

# Psychological Perspectives on Bereavement, Loss and Grief



**Proactive approaches to  
support others and the  
importance of compassionate  
resilience for staff wellbeing**

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# Why are we talking about grief?





# The Psychology of Grief

# Defining Terms

Anticipatory  
Grief

Grief

Bereavement

Mourning

# Psychological models of grief

Bowlby (1969-80)

Kubler-Ross (1969)

Worden (1991)

Silverman & Klass (1996)

Stroebe & Schutt (1999)

# What do models agree on?

- Mourning is necessary
- Individual, non linear process
- Adaptation requires working through different phases/ tasks/ stages of grief.
- Integration is key



# Uncomplicated grief

***"a sort of invisible blanket between the world and me." (C.S. Lewis)***

- An idiosyncratic process
- Gradual movement towards acceptance
- Continuing with basic daily activities (although difficult at times).
- No residual serious social, psychological, or medical consequences.

# Complicated grief

Persistent Complex Bereavement Disorder (DSM-5, sec. 3, 2013)

Prolonged Grief Disorder (DSM-5-TR, section 2/ ICD 11, 2018)

- Pre-pandemic prevalence 1-2/10 (Lundorff et al., 2017)
- 33% of people with PGD will have comorbid anxiety or depression
- Little is known about the neurocognitive mechanisms at play



# Risk factors for complicated grief

## Pre-loss:

- Female
- Pre-existing trauma (particularly ACEs)
- Prior loss
- Insecure attachment
- Pre-existing mood/anx disorders
- Nature of the relationship

## Loss related:

- Relationship + caretaking roles
- Nature of the death
- Death in ICU

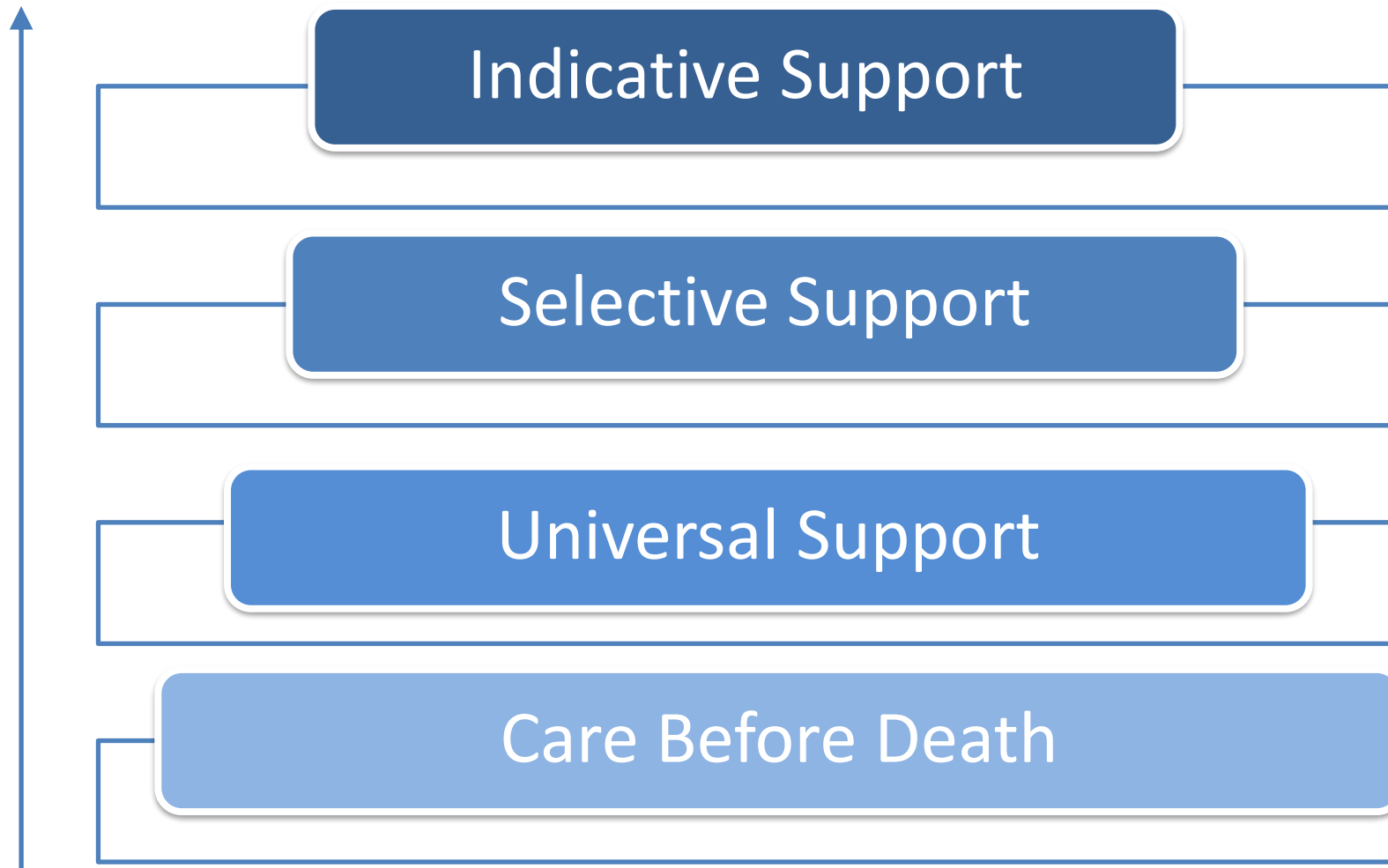
## Other risk factors:

- Social circumstances
- Resources available after death
- Physical support is poor
- The unknown
- Interference with natural mourning process.



# Proactive Approaches to Support

# Guidelines for Support



# Care before death

- Facilitating access to support before death
- Anticipatory grief work (if possible)
- Focus on good communication
- Providing information to support decision making
- Direct approach to difficult conversations in ACP
- Promote choice and autonomy
- Awareness of risk factors for complicated grief

# Universal Support

After death support for all:

- Provide information on the practical aspects of grief and mourning
- Signpost to support organisations
- Offer Psychological First Aid (if appropriate)
- Consider the impact of COVID restrictions and the impact on mourning to maximise support and social connection within limitations.

# Selective & Indicated Support

## Selective

Peer group support:

- Self help resources
- Bereavement support volunteers
- Faith groups
- Community groups

## Indicated

- Specialist bereavement services
- Clinical Psychology
- Mental health services

# Resources to support others



Psychosocial mental health and wellbeing support site – Turas Learn



# Wellbeing and Resilience





# Risks to the workforce

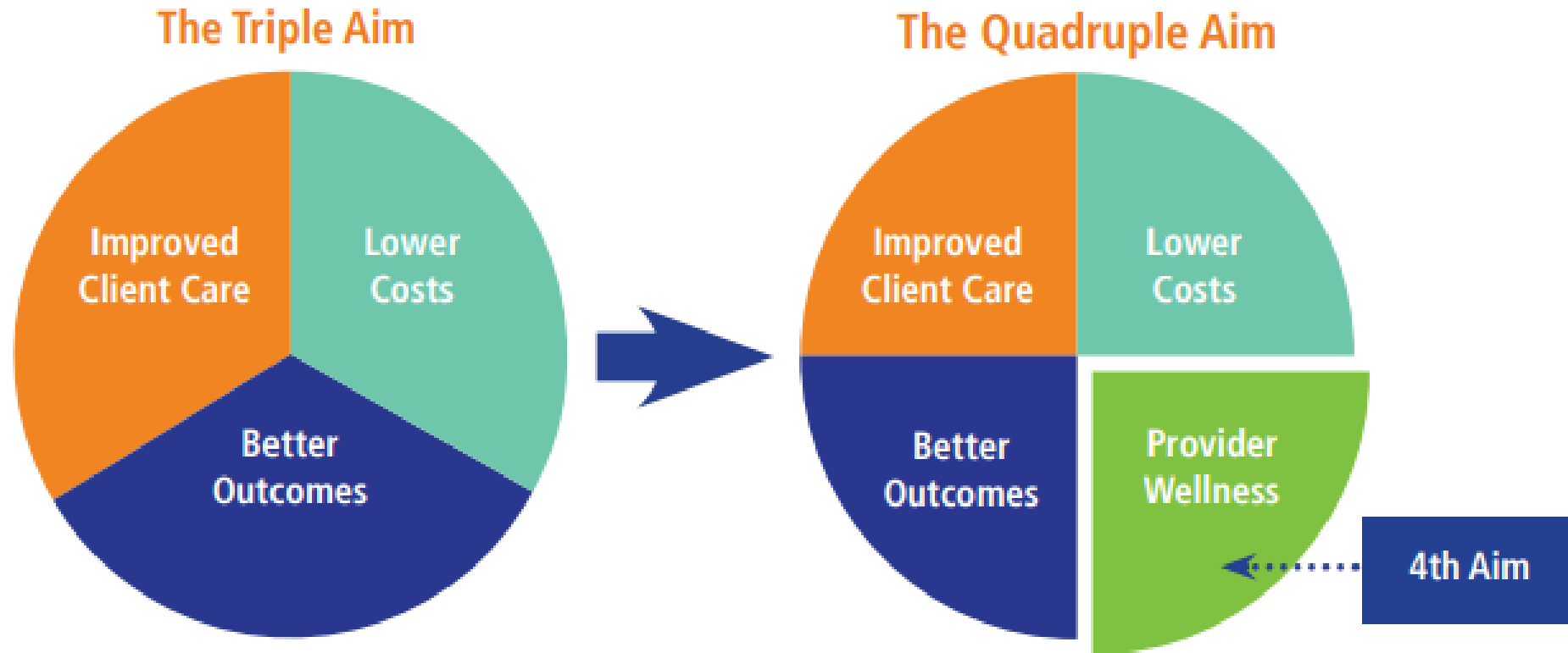
Chronic  
Stress

Burnout

Moral Injury

Compassion  
Fatigue

# Staff matter too



Bodenheimer, T & Sinsky, C. (2014). From triple to quadruple aim: care of the patient requires care of the provider. *Annals of Family Medicine*, 12(6), 573-578.

# Resilience

## **Resilience**

Wellbeing vs burnout

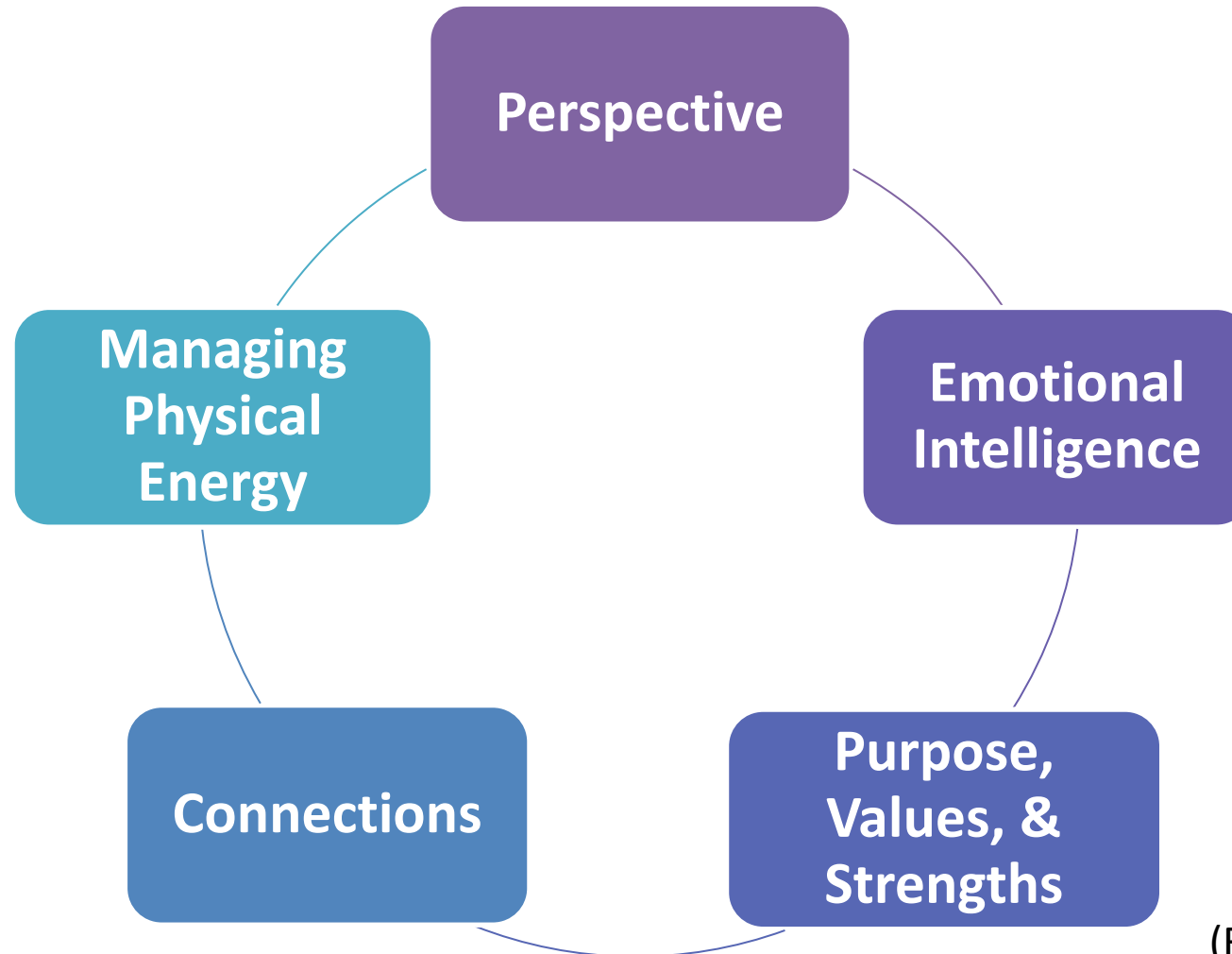
## **Quality of caring**

Compassion vs detachment

## **Quality of care**

Safety vs inattention

# 5 domains of resilience



(Roffey Park  
Institute, 2014)

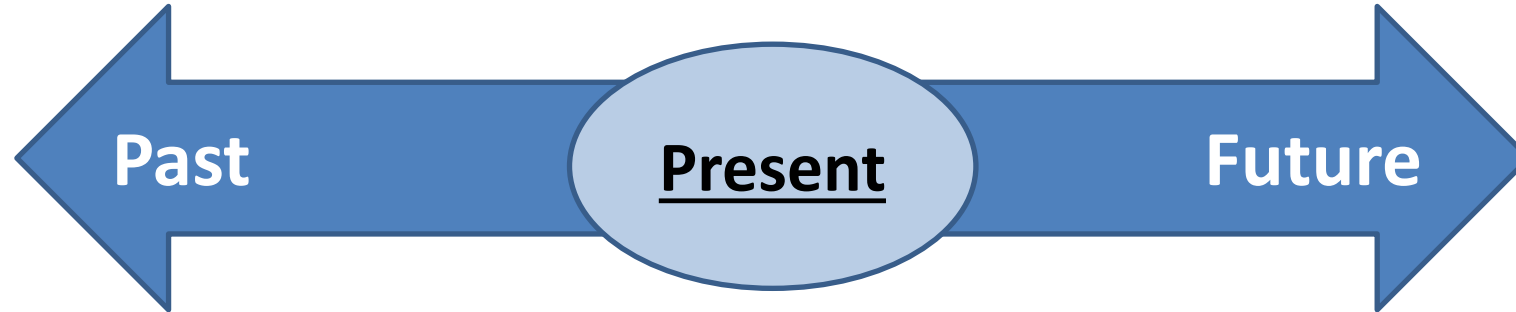
# Compassionate resilience

## Supports:

- Development of self compassion
- Engagement
- Affect regulation
- Interpersonal functioning
- Problem solving
- Reduction in self criticism and shame
- Self care

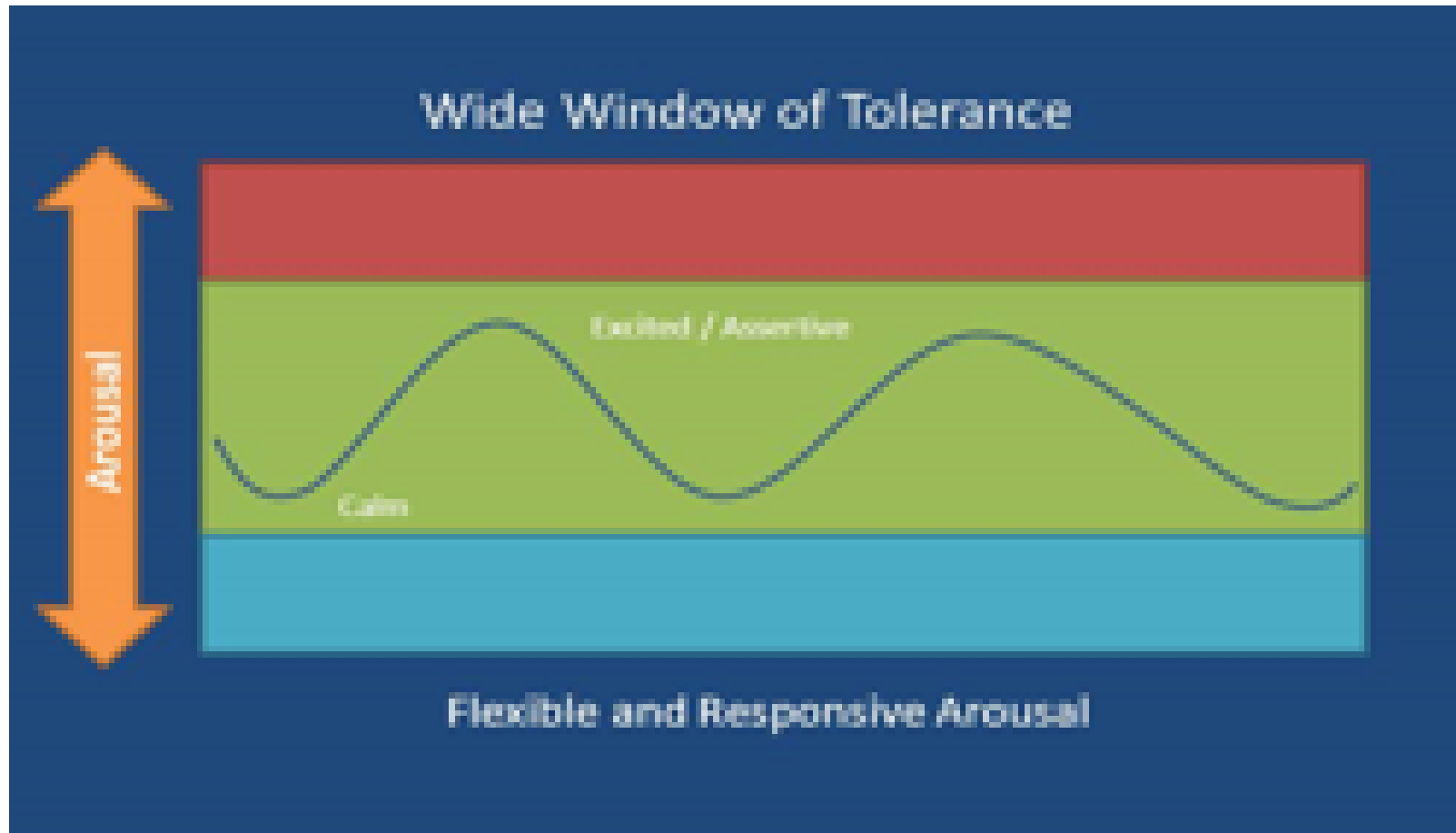
# Developing self compassion

1. Developing the ability to recognise distress  
– mindful attention

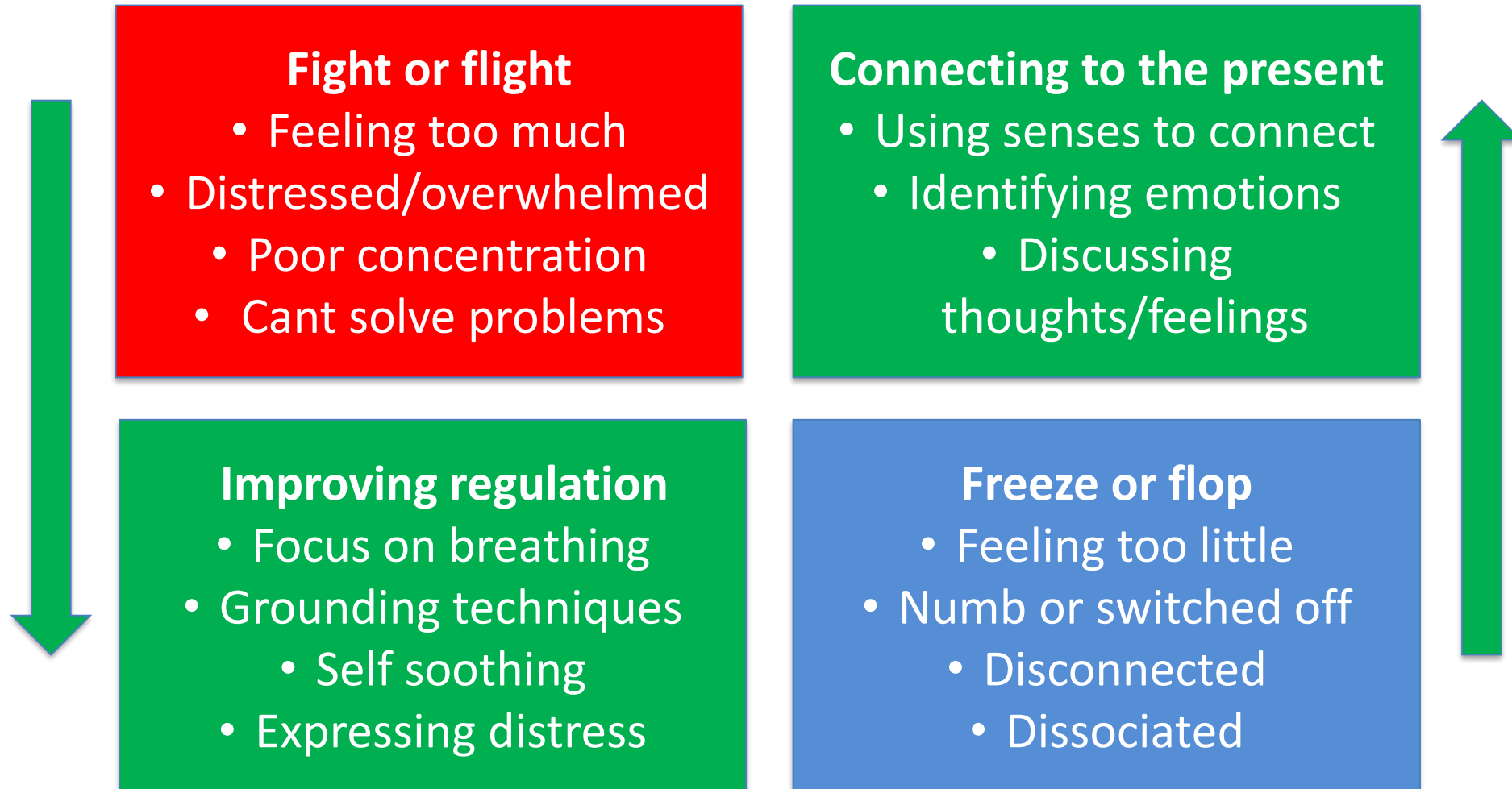


2. Regulating emotional state e.g. managing window of tolerance
3. Engage in emotional soothing and self care activities – active self compassion

# Emotion Regulation



# Getting into **green**





# What does resilience mean to you?



# Resources to support staff

**STRESS, COPING + RESILIENCE**

ADVICE FOR HEALTH + CARE PROFESSIONALS

DR CAROLINE COCHRANE



SCOTTISH QUALITY & SAFETY FELLOWS - NHS SCOTLAND @SQSFellowship

OPEN CHANGE  
OPENCHANGE.CO.UK

NHS EDUCATION FOR SCOTLAND

<https://learn.nes.nhs.scot/741/quality-improvement-zone>



**WELLBEING**

**START**

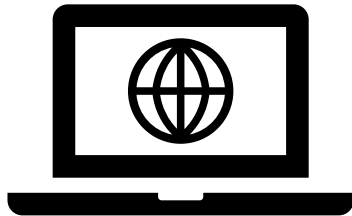
Call the National Wellbeing Helpline: 0800 111 4191

 **National  
Wellbeing Hub**





# Questions?

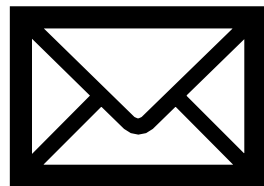


## CONTACT

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<https://www.sad.scot.nhs.uk/>



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