# **Outline**

# **Using Neuroscience in Treatment of** Stress and Trauma

Positives: - Science gives authority, evidence, de-stigmatizes mental health

> Increased motivation and hope for change

Concerns: - Oversimplification, unrealistic expectations, changing state of science, see self as damaged or

### The Promise of Neuroplasticity

Describe neuroplasticity in everyday language Therapy is about creating a new, more resilient brain

We are changing beings - don't have to be stuck in rigid views of self

Teach brain to be less reactive to stress and triggers

"Rewiring" as a metaphor for change Changing "raw," unprocessed memories to organized narratives

### The Brain's Stress Response

Historical view - Hans Selve The brain's stress response "fight, flight, freeze"

The triune brain - reptilian, mammalian, human The amygdala and the prefrontal cortex How the amygdala "hijacks" the brain into emergency mode

# **How the Stress Response is Spread** Throughout the Body

Neurotransmitters - Epinephrine norepinephrine and cortisol The HPA axis and role of cortisol The sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous

The dorsovagal "freeze" response to unavoidable threat

# The Upside and Downside of Stress

Increased motivation and engagement "flow"state

Can create mental toughness and resilience to future stressors

Inflammatory response to chronic stress Stress and health risk behaviors (excess alcohol use, smoking, overeating etc) Stress and cellular aging (telomeres)

### **Traumas - Effects on the Brain**

Cortisol attacks the hippocampus - center of narrative memory Amygdala response increases in strength Impaired anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) and

prefrontal cortical function Cortisol halts production of BDNF - fewer new brain cells formed

Link to depression, anxiety disorders, PTSD Cognitive rigidity and inability to take in new information

Changes in sense of self and dissociation

# **Long-Term Impact of Adverse** Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

The ACE Study (Kaiser and the CDC) Addictive and unhealthy ways of managing anxiety & negative emotions Disease, mental health issues, behavioral problems, PTSD

# **Explaining Neuroscience Concepts** to Clients

Use drawings and images Individualize to the type of difficulty (e.g., disengaged vs reactive - different brain areas) Redirect vs eliminate

Help client label & recognize when happening (e.g., freeze, flooding, negative thinking, rigidity, impulsivity)

Find coping strategies for each type of brain

# **Stress-Proofing the Brain - Overview**

Calming the amygdala - Grounding, mindfulness, self-compassion, perceiving control Moving forward with the prefrontal cortex -Cognitive reappraisal, priming positive mindsets and, growth focus, health psychology

## **Grounding Strategies for Clients with** Trauma or Attachment Injuries Yoga, relaxation, breathing, present-moment

focus, soothing with the senses, pets, drawing, gardening, walking Mental imagery - safe place, boundaries, energetic, times they felt strong/competent Left-brain strategies - task focus and

## **Mindfulness Strategies**

engagement

Qualities of mindfulness states - open noniudamental, fluid, deliberate, Observing and accepting inner experience (thoughts, feelings, sensations) Using the senses to self-regulate De-fusing from negative thoughts and

self-images How mindfulness changes the brain Mindfulness practices - breathing, watching thoughts, urge surfing, open awareness Application to anxiety, depression, addictions, PTSD

# **Self-Compassion Strategies**

Self-kindness, common humanity, focus on unmet needs

Application to depression, anxiety, stressmanagement, trauma, insecure attachment Link to Schema Therapy - healthy adult mode Practices - Metta meditation, soften, soothe and allow, dialogues with inner critic

# **Cognitive Strategies**

How stress and anxiety narrow attention, create cognitive rigidity

Depression and negative thinking PTSD and internalized negative appraisals (helpless, unworthy, unsafe etc.) Worry and rumination cycles - link to prefrontal

cortex and default mode network Why thought suppression doesn't work De-catastrophizing and probability estimation Exposure and tolerating negative thoughts Using metaphors (monsters on the boat, bouncy ball underwater)

# **Creating Positive States of Mind to Counter Stress**

How our brains are wired to the negative Positive emotions can promote physiological recovery from anxiety and fear Reappraising anxiety as excitement Gratitude diaries Commitment, control, and challenge; growth mindset

# Living Healthy in the Face of Stress

Sleep disturbance - behavioral strategies Healthy coping strategies - exercise, meditation, yoga

Dealing with emotional eating

Live Seminar & Webcast Schedule (Both Days) (Times listed in Central)

7:30 Registration/Morning Coffee & Tea 8:00 Program begins

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# **Learning Objectives** Upon completion of this workshop, participants should be able to:

- 1. Determine the neurophysiology of the stress response, including the roles of the amygdala, hypothalamus, sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous systems, and the effects of cortisol and adrenaline.
- 2. Discriminate among acute stress, major life events and chronic stressors, and the longer-term effects of chronic stress on mind and body.
- 3. Implement grounding strategies to help clients who experience "freeze" states or dissociative symptoms.
- 4. Communicate the concept of mindfulness, how it affects the brain, and how to use mindfulness-based interventions in therapy.
- 5. Critique the concept of self-compassion and research on its benefits. 6. Design practical exercises to increase self-compassion in clients facing stress.

- 7. Analyze the importance of perceived control to the impact of stressors and learn how to help clients differentiate controllable and uncontrollable aspects of stressors.
- 8. Explore how stress and anxiety narrow cognitive focus and create thinking traps and learn techniques to help clients be more cognitively flexible in the face of stress.
- 9. Evaluate the research suggesting that positive emotions can undo the physiological effects of negative emotions.
- 10. Investigate how rumination exacerbates the effects of stress and how to help clients curtail ruminative cycles and de-fuse from negative thinking.
- 11. Appraise how a growth mindset differs from a fixed mindset and how to help clients adopt a growth mindset and a gritty attitude towards their stressors.
- 12. Assess the application of a brain-based, neuroscience approach to treating clinical disorders like GAD and PTSD.

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Few trainings can offer you the following taught by skilled trainer and clinician, Melanie Greenberg, PhD,:

- Apply proven brain-based and mindfulness strategies for treating anxiety, GAD, depression, PTSD and help clients handle major life events and chronic stressors
- Teach clients stress resilience skills like positive focus, growth mindset, engaging mind and body, and mental toughness
- Motivate clients and calm the brain's stress response using the power of
- Increase client engagement by focusing on changing the brain not just reducing

Advances in neuroscience and health psychology, positive psychology, and mindful selfcompassion provide us with new tools to energize, strengthen, and update our approach to therapy.

Melanie began incorporating these brain- and strengths-based techniques 5 years ago and they have transformed her practice - making therapy more dynamic and interesting and creating more hopeful, engaged, and empowered clients.

When clients understand that they can actually rewire their brains by practicing new ways of thinking and behaving, they feel less stigmatized and stuck and more motivated to tolerate discomfort in order to change. With these new techniques, we can help clients overcome helplessness, avoidance, and rigid negative self-views and instead develop a growth mindset that helps them overcome the constraints of the past and rebuild their inner and outer worlds for increased happiness and success.

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# **Speaker**

**Melanie Greenberg, PhD,** is a practicing psychologist, author, speaker, and executive coach with more than 20 years of professional experience. She has an active practice in Mill Valley, CA where she sees individuals and couples, teens and adults. Originally from South Africa, Melanie has a passion for psychological growth and healing. She loves to challenge, inspire and motivate. Melanie is the author of *The Stress-Proof Brain* (New Harbinger, 2017) - an Amazon bestseller in neuropsychology, stress-management, and health. She writes the popular Mindful Self-Express blog for Psychology Today (8 million page views) and has a substantial social media following. Melanie is a former professor in the clinical psychology Doctoral Program at Alliant International University, San Diego. She has delivered talks and workshops to national and international audiences, businesses, nonprofits, and professional organizations, including The American Psychological Association, Wisconsin Psychological Association, Society of Behavioral Medicine, and The Bay Club. She has also published more than 50 research articles and scholarly products. A popular media expert, she has been featured on CNN, Forbes, Inc., Business Insider, BBC radio, ABC News, Yahoo, AOL, and Lifehacker, as well as in Self, Redbook, Women's Health, Men's Health, Fitness Magazine and the Huffington Post. She has also been featured on radio shows and numerous podcasts. With almost 50,000 followers, she was named one of the Top Psychologists to follow on Twitter by The British Psychological Society. www.drmelaniegreenberg.com

Speaker Disclosure

Financial: Melanie Greenberg is in private practice. She is an author for New Harbinger Publications and Psychology Today and receives royalties. Dr. Greenberg receives a honorarium from the Community Institute for Psychotherapy and National Charity League. She receives a speaking honorarium from PESI, Inc.

Non-financial: Melanie Greenberg is a member of the American Psychological Association; and California Psychological

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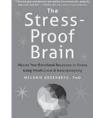
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### You Can Handle It

10 Steps to Shift Stress from Problem to Possibility

# By Margaret Wehrenberg, PsyD

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WISCONSIN MARRIAGE & FAMILY THERAPISTS: This course has been submitted to the Wisconsin Association for Marriage and Family Therapy for review. Credit is pending.

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