

STRESS AND WELLNESS CLINIC (SWC) IMPROVES COLLEGE STUDENT SUCCESS AND WELL- BEING

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PRESENTATION OVERVIEW

- ▶ Research on the benefits of the Stress & Wellness Model
- ▶ Services/interventions provided at the SWC
- ▶ Experiential section: Case study & example interventions
- ▶ Impact of the SWC on the center functioning
- ▶ Discussion and Questions



THEORY AND RESEARCH ON THE BENEFITS OF THE SWC MODEL

- Focus on benefits of SWC in two areas:
 - Student Success
 - Meeting the needs of diverse students
 - College adjustment
 - Retention
 - Psychological Well-Being
 - Stress-related disorders
 - Mindfulness
 - Coping skills



THEORIES SUPPORTING SWC

- Positive Coping (Cummins & Nistico, 2002; Greenglass & Fiksenbaum, 2009; Shiota, 2006)
- Self-Regulation (Folkman & Moskowitz, 2000; Higgins et al., 1999)
- Positive Psychology (Seligman et al., 2005)
- Prevention



RESEARCH ON SWC AND STUDENT SUCCESS

- Meeting the needs of diverse students
 - Racial/ethnic minority students, student veterans, athletes, and International students are examples of student groups who collectively experience higher than average rates of stress compared to majority students (Moradi & Hasan, 2004; Wilson & Pritchard, 2005; Shenoy, 2000).
 - Reducing stress through SWC services may expand the coping resources of underrepresented students and promote a psychologically healthier campus climate.



RESEARCH ON SWC AND STUDENT SUCCESS (CONT.)

○ College adjustment

- Typically, academic and demographic variables have been evaluated in relation to academic adjustment.
- Emotional health of students is a predictor of GPA, specifically higher stress levels is associated with lower GPA and intent to dropout (Pritehard & Wilson, 2004).

○ Retention

- SWC services that reduce stress are promising for increasing retention, especially for underrepresented students.



RESEARCH ON SWC AND STUDENT WELL-BEING

- SWC helps students develop and practice specific coping skills. The skills developed in SWC align with current research on the benefits of:
 - Mindfulness practices (Davis & Hayes, in press; Delgado et al., 2010; Jimenez et al., 2010; Williams et al., 2007);
 - Biofeedback (Hasset et al., 2007; Karavidas et al., 2007; McCraty et al., 1998; Siepman et al., 2008; Thurber, 2006);
 - Self-care (Herman & Davis, 2004; Li et al., 2009; Tempesta et al., 2010).



CASE 1: MARY

- ▶ 22 Married non-Hispanic White Female
- ▶ Presenting Concerns: high levels of anxiety, obsessive thinking, self-esteem issues, difficulty managing stress; some marital issues
- ▶ CCAPS: Gen. Anxiety (70, high) & Family Distress (60, high)
- ▶ Self-Care: no exercise, lack of appetite, difficulty falling asleep; no substance use
- ▶ Social Functioning: spousal conflict; no friends; church
- ▶ Academic Functioning: GPA 3.5, regularly attends class
- ▶ Current Coping: working hard in school, cleaning, controlling husband
- ▶ Spirituality: LDS (Mormon), religion – source of support



CASE DISCUSSION

- How would you work with Mary within your center?
- What do you wish you could do that your system does not offer?





STRESS AND WELLNESS CLINIC



WHAT DID WE WANT?

- Holistic approach
- Individual attention
- **Ability to serve many clients**
- Alternative to traditional therapy
- No diagnosis
- **Clinical time savings**



MISSION OF SWC

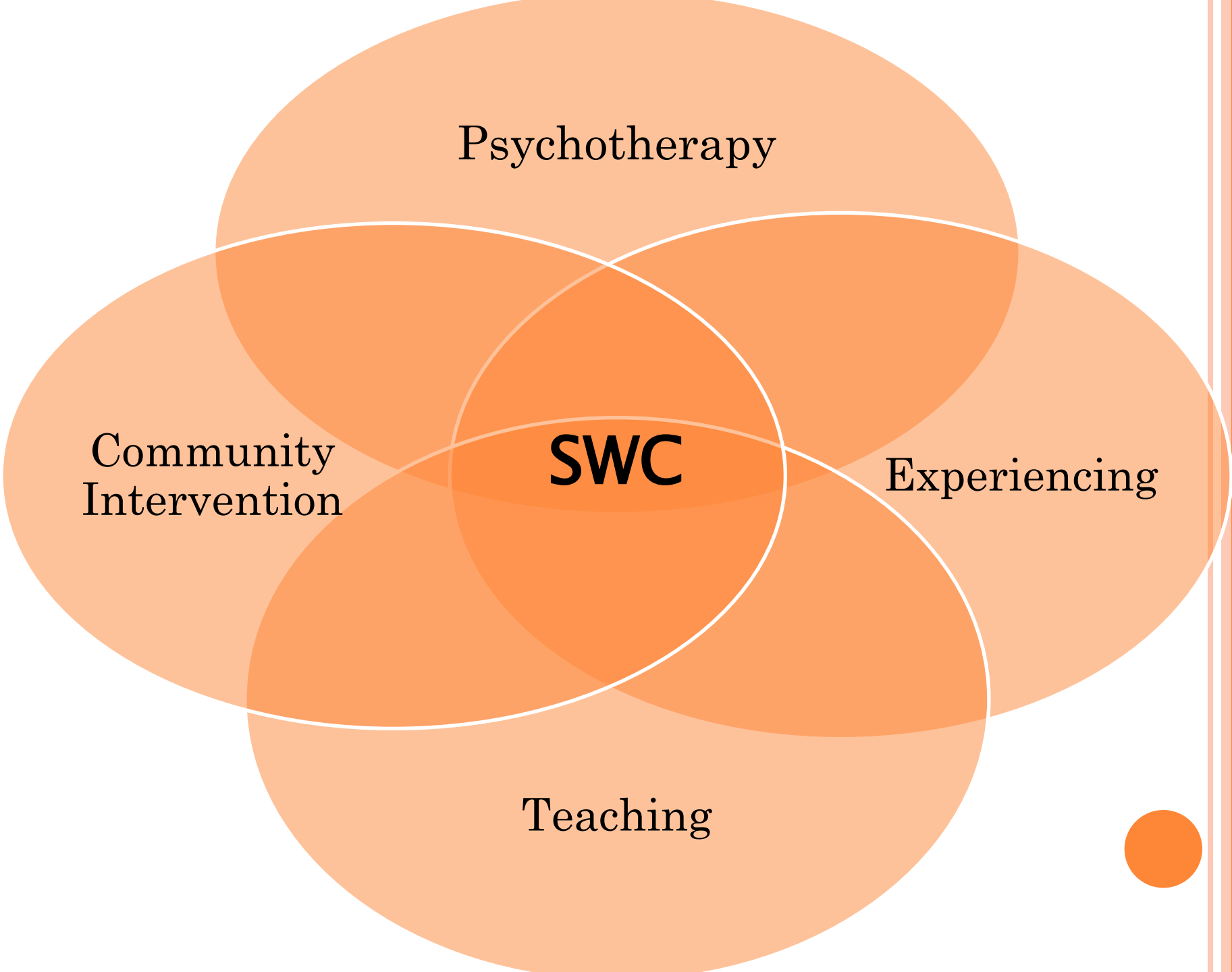
Our mission is to improve and promote well-being of UT students through services focused on the development of stress management and general coping skills.



SWC VS. TRADITIONAL THERAPY

- ▶ Structured & goal-oriented
- ▶ Very brief (3 hrs tops)
- ▶ Counselor's major role: provide information, teach skills, give recommendations, & provide referrals
- ▶ Process: more linear
- ▶ Focus: coping skills & behavioral change
- ▶ More flexible & exploratory
- ▶ Longer-term
- ▶ Counselor's major role: provide guidance & support in self-discovery & change
- ▶ Process: more non-linear
- ▶ Focus: transformation & growth





Psychotherapy

Community
Intervention

SWC

Experiencing

Teaching



RAISING AWARENESS OF STRESS & WELLNESS ON CAMPUS

○ Goals:

- Informing students of services
- Raising awareness of wellness
- Providing tools to manage stress and improve quality of life

○ Marketing:

- SWC Posters
- SWC Website
- SWC Brochure
- Campus events, tabling (e.g., VOLAWARE)
- Students listserve



Stress & Wellness Clinic

counselingcenter.utk.edu/wellness

“Stress is the trash of modern life - we all generate it but if you don't dispose of it properly, it will pile up and overtake your life.” ~ Jeb Dickerson

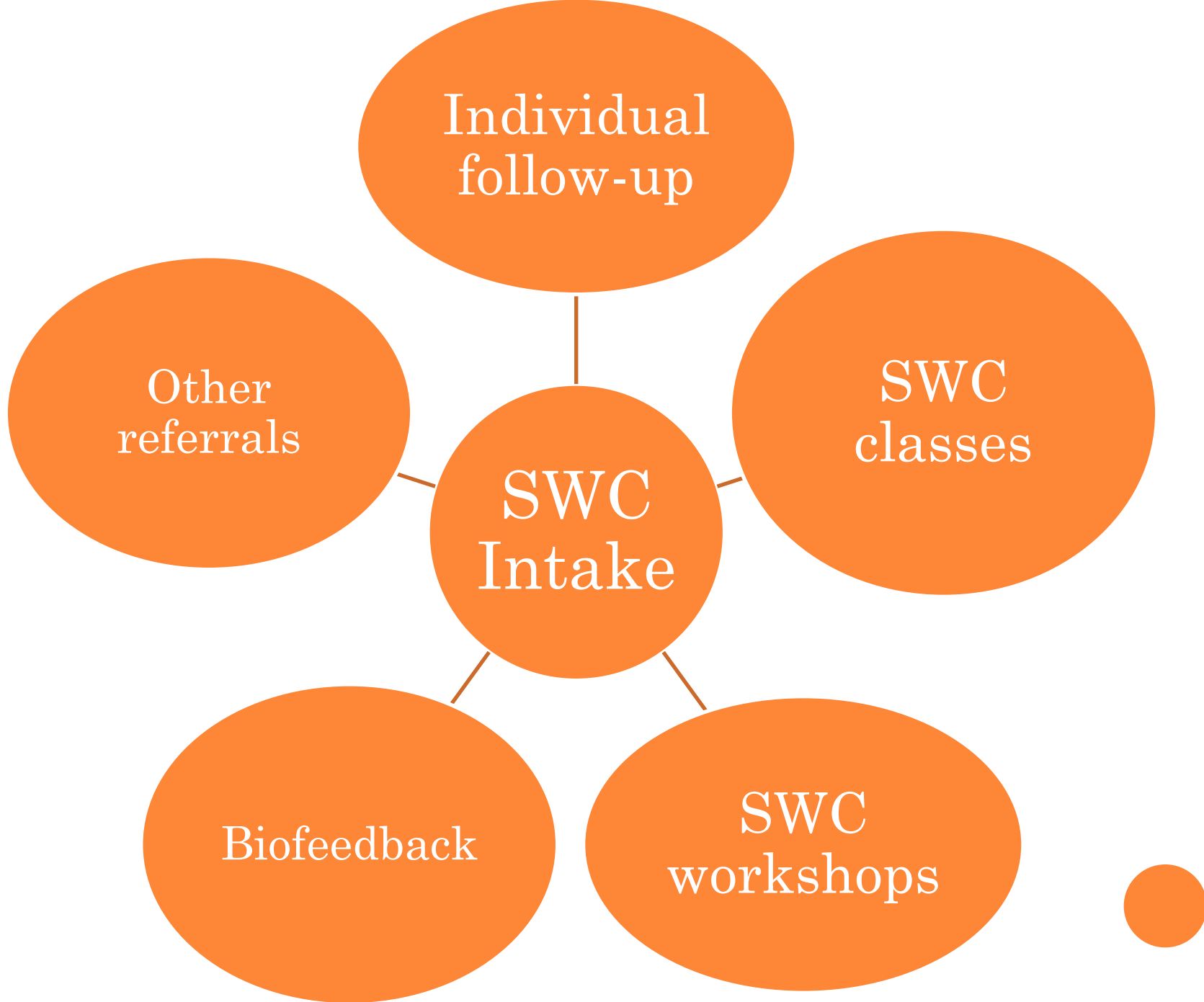


Stress & Wellness Clinic



“The time to relax
is when you don’t
have time for it.”
~ Sydney Harris

counselingcenter.utk.edu/wellness



THE SWC INTAKE

- Holistic Assessment:
- Presenting concern
- Sources of current stress
- Symptoms
- Current coping
- Lifestyle/health habits
 - Sleep, Exercise, & Eating
 - Substance use
 - Spirituality/religion
 - Social support
 - Academics & work
 - Physical health
 - Leisure



DEVELOPING AN INDIVIDUALIZED WELLNESS PLAN

- Identifying and setting goals
- Identifying targets
- Plan of action



SWC INTERVENTIONS: CLASSES

1. Meditation
2. Coping with Anxiety
3. Mindfulness for Stress Reduction and Wellness
4. Making and Keeping Friends
5. Yoga for Emotional Well-Being



YOGA FOR EMOTIONAL WELL-BEING

- Focusing on both mind and body through:
 - Guided meditation
 - Breathing techniques
 - Movement/poses
- Each class is built around a specific theme:
 - *E.g.: Letting go, Joy, Good Enough, Balance, etc.*
 - Theme is continuously explored throughout the class & connections to the life *off the mat* are being made
- Students feedback (Survey):
 - “Felt more peaceful afterwards”
 - “Feeling of joy persisted throughout the week”
 - “Made me feel calm and relaxed. Helped me to release some of the issues I had in my head”



YOGA BREAK

- Breath of Joy
- Goddess pose



SWC INTERVENTIONS: WORKSHOPS

- Assertiveness
- Cognitive strategies for stress reduction
- Coping with panic
- Improving sleep
- Managing the stress of finals
- Mind-body strategies for stress reduction
- Overcoming test anxiety
- Time management



SWC INTERVENTIONS: BIOFEEDBACK

- Uses emWave PC stress relief system
- Assists individuals in reaching a state of psychophysiological coherence
- Teaches clients a technique focused on regulating heart rate variability



SWC INTERVENTIONS: INDIVIDUAL FOLLOW-UP

- Up to 5 sessions (30 min long)
- Typically bi-weekly appointments
- Focus: education, support, & overcoming barriers to change
- Homework assignments:
 - Practice skills
 - Complete readings
 - Implement life style changes
 - Behavioral/experimental assignments



REVISITING CASE 1: MARY

- ▶ 22 Married non-Hispanic White Female
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CASE 1: SWC INDIVIDUALIZED WELLNESS PLAN

- ▶ Goals:
 - Reduce anxiety & learn how to manage it
 - Develop stress management skills
 - Address marital conflict (couple's counseling)
- ▶ Targets:
 - Exercise
 - Anxiety & stress management
 - Need for control
- ▶ Wellness Plan:
 - Readings: causes of anxiety
 - Workshops: stress management
 - Biofeedback
 - Mindfulness class

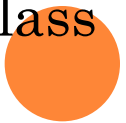


CASE 1: WORKING TOGETHER

- Stress & anxiety management: deep breathing, biofeedback, self-compassion
- Exercise: incorporating yoga and cardio training w/husband
- Identified need to control as an issue – experiential behavioral approach + mindfulness



CASE 1: RESULTS

- ▶ Reduced need to control & increased acceptance & self-acceptance
 - ▶ Anxiety & stress reduction
 - ▶ Consistent exercise routine
 - ▶ Improved sleep
 - ▶ Client continues to use biofeedback & attend mindfulness class
 - ▶ How much clinical time spent?
 - INDIVIDUAL: 30 min intake, 30 min biofeedback training, 2x30 min follow-ups
 - GROUP: 2 hrs of workshops, 8 sessions of Mindfulness class
- 

SWC RESULTS: 2ND YEAR AND COUNTING

- 285 intakes conducted
- 249 follow-up appts
- 70 clts learned biofeedback
- SWC classes:
 - Five 8-session mindfulness classes taught
 - 21 sessions of coping w/anxiety
 - 17 sessions of yoga
 - 16 sessions of social skills
 - 12 sessions of meditation
- Multiple workshops



SWC MODEL STRENGTHS & CHALLENGES

○ Strengths:

- Provides needed services for lower priority clients.
- Meets client needs w/customized interventions
- Strength-based; Life skills-oriented

Challenges:

- Helping clients who need more than SWC can offer
- Dealing with clients' initial resistance to SWC referral
- Staff: Overcoming staff bias towards referrals for individual therapy; Engaging all staff into SWC work
- SWC office space





**Practice
time:**

*Grounding
Meditation*



DISCUSSION & QUESTIONS

