



# Building Mental Wellness for COVID and Everyday Crises

Dr. Lovie J J Foster, PhD, MSW



# Agenda



Pause for the Cause

Mental Health and  
COVID

Daily Stress and Trauma

Wellness Tips

Pause for  
60  
Seconds

## How are you feeling?



# What is Mental Health?



# What is Mental Illness?



## Mental illness

Mental illness: A wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behavior.

Examples: depression, anxiety disorders, schizophrenia, eating disorders, and addictive behaviors.

Can we have  
mental illness  
and mental  
health at the  
same time?




<input type="checkbox"/>	YES
<input type="checkbox"/>	NO
<input type="checkbox"/>	MAYBE



## Let's Chat:

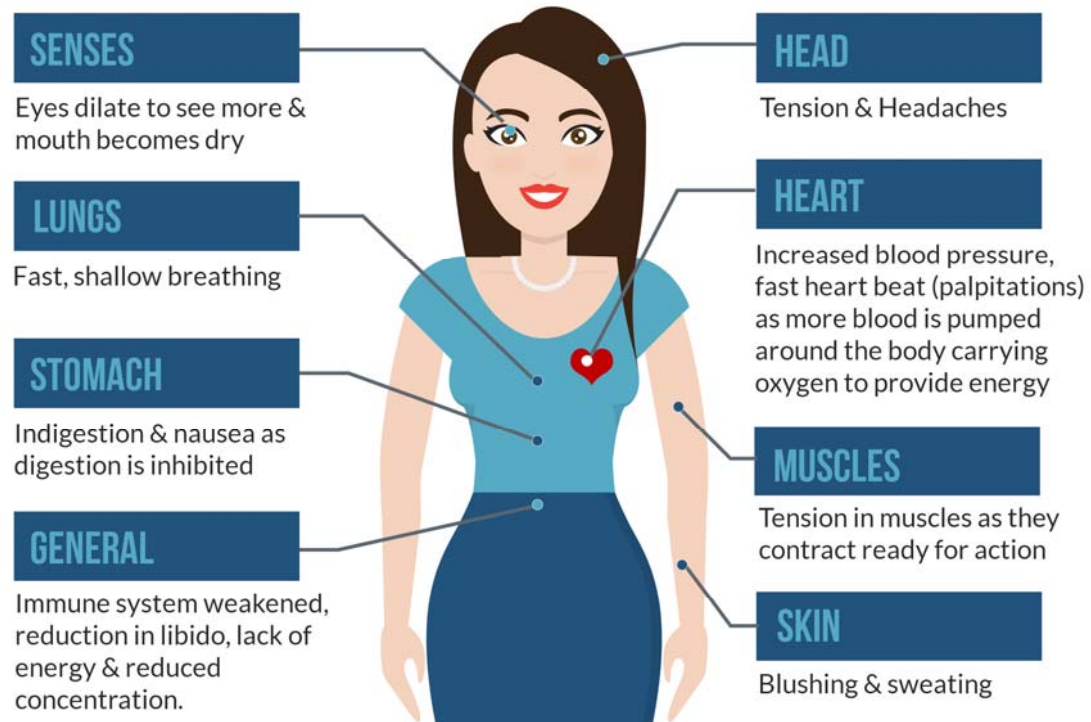
# In what ways have you seen COVID impact mental health?

- Uncertainty/Dis-ease
  - Forced Changes
  - Lack of Control
  - Increased Demands
  - Social Isolation
  - Under-employment
  - Lack of Resources
  - Shaken faith
  - Worry
  - Fear
  - Loss
  - Grief
  - Depressive Symptoms
  - Heightened Anxiety
  - Weight Gain
  - Sleeplessness
  - Hopelessness
  - Self Harm/Suicide
- 






# HOW STRESS AFFECTS THE BODY

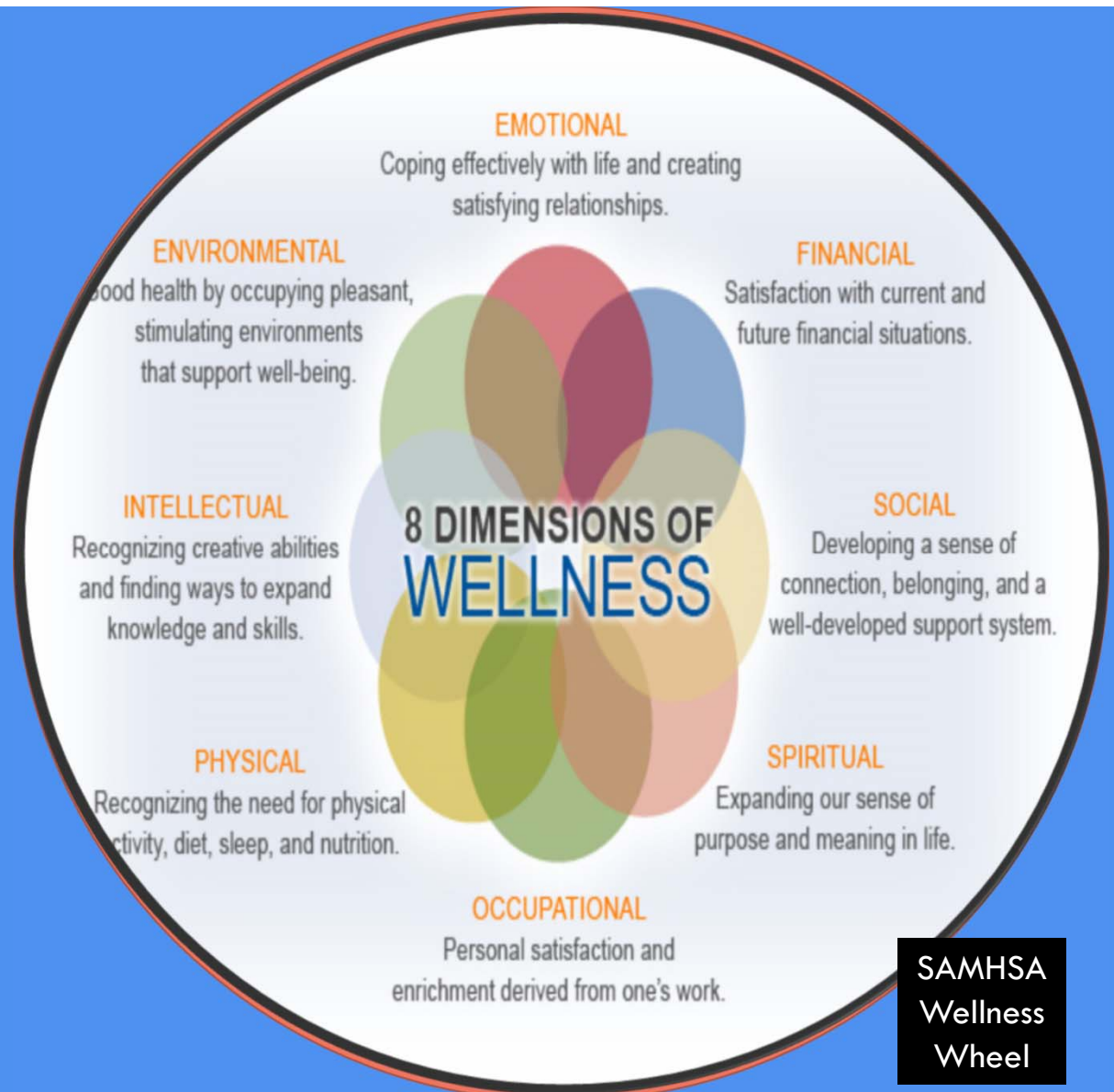


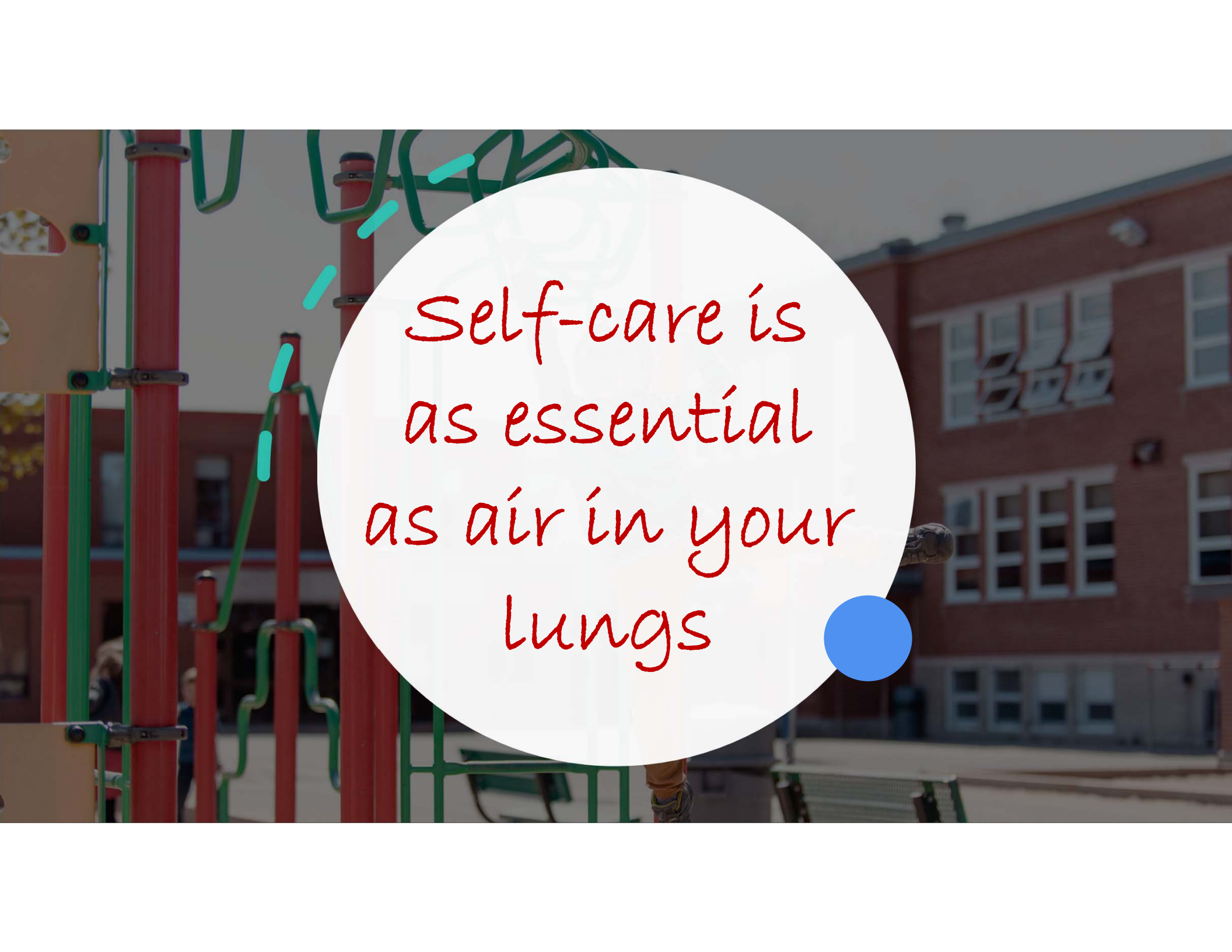


# Signs of Children's Mental Health Challenges

- Persistent sadness — two+ weeks
  - Withdrawing from or avoiding social interactions
  - Hurting oneself or talking about hurting oneself
  - Talking about death or suicide
    - Outbursts or extreme irritability
    - Out-of-control behavior that can be harmful
  - Drastic changes in mood, behavior or personality
  - Changes in eating habits
  - Loss of weight
    - Difficulty sleeping
    - Frequent headaches or stomachaches
  - Difficulty concentrating
    - Changes in academic performance
    - Avoiding or missing school
- 

BALANCE  
is the work  
of resilience





Self-care is  
as essential  
as air in your  
lungs

# Practice Mindfulness

- Pause and notice the world around you
- Deep breathing
- Self-awareness
- Self-compassion
- Affirm your greatness
- Practice gratitude



# Emotional Wellness Tips

- Acknowledge and accept
- Reach out for support
  - Therapy for mental wellness and mental illness
- Stay ready!
  - Commit to daily self-care
- Practice gratitude
- Make a plan and share it



# Physical Wellness Tips

- Add more water, fruits, and veggies
- Reduce sugar and caffeine
- Stretch
- Walk
- Get some air and sun



# Sleep Well

- Make a bedtime routine
- Wind down early
- Use lavender
- Music
- Relaxing voices
- Light/darkness





# How to help a child

## ASK

### Ask direct questions

- Use the emojis chart for check ins
- Ask about every aspect (remember the wellness wheel)
- Make them comfortable—have them create or play while they talk

### Sit silently and listen

- Get on their level
- Don't interrupt
- Feedback what you heard
- Check with them for accuracy

### Keenly observe with full acceptance

- Notice their behavior
- Notice when, where, and how they act when they become emotionally triggered



## ACT

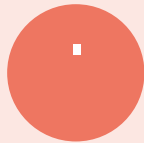
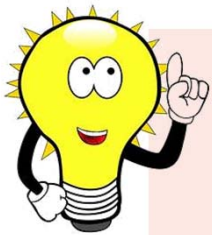
- Get them **Assessed**
- **Care** for yourself first...model the self-assessment/check-in and self-care.
  - They're likely to do as you do
- **Tell** them you love them and show them by following through on the care they need ... you're teaching them that they matter!

What strategy will you  
commit to?





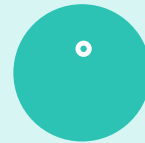
# Healthy Self-Care and Mental Wellness



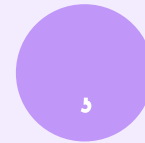
**Mental health  
and mental  
illness often  
co-exist**



**Take a  
pause**



**Acknowledge  
how you feel**



**Address your  
emotional  
and physical  
needs**



**Give yourself  
space, grace,  
and sleep  
well**



**Do this for yourself...and then for your children...and do it OFTEN**

Thank you



Dr. Lovie J J Foster, PhD, MSW

Love Inspires Empowerment