

When Laughing is  
All That You  
Have Left

Using Humor to Get Through the  
Worst of Times



# A little about me...

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- 20+ years in fitness and wellness
- Public speaking
  - Wellness strategy
  - Health coaching
  - Coping and loss
  - Suicide prevention and suicide survivor communities

# Why do we need to cope?

## Effects of stress

- Psychological
- Physical
- Social

What happens when we don't  
successfully cope?

We adopt ineffective coping mechanisms

copng mechanism

***noun***

an adaptation to environmental  
stress that is based on conscious or  
unconscious choice and that enhances  
control over behavior or gives  
psychological comfort.

# Ineffective Coping Techniques

Denial	Drinking	Eating
Smoking	Complaining	Drugs
Over-working	Isolation	Over-helping
Procrastination	Shopping	Gambling
Interneting	TV	Blaming

# Effective Coping Techniques

Acceptance	CBT	Humor
Action	Spiritual practice	Time Mgmt
Support	Set goals	Problem solving
Exercise/nutrition	Assertive communication	Compassionate action
Unplug	Gratitude/positivity	Hobbies



# Why Humor?

- It's free.
- It's easy.
- It's fun.
- It's scientifically proven to help us cope with challenging situations.



# How does humor help us cope

- Scientific rationale





# Keys to Coping

- Positive reframing
- Acceptance
- Humor



# Positive Psychology Research



# Resiliency Study



# Humor Styles Model

- Self-enhancing humor
- Affiliative humor
- Aggressive humor
- Self-defeating humor



# Stress-Buffering Effect



# Endorphin Release



# What situations does humor help?

- Dealing with loss
- Dealing with change
- Workplace dynamics
- Communication challenges



# How to know if humor is not appropriate?

- Know your audience
- Conservative approach
- Your comfort level with humor
- If you ask yourself if it's too soon



# What types of humor are not appropriate?

- Mean-spirited/
- Passive-aggressive
- Consistent
- Singling out
- Discriminatory
  - Race
  - Gender
  - Age
  - Appearance
  - Disability
  - Sexual content
  - Stereotypes
  - Religion
  - Politics

# Humor should:

- Make people feel included
- Make people feel lifted up
- Humanize the speaker
- Build trust
- Boost morale
- Increase productivity
- Allow your group to stand out

# Humor should not:

- Make people feel singled out
- Make people feel put down
- Used as an excuse to say inappropriate comments
- Prevent you from dealing with underlying issues

# Successful Coping Requires an Active Approach

- Listen to funny audiobooks
- Watch funny shows and movies
- Read funny books
- Visit funny websites
- Befriend funny people

# How to incorporate humor

- Be observant
- Find themes
- Be self-effacing
- Take risks
- Practice

# Questions?

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