



# Opioid Crisis

for First Responder and Medical Practitioners

Daniel Crampton, PsyD, Paramedic (Ret)

Ann Rush Crampton, PhD, US Air Force (Ret)

Status Code 4, Inc. (SC4i)

Funded by the Region 16 Opioid Abatement Council



Opioid Crisis film may be viewed at this link: <https://youtu.be/3ANYvuM8Zjw?si=gPa-HxmyWtvXgFR8>

# Agenda

**“Why” Opioid Misuse**

---

**Comorbidity of PTSD and Chronic Pain**

---

**Limitations to Seeking Help**

---

**Resilience Skills and Resources for Pain and Stress Management**

---

**SPOC Model**

---





# **“Why” Opioid Misuse**

# Motives for Opioid Use

## Coping with Pain

From Occupational Stress, Personal Injuries, medical condition such as Cancer

## Coping with Negative Affect and Anxiety

Due to professional exposure to traumatic call situations and patients

## Recreational or Social Motives

From the need to fit in and have "fun"

## To Relax

From the stress and perceived burdens of Life Challenges

# Impacts to Opioid Misuse

Impacts of opioid misuse include mental health symptoms from cumulative/repeated exposures, burnout, compassion fatigue, safety concerns, negative attitudes or cynicism, and frustration with lack of resources to address opioid use.

A solid purple triangle is located in the bottom-left corner of the slide, pointing towards the center.

# **Comorbidity of PTSD and Chronic Pain**

# Post Traumatic Stress Injury

**Posttraumatic stress injury (PTSI) may occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event, series of events or set of circumstances.**

**“An individual may experience this as emotionally or physically harmful or life-threatening and may affect mental, physical, social, and/or spiritual well-being. Examples include natural disasters, serious accidents, terrorist acts, war/combat, rape/sexual assault, historical trauma, intimate partner violence and bullying.”**

**From the American Psychiatric Association**

# Post Traumatic Stress Injury

*Take a few  
moments and  
take the  
Assessment.*

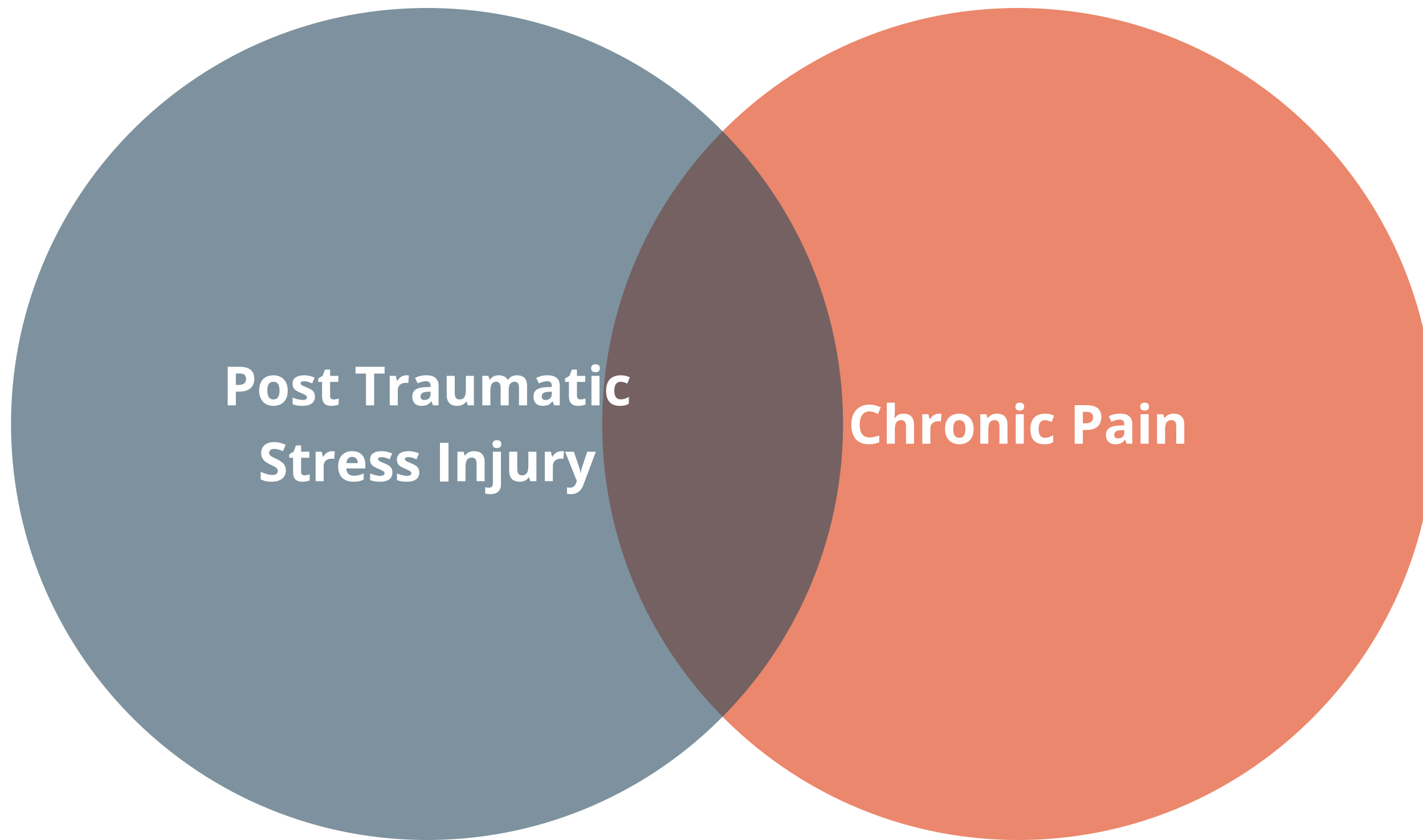
## Are You ...

1. ...experiencing unexpectedly disturbing memories of a traumatic event?
2. ...experiencing dreams or nightmares related to a traumatic event?
3. ...becoming emotionally numb to critical incidents where you feel you shouldn't be?
4. ...avoiding thoughts or feelings associated with a traumatic event?
5. ...no longer participating in the activities you once enjoyed?
6. ...finding it more difficult to concentrate?
7. ...finding it hard to relax?
8. ...having a difficult time falling or staying asleep?
9. ...quick to anger or lash out more than normal?
10. ...feeling that you are having a more difficult time controlling your emotions?
11. ...using drugs or alcohol as an escape?

# Chronic Pain

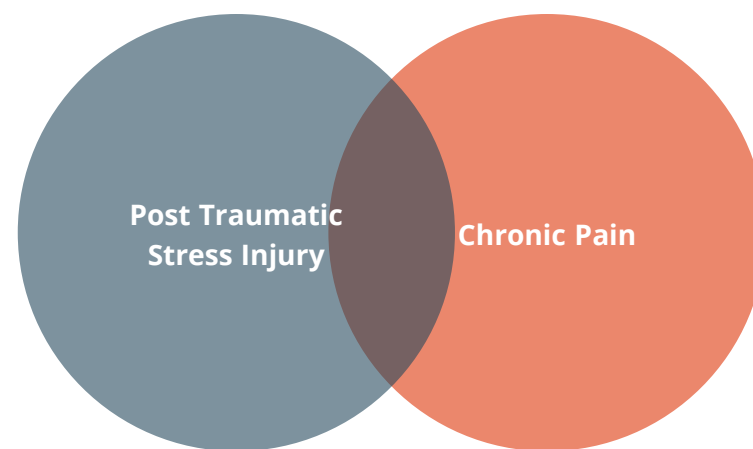
**“Chronic pain is long standing pain that persists beyond the usual recovery period or occurs along with a chronic health condition, such as arthritis. Chronic pain may be "on" and "off" or continuous. It may affect people to the point that they can't work, eat properly, take part in physical activity, or enjoy life.”**

**From John Hopkins Medicine**



***Imagine if you are experiencing PTSD and Chronic Pain and what that would be like...***

# PTSI and Chronic Pain Comorbidity



PTSI and Chronic Pain co-occur at a high rate and may interact in such a way as to negatively impact the course of either disorder.

A First Responder mental health survey comprising 5,093 Canadian First Responders found **23.1% of respondents self-reported clinically significant comorbid concerns with chronic pain were significantly more likely to screen positive for posttraumatic stress injury (PTSI), major depressive disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, social anxiety disorder, and alcohol use disorder.**

In addition, increased levels of PTSI reexperiencing symptoms were associated with increased pain level and pain-related disability. (J. Otis, T. Keane, R. Kerns, 2003).



# **Limitations to Seeking Help**

# Stigma

**Stigma is defined by the as:**

**A mark of shame, disgrace, or disapproval that results in an individual being rejected, discriminated against, and excluded from participating in a number of different areas of society.**

**Stigma often refers to a set of negative and often unfair beliefs that a society, group of people, or individual place onto something or someone.**

**From the World Health Organization**

A large, solid purple triangle is positioned in the bottom-left corner of the slide, pointing towards the center.

# **Resilience Skills and Resources for Pain and Stress Management**

# **What Actions Can YOU Take?**


- **Focus on what is within your control**
- **Can you take anything off your plate to feel less burdened?**
- **Prioritize tasks**
- **Simplify or delegate**
- **Take a Day off (Mental Health Day)**
- **Take Vacations - don't have use or lose**
- **Unplug from Social Media**
- **Identify and manage your triggers**
- **Seek Therapy**

# What Actions Can YOU Take?

There are so many things you can do to help relieve your pain, stress and trauma feelings.

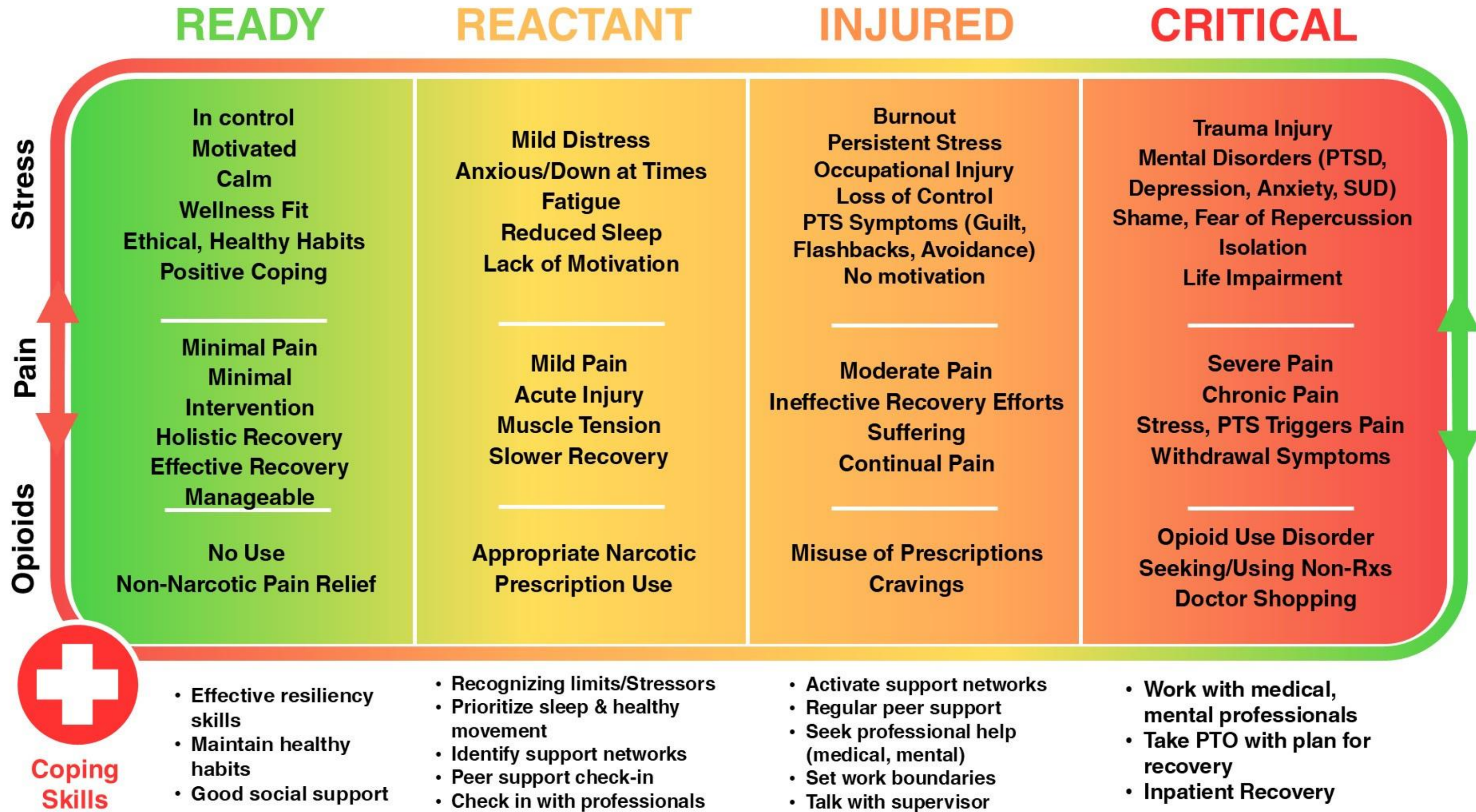
Refer to the list of resilience skills in your handout and **identify 3 new ones** that you may be interested in learning about.



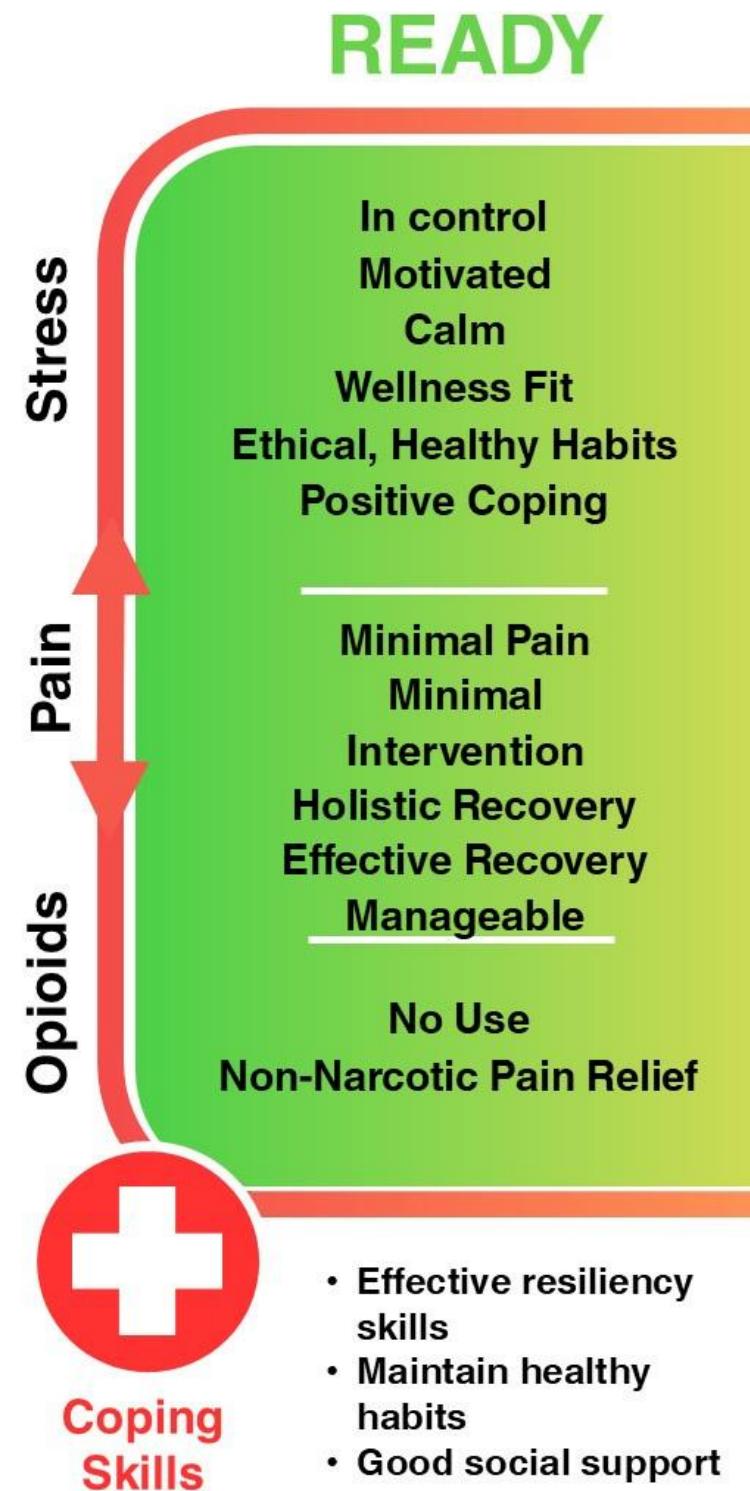
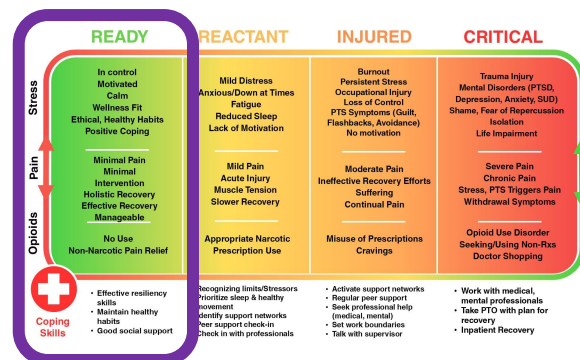


# **Stress, Pain and Opioid Continuum (SPOC) Model**

# SPOC Model

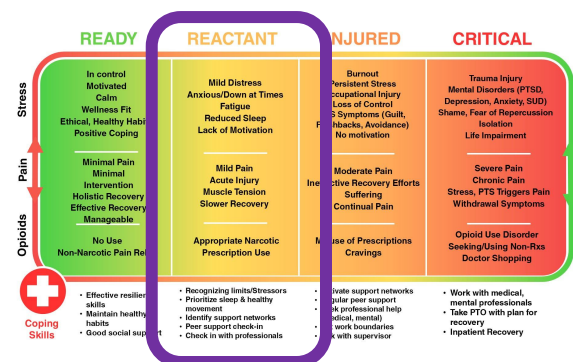


# SPOC Model - Green Column



- Ready to respond when stressful situations arise and less likely to develop stress injury
- Engage in wellness and fitness habits and positive coping
- Manageable pain, need minimal intervention, and engage in holistic, effective recovery
- Pain would be sufficiently managed without narcotics

# SPOC Model - Yellow Column



## REACTANT

Mild Distress  
Anxious/Down at Times  
Fatigue  
Reduced Sleep  
Lack of Motivation

---

Mild Pain  
Acute Injury  
Muscle Tension  
Slower Recovery

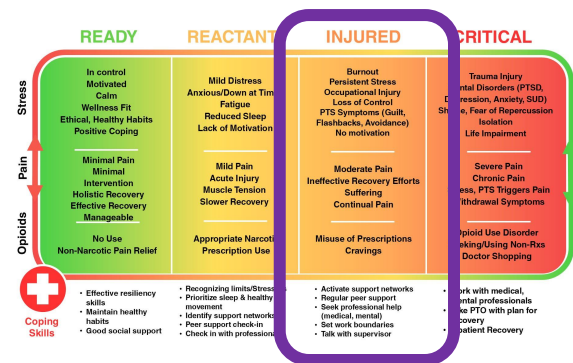
---

Appropriate Narcotic Prescription Use

- Recognizing limits/Stressors
- Prioritize sleep & healthy movement
- Identify support networks
- Peer support check-in
- Check in with professionals

- Stressors and pain start to become more difficult to manage
- Pain may be mild, including acute injury, muscle tension, and somewhat slower recovery
- May involve appropriate narcotic prescription use that follows prescription directions
- Prioritize health and well-being

# SPOC Model - Orange Column



## INJURED

Burnout  
Persistent Stress  
Occupational Injury  
Loss of Control  
PTS Symptoms (Guilt, Flashbacks, Avoidance)  
No motivation

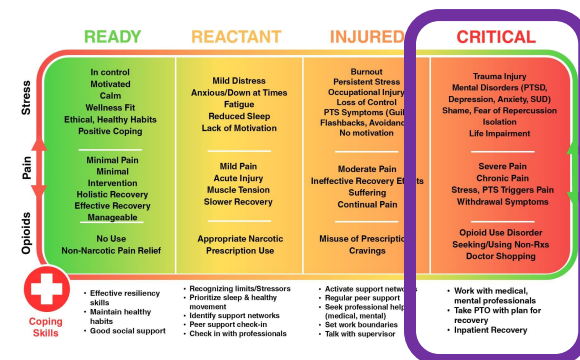
Moderate Pain  
Ineffective Recovery Efforts  
Suffering  
Continual Pain

Misuse of Prescriptions  
Cravings

- Activate support networks
- Regular peer support
- Seek professional help (medical, mental)
- Set work boundaries
- Talk with supervisor

- Stress and pain begin to have quite noticeable impacts: burnout, persistent stress, occupational injury, loss of control, PTS symptoms
- Moderate, continual pain that is not improved with recovery efforts
- May begin misuse of Opioids and cravings
- Peer Support and possibly professional help

# SPOC Model - Red Column



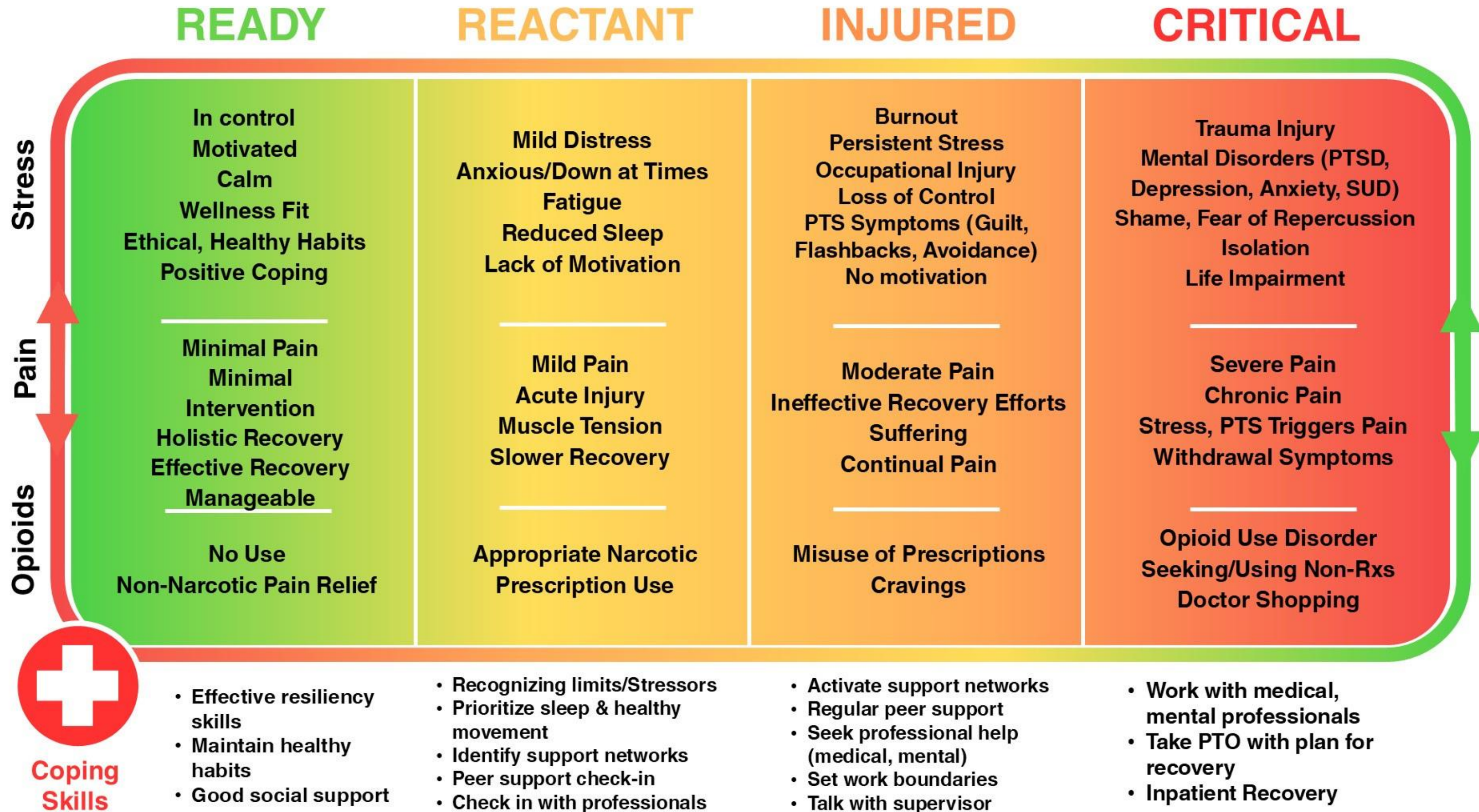
## CRITICAL



- Work with medical, mental professionals
- Take PTO with plan for recovery
- Inpatient Recovery

- Critical area of stress injury. This involves more severe instances of traumatic experiences, PTSI, depression, anxiety, and substance use disorders
- Severe, chronic pain that is exacerbated by stress
- Opioid use disorder and seeking non-prescription narcotics behaviors
- More direct intervention is likely needed with medical and mental health professional

# SPOC Model Exercise



**This Course was made possible by the following contributors:**

**Lyda Hill**  
**Institute for**  
**Human Resilience**

**UCCS** University of Colorado  
Colorado Springs



A solid purple triangle is located in the bottom-left corner of the slide, pointing towards the center.

# Post Test

# Summary

**“Why” Opioid Misuse**

---

**Comorbidity of PTSD and Chronic Pain**

---

**Limitations to Seeking Help**

---

**Resilience Skills and Resources for Pain and Stress Management**

---

**SPOC Model**

---



# Any Questions??

