Tired Brain

What is it;
What to do;
Why we should teach our staff about it
Tired Brain Agenda

- Warm Up
- Neurological View of Tired Brain
- Behavioral View of Tired Brain
- Urges & Surges
- Tired Brain Camp Plan
Warm Up:

- Remember a time in your life where you really struggled. A significant personal crash and burn.
- What did you feel? What were the persistent thoughts that swirled around your head?
- What behaviors... helpful and unhelpful ones ... did I do?

This is your best predictor of how YOUR tired brain will feel / act / tell you what to do.
‘Fatigue” is a term used to describe a decrease in physical performance associated with an increase in the real/perceived difficulty of a task.

From another aspect, fatigue is defined as the inability of the muscles to maintain the required level of strength during exercises.
Brain Parts affected by fatigue

- Amygdala: Fight or Flight (Amy)
- Prefrontal Cortex: Logic and emotional regulation (Forehead)
- Hippocampus: Memory & Learning
Tired Brain = Adrenaline Floods

- An Overaroused Amygdala releases TOO MUCH adrenaline, TOO OFTEN

- Adrenaline = FIGHT or FLIGHT or FREEZE
Tired Brain Turns Us:

OVERACTIVE AMYGDALA

PESSIMISTIC
Optimistic

NEGATIVE RUMINATION

Flexible

LOW EMPATHY
Empathetic

POOR PREFRONTAL CORTEX

Problem Solver

POOR PROBLEM SOLVING

IMPULSIVE
Reflective

OVERLY EMOTIONAL

Methodical

IMPAIRED HIPPOCAMPUS

POOR LEARNING CAPACITY

Open Learner

POOR MEMORY

Responsible

OVERACTIVE AMYGDALA

EMOTIONALLY BRITTLE
Emotionally Resilient

POOR PREFRONTAL CORTEX

POOR PROBLEM SOLVING

IMPULSIVE

RESILIENT

OPEN LEARNER

OVERLY EMOTIONAL

Methodical
Overactive Amygdala:

**Urges and Surges**

**Urges** try and “Fix” the problem
- Drinking, Drugs
- Social Chaos
- Sex
- Disordered Eating
- Rumination
- Unwanted, Intrusive Thoughts

**Surges react** to the problem
- BIG anger
- BIG fear
- BIG sad
- Panic attacks
- Impulsivity
- Lack of empathy
- Emotionally labile
- It’s all about ME
Making an All-Camp Tired Brain Plan

- Mandatory Pre-Camp Training: Not IF, but WHEN
- Whole Camp Emotional Literacy: BIG Emotions
- Personal Self-Care Plan (Soothies)
- Connectivity Plan: Circles of Trust
- Crisis Management Plan
Pre-Camp

Tired Brain Training

- Not IF but WHEN (Especially starting week 3)
- Neurological basics
  - Amygdala
  - Prefrontal Cortex
  - Hippocampus
- Common effects of Tired Brain
  - Impulsivity, Emotional reactivity, Negativity
  - Poor focus & learning
  - Don’t see social cues, lack empathy
  - Old struggles reemerge, Urges & Surges
All-Camp
Tired Brain Training (cont.)

Six Tired Brain Self-Care Strategy & Tools

1. Check the Facts reflection
2. BIG Emotional: All-camp Emotional Literacy tool
3. Journals for ALL.
4. Crisis Management Concept
5. Personal Soothieie Chart
6. Connectivity Plan
Check the Facts

What time do I go to sleep?
What kind of food do I give my body?
What kind of soul food do I give myself?
I feel great!
I feel like crap!
What do I do on my time off?
How much alcohol have I drunk lately?
Did I take my medication?

I feel great!
I feel like crap!
What feels good?

BIG Emotions

GLAD

What is NOT FAIR or NOT OK?

SAD

What might hurt me?

SCARED

What’s important to me that I’ve lost?
Journals for ALL Staff

- Integrates Right/Left Hemispheres of Brain
- Clarifies personal intentions
- Reinforces personal goals
- Prevents and Remedies Brain Looping
- Reinforces Learning
- Boosts Immune System
- Finds Meaning and Purpose in Struggle
Teach Crisis Management

Big Problem!!!

Is it a solvable problem?

NO

YES

Can it be solved RIGHT NOW?

NO

YES

Then solve it!

Distract & Soothe
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beth’s Soothies</th>
<th>What makes me feel just a little bit better?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cleansing Breath</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Pose</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet Forest Walk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Writing in my journal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at the water</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Dark Chocolate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Smell Lavender</td>
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<tr>
<td>Take a Shower / Swim</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Connectivity Plan

Circles of Trust

Inner Circle (1):
People I can share almost ANY problem with

Center Circle (2):
People I can share SOME problems with (but hold back on SOME)

Outer Circle (3):
People I like but don’t share problems with (Whoo-hoo friends)

Outside the Circle (4):
People I don’t like OR trust.
When to Worry

• Inability to fall asleep or stay asleep;

• Panic and anxiety attacks intrude on days & nights;

• Negative rumination replaces clear thinking;

• Unwanted intrusive thoughts (self harm, suicide);

• Disordered eating (too much, too little, too obsessive)

• Increasing urges for Self harm and Suicidal Ideation.
What we ALL need to hear

- Be the “broken record” for them, so they can be the broken record for the kids.

You are GOOD.
You are IMPORTANT.
You are COMPETENT.
I’m cheering for you.