



Stress in the Workplace: The Impact it Has on Our Thinking and Wellbeing

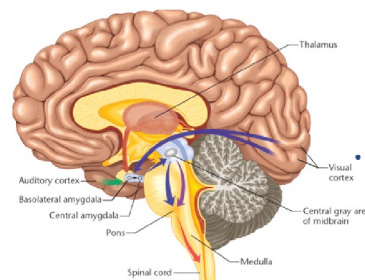
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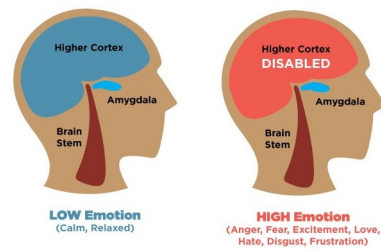
“Anatomy is Destiny” (Sigmund Freud)



- Self Awareness
 - Noticing internal thoughts and feelings, especially around stress and change.
 - Knowing strengths and weaknesses
- Self Management
 - Avoiding the “amygdala hijack”
 - Lessening reactivity
 - Choosing wise action
 - Buffering stress and “overwhelm”

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Amygdala Hijack



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Attorneys Under Stress

Loss Aversion Effect: *Flight*

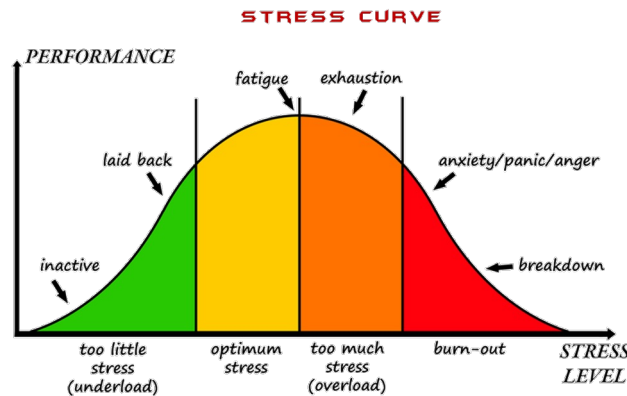
Righting reflex: *Fight*

Uncertainty: *Freeze*



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Stress Curve: Lawyers Beware



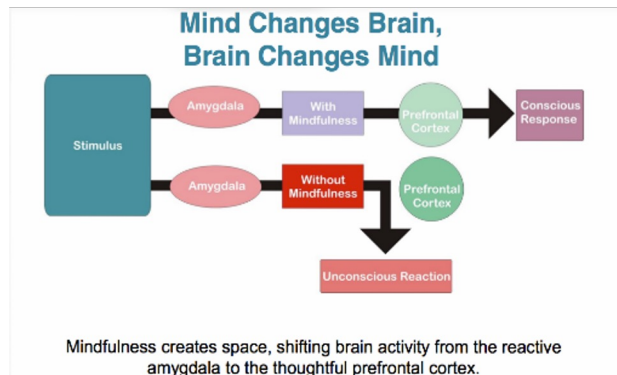
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Stress and its Role on Performance



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Mindfulness is a Pause—the space between stimulus and response; that's where choice lies" Tara Brach

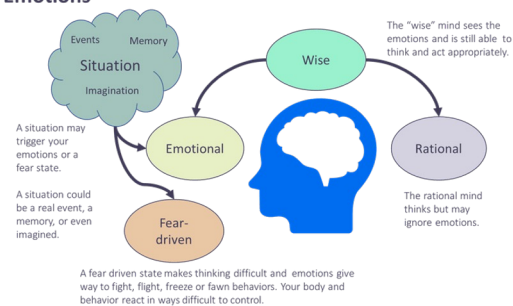


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How Emotions Trigger Responses

Handle Your Emotions

A situation arises that triggers an emotional response. Your thoughts, body, behaviors all begin to change. In the right circumstance, all goes well. In the wrong one, your response may go against your best interest. Maintaining a "wise" mind allows you to see your emotions, physical response, and still maintain your decision making.



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Attorneys Under Stress

Cognitive depletion—negative effects on our decision making and cognitive resources when tired, hungry or under stress

Perceptual narrowing—Brain uses environmental experiences to shape perceptual abilities—neural pathways that are used more are strengthened making them more efficient; those not used as much become less efficient (neuroplasticity and synaptic pruning)

Zero sum bias—cognitive bias that causes people to mistakenly view certain situations as zero sum i.e. that one party's gain is balanced by other parties' losses (competition for a resource they feel is limited when in fact the resource is unlimited and available)

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Evidenced Based Strategies

Mindfulness Stress Reduction (Persistent Patience)

- Wide and varied applications
- 20 plus years of research

Thought Challenging

- Based on cognitive restructuring therapies
- Demonstrated effectiveness for many problems

Managing Uncertainty/Ambivalence

- Based on enhancing intuition practices
- Change resistive thinking into resilient thinking

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Persistence Patience-Mindfulness Strategies

1. Non-judging—Judge less, observe more
2. Patience—awareness of emotions and mindset
3. Beginners Mind—look at things as if the first time “fresh viewpoint”
4. Non-striving-become more aware, more often
5. Acceptance-Comfort in discomfort; sitting with instead of avoidance
6. Letting Go—more discomfort often leads to being less insightful and intuitive
7. Trust

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Self Guided Process

1. Observe thoughts
Non-striving/Non judging
2. Identify thinking patterns
Patience
3. Identify cognitive distortions
Non-judging/Accepting
4. Challenge cognitive distortions
Letting go
5. Construct alternative thoughts/beliefs
Fresh mind
6. Behavioral Experiments
Trust/Patience
7. Re-calibrate (step 1)

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Thought Record---27 y/o female attorney

Situation/Event	Automatic Thought	Feeling/MFN	Emotion (1-10)
Started new job; increasing work load, little support	"If I'm competent and want to be successful, I can't ask for help."	Fear Depression Patience/Non-judging	Righting reflex 8
Recommended to take time off work for treatment	"I will probably lose my job if I'm off of work for more than a few days."	Fear/Panic Non-striving/letting go	Loss aversion 8
Overwhelming work load and expectations	"I can't keep up; I'll be judged a 'loser'."	Depression/Anxiety Trust/Fresh Mind	Perceptual narrowing 10
Father's illness, work more hours	"Must do it without support; can't burden my family/friends"	Guilt/Anxiety Non-striving/Trust	Panic vs. Urgency 10

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The Impact of Stress on Decision Making



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Challenge your Thinking



“Mental” reactions to situations

Real, imaginary/perceived;
anticipatory

Not fully conscious or deliberate

Instantaneous and immediate

Intense emotional associations

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Challenging Automatic Thoughts

Thoughts are NOT Facts

I – Identify the Thought-- “I am 80 % positive I will lose my job if I take time off”

C – Challenge the Thought—Evidence for (loss aversion) and Against thought

E – Evaluate the Thought--Post challenge certainty rating (Revise thought to make it more truthful)

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Managing Uncertainty and Ambivalence-Improving the use of Intuition

*“... she just kept saying,
'We've got to find the child.'”*

The story of a two-year old girl who miraculously survived a horrible crash that killed her parents captivated the nation in March 2003. But if it were not for the determination of Wisconsin State Patrol troopers and others at the crash scene, the story might not have had at least one fortunate ending.

Before dawn on March 7, Troopers Sean Berkowitch and Rhonda Waldera, of District 5—Tomah, were at the scene of a fatal crash on a rural stretch of Interstate 94 in Jackson County. A westbound semi-truck had jack-knifed on the icy road and crossed the median into the eastbound lanes. A Honda with Minnesota license plates hit the semi's trailer and then passed underneath—shearing off the top of the car. It traveled another 700 feet before ending up in the median. Both adults inside the car were dead. That much was known.

But Trooper Waldera also was concerned about the unknown. While investigating the scene, she found a coat, blanket, a “sippy” cup and some pull-up diapers in the car. These items indicated that a small child



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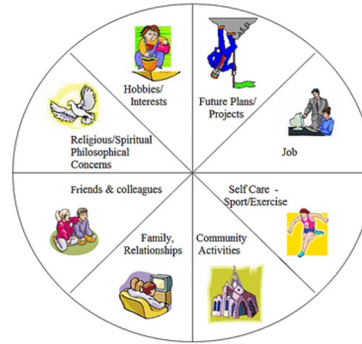
Why is Work-Life Balance so difficult to achieve?



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A Balanced Life



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Barriers to Balance



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Strategies to Achieve Balance



- Set your priorities
- Track your time
- Concentrate on one thing at a time
- Schedule one thing you look forward to each day
- Increase social connections

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More Strategies to Achieve Balance

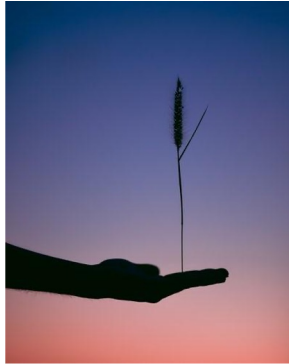


- Respect your private time
- Evaluate your personal habits and lifestyle
- Use your vacation and personal days
- Ask for support and help as needed

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More strategies to Achieve Balance



Get plenty of exercise and activity
Set boundaries
Find a mentor
Learn to say "NO"
Continually reevaluate your work life balance on a regular basis and determine if the work is able to be balanced with your life and values

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Strategies to Improve Balance



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Strategies to Improve Balance

- Some things beyond our control to change
- Take action to reduce or remove stressor
- Break problems down into smaller more manageable pieces
- Take a time management course
- Replace negative relationships with positive ones
- Adopt self – care practices
- Develop outside activities – hobbies, social events, educational challenges
- Seek advice from others
- Commit to the notion that managing stress is a permanent and ongoing activity

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Things to Remember



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WE CAN HELP WITH

Stress - Anxiety - Grief Depression
Career Transitions
Addiction - Substance Abuse
& Much More

Services tailored to the legal profession:

- > Short-term counseling
- > Support Groups
- > Referrals
- > Interventions
- > Help with ARDC Concerns



CONTACT US

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