

Managing Anxiety and Stress

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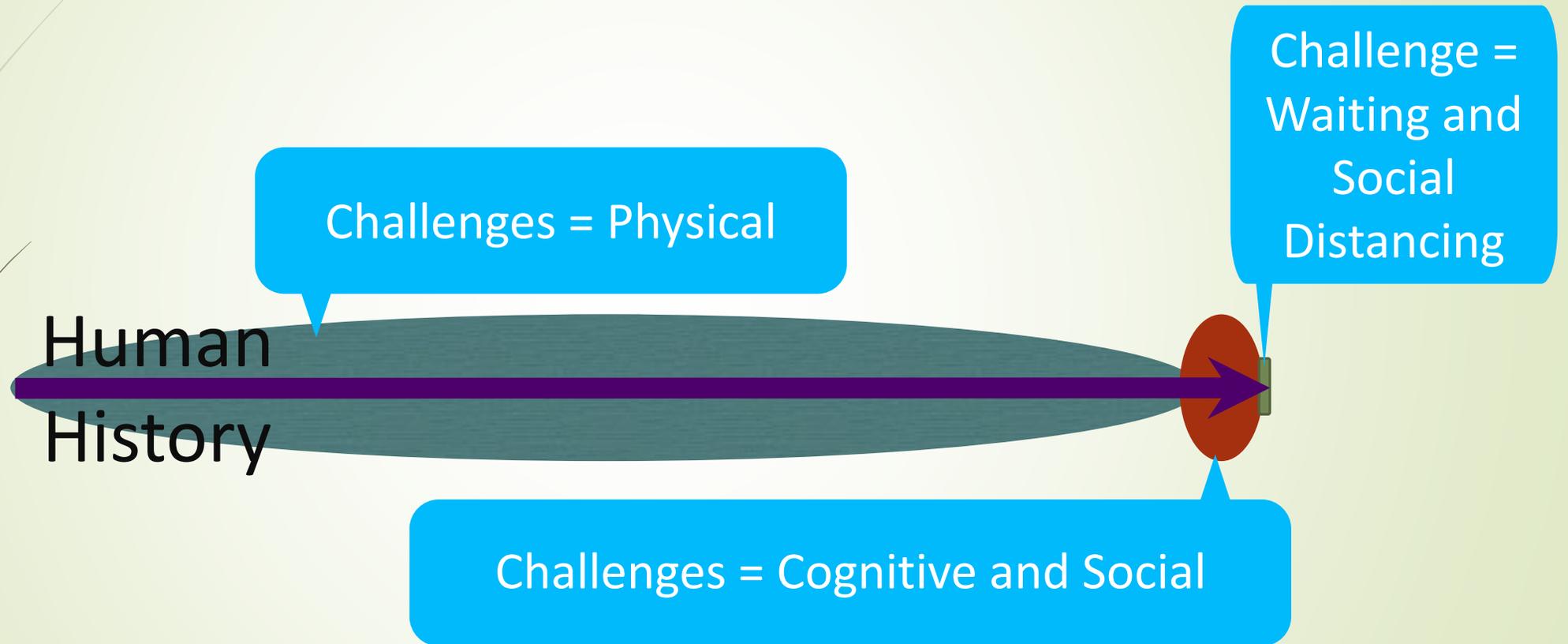
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For a more thorough slide-show
with narration focusing on
dealing with stress during
COVID-19, see:

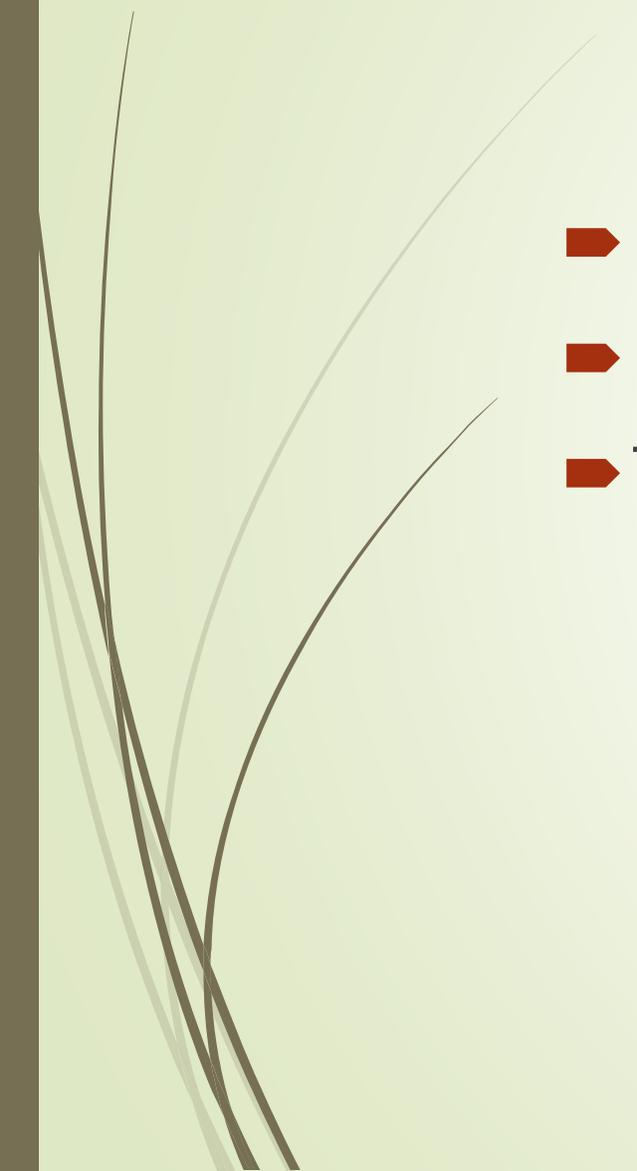
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Why More Anxiety/Stress Now





Be Physically Active

- It is harder to do this responsibly these days
 - But it is even more important
 - The stress hormone – cortisol – needs to be burned in our muscles
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Catch Shallow Breathing and Reset It

- When tense (especially when having to and wait for things to get better) we tend to get into shallow breathing
- Creates a CO₂ imbalance that makes us more nervous and worsens our ability to think
 - It also helps to be well hydrated
- Re-set by taking a long slow drink of water
- Do a breathing exercise
- Focus on good long breaths OUT



COVID-19: Worried About How to Keep Others and Self Safe?

- Don't make moment to moment decisions
 - Don't do it in your head
 - Create a written plan and stick with it
 - Revisit it weekly and make any adjustments in writing
 - Follow the recommendations of the health experts
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Use Your Deliberate Thoughts to Help Yourself

- ▶ When we are in a stressed state our brain's automatic thoughts (the ones we can't directly control) will naturally focus on what may go wrong or what is bad
 - ▶ It is up to you to use your deliberate thoughts (the ones you can actively choose to have) to find positive things and focus on hope
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Keep Your Feelings in Perspective

- ▶ It is easy to let ourselves get grabbed by our difficult feelings and let them run our thoughts. To make the difficult feelings have less power, it usually helps to label them, to admit to yourself that you have those feelings, to tell yourself that it is okay that you have those feelings, but that you do not have to let those feelings make your decisions for you.
- ▶ Remind yourself that you are not your feelings. You are the person that is observing the feeling and can choose what you do in response to the feeling.
- ▶ Do these two ratings – always in this order.
- ▶ 0-10, how big of a deal does it feel?
- ▶ 0-10, how big of a deal is it?



Plan Your Media Engagement

- It is good to stay informed, specially to help us make a good plan for what choices we want to make, but we don't need to get updated several times each day
- Our anxiety system gets triggered when our brain detects a challenge or a danger
- These days people tend to watch news, go online, or see things on social media so much that the anxiety system gets triggered over and over again through the day
- Consider blocking, unfriending, or “taking a break” from some people you know on social media if seeing their posts keep making you nervous
- Make a deliberate plan regarding when and how much to consume media that cause anxiety
- Avoid stress-inducing media within a couple hours of bed-time
- Many benefit from scheduling their social media use for right before exercising



Consider Scheduling A Worry-Time

- What??? I don't want to worry!
 - Yeah, but you are probably worrying anyway.
 - Many people find it easier not to worry in general when they have a specific time set aside for worrying. When you have a scheduled worry time and worries pop up in your mind at other times, you can tell yourself that you will think about it at the designated worry time.
 - The worry-time is also a good time to do any reading you want to do that you think may make you anxious
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