

# Coping with Stress and NETS during COVID19

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# Superheros

- ▶ Yes you are superheros
  - ▶ Imposter syndrome anyone?
- ▶ Remember that all superheros are flawed
- ▶ Their origin story includes coming from a wounded place
- ▶ They prevail when they recognize their unique strengths
- ▶ A moment in history requires them to step up.
- ▶ The path to victory is challenging.



The world needs us all to be super heros now.



# Imagine a powerful and good person

- ▶ Take a moment to bring to mind someone living or dead, mythical or real who personifies for you an admirable person, a person of moral and ethical character and one who acts on the best human qualities.
- ▶ Let that person be your guide today to help you make the best choices to care for yourself and your family in this difficult time.

# Unique challenges for cancer survivors during COVID19

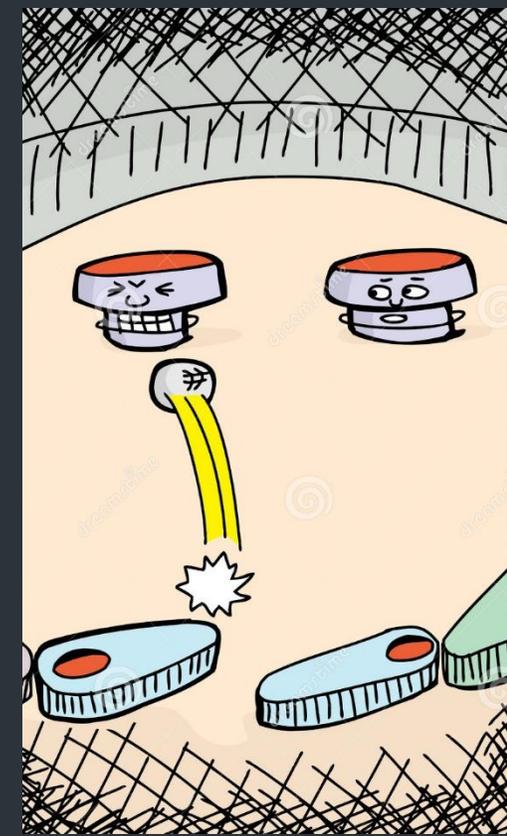
- Feeling helpless against the pandemic
- Being worried about delays in medical care
- Greater isolation as an “at risk” individual
- More challenging to live healthy and practice self-care
  - Many of the usual resources are less available
- Elevated stress/anxiety; psychosocial distress and depression in cancer patients.
  - It is easy to be frightened, uneasy, and lonely.

# Quick Mindfulness Relaxation

1. Stop and notice your surroundings: *colors, sounds, temperature, where are your feet? what can you feel in your body?*
2. Smile and take a slow breath in
3. Exhale and imagine the air flowing down from the top of your head down through your body and out your arms/fingers and legs/toes.
4. Take another breath and as you exhale imagine the air flowing down and out as you relax your body.
5. Imagine a peaceful place and say to yourself a peaceful phrase (*I am at peace* or *Relax*)
6. Practice 20 times a day. *Good to do while listening on a zoom call.*

# Flight Fight Freeze

- ▶ When we are under stress we react instinctively
- ▶ Sometimes those instincts are exactly what we need at the moment.
- ▶ Sometimes reacting makes us feel like we are a pinball in a pinball machine
- ▶ How can we pause and stop and assess and then RESPOND instead of REACT?



You can notice others around you who are reacting with flight fight freeze. Have compassion for them. Maybe help to take some of the load off.

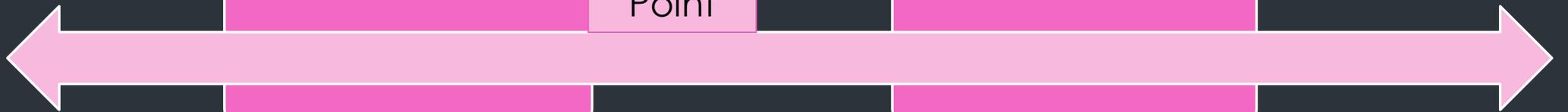
# How does stress make us make AWAY moves



AWAY

Choice  
Point

TOWARD





# Values as a guide through the blizzard

Kindness

Integrity

Reliability

Professionalism

Loyalty

Civic-mindedness

Connection

Compassion

Self-care

Family

Balance

Follow-through

Teamwork

Commitment

Tenderness

Mindfulness

Appreciation

Curiosity

Competence

Presence

Generosity

# How to use Values

- ▶ Pause and get mindful.
- ▶ Ask yourself: what choice can I make in this next moment that would move me forward in the direction of my values?
- ▶ Make a “TOWARDS” move and notice the desire to make an “AWAY” move
- ▶ Remember, we are wired to make more AWAY moves than towards but our most satisfying lives are made up of TOWARDS moves!
- ▶ Set a daily goal to live a value.
  - ▶ Eg. Kindness. Find every possible opportunity to act on it.

# Using Compassion as a TOWARDS move

- ▶ “This is a marathon, not a sprint” We need the ability to endure.
- ▶ Compassion is the ability to feel others’ pain and to wish to ease or reduce it.
- ▶ Self compassion is the ability to notice that we are feeling pain and the wish to support ourselves rather than sabotage.
- ▶ Compassion does not mean that we all take bubble baths and eat marshmallows.
- ▶ Often the most compassionate thing we can do, is to inspire and help others (and ourselves) to do the hard thing – the TOWARDS move.

# Asking the SMALL questions

- ▶ There are a lot of BIG questions that keep us up at night and have no answers.
  - ▶ When will the pandemic be over; how many people will die; will I die; what about racism? How will these problems in our world be solved?
- ▶ Our bodies and minds settle when we can ask (and answer) small questions.
- ▶ There is time enough for big questions, find the opportunity everyday to *settle into peace* with small answerable questions
  - ▶ What will I have for lunch? What does the sky look like? If I mop the floor, how will I feel looking at the result? What's Sarah up to today?

# Write your own story

## Let's ask ourselves

At the end of this story of COVID19 how do we want to describe our actions and our commitment to our wellbeing, our family and our community?

What is our COLLECTIVE story?

*We applied flexibility and curiosity to approach this period with compassion and inspiration; We treated others and our families how we would want to be treated; we made the tough choices to balance resources when we had to; we saw to our own self care and to our neighbors. We took the time to listen. We did not expect perfection and we gave ourselves and others a break. We took the time to smell the roses and ask ourselves the small questions.*

**Take a moment to write your own story from the future. And then live it imperfectly.**

# SUMMARY and take home

1. We are all flawed and all superheros
2. Take guidance from good people throughout our lives and history
3. Times are indeed tough right now with new challenges
4. Remember it is human (mammalian) to fight/flight/freeze react
5. Insert a mindful presence to allow a choice to respond instead of react
6. Attempt to make more TOWARDS moves than AWAY
7. Use values as a Guide: Set a goal to act on a Value each day
8. Practice compassion and self compassion
9. Ask and answer small questions too
10. Write your own story from the future and then act on it imperfectly