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ORLANDO, FLORIDA

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**305 B | Mental Wellness at Work:
Practical Tips and Strategies for
OHNs**

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Contact hours: 1.5 (305 A and B)

The American Association of Occupational Health Nurses, Inc. (AAOHN) is accredited as a provider of nursing continuing professional development by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation

Mental Wellness at Work: Practical Tips and Strategies for OHNs

- Rules of engagement

AAOHN Orlando/Vegas rules – what we say here stays here

****TRIGGER WARNING: We will be role playing and discussing suicide during this presentation.**

Objectives:

- 1. Recognize key factors that influence employee mental wellbeing**, including stressors, demographic differences, and foundational human needs, to better guide mental health education, prevention, and early intervention efforts.
- 2. Identify at least two evidence-based resources and workplace programs** that occupational health nurses (OHNs) can use to support employees experiencing mental health challenges.
- 3. Apply two practical tools or intervention techniques** to effectively respond to workplace stress, emotional distress, or crisis situations—while staying within the OHN scope of practice.

Three key take aways from our chat today:

1. Trust your nursing judgement
2. You are NOT alone
1. Practical Tools: Tips & techniques that help

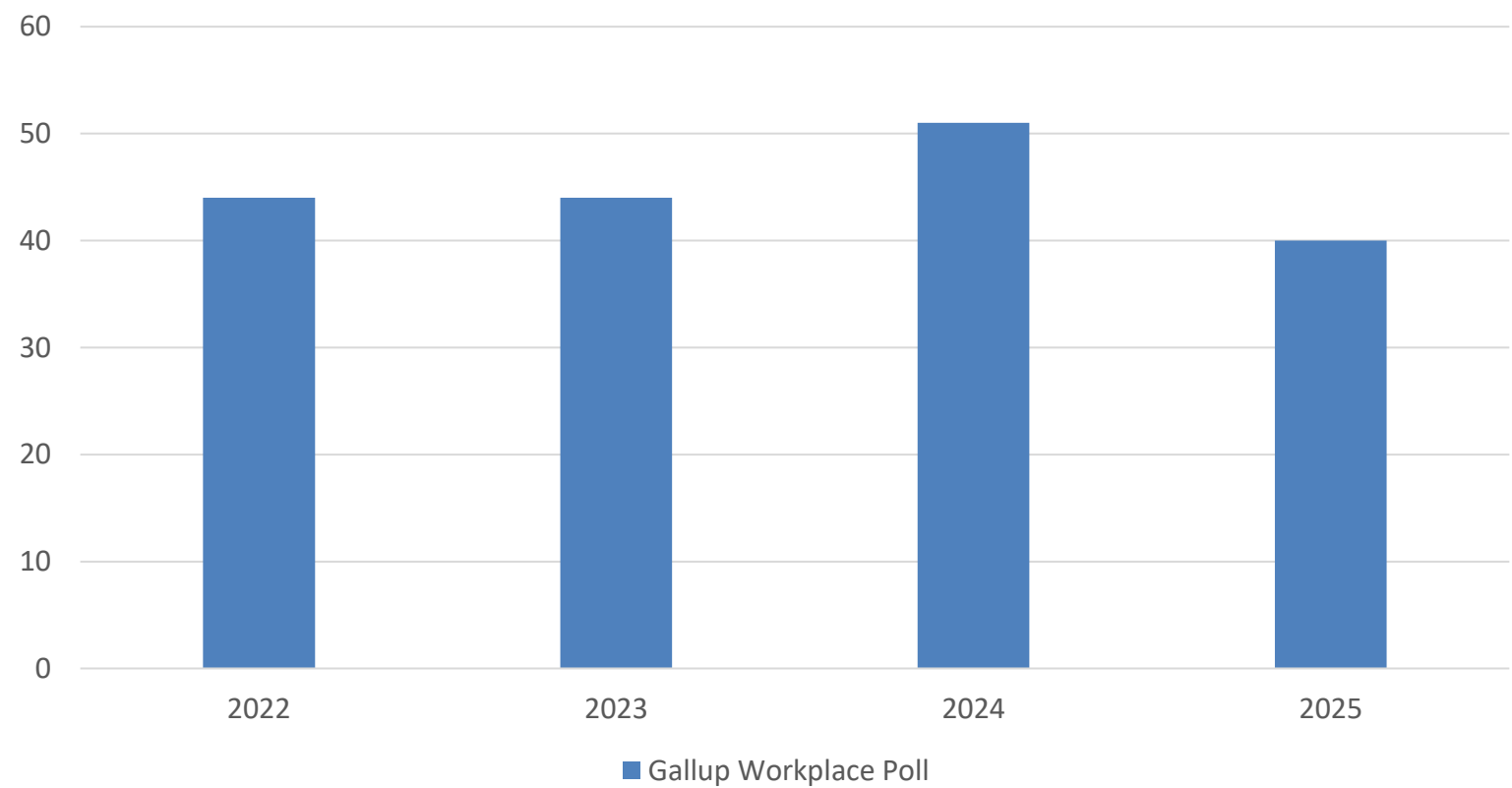
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Gallup Workplace Poll



Key findings show that of global employees feel stressed daily, with women, younger workers, and remote/hybrid employees reporting higher burnout levels. Top stressors include low engagement and inadequate resources.

OSHA Statistics

- Nearly one in five US adults live with a mental illness.
- Workplace stress has been reported to cause 120,000 deaths in the US each year.
- Approximately 65% of U.S. workers surveyed have characterized work as being a very significant or somewhat significant source of stress in each year from 2019-2021.
- 83% of US workers suffer from work-related stress and 54% of workers report that work stress affects their home life.
- For every \$1 spent on ordinary mental health concerns, employers see a \$4 return in productivity gains

EAP: Top results at our workplace

- Anxiety
- Worker Related
- Depression/Sadness
- Overwhelmed
- Difficulty Concentrating





+



“One-size-fits-all”

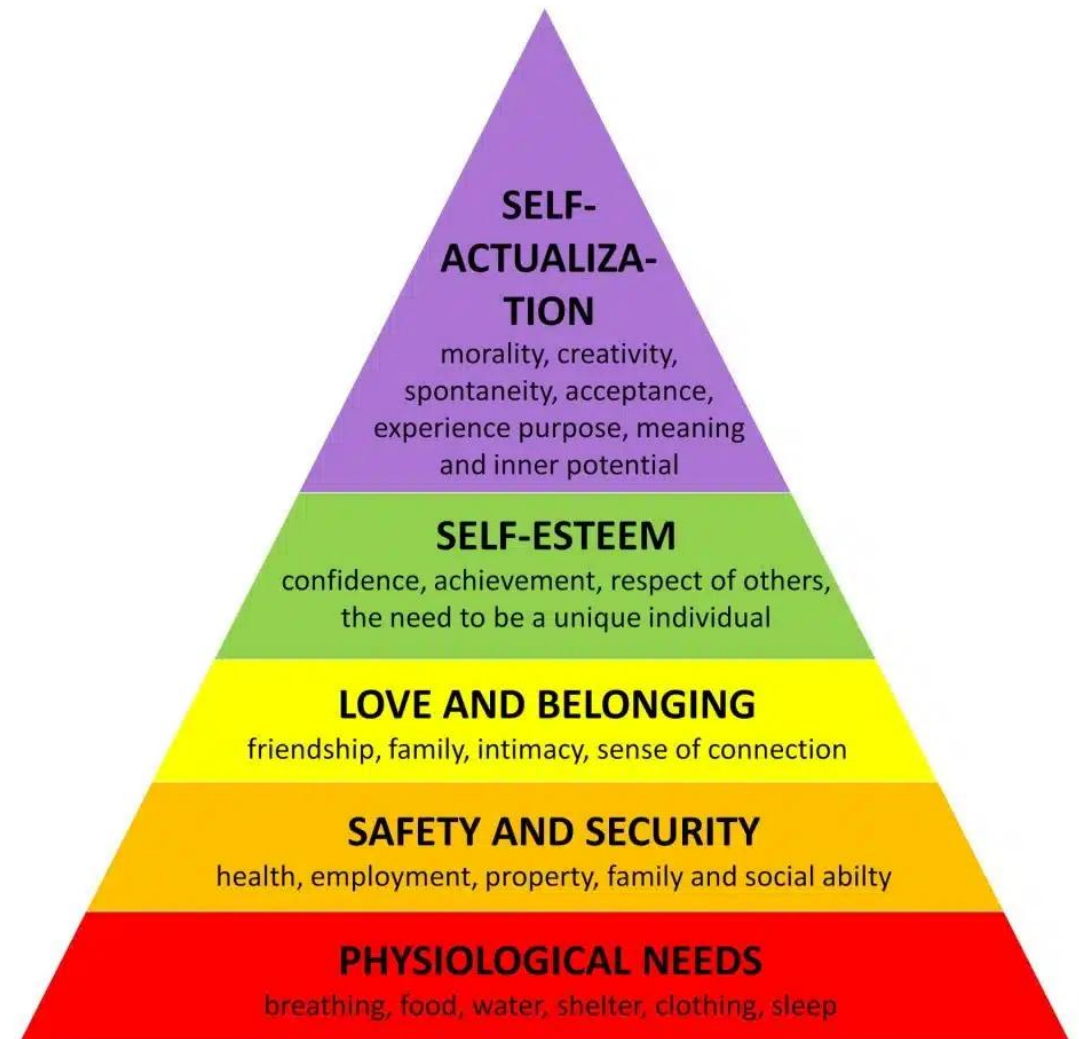
Not when it comes to workplace mental health

Let’s Talk Demographics

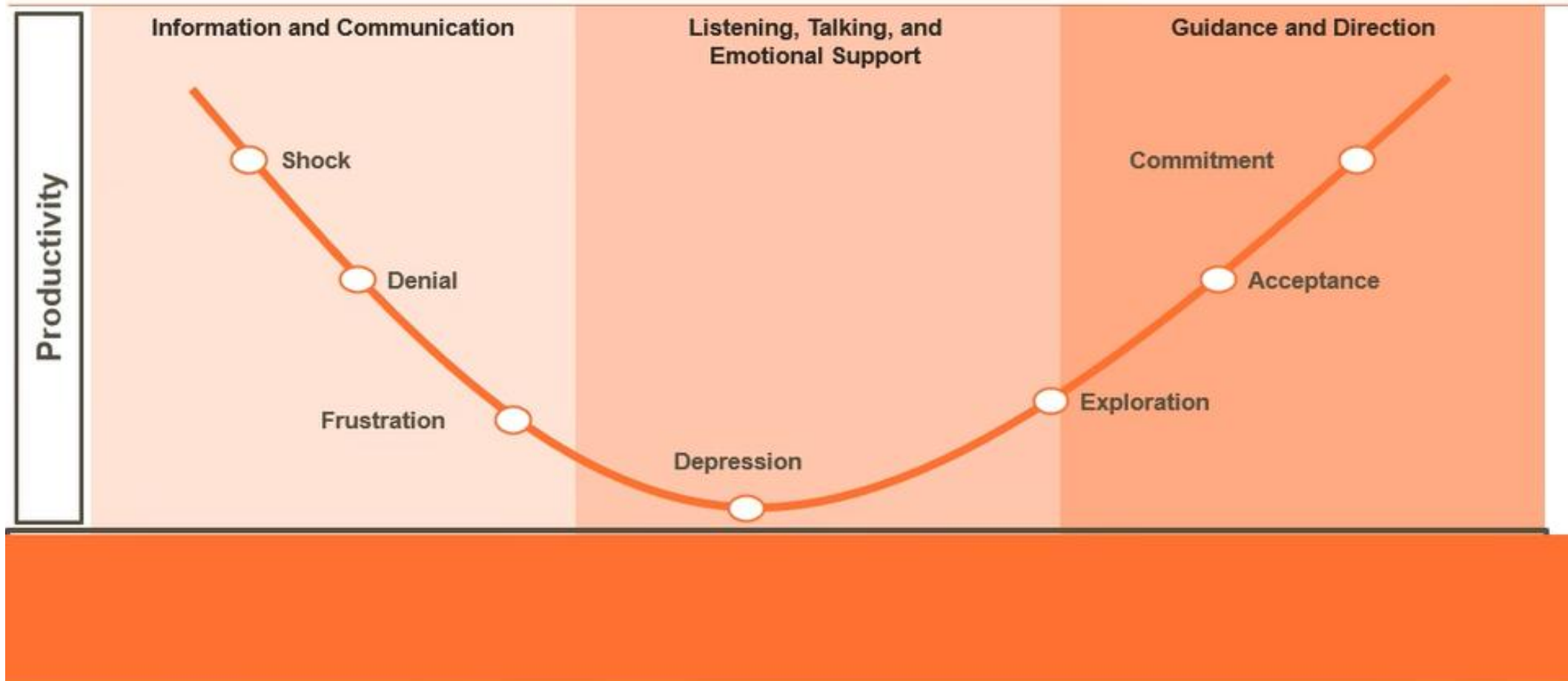
- Corporate vs. Labor workers
- Union vs Non-Union
- Urban vs Rural
- Hourly vs Salary
- Higher Income vs Lower Income
- Remote worker vs Office Worker
- Hospital Occ health vs Industrial Occ health.
- New to the workforce vs Reaching retirement

Cultural norms/disparities

Maslow's Hierarchy Needs



Change Curve





You are NOT Alone: Mental health is a TEAM effort

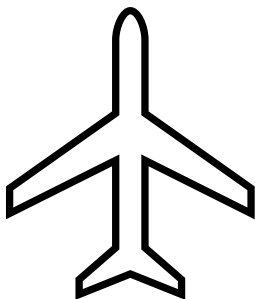
- Understand your EAP and other benefits at your site.
- Partner with HR, EHS, leadership and managers
- Know when to escalate or refer
- Document and collaborate
- Set boundaries – you are a nurse not a therapist



“Always put the Oxygen mask on yourself first before you help others”

Immediate Decompression

- Step away from the scene
- Provide a quiet safe space
- Basic needs
- ‘grounding techniques



Peer Support – Psychological First Aid

- Chatting with a coworker offer a calm nonjudgemental presence
- Let them lead – avoid force talking
- Normalize reactions: stress adrenaline shakiness or even delayed emotions

Encourage Professional Support

- Employee assistance program even for ourselves
- Other Occ health providers
- A license counselor or therapist
- Seeking help is a strength not a weakness

Time and Workload

- Offer time off or a lighter schedule for a few days
- Avoid being put back into high—stress or similar situations
- Ensure coverage so they don’t feel guilty for stepping away

Structures Follow up

- Check in with in
- 24- 48 hours
- One week ongoing as needed – as a nurse leader or peer simple check ins matter
- Just thinking of you – no pressure to respond

Watch for signs they need more help

- Ongoing anxiety sleep issues or intrusive thought
- Emotional numbness or withdrawal

Promote Healthy coping gently ...

Leadership tone matter – “that was a difficult situation and your response mattered.”

Practical Tools : Tips & techniques to help your organization

15 Second Positivity Reset:

“List What You Love”

Why it works:

- Shifts your brain from stress to gratitude
- Interrupts negative thought spirals
- Activates the positive emotional pathways
- Lowers stress response
- Increase resilience in the moment

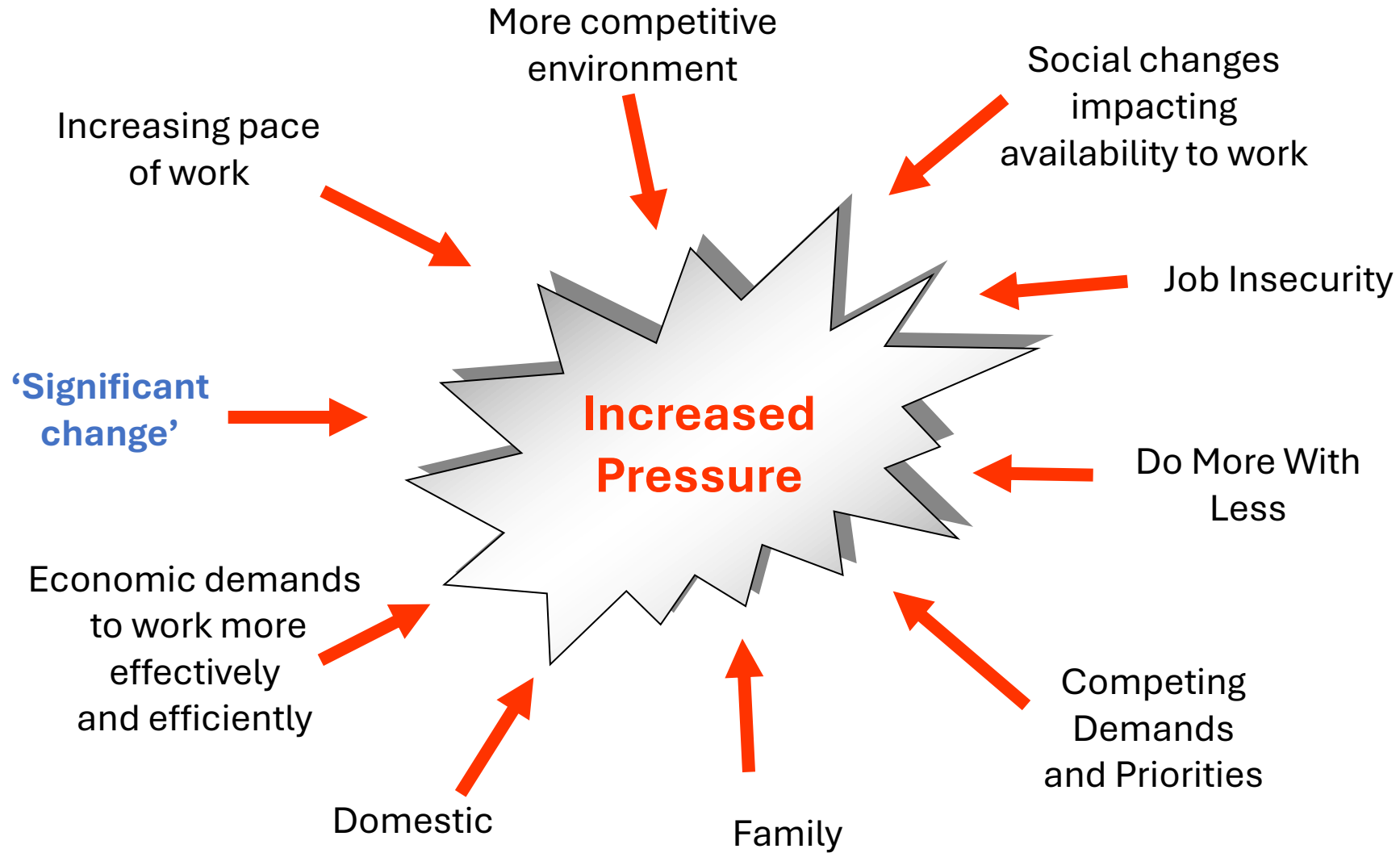
It's a micro rest

- No equipment
- No cost
- No one even has to know you are doing it.

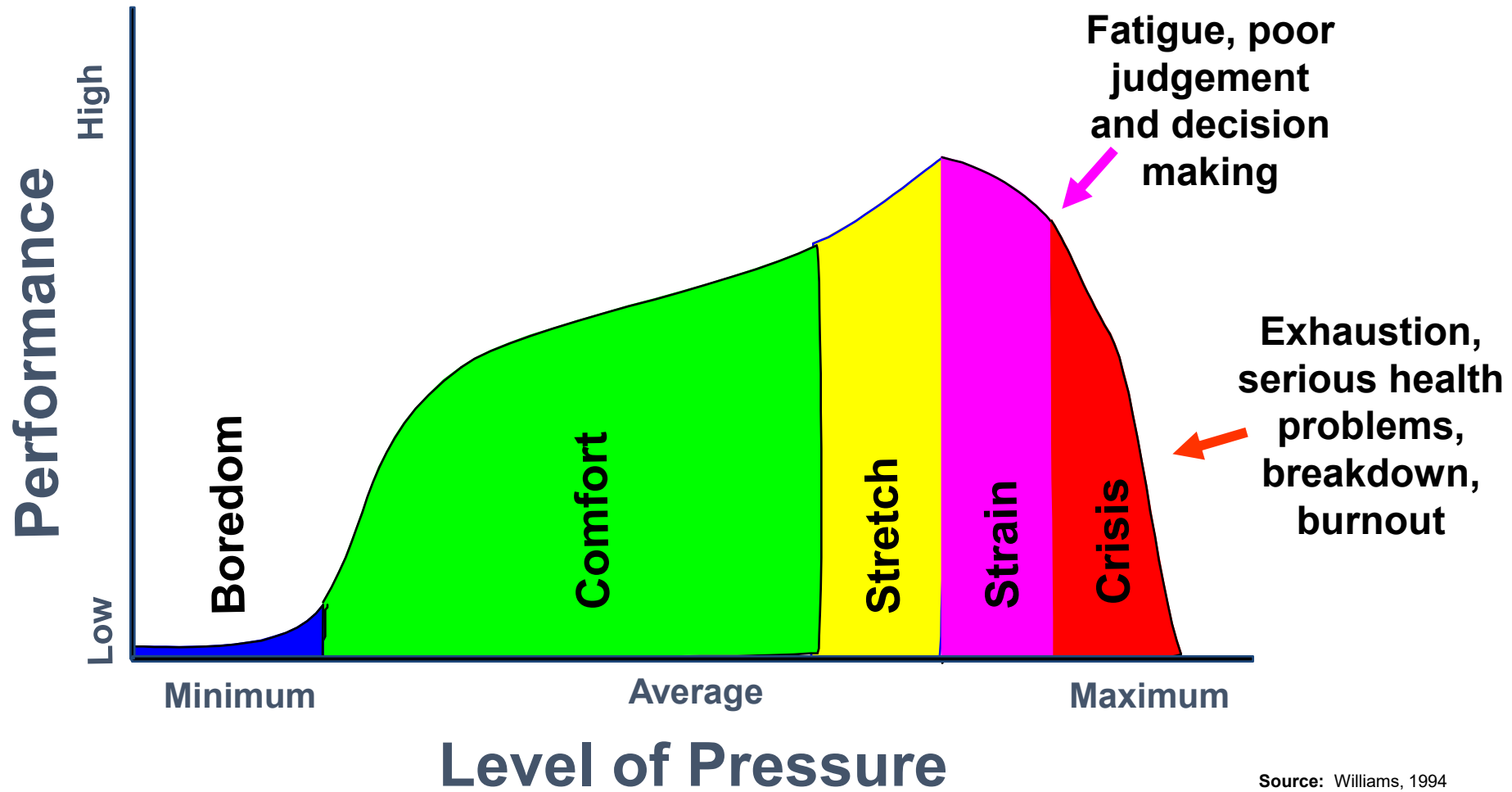
Try it before a difficult conversation, after a challenging interaction, between back-to-back meetings.



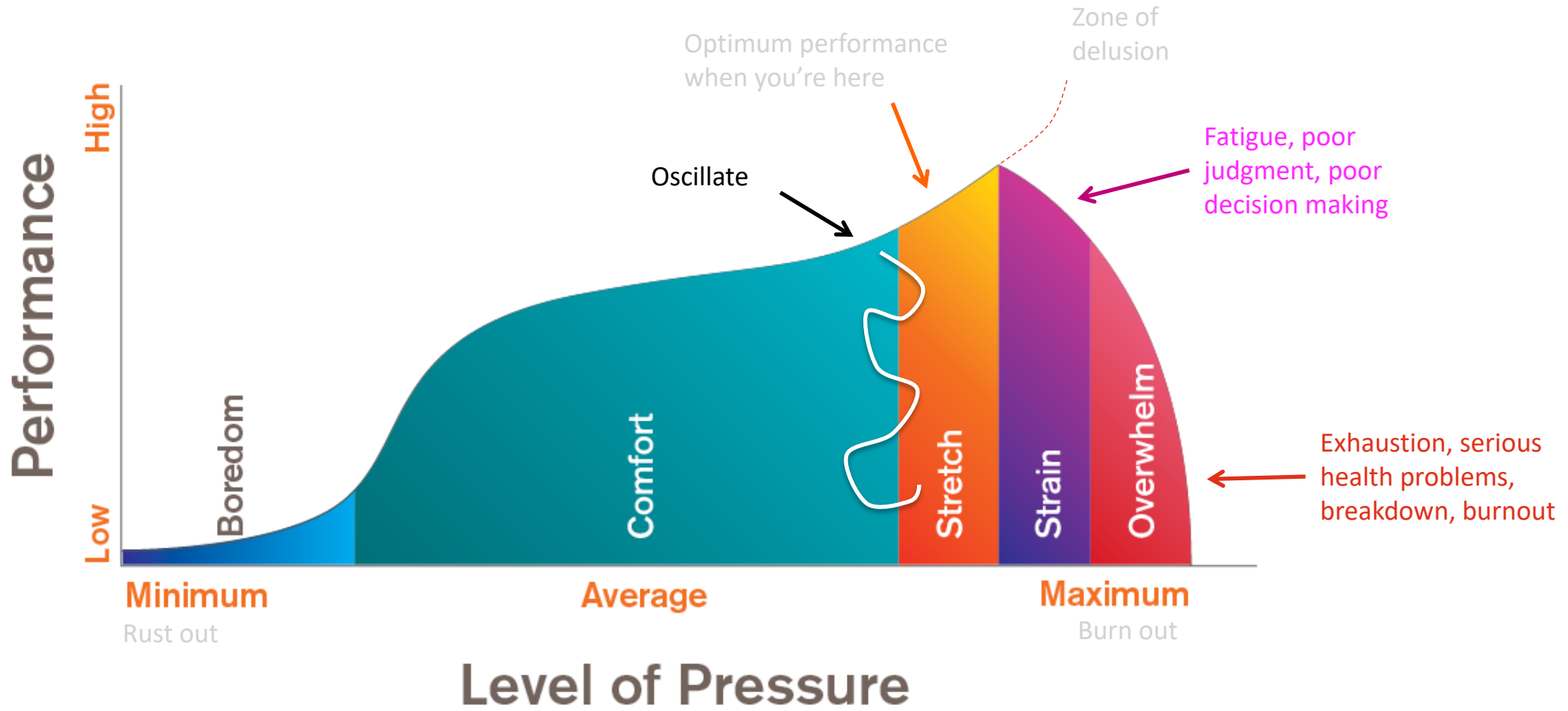
Current Pressures on Employees



Pressure Performance Stages



The pressure performance curve – where are you?



Human energy crisis

Where is he on the pressure curve?

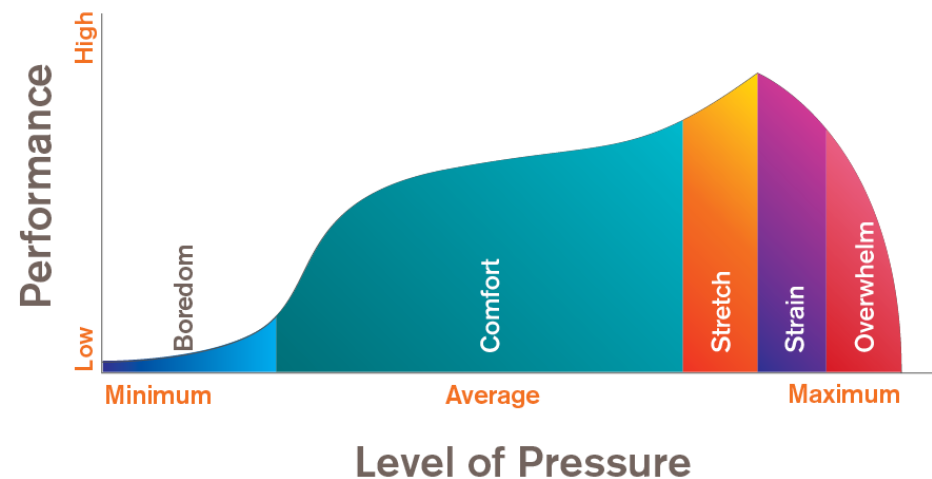


Discuss

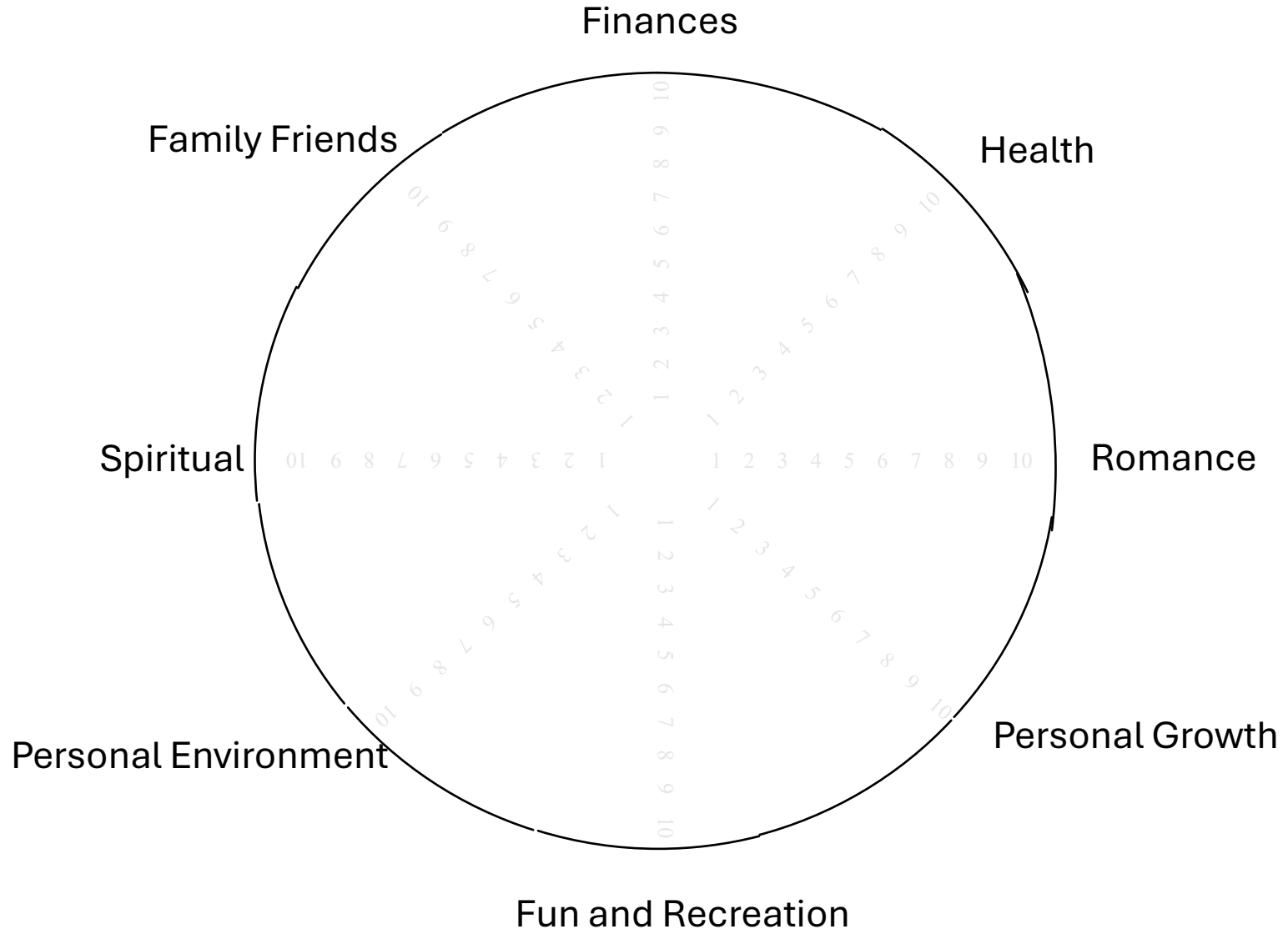
When you're in Healthy Stretch, what does it look like for you?

What's your "zone of delusion" look like, what pushes you into strain?

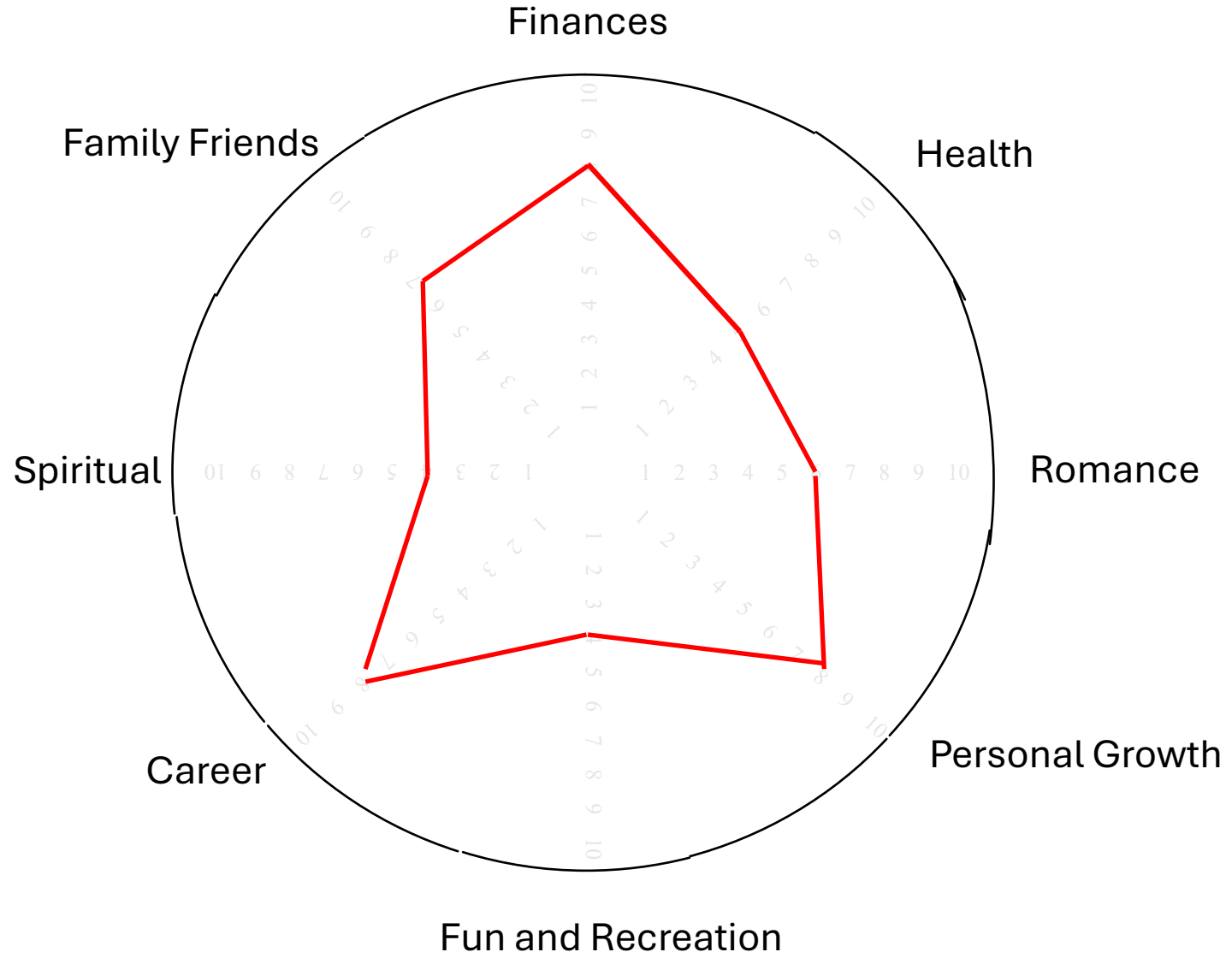
How do you manage stretch so you don't go into strain?

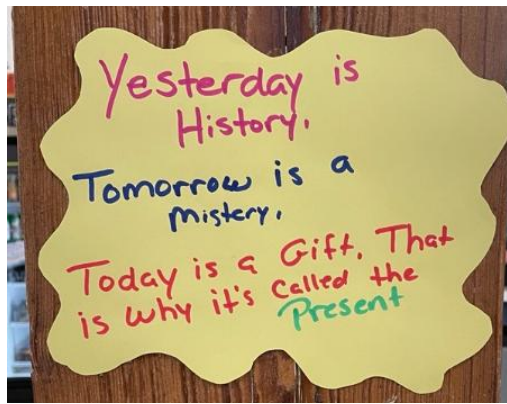


Exercise: The Balance Wheel



Exercise: The Balance Wheel





We will be celebrating TWO WEEKS of Laughs

National Let's Laugh Day

Monday, March 19th

April Fools Day

Wednesday, April 1st

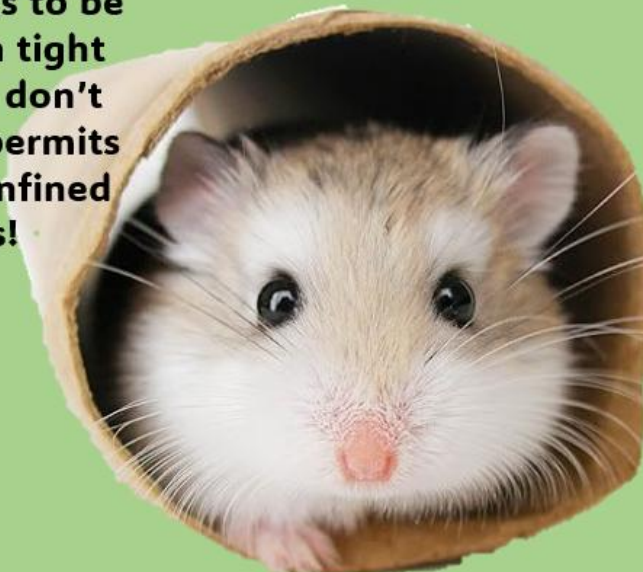
Read the benefits of laughing in the weekly dose.

Enjoy some jokes on the back of Laffy Taffy.

"Jokes on You"!! Write down a work appropriate joke and post on the board in the cafeteria.



Safety wants to be near you in tight places. So, don't forget the permits for your confined spaces!



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1. Trust your nursing judgement
2. You are NOT alone
3. Practical Tools: Tips & techniques that help

Questions?

Objectives: should they be part of the slides?? Question for AAOHN Education??

Appendix:

[Cutest Baby Laughing Videos Compilation | TikTok](#)

[The happy secret to better work | Shawn Achor](#)

Ted talk

[988 Lifeline - If you need emotional support, reach out to the national mental health hotline: 988.](#)

[Find a support group | AFSP](#) (American foundation for suicide prevention)