

MinnRAP Program: (aka Battle Buddies) Introduction (Part I)

Minnesota Resiliency Action Plan

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Disclosures

- No disclosures

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Q1: Please identify your top three stressors the last two weeks

- Risk of infection or harm to self/family/colleagues
- Concerns about limitations in resources (inadequate PPE, ICU beds, testing, lack of vaccine)
- Institutional betrayal
- Social isolation/loss of teamwork
- Childcare issues/managing distance learning/ other caregiver responsibilities
- Zoom fatigue
- Uncertainty about future
- Financial impact/possible job loss
- Racism/ aggression/ fear of police brutality
- Acute risk of civil unrest or violence

Q2: Please identify your top three emotions the last two weeks

- Fear/anxiety/insomnia
- Anger/rage/short fuse
- Grief/depression/sorrow/despair
- Guilt/shame
- Cynicism
- Helplessness/hopelessness/inadequacy/frustration
- Renewed sense of purpose/altruism/commitment
- Healthy coping
- Unhealthy coping

Q3: Identify the top three coping (resiliency) strategies that have been effective for you over the past 3 weeks.

- Exercise
- Connected with a friend or colleague
- Been hydrated, had access to food, and had time to eat
- Had enough sleep
- Laughed
- Felt emotionally connected or supported by someone
- Engaged in a meaningful hobby
- Felt that your work was meaningful and contributed to the greater good



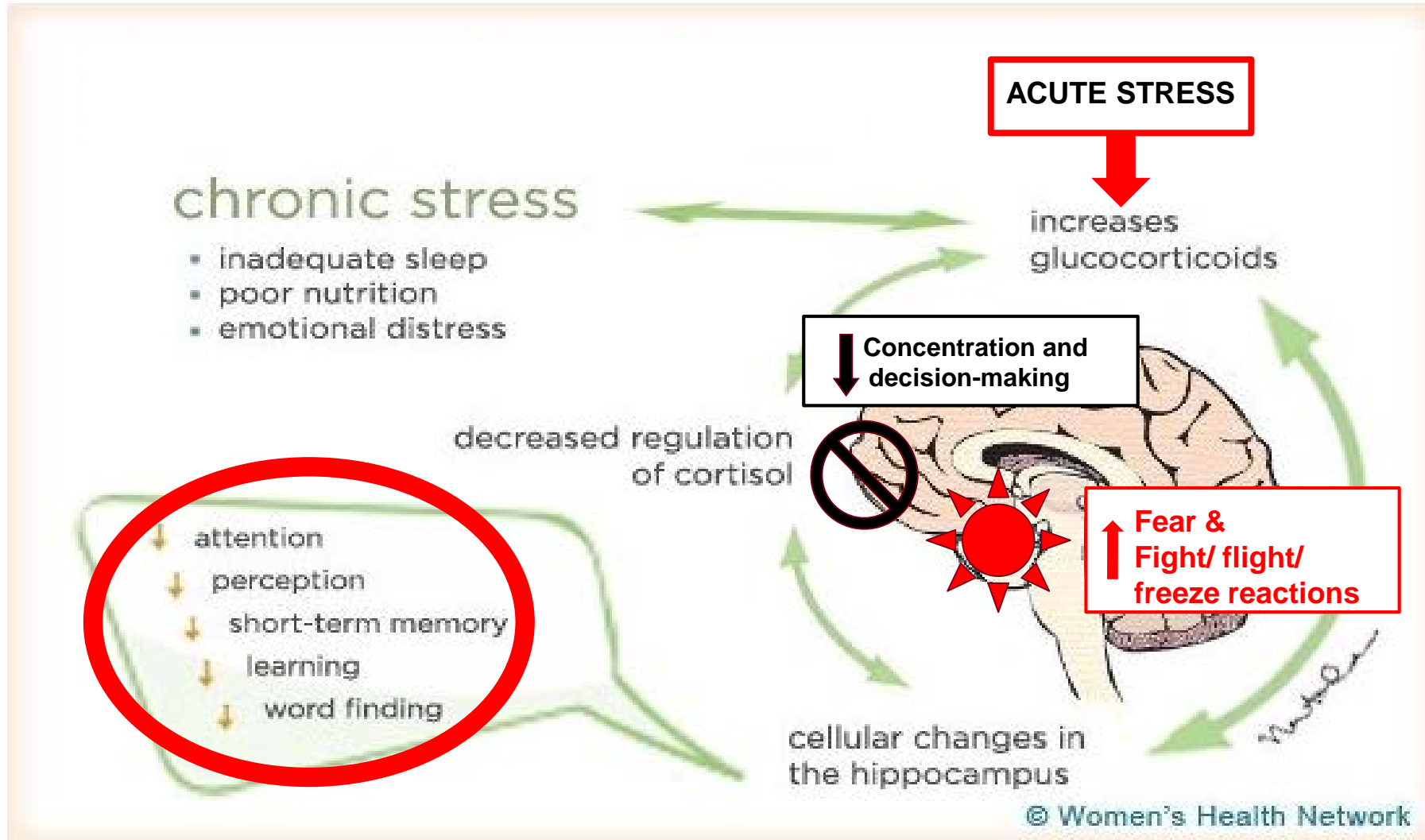
Background:

Observations during first weeks of COVID-19 pandemic at the University of Minnesota

Common experiences & reactions to COVID-19

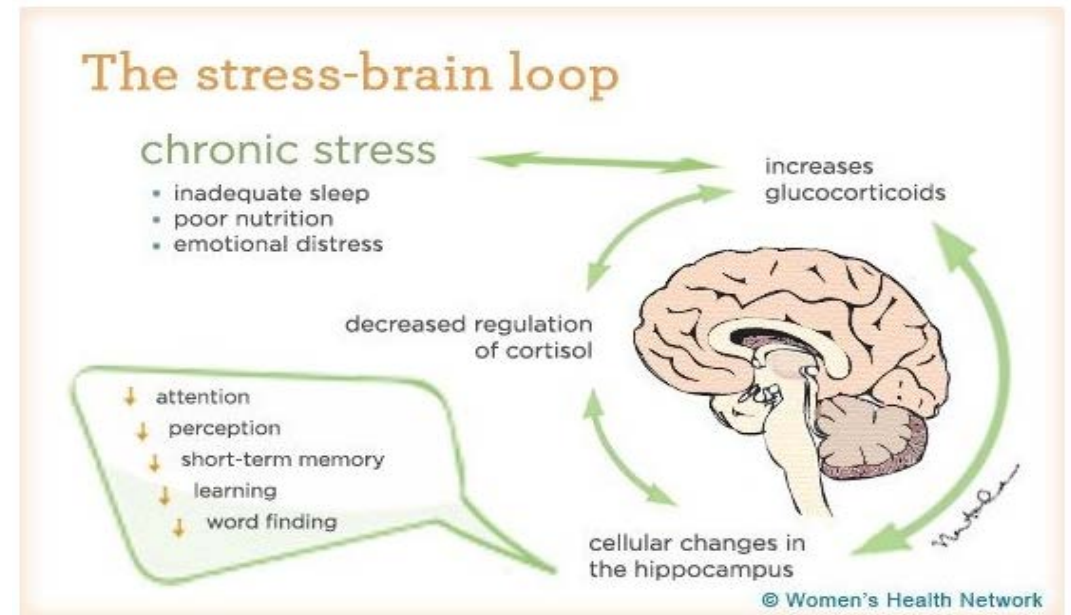


Stress has direct effects on brain function and brain information processing



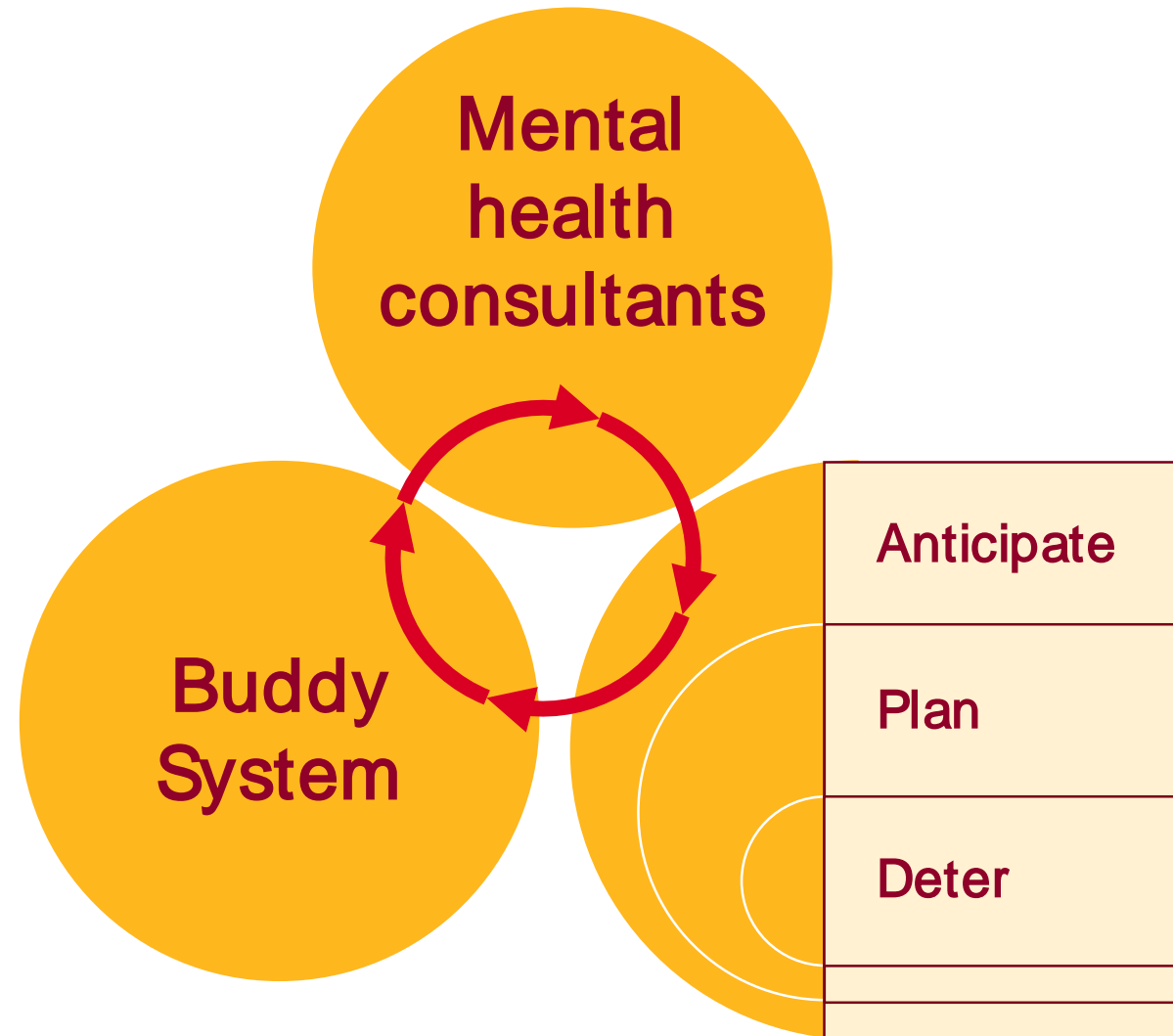
Stress induces unhelpful patterns of thinking (self-monitor for these)

- All or nothing (binary) thinking: right/wrong, safe/unsafe, productive/unproductive, helpful/unhelpful, strong/weak
- Catastrophizing: imagining / extrapolating to the worst outcome
- Mind reading: making assumptions about what another is thinking and then filtering their behavior through that lens
- Fortune telling: predicting outcomes without recognizing their inherent unpredictability or the biases imposed by current situation / state
- Discounting the positive: focusing on negative; loss is more painful than gain is rewarding
- Over-generalization: applying one observation / piece of data to a broad outcome



Building a Model:

Minnesota Resilience Action Plan (MinnRAP)



What is the Buddy System?

- Model used by US Army for peer mentoring and support.
- Battle Buddies helps to:
 - Validate experiences
 - Identify and address stressors early
 - Keep work at work
 - Develop and maintain resilience

Who Is the Ideal Battle Buddy?

- Usually chosen by a third party, but can pair up spontaneously
- Matched based on:
 - Common working environment
 - Similar clinical responsibilities
 - Level of seniority
 - Stage in life
- Battle Buddies (BBs) should not be close friends. BBs need to be able to be supportive and objective when assessing stress behavior and providing feedback

What Does a Battle Buddy Do?

- Primary purpose is to listen
- Check in regularly to share reactions to stressors and anxieties and validate each other's experiences
- Understand daily challenges of a particular unit, provide each other an additional perspective, support resilience and encourage additional help if needed
- Support resilience and growth during challenge

Goals of the Battle Buddy Program

- A working environment where everyone feels supported and valued. No one is left out.
- A cognitively and emotionally resilient team culture.

Battle Buddies Check-ins

How often?

Try to connect with your Battle Buddy 1-3 times per week

Do whatever works: a quick text, phone call, Zoom check-in

Listen, share a story, validate, give feedback

Vary your topics: share observations, a life event, & humor.

What do I say?

How are you doing?

What worried you today?

How are you coping with things at home?

How are you doing with sleep/rest, exercise, meals?

What are you doing for relaxation, joy, satisfaction?

Battle Buddies are *not* just for battle.

- Connect with your Battle Buddy anytime - *before* things get really stressful
- It's like training *prior* to a marathon.
- Brief conversations *now* will strengthen individual and team resilience and ensure endurance for what happens *next*.

Role of Dedicated Mental Health Consultants

- Present at the kick-off/ launch meeting with the unit
- Provides contact information to members of the unit
- Takes their cues from the unit, responding to unit-specific needs
- Connects with the Unit Lead or Champion regularly to track needs
- Offers to facilitate small group sessions customized to each specific unit and focused on needs of unit (validation, stress inoculation)
- Establishes brief, non-intrusive “touchpoints” with the unit to maintain visibility of the program (the goal is **culture shift** and not formal “compliance”)
- Assesses the amount of patient/family distress and deaths that their unit is handling and any additional patient-related mental health needs the unit is experiencing



Anticipate

- **Anticipate and identify** stressors
- Describe your **likely responses**

Plan

- Identify most difficult responses to stressors
- Describe your **personal resilience plan**

Deter

- If coping is overwhelmed move into **Deter** phase by seeking or helping your BB to seek mental health support, pastoral counseling, or connection with EAP.

- Anticipate and identify the specific stressors you are likely to encounter
- Describe your likely responses to these stressors

Plan:

Identify the stressors and responses that will be **most difficult** for you

Describe your **personal resilience**

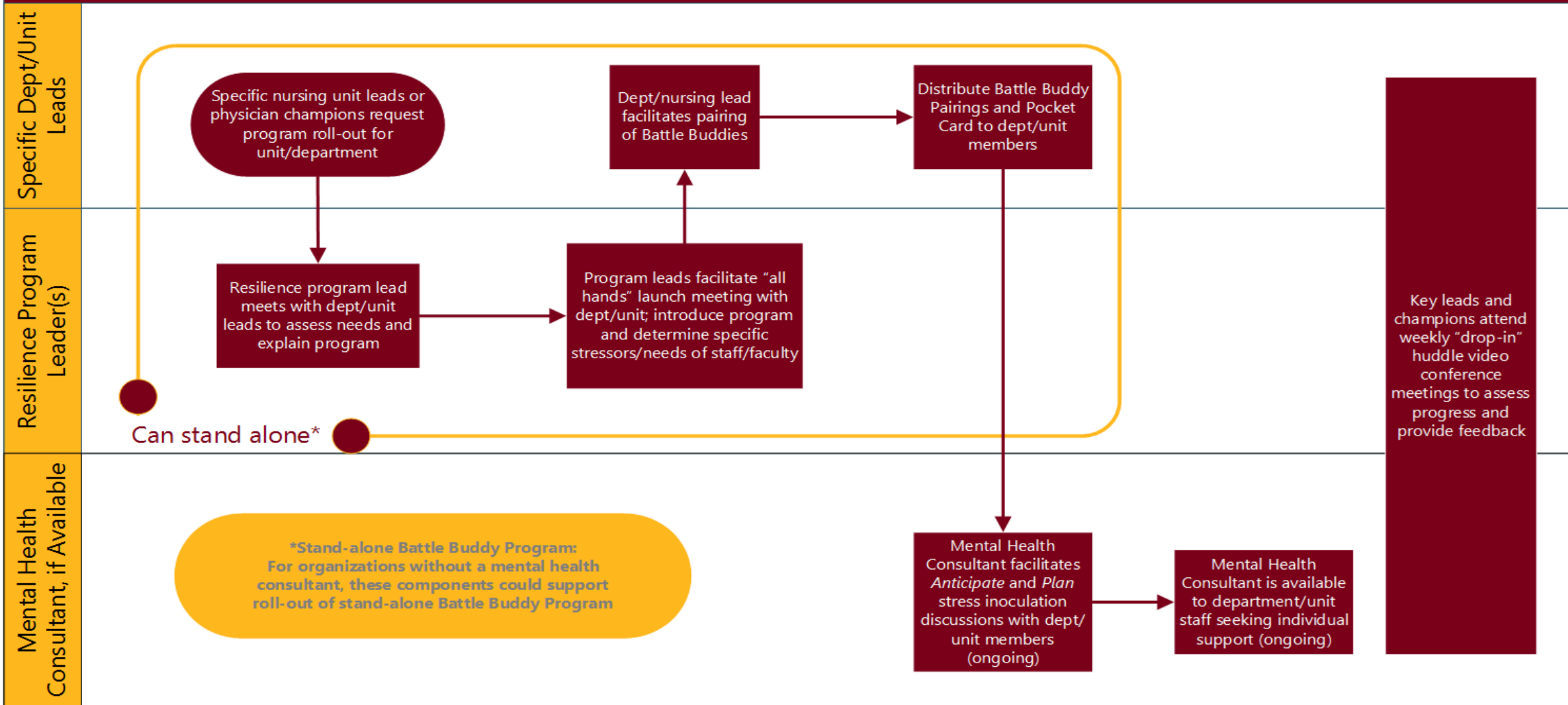
How will you cope with these difficult stressors?

What resources are available to you? What strengths and resilience factors will you make use of?

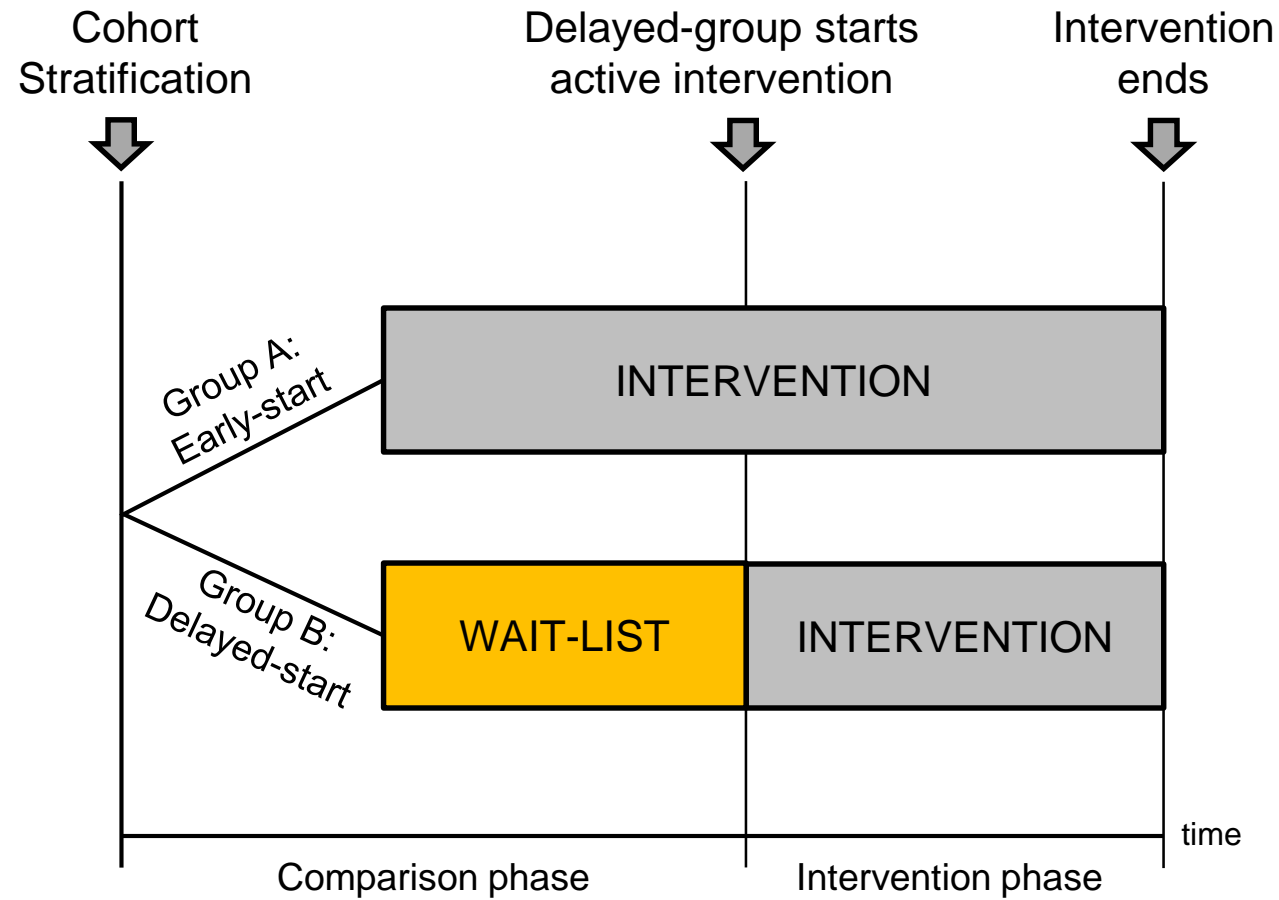
Deter:

If you or your Battle Buddy are experiencing escalating or cumulative stressors and coping responses are getting overwhelmed, it is not your job to be a therapist. Seek mental health support, pastoral counseling, or connection with EAP.

How to roll out the Battle Buddy program as part of a psychological resilience intervention



Assessing Outcomes



How do we manage our stress reactions and work together to move successfully into a new future?

Individually

- Acknowledge negative emotions: anger, fear, anxiety, sorrow, despair
- Foster your positive emotions: gratitude; compassion for yourself and others; solace from music and other creative outlets
- Spend time with your religious, faith-based, or spiritual practices; spend time in nature
- Honor your unique story and the unique story of each person around you

Collectively

- Embody optimism
- Find connection
- Foster self-efficacy
- Engage in collective efficacy

Resilience/ Gratitude Practice

Be proud of the contributions you made to your team today.

Thank a team member for their contributions.

Allow yourself to appreciate the impact that your group is having during this unprecedented challenge.

“The most clear-sighted view of the darkest possible situation
is itself an act of optimism.”

--Jean-Paul Sartre

“Optimism is always the primary justification for its own existence. It can seem
naive until it is gone. The assumption that things can get better, **with the
expectation that they should, creates the kind of social ferment that yields
progress.**”

-- Marilynne Robinson