

Tactics for maintaining Mental Fitness during the COVID-19 Pandemic: Insulating for Anxiety

Dr. Bill Howatt

President, Howatt HR
Chief Research Workforce Productivity,
Conference Board of Canada

Jesse Adams, MSc

Chief Learning Officer, Howatt HR



Agenda

1

Refresher: Charging our Battery

2

Micro-skill of the Day: Insulating for Anxiety

3

Actions for today

1

Refresher: Charging our Battery

2

Micro-skill of the Day: Insulating for Anxiety

3

Actions for today



Recall, we are like batteries and each day we may start at a different level of charge

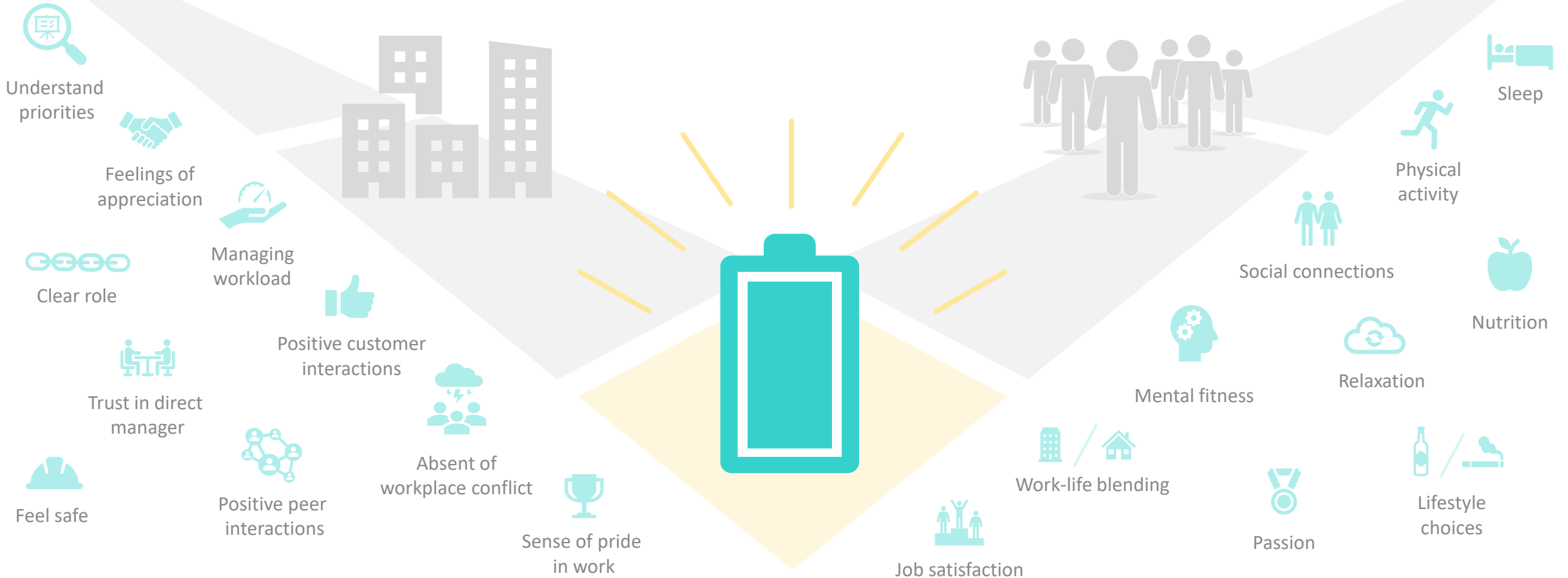


Resilience is built through joint responsibility

Employer Actions

+

Employee Actions

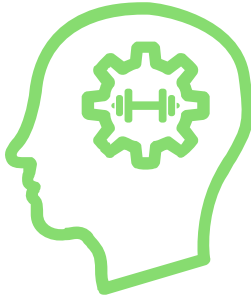


Maintaining Mental Fitness: Micro-skills

- Micro-skills are small behaviours or cognitive skills you can add to your life to support mental fitness
- They are skills that can be applied to all areas of your life:
 - Physical
 - Mental health
 - Personal life
 - Work experience



Trevor's Mental Fitness Plan



	Mental Fitness	Physical Health	Social Connection
Daily	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plan my day/week Develop to do lists and celebrate achievements Family Check ins 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk / run with family Cook healthy meals Physiotherapy at home 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly Zoom dinner with family Scheduled family events (Games, movies, etc.)
When needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make time for myself Incorporate Gratitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Get up and do something 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purposefully reaching out to friends to catch up

1

Refresher: Charging our Battery

2

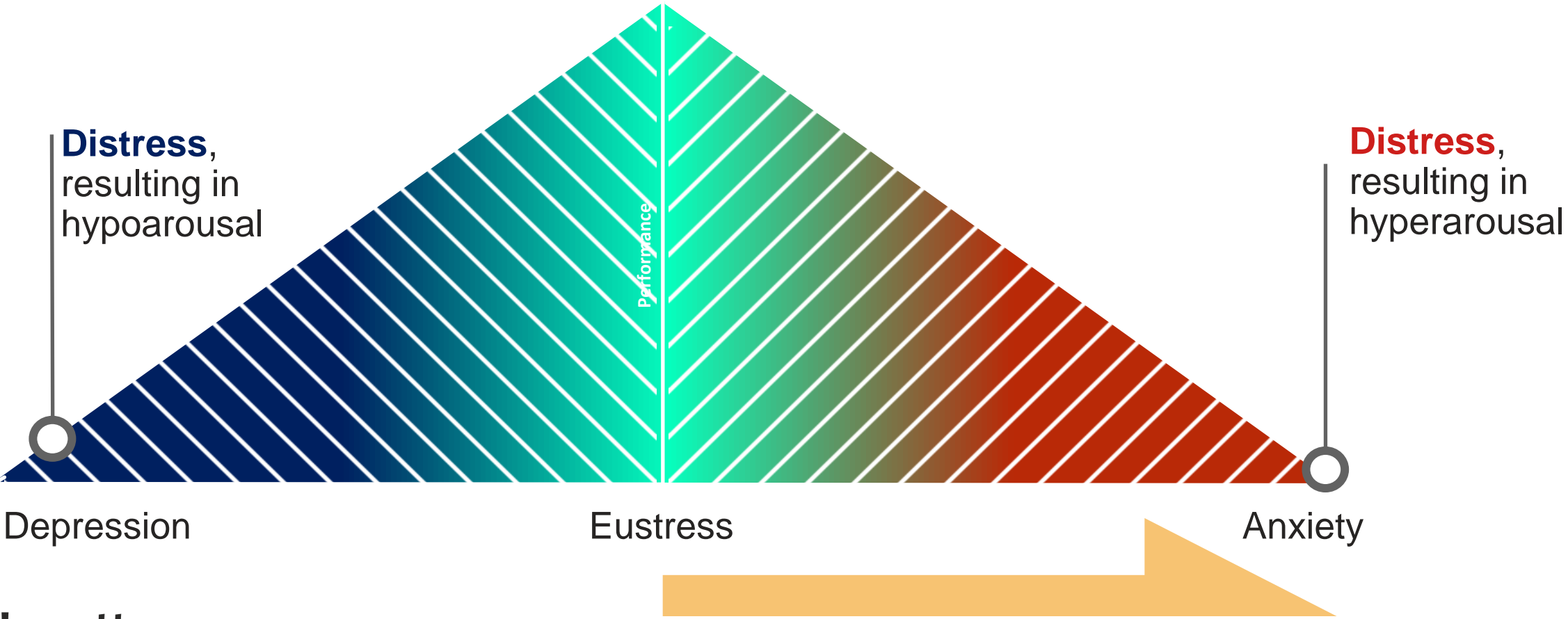
Micro-skill of the Day: Insulating for Anxiety

3

Actions for today

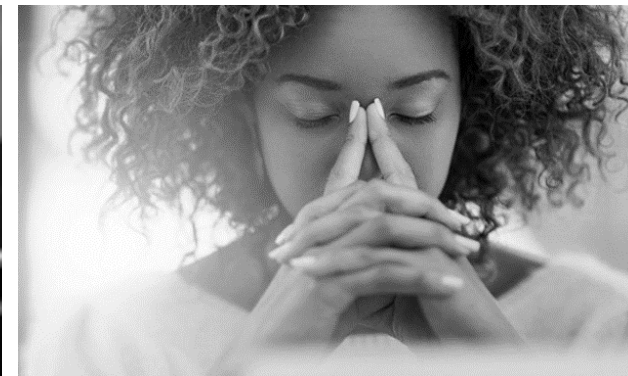
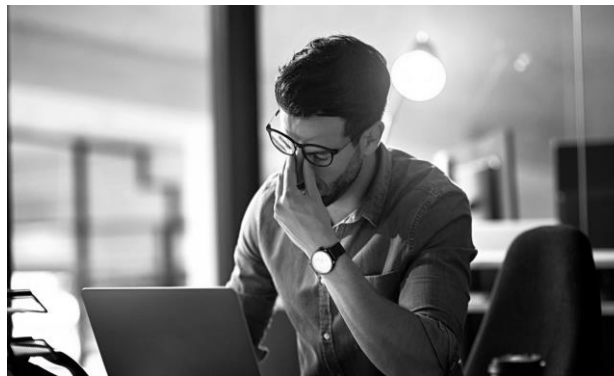
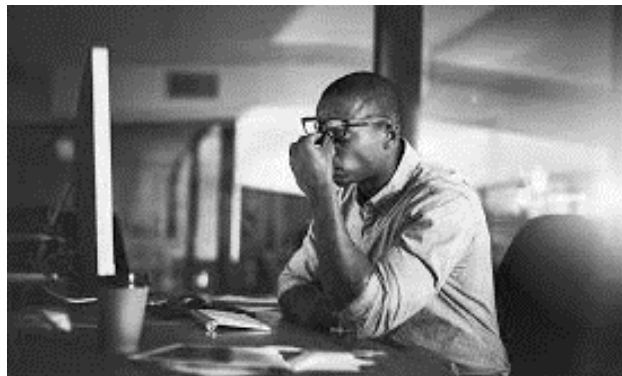


When our conscious and unconscious move into hyperarousal



Why do we move into hyperarousal and develop anxiety

- Throughout the day the average human has 30-45 thoughts per minute
- This is 40,000 - 60,000 thoughts per day
- The majority of these thoughts happen unconsciously



What happens in our brain to promote feelings of anxiety

Stimulus



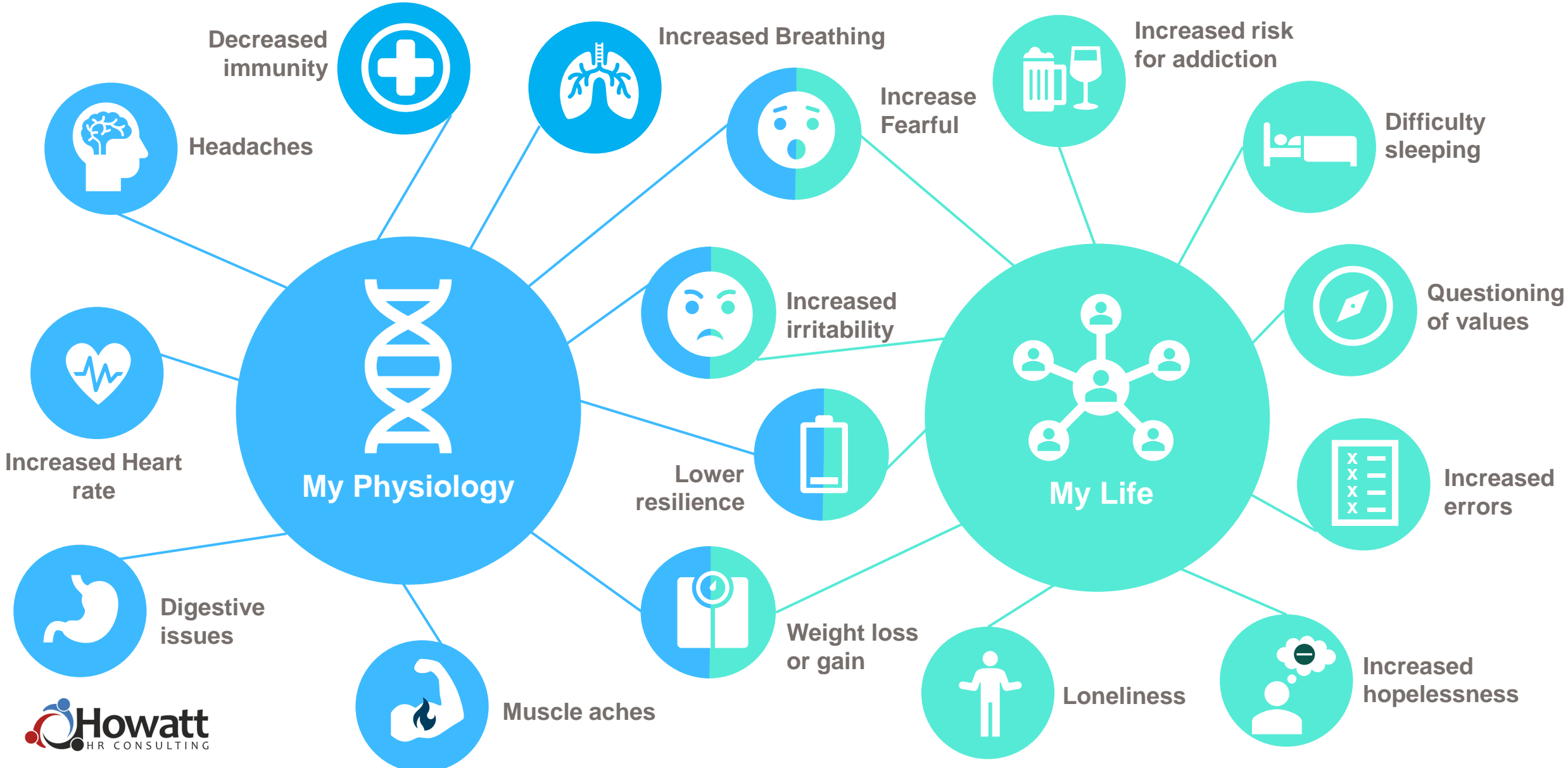
Processing



Response



What happens when we are caught in an anxious loop?



1

Refresher: Charging our Battery

2

Micro-skill of the Day: Insulating for Anxiety

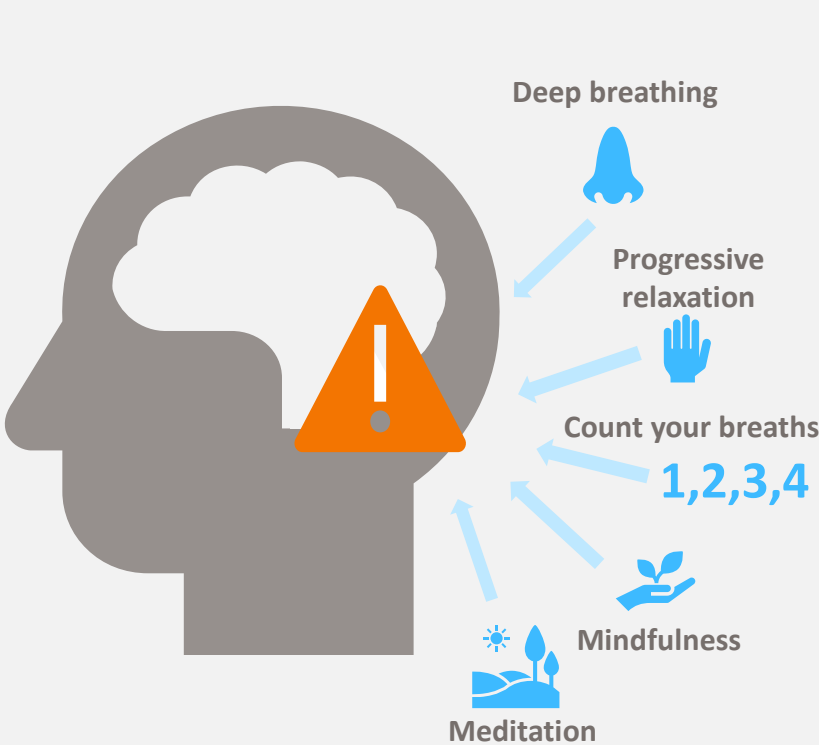
3

Actions for today

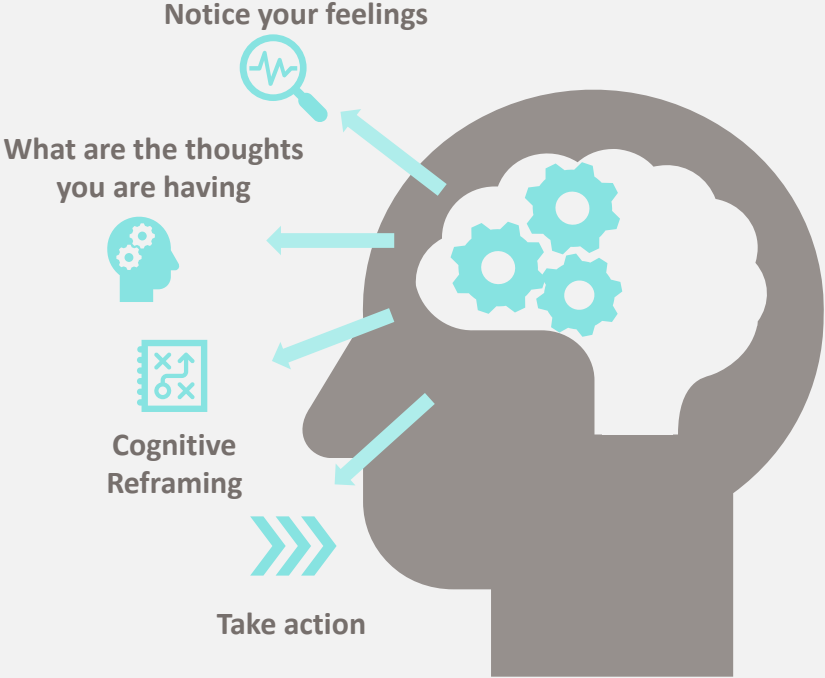


Stopping an anxious loop

Work on your amygdala



Engage your administrator



Know your resources



Additional micro-skills to engage your administrator brain



Notice and **Name**
your feelings



Journal



Talk to a
trusted friend



Ask 5 times...
**“What else could
this mean?”**

Reflection for today

- What situations create anxiety for you?
- What are the feelings and thoughts that come up when you feel anxious?
- How do you do to break your anxious loop?
- Share your reflection on social media using the hashtag:
 - #MYMF
 - #MYMFPLAN
 - #MFSTRONG

Additional Tools:

[Counting Breaths Guide](#)

[My Personal Success Coach \(Chapter 4\)](#)

[Anxiety Quick screen](#)



Next Weeks Webinar

- When: Tuesday April 28, 2020
- What time: 12 pm est
- How to find it: www.maintainingmentalfitness.com
- Micro-skill: Contagion vs. Inciting



Question Period

www.maintainingmentalfitness.com

Sponsored by



ALBERTA URBAN MUNICIPALITIES ASSOCIATION

