

Healing the Mind, Healing the Body: Emotional recovery after cancer

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Betty's Story

Cancer survival rates are
increasing.

By 2022, 67% of the estimated 18
million U.S. people diagnosed with
cancer will survive beyond 5 years.

Survivorship comes at a price

- Changes in physical appearance and functioning
- Fatigue
- Cognitive difficulties
- Foreshortened future/ fear of recurrence
- Pain
- Changes in sexual functioning
- Altered financial status
- Change in social relationships

The Emotional Cost

- $\geq 30\%$ report clinically significant distress
- Depression rates 3 times higher than the general population (58% report sx)
- 34% report clinically significant anxiety
- Those with early childhood trauma or multiple concurrent life events more vulnerable to emotional difficulties.

Survivorship Stages and Challenges

Fear of Recurrence

Depressive sx

Fatigue

Cognitive difficulties

Pain

Cancer Spec. Sequelae

Finding Benefit

Return to work

Fear of Recurrence/Anxiety

Depressive sx

Fatigue

Cognitive difficulties

Pain

Cancer Spec. Sequelae

Finding Benefit

Fear of Recurrence/Anxiety

Fatigue

Cognitive difficulties

Pain

Cancer Spec. Sequelae

Finding Benefit

Re-entry

Early survivorship

Long term survivorship

Treatment
Completion

2 years
After diagnosis

5 years
After diagnosis

Psychological distress occurs across the cancer continuum

- Before diagnosis among those at increased risk due to family history
- Diagnosis and Treatment
- Immediately post treatment
- Survivorship

Effects of chronic stress

- Increased vulnerability to common cold
- Slower wound healing
- General decrements in immune function
- High blood pressure and high cholesterol
- Heart disease
- Weight gain (central fat storage)
- Poor control of blood sugar among diabetics
- Poor health behaviors (e.g., diet, smoking, no exercise)
 - Even 10 years after dx among CRC women w anxiety and depression at tx
- Shortened telomeres and telomerase activity
- DNA damage and poor repair
- Increased VEGF production and vascularization of tumor cells
- Increased rates of tumor cell metastases

Effects of chronic stress



Before work

After work

Bio Behavioral cancer risk factors

- Increased vulnerability to common cold
- Slower wound healing
- General decrements in immune function
- High blood pressure and high cholesterol
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- Weight gain (central fat storage)
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Psychological Interventions

- Promote better management of stressors
- Reduce distress, anxiety, depressed mood
- Enhance quality of life
- Enhance emotional growth (finding benefit)

Can there be a benefit??

- Most survivors navigate the disease without high levels of distress needing psychological intervention
- Those with strong adaptive functioning and good social support do better
- Some will find benefit from the experience and a renewed sense of meaning
- No one is left unchanged
- Psychological intervention can lead to positive changes

Healing the Body

The Stress and Immunity Breast Cancer Project

- Stress management, coping ect.
- Health behavior change
- Relaxation training
- Education to ↑adherence to tx
- Met weekly for 4 months then monthly for 8 months
- 227 Stage 1-3 breast cancer

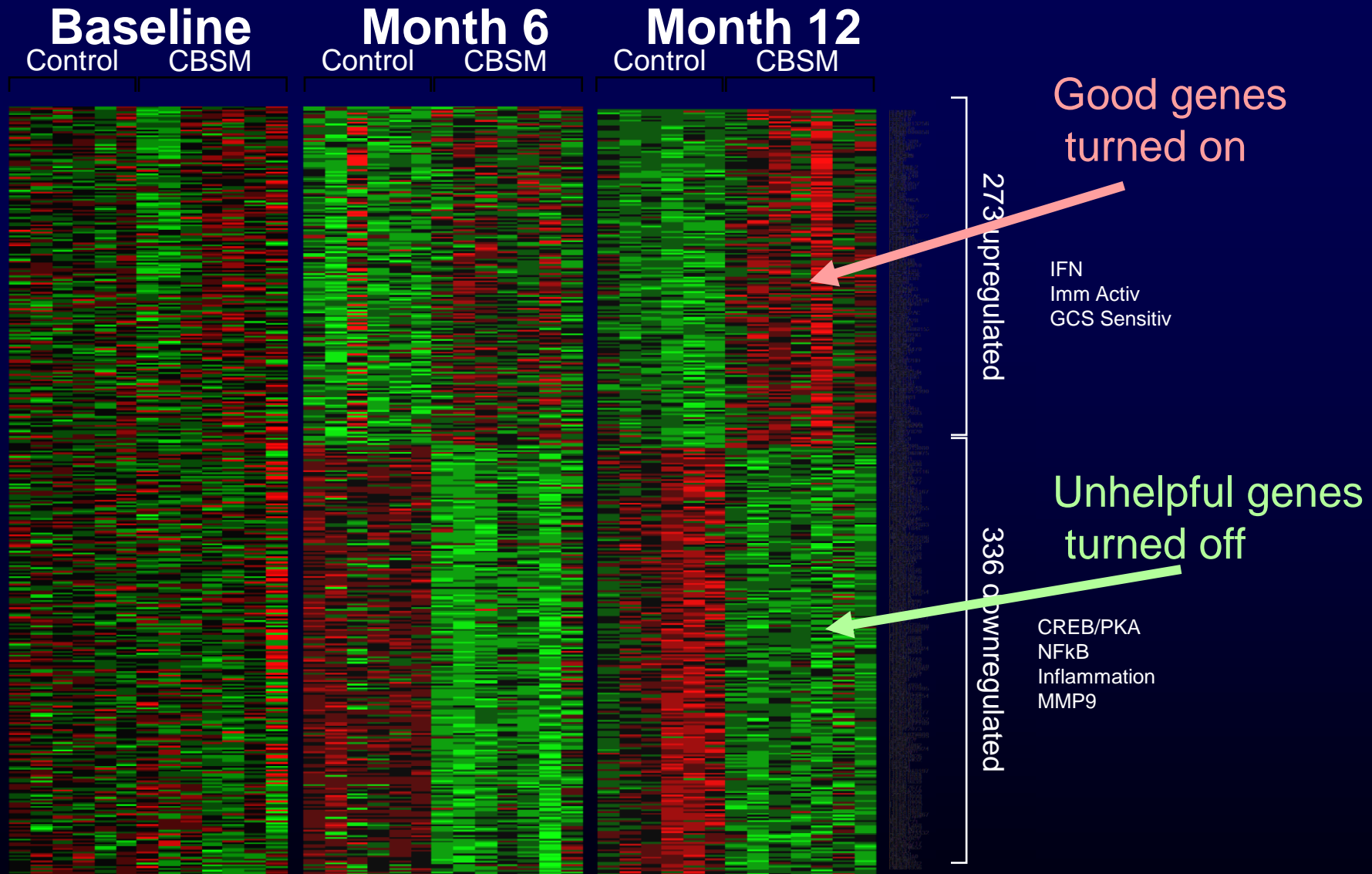
Anderson et al., 2002 *J Consult Clin Psychol*

Cognitive Behavioral Stress Management And Relaxation Training (SMART)

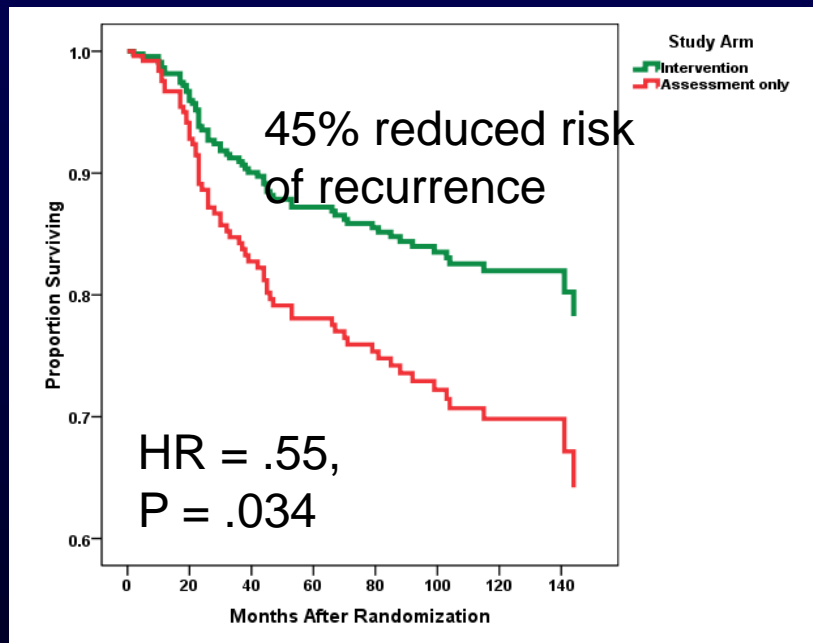
- Stress management, coping ect.
- Social support
- Relaxation training
- Met weekly for 10 weeks
- 240 Stage 0-3b breast cancer

Antoni et al., 2001 *Health Psychology*

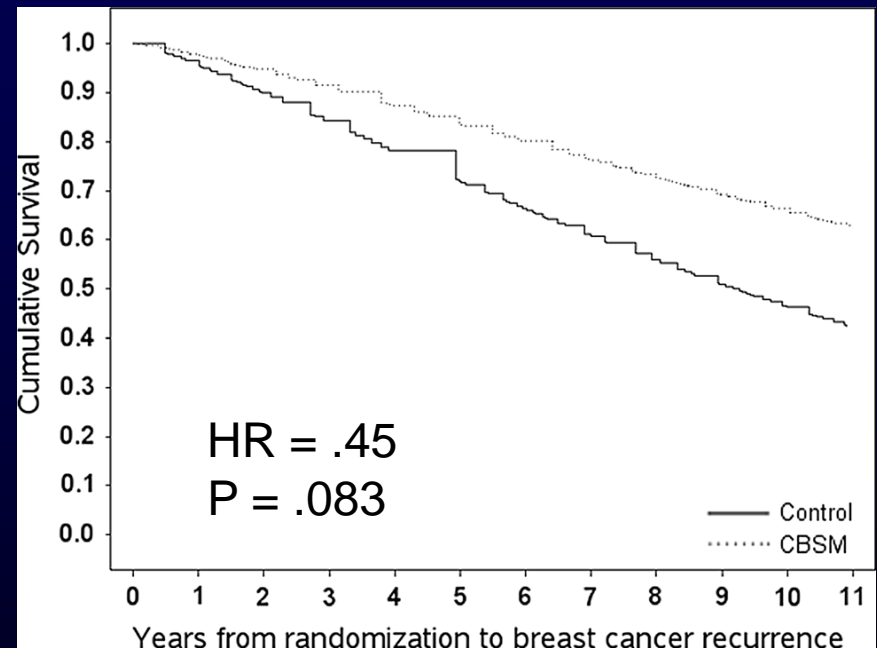
CBSM associated w changes in gene expression



Reduced Risk of Breast Cancer Recurrence

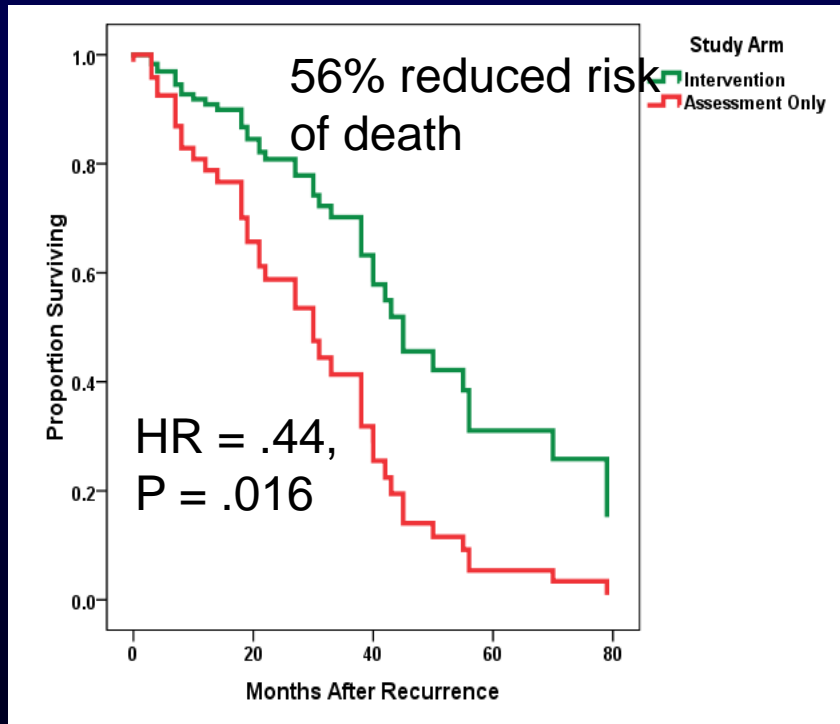


Andersen et. al, (2008) *Cancer*

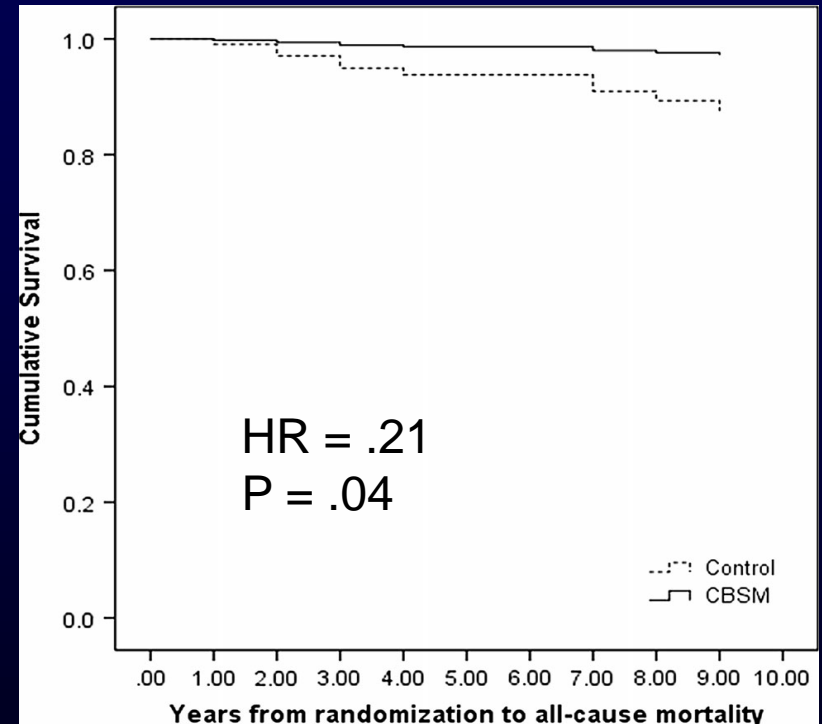


Stagl et. al, (2015) *Br Ca Res and Trtmnt*

Reduced Risk of Death



Andersen et. al, *Cancer*, 2008



Stagl et. al, (2015) *Br Ca Res and Trtmnt*

Does anyone want to learn a few stress management and coping techniques?



How stressed are you right now?



0

10

Take a deep breath...

How stressed are you right now?



0

10

What is stress?

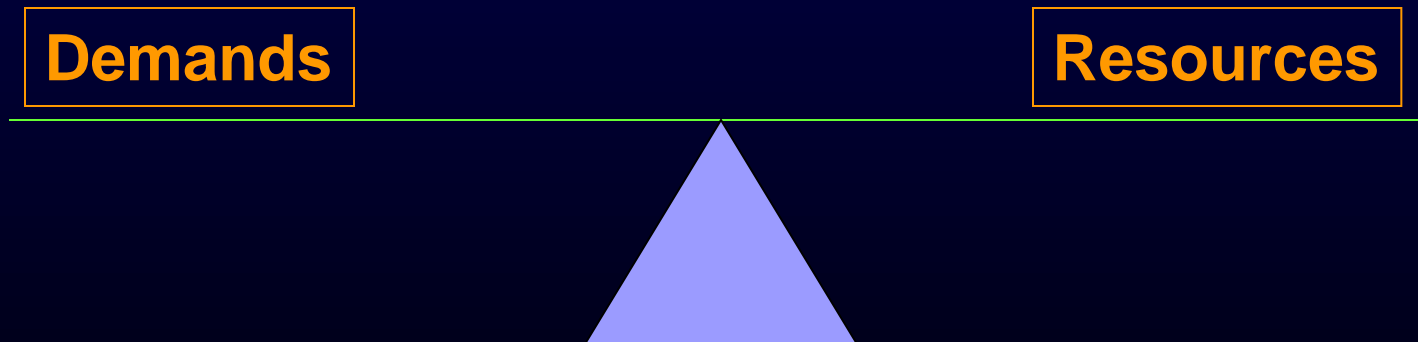
What is stress?

The physical, mental, or emotional tension experienced in reaction to an event.



What is stress?

- Typically experienced when we perceive demands exceeding our resources



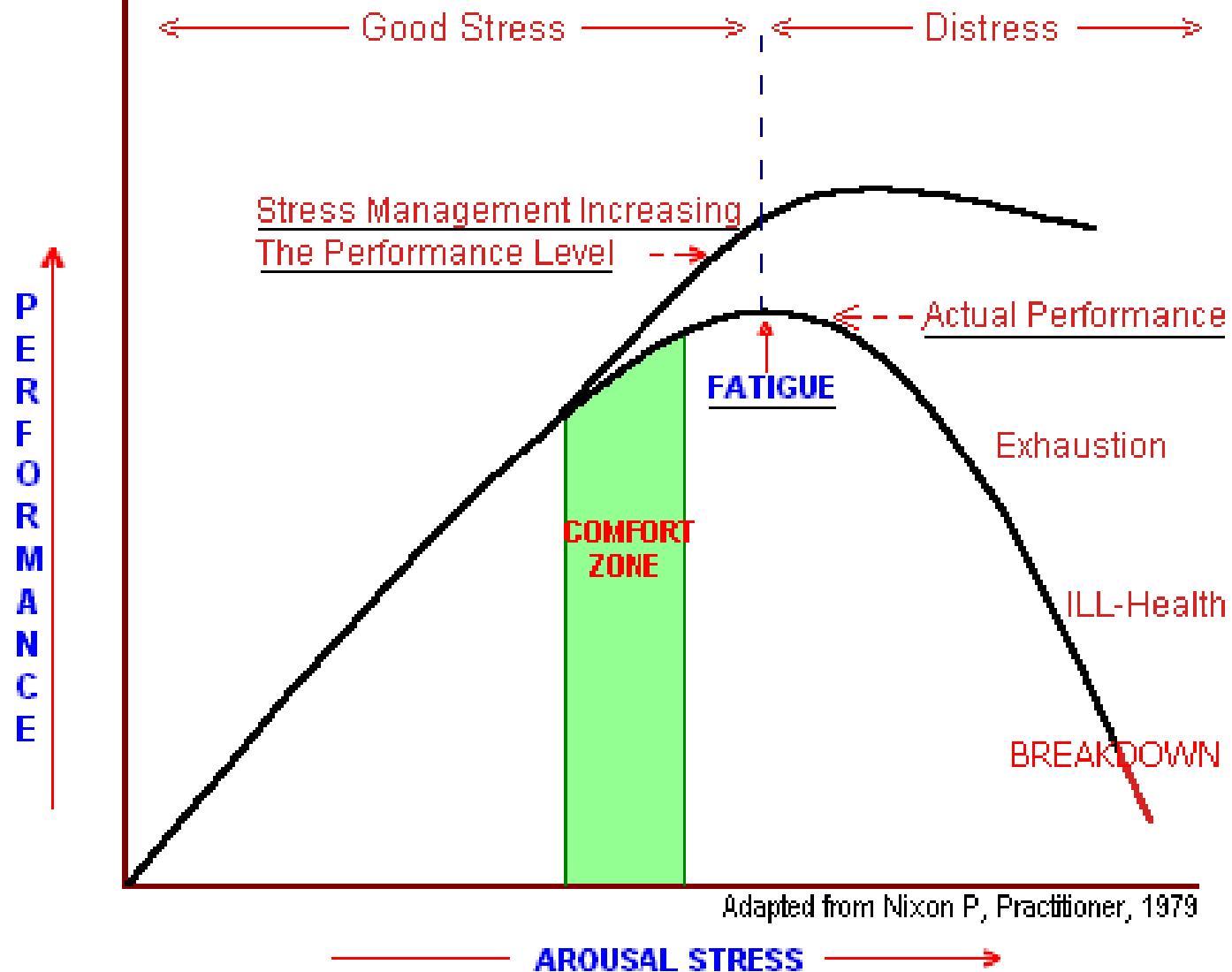
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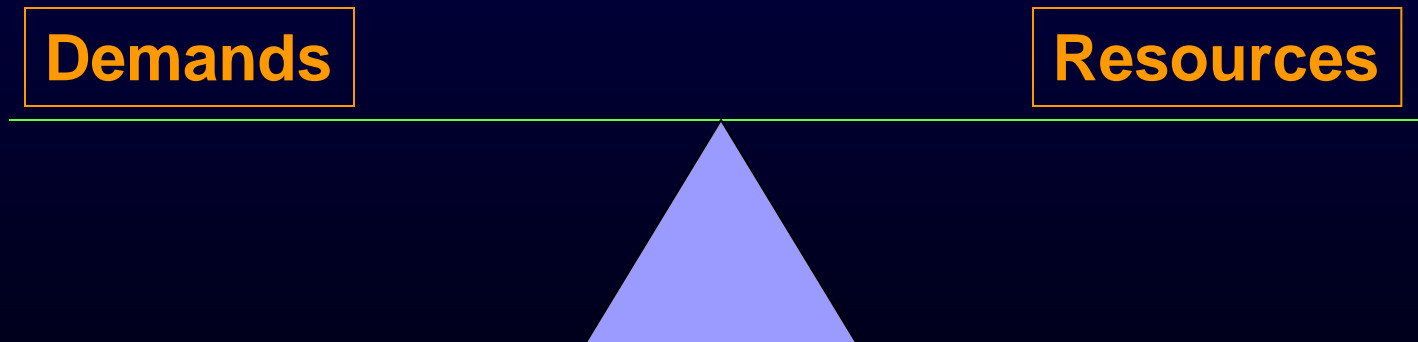


THE STRESS RESPONSE CURVE



How can we manage stress?

- Decrease perceived demands
- Increase perceived resources



How can we manage stress?

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search ID: mbcn2543

"Try these relaxation methods. If they don't work, I'll prescribe a tranquilizer dart."

step 1. Increase Awareness:



How do you know when you are stressed?

Symptoms of stress

Hostility

Resentment

Headaches

Backaches

Ulcers

Muscle Spasms

Sleeping Difficulties

Depression

Drinking/Drug Use

Irritability

Fears

Neck Aches

Anger

Irritable Bowel

Muscle Tension

Indigestion

Constipation

Poor Concentration

Obesity

Low Self Esteem

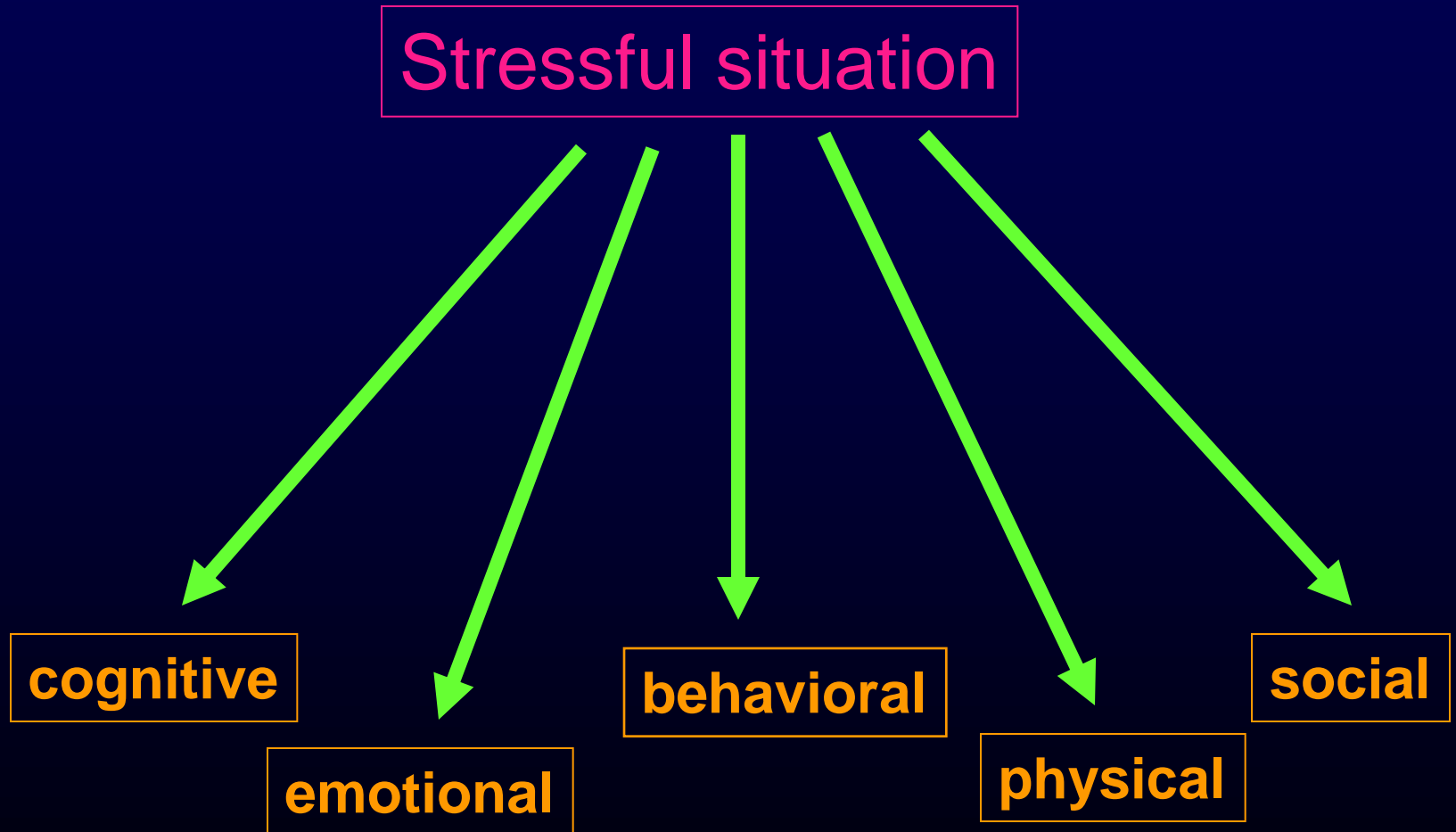
Chronic Diarrhea

Insomnia

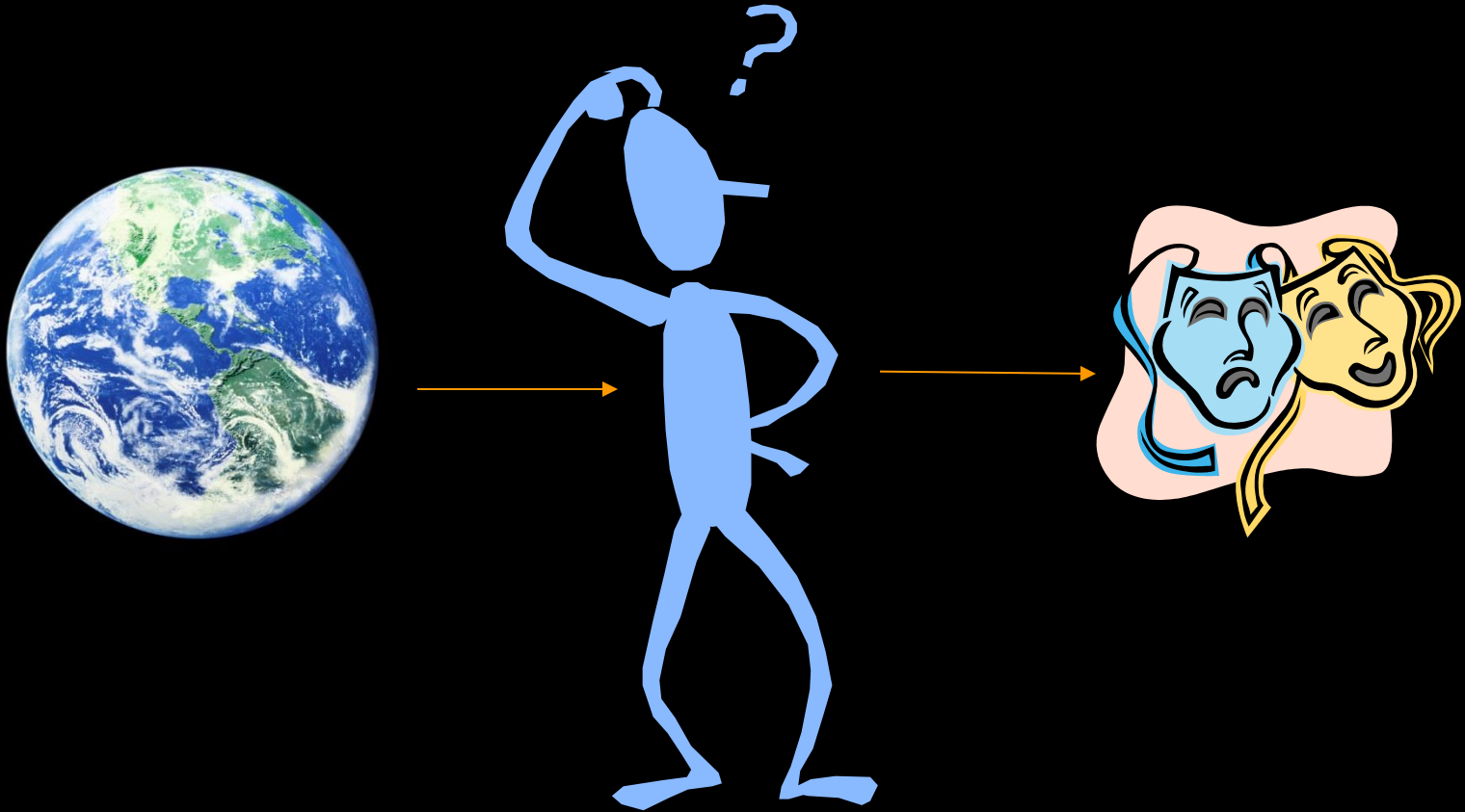
Physical Weakness

Withdrawal

Symptoms of stress

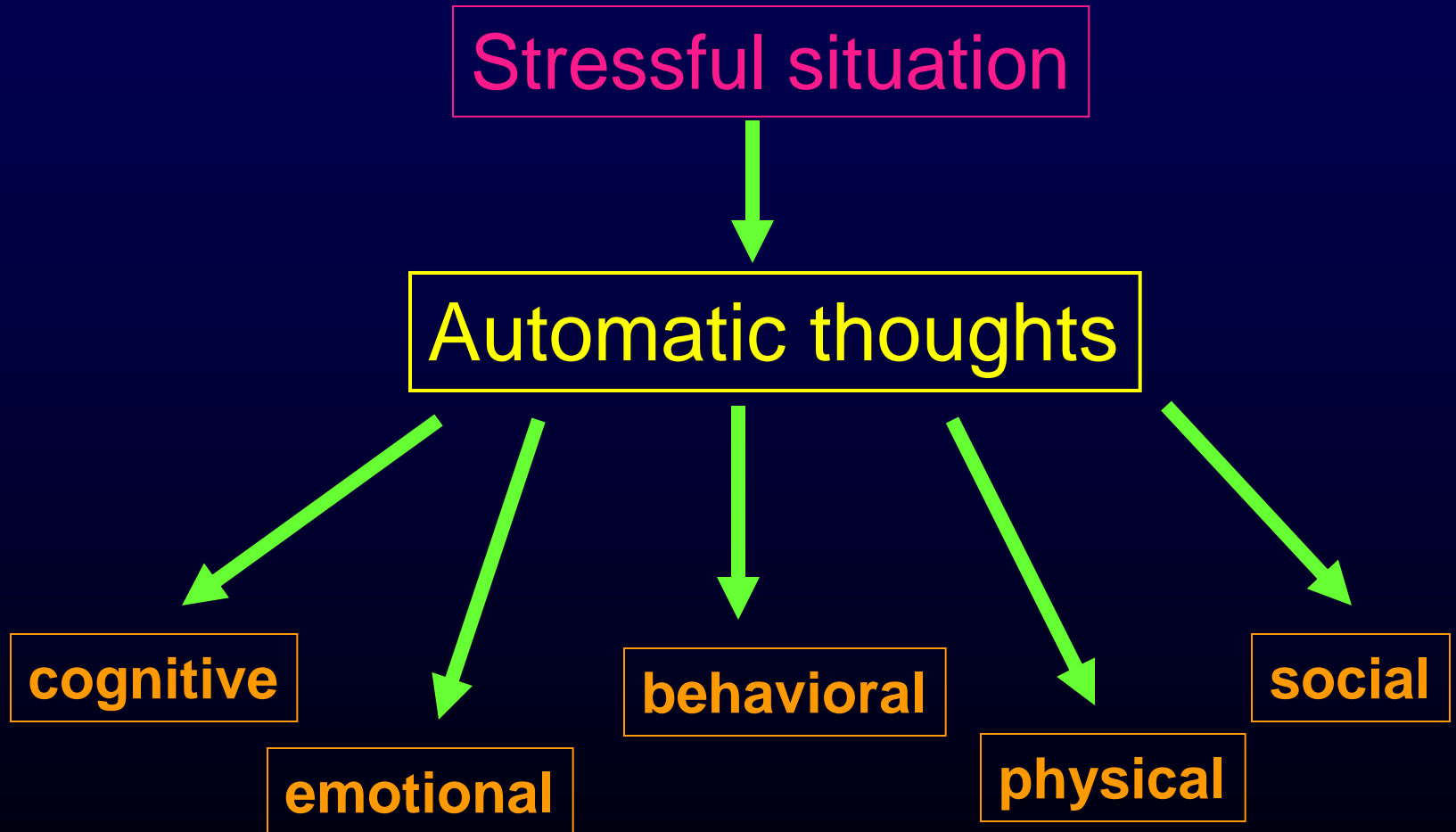


Thoughts determine feelings

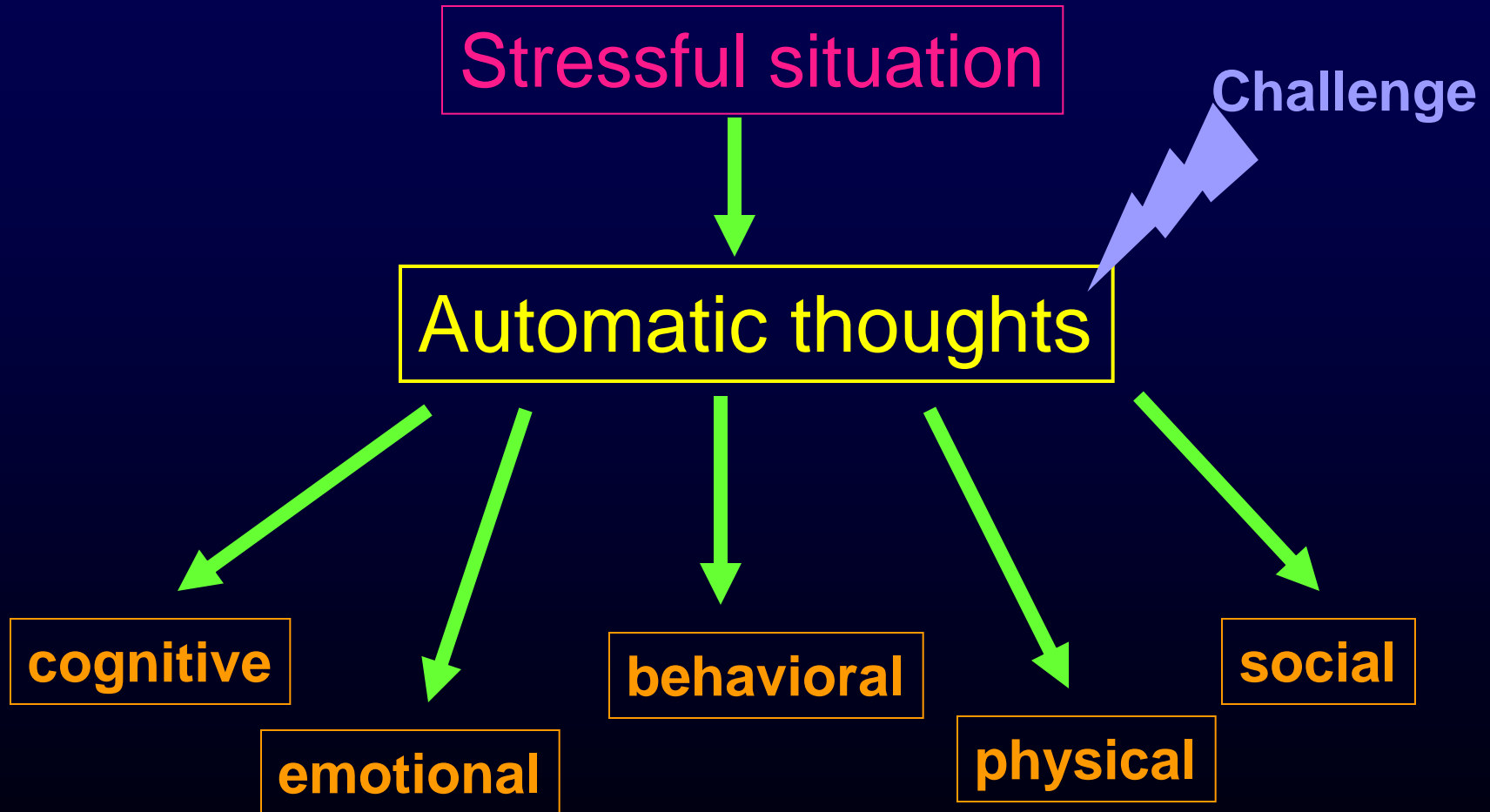


Imagine a lemon

Symptoms of stress



Symptoms of stress



Step 3: Coping with stress

- Problem focused coping
 - Ask for help
 - Get more information
- Emotion focused coping
 - Talk to a friend
 - Relaxation practice



Coping with stress

- Exercise
- Yoga
- Social support
- Meditation



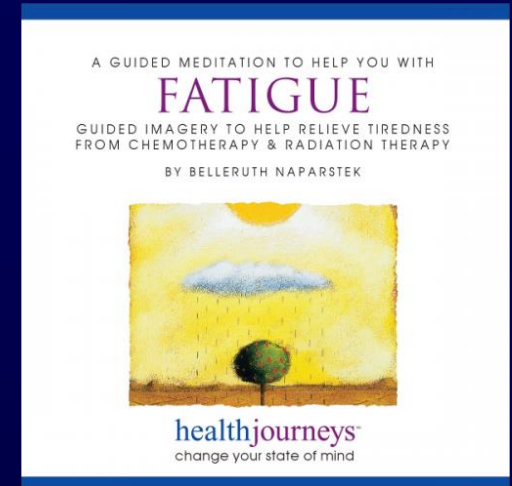
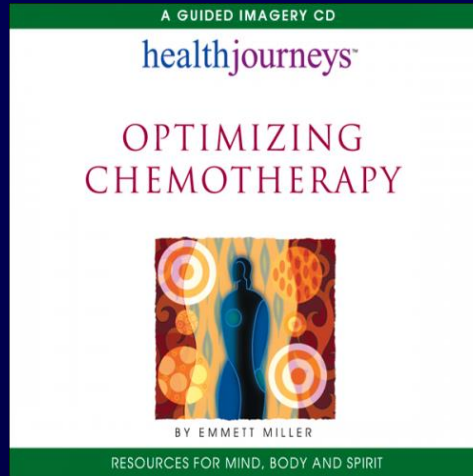
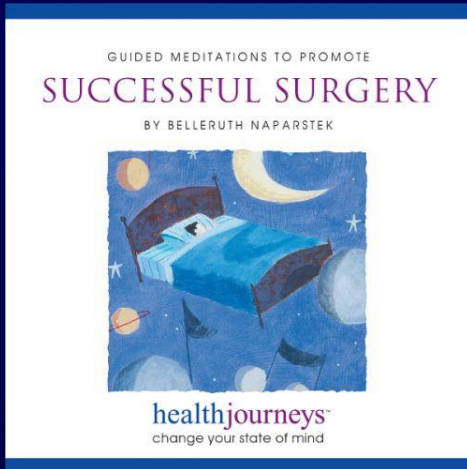
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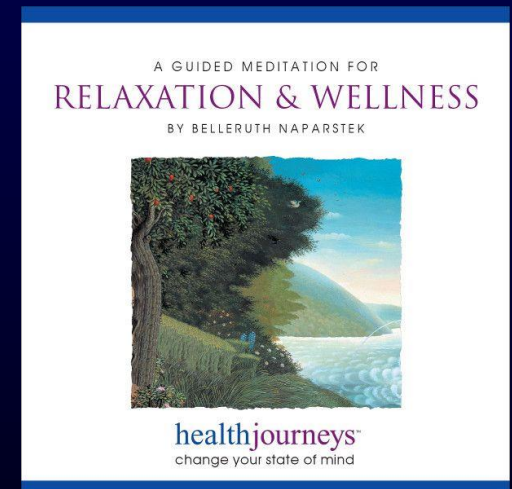
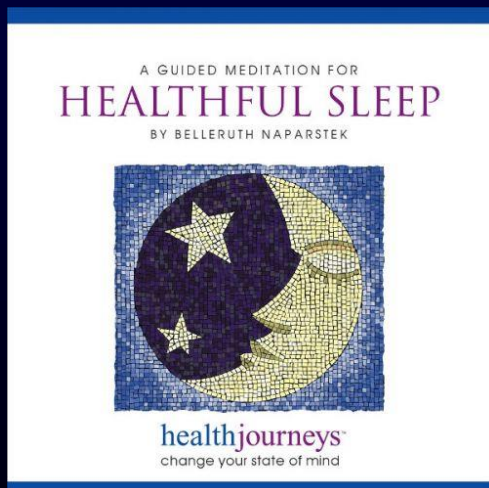
"THAT'S PART OF OUR IN-HOUSE, STRESS MANAGEMENT
PROGRAM..."

Mindfulness and Stress

- Staying present in the moment reduces stress
- Living in the past or future brings the past and future demands into the present – adding to your perception of stress in this moment
- Planning is good, but when you plan, just plan, then execute your plan moment by moment.
- Multi-tasking is less efficient than doing one thing at a time



Guided Imagery can help




<https://www.healthjourneys.com>

What are we doing now...


LivingWell

https://livingwell.northwestern.edu

Welcome, Jane [Sign Out](#)




The logo features a stylized flower-like icon with five petals in blue, green, yellow, and red, followed by the text "Living WELL" in a blue sans-serif font.




A photograph of an elderly woman with short grey hair, wearing a light green jacket and white pants, sitting cross-legged on a white blanket in a field of yellow autumn leaves. She is smiling and looking to her right.

DAILY RELAXATION




A photograph of a white ceramic cup of coffee on a saucer, next to a spiral-bound notebook and a pen on a wooden surface.

DAILY REFLECTION



A photograph of a stack of seven smooth, light-colored stones balanced on a rocky shore, with a body of water and a blue sky in the background.

WEEKLY OVERVIEW



A graphic of a sphere split vertically into two halves, with the left half being blue and the right half being green.

WEBEX SESSION



Sign Out



1. STRESS



2. AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS



3. RATIONAL THOUGHT



4. ACT



5. COPING



6. SOCIAL SUPPORT



7. COMMUNICATION



8. ANGER



9. LIFE GOALS



10. WRAP UP

“Germaine seemed that evening to have captured something essential about our struggle against cancer: that to keep pace with this malady, you need to keep inventing and reinventing, learning and unlearning strategies.”

“The cancer cell is evolving. And so are we.”

Siddhartha Mukherjee, *The Emperor of all Maladies*



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We can help you cope!

- CBSM groups
- Psychotherapy
- Acupuncture
- Nutrition
- Oncology massage



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