



**Trauma-Informed Care
Survivor-Centered Services
and Intimate Partner Violence**

An Overview for CoC Partners

Diana Ortiz, LPC

November, 2021

Goals for Today

1. Go over Doorways comprehensive services provided to survivors and our local community
2. Review the anatomy of the brain and fundamentals of trauma and stress response.
3. Revise basic elements of Trauma Informed Care and how it can be implemented across our systems
4. Practical tips and recommendations to implement in our daily life to support a Trauma Informed Practice
5. A few words about secondary stress and resilience

"When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.' "

- Fred Rogers

DOORWAYS

We envision a day when all people in our community live free of violence and have safe and stable housing.

Doorways is a community-based nonprofit providing shelter and services for survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault, as well as youth and families experiencing homelessness.

We understand that the intersection of homelessness, domestic violence and sexual assault are profound and varied. Many of our clients have experienced just one of these issues, while others have faced all three.

We serve clients across their entire journey, from shelter to independence, with supportive housing and programs like mental health and financial counseling. Through the generosity of our partners and supporters, we help our most vulnerable neighbors survive crisis, rebuild their lives, and achieve brighter futures.

Shelter and Housing

Doorways provides emergency shelter and long-term supportive housing to survivors and their children as well as youth and families experiencing homelessness.



Domestic Violence Safehouse and Safe Kennel*



Family Home



Safe Apartments*



HomeStart Supportive Housing Program

Shelter- and Housing-Based Support

Doorways' two-generation, whole-family approaches focus equally and intentionally on services and opportunities for the child and the adults in their lives. They articulate and track outcomes for both children and adults simultaneously.



Goal Planning, Case Management, and Counseling Services



Pathways for Youth(*)



Children's Services(*)



Financial Independence Track (FIT)



Community-Based Support

Doorways' hotline, survivor advocacy, counseling, and community services are available to adults, youth, and children



24-Hour Domestic and Sexual
Violence Hotline (703-237-0881)*



Revive Domestic and Sexual
Violence Counseling Program*



Hospital Accompaniment
Response Program (HARP)*



Court Advocacy*



Mobile Advocacy*



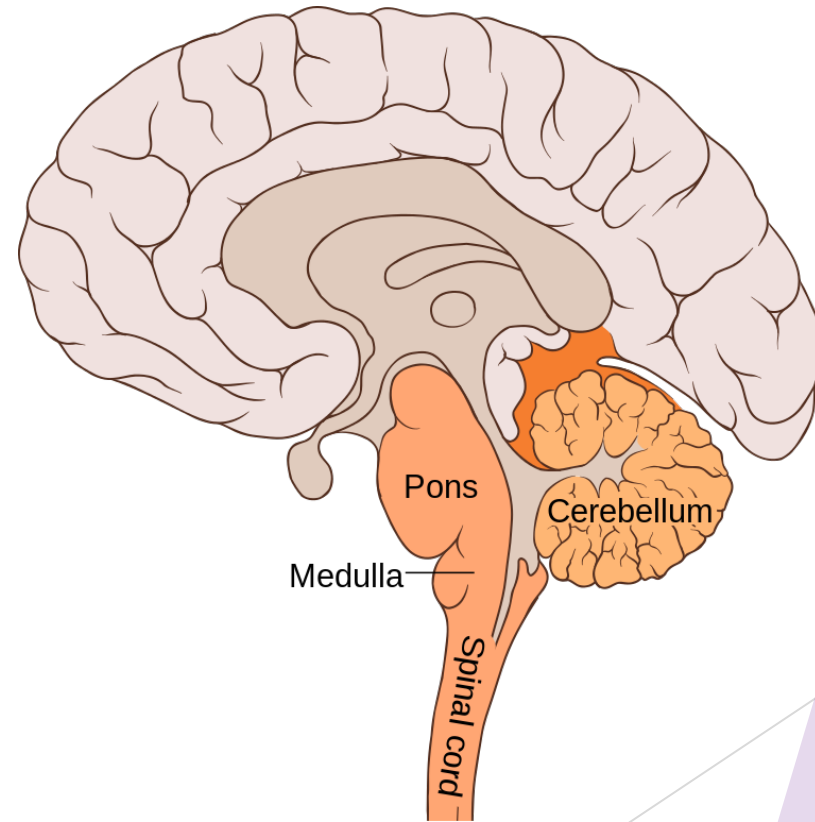
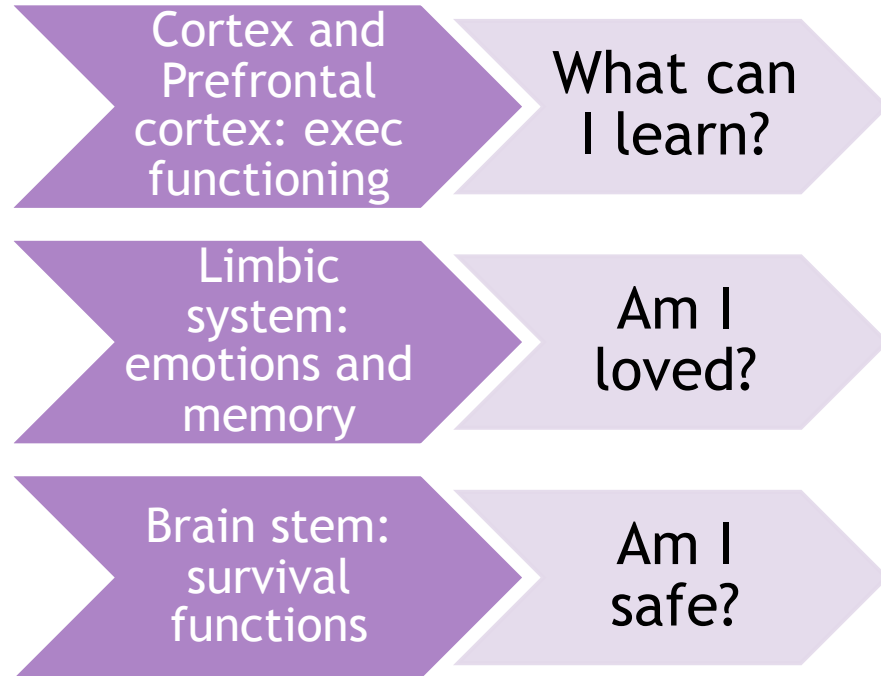
Prevention Program

Anatomy of the Brain

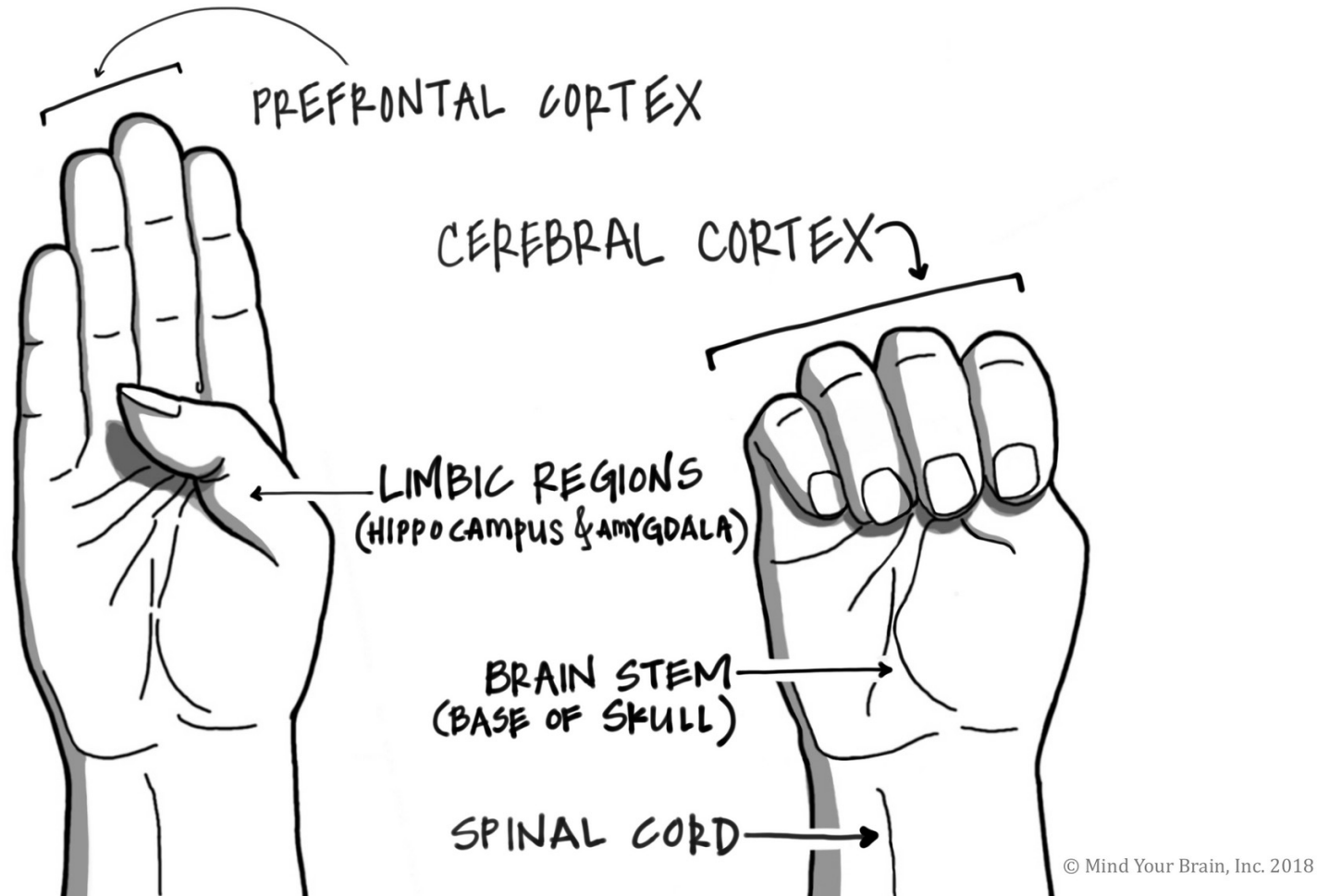
1. **Brain Stem** (reptilian brain) bodily functions (sleep, breath, eat)
2. **Limbic System** (mammalian brain - alarm system) emotions, behaviors, motivation, and long-term memory.
3. **Cortex** (human part) language, thoughts, consciousness, integrating the nervous system response
4. **Pre frontal cortex** (does not develop until young adulthood) executive functioning. Planning, setting goals, motivation, social behavior, consequences

See this video to learn more: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZLF_SEy6sdc

Anatomy of the Brain - part 2



Hand Model of the Brain



Learn more about “flip our lid” model - Dan Siegel <https://drdansiegel.com/hand-model-of-the-brain/>

What is Trauma

- ▶ Exposure to an incident or series of events that are emotionally disturbing or life-threatening.
- ▶ It can cause lasting adverse effects on the individual's **functioning** and their mental, physical, social, emotional, and/or spiritual well-being.

- ▶ **Our brain response changes after trauma.** And so, the whole world feels like it has changed.
 1. The threat perception is hacked (am I safe?)
 2. Filtering system: what is relevant/what can be dismissed is altered. Hypervigilance, difficulty focus and attention span. Hard to fully engage.
 3. Self Sensing system is altered. Defensive response. “You feel it all the time” so we develop coping mechanism to ameliorate that feeling (e.g. alcohol, substance misuse).

Examples of traumatic events:

- ▶ Divorce, neglect, **physical/sexual/emotional abuse**, natural disaster, **homelessness**, community violence, witnessing violence at home, death of a significant person, accidents, suicide, victim of a crime, medical procedures/hospitalization, **racism, discrimination, oppression**

<https://www.traumainformedcare.chcs.org/what-is-trauma/>

How Stress Affects your Brain -

Madhumita Murgia (4 minutes) <https://youtu.be/WuyPuH9ojCE>



Trauma Effects

THE 4 FS OF FEAR AND STRESS

F

FIGHT

This type of response can be physical fighting as well as using your voice to protect yourself.

F

FLIGHT

This can mean physically leaving a situation that causes fear, or it can be done by mentally checking out.

F

FEAR

Freezing may be literal in that you physically stop moving when you feel threatened. It can also be shown by an inability to speak or continue doing an activity.

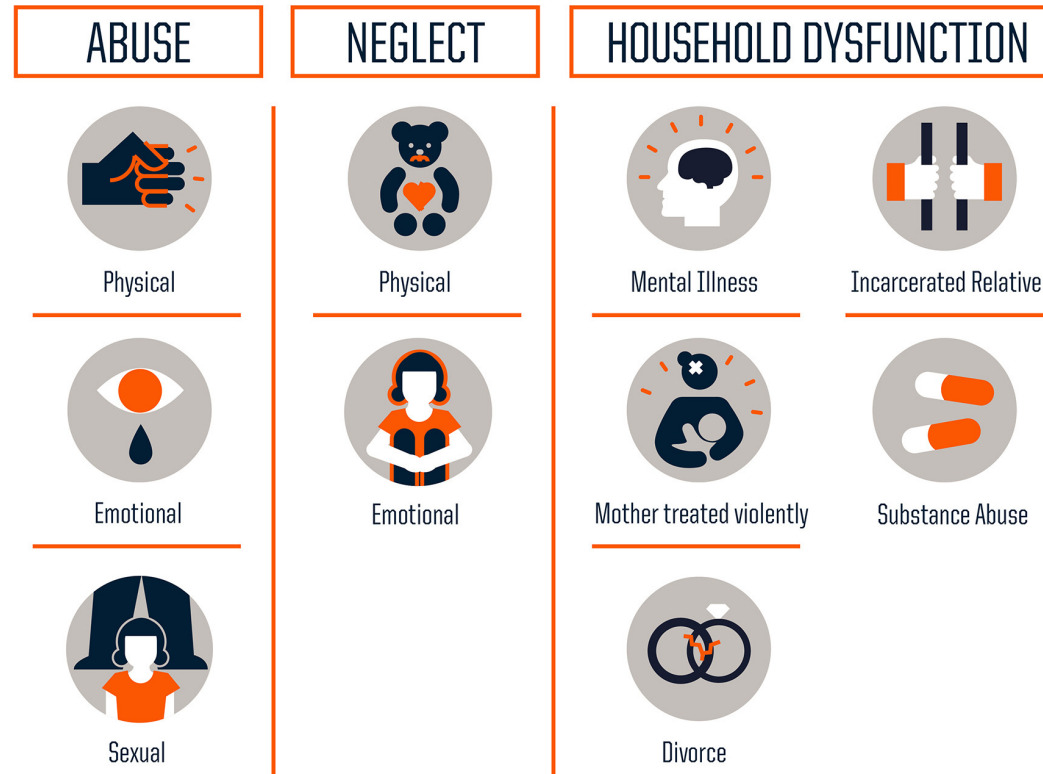
F

FAWN

This type of response is seeking safety from the person who is making you feel threatened.

Impact of Trauma on Children and ACEs

- ▶ Adverse childhood experiences, or ACEs, are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood (0-17 years).
- ▶ ACEs are common. About 61% of adults surveyed across 25 states reported that they had experienced at least one type of ACE, and nearly 1 in 6 reported they had experienced four or more types of ACEs.

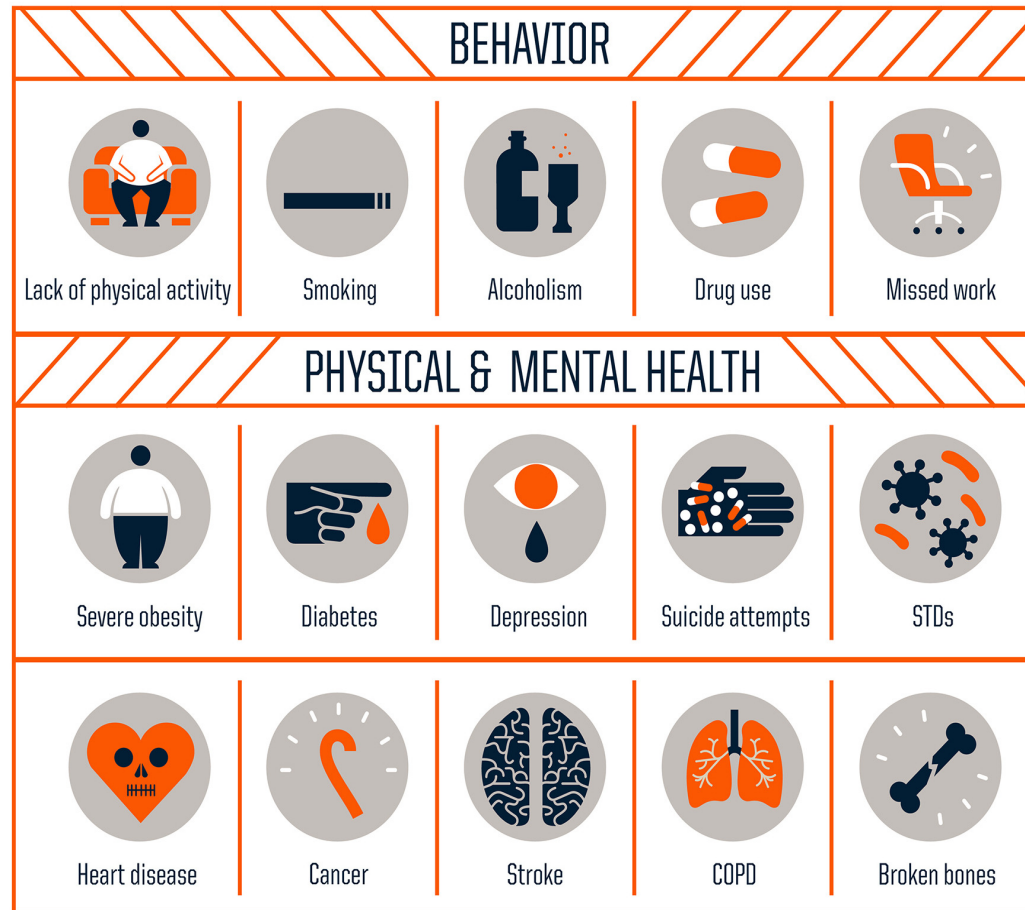


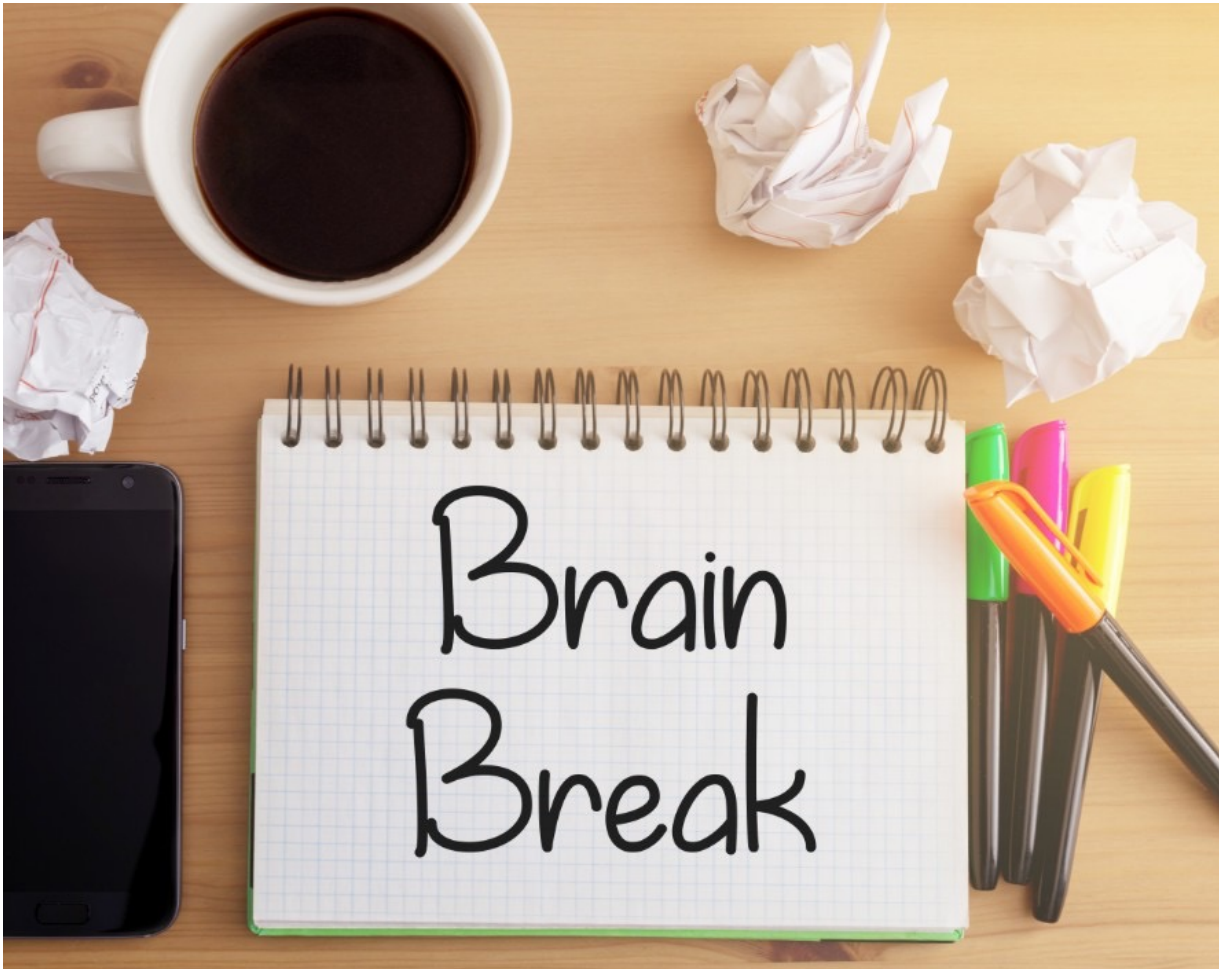
https://www.ted.com/talks/nadine_burke_harris_how_childhood_trauma_affects_health_a_cross_a_lifetime?language=en

<https://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/aces/pdf/vs-1105-aces-H.pdf>
<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/about-child-trauma>

Impact of Trauma on Children and ACEs (2)

- ▶ ACEs and associated **social determinants of health**, such as living in under-resourced or racially segregated neighborhoods, frequently moving, and experiencing food insecurity, can cause toxic stress. Toxic stress from ACEs can change brain development and affect such things as attention, decision-making, learning, and response to stress.
- ▶ Trauma can last well beyond childhood
- ▶ Some children are at greater risk than others. Women and several racial/ethnic minority groups were at greater risk for having experienced 4 or more types of ACEs.





Resilience and Protective Factors

WHAT ACES DOES NOT ACCOUNT FOR:

- ▶ **Protective factors** (e.g., supportive relationships, community services, skill-building opportunities)
- ▶ **Individual differences** (i.e. not all children who experience multiple ACEs will have poor outcomes and not all children who experience no ACEs will avoid poor outcomes—a high ACEs score is simply an indicator of greater risk)

HELPFUL TO REMEMBER:

- ▶ The presence of **ONE** caring adult can shield that individual and buffer stress from their lives.
- ▶ **Resilience:** the ability to overcome serious hardship, while others do not.
- ▶ Resilience is the result of a combination of protective factors. It is the interaction between biology and environment that builds the person's ability to cope with adversity and overcome threats to healthy development.
- ▶ Neuroplasticity of the brain: as trauma altered our brain, so does nurturing, caring, and positive factors in our lives.



kintsukuroi

(n.) (v.phr.) "to repair with gold"; the art of repairing pottery with gold and silver lacquer and understanding that the piece is more beautiful for having been broken.

Trauma Informed Approach

Trauma-informed care is guided by a detailed understanding of how trauma can shape an individual's perceptions and behavior.

Its potential to impact a person's mental, physical, social, and emotional well-being means that an appropriate response recognizes the ongoing and interdependent needs for a **person's sense of safety and connection**, and for the management of emotions and impulses.

The Four Rs of Trauma-Informed Care



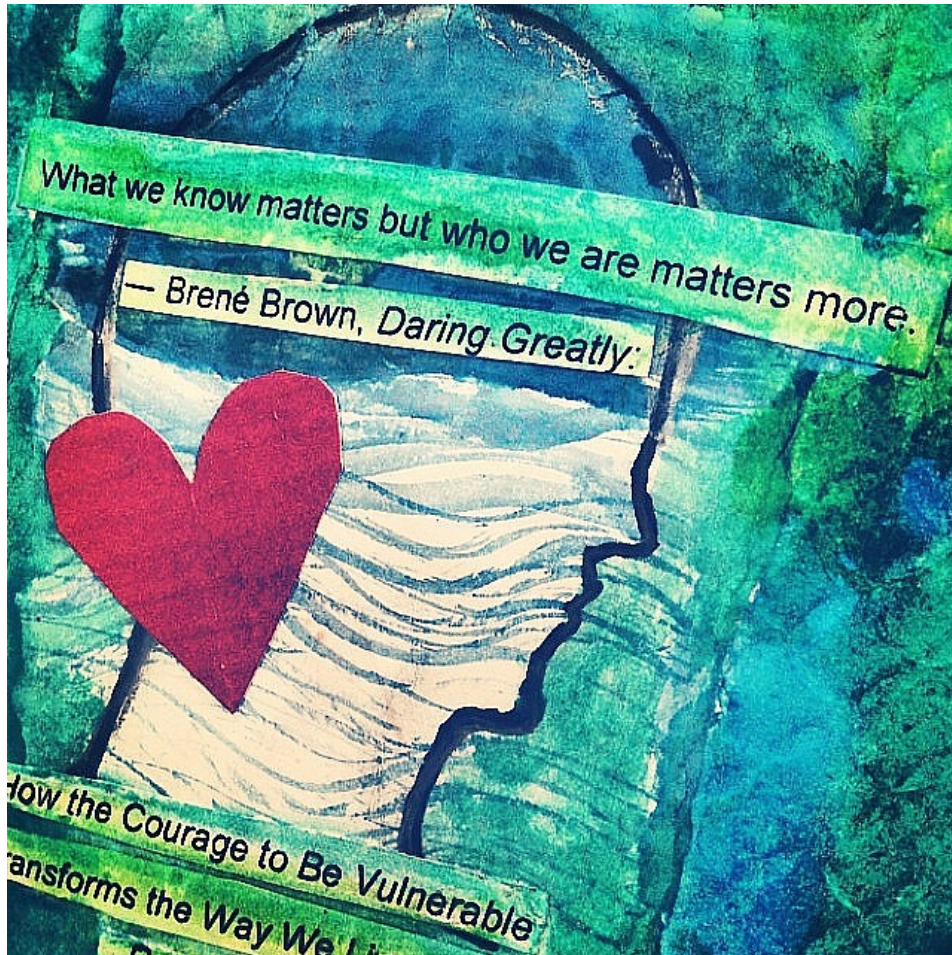
This figure is adapted from: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). SAMHSA's concept of trauma and Guidance for a trauma-informed approach. HHS publication no. (SMA) 14-4884. Rockville, MD: Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Six Principles of Trauma Informed Approach



<https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma14-4884.pdf>

Understanding crisis in the context of trauma (Safety + Connection)



- ▶ When people have unresolved emotions (fear/ frustration/ anxiety) their baseline moves up.
- ▶ Distance between baseline and crisis is shorter.
- ▶ Responses: emotional, psychological, behavioral
- ▶ Some of us are living constantly at stimulus/trigger or escalation phase.
- ▶ Remember the 4 Fs trauma-reactions and the 4 Rs trauma-Informed responses

Reminders when you are in a helping role

1

Remember to
ask permission

2

State the
obvious on
what you are
seeing

3

Watch for your
own triggers
and stress

4

Be a mirror,
not a sponge

“It is important for crisis workers to be aware that the body remembers somatic and other sensory experiences of trauma.” - Laurie Barkin

Stay Grounded Using Your 5 Senses

Relax Your Body, Take a Few Deep Breaths and Focus on the Following...

5 Things You Can See 

4 Things You Can Feel 

3 Things You Can Hear 

2 Things You Can Smell 

1 Thing You Can Taste 

Grounding Techniques for anxiety, depression, and PTSD

5 Senses:

Find:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can hear
- 3 things you can touch
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste



Distraction

- Name all the red things you see
- Count backwards by 3 from 100
- Recite a poem or song
- Pick a category and name all the things you can (dog breeds, baseball teams, etc.)

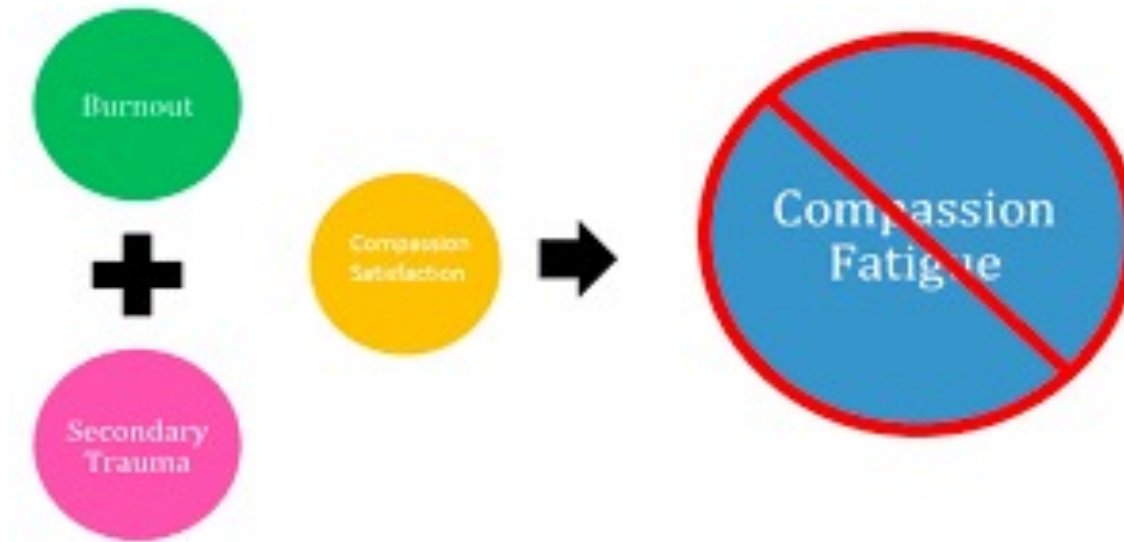
In Your Body

Place your feet flat on the floor. Starting at the crown of your head, focus on your body piece by piece. Paying attention to each tiny movement and feeling as you breathe.

Breathing

Focus on breathing from your diaphragm (your stomach should move, but not your chest). Breathe in for 5 seconds, hold 4, out for 7 seconds, hold 4. Repeat.

Secondary/Vicarious Trauma



- ▶ At times referred as compassion fatigue
- ▶ Secondary Traumatic Stress: The *indirect* trauma that can occur when we are exposed to difficult or disturbing images and stories second-hand stories and experiences
- ▶ Our exhausted hearts, minds, and bodies as a result of helping others through a painful experience
- ▶ Symptoms: Feelings of isolation, grief, anxiety, intrusive images, disassociation, physical ailments, sleep disturbances, a sense of confusion, helplessness, apathy, cynicism, sarcasm, difficulty concentrating.

Ways to foster resilience and mitigate secondary trauma at work

- ▶ Scheduled routinely supervision:
 - ▶ Individual and team debriefs
 - ▶ Get support from other staff members/volunteers
- ▶ Keep your skills sharp - we can always learn something new
- ▶ Create and maintain healthy boundaries
- ▶ Be kind and realistic with yourself and your work
- ▶ Boost your resiliency
- ▶ Cultivate different relationships/skills outside of work
- ▶ Be present - find small ways to take a break throughout your day to remain centered and calm
- ▶ Know when you need to step away

<https://www.wendtcenter.org/resources/for-professionals/>

SIX WAYS TO PRACTICE GROUNDING

with anxiety + intense emotions



body

lay on the ground, press your toes into the floor, squeeze playdough



5 senses

wear your favorite sweatshirt, use essential oils, make a cup of tea



self-soothe

take a shower or bath, find a grounding object, light a candle



observe

describe an object in detail: color, texture, shadow, light, shapes



breathe

practice 4-7-8 breathing: inhale to 4, hold for 7, exhale to 8



distract

find all the square or green objects in the room, count by 7s, say the date

 THE GROWLERY

Be kind to yourself

*“An empty lantern
provides no light.
Self-care is the fuel
that allows your
light to shine
brightly.”*

UNKNOWN



24/7/365 Local Domestic and Sexual Violence Hotline **703-2370881**

Any other inquiries, please feel free to contact us at 703-504-9400
info@doorwaysva.org.

Visit www.DoorwaysVA.org to learn more.