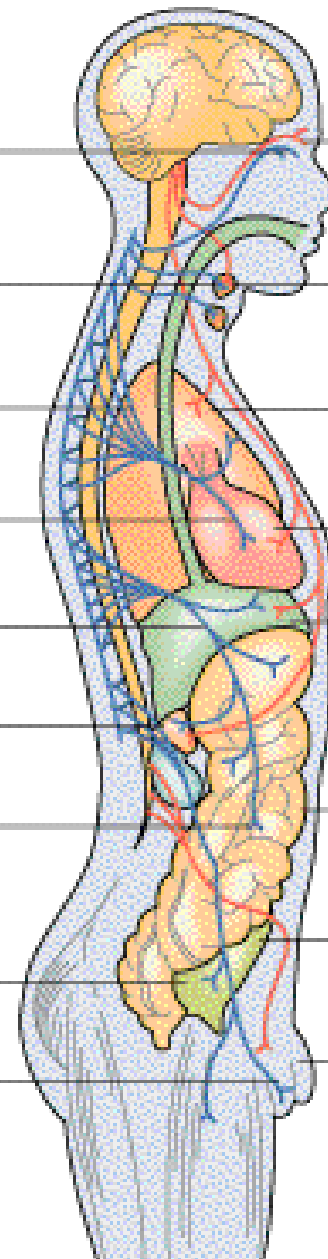
Slows heartbeat

Stimulates gall bladder

Stimulates digestion

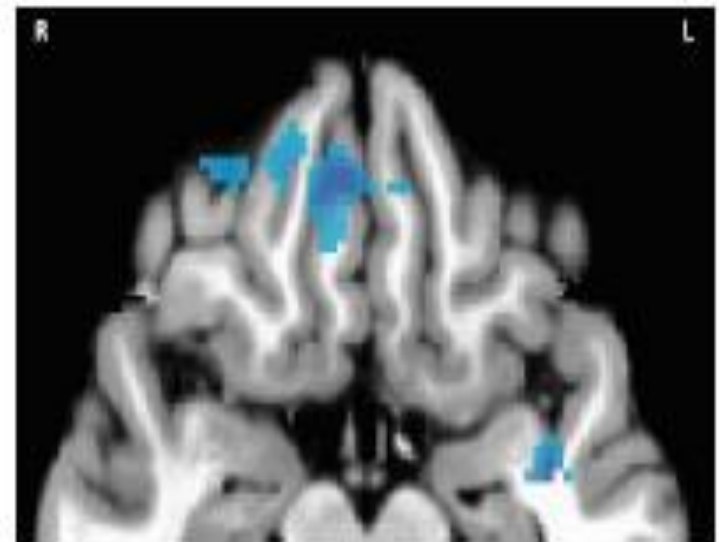
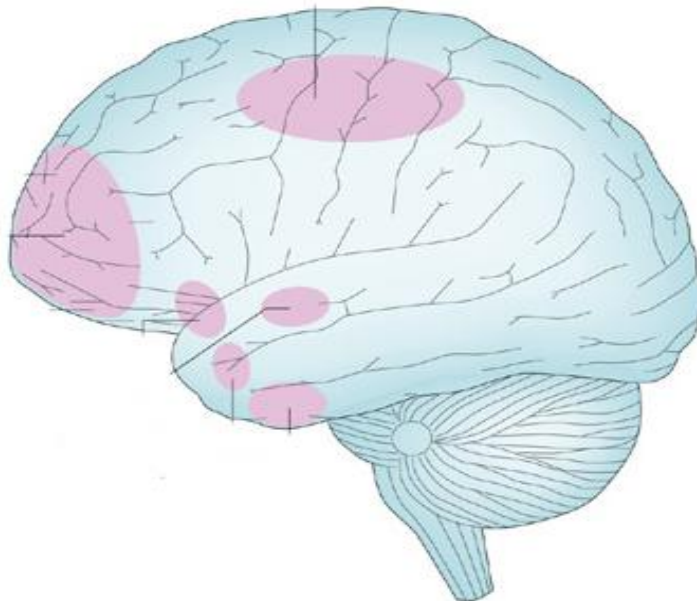
Contracts bladder


Stimulates genitals



 Sympathetic functions
 Parasympathetic functions

- Structures in the Frontal Lobe of the brain interact with the sub-cortical amygdala to regulate emotional responses.



- 
- **Dysfunctional interactions between the Frontal Lobe and the Amygdala play an important role in the mechanisms of many psychiatric illnesses.**

LIFE CONTEXTS OF EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

1. The Whole Person

- Mind
- Body
- Spirit

2. Society

- Family
- Gender
- Communities
- Social Institutions

3. The Natural Environment

- Healing Aspects
- Disasters

LIFE CONTEXTS OF EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

4. Life Tasks



5. Life Stages



THE CONTEXTS OF EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

- Problems in each life context as well as emotional disorders can become risk factors for suicide.

CONTRIBUTARY “EMOTION BOMBS” FROM DYSFUNCTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Neglect / Abandonment
- Disavowal / Lack of Empathy
- Disrespect
- Attacking behaviour (verbal/non-verbal/physical)
- Betrayal
- Lies and Manipulation
- Hate
- Control and Retribution

Destroyers of:

-CONNECTION
-VALIDATION
-PURPOSE

SUICIDE RISK FACTORS

“S.A.D. and P.E.R.S.O.N. S” acronyms:

1. **Sex** – reminds us that *males* are at higher risk than females.
2. **Age** – refers to susceptible age-groups, e.g. *adolescents* and the *elderly*.
3. **Depression** – reminds us to look for its various symptoms and signs.

SUICIDE RISK FACTORS

4. **P**rior attempts, which indicate highest risk.
5. **E**thanol or *alcohol and drug use*, which elevates risk.
6. **R**ational thinking loss - a reminder to consider mental illness.
7. **S**upport system loss. (including family abuse, isolation, homelessness)
8. **O**rganized plan. Is there one?
9. **N**o significant other (including unsupportive spouses).
10. **S**ickness – for example terminal illness, which is a stressor.

WHAT IS EMOTIONAL HEALTH?

- Emotional Health is a **management** of our emotions **and related thinking and relationships in each life context**
- that fosters the **integrated wellness** of the whole person and the **overcoming** of life's challenges
- Emotional Health provides us with **resiliency** that can prevent or improve mental health disorders and prevent suicide



2. PRE-REQUISITES FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

PRE-REQUISITES FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

For Emotion Health to be achieved it needs:

1. A willingness to accept **being Emotionally Vulnerable**
2. **Emotional Intelligence** developing

PRE-REQUISITES FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Let us

I. Embrace our Vulnerability!

(Brené Brown)

I have to accept my vulnerability
in order to face and tell my truth and
be stronger and be healed

HOW CAN I BE “VULNERABLE” AND YET BECOME EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY?

I CAN FACE AND TELL MY TRUTH BECAUSE I NEED NOT FEAR:

- I am born with **worth** and **potential** that no one can take from me
- I am **valid** or “good enough”. I am OK
- **I do not compare myself** with others (They may be busy envying me!)
- God brings **all possibilities**



I CAN FACE AND TELL MY TRUTH
BECAUSE I NEED TO FACE REALITY
TO SURVIVE:

- I am human like everybody else
- I will fall and get up again
- I will mess up and learn
- I will love and lose and love again
- I CAN ONLY HEAL IF I AM BROKEN

BLOCKS TO ACCEPTING VULNERABILITY FOR ENABLING EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Perfectionism
- Narcissism
- Fear of re-traumatization
- Mistrust of Others

BLOCKS TO ACCEPTING VULNERABILITY FOR ENABLING EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- Expectations from Society, Family and Institutions according to:
 - ✓ Hierarchy
 - ✓ Gender
 - ✓ Age
 - ✓ Culture
 - ✓ Religion
- Stigma

PRE-REQUISITES FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

II. Develop emotional intelligence

A. PERSONAL COMPETENCE

- 1. Self-Awareness
- 2. Self Regulation
- 3. Exercise Motivation for positive goals

B. SOCIAL COMPETENCE

- 4. Empathy
- 5. Develop and use Social Skills



3. HOW TO ACHIEVE EMOTIONAL HEALTH

HOW TO ACHIEVE EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- For us to gain Emotional Health we need to:
 1. Manage our *Negative Emotions*
 2. Nurture *Positive Emotions*
 3. Protect one another's *Emotional Balance* through mutually supportive relationships




3. HOW TO ACHIEVE EMOTIONAL HEALTH

I. Manage our negative emotions

Some Negative Emotions and their situational causes.

- Fear /Anxiety from trauma (or anticipation)
- Hurt from abuse or neglect
- Depression and Hopelessness from Loss and Abandonment
- Anger and Frustration from conflict, unfairness and betrayal
- Guilt from interpersonal or moral breaches



All these can precipitate or worsen *hopelessness, isolation* and *mental illness* to cause suicide

Managing our negative emotions

We can use Practical Skills in the contexts of:

- Self Help
- Therapy Assistance (Cognitive Behaviour Therapy)

These are some examples for different situations.

WHEN I FACE CRISIS OR DISASTER (with Anxiety and having Trauma)

- Seek Safety and Support
- Self Calming techniques
- Give Time to Overcome Trauma
- Developing a Coping Perspective
- Problem Solving
- Build Hope for the future

WHEN I FACE ABUSE or NEGLECT (with hurt)

- Recognize that
 - “Life is not always fair”
 - “It is not always my fault”
 - “I cant change people”
- Sometimes it is “forgive and let go of the person”
- Take responsibility for “me”
- Hold no secrets. Face and tell the truth.
- Recover by using support

WHEN I SUFFER LOSS and ABANDONMENT (with feelings of Depression and Disappointment)

- Work through the stages of grief
 - * Denial * Anger * Bargaining
 - * Depression * Acceptance
- Accept support and self care
- Handle inappropriate guilt
- Process “meanings” of loss
- “Give time for healing”

WHEN I AM ANGRY

(from conflict, unfairness or betrayal)

- FIGHT? – No
- FLIGHT? – No
- ARGUE? – No one wins. Conflict grows.
- Stop and Think!
- Arrange Time Out
- Seek Conflict Negotiation
 - ✓ Processing emotions
 - ✓ Problem analysis
 - ✓ Problem solving


WHEN I DO WRONG

(being guilty of interpersonal or moral breaches)

- Be vulnerable
- Use guilt appropriately
- Own it if necessary
- Seek Forgiveness and Reparation
- Accept yourself as being human
 - My mistakes do not define me
 - I have the potential to change
- Seek to grow

PROFESSIONAL HELP FOR COPING WITH NEGATIVE EMOTIONS DUE TO ILLNESS

- Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (for managing thoughts, emotions and actions)
- Medication (anti-depressants, anti-anxiety drugs and anti-psychotics where necessary)
- Family Psycho-education
- Suicide Risk Management



Avoid using drugs and escape
behaviours e.g. sex, overwork, sleep
to cope with negative emotions



HOW TO ACHIEVE EMOTIONAL HEALTH

**2. Nurture positive emotions
through
personal resilience building**

POSITIVE EMOTIONS

- Loving and feeling loved and understood
- Fulfillment
- Humour
- Positive Self Esteem
- Hope
- Enjoyment and Contentment
- Gratitude
- Confidence facing the future
- Equanimity in the uncertainty of life
- Peace

PERSONAL RESILIENCE FOR POSITIVE EMOTIONS

Personal Resilience is the ability to harness inner strengths and rebound more quickly from a setback.

- It includes the abilities to: # see past challenges # accept and adapt to adversity # find enjoyment in life # keep functioning psychologically and physically.
- It involves learning skills for developing thoughts, emotions and relationships in such a way as to produce **optimism, positive emotions** and **mutually supportive relationships**.

SKILLS FOR PERSONAL RESILIENCE BUILDING

- Get Connected (Loving and feeling loved)
- Find Meaning, Altruism and a Moral compass (Fulfillment)
- Start Laughing (Humour)
- Learn from Experience (Positive Self Esteem)
- Remain Hopeful and Grateful (Hope)

SKILLS FOR PERSONAL RESILIENCE BUILDING

- **Practice Self Care** (Enjoyment and Contentment)
- **Keep a Journal** (Gratitude)
- **Accept and Anticipate Change** (Confidence for the future)
- **Maintain Perspective and a Faith** (Equanimity amidst uncertainty)
- **Practice stress management and relaxation techniques** (Peace)

SKILLS FOR PERSONAL RESILIENCE BUILDING

Use Help

An Accountability partner

A Lay (peer) Counsellor

A Life Coach

A Mental Health Professional



HOW TO ACHIEVE EMOTIONAL HEALTH

**3. Protect one another's emotional
balance (through
mutually supportive relationships)**

MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

In each Life Context of Emotional Experience, we need to build mutually supportive relationships as we:

- CONNECT
- COMMUNICATE
- CARE together

This is to achieve emotional health
and thus resilience against suicide

LIFE CONTEXTS OF EMOTIONAL EXPERIENCE

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So we need to seek to:

- **CONNECT WELL**
- **COMMUNICATE WELL , AND**
- **CARE WELL**

CONNECT WELL

- *Be in touch with the feelings of others*. Listen to them and empathize
- *Be in touch with your own feelings*. Share them

Build connectedness by:

- ***Communicating one another's experiences, concerns and related feelings***
- ***Giving support*** for each other in difficult times – be there
- ***Sharing interests, activities and humour***
- Maintaining ***mutual contact***. Do not let the relationship be one-sided
- ***Keep up*** with one another's life progress and wellbeing

COMMUNICATE WELL

- It is the accurate giving and receiving of messages about facts, opinions and one another's feelings.
- There can be no connectedness when effective mutual sharing is blocked.


These are some useful techniques:

- ***Take time to Listen!***
- ***Don't interrupt.***
- Verbally ***reflect back*** the facts and feelings which you have heard or picked up.
- Give ***appropriate feedback*** on these, related to what the person may be asking of you.
- If no feedback is requested, then just listen!
- Sometimes all the person wants is to be heard.
- Share ***empathy*** (or the fact that you have appreciated how the person feels). All persons need this as well.

CARE WELL

How can we care by loving?

- Practice *unconditional self-giving* in helpfulness. Seek the “Whole Person” well being of others.
- *Put the other person first*, as appropriate. Show respect and humility.
- *Be there* when necessary.
- *Don't use love to foster dependency* where you allow others to take advantage of you.
- Love can *be assertive* and “*caringly corrective*”.

- 
- **Express *positive feelings*** constantly and sincerely.
 - Show the 4 A's: verbal and physical ***affection, affirmation, appreciation*** and ***approbation*** (praise)
 - ***Be accountable to each other!***

REVIEW:

1. Understanding Emotions and Emotional Health
2. Pre-requisites for Emotional Health
3. How to Achieve Emotional Health through:
 - Managing our *Negative Emotions*
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 - Protecting one another's *Emotional Balance* through mutually supportive relationships


PRE-REQUISITES FOR EMOTIONAL HEALTH

Yet to be achieved it needs:

1. A willingness to accept **being Emotionally Vulnerable**
2. **Emotional Intelligence** developing

HOW TO ACHIEVE EMOTIONAL HEALTH

- For us to gain Emotional Health we need to:
 - Manage our *Negative Emotions*
 - Nurture *Positive Emotions*
 - Protect one another's *Emotional Balance*
through mutually supportive relationships
(Connecting, Communicating and
Caring)

- 
- **Better Emotional Health: Better Resilience against Suicide?**
 - **Everybody's business!**
Individuals, Families, Communities, Institutions, Church, Government
 - **Let us work together in community so that none perish in isolation!**

MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

In each context of emotional living, we need to come together as service professionals, non-professionals, leaders, policy makers and financiers, churches, synagogues and mosques to enable all persons to be emotionally healthy.



Thank You!

Check:

www.growingbalanced.com

News and Events Page for a PDF
copy of this PowerPoint

References

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- 2007. *I thought it was just me (but it isn't): Making the journey from “What will people think?” to “I am enough”.*
- 2010. *The Gifts of Imperfection: Let go of who you think you're supposed to be and embrace who you are.*
- 2015. *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, learn, parent and lead.*
- 2015. *Rising strong.*