



KENTUCKY CABINET FOR
HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES

Countering the Cost of Caring:

Strategies for Health Care Providers to Build Resilience

Miriam Silman, December 2021

Roadmap

Overview of types of workforce stressors/
threats to resilience

Brain/body impact of secondary traumatic
stress, signs & symptoms

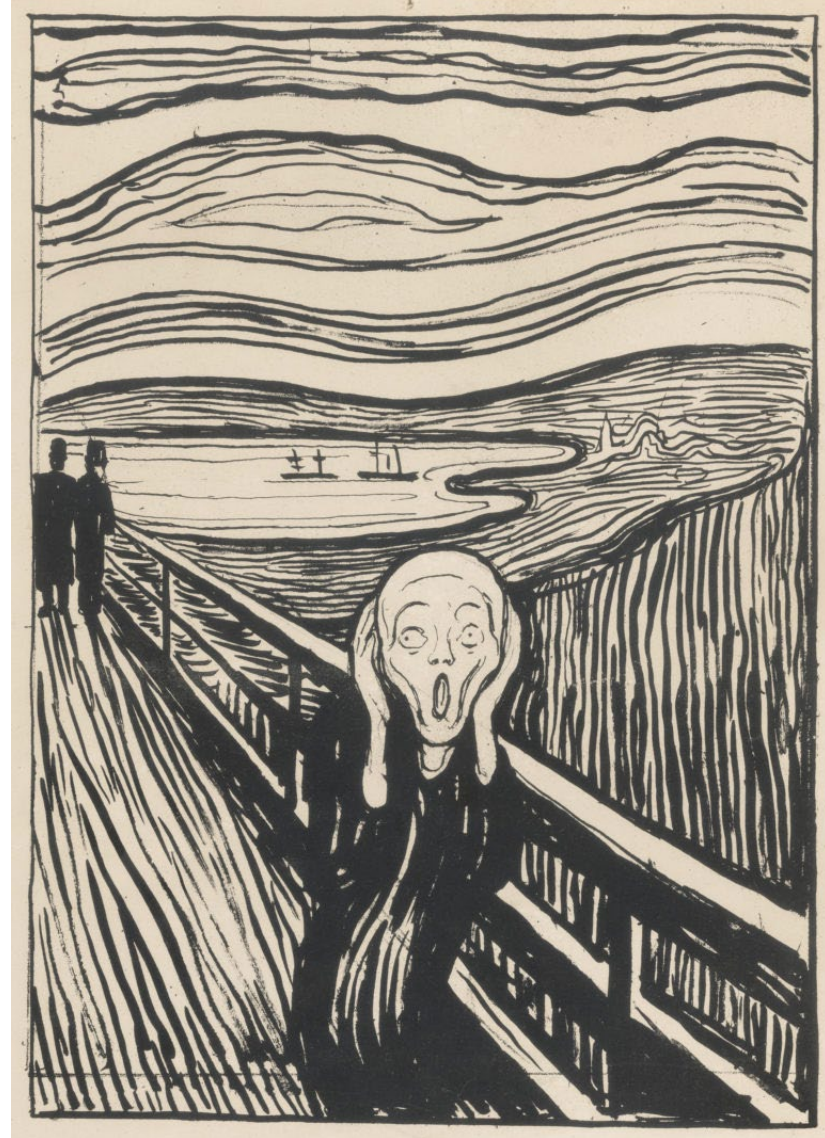
Strategies to manage the impact of the
work during COVID-19

Self-Awareness Reminder

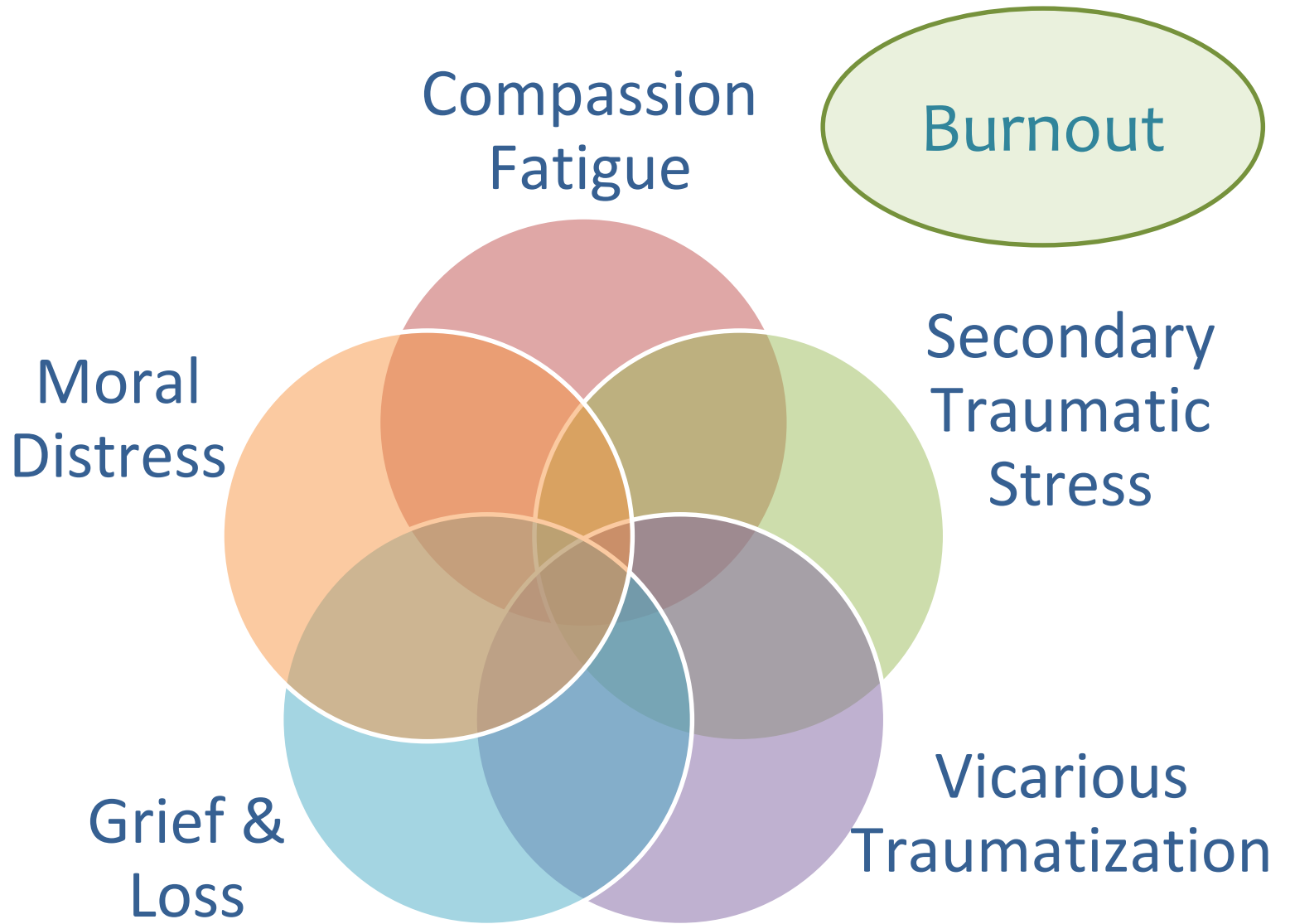
- Pay attention to your own needs and responses
- Take care of yourself however you need to during and following the presentation; you may be impacted even after this session
- Use coping skills that help you *metabolize* your responses to trauma
- Find a safe space in which you can process your experience using coping strategies including talking to colleagues, friends, family, or a professional provider



Carrying Care: The Brain & Body Impact



Workforce Stress Response



Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

- TedXTalk available at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uOzDGrcvmus>

Burnout

“the extinction of motivation or incentive, especially when one’s devotion to a cause or relationship fails to produce the desired results”
(Freudenberger, 1980)



Compassion Fatigue

- “the cost of caring” (*Figley*)
- “the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another” (*NCTSN*)
- “gradual erosion of...our empathy, our hope, and of course our compassion – not only for others but also for ourselves” (*Mathieu*)

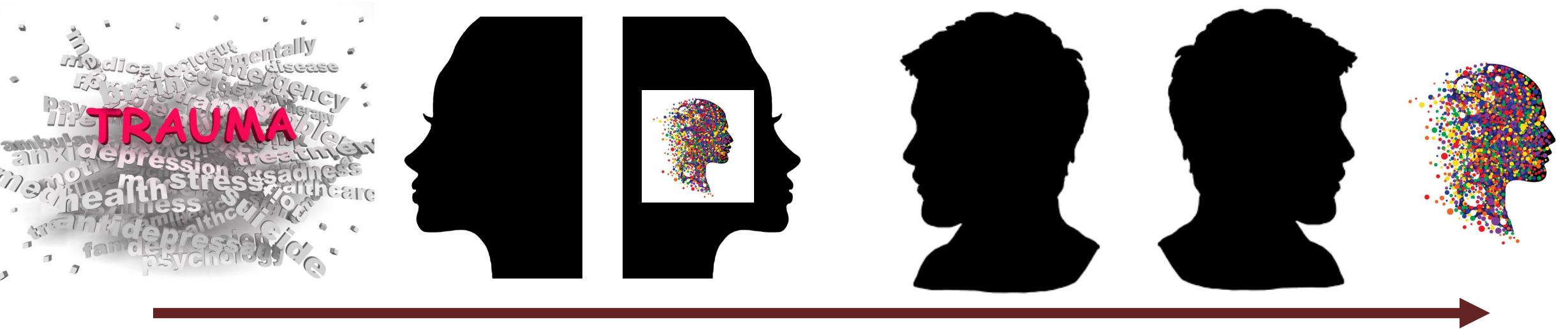


Vicarious Traumatization

Transformation of the...helper's inner experience as a result of empathic engagement with survivor clients and their trauma material....our cherished beliefs are challenged and we are changed"

(Saakvitne & Pearlman)

Secondary Traumatic Stress



- “the natural, consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced or suffered by a person” (*Figley*)
- Exposure to secondary trauma manifests in signs and symptoms of traumatic stress

Moral Injury/ Moral Distress

- Challenge our core values and ethical frameworks
- Disrupt the foundation of how we live in small and large moments
- Elicit feelings of shame, guilt, betrayal, doubt, mistrust, despair, hopelessness, powerlessness
- Impacts our working and personal functioning



Fractured Soul by Tate Krupa

Moral Injury

“Moral injury is not a disorder but a profound war inside that comes from our humanity fighting our experience.

Alleviating that suffering requires remembering our humanity and finding a sense of meaning and purpose that makes sense of our lives.”

-- Rita Nakashima Brock, 2020

Grief & Loss

- Grief changes with time & place, waxes & wanes
- Grief is natural, the way we heal from loss
- Past grief may be triggered
- Losses are both tangible & intangible
- Grief during COVID-19: We've lost people, relationships, connections; control & certainty; a sense of safety, a sense of future; personal freedoms & choices; part of our identity; Ambiguous Grief may occur from absence of sense of closure



Grief & Loss

- Grief is universally experienced but experienced uniquely by each individual
- “Grief is the emotional, cognitive, functional, and behavioral reactions a bereaved person might experience as a result of a loss”



Types of Grief

- Anticipatory
- Ambiguous
- Prolonged
- Complicated

- Acute Grief
- Chronic Grief

- Tangible Loss
- Intangible Loss

Acute Grief



Chronic Grief



Complicated Grief

- “difficulty accepting death, traumatic distress, pervasive yearning for the deceased, intense longing for and a preoccupation with memories of the deceased, extreme anger, and feelings of emptiness.”
- 7 to 10% of bereaved individuals
- Increased risk if:
 - history of mood or anxiety disorders*
 - experience of multiple losses*
 - history of adverse life events*
 - poor health*
 - lack of social support*
 - concurrent life stress*



Tangible & Intangible Loss

Tangible

- Loss of a person
- Loss of a specific physical thing

Intangible

- Agency & autonomy
- Hope
- Sense of future
- Safety & security
- Sense of community & belonging
- Community loss, trauma

The Mental Health of Healthcare Workers in COVID-19

Mental Health America Survey, June – September 2020
 $n = 1119$, 245 (22%) nurses

- 93% reported experiencing stress
- 86% reported anxiety
- 76% endorsed exhaustion & burnout
- 75% reported consistently overwhelmed
- More than 50%: changes in appetite, somatic symptoms, compassion fatigue, questioning career path

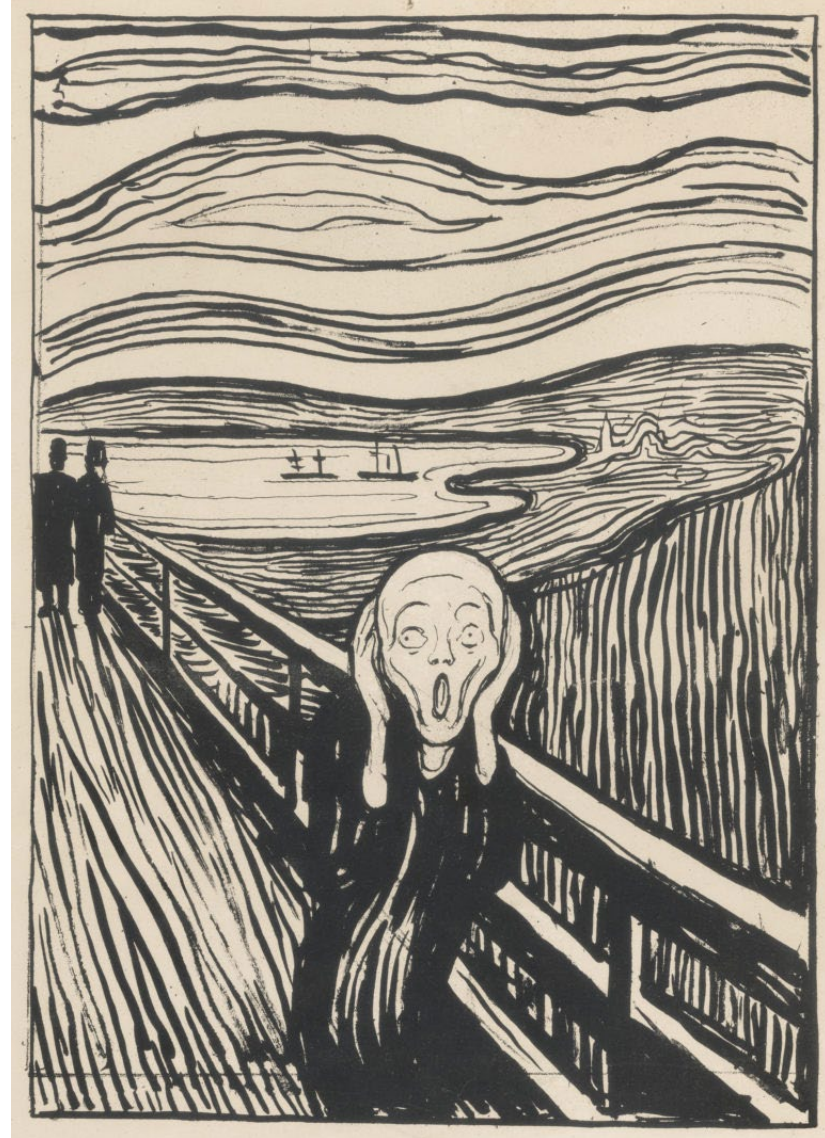
Melnyk et al Survey of Travel Nurses

(August – October 2020; n = 264)

- **Physical and mental health:**

- The vast majority reported physical health (74.6%) and mental health (80.7%) at a five or lower on a 10-point scale.
- 53.8% reported that the pandemic made their physical health worse
- 79.2% reported that the pandemic made their mental health worse.
- Depressive symptoms: 29.5%
- Anxiety: 37.5%
- Stress: 78.5%
- Burnout: 65.5%

Carrying Care: The Brain & Body Impact



Munn et al Survey of Nurses & HCWs

(June – July 2020)

- 58% nurse respondents
- 44% had “at-risk well-being”
- Only 22% reported using well-being or resilience resources
- Significant elements (correlation):
 - *psychological safety*
 - *organizational understanding of staff emotional needs*
 - *leadership & direct manager support*
 - *transparency re staff redeployment*
 - *educational resources*
 - *staffing*
 - *workload*
 - *availability of PPE*

FIGHT



FLIGHT oohlala!



FREEZE



Brain Body Stress Response

1. Amygdala

2. Hypothalamus

3. Adrenal glands release adrenaline and cortisol

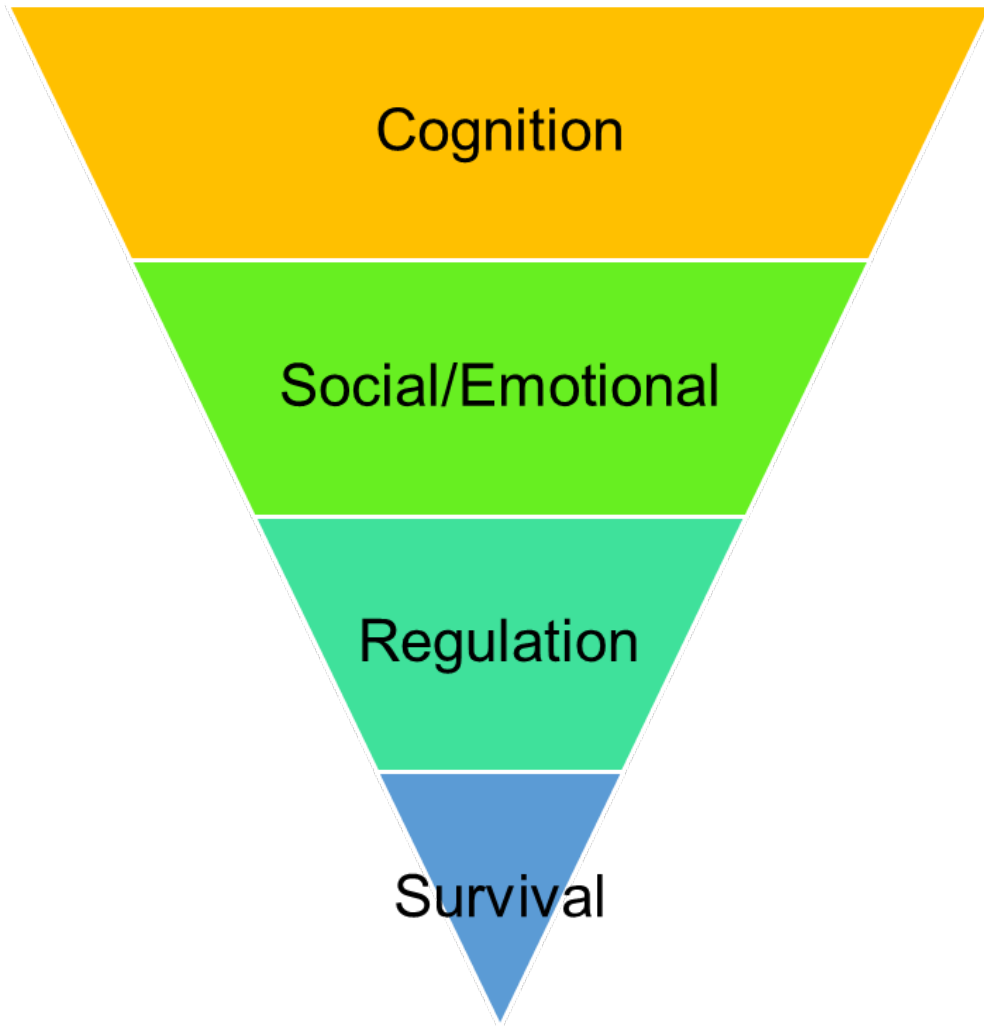
6. Hippocampus

5. Prefrontal Cortex

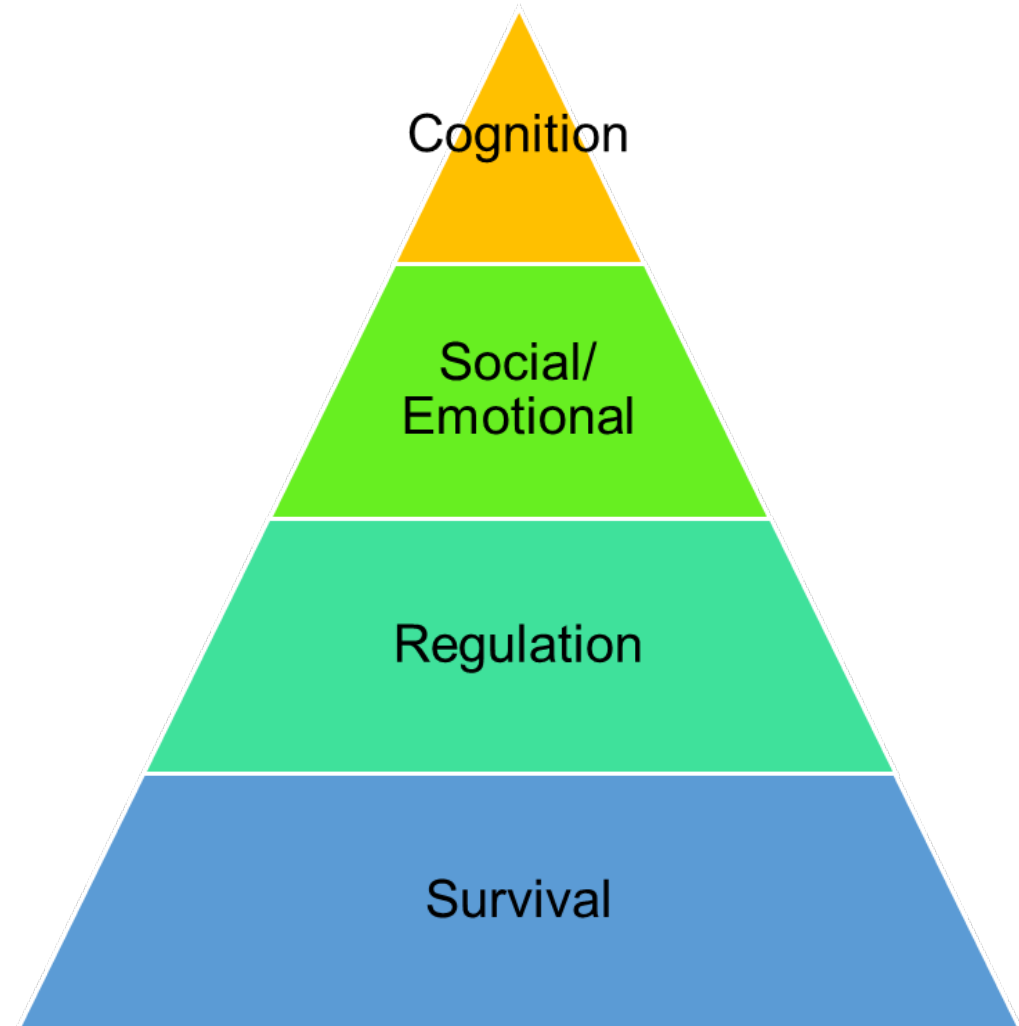
4. Heart rate, blood pressure & breathing rate increase

DANGER!
THREAT!

Brain Energy Allocation When Regulated



Brain Energy Allocation When Experiencing Harm



Signs & Symptoms of STS

Avoidance:

absenteeism, tardiness,
incomplete work, not
engaging in activities,
leaving profession

Intrusions:

dreams, intrusive thoughts,
rumination about patients'
trauma or about risk of
trauma to self or loved
ones

Physical Symptoms:

exhaustion, headaches,
muscle tension, twitches,
GI problems, poor sleep,
hyperarousal

Cognitive Changes:

negative, cynical, think
patients are hopeless, no
creativity, can't focus, loss
of interest in work

Emotional Changes:

depression, sadness,
anxiety, exaggerated fears,
guilt, isolation, feeling
numb, anger

Social/ Interpersonal Changes:

withdrawn, irritable, no
motivation, lack of interest,
anhedonia

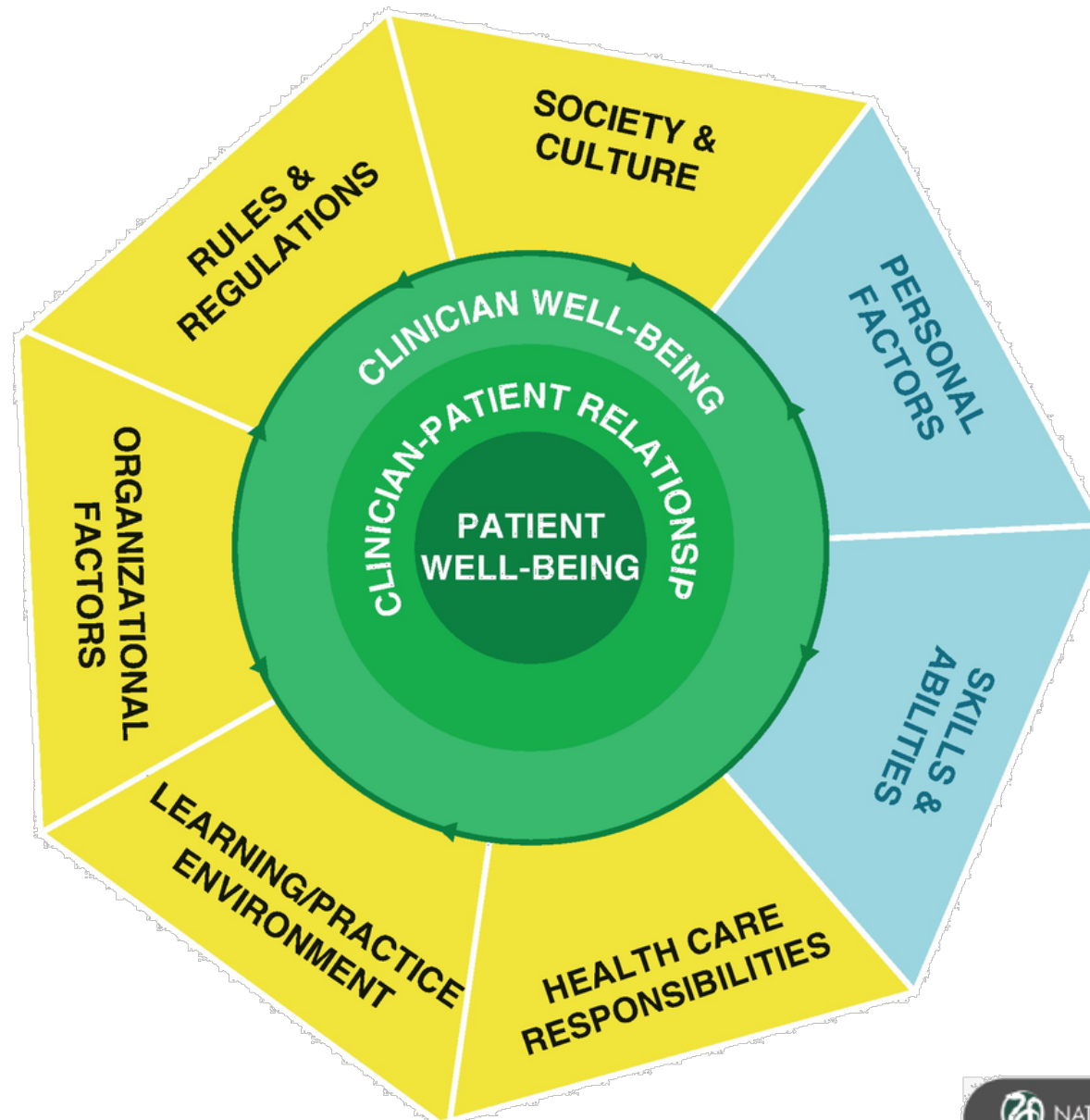
Body Scan

- *Observe sensations*
- *Acknowledge any pain or discomfort*
- *Breathe into & through it*
- *Visualize the tension leaving that part of your body*



What to Do? Prevention & Response Strategies





WHO Guidance

“Managing your stress and psychosocial well-being during this time is as important as managing your physical health”



The Basics

- Be aware & acknowledge
- Take care of your body
- Take care of your mind
- Maintain a routine
- Stay connected
- Be prosocial



Tips for Healthcare Professionals: Coping with Stress and Compassion Fatigue:

https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/SAMHSA_Digital_Download/PEP20-01-01-016_508.pdf

Take Care of Your Body



Healthy Food



Regular Exercise



Enough Sleep

Sleep is Your Superpower, Matt Walker, PhD:

https://www.ted.com/talks/matt_walker_sleep_is_your_superpower?language=en

Melnyk et al Survey of Travel Nurses (August – October 2020)

- **Healthy lifestyle behaviors that a majority of nurses surveyed reported were negatively affected by the pandemic:**
 - More than one-third (38.6%) reported increased alcohol intake.
 - Only about one-third (34.8%) slept seven or more hours a night.
 - Only about one in five (22.3%) reported 150 minutes or more of moderate physical activity per week.
 - Only 8% of the nurses consumed five or more daily servings of fruits and vegetables.

Take Care of Your Mind



Positivity & Hope



Mindfulness

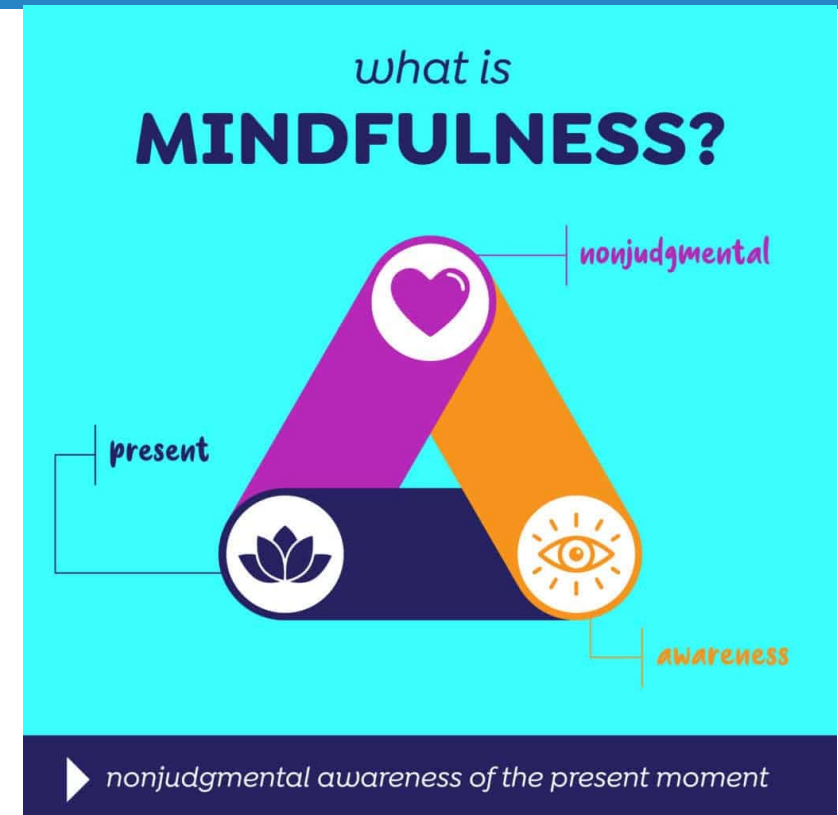


Gratitude

Mindfulness

“Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally, in the service of self-understanding and wisdom.”

Jon Kabat-Zinn



The Science of Self-Regulation

Sympathetic Nervous System

- Activated by the “alarm” response
- Sends body into flight, flee or freeze mode by releasing cortisol & adrenaline
- Diverts blood flow to muscles needed for fight, flee, freeze & contracts muscles
- Releases glucose from liver to provide energy
- Increases heart rate, dilates lungs to breathe more quickly, dilates blood vessels to promote flow, etc.

Parasympathetic Nervous System

- Maintains system in a non-alarm state
- Restores body to state of normal functioning, ideally one of calm & rest; no stress hormones released
- Blood flow goes to all areas of body working, e.g. digestion, thinking
- Energy production is paced and relatively even
- Decreases heart rate, constricts bronchial tubes, constricts blood vessels

Incorporating Mindfulness & Reflection into Work

- Give enough time for the “pause” before a response is required
- Individual & group meeting starts or ends
- “Celebration & Critique” round robin at end of meeting
- Beginning & end of day journaling or shared posting
- Group opportunities for yoga, mindfulness, etc.
- *Use prompts e.g. texts through Remind app or email, etc.*

Grounding Moments

In your mind...

- *5 things you see*
- *4 things you hear*
- *3 things you feel*
- *2 things you smell*
- *1 thing you taste*

Awareness & Monitoring

- Supervision & Peer Supervision
- Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL 5):
[https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/dfc1e1a0-a1db-4456-9391-18746725179b/downloads/ProQOL 5 English Self-Score.pdf?ver=1622777390411](https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/dfc1e1a0-a1db-4456-9391-18746725179b/downloads/ProQOL_5_English_Self-Score.pdf?ver=1622777390411)
- Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale:
<https://www.uky.edu/ctac/stsscale>
- Moral Distress Scale Revised:
<https://www.uky.edu/ctac/content/moral-distress-scale-revised>

Low-Impact Debriefing/ Processing

1. Self-Awareness
2. Fair Warning
3. Consent
4. Limited Disclosure

TEND Academy (2019): www.tendacademy.ca



Addressing Grief in the Workplace

- ✓ Acknowledge the loss, express condolences, check in with one another regularly
- ✓ Support sharing information about a specific loss as comfortable
- ✓ Identify potential flexibility & accommodations: “Is there anything that will make returning to work easier at this time?”
- ✓ Clarify expectations, role, deadlines, etc. to anticipate needed supports
- ✓ Be specific with offers of support: “How are you *today*?” “Why don’t I take care of that today?” “We’d like to provide dinner one night this week.”
- ✓ Create & promote sense of psychological safety
- ✓ Know about EAP and other external sources of professional support

What *NOT* to do when addressing grief in the workplace?

- *Share your own grief story, tell them how to feel, say you know how they feel*
- *Impart your beliefs onto their experience*
- *Put a timeline on when they should “be over it”*
- *Make vague offers to “help” if there’s “anything we can do”*
- *Avoid acknowledging or checking in*
- *Remind them how hard others are working to cover for the at the moment*



If you lose a member of your team...

- ✓ Acknowledge the loss for all staff, even those who may not have worked closely with the person
- ✓ Normalize talking about the cognitive, emotional & physical reactions to the loss; allow staff to share responses as they feel comfortable
- ✓ Create space to talk about the person
- ✓ Find a way to honor the person that feels comfortable to all team members
- ✓ Offer additional support to those who may be most impacted; know resources to suggest
- ✓ Supervisors should clarify how that person's work & responsibilities will be covered, be transparent about the process, include staff when appropriate

Psychological First Aid (PFA)

- Evidence-informed
- Community-level support
- Colleague support
- *Recommended by the American Psychological Association as a response to COVID-related stress:*
<https://www.apa.org/topics/covid-19/distress-mental-health>

PFA Objectives

- Establish a **human connection** in a non-intrusive, compassionate manner.
- Enhance immediate and ongoing safety, and provide physical and **emotional comfort**.
- **Calm** and orient emotionally overwhelmed or distraught survivors.
- Help survivors to tell you specifically what their immediate needs and concerns are, and gather additional information as appropriate.
- Offer **practical assistance and information** to help survivors address their immediate needs and concerns.
- **Connect** survivors as soon as possible to social support networks, including family members, friends, neighbors, and community helping resources.
- **Support adaptive coping**, acknowledge coping efforts and **strengths**, and **empower** survivors; encourage adults, children, and families to take an active role in their recovery.
- Provide information that may help survivors cope effectively with the psychological impact of disasters.
- Be clear about your availability, and (when appropriate) **link** the survivor to another member of a disaster response team or to local recovery systems, mental health services, public-sector services, and organizations.

PFA Strengths

- Psychological First Aid includes basic information-gathering techniques to help providers make **rapid assessments** of survivors' immediate concerns and needs, and to implement supportive activities in a flexible manner.
- Psychological First Aid relies on field-tested, **evidence-informed** strategies that can be provided in a variety of disaster settings.
- Psychological First Aid emphasizes **developmentally and culturally appropriate** interventions for survivors of various ages and backgrounds.
- Psychological First Aid includes handouts that provide important information for youth, adults, and families for their use over the course of recovery.

Psychological First Aid (PFA)

➤ Look

➤ Listen

➤ Link

Look

- Physical status – mask, vaccination, other symptoms?
- Signs of traumatic stress (arousal, intrusion, avoidance, negative cognition & mood) or other concerns?
- Support system – present, available, accessible
- Other adversities/stressors
- Respond with calming & stabilizing support(s)

Listen & Ask

- Coping strategies & supports
- What/who has helped you in times like this before?
 - What have you tried already?
 - What do you need?
- Does what we see match what we hear?

Link

- Health care resources
- Behavioral health resources – Community Mental Health Center, Helpline, DV resources, SUD supports, Hospice & Grief supports
- Structural support resources – food pantry, transportation, housing & utility supports, etc.
- Social supports – in-person & virtual supports through faith communities, extension office, 12-step, etc.

PFA Implementation Tips

- Respectful & non-intrusive approach
- Strong provider self-regulation, model & promote calm
- Cultural humility & respect
- Developmentally appropriate
- Offering supports, not requiring (unless safety is a concern)
- Take practical action steps when possible
- Information accessible, titrated, easily referenced

Psychological First Aid Resources

- *About PFA (NCTSN): <https://www.nctsn.org/treatments-and-practices/psychological-first-aid-and-skills-for-psychological-recovery/about-pfa>*
- *UK Center on Trauma and Children Well@Work: <https://www.uky.edu/ctac/wellatwork>*

Compassion, REsilience And Team-building (CREATE)

- PFA + adaptive coping interventions
- Embed strategies & supports into routine workflow
- Team-based; Pro-active; address “cumulative grief, moral distress and vicarious trauma”
- Purpose:
 1. *Good team cohesion and staff satisfaction with emotional support during COVID-19;*
 2. *Increased staff resiliency and confidence in their ability to cope with future waves and pandemics;*
 3. *Lower relative prevalence of persistent emotional distress and burnout than published in COVID-19 settings*
- Strategies:
 1. *“incorporate peer support element that enhances team cohesion and social support*
 2. *“facilitate emotional validation, normalization of traumatic reactions, problem-solving, and mutual instruction on effective coping*
 3. *“minimize additional time or initiation on the part of HCWs”*



Compassion Satisfaction



Compassion Fatigue



Promote the Good



- Adopt a strengths-based framework
 - Honor lessons learned
- Use affirmations to sandwich suggestions for improvement
 - Celebrate successes
 - Affirm process & outcome
- Center inspiration & motivation

Celebrate Success!

- Give kudos & affirmations
- Recognize small achievements
- Start or end meetings with good news
- Recognize & celebrate effort over outcome
- Remember your inspiration for doing the work
- Celebrate life events & achievements*



Spiritual Candy-Bars

“Ensure that one meeting, one person or experience during the work day feeds your heart and soul, is fun or motivating, inspiring or innovative, that it energizes you, it validates your values, work and connections to doing good. It makes you smile, hope and makes your heart sing.”

Commissioner Marta Miranda-Straub

Reflection: Your Inspiration

- What is your “why” for doing this work?
- What is a situation that reminds you why you do this work?
- With whom can you share your inspiration?





- Physical
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Personal
- Professional

Available at:

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

Using the Self-Care Wheel

- *Write one thing in each pie piece*
- *Rate each thing 1, 2 or 3:*
 - 1 = never use it; not helpful
 - 2 = use it some; somewhat helpful
 - 3 = use it regularly; helpful
- *Forget the 1's; modify the 2's*
- *What else can you do?*



Self-Compassion

- Grace
- Flexibility
- Gratitude
- Focusing on the positive
- Good enough is enough
- Finding our common humanity
- Mindfulness



Self-Compassion: Grace & Forgiveness

Extend to yourself that which you give to others

3 Components:

1. Self-kindness
2. Common humanity
3. Mindful self-awareness

What to do:

- *Positive self-talk*
- *Visualize how you would respond to a friend or colleague*
- *Notice your own suffering & seek support. Ask for help!*

Resources for Nurses

- *Well-Being Initiative from ANA Enterprise:*
<https://www.nursingworld.org/practice-policy/work-environment/health-safety/disaster-preparedness/coronavirus/what-you-need-to-know/the-well-being-initiative/>
- *AANA Resource Page:* <https://www.aana.com/aana-covid-19-resources/covid-19-well-being>

Resources in General

- *UK Center on Trauma and Children Well@Work:*
<https://www.uky.edu/ctac/wellatwork>
- *Tips for Healthcare Professionals: Coping with Stress and Compassion Fatigue:*
https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/SAMHSA_Digital_Download/PEP20-01-01-016_508.pdf
- *Tend Academy:* <https://www.tendacademy.ca/>
- *Trauma Stewardship Institute:* www.traumastewardship.com
- *Compassion Resilience Toolkit for Health & Human Service Providers:*
<https://compassionresiliencetoolkit.org/healthcare/>
- *Mindful:* www.mindful.org
- *Dr. Kristin Neff on Self-Compassion:* www.self-compassion.org

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