What am I Missing?

An overview of children's mental health, social media and development

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Ariel Haubrich, M.EdPsych

What is mental health?

Mental health is "the capacity of each and all of us to **feel, think and act** in ways that enhance our ability to enjoy life and deal with the challenges we face.

It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity."

~Public Health Agency of Canada

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Continuum of Mental Health to Mental Illness
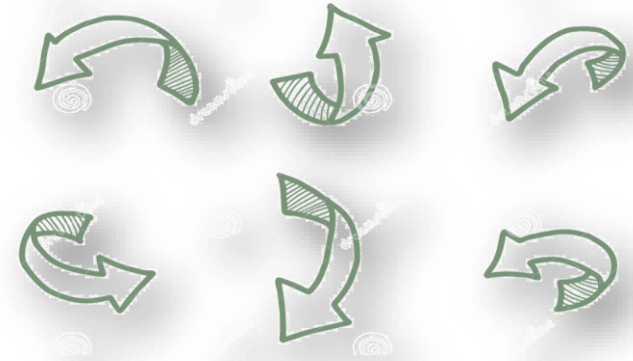
| Mental Health | Mental Health Challenges | Mental Illness |

Mental Health "Challenges"

- When the "big 5" or basic needs are in conflict, out of balance, threatened or absent
  - i.e. grief, loss, esteem challenges, relationship problems, bullying, body image, conflict, poverty, transition, stress, etc.
 - We ALL have mental health challenges/ issues

What is the definition of Mental Illness/ Disorder?

A mental disorder causes major changes in a person's thinking, emotional state and behavior, and disrupts the person's ability to work and carry out their usual personal relationships.

- A <u>medical</u> condition or disease that meets specific criteria for diagnosis. i.e. depression, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, Schizophrenia, Anorexia, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, etc.

- There is a diagnostic process (note how it differs from dynamics in mental health "challenges" or "issues."

- Consider those who are labelled with mental health "issues" and the wide gamut that entails. Schizophrenia is not the same as being bullied, and PTSD and grief are not the same; don't lump them together. and it's not fair to either dynamic to compare them.

Some thoughts on mental illness…

- Symptoms, manifestations and impacts at each of the cognitive, emotional and behavioral are different for each individual as are the "big 5" influences or factors in their life
- The "same" situation is never actually the same
- All mental illness exists on a continuum (mild, moderate, severe), AND
- Mental illness is not "static"
  - Beware the "good days and bad days" standards/ expectations

Mental Illness is not Contagious

You Can't Catch it by Being Kind
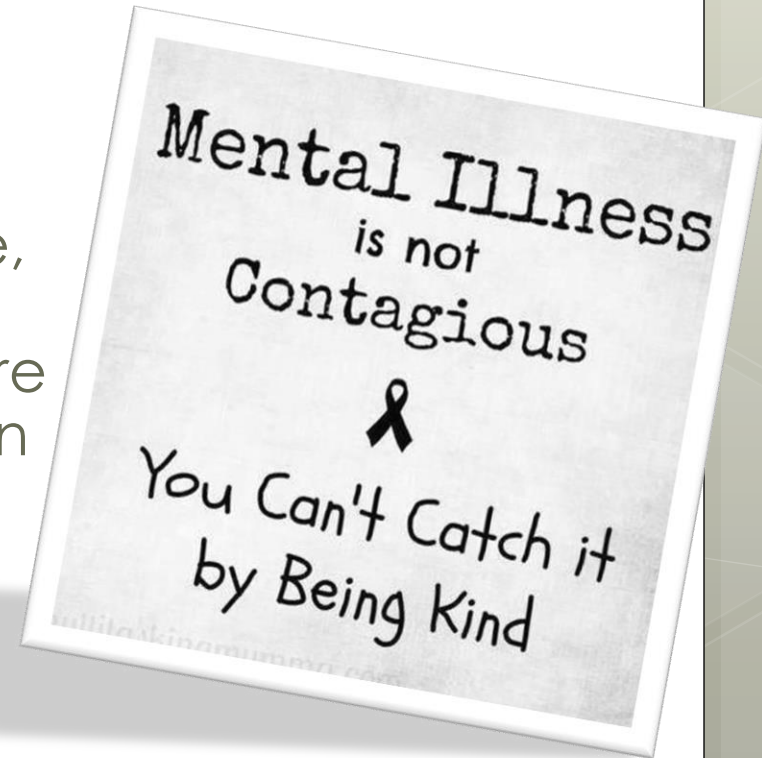
Common Mental Illnesses for Youth

Mood Disorders → Depression
Bipolar Disorder

Behavior Disorders → ADD/ ADHD
Oppositional Defiant Disorder

Autism Spectrum Disorders → Autism Spectrum
Asperger's Syndrome
Pervasive Developmental Disorder

Substance Use Disorders → Addictions
Substance Induced Disorders

Eating Disorders → Anorexia Nervosa
Bulimia Nervosa
Binge Eating Disorder

Anxiety Disorders → Separation Anxiety
Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
PTSD/ Acute Stress Disorder
Phobias
Generalized Anxiety Disorder

What about self-harm?

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As a parent, what should I watch for?

- A change in <u>BASELINE</u> behavior, especially among the BIG 5 and MASLOW's HEIRARCHY

- These changes show a <u>consistent</u> pattern of:
  - Change in intensity or duration of the emotion, thought pattern or behavior
  - Interference in daily living (ability to take care of ones self, carry on personal relationships & go to work or school)

Where do I go from here?

- What is the difference between counselling & therapy?
- What tools does each professional use?
- How do I access them?
- The frustration and failure we have and why…
  - This child doesn't need to be medicated
  - I don't have the skillset for treating…
  - They won't see them/ waiting list
  - What do you want me to do about it?
  - Each system is clogged by the other

Continuum of Mental Health to Mental Illness

Mental   Mental Health   Mental
Health   Challenges   Illness

Family   Community Counselling   Medical Systems
Peers   Support Groups/ Programs   Hospitals
Schools   + Previous   MH professionals
Communities   "Therapy"

The systems that most effectively and efficiently serve & support them

The things that contribute to positive mental health:

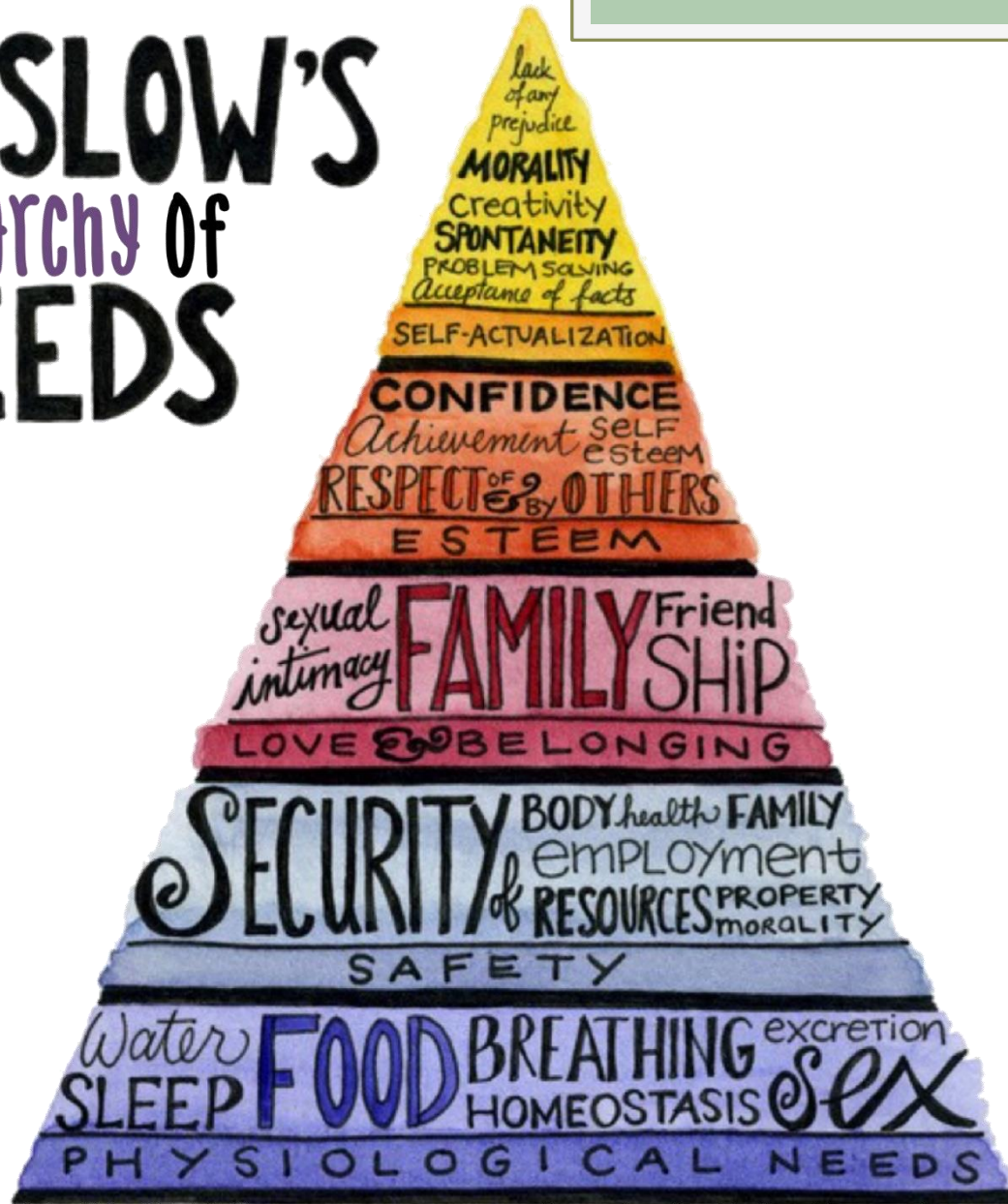## "The Big 5"

- Healthy eating/ Active Living
- Healthy/ connected relationships
- Hobbies & interests
- Involvement/ engaged in "community"
- Positive thinking/ Hope/ Perspective

These Big 5 are based off of Maslow's Heirarchy

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SELF-ACTUALIZATION
Pursue Inner Talent
Creativity Fulfillment

SELF-ESTEEM
Achievement Mastery
Recognition Respect

BELONGING - LOVE
Friends Family Spouse Lover

SAFETY
Security Stability Freedom from Fear

PHYSIOLOGICAL
Food Water Shelter Warmth

WiFi

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Things are getting better and better and worse and worse, faster and faster.....

What do you do **online?**

Rarely is the problem the technology itself, but instead what the technology is replacing or taking time away from…

Physical

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What would you do if you had one more hour in the day?

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Sleep

The most fundamental and foundational wellness & survival process we have

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How does technology affect our sleep?

- Image/ sound/ movement & idea processing time
- Stimulation of the central nervous system (awareness, sensitivity, anxiety, interpretation, heightened arousal)
- Bright light exposure leading to a reduction in melatonin production
- Internet/ computer/ TV time cuts into valuable and important sleep rest, repair and rejuvenation time

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Physical Inactivity

- When we are spending time on the computer, playing video games, Skyping and Face-timing or watching tv (along with a variety of other technological advances) we are not MOVING!

  We need to walk, run, jump, play, bend, push, pull, twist and stretch!

- Protect yourself from **"Sitting Disease"**

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Posture & Strain

- Not only HOW MUCH we sit but HOW we sit affects our wellness. Let's act out our technological activity:

- Video Game #1
- Video Game #2
- Texting
- Texting in Bed
- Reading Computer Screen
- Talking on the phone

Technology use has increased the incidences of low back pain, neck pain, muscle aches, headaches, "tech neck," carpal tunnel, eye strain, "texters thumb," blood clots, etc, etc….

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Texting & Driving

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Safety

- Awareness
- Passwords
- Content
- Privacy Settings
- Activity

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Social /Relational

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Cakes and Cookies

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Authentic Relationships & Interactions

- We are "wired" biologically to be in relationships (groups & tribes).
- We receive a lot of health, wellness, emotional and survival benefits from genuine relationships and there is no replacement for these interactions
  - Touch
  - Eye contact
  - Emotions
  - Understanding
  - Physical proximity and intimacy
  - Mirror Neurons

There is a difference between connecting "to" and connecting "with"

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The ways the internet is wrecking relationships….

Technology takes time. Spending time online or distracted keeps you from engaging with friends and family.

"Checking things" interrupts your quality time together and distracts you. Maintaining all those connections and applications can slice and dice your time with your loved ones. Each and every interruption to your time alone together diminishes the intensity of your connection.

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Virtual connections can't replace life connections. When you receive a text or read an email, all you get is information. You don't receive smiles, hugs, laughter or touch. What fosters positive and connected feelings with significant others usually involves physical touch, eye contact, emotional messages, body language, etc. With close friends and loved ones, these interactions release oxytocin enhancing your feelings of affection and increasing the bonding. These are things you can't express or experience over a text message.

Messages are easily misinterpreted. Texts can only convey so much through words and we miss out on the emotions, nuances and important body language of communication. Further, they often allow for misinterpretation
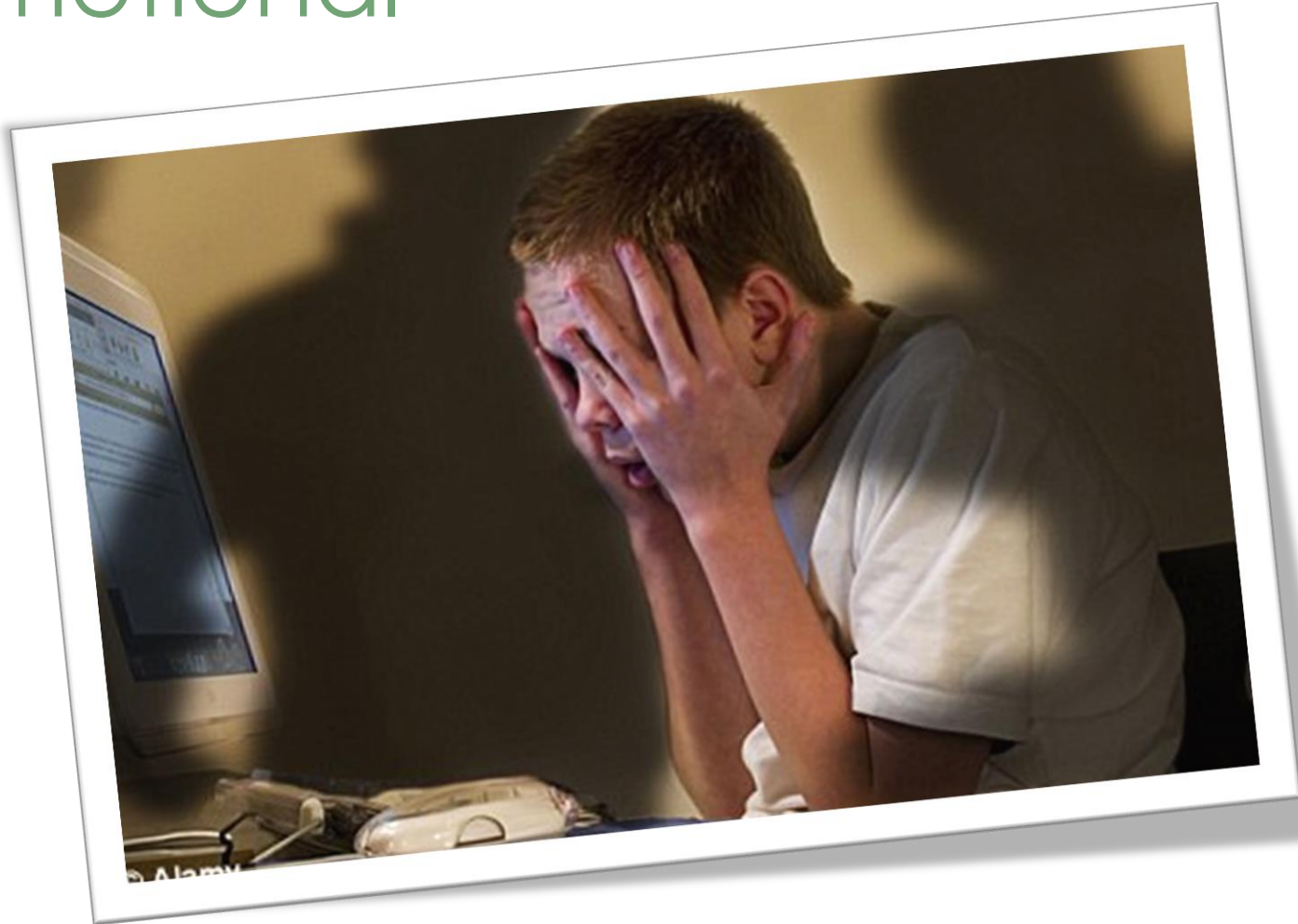
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Texting is a brilliant way to miscommunicate how you feel, and misinterpret what other people mean.

Technology has become a way to avoid difficult relationship or life circumstances. Texting, emailing, "blocking" etc. have taken away our need to face things and "talk" about it!

Technology makes it easier to fight dirty. Anger can be too easily impulsively shot out in an email or text.

We use social media to overshare things that should be personal and between friends/ family. Everyone has an example of something they learned or saw online that they wish had remained personal (or thought should be personal). It makes a friend feel like one of 568 other "friends"….

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Emotional


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Self Esteem

- We become very dependent on the validation we receive (or don't) on social media
- We consciously and subconsciously base our self worth on the number of friends, followers, views, shares and likes we have
- We are constantly exposed to the photo-shopped, digitally altered and specifically mastered content of the internet and its advertisers, as well as the "highlight reel" of our friends and families lives
- Our online behavior sometimes makes us vulnerable to criticism, judgement, gossip, boundary violations and cyber-bullying.

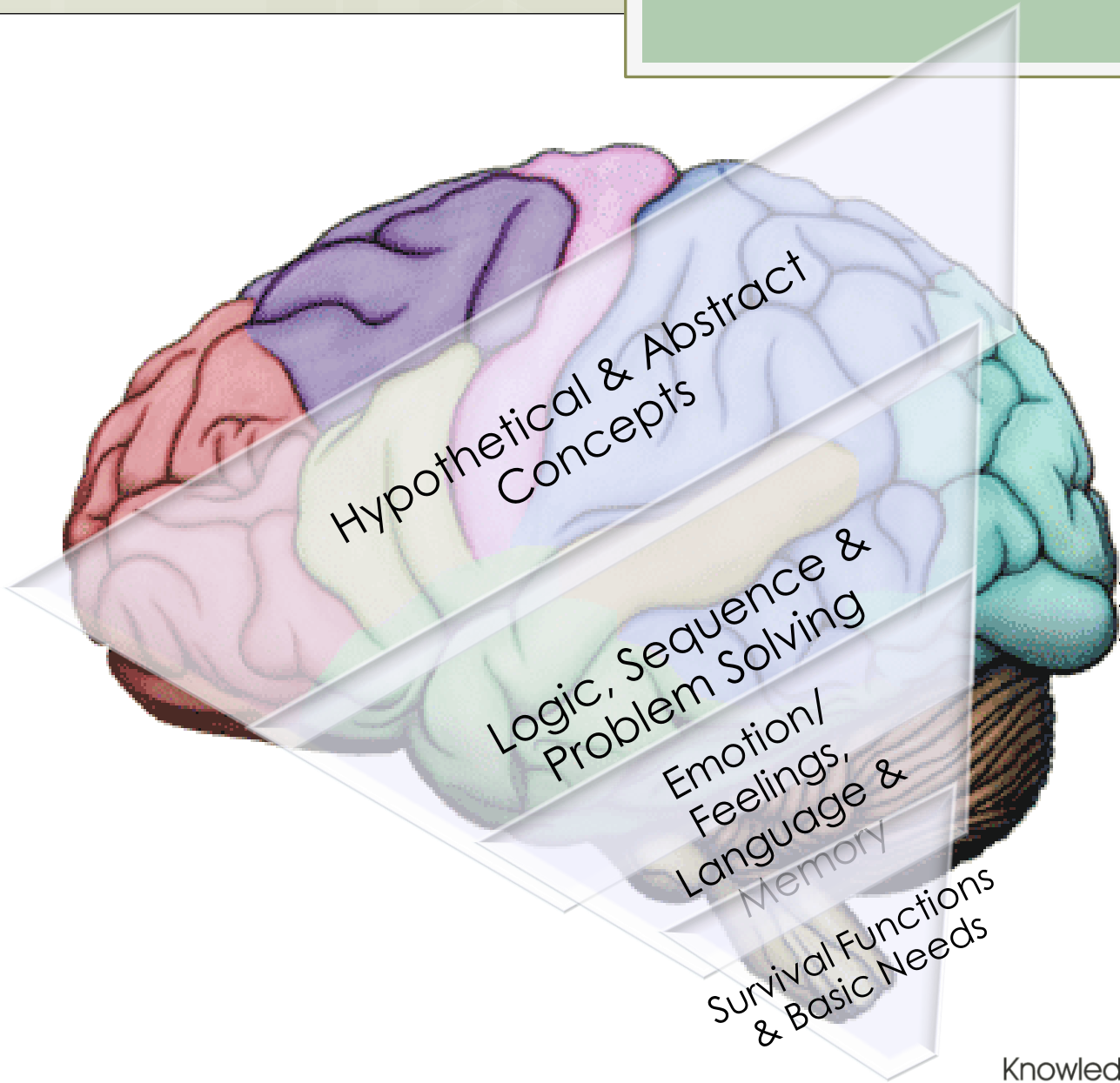Knowledge is Power
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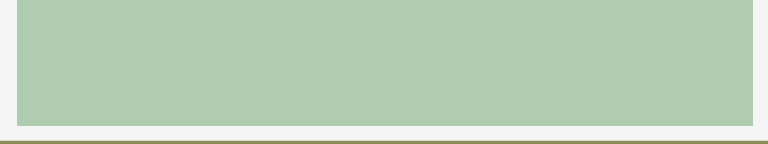
Mental Health

- Increased exposure to technology and the internet stimulates the stress response, the central nervous system and our attention centre

- We become easily agitated, anxious, irritated, emotional, over-sensitive and distracted

- We begin to crave stimulation (can have neurological, intellectual, occupational and emotional repercussions)

- There are higher levels of depression, anxiety, ADHD, sensory processing disorder, personality disorders, narcissism, "FOMO" and **Internet ADDICTION Disorder (IAD)** with those spending excessive amounts of time online or gaming.

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Intellectual

Hypothetical & Abstract Concepts

Logic, Sequence & Problem Solving

Emotion/ Feelings, Language & Memory

Survival Functions & Basic Needs

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How technology interrupts development and cognitive ability

- Cognitive Functions:
  - Attention: The myth of Multi-Tasking
  - Patience (I want a million results and I want them in 0.00062 seconds)
  - Memory
  - Impulse Regulation (dopamine)
  - Information Overload
  - Digital "devolution" (spelling, cursive writing, map reading, calculation, other?
  - Problem Solving (the neurons required to think logically)
  - Abstraction & Creativity (**Be BORED!**)

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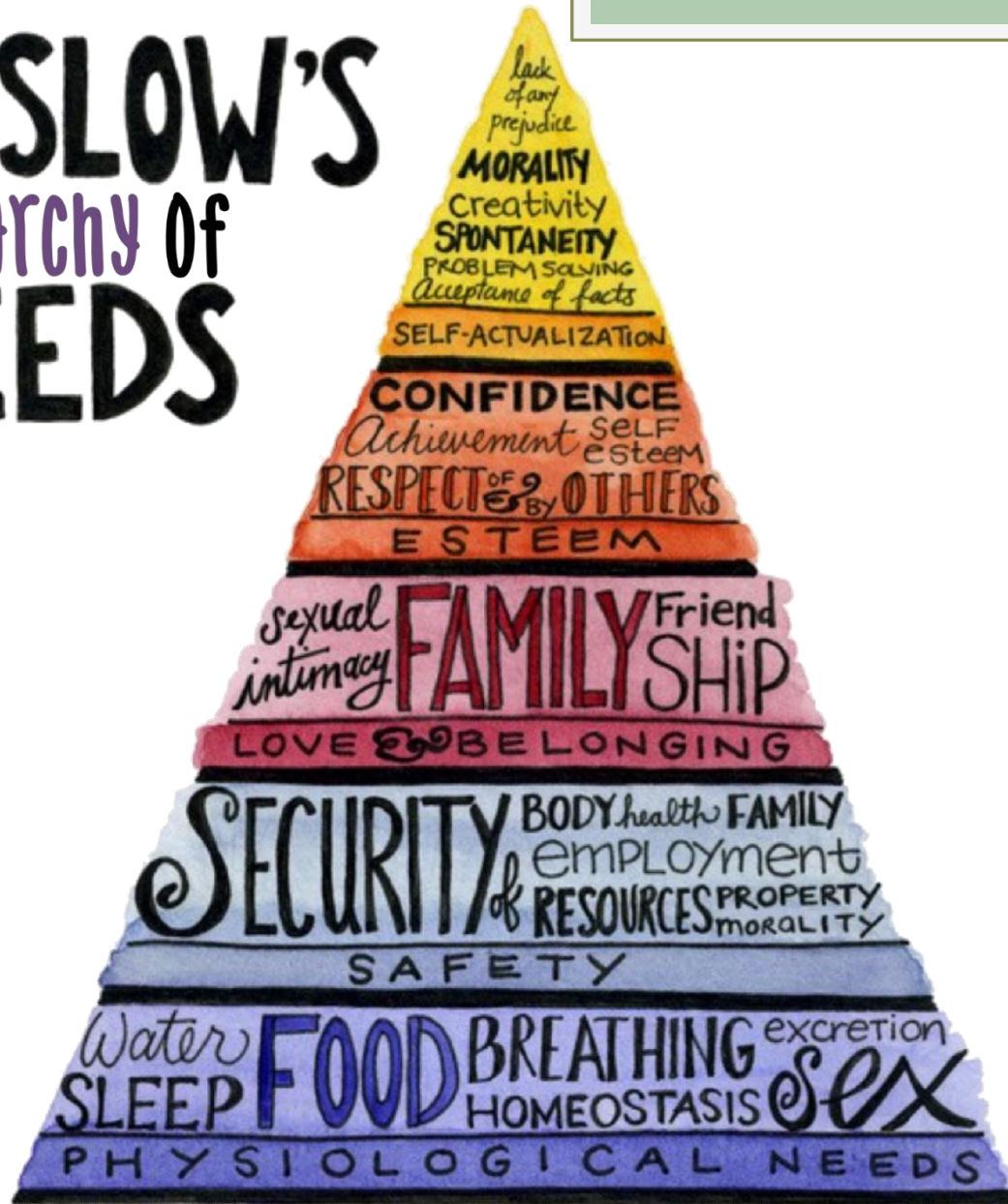
Technology and Humanity….
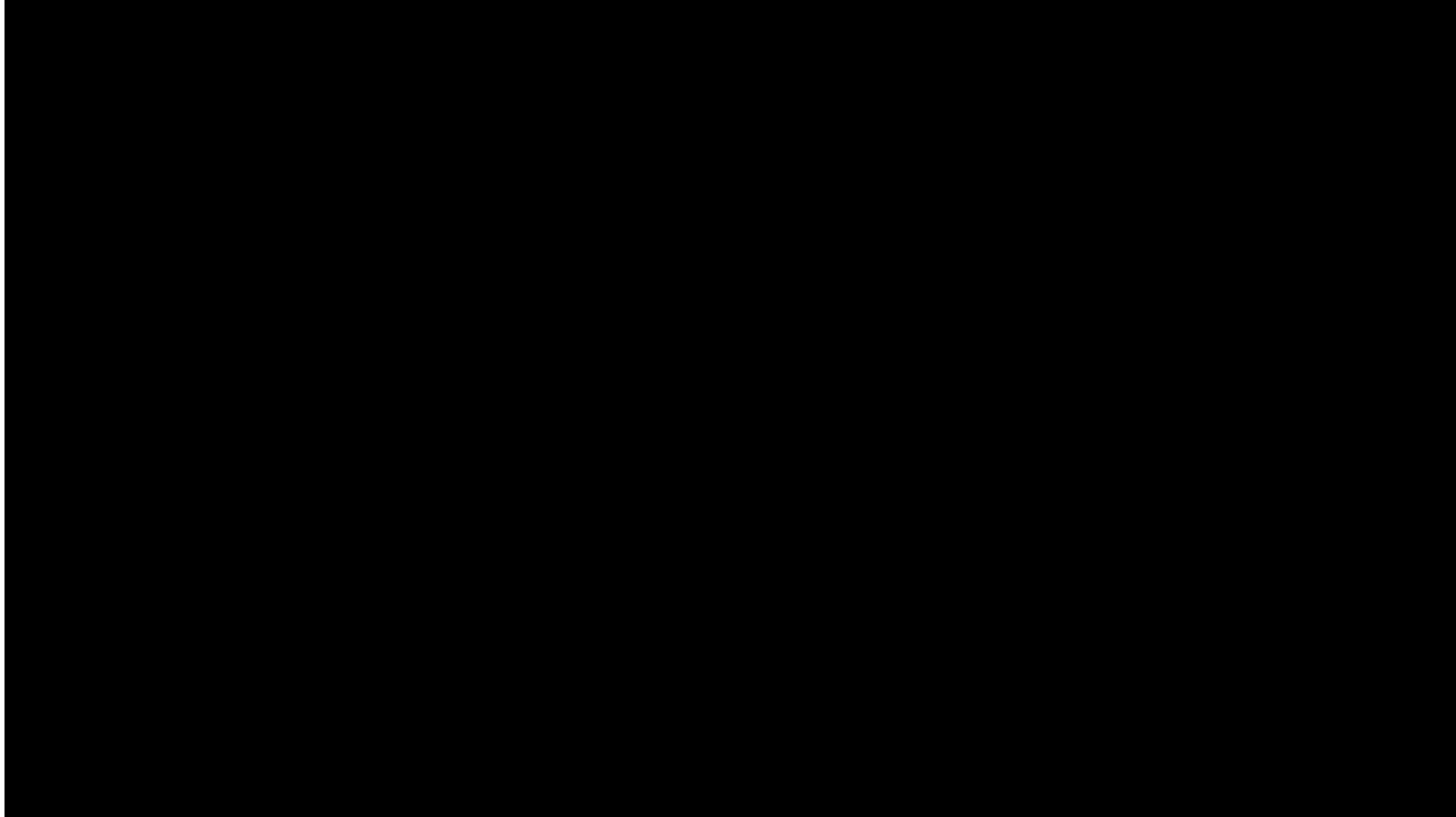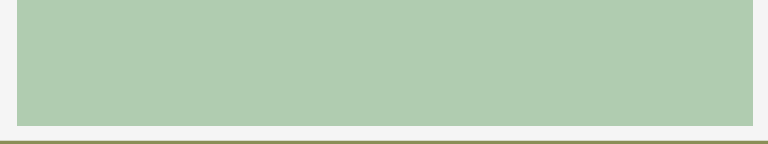
Community Supports & Resources

Questions/ Comments?