



CHARTERED
ACCOUNTANTS
IRELAND

Mental Fitness in the accountancy profession

Dee France



Thrive



STUDENT

- Exam stress
- Work/life balance
- Relationships



PROFESSIONAL STRESS



2-5 PQE

- Career path
- Workplace Issues
- Diversity

Thrive...

RETURNERS

- Confidence
- Up-Skilling
- Childcare issues



5 PQE

- Family
- Work/life balance
- Financial issues



PROFESSIONAL STRESS

...with you every step of the way

MID-LIFE

- Career success
- Family demands
- Third-age



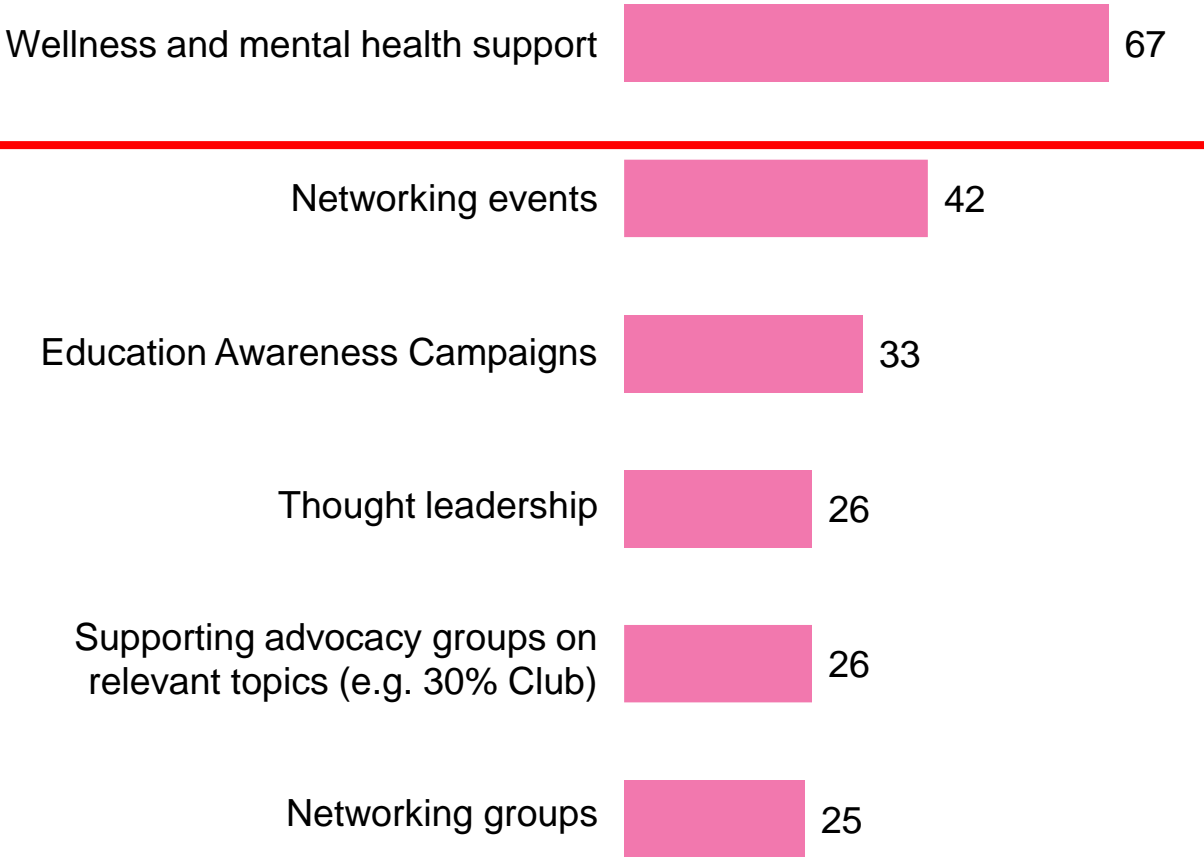
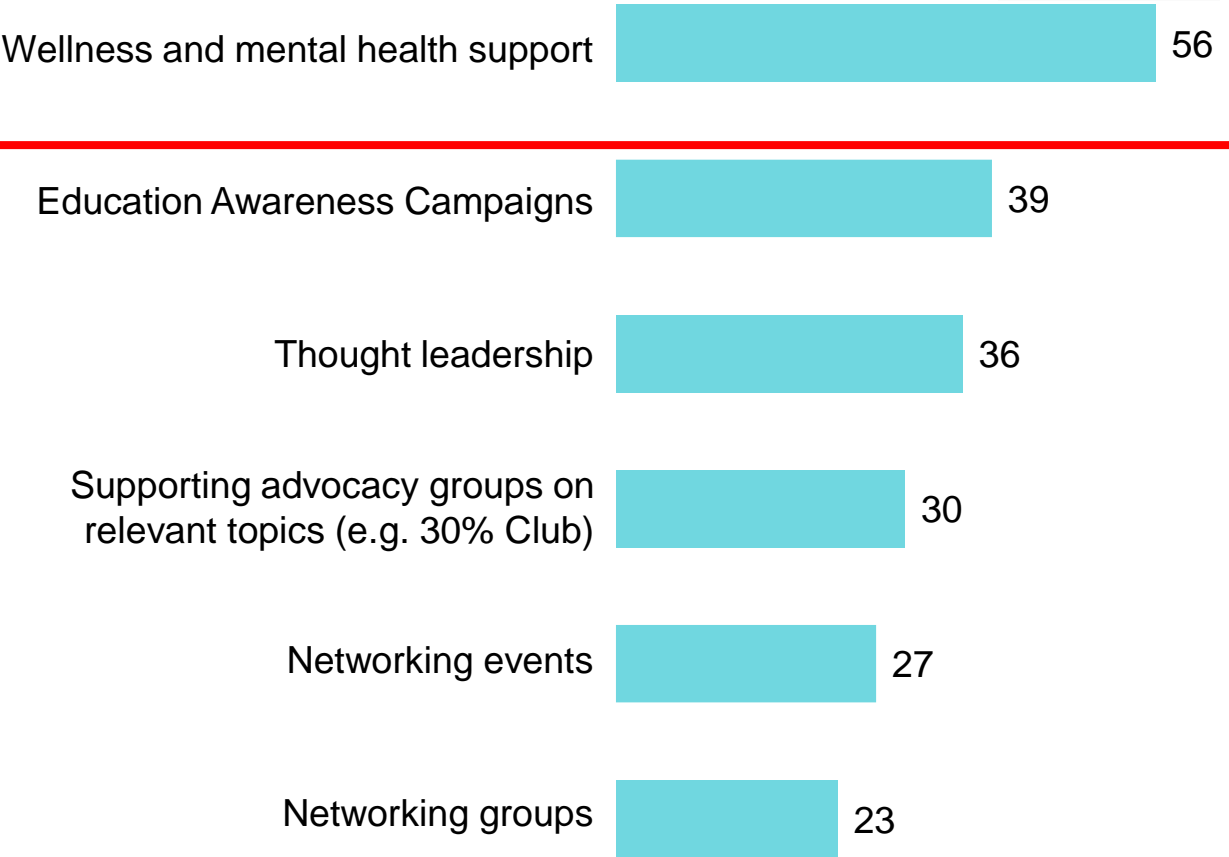
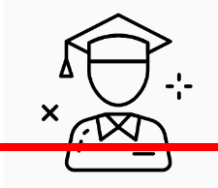
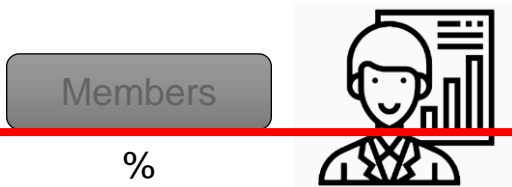
RETIREMENT

- Financial
- Entitlements
- Health issues

Life-cycle touchpoints

Future EDI Initiatives Would like to see Institute Undertake

Base: All Chartered Accountant Members/Students – 1114/212



Wellness and mental health support cited by both members and students are the primary EDI initiative they would like to see the Institute undertake. Education awareness campaigns and thought leadership the next most cited initiatives by members. Higher level of interest amongst students for networking events.



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THRIVE

- **Confidential 1:1 listening service**
- **Professional counselling x 8 sessions**
- **Wellness Coaching x 3 sessions**
- **Mental health / wellbeing events**

CA Support

- **Emergency financial assistance**
- **Dedicated charity / donation model**
- **For members and students**
- **Founded in 1928**



Thrive - wellbeing hub



CA Support

CAW Mental Fitness Taskforce



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About CAW



Chartered Difference



Building Trust

CAW Mental Fitness Taskforce

11 out of 15 member Institutes represented



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Mental Fitness Charter

Our Vision

To drive positive change in the area of wellbeing and mental health across the finance and business community in our region and globally

Key Objectives

- **Raise awareness**
- **Share best practices**
- **Reduce stigma**
- **Support our communities**
- **Encourage our leaders to support this charter**

Reported issues from CAW Institutes

- Increased anxiety around return to workplace / ongoing uncertainty
- Members in practice report increased isolation, lack of supports, mental health issues
- Female members experience increased challenges around childcare, stress management, return to workplace, harassment issues etc
- No dedicated team to manage/drive wellbeing/ED&I agenda
- Some institutes do not allocate budget for wellbeing issues

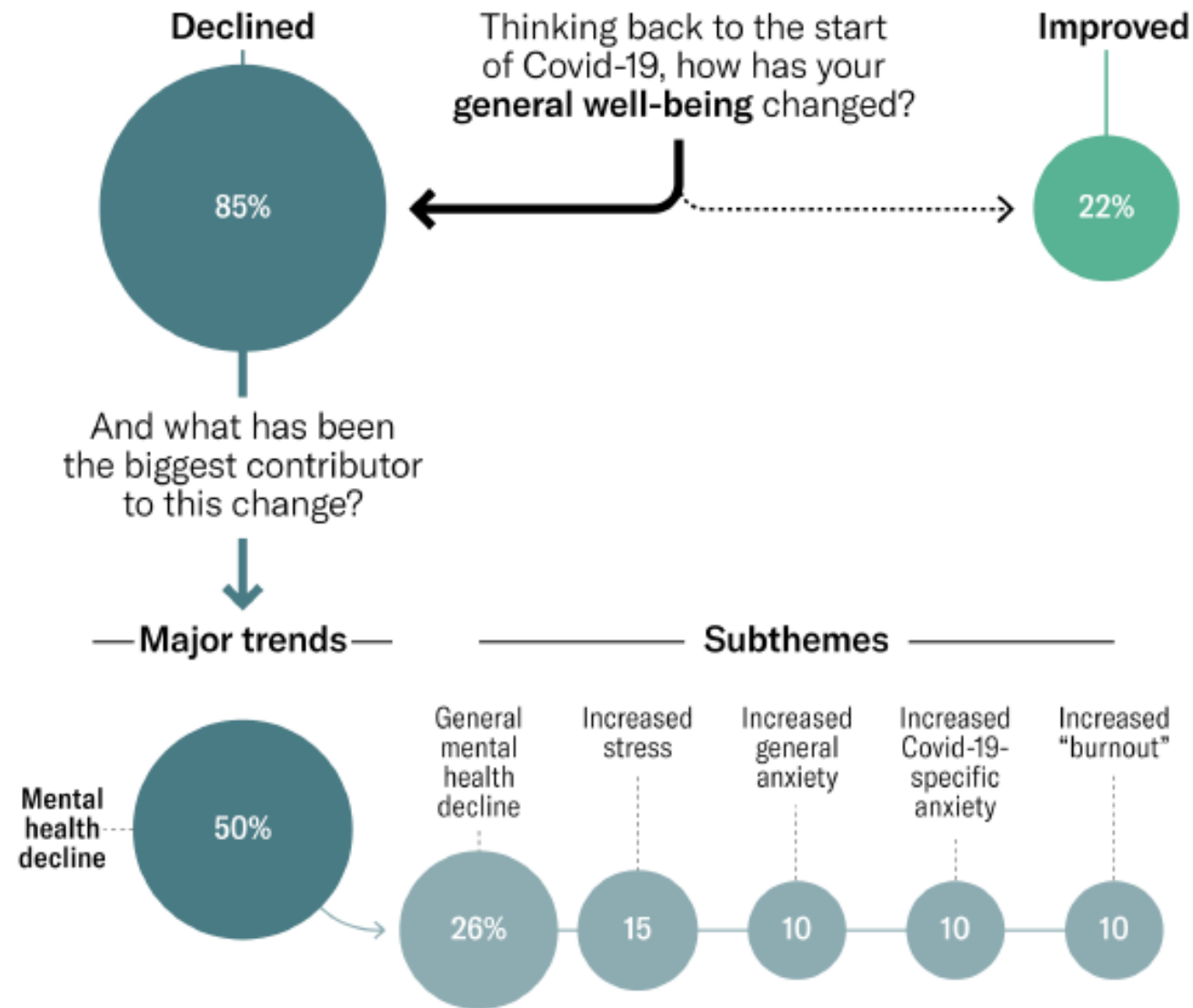
Personal

- Limiting self beliefs (i.e. imposter syndrome)
- Access to support networks (work and home)
- Impacts of COVID / hybrid working

In the workplace

- Occupational stress
- Injustice (perceived or otherwise)
- Discrimination / dignity and respect / unconscious bias
- Lack of leadership accountability

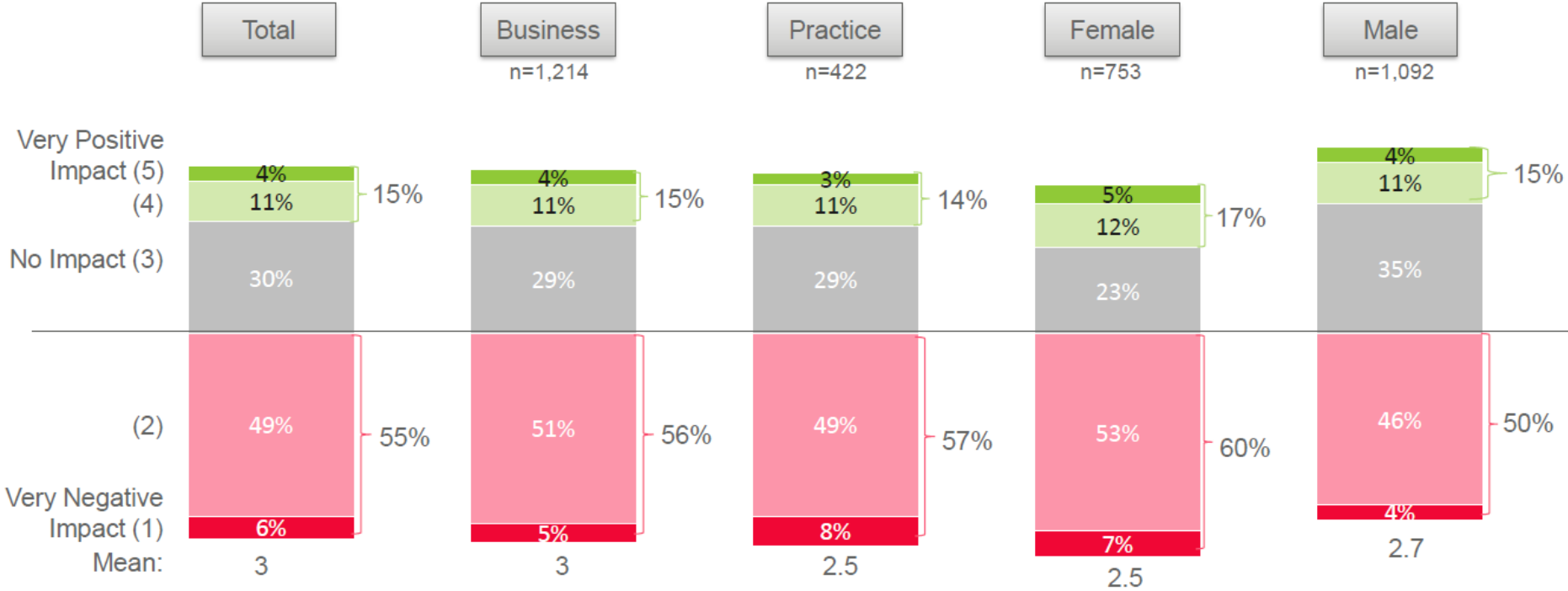
Harvard Business Review - decline of wellbeing during COVID



Survey feedback

Level of Impact Covid-19 Had on Member's Mental Health

Base: All Chartered Accountants members – 1,883




Over 1 in 2 members claim that Covid-19 had a negative impact on their mental health – increasing to 3 in 5 amongst females. Highest proportion of males (35%) claiming it had no impact on their mental health, while a significantly lower proportion of members associate it with having a positive impact on their mental health (15%).

The Corona-coaster

- Shifting landscape
- Fear of the future
- Ongoing stress



EFFECTS OF **STRESS** ON THE BODY




Lack of concentration and energy, headaches, dizziness, panic, depression and anger.

Impact of Stress on our Wellbeing



Increased heart rate and blood pressure leading to increased risk of high cholesterol and heart attack.




Upset stomach, acid reflux, pain ulcers and change


- Suppresses your immune response
- Increases inflammation in the body
- Negatively impacts brain function
- Stress changes gene expression



Suppressed immune response leading to illness and high levels of inflammation.



Joint pain and decreased bone density, muscle tension, tightness, and protein breakdown.



Decreased hormone production leading to reduced fertility and sex drive.

Breakdown of stress model

Cause

Two Types of stressors:

Sudden Impact

Sustained Attrition

Effect

Two Types of Hormones:

Adrenalin

Cortisol

Stressor 1 SUDDEN IMPACT



Work:

Send email to wrong person
Clash with colleague
Make a mistake

Home:

Argument with loved one
Sudden accident
Bereavement

Stressor 2 SUSTAINED ATTRITION



Work:

Workload
Injustice
Workplace bullying

Home:

Toxic relationship
Money worries
Long term illness

Adrenalin & Cortisol

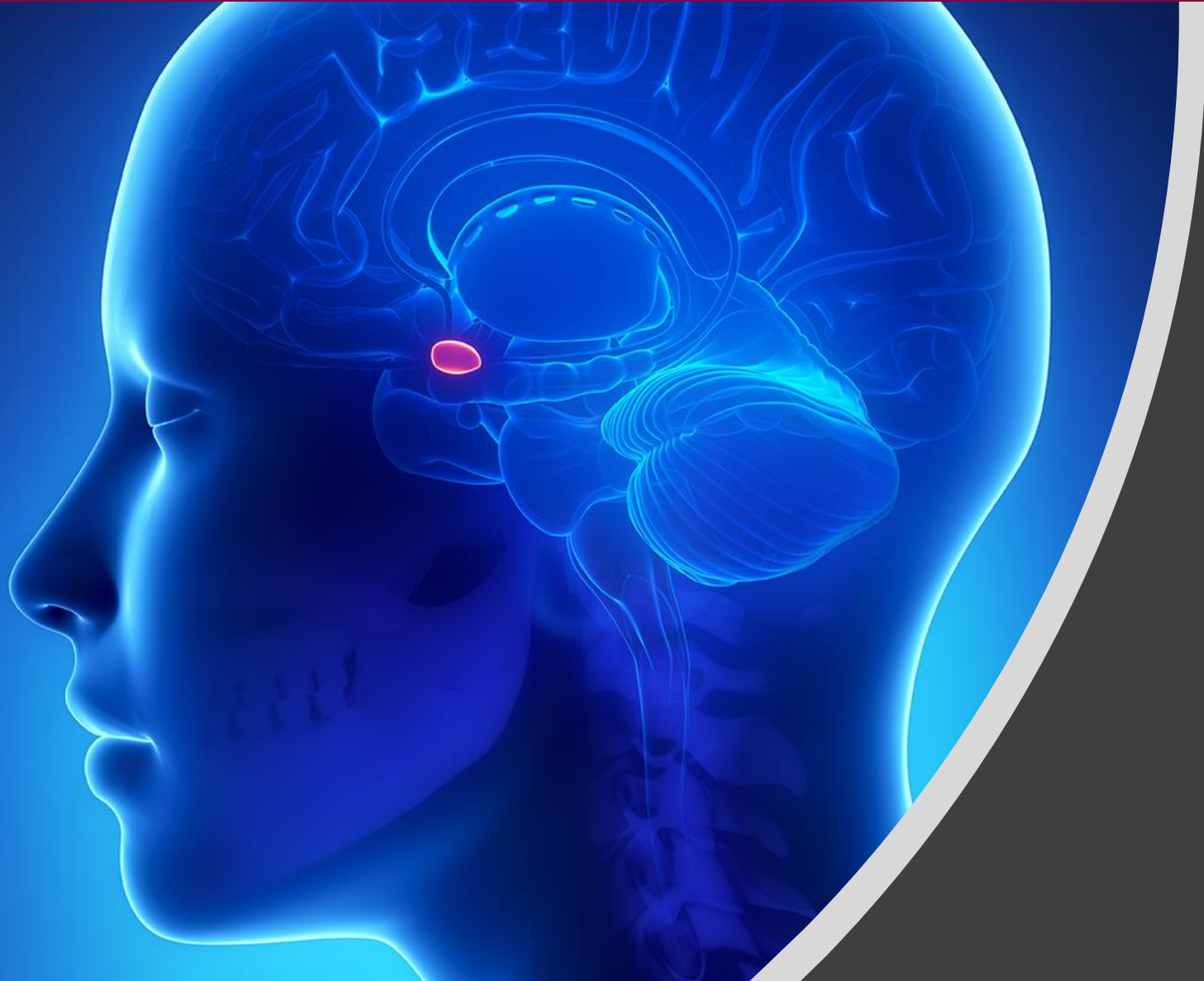
Physical:

- Pounding heart
- Fast breathing
- Grinding teeth
- Sweats
- Blushing
- Stomach churning
- Stuttering / stammering
- Tremors / shakes
- Light headedness / faintness

Mental:

- Difficulty concentrating
- Angry outbursts
- Forgetfulness
- Indecisiveness
- Withdrawal
- Problems communicating
- Racing thoughts
- Negative feelings
- Insomnia

The Amygdala controls the release of these hormones



The amygdala is controlled by the *subconscious* mind...

Why?

Why does stress affect us the way it does?



Think of us as being perfectly designed, but for an era about **70-80 thousand years ago.**

Why is stress so common?



We are not designed to cope with the **pipeline of threat** our modern world throws at us...

Why does stress affect us differently?



**We are all
‘programmed’ for
threat
differently...**

**Depending on
our experiences.**

Our stress is personal to us



Past trauma

Past hurt

Past fears

How can we down-regulate stress?

Mental

**Calm the
subconscious mind**

Physical

**Stimulate the parasympathetic
nervous system**

Mental down-regulation



Subconscious
mind **focusses**
on the negative

Its primary role is
to identify **threat**

The negative

I always mess up
I will never succeed
I can't...
I will never...
I can't ever...

The evidence against

I completed the task
I succeeded... When?
I can... And have
I will... And can see how
I can do this...

Mental down-regulation



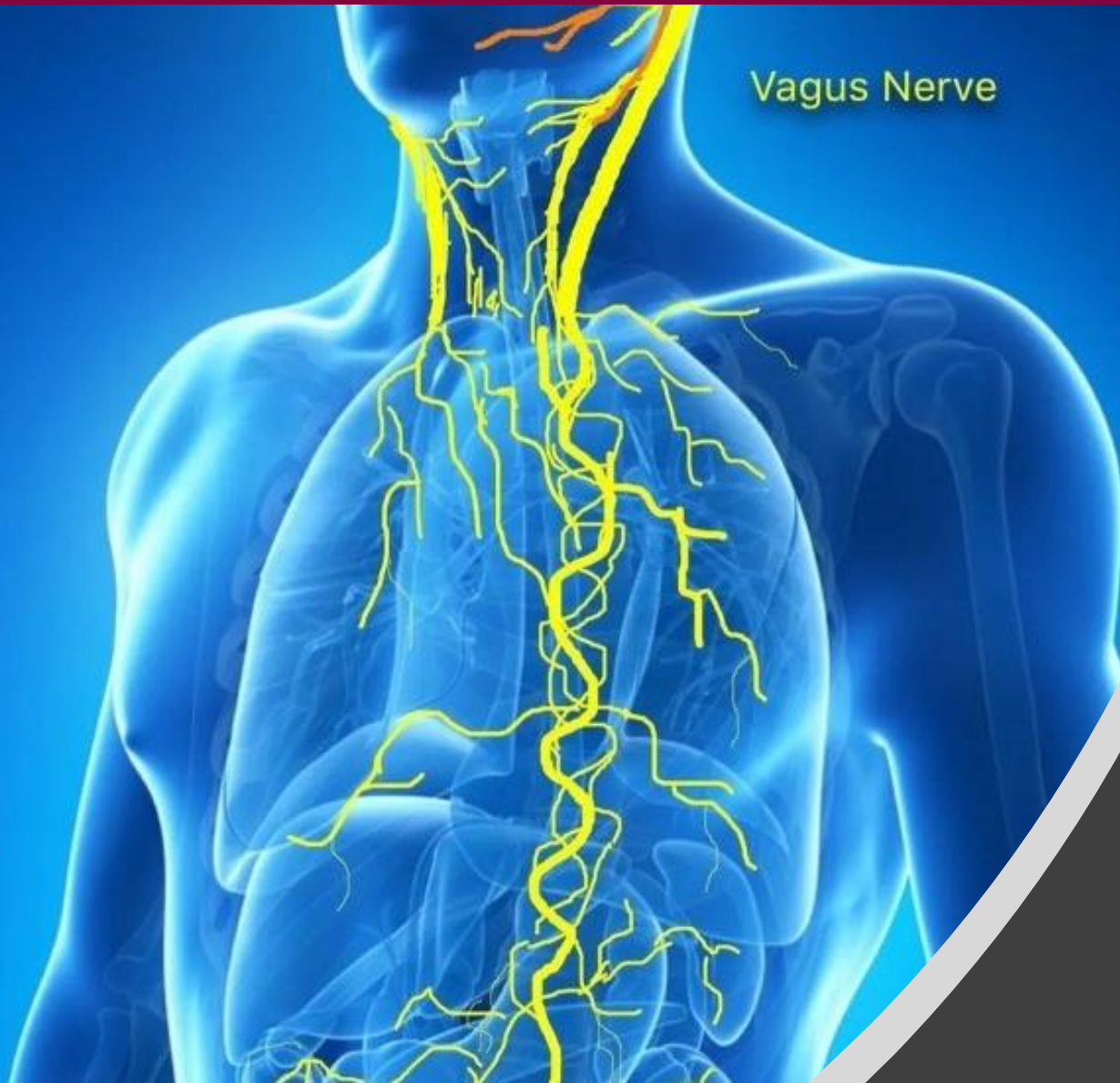
Remember to

Catch it!

Challenge it!

Change it!

Physical down-regulation



The Vagus Nerve is the main component in our *parasympathetic* nervous system

Our rest and digest mode

Benefits of Vagus Nerve Stimulation



Regulates breathing

Reduces heart rate

Reduces stress hormones

Reduces inflammation

Improves cognition

Improves digestion

How to stimulate the Vagus Nerve



Singing
Laughing
Chanting
Exercise
Cold therapy
Meditation
Deep breathing
Clean diet



Two stressors

Two hacks:

Mental

**Calm the subconscious /
inner child**

Physical

Stimulate our Vagus Nerve



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Thank you

Q&A