



Navigating trauma

**Carol Chan, Senior Counsellor,
NUS Health and Wellbeing**



Overview

- Introduction to trauma
- Understanding the impact of trauma
- Coping mechanisms and resilience building
- Resources and seeking help



What is trauma?

Definition of trauma

American Psychological Association (APA)

Trauma is an emotional response to a terrible event like an accident, crime, natural disaster, physical or emotional abuse, neglect, experiencing or witnessing violence, death of a loved one, war, and more.

<https://www.apa.org/topics/trauma>



Trauma is...

- NOT the event
- Is our emotional response to the event
- Caused by anything that is perceived as life threatening (physical, emotional, or psychological) which we are unable to protect or defend ourselves/loved ones
 - Too much
 - Too fast
 - Too soon
 - Overwhelming
 - Shocking



The left side of the slide features three vertical decorative patterns. The first pattern is a series of teal diamonds with white outlines, set against a yellow background, all enclosed within a red border. The second pattern consists of several wavy, vertical lines in yellow, orange, and red. The third pattern is a series of nested, right-pointing chevrons in yellow, orange, and red, with a teal diamond at the center of the innermost chevron.

Big T and Small t

Accidents and falls

- Falls
- Sports injuries
- Traffic accidents
- Near-drowning experience
- Near-suffocation experience



Medical conditions, surgery and procedures

- Serious illness of self / loved one
- Medical procedures (stitches, needles, IVs, anesthesia)
- Surgery
- Dental procedures
- Difficult pregnancy or birth complication for mother and child



Violent acts and attacks

- War and combat, acts of terrorisms
- Sexual harassment, assault, abuse
- Insecure attachment
- Harassment
- Racism, religious prejudice, sexism, discrimination, age-ism, weight-ism
- Being shamed, criticized, bullied, picked on, oppressed
- Animal attacks (e.g. dog attack, snake bite)



Loss

- Death of loved one or pet
- Separation, divorce, break up
- Homelessness, poverty
- Being lost
- Betrayals
- Being unwanted, adopted



Natural disasters

- Fires
- Earthquakes
- Floods
- Volcanoes
- Tsunamis
- Tornadoes
- Hurricanes
- Famine
- Thunder
- Lightning



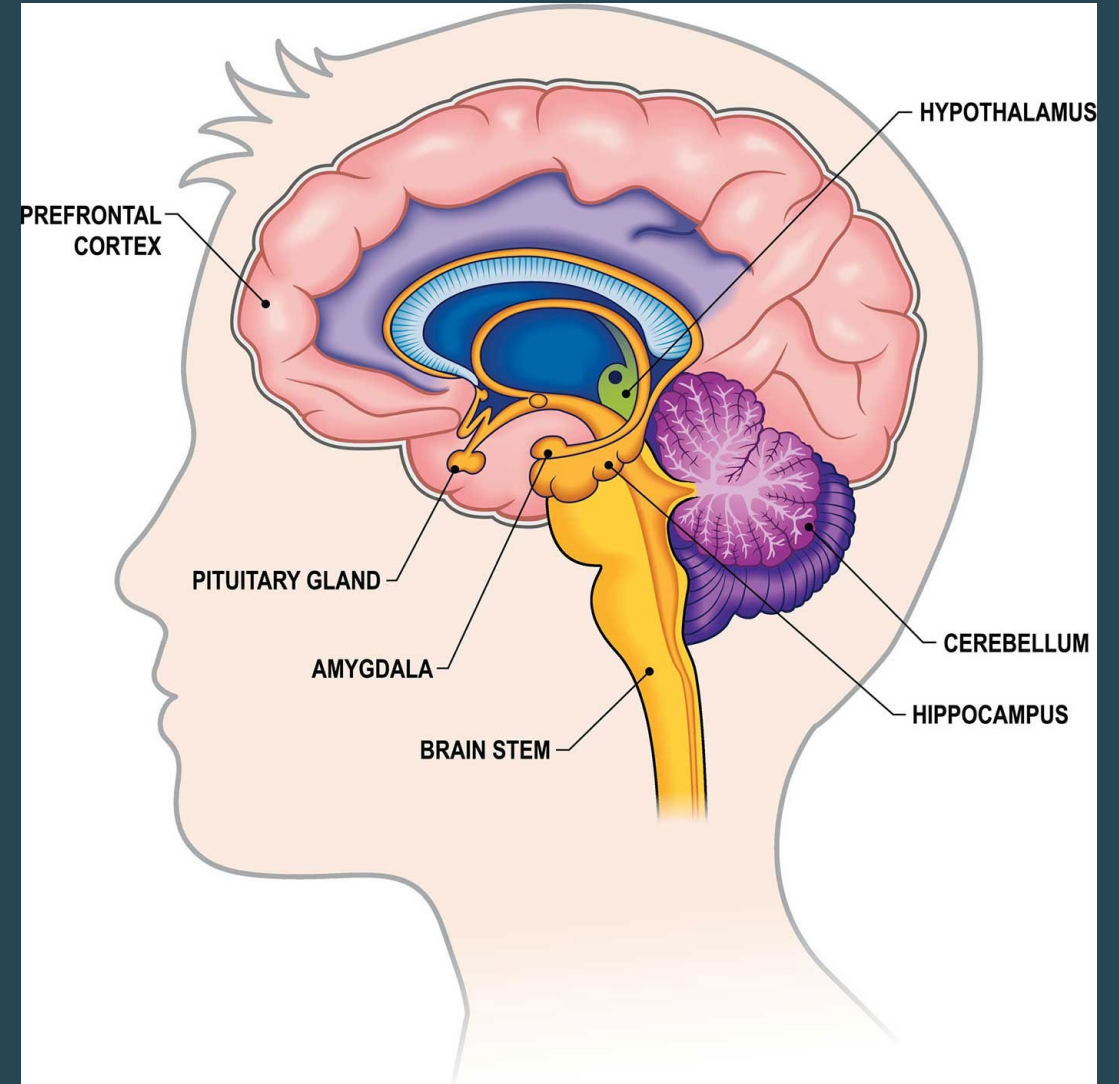
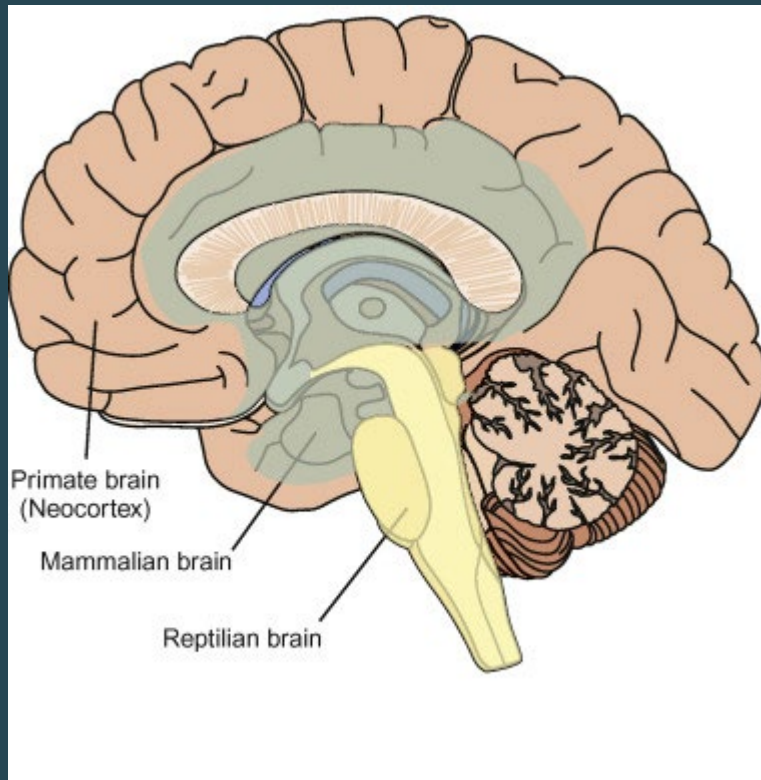
Daily stresses

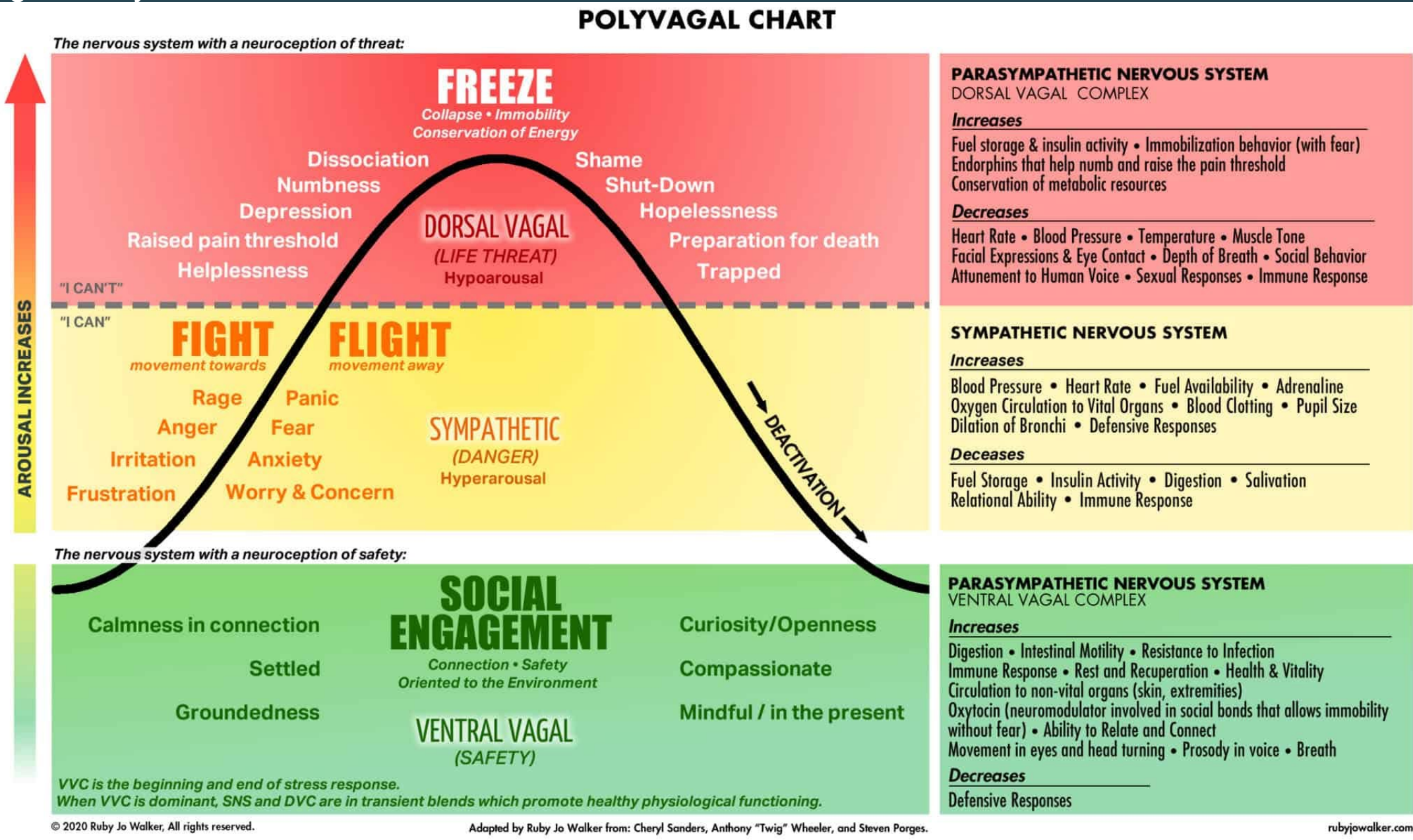
- Transition or change
- New environment, new people
- Job and school demands
- Financial instability and stress
- Joblessness
- Relationship struggles such as work relationship, friendship, romantic relationship, family relationship





**What does traumatic stress
do to our body and mind?**







Trauma stress-related symptoms

Symptoms

- **Re-experiencing the traumatic event**
 - Unwanted upsetting memories
 - Nightmares
 - Flashbacks
 - Intense prolonged psychological distress
- **Unable to recall details of the traumatic event**
 - Chronological order
 - Facts, general knowledge
 - Feeling strong emotions but without context



Symptoms

- **Avoiding anything related to the incident**
 - People
 - Places
 - Activities
 - Objects
 - Situations



Symptoms

- **Negative changes in cognitions**
 - Distorted thoughts about the cause or consequences of the trauma that lead to blaming self or others
 - Changes in perception of the world – believing the world is unsafe, difficulty in trusting others
- **Negative changes in moods**
 - A feeling of detachment or estrangement from others
 - Negative emotional state (e.g., fear, horror, anger, guilt, shame)
 - Difficulty in experiencing positive emotions (e.g., happiness, satisfaction, loving feelings)



Symptoms

- **Altered arousal and reactivity**
 - Irritability or angry outburst
 - Reckless or self-destructive behaviour
 - Difficulty sleeping
 - Irritability or angry outbursts
 - Problems with concentration
 - Increased startle response
 - Hypervigilance



Trauma triggers

- Places where it took place
- Media, News: the event or similar events
- Senses
- Criminal/Civil justice proceedings
- Anniversaries
- Holidays



Trauma and stress related disorders

- Adjustment disorder
- Acute Stress disorder (<1 month from the event)
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Depressive disorders
- Anxiety disorder



WHO

- Around 70% of people globally will experience a potentially traumatic event during their lifetime
- Only a minority (5.6%) will go on to develop Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- An estimated 3.9% of the world population has experienced PTSD at some point in their lives
- The likelihood of developing PTSD varies depending on the type of traumatic event experienced. For example, rates of PTSD are more than three times (15.3%) higher among people exposed to violent conflict or war

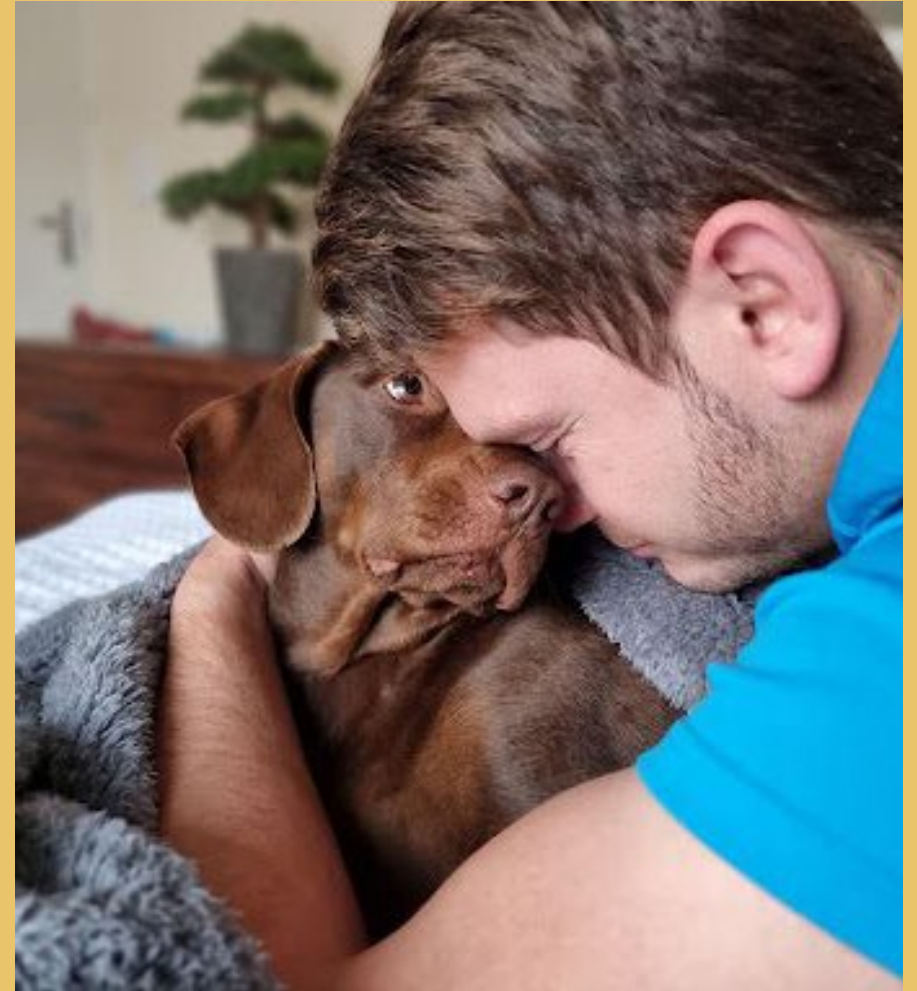




How to cope with trauma-related stress?

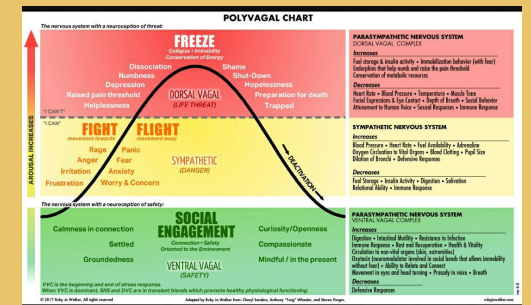
How to cope with trauma-related stress?

- Attention to physical needs: meals, sleep and exercise
- Reach out to friends or family
- Reach out to professional help, if deemed necessary
- Grounding exercise / Mindfulness exercise
- Counselling and Psychotherapy



Building resilience

- Learn to be attune to our feelings – emotions and bodily sensations



Body Scanning

- Find a comfortable position
- Do a body scanning and bring your awareness to the bodily sensations
- If you notice any areas of tension, tightness or discomfort, pause to bring your awareness in the area, allow your body to gently relax.



Something you like in the surroundings

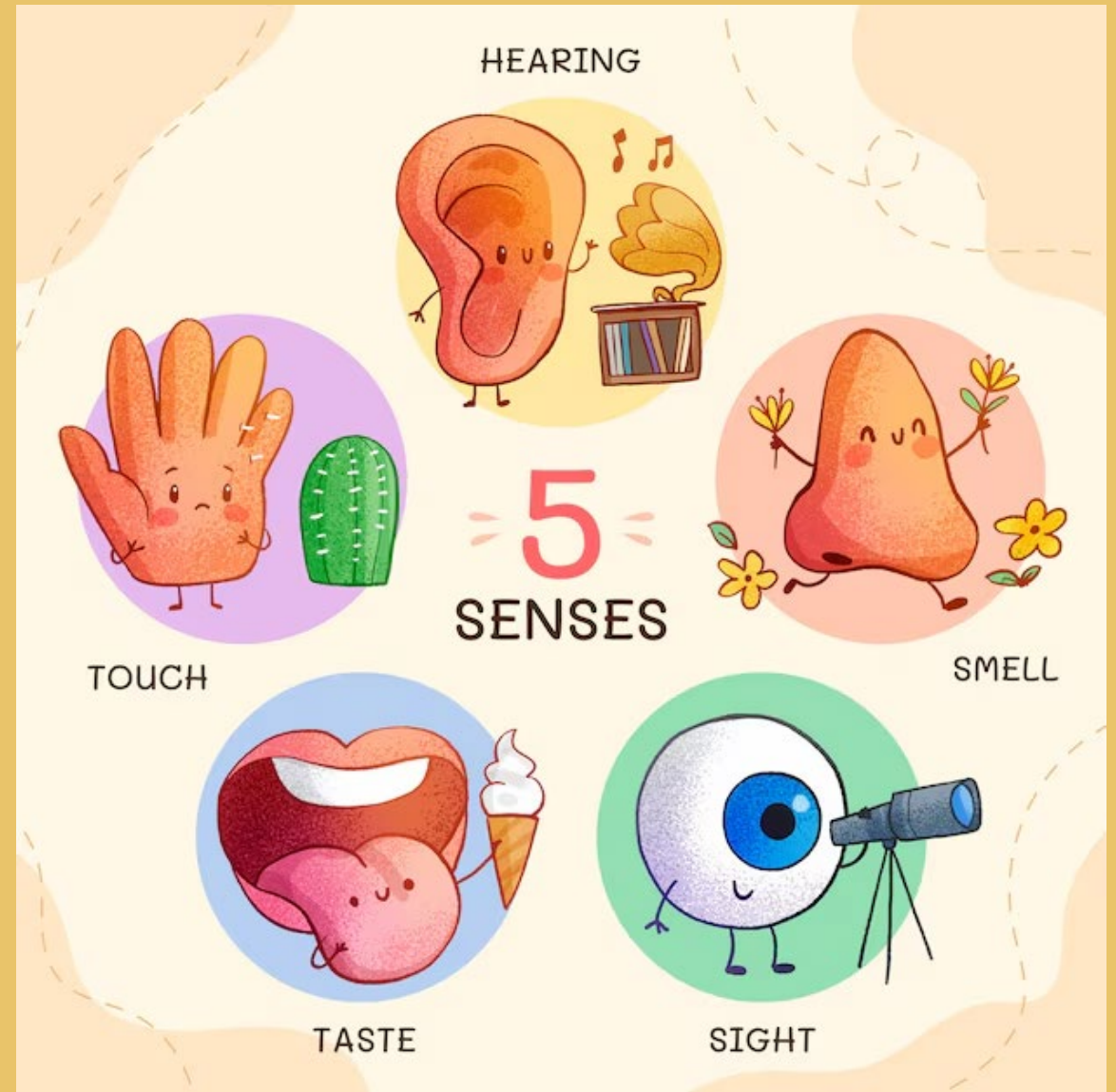
- Look around the surroundings and find 3 things you like.
- Describe them in detail
- Describe what you like about it



5, 4, 3, 2, 1

Look around the surrounding and name

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste



Support for staff

For Support



NUSHeart (EAP)

8008 528 513

(24/7 Singapore Toll-Free)

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(reverse charge number when
calling from overseas)

or access the **Intellect App**:



1. Install the app
2. Select **Join with your organisation**
3. Select **Login with SSO**
4. Login with your NUSNET email address and password

Through **Intellect** (NUSHeart's appointed EAP provider as of 1 April 2023), NUSHeart offers confidential 24 hours access through the hotline and Intellect App, offering up to 5 free emotional support sessions to NUS staff



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support for
students and staff

For Emergencies



Campus Emergency & Security

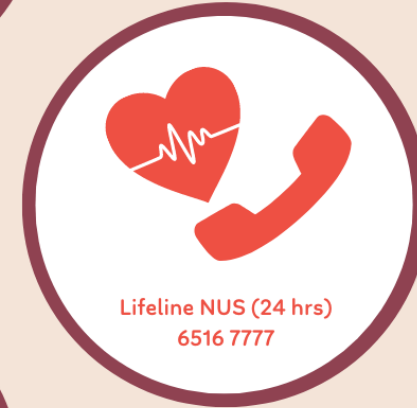
6874 1616 (KR)

6516 3636 (BTC)

6516 5568 / **6222 5568** (OC)

Available 24 hours for
immediate assistance during life-
threatening psychological
emergencies and other
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Support for student



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You are not alone