

PEI Women's Institute

Cultivating Resiliency: Taking Care of Yourself in Trying Times.

Founder's Day

February 14, 2023

Ian MacAusland-Berg MA, MHRM, R.Psych
Manager: Community Mental Health and Addictions (West)
Health PEI

Workshop Description.

- This workshop is designed to assist people learn practical skills and techniques in order to help them cope with and manage the stresses and challenges everyday life. The concepts presented here originate in Acceptance and Commitment. Therapy We will be discussing such topics as creative hopelessness, the struggle switch, choice point, the importance of values and defusion. An exercise called "Dropping the Anchor" will be demonstrated.



Hurricane Fiona

Covid 19



Isolation



	Healthy	Reacting	Injured	III
Changes in mood	Good Mental Health and Functioning Well	Common self-limiting distress	More severe and persistent functional impairment	May Have a mental illness or Severe and persistent functional impairment
Changes in thinking and attitude				
Changes in Behaviour and Performance				
Physical Changes				
Changes in Substance Use				

Three Dimensions of the Good Life

	A Happy Life	A Meaningful Life	A Psychologically Rich Life
Key Features	Comfort Joy Security	Significance Purpose Coherence	Variety Interest Perspective Change
Facilitators	Money Time Relationships Positive Mindset	Moral Principles Consistency Relationships Religiosity	Curiosity Time Energy Spontaneity
Outcomes	Personal Satisfaction	Social Contribution	Wisdom
Measurement	Life Satisfaction Positive Affect	Meaning in life Subjective Meaning	Psychologically Rich Life Psychologically rich experience



Cultivating Resilience

Developing resilience depends heavily on your personal health and wellbeing. **Recognize** that stress is an expected part of life. It cannot be avoided. Experience tells us that life compounded by unexpected setbacks or significant changes. You are strongly encouraged you to **reframe** challenges as an unavoidable pathway to success. **Reflect** on your role in taking care of yourself. **Reach out** to others about any difficulty you may be having that may impact your life as soon as it occurs in before it becomes too overwhelming. There are many other support services ready to assist you.

Understanding and Managing Stress

- Most stress that we experience daily is good for us and avoiding it is harmful.
- The key is not just reducing the amount of stress you experience, but learning how best to deal with the stress that comes along with being alive

Understanding and Managing Stress

- Figure out what the problem really is.
- Consider the solutions.
- Accept what you can't change.
- Be realistic.
- Acknowledging your feelings.
- Do all the things that everyone else's told you to do; build healthy relationships, limit or avoid drugs and alcohol, eat a healthy diet, be active, get a good night's sleep, manage your time wisely.

Pushing Paper Away Exercise





Creative Hopelessness

“*Creative hopelessness* is a process in which one becomes aware that trying hard to avoid or get rid of unwanted thoughts and feelings tends to make life worse rather than better. This leads to a sense of hopelessness in the agenda of avoiding ones’ difficult thoughts and feelings, out of which can emerge a creative attitude toward finding new and different ways of dealing with them”.

From Russ Harris (2019). *Act Made Simple*, second edition

The Struggle Switch



The Struggle Switch

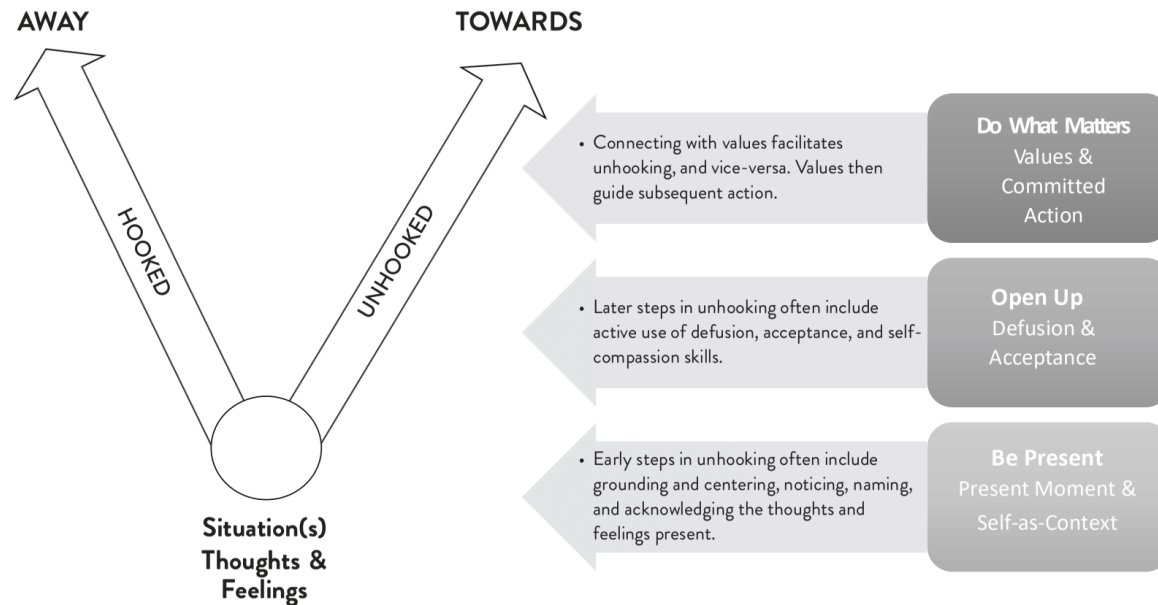


THE STRUGGLE SWITCH
THE MORE WE STRUGGLE THE WORSE IT GETS

Choice Point



Choice Point



Values

- Doing what matters to you.
- Behaving like the sort of person you want to be.
- Living life your way
- Treating yourself or others the way you really want to, deep in your heart

Starting Points

- Who do you care about? Who do you like to hang out with?
- What matters to you?
- What gets you fired up?
- What inspires you? What infuriates you?
- What makes you sad? Happy? Angry? Scared?
- What do you enjoy?
- When do you feel grateful or appreciative?
For what?

Starting Points Continued

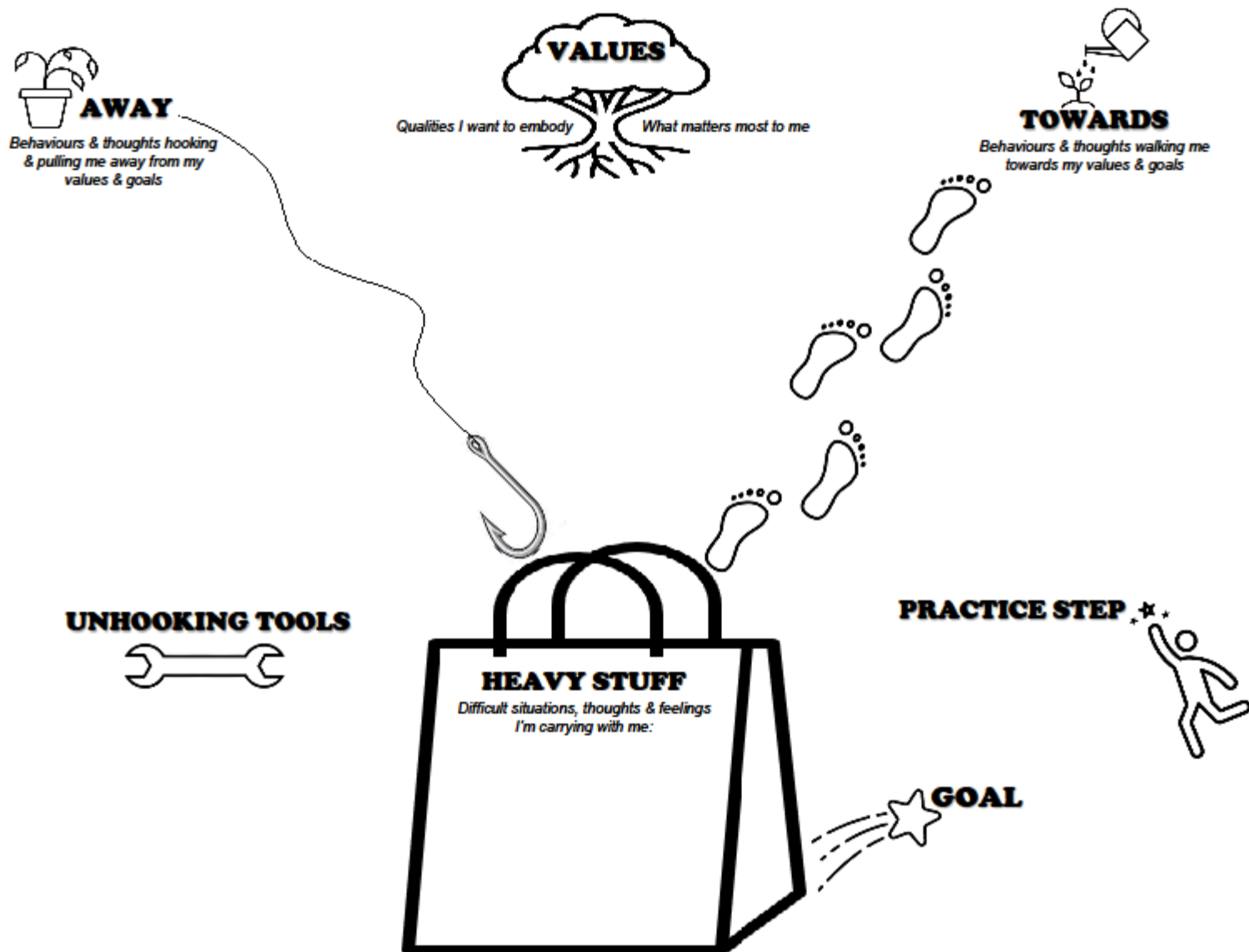
- What gives you a sense of pride, achievement, doing it well, doing it the way you want to?
- Do you ever like the way you do things/treat the people you care about? When, where, doing what?
- Do you ever like the way you are? When, where, doing what?

Defusion

1. What is your mind telling you?
2. Do you notice what your mind is doing (or just did)?
3. What did you do after you got hooked?
4. If we followed you around with the camera crew, and films you "big brother" style, 24 hours a day, what would I see or hear on that videos that would show me that you'd been hooked by that story/those thoughts/those feelings?

THE DEFUSION WHEEL

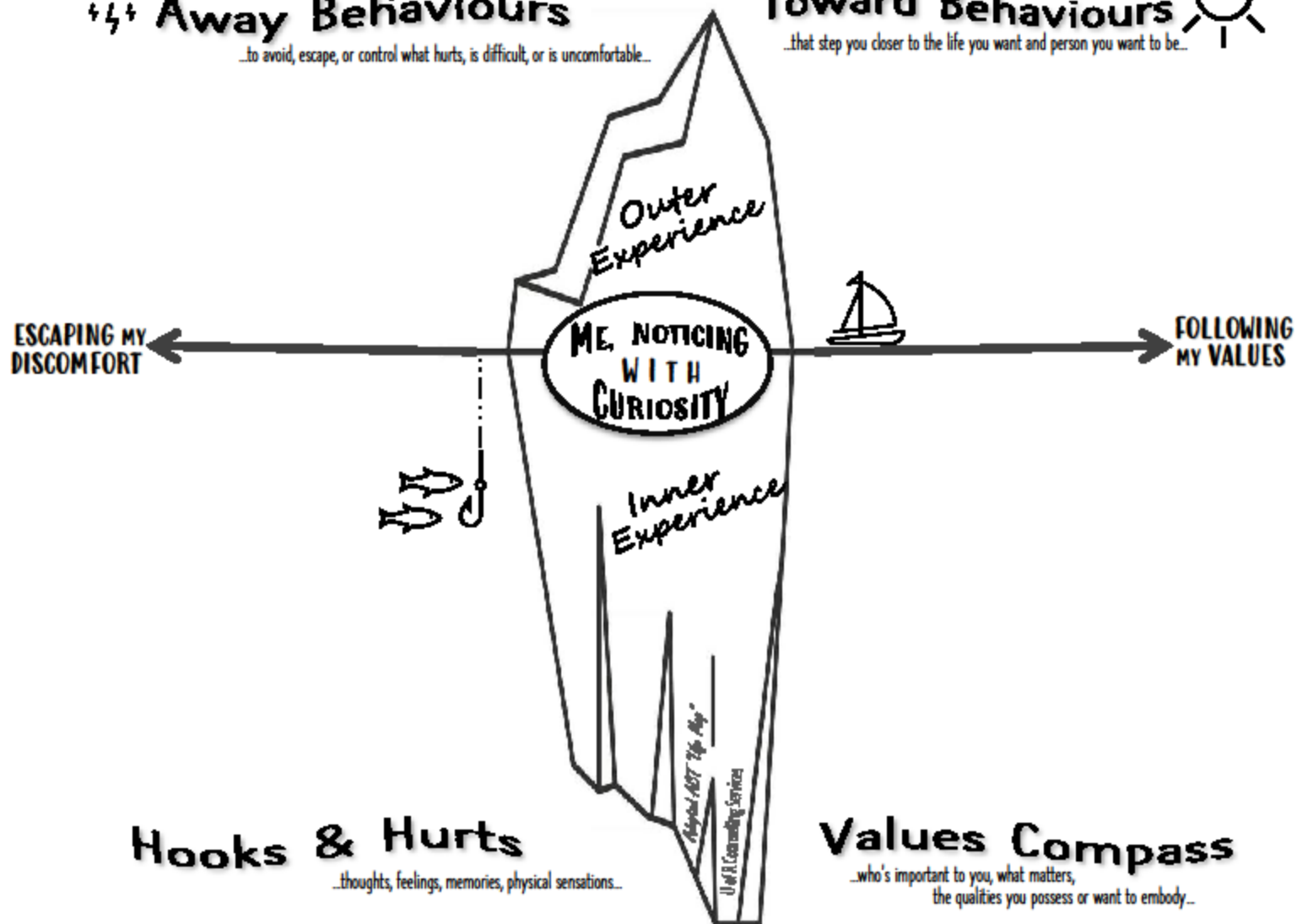




U of E Counselling Services – Adapted from Acceptance Commitment Therapy

 **Away Behaviours**
...to avoid, escape, or control what hurts, is difficult, or is uncomfortable...

Toward Behaviours 
...that step you closer to the life you want and person you want to be...



Dropping the Anchor



Dropping Anchor

Adapted from the work of Dr Russ Harris author of The Happiness Trap

HANDLE DIFFICULT THOUGHTS,

feelings, emotions,
memories, urges, and
sensations more

SWITCH OFF AUTOPILOT

and engage in life; ground
and steady yourself in
difficult situations.



Drop Anchor in the middle
of any kind of emotional
'storm':

- Flashbacks
- Panic attacks
- Chronic pain

To support and hold you steady, so
you don't get swept away,
allowing time for the storm to pass.

To bring your focus back to what's
important to you right here and
now.

WHAT IS INVOLVED?

DROPPING ANCHOR involves playing around with A-C-E:



ACKNOWLEDGE
your thoughts
and feelings



COME BACK
into your body



ENGAGE in what
you are doing

Put together by James Warren, North Bristol NHS Trust, UK.

Dropping Anchor

Adapted from the work of Dr Russ Harris author of The Happiness Trap



ACKNOWLEDGE your thoughts and feelings

Adopt the stance of a scientist, curiously observing what's going on in your inner world.



COME BACK into your body

You aren't trying to turn away from, avoid, escape, or distract yourself from what is happening in your inner world.



ENGAGE in what you are doing

Try all or some of these suggestions, or try your own.

End the exercise by giving your full attention to the next task or activity at hand.

Silently and kindly acknowledge whatever is 'showing up' inside you:

- Thoughts
- Feelings
- Emotions
- Memories
- Sensation
- Urges

Come back into and connect with your physical body.

- You could try some or all of these:
- Slowly push your feet hard into the floor.
- Slowly straighten up your back and spine; if sitting, sitting upright and forward in your chair.
- Slowly press your fingertips together
- Slowly stretch your arms or neck, shrug your shoulders.
- Slowly breathe.

Get a sense of where you are and refocus your attention on the activity you are doing.


In your surroundings, notice:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can hear
- 3 things you are touching
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 taste in your mouth

Finally, notice what you are doing.

Ideally, run through the A-C-E cycle slowly 3 or 4 times, to turn it into a 2-3 minute exercise:

You can practice these kinds of exercises, any time, any place. It's a good idea to practice them often in less challenging situations, when your thoughts and feelings are less difficult, so you can build up your skill levels. Over time, the idea is to use this in more challenging situations, when your thoughts and feelings are more tricky and can more easily overwhelm us.



Silently and kindly acknowledge to yourself that you're hurting, you're in pain.

Push your feet hard into the floor.

Straighten your back; if sitting, sit forward in your chair.

Press your fingertips together, or stretch your arms, or shrug your shoulders.

Acknowledge the painful thoughts and feelings that are present, and also notice...there's a body around that pain – a body that you can move and control. So notice your whole body now – hands, feet, back. ... have a stretch. ... Press your feet down.

Now also look around the room and notice 5 things you can see.

And also notice 3 or 4 things you can hear

And also notice what you are doing

So notice there are painful thoughts/feelings/memories here, and

Also notice your body in the chair ... move it, stretch it,

And there's a room around you.

And come back to what you are doing, and engage fully in the task or activity at hand

Remember, you can practice these kinds of exercises, any time, any place, any activity. And it's a good idea to practice them. Often when you're less fused, so you can remember to use them when you are really fused!



Summary

To increase resilience, remember:

- Creative Hopelessness
- The Struggle Switch
- The Choice Point
- Values
- Diffusion
- Dropping the Anchor

EATING MY ELEPHANTS ONE BITE AT A TIME

TASK

Due Date: _____

MY BITES:

Due Date _____ TASK _____

MY BITES:

[A vertical column of ten boxes for writing bites.]


[Four sets of horizontal dotted lines for writing.]

An illustration of an elephant facing right. The word "TASK" is written in blue capital letters on its side. To the right of the elephant, the text "Due Date:" is followed by a blank space. Below the elephant and the "Due Date:" text, there are several horizontal dashed lines for writing. On the left side of the page, there is a vertical column of ten small squares, each containing a number from 1 to 10.

Due Date: _____

TASK

MY BITES:



A vertical column of ten empty boxes for writing, located on the left side of the page.

Goal-Setting

1. Pick A Domain

Choose **JUST ONE** life domain to work on: health, work, education, leisure, personal growth, spirituality, parenting, friends, family, intimate relationship, other.

Domain:

2. Choose Your Values

Choose 1 or 2 values (maximum 3) that you want to bring into play in your chosen life domain. These values will motivate and inspire the actions you take to pursue the goal.

Values:

3. Set a SMART Goal

S= Specific (Do not set a vague, fuzzy, or poorly-defined goal like, 'I'll be more loving'. Instead, be specific: 'I'll give my partner a good, long hug when I get home from work'. In other words, specify what actions you will take.)

M = Motivated by values (I.e. double check this goal is aligned with the values in step 2.)

A = Adaptive (Is this goal likely to improve your life in some way?)

R = Realistic (Make sure the goal is realistic for the resources you have available. Resources you may need could include: time, money, physical health, social support, knowledge and skills. If these resources are necessary but unavailable, you will need to change your goal to a more realistic one. The new goal might actually be to find the missing resources: to save the money, or develop the skills, or build the social network, or improve health, etc.)

T = time-framed (Put a specific time frame on the goal: specify the day, date and time — as accurately as possible — that you will take the proposed actions.)

Write your SMART goal here: