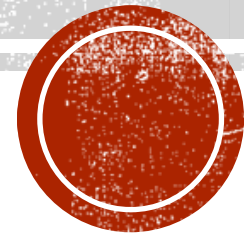


COPING AND CARING

Elizabeth Devon Smith, PhD

Assistant Professor & Clinical Psychologist

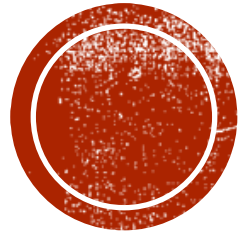
National Jewish Health



OVERVIEW

- Stress and NTM
- Coping: Building a skill set
- Caring: Social support
- Caring: Professional support





STRESS AND NTM



STRESS AND NTM

- Stress is common among patients with various health conditions, including NTM
 - Adjustment to new lifestyle
 - Fears about future health
 - Balancing family worries
 - Depression, anxiety, anger/frustration
- Managing your stress can...
 - Improve your quality of life
 - Help you manage your condition long-term
 - Improve your mental and physical health
 - Help you make lasting changes



LONG-TERM STRESS

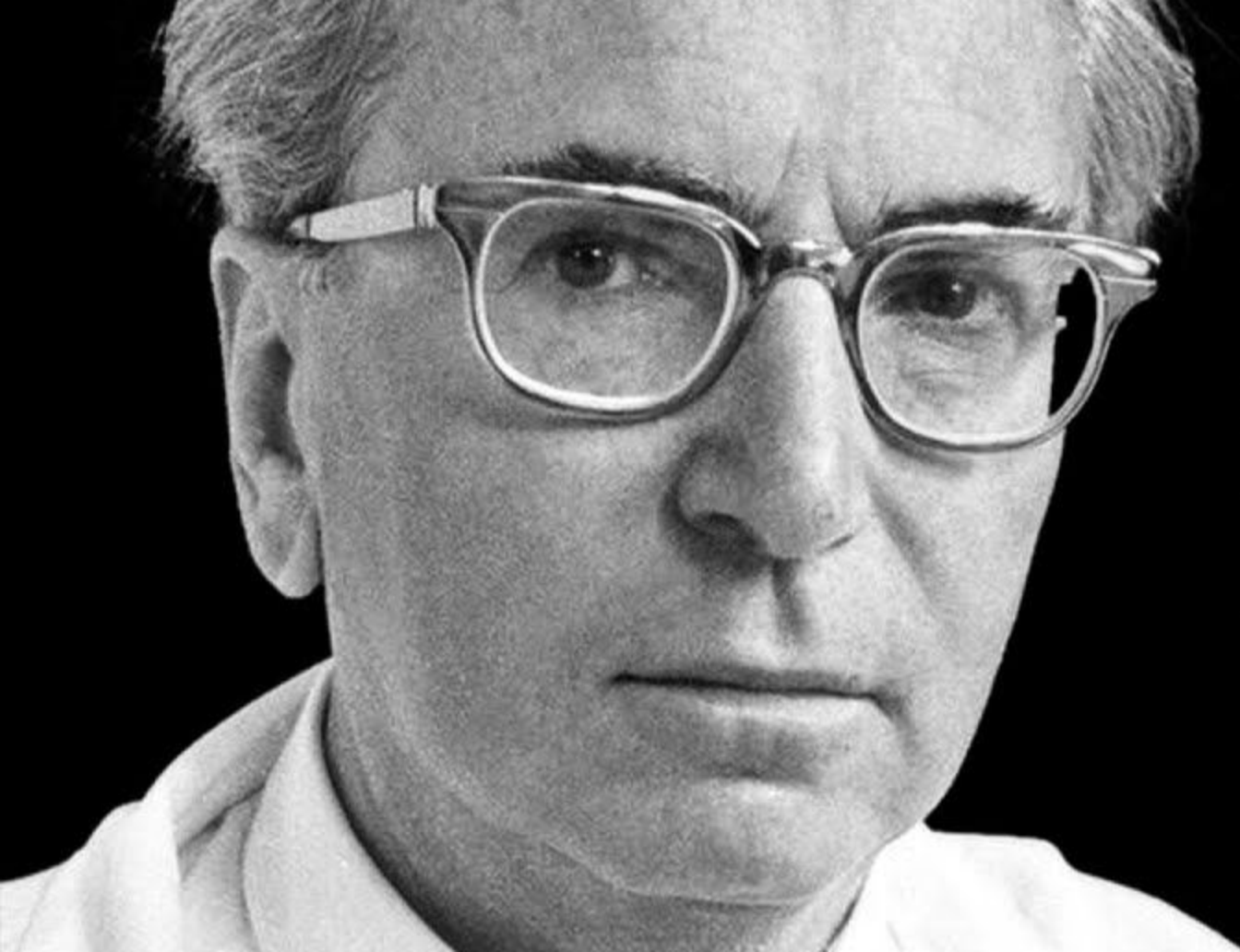
- Long-term stress: repeated on a regular basis or does not improve with time
 - If perceived threat doesn't subside within a few days, body starts to cope by releasing hormones (like cortisol) to sustain preparedness for about 1 month
 - Eventually wears on you both physically and emotionally
 - Exhaustion state is triggered (after 1-3 months) when body can no longer cope with stressor





IS YOUR STRESS CUP OVERFLOWING?



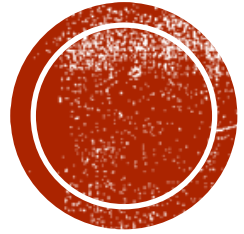


"When we are
no longer able to
CHANGE a situation,
we are CHALLENGED
to change OURSELVES."

www.thequotes.in

**STRESSORS MAY BE UNAVOIDABLE,
BUT STRESS REACTIONS CAN BE MODIFIED**





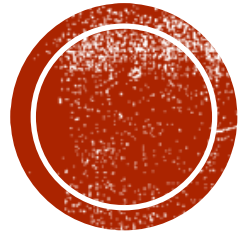
BUILDING A SKILL SET



YOUR EXISTING SKILL SET

- Everyone has coping skills, or things that help us relax or de-stress
- What coping skills work well for you?
- Choosing active rather than passive strategies are more helpful in the long run
 - Active: adaptive strategies that benefit you by being proactive and addressing problems and discomfort appropriately
 - Passive: maladaptive strategies, such as avoidance, denial, ignoring, that often take the form of unhealthy behaviors (skipping medical treatments, substance use)



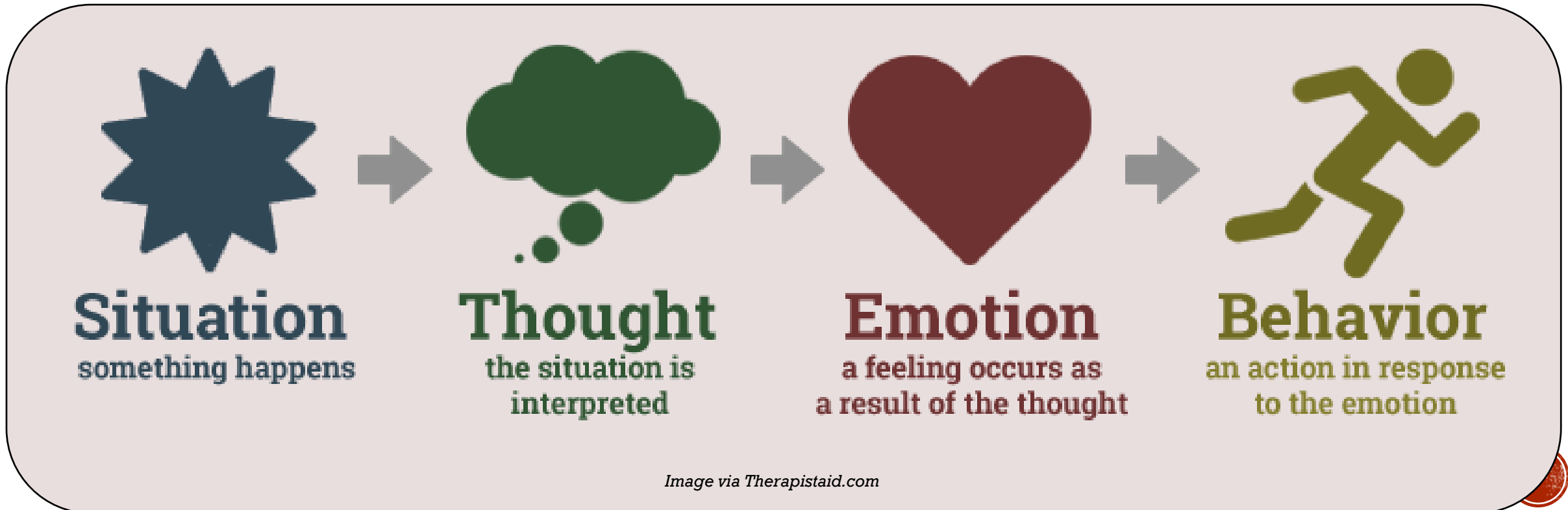


COPING SKILLS: THOUGHTS



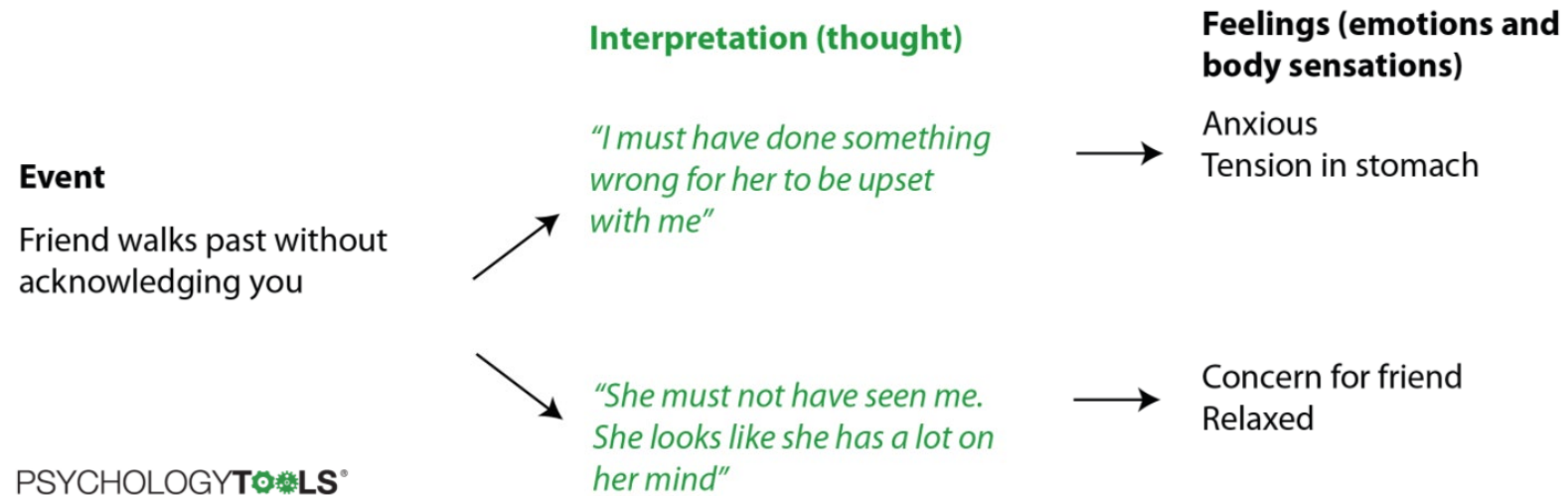
THE POWER OF THOUGHTS

- When a situation occurs, automatic thoughts pop into our mind, which can influence how we feel and behave
- We tend to latch on to thoughts that come to mind first or most often, regardless of accuracy
- However, latching on to thoughts that are negative, inaccurate, or unhelpful creates patterns of negative self-talk



INTERPRETATIONS

- Often, it's not events or situations that bother us
- Instead, it is the way that we interpret events – the meaning that we give to them – that gives rise to our feelings





GLASS HALF EMPTY OR HALF FULL?

- Usually, there is another way of looking at a situation, even if it is not immediately apparent to us
- No right or wrong
 - AND not OR
- Developing flexibility in our thinking reduces our distress



COPING SKILL: UNHOOK FROM THOUGHTS

- Defuse from the thought
 - “This is just a thought and not all thoughts are true”
- Notice a thought without believing it or struggling with it
- Stepping back and observing without getting tangled up
 - “I’m useless” vs. “I’m noticing I’m having thought that ‘I’m useless’”
- Seeing thoughts for what they are...just words or pictures
- Letting thoughts come and go

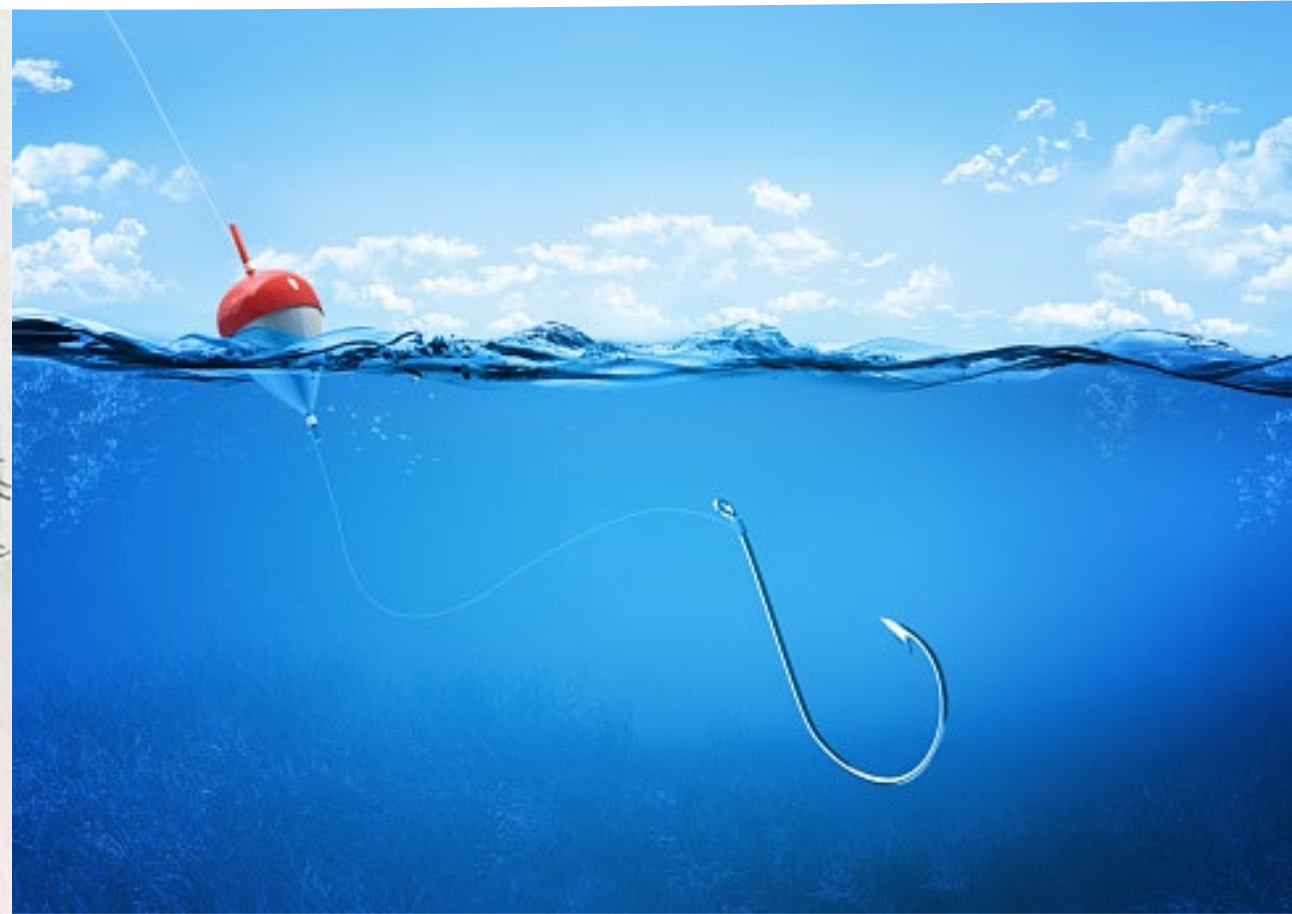


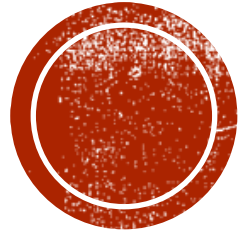
BEING IN
your THOUGHTS



OBSERVING
your THOUGHTS

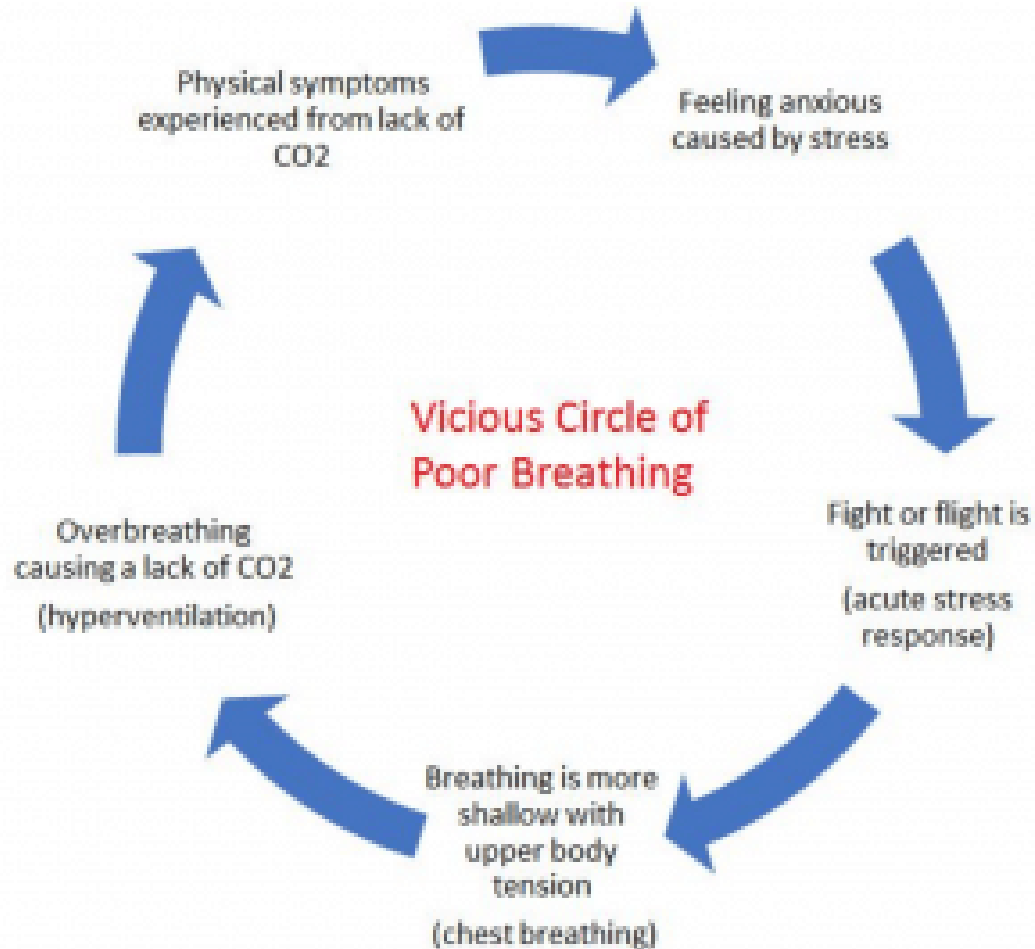
@revelatori 🌍





COPING SKILLS: BEHAVIORS & ACTIONS

CHEST VS. BELLY BREATHING



- Living with NTM, you know the importance of breathing and how difficult things can be when breathing doesn't feel quite right
- Chest breathing: shallow and irregular
- Diaphragmatic “belly” breathing: deeper and steady, allowing for normal oxygen/carbon dioxide exchange



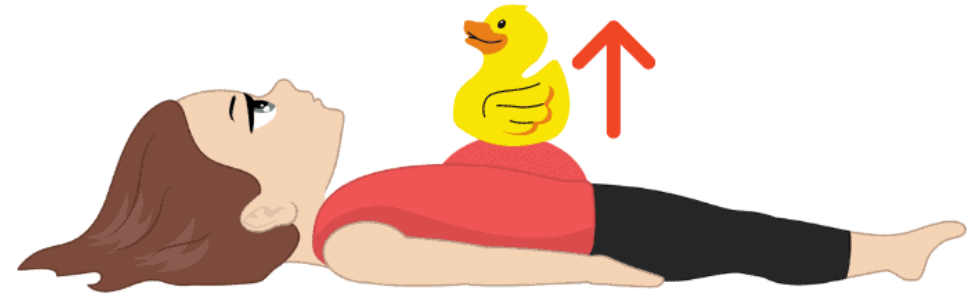
COPING SKILL: DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

BREATHE IN, BELLY OUT

- Place one hand on your chest and the other on your belly.
- Inhale deeply through your nose for a count of four, making sure your belly abdomen is expanding and not your chest. Exhale for a count of four.
- Continue this breathing cycle for a few minutes.
- Feel the stress leave your body while your mind becomes calm.



DE STRESS
MONDAY



Veryspecialtales.com





SIMPLE GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

If you're feeling anxious or worried, bring your attention back to the current moment with this simple grounding exercise. Notice the following around you:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

THEBLISSFULMIND.COM

COPING SKILL: 5-4-3-2-1



COPING WITH ACTIONS: PRIORITIZING SELF-CARE

- Self-care is about making yourself a priority and engaging in activities you *could* enjoy
- We often let our mood dictate what we do, so when we're stressed or unwell, we end up doing very little that we could enjoy, which makes us feel worse
- Self-care can be small activities
- The most important part is to be intentional



COPING WITH ACTIONS: IMPROVING SLEEP

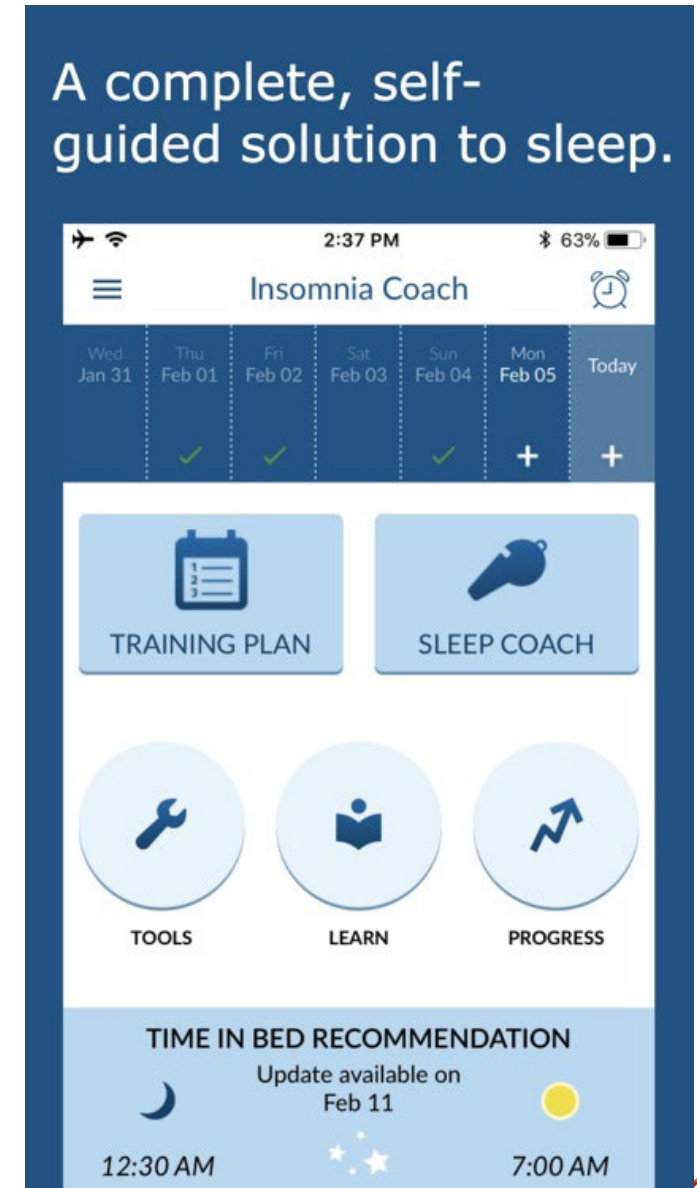
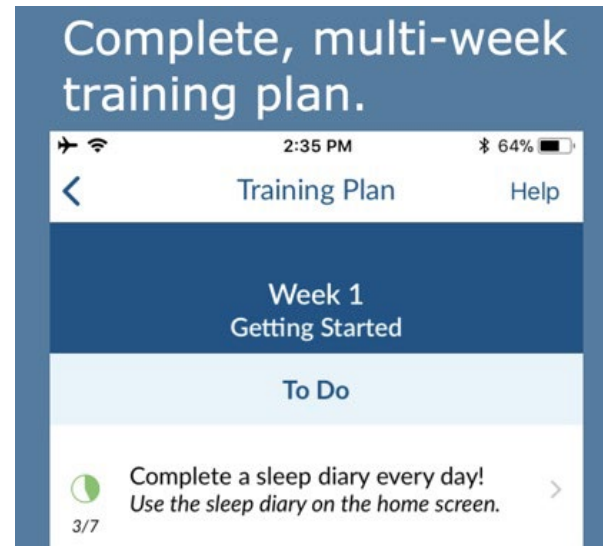
- Good sleep health can be characterized by a few different aspects:
 1. Satisfaction with quality of sleep (feeling rested)
 2. Sleep regularity (getting in and out of bed around the same time every day)
 3. Timing of sleep (majority of sleep occurring during nighttime and early AM)
 4. Sleep continuity (not spending more than 30 minutes awake during sleep time)
 5. Sleep duration (sleeping about 6-9 hours per night)
 6. Daytime alertness (able to stay awake throughout the day without dozing)

- Having frequent and persistent issues with multiple aspects of sleep health may indicate a need to improve sleep habits



SLEEP PROMOTING BEHAVIORS

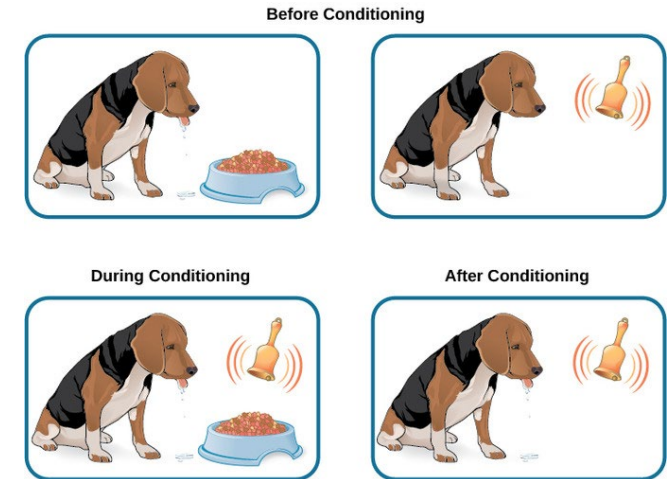
1. Set an earliest bedtime and latest wake time and follow it every day of the week
 - Keep your initial schedule close to your baseline averages
 - Let sleepiness guide actual bedtime to limit time in bed to time sleeping
 - Don't compensate for missed sleep (increase your sleep drive for the next night!)
 - Get a dose of sunlight first thing in the AM



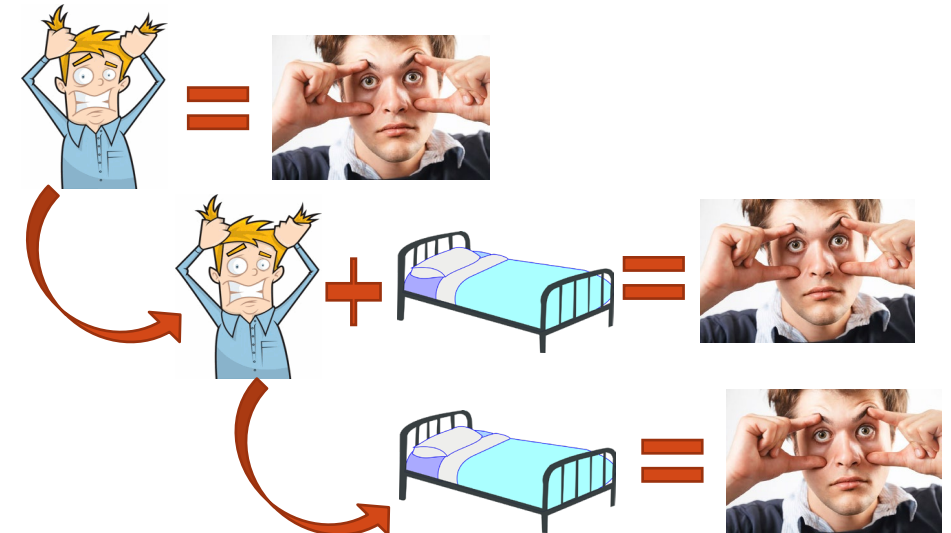
SLEEP PROMOTING BEHAVIORS

Spending too much time awake in bed can make it harder to sleep...

- 2) Eliminate sleep incompatible behaviors and get out of bed when you can't sleep
 - When in bed, don't read, watch TV, eat, use phone in bed, think, worry, or try to sleep
 - If 15-20 minutes pass and you are not sleeping (for any reason)... **GET OUT OF BED**
 - If you can't leave the bed (safety), sit up in bed in a distinctly different position
 - Do something relaxing until you feel you can sleep then try again
 - Have this planned before bed
 - Repeat as needed
 - Stay consistent! This promotes unlearning the association between the bed and arousal



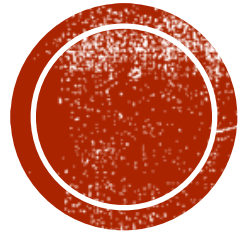
<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atd-bhcc-intropsych/chapter/classical-conditioning/>



SLEEP PROMOTING BEHAVIORS

- Nap smart
 - Build in a 30 minute nap/rest period
 - Should be 7-9 hours after final wake time
 - When you're acutely ill, you may need more sleep and that's ok!
 - If you tend to sleep more during the day and find yourself experiencing nighttime sleep disruption, another option is to recalibrate expectations





CARING: SOCIAL SUPPORT



SOCIAL SUPPORT

- **Role Changes in the Family**
 - Have roles within the family changed due to NTM? (or do you anticipate future changes?)
 - **Communication:** discuss the best way for you to manage role changes
 - Allow yourself to grieve *AND* focus on the roles that you still fill
 - Recognize that it is not necessarily negative for other family members to take on new roles
 - Roles tie into identity and self-worth
 - I keep our house clean; therefore I am a valuable person
 - Has your identity changed?
 - Make sure you still can identify positive aspects of yourself
 - Remember that there are many important ways to contribute to your family and to society



SOCIAL SUPPORT

- Social support= the comfort we receive from people in our life that help us through the good, the bad, and the ugly
- Research supports quality over quantity
 - Even a single source of social support can buffer stress and increase well-being
- Social support comes in different forms
 - Important to know what type of social support you need in a given situation and pair it with the most appropriate support person

Types of Social Support



Emotional

People who can actively share and listen to our concerns and provide empathy, love, and encouragement. Helps reduce feelings of helplessness and isolation.



Informational

People who can share personal knowledge and assistance about difficult decisions and are helpful with research and information gathering. Helps you feel more educated to make sound decisions.



Tangible

People who can provide practical support in areas like finances, caregiving, childcare, bringing you meals, picking up your shift at work, etc.

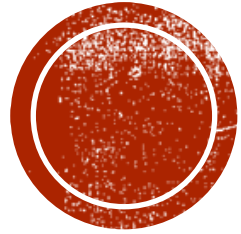
CALM-CF, Bathgate



SOCIAL SUPPORT

- How to enhance the quality of your support network:
 - Ask for what you need (instead of assuming others will know)
 - Ask yourself the following:
 - Am I willing to ask for help?
 - Am I willing to receive help?
 - Am I asking the right people?
 - Am I withdrawing from others?
 - Unhelpful thoughts might be preventing you from getting the support you need:
 - I need to be strong and manage on my own
 - I'm the only one who can do everything right
 - I don't want to burden people with my problems
 - Challenge these thoughts by asking yourself:
 - Is this 100% true 100% of the time?
 - What are the potential consequences?
 - Is this a fact or an opinion?





COPING: PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT



PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

- Sometimes, stress can lead to depression or anxiety
- Or sometimes, the stress can just feel overwhelming
- Either way, professional support is always an option
- Chronic illness (and much of life, in general) involves some suffering
 - BUT there is no need to excessively suffer



DEPRESSION

- **Depression** affects up to one-third of people with a chronic illness
- Feeling sad or down is completely normal
- Sometimes, depression is mild and short term
- However, depression can become more severe and might start getting in the way of day-to-day life
- Signs that you should seek treatment are: (1) your depression lasts most of the day, almost every day, for over 2 weeks or (2) gets in the way of your relationships, activities, or work.



ANXIETY

- Chronic illness can also lead to **anxiety**, which is completely normal
- Mild anxiety can be managed with the coping skills
- However, like depression, anxiety can become more severe and start to interfere with your life
- If anxiety becomes overwhelming or influences your behavior, talk therapy and/or medication can help



TREATING DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

- For mild to moderate depression and anxiety
 - Medications very effective
 - Psychotherapy very effective
 - Medications and psychotherapy equally effective
- For severe depression and anxiety, medication is often crucial
- Most effective approach is medication and psychotherapy together
- Medication usually has quicker results but psychotherapy is more effective than medication at preventing relapse



TREATMENT RESOURCES

- Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies
 - www.abct.org
 - 212-647-1890
- American Psychological Association
 - www.apa.org
 - 800-374-2721
- American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy
 - www.aamft.org
 - 703-838-9808
- American Psychiatric Association
 - www.psychiatry.org/
 - 202-559-3900



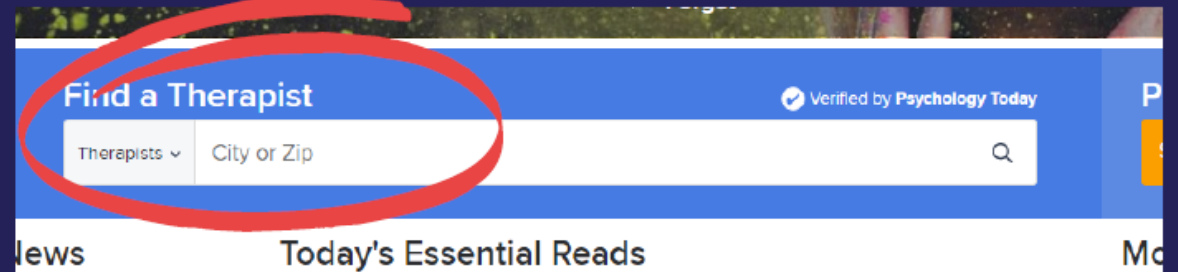
FINDING A THERAPIST

01



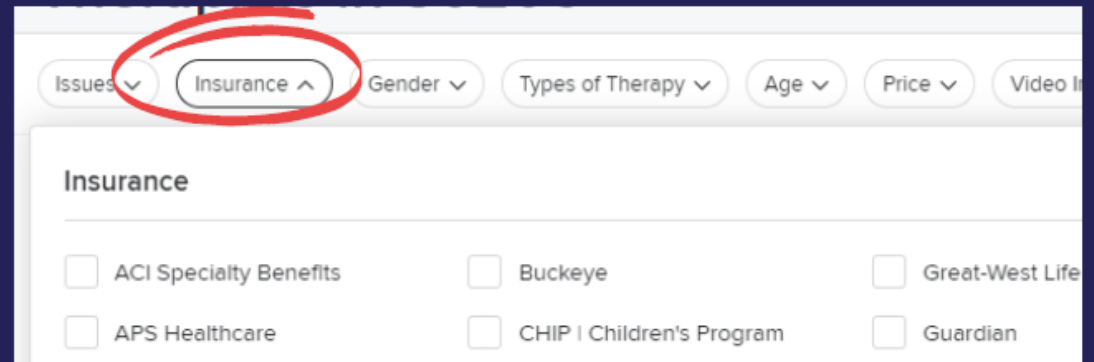
Go to psychologytoday.com on your phone, tablet, or computer

02



Enter your zip code in the search box

03



Filter the results based on your insurance, type of therapy, and anything else.

TYPES OF THERAPY

- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**
 - Very effective for depression and anxiety
 - Structured and time-limited
 - Involves changing behaviors and unhelpful thoughts/beliefs
- **Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT)**
 - Great option for persistent mental health symptoms and coping with chronic health conditions
 - Instead of changing thoughts and behaviors, focus on acceptance and finding meaning in life despite challenges
- **Family Systems Therapy**
 - Helpful for handling changes in relationship dynamics due to illness



SUPPORT GROUPS

- NTM Info & Research (NTM-IR): dedicated to helping people with NTM (and their families) live their best lives through education, information, and support
- The NTM-IR website has a directory of local support groups for those with NTM and bronchiectasis (many are currently virtual!)
- Support groups can be a great way to not feel so alone
- <https://ntminfo.org>



SOME FINAL THOUGHTS

- **Stress**
 - Chronic illnesses can impact stress levels
- **Coping: Building a skill set**
 - Make the most of your existing coping skills
 - When developing additional coping skills, experiment and keep an open mind
- **Caring: Social support**
 - Roles in your family may change and that's ok
 - Re-evaluate your identity and find ways to maintain self-worth
 - Match the social support to your needs
- **Caring: Professional support**
 - Medications are useful and talk therapy is useful
 - Psychotherapy is beneficial for treatment of depression and anxiety, as well as for general adjustment to life and family changes
 - Support groups can connect you to others who have similar experiences





YOU DON'T HAVE TO SEE THE WHOLE
STAIRCASE. JUST TAKE THE FIRST STEP.

~ MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

bobbarron.tv

QUESTIONS?

