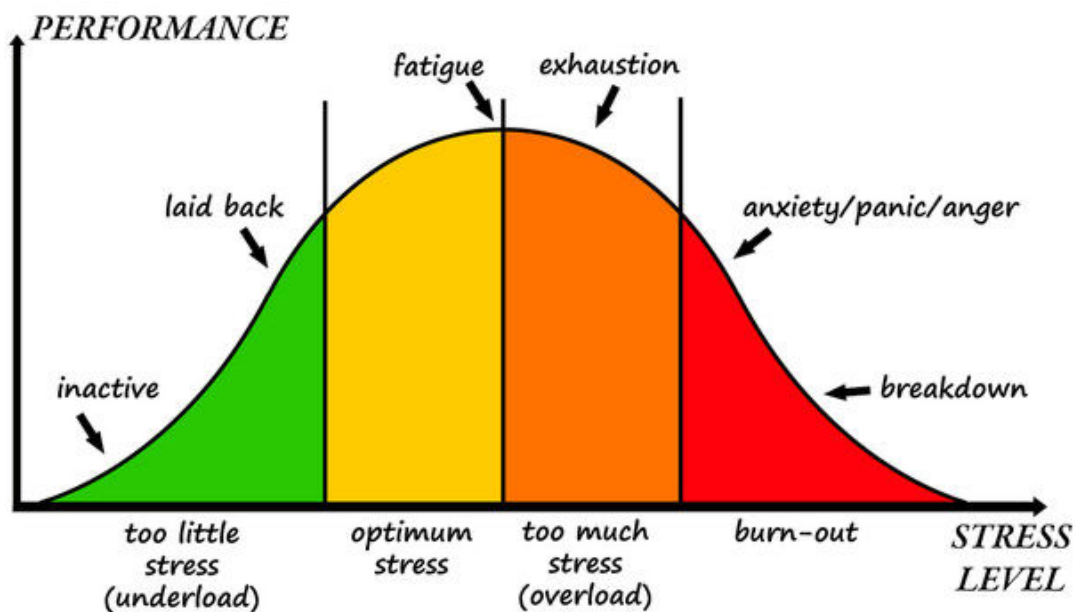


Week One Topics: Orientation to Group, Intentions, Inner Resource

Stress can increase our alertness and performance - but only up to a certain point.

The curve below shows the relationship between stress and performance. Stress management becomes even more important when we have little or no control over stressors.



Burnout is a common consequence. Burnout and chronic stress symptoms can include:

- chronic fatigue
- irritability
- anger
- depression
- anxiety
- frustration
- GI upset
- headache
- physical pains

- sleep problems
- problems with memory and decision-making
- feeling less connected to others or feeling numb
- getting sick more often, immune system issues
- high blood pressure or high resting heart rate

Self-care is self-management; if we manage ourselves, we are strong and able to care for others.

The apple tree does not apologize for taking what it needs (sun, water, nutrients, etc.) to grow apples. Think of the apples as what we give to others as helping professionals. Without self-care, there are no apples.

This group uses Integrative Restoration (iRest) and other exercises to help us take care of ourselves.

Practicing iRest is a form of self-inquiry and meditation to build resilience. Each time we meet, we will practice together. It works best if you also practice on your own. The “Resources” handout has web links and more information on how to do this.

There are 10 parts of iRest. We will touch on each of them throughout this group, coming back to review and build on them as we work together. Today we will start with two: **intentions and inner resource.**

Intentions:

- Tools used to guide us
- Can change with each day, hour, or meditation
- Stated in the present tense, as already true
- Can be words or phrases

If you wanted to be more relaxed, you would say “I relax every day” (not “I will start relaxing”).

Examples:

“Respect.”

“Harmony.”

“I notice when I’m reactive, and I respond appropriately.”

“I speak my truth with kindness.”

“I am aware of my body and give it what it needs.”

Inner Resource:

Your inner resource is your felt sense of constant stability and well-being or ‘okayness’. It is always present inside of you and we will practice consciously experiencing it.

When you get to know your inner resource, you can ground or tap into it at any time. It is like water from a well that you can draw on any time.

Your inner resource is unique to you but it is a whole body experience. Past positive experiences can be portals or keys to feeling your inner resource. Words or imagery can help us start to feel it.

Think back to a time when you felt safe, secure, whole, and at ease. It could be a memory of a special place, being with a wise or loving person, or another type of experience like being with a favorite pet or enjoying a warm beverage. What did you feel in your body during this time? Where were these feelings or sensations located?

Examples:

- Secure
- Connected
- Warmth radiating
- Open
- Calmness in the chest
- Warm hands

- Energy flowing
- Grounded
- Content
- Strong
- A peaceful flowing stream
- A sunny day laying near the ocean
- A room filled with my favorite things
- Picturing a symbol or object that has special meaning
- A serene meadow
- A cozy or special scent (like lavender, vanilla, or a special perfume or cologne)

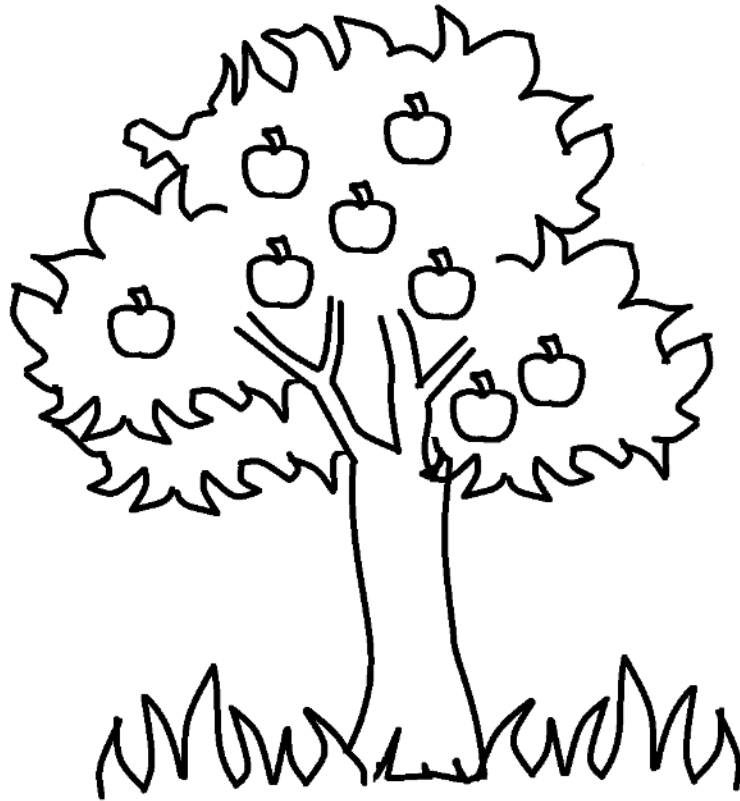
There are endless possibilities or pathways to experience your inner resource. Your inner resource is your constant - a felt sense that exists within you and that you bring with you everywhere you go.

iRest:

Integrative restoration (iRest) is a form of yoga nidra, a guided meditation. It is a trauma-sensitive practice that has been used in many environments including the Department of Defense, Veterans Affairs, healthcare workers, school counselors, and others. It provides your body with deep rest while your mind is alert but relaxed. There is no right or wrong way to practice iRest. Sometimes you may feel very deeply relaxed and other times your mind may wander. Just listen to the instructor's voice and let the experience be just as it is.

Pema Chodron: "You are the sky. Everything else - it's just the weather."

Week One Homework: Below the apple tree, list words that help describe your intentions and inner resource. These words can help ‘grow your apples’ (sustain your work as a helping professional). Practice consciously feeling your inner resource briefly during the week, even if it is only for a few minutes. Don’t get discouraged - this takes practice over time ‘little and often’ yields the best results. Simply put: “Water the root to enjoy the fruit”.



Intentions & Inner Resource Words: