

Compassion Fatigue/ Secondary Traumatic Stress:

"Destroyer of workplace compassion and morale"

Carolyn Curtis, Ph.D. & Charles Stolzenbach, LMFT



Compassion
Fatigue is a form
of physical,
emotional, and
spiritual
exhaustion.



It is common for line staff to be impacted by compassion fatigue.

(Gaille, 2017)

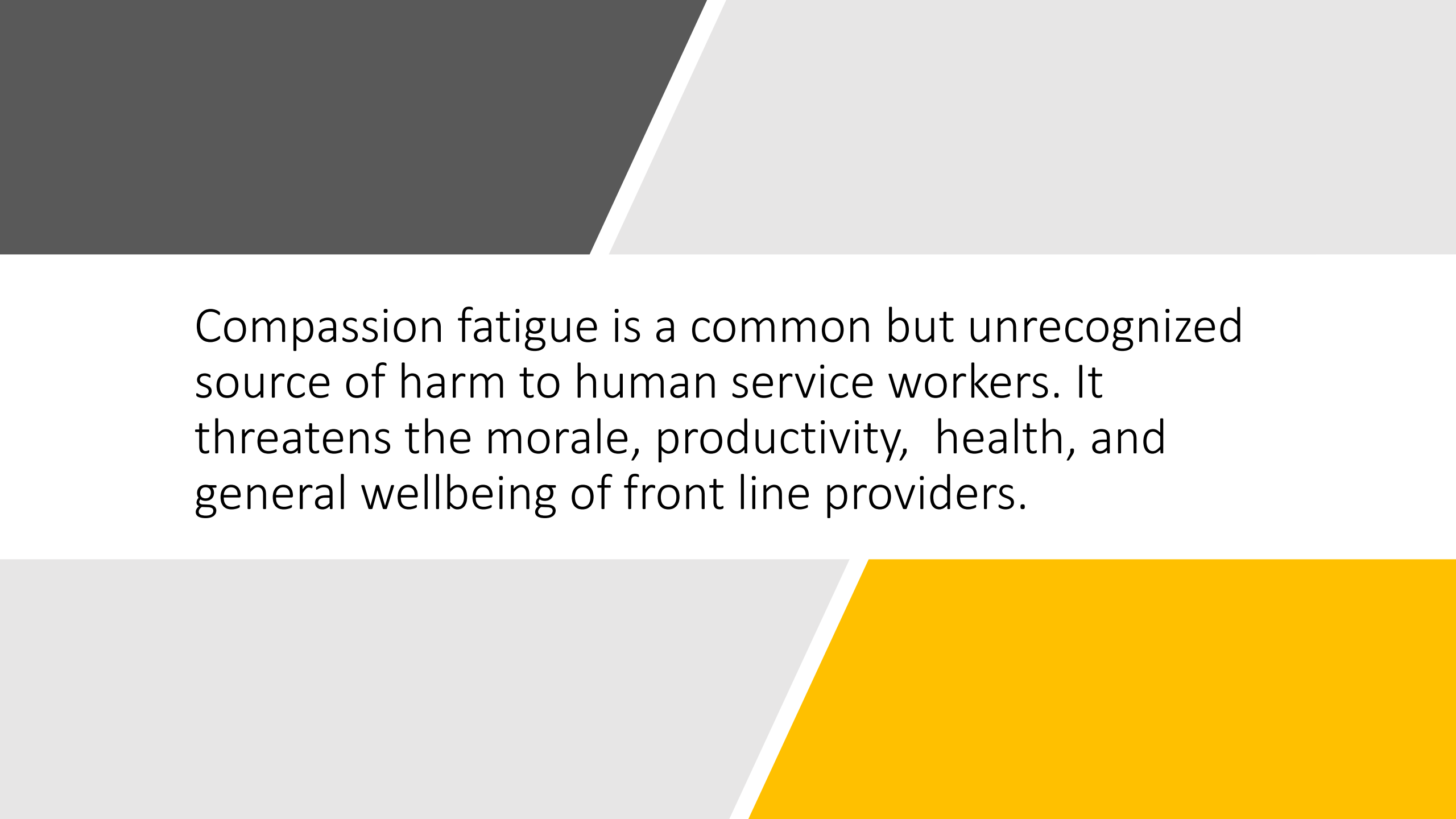
48% of US workforce experience high levels of personal distress that is directly associated to job duties.

40% of nurses report experiencing compassion fatigue

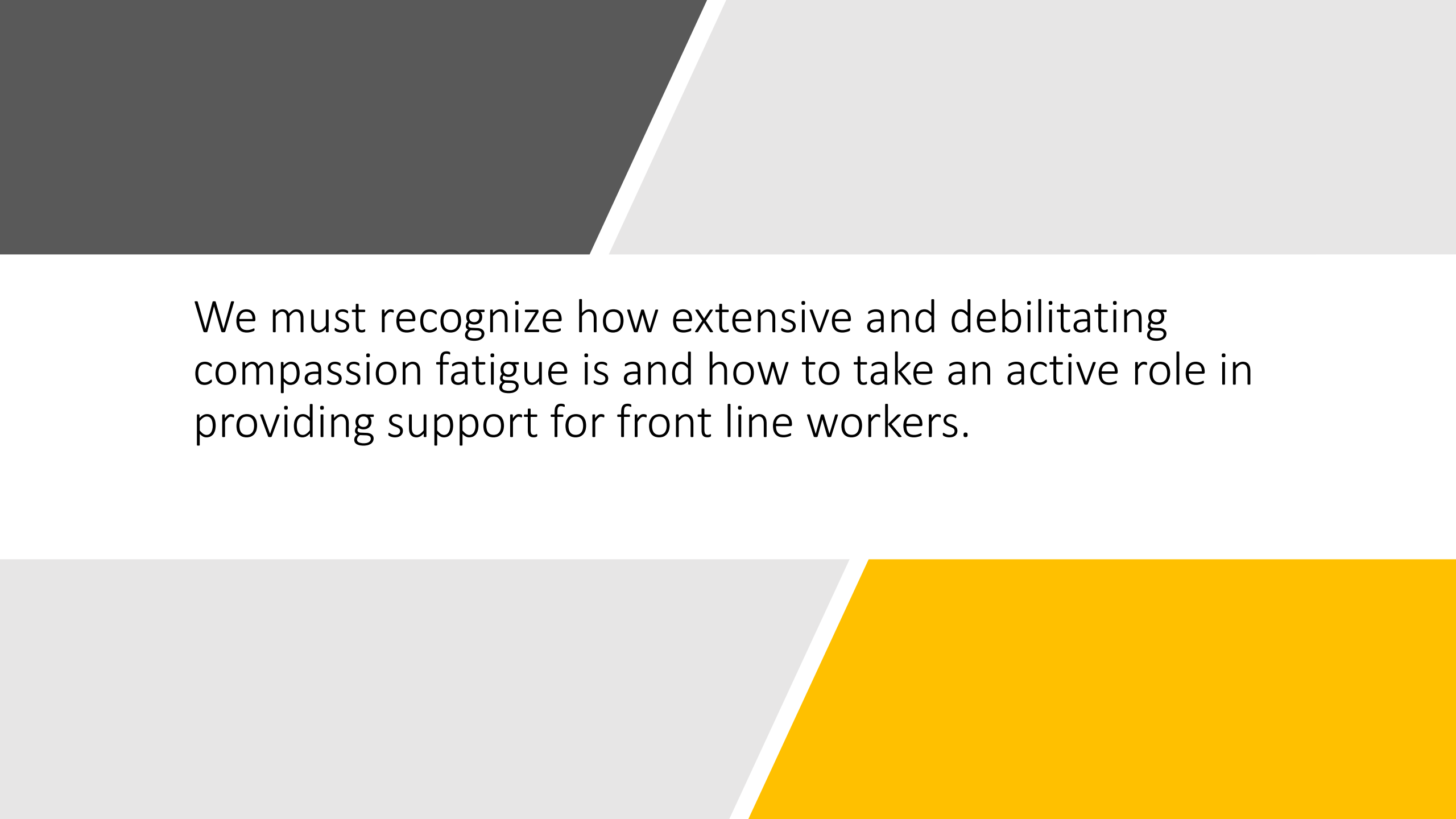
68% of people who experience compassion fatigue are full time employees

Effects of Adverse Childhood Experience on consumers and staff.


Workers carry their own trauma history



Compassion fatigue is a common but unrecognized source of harm to human service workers. It threatens the morale, productivity, health, and general wellbeing of front line providers.



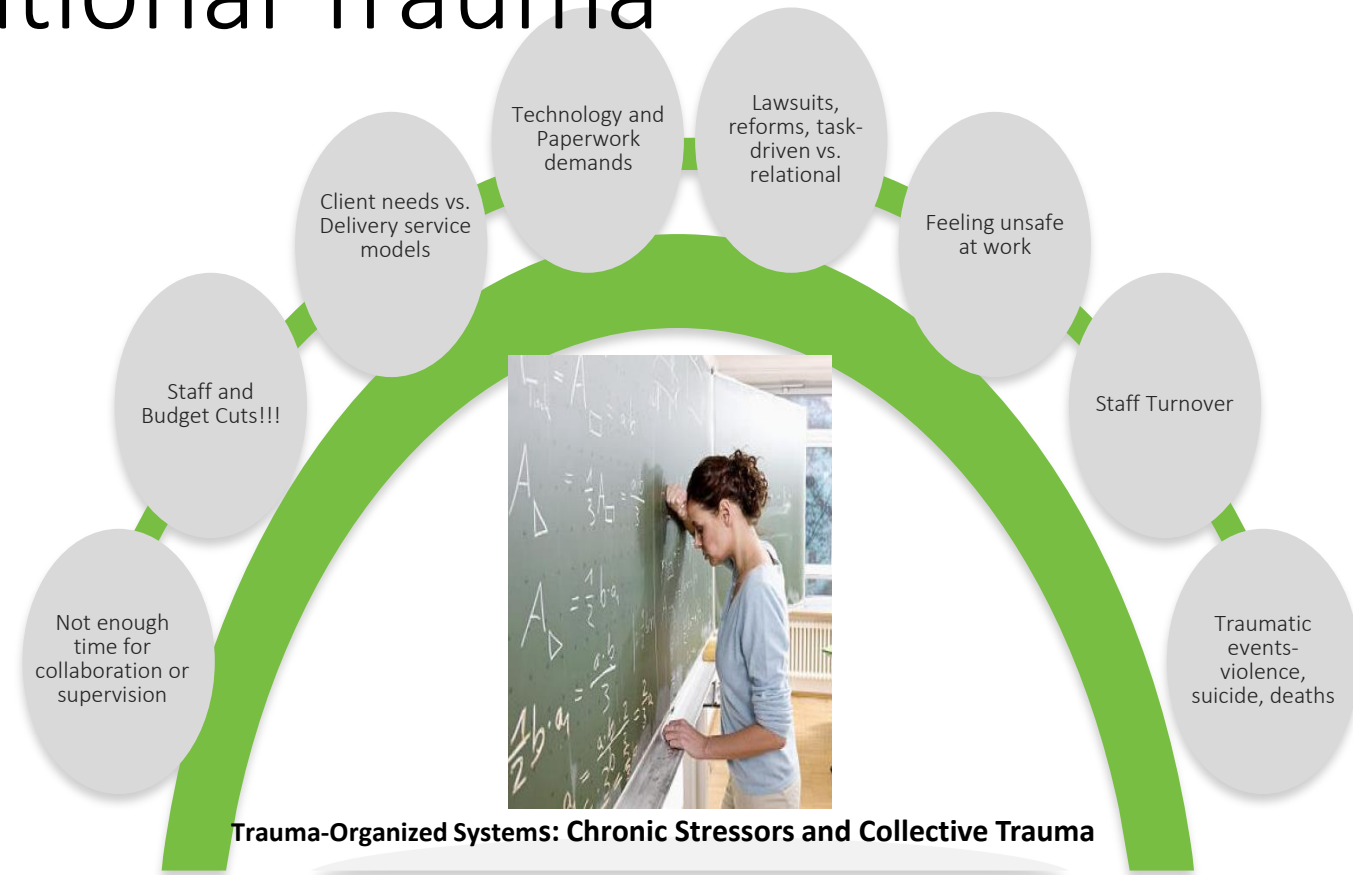
We must recognize how extensive and debilitating compassion fatigue is and how to take an active role in providing support for front line workers.



Through thoughtful and specific interventions,
compassion fatigue can be reduced.

Why a trauma informed
workplace is needed?

Organizational Trauma



Every day stressors that lead to Compassion Fatigue

The case numbers are growing, while the number of Case Workers is frozen.

Not able to help consumers with available resources

Watching consumers make fraudulent claims

Unrecognized behavioral effects of trauma

Conflicting values

Trauma Organized

- Reactive/ Organizational
- Hyperarousal-Crisis Driven
- Reliving/Retelling
- Fragmentation-Us vs Them
- Interpersonal Conflict/Silo
- Organization Disassociation/ Amnesia
- Avoiding—Numbing
- Authoritarian Leadership

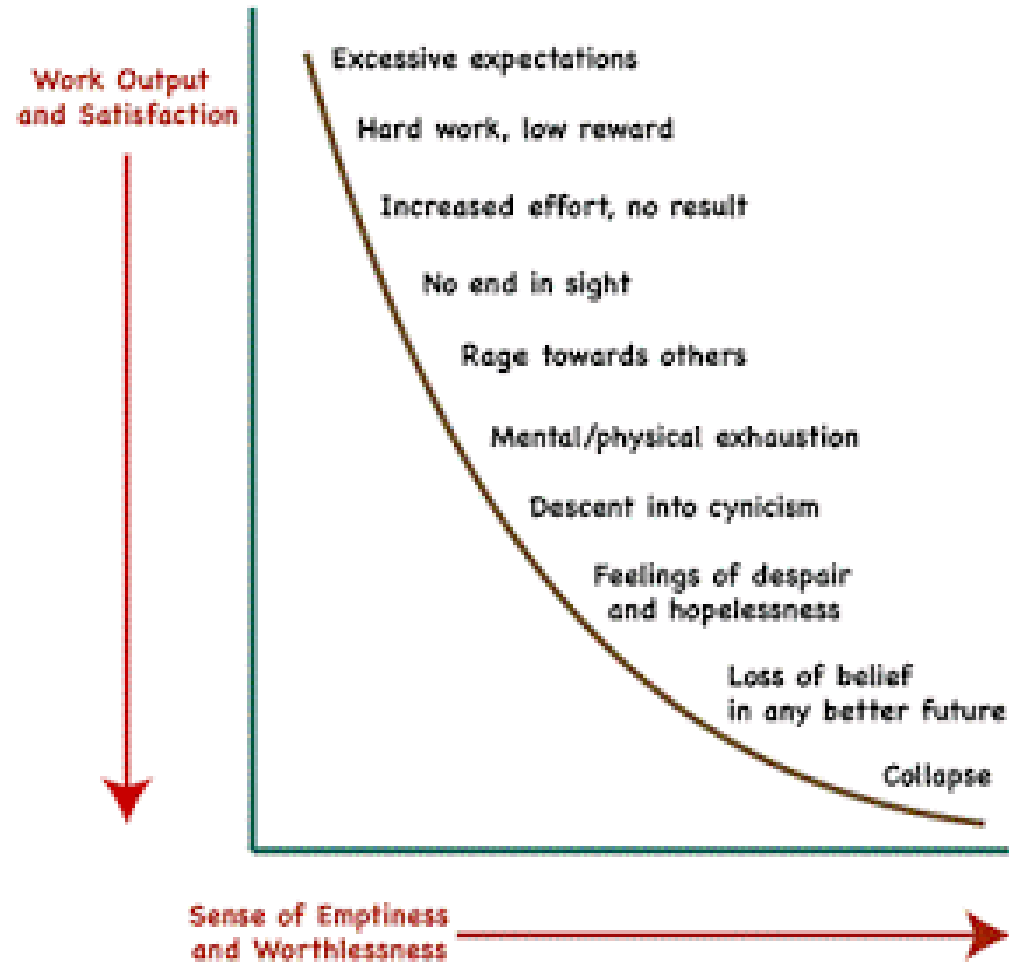




Staff and management often are unaware how stress, trauma, and compassion fatigue effects workplace productivity

- Insubordination
- Absenteeism
- Frequent illness
- Apathy
- Easily distracted
- Low productivity

THE BURNOUT CURVE



Are you suffering from
JOB BURN-OUT?
Here are 4 early warning signs:





Stress, Trauma, & Compassion Fatigue are Public Health Issues

- They are linked to 6 leading causes of death:
- Heart Disease
- Cancer
- Lung Disease
- Fatal Accidents
- Liver Disease
- Suicide



What organizations can
do to reduce
compassion fatigue.



Front line workers are our first responders.

Only 28% of people in helping profession have received some sort of specialized trauma training.

Staff and management can begin to recognize the signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue in self and others.

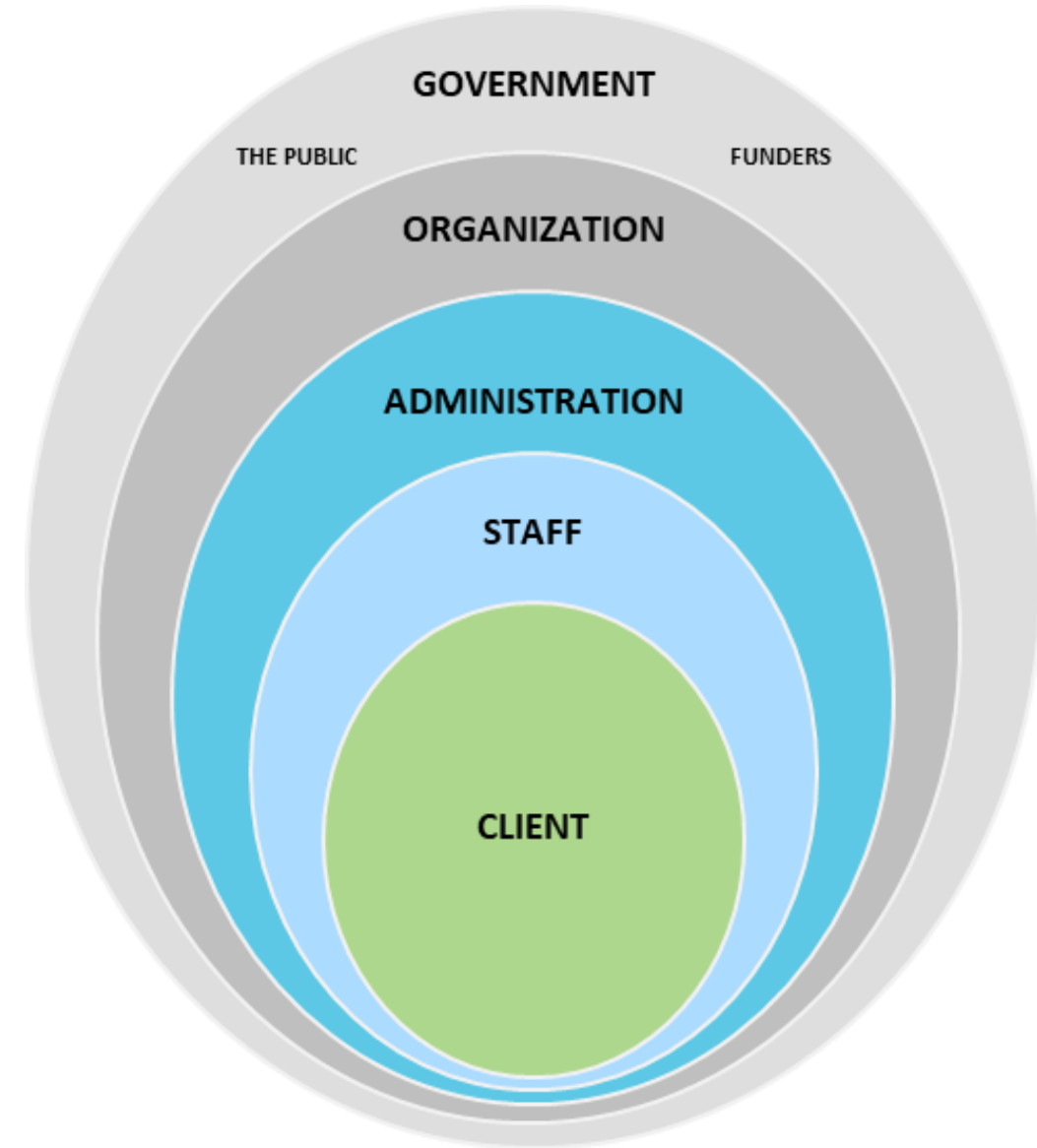
Notice suicide rates, employment turnover, burnout, and other disruptive symptoms are all related to the symptoms of compassion fatigue.

Notice the two most common reactions amongst workers who begin suffering from compassion fatigue are cynicism and emotional exhaustion.

Remember one in two Child Welfare Workers experience compassion fatigue symptoms that fall within the severe range.

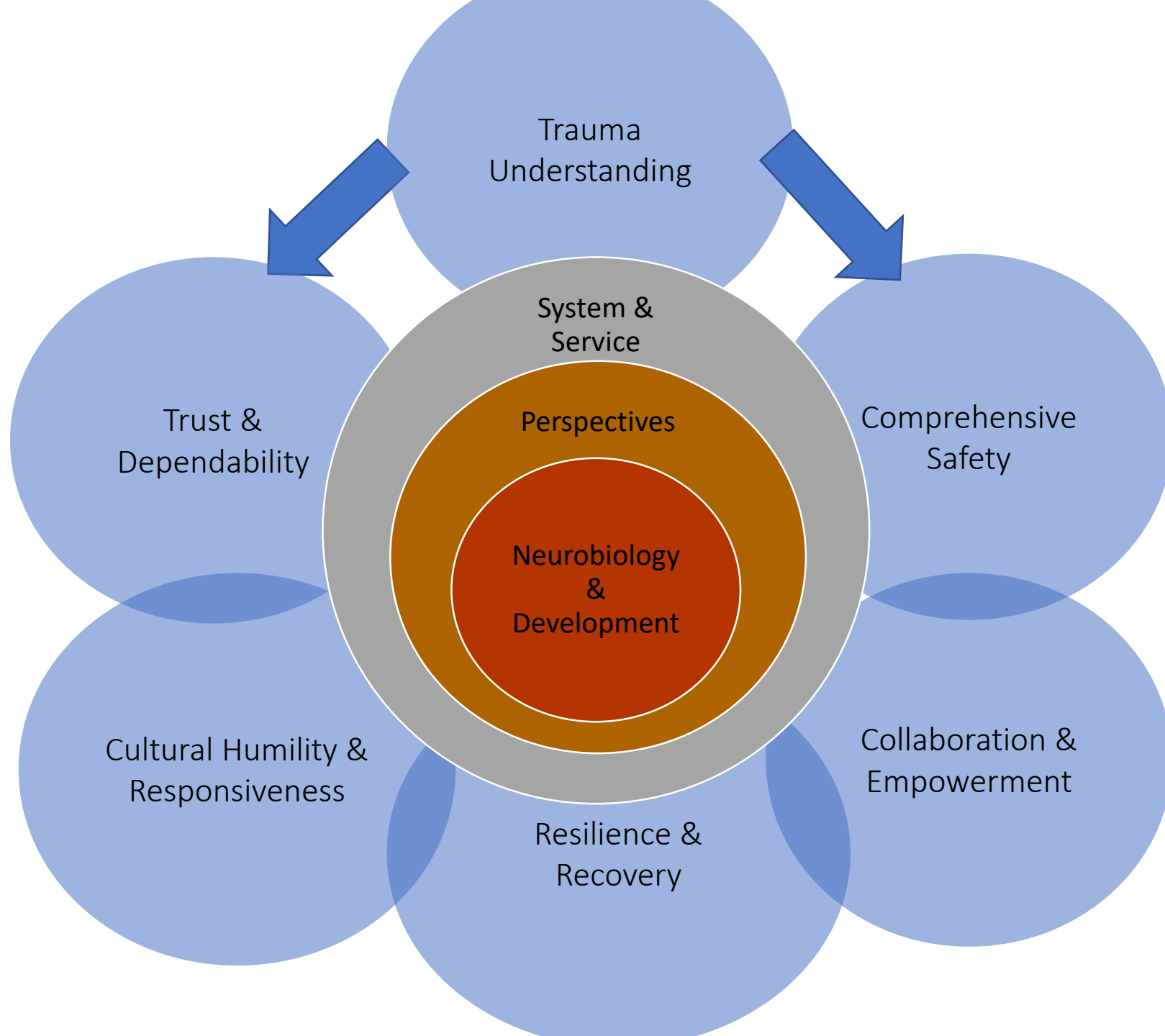
Create a trauma informed workplace

- Shared language
- Foundational understanding of trauma
- Understand the nature and impact of trauma
- Understanding racial disparities and insidious trauma

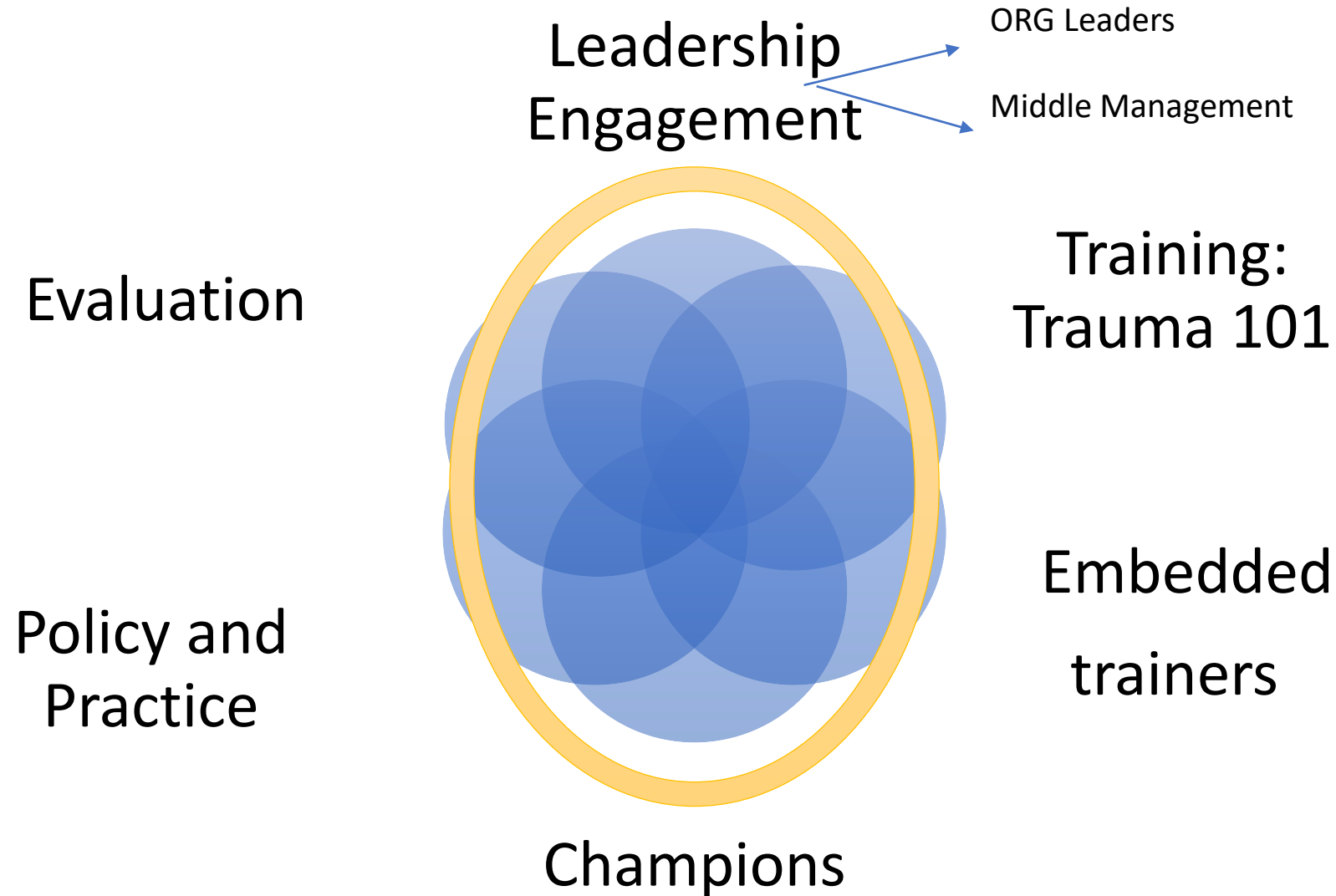




San Francisco Dept. of Public Health Model



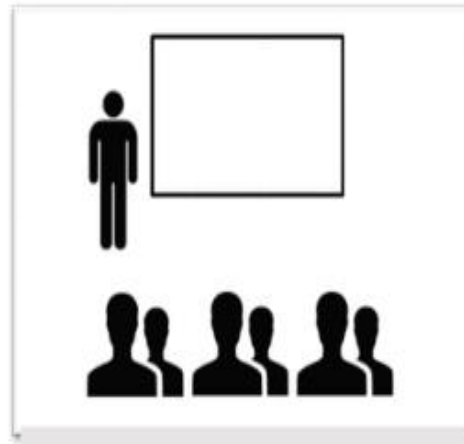
Trauma Informed System: Conceptual Framework



Build Trauma Informed, Educated Workforce

Train the Trainer

Harnessing Local Trauma Experts







Montefiore
University
Hospital Model
Bronx, N.Y.

Key components of program

- Leadership buy in
- Learning collaboratives
- Screening
- Critical Incident Management (CIM)



Learning collaboratives

Introducing trauma informed care—
understanding stress and trauma

Manifestations of trauma

Secondary traumatization

Reactions to trauma

Resilience, recovery, and
commitment to change

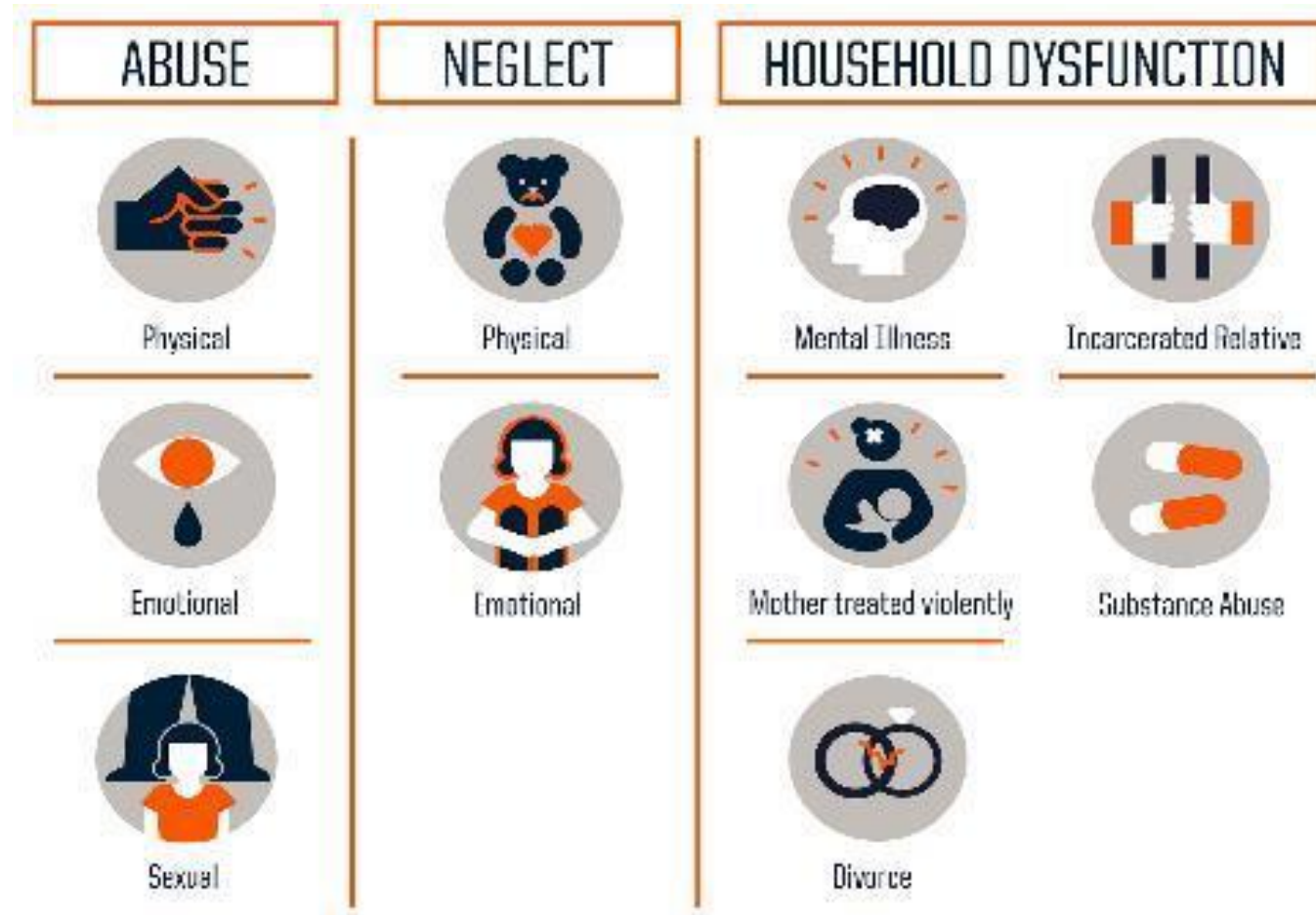
What's your ACEs Score?

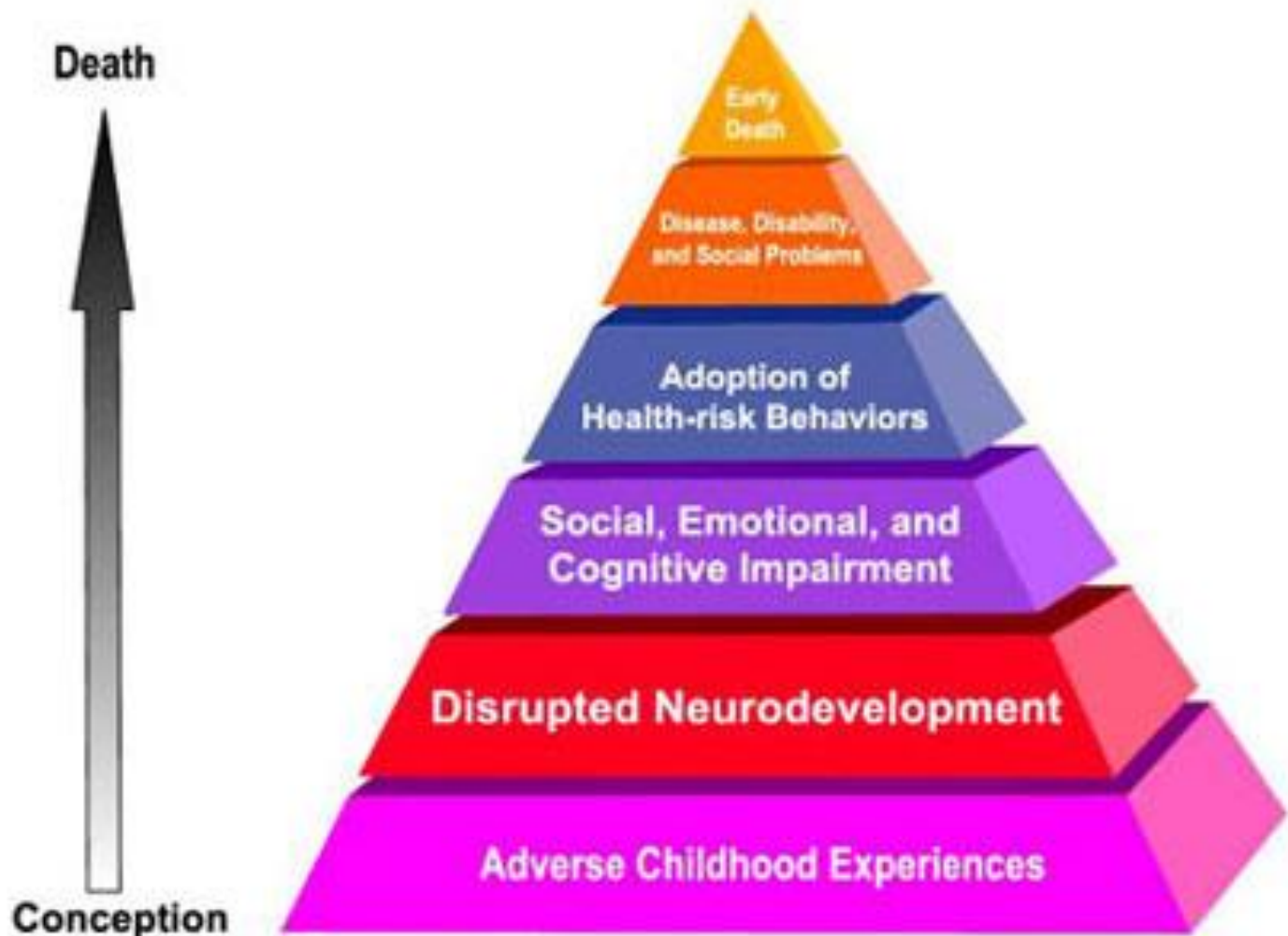
- It is not what is wrong with you; it's what happened to you?
- Its not what is wrong with this organization. It is what happened to this organization?



Trauma Aware
Leadership:

Adverse Childhood Experiences study is foundational for trainings.





Mechanisms by Which Adverse Childhood Experiences Influence Health and Well-being Throughout the Lifespan

Other traumas

Historical trauma

Micro-aggressions

Natural disasters

Community based trauma

Zip code

Allostatic load

Systems oriented trauma- Re-traumatization



The stories of the traumatic stress of refugees from war and civil persecution.

- Suffered from lack of food, clean water, & lack of shelter.
- Witnessed arrest, torture, & execution of community leaders.
- Sexual abuse and rape
- Physically harmed, beaten, causing head trauma
- Suffocation, strangulation, downing
- Night mares, intrusive memories, ever on guard



Critical Incident Management

- Exposure to traumatic events can cause heightened emotional state of crises which generates emotional turmoil.
- International Critical Incident Stress Foundation– Evidence based model
- Use when violent and unexpected death of an associate employed at the site
- A mass casualty event that the center responds to

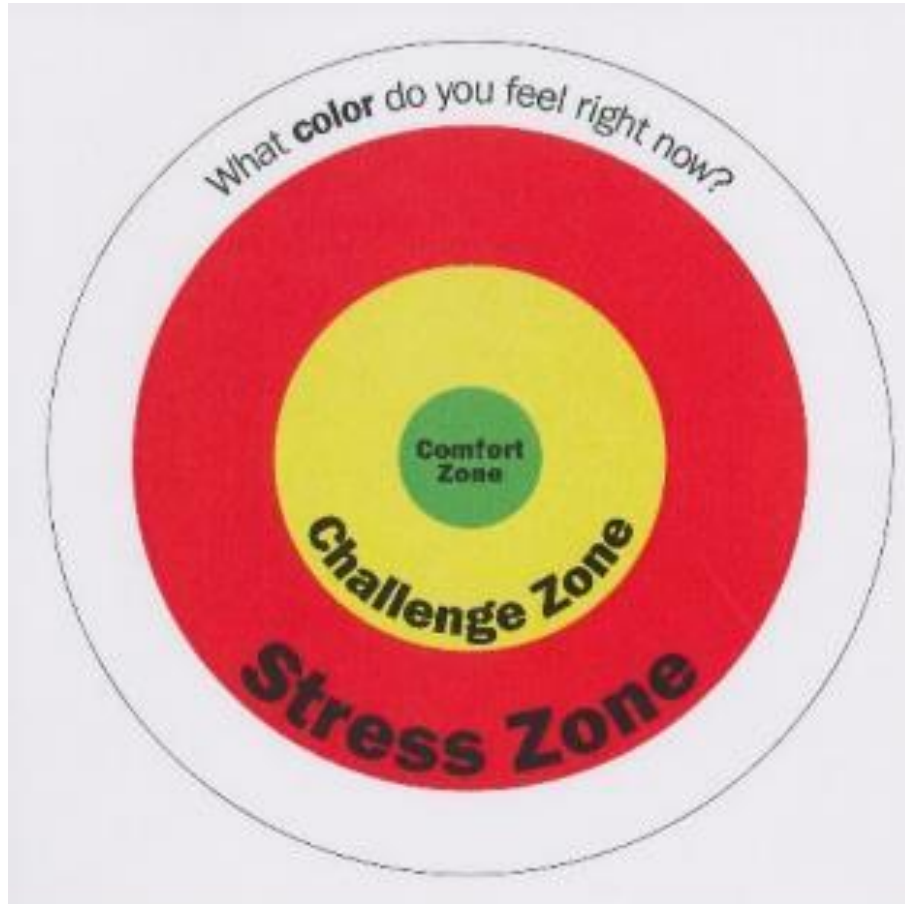




Supervision with trauma awareness.

- Reflective supervision
- Collaborative effort
- Feedback
- EAP is your best friend

Daily Stress Temperature Reading



South Sacramento Medical Center
Trauma Injury Prevention

Types of Stress

GREEN	YELLOW	RED
POSITIVE Brief episodes in sport, PE, and recreation or other leisure-time work.	TOLERABLE Serious, temporary stress responses, buffered by supportive relationships.	TOXIC Prolonged activation of stress response systems in the absence of protective relationships.

Source: American Psychological Association, 2002

How to Use The Color Wheel

This color wheel is used to help you to become more aware of your stress levels with staff patients. If you and your staff patient are in the **red zone**, you are in the **red zone** with a high level of concern, please take care of yourself first! You'll need to use some strategies that you've implemented to help you get it down or to make **yellow** levels of stress better so you can be effective helping others get better.

If a staff or volunteer seems out of sorts or seems to be struggling, use the color wheel as a guide on the other side to explain to you just what the level of stress is and how they can help themselves feel better.

Red is a danger zone - something that the staff patient or volunteer that he or she really cannot focus on anything else, and strategies will need to be found to help staff member get to a more secure stress and right away.

The yellow zone is a moderate level of stress, but will still require that the staff member receive some feedback and help.

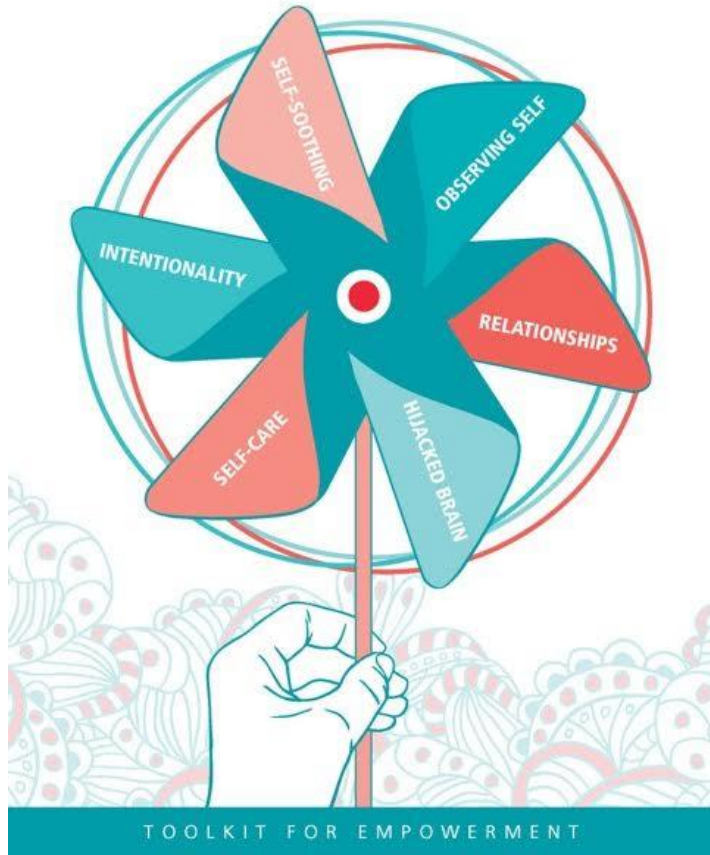
The green zone is a low level of stress and the staff member receives support and feels safe.

© 2010

What individuals can do
to reduce compassion
fatigue?

Mind Matters Pinwheel-Tools for Self Care

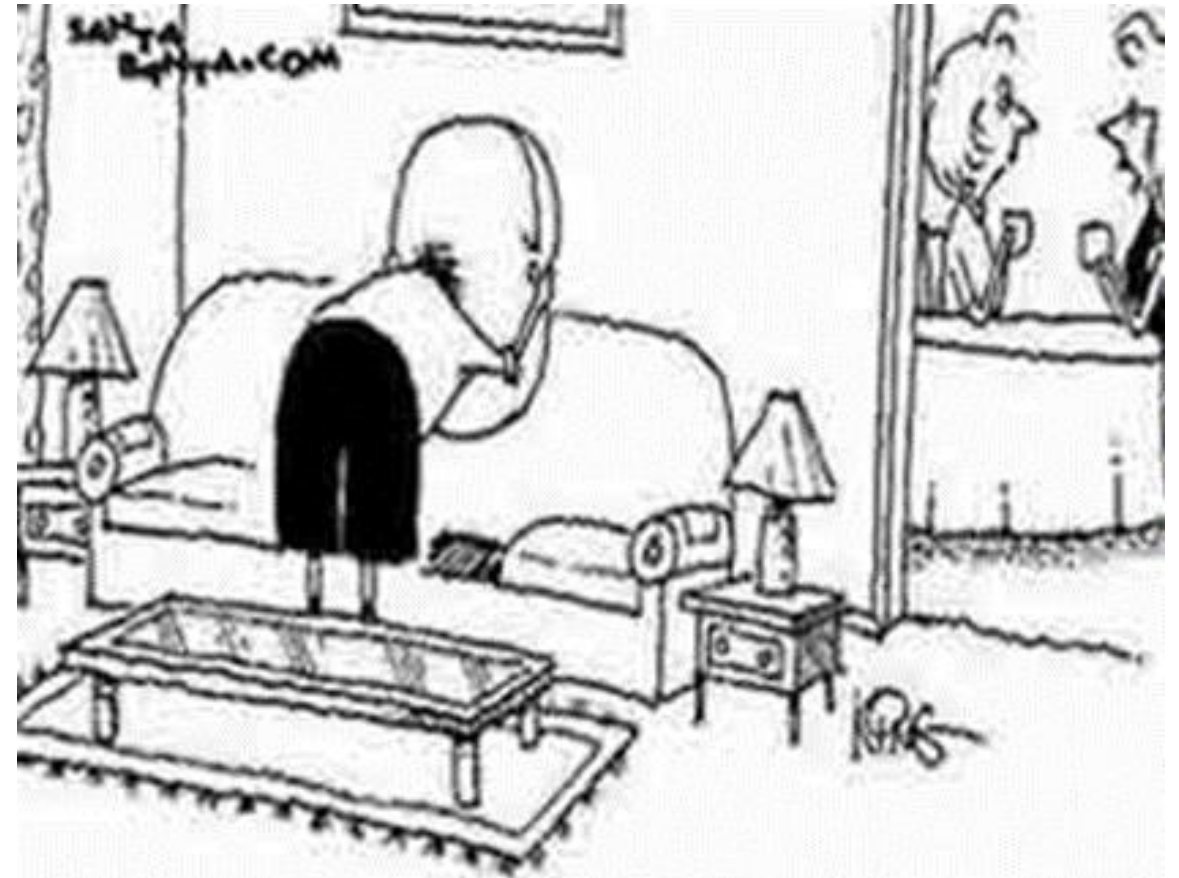
MIND MATTERS | OVERCOMING ADVERSITY AND BUILDING RESILIENCE



Self soothing—emotional regulation skills
Develop an observing self
Relationship Skills
Compassion for the hijacked brain
Self care
Live intentionally

San Francisco Public Health Dept. Method of Self Care

- Individual plan to integrate trauma informed principles into their daily life
- Goals provides input for staff training
- Trauma Informed Champion
- Reminders and Support for Change
- Follow up at one year



The doctor said he needed more activity. So
I hide his T.V. remote three times a week.

Montefiore University Method of Self Care

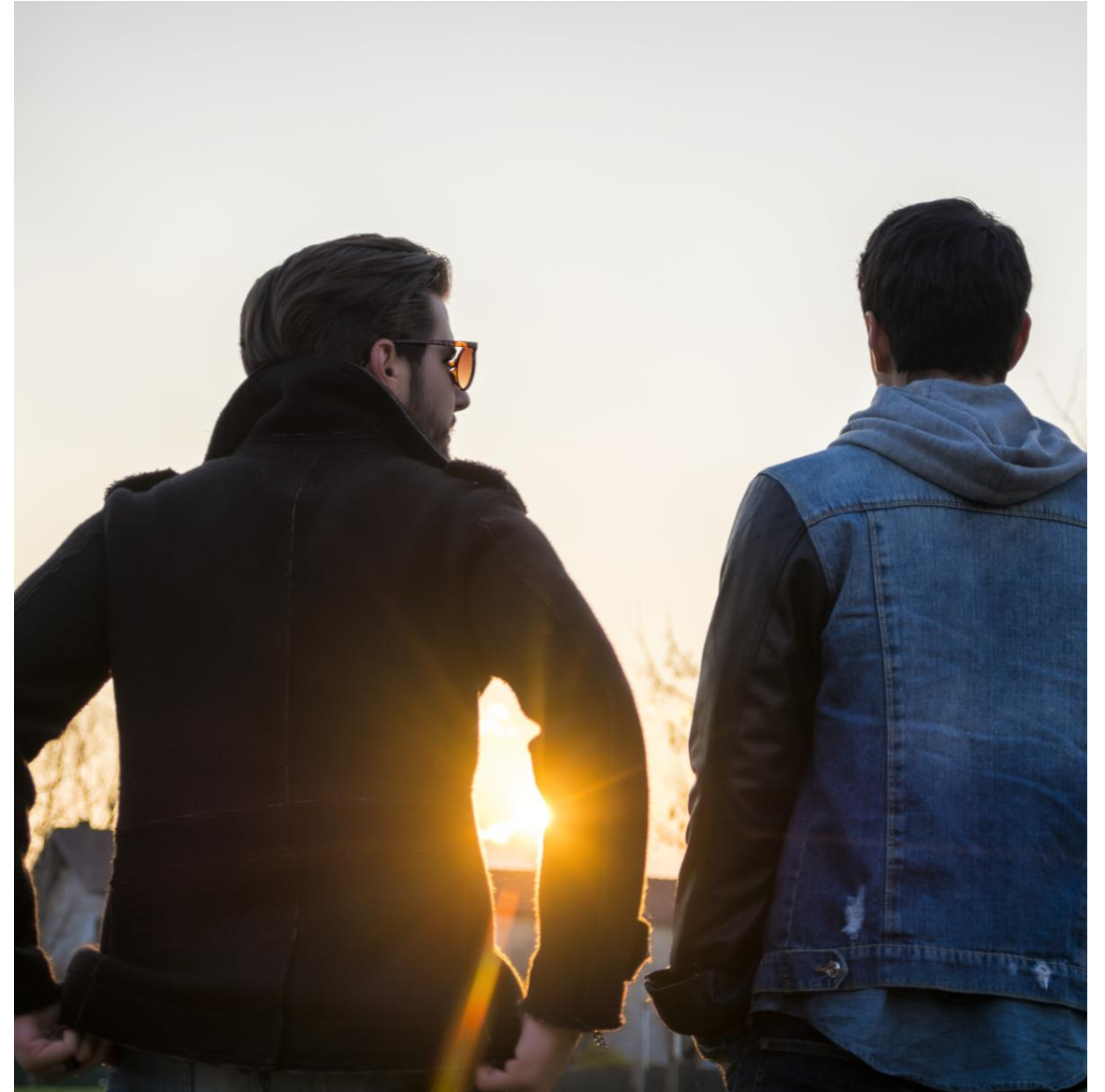
- 718-920-CALM
- Deep breathing
- Mindfulness
- Calm spaces
- Walking routes
- Buddy System
- EAP
- Debriefing



Front line workers need training in responding compassionately to the stories they hear.

PEARLS

Partnership:	“Let’s work together.”
Empathy:	“That sounds frustrating.”
Apology:	“I am sorry that happened.”
Respect	“You have gone through a lot.
Legitimization	“I understand why you’re upset”
Support	“Let’s see what we can do.”



“The Three Good Things “

- 14 Nights
- Write 3 good things that happened that day.

Label them with one of these positive emotions:

*Joy * Gratitude * Serenity * Interest * Hope
*Pride *Amusement *Inspiration *Awe



The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.

Naomi Rachel Remen





Reflect

- What inspired you to be in this field and do this work?
- What motivates you to continue?
- Develop a personal care/service philosophy. Write it down.

Compassion fatigue will always exist because it takes a lot of effort to care for people.

These careers must exist because help is needed every day.

Through it all, it is important to make sure each worker takes self-time everyday, to maintain their quality of work and continue being a provider in this helping service.



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Let's work together to
reduce compassion fatigue.

