



COORDINATED  
BEHAVIORAL  
CARE

# EMOTIONAL HEALTH IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

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THANK YOU SAMHSA!



***SAMHSA***

Substance Abuse and Mental Health  
Services Administration

# COORDINATED BEHAVIORAL CARE

*Coordinated Behavioral Care (CBC) is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the quality of care for New Yorkers with serious mental illness, chronic health conditions and/or substance use disorders, through a Health Home, an Independent Practice Association (IPA) and other innovative programs, such as Preventative Case Management (PCM) services.*

*CBC seeks to create a healthcare environment where New Yorkers—especially those most impacted by social determinants of health—receive coordinated, individualized and culturally competent community-based care that is effective in preventing and managing chronic physical and behavioral health conditions.*



## CBC TRAINING INSTITUTE

Coordinated Behavioral Care's Training Institute provides innovative, interactive, culturally sensitive training and professional development to New York State's mental health providers. With an eye on adult learning theory, our trainings are cutting-edge, and delivered with compassion for and understanding of the complex demands on mental health professionals. It is our mission to ensure that we provide evidence-based training on a variety of topics to assist providers in supporting the service recipients on their caseload. With a love of learning ourselves, we create our trainings to be the scaffolding upon which a successful, rewarding career of service can be built.

Here are some previous trainings:

- Supporting LGBTQIA+ Clients
- HIPAA and Working from Home
- Pathway Home Model Panel Discussion
- Anti-racism Training
- Interview: This is How I Recovered From Mental Illness
- Working with Clients with Borderline Personality Disorder
- Medication Management for Non-Prescribers
- Helping Your Participants Reach Their Dreams
- Treating Seasonal Affective Disorder





# PAUSE

## CREATE SPACE FOR BEING HERE

- Sit upright in comfortable position with your back straight, but not tight, eyes gently closed.
- Feel your bottom making contact with the chair, feet flat on the floor
- Take 3 Slow Deep Breaths - Inhale and Exhale same length of time

# LEARNING GOALS

- Understand why uncertainty about the future causes worry, anxiety and stress
- Why some people become more anxious and stressed than other people facing the same situation
- How can each of us learn to handle uncertainty in our lives better, especially by practicing Self-care and Self-compassion
- How can we use the same skills and understanding of Self-care and Compassion to help our clients deal with their difficulties



# AT THE BEST OF TIMES LIFE IS UNCERTAIN





# WHAT IS UNCERTAINTY?

- Uncertainty is the result of having limited knowledge about an occurrence or event, making it difficult to control, plan, or predict a future outcome.
- Most people are creatures of habit and prefer to have a plan or routine in place. When things deviate from our plans it can feel like losing control, contributing to increases in anxiety or stress.



# UNCERTAINTY AND COVID-19

## *WHY HAS THIS TIME BEEN SO HARD?*

- Rick Hanson, a psychologist, writes that as human beings we have 3 basic needs
  - Safety
  - Satisfaction
  - Connection
- When we perceive that these needs are met we are able to meet challenges in a responsive and helpful way.
- When we perceive that any of these needs are unmet, it is easier to slip into our fight-flight-freeze response and stress, fear and negativity can take over.

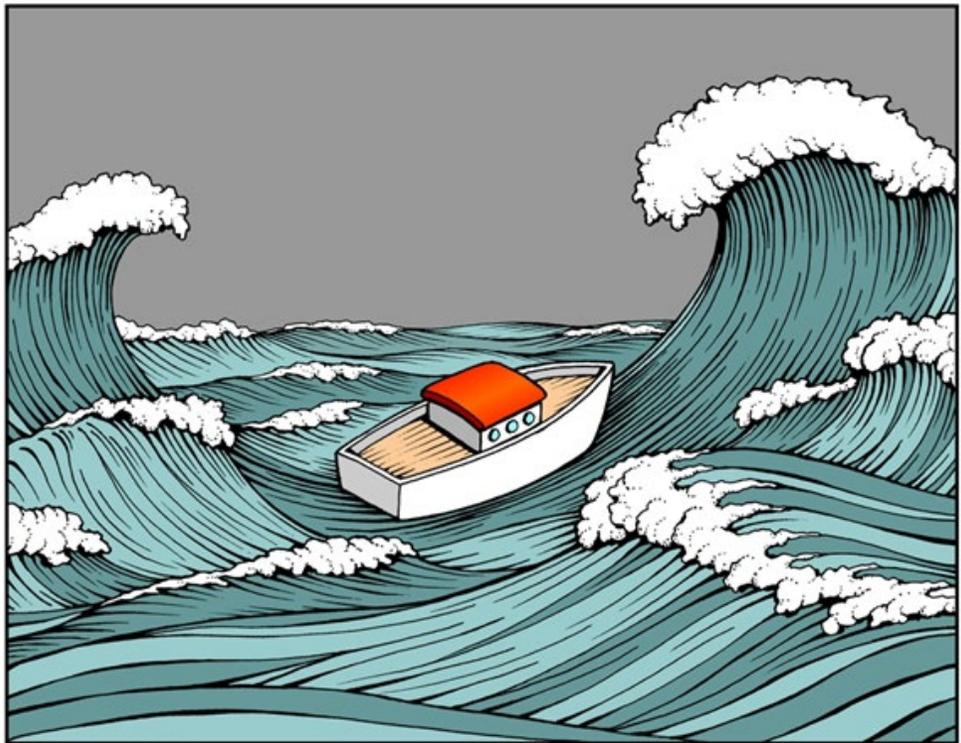


# SWIMMING IN AN OCEAN OF ANXIETY





# WE ARE NOT “ALL IN THE SAME BOAT”



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# POLL: WHAT IS YOUR NUMBER ONE COVID WORRY?

1. Health – mine or a family members?
2. Safety - bringing the virus home from work?
3. Job – keeping mine or someone else in your household?
4. Education – is my child suffering or falling behind?
5. Multiple – I can't choose
6. Other – write in the chat box

# THE NEW NORMAL



*“I don’t just want a new normal,  
I want a new, good normal.”*



# WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ‘WORRY’ “ STRESS AND ANXIETY?

- ‘Worry’ is the mind’s attempt to plan for the future. It is all those ‘what ifs’ that can preoccupy our thinking?





# WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ‘WORRY’ ‘STRESS’ AND ‘ANXIETY’ ?

- Stress is the bodily and brain signs and symptoms that we experience when we face a situation
  - Butterfly feeling in your stomach
  - Breathing fast
  - Sweating
  - Problems sleeping or sleeping a lot
  - Change in appetite
  - Short temper
  - Wanting to isolate
- Signs and symptoms usually go away when the situation is over



# WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ‘WORRY’ STRESS AND ‘ANXIETY’ ?

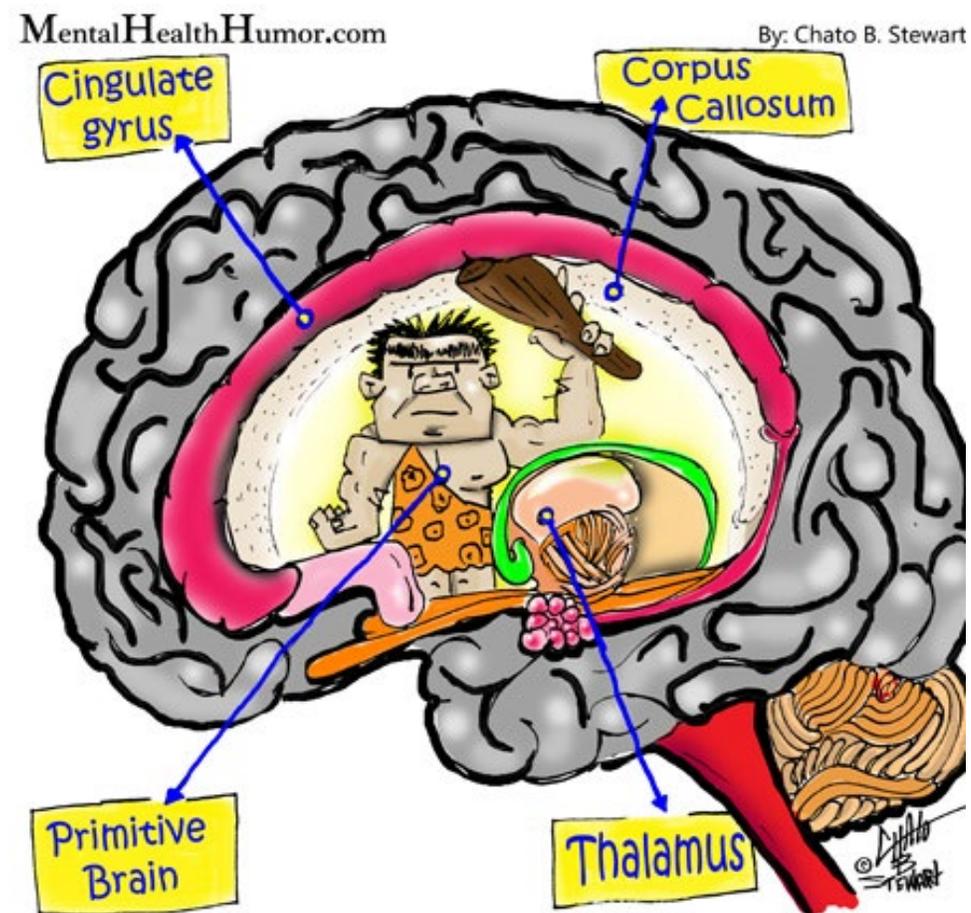


- ‘Anxiety’ shares most of the signs and symptoms of stress
  - Butterfly feeling in your stomach
  - Breathing fast
  - Sweating
  - Problems sleeping or sleeping a lot
  - Change in appetite
  - Short temper
  - Wanting to isolate
- Often feels like it is coming from within
- Hangs on after a situation is over – can feel like a weakness
- Focused on the future



# WHY DOES UNCERTAINTY CAUSE WORRY AND ANXIETY?

- Worry and anxiety are adaptive.
- This is based on thousands of years of evolution starting with our ancestors worrying about getting eating by whatever was rustling in the bushes.

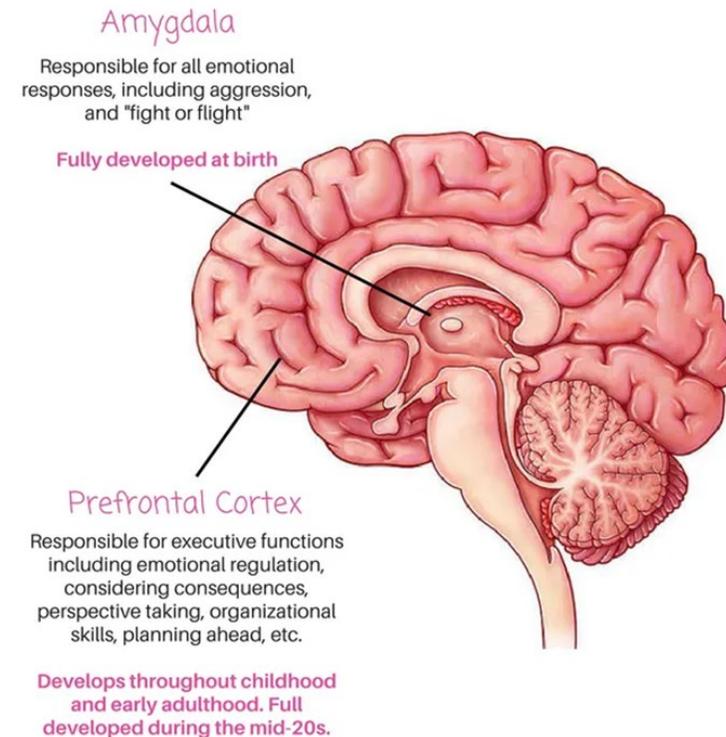


The Limbic System's Primitive Brain

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# FURTHER ALONG ON THE EVOLUTIONARY PATH

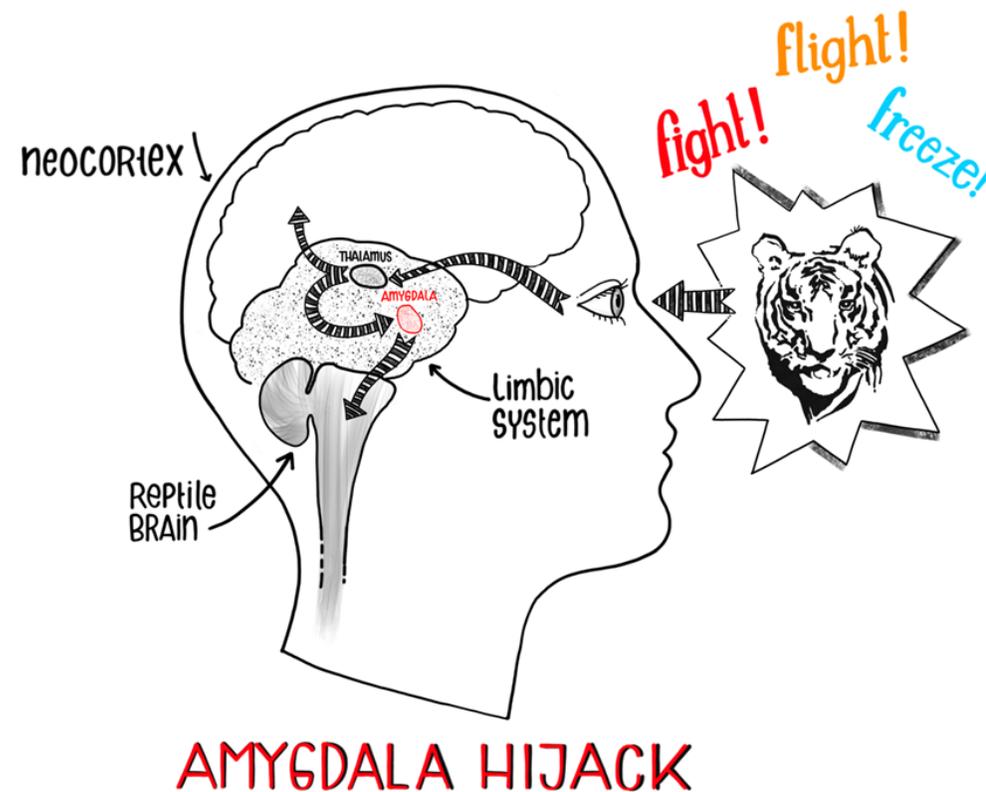
- During the evolution of our species we developed a more complex brain with added structures.
- One of these structures is the frontal lobe – the home of planning and reasoning. This is the part of the brain that is supposed to manage our reactions to things that happen....or might happen.





# OK – WHAT COULD GO WRONG WITH THAT?

- The way our brains are wired the signals to the amygdala and then the rest of the body travel faster than the signals to the frontal lobe.
- The question is whether the rational part of our mind, which is slower to react, can take control of the situation or does the stress response run the show.

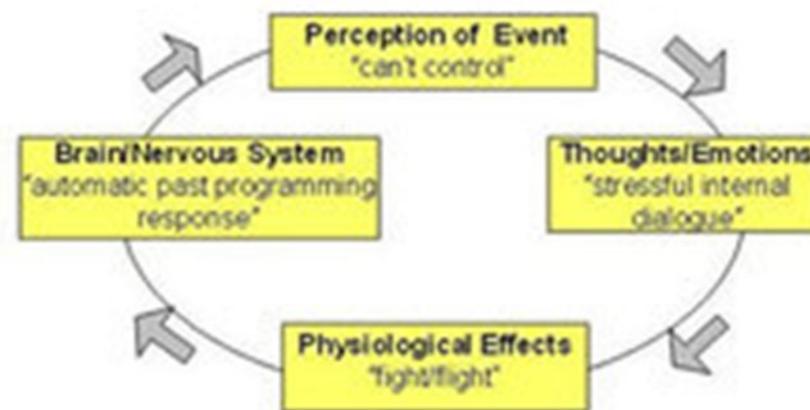




# THE WORRYING AND ANXIETY LOOP

- Worrying about a situation involves the mind sending a danger signal to the body.
- The body responds to this danger signal by readying itself for action. Our brain experiences the bodily readiness response as anxiety.
- Our mind doesn't generally like the feeling of anxiety and tries to control it.
- Issues arise when our anxiety overwhelms the rational mind

**The Stress Cycle**





# ANOTHER WAY EVOLUTION PLAYS A FACTOR



- Most of the threats/worry we face today are not imminent ‘life and death’ situations.
- But, our brains are not so good at telling the difference.
- The threats/worries also tend to be more repetitive and stretched out over a longer period of time.



# UNCERTAINTY CAN BE WORSE THAN REAL BAD THINGS HAPPENING?

- Numerous scientific studies have shown that people are more stressed when they are uncertain of an outcome than if they know for sure they are going to experience a negative outcome.

*“I’ve had a lot of worries in my life, much of which never happened.”*

*Mark Twain*



# EVERYONE IS DIFFERENT

- Worry and anxiety are universals, but we don't all handle stress the same.
- Genetics, family circumstances, societal influences, trauma all impact on how we handle worry and anxiety.
- There is a continuum between normal and problematic worry, anxiety and stress.



# THE GOOD NEWS

- The good news is that we can change our wiring by educating ourselves, acquiring new problem-solving skills, and through self-care and compassion. The term scientists use for this ability at any stage of our lives to change our wiring is “neuroplasticity”.





# THREE ELEMENTS OF SELF-COMPASSION





# THE GOLDEN RULES

*“Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”*

- **The Golden Rule of Self-Compassion**

*“Do unto yourself what you do for a good friend who is feeling bad about themselves and suffering.”*



# THREE ELEMENTS OF SELF-COMPASSION

- Self-Kindness
  - When times are difficult or we make a mistake we offer ourselves kindness and encouragement instead of criticism, blame or shame.
  - When we feel inadequate we offer ourselves unconditional warmth and acceptance.
  - When life is hard and challenging we actively soothe and comfort ourselves.

# THREE ELEMENTS OF SELF-COMPASSION

- Common Humanity
  - We recognize that everyone is flawed, makes mistakes, fails and experiences and occasional self-doubt.
  - Everything is not always going to go well or easily in our lives.
  - Life entails periods of suffering and pain – no one is exempt.
  - Many of us have a tendency to think that we are the only one's who are so flawed, error prone, and full of misfortune. These thoughts tend to leave us feeling alone and isolated.
  - By recognizing that all of us feeling suffering, are flawed and make mistakes we can feel connected instead of isolated and alone.



# THREE ELEMENTS OF SELF-COMPASSION

- Mindfulness
  - Mindfulness involves being open and accepting of the reality of the present moment in our lives – allowing thoughts, emotions, and sensations to enter awareness without trying to avoid them or push them away.
  - We avoid the tendency to get wrapped up in problem-solving to make the feelings go away.
  - By developing our capacity to stay with what is going on we give ourselves the time and space to offer ourselves kindness and appreciate our connectedness to everyone else who is going through a hard time.



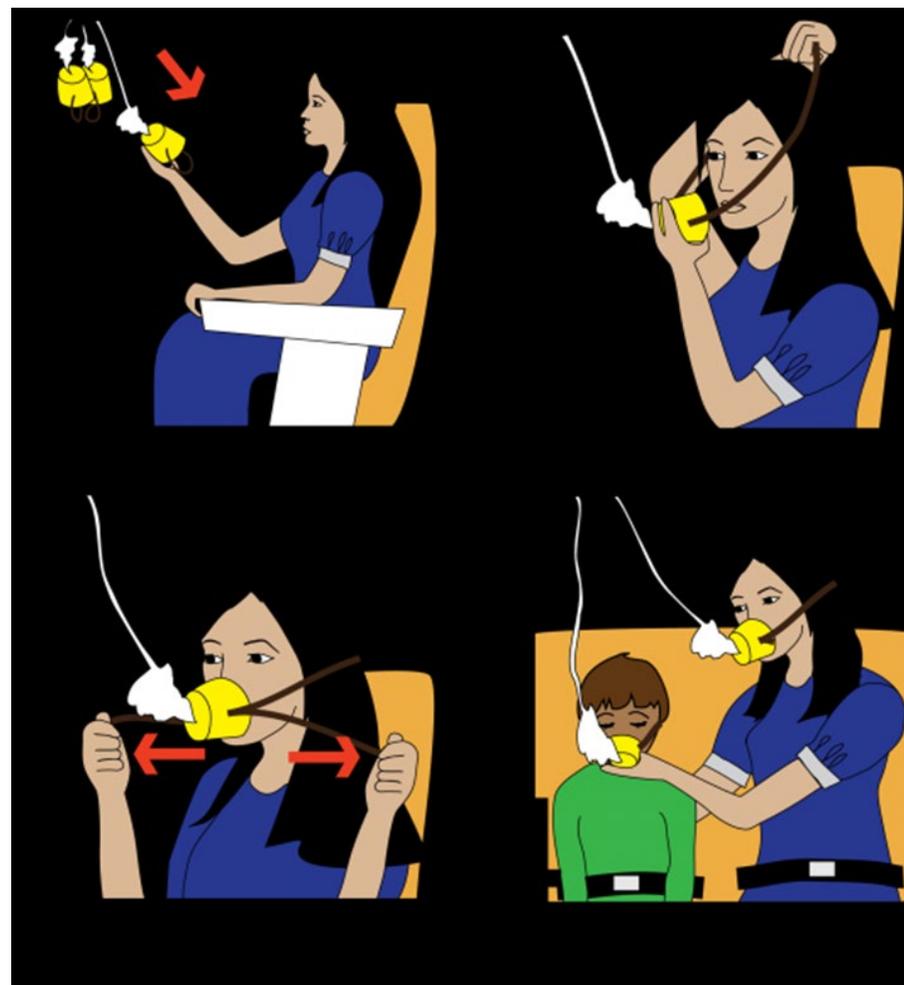
# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MINIMIZE THE ANXIETY AND STRESS THAT COMES WITH UNCERTAINTY

- Acknowledge and accept the situation – it's totally understandable
- Accept that there is no such thing as absolute certainty or predictability – the best we can ever do is assess the possibility or probability of an event happening
- Accept that there are situations that you cannot control – concentrate on the parts of the situation that you do have some control over.
- Educate yourself about the situation
- Practice Self-Compassion
- Practice Self-Care – sleep, exercise, eating well
- Connect with family, friends, spiritual communities, volunteer groups



# WORKING WITH CLIENTS

- Until now we have been concentrating on ourselves.
- That isn't being self centered or selfish
- Clients are experiencing the same things we are and they may even be more vulnerable to worry, anxiety and stress. It may be harder for them to access the same coping strategies





# WORKING WITH CLIENTS

- The clients we work with are affected by all the same things we are:
  - Concerns about health
  - Disruption of routine
  - Isolation from family, friends and faith communities
- They are also prone to additional factors that can exacerbate the impact of the pandemic on them
  - Trauma – reduces ability to manage stress/so many of our clients have suffered
  - Co-morbid medical conditions – increased vulnerability to illness
  - Existing emotional vulnerabilities related to their behavioral health diagnosis
  - Pre-existing tendency to isolate.
  - Issues related to a lack of adequate access to Social Determinants of Health
  - Changes in how they access to care - telehealth, medication



# THE THINGS WE DO TO HELP CLIENTS ARE THE SAME THINGS WE DO FOR OURSELVES AND OUR FAMILIES

- Practice basic self-care, e.g. getting enough sleep, healthy eating, getting outdoors, leisure activities
- Learn some simple Mindfulness and Self-Compassion techniques
- Connecting via video with family and friends
- Access streaming religious services
- Help someone who might need help with shopping or errands
- Treating them with empathy and compassion





# LOVING-KINDNESS MEDITATION

## *For Yourself:*

- May I be safe
- May I be happy
- May I be healthy
- May I accept myself just as I am

## *For Those Who You Love and Are Dear To You*

- May we be safe
- May we be happy
- May we be healthy
- May we accept ourselves just as we are



# RESOURCES

- The Mindful Self-Compassion Workbook – Kristin Neff and Christopher Germer
- Kristin Neff’s website – <http://self-compassion.org>
- Radical Compassion - Tara Brach
- Tara Brach’s podcast
- Various apps – Mindspace, Calm, Insight Timer
- Various podcasts – Ten Percent Happier, Heart Wisdom with Jack Kornfield, Metta Hour Podcast with Sharon Salzberg

# CONTACT INFORMATION



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# ADVICE FROM BOB MARLEY

*Legend: The Best of Bob Marley and the Wailers by Bob Marley & The Wailers on Apple Music*