



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- When you hear the word "adversity" what comes to mind? What do you visualize?
- "Suffering doesn't happen TO you, it can happen FOR you." How does this resonate with you? How have you seen suffering happen FOR you in the past?
- What have been your difficulties/misfortunes lately? Name them...Give them space in your mind and heart...
  - How would you rate the intensity of these difficulties/misfortunes on a scale of 1-5? (1 = manageable, not intense; 5 = completely overwhelmed, cannot function, very intense)
  - What feelings does this bring up for you? (sadness, fear, anger, overwhelm, etc.)
  - Who is one person you can share this with?

# NAVIGATING ADVERSITY

## RESOURCES & REFLECTIVE GUIDES

Sometimes adversity is like a slow drip, drip, drip of hard things in life. You can keep going and even ignore the accumulating drips. It can feel easier to push through and "soldier on" because it might feel even more scary or overwhelming to actually acknowledge the reality of the difficulties. You might be afraid that if you acknowledge it, then you'll fall apart along with all that you're trying to hold together.

Sometimes adversity is like a freight train that barrels over you, making it impossible to continue life as-is. You are at your "rock bottom" breaking point and feel suffocated by the enormity of your situation. It can feel scary and overwhelming to try and put the pieces of life together again, or even to get out of bed each day.

Your feelings, whatever they are, make sense. It is okay to feel that way. You are carrying so much and going through very difficult circumstances. No one automatically has a window of tolerance to handle these types of hard situations in life. Have compassion for yourself. You are not alone and there are ways to regulate and expand your window of tolerance. While this does not erase or minimize the difficulties you are facing, it may help you walk through them with resilience and experience greater growth and empowerment along the way.

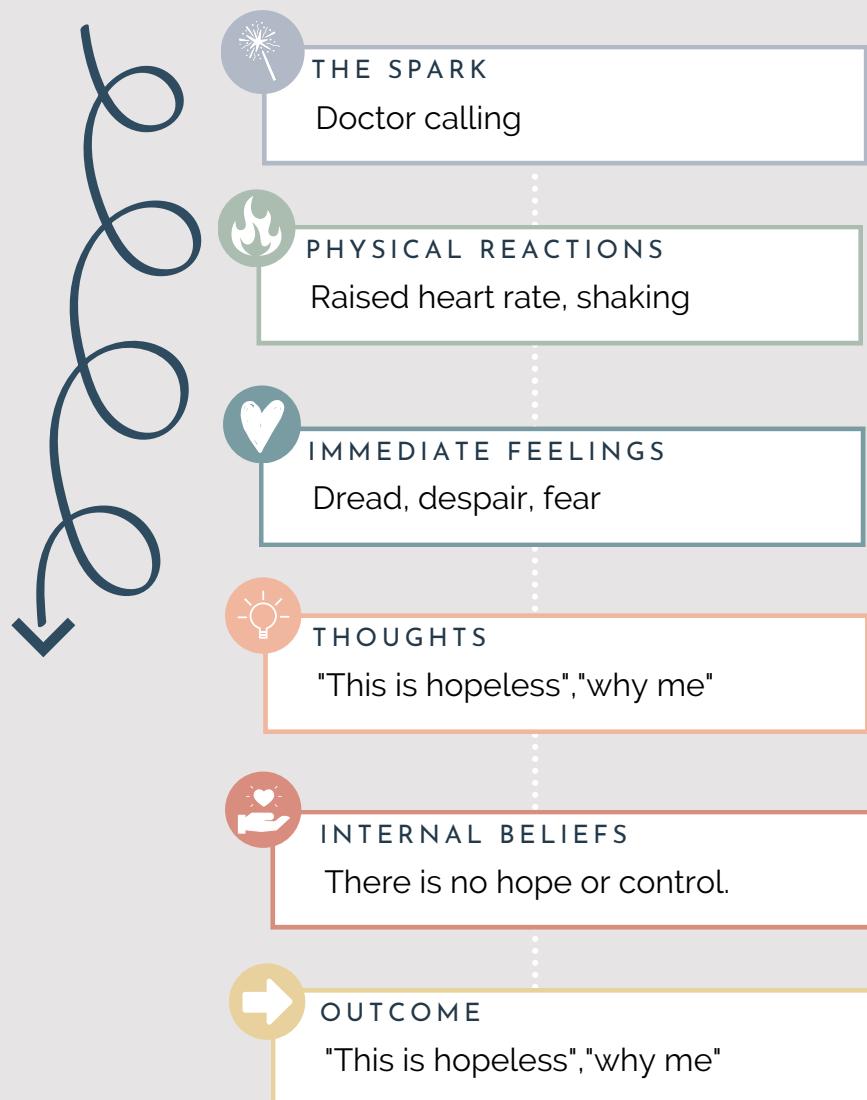


## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Look at the graphic and example. Think about your own life and what scenarios might spark your own spiral.
  - What are the following physical reactions, feelings, thoughts, beliefs, and outcomes?
- What are the recurring thought patterns/behaviors in your life today?
- Where do you hope to see things change?

# KNOWING YOUR SPIRAL

Oftentimes it is hard to know how certain events land with us until we are at the place of being completely overwhelmed. Knowing your spiral of how a situation, event, or circumstance can launch you into your reactions, thoughts, and behaviors is a critical step in knowing yourself more fully. For example:



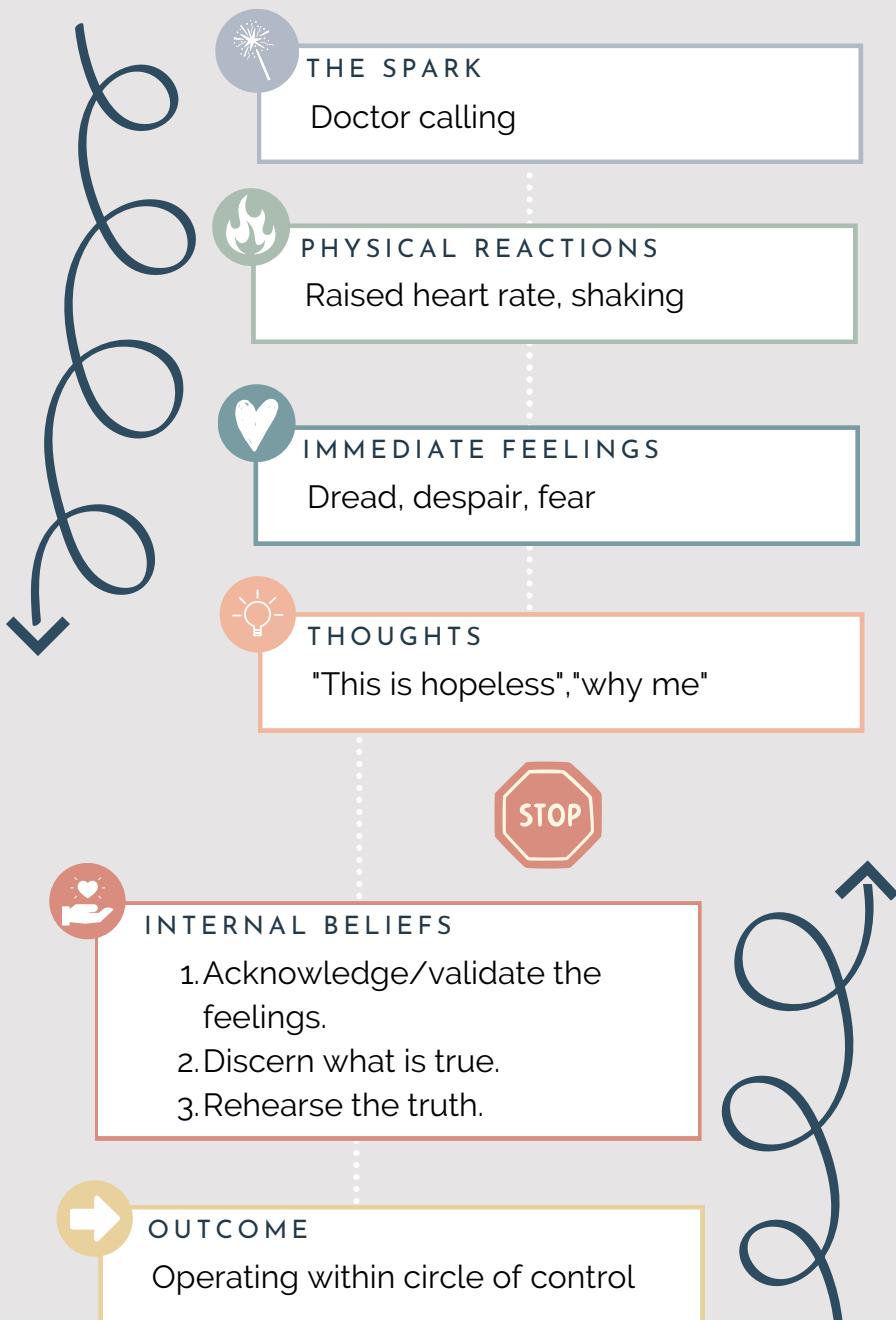


## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Work through the spiral once again. Identify common triggers and go through the steps.
- What are some truths that can help anchor you when you feel the pull to spiral?
- Practice rehearsing the steps of internalizing a belief/truth.
- What would daily practice of this internalization look like for you?
- What possible outcomes could it lead to (while remember what is in and outside your circle of control)?

# REVERSING YOUR SPIRAL

Reversing your spiral can feel like trying to reverse a hundred tons fast-moving ship. Yet just a first step of trying to intercede the thought patterns can be a slow way in reversing the direction. For example:





## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- If life was to feel like a river right now for you, what kind of river does it feel like?
  - Talk about different parts of the river (rapids, peaceful spots, etc.) and talk about real life examples when it has felt that way.
- What do you need in your canoe to help you make your way down the river?

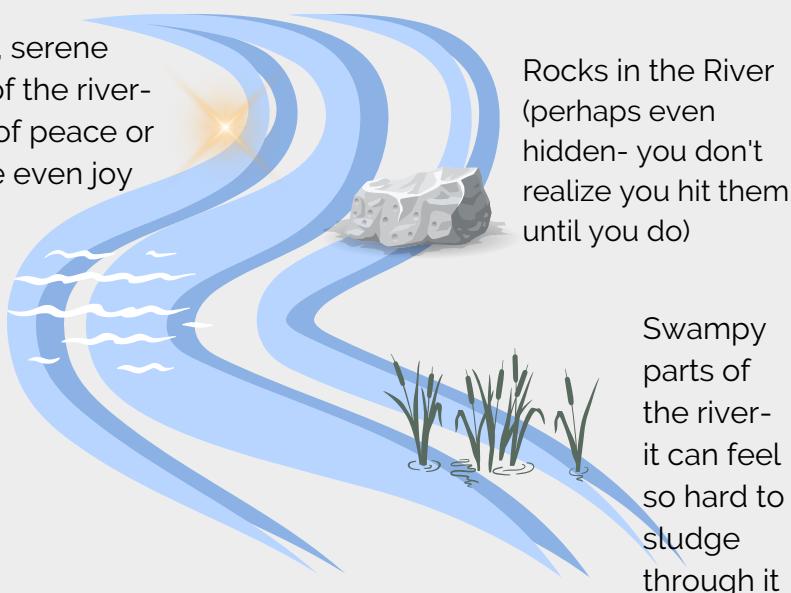
## FAMILY ACTIVITY: IN MY CANOE

Every family experiences joys, sorrows, and adversity TOGETHER. When a family is faced with a terminal illness or loss, though the family is all grieving the same thing, the way in which each family member grieves and processes can look very different from one another.

Imagine that your grief is a river and each family member is in their own canoe navigating the same river, but at different speeds and parts of the river. . .

An illustration to demonstrate:

Sunny, serene parts of the river- times of peace or maybe even joy



Rocks in the River (perhaps even hidden- you don't realize you hit them until you do)

Swampy parts of the river- it can feel so hard to sludge through it

Now, what would it look like if each person were in their canoes and going down stream? Maybe brother just hits a rock while sister finds herself in a more joyful time, even along the grief river. Maybe dad is feeling stuck in the swamp or mom is experiencing an especially difficult time with the rapids she is navigating.

How can you have grace for your family in their own canoes? How could you even offer support and coach your family members from across the river?

Now, gather your own creative supplies to make your own river AND canoes at home to talk about this example together.



## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What are feelings/emotions you have felt this week?
- What do you think you do with those feelings? Bottle them up? Share with others?
- How can you release a bit of how you are feeling so you don't erupt like the Diet Coke or a Volcano?
  - What is one thing you can DO?
  - Who is one PERSON you can talk to?

# FAMILY ACTIVITY: VOLCANO FEELINGS

When we are navigating adversity together, it can be hard to know what aspects of our pain cause us to "erupt like a volcano". Oftentimes, naming the emotions and what happens is an important way to then learn what to do with the complicated emotions. Try this activity with your family to promote discussion all together.

### MATERIALS:

-  Mentos
-  Markers
-  2 Liter Diet Coke
-  Towels for cleanup!

### ACTIVITY STEPS:

1. Name some of the emotions/hard things you might feel on any given day and write each one down on a separate Mento with a marker.
2. Use the Reflection Questions on the side to talk about what happens when they might bottle up those emotions.
3. Take the Diet Coke and discuss how the Diet Coke represents YOU (can even draw a picture of you and paste it on the bottle).
4. In an open space outside, try to bottle up the emotions in the Diet Coke as fast as you can....then see what happens!
5. Discuss alternative ways to bottling up emotions when facing adversity and how you can help one another.