

Celebrating
50
YEARS
1970 - 2020

Supporting our Supervisors: Mental Health and Well Being

15 September 2020



Presenters



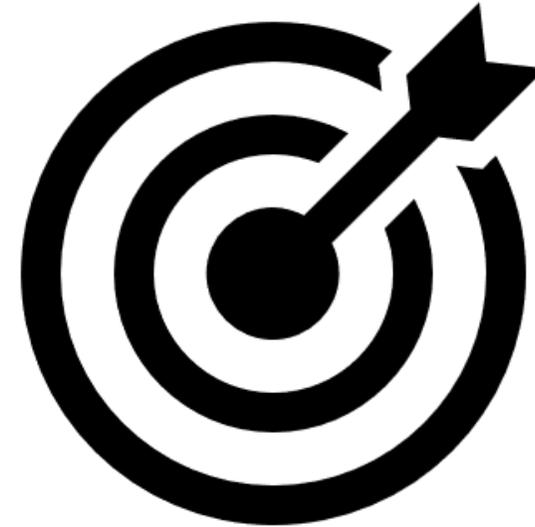
Dr Jane Harte
*Associate Dean Students
College of Medicine & Dentistry
James Cook University*



Dr Anna Kokavec
*Academic Lead Student Support
College of Medicine & Dentistry
James Cook University*

PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- Challenges we are facing
- Trauma pandemic?
 - Post pandemic stress
 - Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Stress and coping
 - Becoming more resilient
 - Stress and distress
 - Focusing on balance
 - Achieving balance
- Am I ok?
 - Making sure I am OK
 - Having the courage to seek help





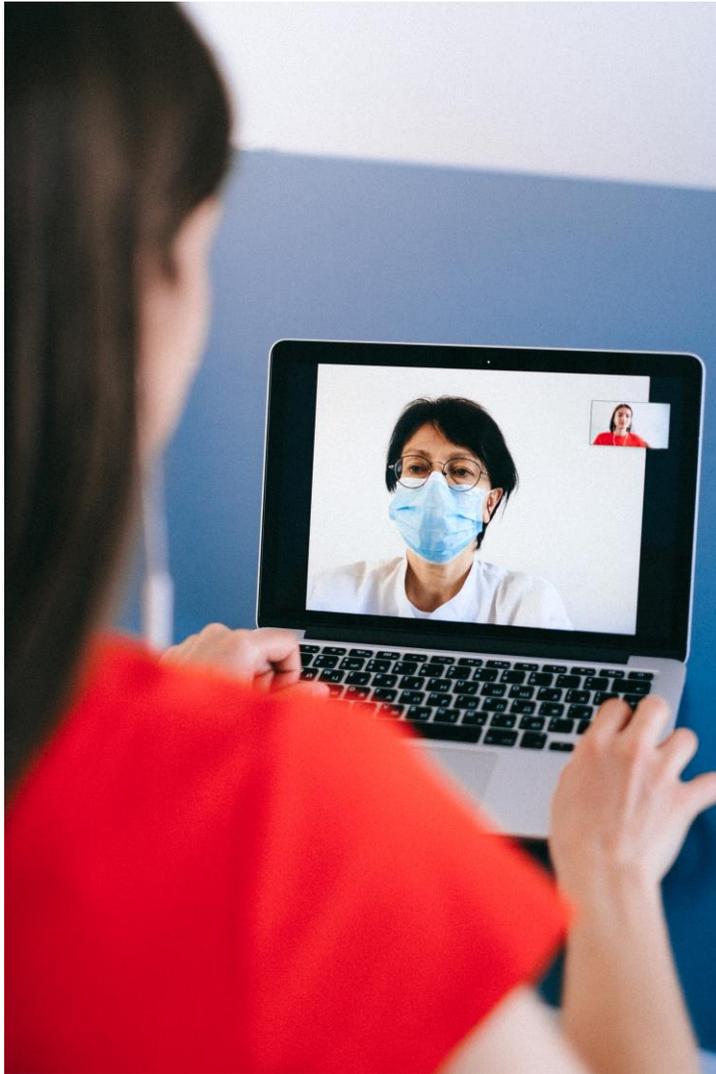
CHALLENGES WE ARE FACING

- **CHANGE:** Stress of living in an unpredictable world.
- **TECHNOLOGY:** Stress of learning to do things a different way using different tools.
- **ISOLATION:** Stress of being alone and not able to meet face-to-face with family, friends, work colleagues.
 - Border closures?
- **FEAR:** Invisible enemy that has the potential to cause death.



CHALLENGES FACING HDR STUDENTS

- Data collection for many HDR projects has been significantly impacted.
- Courses moving to online has reduced the availability of casual teaching work.
 - Many HDR students, even those on scholarships, rely on casual teaching work to survive.
- Many HDR students are feeling emotionally and financially vulnerable.
 - Freeze on SP2 JCU casual contracts
 - Reduction in hours in SP1 and/or SP2
 - Loss of part-time/casual wages
 - Universities excluded from government funding.



CHALLENGES FACING SUPERVISORS

- Many HDR projects have been impacted since COVID-19 restrictions were first introduced in March 2020.
 - HDR student projects?
 - Grant funded academic projects?
- Research grants require projects to be completed in a timely manner.
- Reporting back status of project to funding institutions?
- Conferences to report results may have been booked and paid for but no data due to COVID-19
- Feelings of helplessness: What can I do to support my students?



REFLECT

Let's pause and reflect on our experiences during the last few months.

- Were there any positives?
- Any challenges?
 - How did you deal with the challenges?
 - As time went by do you think the strategies you used worked?
- Feel free to share your thoughts in the Q&A area.



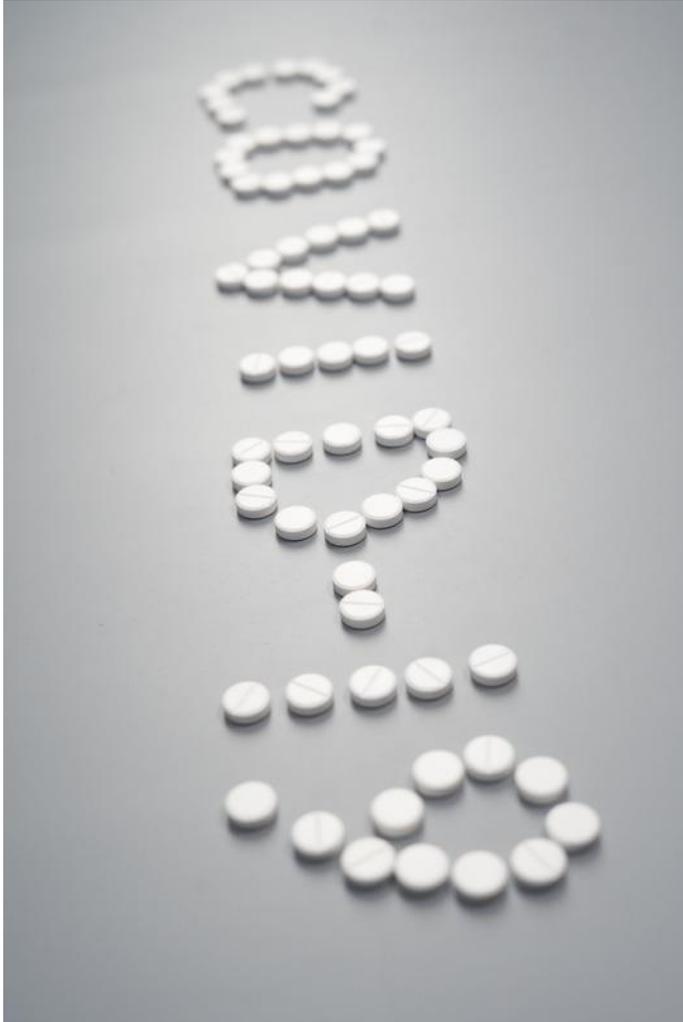
TRAUMA PANDEMIC?

- The importance of “flattening the curve” to support our medical system has understandably been the focus in the media.
- However, mental health experts are warning there could be a pandemic of another kind, a trauma pandemic that could potentially stay with us for a long time.
 - Symptoms can emerge days, weeks, months or even years after the threat of contracting COVID-19 has passed.

POST PANDEMIC STRESS



- A recent report published in *The Lancet* has highlighted a link between quarantine and acute stress disorder (Brooks et al., 2020).
- The social, mental, and cultural impact of going through a global pandemic such as COVID-19 can reportedly also result in people developing post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD.
 - PTSD is reportedly one of the most prevalent long-term psychiatric diagnoses among survivors of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), an epidemic that started in China in 2002 (Mak et al., 2010).
- We are already starting to see some evidence that some students and staff are feeling anxious when on campus, especially those who have been in quarantine.



POST PANDEMIC STRESS

PTSD can occur following deliberate acts of violence against the person, severe accidents, natural disasters, or military action (e.g. prisoner of war).

- A pandemic that creates fear such as COVID-19 falls into the natural disaster category.
 - COVID-19 is a 'sneaky' virus. Many do not know they have it (i.e. asymptomatic) but are still highly infectious.
 - Fear and suspicion every time you go out of the house. Perceive your life as being at risk if someone coughs, blows their nose, or sneezes.
 - Subconsciously on the look out for some invisible enemy.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER (PTSD)

Table 1. Diagnostic Symptoms of PTSD ³		
Category	Number	Symptoms
Intrusion	1 or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distressing memories • Distressing dreams • Dissociative reactions (eg, flashbacks) • Psychological distress upon exposure to internal or external cues • Marked physiological reactions to internal or external cues
Avoidance	1 or both	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoidance of distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings about the trauma • Avoidance of external reminders that arouse distressing memories, thoughts, or feelings about the trauma
Cognitions/mood	2 or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inability to remember an important aspect of the trauma • Negative beliefs or expectations about oneself, others, or the world • Distorted thoughts about the trauma that lead to blaming oneself or others • Persistent negative or emotional state • Diminished interest or participation in activities • Feelings of detachment or estrangement from others • Persistent inability to experience positive emotions
Arousal/reactivity	2 or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritable behavior and angry outbursts • Reckless or self-destructive behavior • Hypervigilance • Exaggerated startle reflex • Problems with concentration • Sleep disturbance



PTSD RISK FACTORS

Is everyone at equal risk of developing PTSD?

- Interestingly, not everyone who experiences a traumatic event develops ASD or PTSD.
 - Some seem to be more resilient than others.
 - A person's risk of developing PTSD can be influenced by a range of factors.

PTSD RISK FACTORS

Table 2. Risk Factors Associated With Development of PTSD ^{3,9,10}	
Timeframe	Examples of Risk Factors
Pretrauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• History of depression or anxiety• Previous trauma exposure• Childhood adversity• Lower intelligence or education
Peritrauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Severe trauma• Interpersonal trauma• High perceived threat to life of self and/or others• Dissociation (distorted awareness; unreal)
Posttrauma	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Negative cognitions about self and world• Poor coping strategies• Ongoing life stress• Lack of social support



QUESTION?

- Some people, when they encounter stress, manage to survive, grow stronger, and even thrive.
- Others feel overwhelmed, fall apart and become scared.
- Things you find easy to deal with may present a challenge to someone else.
 - Why do you think some people deal with stress better than others?



WHAT IS RESILIENCE?

- Comes from the Latin word *'resile'*, which means “to spring”.
- Defined simply, resilience is a person’s ability to adapt to changing circumstances and ‘bounce’ back even stronger from stress, adversity or challenges.
- Resilience is our ability to cope – it’s about feeling positive about change and learning, growing and developing into the most emotionally robust person we can be.



ACCEPTING CHANGE

Change is everywhere and it is impossible to avoid change.

- How you respond to change will determine how you feel. Important to make change your friend.
 - **Characteristics of a resilient individual:** flexible, adaptive, learns from experience, optimistic, proactive, and knows when to seek support.
 - **Characteristics of a resilient team:** based on mutual trust, social norms, participation and social networks. Has the resources to adapt positively to change.
 - Both individual and organizational resilience is an important determinant of how you will respond to the challenge of returning to work.



BECOMING MORE RESILIENT

- Becoming more resilient involves developing ‘positive’ **behaviours** that we can draw on during stressful times.
 - We could also say we are building *positive coping strategies!*
- When things become stressful, having a well stocked resilience toolkit is key to remaining calm and moving forward.

BUILDING RESILIENCE



STRESS AND DISTRESS



The human body is designed to experience stress and react to it.

- Stress can be positive, keeping us alert, motivated, and ready to avoid danger.
- Stress becomes negative when a person faces continuous challenges without relief or relaxation between stressors. As a result, the person becomes overworked, and stress-related tension builds.
- Stress that continues without relief can lead to a condition called distress – a negative stress reaction.

CHRONIC STRESS



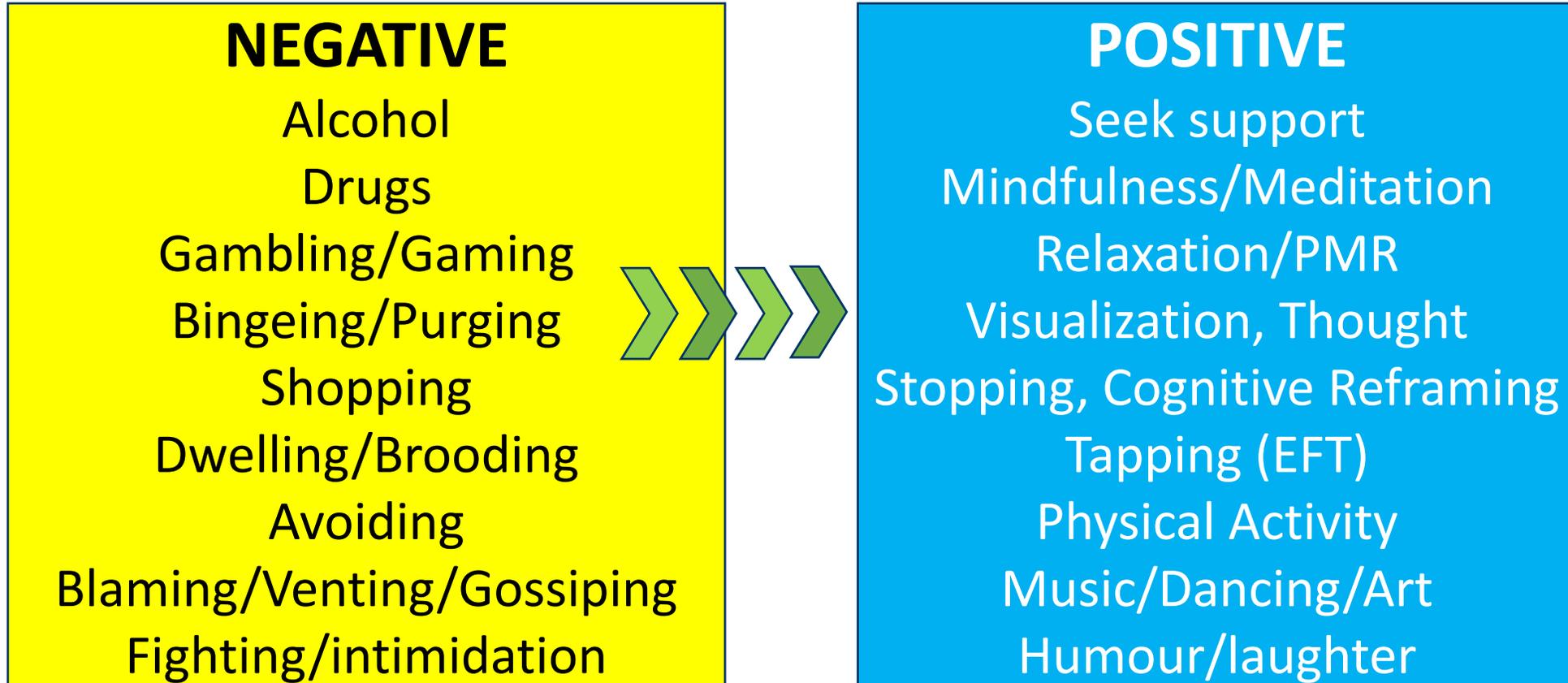
- Stress that continues without relief can lead to a condition called distress – a negative stress reaction.
- Distress can disturb the body's internal balance or equilibrium, leading to physical symptoms such as
 - Headaches, stomach aches, high blood pressure, chest pain, sexual dysfunction, and problems sleeping.
- Emotional problems can also result from distress. These problems include:
 - Depression, panic attacks, excessive worry, and other forms of anxiety.



STRESS AND COPING

- The coping strategy you adopt when confronted by a stressor is largely based on what worked for you in the past.
 - Coping is a learned behaviour.
- Coping strategies can be grouped into two broad categories:
 - **Negative strategies:** Getting through the acute challenge only.
 - **Positive strategies:** Getting through the acute challenge *and* staying peaceful down the track.

COPING STRATEGIES





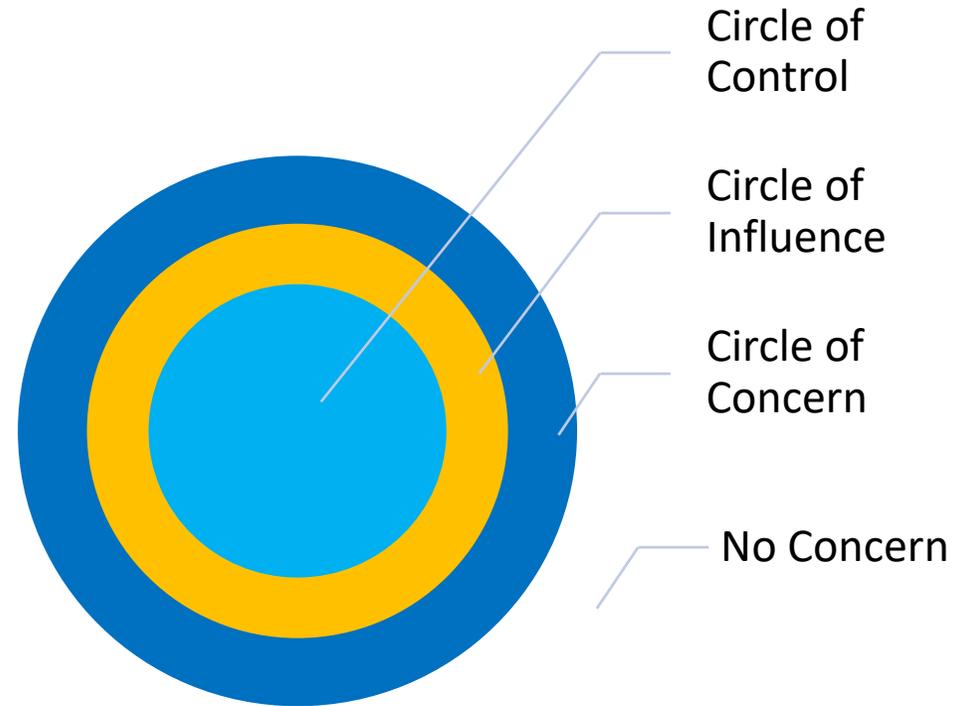
WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT

Things you find easy to deal with may present a challenge to someone else.

- How we cope with adversity is based on what worked for us before.
- Everyone copes differently because not everyone has had the same experiences.
 - Not everyone has had the same opportunities for growth.
- Important to show compassion for others who may be struggling.
 - Offer support rather than judgement.
 - Everyone is doing the best they can.

TAKING BACK CONTROL

- **Feeling stressed means something in your life is out of your control.**
- **Circle of Control:** all the problems that concern me that I can do something about.
 - **Circle of Influence:** Problems I have some influence over.
 - **Circle of Concern:** Difficulties and problems I can experience in all aspects of my life. For example health, work, personal relationships.
 - **No Concern:** problems (usually belonging to others) that is not my concern.



Source: Momentum, Michael McQueen



WHAT IS MY RESPONSIBILITY?

Focus on what you CAN do.

- There are two ways of approaching a problem
 - **Problem-focused:** Is there anything you can do to change the problem?
 - **Emotion-focused:** Is there anything you can do to change your response to the problem?

Take responsibility only for what you can change and belongs to you.

- Ask yourself “Does this problem belong to me?”
 - What is my responsibility?
 - What is my student’s responsibility?
- Am I taking responsibility for something that is outside of my control?
- Does it even belong to me?



AVOIDING CONFLICT

- It takes at least two people to create conflict. After all, a person cannot create conflict on their own
- If you don't want to participate in someone else's drama all you have to say is "sorry I am not doing this today" and walk away.
- You cannot control what others do, you can only control what you do!
- Some are better than others at taking responsibility.
- Everyone thinks their behaviour is the 'right' thing to do.
- We all have strategies we use to meet our needs.
- These are learned at a young age and largely subconscious.
 - All involve unbalancing someone else.



FOCUSING ON BALANCE

Getting the balance right means focusing attention on the

- Physical
- Emotional
- Social and
- Personal aspect of health and wellbeing

FOCUSING ON BALANCE

PHYSICAL

Am I taking care of my body?

- **Fuel:** What am I eating?
- **Hydration:** What am I drinking?
- **Activity:** When was the last time I did any physical activity?
- **Nature:** Have I been outside today?

SOCIAL

Who am I spending my time with?

- **Relationship:** Do my friends lift me up or drag me down?
- **Connectivity:** Have I talked to anyone today?
- **Communication:** What did we talk about?

PSYCHOLOGICAL

What is my mind doing?

- **Mood:** How do I feel? What am I scared of?
- **Cognition:** What am I thinking? Are my thoughts positive or negative?
- **Mindfulness:** Am I focusing on the past, future or what is happening right now?

SELF

What do I see when I look in the mirror?

- **Self worth:** Do I love and accept myself?
- **Self-esteem:** Do I appreciate myself?
- **Self-confidence:** Do I trust myself?
- **Responsibility:** Am I scared of saying 'no'? Do I rely too much on the opinion of others? What do I need to be happy?

ACHIEVING BALANCE

BIOLOGY

- **Fuel:** Varied diet with plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables
- **Hydration:** Filtered water
- **Physical Activity:** What can you do? If sitting try to get up and move around for 5 min every hour
- **Nature:** at least 30 min per day; On nice days an idea may be to eat your lunch outside.

CONNECTIVITY

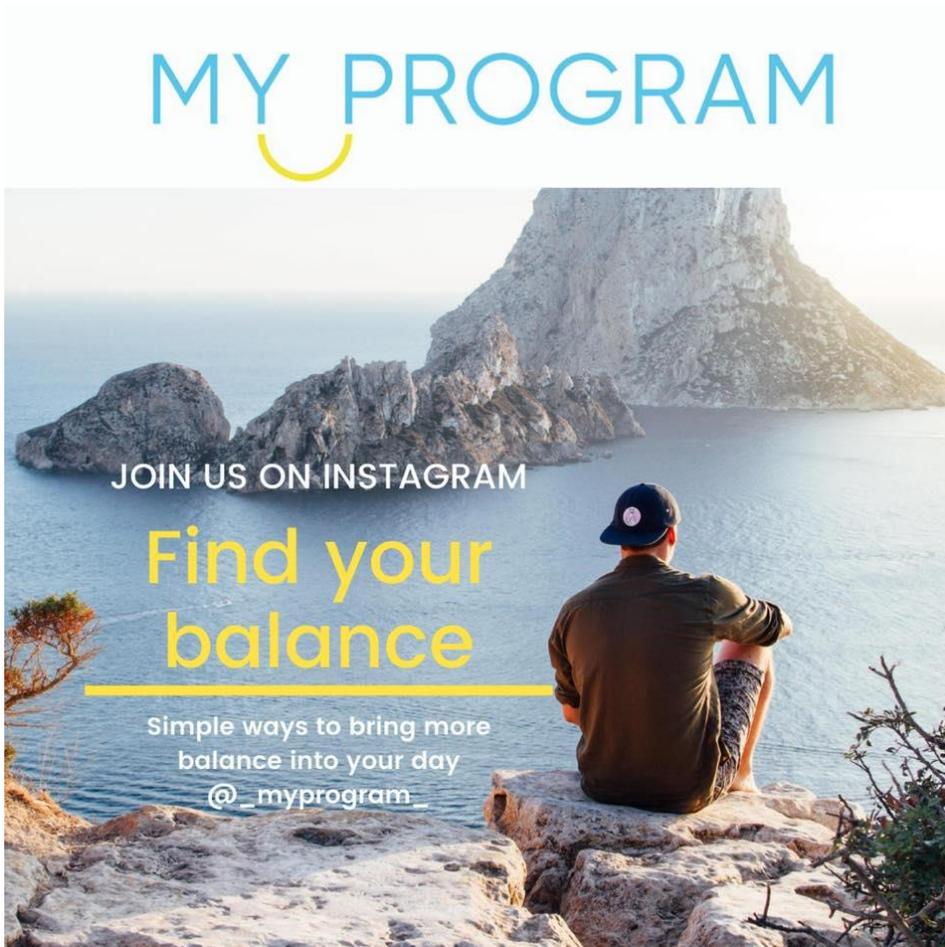
- **Relationship:** I surround myself with positive people, those who respect and care for me.
- **Connectivity:** I connect with someone every day.
- **Communication:** I have a face-to-face conversation, even if it means using technology

PSYCHOLOGY

- **Mood:** I use my tools to keep my emotions balanced.
- **Cognition:** I use my tools to keep thoughts positive.
- **Expectations:** I accept my humanness. My expectations of what I can and cannot do is realistic.
- **Flexibility:** I go with the flow.
- **Mindfulness:** What am I doing right NOW.

SELF

- **Self worth:** I accept all of me. What I think and feel matters.
- **Self-esteem:** I am proud of myself and my achievements.
- **Self-confidence:** I am strong; I have everything I need to be successful.
- **Responsibility:** I am responsible for my choices.
- **Balance:** I choose balance in all areas of my life.



TOOLS AND TIPS

- Simple and practical tools and tips to help build resilience and promote balance.
 - Can be used every day.
 - Developed by health professionals.
 - Suitable for the entire family.
- Follow on Instagram @_myprogram_
 - New tools and tips uploaded every week.



HOW ARE THINGS GOING?

- It takes courage to speak up and admit that things are getting too much.
 - My students are depending on me, I don't want to let them down.
 - Everyone else seems to be coping. I don't want to seem weak, especially not when I am with my students/work colleagues.
- Feeling overwhelmed, anxious, depressed, or exhausted and not dealing with the situation and just hoping it will go away, is a choice that is always available (Negative coping).
- A better choice is to tell someone you are struggling and ask for help (Positive coping).
 - GP? Counsellor? Supervisor? Teacher?



AM I OK?

During this time of social distancing many people are feeling more anxious, depressed and stressed than usual.

- Could be due to uncertainty about the future, loss of income, boredom and/or loneliness or other personal reasons.
- Helpful to check in with yourself and ask “ Am I OK” to ensure UROK?
- Good idea to monitor mood and take action if needed.

DASS 21

DASS 21 NAME _____ DATE _____



Please read each statement and circle a number 0, 1, 2 or 3 which indicates how much the statement applied to you over the past week. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any statement.

The rating scale is as follows:

- 0 Did not apply to me at all - NEVER
- 1 Applied to me to some degree, or some of the time - SOMETIMES
- 2 Applied to me to a considerable degree, or a good part of time - OFTEN
- 3 Applied to me very much, or most of the time - ALMOST ALWAYS

					FOR OFFICE USE			
	N	S	O	AA	D	A	S	
1	I found it hard to wind down	0	1	2	3			
2	I was aware of dryness of my mouth	0	1	2	3			
3	I couldn't seem to experience any positive feeling at all	0	1	2	3			
4	I experienced breathing difficulty (eg, excessively rapid breathing, breathlessness in the absence of physical exertion)	0	1	2	3			
5	I found it difficult to work up the initiative to do things	0	1	2	3			
6	I tended to over-react to situations	0	1	2	3			
7	I experienced trembling (eg, in the hands)	0	1	2	3			
8	I felt that I was using a lot of nervous energy	0	1	2	3			
9	I was worried about situations in which I might panic and make a fool of myself	0	1	2	3			
10	I felt that I had nothing to look forward to	0	1	2	3			
11	I found myself getting agitated	0	1	2	3			
12	I found it difficult to relax	0	1	2	3			
13	I felt down-hearted and blue	0	1	2	3			
14	I was intolerant of anything that kept me from getting on with what I was doing	0	1	2	3			
15	I felt I was close to panic	0	1	2	3			
16	I was unable to become enthusiastic about anything	0	1	2	3			
17	I felt I wasn't worth much as a person	0	1	2	3			
18	I felt that I was rather touchy	0	1	2	3			
19	I was aware of the action of my heart in the absence of physical exertion (eg, sense of heart rate increase, heart missing a beat)	0	1	2	3			
20	I felt scared without any good reason	0	1	2	3			
21	I felt that life was meaningless	0	1	2	3			
TOTALS								

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<https://www.workcover.wa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/3.dass21withscoringinfo.pdf>

DASS 21 SCORE

DEPRESSION SCORE ANXIETY SCORE STRESS SCORE

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	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Normal	0 - 4	0 - 3	0 - 7
Mild	5 - 6	4 - 5	8 - 9
Moderate	7 - 10	6 - 7	10 - 12
Severe	11 - 13	8 - 9	13 - 16
Extremely Severe	14 +	10 +	17 +

Note: scores are just an indication of how a person may be feeling right now and it does not mean they have depression, anxiety or stress issues.

Clinical verification by a mental health professional would be required for a proper diagnosis. However, if you scored in the severe or very severe range you may choose to make an appointment to speak with your GP.

<https://www.workcover.wa.gov.au/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/07/3.dass21withscoringinfo.pdf>

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

- Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free counselling service paid for by your employer.
- Up to 6 counselling sessions annually can be accessed free of charge to assist with personal or work-related issues.
- Completely confidential service, separate to your employment.
- In Australia there are a number of companies who are registered as EAP providers.
 - The EAP provider for JCU staff is LifeWorks.
 - Contact number: 1800 604 640



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Q & A