

Pathways to Wellness

Module 3: Recovery Strategies

Purpose:

- To educate and provide holistic strategies for recovery from stress by promoting physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and social well-being

Benefit:

- Helps individuals develop personal resilience, manage mental health conditions, build self-awareness around limitations and boundaries, restore balance and equilibrium, and nurture the mind-body-spirit connection

Responsibility:

- Empowering self, teams, and others to take care of themselves so they can be in service to their community and organization. As a company, it is their responsibility to promote wellness and create supportive environments for their team to thrive.

Process:

- The process emphasizes experiential learning, self-reflection, and developing practical skills that can be integrated into daily life for improved overall well-being. It also promotes learning proactive techniques to build resilience before stressful situations and responsive practices to regain equilibrium afterward. The focus is on personalized pathways to rejuvenation by nurturing the mind-body-spirit connection.

Inspiring Quote or Book Excerpt:

- "Self-care is giving the world the best of you, instead of what's left of you." - Katie Reed
-

What are Recovery Strategies?

- They are a holistic approach to help promote wellness in our Physical, Emotional, Mental, Spiritual, and Social ways of being
- They are ways to help reduce fatigue, stress, and exhaustion based on varying competing requirements in life
- Some brief examples include:
 - Lifestyle, Diet, Sleeping, Mindful Practices, Calm mind, Breath, Connecting with the land (going for a walk, sitting at a lake or the ocean)

- Recovery strategies are holistic approaches that help reduce fatigue, stress, and exhaustion from the competing demands of life. They encompass physical, emotional, mental, spiritual, and social practices aimed at restoring balance and well-being. Examples include lifestyle changes, dietary improvements, sufficient sleep, mindfulness practices, breathwork, and connecting with nature through activities like walking outdoors or sitting by a body of water. Recovery strategies provide pathways to rejuvenation by addressing the whole person.
-

Why are Recovery Strategies important?

- Connection - to self, others, and the earth.
- Recovery strategies help us come home to ourselves
- If we do not deal with stress in a timely manner, the stress builds up over time and this can lead to dis-ease. In some holistic practices, dis-ease is recognized as a lack of ease in the body, which can manifest into physical, mental, and emotional disease.
- Recovery strategies are vital because they build personal resilience to handle life's inevitable stressors and changes. Without proactively managing stress through healthy outlets, we risk becoming overwhelmed, which can lead to negative coping mechanisms.
- Recovery practices foster greater self-awareness around our limitations and boundaries while providing tools to restore equilibrium during difficult times. They help us stay connected to ourselves, others, and the natural world - reminding us that we are human and need to nurture our mind-body-spirit.
- Society places an expectation on us from when we're really young to simply push through and keep going without taking time to pause and recover after an illness, crisis, or gradual build-up of accumulated stress. This is detrimental to our well-being and eventually takes its toll on one's body, mind, and emotions. We tend to survive rather than thrive, until one day it's too late.
- Having an awareness and understanding of what recovery strategies I can reach for is a preventative intention. It gives me a sense of comfort in knowing that I myself am a source of support when things get tough and that practices that I have been exploring are there for me when I need them; I make recovery strategies as part of my stress plan - under that plan, I can think about things that I might *react* within the moment - shorter,

quicker practices and things that I might respond to - longer more supportive and nourishing practices.

Increasing Recovery and Recovery Practices:

- Self Care Practices
- Practices that tend to the soul - what does this mean? Each person will define this in their own way
- Ocean dips - Can be held over the full moon (once a month), or if you are in an increased stressful season, consider ocean dipping once a week
- To increase recovery and integrate recovery practices, it's essential to prioritize self-care activities that tend to the soul - whatever that means for each unique individual. The more we integrate recovery practices into our lives, the more opportunity we give ourselves to regulate our nervous systems, lower cortisol in the body, and promote inner wellness and peace.
- Having a repertoire of grounding techniques allows us to be proactive before stressful situations and responsive afterward to regain our center. Recovery practices are personalized pathways back to wholeness.
- We have shared some practices in previous modules, but in addition to this you may consider exploring practices before, during, and after stressful or emotionally draining situations.
- Other ways to structure this are to think of categories for things that bring you joy/recovery. You can prioritize three areas such as: Movement, Meditation, and Music. These can be expressed in a variety of ways including:
 - Movement: exercise, yoga, freestyle dancing, somatic practices
 - Meditation: sitting in silence, sensory deprivation, journaling, or reading
 - Music: singing along to songs, playing calming music, binaural beats in headphones
- Alongside this, getting into nature is always going to help regulate the nervous system
- Finally, breaking up your daily routine/habits - when we fall into dysregulated patterns, recovery practices will bring us home to ourselves.
- *“The thing to remember is this: it is your mind more than anything else that determines the quality of your life, and it is your energy more than anything else that determines the state of your mind.”* – Rajshree Patel, The Power of Vital Force.

- The concept of life force energy and how to tap into it as a pathway to recovery and healing. When feeling low in energy, having been through a crisis, or dealing with high stress, it's important to assess which areas of your life may be out of balance. Often, energy depletion can result from taking on too many responsibilities, overworking, constantly pushing through, and giving of yourself without adequate self-care - something common in caring professions.
- Sources of life force energy may include:
 - **Food:** The freshness and quality of the food you eat impacts its life force energy. Fresh, raw, plant-based, organic foods carry higher life force than highly processed, canned, overcooked, or fast foods. Cravings for sugar or caffeine may signal nutritional deficiencies or an agitated mind. Staying hydrated by drinking plenty of water is crucial, as our bodies and brains are mostly composed of water.
 - **Sleep:** Quality sleep allows your cells to regenerate. Too little sleep can leave you feeling agitated, while oversleeping may cause grogginess. An agitated mind before bed or overuse of technology close to bedtime can disrupt sleep. Establishing a calming pre-bed routine without phones or computers can improve sleep quality.
 - **The breath:** Most people only use about 30% of their lung capacity. You will learn proper breathing techniques like alternate nostril breathing, box breathing, straw breath, and SKY breath to manage the mind, emotions, and radically boost energy conservation.
 - **Calm and peaceful mind:** When thoughts race between past and future rather than being present, it taxes the nervous system and drains energy. Breathwork and meditation practices covered in this program can help you recover, remain calm and focused, improve decision-making, creativity, energy, and self-compassion.
 - **Nature:** The field of ecopsychology explores how immersion in nature benefits wellbeing. Spending time in places with high life force like lakes, oceans, forests, and mountains can have a calming effect that boosts energy. Grounding activities like walking barefoot and interacting with animals are helpful for regulating the mind, body, and emotions. Equine-facilitated wellness is an experiential component that supports the recovery journey.
 - **Creativity:** Engaging in creative outlets like painting, sculpting, dancing, singing, or drumming can be therapeutic for recovering from crisis or stress. The present moment focus provides a sense of rejuvenation.
- Other Practices:
 - **Being with Trees:** Gazing at trees, imagining your feet as roots connecting to the earth while looking up at the sky, can create a grounding sense of balance.
 - **Walking Structure:** Sometimes solitary walks allow for self-reflection, while other times, walking with supportive individuals who truly listen can help regulate your nervous system.

Additional Resources, Assessments, etc:

- General Summary:
 - Counselling, Therapy
 - Professional Coaching
 - Physical Activity
 - Creating Routine and structure in your life
 - Having a close social circle
- The 7 Types of Rest is a great framework to use for a personal assessment on how you are feeling each day. It can also be something that is printed out for your family, friends, or colleagues to see how you are doing. Each of the 7 areas includes:
 - **1. Physical Rest:** This involves allowing your body to recover from physical exertion and activity. Ways to promote physical rest include getting enough sleep, taking naps, gentle stretching, massage, and avoiding overexertion.
 - **2. Mental Rest:** This means taking breaks from intense concentration, problem-solving, decision-making, and other cognitive work to recharge your mind. Promote mental rest through meditation, mindfulness practices, daydreaming, and engaging in hobbies that don't require mental strain.
 - **3. Sensory Rest:** This provides a break from the bombardment of sounds, sights, and other sensory inputs that can lead to sensory overload. Promote sensory rest by unplugging from technology, dimming lights, spending time in nature, and avoiding overstimulating environments.
 - **4. Creative Rest:** This rejuvenates your ability to problem-solve and explore new perspectives by exposing yourself to inspiring art, music, nature, and other creative pursuits. Promote creative rest through appreciating beauty, journaling, and allowing your mind to wander freely.
 - **5. Emotional Rest:** This allows you to process difficult emotions in a healthy way rather than suppressing or ignoring them. Promote emotional rest through journaling, talking to a therapist, practicing self-compassion, and stepping away from emotionally draining situations.
 - **6. Social Rest:** This provides a break from surface-level social interactions and instead surrounds you with positive, supportive relationships that energize you. Promote social rest by setting boundaries, spending time alone, and nurturing close connections.

- **7. Spiritual Rest:** This allows you to connect to something greater than yourself and find a sense of meaning and purpose. Promote spiritual rest through prayer, meditation, spending time in nature, and exploring your values.
 - [Breath: The New Science of a Lost Art](#), book by James Nestor
 - [Ecopsychology: How Immersion in Nature Benefits your Health](#) – by Jim Robbins for the Yale School of the Environment
 - [How Does Nature Impact Our Wellbeing](#) –by Louise Delagran for the University of Minnesota
 - [How Horses Help us Heal and Thrive](#) – The Washington Post
 - [The Power of Vital Force](#) – by Rajshree Patel
 - [The Art of Living Foundation](#) –* SKY Breath meditation /Part 1 resilience and personal development program refers to sources of energy.
-

Academic References (APA Format):

BetterUp. (2024, May 1). The 7 types of rest: What they are and why you need them.

<https://www.betterup.com/blog/types-of-rest>

KRON4. (2024, May 24). The 7 types of rest framework by Dr. Saundra Dalton-Smith sparks a rest revolution [Press release]. <https://www.kron4.com/business/press-releases/ein-presswire/655223190/the-7-types-of-rest-framework-by-dr-saundra-dalton-smith-sparks-a-rest-revolution>

Patel, R. (n.d.). Rajshree Patel. <https://www.rajshreepatel.com/>

The Art of Living Foundation. (n.d.). About us. <https://www.artofliving.org/ca-en/about-us>

The Washington Post. (2024, March 31). How horses help humans heal and thrive.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/creativegroup/zoetis/how-horses-help-humans-heal-and-thrive/>

University of Minnesota. (2024, March 30). How does nature impact our wellbeing? Taking Charge of Your Wellbeing. <https://www.takingcharge.csh.umn.edu/how-does-nature-impact-our-wellbeing>

Yale Environment 360. (2024, March 30). Ecopsychology: How immersion in nature benefits your health. <https://e360.yale.edu/features/ecopsychology-how-immersion-in-nature-benefits-your-health>