

How to be Trauma-Informed Managers and Leaders

REDF CA RISE Training

August 19, 2025

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Meet the Team



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Learning Objectives

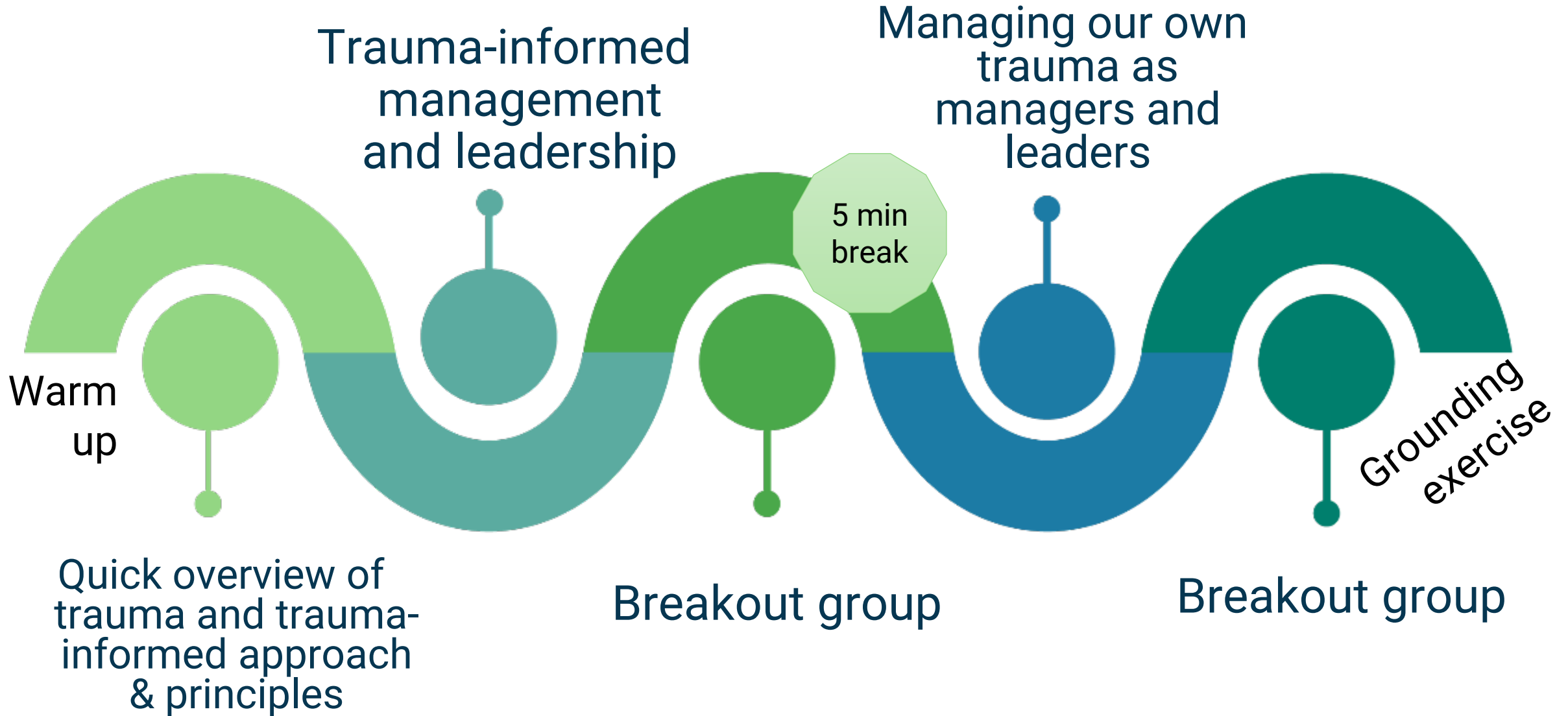
Deepen understanding of trauma and how it affects us.

Define a trauma-informed approach and trauma-informed equity principles.

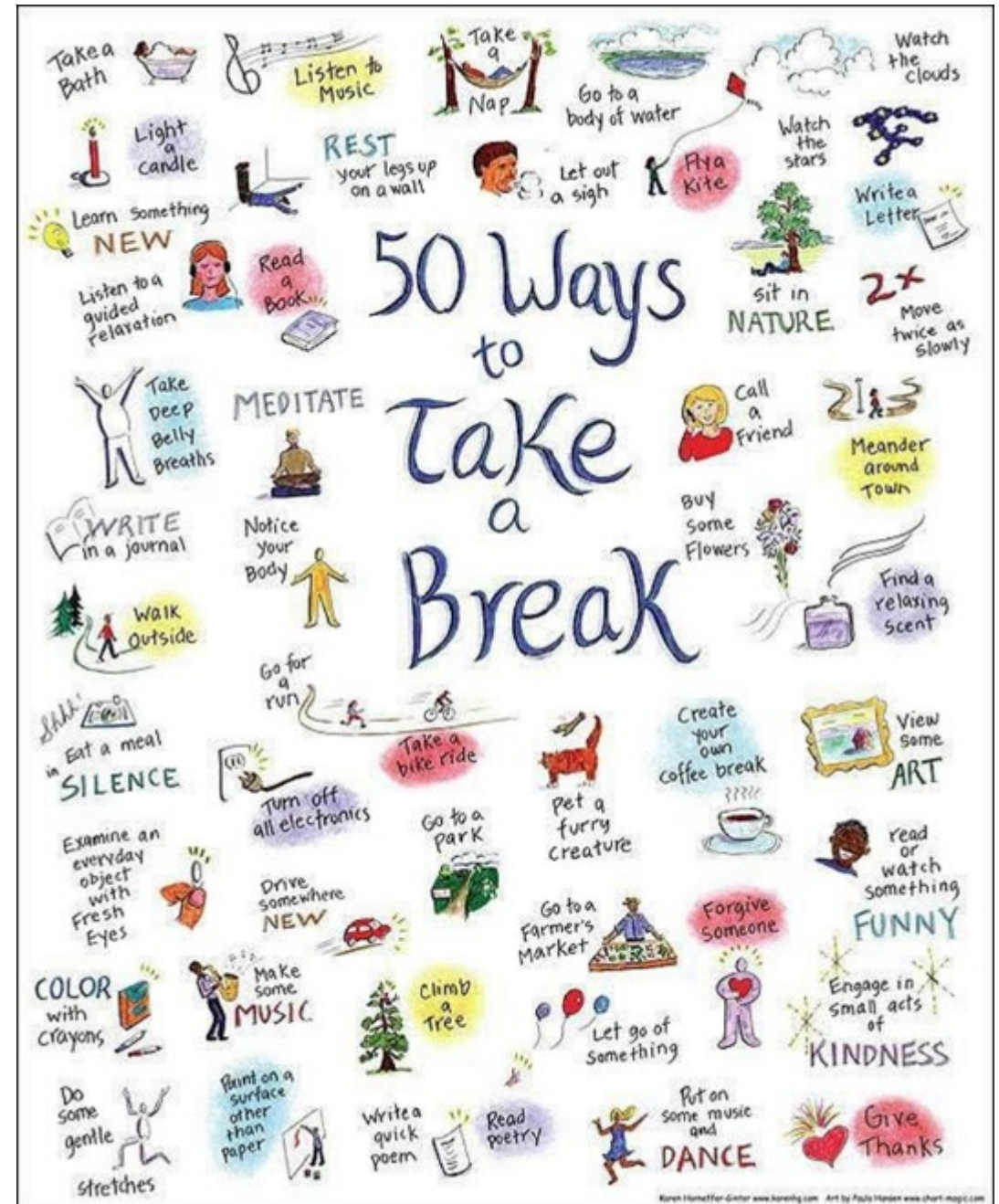
Describe how to apply a trauma-informed approach and principles to managing people and leading teams.

Learn practices and tools for managing our own trauma in the context of managing people and leading teams.

Today's Agenda



**Listen to your
body and prep
for self-care.**





02:26

Insight Timer, Two-Minute Meeting Preparation Meditation, Kate James

Trauma, trauma-informed approach and principles



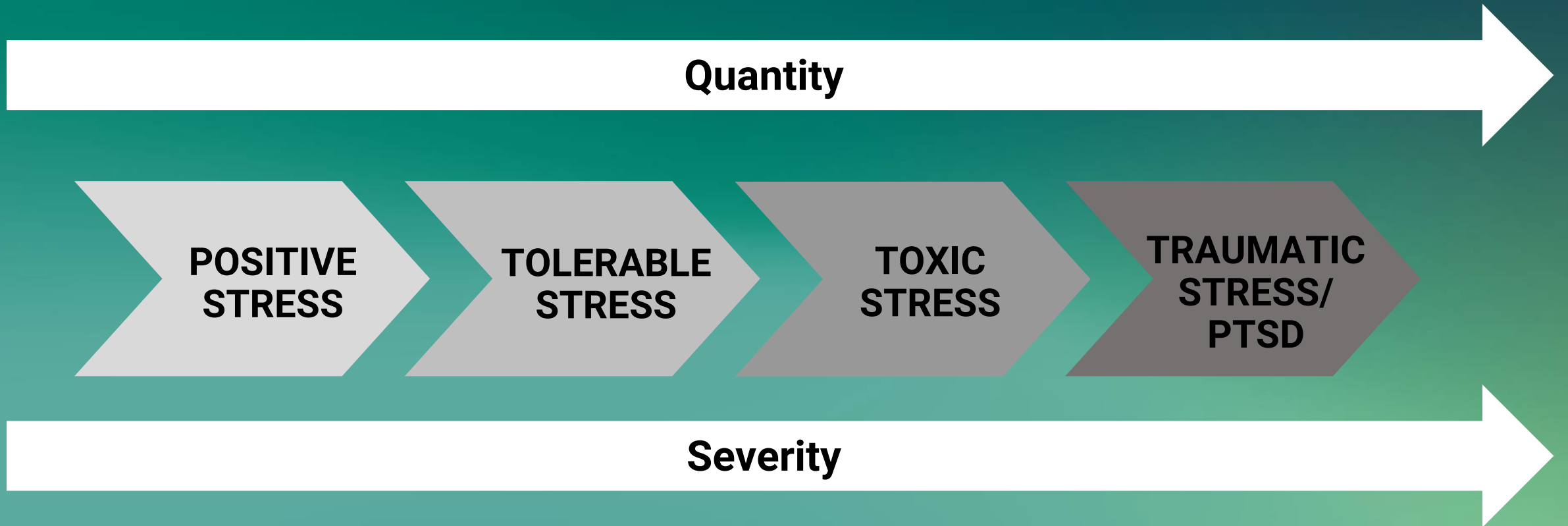
Definition of Trauma

An event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

Traumatic events may be experienced by an individual, a generation, or an entire community or culture.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

From Stress to Trauma

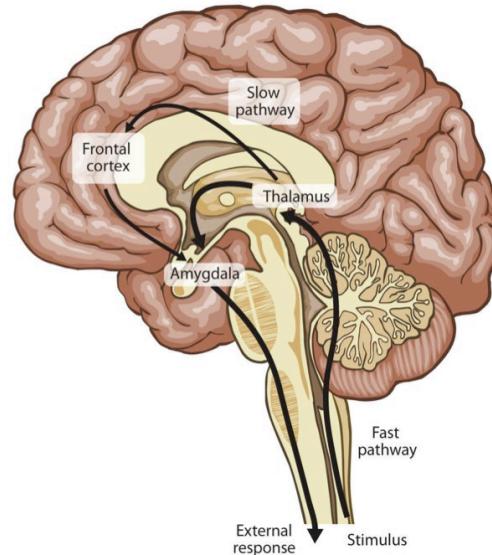


References: Center on the Developing Child Harvard University. (2020) *Toxic Stress*. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/key-concepts/toxic-stress/>.
Harris, N.B. (2018). *The deepest well: Healing the long-term effects of childhood adversity*. New York, NY: First Mariner Books.
Sar, V. (2011). *Developmental trauma, complex PTSD, and the current proposal of DSM-5*. *European Journal of Psychotraumatology*, 2(1), 5622.

The Brain on Toxic Stress and Trauma

Abnormal experiences:

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Chronic work stress
- Climate change trauma
- COVID-19 pandemic
- Inflation
- Poverty
- Racial trauma
- Racial violence and injustice
- Unemployment
- War
- Secondary trauma



Fight
Flight
Freeze
Submit

Normal *automatic* bodily responses:

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Body aches
- Brain fog
- Confusion
- Depression
- Fatigue
- Fear
- Feeling fed up
- Feeling physically older
- Irritation
- Numbness
- Lack of trust

Normal responses to
abnormal experiences

Behavioral Responses

Fight

- Lashing out
- Angry outbursts
- Violence toward self
- Violence towards others

Flight

- Avoidance of emotions, people, places
- Struggle to focus
- Difficult to trust and form healthy relationships

Freeze

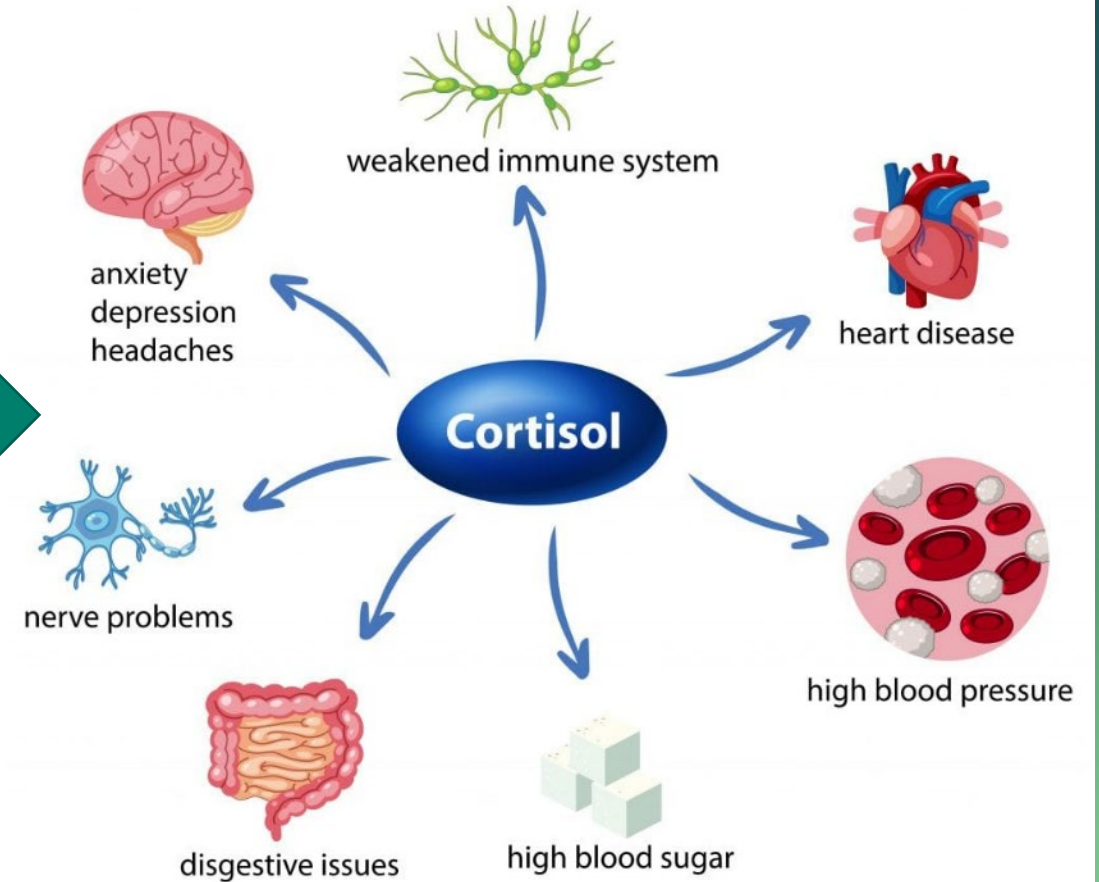
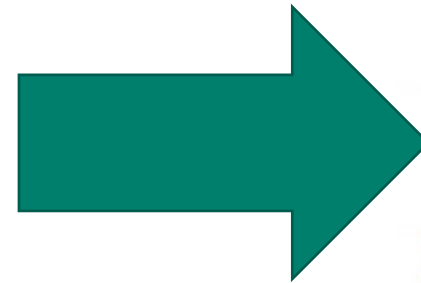
- Diminished mental processing
- Brain fog
- Anxiety
- Difficulty with planning, goal setting

Submit

- Melancholy
- Depression
- Easily give up
- A “whatever” attitude



Physical Responses



A Trauma-Informed Approach

SAMHSA's definition of a trauma-informed approach is grounded in four practices and six principles.

A TI approach...

- **Realizes** the widespread impact of trauma;
- **Recognizes** the signs and symptoms of trauma in self and others;
- **Responds** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
- **Resist** re-traumatization.

A TI approach does NOT:

- Probe about trauma experiences;
- Attempt to diagnose trauma;
- Ask “what’s wrong with you?”;
- Abandon accountability.



Trauma-Informed Equity (TIE) Principles

Adapted from SAMHSA and
the University of Michigan



Safety, Acknowledgement, Respect, & Structured Interaction



Trust and Transparency



Empowerment, Voice, Choice, and Flexibility



Peer Support and Belonging



Collaboration and Mutuality



Cultural Humility and Critically Engaging Difference



Trauma-Informed Management and Leadership

Forms of Power

1 Coercive Power

2 Reward Power

3 Legitimate Power

4 Expert Power

5 Referent Power

6 Informational Power

7 Collective Power

Adapted from: [French and Raven's Forms of Power: A Simple Summary](#) and [Innovation Network](#)



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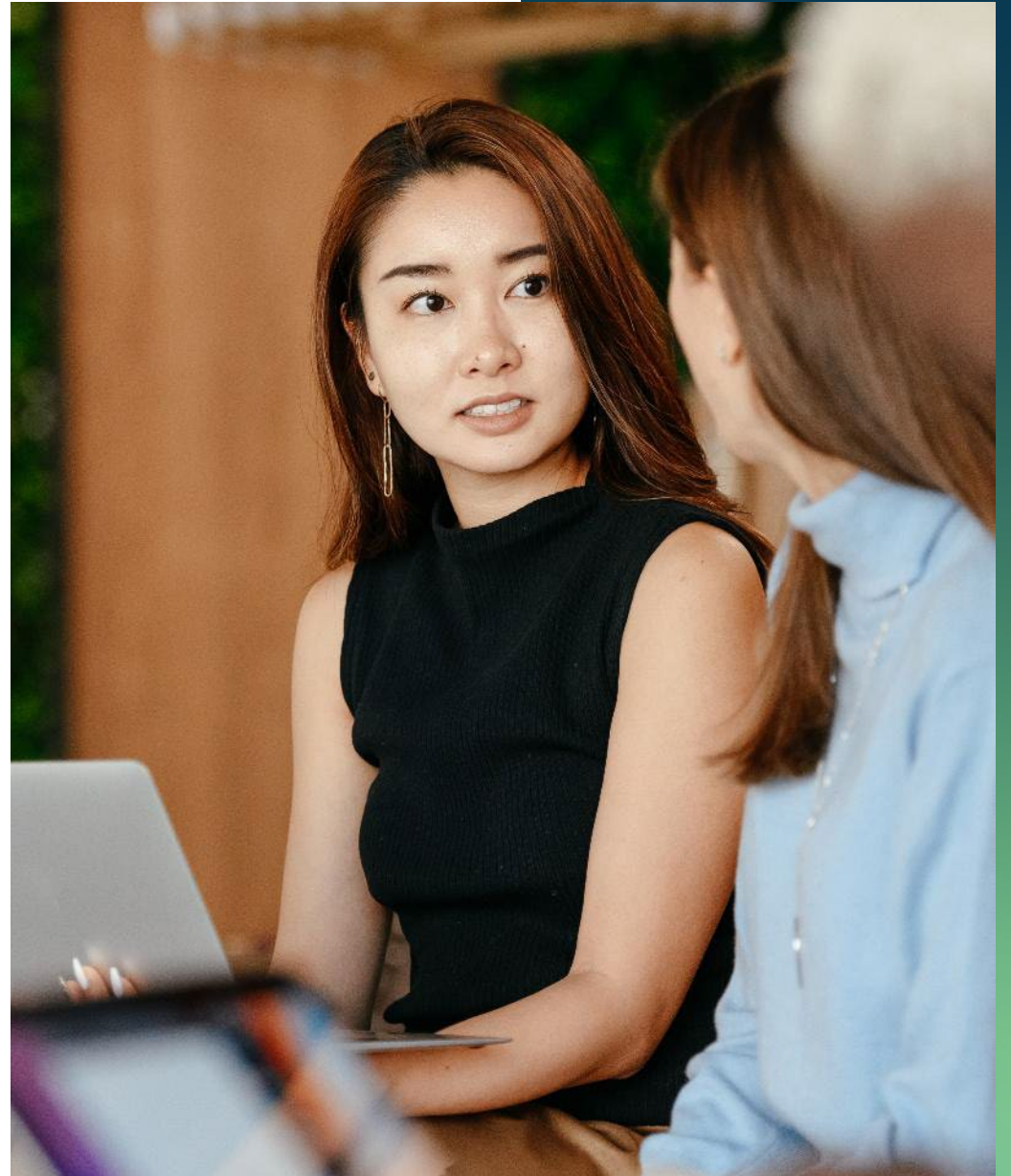
Collaboration and Mutuality



Cultural Humility and Critically Engaging Difference



What are some
reasons why
people don't do
what's expected of
them?



Trauma-informed Accountability



Clearly communicate your expectations



Set people up for success



Explain consequences with expectations



Implement consequences, good or bad



Check out that expectations can be achieved



Make sure you are a good role model of accountability



If needed: Restate expectations & provide feedback



Assume good intent



Break Out Groups

1. How can I integrate trauma-informed principles more deeply into my leadership and management?
2. How can I coach others on how to integrate these principles into their leadership and management?

5 Minute Break

Download CSW Trauma & Resilience Quick Guides
<https://skilledwork.org/trauma-resilience-at-work/>

Managing our own trauma re/triggering



NATIONAL CENTER ON

Parent, Family and Community Engagement

Understanding Trauma and Healing in Adults

Brief 2. Caring for Ourselves as We Care for Others



Steps for managing our trauma at work

- 1 Recognize the feelings that accompany trauma triggers
- 2 Prepare for triggers by identifying when they are most likely to happen
- 3 Make a plan for regulation & self-care for when triggers occur
- 4 Seek out additional supports and integrate regular self-care, collective care, resilience building strategies

Packing Your “Regulation Briefcase”

Sensory Regulation

Send “Safe Signals”
Bottom Up

- Breath Exercises
- Engage in rhythmic activities (dancing, drumming)
- Use a stress ball or fidget
- Take a quick walk/nature
- Release through exercise
- Aromatherapy

Cognitive Regulation

Thinking that Redefines ‘Stress’
Top Down

- Name the emotion
- Shift negative self talk
- Visualization (imagine a safe place or feeling)
- Practice gratitude
- Focus on the “big picture”
- Make a list (what is controllable?)

Social Regulation

Positive Interactions with Others
Relational

- Quick positive interactions
- Ask for help
- Social networking
- Join group exercise
- Participate in community Service
- Join or organize a support group

Self-Regulation

Co-Regulation

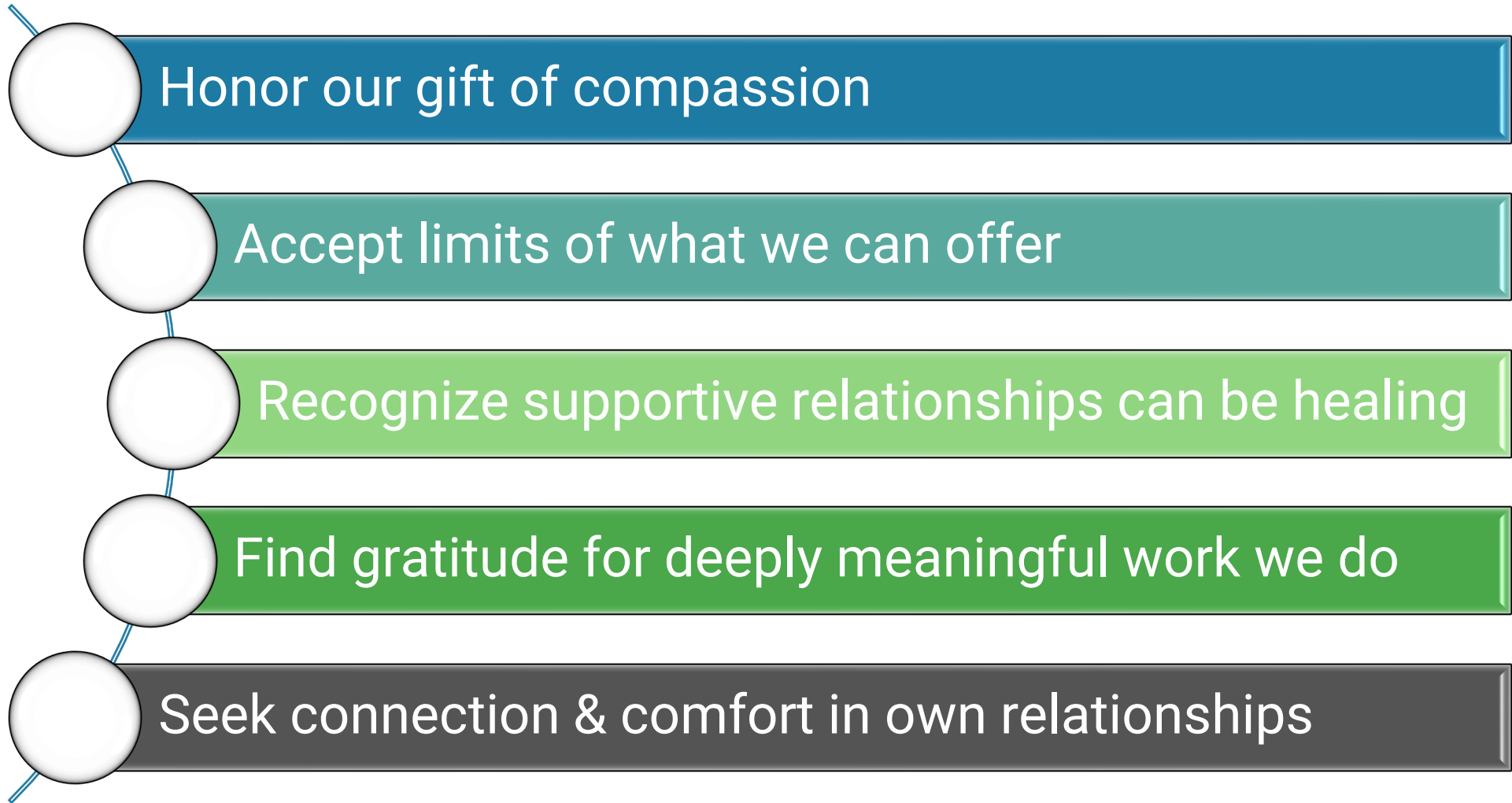
- Use calm and even tone (voice/smile)
- Show you're listening
- Schedule walking meetings
- Listen to calming music
- Use open body language

- Discuss and set mutual goals
- Share inspirational stories
- Help reframe negative thinking
- Use humor to shift mood
- Help shift catastrophic wording
- Encourage reflective journaling

- Offer to help
- Remind others of achievements and successes
- Plan regular checkins
- Plan regular social gatherings
- Quick positive conversations
- Share moments of gratitude



Valuing Ourselves and Our Work



Source: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/utha-trauma-brief-02-caring-for-ourselves.pdf>

Holistic Self-Care and Collective Care

<https://olgaphoenix.com/self-care-wheel/>



CSW's Resilience Rainbow



BUILDING RESILIENCE



Break-out Group Discussions



Scenario

- Monique has graduated from the ESE training program and is a brand-new manager at the SE café. You are Monique's SE coach. You know that she has experienced a tough family situation, but you don't know the details.
- As you coach Monique, you notice that sometimes she is overconfident in her management skills and dismisses your advice on how to manage the café business and staff. When you try to mention this to her, she gets defensive and suggests that you are underestimating and trying to undermine her.
- One day, everything seems to fall apart at the café. A barista does not show up for the morning shift, the espresso machine breaks down, and Monique loses it. She threatens to fire all the staff and storms out of the shop. She doesn't contact you until that evening.

Discussion Questions

1. You have some understanding of trauma but are not in a position to diagnose trauma. Do you think Monique might have experienced trauma re/triggering in this scenario? What may have been the trigger(s) and what may have been the response(s)?
2. What would be a trauma-informed approach(s) with Monique when she calls you the evening after the terrible day?
3. What might be some longer-term approaches you and Monique can take to mitigate this type of situation in the future? And to address it if it happens again?
4. How did you feel when this happened? How can you take care of yourself in challenging situations like this?

Thank you, and be well!

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Grounding Exercise

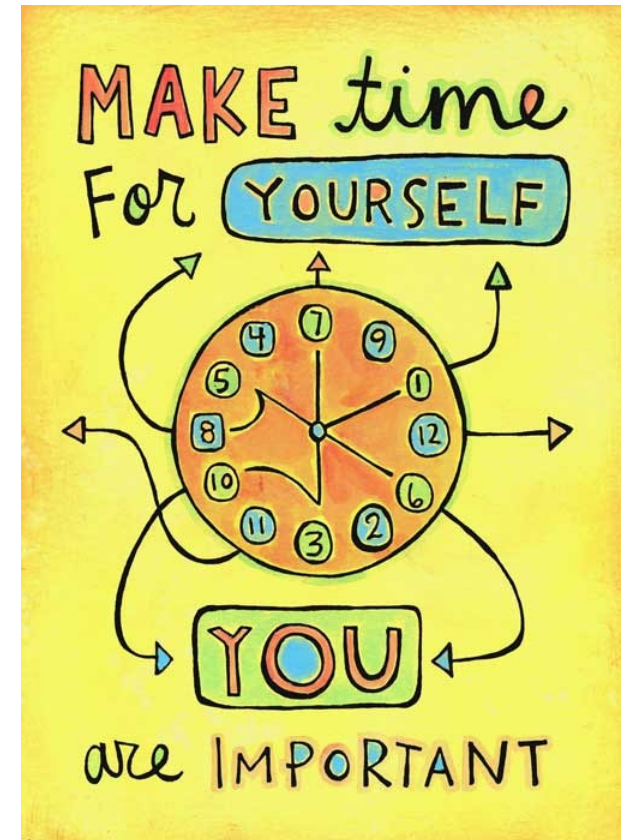


2 Minute Re-Centering Mindfulness Meditation for De-stressing <https://youtu.be/Jholcb8Gz0M?si=a9gXxOdjcHbdwMBc>

Additional Tools

Building Resilience Resources

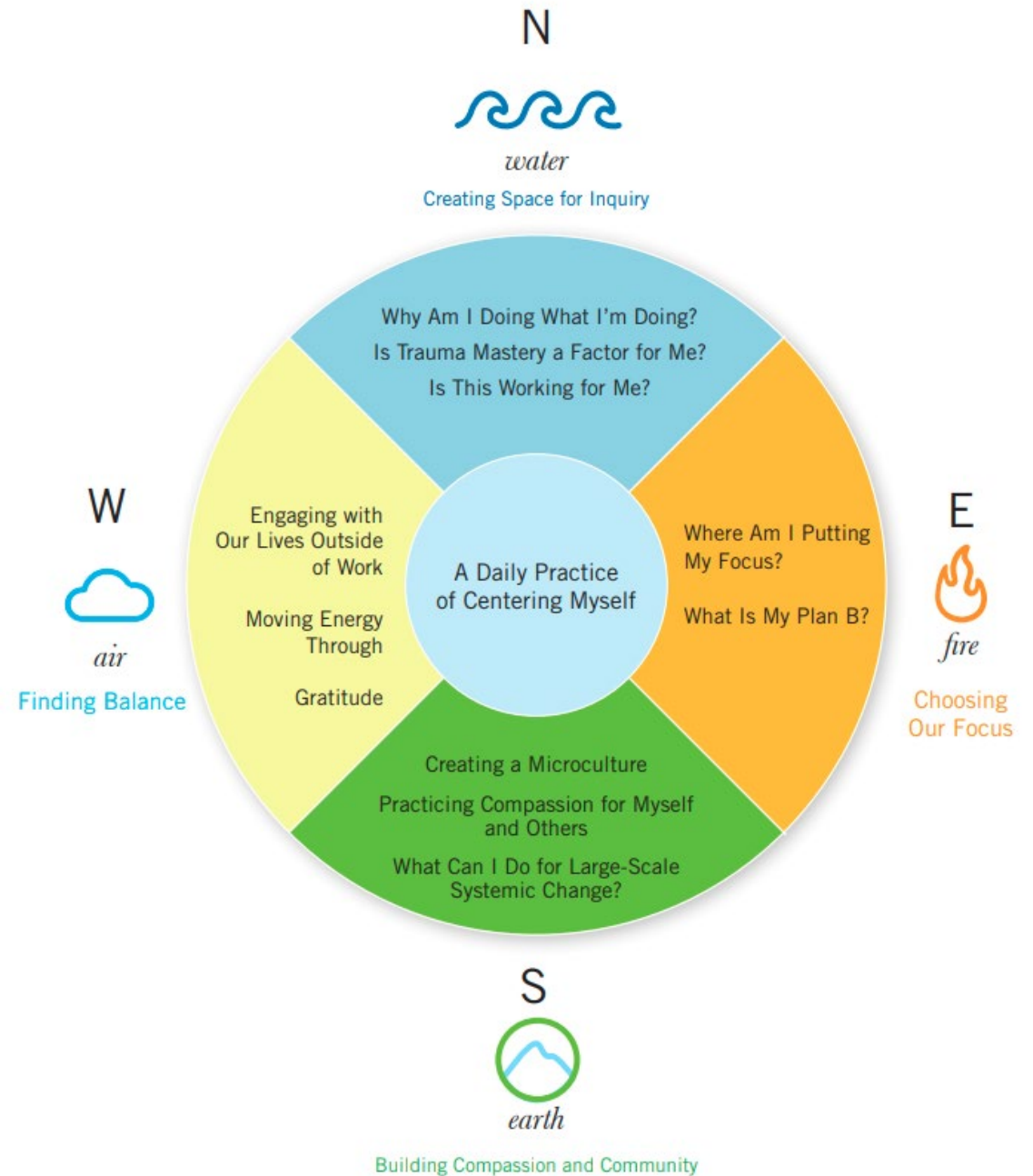
- [NYT 10 Ways to Keep Your Mind Healthy in 2025](#)
- [Caring for Ourselves As We Care For Others Brief](#)
- [Rain of Self-Compassion](#)
- Meditation apps: [Insight Timer](#), [Calm](#), [Headspace](#), [Mindful.org](#)
- [Self-Care Wheel – Olga Phoenix](#)
- [The 5 Directions – Trauma Stewardship](#)
- [The Miracle of Mindfulness: An Introduction to the Practice of Meditation](#)
- [Sharon Salzberg books](#)
- [Stay Well MI Self-Compassion Exercise](#)
- [Origins Creating a Trauma-Informed Workplace Toolkit](#)
- [Workforce Resilience Enhancement Project](#)



The 5 Directions

“Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others”

by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky and
Connie Burk



Alternate to Self-Care Wheel

Trauma Stewardship

- A path to rejuvenation, revitalization, and achieving balance, joy, and meaning in both our work and our lives
- As stewards we create a space for and honor others' hardships and suffering, yet do not assume their pain as our own.
- We need to develop a long-term strategy that enables us to remain whole and helpful.

5 Directions

1. **North (Water):** creating space for inquiry
2. **East (Fire):** choosing our focus, reframing
3. **South (Earth):** building compassion and creating community
4. **West (Air):** finding balance, engaging with our lives outside of work
5. **Centered Self (Middle):** a daily practice of centering ourselves



Rain of Self-Compassion

Source: <https://www.mindful.org/tara-brach-rain-mindfulness-practice/>



Feeling Overwhelmed? Remember “RAIN”

Four steps to stop being so hard on ourselves.

R

Recognize
what's
going on

A

Allow the
experience
to be there,
just as it is

I

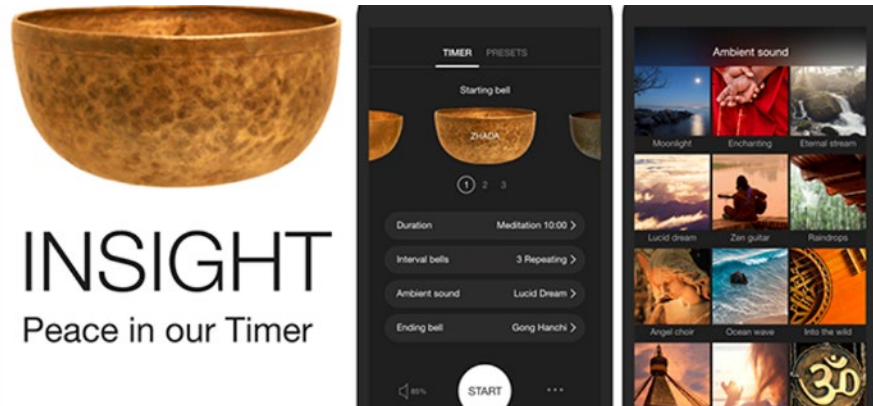
Investigate
with
kindness

N

Natural
awareness,
which comes
from not
identifying
with the
experience

Meditation Apps/Resources

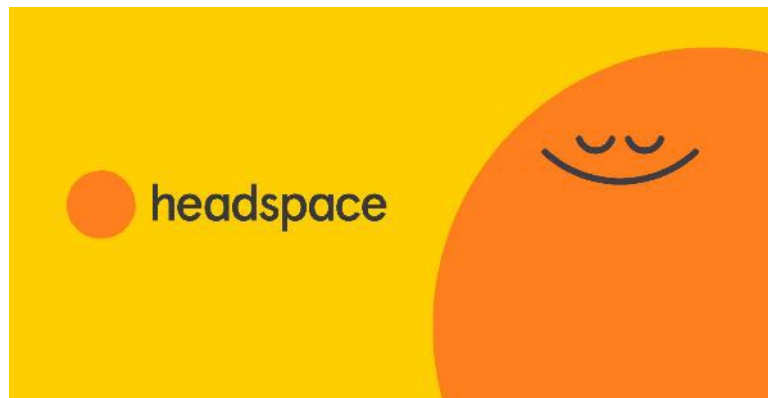
<https://insighttimer.com/>



<https://www.calm.com/>



<https://www.headspace.com/>



<https://www.mindful.org/>

