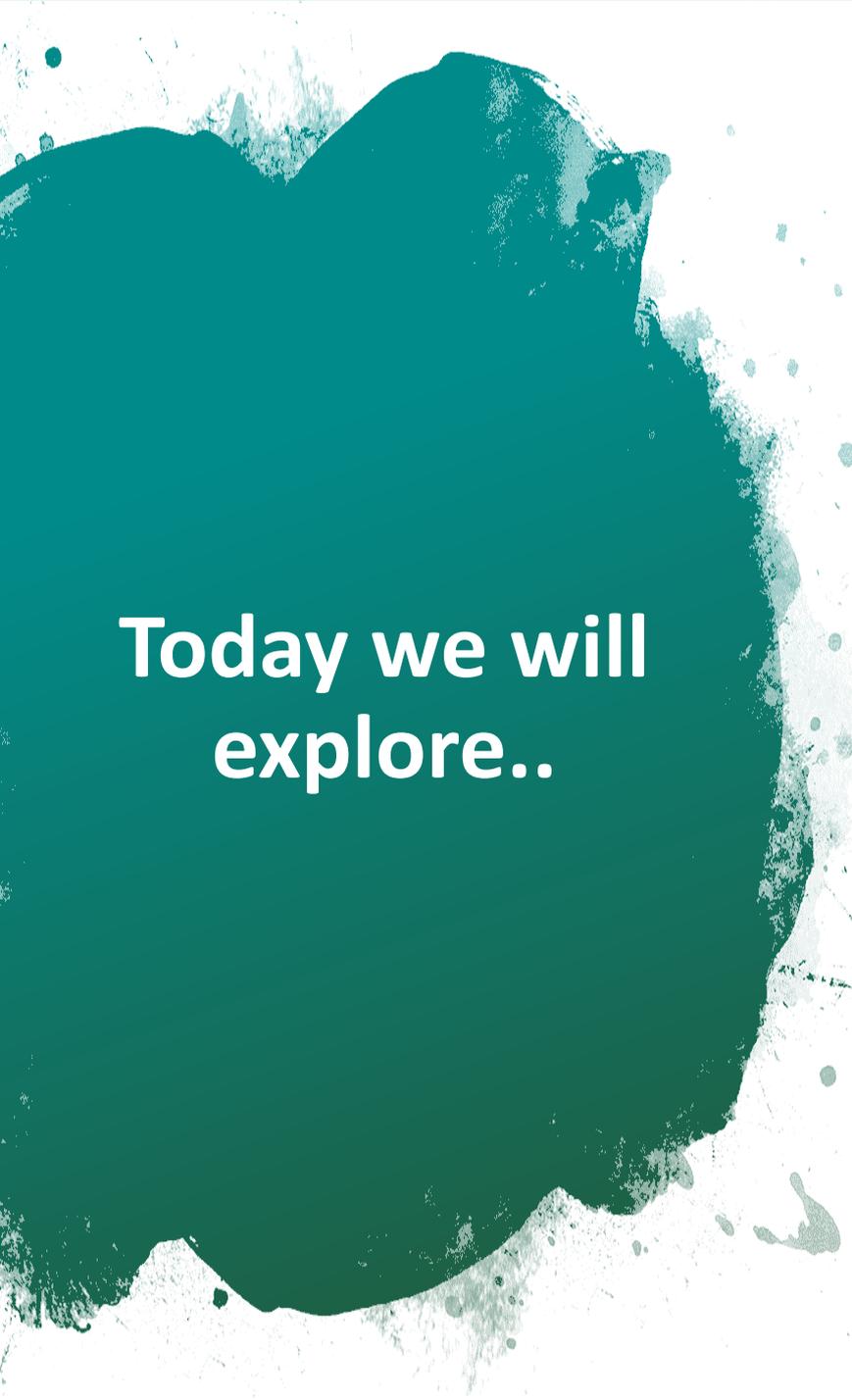


Grief and Anxiety: Accept anxiety, improve sleep



Presented by CORP Workplace Solutions 2020



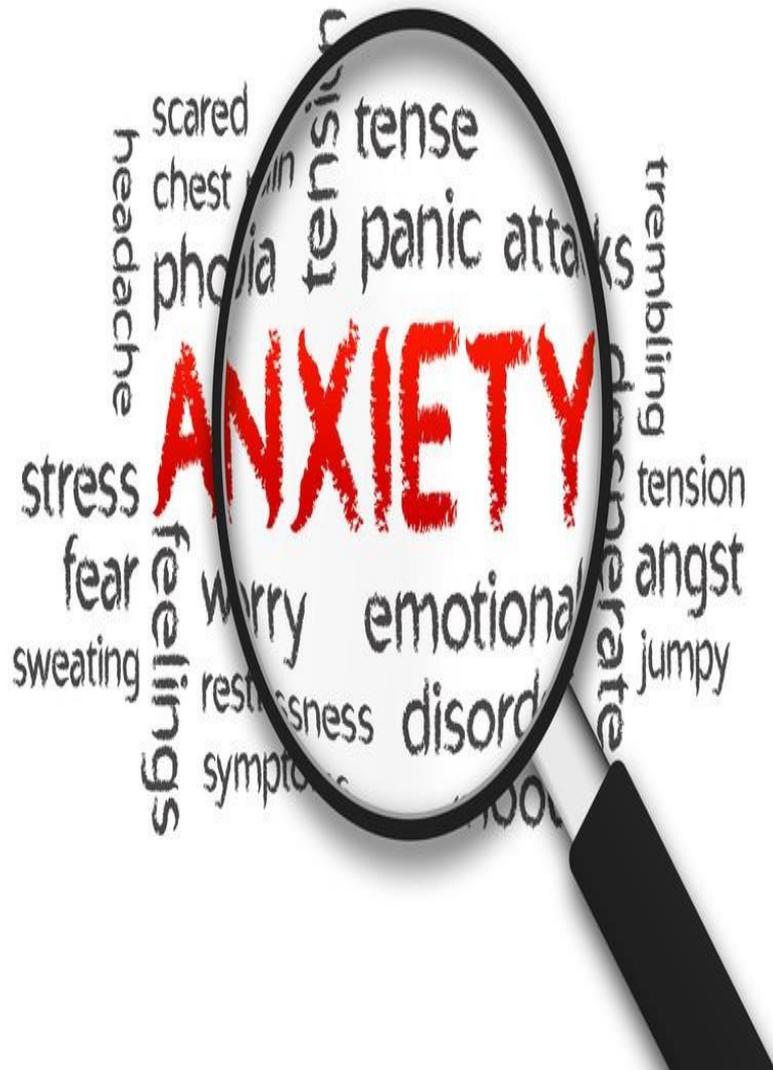
**Today we will
explore..**

- Anxiety related to grief
- The Biological factors: Vagus Nerve
- Acceptance of anxiety
- Tolerating uncertainty
- Working with our thoughts.
- Soothing ourselves & Calming our bodies.
- Improving our sleep

The grieving process



Impact of loss



FACTORS

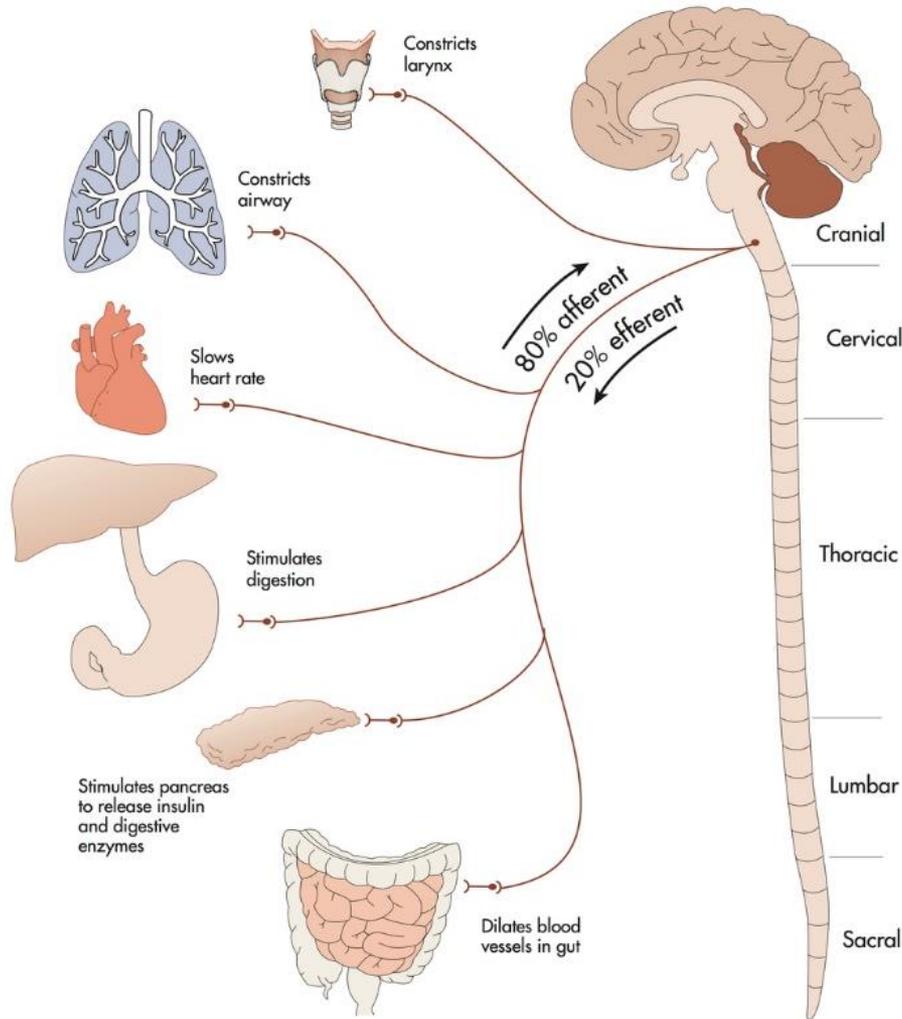
- Level of dependence on our loved one
- The suddenness of their death – fear and hypervigilance
- Facing our own mortality
- Fear of illness
- Exposure to trauma: Post Traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) – flashbacks, sleep issues
- Pre-existing anxiety – leading to panic attacks (worry about worry)

What is your stress level?





Science of Resilience



The Vagus Nerve:
Longest cranial nerve in the human body

Links to all visceral organs --heart, lungs, digestive tract

Oversees crucial functions

Anti-inflammatory & 'chill-out' neurotransmitters

Stimulate the Vagus Nerve to decrease arousal

Science of Resilience



Ways to stimulate the Vagus Nerve:

Humming

Speaking

Laughing

Singing

Splash face cold water

Coughing

Tensing the stomach muscles

Eating

Drinking

Calming the mind: Accept Anxiety

1. Normal reaction is to want to push Anxiety away
2. Labelling anxiety or worry as bad causes more stress, more stress hormones and has a negative impact, or negative loop
3. Welcome Anxiety
4. Steps:
 - Acknowledge Anxiety
 - Breathe - anchor in the present moment (mindfulness)
 - Breathe - calm our body, (mindfulness & self compassion)
 - Notice the sensations in our body
 - Understand it's positive intention and positive effects





Uncertainty

- We tolerate uncertainty every day
- Examples – driving, going to work
- Notice your mental muscles
- Continue to develop your skills
- Calm our bodies.

You & Self Care

- Exercise
- Healthy eating
- Mindfulness
- Self compassion
- Self talk
- Improved sleep



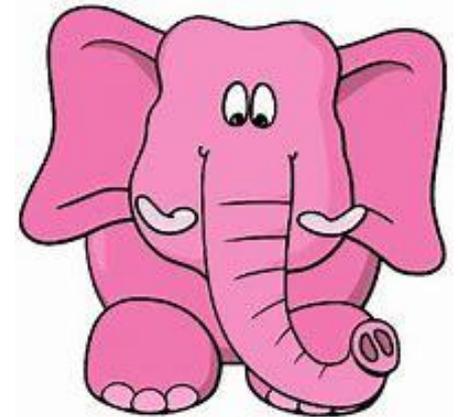
The Worry/Grief Time Technique

Can we stop worry? ‘Don’t think of a pink elephant!’

1. Set up worry or Grief time

- *How long will you make your worry time?*
- *What time will you do your worry time?*
- *Where will you do your worry time?*
- *What activity will you do to end your worry time?*

This can include positive self talk and Gratitude



The Worry Time Technique

2. Postpone your worries at all times other than your Worry Time

- *Where will you write down your worry thoughts?*
- *What things will you try to postpone your worries?*

3. Using my worry time effectively

- For each worry ask yourself *can I do anything to control or change this thing I'm worried about?*
 - If YES -> **make a plan** and share it with someone supportive
 - If NO -> ask yourself if it is worth worrying about that thing or could you let it go?

Grounding Techniques

- Any technique that connects a person with the present moment.
- Sensory grounding: see, hear, smell, touch, feel
 - Cognitive grounding: reassurance of being safe in the present moment, self talk, use of grounding statement, knowing what is different



**Breathing techniques:
focus on the exhale to calm & the inhale to excite**



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Breathing technique: calming stress and worry

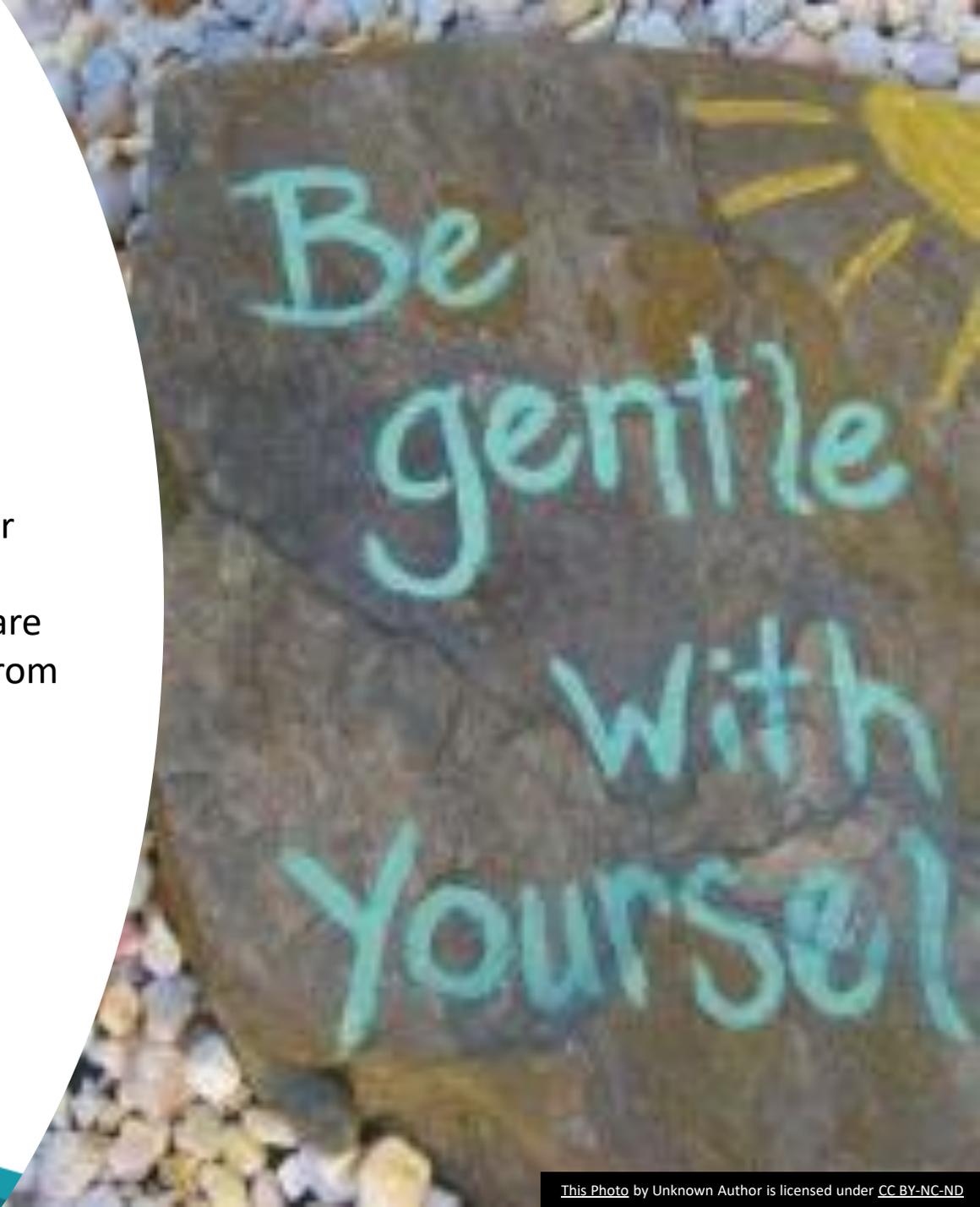
Breathe in slowly and steadily. Pause and exhale slowly, through your nose, to the count of four, pause and repeat.

Repeat, but at the end of the exhale, contract your stomach and pelvis floor muscles. Hold the contraction as you breathe in. Pause. Then slowly exhale (adding a hum), and release all muscle tension as you breathe out for 4. Slowly begin to elongate your exhale to 6, 8 or 10. Take a normal breath and repeat.

Advance: break the exhale into three separate stages; Pause between the squeeze of your belly and pelvis, (pause) your lungs (pause) and your upper chest. Take a normal breath and repeat

Self-Compassion

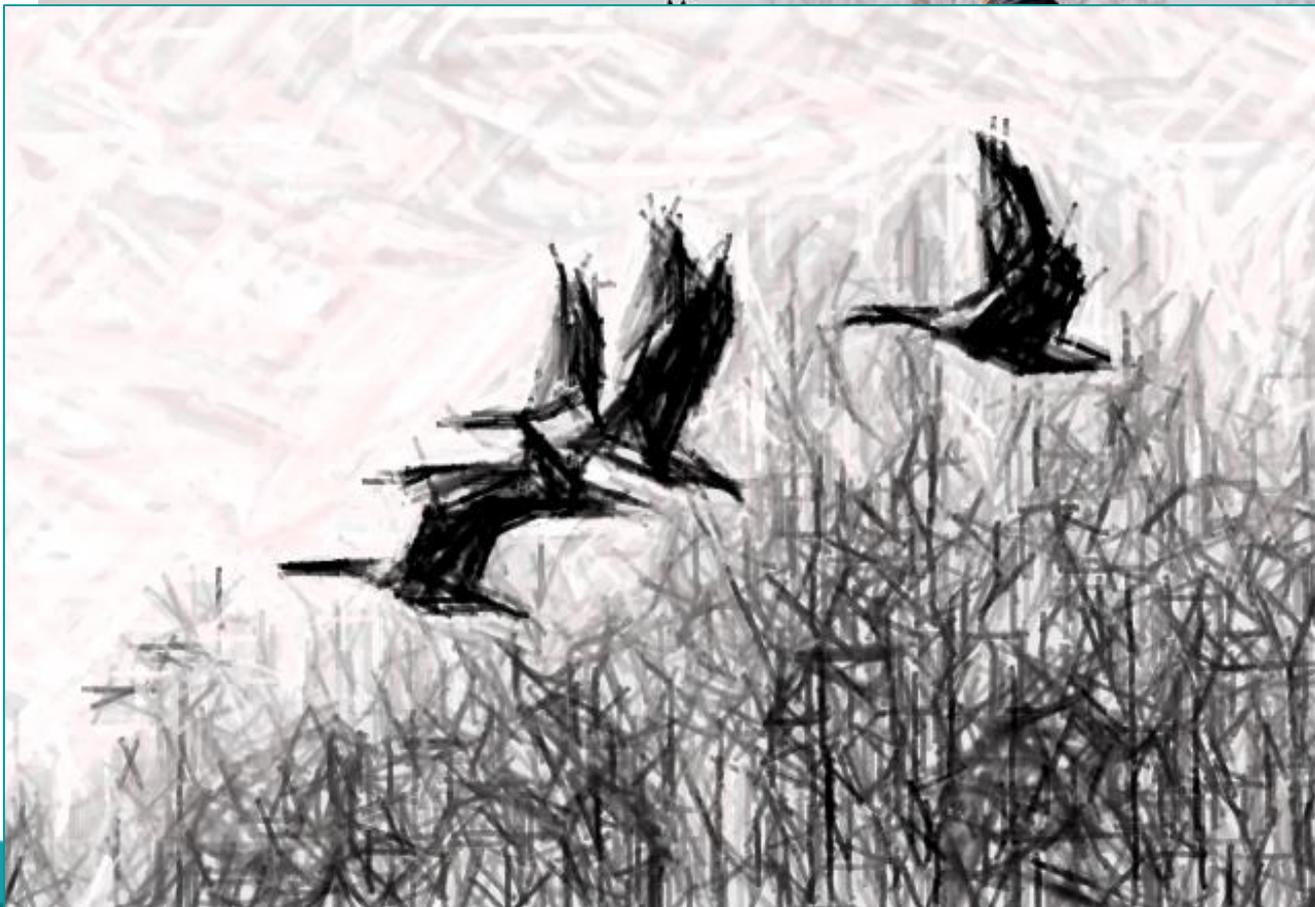
- Self-compassion is: “a way of relating to yourself and all of your experiences with care, love and kindness, particularly when you are suffering.” This is very different from criticizing yourself for feeling anxious or ignoring your anxiety.
 - -Ali Miller, MFT



Resilience



A Good Night's Sleep



Which of these affect your sleep?

- Sugar, caffeine, cigarette smoking, alcohol use, some medications, and some drugs
- environmental factors like noise, light, and a too warm or too cold bedroom
- other health concerns, such as asthma, bronchitis, and chronic pain
- other sleep-related disorders: restless leg syndrome, sleep apnea, menopause
- mental health issues, particularly anxiety and depression
- Insomnia can lead to worry and stress. If a sleep-worry cycle begins - the less likely we are to sleep
- Nightshift – approx. 17% Australian pop'n. Essential to plan around and manage the consequences

Before Bedtime – Sleep Hygiene

- Eat Early, sleep enhanced through plant rich diets
- Stay hydrated throughout the day – eliminating waste and toxins
- Exercise – but earlier in the evening. Movement leads to more oxygen
- Consider use of Magnesium – Epsom salt bath or sprays are useful
- Consider a milky drink or small portion of food, something containing tryptophan (ie) bananas, nuts, cheese - this helps us produce melatonin – essential for sleep onset
- Worry time & problem solving – write it in a worry book: follow with gratitude
- Create a shutting down or winding down before sleep routine, yoga poses
- Try for ½ hour no artificial lights before bed – turn off your computer and phone
- Sleep in complete darkness and silence, cool temperature
- Expect to sleep, positive affirmation and visualization

Leaves-on-a-stream



Summary: The unique journey of grief

- Giving ourselves time to grieve
 - Working with our thoughts
 - Calming our bodies.
 - Connect to our resilience resources
 - Soothe ourselves
 - Sleep well
1. Self compassion, willingness to accept and experience our feelings
 2. Accept anxiety
 3. Notice our skills for tolerating uncertainty
 4. Limit Worry and grief time
 5. Gratitude practices
 6. Breathing and grounding
 7. Self compassion, self care
 8. Sleep hygiene, bedtime routine
 9. Positivity and gratitude
 10. Relax the vagus nerve

Thank You!



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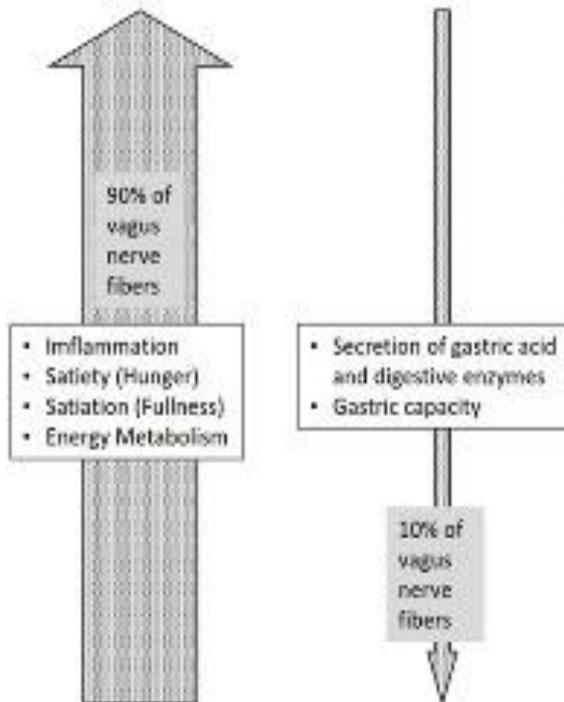
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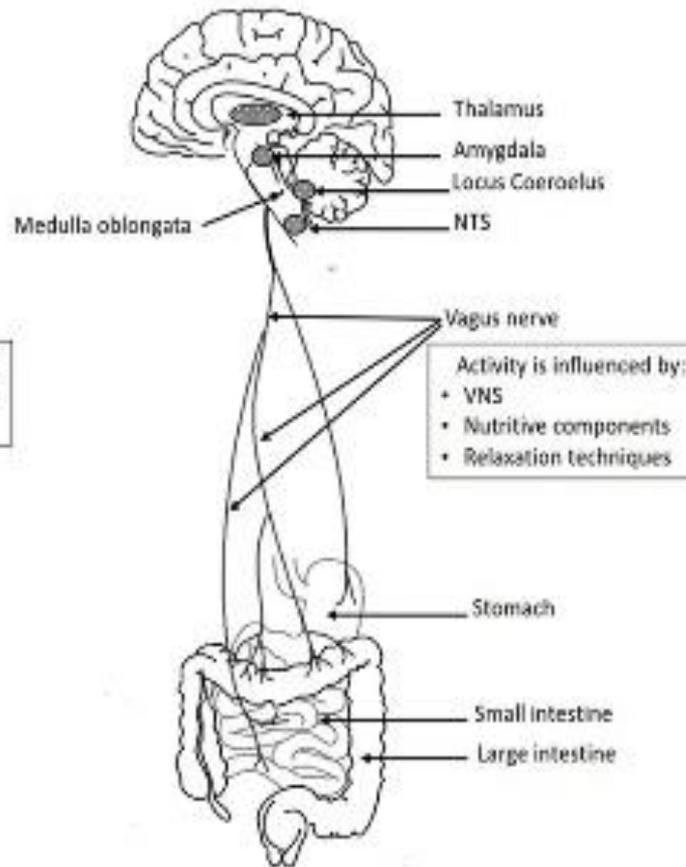
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The Vagus Nerve

Afferent and efferent connections



Anatomy



Disorders

- Psychiatric disorders
- Major depression
 - PTSD

- Inflammatory GI Disorders
- Ulcerative Colitis
 - Crohn's Disease