

## **Welcome to Webinar**

Dylan Le Roy:

Great, so if we can just move to the slide with the territorial acknowledgement. My name is Dylan. I have the pleasure of welcoming you here. We would like to recognize and acknowledge that QayQayt First Nations, Kwikwetlem First Nations, as well as all Coast Salish People, on whose traditional and unceded territories we live, we learn, we play, and we do our work. Next slide, please.

Dylan Le Roy:

Here's the overview of our session today. I won't bother reading through it since we have the pleasure of all of you being present. We'll have an opportunity to be together for the next hour or so, and have a great opportunity to, hopefully, learn together and also answer some of your questions. Next slide.

Anuschka Naidoo:

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Anuschka. Yeah, I just really want to welcome everyone to this session and I'm really looking forward to spending the afternoon with you over the next hour. Today, we are going to talk a little bit about burnout. We're going to talk about what burnout is, how to identify symptoms of burnout. We're going to take a look at how to manage our distress when we're experiencing burnout and how to practice self-care. That's what we're going to cover in the one hour.

Anuschka Naidoo:

Dylan and I were talking and realized that this could be a two-day retreat. We're probably going to skim the surface of a lot of these topics and then, hopefully, leave participants with something to take home and do a little bit more digging around. You'll also notice that there's going to be a few opportunities to share. We're going to be using a tool called Slido so we can have some participation from everyone who's joining us today, and we'll walk you through that as we go along. Next.

Anuschka Naidoo:

Just to introduce ourselves before we get started. Again, my name is Anuschka. I'm a counselor at Douglas College and I do private practice outside of the college. I've been a counselor for over eight years and mainly working in the not-for-profit sector with youth and young adults who experience anxiety and depression. A lot of the groundwork of what I do is around mindfulness-based approaches and using behavioral approaches to get into action and moving. A lot of the foundation of the work that I do outside of this webinar is also integrated into our content today. Dylan, would you like to introduce yourself?

Dylan Le Roy:

Sure. Again, I'm Dylan Le Roy. I'm a clinical counselor at Douglas College. I have the pleasure of working with Anuschka. I've been a clinical counselor for 11 years. I've been in post-secondary for about 20-some-odd years. My earlier work was in career services. I have some experience doing some volunteer management, career guidance, personal counseling. If you want to read the full, exciting history of Dylan, you can look at the bio posted up on the website. Next slide, please.

## **Biggest Challenges during COVID-19**

Anuschka Naidoo:

We're going to start the group off today with doing a little bit of sharing using an app called Slido. I'm not sure if this is new for some of the folks on the webinar today, or you've used it before. But what we're going to invite you to do is either open up another browser on your computer screen, or pull out your phone, and type in slido.com. You're just going to head straight to the website, slido.com, and you'll see a spot to enter a code there.

Anuschka Naidoo:

You can also actually use your picture function to take a picture of the little image on the screen, and that might take you directly to the website if you're tech savvy. You're going to punch in 39870, and then you'll see a question pop up on the screen that says, "What is one of the biggest challenges you've experienced during COVID-19?" We'd just like to hear from everyone who's here today. What challenges are you experiencing right now, or have you been experiencing over the last several months?

Anuschka Naidoo:

Great. I see someone's been able to get onto Slido and they've mentioned loneliness. With all the social distancing or isolation, loneliness. Adapting to new tech platforms, dealing with all the uncertainty. Feeling scattered, feelings of isolation, work-life separation, lack of motivation, connection with coworkers, struggling to focus. I'm also seeing stuff around time management and balancing emails. Dylan, are you able to scroll down a little, let's see if there's anything else. Feeling scattered, troubles collaborating with our team, missing the little things that happen at the office. Thank you so much. Thanks for sharing.

Anuschka Naidoo:

I think we just want to really make space today in our discussion to notice all the challenges that we're experiencing during this time and, hopefully, create a space where if we can acknowledge some of the challenges that we're experiencing and even see other's challenges that maybe we can make space for figuring out how to cope with all those challenges. Thanks, Dylan. Dylan's going to move on to talking a little bit about what burnout is.

## **What is Burnout?**

Dylan Le Roy:

What we got asked to do in this presentation, I was initially drawn to the idea of burnout maybe from more of a colloquial general use of the word. I think we use it a lot to express how we're experiencing our emotions. I think at the same time, it's important to note to help validate some of our experiences, too. The World Health Organization in 2019 actually added it to the International Classifications of Disease codes, so the ICD codes. These are the codes that physicians or psychiatrists would use to track your sense of wellness.

Dylan Le Roy:

Burnout from that perspective, more of a clinical perspective, it's not in the diagnostic and statistic manual, it's in the medical health manual, is really focused around the work environment. Feelings of

energy depletion, exhaustion, distancing mentally from our work, zoning out, checking out, and reduction in our efficiency. It is basically a withdrawing away from something that hopefully brought us joy. When we were exploring this presentation, if you go to the next slide, please, we wanted to look at burnout from a broader perspective.

Dylan Le Roy:

I am more than willing to share. It's a more broader based burnout with all the transitions. We're going to use this broader framework to move forward and explore how we can learn about how our bodies deal with distress, learn some techniques and introduce some ideas around how to manage it. Something I'm very interested in from a clinical perspective is really that idea of unnecessary distress, so suffering where we don't need to suffer. Many of us, when we're feeling burnt out, can feel a lack of connection to our work. We start getting into some of the more existential stuff around a lack of sense of meaning towards what brought us to our passions.

Dylan Le Roy:

I don't want to speak for all present, but in my 20-plus years in post-secondary, there's very few people I've bumped into and said, "I got into working in post-secondary to get a fancy car." Most of us are drawn to it because we care about students. We care about learning. We care about the ideas behind learning. We're pulled to it because it aligns with our values, our passions, our interests. When we start to feel disconnected from it, we almost become disconnected to parts of ourselves.

Dylan Le Roy:

Another area we are going to touch on, and I know many of the clients that I support, or students but they also wear lots of other hats, is talking about that noticing how the distress from work has been transitioning into home. We'll go a bit more into that, around that lack of boundaries as well. I feel very blessed and fortunate for all the things I have in my life. I have an employer that's still paying me. I can still reach out to my clients. But I just really noticed I miss my nice little office. I miss all my little towels and I miss the things I have around there to help me feel grounded. It's harder to do my job when one of my kids go screaming through the background, still trying to maintain my counselor composure. It's a real blurring between work and life right now balance. Next slide, please.

### **Working from home**

Dylan Le Roy:

I'm not going to read the big long quote, because you all have the ability to read it. Hopefully, you can see it clearly. This individual isn't famous in any ways, it was just quoted in a paper. He's a psychiatrist from Kings College. One thing that really landed when I read this is that naming that we're in an unprecedented experience. We're being bombarded with information, with threat, with the concern for our wellbeing, for the wellbeing of the individuals we love. Our works have been turned upside down in regards to how we normally expect to do it.

Dylan Le Roy:

I've talked with fellow faculty who are feeling so stressed out about, "How do I provide quality education to my students remotely when that's not the modality I've been taught in, that's not the way I've structured my courses?" From personal to professional, everything's been flipped around. A really

important part, and we'll get into some strategies, too, is just really naming that this is a very unusual time and that's okay. We didn't create it or we didn't wish it upon anyone.

Dylan Le Roy:

Then when we look at our historical supports as humans, many of those are now pulled away from us. Whether a colleague of mine was talking about how much she missed the commute, even though commutes are stressful, just that 15, 20 minutes to move away from work and leave it all behind her. I was reflecting on how much I missed just having a five-minute walk that I want to go take the bus, just for me. Some of those things, seeing our friends, seeing our families can be taken away from us right now.

Dylan Le Roy:

As I mentioned, our home environment has become our work environment for many people. Someone put up in the thing, yeah, lack of commute. I do actually like that, too. I'm currently wearing very comfortable shorts, but have a somewhat colored shirt on. We get to be a professional up top and comfortable on the bottom. There's lots of fun things like that. Our team, we meet weekly, and even with that remote team Zoom meeting, I really miss my colleagues. I really miss being able to just drop in, ask Anuschka, Ellen, and other colleagues, "Hey, how was your weekend?" It feels a little odd sending a formal email, "Dear Anuschka, I request your weekend, and how would you go?" It's just very unnatural.

Dylan Le Roy:

We miss those social connections, and seeing students. I miss seeing my lovely students [inaudible 00:11:42] students in person. Walking in the concourse, hearing the buzz of people. Then, again, just to really bring back to that concept of burnout is that lack of separation. Many students and colleagues and friends I've talked to, that's the hard thing. We're wearing so many hats and they're transitioning so quickly.

### **COVID-19 and our minds**

Dylan Le Roy:

I won't get into all the super science of it, but just from a very high level perspective. The work of Dr. Rick Hanson, his name's referenced there if you wanted to look them up, has been quite influential on me later in my career. Big focus on building resilience. He actually has a really great new book called Neurodharma out right now. He brings in some very classic wisdom in a nonreligious way, but more from the normal teachings, and then he brings it in with the science. He brings in a lot of neurobiology and neuroplasticity.

Dylan Le Roy:

Building off some of his work, I just wanted to share in the context of COVID. I was reflecting on the different parts of our body or our mind that are impacted by a pandemic. If we really make it simple, I did okay in biology back in my master's so I'm not going to go on all the different areas. If we think of it in those three major areas, starting with the brainstem, we have the reptilian development, then we go from a mammalian, and then we have a more higher-order primate reasoning stuff on the top.

Dylan Le Roy:

When we think about our lives, again, bringing in the good, if we can, even in periods of distress, I think about all of the amazing privileges, blessings, opportunities I have. I have heat. I have shelter. I have food. I have people who love and care for me. Even with all those good things, our brains are designed to focus on the bad. This thing called negativity bias, so we get drawn towards threat. Ultimately, that was adaptive, regardless of whether you believe in evolution or creationism, or mixing the two, whatever was most adaptive would have been continuing on.

Dylan Le Roy:

Those who had the ability to really sense threat constantly made more children and on and on and on it goes. When we're in something like a pandemic that pulls a sense of actual physical safety, we could get sick, many people unfortunately have died, that reptilian part of our brain is constantly firing, is saying threat, threat, threat, threat. A really great place to start, it's not going to fix everything, but a start, is to try and, Dr. Hanson coined the term, pet bill lizard. We want to start with some real simple, hands-on, calming mechanisms.

Dylan Le Roy:

One of my favorite is just taking a count of six big breath in, hold for two seconds, and then breathe out longer than you breathe in. Depending how big your lung capacity is, maybe it's a four in, hold for two, six out. That tricks the brain into saying, "Well, I can't be eaten right now because I'm breathing slowly, I must be safe." Once we can tend to that base need, we can start moving up to the emotional and desire-based need, which were in the mammalia, which is the mouse, we feed the mouse. How can we introduce little things in our daily activity to give rewards?

Dylan Le Roy:

I'm fortunate where I live. I live right near Riverview Forest and also the Riverview hospital grounds. I try, whenever it's nice, three times a week, go for a bike ride with my kids. That's a reward for myself. It's something I can chase after, it gets the body moving. Once we can fit those needs with our emotion and desires, and there's a lot of different ways to do what we do in very high level, we can go to those higher-order needs, so hug the monkey. We want to try and build connections.

Dylan Le Roy:

Anuschka and I were both really excited to do this and learn more about BCcampus because this is connection. It's maybe not the same as all being together, sharing some yummy treats and some coffee, but at least we get to witness together some information, some sharing, some time. Trying to carve out social distance gatherings have been our new favorite things. Just putting those as priorities, because all those micro interactions that add up in our old normal aren't available to us right now. In our new normal, how can we purposely offer connection to ourselves and not look at it from a place of being selfish? These are core needs and initiatives, and I'll talk a bit more about those core needs coming up.

Dylan Le Roy:

Giving credit where credit is due, I was listening to one of his podcasts, Dr. Hanson, and I loved how he said, "Yeah, we're used to gentle flute music, those that all have privilege and power being in the background, and now we're in a heavy metal concert, 24/7, just going around in the background." When I thought of that, it gave me an opportunity to pause and be like, "Yeah," I was like, "What is going in the

background?" I'm holding my shoulders, and maybe I just got drop them. It's just a model of thousands. If you did want to do some more research, do look into some of Dr. Hanson's work. Next slide, please.

## **Stress**

Anuschka Naidoo:

Thanks, Dylan. Before we go on to continuing to talk about how to tame or calm and soothe ourselves, we thought it was really important to talk about stress. We can't talk about burnout without talking about stress. What is stress? Stress is our physical and mental response to our environment. It's usually a condition or a feeling that we experience when we perceive that our demands in our environment are exceeding the resources that we have to cope or take care of ourselves. It's not necessarily an inevitable consequence of an event. That means that not everyone might experience stress from the same event, but it's really a perceived experience for ourselves.

Anuschka Naidoo:

It's really important to understand what does cause us stress, where does it show up in our lives. It's also really interesting and important to look at the difference between stress and anxiety, because sometimes we can interchange those words and it's hard to separate out how we experience things. When we think of stress, we think of an experience that's imminently happening to us, that's actually a demand in our experience in the present moment, versus anxiety is the anticipation that something is going to happen in the future.

Anuschka Naidoo:

If we could imagine, being in the middle of a car accident would be an experience that would bring on stress, likely for most people. Anxiety could be worrying about getting into a car accident before even getting into the car and driving. Knowing the difference between what our experience of stresses and what our experience of anxiety is can help us figure out what is in our control and what is out of our control, and then we can actually figure out how to cope with it in a really healthy way.

Anuschka Naidoo:

It's also helpful to know the difference between stress and stressors. Stressors are actually factors that are causing the stress for us. Again, if we can differentiate our symptoms of stress versus the things that are causing our stress, which are our stressors, then we know where we can start to tackle things. What can we do to start to eliminate our stressors, and then what can we do to cope with our stress? Next.

## **Common Symptoms of Stress**

Anuschka Naidoo:

This table outlines some symptoms of our stress. What I'd really recommend is getting really familiar with your own symptoms of stress. Where does it show up in your mind? What kind of emotions do you experience? How does it show up in your body? What does it cause you to do or not do? Getting really close and befriending our stress and our anxiety helps us really tune into our own personal experience.

Anuschka Naidoo:

The more that we know about ourselves and can understand about ourselves, the more that we can actually do the things that are going to be helpful to cope with the stress. Oftentimes, our stress gets captured in our body, and it actually gets trapped in our body, and can lead to very chronic physical pain or ailments. It's really important to start to identify these symptoms in ourselves so that we can do things to actually prevent or cope with the stress. Next.

## **Suffering**

Anuschka Naidoo:

Oftentimes, what we do with our stress and anxiety is we actually avoid it or control it. We're confronted with something that's stressful or we're confronted with anxiety or worry about something, and we tend to avoid it or control it. We distract ourselves. We remove the obstacles by doing something different. What happens is that actually ends up growing our stress or our anxiety into something even bigger. Kind of what Dylan mentioned is that's how we grow our suffering, and we end up suffering and growing our challenges into things that are bigger than what they started out to be.

Anuschka Naidoo:

I like the quote here. It says, "It's not stress that kills, it's our reaction to it." It might be helpful to start to look and see, when stressors start coming into my life, when I start to notice symptoms of stress in my body or I notice that I'm worrying or anxious about something, what do I tend to do? Do I shy away from it? Do I avoid it? Do I try to control my situation so I don't have to feel anxious or worried? How does that play out? Does it get better? Does it go away?

Anuschka Naidoo:

The interesting thing is it's actually kind of a paradox. The more that we avoid and control our stress and our anxiety, the bigger and bigger it grows. Then it feels like we start to lose confidence in our ability to actually cope with it. But the interesting thing is we were actually created to cope with stress and anxiety. These are things that we are physiologically able to cope with. We have the ability in our body and we can develop the skills and tools so that we can actually move towards our stress and find healthy ways to cope with it. Next.

## **Mental Health Continuum Model**

Anuschka Naidoo:

This is a really great tool. The Mental Health Commission of Canada has created this Mental Health Continuum Model. You can actually find it on the [workingmind.ca](http://workingmind.ca). They have a self-care resilience guide for COVID. What this offers is this continuum model to identify where you fall along the continuum of wellbeing. The continuum ranges from healthy to reacting, to injure, to ill. We all can fall along this continuum and move along this continuum based on different events that are happening in our lives that are external to us like COVID, based on internal experiences that we have based on genetic stuff. There's all these different compounding and compounding factors that help create our mental health and wellbeing. Looking at, in any given moment, where do we fall along this continuum?

Anuschka Naidoo:

There's actually a self-assessment piece in this workbook. You can go online and do a self-assessment and see where you fall along the continuum. Then at the bottom of the table, it actually offers steps to help you move towards the left part of the continuum, so into injured, reacting, and healthy. The really great thing about this continuum model is that as we start to gain awareness again of our stress and our anxiety and our relationship to it, and really become connected to it, we can start to prevent or care for ourselves at times that are really difficult and really challenging. This can actually prevent us from going into distress or from having worsening symptoms. Next.

### **What has helped you with burnout/stress?**

Dylan Le Roy:

Thanks, Anuschka. We're going to try using Slido again. We were successful in one attempt, so we'll see if I can offer some of the wisdom we're trying to share to self. Be patient and imperfect, if need be, while I attempt to screen-share again. If you just go to [slido.com, 39870, 39870](https://www.slido.com/join/39870), there should be another opportunity to share. I'm just going to share my screen and that information will be up for you again.

Dylan Le Roy:

That happened smoother than I imagined. We have an opportunity for you to share again. When have you experienced burnout/stress, what is one thing that has helped you? One of the questions received earlier was wanting to draw from the wisdom of the participants here today. This is a great opportunity if you're looking along the list to see if there's anything new or congratulate yourself on trying something that others have had success with. I love this live poll. It's like being back at Hastings racetrack. "Oh, talking with a friend, loved one is in the lead."

Dylan Le Roy:

We've got connecting with others, going for a walk, meditation, and I'd open that one up, too, for people if you haven't tried meditation before. You can look at from a broad perspective of contemplative practices, one of my new favorite words, and almost everything on this list would fall under that. Just doing something with intention, with love and kindness, with care. Taking a few breaths. We can hijack our system into some calm. Humor, that's one of my favorite things. I think people I work with can attest to I've got a unique sense of humor. Oh yes, Netflix. Yes, the Umbrella Academy is coming back, which is one of my favorite shows. That's a Netflix endorsement. There's some great information here. Like I said, we'll leave the poll up. I think we're at almost all of the responses of people who are here. Great. If you could pull the screen back, that'd be great. Thank you.

### **Burn out and self care**

Dylan Le Roy:

I'm going to be referencing some work from another author and a presenter that I've had the pleasure of seeing. Dr. Dan Siegel is a child psychiatrist. He has some amazing books. Even if you're not raising [inaudible 00:27:05] raising young children, I feel the wisdom within them can be applied at any stage of life, really where we're just all big kids. What we learned as a youth comes forward with us. Dan Siegel coined a couple of really great phrases. One that I'm very fond of, it's not on the slide but it's called

MWe. He really focuses on the interconnection between all of us. There is no me and you, there is only MWe of people.

Dylan Le Roy:

I also don't know how to turn off the ringer on my phone, which keeps going off, but that's okay. What we want to start with is just a little activity here. One of the most powerful interventions, it is an intervention, clinical, is just naming. Naming your state. Many of us, not all of us, have been raised in a system that focuses on our own, just being super happy and not showing feelings. At the same time, it's okay to say, "I feel scared. I feel trapped. I feel alone. I feel uncertain." I saw at the beginning, Duane had put Dr. Bonnie Henry, who's become a superhero in our house. Her kindness, her compassion, her composure, and her focus, too, on if you don't feel okay, that's okay.

Dylan Le Roy:

If we can just name it, we contain it. I have a two-year-old son and a nine year-old-son. The two-year-old doesn't get it quite yet, but it's our favorite one with our nine-year-old that we just have to name what's going on, it's okay if it's good or bad. If we can offer ourselves that same sense of patience, compassion, and caring that we offer to our children, to our loved ones, to our colleagues, take that big deep breath and really name what's going on, and then we can activate some skills and some skillful wisdom to try and tame that experience if it's unpleasant and we have other tasks to deal with in a moment.

Dylan Le Roy:

An exercise that Dr. Siegel did when I saw one of his talks was around, again, simplifying the mechanics of our brain. I think it's helpful to really ground this into the science. It's just not all out there. It's actual hard science. If we think of the brain, again, really simplistically, you have your downstairs brain and your upstairs brain that wraps around. You can see in the picture how it's wrapped around that downstairs brain. A little activity that can even be helpful is when we're feeling overwhelmed, we don't do it in the middle ... We can do it in a Zoom meeting because my hand could be low, but maybe not when we're around others, is if we can just even imagine it is like blowing your talk.

Dylan Le Roy:

I feel full right now, and then we can take that deep breath. As I mentioned before, there's an activity of just breathing in. If people want to try along, you breathe in four, so big breath in through the nose and close the hands. One, two, three, four, and hold for the count two, one, two, and then out for six. We could do that three or four times, and we're wrapping around that reactive reptilian defense mechanism type part of our body, that fight, flight, freeze, or faint. We're offering it some refuge and some care.

Dylan Le Roy:

As I initially mentioned at the beginning, we could do a retreat on this. There's thousands of different ways to try and offer love and kindness and care. This is just one that's very simple, works great with kids, too, concise and visual, but let's offer ourselves that same patience. If we could just imagine, "I feel stretched. I'm just going to offer that care back." It's like giving ourselves a hug. That's the idea behind this. Nice and simple. If we take that big breath, four or five in, hold and more out, we actually end up tricking that basement brain into thinking, "Oh, everything's okay, I can access that higher-order reasoning now."

Dylan Le Roy:

The trick, and I actually alluded to it there, spoke to it, is we build upon our suffering. We start shooting all over ourselves is one of my favorite words. We say, "Well, I should be able to handle this. I'm the professional. I'm the instructor. I'm the administrator. I should not be upset about this. I have to care for all these other people." Now, you're just blowing it apart, because you feel unsafe. You worry for the safety of others. We just try and bring it back to the center and then we can activate the higher-order reasoning. Next slide, please.

### **Managing Distress**

Dylan Le Roy:

Many of the questions asked for some tools. I'm going to go through a few high order lines. Anuschka has some other opportunities to share. A bit of a caveat for all of these tools, it's not one size fits all. One of my favorite instructors I had in grad school used to have this wonderful British accent which I will not try and emulate. Anyway, he always said, "There's no cookbook answer." If there was one answer for all problems, one, all counselors would be out of work, two, there would only be one book in the self-help. Everyone has to follow the whole path. They have to follow their own way. It depends on your life history and so many variables.

Dylan Le Roy:

If any of these fit for you, great. If any of them feel triggering, that's fine. Just step away from that. I'm a big fan of parables and wise sayings. The Serenity Prayer offers some great wisdom, so grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Really trying to find a mantra that works for you. My son was sharing his for going up big hills on his bike. I just look down and tell myself it's flat, and keep pedaling. That's his mantra for adversity.

Dylan Le Roy:

One of my favorite activities that I try on a daily basis, which is hard to do it's, again, from Dr. Rick Hanson, is the beautiful jewels, so taking in the good. When I look out the window, I see some beautiful trees, I can see the wind blowing through. Again, I'll borrow from Dr. Rick Hanson. I have to give credit where credit is due, and he's from Southern California so he sounds all super cool. He talks even like, "Whoa, we're all made us stardust." Just the amazement that it is in existence. Even in suffering, we can build a sense of agency in resiliency by taking in little bits of good. That's not to dismiss suffering. We don't want to do that don't feel pain thing, but if we need to try and build our bucket, fill it up a bit, trying to take in a little good.

Dylan Le Roy:

Now, many of you shared in the survey, so I appreciate that. I think that going for a walk, vacations, great things, and then reach out for support. If you're a faculty member, talk with the peers that you trust. If you're a staff person, administrator, reach out to a friend, reach out to a colleague, find your allies. Many of us are very fortunate to have access to an employee and family assistance programs, so many of them are going remote. If you're feeling really burnt out, overwhelmed, have the courage to state, "I don't feel good," and then, hopefully, put into practice what you've encouraged others to do, is talk to a professional if that feels safe, but that can also be through your faith-based systems.

Dylan Le Roy:

There's so much stuff online. We're going to pull together some of our, I guess, top ones to check out and send that out after the presentation. There's mindfulness, progressive muscle relaxation. My mom is a convert to Yoga with Adriene Ranger. I can't remember. Now I see Anuschka nodding. Anything that you can do that offers some kindness back to self. I'm a big fan of watching funny videos. Just sit for five minutes. Everyone teases me around the house. "Oh, dad's watching his funny videos." Something that offers a refuge. Again, they are not going to remove the fact maybe that you feel your employer isn't accommodating your sense of unwellness. That's a big system issue. At the same time, if you can offer refuge kindness to yourself, you may be able to approach some of those larger challenges with a bit of clarity and skillfulness. Next slide, please.

### **Managing Distress @ Work and in Life**

Dylan Le Roy:

Very quickly, a great book, author David Richo. Some of all of these five things are a little harsh. He's a very wise individual who pulls from a lot of ancient wisdom if we look at The Five Things We Cannot Change. This can be encouraging during difficult times. Everything changes and ends. There's always a start, a finish, and a change. Things don't always go according to plan. We did some actually online training for how to do counseling online. That was a big message.

Dylan Le Roy:

Having that plan B, C, D, E, F, G, and be kind with yourself if it doesn't work. Unfortunately, life isn't always fair. Pain is part of life. We all experience pain at some point or another. Unfortunately, even if it's colleagues or loved ones, people are not loving and loyal all the time, because people are dealing with their own traumas, their own hurts. Just, again, to draw a great resource and some, I guess, hard facts of life according to David Richo and his research is check out his book if you wanted to read something that will hopefully be inspiring. Next slide, please.

### **Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs**

Anuschka Naidoo:

Thanks, Dylan. We wanted to highlight Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. This might bring you back to Psych 101. Dylan talked a little bit about our fight, flight, and freeze response that happens when our stress response is activated in our body, and that lizard part of our reptilian brain that's activated. It's really important to be able to notice that when we're in that response, it's really important to go back to the basics. During this crisis and during this global pandemic, it can feel really difficult to sometimes accept the stress and the pain that we're experiencing, because sometimes we compare ourselves and our pain to other people's pain.

Anuschka Naidoo:

It's called comparative suffering. We feel like we're not suffering enough to need to take care of ourselves. Other people have it so much worse, especially if you still have your job, if you have a roof over your head, if you're able to get enough good food. It can be really difficult go back to the basics. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs actually brings things back to the basics for us. It's really looking at the fact that we are in unprecedented times, and this is a global pandemic, and so our bodies are activated and

our stress response is activated, which actually requires us to do the most basic things to take care of ourselves.

Anuschka Naidoo:

Looking at the D needs. Taking those deep breaths, like Dylan was talking about, and soothing our stress response, making sure we have enough food and sleep, intimacy, making sure that our work schedule is structured, that we are connecting to people. Those basic needs are essential for us to be able to eventually move back up to maybe what we were working on last year. If it feels like you were working on your B level needs, the more self-actualization or esteem needs over the last year or two, it might feel odd to go back to the basics. But just making space for the fact that some of us are in survival mode right now, and so it is okay to take care of ourselves at this level and then eventually build ourselves back up to the space where we are thriving again. Next.

### **Lifestyle Practices that Close the Stress Cycle**

Anuschka Naidoo:

One important thing that I've learned in the last year is something around our stress that we experienced. Back in caveman days, when we experienced stress or when an animal even experienced stress, there would be a stressful thing that would impact their body, and then they would shake it off and move on to their rest of their days or their lives and the next stressful event would happen with a lot of space in between, a lot of spaces for recovery. What's happening in today's world is we're confronted with so many stresses all throughout the day. We hit our brake pedal when we're driving because we're avoiding an accident, or we get a really unexpected call from a loved one and here's some sad news, or our kid comes home and tells us something that's worrying.

Anuschka Naidoo:

We have all these little stressful experiences that build up and we don't actually take the time to close our stress loop. Our stress is, actually, it happens in a cycle. There's a start, a middle, and an end. We have started all these stress cycles in our bodies and in our minds and in our experiences, but we haven't actually closed them. Here, there's some evidence-based ways of how we can actually close our stress cycle.

Anuschka Naidoo:

One of them that we've heard about over and over again is physical activity. The act you'll actually see animals in nature shaking when they encounter the release of stress. Looking at how we can actually move our bodies through yoga, running, any type of physical activity, walking, to be able to literally shake the stress and get rid of it from our bodies. Looking at how we can integrate physical activity into our lives, even during a time where many of us are very sedentary in front of our computers, in our homes.

Anuschka Naidoo:

The other one is physical touch and connection. Coming back to this, actually, it's one of our basic needs at the bottom of Maslow's hierarchy. The research shows that a 60-second hug, which seems long, or a 30-second kiss, which also seems long, actually closes our stress loop. We know at this time during COVID, it can be really hard to have that physical intimacy and connection with people, but looking at ways that we can actually nurture ourselves.

Anuschka Naidoo:

Like even as Dylan said, can we rub ourselves, can we connect with ourselves, can we connect with people in other ways, even if that's virtual. How do we get our need for connection met, because what happens when we connect with others is that we actually soothe that internal system and that part of our brain. If we can ground ourselves and feel connected and safe, that tells our brains that we are actually safe, and so our stress response starts to go down and we start to close that loop again.

Anuschka Naidoo:

Then the third one that Dylan touched on already is mindfulness, so this idea of we're spending a lot of time thinking about the future. What is work going to look like this fall? What are students going to be dealing with? What kind of conditions are we going to have to work under? What's the state of our country and the financial stress that we're experiencing? There's all these things that we have to think about in our near future. We spend a lot of time in the future and then we spend a lot of time in the past, worrying about things that have happened or wishing that we could be back there where things were a little bit easier and a little bit different.

Anuschka Naidoo:

Looking at how we can get out of the future and out of the past and into the present moment. Being in the here and now can actually be a really nice break for our mind. We can give ourselves the space to let the thoughts pass and let them go, and just really connect to what's going on in the here and now. Oftentimes when we are in the here and now, we realize that in this very moment, we're actually okay, we are actually safe. I have a roof over my head. I'm not in danger, so I can calm myself down and ground myself. Just looking at these evidence-based tools and ways that we can start to get back to the basics and connect with ourselves and close that stress cycle. Next slide, please.

## **Self-Compassion**

Anuschka Naidoo:

The last thing that we really want to leave everyone with is the tool of self-compassion. Self-compassion has become really popular in the last few years. Dr. Kristin Neff has done a lot of research and work on self-compassion, and this is where this information is coming from. Self-compassion is basically the tool of showing yourself the love and kindness that you would show to a friend or a loved one. It's actually broken down into three different tenets. They're listed on the screen here.

Anuschka Naidoo:

The first one is self-love and self-kindness, so this idea that oftentimes, we hold ourselves to a really high standard. We have really high expectations of ourselves, and in our minds or in our heads, we're very critical and judgmental of ourselves. What that does is that actually brings up emotions and feelings of guilt and shame and resentment and anger and disappointment, and that can be a really painful experience and that tends to grow our pain into suffering.

Anuschka Naidoo:

Looking at how we can start to extend the treatment of self-love and kindness to ourselves, so thinking about if a friend was experiencing this or if my loved one or a kid of mine was experiencing this, what would I say to them? How would I talk to them? What tone of voice would I use for them? What would I

do for them if they were experiencing this distress or burnout? Looking at if we can extend that treatment to ourselves. I always think about little things that happen for me.

Anuschka Naidoo:

If I have a difficult conversation and I don't think it went well, the messages and the voice that goes running in my head. What would I tell a friend if they had just had a difficult conversation? What would I assure them of? What would I tell them to make sure they feel grounded and safe? Looking at how we can extend that to ourselves in all these small situations in our life.

Anuschka Naidoo:

The second one is a common sense of shared humanity versus isolating ourselves. The idea is when we're in our heads and when we're criticizing ourselves and judging ourselves and when we're experiencing pain or distress, oftentimes, we tend to avoid, like we said, we avoid people, we avoid things, and we try to control our environment and we make our world really small, and that actually grows our pain again, and we tend to isolate and disconnect from others.

Anuschka Naidoo:

Part of self-compassion is actually coming back to the reality that suffering and pain is actually a human experience. We all experience distress, and we're all experiencing challenges, especially at this time during COVID. Just reminding ourselves that we're actually not alone. We all experience feelings and emotions of sadness and frustration and anger, guilt. These are all very naturally occurring emotions and feelings. If we can actually start to connect with others and bring others back into our world, then we start to feel more cared for by ourselves and by others.

Anuschka Naidoo:

Then the third one that I've mentioned and Dylan has already mentioned is this idea of mindfulness, and how we can actually practice mindfulness and being with ourselves is actually an act of compassion. By avoiding things or distracting ourselves or getting caught up in our heads and caught up in the past, that's actually not being with ourselves in the moment.

Anuschka Naidoo:

In order to do things like name our emotions, like Dylan was talking about, to tame them, we have to actually slow down and connect with ourselves in the here and now so that we can actually notice what symptoms are going on in my body, what stress symptoms are happening, what emotions are coming up for me, what thoughts are floating around in my mind. Then if we're in that moment, we can figure out what to do next. Instead of getting wrapped up in everything, really slowing things down and taking a moment can really help us practice self-compassion. That is a little bit about how we can support ourselves during distress.

### **What have you learned about yourself or gained through your experience during COVID-19?**

Anuschka Naidoo:

Next, we're going to move into our last Slido activity. As we go towards wrapping up, before we check out with everyone, we want to hear from you all because you all have so much experience and wisdom yourself, working in COVID and getting through the last few months. What is one thing that you have

actually learned about yourself or gained through your experience during COVID? Again, if you can log on to slido.com and if you want to just punch in that code again, 39870, and then Dylan's going to pop up on the screen.

Anuschka Naidoo:

We're actually going to create a word cloud so we can see from everyone what are things that you've learned about yourself or things that you've gained during your experience of working during COVID. I'm just going to give everyone a second to log on and to maybe contribute to this word cloud and then we'll take a look and see what people ... Noticing some things about ourselves. Noticing that I'm an introvert, self-compassion, resilience. Noticing that I'm not that introverted. Noticing that I can pivot and maybe recover. Yeah, maybe the use of technology, feeling connected, like we're all one, enjoying my own company. Yeah, being nimble.

Anuschka Naidoo:

It looks like the one that's really standing out is this piece around resilience. I think that's what resilience is about, is how we overcome really tough, difficult times and how we come through stronger. Speaking out. I'm a homebody. Some people are not missing the commute. Thank you so much. I really appreciate seeing all these words and really understanding more about what are we coming out of this experience of COVID with.

Anuschka Naidoo:

There have been some really difficult times. Many of us have experienced a lot of stress and that can result in burnout, and the experiences of just feeling overwhelmed with everything that we're demanded to do at this time. But it also sounds like there's been some really positive experiences of getting to know ourselves a little bit better, being able to maybe practice taking care of ourselves, getting to challenge ourselves to do things a little bit differently. Thank you so much for sharing. We're going to take the screen back to our final wrap-up screen, and Dylan's just going to wrap up our presentation and then we'll move into our Q&A.

## **Webinar Wrap-Up**

Dylan Le Roy:

Yeah. Thanks so much for sharing. Again, if I have the ability to pull that information out, because that could act as a point of inspiration when we're feeling a little bit more way down, to look at all those amazing and powerful statements that people shared around what they've learned. We're going to open up. We got formally five more minutes to any questions. I believe Duane will assist with that, too. Also, we do have a little bit extra time if we run a little over to do some questions that people are hoping to have answered.

Duane Seibel:

I'll lead us into the Q&A. For those of you that have another Zoom meeting to go to perhaps, right on the hour, this will be recorded and you can come back and listen to the answers to questions. Those who want to ask questions now can either unmute their mic or type something in the chat area, and we will read it for you. In the absence of any questions that have come up, Dylan, there was one question that came out in the [inaudible 00:51:46] about systemic change and ideas about how you change the administration to deal with burnout.

Dylan Le Roy:

Yeah, yeah, with full disclosure, Duane used to be my administrator, but I feel very safe right here with him present. Really, from my perspective as a clinician and someone who's done a fair amount of work in social changes, invite the people who make decisions to these types of meetings. Invite them to learn. Invite them to join BCcampus and the information they're sharing. As Duane mentioned, this is recorded, send them along. The more opportunity people of power and people in positions to enact change, to be exposed to the information that's new to them, let's hope they're coming at it from a place of willful ignorance versus crushing up souls. Inviting people to join is a really a great place to start.

Duane Seibel:

Okay. There's not questions coming up at this point. We'll move to closure. On behalf of BCcampus, I'd like to thank Anuschka and Dylan for sharing and facilitating this important session. I'd also like to thank you for participating and being part of this. This has been recorded. If you would like to see past webinars including this one, please go to the BCcampus website.

Duane Seibel:

Also, if you would like to learn more about upcoming webinars, you can go to the BCcampus website and subscribe to the newsletter. As always, we have a great technical team in the background, and I'd like to do a huge shout out to Paul and Declan for providing technical support. I hope to see everybody back at webinars soon, and I wish everybody a restful Canada Day. Thank you.

Anuschka Naidoo:

Thanks, everyone.