



**UW PACC**

Psychiatry and Addictions Case Conference

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# POST-COVID AND MENTAL HEALTH

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# SPEAKER DISCLOSURES

- ✓ No conflicts of interest

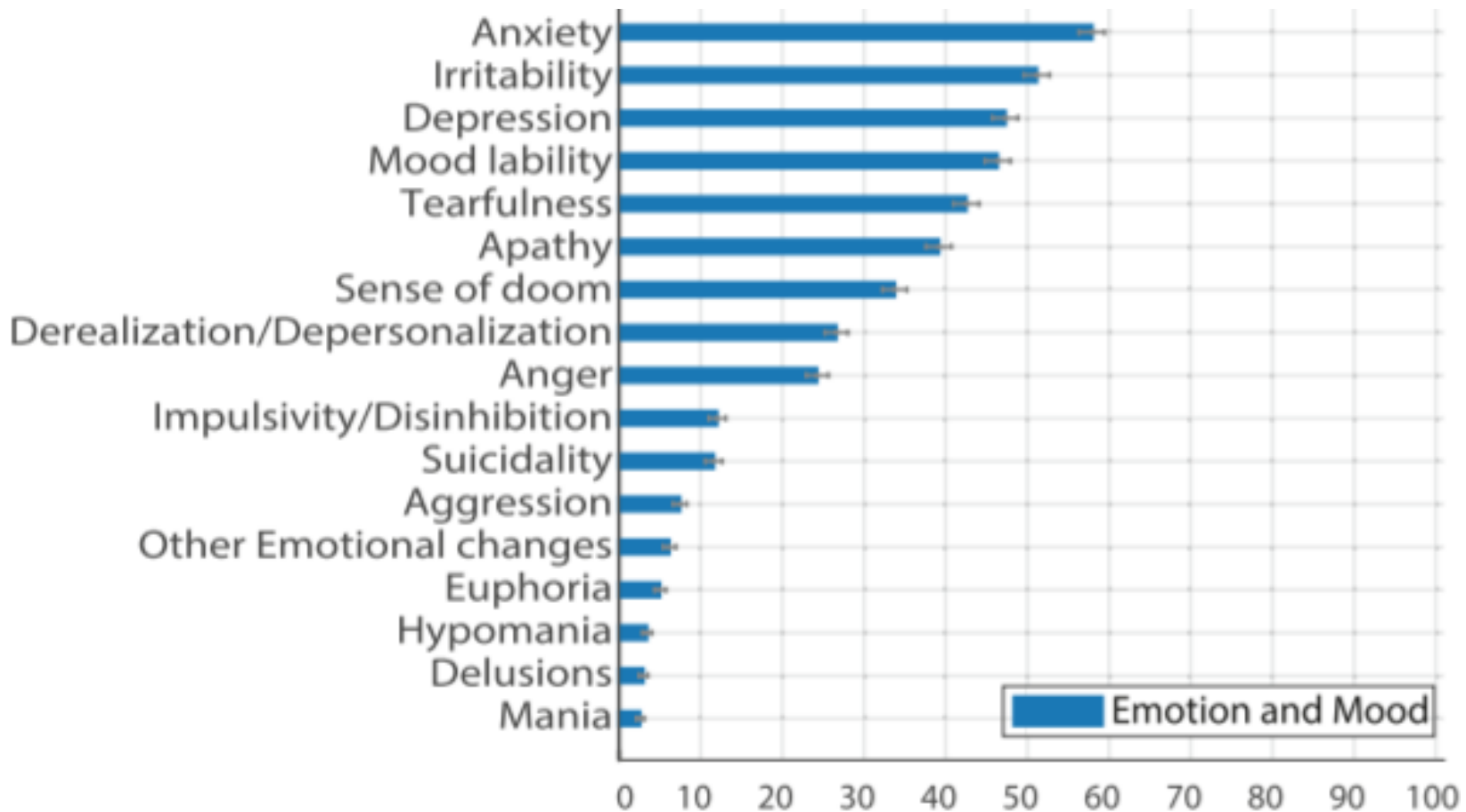
# OBJECTIVES

1. Discuss the relationship between mental health concerns and post-COVID.
2. Learn about self-management interventions used to address mood, anxiety, and coping concerns.
3. Increase confidence in assessing and/or treating mental health issues among people with post-COVID.

“The term “Post-COVID Conditions” is an umbrella term for the wide range of physical and mental health consequences experienced by some patients that are present four or more weeks after SARS-CoV-2 infection” (CDC).

“While most people who develop COVID-19 fully recover, some people develop a variety of mid- and long-term effects like fatigue, breathlessness and cognitive dysfunction Some people also experience psychological effects as part of post COVID-19 condition” (WHO).

# MENTAL HEALTH SYMPTOMS



(Davis et al., 2021)

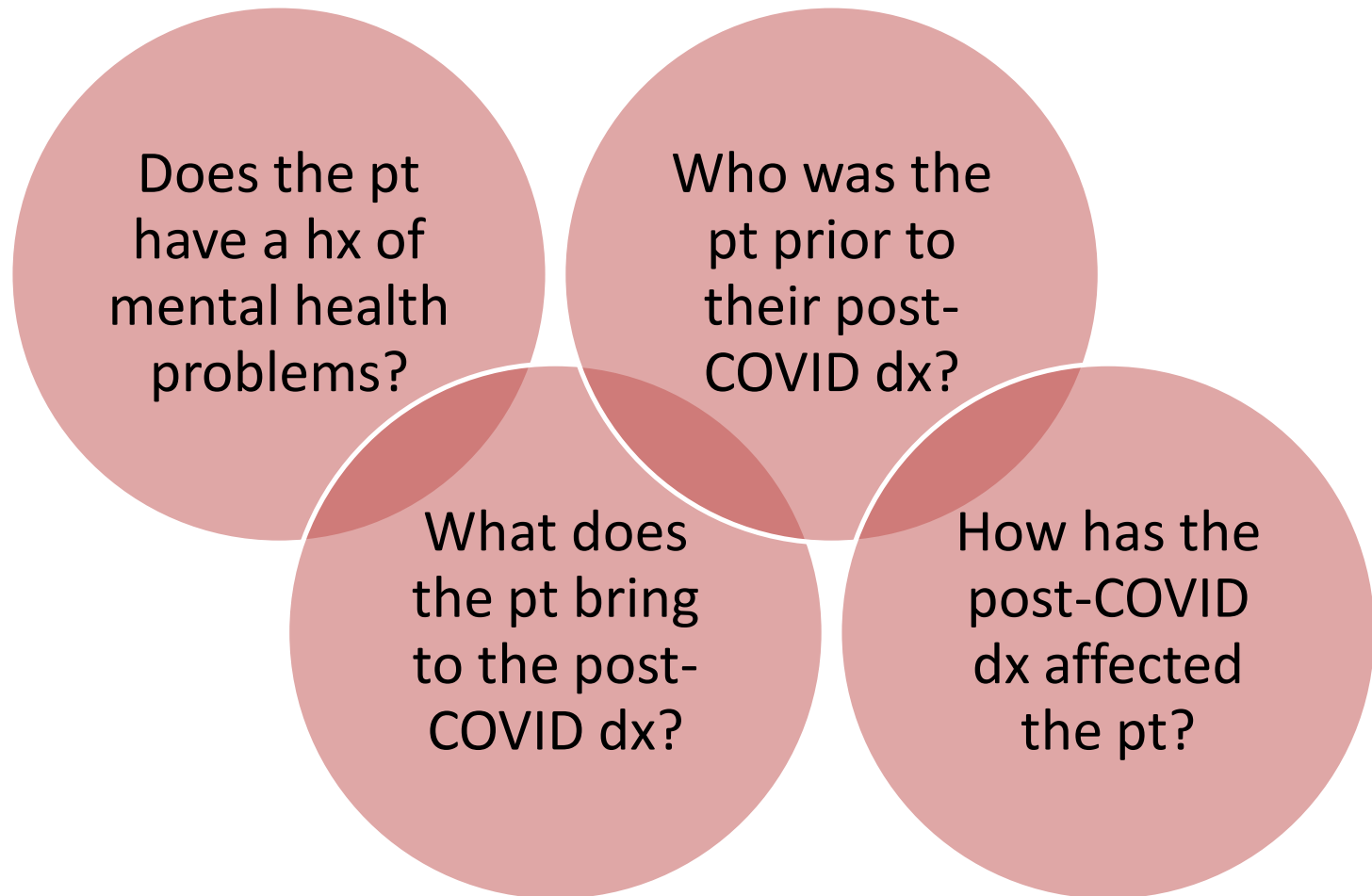
# MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH FINDINGS

- 1 month after hospitalization, ~56% screened positive for at least one mental health disorder.
- Anxiety, depression, and sleep difficulties were present in approximately 1/5 of patients at 6-month follow-up.
- Clinically significant PTSD symptoms were reported in ~30% of patients requiring hospitalization.
- Overall probability of a new psychiatric diagnosis was 5.8% among a subset patients with no known previous psychiatric illness.

# ETIOLOGY OF MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS

- 1) Specific effects of COVID-19 on the brain, the immune system, or other organ systems.
- 2) Reaction to chronic symptoms, the disruptive nature of post-COVID symptoms on one's life (e.g., employment, relationships, social roles).
- 3) Long-term hospitalizations, particularly in the ICU, can cause post-intensive care syndrome, which can include severe deconditioning, cognitive problems and PTSD.

# MENTAL HEALTH CASE CONCEPTUALIZATION





# TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

- Some patients may think questions about their mental health means the provider believes symptoms are a mental health issue. Therefore, it can be helpful to continue:
  - Validating the patient’s symptoms and their pain/suffering.
  - Normalizing mental health concerns and distress in the setting of post-COVID.
  - Asking patients what they are hoping to get from their visit. What are hoping to get from you as the provider.

# SELF MANAGEMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS

# SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Self-management is the patient's day-to-day management of their chronic health condition.
- Goal of self-management interventions:  
Increasing patients' involvement in and control over their care.
- Self-management is valuable for addressing mental health concerns.

(Grady & Gough, 2014; Newman, et al., 2004)

# BENEFITS OF SELF-MANAGEMENT



Improved symptom management and quality of life



Allow patients to be an active participant in their care



Help patients recognize the power they have in managing their condition

# TALKING ABOUT SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Talk to your patients about self-management.
- Do not assume patients know about self-management.
- Reinforce patients' self-management actions/behaviors.
- Invite your patients to be a partner in their care with you!

# RESEARCH ON SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-management interventions have been shown to be effective in:



Addressing insomnia and improving sleep.



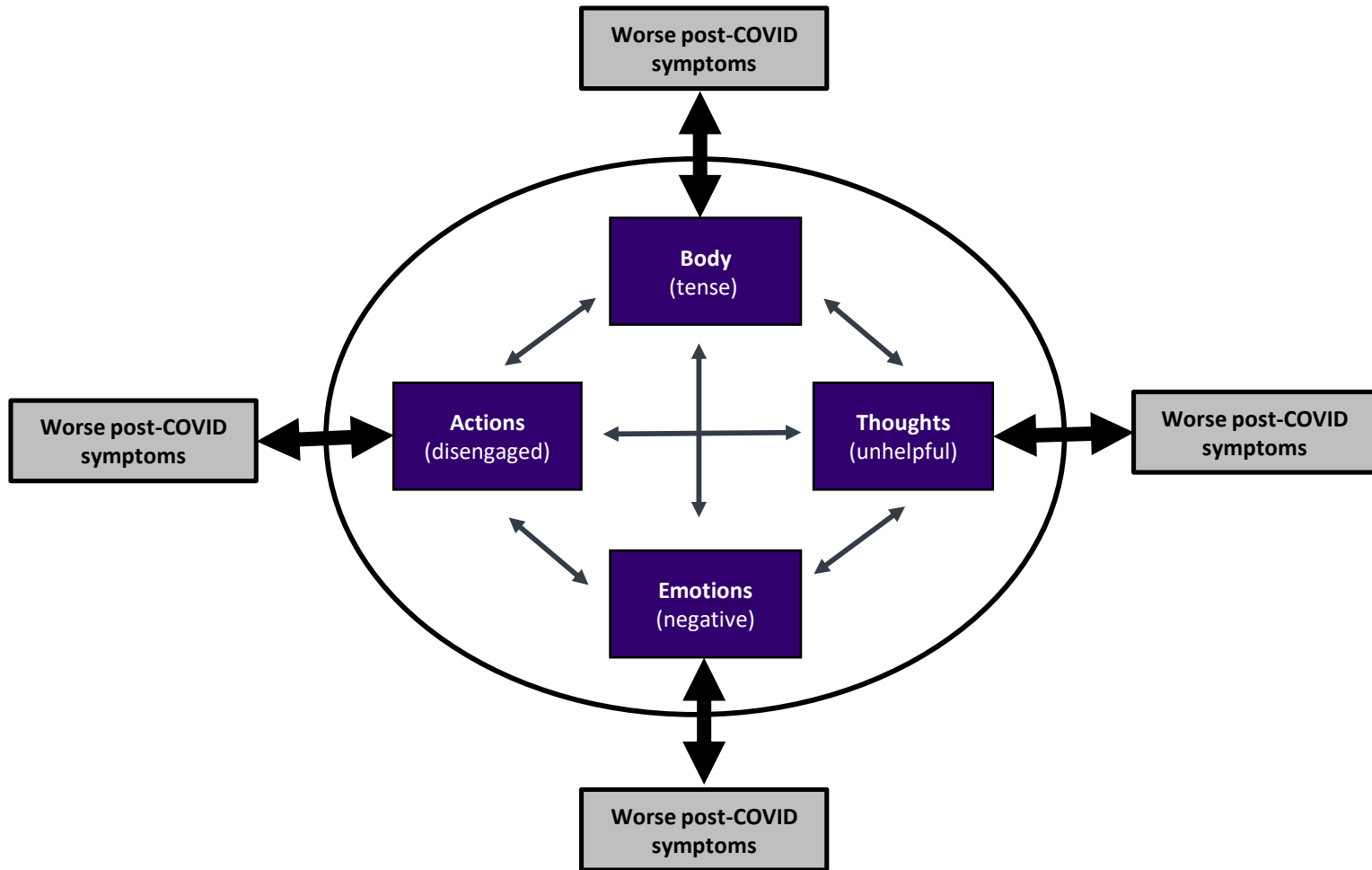
Improving mood and reducing anxiety.



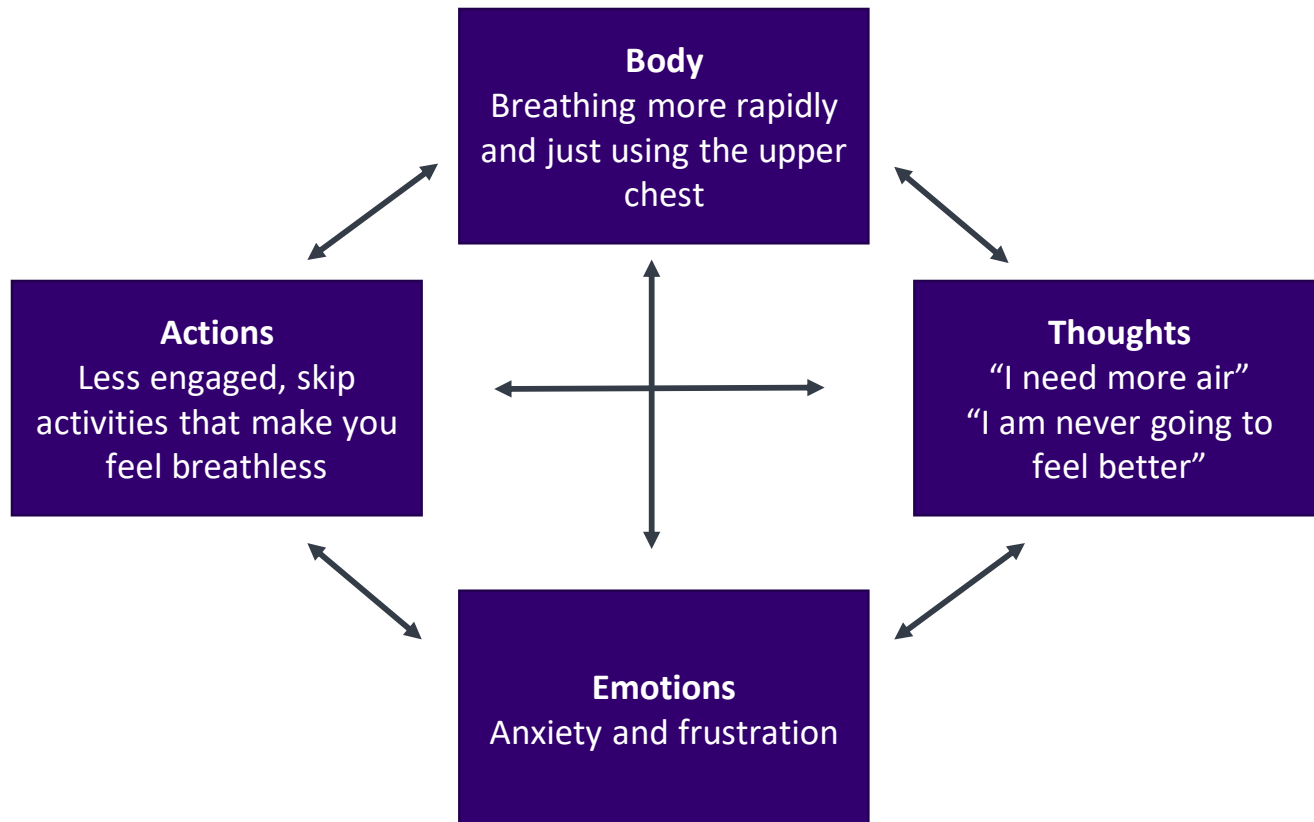
Reducing the negative effects a health condition has on one's life.

(Grady & Gough, 2014; Newman, et al., 2004)

# COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

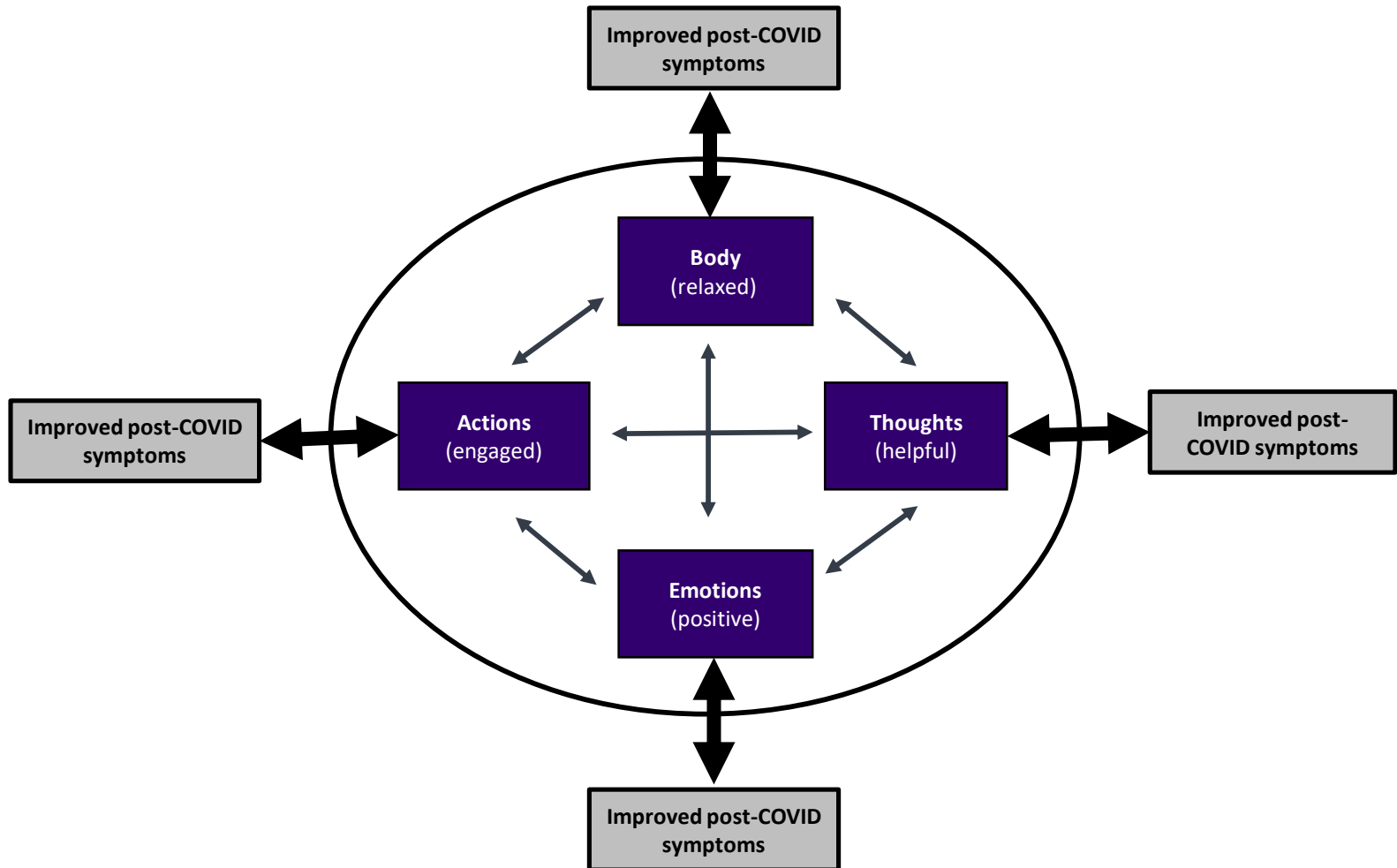


# COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

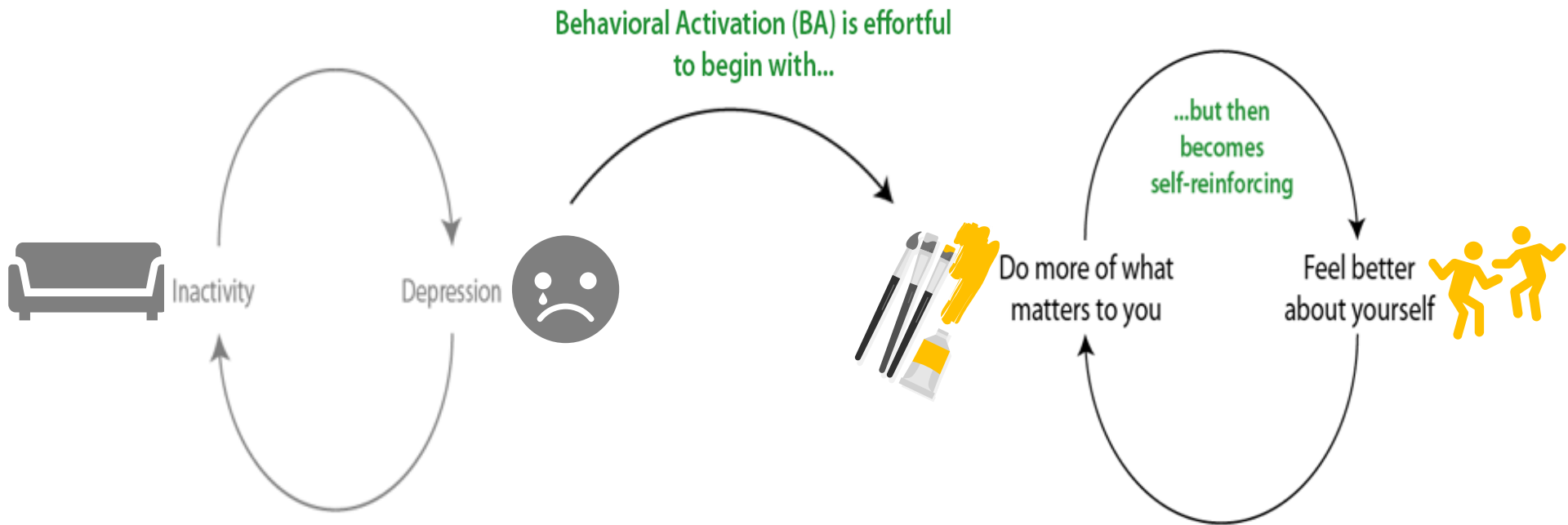




# COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY



# BEHAVIORAL ACTIVATION



# UNCERTAINTY AND DISTRESS

- Humans are generally uncomfortable with uncertainty – we like to:
  - Plan for the future
  - Find a solution to the problem } **This can be particularly difficult when living with a chronic medical condition**
- Post-COVID is novel and disrupts one's life, which can cause distress and uncertainty. This is a NORMAL reaction and can include many different emotions:
  - Anxiety
  - Worry
  - Anger
  - Sadness
  - Fear
  - Irritability
  - Restlessness
  - Grief

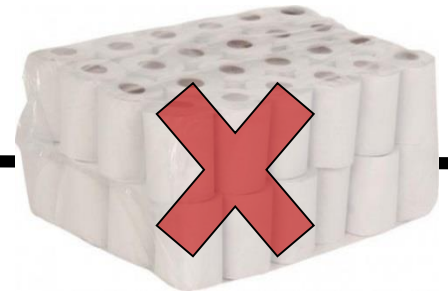
# UNCERTAINTY CONTINUUM



**Pretend the challenge is not happening**



**Tolerate the distress, while finding ways you can feel better**



**Panic, attempt to control the things that are not within your control**

# STEPS FOR COPING WITH UNCERTAINTY

## 1. Focus on what is within your control

- We cannot fully control what happens in the future
- We cannot eliminate all natural fear and anxiety
- But we can control what we do – here and now

## 2. Use a coping strategy

- Problem-focused coping skills – for the controllable aspects
- Emotion-focused coping skills – for the uncontrollable aspects

# STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH UNCERTAINTY

Problem-focused	Emotion-focused
Information seeking	Reframing thoughts
Goal setting	Relaxation exercises
Conflict resolution	Talking with supportive friends/family
Asking for help	Healthy distraction

Example:	Controllable	Uncontrollable
<p><b>I have not recovered from post-COVID, concerned I will feel this way for the rest of my life</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attending doctor appointments</li> <li>• Communicating with medical team</li> <li>• Using self-management strategies</li> <li>• Staying informed (e.g., webinars)</li> <li>• Participating in research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If there will be a “cure”</li> <li>• The novelty of long COVID</li> <li>• Some flare-ups can be unpredictable</li> </ul>
	<p><u>Problem-focused coping</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information seeking</li> <li>• Asking for help</li> <li>• Goal setting</li> </ul>	<p><u>Emotion-focused coping</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reframing thoughts</li> <li>• Relaxation exercises</li> <li>• Healthy distraction</li> <li>• Talking with supportive family/friends</li> </ul>

# TRANSLATING TO CLINICAL PRACTICE

- Move the needle...even just slightly:
  - Does the patient have unhelpful thinking patterns?
  - What is an enjoyable activity you can do today?
  - Help identify what is within in the patient's control.
  - What could be a helpful coping strategy?



# IN SUMMARY

- Post-COVID often has both physical and psychological components.
- Self-management and self-management interventions are valuable for both the physical and emotional symptoms of post-COVID.
- Interventions: Cognitive behavioral therapy, behavioral activation, coping with uncertainty.

**THANK YOU**