

**TAKING CARE:**  
 FINDING STRENGTH FOR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS  
 Strength in the Storm Series



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How did we get this far along?

- Courage – facing into the storm day after day
- Creativity – making what you had enough for the job
- Connection – mutual aid and support
  - *Symbiotic relationships in a diminishing relational world*
- Coffee – pandemic fuel
  - *"Sleep?! That's what coffee's for"*

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How did we get this far along?

Our strategies worked well as far as they could go. As we move into the later phases of the pandemic, will need new paradigms and new strategies.

- The battle has been long and hard-fought
  - *It has spilled over into your personal lives.*
- Entering a new and critical phase for HCW – Demobilization

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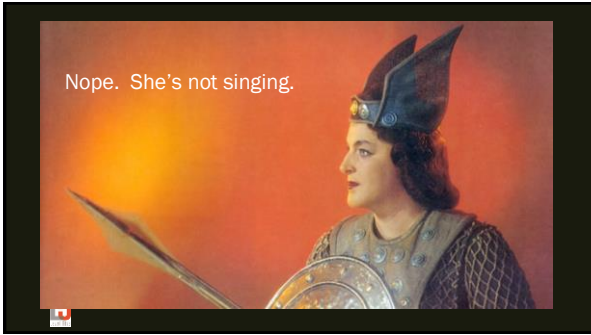
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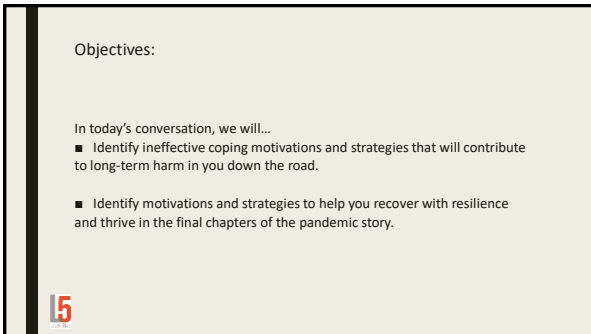
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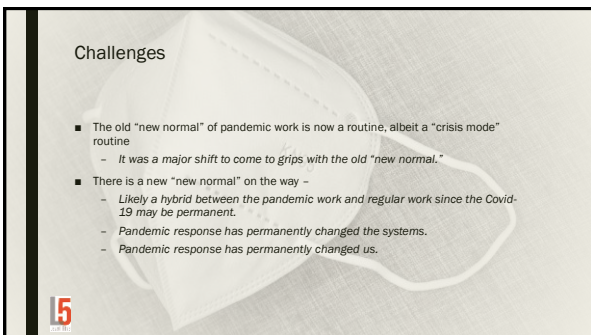
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### Challenges

- For many of us, the emotions of the last 14 months are unresolved
  - For many, grief has been delayed, compounding the impacts of it.
- For some, grief, loss, change, and burnout may lead to job loss.
- Facing into a world that has changed significantly.
  - Some changes may be permanent – family, work, school, expectations, national and world events.
- Shifting into new modes and methods: work, family, and personal life.




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### Motivations and strategies

Ineffective motivations and strategies may not be chosen consciously.

No need to feel guilty – natural response to unrelenting stress and trauma.

We overcome the ineffective by identifying and choosing effective paradigms and practices.




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### Coping strategies



Coping strategies can be active or avoidant

"Active coping" – addressing a problem or stressors directly to alleviate the stress or traumatic reactions.

- Cognitive coping addresses the thought processes.
- Behavioral coping to address the resulting problem behaviors or responses.

"Avoidant coping" – maladaptive coping in which one changes behavior to avoid thinking about, feeling, or doing difficult things.

- Avoiding stressors and recovery work rather than dealing with them.
- Majority will tend towards avoidant coping.


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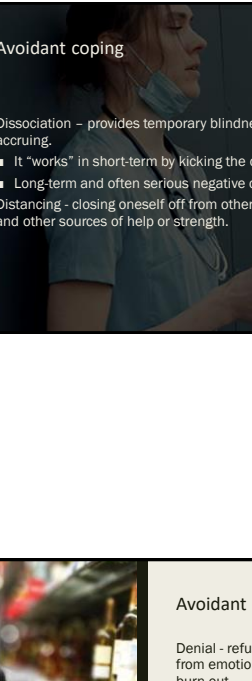

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**Avoidant coping**

Dissociation - provides temporary blindness to the issues that are accruing.

- It "works" in short-term by kicking the can down the road.
- Long-term and often serious negative consequences accrue.

Distancing - closing oneself off from others - coworkers, family, friends, and other sources of help or strength.

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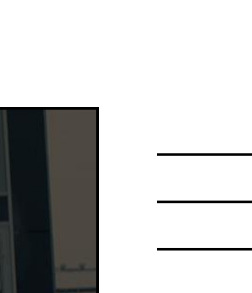

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**Avoidant coping**

Denial - refusal to believe that one is suffering from emotional and physical damage and possibly burn-out.

Destructive coping - choosing harmful coping strategies to deal with stress, anxiety, and trauma impacts.

- Passive-aggression, procrastination, ruminating.
- Substance use as coping.
- Anger, isolation, inappropriate relationships.

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**Recovery**

The goal is recovery, not merely survival.

- Focus on the root, not the fruit
- Doing a good job at work comes from recovery
- Healthy relationships come from recovery
- Demobilization works best with recovery

Key point: your recovery will become "Job 1" for you as the crisis eases and you begin to demobilize.

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**Recovery = taking care**

Successful recovery will depend upon you "taking care." That means intentionally, deliberately choosing your motives and strategies.

- Shift your paradigm to active and interactive coping.
- Shift your priorities from crisis work to the work of recovering well.
- Shift your purposes in your relationships to include *your* recovery as well as that of family, coworkers, and friends.



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**Recovery skills**

Redirecting your pandemic energies into active coping strategies for you, your tribe, your team.

Learning and employing new active coping and recovery skills.

Key point: you must commit to "taking care" seeking and accepting help from family, coworkers, and friend.

- If you fail at this, you will likely see only limited recovery...at best.



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**Recovery paradigm**

Recovery, like survival, is a team sport. The lone survivor, like the lone wolf, is the least survivable.

Recovery is a mindset:

- You cannot do this alone
- Others need to join you in recovery, and you need to join them.
- Choose to roger-up to seeking help and resources as well as utilizing help and resources.




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**Effective recovery thinking**

Taking care includes:

1. Acceptance - of losses, grief, changes and new conditions
2. Acceptance of help from others - seek help and engagement
3. Good grief - is not a solo gig, processing heals grief.
4. Celebrate the good - hunt down the good, limit the negativity, celebrate with others.
5. Connect with intentionality - build, rebuild, and seek healthy relationships.



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**WIIFM?**



Recovery will bring you...


Health - physical, emotional, mental, relational.

Wholeness - the wellspring of your impact in the world.

Hope - with hope comes resilience, but there is no resilience without hope.

Relationships - family, friends, coworkers.

Positive impact - in every arena of your life.



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**Thank you**

Statewide Healthcare Coordination Center (SHCC) - Behavioral Health Staff Wellness Branch

Level 5 Services



No need to be a lone wolf. Find your pack and stick with them.



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