“Don’t Tell Me to Just Do Self-Care” Trauma-Informed Approaches to Addressing Secondary Traumatic Stress and Burnout

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Agenda

- My Whys – values and belonging
- What is Burnout, Secondary-Traumatic Stress (STS) and related terms?
- Signs and symptoms
- Trauma-Informed Care Approaches to Professional Well-Being

The power of belonging & our own values

- When belonging becomes conditional, organizational safety is compromised and we live in fear
- How can we find ways to stay grounded in our own values without losing ourselves in systems shaped by urgency, scarcity and pressure

Definition of well-being PERMA

- Positive Emotion: feelings associated with **enjoyment** and life satisfaction
- Engagement: flow or focused feeling one experiences when absorbed in an activity fully and in this state one is usually most productive
- **Relationships**: positive engagement and connection with other people, feeling supported
- **Meaning**: connecting with what has value and is found to be worthwhile
- Accomplishment: having goals and ambitions in life and pursuing these just for the sake of it rather than for any reward to be achieved

Seligman, 2011

Loving-Kindness Meditation

Shift towards

Single-based models

Self-Care

Single-level approaches

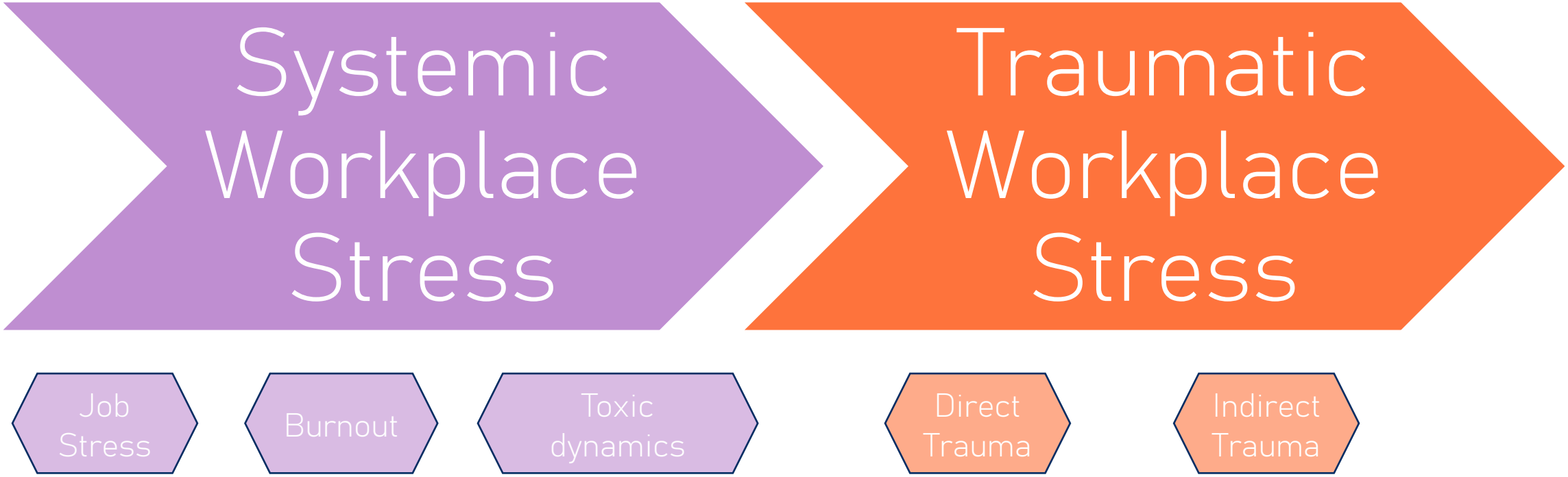
Bifocal models

Organizational level

Individual Level

Adapted from: TEND Academy

The Complex Stress Model



Dr. Pat Fisher, 2016

What are your top sources of stress?

- Heavy caseload or unmanageable workload
- Lack of clarity and supervision
- Lack of funding or job insecurity
- Challenging workplace dynamics (e.g., microaggressions, hostility)
- Emotionally taxing or complex client situations
- Balancing work with personal life
- Limited opportunities for professional growth
- Feeling isolated or unsupported in your role
- Other (please share in chat)

Child serving professionals: at risk

- Between 16%-92% of child welfare professionals suffer STS
- National annual turnover: 14-22% with burnout as main factor
- 21.7% of helping professionals were at high risk for STS
- 24.8% high risk of burnout
- 50% of child protection workers were at high risk of compassion fatigue
- 50% of pediatricians report at least one symptom of burnout

Sheehan et al., 2024; Sprang et al., 2006; Starmer et al., 2024

Main sources of stress

- Excessive caseloads
- Heavy documentation and administrative burden
- Exposure to child trauma
- Staff shortages
- Lack of supervisory support
- Emotional labor
- Limited organizational recognition
- Poor work-life balance

Quotes from child welfare workers

Feeling stressed and overwhelmed: I am the person doing all the home visits and seeing and getting all that information, but my supervisor made that decision only by herself. What I say don't really matter. It is stressful and I don't think this is how we should work. [Vanessa, MSW, 6 years experience]

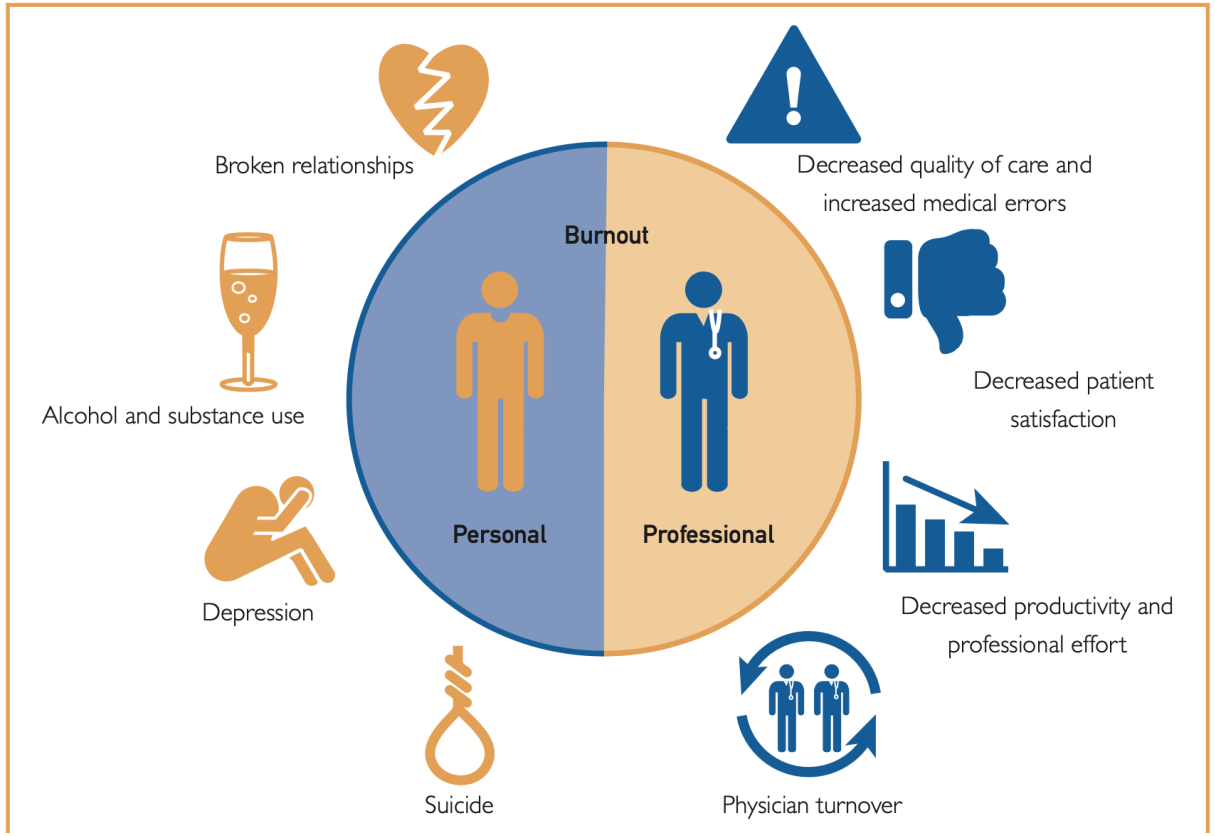
Negative stereotypes: "she called me a baby snatcher and accused me of trying to do anything possible to destroy her family. People have so many stereotypes about this work, and I find that to be stressful".

I feel like a **failure**. I feel that I have failed that family. I find that a lot. I feel that people think I'm failing them because I'm not helping, but I don't have the ability to. I feel like no matter how hard I try to be helpful to families, I crash with the policy and then there will be no room for me to do anything further. [Lucy, BSW, 6 years experience]

It feels very **stressful** for me. I call it **suffering in silence**. You can't tell a client that, oh I agree with you but my manager doesn't. Because as a department, if the department made the decision, well, we made the decision [Anna, MSW, 6 years experience]

Moyo, O. (2024). "Suffering in silence": How social workers in child welfare practice experience and manage burnout.

Consequences

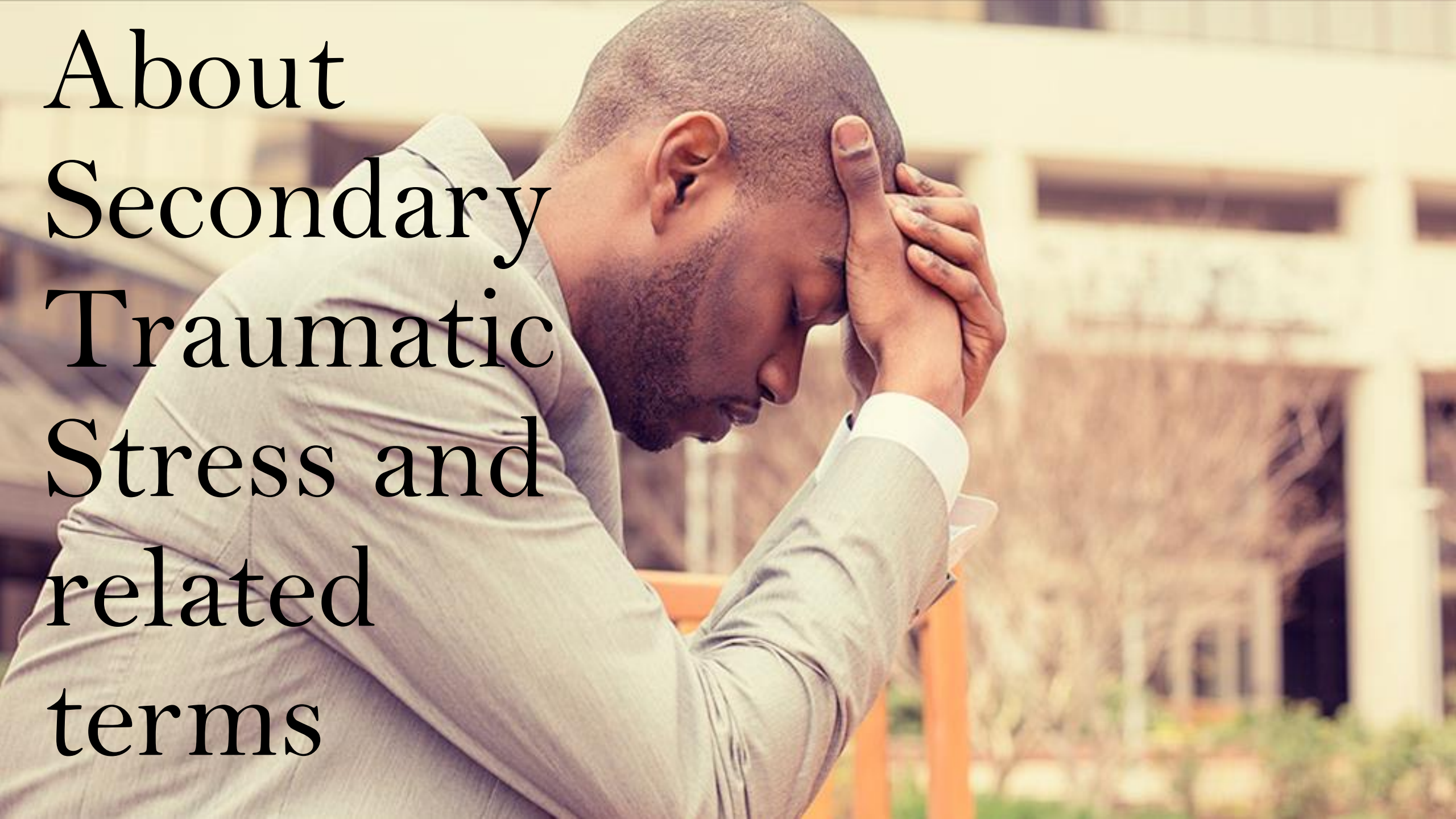


Shanafelt, T. D., & Noseworthy, J. H. (2017, January). Executive leadership and physician well-being: nine organizational strategies to promote engagement and reduce burnout. In *Mayo Clinic Proceedings* (Vol. 92, No. 1, pp. 129-146). Elsevier.

Padlet: What type of support do you need?

- Leadership support and change in organizational culture
- More opportunities to connect with collegues and supervisors
- More supervision/consultation time
- Practical tools: manage stress in the moment, how to listen and help to a colleague, how to establish boundaries

https://padlet.com/kostovazlatina/what-are-your-biggest-sources-of-stress-ddimm52q3bkyvp2m



About Secondary Traumatic Stress and related terms

Secondary Traumatic Stress

- Secondary Traumatic Stress is the emotional distress that results when an individual hears (reads, sees) about the firsthand trauma experiences of another.
- For individuals who care for individuals who have experienced trauma and their families, hearing trauma stories can take an **emotional toll**.
- STS symptoms can range from mild to severe, at which point individuals can develop **post-traumatic stress disorder** (PTSD).

Burnout

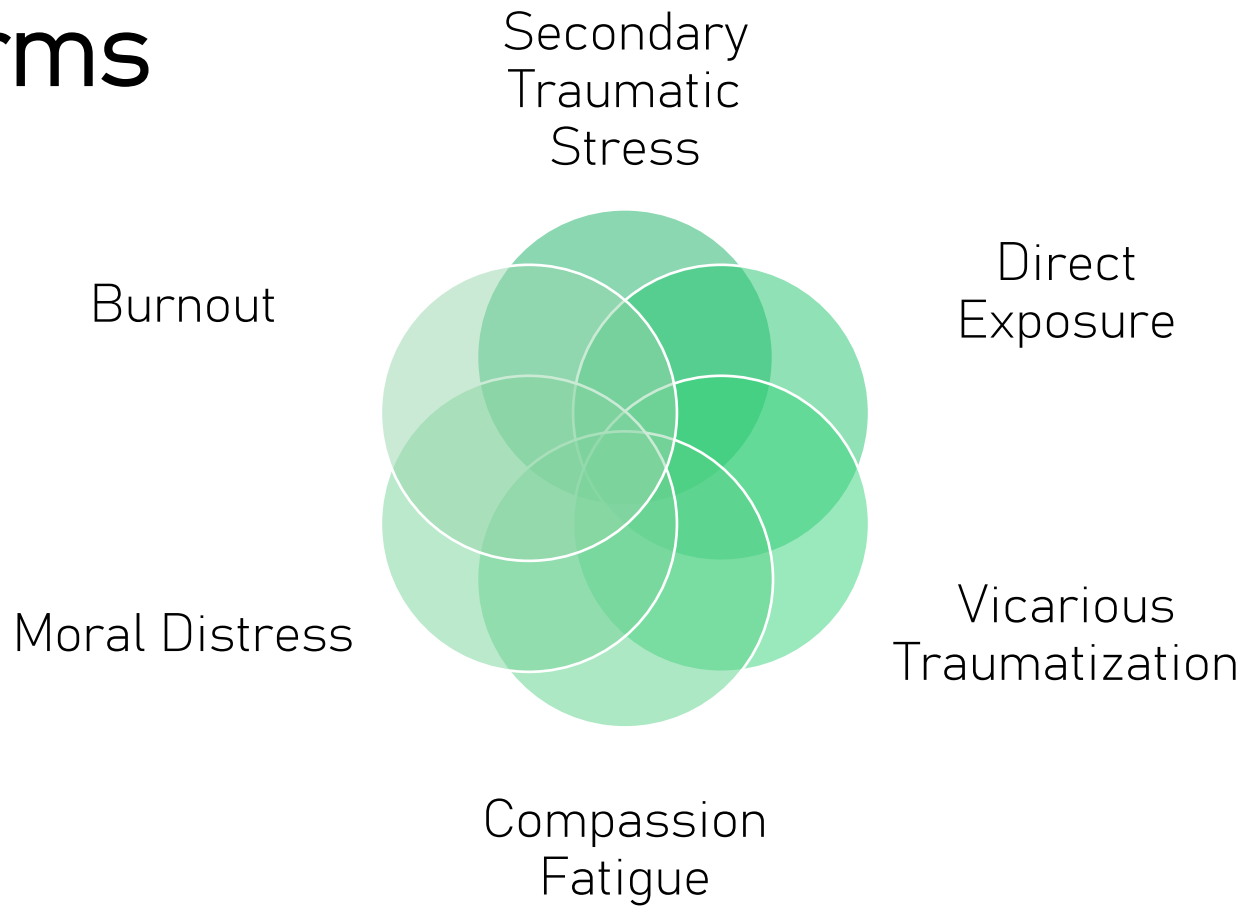
- **Emotional exhaustion** – job demands lead to a lack of equity and reciprocity between workers and service recipients
- **Depersonalization** – feelings of detachment and lowered interest in work
- **Reduced feelings of personal accomplish**ment – perceiving work efforts to be making no difference or ineffective

"I began to stop caring about my clients"

Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1982

Yang, Y. & Hayes, J. A. (2020). Causes and Consequences of Burnout Among Mental Health Professionals. *Psychotherapy, 57* (3), 426-436. doi: 10.1037/pst0000317.

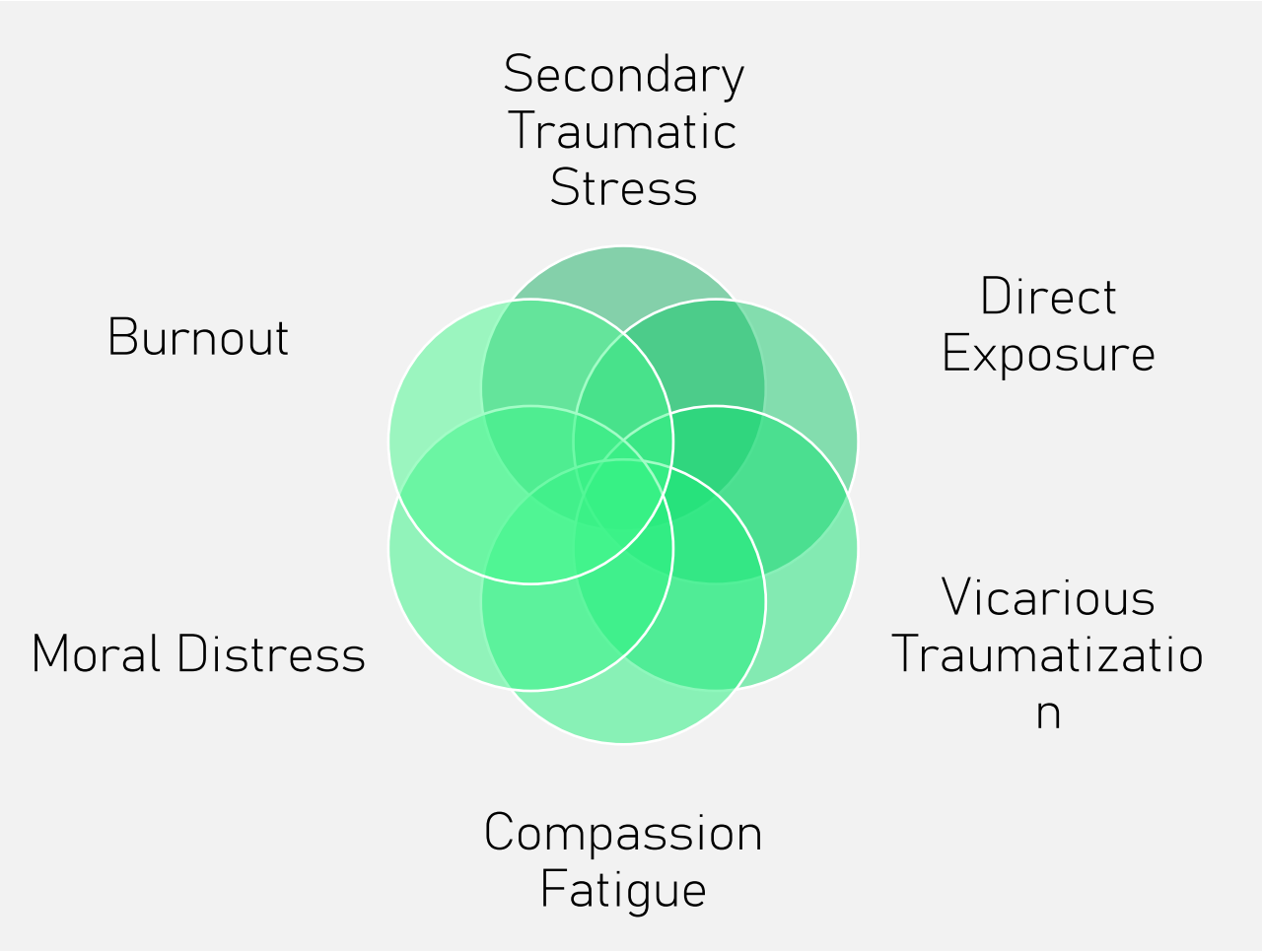
Related terms



Related Terms

Direct Exposure

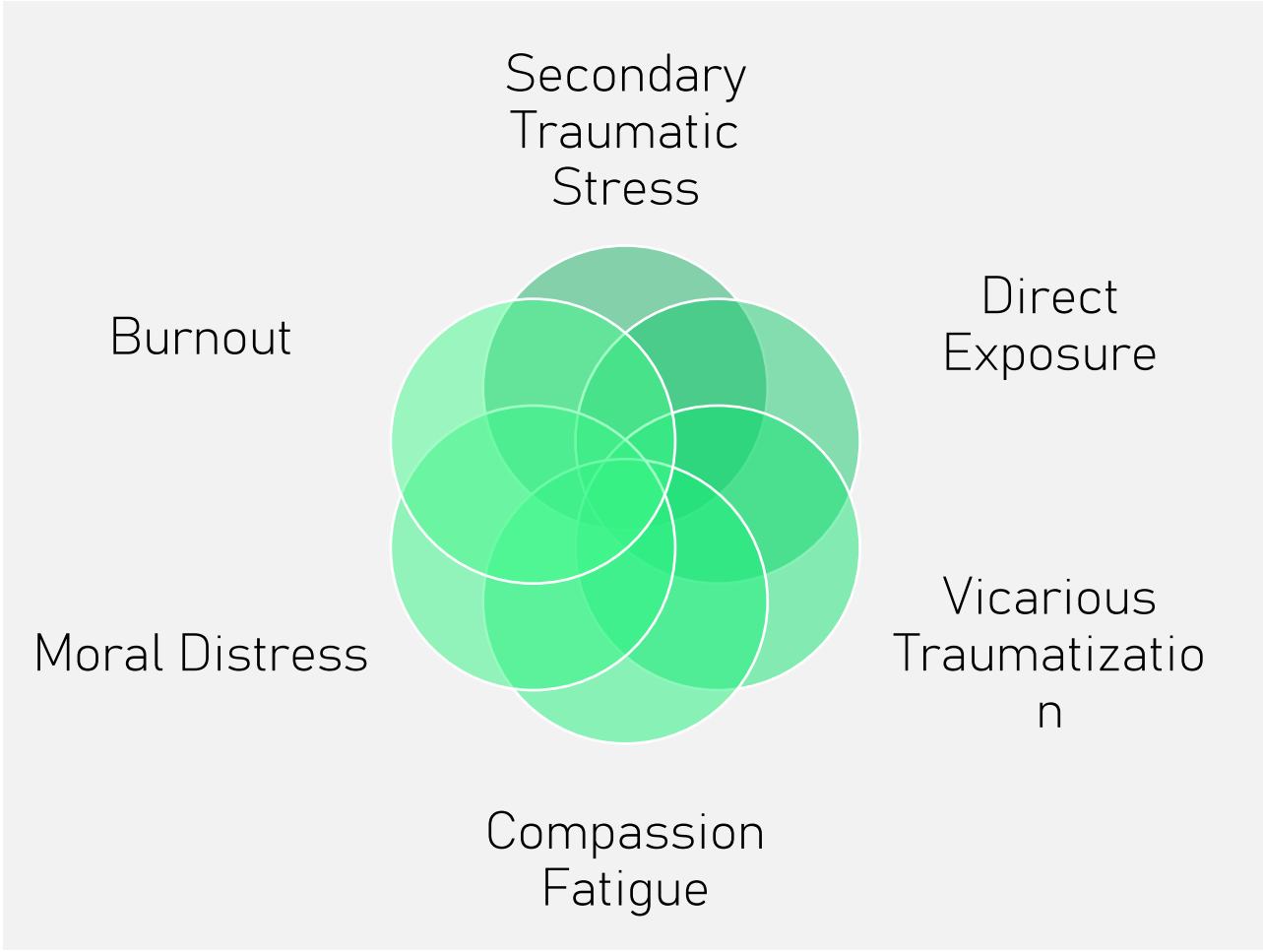
Many child-serving professionals are directly exposed to trauma during the course of carrying out their daily work responsibilities. These are events that involve a direct threat to the provider or witnessing threats to others.



Related Terms

Vicarious Traumatization

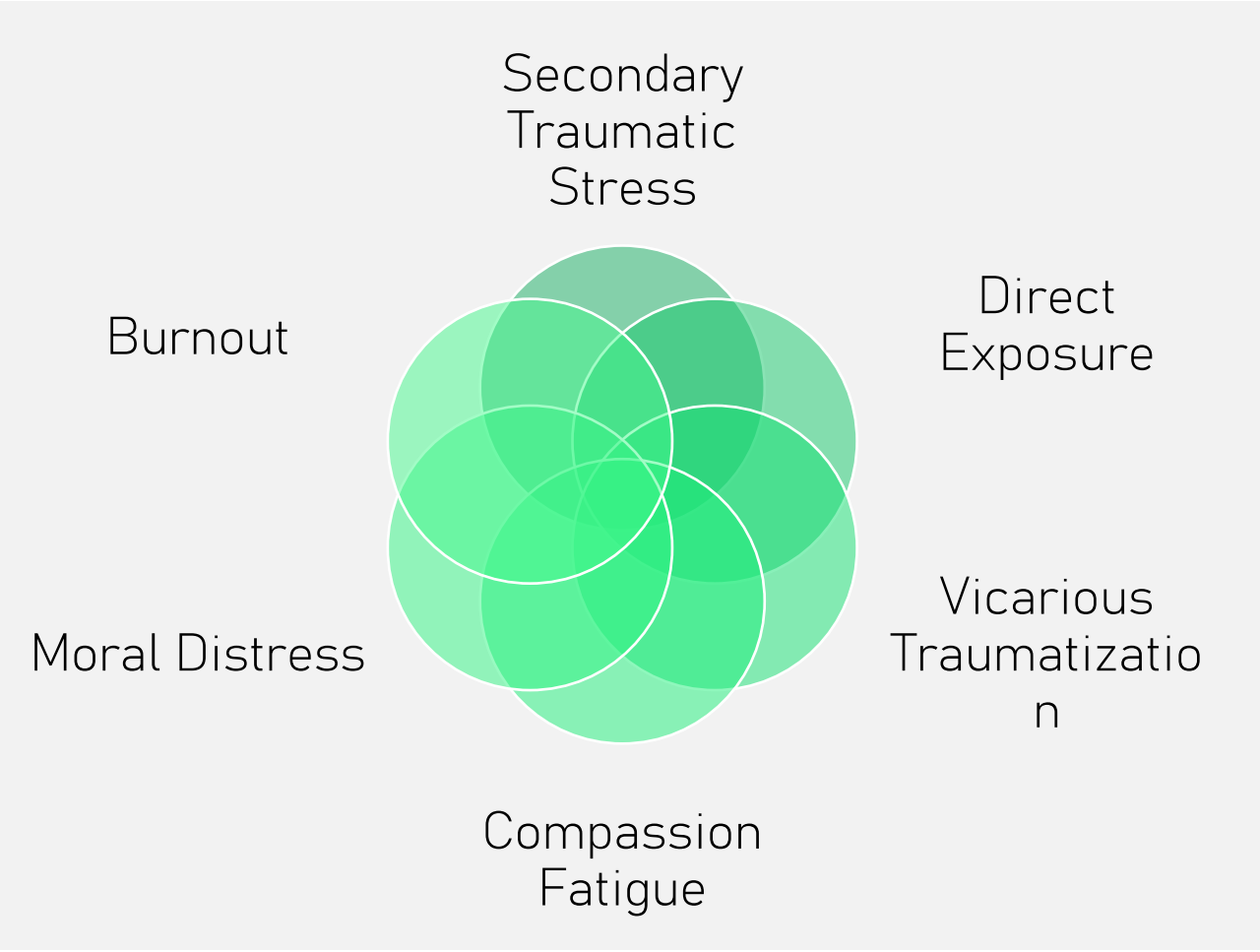
Changes in the *inner experience* of the provider, such as expectations for trust, safety, control, esteem, or intimacy, that result from *cumulative* and *chronic* exposure.



Related Terms

Compassion Fatigue

The physical and emotional exhaustion experienced by those who care for others who are in distress. Reduced capacity or interest in being empathic

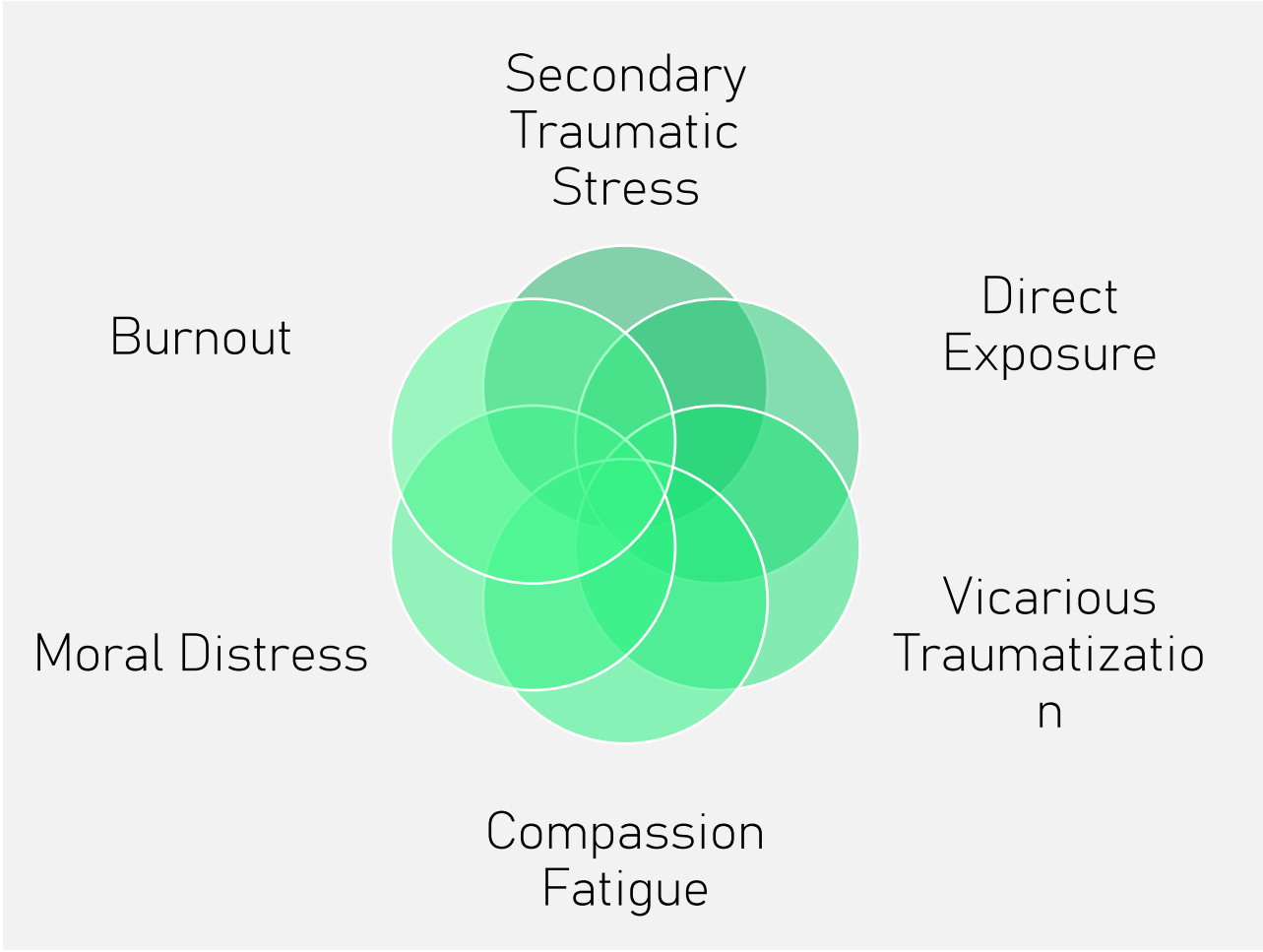


Figley. (1995). Compassion Fatigue: Coping with Secondary Stress Disorder

Related Terms

Moral Distress

Stress that occurs when one believes they know the right thing to do, but institutional or other constraints make it difficult to pursue the desired course of action.



Related Terms

Compassion Satisfaction

- Positive aspects of the work, such as inspiring and rewarding work with students and belief that one's work makes a meaningful contribution to students and society.

TF-CBT Ukraine project: What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger

137 Ukrainian mental health professionals trained in TF-CBT

Low to moderate burnout/STS

High levels of compassion satisfaction

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
GREEN CROSS Academy of Traumatology
Traumatology

ISSN: 1085-9373
https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000562

"What Doesn't Kill You Makes You Stronger"—Professional Quality of Life in Ukrainian Mental Health Care Professionals During the Ongoing War

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Mental health professionals working in the context of war face unique and complex issues related to trauma, stress, and mental health. However, little is known about the Professional Quality of Life (ProQoL) of these professionals in Ukraine since the Russian invasion. Therefore, the aim of this study was to examine the levels and possible predictors of compassion satisfaction, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress (STS) among Ukrainian mental health professionals. A sample of 137 Ukrainian mental health professionals completed an online survey about their ProQoL and their attitudes toward evidence-based practice between May 2022 and February 2023. Data were analyzed descriptively and through multiple regression. Participants reported moderate to high levels of compassion satisfaction ($M = 40.63$, $SD = 4.13$) and low to moderate levels of burnout ($M = 19.74$, $SD = 3.69$) and STS ($M = 19.64$, $SD = 4.32$). Attitudes toward evidence-based practice were associated with stronger compassion satisfaction and weaker burnout and STS. While working in the context of ongoing war is intensely stressful, mental health professionals in Ukraine reported favorable levels of ProQoL. Dissemination of evidence-based treatments might help to further improve the well-being of professionals working in contexts of war.

Keywords: Ukraine, war, mental health professionals, Professional Quality of Life, evidence-based practice

Reflective Exercise

Consider how these descriptions of STS/burnout and related terms resonate with your own experiences.

- *Can you relate to this?*
- *What is it bringing up for you?*
- *How did you first notice the impact your job was having on you?*

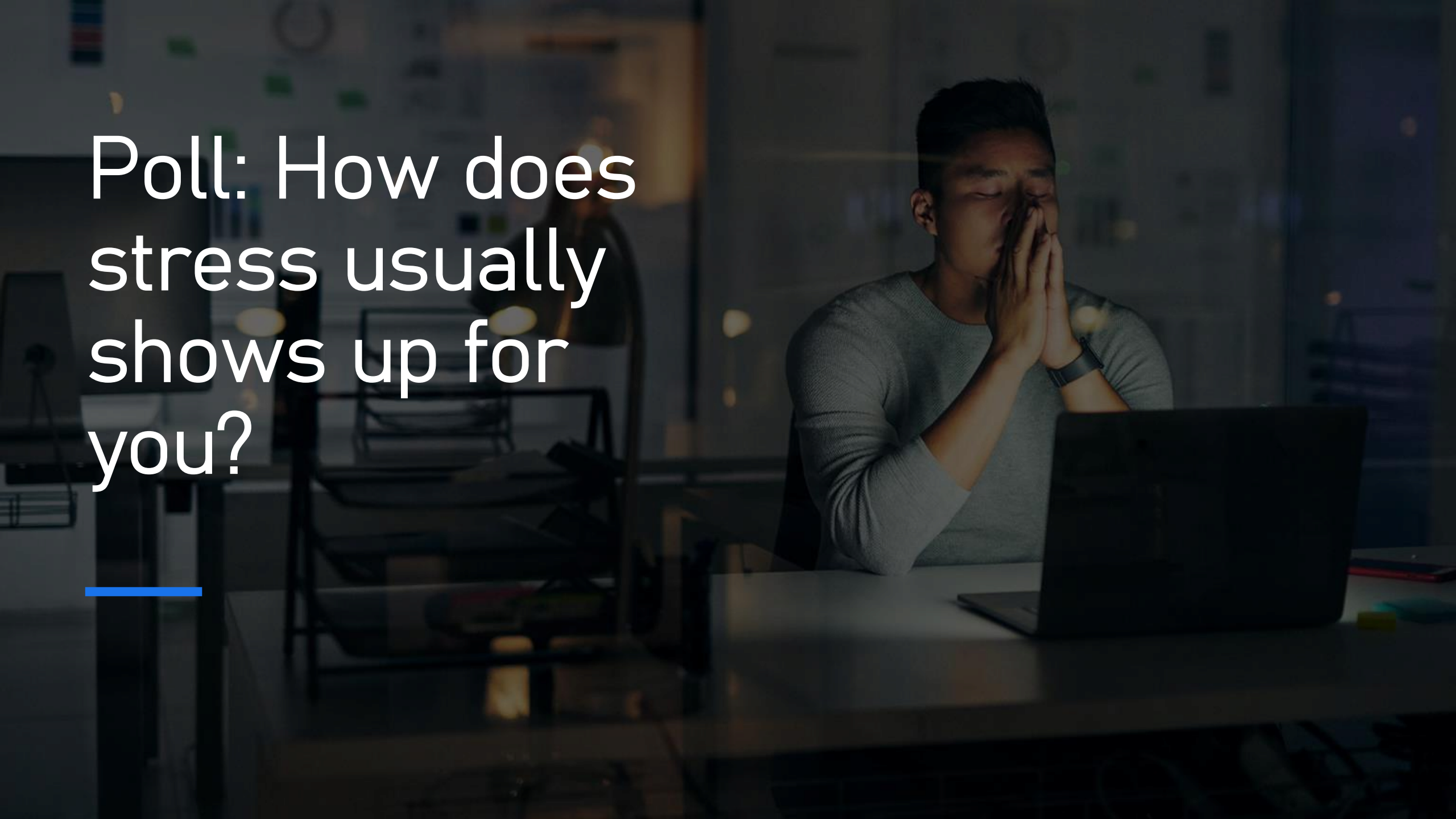
Signs and symptoms

Hopelessness	Inability to embrace complexity	Inability to listen, avoidance (including of certain clients)	Anger and cynicism
Sleeplessness	Chronic exhaustion and/or physical ailments	Minimizing	Guilt
Preoccupation with clients/client stories	Intrusive thoughts/nightmares/ flashbacks	Feeling estranged/isolated/no one to talk to	Feeling trapped, “infected” by trauma, inadequate, depressed

Domains of symptoms

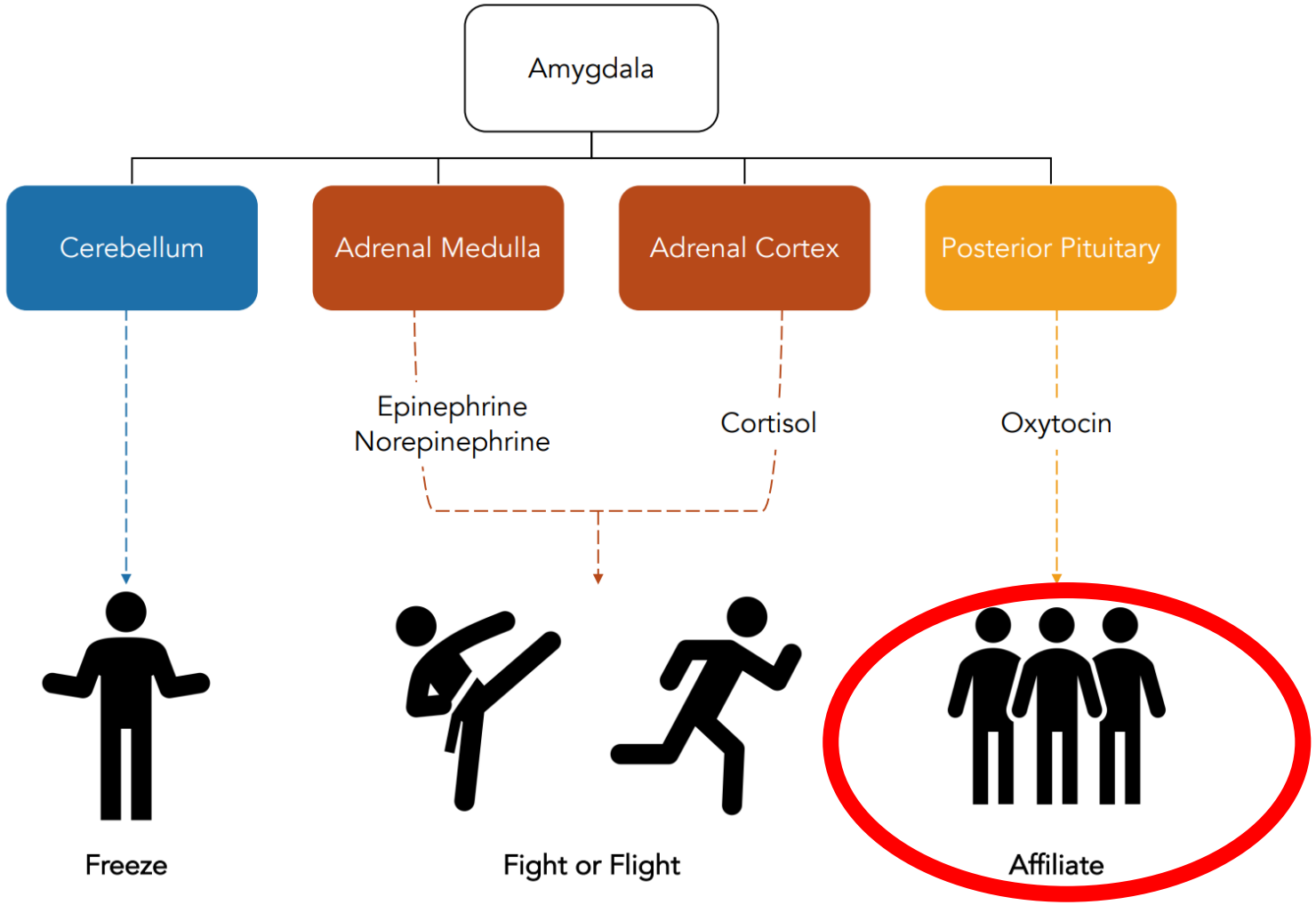
- **Physical:** Headaches, stomachaches, muscle tension, fatigue/exhaustion, sleep difficulties, elevated heart rate, rapid breathing
- **Cognitive:** Difficulty concentrating, forgetfulness, indecisiveness, self-blaming thoughts, catastrophizing, racing thoughts
- **Emotional:** Irritability, anxiety, sadness, feeling overwhelmed, emotional numbness, hopelessness
- **Behavioral:** Withdrawing from others, procrastination, reduced productivity, changes in eating or sleeping habits, increased use of alcohol/food/social media, avoiding certain clients or tasks
- **Relational:** Feeling disconnected from colleagues or loved ones, reduced empathy, conflict with others, difficulty being present
- **Professional:** Loss of job satisfaction, compassion fatigue, decreased sense of accomplishment, feeling ineffective, dreading going to work

Poll: How does stress usually shows up for you?



The physiology of burnout and STS

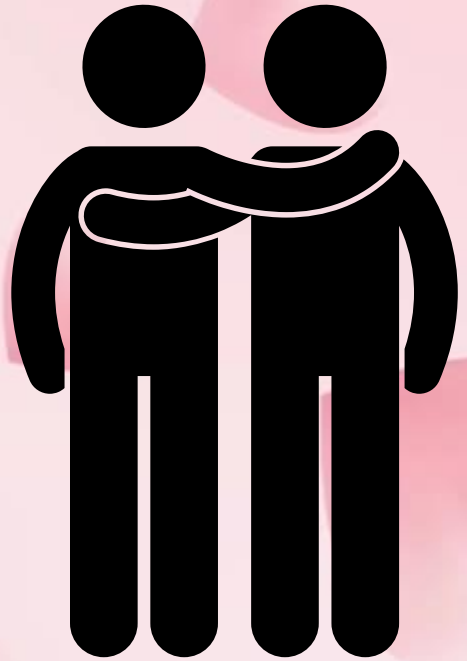
Physiology of the stress response



Garner, A and Saul B.. Thinking Developmentally, AAP Press, 2018

Or the Friend Response

- Oxytocin - drives social salience, helping to determine who is safe and who isn't
- We are born to connect. Connection is a biological need to survive
- We can connect with others for safety, affection, and to solve problems



Oxytocin

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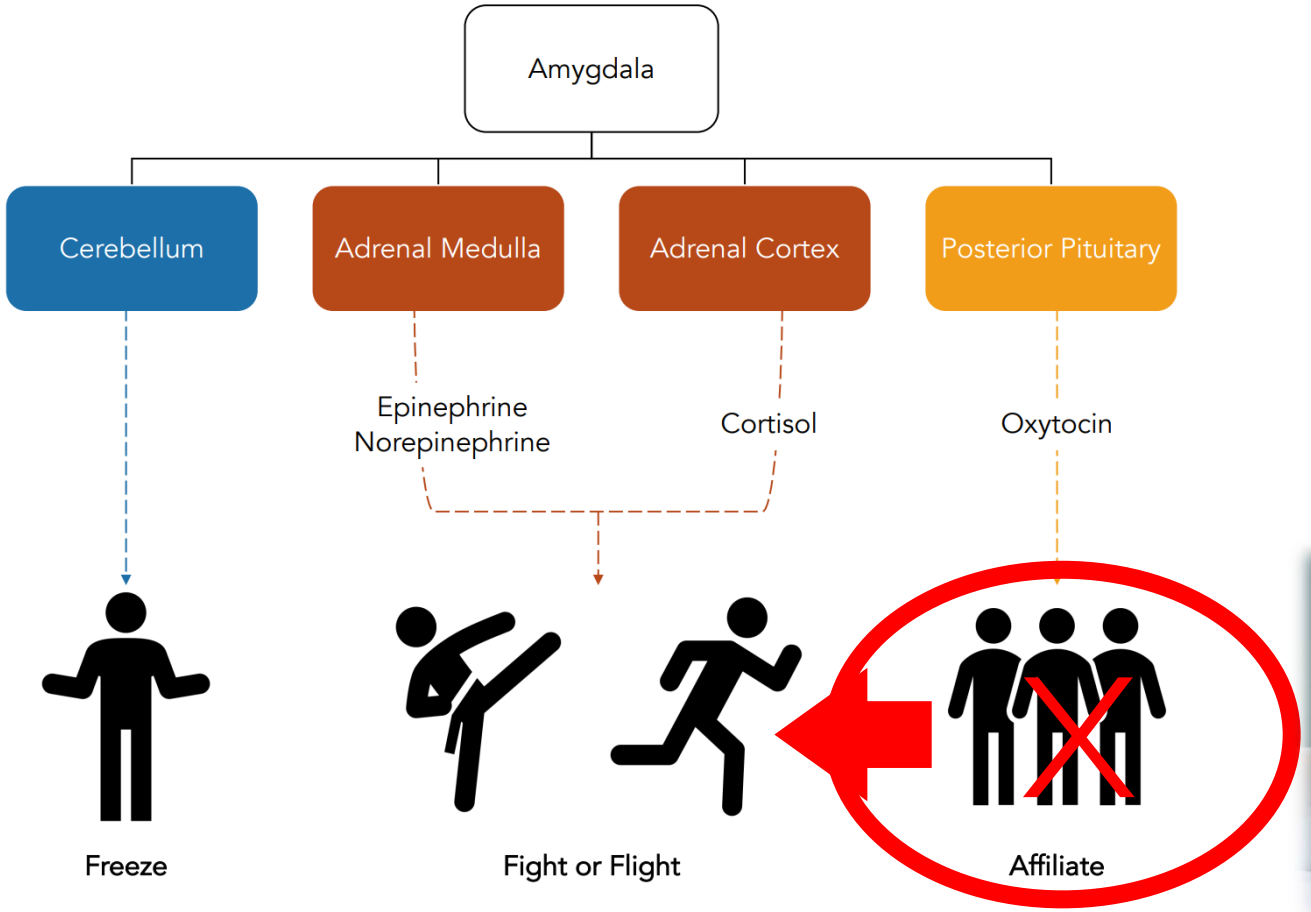
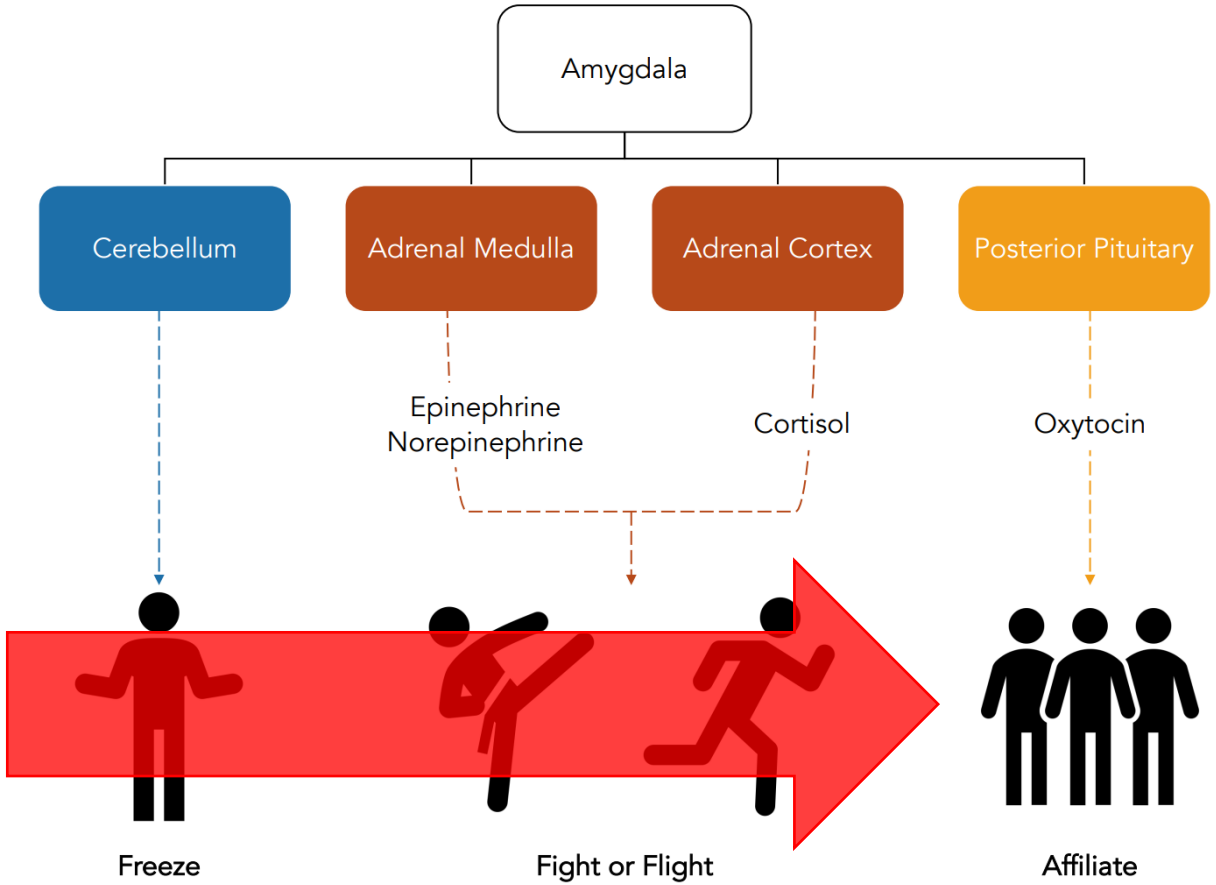
The affiliate response



Garner, A and Saul B.. Thinking Developmentally, AAP Press, 2018

Fostering the affiliate response



Garner, A and Saul B.. Thinking Developmentally, AAP Press, 2018

Not all stress is toxic

POSITIVE

- Brief increase in heart rate, mild elevations in stress hormone levels

TOLERABLE

- Serios, temporally stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships

TOXIC

- Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships

Source: Harvard Center for Developing Child

“

It is not about summing the suffering,
but
building the buffering

”

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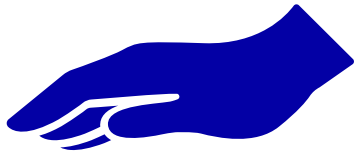
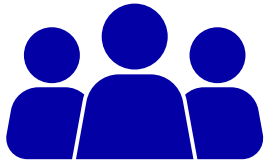
6 Core Principles of Trauma-Informed Care Models



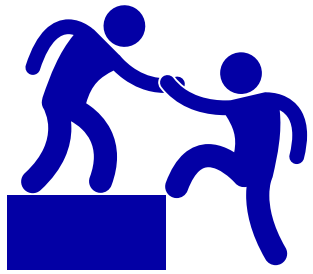
Safety

Empowerment, Voice and Choice



Collaboration and Mutuality

Trust and Transparency



Peer Support

Cultural, Historic, Gender Considerations

Source: Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration

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IT IS ALL SET!

The Foundations for a Thriving Workplace

SAFETY

Creating physical and emotional safety for everyone.

EMPOWERMENT, VOICE & CHOICE

Empowering individuals by honoring their voice and supporting choice.

TRUST & TRANSPARENCY

Building trust through open communication and transparency.

When **SET** is in place, people feel valued, connected, and empowered to **thrive.**

Bidirectional approach

Always start with SAFETY

People cannot thrive, learn, innovate, or provide compassionate care unless they feel safe.

Types of safety

Physical

The absence of harm or injury; knowing that your basic needs are met

Psychological

The permission to be your full self without fear of harm and rejection

Relational safety:

"We are in this together" "You matter"

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Organizational Level Approaches

SAFETY IS THE FOUNDATION
of Organizational Well-Being

People can't thrive, learn, innovate, or provide compassionate care unless they feel **safe**.

FIVE TYPES OF SAFETY

PHYSICAL SAFETY

"Do I feel physically safe at work?"

- Safe environment
- Protection from violence
- Adequate staffing
- Breaks and rest
- Ergonomic workspace

Safe bodies support healthy minds.

PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

"Can I speak up, ask questions, and be myself?"

- Ask questions
- Admit mistakes
- Request help
- Offer ideas
- Disagree respectfully

When it's safe to speak up, we all learn.

EMOTIONAL SAFETY

"Can I experience emotions without feeling punished?"

- Stress and burnout can be discussed
- Grief is acknowledged
- It's OK to say, "I'm struggling."

Emotions are welcome here.

CULTURAL & INTERPERSONAL SAFETY

"Do I feel respected, valued, and like I belong?"

- Inclusion
- Respect
- Fairness
- Trust
- Absence of bullying and discrimination

Belonging allows people to bring their best selves to work.

PROFESSIONAL SAFETY

"Can I grow, innovate, and learn without fear?"

- Try new ideas
- Receive feedback
- Learn from mistakes
- Access supervision and support

Growth happens in safe places.

LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS THAT BUILD SAFETY

INSTEAD OF:	TRY THIS:
"Who made this mistake?"	"What happened in the system?"
"Don't bring me problems."	"Bring me problems early."
"Our door is always open."	"Tell me what I'm missing."

> "Safety is not simply the absence of danger—
> it is the presence of conditions that allow people to learn, connect, speak up, recover from mistakes, and do meaningful work.

THE SAFETY FOUNDATION

TRUST
People feel secure in relationships.

CONNECTION
Stronger teams and collaboration.

LEARNING
People share, ask, and grow.

INNOVATION
New ideas and solutions emerge.

WELL-BEING
Reduced stress, greater resilience.

QUALITY CARE & OUTCOMES
Better for staff, clients, and communities.

Creating a sense of psychological/emotional safety

- Do people feel comfortable:
  - asking questions
  - saying "I don't know”
  - admitting mistakes
  - requesting help
  - offering ideas and being proactive
  - respectfully disagreeing
  - It is ok to say “I am struggling”

Cultural and professional safety

Do I feel respected and valued?

Can I grow without fear?

Am I seen in my potentials?

Am I offered opportunities to learn?

I am offered with clear job/tasks descriptions and adeguate supervision?

PRACTICAL WAYS TO BUILD SAFETY

Every day. In every interaction.

CREATE CLARITY

- Clearly communicate roles, expectations, and priorities.
- Help employees prioritize competing demands.

LEAD WITH CONNECTION

- Start meetings by asking, "How are you doing?" before the agenda.
- Show genuine curiosity, empathy, and compassion.

NORMALIZE WELL-BEING

- Be a role model – take vacations, set boundaries.
- Talk openly about stress, burnout, and secondary traumatic stress.

FOSTER RESPECT AND BELONGING

- Address microaggressions, incivility, and disrespect promptly.
- Check your own assumptions and narratives (e.g., "lazy," "difficult," "disorganized"). Stay curious rather than judgmental.

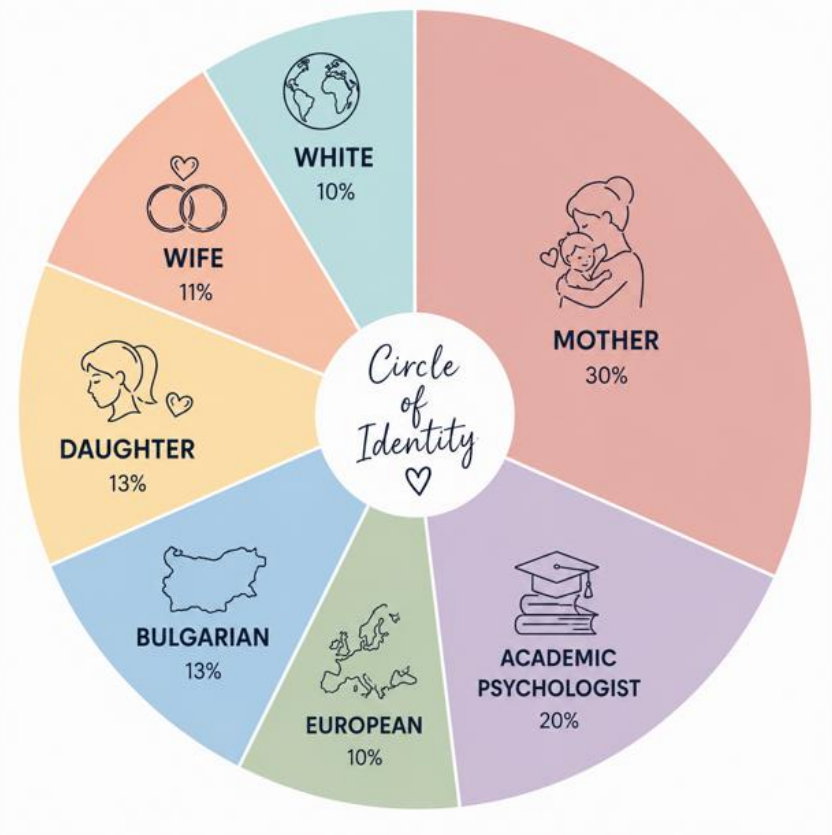
Safety is built through clarity, connection, well-being, respect, and support—consistently, every day.

Individual Level Approaches

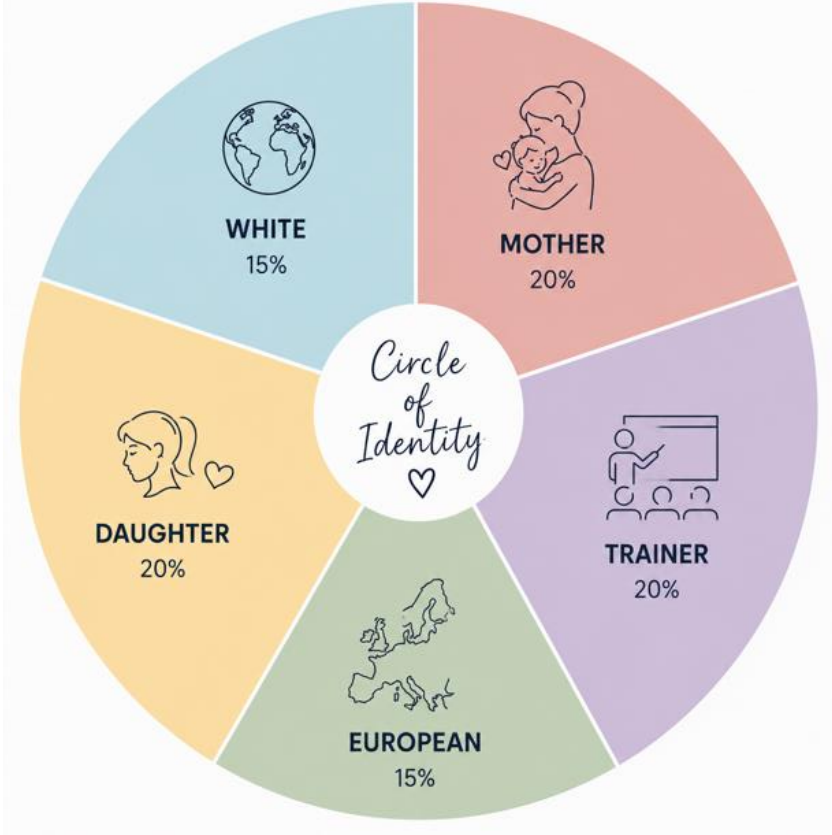
Can you bring your whole self?

What are your identities?

What are my identities?



What identities do I think others see in me?



Safe Debriefing

Low Impact Debriefing

"When we see or hear difficult things, it's natural—and even healthy—to talk it through with others. The trouble comes when we unintentionally 'slime' others with the weight of what we're carrying."

– FRANÇOISE MATHIEU MED, RP | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TEND

1 Self-Awareness

Check in with yourself - how are you feeling?
After witnessing a challenging situation, take a moment to reflect on **how you feel and what you need.**

2 Fair Warning

After you've identified a trusted person to connect with, **warn your listener** that the content you want to discuss is potentially disturbing or traumatic.

3 Consent

Seek permission before sharing any details.
This allows the listener to decline or set boundaries around what they have capacity to hear.

4 Limited Disclosure

Start with the least disturbing details and gradually add more info as needed. **You may not need to share the most graphic details** to get the benefits of connecting with a trusted person.

tend®

Adapted from Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995

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Regaining your own safety through self-regulation

Self-awareness

A heightened, flexible attentiveness to your environment and internal cues such as bodily sensations, thoughts and feelings.

- People with **higher levels of awareness have higher levels of well-being** and positive emotions

- Distraction, the main detractor from awareness, can impair **executive function** as well as increase **stress** and anxiety, ADHD symptoms, and depression.

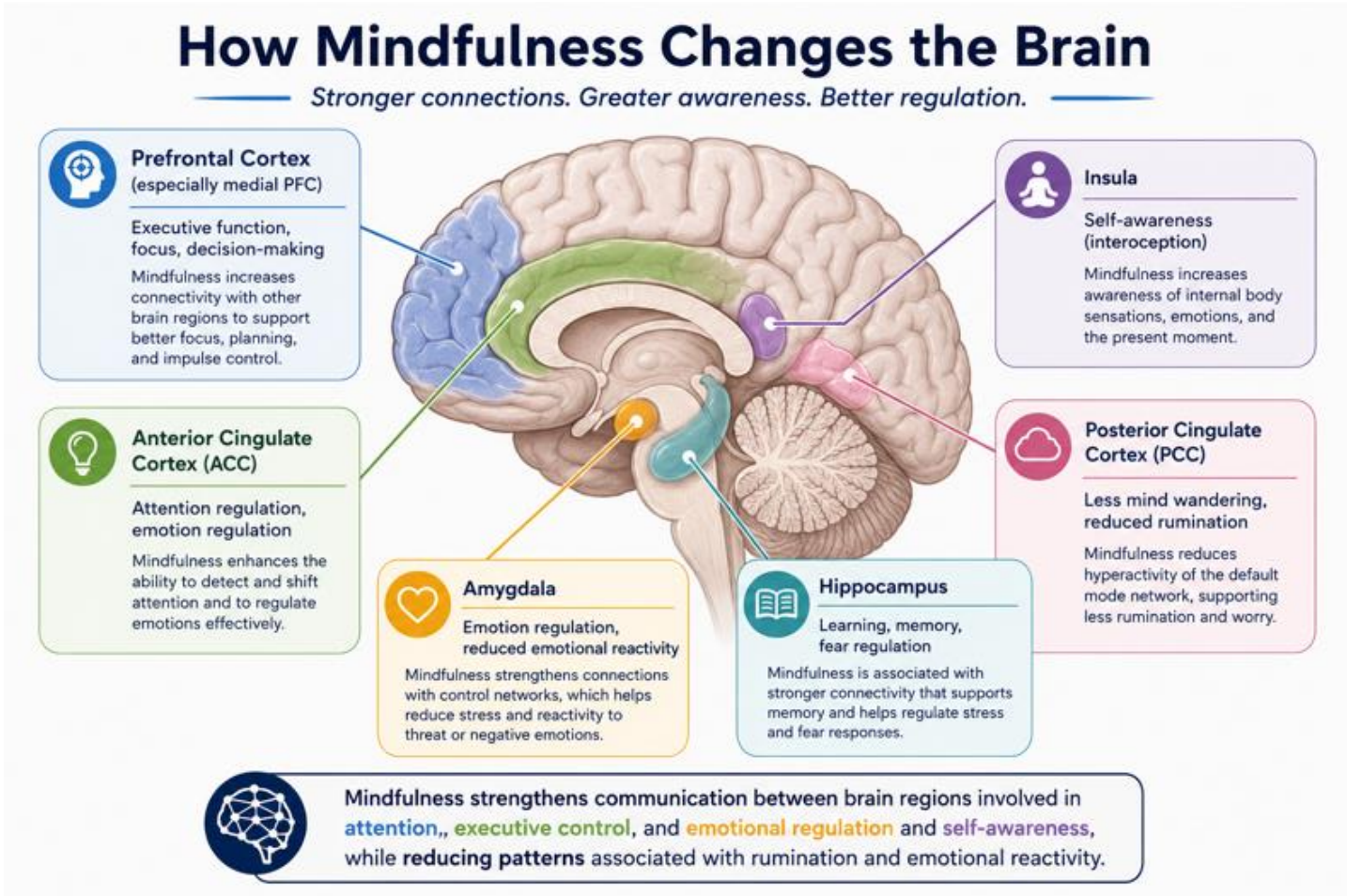
P. Seli, R. E. Beaty, J. Marty-Dugas, D. Smilek, Depression, anxiety, and stress and the distinction between intentional and unintentional mind wandering.

Mindfulness (2022) 13:1857–1875
https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-022-01919-2

REVIEW

The Impact of Mindfulness-Based Interventions on Brain Functional Connectivity: a Systematic Review

Michelle Melis[1,2] · Gwen Schroyen[1,4] · Juliette Pollefeyt[5] · Filip Raes[5] · Ann Smeets[6,7] · Stefan Sunaert[1,8] · Sabine Deprez[1,4] · Katleen Van der Gucht[3,5]



The 3 minute breathing space

Step 1:

Check-in what is here for you right now? What thoughts, what emotions and what body sensations are present?

Step 2:

Now focus on your breath. Focus on the sensations of your body as you breathe in and out.

Step 3:

And now expand your awareness to your body as a whole. Be aware of your posture, of your facial muscles, of your breathing.

Kostova, Z., Levin, L., Lorberg, B., & Ziedonis, D. (2019). Mindfulness-based interventions for adolescents with mental health conditions: A systematic review of the research literature. Journal of Child and Family Studies, 28, 2633-2649.

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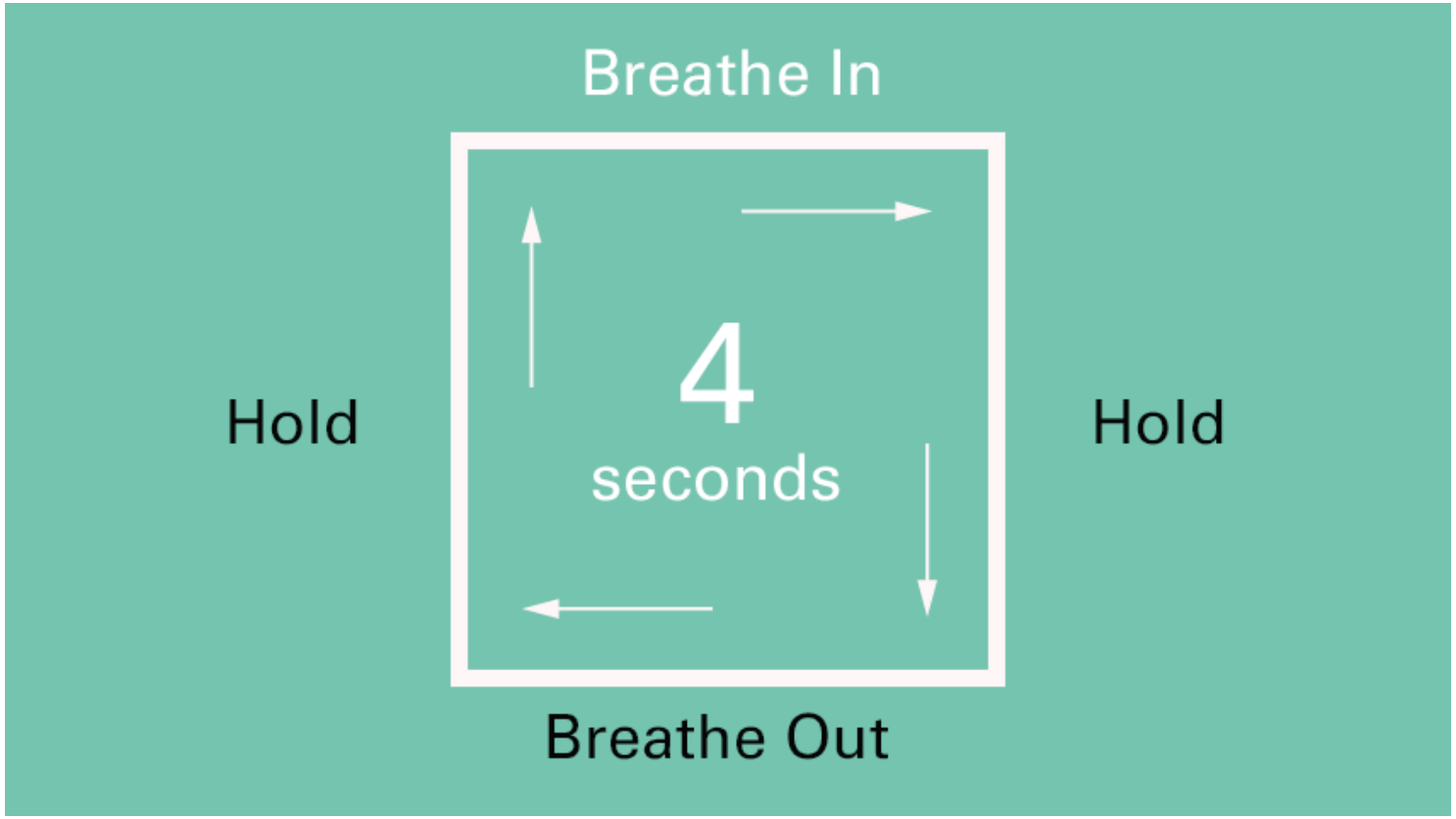
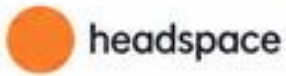
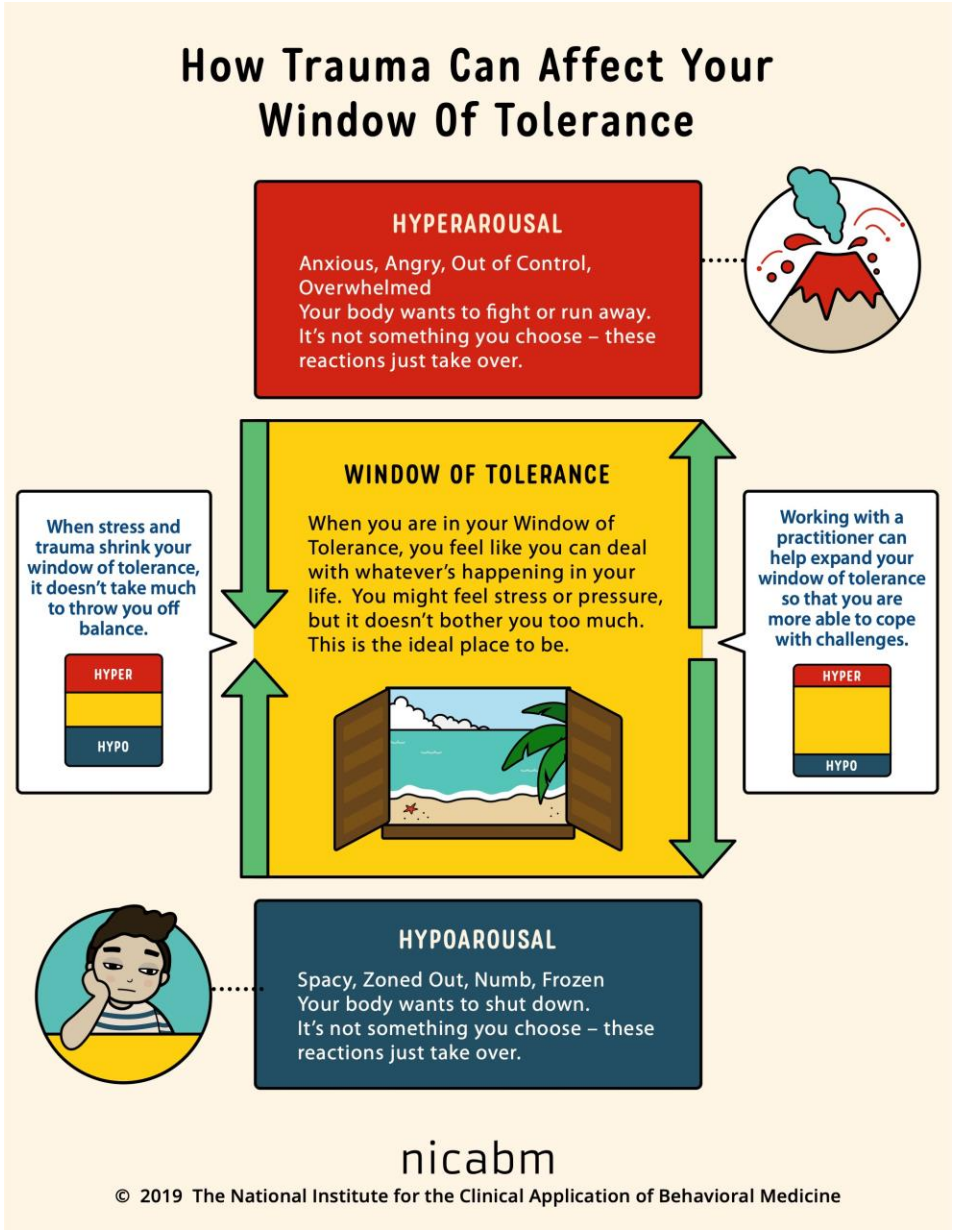
Square breathing technique



APP	LOGO	SHORT DESCRIPTION	BEST FOR	FREE VERSION
Insight Timer		The world's largest free library of guided meditations, talks, music, and courses from thousands of teachers.	All levels – huge variety of meditations and topics	Extensive free library
Calm		Guided meditations, sleep stories, breathing exercises, and relaxing music.	Sleep, relaxation, anxiety reduction, beginners	Limited free content
Headspace		Structured mindfulness courses and daily meditations to improve mental health and well-being.	Stress, focus, daily mindfulness practice, workplace well-being	Limited free content
Healthy Minds Program		Science-based mindfulness program developed by researchers at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.	Building mindfulness skills with a research-based approach	Completely free
Balance		Personalized meditation plans that adapt to your mood, goals, and experience level.	Personalized practice, stress relief, better sleep	Free introductory program (availability varies)
Smiling Mind		Nonprofit app offering mindfulness programs for adults, kids, schools, and workplaces.	All ages – adults, children, educators, workplaces	Completely free
Medito		100% nonprofit meditation app with guided meditations, tracks for sleep and anxiety, and daily reminders.	Beginners, simple and ad-free experience	Completely free
Ten Percent Happier		Mindfulness for skeptics – practical meditations and talks from experts and teachers.	Busy professionals, skeptics, practical mindfulness	Limited free content

Internal awareness: The window of tolerance

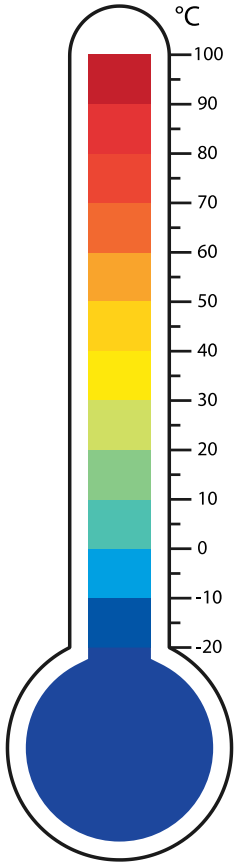


What is your response? Irritable, anxious, over-eating?

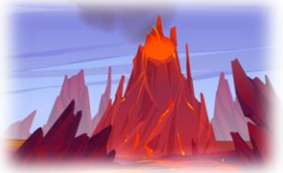
Zoned out, frozen, numb, avoidant

Ogden & Milton, 2000

How do I look under stress?



- Irritability
- Reactive and impulsive
- Increased heart rate
- Moodiness
- Anxiety
- Rumination
- Loss or increase in appetite and sleep
- Withdrawn
- Shut down
- Isolating
- Using alcohol, substances, etc.



Down-regulation (mindfulness, relaxation, etc.)

Up-regulation (exercise, behavioral activation, etc.)

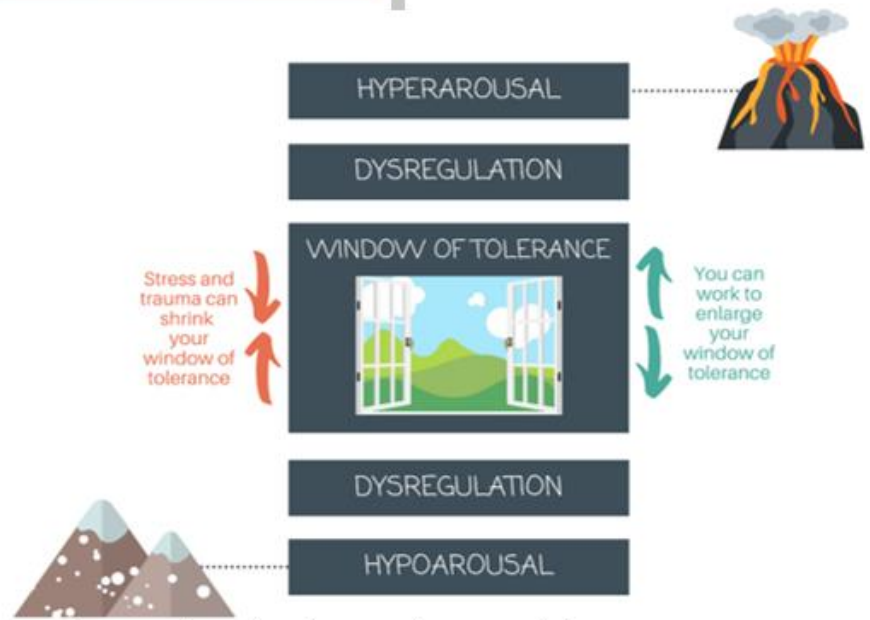
Action Plan

ACTION PLAN

Center on Trauma & Children | University of Kentucky

Trauma, Stress, and Caregiver Wellbeing

Part 1 – The Window of Tolerance



What are the triggers that might make your window even smaller?

_____

_____

What am I like when I am stressed, upset or overwhelmed:

_____

_____

What are my hyper arousal symptoms?

_____

_____

What are my hypo arousal symptoms?

_____

_____

How self-aware are you?

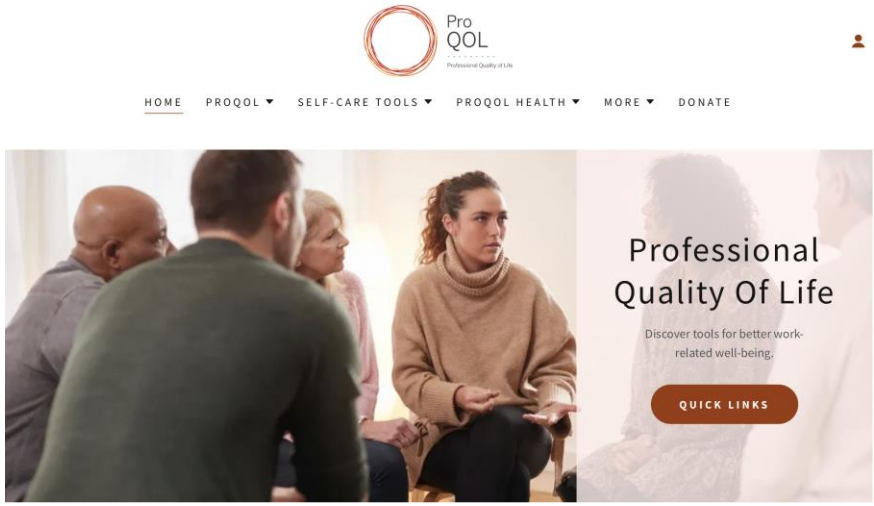
- https://www.mindtools.com/axbwm3m/how-emotionally-intelligent-are-you#google_vignette

Organizational Level Approaches

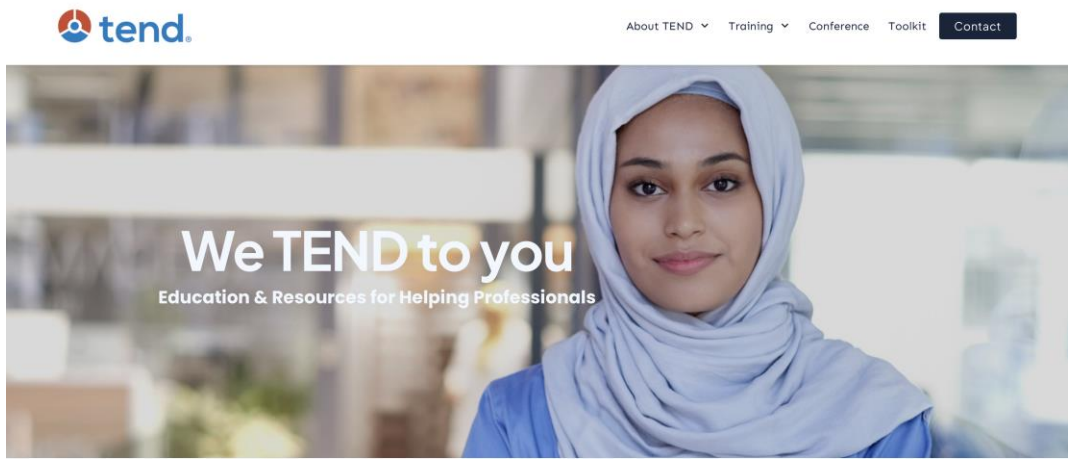
Resources

https://ctac.uky.edu

https://www.stsconsortium.com



https://proqol.org



https://tendacademy.ca

PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCALE (PROQOL)

COMPASSION SATISFACTION AND COMPASSION FATIGUE (PROQOL) VERSION 5 (2009)

When you *[help]* people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you *[help]* can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some-questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a *[helper]*. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the *last 30 days*.

1=Never **2=Rarely** **3=Sometimes** **4=Often** **5=Very Often**

1. I am happy.
2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I *[help]*.
3. I get satisfaction from being able to *[help]* people.
4. I feel connected to others.
5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
6. I feel invigorated after working with those I *[help]*.
7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a *[helper]*.
8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I *[help]*.
9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I *[help]*.
10. I feel trapped by my job as a *[helper]*.
11. Because of my *[helping]*, I have felt "on edge" about various things.
12. I like my work as a *[helper]*.
13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I *[help]*.
14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have *[helped]*.
15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with *[helping]* techniques and protocols.
17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
19. I feel worn out because of my work as a *[helper]*.
20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I *[help]* and how I could help them.
21. I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.
22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I *[help]*.
24. I am proud of what I can do to *[help]*.
25. As a result of my *[helping]*, I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.
27. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a *[helper]*.
28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
29. I am a very caring person.
30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

STS

BURNOUT

COMPASSION SATISFACTION

YOUR SCORES ON THE PROQOL: PROFESSIONAL QUALITY OF LIFE SCREENING

Based on your responses, place your personal scores below. If you have any concerns, you should discuss them with a physical or mental health care professional.

Compassion Satisfaction _____

Compassion satisfaction is about the pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well. For example, you may feel like it is a pleasure to help others through your work. You may feel positively about your colleagues or your ability to contribute to the work setting or even the greater good of society. Higher scores on this scale represent a greater satisfaction related to your ability to be an effective caregiver in your job.

If you are in the higher range, you probably derive a good deal of professional satisfaction from your position. If your scores are below 23, you may either find problems with your job, or there may be some other reason—for example, you might derive your satisfaction from activities other than your job. (Alpha scale reliability 0.88)

Burnout_____

Most people have an intuitive idea of what burnout is. From the research perspective, burnout is one of the elements of Compassion Fatigue (CF). It is associated with feelings of hopelessness and difficulties in dealing with work or in doing your job effectively. These negative feelings usually have a gradual onset. They can reflect the feeling that your efforts make no difference, or they can be associated with a very high workload or a non-supportive work environment. Higher scores on this scale mean that you are at higher risk for burnout.

If your score is below 23, this probably reflects positive feelings about your ability to be effective in your work. If you score above 41, you may wish to think about what at work makes you feel like you are not effective in your position. Your score may reflect your mood; perhaps you were having a "bad day" or are in need of some time off. If the high score persists or if it is reflective of other worries, it may be a cause for concern. (Alpha scale reliability 0.75)

Secondary Traumatic Stress_____

The second component of Compassion Fatigue (CF) is secondary traumatic stress (STS). It is about your work related, secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events. Developing problems due to exposure to other's trauma is somewhat rare but does happen to many people who care for those who have experienced extremely or traumatically stressful events. For example, you may repeatedly hear stories about the traumatic things that happen to other people, commonly called Vicarious Traumatization. If your work puts you directly in the path of danger, for example, field work in a war or area of civil violence, this is not secondary exposure; your exposure is primary. However, if you are exposed to others' traumatic events as a result of your work, for example, as a therapist or an emergency worker, this is secondary exposure. The symptoms of STS are usually rapid in onset and associated with a particular event. They may include being afraid, having difficulty sleeping, having images of the upsetting event pop into your mind, or avoiding things that remind you of the event.

If your score is above 41, you may want to take some time to think about what at work may be frightening to you or if there is some other reason for the elevated score. While higher scores do not mean that you do have a problem, they are an indication that you may want to examine how you feel about your work and your work environment. You may wish to discuss this with your supervisor, a colleague, or a health care professional. (Alpha scale reliability 0.81)

WHAT IS MY SCORE AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In this section, you will score your test so you understand the interpretation for you. To find your score on **each section,** total the questions listed on the left and then find your score in the table on the right of the section.

Compassion Satisfaction Scale

Copy your rating on each of these questions on to this table and add them up. When you have added then up you can find your score on the table to the right.

3. _____
6. _____
12. _____
16. _____
18. _____
20. _____
22. _____
24. _____
27. _____
30. _____

Total: _____

The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions is	And my Compassion Satisfaction level is
22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

Burnout Scale

On the burnout scale you will need to take an extra step. Starred items are "reverse scored." If you scored the item 1, write a 5 beside it. The reason we ask you to reverse the scores is because scientifically the measure works better when these questions are asked in a positive way though they can tell us more about their negative form. For example, question 1. "I am happy" tells us more about the effects of helping when you are *not* happy so you reverse the score

You Wrote	Change to
	5
2	4
3	3
4	2
5	1

*1. _____ = _____
*4. _____ = _____
8. _____
10. _____
*15. _____ = _____
*17. _____ = _____
19. _____
21. _____
26. _____
*29. _____ = _____

Total: _____

The sum of my Burnout Questions is	And my Burnout level is
22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale

Just like you did on Compassion Satisfaction, copy your rating on each of these questions on to this table and add them up. When you have added then up you can find your score on the table to the right.

2. _____
5. _____
7. _____
9. _____
11. _____
13. _____
14. _____
23. _____
25. _____
28. _____

Total: _____

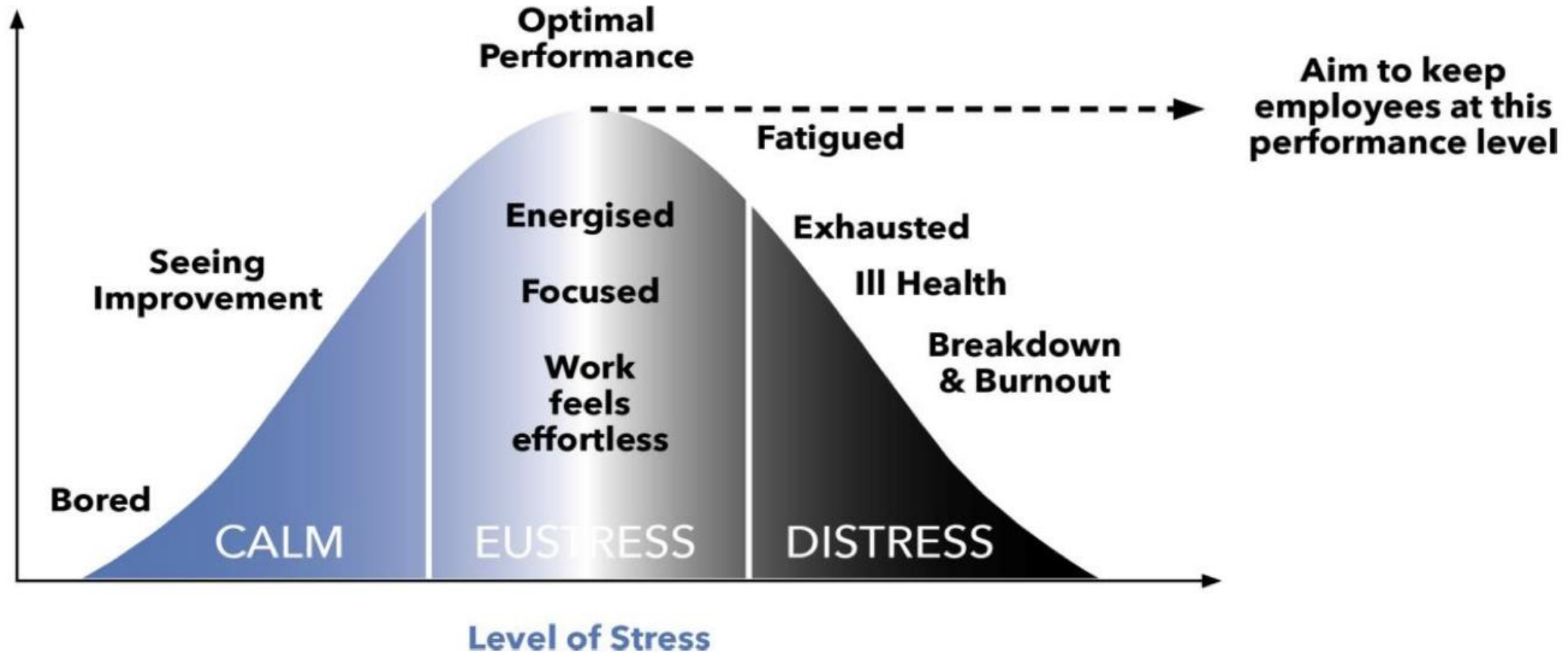
The sum of my Secondary Trauma questions is	And my Secondary Traumatic Stress level is
22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

Organizational awareness: acknowledge and assess the problem

The **Secondary Traumatic Stress Informed Organizational Assessment (STSI-OA)** is a 40-item measure that categorizes STS *prevention* and *intervention* activities into 6 domains by self-rating the degree to which the organization:

- Promotes resilience-building activities.
- Promotes physical and psychological safety.
- Has STS-relevant policies.
- Exhibits STS-informed leadership practices.
- Exhibits STS-informed organizational practices.
- Evaluates and monitors STS policies/practices in workplace.

You can request a free copy at: http://www.uky.edu/CTAC/STSI-OA.



https://www.hamiltonhealthsciences.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/CREATE-Resilience-Model.pdf

How?

- By seeing employee's strengths and matching them with the right fit roles (interpersonal/detail oriented/organizational skills, etc.)
- Ensuring appropriate staffing
- Professional growth and opportunities for promotions
- Quality supervision time
- Clear expectations and empower to take ownership over their abilities
- Optimal growth opportunities – set them up for success!
- Informal, bonding time with collogues

Trust and transparency

Chronic interpersonal stress teaches the nervous system to expect unpredictability, loss of control and power dynamics being misused

Having low trust is not resistance, but protection

Ways to enhance trust and transparency

- Frequent check ins – instead of waiting for annual performance evaluation, have frequent check-ins
- Be transparent around funding, current instability – without inflicting fear, but fostering transparency
- Promote effective, open communication
- Explain process behind decisions
- Walking and talking – better processing!

Trauma-Informed Supervision (TIS)

Supervision that incorporates the fundamental elements of trauma-informed care into the supervisor-supervisee dynamic and focuses on offering relationship-based supervision.

- Acknowledges, responds to, and addresses the impact of trauma exposure
- Provides a safe environment to share their experiences and impact
- Allows opportunities to learn and practice strategies to address and mitigate the impact

Reflective supervision

How did you feel? What did you notice in yourself?

Did you have any strong reactions during this interaction?

How do you think *[other person in interaction]* was feeling? What was their perspective?

What did you think was going to happen? Why do you think it did or didn't go as planned?

What do you think was driving your stress reaction?

Are there aspects of the interaction that remind you of your own experiences or history? How might this have influenced you?


NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Using the Secondary Traumatic Stress Core Competencies in Trauma-Informed Supervision

Introduction

How to Use the STS Supervisor Competency Tool

https://www.nctsn.org/resources/using-secondary-traumatic-stress-core-competencies-trauma-informed-supervision

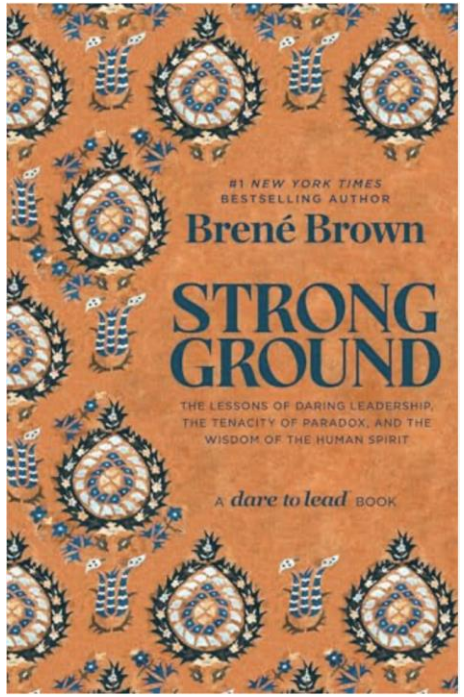
Empowerment, Voice and Choice

- Empower employees/colleagues in emphasizing their strengths
- Offer opportunities for growth
- Ask their opinions, involve them in decision-making

UMass Chan MEDICAL SCHOOL | Lifeline for kids

Individual Level Approaches

Find Your Strong Ground



https://brenebrown.com

Back to your own values!

- Only 10% of organizations live by their own values
- What is a value?
- *"For a long time, I thought about values as guiding principles. I think that was incomplete. It's not just what you care about. It's what you sacrifice for." (Adam Grant, The Curiosity Shop)*
- "One of the ways that I've become clear about what my values are is to look at the things that I give up—and why." (Adam Grant)

LIST OF VALUES

- Circle as many values as you would like
- Now, write down the **two that are the driver** of every single one that you circled before
- Ex: care, connection, authenticity, financial stability, parenting, reliability, etc.
- My two: Connection and Making a Difference

Accountability	Efficiency	Intuition	Security
Achievement	Environment	Job security	Self-discipline
Activism	Equality	Joy	Self-expression
Adaptability	Ethics	Justice	Self-respect
Adventure	Excellence	Kindness	Serenity
Altruism	Fairness	Knowledge	Service
Ambition	Faith	Leadership	Simplicity
Authenticity	Family	Learning	Spirituality
Balance	Financial stability	Legacy	Stewardship
Beauty	Forgiveness	Leisure	Success
Being the best	Freedom	Love	Teamwork
Being a good sport	Friendship	Loyalty	Thrift
Belonging	Fun	Making a difference	Time
Career	Future generations	Nature	Tradition
Caring	Generosity	Openness	Travel
Co-creation	Giving back	Optimism	Trust
Collaboration	Grace	Order	Truth
Commitment	Gratitude	Parenting	Understanding
Community	Growth	Patience	Uniqueness
Compassion	Harmony	Patriotism	Usefulness
Competence	Health	Peace	Vision
Confidence	Heritage	Perseverance	Vulnerability
Connection	Home	Personal fulfillment	Wealth
Contentment	Honesty	Power	Wellbeing
Contribution	Hope	Pride	Wholeheartedness
Cooperation	Humility	Recognition	Wisdom
Courage	Humor	Reliability	
Creativity	Inclusion	Resourcefulness	Write your own:
Curiosity	Independence	Respect	
Dignity	Initiative	Responsibility	
Diversity	Integrity	Risk-taking	

Brown, B. (2025). *Living into our values: Taking values from professing words to practicing behavior* [Podcast handout]. Brené Brown, LLC.

From Values We Profess to Values We Practice

What is one behavior that shows you are operating in alignment with your values?

What is one behavior that shows you are operating out of alignment with your values?

What does it feel like when you're living into your values?

What are the early warning indicators or signs that you are living outside your values?

Brown, B. (2025). *Living into our values: Taking values from professing words to practicing behavior* [Podcast handout]. Brené Brown, LLC.

Padlet: Share Your Top Values

- https://padlet.com/kostovazlatina/your-values-46qpmsb3jxck7xlv

Organizational Level Approaches

PRACTICE what you preach

Community Mental Health Journal (2020) 56:1531–1543
https://doi.org/10.1007/s10597-020-00602-x

ORIGINAL PAPER

Check for updates

Disseminating Trauma-Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy with a Systematic Self-care Approach to Addressing Secondary Traumatic Stress: PRACTICE What You Preach

Esther Deblinger[1] · Elisabeth Pollio[1] · Beth Cooper[1] · Robert A. Steer[2]

Engaging Ukrainian TF-CBT therapists in a PRACTICE skills course to support their wellbeing

Elisabeth Pollio, Esther Deblinger, Beth Cooper, Maike Garbade, Julie P. Harrison & Elisa Pfeiffer

To cite this article: Elisabeth Pollio, Esther Deblinger, Beth Cooper, Maike Garbade, Julie P. Harrison & Elisa Pfeiffer (2025) Engaging Ukrainian TF-CBT therapists in a PRACTICE skills course to support their wellbeing, European Journal of Psychotraumatology, 16:1, 2476898, DOI: 10.1080/20008066.2025.2476898

- EBTs provide a road map and increase sense of competency, which reduces STS and burnout
- Incorporating self-care in trainings in EBTs
  - Increase in competency
  - Active coping & humor
  - Decrease in STS

Praise

- Purely positive praise works better, praise should NOT include sarcasm or negative tags (e.g., “I like how you___, why don’t you do it all the time?”)
- Repeat praise predictably and immediately after the positive behavior occurs
- Acknowledge small steps (don’t wait for perfection)
- Intermittent or occasional praise is preferable once the new behavior is established
- Specifically describe positive effort in detail (“I like the effort you put into this project” vs “Good job”)
- Enthusiasm is key to effective praise. Increase enthusiastic reactions to positive behaviors

Esther Deblinger and Lori Stauffer, 2015

Affirmation circle

Write your name on an index card

Pass it to the next person

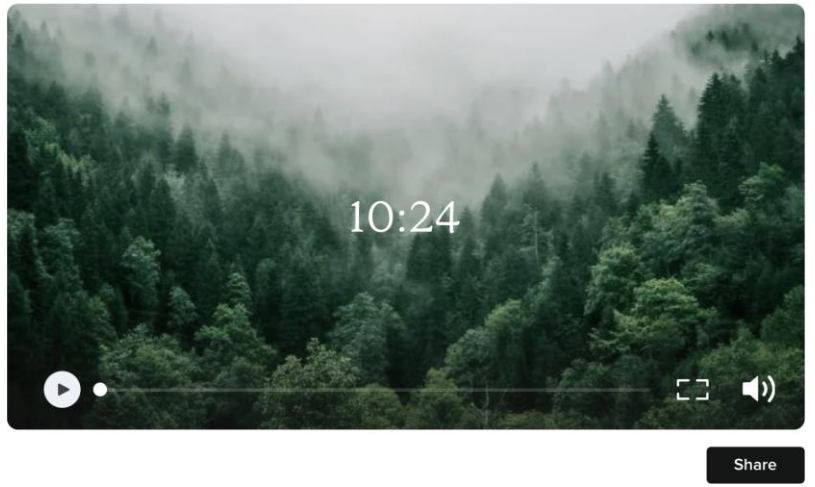
The person receiving the index card should write a positive affirmation and appreciation to that person ("Your kindness and generosity makes everyone so heard and understood". "Thank you for your incredible work")

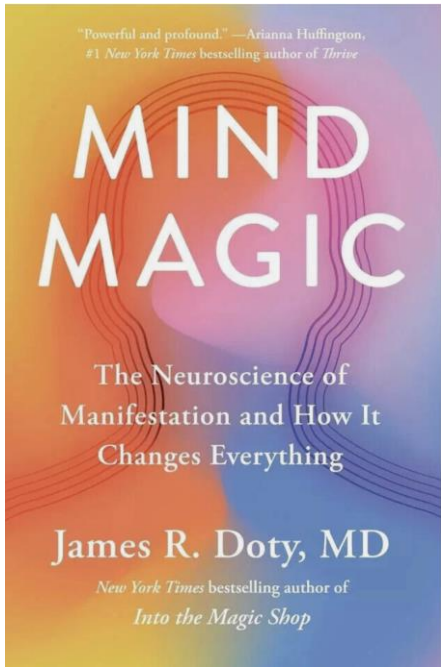
Take some time at the end to read your affirmations

Individual Level Approaches

Manifestation practice: the power of setting up an intention

- Based on neuroscience research of Dr. James Doty at Stanford University
  - Relax the body, soften the heart
  - Clarify your intention – something you genuinely desire (I want__; I am becoming__I am creating__)
  - Visualize – engage all your senses in visualizing your intention
  - Embody the feeling
  - Release and let it go





Manifestation Practice by Phoebe Moore, PhD

Saying No and keeping boundaries

Adapted from: Lisa Conrady, LLC

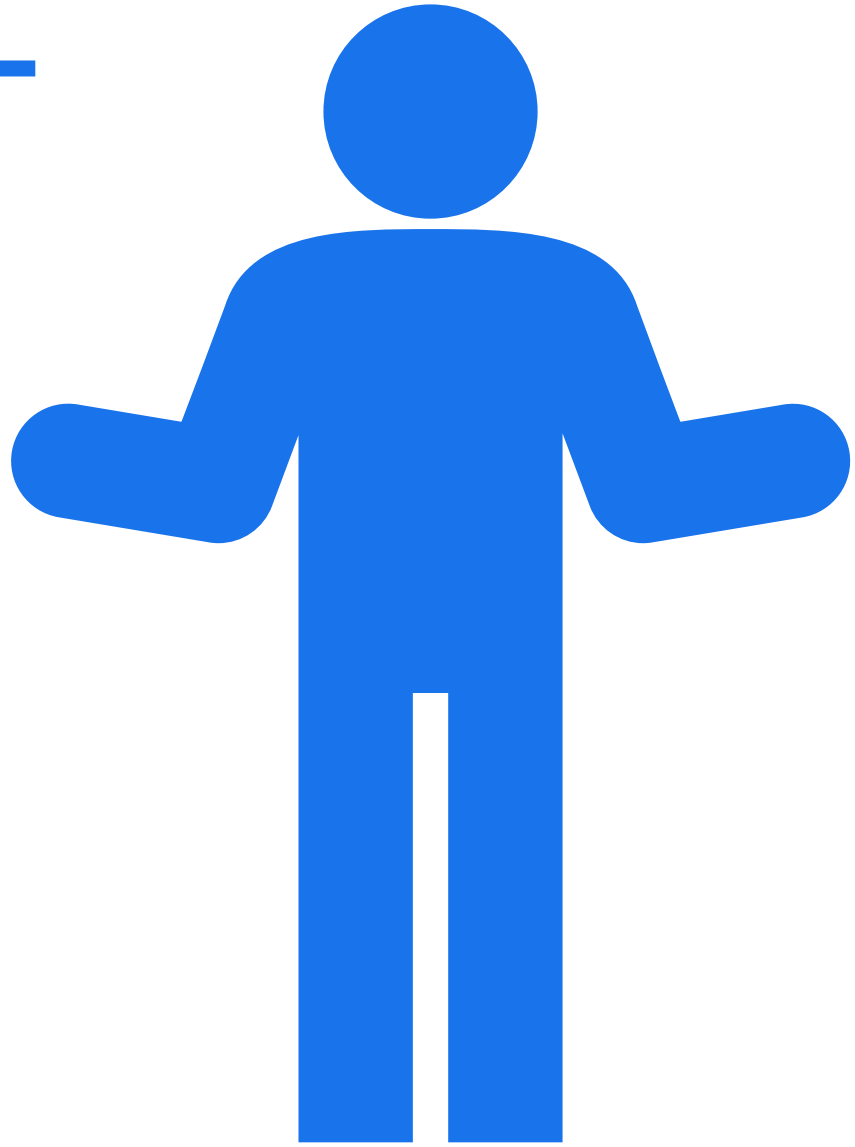
- Saying No feels uncomfortable
  - Will they be upset?
  - Will they think less of me?

- No doesn't need a justification ("I am sorry, but..")
- Every No is a Yes to something else: yes to rest, to presence, to integrity
- No may not be accepted the first time, so you need to be consistent
- Before the end of the day make it clear you are not available ("I will be stepping out of my computer, but I wanted to check-in if you need anything from me before that.")
- Ensuring space between work and home
  - Driving time
  - Music
  - Time at home to offload

Peer Support

Recognizing that we are all different..

- Some people need to process stress right away
- Others need their own space and time to reflect
- Some people may become initially anxious/reactive
- Other may withdraw



Asking what the other needs

- Do you need me to listen, or you need an advice/solution?

What Employees Need: Support That Helps Us Thrive

Different types of support. Many possible sources. You don't have to do it alone.

Who Can Provide This Support?

Manager/Supervisor
Direction, feedback, advocacy, resources

Peers/Colleagues
Collaboration, shared experience, check-ins

Mentors/Coaches
Guidance, perspective, skill-building

Friends/Family
Emotional support, encouragement, practical help

Professional Resources
EAP, counselors, wellness programs, HR

How to Identify Your Support Needs

1. **Pause and Reflect**
   What's going on? What do I need most right now?
2. **Name the Support**
   Is it emotional, tangible, informational, or appraisal?
3. **Identify Possible Sources**
   Who can provide this type of support?
4. **Reach Out**
   Be specific about what you need.
5. **Follow Up**
   Check in, express gratitude, and adjust as needed.

Support is not a sign of weakness—it's a strategy for resilience.
Know what you need. Know who to ask. We're stronger together.

If you have:

2 minutes	10 minutes
Smile Sit quietly, relax Breathe deeply Stretch Thank someone Tell a joke to a co-worker Have a 2 minute dance party	Plan a party to celebrate an accomplishment or milestone Write down your thoughts Clean up your locker/workspace Do a wellness activity with your co-worker(s) Sit outside, take in 5 senses
5 minutes	**30 minutes**
Get coffee, tea, or water Have a snack Have a conversation with someone who you don't usually talk to at work Do a mindfulness practice Listen to music Tell a story to a co-worker	Eat lunch with your co-worker Take a walk outside Mindful movement Assess your wellness plan Debrief with a co-worker about something stressful Complete a task that has been nagging at you

Adapted from Volk, K.T., Guarino, K., Edson Grandin, M., & Clervil, R. (2008). *What about You? A Workbook for Those Who Work with Others.* The National Center on Family Homelessness.

Remembering Your Whys

We all have bad days at work, but there are also moments that remind us why we do this work.

- *Why do you do this work?*
- *Think about a rewarding moment at your job.*
- *What are the things that you love/enjoy about your job?*
- *Think about people whose lives you've touched.*
- *What are some compliments you have received from your co-workers, or things you think you do well?*

Adapted from Volk, K.T., Guarino, K., Edson Grandin, M., & Clervil, R. (2008). *What about You? A Workbook for Those Who Work with Others.* The National Center on Family Homelessness.

Who are your affiliates?

Resources (and survey)

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- Yang, Y. & Hayes, J. A. (2020). Causes and Consequences of Burnout Among Mental Health Professionals. Psychotherapy, 57 (3), 426-436. doi: 10.1037/pst0000317.

NCTSN Resources

- NCTSN STS Fact Sheets
  - For Child-Serving Professionals
  - For Community Violence Workers
  - For CAC Workers
  - Guidance for Supervisors and Administrators
- STS Supervisor Competencies
  - Supervisory Competencies
  - Supervisor Self-Rating Tool

All resources can be accessed at:

https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care/secondary-traumatic-stress

NCTSN Webinars

- Secondary Traumatic Stress Series:
  - https://www.nctsn.org/resources/secondary-traumatic-stress?utm_source=spotlight&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=nctsn-spotlight
- Cultural Implications of Secondary Traumatic Stress:
  - English: https://learn.nctsn.org/enrol/index.php?id=234
  - Spanish: https://learn.nctsn.org/course/view.php?id=233
- Trauma-Informed Care: Understanding and Addressing the Needs of Unaccompanied Children. NCTSN 4-Part Webinar series, Part 4 on STS:
  - English: http://bit.ly/unaccompanied-children-english
  - Spanish: http://bit.ly/unaccompanied-children-spanish
- Emotional Challenges and Self-Care for Those Working with Young Traumatized Children:
  - https://www.nctsn.org/resources/emotional-challenges-and-self-care-those-working-young-traumatized-children

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