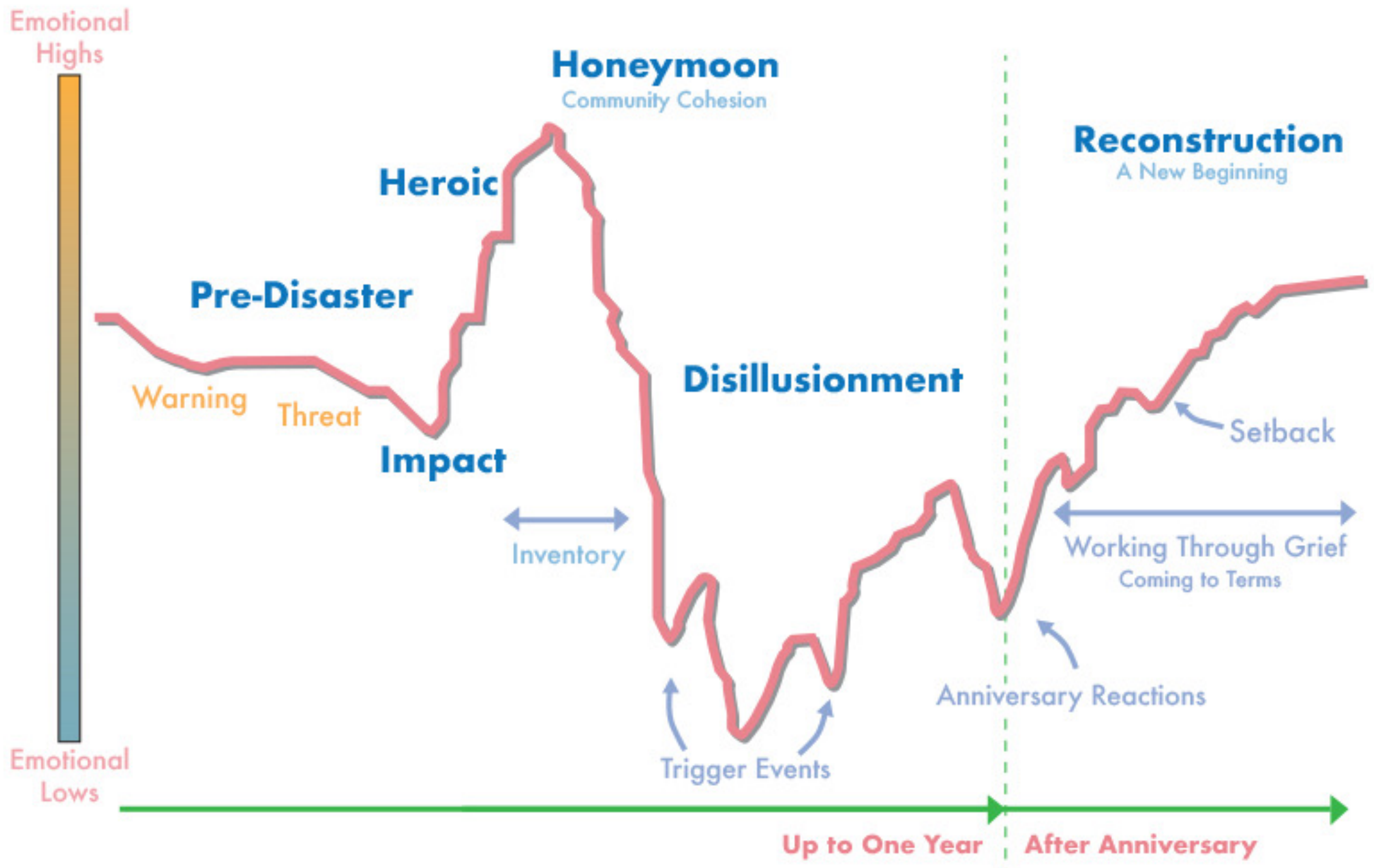




BEHAVIORAL HEALTH RECOVERY FROM COVID 19

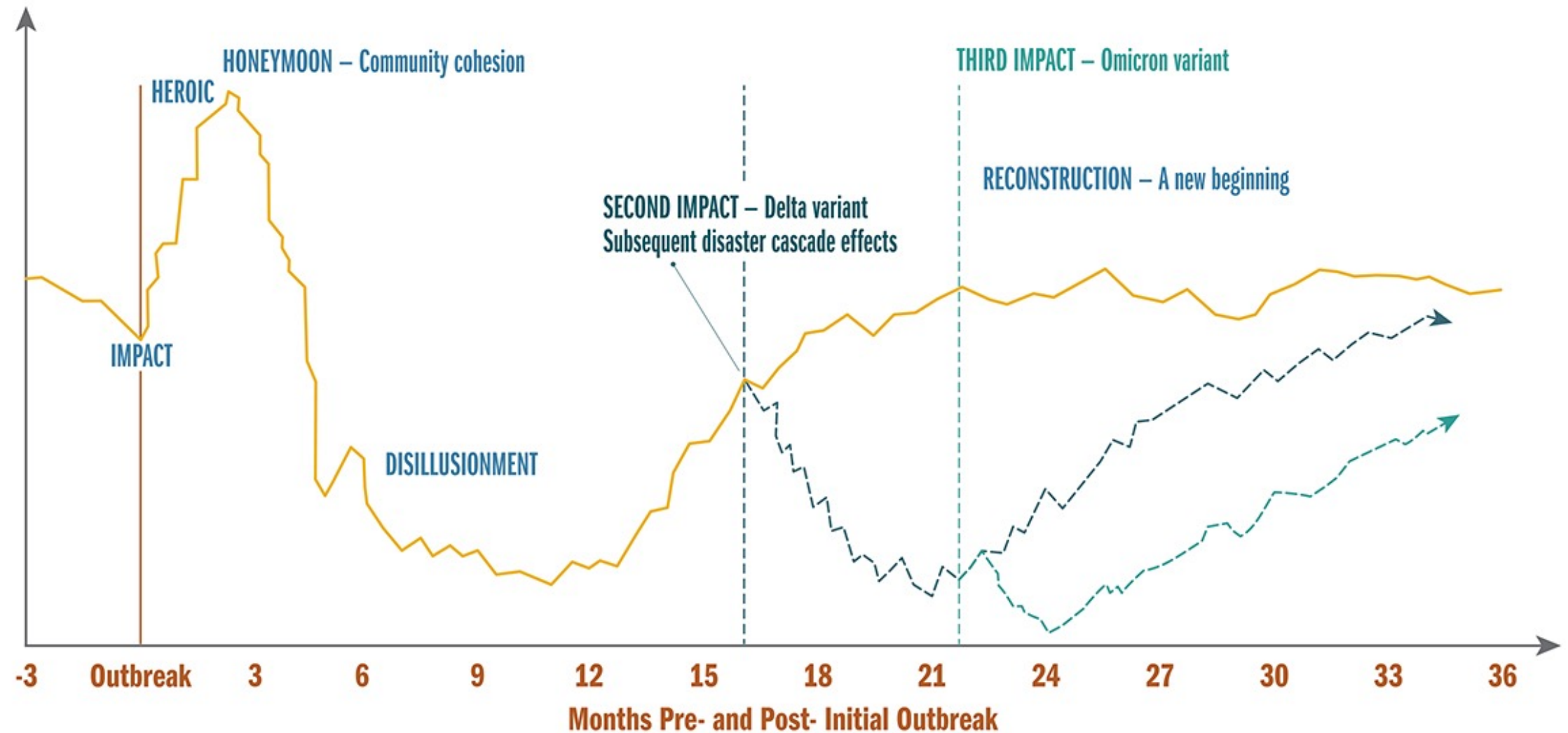
Workplace Trends, Resources, and Strategies (8th Gen)

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Co-Lead, Behavioral Health Strike Team



Reactions and Behavioral Health Symptoms in Disasters – COVID-19

Emotional Response – Lows to Highs



Our (complicated) relationship with time

- The experiences of the pandemic have influenced our collective perception of time.
- Our sense of time does not have its own receptors:
 - Input is needed from sight, touch, taste, smell and sound to influence our perception of how much time has passed.
- “Stronger is perceived as Longer”: the more intense something is, the longer it seems like it lasts.
- We need physical markers from our environment to accurately track time (which may explain in part why 2020 felt -and was- so strange).
 - Re-claiming, prioritizing, and controlling our time is a REALLY important part of our recovery: Eg. Boundaries, Sleep, Relationships

The neuroscience of response and recovery

Prefrontal cortex:

higher-level functioning, planning, organization, details, filtering.

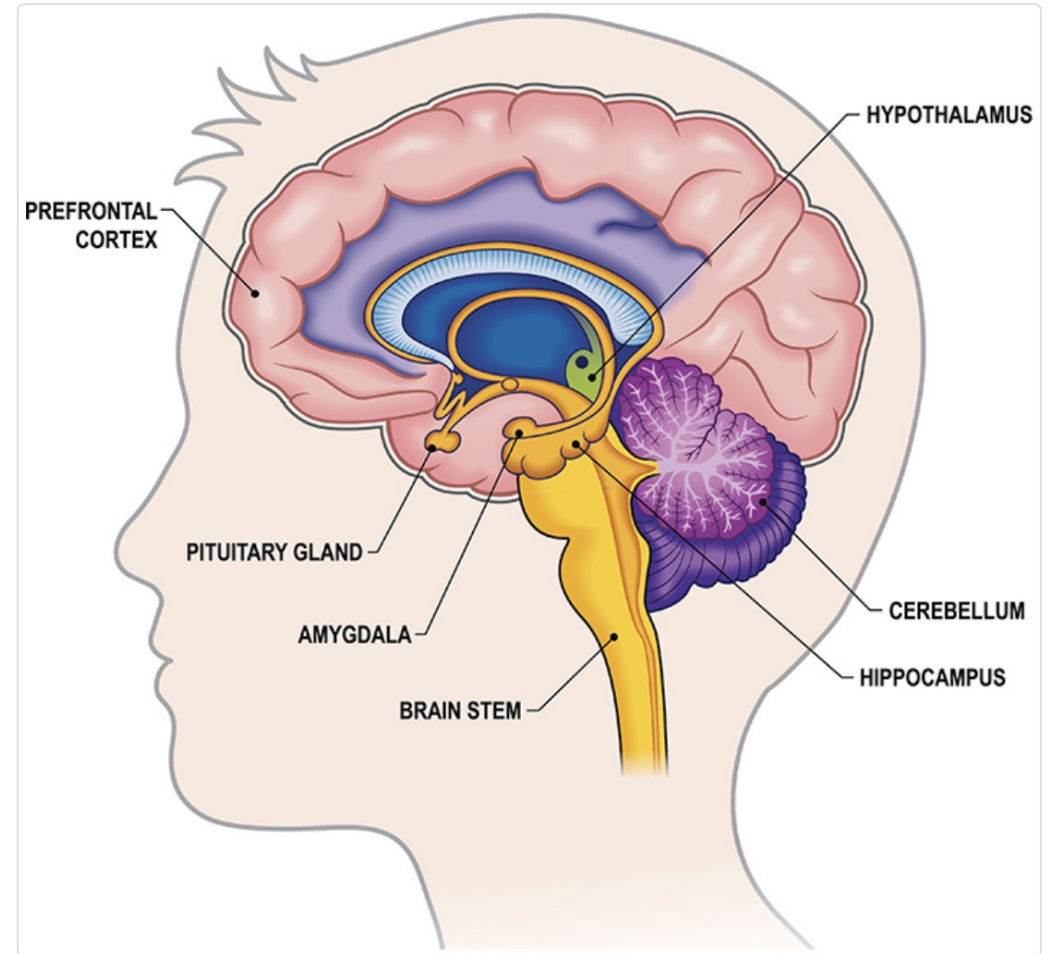
Limbic system:

emotion, impulse, pleasure and safety, memory, defense, protection (fight, flight or freeze)

Structures of note:

Amygdala & Hippocampus, both parts of the limbic system.

We are all still (at least slightly more) activated.



<https://www.simplypsychology.org/limbic-system.html>

Transitioning to and from “Emergency Mode”

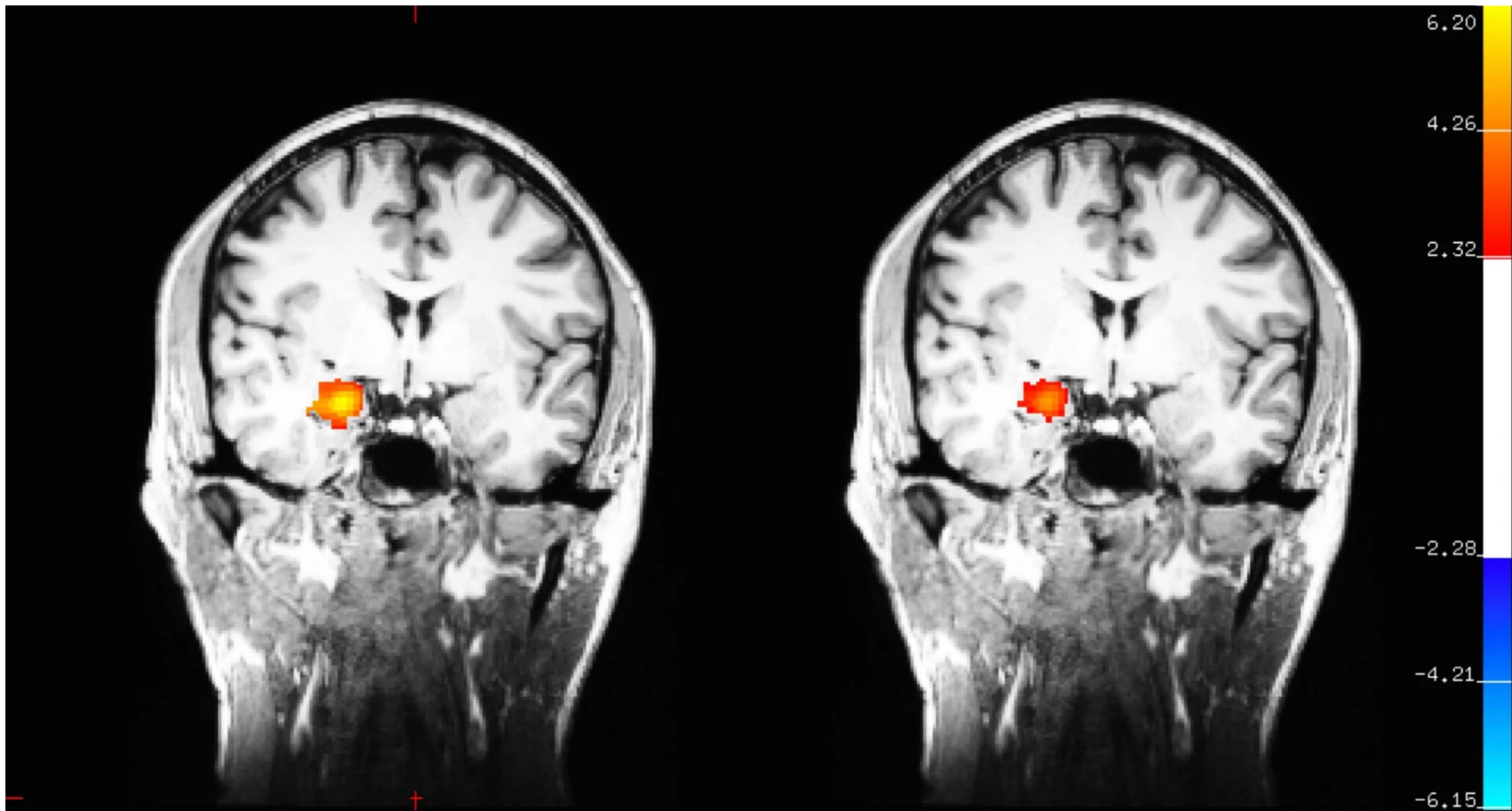
- The brain and body need an opportunity to let down on the ‘threat scanning’ and be more accurately tuned in to day-to-day ups and downs.
- ADDICTION TO THE EMERGENCY (or more aptly, the neurotransmitter release associated with intensity) IS A REAL NEUROLOGICAL THING.
- Key physiology: Dopamine, Adrenaline / Epinephrine / Norepinephrine / Cortisol

IDEAS:

- Slow down and evaluate the criticality of a task or a job before you start to do it. Does it need to be done “RIGHT NOW” or can it realistically wait or be prioritized behind other things.
 - Establish a practice of this evaluation for any new task / ask.

The benefits of orienting to “right now”

- Taking part of your day to ‘tune in’ to the present moment (mindfulness, deep breathing, meditation) is related to decreases in anxiety and depression as seen in fMRIs (see next slide).
- Being oriented about right now reminds us that we are not currently under ‘threat’.
- Mindfulness can improve cognitive functioning and emotion regulation for people who are experiencing grief and bereavement.
- *** Mindfulness and meditation as practices are not “one size fits all”, and they can be triggering for some people.
 - <https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2018/04/harvard-researchers-study-how-mindfulness-may-change-the-brain-in-depressed-patients/>
 - <https://askthescientists.com/brain-meditation/>
 - <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fnhum.2018.00541/full>



Functional MRI (left) showing activation in the amygdala when participants were watching images with emotional content before learning meditation. After eight weeks of training in mindful attention meditation (right) note the amygdala is less activated after the meditation training. Courtesy of Gaëlle Desbordes

We “have all the time there is”

- How can you prioritize what you do in a 24-hour cycle differently?
 - SMALL things?
 - Sleep cycle and sleep hygiene
- How can you establish, and then maintain, healthier boundaries around the way you spend your time? (hint: you need time when work is not accessible).

Q: what would be different if your colleagues could see you handle pressure in a healthier way?

- Two variables (out of many) that have been shown to predict the variance in leaders' capacity to manage pressure well:
 - Sense of Purpose, Sense of Potential (when up against roadblocks)

Key Issues for the current time



Young Children (2-5)

- Developmental regression (and delay) for some
- Social interaction
- Communication & behavior norms



Children 6-12

- Emotion & behavior regulation
- Social / peer difficulties with connection
- Academic challenges



Youth 13-18

- Social norms are hard to figure out
- Sense of future may be inaccurate
- Sense of threat is neurologically stronger

Key Issues



Young Adults 19-25

- Concerns about medium term future and realistic opportunities
- In-group support vs. out-group (other generational) rejection / judgement



Adults 26-65

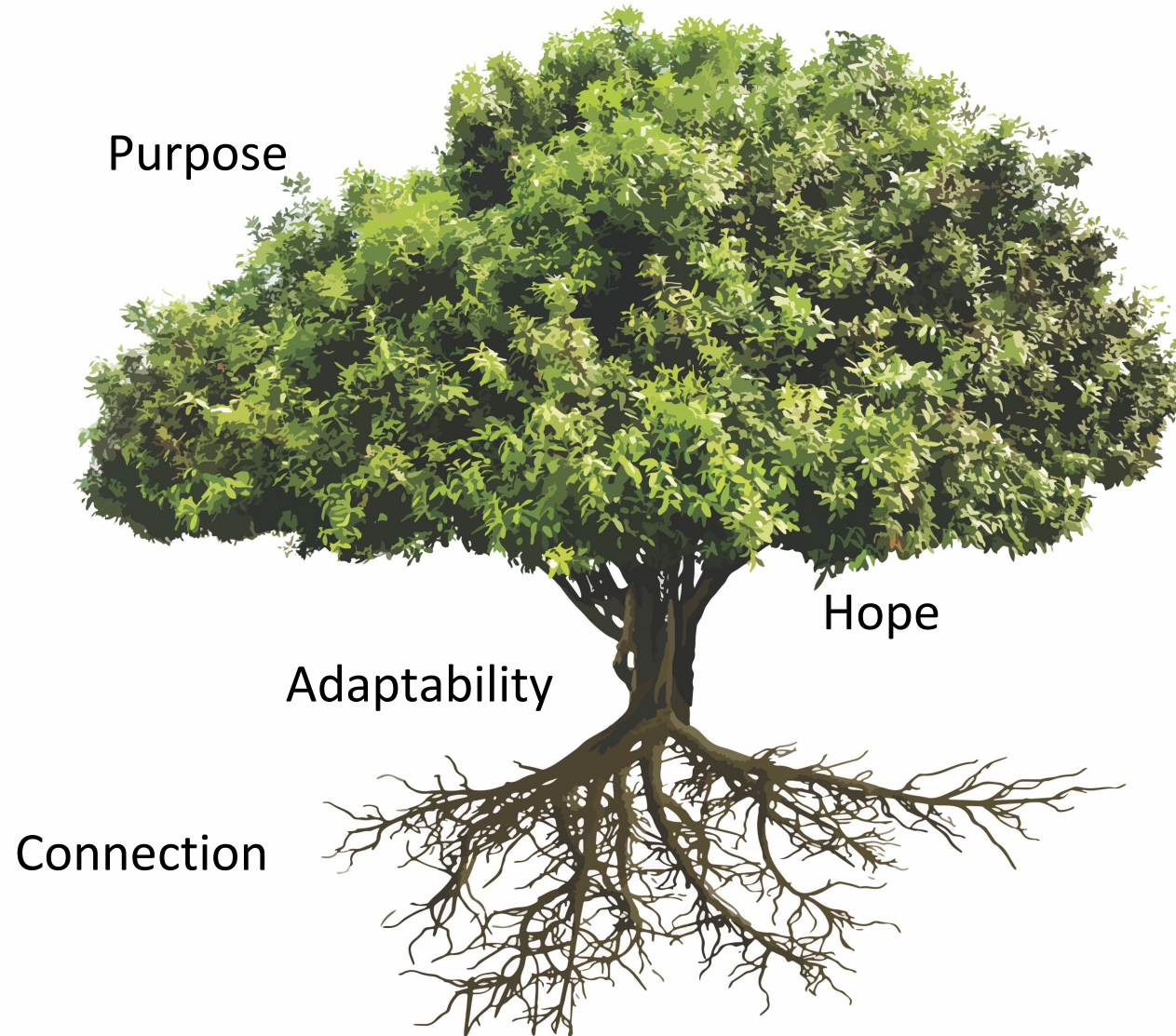
- Financial pressure
- Lost relationships (grieving people who may be still alive)
- General sense of disorganization/ feeling unsettled
- Brain Fog



Older adults 65+

- Social connections (with family, friends).
- Meaning making in current work or post-retirement
- Peers / friends deteriorating or loss of health

Resilience



Active Listening



Clarify

Ask open ended questions



Reflect

Summarize what you think you heard



Express Empathy

Listen with the intent to Understand and Care, **not** **problem solve**

Key issues in long-term organizational revitalization

- Content vs. process
 - When establishing the new work tasks, focus on processes (when content often remains unknown)
 - **Let the HOW guide the WHAT: How** do you want to feel about the choices and steps you are making, rather than starting with **what** you want to do?
- Managing unknowns, associated fears – what are ways that all team members can contribute to this as part of a healthy process?
 - Return to workplace (excitement vs. anxiety)
 - Fear-related behaviors (resource hoarding)
- Maintaining effective communication
 - Zones of regulation (you and others)
 - Active listening

THRIVE[©]

with a
focus on...

Transparency

Healthy engagement

Respect

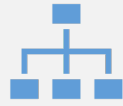
Integration

Values & Vision

Effort

THRIVE © with a focus on

Transparency



Modeling desired behaviors engages ‘Social Learning Theory’, the process by which much of human behavior is learned.



Leaders, managers and supervisors are in a unique position to influence large-scale individual and cultural change



WALK the TALK
(don’t just talk about boundaries)



Transparency includes not-so-good news too, as well as coping strategies and struggles

THRIVE © with a focus on

Healthy engagement

HEALTH AND WELLBEING / WELLNESS IS 'MISSION CRITICAL',
NOT OPTIONAL



MODELING HEALTHY BOUNDARIES FOR EACH OTHER IS
CRITICAL TO REDUCTION OF BURNOUT



TAKING CARE OF YOURSELF ALLOWS YOU TO FULLY
ENGAGE WHEN YOU ARE "ON"

Respect for people

- Individual differences, needs, and contributions
- Perspectives and voices
- Lived experiences
- Priorities

THRIVE[©] with a focus on **Integration**

*Integration is **the act of bringing together smaller components into a single system that functions as one.***

- Team cohesion is related to positive mental health outcomes
- Cohesion among Thoughts, Feelings, Behaviors is also related to favorable mental health experiences
- Developing connection amongst team members increases respect and good communication.

THRIVE[©] with a focus on
Values & Vision

- Consider completing an exercise in core value identification.
- Decide on one or two core values that you can develop or operationalize in a workplace setting.
 - What are the opportunities and challenges around implementing this?
- Orientation towards core values (as an individual) and mission (as a team) makes decisions, actions and changes ***easier and often more successful.***

THRIVE[©] with a focus on

Effort

- Ask your colleagues about their preferred “language of appreciation”
 - (think 5 love languages, but workplace appropriate)
- Include kudos, recognition, celebration, and accomplishments EARLY in the agenda for regular team meetings
- Acknowledge the degree of effort that is being made on works in progress.



Empowerment in long-term recovery



Personal level

- Active Coping Skills
- Sleep hygiene
- Core Values orientation
- Focus on the “how” rather than the “what”
- Personal coping plan



Professional Level

- Practice (and model) healthy boundaries
- Transparency (workplace appropriate) around behavioral health
- Attend to success, wins, and gratitude



Social / Cultural level

- Express appreciation for the work, and effort of others
- Practice in public the things that you want to see improved
- Develop and maintain healthy connections

Resources for Behavioral Health and Crisis Support

<https://doh.wa.gov/emergencies/covid-19/healthcare-providers/behavioral-health-resources>

[Back to Classroom THINK toolbox for parents, caregivers and teachers](#)

[Behavioral Health Toolbox for Families](#)

[Workplace Resilience](#)

Crisis support

[Suicide Prevention Lifeline](#): 988 and 800-273-8255

[Crisis Text Line](#) provides confidential text access from anywhere in the U.S. to a trained crisis counselor.
Text HOME to [741741](#) (24/7/365)

[Crisis Connections](#) is a 24-hour crisis line that connects people in physical, emotional and financial crisis to services. Call 866-4-CRISIS ([866-427-4747](#))

[Teen Link](#): call or text 866-833-6546

National [Disaster Distress Helpline](#): 800-985-5990 or text “TalkWithUs” to 66746.



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