

With care for yourself and everyone

Psychosocial support at the workplace in war and post-war times

Psychological methods of self-recovery

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“... even a concentration camp prisoner has choice. They can try to survive at any price or become ultimately numb and throw up their hands. Or, they can keep living in spite of everything. The image of their beloved one and an imaginary talk with them, tree trunks lit by sunset, assistance to other prisoners, humour – all this can become a point of spiritual “escape”, a secret life immune to terrible conditions...”

Viktor E. Frankl, Austrian psychotherapist

Books:

“Humankind’s search for ultimate meaning”, “Yes to life: in spite of everything”

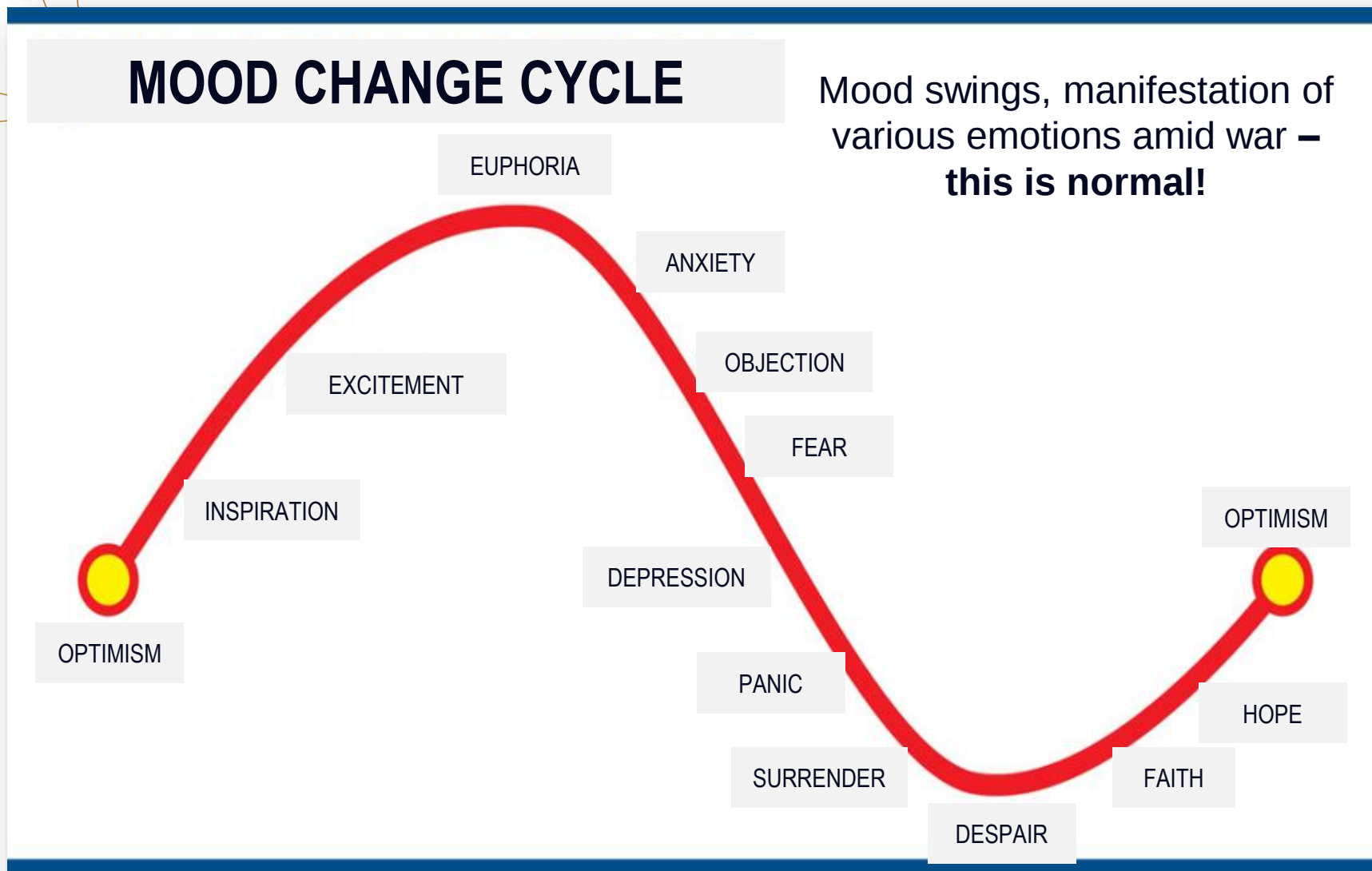


► **Human psychology during war**

Workers in martial law:
a psychosocial aspect



“war inside us”



Psychosocial consequences of war

- ▶ According to the WHO estimate, 10% of people on average will have serious mental health problems; 10% will have maladaptive behaviour
- ▶ The most common consequences: depression, anxiety and psychosomatic problems
- ▶ Stress because of:
 - *fear of death*
 - *fear of uncertainty* aggravated by having no clear action plan, support from management, working in a dangerous zone, etc.
 - *fear of change* (psychosocial adaptation, relocation, etc.)



“Ukraine has only one real resource – energy of people. And this energy needs to be released. Entrepreneurship and volunteering are two pedals of our bicycle on which we must flee from the horseriders of the Apocalypse”

Valerii Pekar, entrepreneur, public activist

Diletant coffee shop, Kyiv



Instagram: @dyletant.cafe

“We keep coming here and writing ‘a phrase of the day’, putting fresh flowers, and making filter coffee even for one person...”

► **Stress and distress:**

psychological methods of self-recovery



"We're all under stress now. I'm not a psychologist. I'm afraid that communication with more stressed people will increase my quantity of stress, too".

ILO training participant

Self-care

Care for yourself!

"First put an oxigene mask on yourself, then on your child"

NOW



Mental health

is a component of general human health, which includes emotional, psychological and social well-being, that is determines the way we think, feel and act, manage stress, communicate and make decisions



**What does
“stress” mean?**

It is our body's non-specific
response to any demand put to it

Stress development stages:

- ▶ **Anxiety**
- ▶ **Resistance**
- ▶ **Exhaustion**



Distress

is a state when a person cannot adapt to a stressful situation and exhibits maladaptive behaviour



Possible human physiological responses to a stressful situation:

Analyze your condition, pay attention!



- ▶ Accelerated heartbeat
- ▶ Fast shallow breathing
- ▶ Nausea, diarrhea
- ▶ Dizziness
- ▶ Feeling of lack of air
- ▶ Dry mouth
- ▶ Cold and wet palms
- ▶ Muscle swelling and tension
- ▶ Nervous tremor
- ▶ Difficulties with sleeping
- ▶ Continuous headache
- ▶ Infirmary, feeling exhausted and tired
- ▶ Loss of appetite
- ▶

Possible human psychological (emotional, cognitive, behavioural) responses to a stressful situation:

- ▶ Shock, objection, rejection
- ▶ Sense of doom, helplessness
- ▶ Feeling guilty
- ▶ Apathy
- ▶ Frequent mood swings: feeling happy at one moment but sad in the next instant
- ▶ Annoyance, outbursts of anger, aggressiveness
- ▶ Communication problems
- ▶ Inability to concentrate
- ▶ Embarrassment
- ▶ Memory problems
- ▶ Obsessive thoughts
- ▶ Low productivity
- ▶ Substance use problems

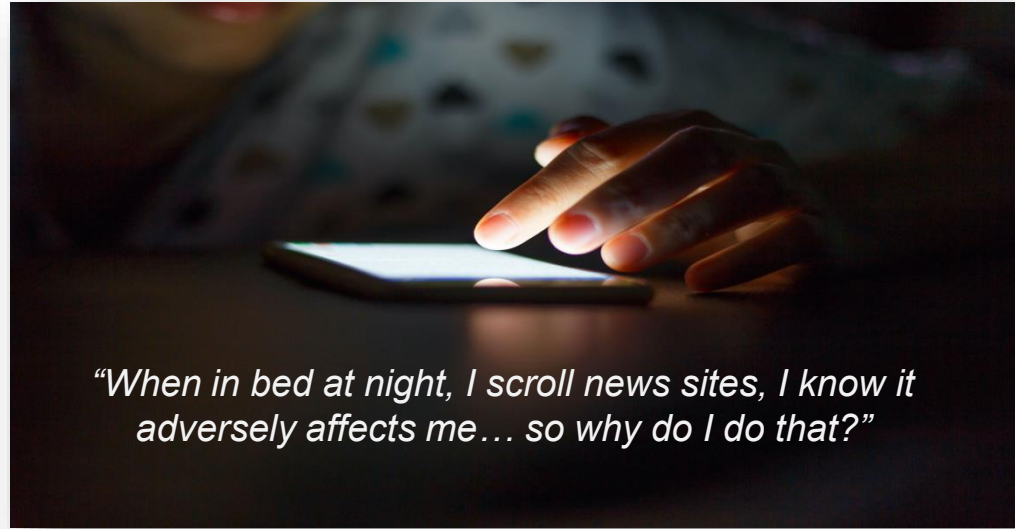
Analyze your condition, pay attention!



Distress risk factors (possible causes):

- ▶ **traumatic event severity degree;**
- ▶ **no stress management experience;**
- ▶ **no support from others;**
- ▶ **state of physical health;**
- ▶ **age;**
- ▶ **gender specifics;**
- ▶ **doomscrolling.**





"When in bed at night, I scroll news sites, I know it adversely affects me... so why do I do that?"

Doomscrolling

- ▶ practice of obsessively checking (scrolling) news for updates, anxiously expecting that news will be bad, so that the feeling of fear from that forces the person to keep looking for updates again and again
- ▶ the need to get a feeling of control over the situation and over the person's own anxiety at least somehow

I go on an "information diet"!:

- ▶ I realize why the "scrolling" is dangerous to me.
- ▶ I set limits: what and how much do I consume?
- ▶ I do my job and make pauses for news.
- ▶ I try to read/watch positive news before bedtime or rather do something pleasant to me half-an-hour before going to bed.
- ▶ Every day I try to make a list of what I am grateful for and to whom.

Coping strategy

is a human thinking and behaviour strategy aimed at stress management

- ▶ **A person adapts to demands of a stressful factor**

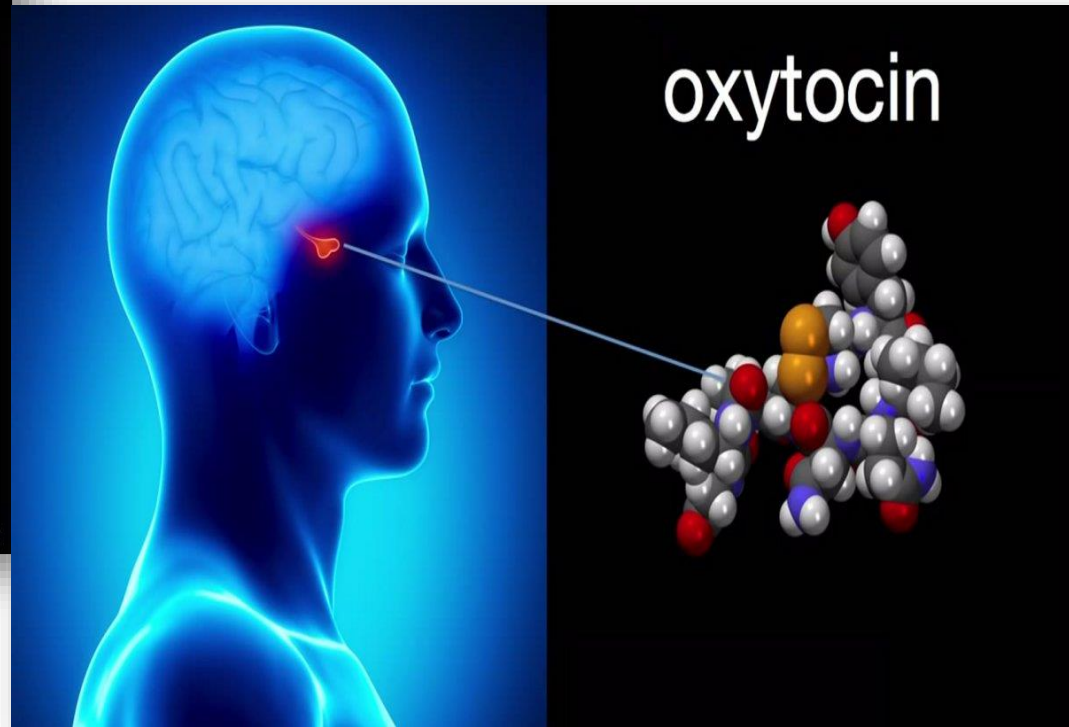
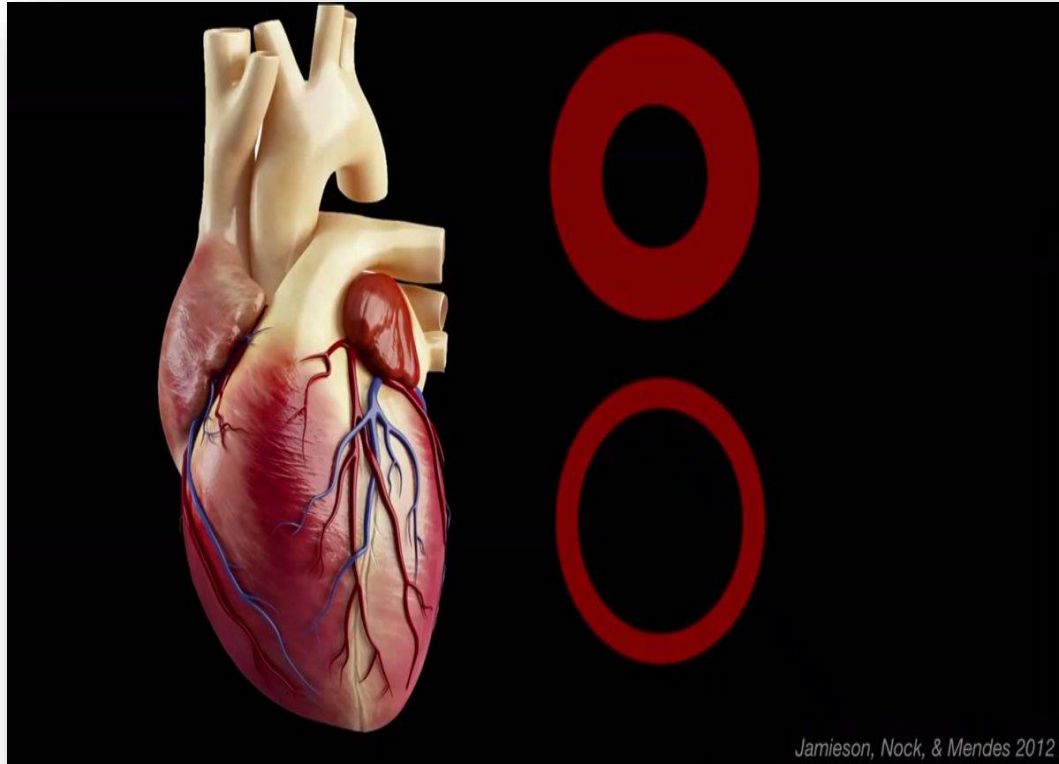


**What helps you cope with stress and anxiety and keep
“balance” now?**

**Question for
reflection**



Stress is like a friend!



Hugging is important!



- ▶ **Pets** can reduce stress level and provide social interaction that we may be lacking

Physical exercises reduce stress level



- ▶ When exercising, our body releases chemical substances – endorphins – which interact with brain receptors and mitigate the feeling of pain
- ▶ Prophylaxis of depression

Sleep is important!

- ▶ **Endorphins (happiness hormones) are produced in brain mainly during sleep**
- ▶ **Melatonin (sleep hormone) helps regulate our pressure, level of cortisol (stress hormone), and our immune function**



War and people's
motivational
creation

Creation as a self-help method



“I wanted something soothing: listening to music, watching pictures which give peaceful energy. However, pain subconsciously came out of me...”

Anzhela Kushchyk, Ukrainian artist

Let's exercise!

- ▶ Right breathing reduces stress level
- ▶ Methods of attentiveness, conscious meditation:

“mindfulness”

“grounding”



Methods of “grounding” – answer to an acute stress response

It helps reduce the level of anxiety by focusing attention on the “here and now” moment, observing things around, and describing them in detail

Techniques which restore the sense of reality and control (examples)

- ▶ Describe in detail items around you, using smell, touching and taste
- ▶ Change your body’s position and feel your muscles, feel and describe what you are sitting or lying on
- ▶ Touch your pet and start stroking it
- ▶ Start washing dishes and concentrate on how water is flowing, on movements, and the like
- ▶ Walk barefoot, hug a tree
- ▶



Caring for others I support myself!

- ▶ Care for others strengthens resilience to consequences, even of severe stress



“Do what you can, with what you have, where you are”

Theodore Roosevelt

How to care for your own psychological health amid martial law (conclusions):

- ▶ I afford joking, laughing, being glad
- ▶ I get carried away by business (my routine) rather than news
- ▶ I maintain positive connection with myself, reality and close people
- ▶ I have clear goals for today and a plan for the future instead of just waiting for the war to end (I realize what I can and cannot control)
- ▶ I do exercises, eat, drink water, sleep, and wash myself
- ▶ I breathe correctly and “get grounded” when I feel anxious
- ▶ I know that all my emotional reactions are normal for this abnormal situation
- ▶ If I don't cope I seek help





International
Labour
Organization

Project is implemented by
International Labour Organization

Project

“Towards safe, healthy and declared work in Ukraine”



MOVING FORWARD
TOGETHER

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