

# Today's Facilitators

## Office of Quality and Safety, Care Experience



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Training +  
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Project



## The Office of Quality and Safety, Care Experience

We focus our staff on providing compassionate care by increasing workplace engagement and utilizing role model patient-centered behaviors.



# *Emotional Justice*

Recognizing Emotional Trauma After a Crisis  
Event



## *Emotional Justice is:*

- *Stopping and acknowledging you've been through something traumatic*
- Looking around you and acknowledging the loss, grief, shame, guilt, loss of normalcy
- Listening to your body and acknowledging the internal alarms and new behaviors that may be negatively impacting your life due to the onset of trauma
- Doing something about it: courage to be vulnerable, finding positive ways and outlets to heal; courage to be transparent in saying - “I’m not okay”

# *Identifying the Challenge*

Recognizing Emotional Trauma After Crisis  
Event



# *Recovery from a Traumatic Event is a Long Arc of a Journey*

- Being in the midst of this COVID-19 crisis is causing serious and encompassing stress on our lives
- While we're adapting to a new normal, there is fear that things may never "be the same."
- While we're currently dealing with the stress of living in a COVID-19 world. We need to acknowledge that our trauma may be carried along with us even as the curve flattens.
- What are important things to keep in mind as we look to heal our trauma and seek Emotional Justice?

# *Our Stress*

Why COVID-19 Feels like an Attack



# COVID-19's unique effect on us as social beings:

Our brain reacts to Social Pain or Trauma in the same way that we might experience Physical Pain or Trauma

## Exhibit 1: Social and Physical Pain Produce Similar Brain Responses

Brain scans captured through functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) show the same areas associated with distress, whether caused by social rejection or physical pain. The dorsal anterior cingulate cortex (highlighted at left) is associated with the degree of distress; the right ventral prefrontal cortex (highlighted at right) is associated with regulating the distress.

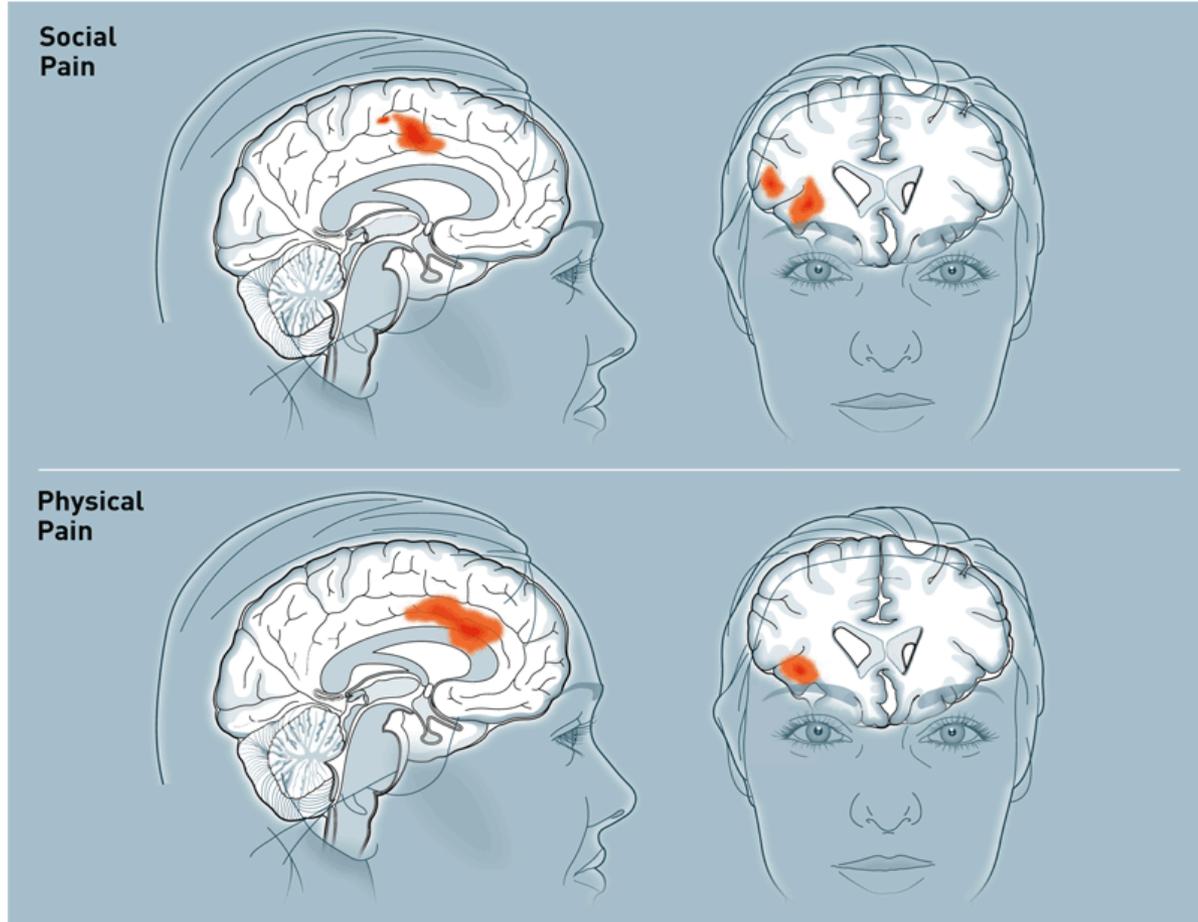


Illustration: Samuel Valasco

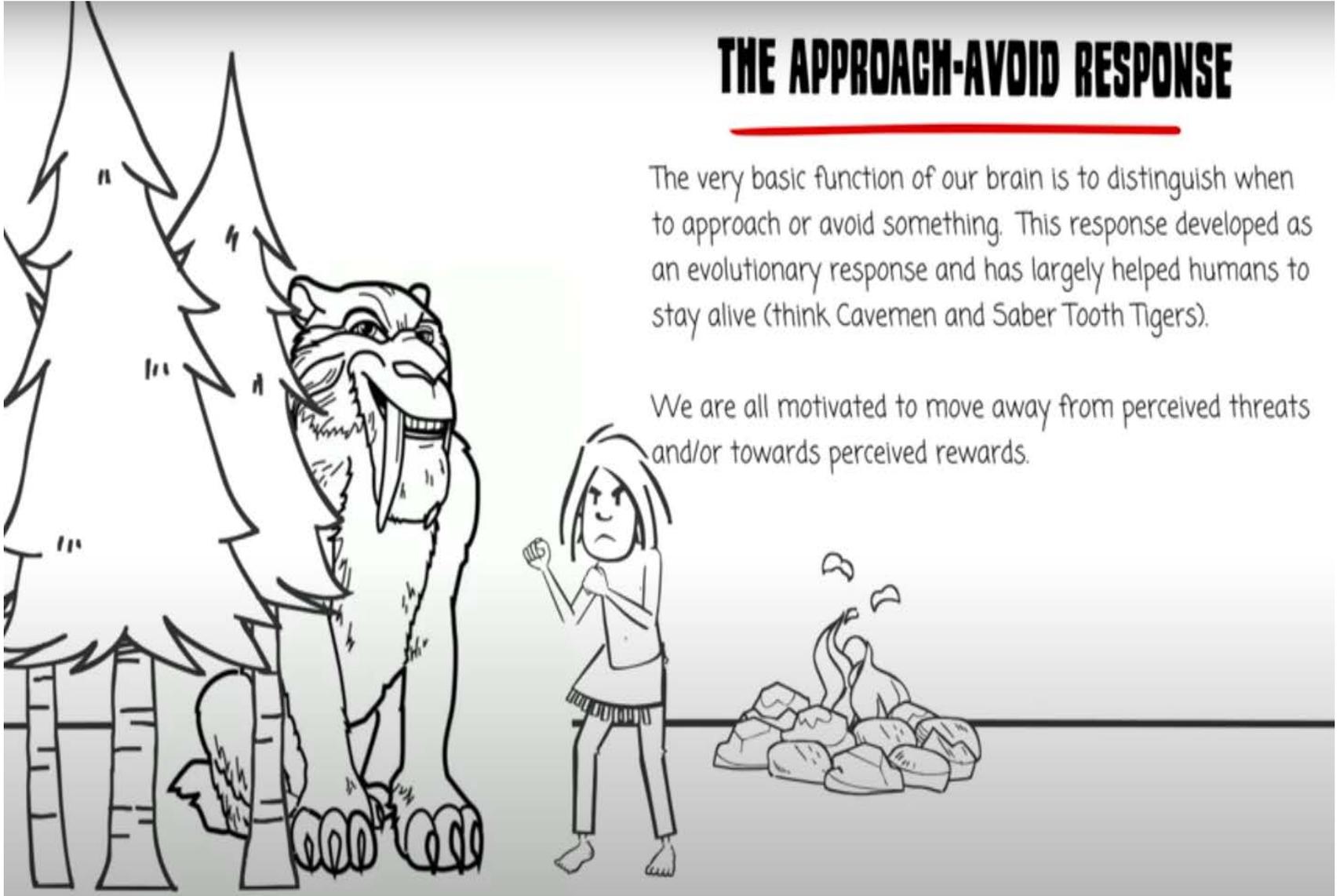
Source: Eisenberger, Lieberman, and Williams, *Science*, 2003 [social pain images]; Lieberman et al., "The Neural Correlates of Placebo Effects: A Disruption Account," *Neuroimage*, May 2004 [physical pain images]

## THE APPROACH-AVOID RESPONSE

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The very basic function of our brain is to distinguish when to approach or avoid something. This response developed as an evolutionary response and has largely helped humans to stay alive (think Cavemen and Saber Tooth Tigers).

We are all motivated to move away from perceived threats and/or towards perceived rewards.

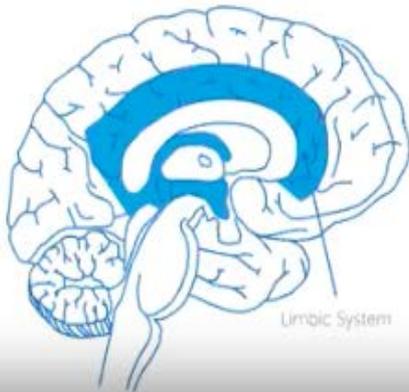


# The Approach-Avoid Response and our Brain

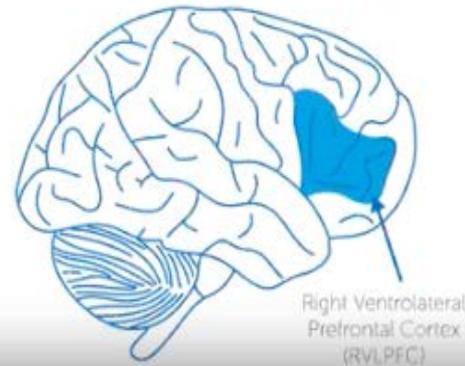


Avoid  
(Limbic System)

Thinking unclearly



Thinking clearly



Approach  
(Prefrontal Cortex)



# *SCARF Model*

Understanding the Social Dynamics that  
Affect Our Brain



Situations outside of ourselves have a powerful impact on our sense of internal wellbeing.

According to research from the NeuroLeadership Institute, what triggers our Approach-Avoid Response falls within 5 domains that can positively impact us when rewarded or negatively impact us when threatened.



the brain & collaboration



The well-researched **SCARF** model aims to identify the core social domains that drive human behaviour.

These five domains activate the **primary reward** or **primary threat** circuitry in our brains. **SCARF** refers to five domains:

- Status:** Our relative importance to others
- Certainty:** Our being able to predict the future
- Autonomy:** Our sense of control over events
- Relatedness:** Our sense of safety with others
- Fairness:** Our perception of fair exchanges between people

*The Domains are the Same for each  
Person*

**But Each Person Has a Different  
Strength of Connection to each  
Domain**

**Ex: We'll both be affected by a  
threat to our sense of Relatedness,  
but it may have a much larger effect  
on me than on you**



# Status (SCARF)

Domain and Description	Brain Effect	Threat → Reduce	Reward → Increase
<p>Relative importance to others</p> <p><u>Common Example:</u> A friend/colleague questioning your work ethic</p>	<p>Reduction/validation in status amongst peer group will trigger the same threat/reward as physical pain.</p> <p>Experiencing loss of self-perceived value causes a break to our self-identity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Putting our competence into question</li> <li>-Feeling ignored</li> <li>-Feeling challenged</li> <li>-Unsolicited feedback</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Positive feedback and public acknowledgment</li> <li>-Reassurance of value to you and others in your mutual peer group</li> <li>-Paying attention to what matters to them</li> </ul>

**COVID-19 Scenario:** Recently, people may have had to change jobs or roles; and some roles, at this time, are more active than others. A common anxious question like: "Am I doing enough?" or, "is my work even as valuable?" or, "Am I even contributing?" may come into your head from time to time. These are all common status anxieties we may be facing as we all do our best to help as much as we can.



# Certainty (SCARF)

Domain and Description	Brain Effect	Threat → Reduce	Reward → Increase
<p>Ability to comfortably and successfully predict the future</p> <p><u>Common Example:</u></p> <p>The certainty that your scheduled 7am train to work will arrive at 7am</p>	<p>When we're uncertain of something, the orbital frontal cortex of our brains starts to work overtime as it attempts to make sense of the unknown</p> <p>→ Loss of focus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Change</li> <li>-Lies</li> <li>-Lack of full information</li> <li>-Imagining others' expectations without getting clarity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Vision and strategy, including timing and cadence</li> <li>-Plans (even when we know things may not go as planned)</li> <li>-Turning implicit (indirect) into explicit (direct)</li> </ul>

**COVID-19 Scenario:** There largest unknown in all of this that is adding the most to our daily mental load is not knowing when this will all be over and not knowing what the “new normal” will even be for the field of healthcare moving forward. Will your jobs look the same two months from now? Additionally, dealing with the constant uncertainty of worrying about exposure to COVID-19. Living in a constant state of ambiguity is very hard on our brains and emotional state.



# Autonomy (SCARF)

Domain and Description	Brain Effect	Threat → Reduce	Reward → Increase
<p>Perception of exerting control over events or our lives</p> <p><u>Common Example:</u></p> <p>A partner micromanaging you as you are working</p>	<p>The brain reacts with stress signals when we have no control over a situation. Stress is massively reduced when people have control and choices, regardless of the difficulty of the situation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Micromanagement</li> <li>-Quarantine/Isolation</li> <li>-Loss of favorite tasks</li> <li>-Being assigned a new responsibility without your feedback first</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Choices between options i.e.. which do you prefer</li> <li>-Enable individual decision making</li> <li>-Trust from peers</li> <li>-Setting your own self-improvement goals</li> </ul>

**COVID-19 Scenario:** Going back to the first example, there are so many members of our NYC Health and Hospital community that have recently switched roles or departments (possibly by choice, possibly not). Now these departmental transfers have to be more reliant on their colleagues to learn to do things that were completely familiar back in their former department. This loss of autonomy or self-reliance triggers an increased stress load and sense of helplessness on all other aspects of life.



# Relatedness (SCARF)

Domain and Description	Brain Effect	Threat → Reduce	Reward → Increase
<p>Sense of safety with others</p> <p><u>Common Example:</u></p> <p>Knowing that your friends are actively rooting for you to succeed</p>	<p>Need for safe human contact has a similar impact on our brain as the need for food</p> <p>Thoughts from people who share relatedness tend to light up the same circuitry. Impedes building Oxytocin.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Meeting someone unknown</li> <li>-Feeling let down, not involved</li> <li>-No help from others</li> <li>-Social distancing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-More introductions</li> <li>-Mentoring/coaching</li> <li>-Making an effort to connect</li> <li>-Not feeling alone in your efforts</li> </ul>

**COVID-19 Scenario:** Social distancing is having a massive impact on the sense of comfort we generally derive from our relatedness. Things like constantly wearing PPE to protect ourselves from a virus make us inherently insular towards others. Even knowing that there are certain parts of the hospital for COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients and staff draws an in-group and out-group boundary in our minds in how we might usually relate to other colleagues. The change in how we bond is emotionally difficult.



# Fairness (SCARF)

Domain and Description	Brain Effect	Threat → Reduce	Reward → Increase
<p>Perception of fair exchanges between/amongst people</p> <p>Common Example: Everyone getting an equal slice of pie</p>	<p>Scarcity Mindset:</p> <p>Triggers anxiety producing feelings of disgust at injustice. Causes tunnel vision in the brain from perceived lack resources and lack of safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Different set of rules for different people</li> <li>-”Compare despair”</li> <li>-Seeing others’ needs get met, but not your own/friends’</li> <li>-Injustice in a trusted system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Acknowledge and reward all contributions</li> <li>-Establish clear and equal expectations and norms for all</li> <li>-Help people see situations from other perspectives</li> </ul>

**COVID-19 Scenario:** The general conversation around scarcity of PPE in our global healthcare community takes a heavy toll on everyone in the community. Whether you are in the abundance group or scarcity group, the anxiety around fairness is very real and can cause general distrust or outrage at injustice. This all leads to an understandably large allotment of emotional baggage on our minds.

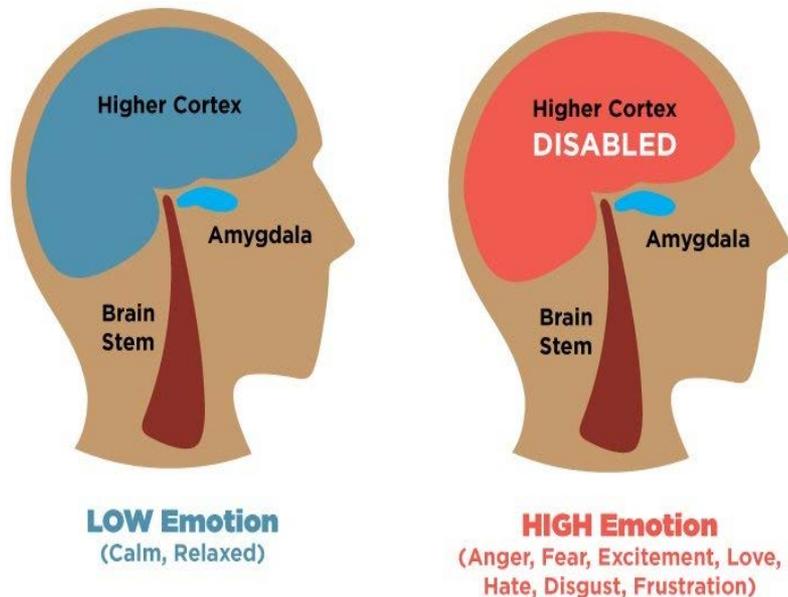


**“If you don’t spend a reasonable amount of time attending to feelings, you’ll spend an unreasonable amount of time attending to the aftermath”**

**-Brene Brown**

## *The Mind Wants Emotional Justice Why?*

### The Brain Pre-Trauma and **Post-Trauma**



- The brain recognizes emotional trauma
- The brain needs to sense trauma is being treated
- The brain wants to return to post trauma stasis

## *How Do We Know The Mind Wants To Heal ?*

- The body shows symptoms
- The symptoms are our internal bells
- Body engages in checks and balance
- Effects of trauma, let's us know something is wrong
- High cortisol levels
- High adrenaline levels
- High blood pressure
- Triggers mental health issues
- Brain switches from relaxed state response to a stressed state response

## *Cognitive Symptoms of Emotional Trauma*

- Intrusive thoughts of the event out of the blue
- Nightmares
- Loss of concentration
- Mood Swings
- Recurring Visual Images
- Disorientation



## *Physical Symptoms of Emotional Trauma*

- Fatigue and Exhaustion
- Change in eating patterns
- Easily startled
- Change in sleep patterns
- Unexplainable aches and pains throughout the body
- Insomnia



## *Psychological Symptoms of Emotional Trauma*

- **Depression:** mental health disorder that affects mood and behaviors
- **Shame:** you're not proud of your behavior or your performance
- **Emotional Numbing:** evasion of connecting with people
- **Irritability:** short stemmed things that did not bother you before, bothers you now
- **Anxiety:** sudden onset of intense fear of imminent danger
- **Guilt:** connected with empathy (especially if someone perished)
- **Disbelief:** refusal to accept a thing as real or true
- **Anger:** feelings of hostility
- **Emotional Shock:** surge of strong emotions along with physical reactions
- **Panic Attacks** sudden onset of intense fear ;imminent danger

## *Effects of Emotional Trauma*

- Hostility
- Loss of Former Belief System
- Uncontrolled Reactive thoughts
- Social Withdrawal
- Substance Abuse
- Feeling Ineffective
- Alcoholism
- Feeling Like you'll never be the same
- Constant Arguments with Loved Ones
- Feelings of Hopelessness and Despair

*Step-down Care: moving a patient from intensive care to a transitional recovery program*

**Step-Down Emotional Care:** transitioning from injury mode based on a traumatic event and moving toward healing post trauma; coping with the shock, confusion, anger, sadness, fear and anxiety to pinpoint a few



- **Step-Down Emotional Care:** Moving away from high intense post trauma responses; moving away from high emotion, very reactive
- **Transitional Recovery Response:** In transit transitioning; putting trauma into perspective; returning brain to pre-trauma equilibrium; proactive responses; focused on getting the brain to low emotion; focused on healing
- **Key Component:** brain recognizes it's Shifted into healing mode

## *Emotional Justice is.....*

- ***Emotional Intelligence***: managing self, knowing when to enact P>A>U>S>E
- ***Conscientiousness***: check in with yourself by doing periodic emotional appraisals; How am I doing? Am I coping well? Am I functioning at high level or low level emotion?
- ***Self-Awareness***: knowing who you are; knowing how to recognize you need help and allowing yourself to be vulnerable enough in asking for help, seeking help and accepting the help being provided

## Social Threats have a Larger Impact on our Behavior than Social Rewards

Research from David Rock (2008) shows that it takes five positive social rewards to overcome the same impact on our stress levels as one negative social threat.

This means we need to find ways to generate much more POSITIVE rewards at work to overcome the NEGATIVES of COVID-19.

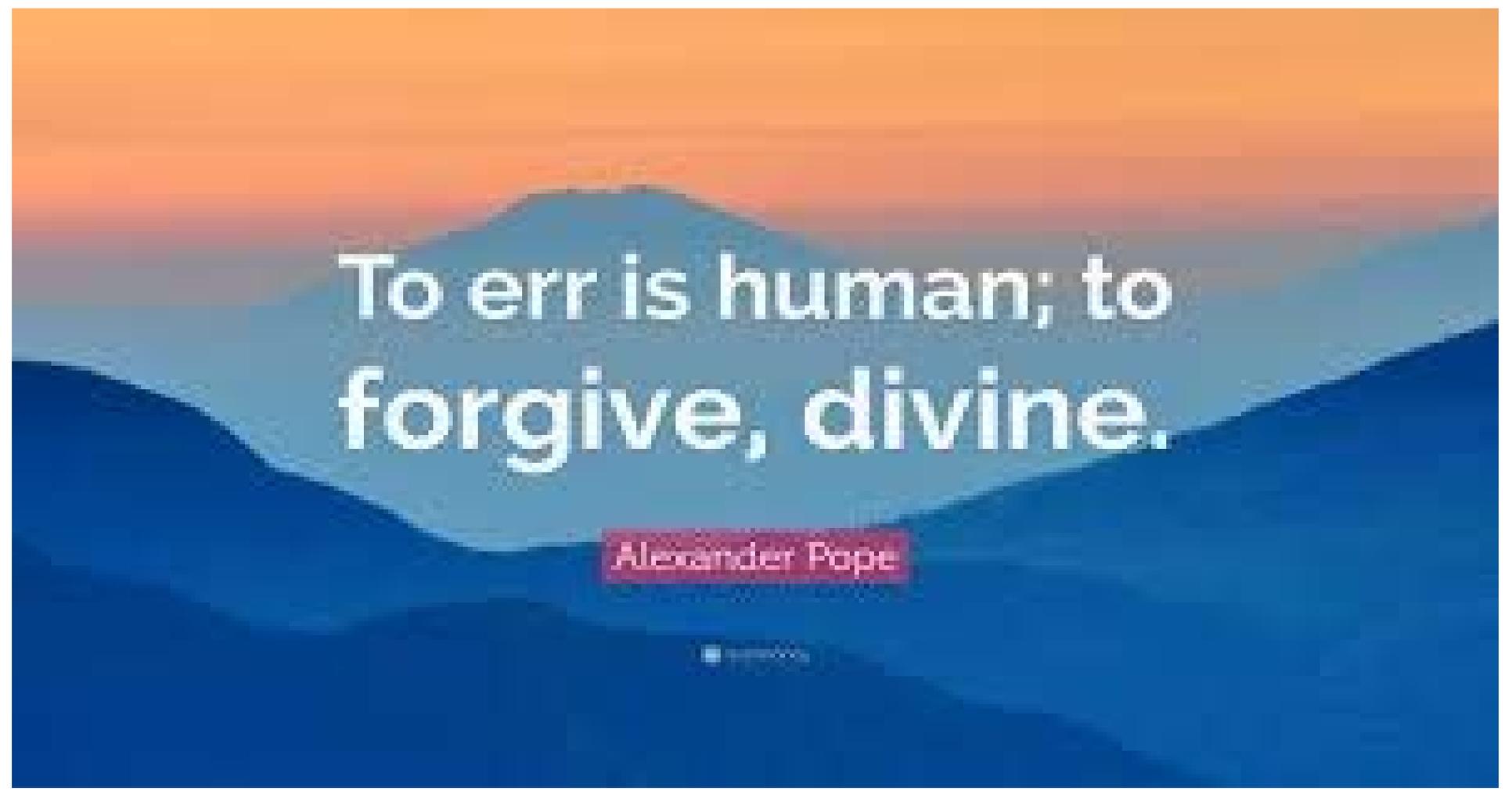


threat or reward

## *Emotional Justice is.... Putting Step-Down Care Into Action*

<b>STOP</b>	<b>LOOK</b>	<b>LISTEN</b>	<b>DO</b>
<b>Pause</b>	Identify the traumatic experience(s)	Heart-Set feelings matter; your feelings matter	Pay attention symptoms what are they saying to you
<b>Assess</b>	What is the crisis aftermath looking like? Appraise your emotions	Listen to your body it gives cues as visible changes will be evident	Process and evaluate those changes; positive or negative impact on your life
<b>Unload</b>	Pick up a pen and paper unload your thoughts and feelings; see your thoughts in print	Listen to other's experiences. Know that your story is unique to you however you're not alone	Meditate, listen to calming music; do activities that bring you peace and joy; a relaxed state
<b>Selfcare</b>	Take ownership be proactive with your emotional and mental health	Connect with others share and support	make yourself accessible and approachable
<b>Execute</b>	Safe and protected Environment	Listen to the trained professional	Practice Emotional Regulation

## *Emotional Justice is all About Perspective*

A landscape photograph showing rolling hills under a sunset sky. The sky transitions from a deep orange at the horizon to a lighter, hazy blue at the top. The hills are silhouetted against the sky, with the foreground hills being a darker blue. The overall mood is serene and contemplative.

To err is human; to  
forgive, divine.

Alexander Pope

# *Emotional Justice Takeaways*

- Pay attention to your emotions based on your behavior (rational/irrational)
- Balanced Diet
- Engage in physical activities
- Practice meditation
- Laugh
- Connect with others
- Adopt a pet especially if you find yourself alone a lot
- Take care of your spiritual self; engage in things and activities that heal the spirit like pray
- Get enough sleep (chamomile, lavender, magnesium)
- Candles and aromatherapy
- Be gentle and compassionate with yourself take ownership of your care

# The SCARF® Assessment



- ❖ SCARF Information
- ❖ Completely free online assessment (similar to the Myers-Briggs)
- ❖ Takes about 10 minutes
- ❖ Answers range from:  
Strongly Disagree ←————→ Strongly Agree
- ❖ Provides numerical feedback on self-assessment answers in order for you to better understand your relationship with the social domains that affect your brain and wellbeing.

- ❖ Link to Assessment:  
<https://neuroleadership.com/research/tools/nli-scarf-assessment/>
- ❖ For Further information:  
<https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/SCARF.htm>