

Fostering Resilience and Recovery

Strengthening Coping and Protecting the Most Vulnerable

UW MEDICINE

JUNE 2021

Trauma Recovery Innovations

Michele Bedard-Gilligan, Ph.D., Co-Director

Kristen P. Lindgren, Ph.D., ABPP, Co-Director

UW Medicine

Acknowledgments:

- Collaborator: Emily Dworkin, Ph.D.
- UW Dept of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences
- Colleagues at:
 - Center for the Study of Health and Risk Behaviors
 - UW Center for Anxiety and Traumatic Stress

Mission

We seek to promote trauma recovery by making treatments easier to use and sustain in real world settings across the globe.



**TRAUMA
RECOVERY
INNOVATIONS**

Behavioral interventions for trauma-related mental health symptoms are effective, BUT those who need them most, often don't receive them.



We adapt treatments

In Haiti, DRC, Iraq, & Somalia and US AIAN communities



We consult, train, & implement

NW Providers, WA State ECHO clinic, Seattle area providers



We develop new treatments

Briefer, technology-based treatments for sexual assault & co-occurring substance use

Goals for today:

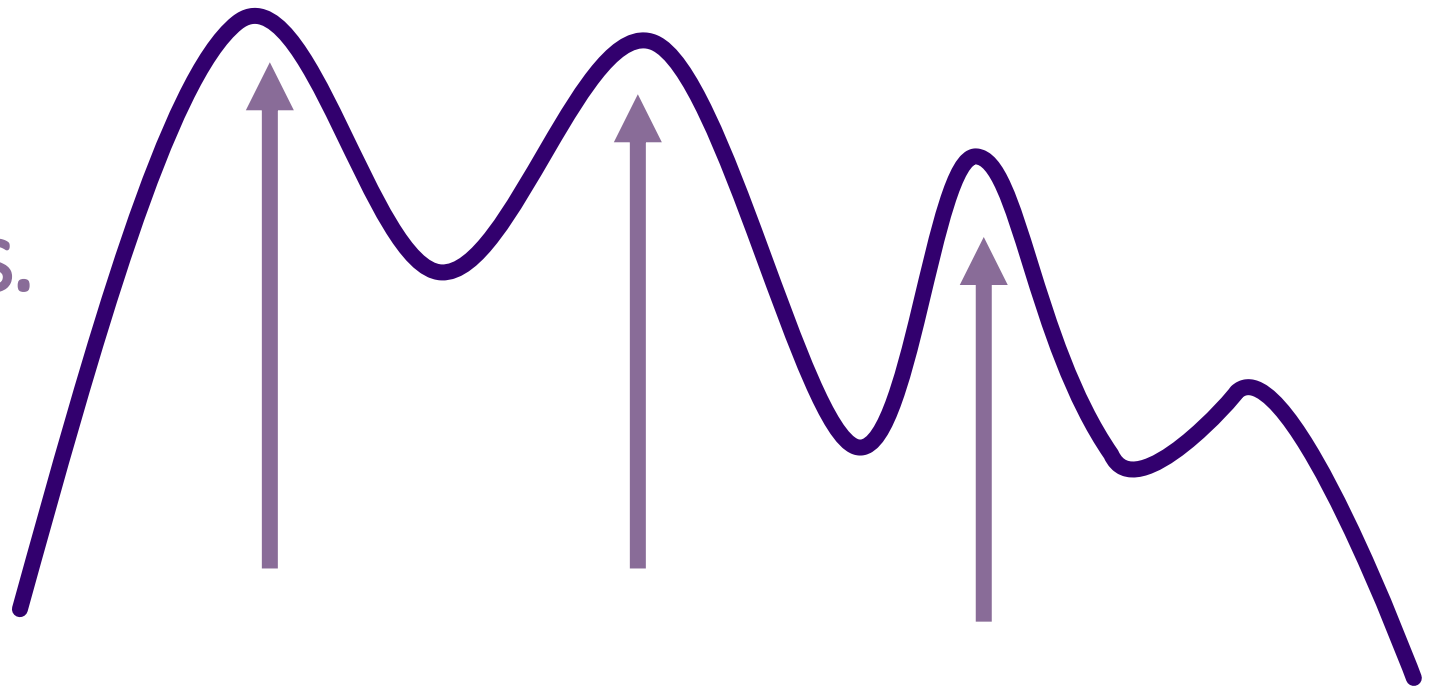
- ✓ Present **recent work on promoting resilience** during periods of high stress
- ✓ **Answer questions** on effects of stress, trauma, and resilience

Defining Resilience



We are living in a time of elevated **acute AND chronic** stressors.

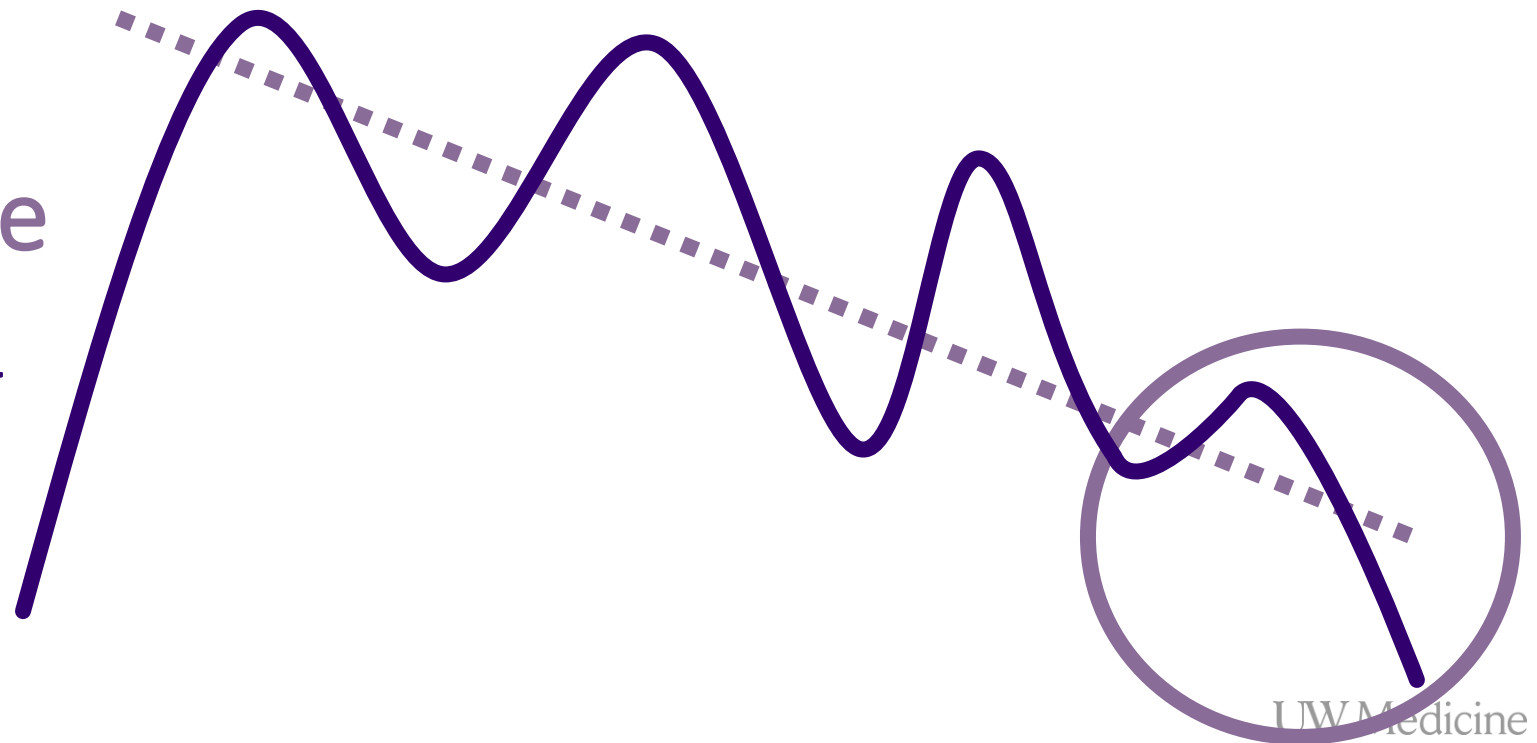
Everyone is being exposed to repeated periods of acute distress.



Resilience is the process of **adapting well** in the face of **adversity**.

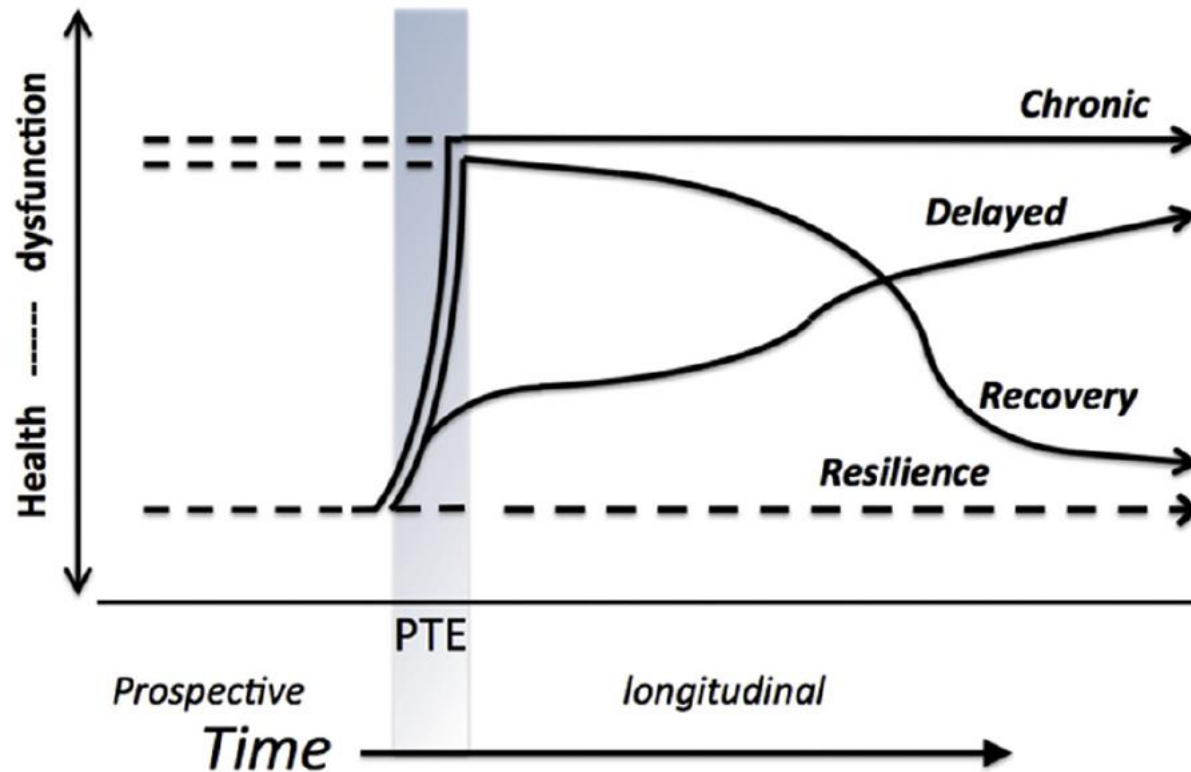
Resilience is the most common outcome.

We expect most people to be resilient during & following stressors.



Most people are resilient, although **pathways are varied**

Bonanno (2004), Galatzer-Levy et al. (2018)

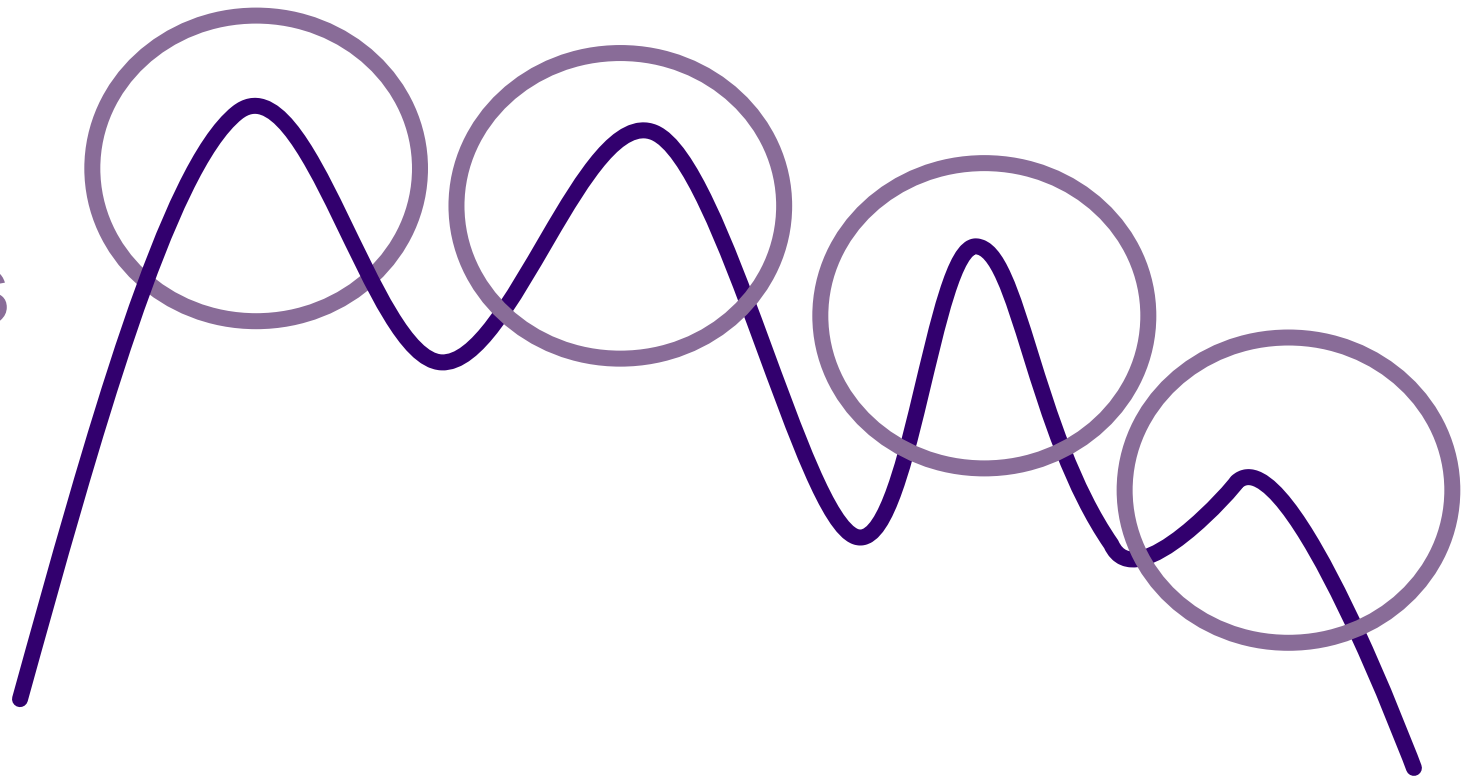


Prospective and Longitudinal Studies ($k = 54$, $N = 76,435$)

- 65.7% resilient
- 20.8% recovery
- 10.6% chronic
- 8.9% delayed onset

But resilience is variable and nonlinear.

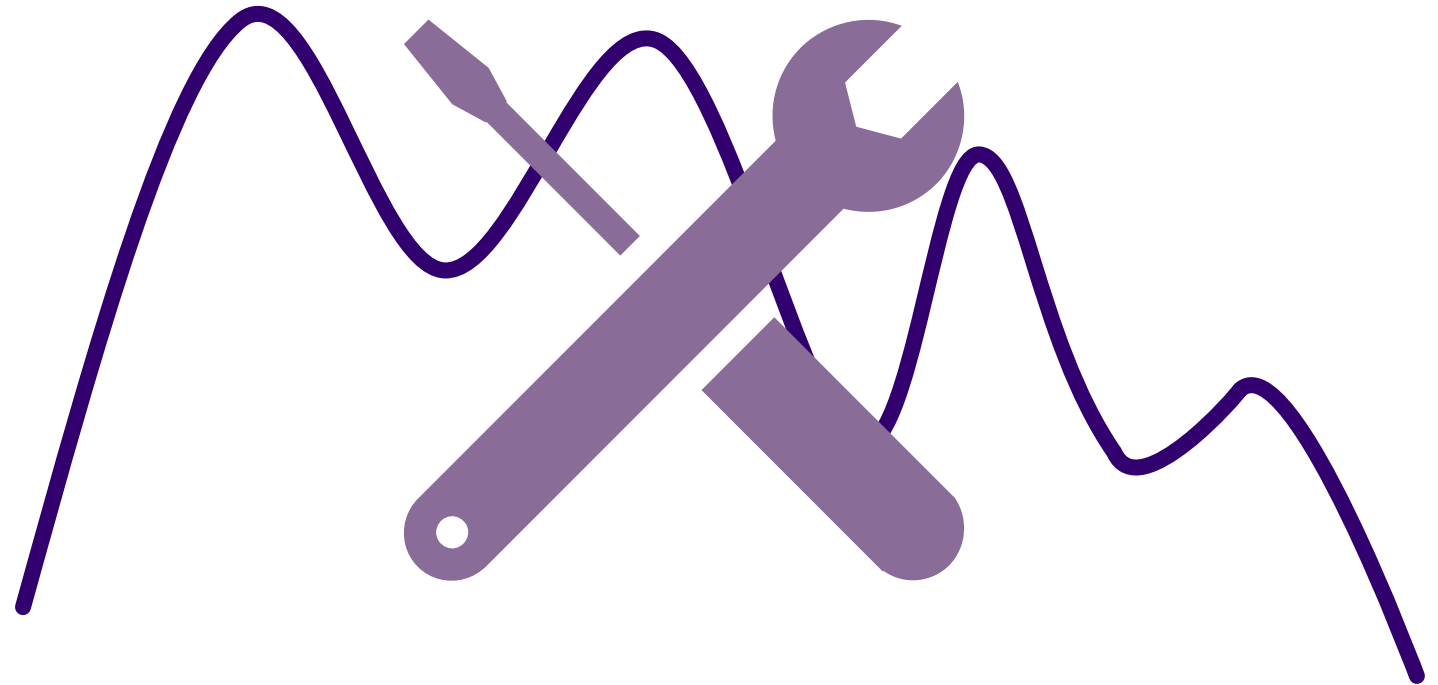
It doesn't mean
there's no distress
along the way.



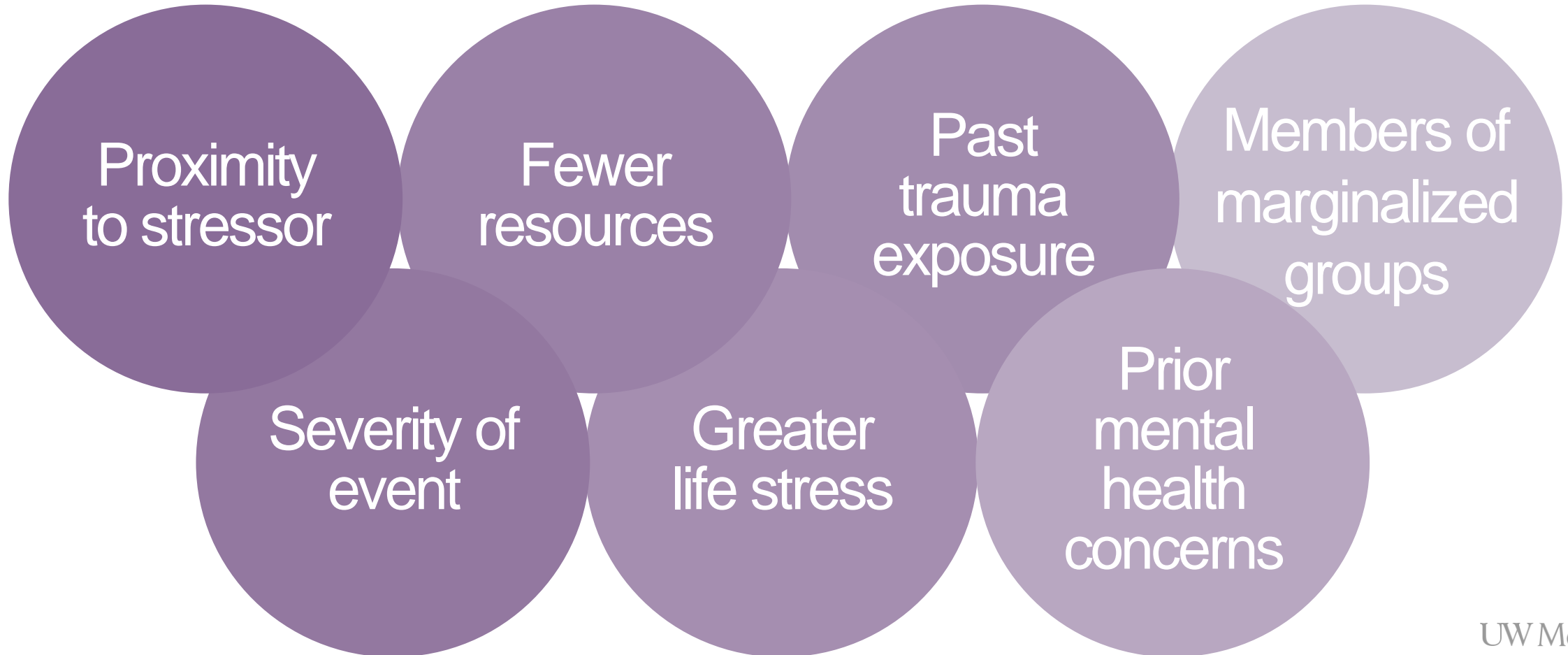
Resilience requires **effort, persistence, and patience.**

—

It can be **acquired**
and **learned.**



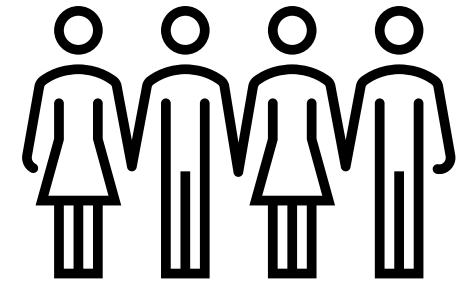
Those who are **most vulnerable** may need more support.



Some of us are affected more than others.



Bolstering the
community helps
us all!



What it means to be **resilient**.

“It’s to be adapting and accommodating, rather than resistant to, the suffering. I think that’s what it is to live through hardship for sustained periods of time.”

- Dipali Mukhopadhyay, Columbia University

A large, stylized graphic of a leaf or flower, composed of several overlapping, curved shapes in various shades of purple and blue. The graphic is centered on the page and serves as a background for the text.

Promoting Resilience



Strategies to promote resilience focus on 3 A's.

- Assessing
- Accepting
- Adapting



Regularly **assessing** one's well-being & needs is crucial.

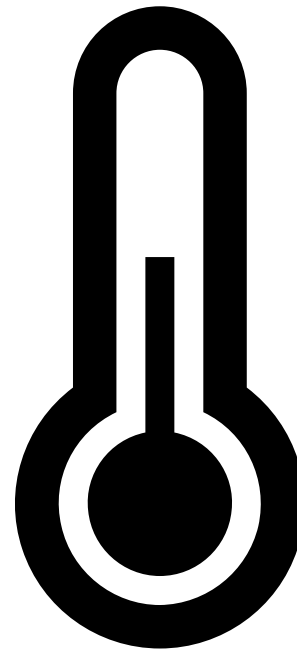
Do regular emotional and behavioral temperature checks.

Eating healthy?

Sleeping well?

Staying active?

Seeing friends/family?



Positive feelings?

Negative feelings?

Negative thoughts?

Substance use?

Regularly **assessing** one's well-being & needs is crucial.

Ask yourself regularly:



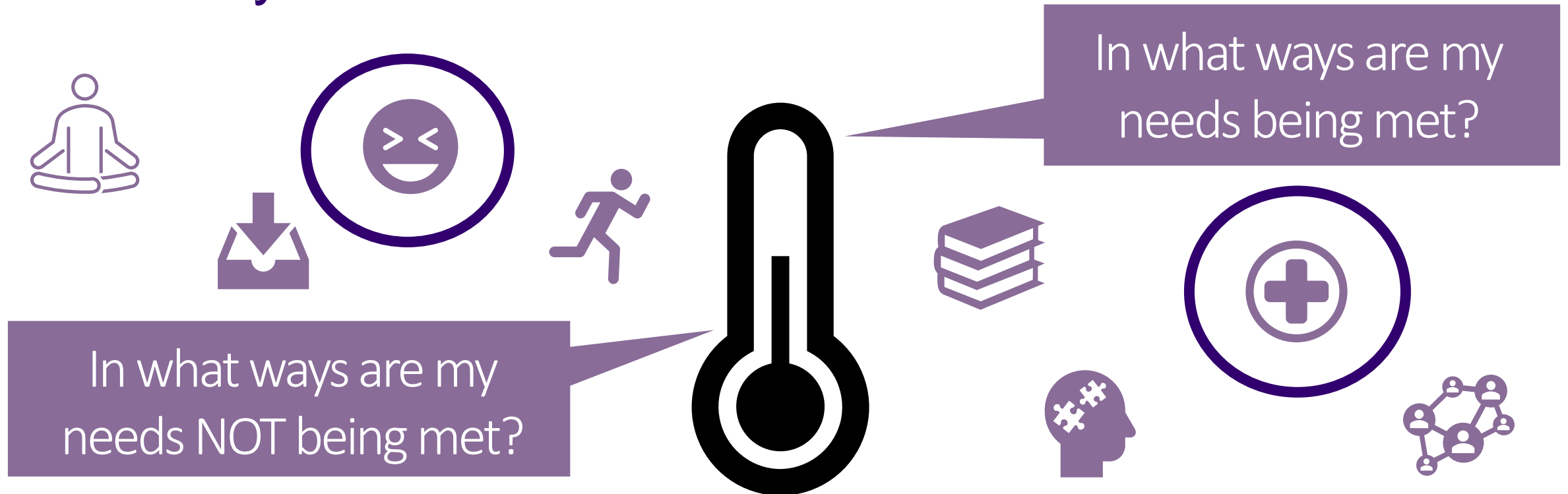
In what ways are my needs being met?

In what ways are my needs NOT being met?



Regularly **assessing** one's well-being & needs is crucial.

Prioritize your needs:



Acceptance means acknowledging the new normal and your reactions to it.



Notice where your reality has shifted and work to accept:

Unavoidable changes

Negative emotions

Loss of control

Acceptance means acknowledging
the new normal and your reactions to it.



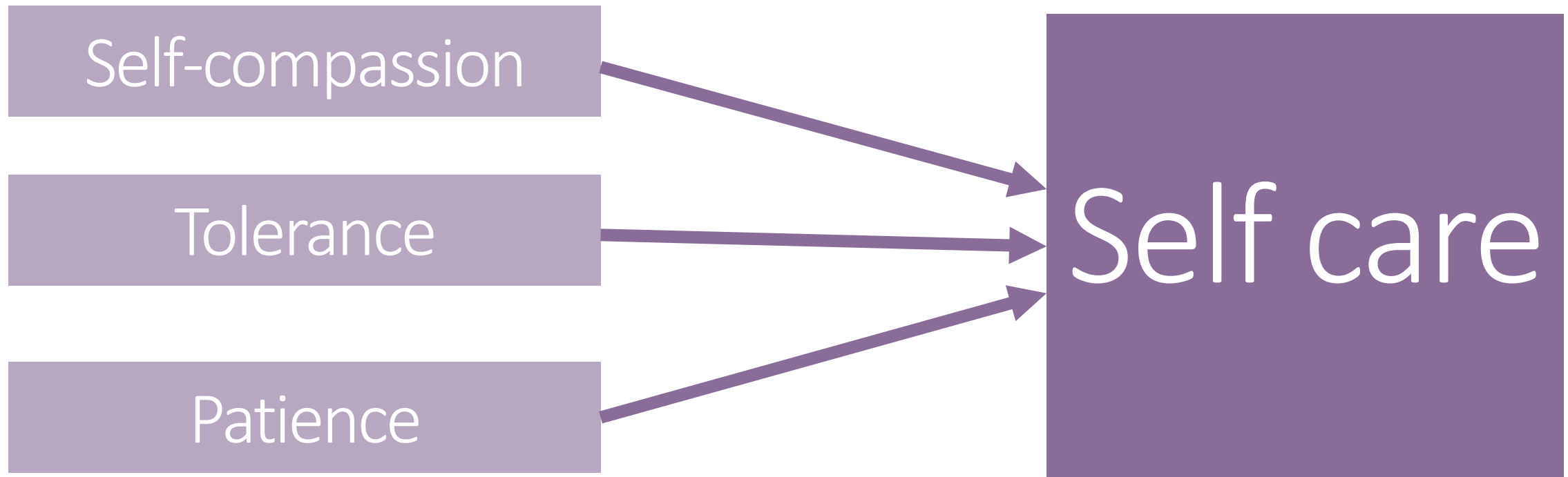
Also notice:

How you coped

Your strengths

Your resources

Acceptance means acknowledging that this is hard!



Adapting to the new reality requires intention, planning, and flexibility.

Set a
routine

Sleep, eat, work, school, social,
self-care

Stay
active

Exercise, get out, get engaged

Don't
avoid

Don't isolate or withdraw, limit
substance use

Adapting involves promoting positive activities.

Review a list of activities.



Create

- Draw a picture
- Paint a portrait
- Take a photograph
- Doodle / sketch
- Organise photographs
- Make a photograph album
- Start a scrapbook
- Finish a project
- Do some sewing / knitting



Kindness

- Help a friend / neighbor / stranger
- Make a gift for someone
- Try a random act of kindness
- Do someone a favour
- Teach somebody a skill
- Do something nice for someone
- Plan a surprise for someone
- Make a list of your good points
- Make a list of things or people you are grateful for



Plan

- Set a goal
- Create a budget
- Make a 5 year plan
- Make a 'to do' list
- Make a 'bucket list'
- Make a shopping list



Write

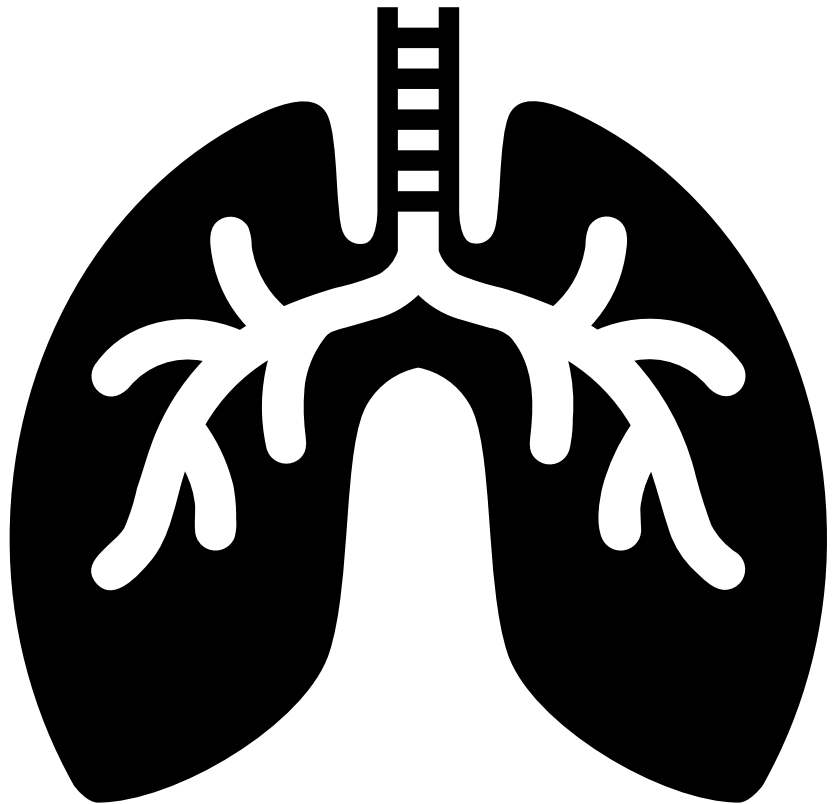
- Write a letter with compliments
- Write a letter to your politician
- Write an angry letter
- Write a grateful letter
- Write a 'thank you' card
- Write a journal / diary
- Write your CV
- Start writing a book



Self care

- Take a bath
- Take a shower
- Wash your hair
- Give yourself a facial
- Trim your nails
- Sunbathe (wear sunscreen!)
- Take a nap

Adapting involves managing distressing reactions as they occur.



Breathing

Get comfortable

Breathe in through your nose for 5, expanding your belly

Hold for 5

Exhale slowly for 7 while you say a soothing word

Adapting involves **feeling and tolerating** distress, not eliminating it.



Writing Exercise

Set aside 30 minutes

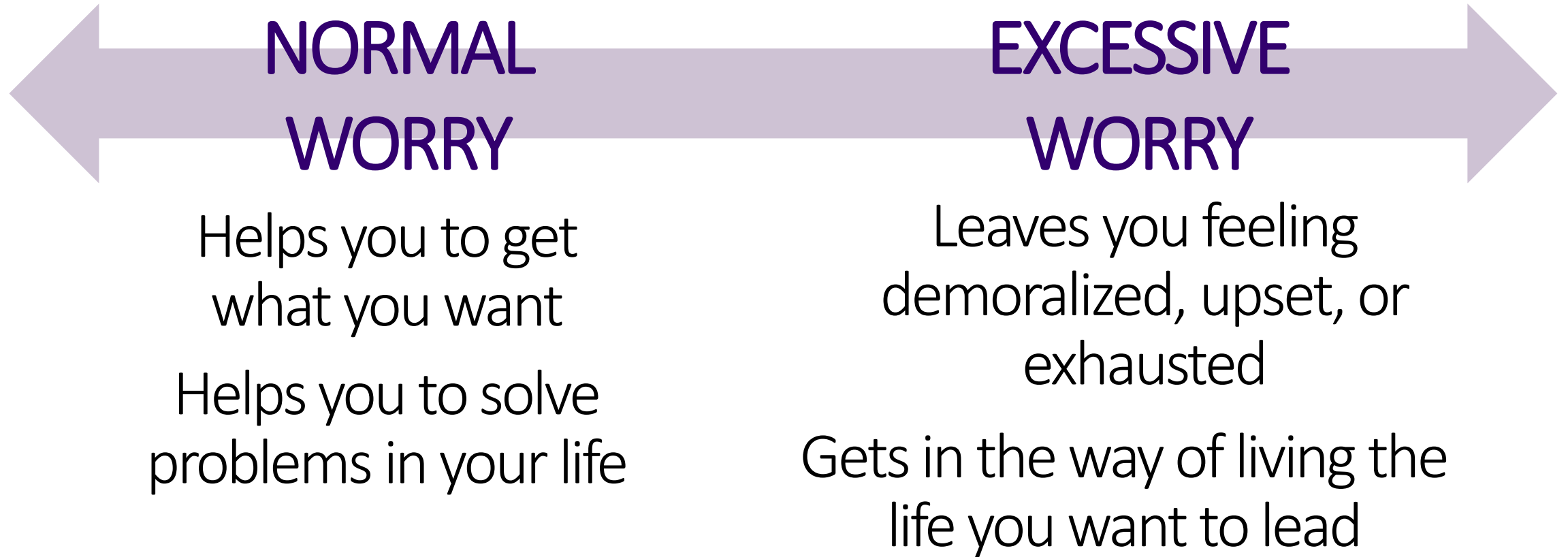
Write about whatever is distressing you

Give yourself space to feel your emotions

Consider the things you did to help yourself or others

Repeat, building in new helpful thoughts

Adapting involves distinguishing between **normal** and **excessive** worry.



Adapting involves **challenging worry thoughts**, not treating them as facts.

Ask yourself: What would be more helpful thoughts?
What would I **say** to a friend in this situation?

The worst could happen, but I don't know that it will.

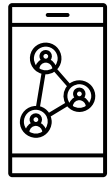
Even if the worst does happen, I could cope if I had to.

Adapting involves increasing **social and community connections.**

Think about how to give and get varied social support.



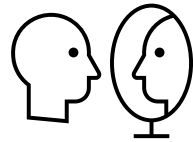
Emotional
Comfort



Social
Belonging



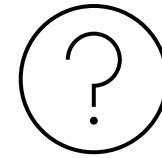
Feeling
Needed



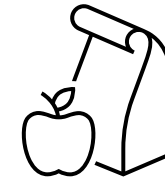
Self-
Worth



Reliable
Support



Advice
Info



Physical
Assistance



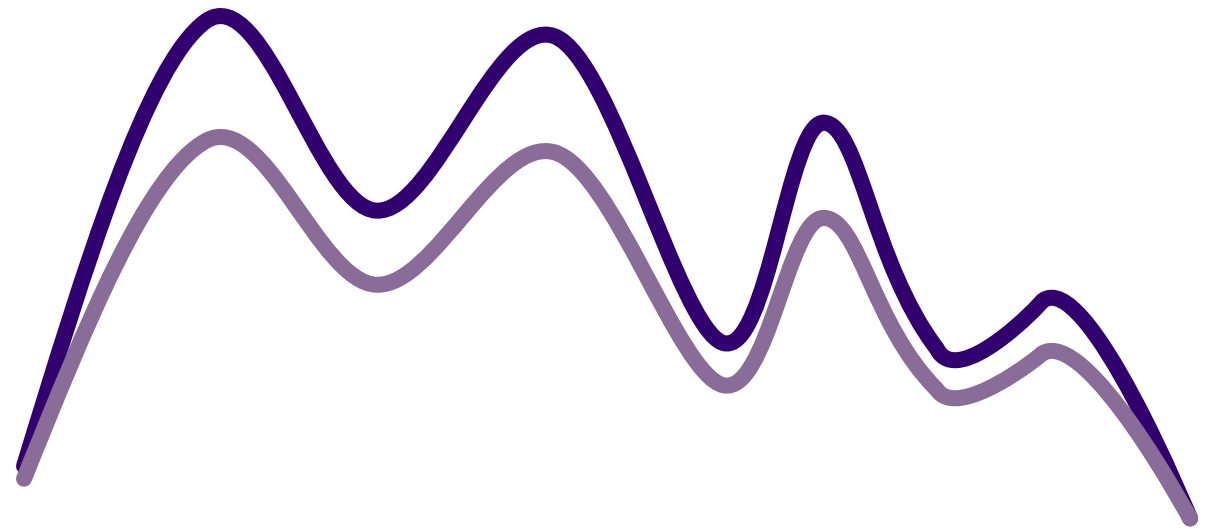
Material
Assistance

What do you need and what can you give?

Assessing, accepting, and adapting can **promote** **long-term resilience.**

Remember that **resilience** is the most common outcome.

Working to cope effectively with crises will **promote** future resilience.



We can promote resilience and recovery from trauma by translating evidence-based, culturally mindful knowledge to the real world, one project at a time.



**TRAUMA
RECOVERY
INNOVATIONS**

QUESTIONS?

