

NAADAC

WELLNESS AND RECOVERY IN THE ADDICTION PROFESSION PART SIX:
STRATEGIC DISENGAGEMENT FOR YOU AND YOUR CLIENTS

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>> Hello, everyone and welcome to part six of six of the specialty online training series on wellness and recovery. Today's topic is one Wellness and Recovery in the Addiction Profession Part Six: Strategic Disengagement for you and your Clients. Presented by Noreen Braman. My name is Jessie O'Brien and I am the training and professional training content manager here at NAADAC, and I will be the organizer for this training experience.

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To access material from for this specialty online training series, make sure to bookmark the web address at the bottom of the slide -- or at the top, excuse me, and you can go to this page when you need information related to the training. As you know this is the last webinar in the wellness series so you may be applying for your certificate today so that's where the instructors are for you to do that if you want to do that.

This particular webinar is approved for 1.5 continuing education hours and our website contains a full list of the organizations that approve us for continuing education providers. So as you know, you have already paid the registration fee of \$25, and this includes your access to the quiz, receiving the certificate a cup upon successful completion of the quiz and eligibility towards applying for the certificate of achievement for wellness in the addiction profession.

Just a quick orientation to GoToWebinar, that's a platform we are using today. The most important thing to be aware of is that little orange arrow that you see in your control panel. That will minimize and maximize the control panel so if you want to, you can move it out of the way altogether. But otherwise I want to bring attention to the little handouts drop down menu. You'll see a copy of today's lights as well as a specific -- for

this webinar. So you can download those. Also I want to bring attention to the questions box. If you have any questions for our presenter or any questions for us as well, go ahead and type them in the questions box and we are going to collect them and we will present them to Noreen in the Q&A at the end of the presentation.

Just a reminder to use the user-friendly instructional guide and how to access our online quiz and earn your CE certificate. Those instructions are also available on the webpage where you registered for this webinar.

Let's meet our presenter. Noreen Braman is the communications manager for the New Jersey Lawyers Assistance Program. She is a strategic communications professional and author of *treading water*. A member of the association for applied and therapeutic humor, Noreen is a Certified Laughter Yoga Leader and Laughter Wellness Instructor, teaching how to laugh for the health of it through her smile side like laughter and happiness club presentations. Among others, she has spoken at the Paint the Mall Purple recovery event in New Jersey and at the Recovery 360 conference in Philadelphia. Noreen was the keynote speaker for the 2019 society for emotional intelligence conference. She teaches well-being topics at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Rivers University and say regular contributor to 30seconds.com and mediums Fearless She Wrote. So Noreen, if you want to turn on your camera and join us, I will pass it over to you. There she is.

>> Thank you so much, and I really am so very pleased to be here with you today, and I'm hoping that we are not only going to share a lot of good information, but have some fun. We could sure use it. It's the last session, so let's go out with some laughter.

The name of this presentation the presentation is strategic disengagement, which is a very formal sounding topic name, and it's kind of a tongue-in-cheek description of laughter wellness, laughter therapy, laughter for the health of it. Back in the day -- days I was in corporate circles, got to know very serious people doing very serious work, this is the kind of think you would come back to the office until your boss. I went to strategic disengagement today and I learned a lot.

There is an actual definition for strategic engagement, and corporate terminology for taking a break, relaxing, recharging your batteries. It helps prevent burnout, improves concentration, increases productivity. So regarding support kind of stress you face, you

need rest. And taking a break help to recharge, meaning you come back to work stronger, more focused, and reenergized. And this is from my friend Drew Tarvin and, with Humor That Works. He is a former executive with Procter & Gamble and now has a whole company of humor that works, all about bringing humor into your workplace and why that is important.

The other very formal word we will be talking about today is gelotology. This is actually the study of humor and laughter. And its effect on the human body. It is also the psychological and physiological study of laughter. So we need to understand that this moment can affect our body, it can affect our mind. It is taken from the Greek word gelos, meaning to laugh and a gelotologist is a person who specializes in gelotology. So in some respects, I'm a gelotologist.

But in today's world, this is more of the kind of opening slide we have for our laughter presentation. A little light on the heavy language and a little bit more upfront with fun. Before we start, however, I'd like to take you through a very brief orientation in space and time. This is because most of us, at any time during the day, are living in one of two places. Either the past, what we were doing before we got here, or the future, what we need to do as soon as we are done with this. Most of us spend very little time in the present.

So in order to help you calm your mind, relax your body, and sit back and enjoy this presentation, we are going to orient ourselves in space and time. There are only three things you need to remember for this. The first one is what day of the week is today? The second is what is today's date? And the third is where are you right now? So I'm going to ask you that question. You answer aloud, no one else can hear you, but it's good to do it out loud, and I will tell you the answers. So let's start as you would any kind of meditation by closing our eyes, being aware of our bodies in the chair, relax as much as possible, feet flat on the floor, shoulders relaxed. And we're going to take a cleansing breath into our nose and out of our mouths quick.

So we read in and out. And one more in and out. And thinking only of the present moment where I am today, what I'm about to do, please say what day of the week today is. Today is --

And now please say aloud today's date. Today's date is --

And please say aloud where you are this moment. I am in --

Very good. Let's do another cleansing breath in and out. I'm going to ask you the questions one more time. What day of the week is today? Today is -- what is today's date? Today's date is -- and right this moment, where are you? I am in --

Let's finish with another breath in and out. Feel your body relax, shoulders relaxed, hips relaxed, feet relaxed. And slowly open our eyes and hopefully we are now more present in today's presentation.

Before we get started in talking about laughter, laughter wellness, and laughter for the health of it, I need to explain to you the difference between wellness and well-being. Many of us here these words all day, every day, so much that they become buzzwords and lost their meaning. We may have been asked to join a wellness program at our work, at a gym, in the community, and many times a day wellness program consists of getting your way, your cholesterol, your blood pressure, and doing some kind of exercise regimen. Wellness does include more than that.

Wellness, according to the national Institute of health, has several dimensions, including emotional, coping effectively with life and having satisfying relationships, and physical such as recognizing the need for activity, healthy foods, and sleep. And you may think well, if the physical, it's the emotional wellness is the only word I need.

However, well-being is a little bit more nuanced when you separated out and take it on its own. And because of wellness sort of swallowing up well-being and not giving it, it's do all the time we like to refer to a separate definition of well-being. So it does mean the presence of positive emotions and moods such as contentment and happiness, the absence of negative emotions such as depression and anxiety, but more important is satisfaction with life, fulfillment, and positive functioning.

The thing to remember is that wellness cannot exist without well-being. You can run as many marathons, diet as much as you want, check all your bodily functions and get checkups all you want, you will not have wellness without well-being. You need the emotional component. The mental health component.

However, for some of us, me in particular, with a chronic health condition, wellness for me might be a day to day thing. I may not have wellness one day or another day or whatever. However, well-being I can have all the time. And much of what we are going

to talk about today is the way to give yourself resilience for your well-being so that when other things are not going so well, you can bounce back from it.

So the first thing we are talking about today is just the very idea of humor in recovery.

We now know that humor and laughter has many qualities that can help both physical and mental health. Especially in early recovery, the proper use of humor and laughter can help with anxiety, depression, stress, and mood. It helps people in recovery take things less seriously while allowing focus on getting well. In your packet you have this complete report from the open nursing journal. I know it's small print, edit many pages. I'm just going to go over a few of the points that I made in this report.

This report is a review of literature, so they didn't do any first-person research. However, it's very thorough and inclusive and it includes a lot of information in a very succinct way. So in the abstract, it tells you that humor throughout the literature is demonstrated as having positive effects on memory and learning. And having physical and psychological benefits.

And right here in this opening paragraph they talk about it especially important for early recovery programs, especially for engagement in 12 step programs. And other social support networks. They highly recommend further study on this. If you go further into the report, you'll find that, of course, it gives a lot of information about ad actions, and things that we are already well-versed in peer and then it talks about the theoretical perspectives of humor. So the scholars who are studying gelotology, have broken humor up into three different theoretical types of humor.

The first one is called the arousal theory. And the arousal theory means the relief theory, explains that laughter is a means of releasing tension and energy, particularly during social interactions. They go on to describe it somewhere and they say that stresses are reduced when people experience humor and engage in laughter.

And this is a cognitive perspective humor that says in respond to stress people might be less likely to appraise their environment as threatening and experience less stress.

Evenly explain how the use of humor is so successful in the learning environment.

The incongruity theory is especially interesting for people in recovery because this helps people out things that violate acceptable patterns to resolve conflicts. And it looks like

situations that don't make sense and even points of view that have opposite ends to each other.

So this actually can help a person in recovery gain a new perspective through humor by identifying what some of the contradictions are in their own thoughts and in their own behaviors. Can that especially works for accepting recovery concepts.

It says that it helps them cope with tension and problem solving.

The third theory of humor is called the superiority theory. Now, the security theory can get you in trouble, depending on whether you are using some other person, faith, incident, as the butt of your joke and deal with the idea of deleting or belittling someone. However, self-deprecating humor also falls into this category. And it is shown that people in recovery who can laugh at their former habits, their former selves, some of the things that they did, show a better attitude in the recovery process. It provides an alternate perception of themselves and encouragement for their new self.

The report also talks about how these implications are for nursing and in hospitals because this is basically who this is for and then it has a really nice long list of resources. So if you go back to wherever it is you worker your program and you want to think about offering a laughter program to your support groups or people in recovery, this is what you bring with you. You bring this report with you.

Again, some of the recommendations for using humor and laughter with clients is to avoid negative humor that uses disparagement, ridicule, or avoidance of problems. Many kinds of support groups sometimes tend to have some gallows type humor, which may be okay in their private meetings and whatever, but should probably be discouraged when you are in a formal session or informal group because you never know when you are using disparaging or gallows humor, who may be triggered by a particular thing. So another thing we want to do is encourage appropriate reframing. I like to call this today's disaster is tomorrow's funny story. Many of us have family stories that recount some misadventure of our family, our friends, that at the time did not all seem funny, but on retelling, thinking perhaps of such an absurd situation, for example, my family being kicked off the New York State Thruway because our muffler was broken.

And we were left in a very rural area Saturday gas station and said we can't get back on the Thruway unless we have a muffler. And he said if you've got one, we can put it on for you, but we don't have any mufflers here. But wait, there's a farmer down the road who might be able to help you. And so this farmer with his four large sons came, they looked at our muffler, they took it away, a couple hours they came back, and it was fixed. And they had fixed it by welding four beer cans onto the hole in the muffler.

That is a funny family story that is part of a lot of misadventures on that trip. Again, this is reframing. Because for a while there we were pretty upset. This was our family vacation and now it's ruined, and what are we going to do? So reframing will help.

I like to tell people about the TV series, Everybody Loves Raymond, and if you remember that series, Ray Romano is an observational humorist, and most of the stories had something to do with personal things that happened in his family. It didn't supply the whole series with of sitcom plots. What they did is every Monday, all the writers came into the writing room, sat down with each other, with a cup of coffee, and said what happened at your house this weekend?

And those stories that became funnier with the retelling and funnier with the adding perhaps some of the idiosyncrasies of the Everybody Loves Raymond family, became a plot of many, many shows. And for me, it was kind of one of the funniest sitcoms that I have ever enjoyed.

So again, reframing is really a very important tool. And the other thing we are going to talk about is recommending laughter wellness and laughter yoga participants so they can use laughter as an exercise, not relying on jokes or comedy. I'm going to teach some of that at the very end of this and you can take it back with you to your groups and give it a try.

Laughter helps us because it helps us in addiction rewire their brain. We all know about with the neurons that fire together, wire together, and it's a big part of the reinforcement of addiction. But laughter can also wire together those endorphin producing areas giving you endorphins and dopamine, similar to what is felt with recreational drugs. And we know that even faking it until you make it, meaning you simulate laughter, elevates mood. And gets the brain to release endorphins.

One of the good things about using laughter as a therapeutic tool is that it doesn't require any special tools, any special atmosphere, any special room, and doesn't require medication. It is a simple self soothing technique. A person can learn to use laughter to self soothe when they are having a difficult time. How to simulate laughter on their own, how to find the things that give them laughter and give them a break. And it is absolutely powerful in group. Not only for the stress relief it gives, but for the social bonding that it will create. And we will talk a little bit more about that in a little bit.

And we know that what we want our clients to do, sometimes we tell them you need to soak your discomfort, laughter helps with that, and it also helps to defuse anger. Anger is often the front emotion that's covering up something else. And if you can't get the anger calmed down or put to the side, you can't get at what is perhaps the real emotional issue. And all of these tips come from Sebastien Gendry, who operates laughter online University and the American school of laughter wellness.

Another person very well-known in the laughter community is Allen Klein. He has written, like, 35 books on laughter. And the one book I would like to refer to is this hand book he calls last, for each letter of last stand for something. And in it, it's kind of a notebook of exercises, therapeutic types of things that you can try both for yourself, for your own mental rejuvenation, and also with clients and that I have selected a few to highlight in their inner hand out. And we're going to go over them really quickly and let you know what's there.

The first thing that caught my eye this book is the finger trap exercise. I don't know how many of you women are having these when you're a kid. It's a finger trap exercise. It's a woven bit of bamboo or whatever you put your index fingers in each side. And of course you try to escape. The more you pull this way, the tighter it becomes. If you become extreme frustrated as I have seen some people do, you can actually tear the finger trap apart. That is not the recommended way to escape from the finger trap.

This, in itself, is a metaphor for stress. That will only work against the stress, try to get rid of it in the wrong way, we end up perhaps doing more damage or not solving our problem. But when we take the time to realize if we push our fingers together in little bit, we can slide one out and then slide the other one out.

So I have given these out in person conference is for people to keep on their desk as a little reminder of what stress can do. It's one of those little visual aids.

There is another kind of fun exercise you can do to physically help someone deal with some heavy thoughts or worries or whatever. Have some balloons hanging around. And tell your client we are going to do this together. We are both going to blow up a balloon, but first we are going to think of all of the problems that we have that we are going to put in this balloon. And then we are going to blow the balloon up as much as we can, we are going to hold over our heads, count to three, and let go of it. This physical exercise of letting go of the balloon is again a metaphor for letting go of the current issue of the day. It's a fun thing to release some endorphins and is probably not going to solve the problem you're speaking of, but it can put a person in a more relaxed, even meditative state of mind so that you can have more productive conversations with them. And make better progress.

And also, we are going to look at some of these exercises if you have your -- there is a lady blowing the balloon. We are done with her.

There you go. If you open up your handout, I'm going to read some of it to you, you'll first see the finger trap exercise. Then you'll see the letting go of the balloon. He was saying letting go way before it was ever frozen, and then there's something that's called living with the blemishes. Basically, this is just an exercise to help think about things you don't like about yourself, things you are to satisfied with, people that get stuck in this kind of treadmill thinking about I don't like this about myself, I don't like that about myself. And you make two lists. You make my not so perfect list, but not so perfect about me, and then in the second column, what is positive or humorous about this? For example, it says perhaps you're thinking about I'm very disorganized and I just don't like that about myself. In the second column, you might say but when I'm searching through all of my piles of stuff, I sometimes find things that I have been missing for months. Or one whole things I haven't thought about for years. And little treasures. Again, the undertaking of this organization, and right now you are lightening the load a little bit by thinking of something humorous or amusing about that.

Again, the idea is to build a person's resilience with humor, give good feelings so that you can get into the tougher things that maybe you have to discuss. Now, one secret

that Allen likes to talk about is the use of red crayons. Giving your client a red crayon to fill out all of these kinds of surveys and tasks and writing exercises, in itself is an incongruous thing. I'm not going to write with a crayon, I'm not a kid. Well, yes, you can write with a crayon and this is what we are going to do. This is how the exercises with and we have no choice.

Writing with a crayon can invoke some of their childlike memories and happiness and the way you used to do things. And also, writing with the color red makes whatever you are writing stand out and see more important and more relevant. So it can be another one of these distraction tools that can help us calm down the anxiety or the depression or the worry and get at the things that we really want to talk about.

The next exercise and there is called can't laugh? Smile. We are going to talk little bit more about smiling, but in this exercise, he suggests that you have a token, a little something that you carry around with you. He is not very creative when he talks about a straw or a stir stick or something like that, but maybe a shiny rock, or look at any just something that has meaning for you. That is small, you can put in your pocket, in your wallet, carry with you all the time. And every time during the day you encounter the civil token, you have to smile at it. Just smile. We don't know why, not for any reason, just smile. The more you do this, the more you will be able to actually smile genuinely. And when you smile, exercise these muscles, again, the brain is releasing those endorphins even if you haven't been thinking of something to make you smile. You use this token and simple to help you smile.

The next one after this is called the humor support system. This is very important for anyone going through recovery or any kind of issue, mental health, physical issue, they need a support system. They absolutely do. So ask your clients to find out who was there humor support system.

Who helped make you laugh? Who are your humor buddies? Who are the people who are fun to be around? Those who help you lighten up and those who help you laugh. At the important thing, courts, is who are those buddies who are in sobriety who are in recovery with you, not the old party buddies, not the bad influences, but the people who can with laughter help you on your recovery journey. So that can include family, friends,

coworkers, acquaintances, and then asks you to think, what are their characteristics that you admire? This person makes me laugh. Why does this person make me laugh? They tell jokes or they just have that witty thing to say at the right moment, or as my nephew used to say about me, and I was so touched by this, all the kids would call me Aunt No and that kind of makes me sound like I was mean and I didn't like that. So my nephew went to my sister one day and he said but I really like Aunt No. And my sister said why? And he said because she is always smiling. And I realized that that is perhaps something that my friends might say about me that I am their humor buddy because I smile a lot.

Again, this is another simple exercise that you can help. The next one is called don't worry, be happy. And again, it's an exercise that is looking at things going wrong in your life and then trying to counter that with the things that are going well in your life. So you have to, no matter what's going on, you have to find at least three things that are going well.

And then you have a discussion about how does it feel to put aside those things that are going wrong in your life right now and only looking at the good things? And how can you shift your focus from concentrating on your problems to more positive things? We are going to talk a little bit in a few minutes about the important balance between positive and negative experiences and why some people just can't seem to get out from under. The last exercises called red nose day. And basically, we actually have a red nose day every year in May, and I think Walgreens is the place that sells the red noses, and use it for fundraising. But having a red nose around, having it on your desk, in your bag, having it in your car, can do a lot of things to break tension, to just get people who are really cranky to smile. And just by putting on a nose it automatically makes people smile. Not everyone, but a lot of people.

For me, when I am on the New Jersey Turnpike or the Garden State Parkway and somebody has cut in front of me or I have accidentally cut somebody off and they're waving at me with only part of their hand or screaming at me, I can pop this on and give them one of these sorry, and they may just get away from you because they didn't trust what you're going to do because who wears a clown nose in traffic or they may actually

laugh. And if they laugh along with you, you have called them down, you calm yourself down, and avoided some road rage.

So those are some of the exercises and things that Allen Klein has in this wonderful book of his. Don't forget the red crayons. It's really very, very important.

That is a lot of the things you can do with your clients. And you can try out any of these exercises for yourself because after all, you need to build your own humor reserve. The humor reserve is something that helps build your reserves and as the Mayo Clinic says, resilience is the thing that helps you bounce back from difficult things in life.

And the biggest mental health issue that we see among helping practitioners, people working in helping agencies, organizations, nonprofit rescue, in fact, I was very much reminded this week of the fatigue that happened to people digging in the 911 records watching people in Florida trying to dig through this rubble.

Even the best will suffer compassion fatigue. In like everyone in this industry, we are very at risk at this. We listen to someone's problems. Our neurons fire. It's part of our primitive brain social survival skills, that of someone else's upset, we absorb that emotion. Because if they are upset for some reason, maybe we need to be upset and aware of whatever. If they are afraid, we need to be afraid. We don't know why, but this is what the primitive brain does to us.

So compassion fatigue is really one of our biggest problems. Including compassion fatigue is also that many of us are working long hours, large caseloads, and maybe not sleeping or eating well.

Maybe we have few breaks. I know sometimes in my office, one or another of us will say, it's 3:00, we haven't had any lunch. And someone else will say lunch? What's that? Each one of those things takes a bite out of your resilience. It takes a bite out of your reserve to deal with other things that are difficult, unpleasant, or just hard to do.

And that is basically the very definition of stress. Sometimes stress is described as having all the responsibility, but none of the authority. Sometimes we feel like that in our work that we have so much to do and we can't control it. Then sometimes, we will dial it back, have some fun, and the stress will go away and we will feel much better. But we go back to those situations and start dealing with some of those things again, and even

in our own families, and out in the world, the stress comes back.

We absolutely need to have an active plan to build back our resilience. And I know that all of you know this, you cannot care for anyone else unless you take care of yourself first. Every time you get on an airplane, you're reminded to put on your oxygen mask before you put on somebody else's. I think we hear that so much that we just don't pay attention to it anymore. So I would like to present to you something a little bit stronger to think about.

When the towers were falling on 9/11, many firemen were trying to get to the scene to be helpful. One particular fireman was in New Jersey visiting, and he saw what was going on. He jumped in his car with all his equipment and headed for the Lincoln Tunnel to try to get into New York. By then, the tunnels were closed. Everything was shut down. He jumped out of his car, put on all his equipment, and ran from the Lincoln Tunnel to the World Trade Center. He joined his station of firefighters there, they went in, they rescued many people, but unfortunately, they were killed in the subsequent collapse. Every year now, they have a run where people run from the Lincoln Tunnel to the World Trade Center in full firemen's gear, and they raise money for victims, orphans and widows from 9/11, and also for veterans. And people feel like they have helped out in some regard.

The point, though, is that this person felt he had a duty. He had to be there. He wanted to help, but he did jump out of his car and just run. He put on all of his equipment. He put on a hat, and oxygen mask, he put on a coat. He put on the gloves. He carried all that hundreds of pounds of equipment with him.

This is what your resilience is. Your resilience is a fireman's uniform. It keeps you safe from the fires that are around you. And every time you encounter a negative experience, you lose one of those pieces of equipment. Your heart, your oxygen mask, your gloves, and you had to do something positive to build that backup. And there is a particular ratio for this.

To look at this anymore humorous way, we talk about burnout all the time. And I saw this and I thought well, Frank just up and exploded. I hope I never get that burned out. I

know many of us have been there, where we have been so burned out we just feel like we can't go another day. We are just going to explode.

So there are some ways that you can enhance well-being for both you and your clients. And these are things that I'm sure you have heard. And I think some of you may think it's too much to do and worry about. So let's talk about some simple ways to incorporate these things.

The first is mindfulness. Yes, there is mindfulness meditation, there are places you can go to, you can go to yoga classes where there is meditation and spend a couple of hours, or you can do the simple exercise I taught you at the beginning of this class. That is being present in the moment. That is the essence of my mindfulness.

Now, mindfulness with 1 L is being present in the moment. Mind full with 2 Ls, is meaning your mind is filled up with all of the things you have to do. Over and over again. That's not being mindful, that's ruminating. You have ruminated all day long, reminding us of you have to pick up the kids from soccer. You have to deliver this report to someone. By the time you actually do that activity, your brain has processed that 45 times and you're already exhausted.

Or the other thing happens and I can tell you that most of you can identify with this business with the cell phone, go out to your car, where's my cell phone. I don't have it. Quip where is my cell phone? Is it in my pocket? My bag, Mike hope? Is in the house, to the bathroom, could you call my phone so I could find it? That is being mindless. You drive to work and all of a sudden the parking lot, you don't even know how you got there. That's being mindless.

So now we have mindful and mindless balancing in between and we have to try and be present in the moment. So I suggest for those of you who don't already have 8 mindfulness meditation practice, use that little exercise that I taught you at the beginning here, just to start your day. Maybe you center yourself after lunch. Just where you are at the moment, taking care of the issue at hand.

The second had it is gratitude. I know that most of us have very good manners and we thank people in everyday thank you for the water, thank you for the menu, thank you for the seat, thank you for the mask, we are doing that all the time. That's not the kind of gratitude that really get to any kind of hype in your brain. Intentional gratitude helps you.

Writing a note to someone, thank you for helping me, not just thing you for helping me, thank you for doing that research I didn't have time to do myself. Thank you for handling that call because I was already so busy. Thank you for taking my shift.

That's the kind of think that expresses gratitude. There is also the appreciation of things, which we don't always think of as gratitude. Appreciation of art. Appreciation of music. Appreciation of sport literature. You can take these things impassively, as a fan or an observer or you can work on them yourself.

Having that appreciation is also part of gratitude. Gratitude changes your mind. It changes the brain. The center for happiness at UC Berkeley has a lot of information about how gratitude changes the brain. And one of the best ways you can work on this as a regular habit is every day before you go to sleep, meditate a little bit on three things you can be grateful for today.

I get it. There are going to be days where the only thing that you're going to be grateful for is that the day is over. That is legitimate. We have all been there. Absolutely. And it can cause a lot of frustration like I didn't accomplish anything today, if you can then turn that into I'm grateful the day is over, and I'm hoping that tomorrow is better. That's the kind of thing that is going to help you build up your resilience to accept what happened today and look forward to tomorrow being better.

Having a purpose in life is something we think of that eternal question, why am I here? What is life? There are people who have mission statements. Oprah Winfrey has a mission statement. Do you have a mission statement? Sometimes we get tied up in the work that we do and think that's our mission. And if we are very, very lucky, maybe it is. It's you have wanted to do this pretty glazing your whole life and you're doing it and doing good look work, that's what you wanted to do with your life.

Or maybe your paid employment isn't quite aligned with those things that you value above all else. You may have to may be volunteer or help out somewhere else or as many people are finding as they get older, they have a second career in which they can now focus on that one thing they wanted to do. For example, helping animals. You always wanted to help animals, but been too busy having a career, and you got a way in life that now maybe I can help animals.

And when you think of a mission statement, it is always aspirational. While you have steps maybe goals to meet, it is aspirational. So we always had a vision of the road ahead of you.

If I was a person who what I valued above all else is friendship, my purpose statement, my mission statement, might be I want to use my people skills to be everyone's friend. Will you can't be everyone's friend. First of all, you're not going to meet everyone, and not everyone is going to like that you, you're not going to like everyone. Yet this gives you the aspiration to do your best from day to day in trying to express that friendliness in whatever way you find it to be working for you. That is what a mission is.

The Japanese have a word. It's called ikigai and that means reason for getting up in a morning. The reason for getting up in the morning is not to rush to work to make money. Although, we have to put a roof over our heads and food in our bellies. But a reason to get up in the morning, maybe something with more of an outward thing, helping other people, even for people -- there are many people in Japan who have really long, long lives, 90, 100, some of them their purpose in life is to keep that garden the way their grandfather kept the garden. To raise those plants, to take care of those plants, and to share with others.

So explore those things maybe you haven't had time for. It's a long thing to think about her sometimes a simple answer.

Happiness is also what you might think of first of all when you think about well, how do I improve my resilience? I need to be happy. We don't want to think of happiness as something that happens to us. Falls from the sky. Doesn't happen.

Happiness is not what we get or achieve. If you're thinking that when I get a better job I'm going to be happy, when I'm at my money I'm going to be happy, when I moved to a different state, I'm going to be happy. When I buy new car I'm going to be happy, when I meet the love of my life, I'm going to be happy. Although things are nice. All those things are wonderful. It's not saying that you shouldn't be looking for some of those things.

However, the real secret of happiness is to be content in the moment. Yes, I not have to work towards laser work towards that, but right now, I feel satisfied and happy with my life the way it is.

Some people who live in the worst possible living conditions will describe themselves as happy because if you can find some things in your life that you can control, maybe you can't control your job, what's going on in the world, but you can control the relationship you have with your family, you can control even just the food you pick to eat, and the five minutes that you take for yourself every day to walk in the woods. Those are the kinds of things that are going to bring you happiness.

And the thing is, when I talked about the ratio, for every three negative things, that happened to you, you need five positive things to happen. And this is why sometimes you will feel like the hits keep coming and you can't get out from under. And this is why you have to go out and seek the things that are going to help your happiness. Again, talking about your support system, who are the people who help you left? Who are the people who listen to you? Who are the people that can sit down and watch a comedian or a funny movie and forget about everything? Those are the things that are going to contribute to your happiness and help you when things unfortunately are not happen. And that brings us of course, to what started me down this whole well-being journey. That is laughter. As a left her yoga teacher and it Laughter Wellness Instructor, it is my absolute joy to help people laugh for the health of it.

And the first thing we need to do is we need to figure out where we are with laughter. And I'm going to give you a little after test. So if you have a piece of paper and a pencil, there are 10 questions. And you will say 5 if you strongly disagree, 1 if you strongly agree, and 2, 3, 4, some degree of that in the middle. So I'm going to read the questions. I will read them twice. 5, strongly disagree, 1, strongly agree.

Number 1. I feel I have a good sense of humor. I feel I have a good sense of humor.

Number 2. I enjoy laughing and do so easily. I enjoy laughing and I do so easily.

It never 3. I feel comfortable laughing by myself, in a theater, watching TV, reading, et cetera. I feel comfortable laughing by myself.

Number 4 I enjoy laughing at home and unable to do it easily. I enjoy laughing at home and I am able to do easily.

Number 5, I enjoy laughing at work and am able to easily do it with my coworkers. I enjoy laughing at work, and I'm able to easily do it with my coworkers.

Number 6. I make a point of sharing funny stories I hear. I make a point of sharing funny stories I hear.

Number 7. I like making other people laugh and consider myself fairly good at it. I like making other people laugh and consider myself fairly good at it.

Number 8. People tell me I have a good sense of humor. People tell me you have a good sense of humor.

Number 9. I often try to turn tense moments around by using humor. I often try to turn tense moments around by using humor.

Number 10. I seek out people and things that make me laugh. I seek out people and things that make me laugh.

Now, take your score and add it up. If you scored between 40 and 50, you are not laughing nearly enough. Watch some funny movies, preferably with a friend or loved one. Think about finding a friend rather than being funny. If you scored between 30 and 40, read a book or other information about laughter and humor. Learn why we laugh and why humans need it. Try to define your own sense of humor, but tickles your funny bone.

20-30 is your life and just enough to get by. Explore laughter yoga or laughter wellness class. Learn to laugh for the health of it.

And 10-20, your laughing a lot. Humor and laughter are integral parts of your life. Keep it up.

So now that we figured out where we are, in laughter, and I'm checking the time clock here, we are going to go through these things a little bit quickly. So humor actually came after laughter. Laughter was first on the illusionary scale. Then came humor. But you need to do sometimes is locate your sense of humor. And there are words that refer to senses of humor. And I just want you to thing real quickly, some of those words resound with you for your kind of humor or if they are not for example, let's talk about corny humor. If that's nothing you enjoy or don't enjoy. How about gross humor. Think junior high. Is that something you still enjoy? No judgments here. How about nitwit humor. Whatever you envision that to be or observational humor. Sarcastic humor. How about abstract humor? What you see in the New Yorker that makes you scratch your head. And then we get into the risqué humor or X-rated humor. Now, knowing there's all of this

kind of humor, this is where telling jokes in the workplace can be dangerous. Because you may enjoy one of those jokes and some of your smart heart. And that's called hurtful humor.

So why do we call humor a survival tool? This is Dr. Paul McGhee who has called it a survival tool. You must -- look, humor is a survival skill because it's grown out of laughter. So let's take a step back to where laughter started. One group of Neanderthals met another group of Neanderthals and they needed to get along. And they had no language here no written language. And the human brain, we don't know how or why it happened, began to develop this idea of smiling.

Thick in the animal world, showing your teeth is bad. But for some reason humans thought it was nice. When they begin to sounds with that, laughter occurred. So this showed I'm peaceful, and helpful, and we can get along. We know that babies left before they speak. When I was a young mother, I was told, that's gas. It can be gas, but the truth of the matter is babies laugh not because anything is funny, but because they are trying to be social to show that they are cute, loving and hungry. Please take care of me.

In fact, when you hold the baby in your arms look I tie, smiling or laughing, your brain waves start to sync together. And you may think of course, I'm the grown up. I am teaching the baby. It is much more diabolical than that. The baby's brain is controlling yours. You are synchronizing with the baby's brain waves, this helps the baby bond the better and assure that its chances of survival and being taken care of are there.

And Dr. Paul McGhee also talks about surrounding yourself with humor, cultivating a playful attitude, using props for comic relief. Remember this. Laugh more often. Find humor in daily life, and take yourself lightly. One of the exercises we hand out is about taking yourself lightly.

There is a place for humor and grief. And I can spend a lot of time on this, but I'm only going to go over it briefly in that when you hear people laughing at a memorial or funeral or whatever, they are not being disrespectful. They are remembering their loved one with joy. And laughter, like trauma, cements memories into the amygdala much deeper than normal memory. In New Jersey, there is this wonderful tombstone. This kind of sounds like the opposite of words there, and it is taught by the Three Stooges. It says

laugh don't weep it feels better. This fireman was known for his sense of humor, his playfulness, and his joke telling, and his love of the three stooges. Slapstick humor, not for me.

But this has been passed around with firefighters around the country and had been referred to in firefighter funerals and shows you the importance of humor, even in grief. We are going to skip the smiling at strangers part. Just making you aware that in both Russia and Norway, smiling at strangers is frowned upon.

We are going to talk a little bit about gelotology pioneers. Three names you need to remember our Norman Cousins, Dr. Patch Adams, and Dr. Madan Kataria up here. Norman Cousins wrote the book, Anatomy of an Illness, how he used laughter to help cure himself of a serious illness. Or at least make his pain bearable.

Dr. Patch Adams, you may be remembering him as being played by Robin Williams in the movie. He has the goods and tight Institute in which he treats very serious diseases with a prescription for medical treatment and laughter. And Dr. Madan Kataria who created laughter yoga, which I am going to give you a sample of right now. Laughter, by the way, is the new medication. Does the same thing for your brain as meditation. It occupies both the right lobe and the left lobe, pushing stress and anxiety out of the way. I know some of you good at keeping that stress and anxiety exiled here, so you have to have some intensive care laughter.

All we are going to do today is breathe. Using the yogic pranayama breathing like we did in the right beginning. You're going to start duck laugh. Just start to chuckle, the laughter sounds, making the sounds of laughter, not feeling genuine laughter, but making the sounds still pulls your brain into releasing endorphins.

And you move a little bit. Not so much while we are seated here today, but in a big laughter yoga session, you will be standing, you will be sitting, you'll be walking, you will be moving around. So what I'm going to teach you is three things -- or two things.

Where your lives in your body, and what the laughter sounds are. And these are all the things that you need to remember. This isn't the gym, there is no pain. Reach down and find your childlike playfulness.

We did a little bit of this in the beginning with our breathing we know how to breathe in through our nose and out through our mouth. Laughter breathing means to do that and

forcefully say a laughter sound at the end of it. So let's try ho, ho, ho. Breathe in through your nose out through your mouth and ho, ho, ho. Now, that's too hot in through your nose, out through your mouth and ha, ha, ha. And the third sound is he, he, he. Breathing through your nose and he, he, he. And we're going to look at those sounds as ho, ho, ho in your diaphragm, ha ha ha in your chest, and he he he in your chest. And just because we can, whee. You can do this with anyone, and it is a physical and emotional exercise. So let's do it. Breathe in.

(The activity was performed.)

Do this three, four, or five times and you actually will feel an uptick in your pulse, which indicates that you have just done any aerobic exercise. And this is laughter for the health of it, not relying on jokes or comedy, but getting your brain and your body the benefit of laughter.

Any questions? I can turn my speaker back on because it likes to turn itself off.

>> Okay. I do have a couple of questions. The first is from Christina on Long Island. How do you typically structure laughter sessions in therapeutic type milieus?

>> What you're going to want to do is slowly introduce a person to this. Maybe do some of the written exercises on introducing humor. Then this little exercise for orientation space and time teaches the breathing. And then what you can do is say no we are going to try a little laughter exercise. Just follow along with me even if you don't feel like laughing and making the laughter sounds.

And try to do gentle breathing, ho, ho, ho. Breathing, ha ha ha. Fixing amenable to that, you can go on to the other exercises. You can then at some point go along with laughter yoga, I recommend Robert Rivest. He's a master trainer. He has wonderful exercises that you can go on, and then you can share.

In a group, this is even best, especially if you are just starting out.

>> Great. The next one, I don't know if it was in the handout, but someone wanted a copy of the laugh assessment.

>> The laughter test?

>> Yes. The laughter test.

>> I have this here is a PDF, so I can give it to you and you can get it to them. My apologies for not including it in the handout.

>> That's great. I think all of us are into assessment. It's a great way to introduce it to people.

>> Exactly.

>> Next question is from John in Connecticut. Do you people don't think people participate in this in group settings or are they self-conscious and had you get them over that?

>> Jumping right into laughter yoga can be difficult. There is an 80-20 ratio of anything that your teaching where 80% will give it a try, and 20% don't want to have anything to do with it. So what you can do is again, I think this is a good idea, give people a laughter test ahead of time. And then talk a little bit about the importance of laughter and why you need it. Because I had someone tell me once, we are not children. Well, that's kind of a shame to have that attitude that you are not going to laugh because you're not children.

Part of this is to get back to that childlike fullness. And I have to tell you that you haven't lived until you have seen 200 lawyers dressed for court standing up and laughing. So it is possible that yes, they have to be introduced. You can't just jump into it. Because people will say I can't live in front of other people, never mind pretend laugh. Yes, I get that.

>> That's great. I would be curious to hear some feedback from the lawyers in the room. Everybody laughing --

>> And you lied on the floor put your hand on your belly. And here's the thing. If you have big support groups or you want to have a special session, find a laughter yoga leader in your area to come and help you. Don't feel like you have to put this all on yourself. Because it is something that people are trained to do and just giving you the full taste of it doesn't really show you the whole depth and breadth of it. I have this whole training manual here, with all of the things that you have to learn. So start out with just a little humor, a little laughter test, little laughter breathing, or you yourself go through training and become a laughter yoga leader.

>> Is a like an association or how would you find that resource in your community?

>> You go to laughter yoga.org, that the international society, that's Dr. Katari has School of Laughter Yoga. And you can look up in the United States by state, county, city, you can find laughter yoga leaders in just about every state.

Or you can like I said, go online and look for Robert Rivest because I think he is the master trainer and at least you cannot that video and see more of what it's like and then take about okay, we're going to get somebody in here to help us with. And I'm going to get myself trained.

>> That's great. I have more questions coming in. The next one, what -- exactly causes laughter and how is the main what is any process that that leads to letter?

>> That's actually a great question because I was just reading about this. And apparently, laughter doesn't really start in the brain. It starts as a physiological reaction in the diaphragm period we are not exactly sure why it starts there, but it creates this sort of a -- what do they call that -- a spasm which creates the laughter sound. And that feeds to your brain at which point your brain then thinks, oh, something is funny and I'm laughing. I found this to be the extremely interesting. I don't know if it's in that report that I put in there or where I was reading this yesterday, but it was really, really amazing to find out that when you think about the primitive brain and the primitive body, there wasn't much to the limbic brain. Probably a lot of physical activities that primitive humans did we're actually training the brain.

And for some reason, we haven't -- and apologists haven't gotten down that deep yet, why this particular reflex action developed in humans. But that's basically what it is. It's a primitive reflex action. Brain came last.

>> Okay now the questions are rolling in. Some people wanted to know more about what else you have done, you mentioned the lawyers, have you use it psychiatric inpatient wards or what other types of groups have you use this with?

>> I have done laughter yoga mostly in support groups for lawyers and recovery, for general groups in recovery, I do this as a CLE program for attorneys. All about just having humor and we give them a little bit of laughter yoga at the end. I have been with senior citizens groups, hospital groups, children's groups, there is another person whose name I like you to write down, his name is Slash Coleman. You can find him on LinkedIn. He is currently developing a specific laughter yoga program for people in

recovery. He's finding out which laughter exercises, which other things that they do in laughter yoga are the best. And I attended a seminar with him not too long ago. It's very exciting news.

So check him out and see what he's doing. Pretty soon we will have something really exciting.

>> How do you spell Robert Rivest?

>> R-I-V-E-S-T. He is a mime performer. And what he has actually done with laughter yoga is incorporate all these things and he's wonderful.

>> Someone wanted to know what are some of the things for comedians that help you left? Things that you find more success in terms of bringing humor.

>> Again, we all have different senses of humor. Trying to figure out which comedians are going to be universally accepted that acceptable to everyone is very difficult. I do have to say that this week I did recommend Michael McIntyre, who is a British comedian. He has a show called Showman and what he is, is an observational humorist. In other words, he tells stories of things that have happened in his own life. The things that maybe we're not so funny when they happened, but with the retelling, how he has been mistaken for Kim Jong-Un in someplace is because of his haircut. His stories and Jerry Seinfeld is like that, too, and also Mike Birbiglia who you may know from NPR. He's an observational humor euros. Maybe not talking about political things, maybe not talking about ellipse you terrible lot, and not having what you would call risqué jokes. And that's a good starting point if you're in a mixed group and you are not sure. So that's for me.

>> Great. Penelope wanted to know, is there a timeframe when it's best to introduce humor, laughter therapy, or in someone's recovery, how soon can you start?

>> The nurses report emphasized more than once in early recovery. And I think that that makes sense because this may be the period of time when someone isn't sure if they are doing the right thing. They are probably feeling a lot of discomfort. A lot of discomfort, not just physical, but mental discomfort. Just the change of their lifestyle. They are getting away from the crowd of friends. And the laughter gets into the both sides of the brain, can calm that.

Again, as they said, if you do that dopamine, which can help replace that craving. Especially for opioids.

>> All right. Someone asked specifically if there was any literature or studies on humor for specific subgroup populations? Anything like that? That might be specific.

>> That's a really good question. And I think that some laughter yoga leaders are starting to do those kinds of things. And I think that probably the best way to start researching things like that are going to the laughter yoga.org page or going to American laughter yoga, that page, and see what they are saying about the groups that they have had. I would say when you are dealing with cohesive populations, it's probably a good idea if someone in that population is actually a trained laughter yoga leader or Laughter Wellness Instructor. Because it helps with the comfort level, especially you don't want somebody coming in who they are going to feel is perhaps a member of something which was depressing or did something wrong back in history. We have a lot of those things to think about these days.

And we don't want at all to make anybody feel that the instructor is laughing at them. We never laugh at anyone. We always laugh with people. That's what I would like them to do, start looking around on the Internet. I'm not familiar with any other than the recovery community and senior citizens right now. There are a lot you can find about seniors and laughter yoga. In fact in North Carolina, it's an approved therapy. It is covered by the Medicaid and Medicare and done in their state run homes.

>> One more question. Someone asked about laughing yoga and I guess physical health. Is there any research on left her yoga and increasing physical health things or is it more of a psychological, emotional?

>> You have both psychological and physical benefits. In fact, people with diabetes, if they have a regular laughter yoga practice have better control of their blood sugar. And we think this is because of the exchange of oxygen, the supporting of the heart muscle, and the actual little bit of aerobic exercise, which helps move the blood along include the sugar.

People on dialysis or a population that has been studied with laughter yoga. And people undergoing dialysis do much better. They actually do their laughter yoga while they are

receiving dialysis. And whether it's because of they are more relaxed, they are distracted, whatever it is, they actually do better.

And also blood pressure. Blood pressure is brought down by laughter yoga and the effects last for about 4 hours after. So there definitely more and more every day.

I also belong to the association for applied and -- humor. Their website is aath.org. We are the people who are serious about laughter and their research materials there that you can click on and ask about and even get speakers in their or people that you can ask questions of the period it's a wonderful organization. And they can probably find you someone from a specialized population to come into something for you.

>> Wonderful. Thank you, Noreen. That is all the time we have for questions. This was very fun. I enjoy doing it. I was doing the laughing thing. So maybe we can incorporate this into our daily wellness practices.

Moving on a little bit, a reminder about this particular webinar is approved for 1.5 continuing education hours. And you've already paid the registers and fee of \$25, and it includes access to your quiz and certificate and also eligibility for the certificate of achievement.

And these are some upcoming webinars that hopefully you guys are tuning into. Our next one is July 14. And we have a second part in advancing Wallace in the LGBTQ care series, that on July 16. You can cut this on demand. In the are -- so if you haven't had a chance to look at it, I have a slide from that with the sweat webinar, the first one is on July 23rd.

Our annual conference or get registration is now open. We also just launched information and you may have received an email on our conferences. There on three Fridays. So lots of opportunities for CEs. Conference is so great and I hope you guys will sign up and join us this year from October 28 through 30. There is -- you can save up to \$151 if you register early. I'd mentioned our advance the dancing awareness and LGBTQ care series. We having one each month in June July August and September. It's a four-part series. So hopefully you guys can join us. It's really awesome.

I mentioned our advances in technology in the addiction profession, specialty series. It's going to discuss the rapidly growing field of -- practice. I got catapulted into that during - of you and even if you wanted to or not, there are 8 parts to this series, and you go

over tools and best practices so people can feel confident that confident in using tools. So hopefully you will check this out. That's the web address at the bottom of the screen. And sign up and join us.

This was the last part of our six part series on wellness and recovery. You can reach all of the previous 5 at the address at the bottom of the screen. It's a great series. So check that out.

We also did earlier this year, ethics and practice specialty online training series. It was a really thorough diet into the NAADAC code of ethics. And with want to series any technology series, it's \$25 that you take everything in the series. You can get and certificate of achievement for that particular series. So check that out.

These are all the benefits of being a member of NAADAC. My personal favorite is that all the CEs are available want to sign up. Check out all the benefits and find out what is best for you. And we do have a short survey that will come up after the seminar. We do value your feedback. So I will use that to inform content going forward. Thank you again for participating in this webinar. Thank you, Noreen, for your value and support. And I encourage you to take some time and look at our website. Everyone, have a wonderful July 4 weekend. Stay cool, everybody. Take care.