

Stress Management & Mental Health Enhancement




**Canadian Mental
Health Association**

Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge

Mental health for all



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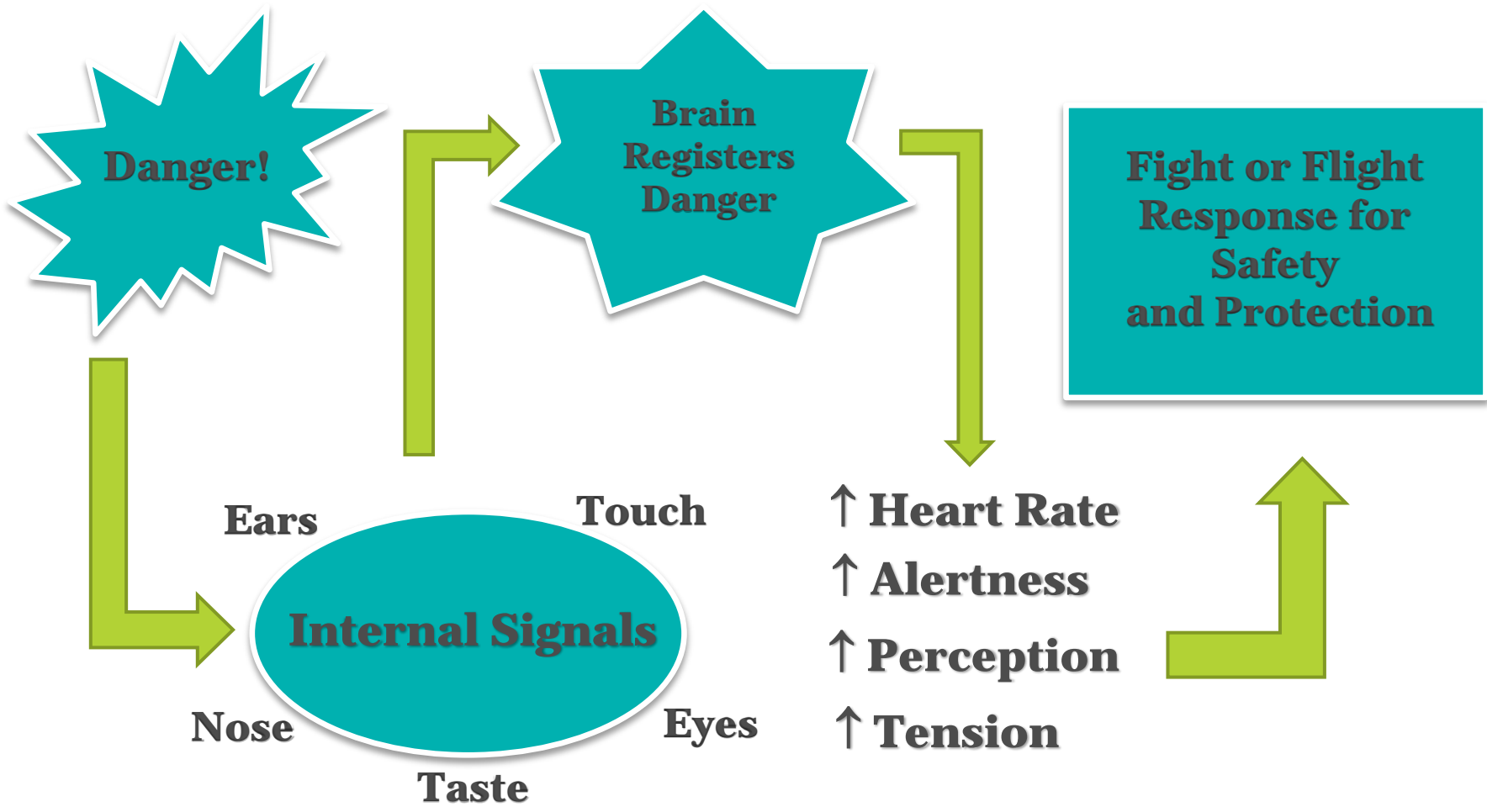
Purpose

- To gain a better understanding of what stress is and how it can affect us.
- To learn the difference between positive and negative stress.
- To discover and implement techniques to help improve our symptoms of negative stress.
- To learn strategies to better improve our mental health.

What is stress?

Stress

- Stress is one of the most commonly talked about, written about and thought about phenomenon's.
- It is unique and hard to define in a general sense because what can be stressful to one person may not be stressful for another person.
- It is how you think, feel and react to a situation that determines whether you find something stressful.
- Our reactions to stress can affect both your mental and physical health.



Positive Stress

- Planning a wedding.
- Having a baby.
- Buying your first home.
- Purchasing your dream car.
- Getting promoted at work.
- Starting a new relationship.
- Graduating from school.
- Taking an exam.
- Going on vacation.



Negative Stress

It is important to remember that stress can affect our lives from all avenues. Therefore, we must make changes to our lifestyles not just one area of our lives.





Common Causes of Stress

External

Household



Attitudes

Beliefs



Internal



Experiences

Behaviors



Work

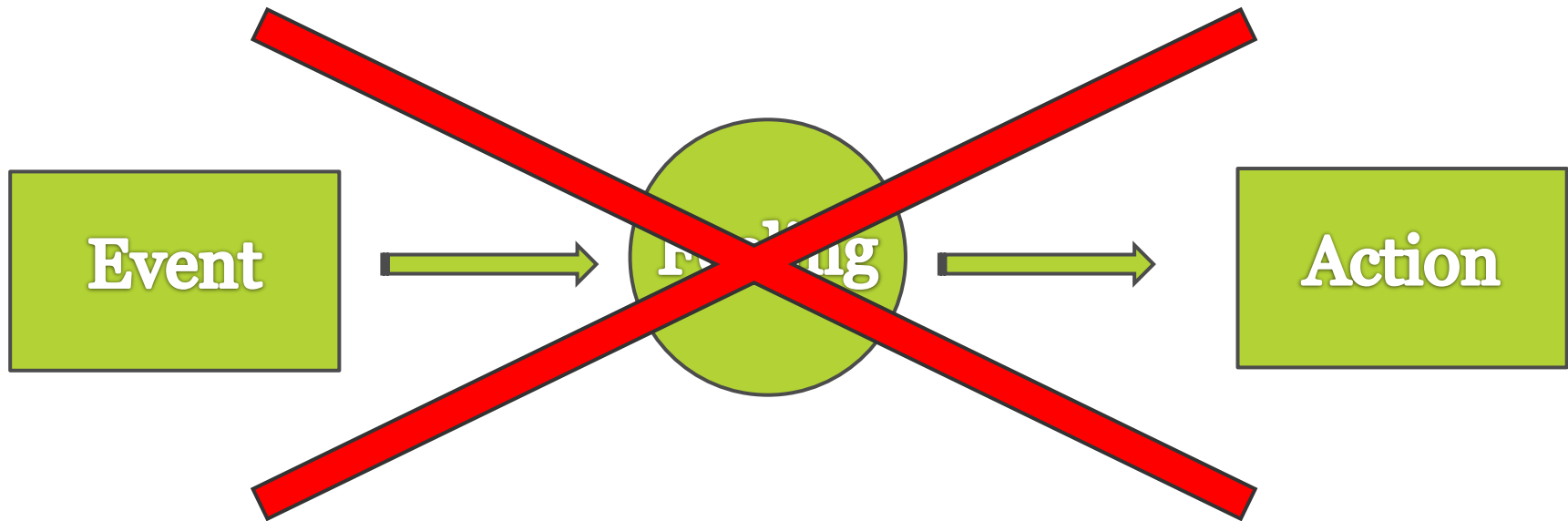
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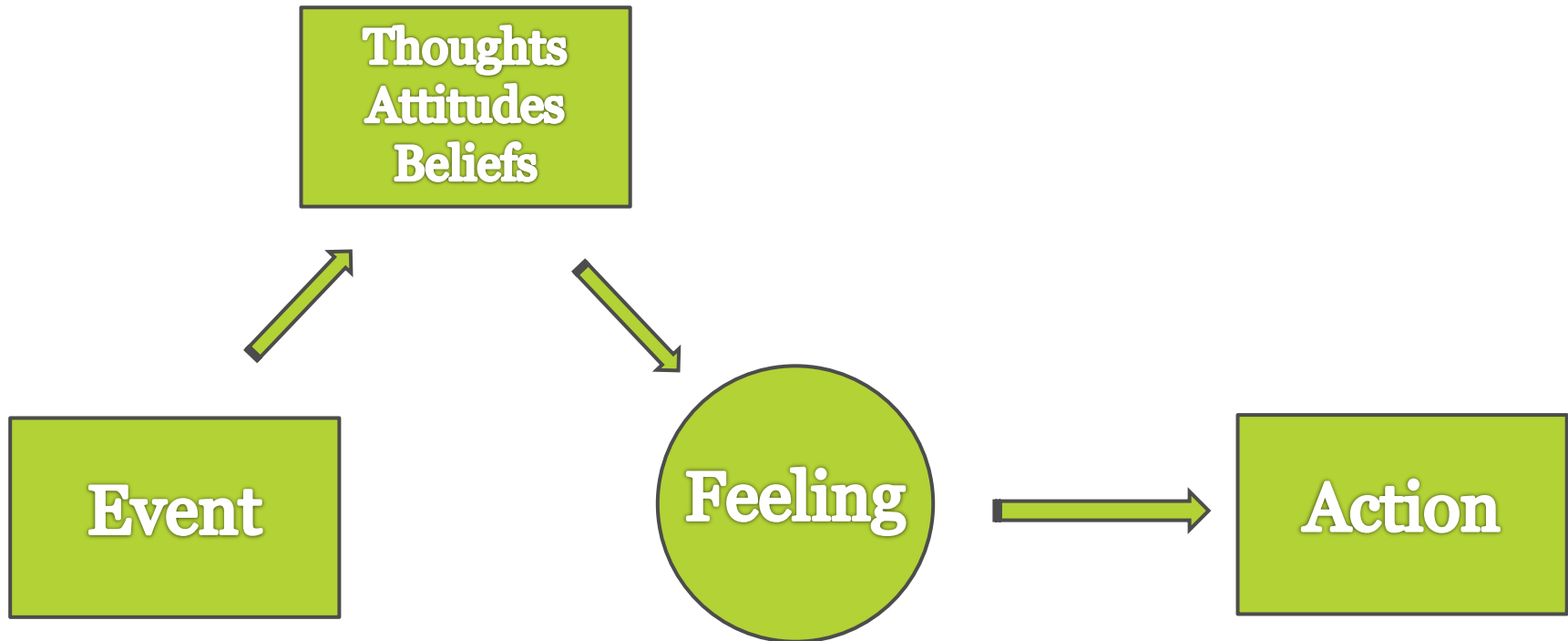
Community



Our Misunderstanding



Cognitive Behavioural Therapy



Examples of Stressful Thoughts, Feelings and Behaviours

1. You dwell on your weaknesses and minimize your strengths.
2. When faced with a new situation, you expect a negative outcome.
3. You avoid taking risks.
4. You have difficulty accepting compliments from others.
5. You often feel ashamed and embarrassed .
6. You lack confidence in your abilities.
7. You find it hard to make important decisions without relying on the advice from others.
8. You avoid problems rather than tackling them.

Examples of Negative Thinking

- All or Nothing Thinking
- Overgeneralization
- Disqualifying the Positive
- Jumping to Conclusions
- Magnification or Minimization
- Emotional Reasoning
- “Should” statements
- Labeling and Mislabelling
- Personalization





Stress Coping Techniques

Coping With Stress

- Identify Your Problems
- Talk about your problems
- Learn more about stress management
- Reduce tension



The “A, B, C’s” of Stress Management

A Attitude

How do I see it? Other ways of looking at it?

B Balance

Work/Play/Relaxation

C Commitment

Evaluating your current commitments

D Do

Do something different/out of the ordinary

E Exaggerate

Exaggerate more positive things in your life

F Focus

Current focus vs. a healthier focus

Reprogramming



Recognizing negative patterns which lead to unhealthy behaviours and then changing your thinking to allow healthier coping skills to develop.

Reprogramming

The next time you are stressed and feel overwhelmed or highly emotional:

1. Bring to mind a current situation or memory where you had a hard time coping.
2. Lightly place your fingertips on your forehead.
3. Put your thumbs on your temples next to your eyes, breathing deeply.
4. Keep the scene in your mind over the next few minutes.
5. As the blood returns to your forebrain over the next few minutes, you will find yourself beginning to think more clearly.



The Four A's of Stress Management

Accept

When we can't change the situation, sometimes we need to just accept it for what it is.

- Learn from the past?
- Talk with someone you trust?
- Use positive self-talk
- Keep smiling, despite difficulty
- Join a support group

Avoid

Plan ahead to rearrange your surroundings.

- Avoid someone who constantly bothers you
- Avoid taking on more than you can handle
- Leave the situation
- Avoid discussing certain topics



Alter

Changing stressful situations may allow you to evade the stress all-together.

- Ask someone to change their behavior
- Tell the person how you feel
- Change the time, place, setting
- Manage your time better
- Be more assertive



Adapt

By anticipating stressors in your life and making plans to adapt, you can save yourself a lot of aggravation.

1. Change Your: Thinking
2. Change Your: Feeling
3. Change Your: Behavior



Mitigating Mental Illness

The Big Four

The “Big Four” refer to the practical skills used by the Canadian Armed Forces and has many similarities to the ideas used in Sports Performance Psychology.

1. Goal Setting
2. Mental Rehearsal or Visualization
3. Self-Talk
4. Tactical Breathing

Goal Setting

- Setting both long and short-term goals.
- By setting goals we increase our motivation.
- Taking the time to review your goals and physically write them down can actually improve our chance for success and the likelihood that we will follow through with them.

Mental Rehearsal or Visualization



Self-Talk

- All people “talk” to themselves.
- People who are stressed can experience negative self-talk.
- Language tends to be overly dramatic, such as “never,” “always,” “awful” and “terrible,” or demanding, such as “have to”, “can’t” and “should.”
- This creates negative beliefs or expectations that cause further problems.
- People can be helped to practise using positive self-talk that replaces negative.

Tactical Breathing

This breathing strategy has been used by first responders, the military and athletes to focus, gain control and manage stress. In addition, it appears to help control worry and nervousness.

Relax yourself by taking 3 to 5 breaths as described below.
Visualize each number as you count.

Breathe in counting 1, 2, 3, 4

Stop and hold your breath counting 1, 2, 3, 4

Exhale counting 1, 2, 3, 4

Repeat the breathing

Breathe in counting 1, 2, 3, 4

Pause and hold your breathe counting 1, 2, 3, 4

Exhale counting 1, 2, 3, 4

Questions

