When You've Heard It All

VICARIOUS TRUAMA, COMPASSION FATIGUE, & CARING FOR YOURSELF IN BATTERING INTERVENTION WORK

Presented by Apryl E. Pooley, PhD
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Michigan Victim Advocacy Network

MICHIGAN VICTIM ADVOCACY NETWORK

Session Goals

IDENTIFY

- What is vicarious trauma
- Sources of vicarious trauma

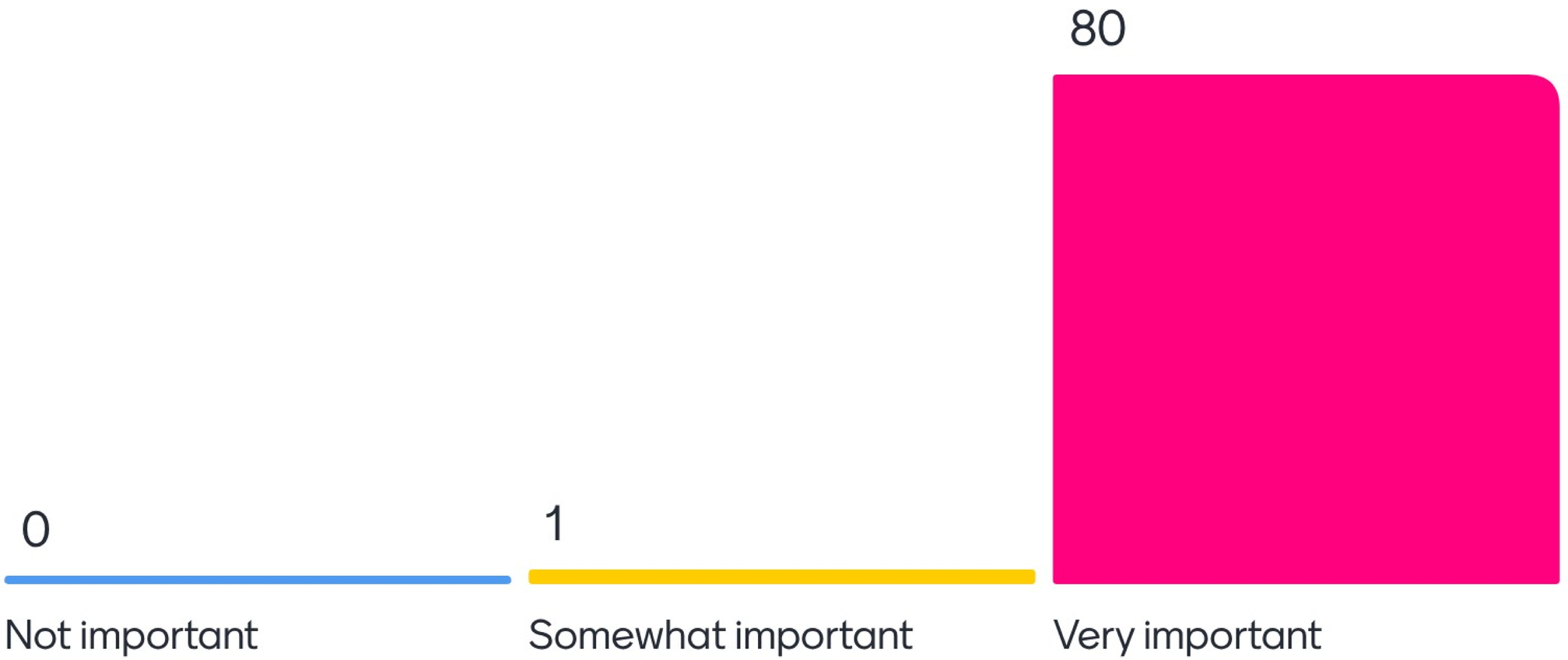
DESCRIBE

- Various impacts of vicarious trauma
- Early warning signs

LEARN

- Invidividual tools for resilience and self-care
- Organizational practices to manage the effects of vicarious trauma

How important do you think self-care is in your work?



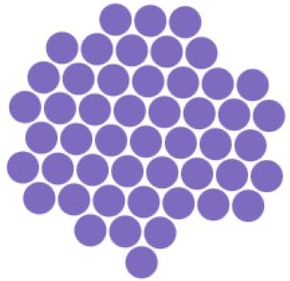
My pre-existing knowledge on vicarious trauma:

4 No knowledge of the topic

5 Heard about it before

8 A little knowledge

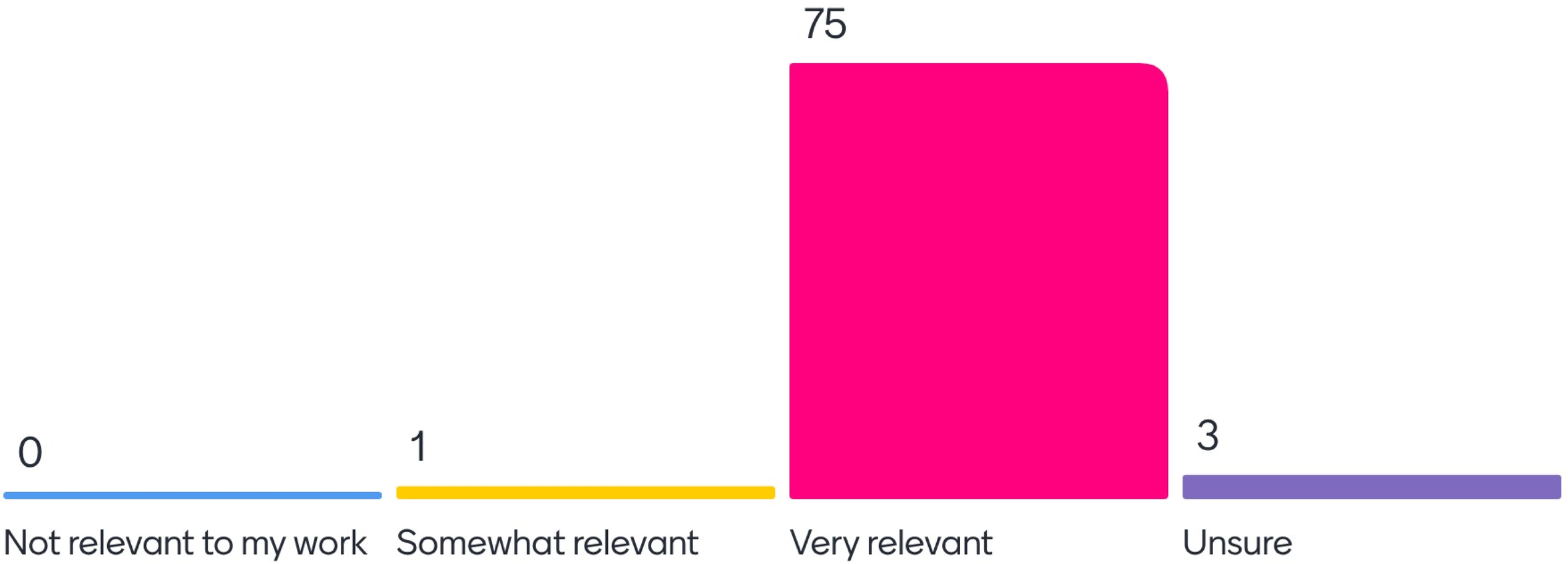
19 Have had basic training



49 Have a strong understanding and want deeper knowledge

0 Already know everything

How relevant do you think vicarious trauma is to your work?



What is Vicarious Trauma?

Vicarious (or indirect) trauma is a type of traumatic experience

How Common is Trauma?

83% Adults in the U.S. that have experienced trauma.

Trauma Categories

Direct
Firsthand experiences, occurring directly to the victim.

Indirect
Secondhand experiences, common among trauma responders like investigators or healthcare workers.

Data: Benjet, C., et al. (2016). The epidemiology of traumatic event exposure worldwide: Results from the World Mental Health Survey Consortium. Psychological Medicine, 46(2), 327–343.

Trauma results from events or circumstances that threaten our physical or psychological safety, security, or belonging.

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What is vicarious trauma?

- The exposure to details of another person's traumatic experience by seeing it, hearing about it, or reading about it *and* **empathizing, identifying, or resonating with the other person's experience**.

- Vicarious trauma can cause someone's nervous system to **register the traumatic experiences of someone else as if it has happened to them.**

Rothschild B (2022) Help for the Helper: Preventing Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma in an Ever-Changing World. Second edition. WW Norton & Company, New York NY.

Vicarious trauma can affect people in various ways

Negative Effects of Indirect/Vicarious Trauma

Vicarious Traumatization

Continuous empathetic engagement with others' trauma changes the person's worldview and accumulates stress.

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Nearly identical to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), involves reliving, avoidance, or hypervigilance in response to someone else's trauma.

Compassion Fatigue

Involves a reduced capacity to empathize after repeated, overwhelming exposure to others' trauma.

Negative Effect of Chronic Stress

Burnout

Results from constraint in the working environment, producing stress symptoms of exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced efficacy.

Burnout is a related challenge that can make someone more vulnerable to the effects of vicarious trauma

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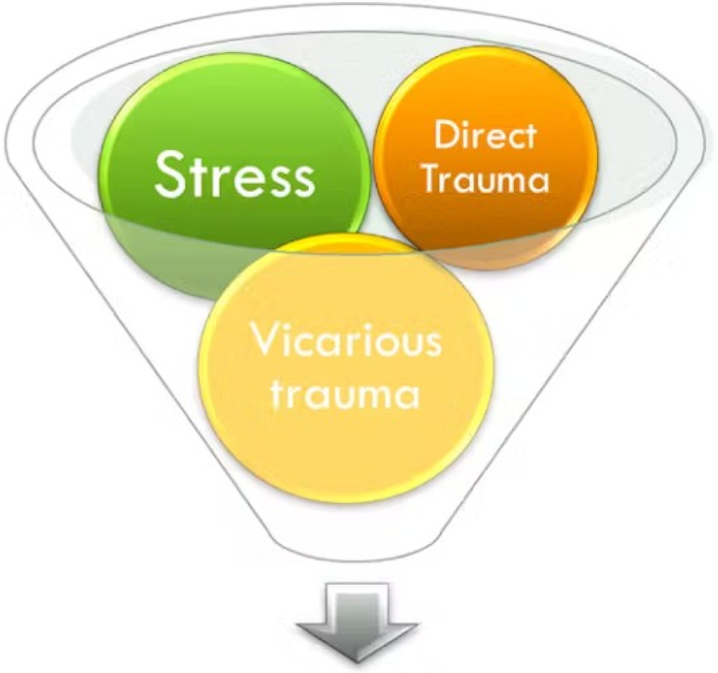
Stress, direct trauma, and & vicarious trauma are inter-related challenges



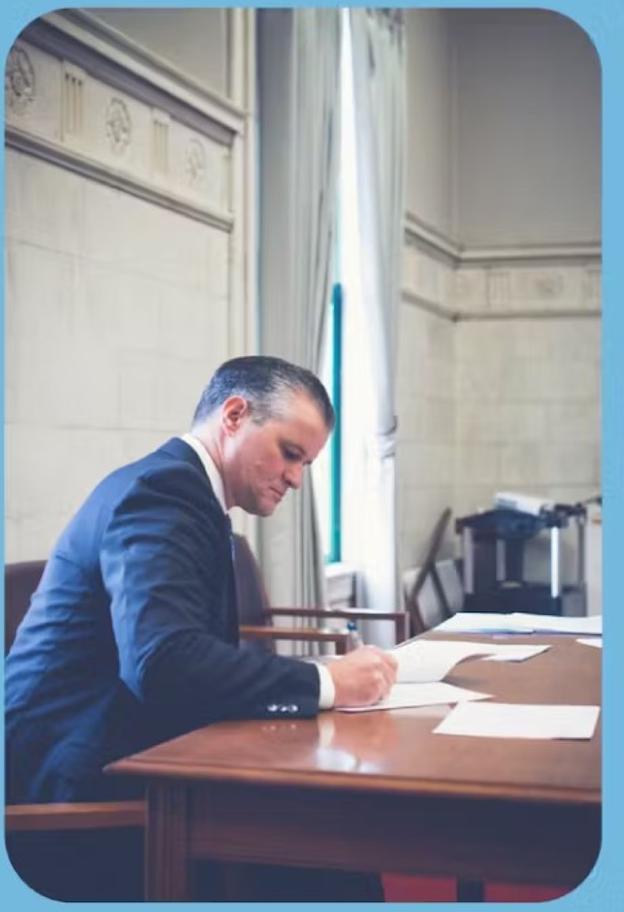
Effects: burnout, PTSD, addiction, depression, anxiety, resilience, post-traumatic growth, etc.

Cieslak, R., Shoji, K., Douglas, A., Melville, E., Luszczynska, A., & Benight, C. C. (2014). A meta-analysis of the relationship betwee
job burnout and secondary traumatic stress among workers with indirect exposure to trauma. Psychological Services, 11(1), 75–8

Vicarious trauma anecdote

"One night, sitting on the couch with my wife, I finally decided that I needed to look at the **secondary crime scene photographs** which documented the recovery of their bodies. I needed to fully prepare my case, and I had to look at the photos that captured the conditions of those little girls when they were recovered by hazardous material crews. I looked up and saw my own daughter, three and a half years old with blonde hair, dancing and singing in our living room.

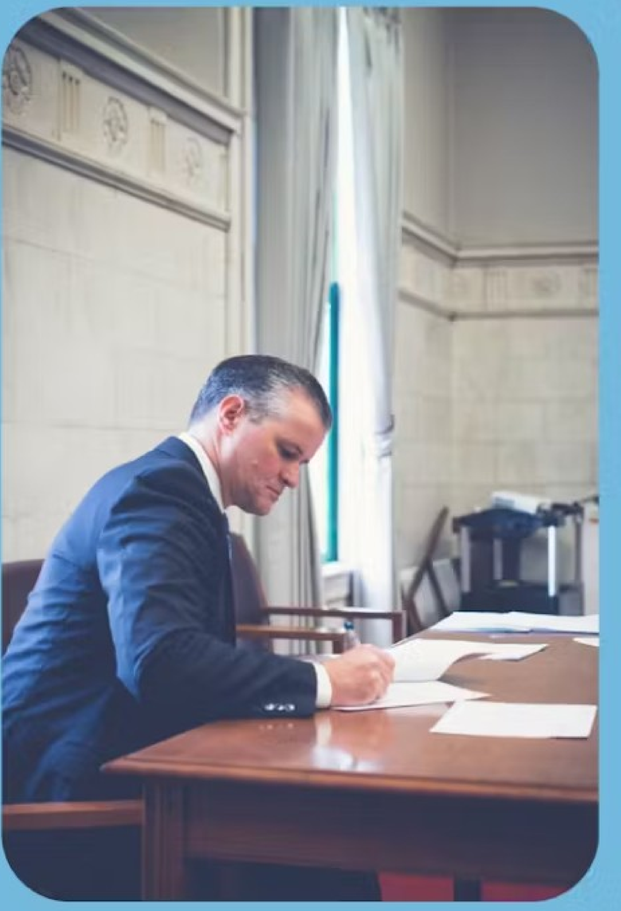
And that's when it happened…"



Rourke, Michael (2021). "Vicarious Trauma Is Real--and I Learned the Hard Way." National District Attorneys Association. Retrieved from: https://ndaajustice.medium.com/vicarious-trauma-is-real-and-i-learned-the-hard-way-6793a9750db3

Vicarious trauma anecdote

"My mind took me to a very dark place — for the first time in a 21-year career, **I finally understood the horrifying toll this job can take**. I realized that this career had changed me, this case had changed me. It had changed my partners. We lost a very skilled, longtime detective from the ranks of law enforcement all together."



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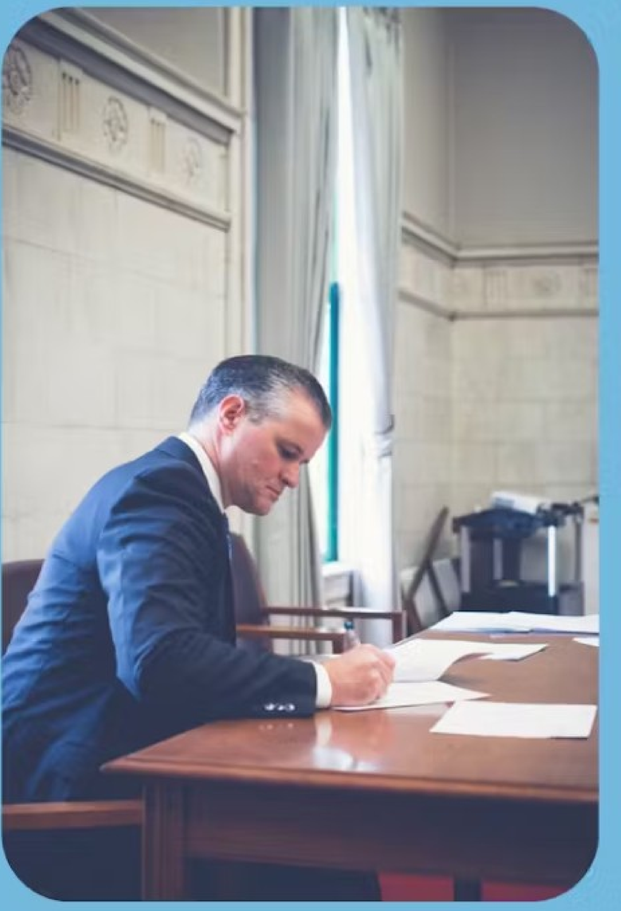
Vicarious trauma anecdote

"The impact upon me was profound, and not just limited to that one evening on the couch with my wife. My jurisdiction is a largely rural community with a robust oil and gas industry. You cannot drive down a road for any appreciable distance without seeing an oil tank battery. **For more than two years now, I have not passed one of those batteries without thoughts** of those innocent little girls intermixed with my own daughter. For the longest time, **falling asleep was a premium that also came with a price.**"



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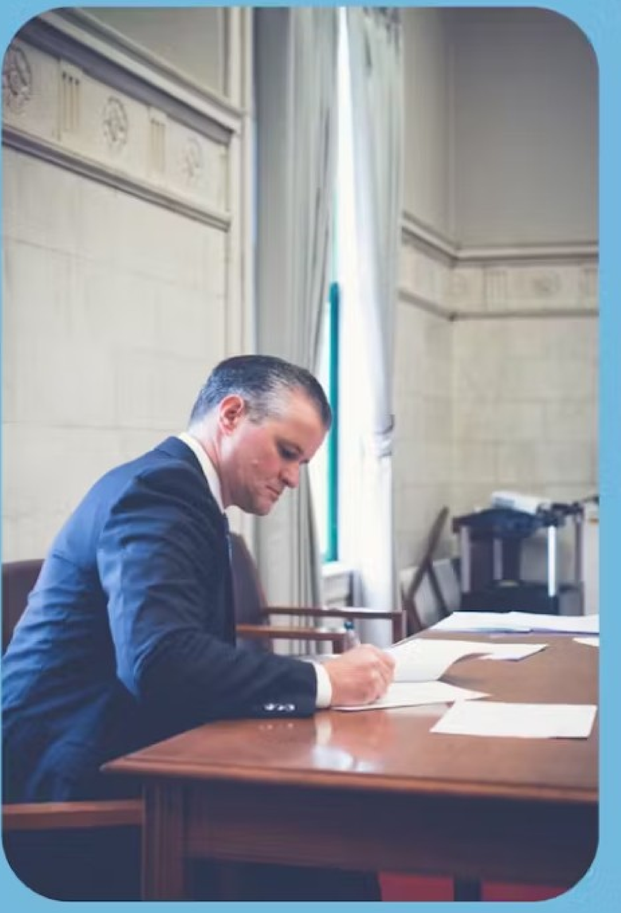
Vicarious trauma anecdote

"Vicarious trauma exists. We have known of its impacts for decades. I only first acknowledged its impact upon me during that prosecution, and that understanding has been a life-changing experience. My epiphany was not just limited to prosecutors, however. **Secondary trauma can be a daily reality** for our secretaries, victim advocates, investigators and community relations directors."



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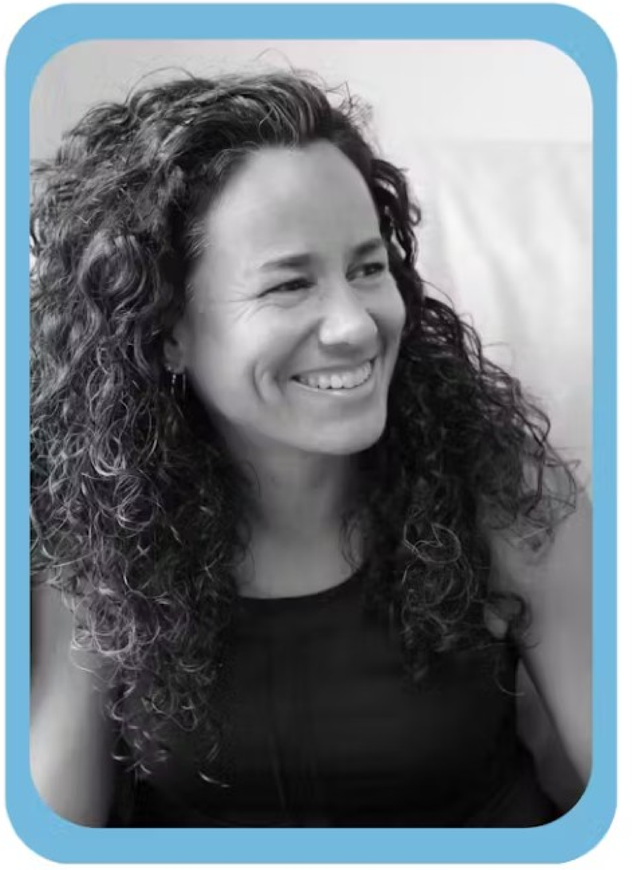
Vicarious trauma anecdote

"We went on a hike to the top of these cliffs, and we're standing looking out, and the first thing I thought was that this is incredibly gorgeous, and the second thing I wondered was how many people had killed themselves by jumping off the cliff. And because I was a trauma worker in the regional trauma center for the Pacific Northwest at the time, I just naturally started triaging. I wondered about where the helicopter would land, and where the nearest Level One trauma center was, and how long would it take to get there. Would you land on the cliff or the beach? Would you bleed out?"



Laura van Dernoot Lipsky, author of *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*

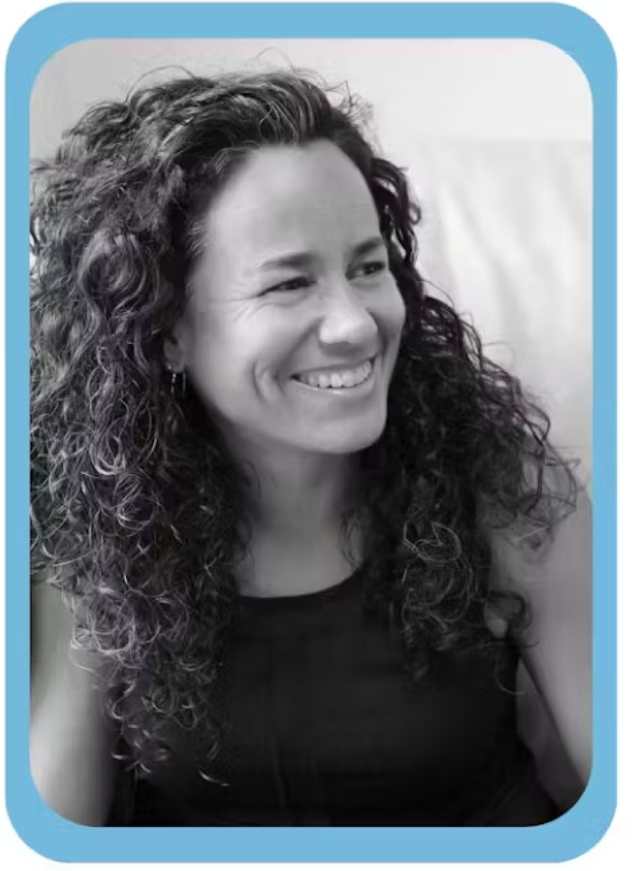
Hermann, Peter. "Laura van Dernoot Lipsky: Wellness Warrior." Reunion Magazine, Mar. 16, 2015, pp. 14-24. Retrieved from: https://issuu.com/thejhf/docs/reunionissue2

Vicarious trauma anecdote

"So I said this out loud, assuming I'm giving voice to what everybody in my family was also wondering. And apparently nobody was. It got very quiet, and then after several long minutes, my stepfather-in-law said to me,

"'***Are you sure all this trauma work hasn't gotten to you?***'"

Hermann, Peter. "Laura van Dernoot Lipsky: Wellness Warrior." Reunion Magazine, Mar. 16, 2015, pp. 14-24. Retrieved from: https://issuu.com/thejhf/docs/reunionissue2



Laura van Dernoot Lipsky, author of *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*

Vicarious trauma can change your worldview

What are some ways your work has changed your world view?

Disney movies are ruined for me

Jaded

The system is seriously broken and needs to be fixed

Feel like i am a witness tho peoples darkest moments.

I work in addictions too, and have a fear that many people are under the influence and may cause an accident to me or my family

Everyone has DV issues even my own children

I told about my work all the time

Increased compassion for myself and others. Recognizing people's capacity for good and evil

What are some ways your work has changed your world view?

I hesitate to trust what ppl tell me

I view everyone as guilty of doing something wrong

Seeing all the helpers not just the abusers and survivors!

always looking for the "red flags"

I cannot help but analyze the dynamics of people around me in public, gauging whether they are positive or negative interactions

On guard.

Less trusting of strangers

I see red flags of interpersonal violence that others don't - everywhere.

What are some ways your work has changed your world view?

I've become overly protective of my children and family

Dating became harder because I'm constantly thinking about the worst case in relationships

It has made me very nervous about relationships, stability, possible harm

Fearful for my children as they start new relationships

I feel isolated and misunderstood by others

Always look for warning signs

Concern for my children

Very aware of sexist language/views on social media and media in general

What are some ways your work has changed your world view?

My children don't go to other people's homes.

Evaluate every relationship looking for abusive tactics

I start talking to men in my life the way I would challenge participants

I see power and control everywhere and have to remind myself not to step in all the time.

There is even more dysfunction and darkness in the world than I thought

It has also affected my relationships, I'm often described as "intense"

My view of relationships around me.

Pointing out red flags to loved ones and they tell me I am "grouping" them.

What are some ways your work has changed your world view?

Seem to see red flags everywhere

I tend to talk about my work- not realizing that often, people don't want to hear it. But then I have to figure out how to purge it

I have become sometimes over protective

Everyone lies to me.

Being very suspicious of strangers

Made me less naive to what is going on in the world

At first, it made me suspicious of people and overly critical. I've found a balance.

Suspecting DV everywhere, suspicious of relationships, often expecting the worst, but also at times desensitised

What are some ways your work has changed your world view?

Wanting to vet every potential mate for my daughter

Think the worst of people

Hard to trust people or know their true intentions

It makes me more accountable to look inward at my own faults and defensive coping mechanisms.

I am vigilant with keeping an eye on kids at all times. Granddaughter got on the wrong bus and I was certain she had been abducted until the bus garage found her.

I have had to deepen my faith

I assume all men have likely hurt the women in their lives.

It has changed everything! I have been enlightened to a whole world that I really didn't exist!

What are some ways your work has changed your world view?

I'm much more aware of relational problem or traumas around me, and tend to point these out when I see them.

I'm very critical of my friends partners and it gets hard to give advice without being jaded

Hyper vigilance

I see abusive relationships EVERYWHERE

Positively - opened me up to people, to myself, to resilience and strength. I am much more confident in the basic goodness of people and the value of cooperation which so often goes unnoticed

No sleepovers ever for my kids

Has made me focus too much on the negative and not the positive.

It's hard to listen to music, watch shows, etc. without calling out when I see/hear violence against women being perpetrated

What are some ways your work has changed your world view?

Hyperaware or ready to intervene when I hear raised voices.

Skeptical

More aware of my surroundings at all times. Better understanding of how trauma has a long lasting impact on people.

Every man I see out in the world has nefarious intentions when I'm out and about by myself, jaded about the efficacy of the system, being extra mindful of others- never taking the helper hat off

Always have to be the helper. Who is helping me?

I became aware how prevalent CSC and DV cases are...the people around me don't see it the same way

Looking for the abuse in all situations

Opened my eyes to the idea that what the general public calls "evil" has its genesis in childhood for most...empathy for the unspoken history of others.

What are some ways your work has changed your world view?

Overly careful with my own family but somewhat jaded with clients.

I've seen how privilege and bias effects clients first hand

More aware of dynamics of couples in public. Comment on facial expressions of people when out with my husband.

I don't talk a lot about what I do for a living because it makes people uncomfortable

I don't trust police to have safe responses.

Listening to frustrated clients about their feelings with legal system in our state doesn't listen to them as victims and or perpetrators

Less positively - fear and doubt that the challenges are relentless

Everywhere i go and there is a crowd i observe and evaluate whether someone is an abuser.

What are some ways your work has changed your world view?

I had become less compassionate with "victims" because I couldn't understand how they can't see the clear/ present dangers and they don't want to leave the situations that they are complaining about..

I immediately begin to think of options for a situation when listening to my children.

I don't let my children stay over other places

Many ways... I have hypervigilance around people in public. Also, I have learned about secondary trauma.

Everyone has a story. Meet people where they are. It's also made me a bit cynical if I'm being honest, although I like to call it realism haha

I am much more intentional towards people I cross paths with.

When I think about my #1 trauma/vicarious experience, it shrunk my world to a focus on the work, the events, those connected to these, and made it difficult to focus on other dimensions & enjoy life

I can't read romance novels , because.. he did what?

What are some ways your work has changed your world view?

I think I get that way because I experienced three cambat tours. I see people complain and I try to express acknowledgment that they don't know of the violence and poverty especially at times of war

Find hope

DV goggles

Hearing survivor stories and reading orders of protections

Well, I'm a therapist and I do evaluations. So between clients telling me, or reviewing police reports and file charts, a lot of ways. Also sometimes people have partners show up at the office.

CPS reports, Court appearance talking to victims

Reviewing evidence. Listening to recordings of drop off and pick.

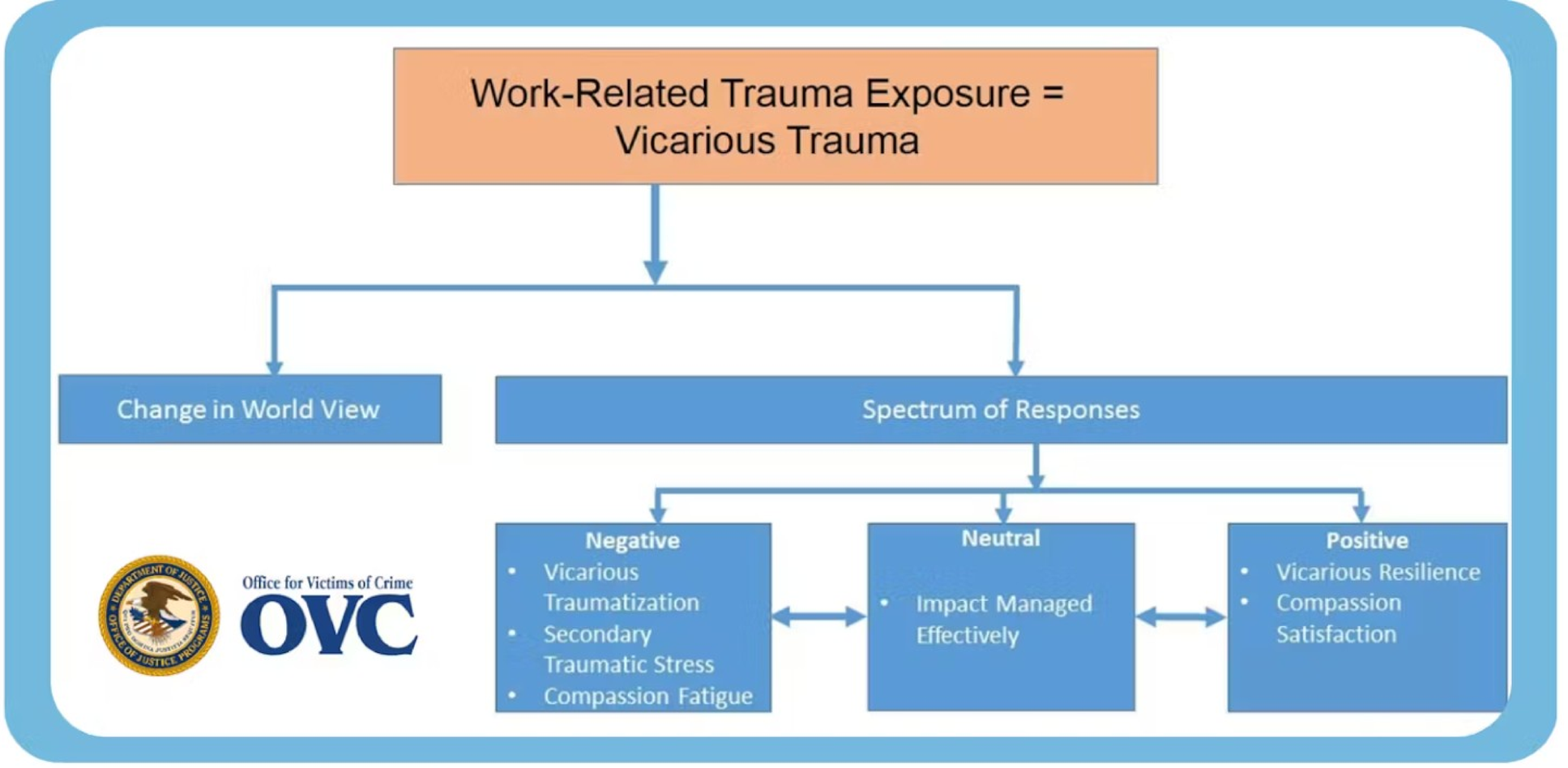
Vicarious trauma is common

*domestic and sexual violence advocates, social workers, prosecutors, judges, therapists, nurses, physicians

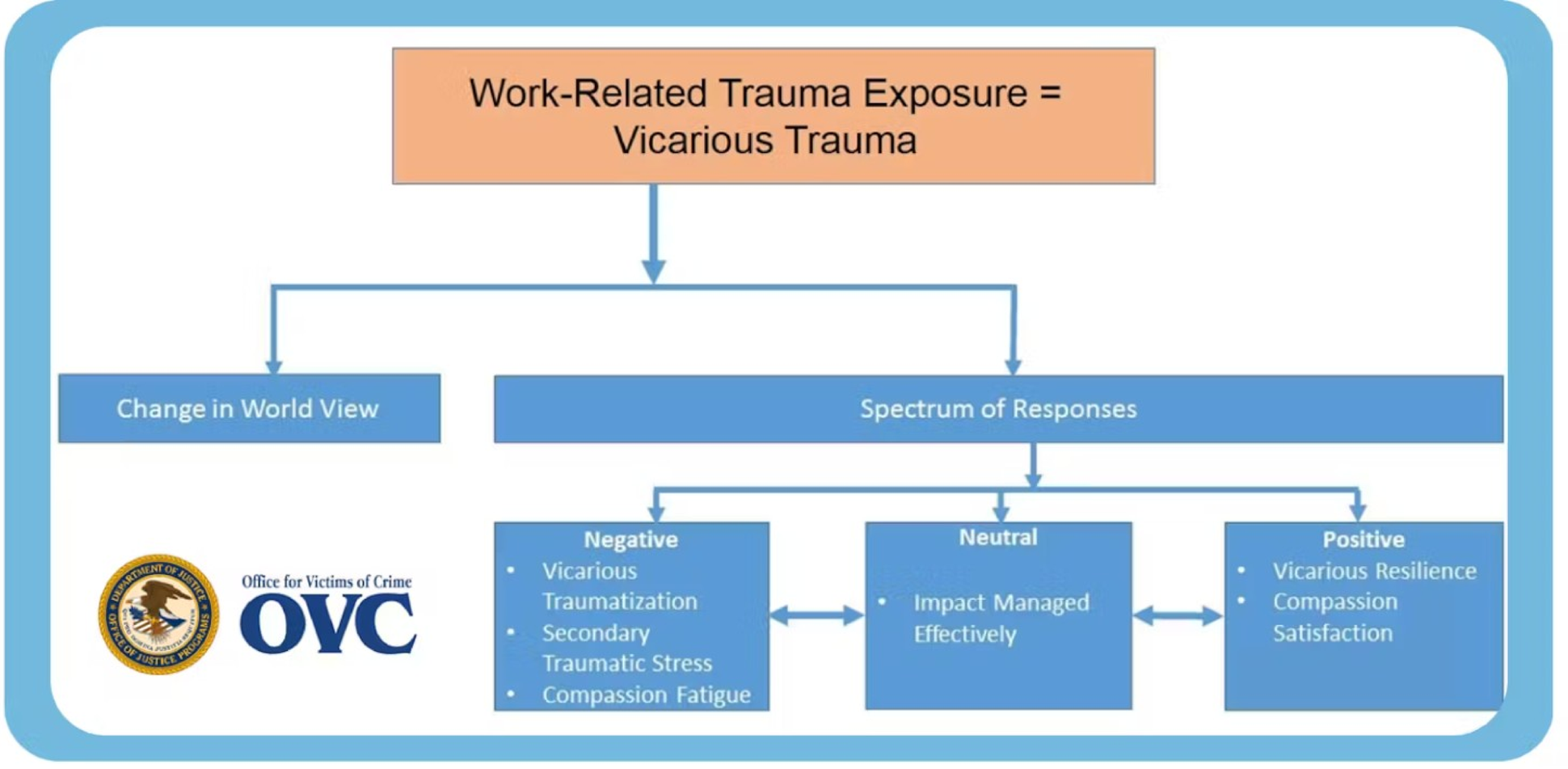
Iversen S, Robertson N. (2021) Prevalence and predictors of secondary trauma in the legal profession: a systematic review. Psychiatr Psychol Law. Mar 5;28(6):802-82

Mathieu, F. (2012). The Compassion Fatigue Workbook. (Routledge, N

The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit



Vicarious trauma is the exposure to other people's trauma and **can lead to a change in world view** and cause someone's nervous system to **register the traumatic experience of someone else like it has happened to them**.



Sources of vicarious trauma can include:

- Direct witnessing of abuse, violence, or other trauma
- Someone telling you about their own or someone else's trauma
- Reviewing evidence (e.g., photos, video)
- Reading details of trauma (e.g., police reports, transcripts)

“The trauma is in the details.”

How might you be exposed to vicarious trauma at work?

Police reports

One on one assessments with clients

Through clients sharing their own traumas

First hand information verbally

Talking with clients

Through supporting staff when they want to discuss cases or their own stories

Research interviews

Hearing stories

How might you be exposed to vicarious trauma at work?

I'm a clinical supervisor so I hear about every case in our therapy program.

Hearing about perpetrators behavior. And their Partners response

Reading police reports documetingbbehavior

Hotline calls

Second hand stories

Through client intake calls

Through the survivor telling their story

Through other people telling me, police reports, court evidence

How might you be exposed to vicarious trauma at work?

Listening to participants telling us what happened and what they did

People telling me, but also strangers that find out what I do

I oversee all mandated reporting within the org

Through a victim's story!

Facilitating support group

Case reports

What my clients share

Client and participant stories, hearing stories from friends

How might you be exposed to vicarious trauma at work?

word of mouth, determining victimizations, bipp group

Staff who share a victim assessment

Observing court proceedings

Review of client intakes, direct contact with clients, case presentations, attending court hearings, conversations with team members.

Police affidavits Assessments Client stories

Reading impact statements

Mostly through working with traumatized people (public and colleagues)

Through people sharing and police reports

How might you be exposed to vicarious trauma at work?

Talking with my clients (survivors), reading police reports, coworkers' trauma.

Other people telling me and reading police reports

From colleagues

When talking with clients, and them telling us their trauma related experiences or the adverse childhood experiences.

Survivor accounts and visiting survivors at the hospitals

From victims, from other providers, reviewing reports, court petitions, supervision with people supervise.

During the intake process and listening to their stories

Seeing videos on social media about their specific incidents

How might you be exposed to vicarious trauma at work?

Intakes, group discussion, hearing shelter/legal advocacy issues

Hearing verbal stories, police reports, assessments

Voicemails where we heard person abusing partner

Talking to survivors, intervention classes, supporting staff (advocates and interventionists)

1st response calls

Having to ask the clients what brought them to PAIP

Assessments, first hand from clients, from other staff members, from all kinds of collateral information

Reading police reports and talking with the abusers.

How might you be exposed to vicarious trauma at work?

Listening to victim stories and perpetrators stories

Occasional direct exposure to acts of cruelty and its aftermath

Read police reports, sometimes pictures, women's stories during assessments

Crisis hotline calls

Survivors telling me their stories, reading PPO narratives, and hearing survivor testimony in court.

Homicide review teams

Sometimes hearing about children going through a traumatic divorce forced me to feel some of my own past experiences and my own children.

Sporadic stories from children in supervised visits, often by questioning the visiting parent about their past behavior

How might you be exposed to vicarious trauma at work?

Reading the police reports

I do individual therapy and also teach BIP groups, and I have heard a LOT of trauma from all of my clients

Listening to victim experiences

Abusers, intakes, victim/survivors, coworkers, family, friends, Church

When the most shocking story breaks through your defenses

In groups work, people talking about their ACEs and how their early experiences pre-disposed them to act with cruelty

Hearing 911 calls

Having to deal with the Trump administration

How might you be exposed to vicarious trauma at work?

Videos partners share about abuser

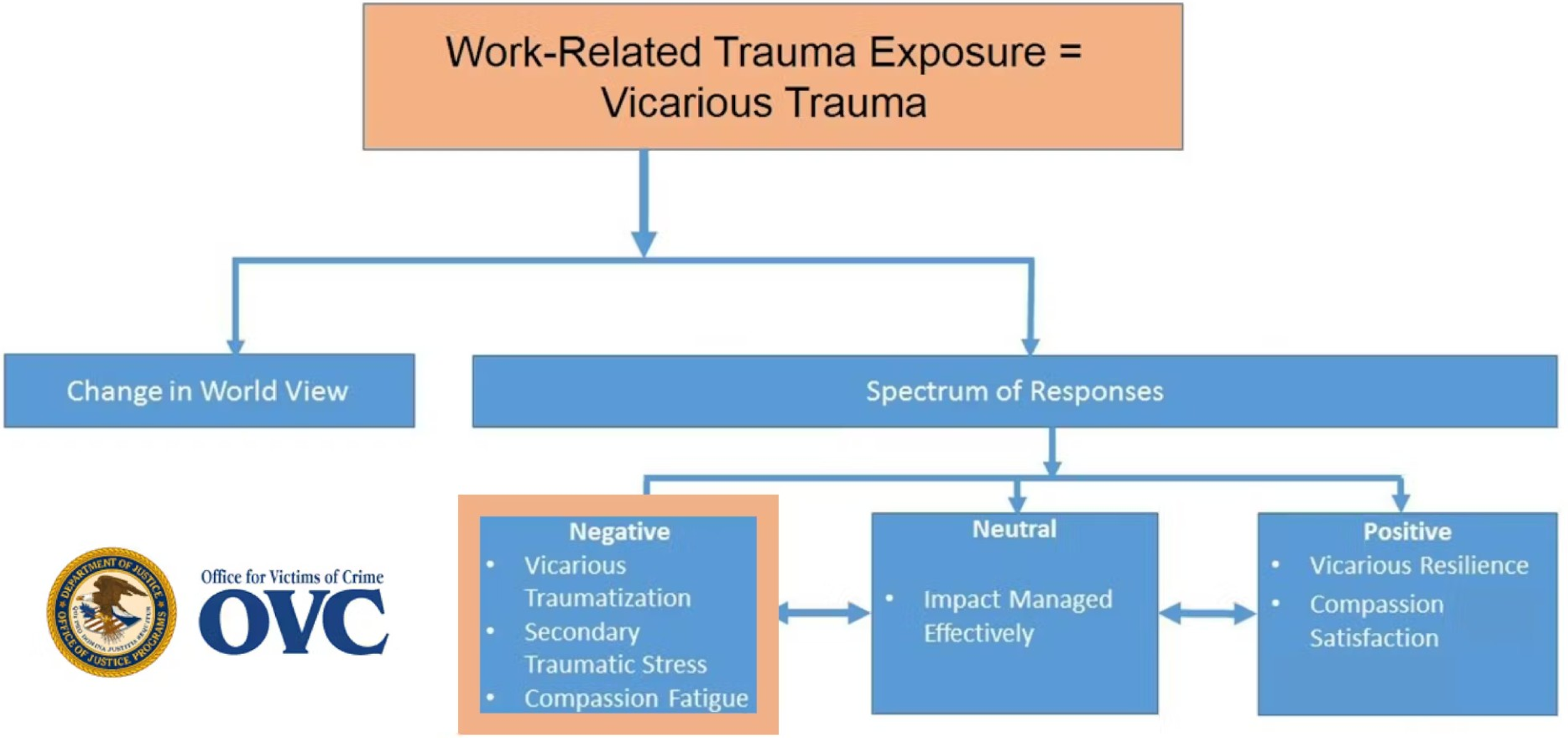
Participants coming to group with injuries from partners

Workplace chats and email

Ice activity

And also working within an abusive system

Last week I was on the phone while a client was being IVC'd and I was afraid he was going to be shot. He and his dogs were pepper sprayed :(


Work-Related Trauma Exposure = Vicarious Trauma
Change in World View
Spectrum of Responses
Negative
• Vicarious Traumatization
• Secondary Traumatic Stress
• Compassion Fatigue
Neutral
• Impact Managed Effectively
Positive
• Vicarious Resilience
• Compassion Satisfaction
Office for Victims of Crime
OVC

Vicarious Traumatization

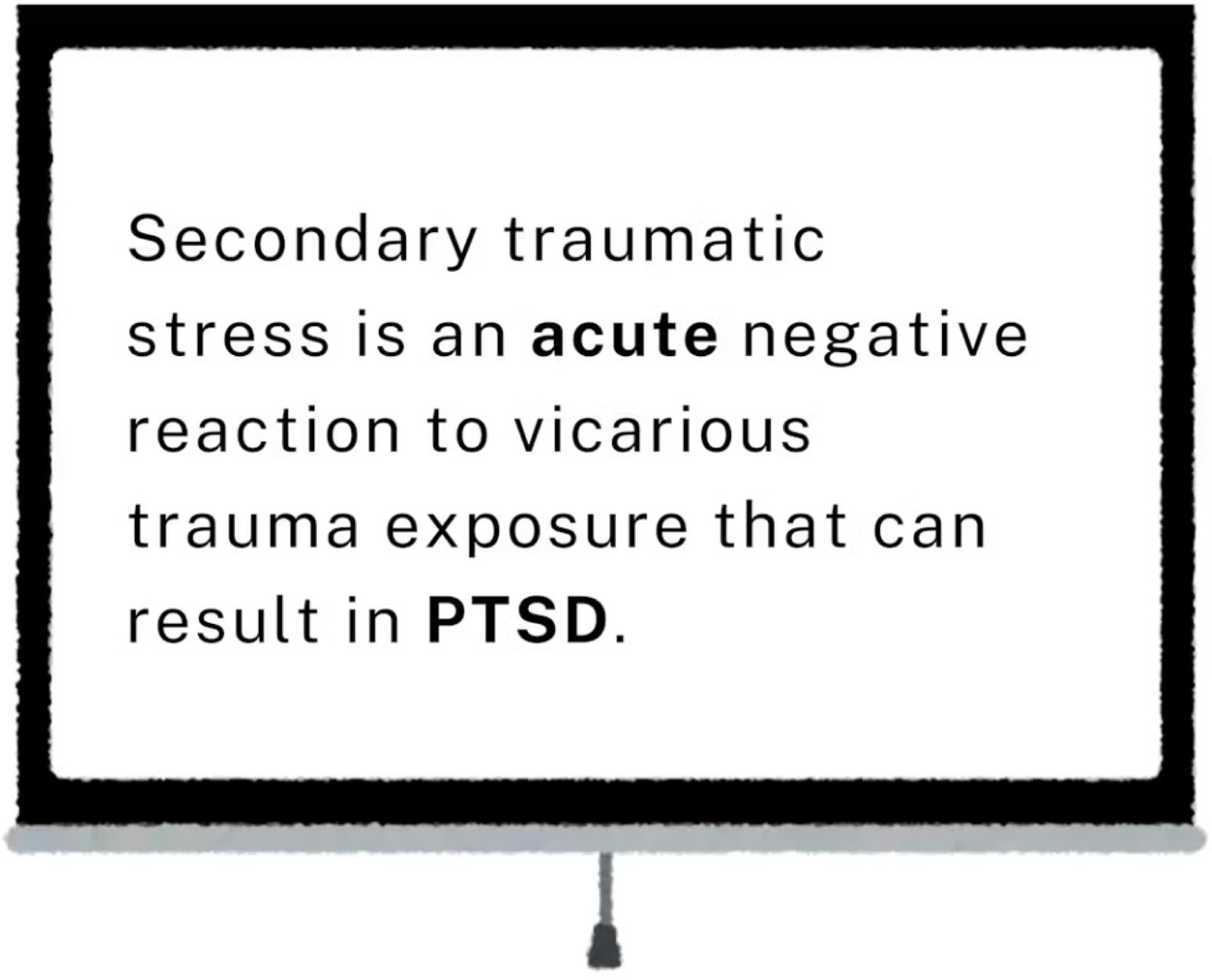
Vicarious traumatization is **any negative reaction to vicarious trauma exposure** that has detrimental effects on personal and professional well-being.

Vicarious Traumatization

Changes can happen over time as you accumulate many trauma stories.

Exhaustion and physical ailments	●Headaches, back pain, wrist/joint pain, stomachaches ●Falling sick when you have time to rest or vacation
Emotional shifts	●Feeling disconnected from your emotions or body ●Feeling helpless/hopeless about the future
Changes in thought patterns	●Intrusive thoughts/images related to trauma material ●Guilt for having more resources than those you serve
Behavioral shifts	●Missing work, skipping interview questions, or quitting ●Over-reliance on escape (TV, shopping, substances)
Relationship changes	●Difficulty relating to others who are not in your field ●Hypervigilant/concerned about the safety of others

Secondary Traumatic Stress



Symptoms usually have a **rapid onset** and are associated wtih a **particular exposure/event.**

Symptoms include the same categories as PTSD:

- **Intrustion**
- **Avoidance**
- **Changes in cognition or mood**
- **Changes in arousal or reactivity**

Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue is physical, emotional, and spiritual **depletion associated with caring for others** who are in significant emotional pain or physical distress.

SYMPTOMS

- Diminished ability to feel empathy/sympathy
- Anger and irritability
- Emotional Exhaustion
- Reduced sense of satisfaction at work
- Hopelessness and helplessness
- Increased absenteeism
- Impaired ability to make decisions or provide consistent services

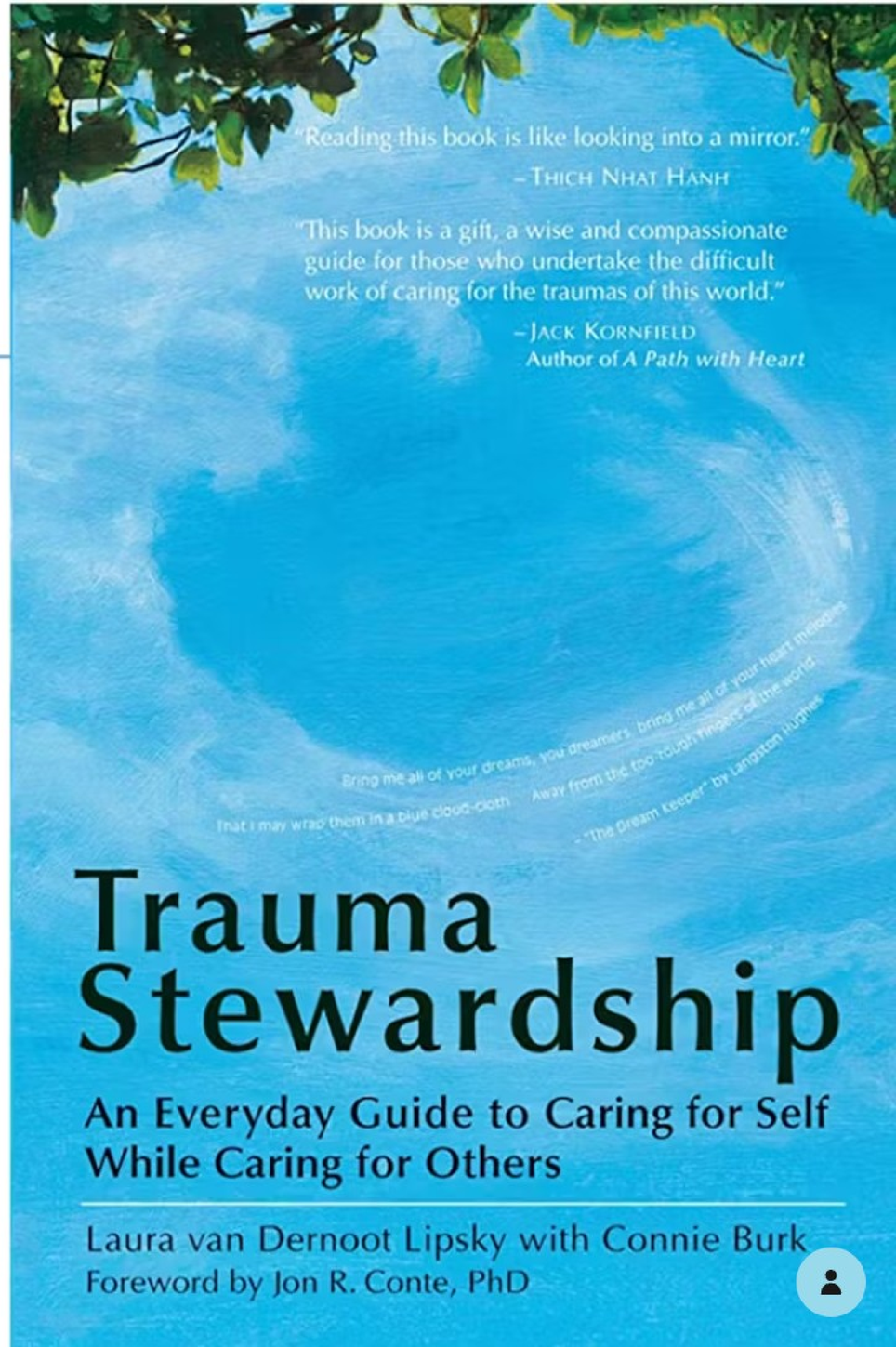
Compassion Fatigue

Cocker, F., & Joss, N. (2016). Compassion fatigue among healthcare, emergency and community service workers: A systematic review. In *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* (Vol. 13, Issue 6).

Warning Signs of Vicarious Trauma Response

16 Warning Signs

1. Feeling helpless and hopeless
2. Sense that one can never do enough
3. Hypervigilance
4. Diminished creativity
5. Inability to embrace complexity
6. Minimizing
7. Chronic exhaustion/physical ailments
8. Inability to listen/deliberate avoidance
9. Dissociative moments
10. Sense of persecution
11. Guilt
12. Fear
13. Anger and Cynicism
14. Inability to empathize/numbing
15. Addictions
16. Grandiosity



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12. Fear
13. Anger and Cynicism
14. Inability to empathize/numbing
15. Addictions
16. Grandiosity

MINIMIZING

- Does it take a more intense level of suffering to get your attention?
- Do you consider less extreme experiences of trauma 'less' real and therefore less deserving of your time and support?
- Do you downplay anything that does not fall into the 'most extreme' category of hardship?

16 Warning Signs

1. **Feeling helpless and hopeless**
2. Sense that one can never do enough
3. Hypervigilance
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10. Sense of persecution
11. Guilt
12. Fear
13. Anger and Cynicism
14. Inability to empathize/numbing
15. Addictions
16. Grandiosity

FEELING HELPLESS/HOPELESS

- Do you frequently ask yourself if you are making an impact?
- Do you ask yourself what's the point?
- Is it difficult to see that any progress is being made for a positive change?
- Do you feel overwhelmed, as if nothing can remedy the situation?
- Do you believe things are plunging into greater despair?
- Are your successes hard to keep in focus?

16 Warning Signs

1. Feeling helpless and hopeless
2. **Sense that one can never do enough**
3. Hypervigilance
4. Diminished creativity
5. Inability to embrace complexity
6. Minimizing
7. Chronic exhaustion/physical ailments
8. Inability to listen/deliberate avoidance
9. Dissociative moments
10. Sense of persecution
11. Guilt
12. Fear
13. Anger and Cynicism
14. Inability to empathize/numbing
15. Addictions
16. Grandiosity

A SENSE ONE CAN NEVER DO ENOUGH

- Is there a feeling of urgency in the workplace?
- Do you ask yourself: Am I good enough? Tough enough? Smart enough?
- Do you believe you are not doing enough and you should be doing more?

Impacts on the work

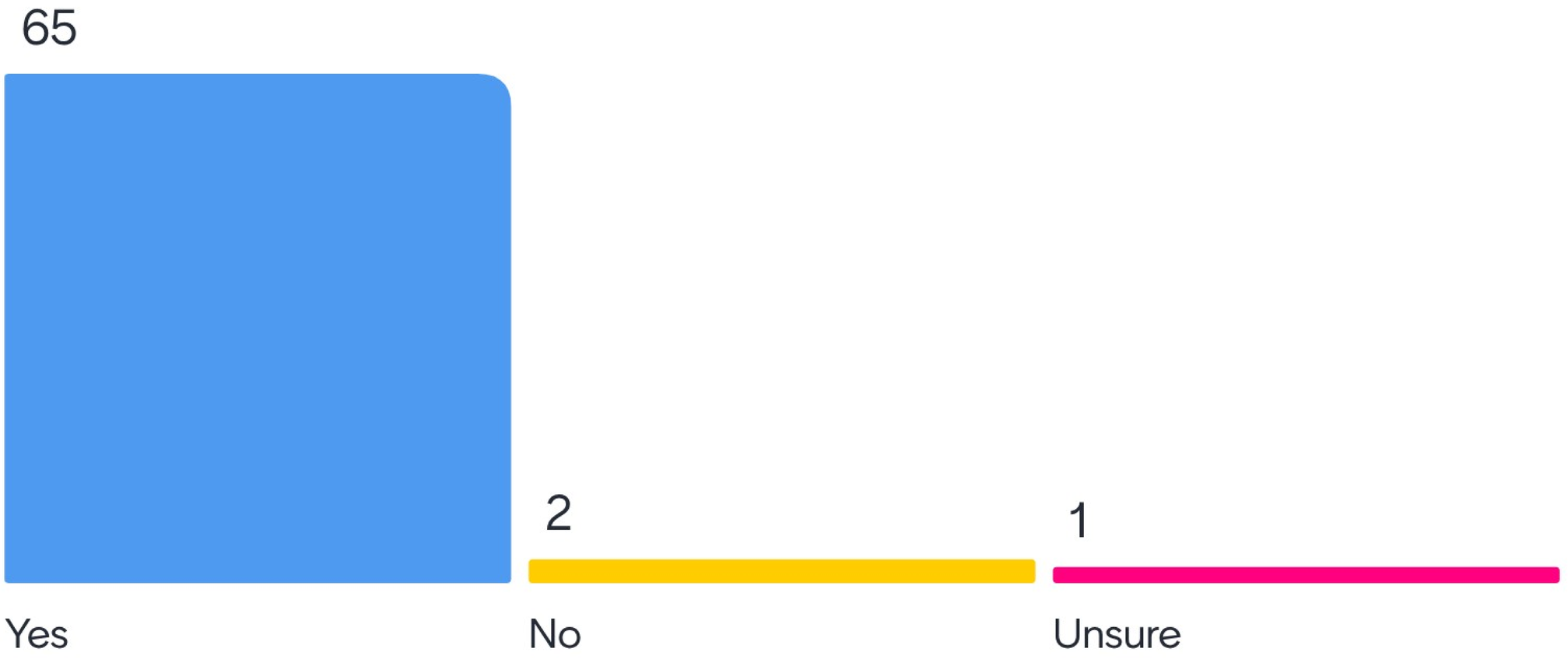
Impacts on job performance	Impacts on organizations
Decreased ability to listen carefully	Changes in overall culture/performance
Difficulty negotiating conflict	Lower quality work and taking shortcuts
Decreased empathy	“Suffering in silence”
Victim-blaming attitudes	Decreased collaboration
Decreased problem solving	High turnover

Who does it affect?

> Professionals who are the most successful, because of their ability to openly and effectively engage with victims, suffer the greatest negative consequences of secondary trauma.

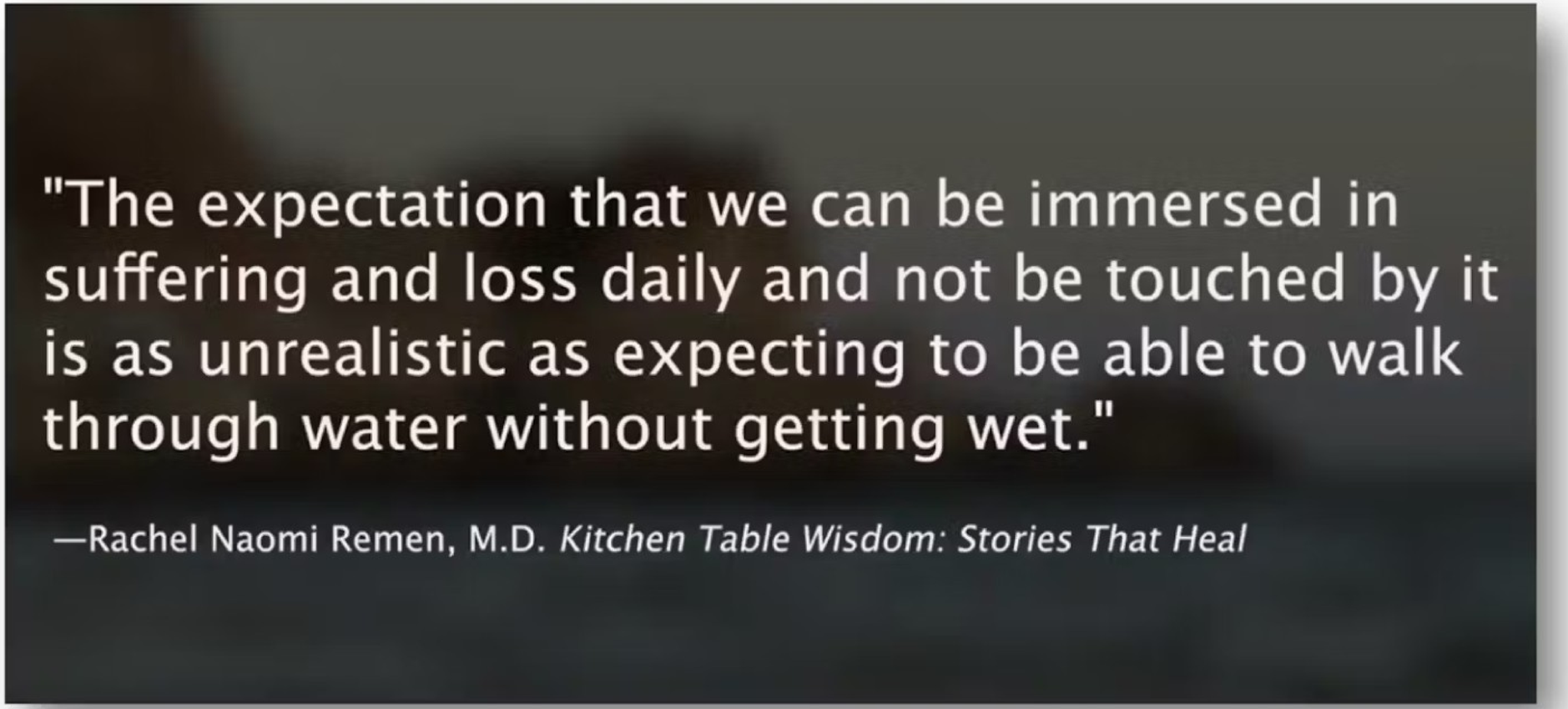
--Andrew Laue, LCSW, Developer of the STAR-T program (Secondary Trauma Activates Resiliency)

Do you think you are (or have been) affected by vicarious trauma?



Tools for Resilience

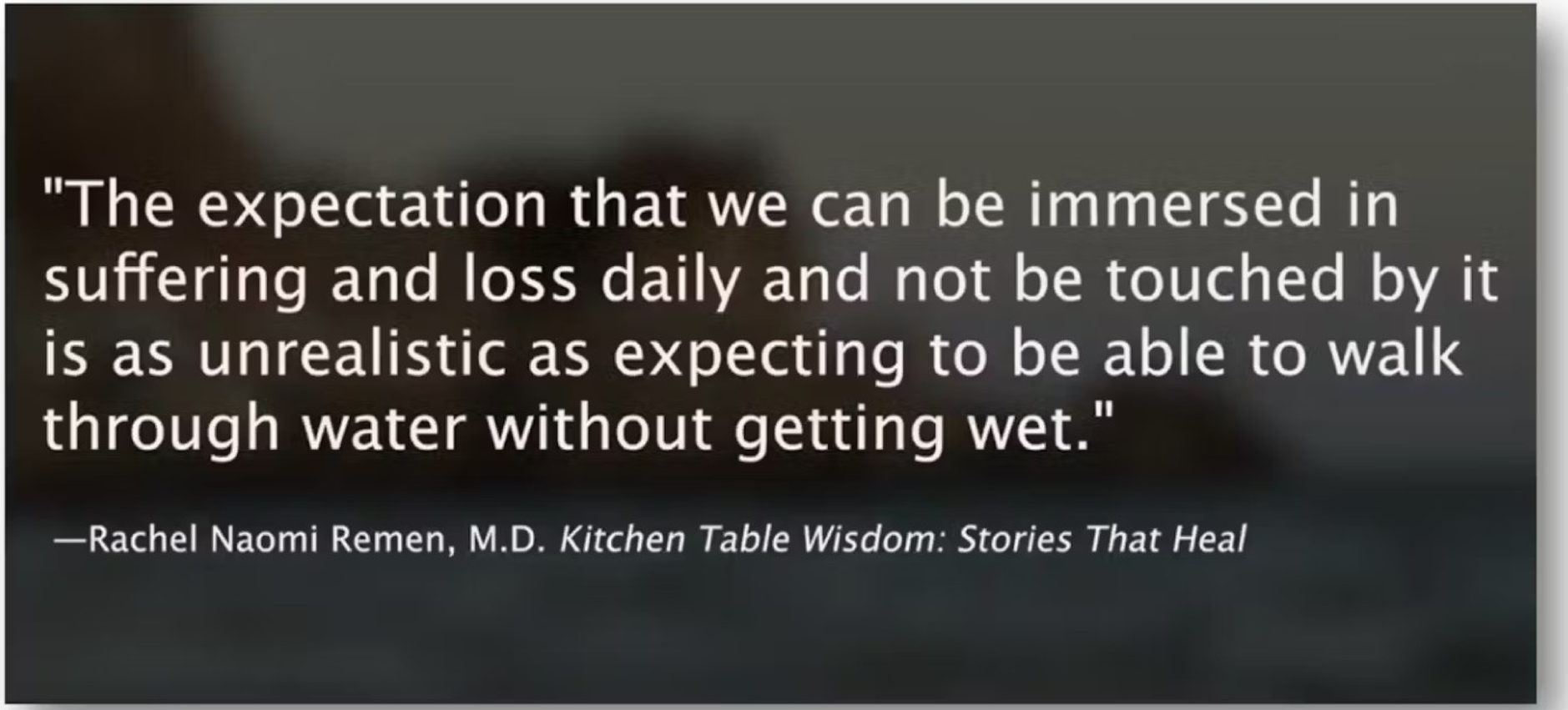
Why does trauma affect people vicariously?

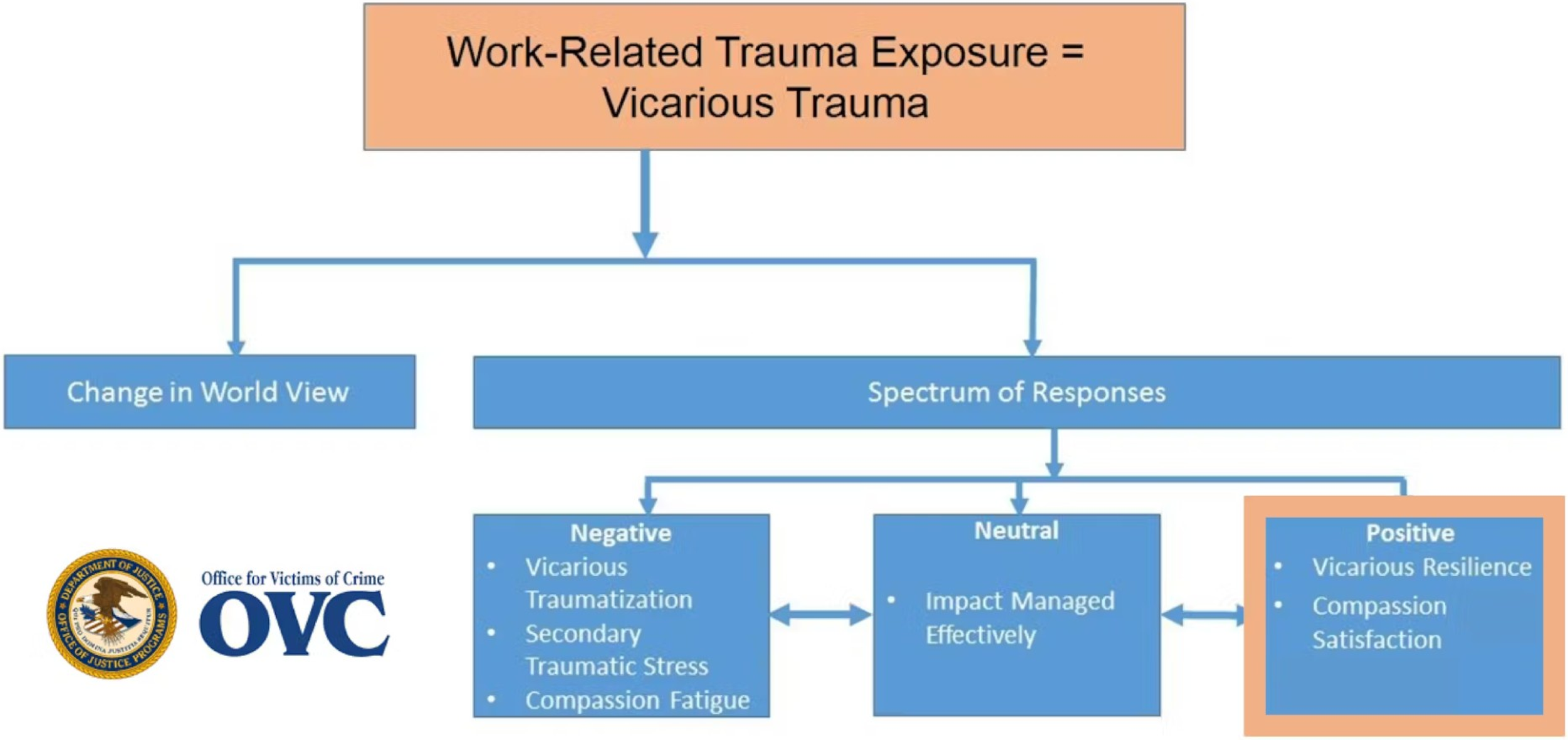


Mirror neurons are involved in vicarious trauma

Vicarious trauma occurs when someone's nervous system begins to register the traumatic experience of someone else like it has happened to them.

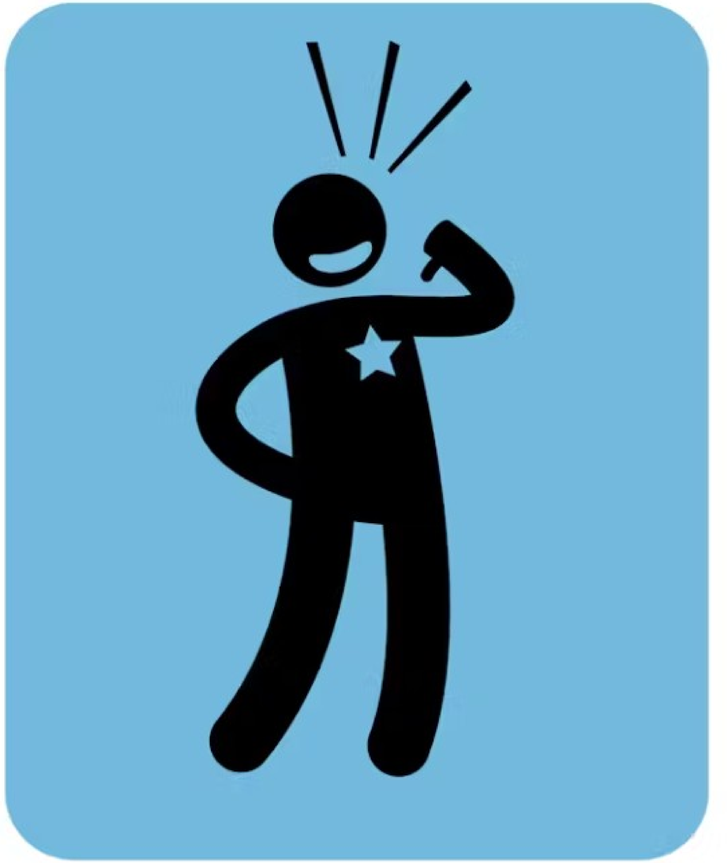
Time to get your rain boots...




Work-Related Trauma Exposure = Vicarious Trauma
Change in World View
Spectrum of Responses
Negative
Vicarious Traumatization
Secondary Traumatic Stress
Compassion Fatigue
Neutral
Impact Managed Effectively
Positive
Vicarious Resilience
Compassion Satisfaction
Office for Victims of Crime
OVC

Compassion Satisfaction

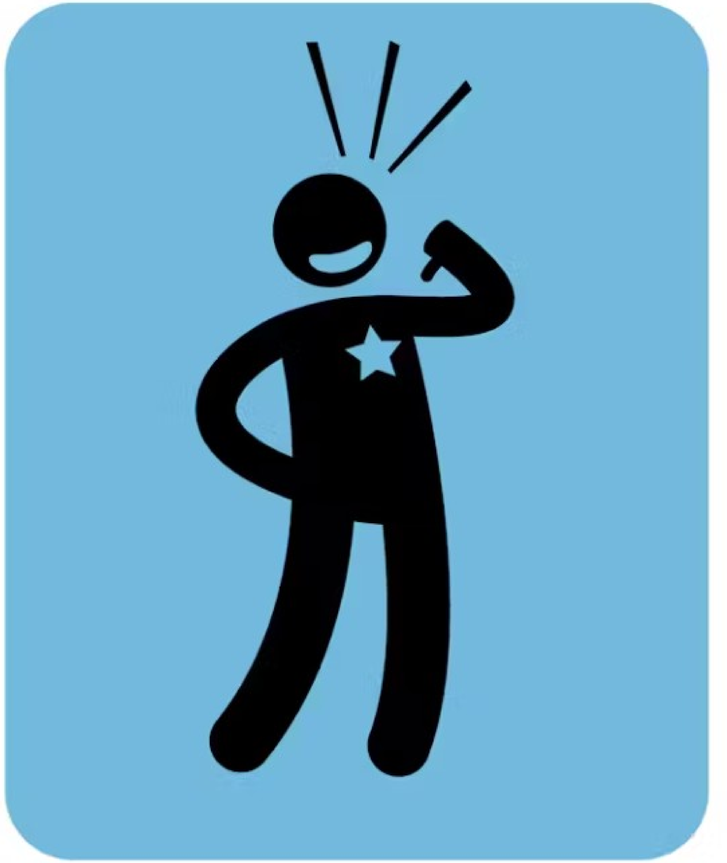
Compassion satisfaction is **feeling positively about the meaningfulness of one's contribution to the work** and/or the greater good of society.



Compassion Satisfaction

Tips for promoting compassion satisfaction:

- Focus on what you're fighting for rather than what you're fighting against
- Start a journal to keep track of positive impacts you've had and client successes
- Save any thank you letters or expressions of gratitude you receive



Vicarious Resilience

Vicarious resilience is the positive transformation and empowerment experienced through witnessing someone overcome adversity.

Vicarious Resilience

Tips for promoting vicarious resilience:

- Work with clients on a longer-term basis to be able to see changes
- Engage with larger movements and other people's success stories

Tools for Resilience

1. Managing your trauma load
2. Self-tests and Professional Quality of Life tools
3. Breathing and grounding exercises

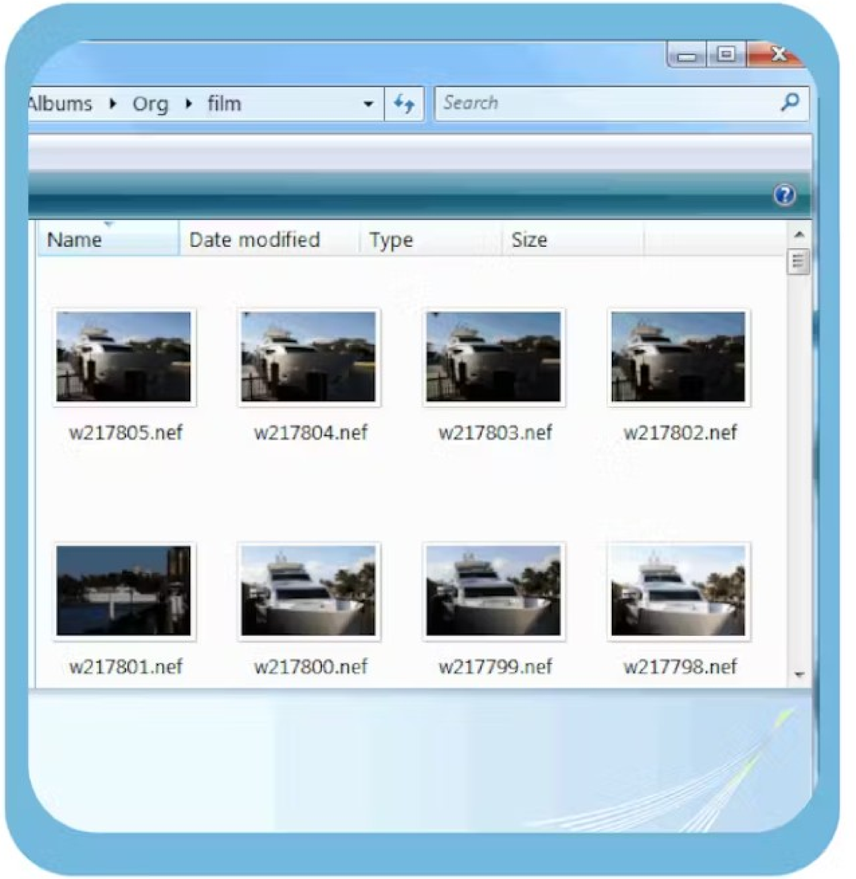
Managing Your Trauma Load

A primary risk factor for experiencing the negative effects of vicarious trauma is simply taking in a lot of details about trauma, and you can work to manage how much you are absorbing.

Managing Your Trauma Load

Limit/control sensory intake

- With photos, start with an aerial/gallery view to get an idea of the type of content you are about to view.
- With video, watch with the sound off at first.
- With reading, use your own background sounds (music, white noise) instead of silence.



Patrick, Wendy L. (2021). What You Wish You Hadn't Seen: How to Cope With Viewing Graphic Images. National District Attorneys Association. Retrieved from: https://ndaajustice.medium.com/what-you-wish-you-hadnt-seen-how-to-cope-with-viewing-graphic-images-2eff23ebb214

Managing Your Trauma Load

Limit time

- Review case files or evidence for a short, defined amount of time (1-2 hours) and then take a break.
- Work on “heavier” cases earlier in the day to allow more time to process during work time.
- Set work boundaries (e.g., not checking email outside work hours, using vacation time, taking short breaks)

Patrick, Wendy L. (2021). What You Wish You Hadn’t Seen: How to Cope With Viewing Graphic Images. National District Attorneys Association. Retrieved from: https://ndaajustice.medium.com/what-you-wish-you-hadnt-seen-how-to-cope-with-viewing-graphic-images-2eff23ebb214

Managing Your Trauma Load

Leave work at work

- Avoid reviewing cases at home
- Create mindful routines to end work (close and lock your office door, change into different clothes, go for a walk)

Patrick, Wendy L. (2021). What You Wish You Hadn't Seen: How to Cope With Viewing Graphic Images. National District Attorneys Association. Retrieved from: https://ndaajustice.medium.com/what-you-wish-you-hadnt-seen-how-to-cope-with-viewing-graphic-images-2eff23ebb214

Managing Your Trauma Load

Broaden identity outside of work

- Spend time with personal friends/family outside of work
- Participate in group/community activities like sports, volunteering, nature

Patrick, Wendy L. (2021). What You Wish You Hadn't Seen: How to Cope With Viewing Graphic Images. National District Attorneys Association. Retrieved from: https://ndaajustice.medium.com/what-you-wish-you-hadnt-seen-how-to-cope-with-viewing-graphic-images-2eff23ebb214

Managing Your Trauma Load

Seek support

- Debrief with coworkers during work time (don't need to share details of trauma but share how you're feeling about it). If we help each other, it lightens the load.
- Professional counseling/therapy

Patrick, Wendy L. (2021). What You Wish You Hadn't Seen: How to Cope With Viewing Graphic Images. National District Attorneys Association. Retrieved from: https://ndaajustice.medium.com/what-you-wish-you-hadnt-seen-how-to-cope-with-viewing-graphic-images-2eff23ebb214

Tools for Resilience

1. Managing your trauma load
2. Self-tests and Professional Quality of Life tools
3. Breathing and grounding exercises

Burnout Self-Test

Burnout Self-Test
Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI)

The Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) is the most commonly used tool to self-assess whether you might be at risk of burnout. To determine the risk of burnout, the MBI explores three components: exhaustion, depersonalization and personal achievement. While this tool may be useful, it must not be used as a scientific diagnostic technique, regardless of the results. The objective is simply to make you aware that anyone may be at risk of burnout.

For each question, indicate the score that corresponds to your response. Add up your score for each section and compare your results with the scoring results interpretation at the bottom of this document.

Questions:	Never	A Few Times per Year	Once a Month	A Few Times per Month	Once a Week	A Few Times per Week	Every Day
Section A:	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
I feel emotionally drained by my work.							
Working with people all day long requires a great deal of effort.							
I feel like my work is breaking me down.							
I feel frustrated by my work.							
I feel I work too hard at my job.							
It stresses me too much to work in direct contact with people.							
I feel like I'm at the end of my rope.							
Total score – SECTION A							

https://different.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Maslach-Burnout-Inventory-MBI.pdf

Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Trauma Self-Test

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.

https://proqol.org/proqol-measure

Professional Quality of Life Tools

Fundamental Skills for Self-care - Handouts

Better Sleep

All of us can experience moments of sleep disturbance or problems sleeping well for a variety of reasons including stressful events during the day, anxiety problems, trouble at work or in our private life.

SELECT LANGUAGE

Boundaries

Many people in caring professions, including healthcare professionals, struggle to set boundaries between work and personal life. However, without good boundaries that give our bodies and minds a chance to rest, the resulting overwork and boundless emotional investment can impact our bodies, minds and relationships negatively.

SELECT LANGUAGE

Breathing

When we start to feel anxious, upset or uncomfortable, our breathing is one of the first things that changes. It usually becomes faster, shallower and less smooth.

SELECT LANGUAGE

Intentional Avoidance and Focus

An amazing ability that may be unique to humans is the ability to think about our own thinking. This ability gives us some powerful tools for managing the ways we respond to distressing and exhausting experiences, including our work.

SELECT LANGUAGE

Grounding Techniques

Grounding is set of helpful strategies that can be utilized when we are feeling overwhelmed or in distress. Grounding helps to reorient the mind and body, bringing you back into the present moment where you can experience a current state of safety and move away from symptoms of distress.

SELECT LANGUAGE

Intrusive Thoughts and Flashbacks

Occasionally, people that have been exposed to traumatic stories might have intrusive thoughts, which are distressing ideas and memories that suddenly and unexpectedly come to mind and trigger a response of fear, worry, or grief.

SELECT LANGUAGE

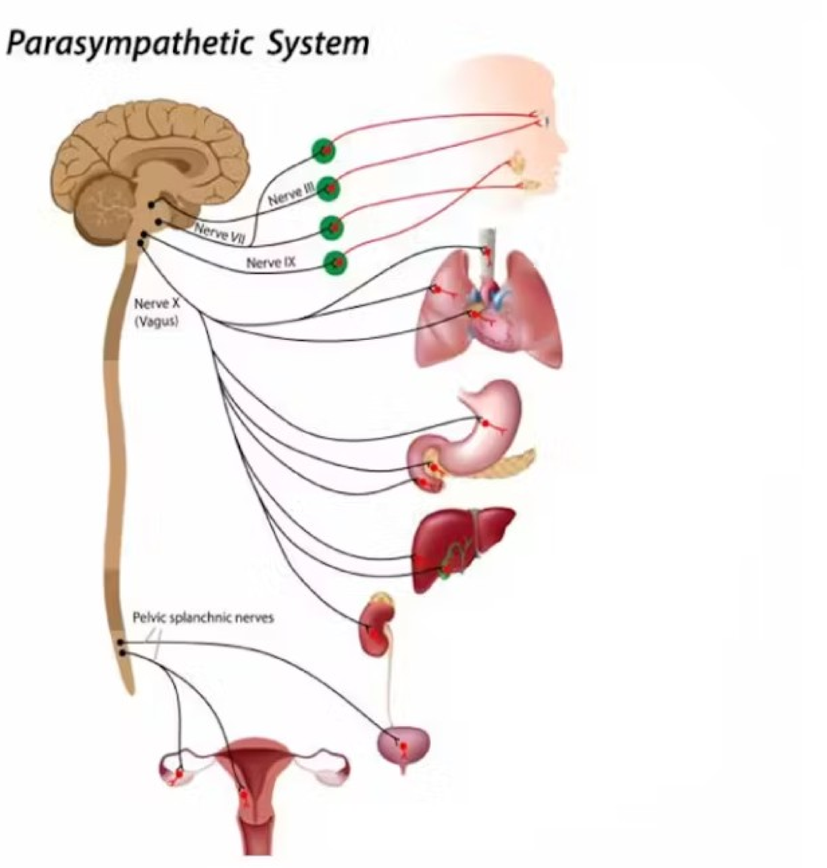
https://proqol.org/self-care-tools-1

What self-care tools or practices work for you?

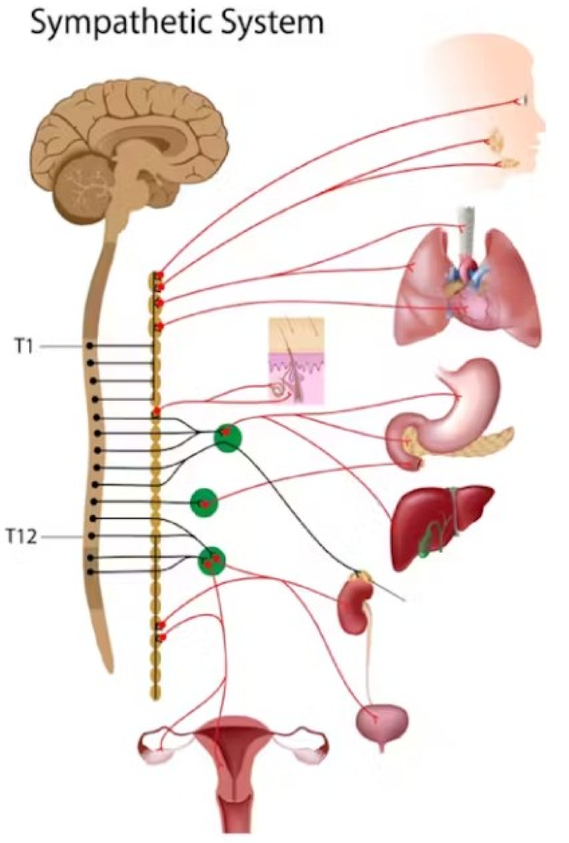
Tools for Resilience

1. Managing your trauma load
2. Self-tests and Professional Quality of Life tools
3. Breathing and grounding exercises

How do breathing and grounding exercises work?



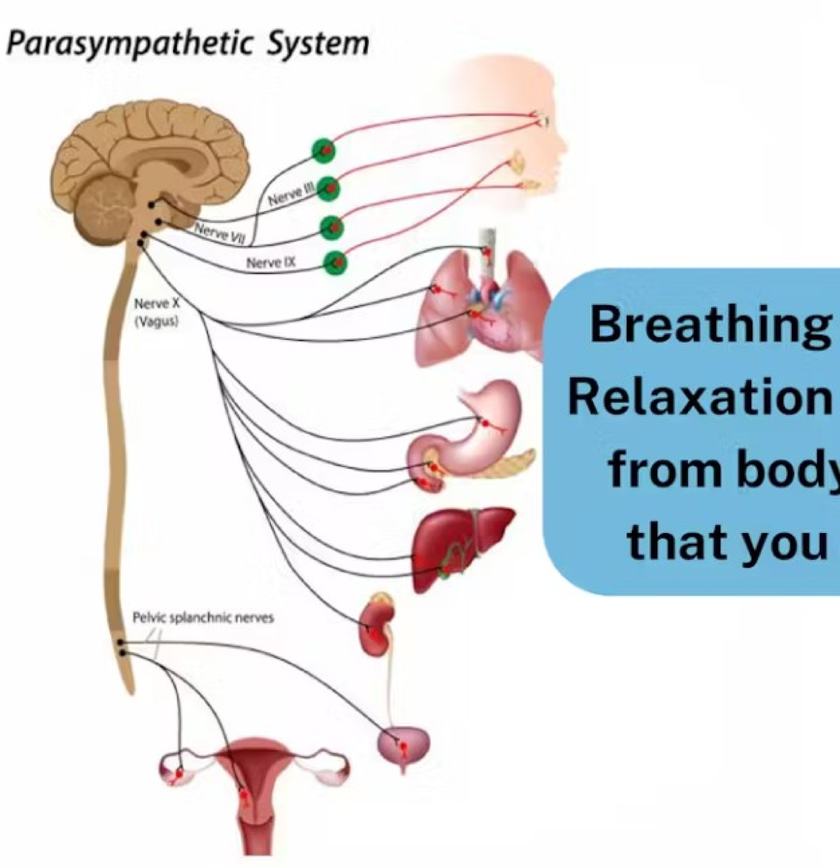
Rest-and Digest



Fight-or-Flight

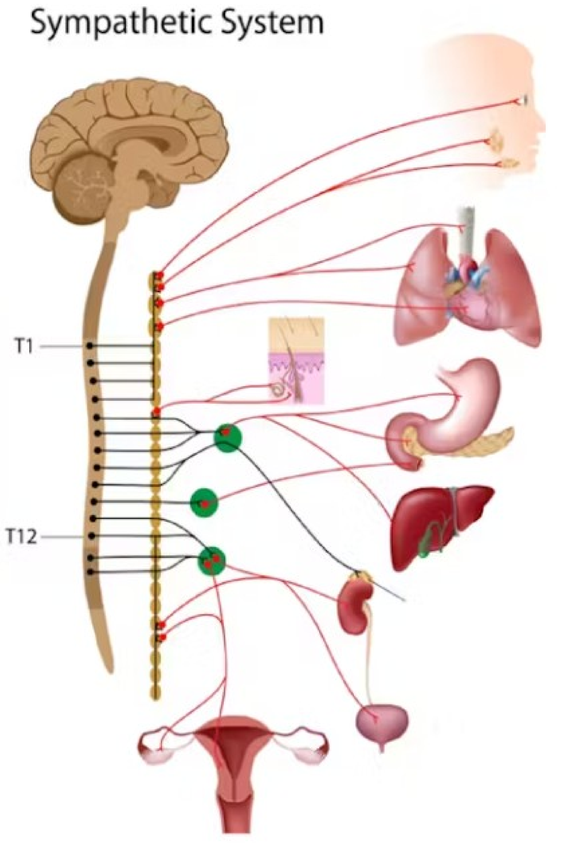
How do breathing and grounding exercises work?

Bottom-up regulation



Rest-and Digest

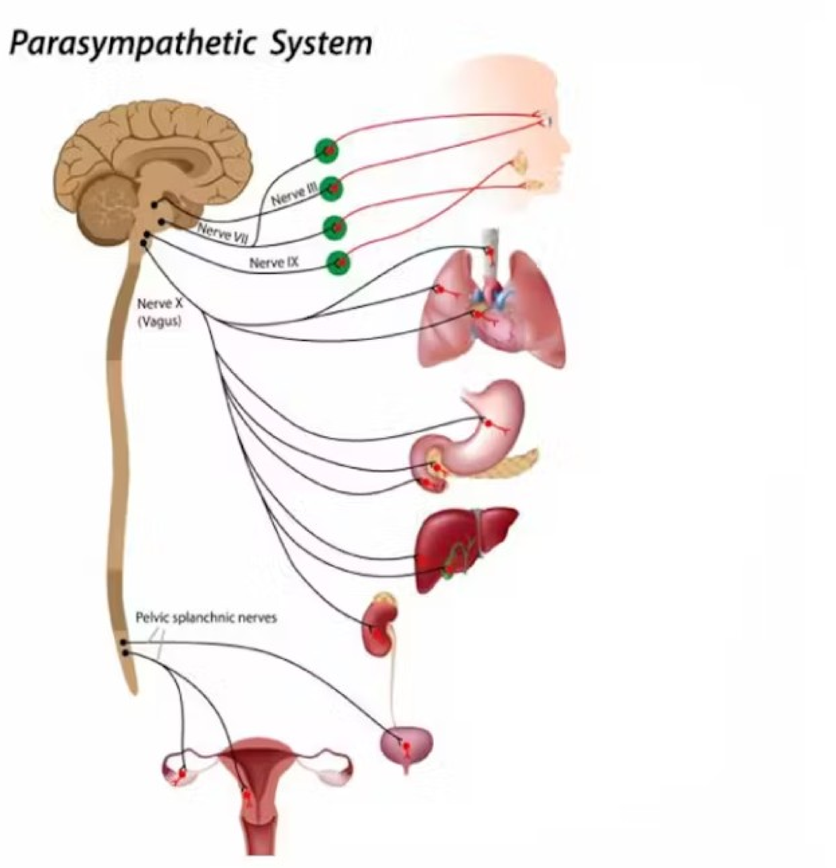
Breathing & Muscle Relaxation sends info from body to brain that you are safe



Fight-or-Flight

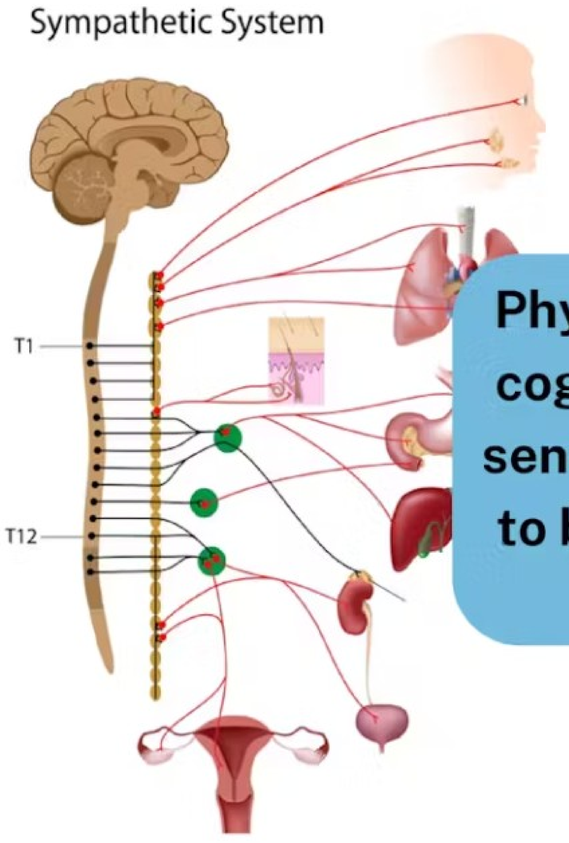
How do breathing and grounding exercises work?

Bottom-up regulation



Rest-and Digest

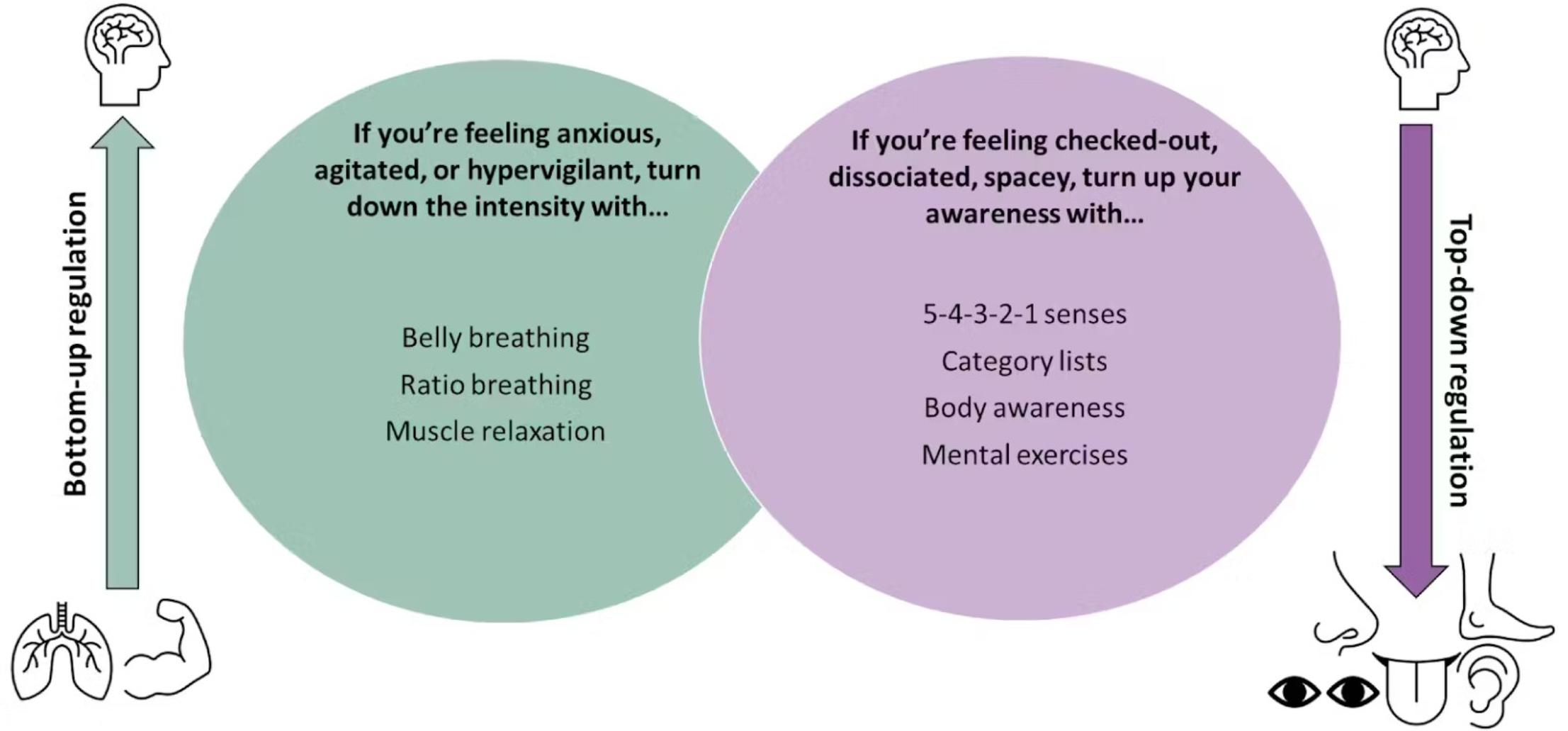
Top-down regulation



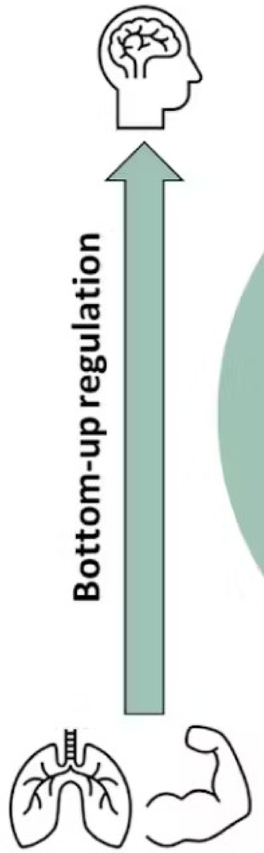
Fight-or-Flight

Physical, sensory, & cognitive grounding sends info from brain to body that you are safe.

Mind-Body Tools for Vicarious Trauma



Deep Breathing



If you're feeling anxious, agitated, or hypervigilant, turn down the intensity with...

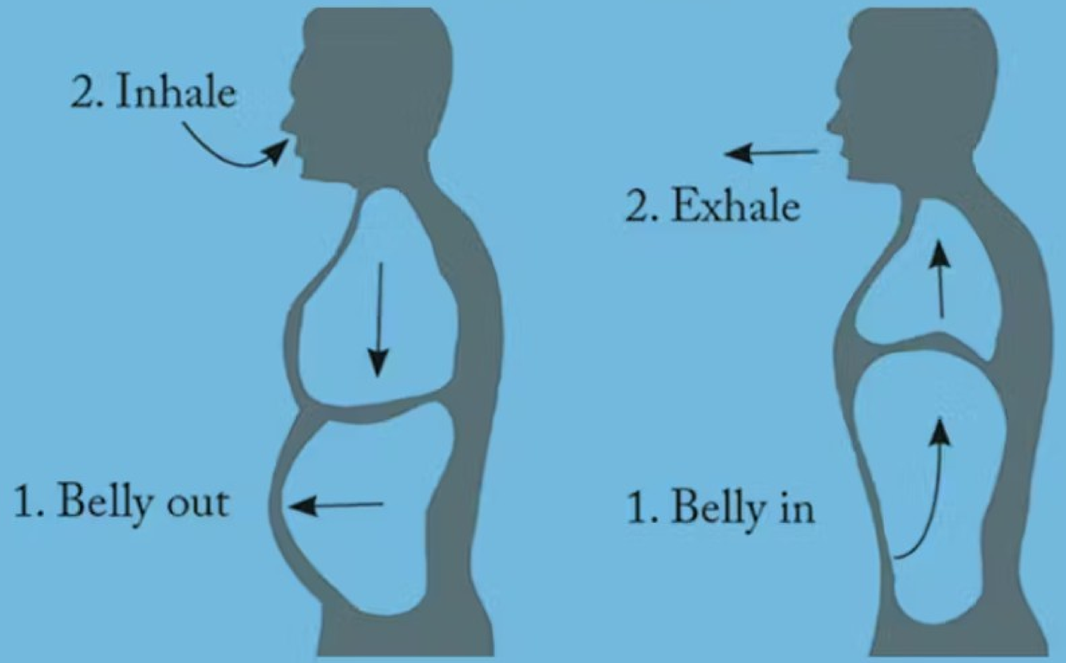
Belly breathing

Ratio breathing

Muscle relaxation

Ratio breathing

Belly breathing



Session Materials

Deep Breathing

Deep Breathing: a relaxation technique performed by purposefully taking slow, deep breaths. When practiced regularly, deep breathing provides both immediate and long-term relief from stress and anxiety.

How Deep Breathing Works

During periods of anxiety, the body triggers a set of symptoms called the **stress response**. Breathing becomes shallow and rapid, heart rate increases, and muscles become tense. In opposition to the stress response is the **relaxation response**. Breathing becomes deeper and slower, and the symptoms of anxiety fade away. Deep breathing triggers this response.

Instructions

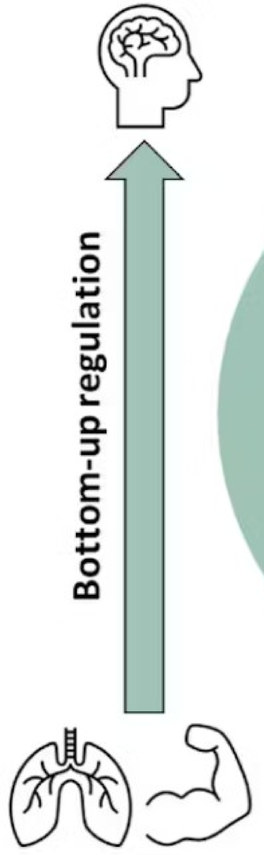
Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. Close your eyes, if you would like to do so. When you're learning, try placing a hand on your stomach. If you breathe deeply enough, you should notice it rising and falling with each inhalation and exhalation.

1. **Inhale.** Breathe in slowly through your nose for 4 seconds.
2. **Pause.** Hold the air in your lungs for 4 seconds.
3. **Exhale.** Breathe out slowly through your mouth for 6 seconds.
   Tip: Pucker your lips, as if you are blowing through a straw, to slow your exhalation.
4. **Repeat.** Practice for at least 2 minutes, but preferably 5 to 10 minutes.

Tips

- If it isn't working, *slow down*! The most common mistake is breathing too fast. Time each step in your head, counting slowly as you do so.
- Counting out your breaths serves a second purpose. It takes your mind off the source of your anxiety. Whenever you catch your mind wandering, simply return your focus to counting.
- The times we use for each step are suggestions, and can be lengthened or decreased. Lengthen the time if it feels natural to do so, or decrease the time if you feel discomfort.

Muscle Relaxation



Bottom-up regulation

If you're feeling anxious, agitated, or hypervigilant, turn down the intensity with…

Belly breathing

Ratio breathing

Muscle relaxation

Session Materials

Progressive Muscle Relaxation Script

Progressive muscle relaxation is an exercise that reduces stress and anxiety in your body by having you slowly tense and then relax each muscle. This exercise can provide an immediate feeling of relaxation, but it's best to practice frequently. With experience, you will become more aware of when you are experiencing tension and you will have the skills to help you relax. During this exercise, each muscle should be tensed, but not to the point of strain. If you have any injuries or pain, you can skip the affected areas. Pay special attention to the feeling of releasing tension in each muscle and the resulting feeling of relaxation. Let's begin.

Sit back or lie down in a comfortable position. Shut your eyes if you're comfortable doing so.

Begin by taking a deep breath and noticing the feeling of air filling your lungs. Hold your breath for a few seconds.

(brief pause)

Release the breath slowly and let the tension leave your body.

Take in another deep breath and hold it.

(brief pause)

Again, slowly release the air.

Even slower now, take another breath. Fill your lungs and hold the air.

(brief pause)

Slowly release the breath and imagine the feeling of tension leaving your body.

Now, move your attention to your feet. Begin to tense your feet by curling your toes and the arch of your foot. Hold onto the tension and notice what it feels like.

(5 second pause)

Release the tension in your foot. Notice the new feeling of relaxation.

Next, begin to focus on your lower leg. Tense the muscles in your calves. Hold them tightly and pay attention to the feeling of tension.

(5 second pause)

Release the tension from your lower legs. Again, notice the feeling of relaxation. Remember to continue taking deep breaths.

Next, tense the muscles of your upper leg and pelvis. You can do this by tightly squeezing your thighs together. Make sure you feel tenseness without going to the point of strain.

(5 second pause)

Sensory Grounding

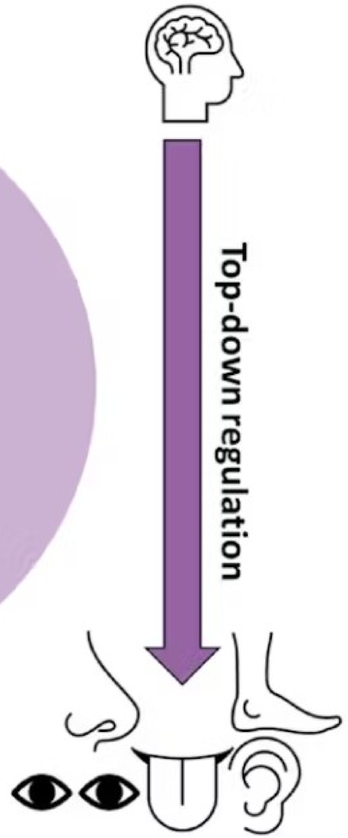
If you're feeling checked-out, dissociated, spacey, turn up your awareness with...

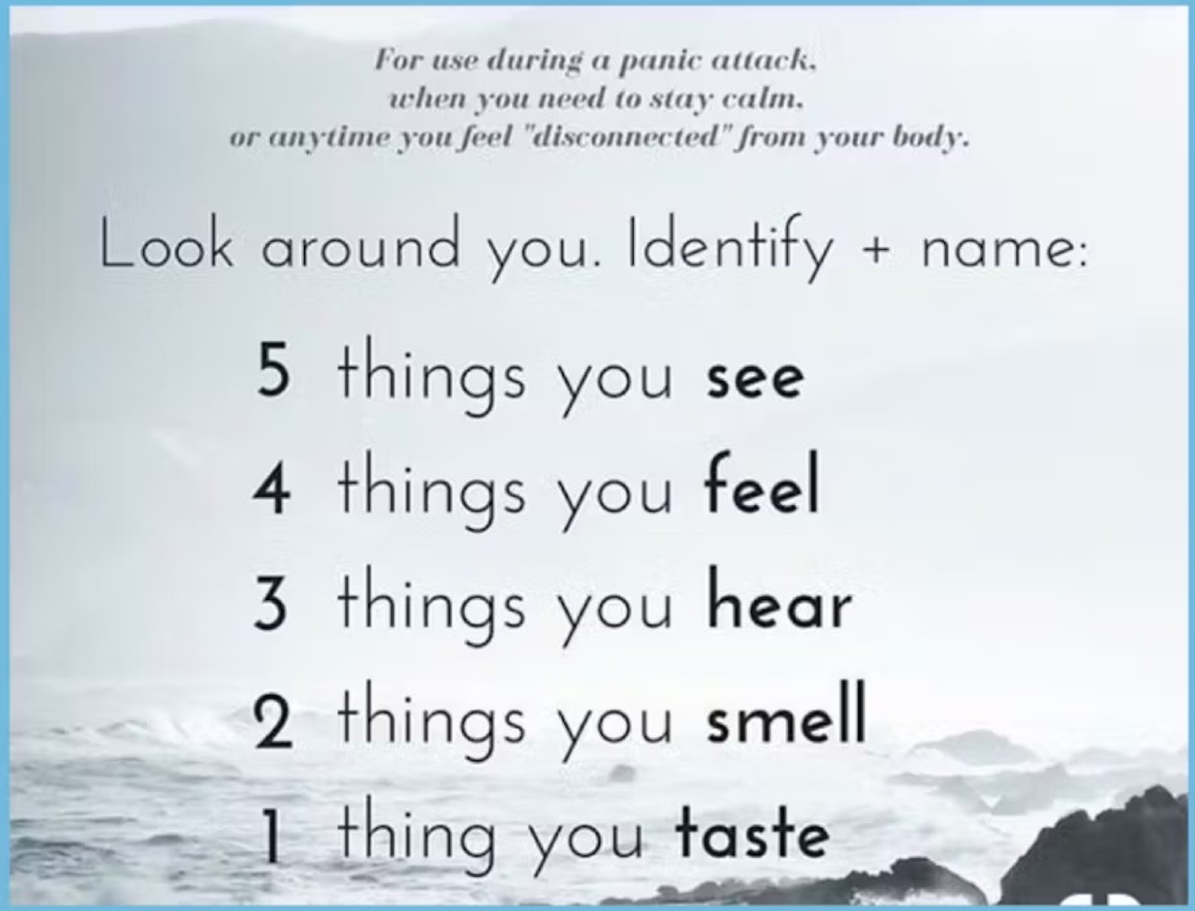
5-4-3-2-1 senses

Category lists

Body awareness

Mental exercises





Session Materials

Grounding Techniques

After a trauma, it's normal to experience flashbacks, anxiety, and other uncomfortable symptoms. **Grounding techniques** help control these symptoms by turning attention away from thoughts, memories, or worries, and refocusing on the present moment.

5-4-3-2-1 Technique

Using the 5-4-3-2-1 technique, you will purposefully take in the details of your surroundings using each of your senses. Strive to notice small details that your mind would usually tune out, such as distant sounds, or the texture of an ordinary object.

What are 5 things you can see? Look for small details such as a pattern on the ceiling, the way light reflects off a surface, or an object you never noticed.

What are 4 things you can feel? Notice the sensation of clothing on your body, the sun on your skin, or the feeling of the chair you are sitting in. Pick up an object and examine its weight, texture, and other physical qualities.

What are 3 things you can hear? Pay special attention to the sounds your mind has tuned out, such as a ticking clock, distant traffic, or trees blowing in the wind.

What are 2 things you can smell? Try to notice smells in the air around you, like an air freshener or freshly mowed grass. You may also look around for something that has a scent, such as a flower or an unlit candle.

What is 1 thing you can taste? Carry gum, candy, or small snacks for this step. Pop one in your mouth and focus your attention closely on the flavors.

Physical Grounding

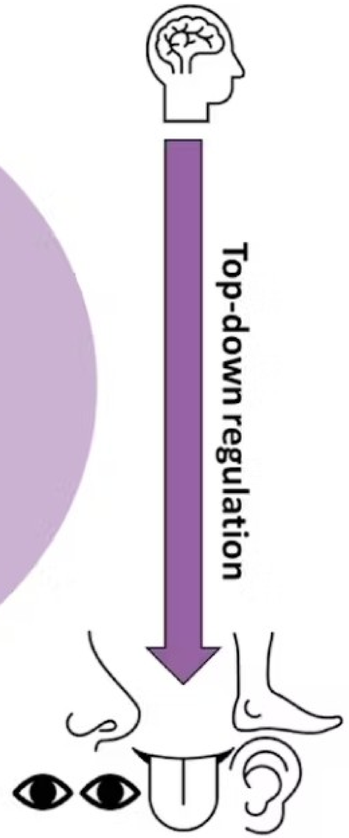
If you're feeling checked-out, dissociated, spacey, turn up your awareness with...

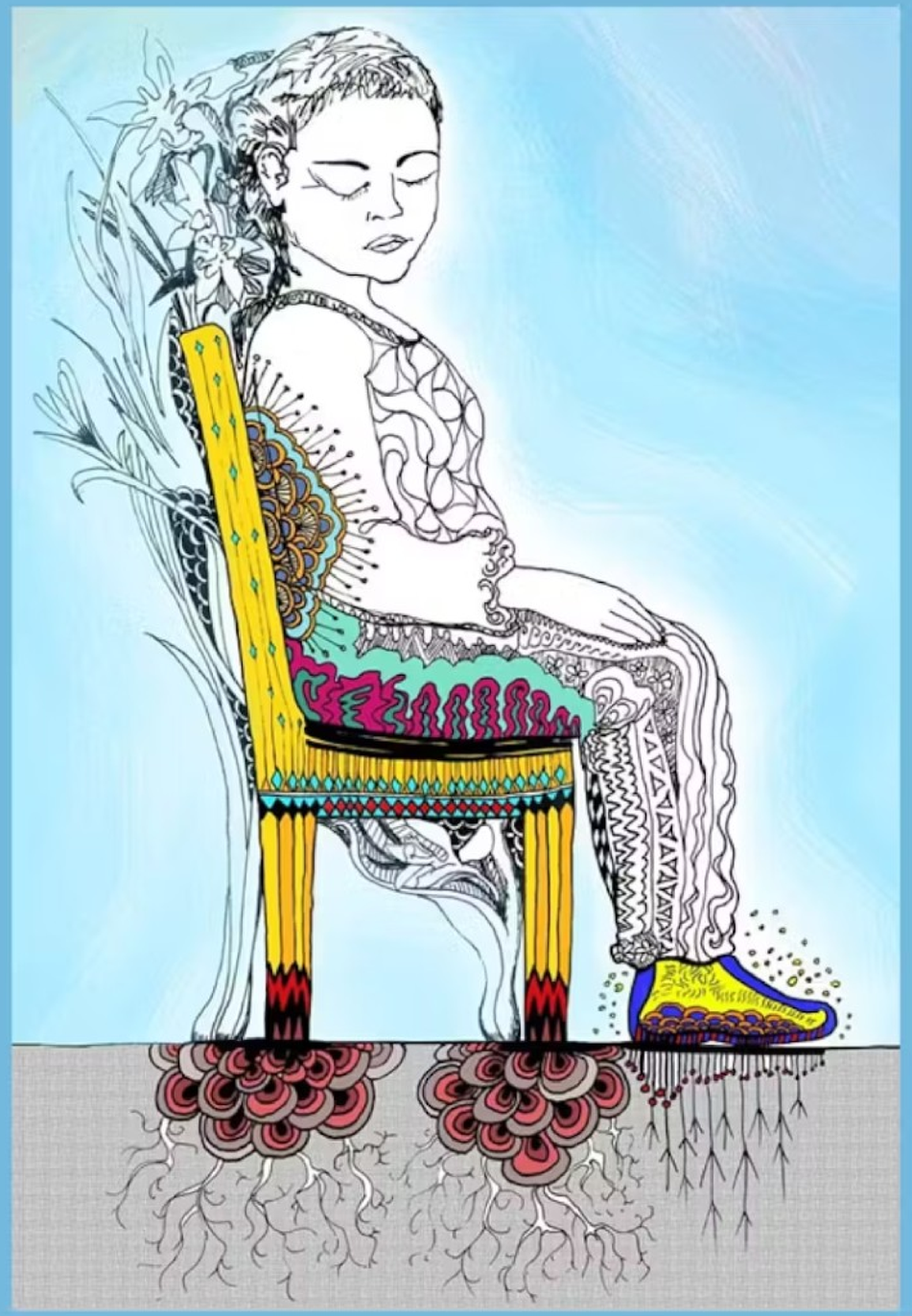
5-4-3-2-1 senses

Category lists

Body awareness

Mental exercises





Session Materials

Grounding Techniques

Body Awareness

The body awareness technique will bring you into the here-and-now by directing your focus to sensations in the body. Pay special attention to the physical sensations created by each step.

1. Take 5 long, deep breaths through your nose, and exhale through puckered lips.
2. Place both feet flat on the floor. Wiggle your toes. Curl and uncurl your toes several times. Spend a moment noticing the sensations in your feet.
3. Stomp your feet on the ground several times. Pay attention to the sensations in your feet and legs as you make contact with the ground.
4. Clench your hands into fists, then release the tension. Repeat this 10 times.
5. Press your palms together. Press them harder and hold this pose for 15 seconds. Pay attention to the feeling of tension in your hands and arms.
6. Rub your palms together briskly. Notice and sound and the feeling of warmth.
7. Reach your hands over your head like you're trying to reach the sky. Stretch like this for 5 seconds. Bring your arms down and let them relax at your sides.
8. Take 5 more deep breaths and notice the feeling of calm in your body.

Cognitive Grounding

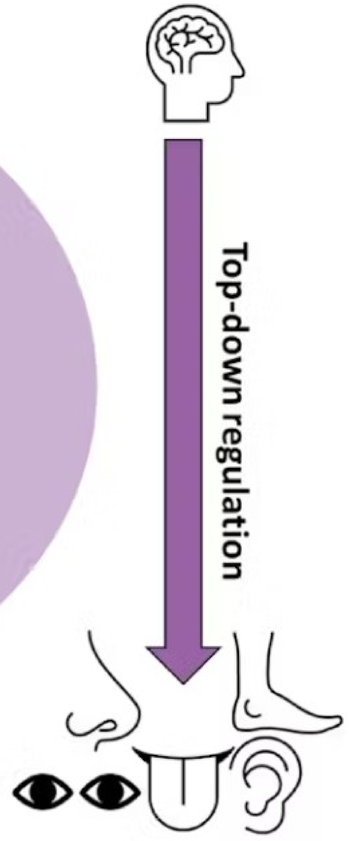
If you're feeling checked-out, dissociated, spacey, turn up your awareness with...

5-4-3-2-1 senses

Category lists

Body awareness

Mental exercises



1. Vanilla
2. Chocolate
3. Cookies N' Cream
4. Mint Chocolate Chip
5. Chocolate Chip Cookie Dough
6. Buttered Pecan
7. Cookie Dough
8. Strawberry
9. Moose Tracks
10. Neapolitan

Source: 2017 International Dairy Foods Association Ice Cream Survey, a national survey of ice cream makers and retailers. Conducted by Research America Inc.

Session Materials

Categories

Choose at least three of the categories below and name as many items as you can in each one. Spend a few minutes on each category to come up with as many items as possible.

Movies	Countries	Books	Cereals
Sports Teams	Colors	Cars	Fruits & Vegetables
Animals	Cities	TV Shows	Famous People

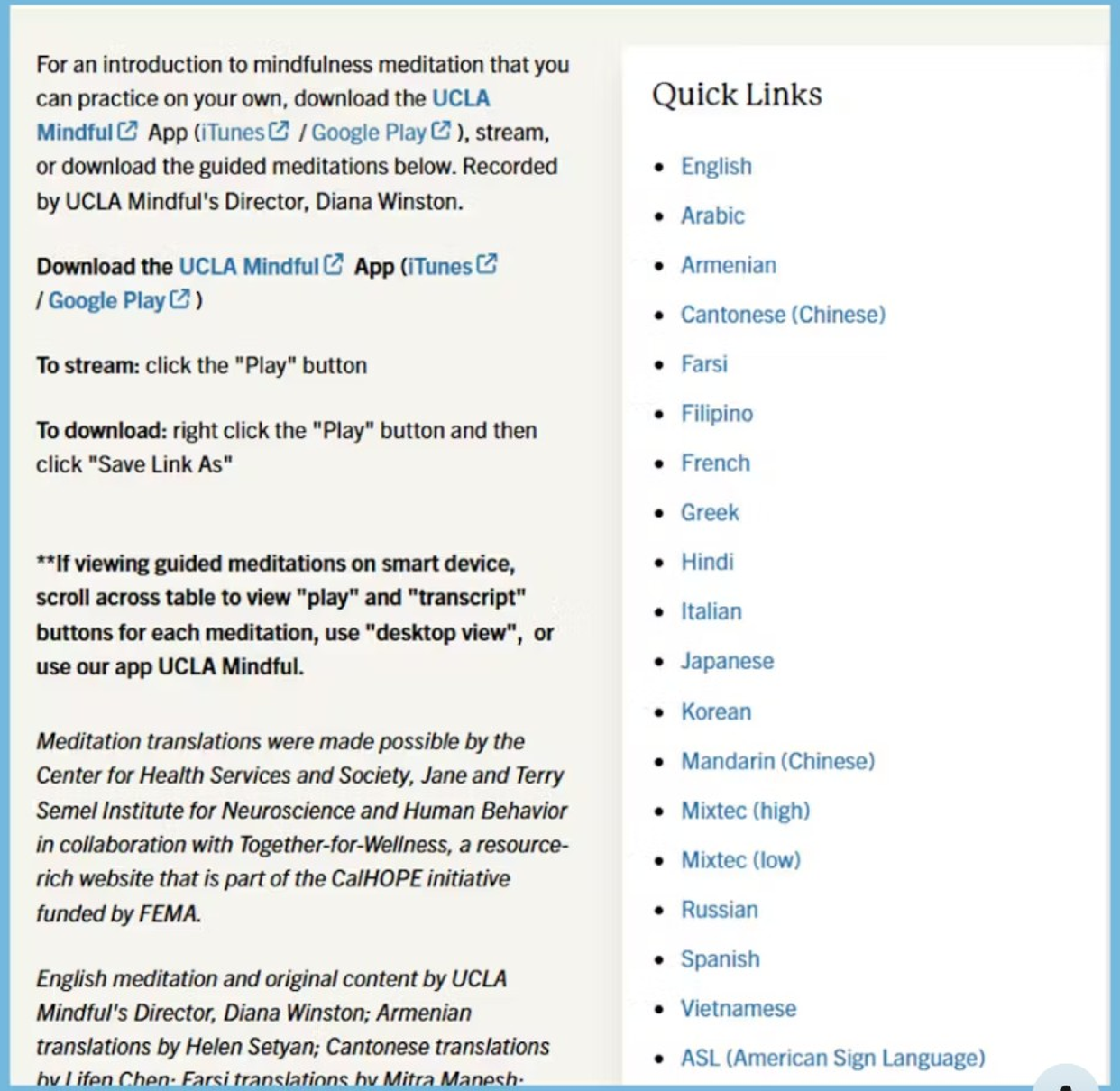
Mental Exercises

Use mental exercises to take your mind off uncomfortable thoughts and feelings. They are discreet and easy to use at nearly any time or place. Experiment to see which work best for you.

- Name all the objects you see.
- Describe the steps in performing an activity you know how to do well. For example, how to shoot a basketball, prepare your favorite meal, or tie a knot.
- Count backwards from 100 by 7.
- Pick up an object and describe it in detail. Describe its color, texture, size, weight, scent, and any other qualities you notice.
- Spell your full name, and the names of three other people, backwards.
- Name all your family members, their ages, and one of their favorite activities.
- Read something backwards, letter-by-letter. Practice for at least a few minutes.
- Think of an object and "draw" it in your mind, or in the air with your finger. Try drawing your home, a vehicle, or an animal.

Self-Care Tools

Free Guided Meditations
(in 17 languages)



For an introduction to mindfulness meditation that you can practice on your own, download the UCLA Mindful App (iTunes / Google Play), stream, or download the guided meditations below. Recorded by UCLA Mindful's Director, Diana Winston.

Download the UCLA Mindful App (iTunes / Google Play)

To stream: click the "Play" button

To download: right click the "Play" button and then click "Save Link As"

****If viewing guided meditations on smart device, scroll across table to view "play" and "transcript" buttons for each meditation, use "desktop view", or use our app UCLA Mindful.**

Meditation translations were made possible by the Center for Health Services and Society, Jane and Terry Semel Institute for Neuroscience and Human Behavior in collaboration with Together-for-Wellness, a resource-rich website that is part of the CalHOPE initiative funded by FEMA.

English meditation and original content by UCLA Mindful's Director, Diana Winston; Armenian translations by Helen Setyan; Cantonese translations by Lifen Chen; Farsi translations by Mitra Manesh;

Quick Links

- English
- Arabic
- Armenian
- Cantonese (Chinese)
- Farsi
- Filipino
- French
- Greek
- Hindi
- Italian
- Japanese
- Korean
- Mandarin (Chinese)
- Mixtec (high)
- Mixtec (low)
- Russian
- Spanish
- Vietnamese
- ASL (American Sign Language)

Organizational Change

A vicarious trauma-informed organization recognizes the challenges of vicarious trauma and **assumes the responsibility for proactively addressing the impact of vicarious trauma** through policies, procedures, practices, and programs.

https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/vtt/blueprint-for-a-vicarious-trauma-informed-organization

Organizational Factors to Promote Resilience

- High-quality supervision
- Peer support and regular de-briefing during work hours
- Manageable caseloads
- Adequate pay/benefits, including mental health services (e.g., EAP)
- Everyone having a voice in the organization
- Organizational culture that normalizes and encourages seeking help

You got this!

It may be inevitable that you will be exposed to vicarious trauma, and it's normal to be affected by that. But the negative consequences are not inevitable and are treatable.

You can do this work in a healthy and sustainable way.