

Finding the Balance:

Managing stress in turbulent times

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University of Nebraska
Medical CenterSM



Agenda

- Discuss the role of stress on the human body
- Understand the role of self-care activities on physical and emotional health
- Provide you helpful resources for enhancing your mental well-being

THATABABY

BY PAUL TRAP

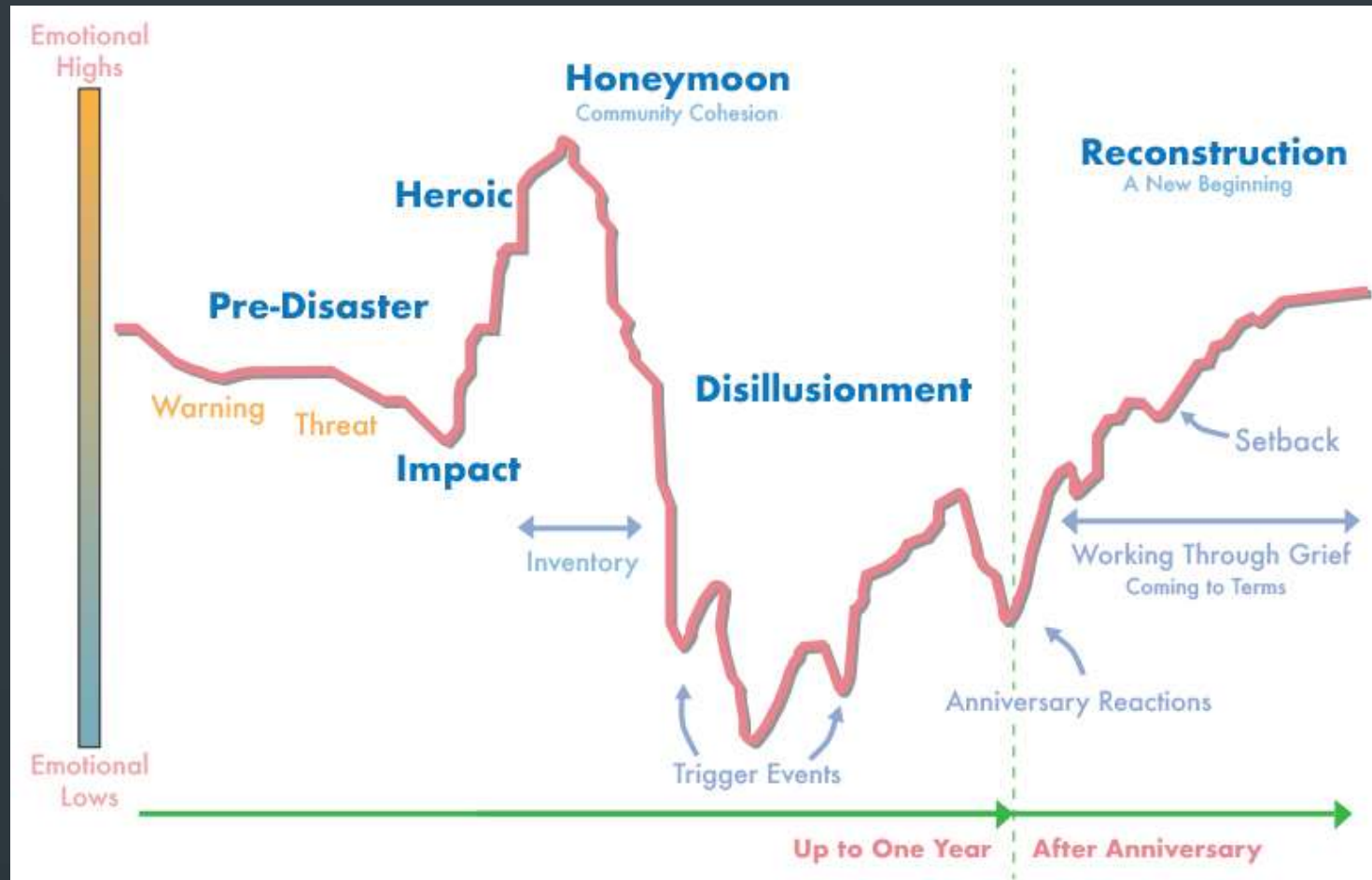




**BUT WAIT,
THERE'S MORE**



How is the pandemic affecting us?





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🔊 </>

Living, But Not Flourishing: The Pandemic-Fueled Feeling Known As 'Languishing'

May 04, 2021

By [Robin Young](#) and [Serena McMahon](#)



Emory University sociologist Corey Keyes coined the feeling "languishing" — showing up for life, but living without purpose or aim. (Getty Images)

Are you feeling “blah” a year into the pandemic?





The New York Times  @nytimes · Apr 19



There's a name for that sense of stagnation and emptiness you're feeling during the pandemic: It's called languishing. nyti.ms/3n09V8V

languishing

verb / 'laNG wiSHiNG /

1. A name for the blah you're feeling.
2. The void between depression and flourishing — the absence of well-being.
3. It can dull your motivation and focus. And it may be the dominant emotion of 2021.



 104

 3.7K

 8.1K





“I feel stuck, in a sort of limbo where essences of life buzz around me, but I can’t access them. Life is at once too overwhelming and not engaging enough. Each task I do requires a search for motivation beyond anything I’ve ever known. I’m tired, burnt out, and not often excited, but also restless, eager to engage, and trying.”



RX for languishing

- Give yourself some grace
- Remind yourself about meaning and purpose
- Connect with others
- Do a little something



"I'm so glad it snowed. I haven't socialized this much in months!"



Some common reactions to stress

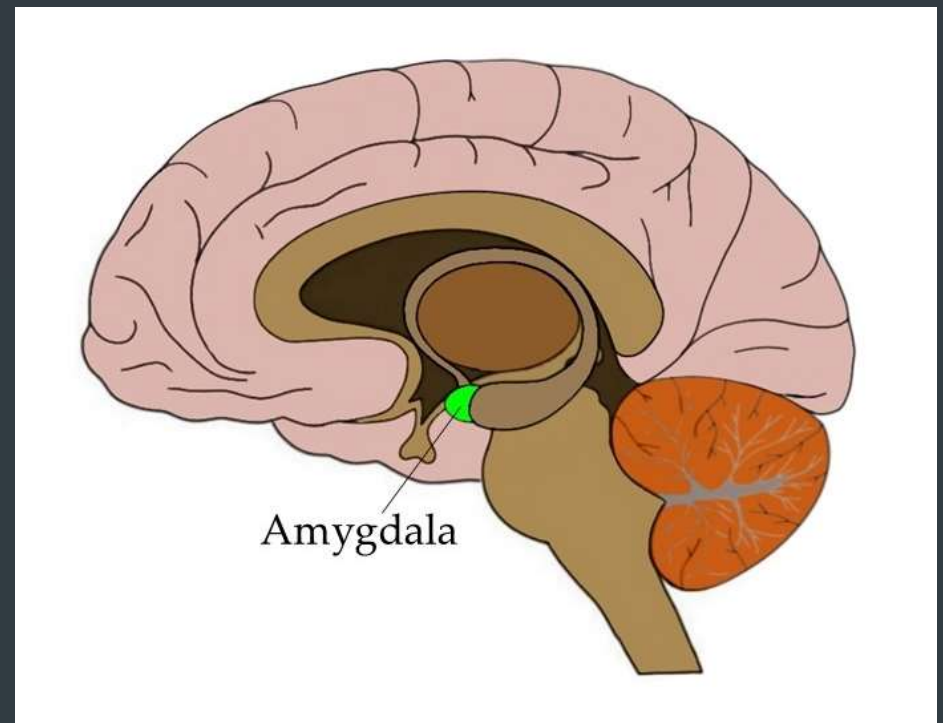
- Vague sense of unease
- Irritability, impatience
- Insomnia
- Physical symptoms



Let's talk about the amygdala

The “Amygdala Hijack”

The sudden, intense, unconscious emotional response which “takes over” higher brain centers





Physiology of stress

The amygdala “pulls the fire alarm”

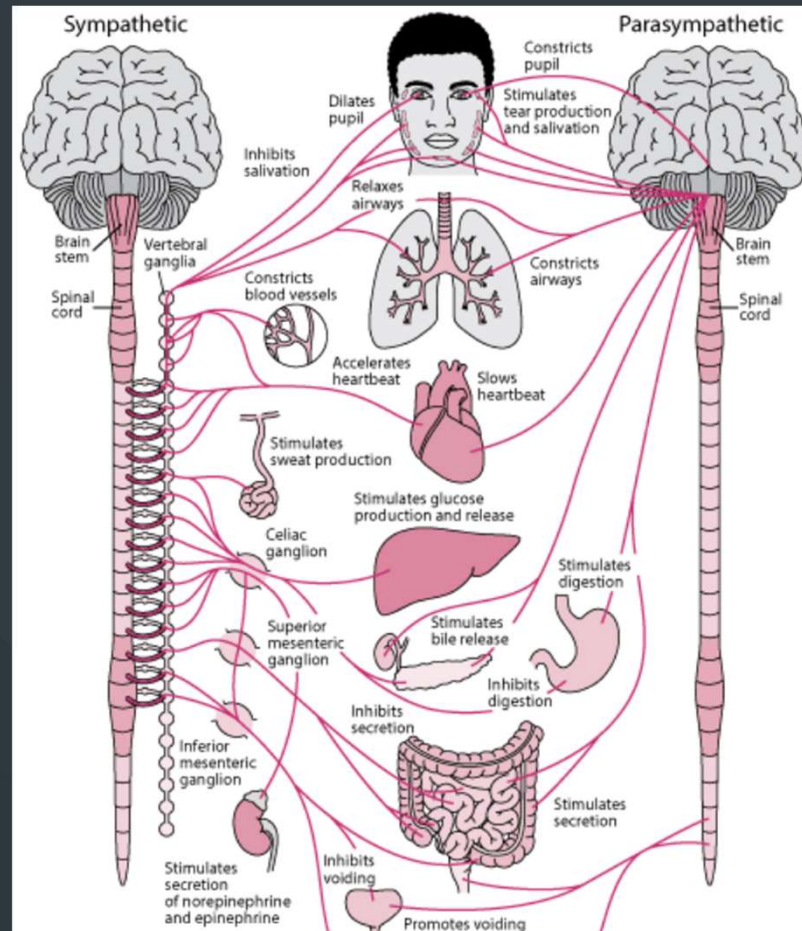
This activates the ***fight or flight mechanism***, aka the *sympathetic nervous system*

This leads to release of stress hormones: cortisol, epinephrine, and others

The autonomic nervous system



SYMPATHETIC:
“Fight or flight”

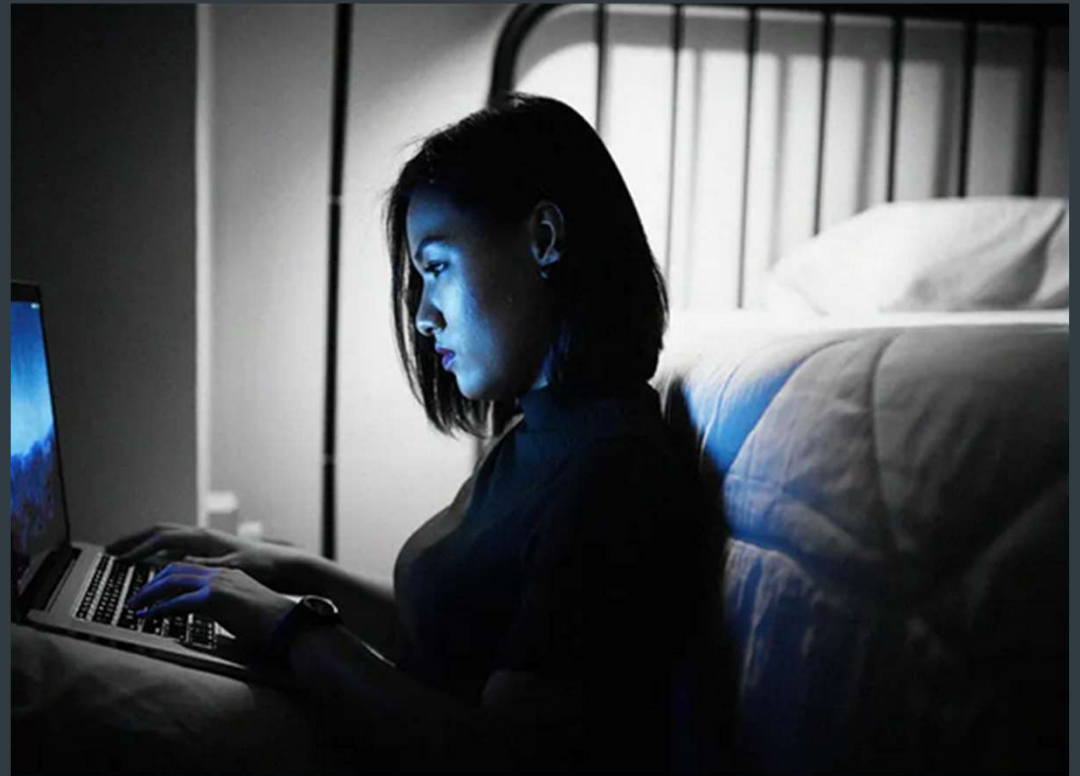


PARASYMPATHETIC:
“Rest and digest”

Some things we use to de-stress (but shouldn't...)



- Denying the problem or feeling
- Numbing the pain through:
 - Alcohol
 - Other drugs
 - Other distracting behaviors





Self-Care 101

Perspective-Taking



**THE RIGHT PERSPECTIVE
MAKES THE IMPOSSIBLE
POSSIBLE.**



“I'm all right, right now”



Start with sleep

- 7-9 hours/day
- Affects mood, anxiety, cognition
- “Time to take out the trash”



"Wow, it's only eleven—that still leaves time for me to ruin tomorrow by staying up doing nothing on the Internet."

Revenge
bedtime
procrastination



Get up and get moving

- Exercise is like Miracle-Gro for the brain!
- Helps reduce anxiety, and improve mood
- Improves problem-solving ability



Build in micro-practices

Try this with me!

6-second breath to reset your autonomic nervous system

- Count slowly to 6 as you breathe in
- Pause briefly
- Count slowly to 6 as you breathe out
- Repeat 3 more times

Safely stay socially connected



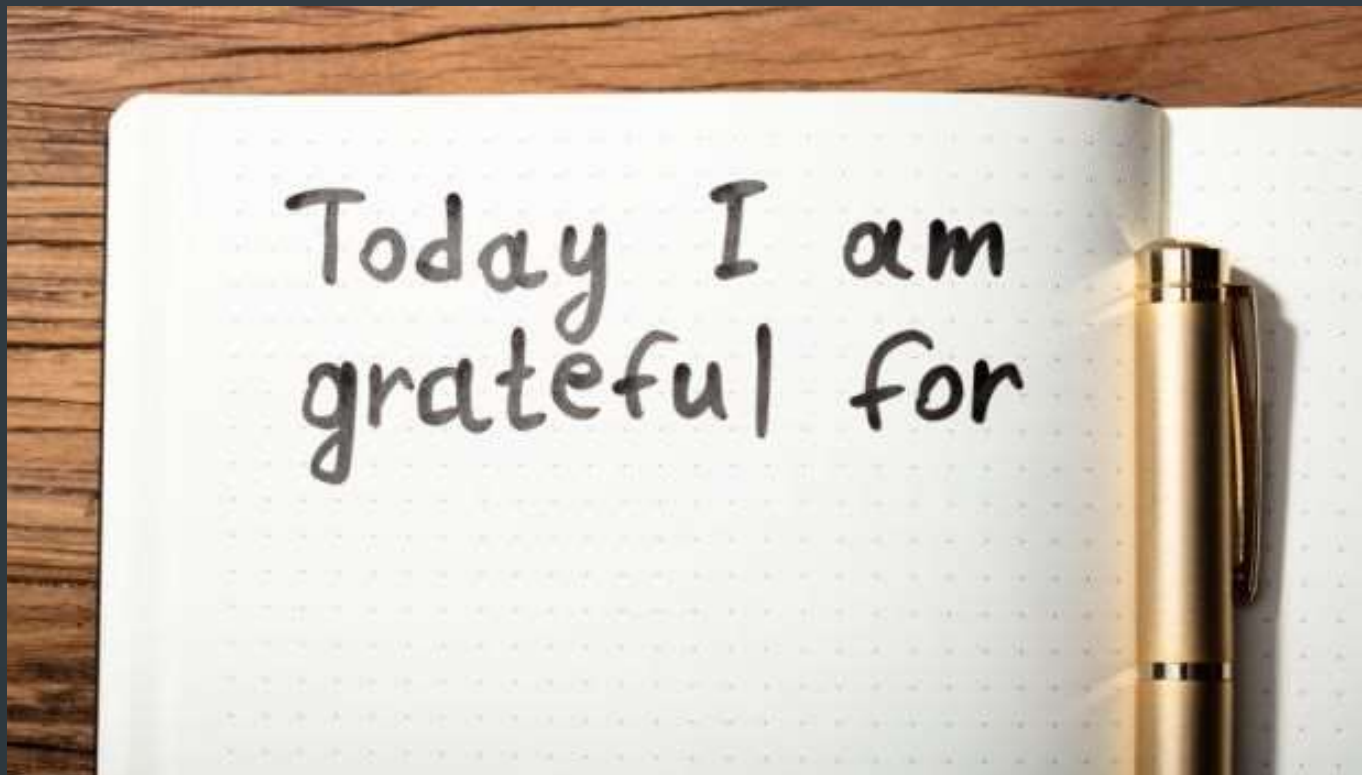


Use the humanities

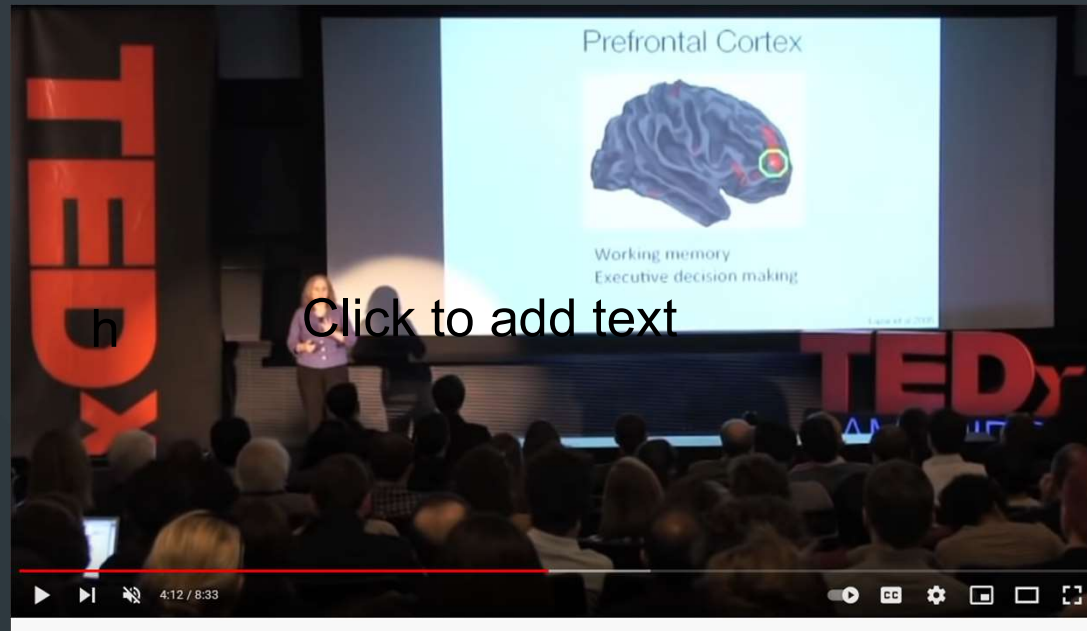
- Increases wisdom, perspective, empathy
- Reduces burnout
- Can be active:
 - Playing a musical instrument
 - Writing poetry
- Or passive:
 - Attending plays and concerts
 - Reading poetry



Keep a gratitude journal



Consider mindfulness/meditation



Sara Lazar TED Talk



"Now that I've invented it, I have this odd compulsion to hold it in my hand wherever I go and glance at it incessantly."



How can we support each other?



How to spot someone in need

- Changes in communication and demeanor patterns
- Changes in the way they work:
 - Cancellations, tardiness, forgetfulness
 - Overproductivity, working long days or unusual hours



How to avoid 'overstepping' boundaries?

Asking the easy, but real questions:

- *Are you okay?*
- *Really, how are you doing?*
- Consider sharing something you are dealing with or have dealt with in the past – express vulnerability if you are comfortable doing so

Don't feel the need to fix someone else's problem(s) – you are there to listen and steer the person toward help if needed

Brene Brown on empathy





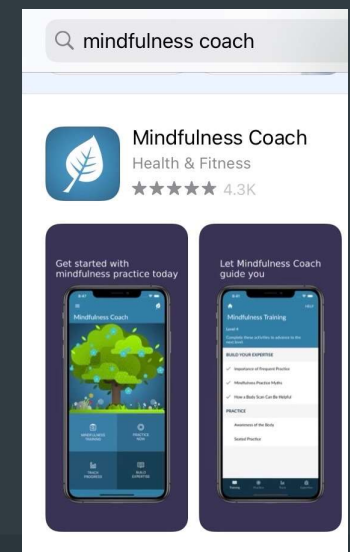
Some ideas for teams to consider

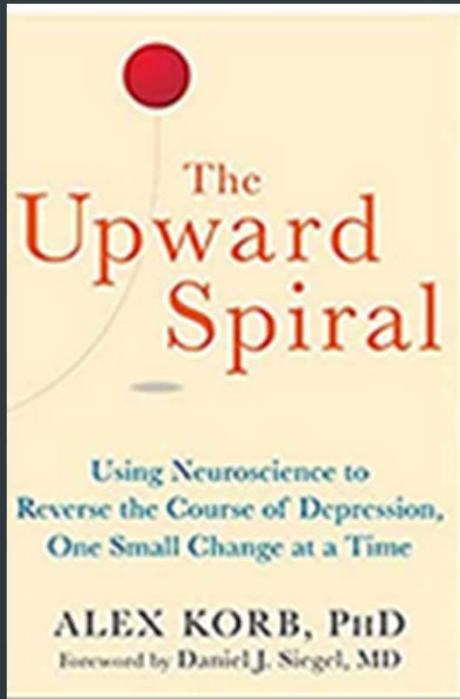
- Start a meetings with a mindful minute – e.g., have the group do 4 slow, deep breaths (inhale for 6 seconds/exhale for 6 seconds)
- Ask the group for “thorns and roses”
- Have group members acknowledge something positive done by another member of the group



Additional resources

- COVID Coach:
 - Mood and anxiety self-check
 - Stress management tools
- Insomnia Coach
- Mindfulness Coach





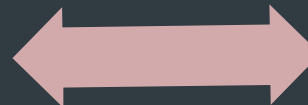
Prefrontal cortex

- What should I do for the long haul?



Nucleus accumbens

- What feels best right now?



Dorsal striatum

- How can I keep doing the same thing?



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Counseling Services

Personal Counseling

The UNMC Counseling Center offers a wide range of professional counseling services:

- Brief problem-solving
- Individual counseling
- Couples/relationship counseling
- Cognitive behavioral therapy
- Stress management training
- Consultation on communication difficulties
- Chemical dependency screening
- EMDR for trauma recovery
- Assessment and referrals (if needed)

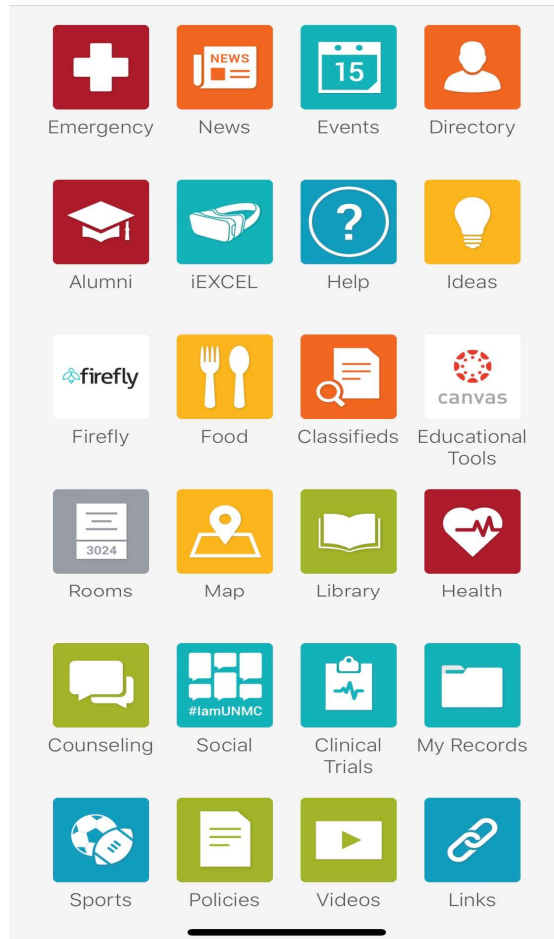
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The UNMC Counseling & Student Development Center offers professional counseling and psychological services free-of-charge to all UNMC students and medical residents. Medical referrals are also available, if needed.

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COVID COACH



NEBRASKA MEDICAL ORCHESTRA

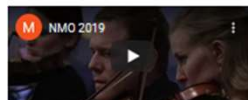


The Nebraska Medical Orchestra—a collaboration between UNO and UNMC—is a volunteer orchestra, under the direction of **Dr. Matthew Brooks**, open to all healthcare-related musicians. While many of our musicians come from various colleges and departments at UNMC, Nebraska Medicine, and Children's Hospital & Medical Center, we have welcomed musicians affiliated with other healthcare organizations and institutions, including UNL, Clarkson College, Nebraska Methodist College, Creighton University, and private practices.

For more information about joining the NMO, please reach out by emailing NebMedicalOrchestra@unmc.edu.

Nebraska Medical Orchestra
 Matthew J. Brooks, DMA | Music Director & Conductor

REQUEST INFORMATION



Working together to improve the quality of life in the community



UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA AT OMAHA
 SCHOOL OF MUSIC



UNMC
 Nebraska
 Medicine

HEALING ARTS PROGRAM



LEADERSHIP

Washington Garcia, D.M.A. - Matthew Rizzo, M.D.

Executive Directors

Matthew J. Brooks, D.M.A.
 Music Director and Conductor

Advisory Council

Steven Wengel, M.D., chair

Gail and Michael Yanney

Michael Hilt, Ph.D.

Jennifer Boomgaarden

William Lawlor

Amy Jensen

Sarah Holstein, M.D., Ph.D.

Mary Perkinson, D.M.A.





After listening to his owner drone on for hours, Ralph suddenly realized he was NOT cut out to be an emotional support dog after all.

Take Care...from a
professional when you need it

take



Take Care...of others

care

Take Care...of yourself