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Caring for ourselves so we can care for others

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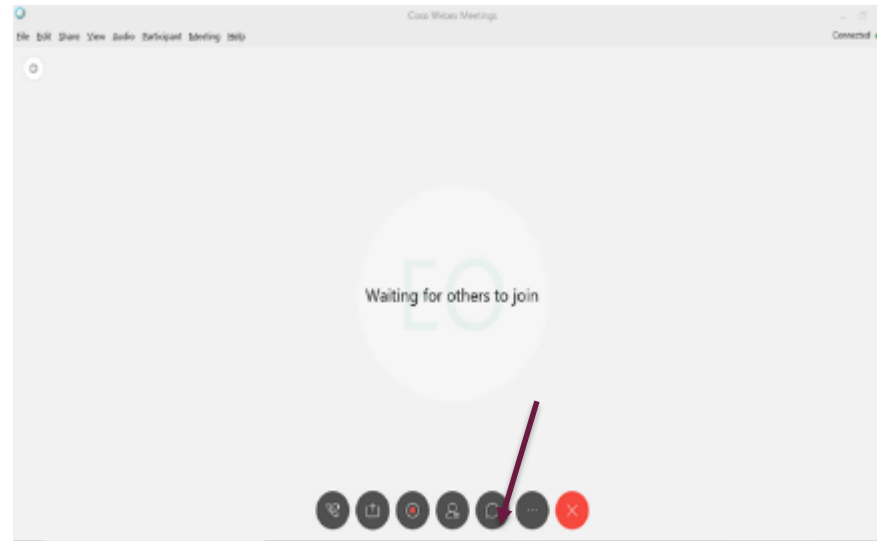
# Stress and Our Perceptions

Taught by Harris Health System Employee Wellness Team

# Engage and Interact

**Questions** – Type questions, thoughts, examples, in the chat box, the more interaction the better.

**Premium Points** - You can only receive credit for one Wellness Workshop per day. Confirm your employee ID is entered correctly when registering for Employee Wellness activities. Please allow up to 4 weeks for 50 Premium Points to be reflected in MyCigna.



# Employee Wellness Team



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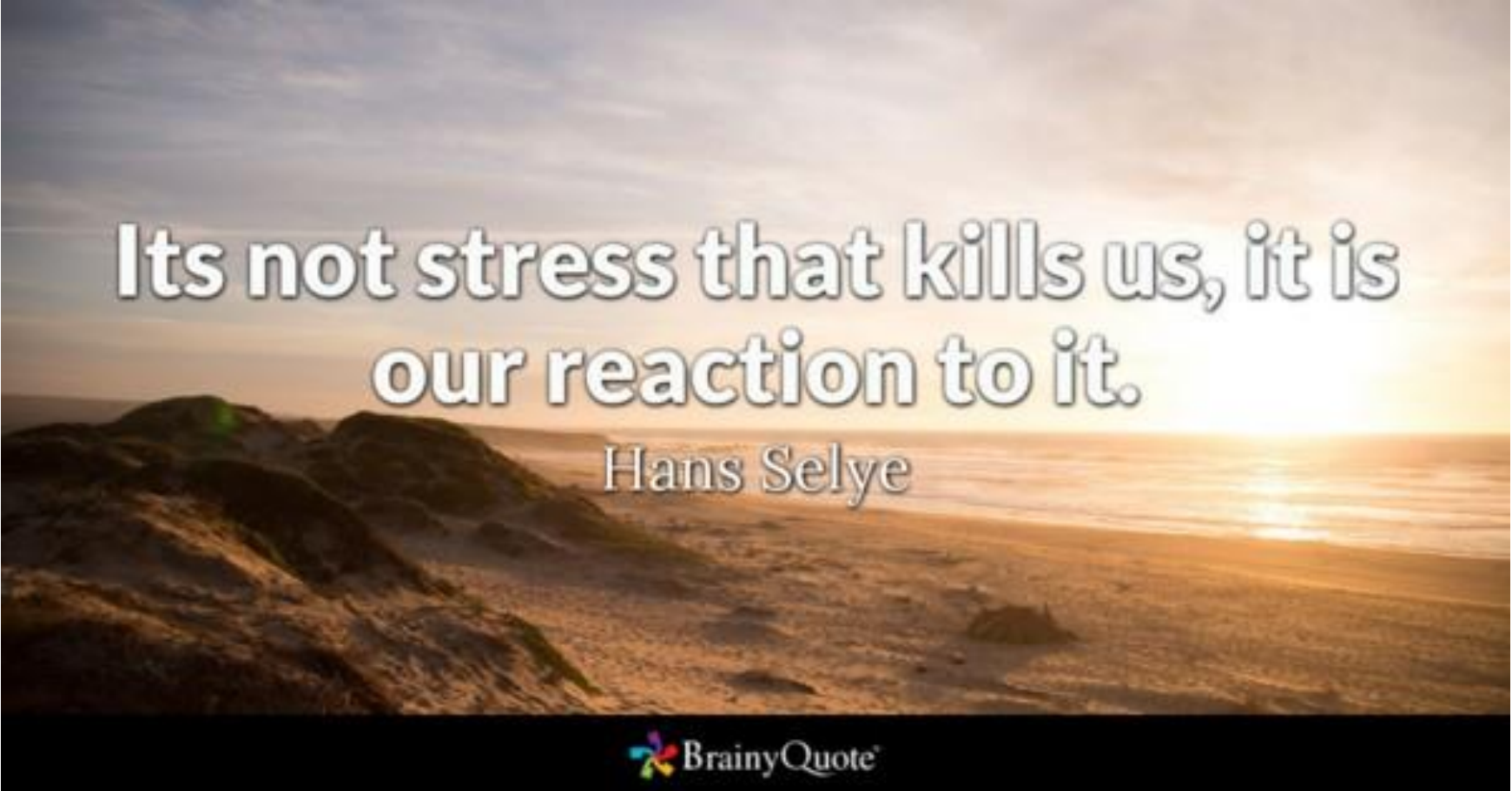
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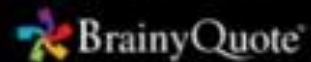


**Crystal Cunningham**  
Onsite Client Service Partner  
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**Its not stress that kills us, it is  
our reaction to it.**

Hans Selye



# Learning Objectives

- Explore the relationship between stress and perception
- Understand how our perceived control over situations can add stress
- Identify common thought distortions
- Learn strategies for combating negative thought patterns

# Stress and Perception

**Stress is the psychological and physical response that results when a person's (actual or perceived) resources are not sufficient to cope with life's demands and pressures. It can be intensified by the feelings of having little support or control.**

# Who Is In Charge?

## **Others are:**

- I was lucky to get that job
- I just can't catch a break

## **I am:**

- I worked hard to get that job
- I can do something to turn this around

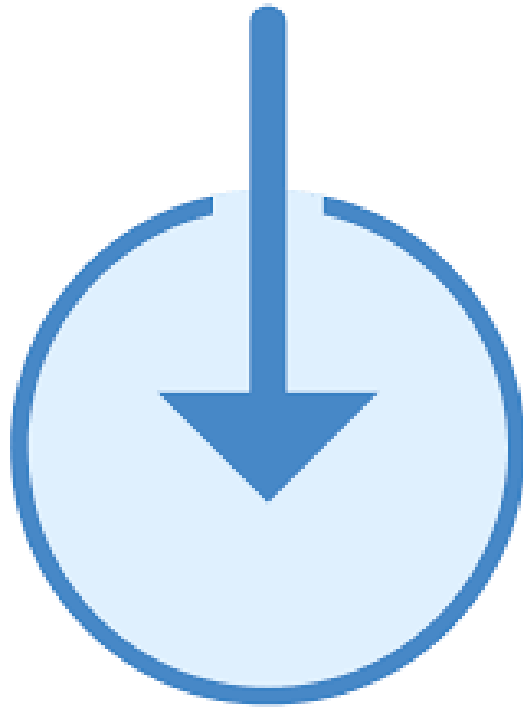
**Q: Who is in charge?**

**A. I feel like I usually am**

**B. I feel like others usually are**



# Source of Control



**INTERNAL**

- You feel that you have complete control over outcomes
- You have high expectations for yourself, no matter the task
- You take full responsibility and/or credit for your actions
- You have difficulty letting other make decisions

# Source of Control

- You feel like you don't have control over what happens in your life
- You believe that your actions have little impact on outcomes
- You accept change as inevitable
- You are comfortable with other making the decisions



**EXTERNAL**

# Source of Control

- You recognize when circumstances are beyond your control
- You give yourself credit or take responsibility when it's applicable



**BALANCED**

- You focus on solutions instead of problems
- You take the lead when needed but recognize you aren't always in control

# Finding A Balance

## You can control...

- Your effort
- Your attitude
- Your thoughts
- Your focus
- Your decisions
- Your time

**YOU**



## You can't control...

- Others' actions
- Others' feelings
- Others' thoughts
- Others' decisions
- Nature
- Unforeseen events

**OTHERS**

# Automatic Thoughts

Our thoughts can lead to the emotions we experience including stress and worry:

- May be linked to rules and assumptions you learned during the course of your life
- You often don't notice the thought that led to the emotion



It takes practice to notice evaluate, and challenge thought distortions

# Identifying Thought Distortions

## Generalizing

Making assumptions about every situation based on one event

Change your perception:  
What are possible alternative explanations?

- Recognize what you can control
- Identify growth opportunities

# Identifying Thought Distortions

## Polarizing

All or nothing attitude, seeing things as all bad or all good, no in between

Change your perception:  
Look at all aspects of the situation.

- Give your self credit
- Admit mistakes and move forward
- Helps you make informed decisions

# Identifying Thought Distortions

## Catastrophizing

Making “mountains out of molehills”, anticipating the worst outcome from a small setback

Change your perception:  
Evaluate the evidence to support your beliefs.

- What do you actually know?
- Differentiate between fact and opinion
- Put things into perspective



# Identifying Thought Distortions

## Filtering

Seeing only the negative, ignoring the positive

Change your perception:  
Reframe the situation

- Restate in a neutral, factual way
- Identify positive counter-thoughts
- Consider other's points of view

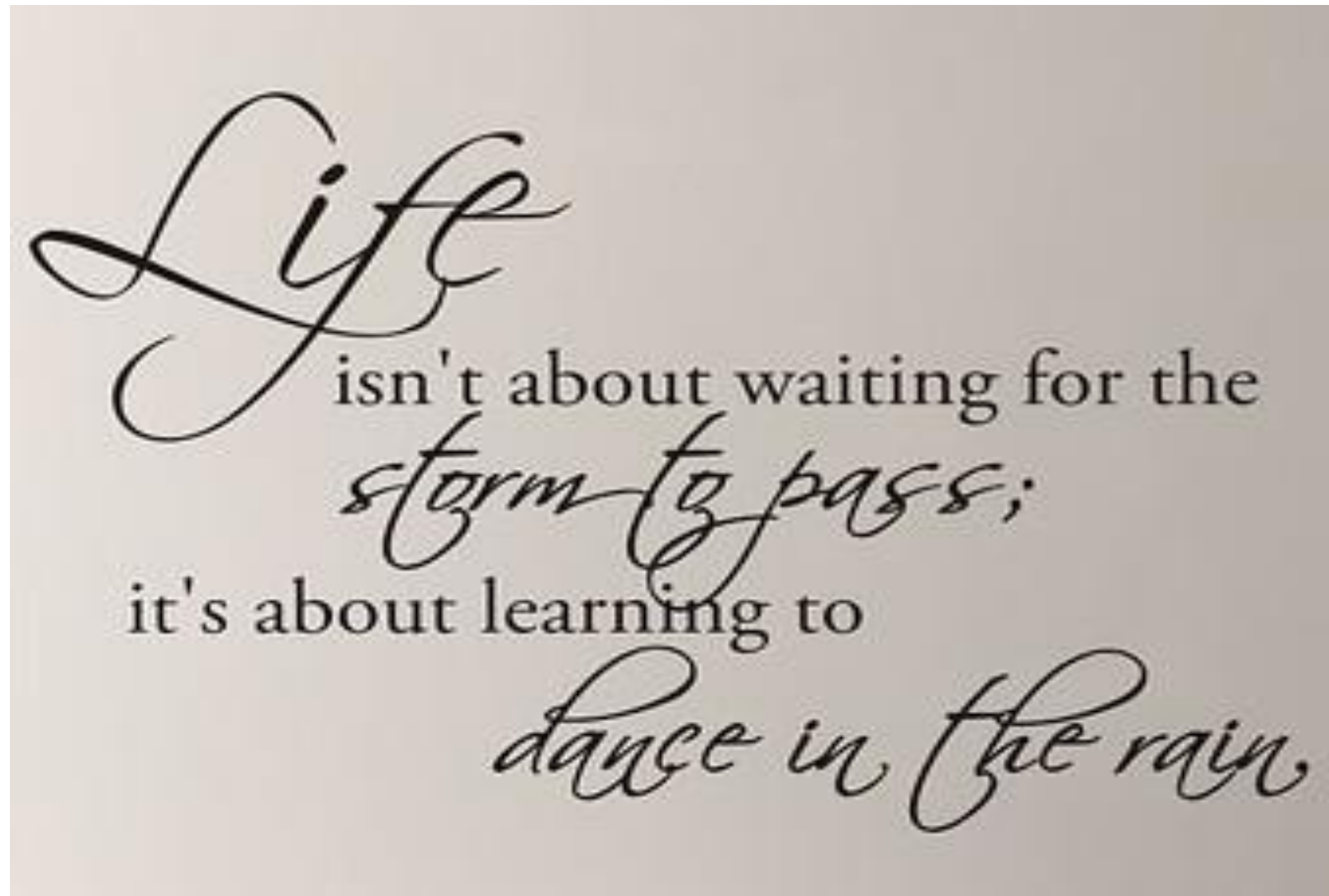
**Q: Which thought distortion is most common for you?**

- A. Generalizing**
- B. Polarizing**
- C. Catastrophizing**
- D. Filtering**

# Taking Action Against Thought Distortion

- Distinguish between life events and daily hassles
- Identifying your resources
- Make small changes
- Focus on solutions, not the problem
- Allow yourself to rely on others
- Have a mantra

Asking for feedback is a good starting point to identifying and challenging your thought distortions.



# Resources

## Stress Management, Depression and Counseling Services

- Employee Assistance Program
  - Online: [www.feieap.com](http://www.feieap.com),
  - Username: hhs
- Well Powered Living 1.0, 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0 coming soon!
- Employee Wellness Workshops: Mindfulness, Meditation, Stretching etc.
- Cigna Behavioral Health
  - Visit **myCigna.com** or call the toll-free number on your Cigna ID card.
  - Call Cigna Behavioral at **800.274.7603**.
  - Go to **Cignabehavioral.com** for extra resources.
- Coaching
  - Telephonic health coaching: 855-246-1873
  - Onsite health coaching: Contact Latecia Murphy
    - Office: 713-873-6407
    - Email: [Latecia.Murphy@harrishealth.org](mailto:Latecia.Murphy@harrishealth.org)

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