

# **The Long Mile: Managing Chronic Pain**

## **Session 7**

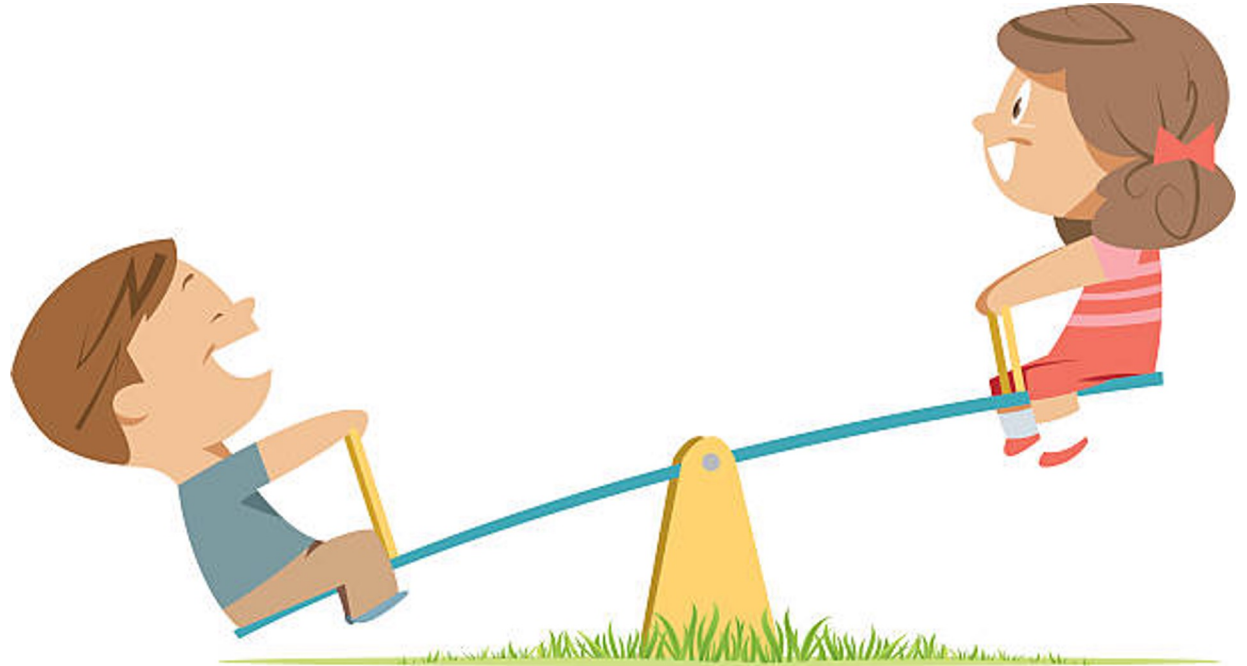
### **GROUP HANDOUTS**

# Learning objectives

- Understanding effects of stress on muscle tension, physiological functions and resilience
- Effects of chronic illness on resilience
- Identifying your stressors
- Stress reduction strategies
- Benefits of mind-body practices for chronic pain

# Stress vs Resilience

Balance



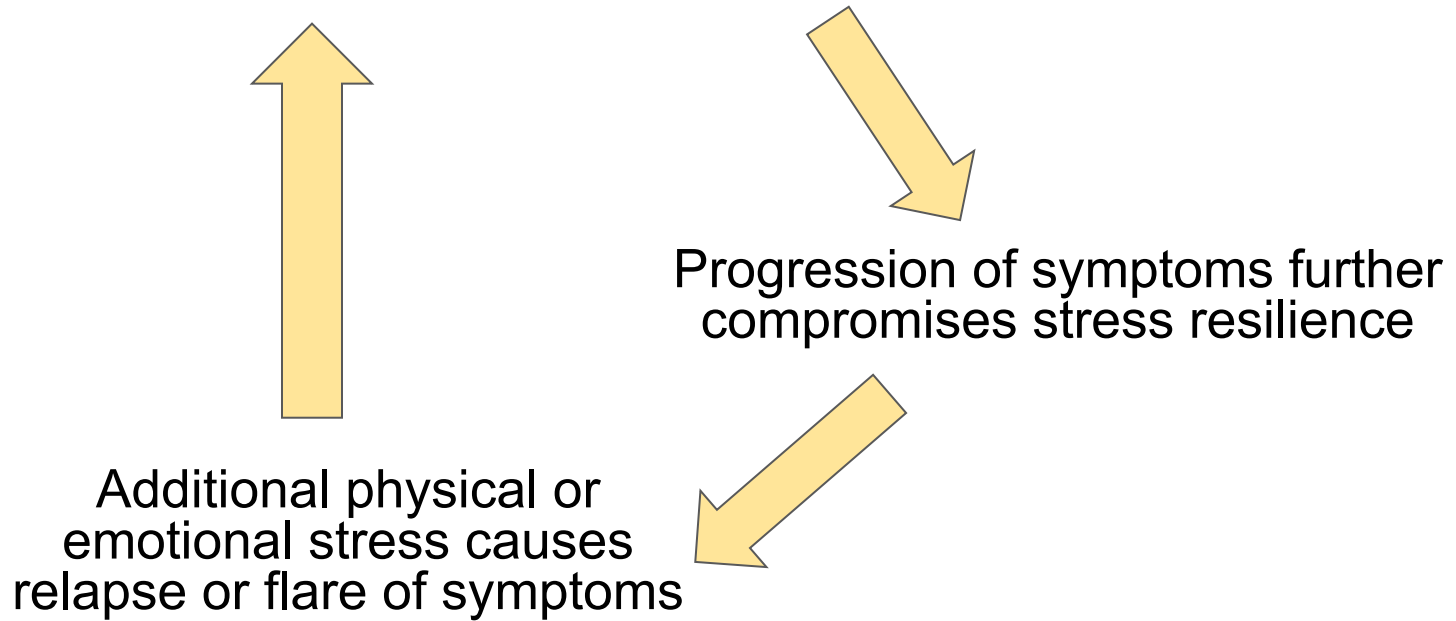
# Resilience

Ability to adapt in the face of adversity, tragedy, threats or significant stress – such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, workplace and financial stressors.

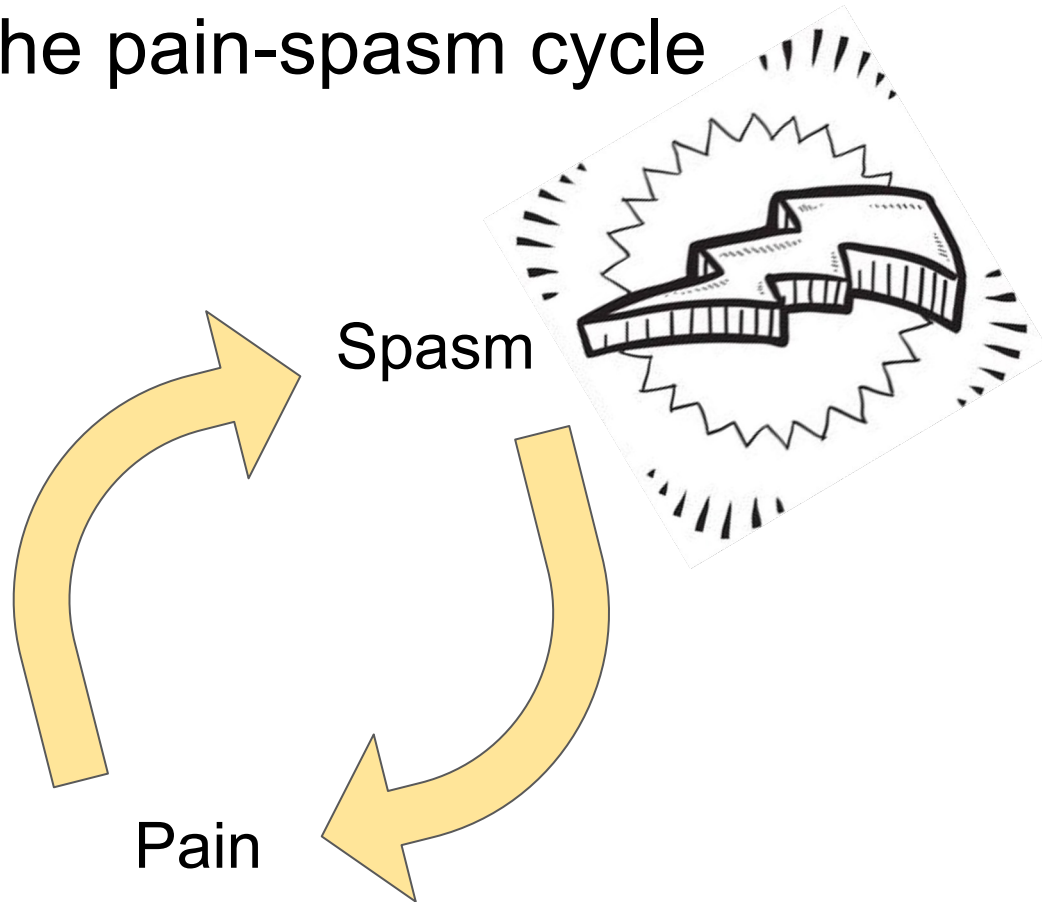
American Psychological Association



# Illness reduces resilience over time



# Stress and the pain-spasm cycle

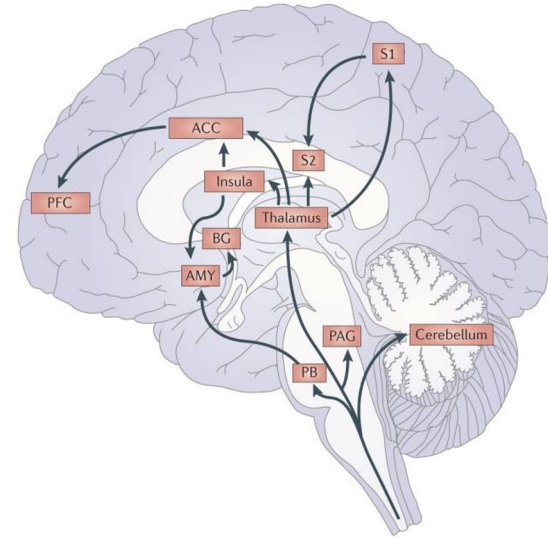


# Stress affects our body functions

- Sets off “flight, fight or freeze” reaction of the autonomic nervous system
- Imbalances multiple physiological systems such as circulation, blood pressure, heart rate, bowel function, breathing and lung function, immune function
- Imbalances endocrine system: pituitary hormones, thyroid hormones, sex hormones, menstrual cycles
- Weakens our muscle strength
- Impacts many chronic conditions such as heart disease, cancer, asthma, depression, migraine headaches, insomnia, gastrointestinal disorders

# We can learn to improve our resilience

**“stress-induced plasticity  
in particular brain  
circuitry contributes to the  
chronic pain state”**



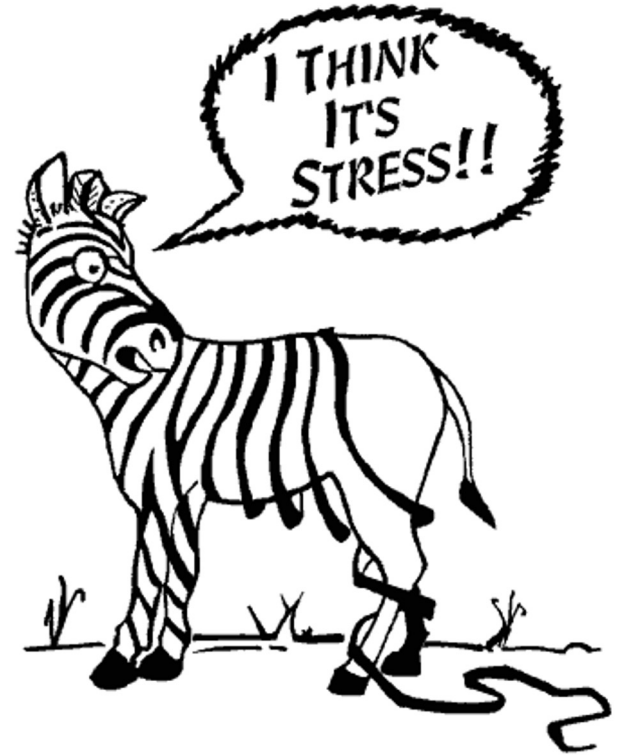
Sturgeon, J.A., Zautra, A.J. Resilience: A New Paradigm for Adaptation to Chronic Pain. ***Curr Pain Headache Rep*** 14, 105–112 (2010)

Bushnell MC, Ceko M, Low LA. Cognitive and emotional control of pain and its disruption in chronic pain. ***Nat Rev Neurosci.*** 2013;14(7):502-511

# Multiple types of stress

Stressors may be:

- Environmental
- Chemical
- Physical
- Behavioral
- Emotional
- Societal



# Environmental stressors

- Light sensitivity
- Noise/sound sensitivity
- Scents/odours/vapours
- Harsh weather conditions
- Air quality: smoke, mold
- Electromagnetic



# Bio-chemical stressors

- Allergies: food or pollens
- Food additives/preservatives
- Chemicals in scents, cleaning products, personal care products
- Inadequate nutrition and water intake
- Agricultural sprays
- Heavy metals
- Medication side effects

<https://davidsuzuki.org/queen-of-green/the-abcs-of-avoiding-toxic-chemicals/>  
<https://www.ewg.org/skindeep/>

# Physical stressors

- Trauma: accidents, surgery, fractures, childbirth
- Musculoskeletal: chronic neck/back pain, muscle tension
- Inappropriate exercise
- Too much/too little activity
- Poor ergonomics/posture
- Habitual shallow breathing





# Behavioural stressors

- Inadequate sleep and rest, poor sleep habits
- Over dependence on medications
- Dysfunctional family relationships
- Habits of workaholism, procrastination, perfectionism
- Poor time management and organizational habits
- Rude/aggressive behaviours of others
- Negative people
- Social events, large crowds
- Difficult bosses/co-workers



# Emotional stressors

- Life changes: divorce, death, loss of job or ability to work, marriage, pregnancy, house move
- Past emotional trauma
- Worries and anxieties
- Fears and phobias
- Fear of other medical problems
- Thought habits: pessimism, loss of hope, self-criticism



# Societal stressors

- Food insecurity
- Homelessness
- Inequality: gender, race, religion, sexual orientation
- Medical-legal issues
- “Red tape” dealing with bureaucracies, government, insurance disability, ICBC etc.
- Healthcare system frustrations



# All stressors go into the same bucket



## How are you handling your bucket?

# Lightening the load

Helpful strategies:

Start with small challenges: remove, reduce, re-organize

Emotional Freedom Technique

Improve communications

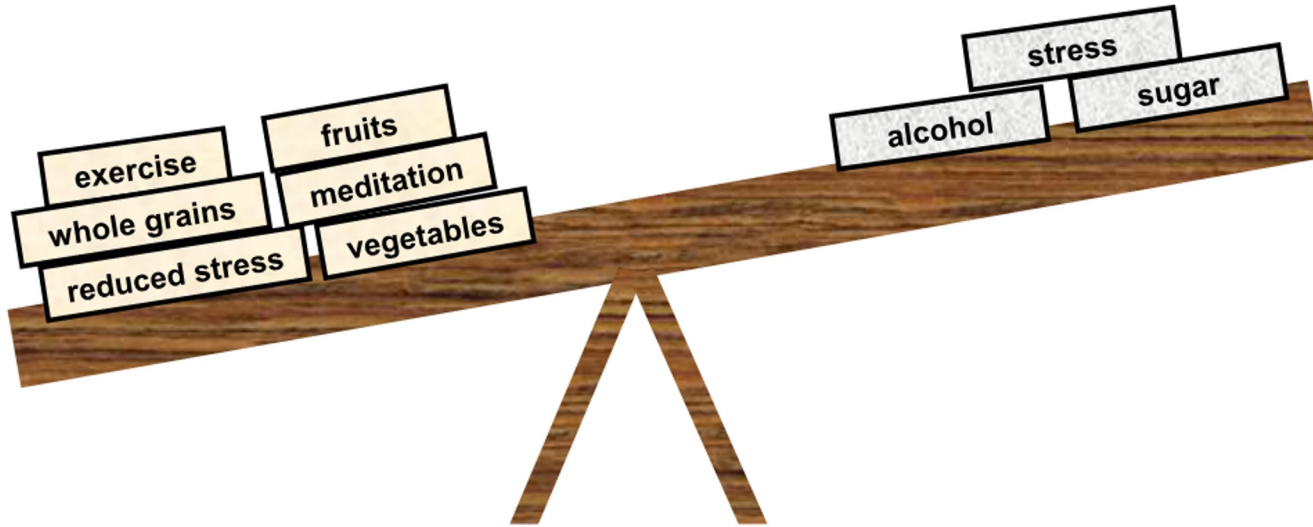
Mind-body practices

Breathwork

# Lighten the load and tip the scales



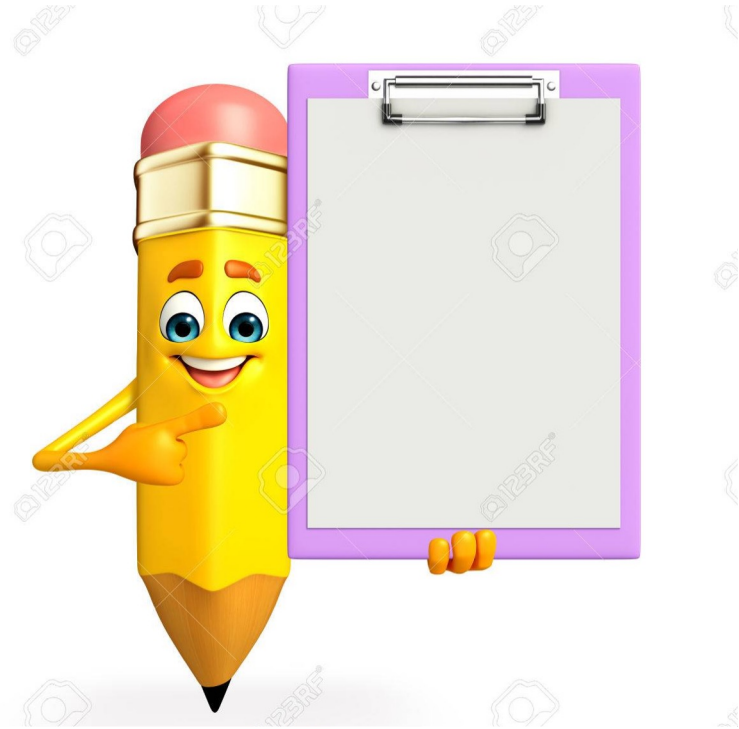
# In your favour



# Helpful strategies

## Start with small challenges:

- Remove, reduce, re-organize the small stressors such as dealing with home management, clutter, activity schedules, errands.
- Make a list. Take on the easy ones first.
- Use goal setting worksheet of session 2.
- Ask for help if possible.
- Practice EFT for emotional stressors.





# Serenity Prayer

“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.”

Reinhold Neibhur

# For things we cannot change

- Learn to be gentler on yourself
- Learn to see the positives in any negative situation
- Practice relaxation techniques
- Go for a walk in the park
- Develop a support system
- Make time for humour
- Listen to music, sing, hum
- Pursue an artistic hobby or craft
- Write a journal
- Improve communication skills
- Explore complementary therapies such as massage, acupuncture
- Breathe

# Improve communication skills

- Be clear about your boundaries
- Learn to say no without feeling guilt
- Learn to communicate assertively to express your needs without offending others
- Develop a good relationship with your doctor

# Tips for assertive communication

- Be authentic with yourself and others
- Respect yourself as well as others
- Become aware of your own thoughts, feelings, wants and needs
- Avoid manipulation and passive behaviour
- Use “I” messages
- Practice with family

# Unload your emotional bucket of stress

Emotional Freedom Technique  
-one of many “do-it-yourself” options



# Emotional Freedom Technique

- Roots in Thought Field Therapy developed by Roger Callahan, US psychologist, 1925-2013
- Also called Tapping Therapy - involves tapping of acupuncture points
- Developed into EFT in 1990's by Gary Craig (1940- ), neuro-linguistic programming practitioner
- Commonly used for anxiety and phobias
- May be used for all distressing emotions (except severe distress which requires professional help)
- Helpful “do-it-yourself” technique for mild to moderate emotional stress

# EFT™ TAPPING PROCEDURE (The Basic Recipe)

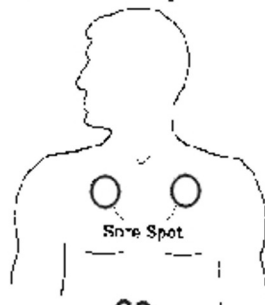
## #1...The Setup

1) Repeat 3X

*Even though I have this  
(problem)  
I deeply & completely accept myself.*

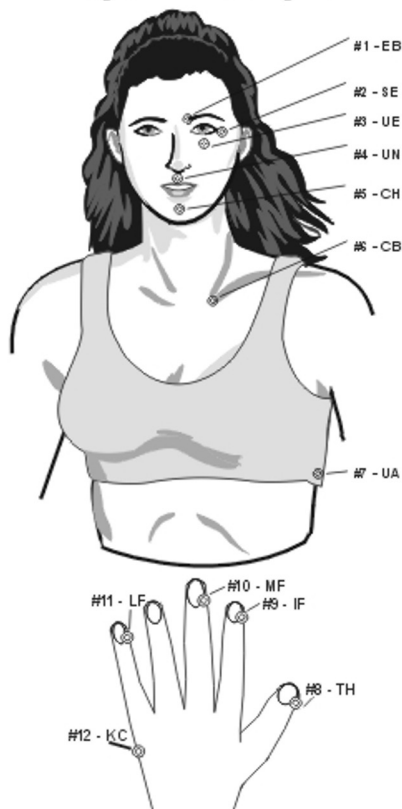
2) While continuously  
rubbing the "Sore Spot" or  
tapping the "Karate Chop" point.

### The Sore Spot/ Karate Chop Point

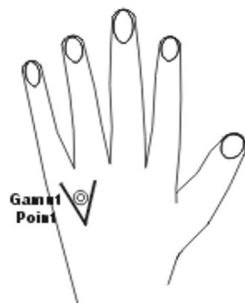


## #2...The Sequence

Tap about 5X on each point



## #3...The 9 Gamut



Perform 9 actions while tapping the  
GAMUT POINT continuously:

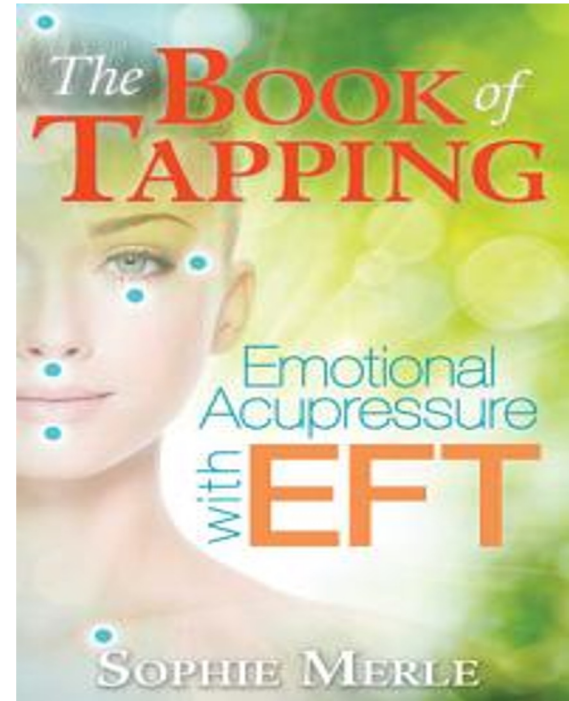
- 1) Eyes closed
- 2) Eyes open
- 3) Eyes hard down right (head steady)
- 4) Eyes hard down left (head steady)
- 5) Roll eyes in a circle
- 6) Roll eyes in opposite direction
- 7) Hum 5 seconds of song (Happy Birthday)
- 8) Count from 1 to 5
- 9) Hum 5 seconds of a song again.

## #4...Repeat (#2) The Sequence

NOTE: In subsequent rounds of tapping,  
change the setup language to "Even though I  
STILL have SOME OF this problem..." and use  
"REMAINING problem" as a reminder phrase.

# Tips for EFT practice

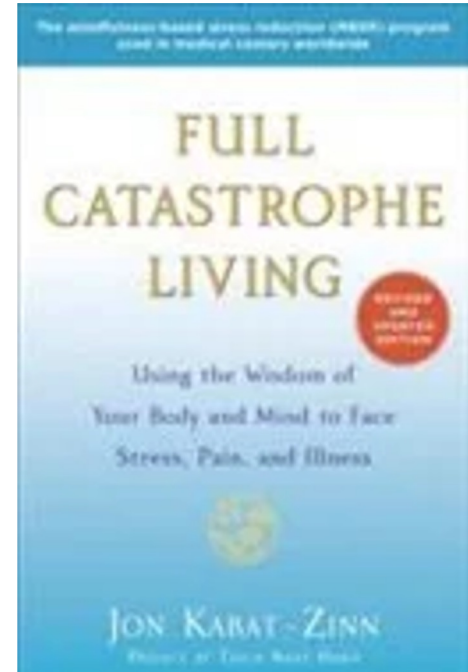
- Find a good book
- Online resources also such as youtube videos by Nick Ortner, Brad Yates or Dawson Church
- Free apps are available such as “The Tapping Solution”
- Some psychologists use it in their practice or may teach workshops on it





# Unload your emotional bucket of stress

MBSR - Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction  
-another technique to unload your bucket



# Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction and chronic pain

Study of 133 chronic pain patients participating in MBSR program

- Improvement in pain intensity and functional limitations due to pain in subgroups with arthritis, neck/back pain or 2 or more pain conditions
- Participants also showed improvement in health related quality of life and distress

Rosenzweig, Steven, et al. "Mindfulness-based stress reduction for chronic pain conditions: variation in treatment outcomes and role of home meditation practice." *Journal of psychosomatic research* 68.1 (2010): 29-36.

# Multiple health benefits of meditation

Some of the reported benefits:

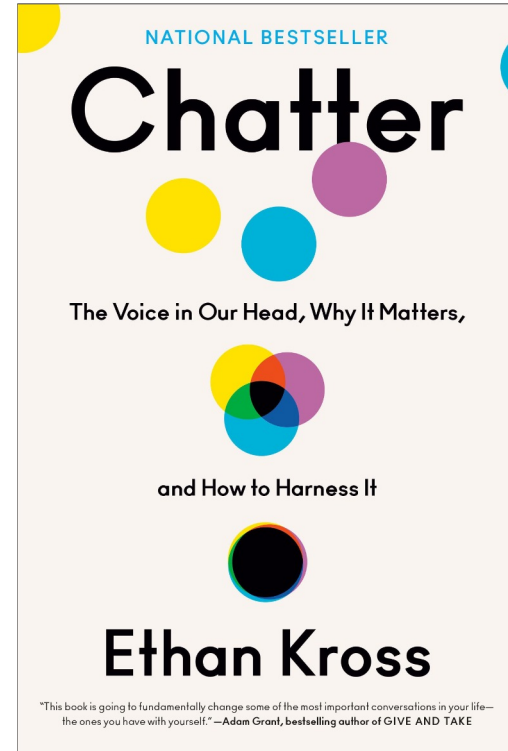
- Reduction in blood pressure
- Reduction in heart rate
- Cardiorespiratory synchronization
- Alter levels of melatonin and serotonin
- Boost immune response
- Decrease level of ROS (Reactive Oxygen Species)
- Reduce stress and promote positive mood states
- Reduce anxiety and pain
- Enhance self-esteem



# What if we can't meditate?

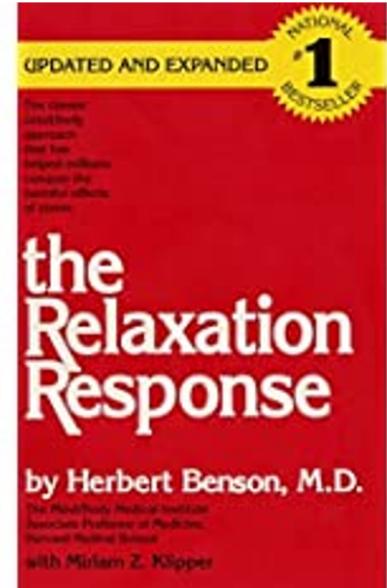
Research based tools to help quiet our inner chatter.

Includes engaging in rituals passed down to us from our families or culture as well as rituals we create for ourselves.



# Mind-body practices

- Mindfulness meditation: may be practiced during showering, eating, walking etc.
- Clearing the mind exercise
- Dr. Benson's relaxation technique



Laurie Keefer, Edward B Blanchard, The effects of relaxation response meditation on the symptoms of irritable bowel syndrome: results of a controlled treatment study, Behaviour Research and Therapy, Volume 39, Issue 7, 2001, Pages 801-811

# Time to kick back

## Relaxation exercise

### 11. Clearing the Mind visualization



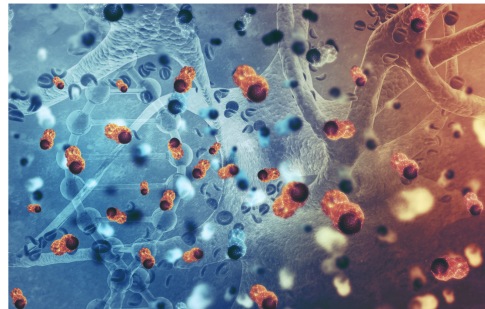
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## The Long Mile: Managing Chronic Pain

Dr. Teresa Clarke

This 10-week series will help you on your chronic pain journey. You will learn how to promote healing through integrative approaches and optimize your physical and mental well-being.



## Immune Health & How to Optimize Your Immunity

Dr. Teresa Clarke

In this session, you will learn integrative health approaches to promoting immune health. These approaches can be added to public health recommendations to reduce your risk of serious viral illness.



## Acupressure for Chronic Illnesses

Dr. Teresa Clarke

In this series of three workshops, you will learn how Acupressure can be utilized in a self-treatment approach to improve wellbeing and symptom management in patients with chronic illnesses.



## Osteopathy & Chronic Conditions

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### By participating you will learn about:

- The endocannabinoid system
- The differences between cannabinoids (THC & CBD)
- Routes of administration (oral oil & vaporization)
- Symptom management using cannabis
- Customized treatment plans
- How to dose your cannabis safely
- How to monitor for symptom improvements
- Potential side effects
- Drug interactions
- Supply options through a Health Canada licensed seller
- Cost of medication & discount programs available
- Extended health benefits & claiming as a medical expense
- Driving & travelling
- How to store your medication

## 201: Inhaled Cannabis; Dried Flower, Vape Pens & Extracts

### By participating you will learn about:

- The difference between smoking & vaporization
- Is vaporization safe?
- When to consider using vaporized cannabis for symptom management
- Finding the right temperature for optimal benefit
- Types & cost of vaporizers
- Choosing the best strain to vaporize (sativa, indica, hybrids)
- How to determine your optimal dose & monitoring effects
- Taking proper care of your vaporizer
- Where am I allowed to vaporize my cannabis?
- Safe storage of vaporizer & cannabis
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## 202: Cannabis Edibles, Oral Preparations & Topicals

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- Tinctures & sprays
- Creams, salves & liniments
- Differences between onset of actions for various routes of administration
- Risks & side effects
- Choosing a product that is right for you
- Dosing of extracts and edibles; the basics
- Driving & travelling

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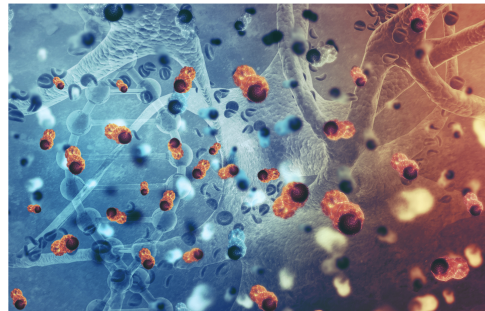
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