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[www.in-equilibrium.co.uk](http://www.in-equilibrium.co.uk)

# **Understanding Vicarious Trauma**

Slides to accompany a 90-minute virtual workshop

Facilitated by Mark Eyre, In Equilibrium

# Workshop programme

The 90-minute virtual session will include:

- How to recognise Vicarious Trauma in yourself and others
- The signs and symptoms of Vicarious Trauma
- Strategies to cope with Vicarious Trauma
- Initial plan to improve personal coping resources



# Our approach

Notice

- Identify early signs & symptoms of Vicarious Trauma

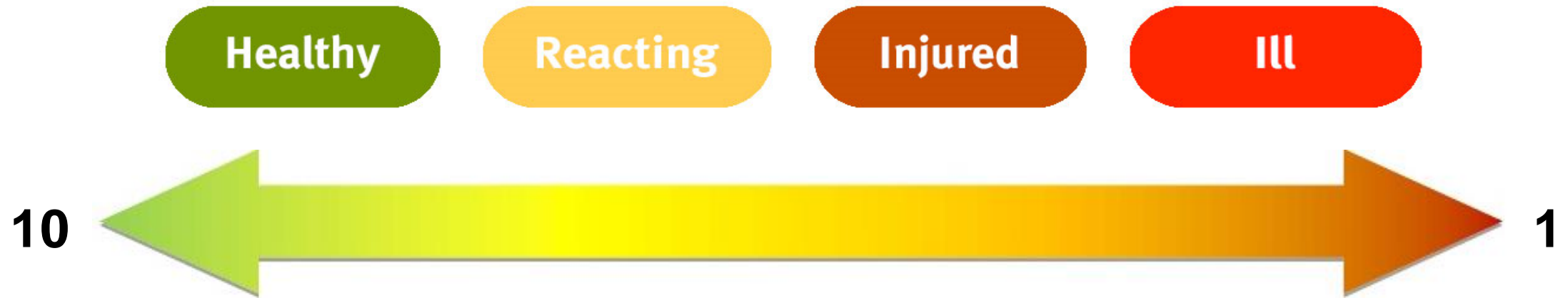
Act

- Take action to reduce risk

Change

- Build resilience and move to Vicarious Transformation

# Our mental health wellbeing



- Which category would you say you are currently in?
- What makes you say this?

**Exercise 1**

# Potential impacts

- Stress
- Burnout
- Compassion fatigue
- Vicarious trauma



# A definition of stress

“Stress is the psychological, physiological and behavioural response by an individual when they perceive a lack of equilibrium between the demands placed upon them and their ability to meet those demands that, over a period of time, leads to ill-health”

Professor Stephen Palmer



*in*equilibrium

# What makes an incident traumatic?

- Actual or threatened death, serious injury, physical harm
- Unpredictable, occur without warning
- Can be experienced first-hand or witnessed
- Outside of normal human experience
- Result in the experience of extreme fear, helplessness or horror for those involved





# Burnout and compassion fatigue

## Burnout

- Caused by prolonged stress, at work or elsewhere
- Usually happens over a longer period of time
- You feel worn out, tired and are unable to function



## Compassion fatigue

- Becoming weary of listening to people's problems
- Results in a loss of compassion
- Can happen in a relatively short time
- It changes who you are



# What is vicarious trauma?

<https://youtu.be/wVDSdta0mbM>



# What is Vicarious Trauma (VT)

- We become traumatised by being exposed to the trauma of others
- Results from empathetic engagement with the trauma of others
- Generates powerful emotions and potential over-involvement
- It impacts on our sense of hope, meaning, purpose, and behaviour



# Vicarious trauma symptoms

- Numbing, detachment, or absence of emotional responsiveness
- Depersonalisation, cynicism and negativity
- Re-experiencing the traumatic event
- Avoidance of things that remind us of the trauma
- Anxiety or increased arousal e.g., difficulty sleeping, irritability, poor concentration, hyper-vigilance, exaggerated startle response



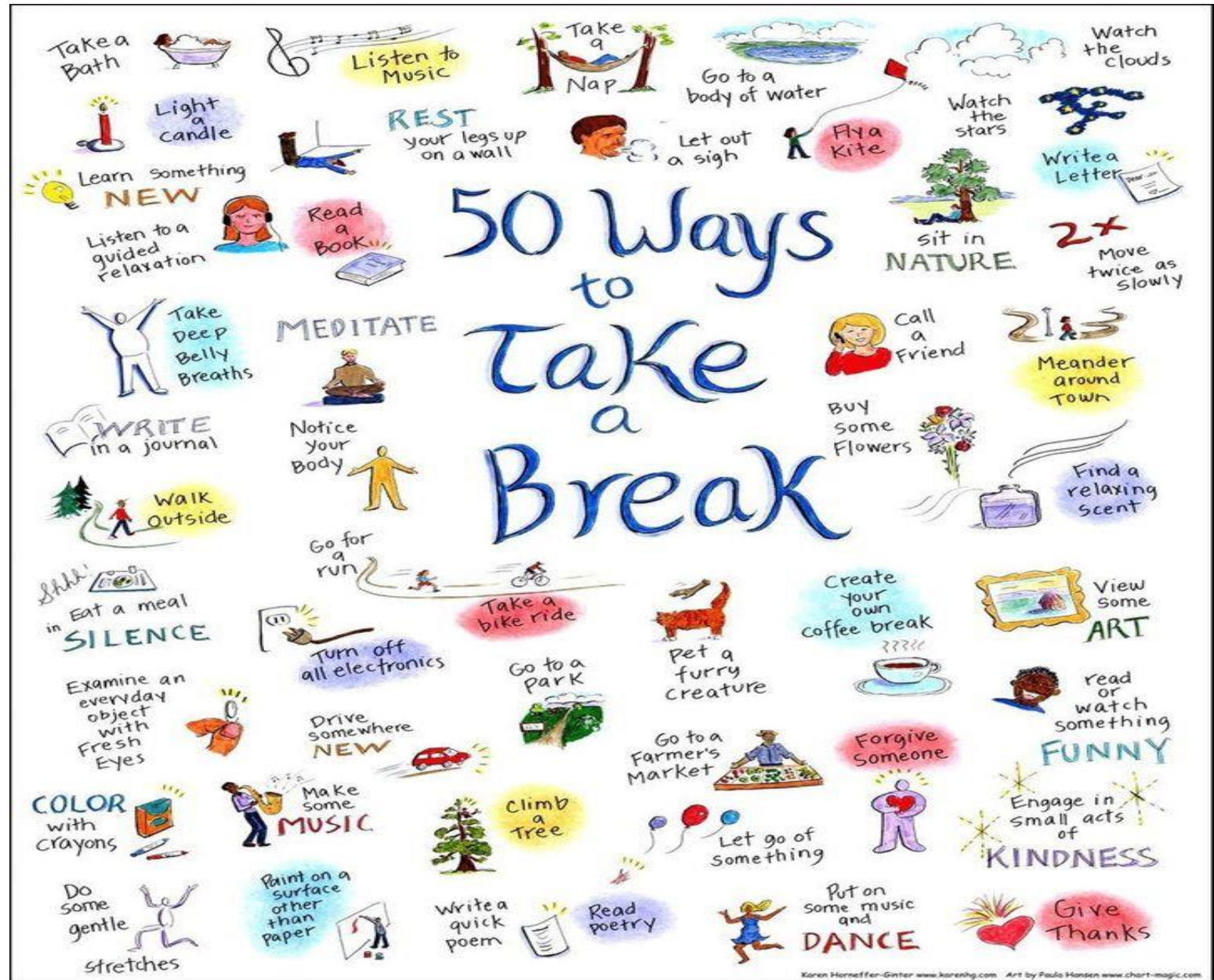
# Exercise: Self-care

- What steps do you take to make sure you look after yourself?
- How could you help others?
- What other steps could you take?

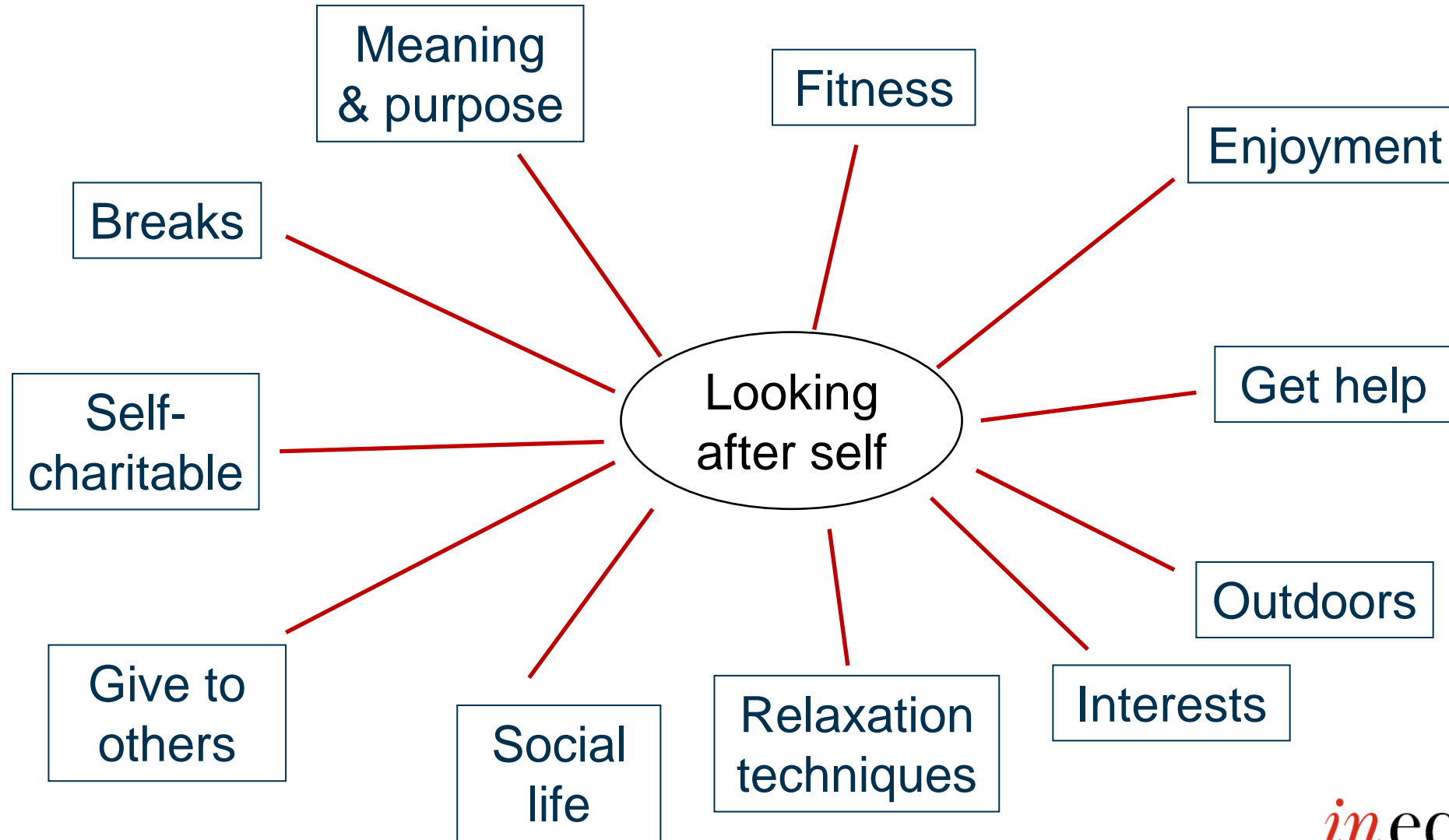
**Exercise 2**



# Self-Care



# Self-care key factors



# Four steps to improve your mental well-being

1. Connect with other people
2. Take notice of what's around you
3. Keep on learning
4. Challenge negative thoughts – focus on the good stuff





# Vicarious transformation

<https://youtu.be/QXuCBnX23Po>



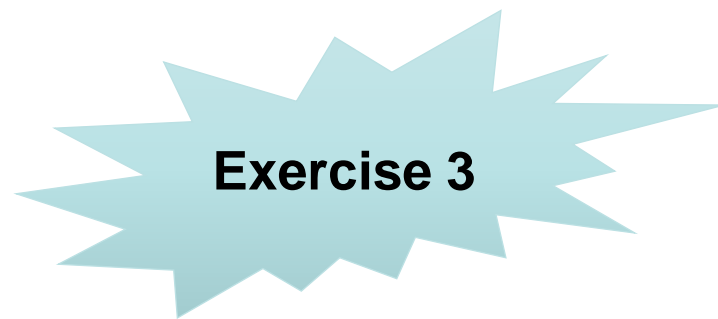
# Vicarious Transformation

- Active engagement with impacts of trauma
- Spiritual growth
- Deeper connection with, and compassion for, others
- A sense of meaning and hope



# Learning and actions

- What are your main learning points from today's workshop?
- What are you going to do because of today's workshop?



# Resources

Please visit the In Equilibrium website to access a variety of resources relating to wellbeing in the workplace:

<https://www.in-equilibrium.co.uk/wellbeing-at-work-resource-overview-page/>

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