



Working with a New Reality: Managing Mental Health with Knowledge and Resilience

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Speakers



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Part 1: Dr. Diane McIntosh

- What is a Chief Neuroscience Officer?
- Define mental health Vs. mental illness
- Describe the impact of COVID-19 on our collective and individual mental health
- Discuss opportunities to positively impact your own mental health



TELUS mental health vision

To provide **personalized**, **accessible** mental healthcare backed by science and delivered with **compassion**.



We bring diversity, inclusion, empathy and **compassion** to the design and delivery of our mental health products and services.

We are creating mental healthcare options that are **accessible** by anyone, anywhere, at any time.

We recognize that mental healthcare must be evidence-based and **personalized** to meet the needs of each individual.



What is mental health?

The WHO:

“A state of **well-being** in which the individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can **work productively** and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”



Mental Health vs. Mental Illness

- **It's common to experience physical and mental health ups and downs**
 - We all have bad days, when our mental health isn't at it's best
 - Not everyone experiences a mental illness
- Mental illnesses are **medical conditions** that impact emotions, thinking and behavior.
- They're defined by:
 - A **constellation of symptoms** (depressed mood, change in sleep patterns or appetite, auditory hallucinations)
 - **Emotional distress**
 - **Difficulty functioning** in social, work/school or family activities.



Every Canadian is impacted by mental illness

- In any given year, **1 in 5** Canadians will personally experience symptoms of a mental illness.
- **1 in 24** will have a serious mental illness
- **1 in 12** will have a diagnosable substance use disorder



The mental health spectrum



Healthy

Stressed

Functional
impairment

Crisis

Interventions across the mental health spectrum

	Self-care/ social support		Professional help	
	Healthy	Stressed	Functional impairment	Crisis
Patient / employee indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid support systems • Healthy work relationships • Feels “in control” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some anxiety/ sleep pattern disturbance • Reduced confidence, self-doubt • Irritability • Tension with team members • Increasing sense of burnout • Physical illness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-medication (e.g. alcohol) • Mood and anxiety symptoms; sleep disturbance, low energy • Isolation, irritability, anger • Breakdown of work relationships • Cognitive challenges (e.g. memory, concentration, organization, mental slowing) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worsening functional impairment+ • Overt and impairing psychiatric symptoms including cognitive impairment • Incapacitated • Need for workplace leave
Impact	Functioning at desired level: productive at home and at work	Still functioning but not optimally: reduced focus and quality of performance	Functionally impaired. Inability to complete work responsibilities. Presenteeism and some absenteeism.	Potentially life threatening. Inability to attend work. Disability claim.

Interventions across the mental health spectrum

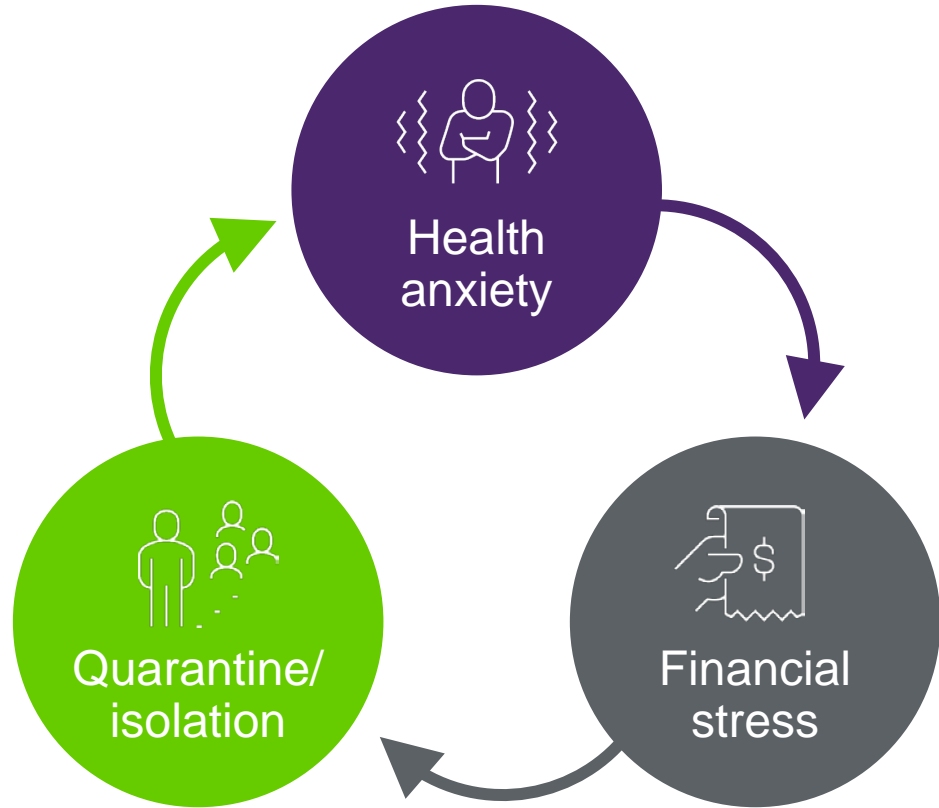
	Self-care/ social support		Professional help	
	Healthy	Stressed	Functional impairment	Crisis
Interventions	Exercise/yoga Professional coaching Dietitian Mindfulness/meditation Sleep hygiene	Healthy + Psychotherapy Financial planning / parenting support / health education	Healthy+ Psychotherapy+ GP / NP / supported by psychiatric option (E.g. medication)	GP / psychiatrist / psychologist Disability management program

All mental illnesses are associated with an increased risk of physical illnesses

- Physical pain
- Abdominal symptoms
- Heart disease
- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Other inflammatory illnesses



COVID-19 mental health trifecta



Chronic, unpredictable stress is bad for us

- It's the kind of stress used as the most reliable animal model employed to research to predict depression
- Chronic, unpredictable stress associated with:
 - Structural and functional brain changes
 - Depression, anxiety
 - Cognitive impairment, Alzheimer's Disease
 - Inflammatory illnesses



Canadians' COVID-19 mental health experience



84%

report their mental health
has worsened since the start
of COVID-19

28%

report increased
use of alcohol

35%

of seniors have experienced
negative impacts on their
mental health

41%

of youth report
symptoms of anxiety and
high stress levels



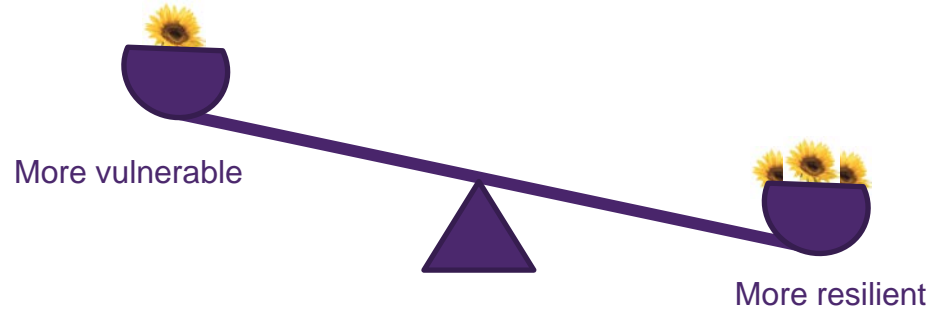
In order to take care of anyone else, you must first take care of yourself

What is resilience?

- It's not just **surviving** adversity
- It's the ability to emerge from adversity **even stronger**



Resilience is individual



You can build resilience.

Self-actualization

- Hard-wired, innate drive to **be your best self** and live to your **full potential**
- That drive is always there, but life can get in the way
- You can learn how to **harness or reawaken that drive**, despite difficult circumstances



Resilience is rooted in...



- Managing our **expectations**
- Our ability to **anticipate** and **accept change**
- Our acceptance of what we can and can't **control**
- How we talk to ourselves (AKA **internal narrative**)

“Expectations kill happiness”

- Stress happens when your expectations are not aligned with your reality
- If expectations are **constantly misaligned** with reality, can result in:
 - Chronic frustration, anxiety
 - Sub-optimal performance
- Having **realistic expectations** is critical
 - It's necessary to have the right tools and environment to successfully deliver



We have simple minds

- Our brain is hard-wired to simplify everything
- The downside: “present bias”
 - We focus only on the familiar and **miss the change**



Can we ever get back to normal?

- “Normal” is an illusion
- There is now and there is the future, which will be different
- **Change is constant and inevitable**, so we need to **expect** it and be **prepared**



You can only control you

- I can only control me - but I am able control my own thoughts, feelings and behaviour
- Feeling **unable to control yourself** can provoke a sense of vulnerability and anxiety



I control me, but not everything that happens to me



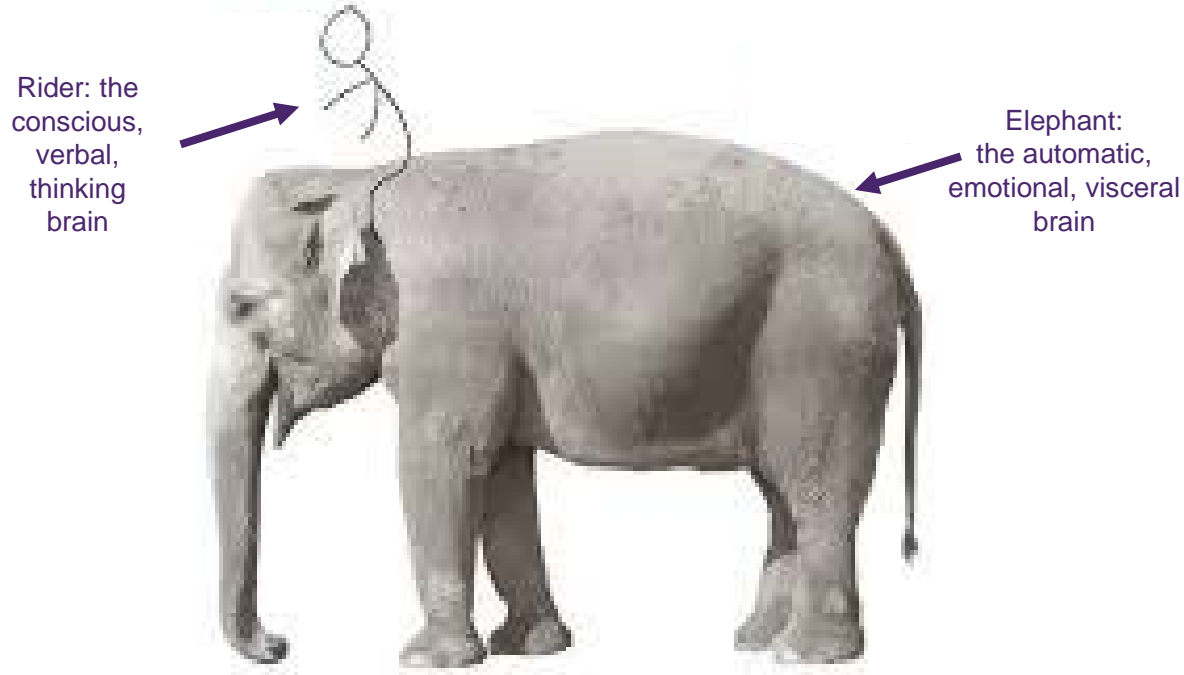
- Most of us feel responsible for our successes or failures.
- Accept that bad things happen to good people and life includes random events.
- Feeling entirely responsible for everything isn't helpful, nor is feeling like you never have any control – perpetual victim.

Our internal narrative

- You are your own narrator.
- If your internal story is harsh and judgemental, negative thoughts, feelings and behaviours are likely to follow.
- To create positive life changes, you need to speak more empathetically to yourself.



Self-talk strongly influences how we feel



Negative self-talk is destructive

- It scares the heck out of your subconscious, driving worry and anxiety
- It's also **infectious** – and it can infect those around you
- It's important to support **constructive questioning/ideas/opinions** Vs. negativity



What resilience does not mean

- Accepting bullying, racism, sexism
 - “Suck it up, buttercup” is offensive
- But, resilience can help us to **weather those storms**, and other life challenges, with **grace and dignity** and embolden us to **courageously demand better.**



Recap: you can build resilience by...

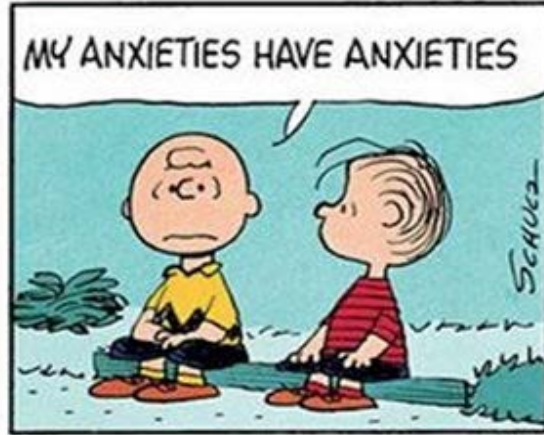
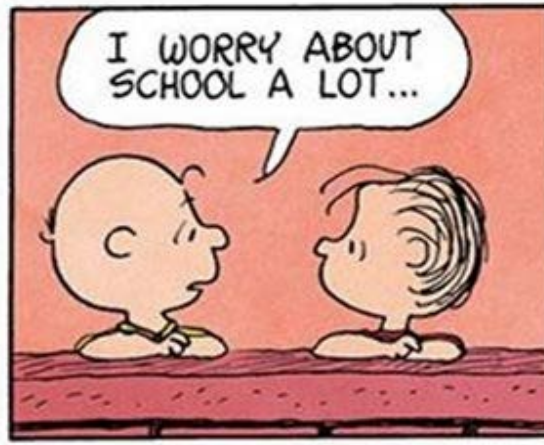
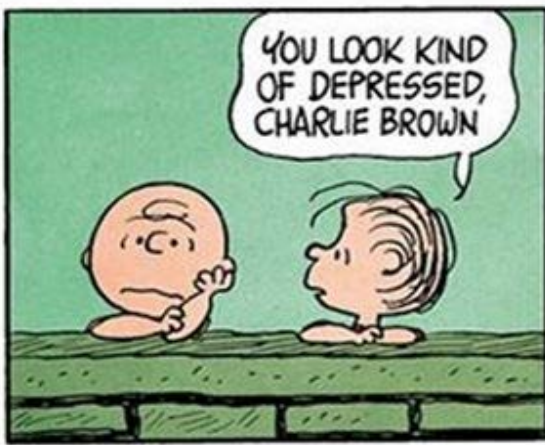
- 1 Carefully considering the expectations **you place** on yourself and others
- 2 Expecting **change**
- 3 Accepting that you can only **control you**
- 4 Talking to yourself more **empathically**





Part 2: Dr. Susan Siklos

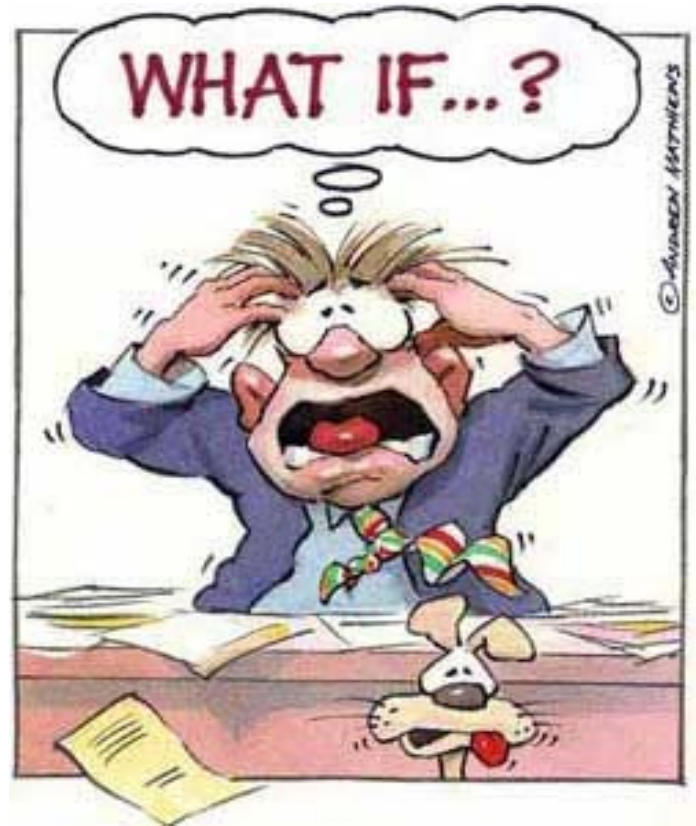
- Parenting during uncertain times
- Supporting anxious/stressed kids and teens
- Tools and strategies for building resilience in children and teens



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How are **you** doing?

- Parents manage **a lot!**
- Caring for yourself – **when??**
- Self-compassion



COVID makes parenting **even harder!**

Challenges

- Managing screen time
- Getting babysitters
- Smaller social circles
- Fewer kid activities
- Work from home – blurred boundaries



Parenting strategies that are **still important** during COVID

1. Self-compassion
2. Consistency
3. Communication
4. Connection
5. Anxiety management



Self-compassion and self-care

- Self-care
- Self-compassion
- Stress and anxiety
- Tolerating uncertainty
- Be creative



The importance of consistency

- Knowing **what to predict** can help children feel less anxious and stressed
- Aim to **be consistent** with house rules and expectations



Communication is key

- **Listen, empathize, validate**
- Provide **age-appropriate** information
- Stay away from **excessive reassurance**
- **Check in** regularly



Managing anxiety in kids and teens



- Excessive **reassurance seeking**
- **Hand washing** – what's normal?
- **Avoiding** others
- Unhelpful/anxious **thoughts**
- **Mindfulness**



Building resilience: How to move from reactive to proactive

How to build resilience in children and youth

1. Foster **strong relationships**, a sense of belonging
2. Help them manage **big emotions**
3. Teach **flexibility**, problem solving
4. Support **self-competence**
5. Model **optimism**



Foster strong relationships

- Ensuring they have **strong relationships** with trusted adults
- Importance of **parent / child relationship**
- Sense of **social belonging**
- **Community**



Modelling and helping manage big emotions

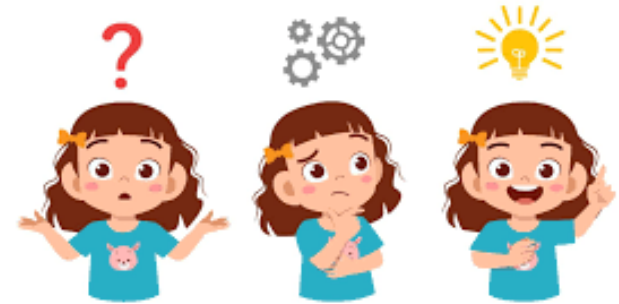
- Learning to weather the storm of **big emotions**
- Tools that help
 - Grounding/breathing
 - Dropping Anchor
 - Mindful visualizations
 - Take a break

I DON'T WANT TO GO TO
SCHOOL! I HATE SCHOOL!
I'D RATHER DO **ANYTHING**
THAN GO TO SCHOOL!



Flexibility and self-advocacy

- Learn to **bend without breaking**
- Empowering children and youth to be **flexible** and **solve problems** –
 - Don't solve it for them!
- Let your child make **mistakes**



Self-competence

- **Important for children to feel competent** – does not have to be school/academic
 - Social skills
 - Sports
 - Art
 - Helpful



The role of optimism

- **Protects** children, teens, and adults from depression
- Optimistic/helpful **thoughts**
- Being in the **present moment**
- **Gratitude**
- ***Accepting that change happens - only guarantee in life!***



Recap: building resilience in children and youth

- 1 Foster **strong relationships** with adults
- 2 Help manage **big emotions**
- 3 **Flexibility**: learn to bend
- 4 Making sure youth **feel good about themselves**
- 5 Build **optimism**





Q&A

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[Epigenetics : how our genes and experiences make us who we are](#) By Diane McIntosh

[May 20: When to get a mental health screening](#) by Care Centres Team

[Why meditation helps you stay calm,](#) By Consumer Health team

[Supporting mental health in the workplace](#) By TELUS Health team

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[The brain-gut connection: how mental health affects digestion,](#) By Care Centres Team

[The power of pets to support mental health and physical well-being](#) By Diane McIntosh

[What does self-confidence mean to you?](#) By Consumer Health team

[Mentally prepare for life back at the office or on campus](#) By Consumer Health team

[Building resilience during challenging times](#) By Diane McIntosh

[Helping your child deal with anxious feelings in the face of COVID,](#) By Susan Siklos, Psychologist and Lead for Child and Youth Mental Health



Thank you