

Medical Student Mental Health: Challenges and Opportunities

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Disclosures

I have no financial disclosures to make.

The Health Care Setting

A Grim Picture

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Medical students

Depression rate 27%

Anxiety and burnout in more than half

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Residents

Burnout 60-75% and higher

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A Grim Picture

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Residents

Burnout 60-75% and higher

Physicians

Burnout rate 54% and rising

Highest suicide rate of any profession

So what's being done to address this?



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Not enough

Saint Louis University Medical Student Mental Health

Saint Louis University Medical Student Mental Health

Moderate- Severe Symptoms of Depression (% of class)

	Orient.	MS1 (EOY)	MS2 (EOY)
Class of 2011	6	27	29
Class of 2012	6	27	35

Saint Louis University Medical Student Mental Health

Moderate- Severe Symptoms of Anxiety (% of class)

	Orient.	MS1	MS2
Class of 2011	33	56	58
Class of 2012	27	54	61

A Simple Model



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Reduce unnecessary stressors and enhance the learning environment

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Increase students' ability to deal with stress

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Reduce unnecessary stressors and enhance the learning environment

Increase students' ability to deal with stress

Help students find meaning in their work

The Interventions



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2013- Restructured the four year curriculum to allow early start and end to the 3rd year

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2014- Confidential tracking of depression and anxiety

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2012- Change to “true” pass/ fail in 1st two years

2013- Restructured the four year curriculum to allow early start and end to the 3rd year

2014- Confidential tracking of depression and anxiety

2015- Focused support of 2nd years in run-up to Step 1

Mental Health Impact

Moderate- Severe Symptoms of Depression (% of class)

	Orient.	MS1	MS2
Class of 2011	6	27	29
Class of 2012	6	27	35
Class of 2018	4	4	6

Mental Health Impact

Moderate- Severe Symptoms of Anxiety (% of class)

	Orient.	MS1	MS2
Class of 2011	33	56	58
Class of 2012	27	54	61
Class of 2018	21	14	32

External Bench-Marking

AAMC
Year 2
Questionnaire



External Bench-Marking

AAMC
Year 2
Questionnaire

	National	SLU
Emotional Climate	9.2	10.8
Student-fac. interaction	14.8	16.0
Quality of life	40.1	45.5
Perceived stress	5.8	4.7
Disengagement	9.7	8.2
Exhaustion	11.8	9.3

External Bench-Marking

AAMC
Year 2
Questionnaire

SLU students report getting $\frac{1}{2}$ hour more of sleep per night and spending $1 \frac{1}{2}$ hour less time in class or studying per day than the average medical student.

Impact

But what happened to academic performance???

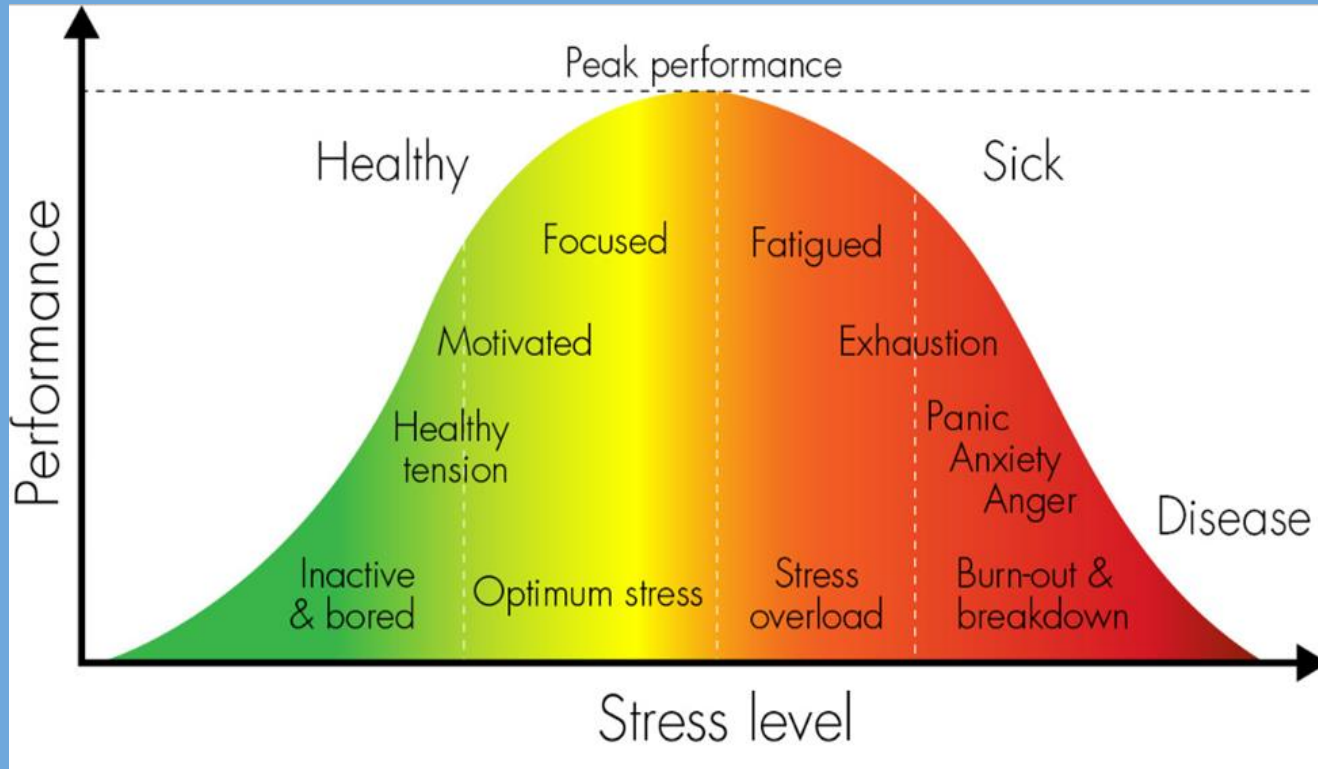
Impact

USMLE Step 1 performance

	Mean	Failure rate
Classes of 2011 and 2012	224	4%
Class of 2018	228	2%

How could this happen???

The Yerkes-Dodson Curve



What is Needed

What is Needed



What is Needed

We need to improve the academic environment
in the pre-clerkship years.



What is Needed

In the clinical years, we need to work on enhancing the well-being of faculty and residents.

Other Drivers of Poor Mental Health

Other Drivers of Poor Mental Health



Problematic Mindsets

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Comparison

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Seeing performance as identity

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Personalization and self-blame

Problematic Mindsets

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Feelings of inadequacy, embarrassment, and shame

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Chasing success

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Chasing success

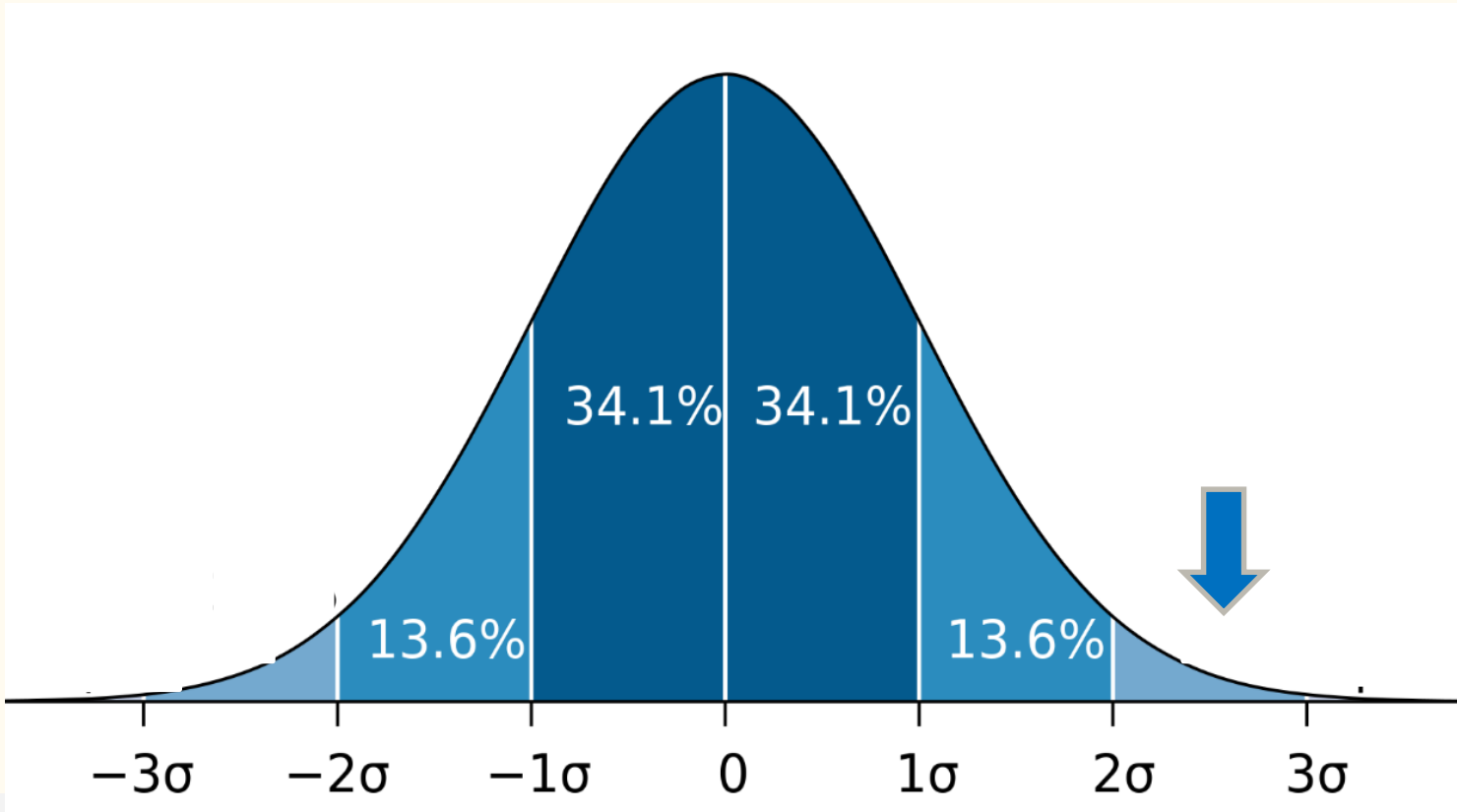
Stigma around seeking care for mental health problems

How to Address the Mindsets

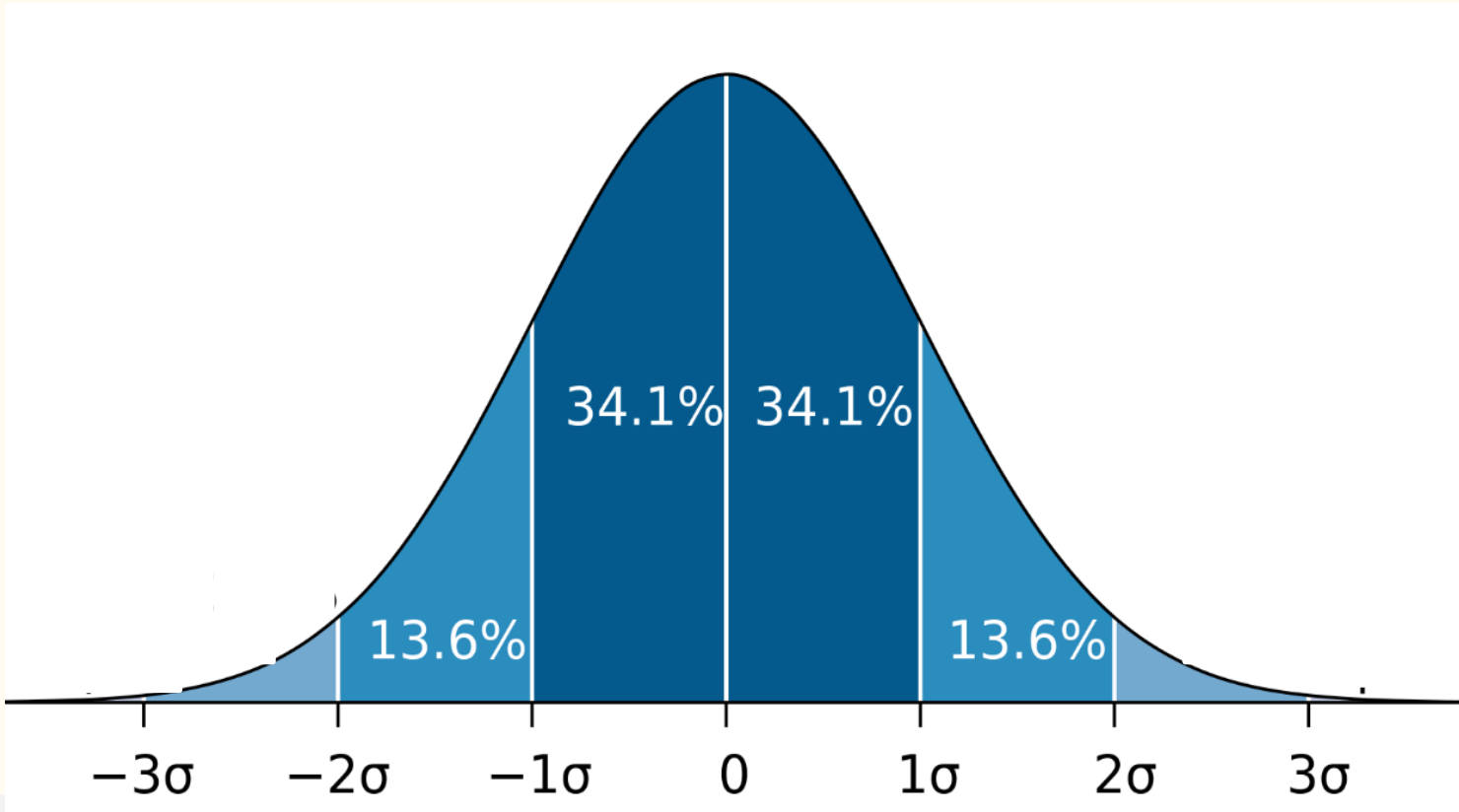
How to Address the Mindsets

Teach cognitive behavioral techniques
to first-year students

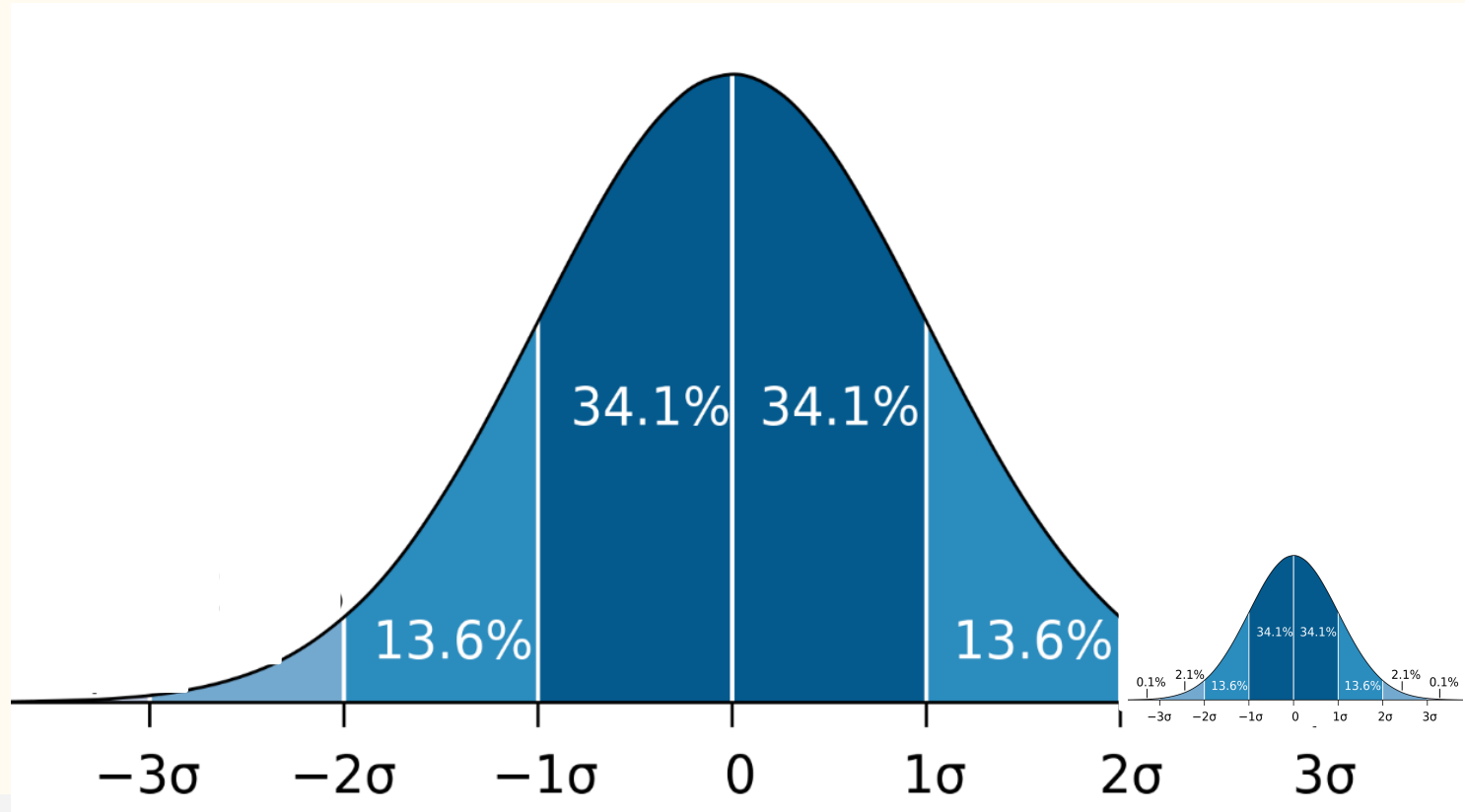
Academic Achievement Before Medical School



Academic Achievement in Medical School



Academic Achievement in Medical School



Beyond Curriculum to Culture

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AAMC
Graduation
Questionnaire



Beyond Curriculum to Culture

AAMC Graduation Questionnaire

Students were asked to rate their satisfaction with the Office of the Dean for Curricular Affairs on accessibility, awareness of student concerns, and responsiveness to student problems.

(5-point Likert scale from very satisfied to very dissatisfied)

Beyond Curriculum to Culture

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(5-point Likert scale from very satisfied to very dissatisfied)

Nationally- 32.8% very satisfied

SLU- 76.1% very satisfied

Beyond Curriculum to Culture

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Satisfaction with programs/ activities that promote effective stress management, a balanced lifestyle, and overall well-being.

Beyond Curriculum to Culture

AAMC
Graduation
Questionnaire

Satisfaction with programs/ activities that promote effective stress management, a balanced lifestyle, and overall well-being.

Nationally- 33.3% very satisfied
SLU- 81.2% very satisfied

Beyond Curriculum to Culture

AAMC
Graduation
Questionnaire

Agreement with statement “My medical school has done a good job of fostering and nurturing my development as a *person*.”

(5-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Beyond Curriculum to Culture

AAMC Graduation Questionnaire

Agreement with statement “My medical school has done a good job of fostering and nurturing my development as a *person*.”

(5-point Likert scale from strongly agree to strongly disagree)

Nationally- 33.8% strongly agree

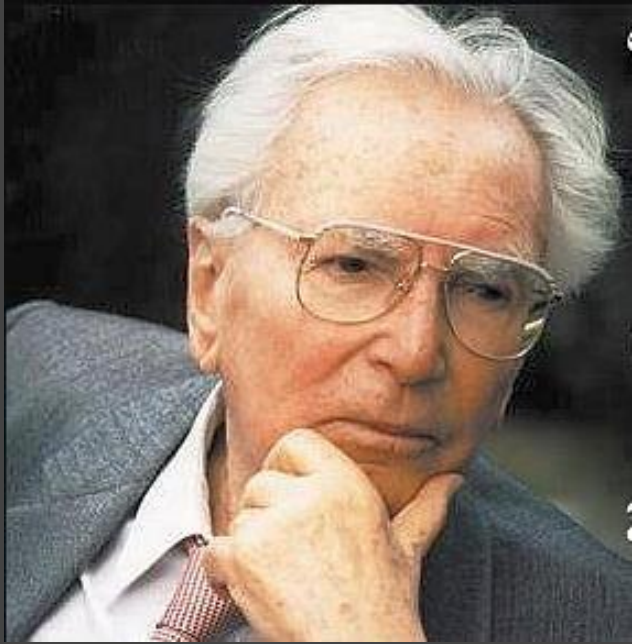
SLU- 65.0% strongly agree

If we take man as he is, we make him worse, but if we take man as he should be, we make him capable of becoming what he can be.

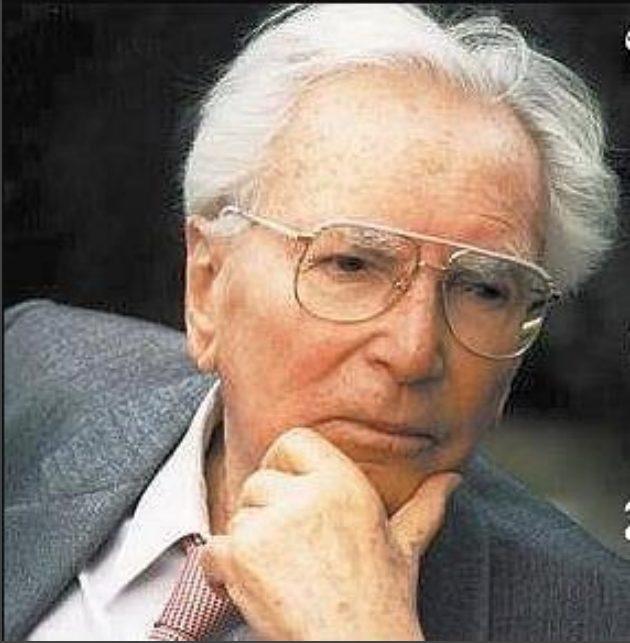
Viktor Frankl

The Importance of Meaning

Viktor Frankl

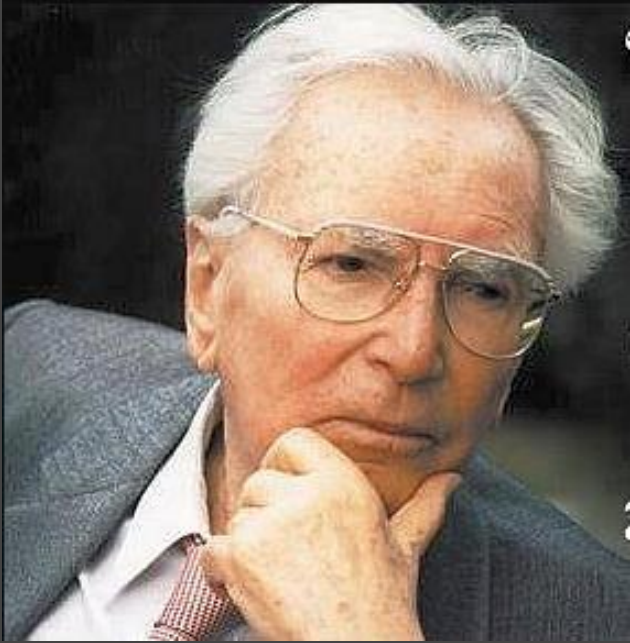


Viktor Frankl



There is nothing in the world, I venture to say, that would so effectively help one to survive even the worst conditions as the knowledge that there is a meaning in one's life.

Viktor Frankl



There is nothing in the world, I venture to say, that would so effectively help one to survive even the worst conditions as the knowledge that there is a meaning in one's life.

There is much wisdom in the words of Nietzsche, "He who has a why to live for can bear almost any how."

