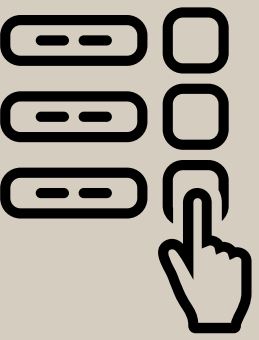


01

Welcome! Thank you for being here. We will begin promptly at 2pm CENTRAL U.S. time



We invite you to introduce yourselves in the chat by sharing your name, pronouns, position title, organization, the location you're Zooming from, one word to describe how you're currently feeling, and your favorite way to take care of yourself.



Today's Objectives



- ▶ **What is vicarious trauma and burnout, how do I know if I'm experiencing it, and how we can create space to tend to it?**
- ▶ **How can helpers draw boundaries and utilize the agency they have to prevent burnout and compassion fatigue?**
- ▶ **How do we support our own mental health while holding space for others?**

About the presenters

A little bit about us and our personal experiences with vicarious trauma & burnout



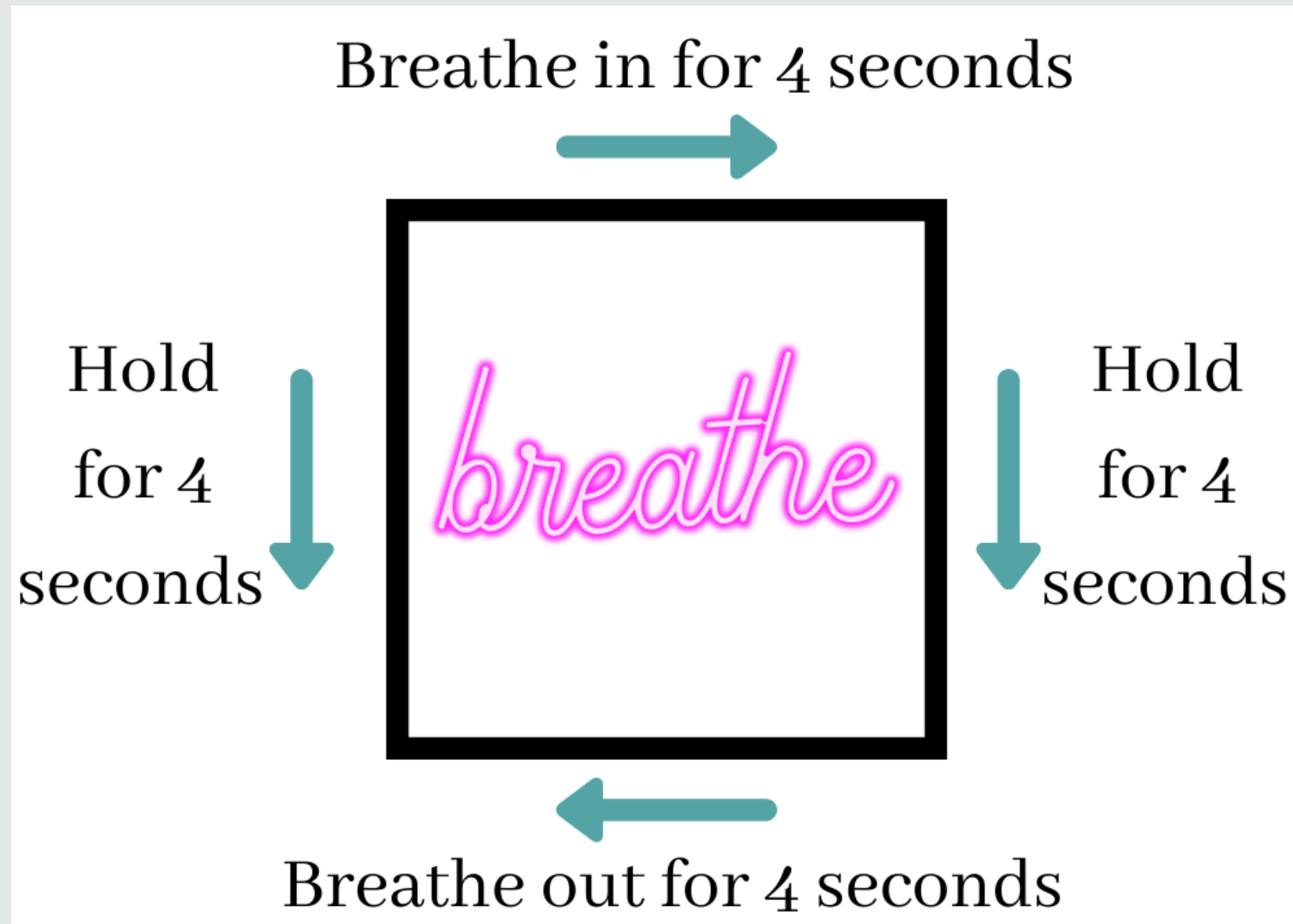
▀ **Meg Kelly, MA, LMHCA**
she/her

**Psychotherapist in
Private Practice
NE Indiana**

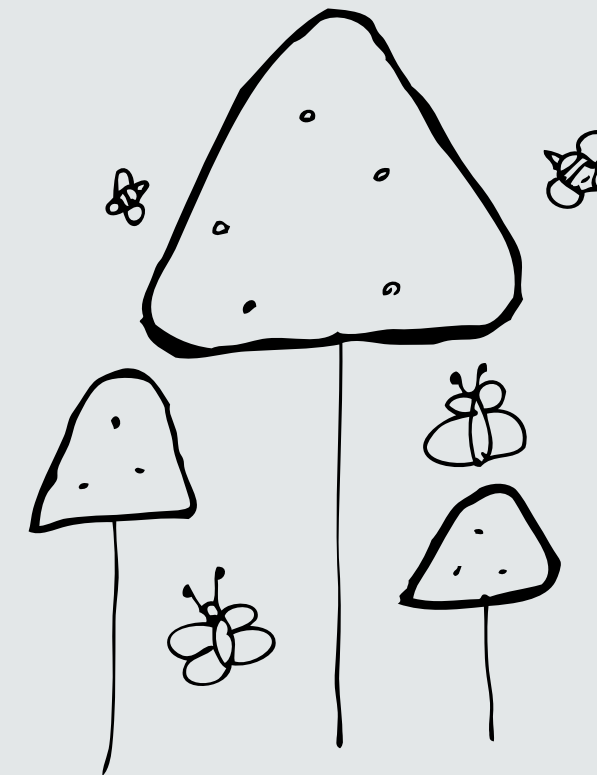


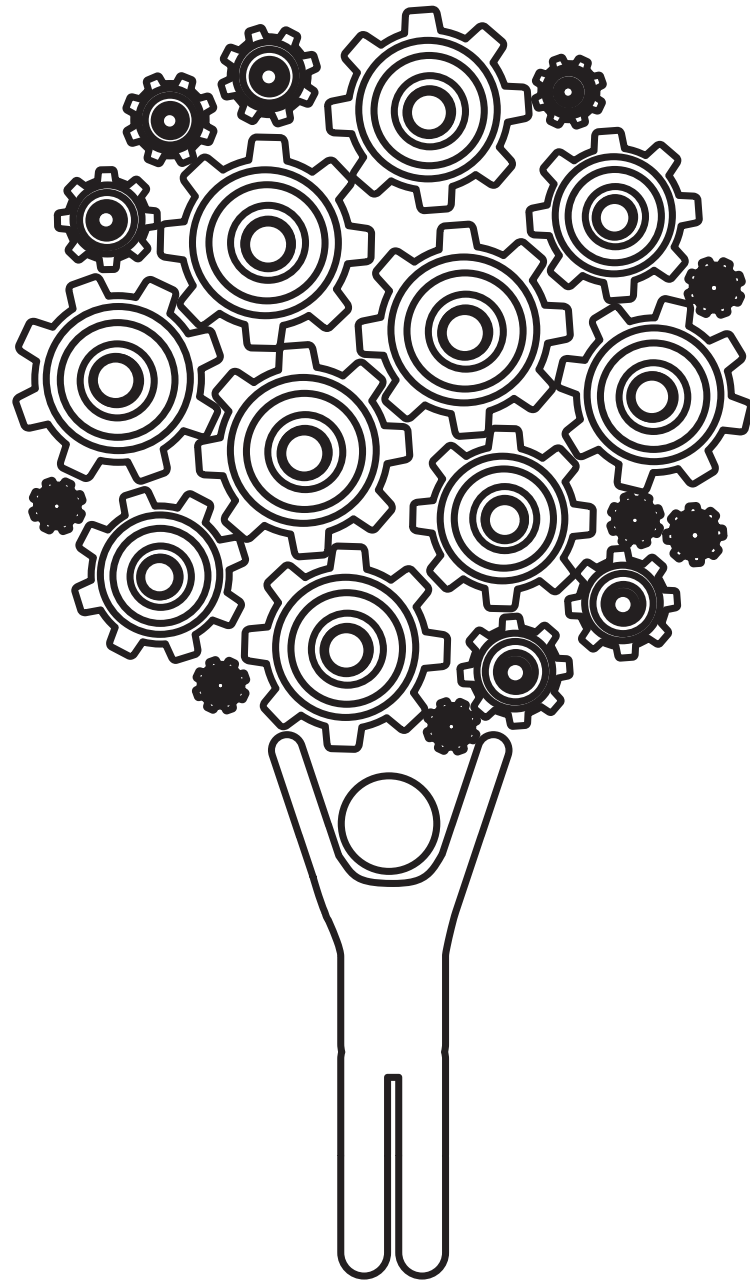
▀ **Brenisen Wheeler**
she/her

**Education and Outreach
Coordinator, Women's
Advocates**



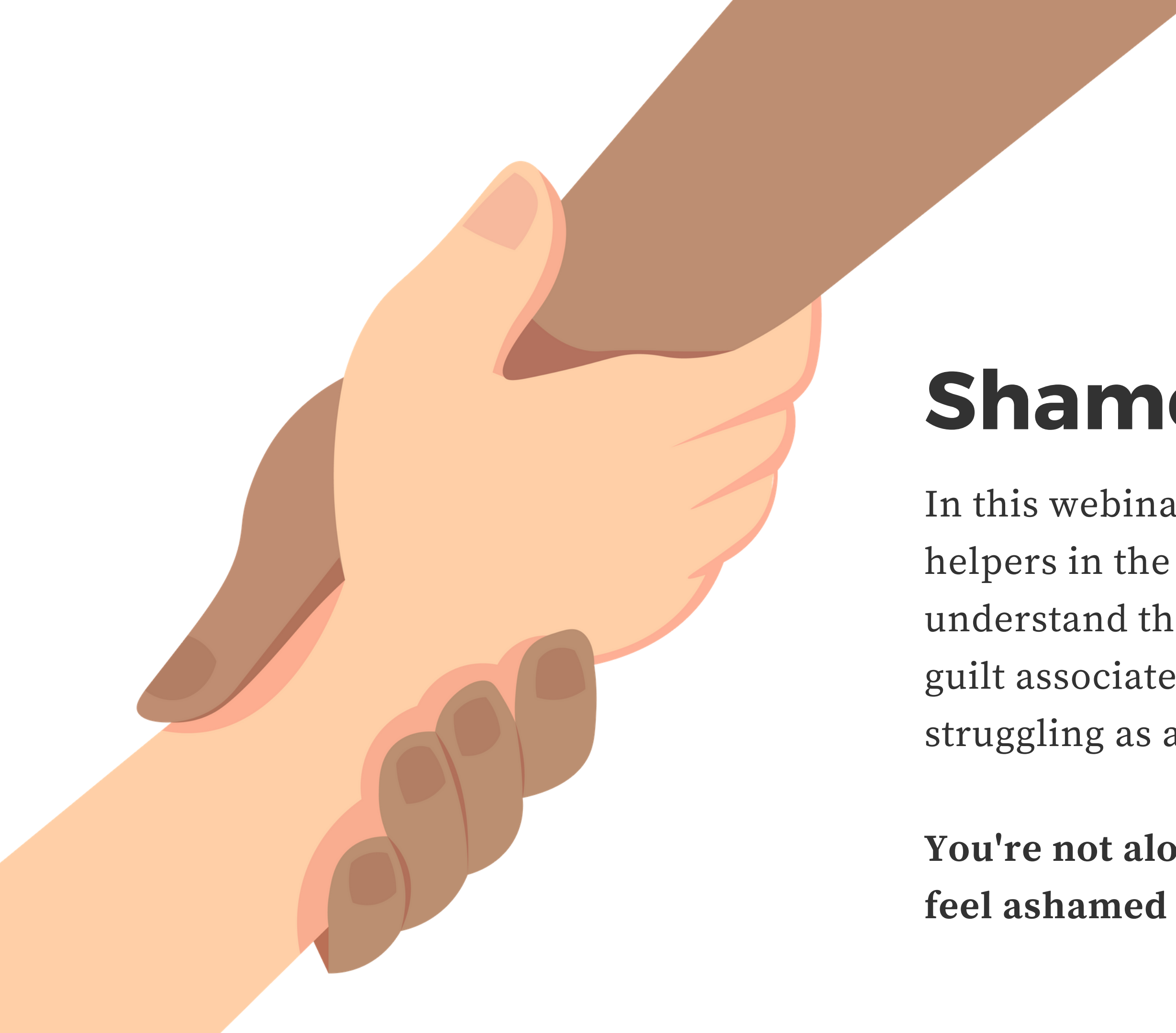
Grounding Activity.





***Helper**

In this webinar, we are using "helper" as an umbrella term to describe all the different ways that we hold others. A helper may be paid, unpaid, or both.



Shame-Free Zone

In this webinar, we hold our fellow helpers in the highest regard and understand that there is often shame or guilt associated with admitting you're struggling as a helper.

You're not alone and there is nothing to feel ashamed of for needing support!



**Let's make a word
cloud:
In what ways are
we helpers?**





Write in the chat:
How would you define
vicarious trauma/compassion
fatigue?

Compassion Fatigue (CF)

"Also called “**vicarious traumatization**” or secondary traumatization (Figley, 1995). The emotional residue or strain of exposure to working with those suffering from the consequences of traumatic events. **It differs from burn-out, but can co-exist.** Compassion Fatigue can occur due to exposure on one case or can be due to a “cumulative” level of trauma."

Source: American Institute of Stress

Symptoms of Compassion Fatigue (CF)

- Affects many dimensions of your well-being
- Nervous system arousal (Sleep disturbance)
- Emotional intensity increases
- Cognitive ability decreases
- Behavior and judgment impaired
- Isolation and loss of morale
- Depression and PTSD (potentiate)
- Loss of self-worth and emotional modulation
- Identity, worldview, and spirituality impacted
- Beliefs and psychological needs-safety, trust, esteem, intimacy, and control
- Loss of hope and meaning=existential despair
- Anger toward perpetrators or causal events

Source: American Institute of Stress

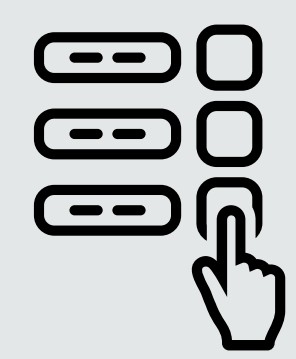
Burnout

"Cumulative process marked by emotional exhaustion and withdrawal associated with increased workload and institutional stress, NOT trauma-related."

The Stages of Burnout have been identified as:

- enthusiasm
- stagnation
- frustration
- apathy

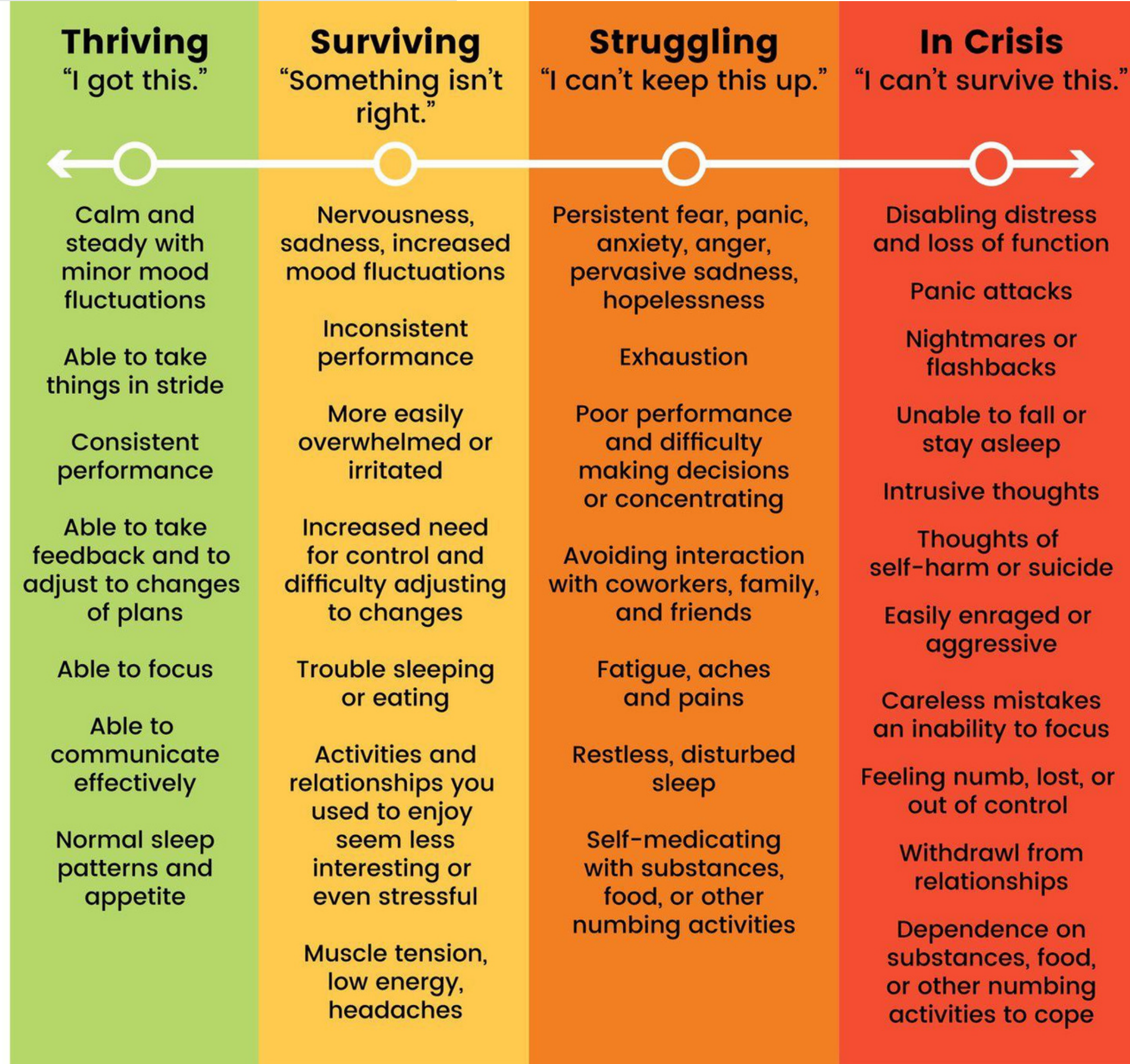
Source: American Institute of Stress



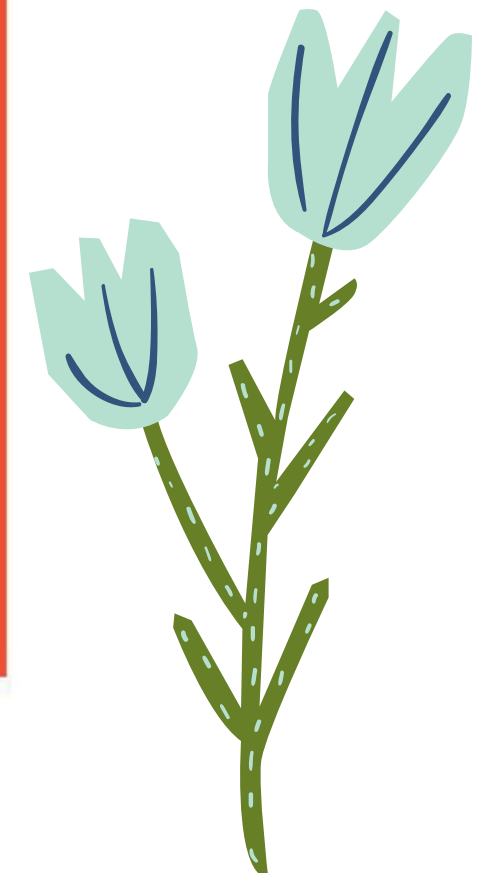
Trauma stewardship

"bearing witness to
trauma without
surrendering [our]
ability to live fully"

- Laura van
Dernoot Lipsky



Adapted from: Watson, P., Gist, R., Taylor, V. Evlander, E., Leto, F., Martin, R., Vaught, D., Nash, W.P., Westphal, R., & Litz, B. (2013). Stress First Aid for Firefighters and Emergency Services Personnel. National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.



Possible Signs of Burnout, Impairment or Compassion Fatigue



- Resentment or annoyance toward those who need your help, your colleagues, or the profession at large
- Palpable relief when someone cancels or doesn't show up
- Conversations with colleagues becoming increasingly negative, pessimistic, or echo-chambery
- Preoccupation with, or persistent anxiety about, your work, even (or especially) when you're not there
- Chronic or recurrent illnesses, pain, low energy (fatigue), that have no medical explanation
- "Us versus them" mentality
- Engaging in addictive or numbing behaviors to avoid thinking about or dealing with thoughts & emotions



Possible Signs of Burnout, Impairment or Compassion Fatigue

- ▶ Viewing your loved ones, friends, or community outside of helping as an annoyance or distraction
- ▶ Rumination, depressed mood, loss of interest, irritability, overwhelm, hypervigilance (being "on alert")
- ▶ Avoiding helping at all costs, or alternatively, helping more and more (being a "workaholic")
- ▶ When working directly with those who need help, feeling "zoned out" or "not with it," or even numb to the contents of discussion (dissociation)
- ▶ Daydreaming about quitting, changing professions, or "running away" from it all
- ▶ Your own signs & symptoms will be unique to you...

Activity:



Write down your own
personal indicators that
you may be experiencing
burnout and/or
compassion fatigue



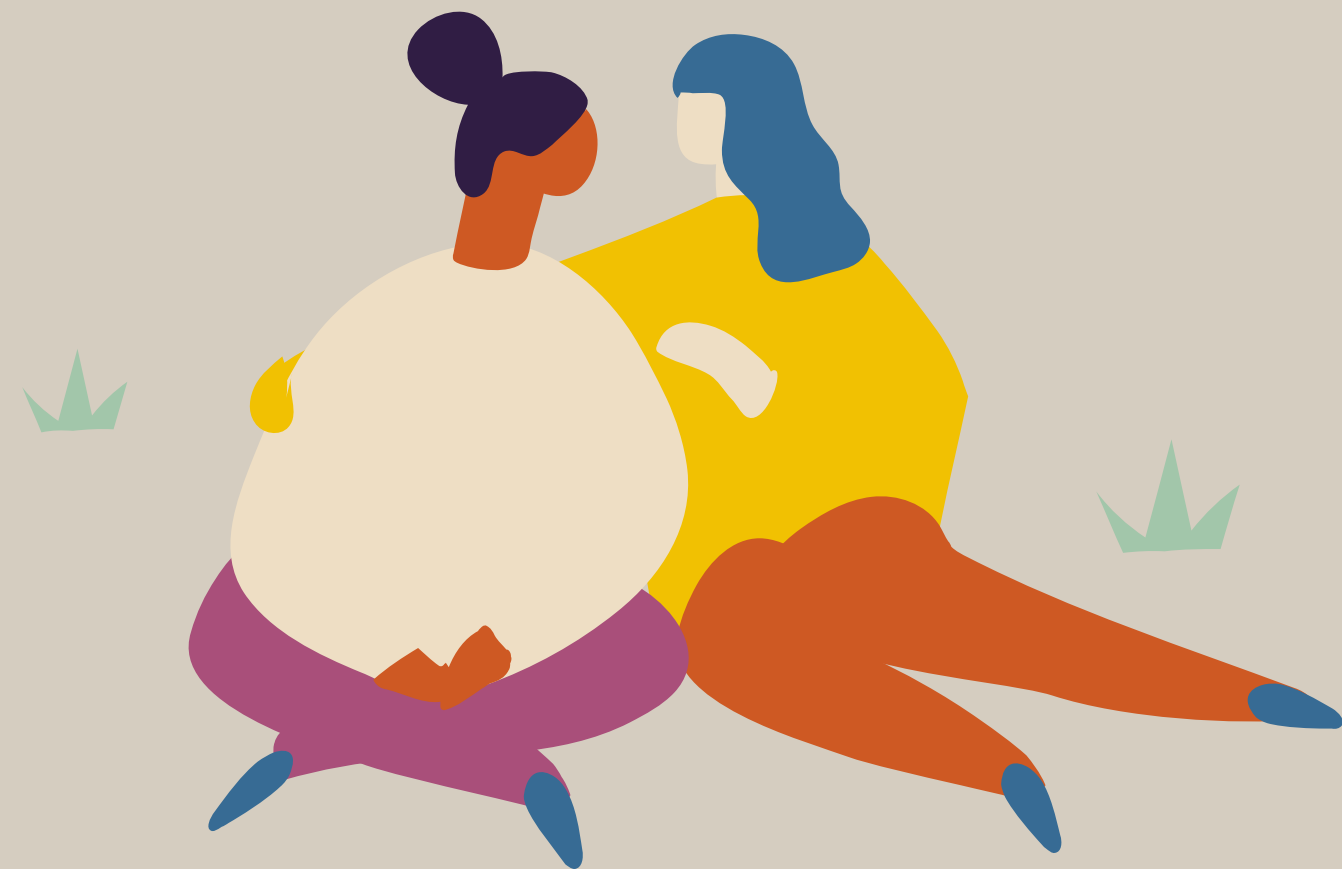
Consider the following...

- ▶ What thoughts do you have about yourself, those you serve, or your role as a helper?
- ▶ What physiological sensations or symptoms do you experience while helping, or thinking about it?
- ▶ What concerns have others (colleagues, supervisors, loved ones) brought to you?
- ▶ What emotions do you experience when you think about your work?



Write in the chat:

- What expectations do you have of yourself as a helper?
- What beliefs do you hold about what it means to be a helper?
- What do you say to the people you help that you don't apply to yourself?



Extending Non- Judgment Toward Ourselves as Helpers



Dismantling harmful thoughts and beliefs about our needs as helpers

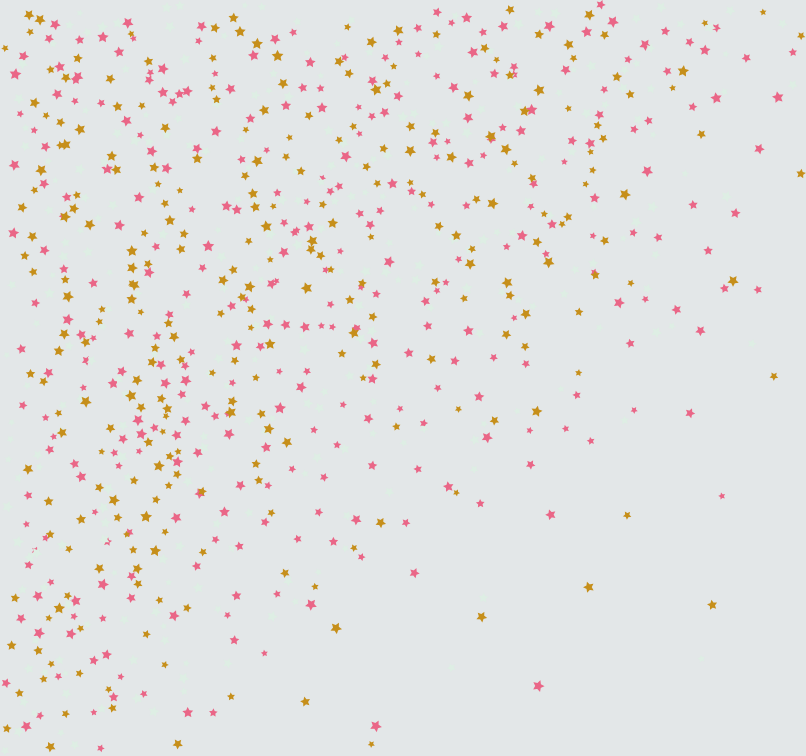


- ▶ **Thought:** The needs of others take priority over my own
- ▶ **Thought:** If I don't do it, nobody will
- ▶ **Belief:** Self care is selfish when so many are in need
- ▶ **Belief:** Setting boundaries with others means I am rude or uncaring
- ▶ **Belief:** Feeling this way means I'm doing something wrong or I'm not trying hard enough

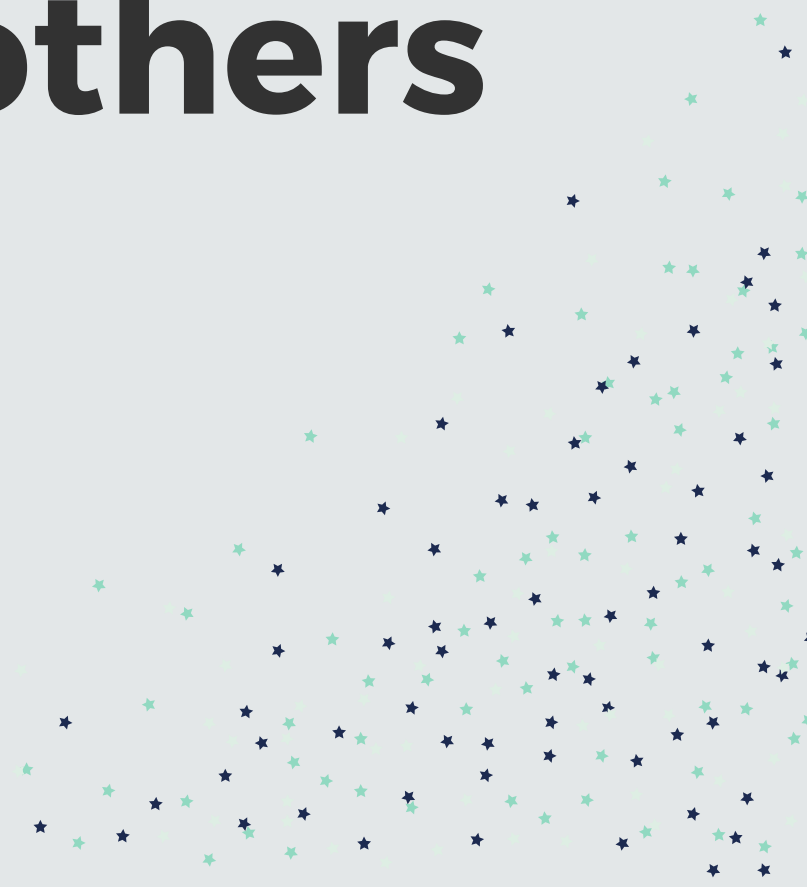
Dismantling harmful thoughts and beliefs about our needs as helpers



- ▶ **You are valuable and you matter just as much as those you help**
- ▶ **You, alone, should not be held to account for "doing it all"**
- ▶ **You are your own most valuable & precious tool as a helper**
- ▶ **Boundaries allow you to honor your own integrity, and to model that for those you serve**
- ▶ **Even the most experienced and longest-serving helpers are not immune to the pain & trauma of the world**

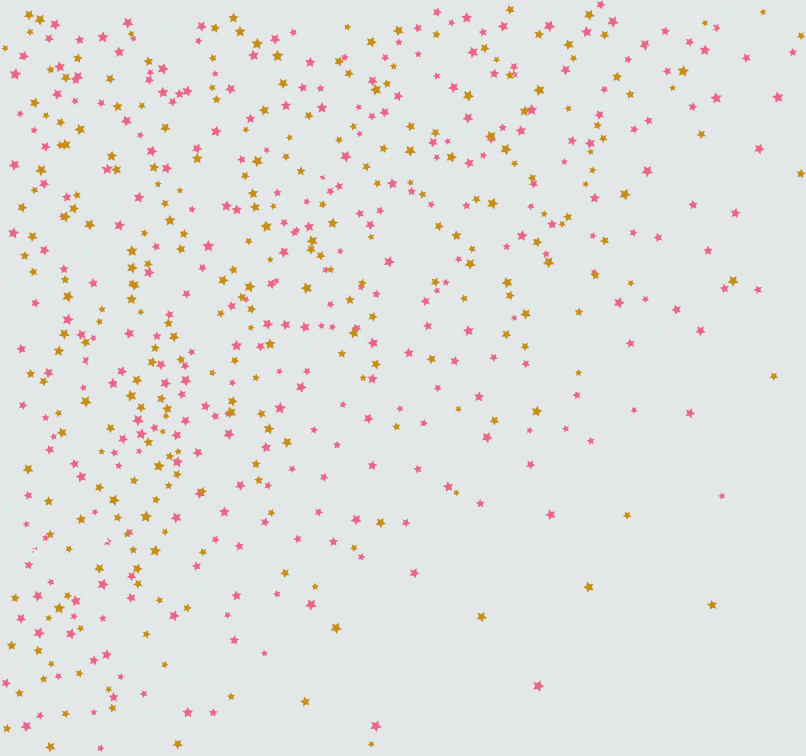


Creating space to tend to the impacts of helping others

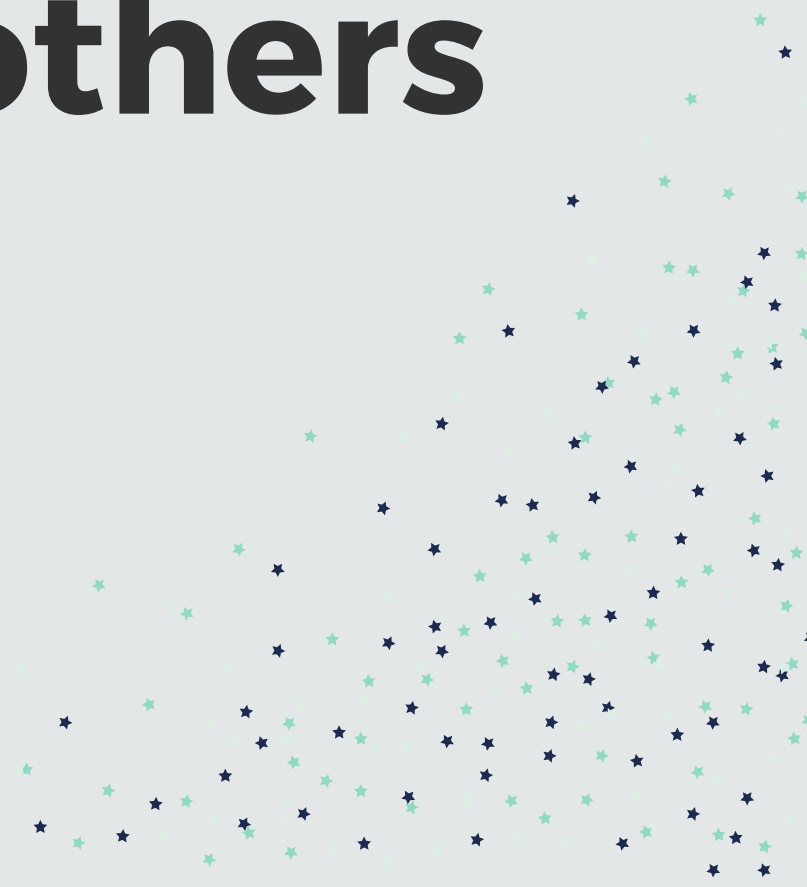


- Deeply evaluate your personal beliefs about what it means to be a helper - are there beliefs that contribute to burnout?
- Find activities, hobbies, & communities that are not related to your role—and make time!
- Create transitional routines between helping and the rest of your life
- Intentionally add space to your schedule, esp. if "finding the time" is difficult—even if it's only 10 minutes a day



A cluster of small, multi-colored stars (pink, yellow, and orange) in the top left corner of the slide.

Creating space to tend to the impacts of helping others

A cluster of small, multi-colored stars (teal, blue, and green) in the bottom right corner of the slide.

- **Reconnect with your physical self in ways that feel safe and soothing—breathing, meditation, movement**
- **Practice setting & respecting boundaries in ways that are less "risky" — and build up to the bigger, riskier boundaries**
- **Identify a safe person or colleague for accountability & support**
- **If your symptoms are severe and/or impacting your ability to work in an ethical manner, seek professional support**

Awareness of our personal agency



Non-denominational Serenity
Prayer "...grant me the **Serenity** to
accept the things I cannot change,
the **Courage** to change the things I
can, and the Wisdom to know the
difference, grant me **Patience** with
the changes that take time,
Appreciation of all that I have,
Tolerance of those with different
struggles and the **Strength** to get
up and try again, One Day at a
Time"

- ▶ Recognize you have a choice in your profession & place of work
- ▶ Use this privilege as an opportunity to model agency and integrity for those you serve
- ▶ Use your agency to define what your personal & professional boundaries need to look like, to protect yourself & those you serve

Utilizing our personal agency

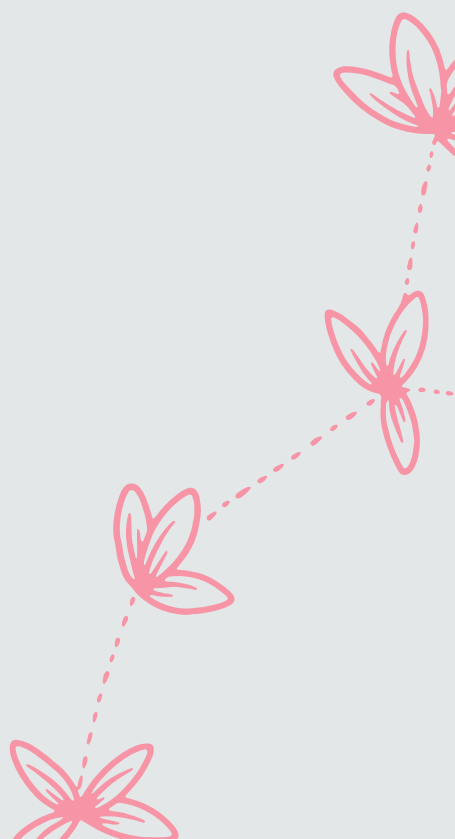


Boundaries + Burnout Prevention



- Be honest about what your current boundaries look like. Do you answer your phone after hours, even if you're not on-call? Do you schedule sessions over your lunch hour? Do you take on work you know you can't reasonably complete unless you work overtime? Do you work during family time? Why do you do this?
- Take time to address & process the underlying belief systems and core values that allow you & others to disrespect your boundaries as a helper
- Listen to the messages your mind and body are sending you when a boundary is crossed—ignoring it won't just make it go away!

[Putting Boundaries Into Action Webinar Link](#)





Supporting your own mental health

- **You can & deserve to work on your own healing and growth, even as you join others on their healing journey**
- **There is no shame in seeking help from a professional who is trained to assist with burnout- or trauma-related responses**
- **Addressing CF & burnout is imperative for ethical helping. Impairment, numbing, and illness put ourselves & others at risk for harm**
- **Listen to the messages your mind and body are sending you—ignoring the signs and symptoms of CF or burnout won't just make it go away!**

Building Support Into the Workplace



Actions from management speak louder than words

Create safe environments for your helpers to express difficulty, frustrations, or fears—without shame, guilt, or fear of repercussion

Create intentional routines of debriefing for helpers, even if only for 10 minutes at the end of the day/shift

Use your position of privilege/power within the organization to advocate for systemic changes that direct funds and resources to your helpers

Respect their time away from work!

Building Support Into the Workplace



Take a deep and honest look at the ways in which your organization may take advantage of newer / less experienced / marginalized workers and their desire to help

Evaluate the messages leadership sends about being a helper at your organization - is it more important to provide deep, empathetic help, or to meet productivity expectations? How can you strike a balance?

Build a workplace culture that places **equal value** on the individual and organizational responsibilities of managing burnout and compassion fatigue

Building Support Into the Workplace



Model professional boundary-setting for your helpers and encourage growth in this area as much as any other aspect of their work

Challenge the status quo - if it's just "a well known fact" that your organization/industry has high turnover because "it's not for everyone," step back and evaluate what role the system/organization plays in this dynamic; be prepared for feedback that is hard to hear

Honor and uphold the humanity of your helpers — they're amazing folks who deserve the best, so that they can do their best in **and** outside of their work!

Reflection: What's Next?

Creating a plan to start filling your cup





Stress Resilience Components

[Source: Bessel A. van der Kolk]



- ▶ **A sense of personal control:**
believing in your own capacity to influence the course of your life
- ▶ **Pursuit of personally meaningful tasks:** present, engaged and active during challenging times
- ▶ **Healthy lifestyle choices:**
nutrition, exercise, relaxation
- ▶ **Social Support:** relationships that can serve as a 'buffer in dealing with difficult situations'



Apply it: Filling Up My Cup Plan

- ▶ **What will you do to better understand your own signs & symptoms of burnout/CF? Make a list of "warning signs" or signals**
- ▶ **What steps will you take to address your most immediate needs?**
- ▶ **If you're not currently burnt out or experiencing CF, what can you do to plan to help yourself in the future?**





Apply it: Filling My Cup Up Plan

- ▶ **What routines, boundaries, or actions can you add to your life to support your own well-being?**
- ▶ **Who is a trusted person or community you can go to when you need extra support?**
- ▶ **If you're in a leadership role, what steps can you take to better understand how your helpers are functioning?**



Apply it: Filling My Cup Up Plan

For a more concrete plan to fill your cup,
create a SMART goal:

- • **Specific**: What, specifically, do you need/want to do?
- **Measurable**: How much/often will you engage in your plan?
- **Achievable**: Can you achieve this without a lot of extra effort or time?
- **Relevant**: Is it relevant to your goals of filling your cup?
- **Time-based**: Can it be done within a reasonable timeframe?
A day, week, month?



Apply it: Filling Up My Cup Plan

SMART goal example:

- **Specific**: I will schedule an uninterrupted lunch break with no cellphone or computer
- **Measurable**: Three days per week, 20 minutes per day - Mon, Wed, Fri
- **Achievable**: Yes
- **Relevant**: Yes
- **Time-based**: Yes

*Add it to your schedule and tell anyone who needs to know about this new boundary



SMART goal example:

- **Specific**: I will contact my local mental health center for a counseling appointment
- **Measurable**: By May 15th, 2021
- **Achievable**: Yes
- **Relevant**: Yes
- **Time-based**: Yes

Find the contact information for your local agency, put a reminder in your phone or calendar, and make the call at the time you've designated.

Apply it: Filling My Cup Up Plan





Tiny THE TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP INSTITUTE'S SURVIVAL GUIDE

PROTECT YOUR MORNINGS

[or whenever you wake up]
less cortisol, more intentionality.



GO OUTSIDE

[or look outside]
perspective, context +
something larger than this.



BE ACTIVE

[avoid stagnation]
in body, mind, spirit.

CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS

those that are edifying + healthy.

NURTURE GRATITUDE

what is one thing, right now,
that is going well?



DETOX

if navigating addictions
be wise + safe
limit news + social media.

SPEND TIME WITH ANIMALS

↓ stress hormones, ↑ comfort.

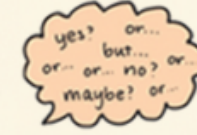


METABOLIZE ALL YOU ARE EXPERIENCING



re-regulate your nervous
system.

SIMPLIFY



[less is more]
be aware of decision
fatigue + cognitive overload.

ADMIRE ART

the gift of feeling transported.



LAUGH

pure humor = a sustaining force.

FOSTER HUMILITY & EXTEND GRACE

self-righteousness
+ hubris = unhelpful.

SLEEP



to cleanse + repair brain + body.

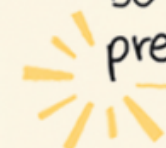
CLARIFY INTENTIONS

how can i refrain from causing harm,
how can i contribute meaningfully?

BE REALISTIC + COMPASSIONATE

[with yourself]

be mindful of the quality of your
presence. it means so much
to others.

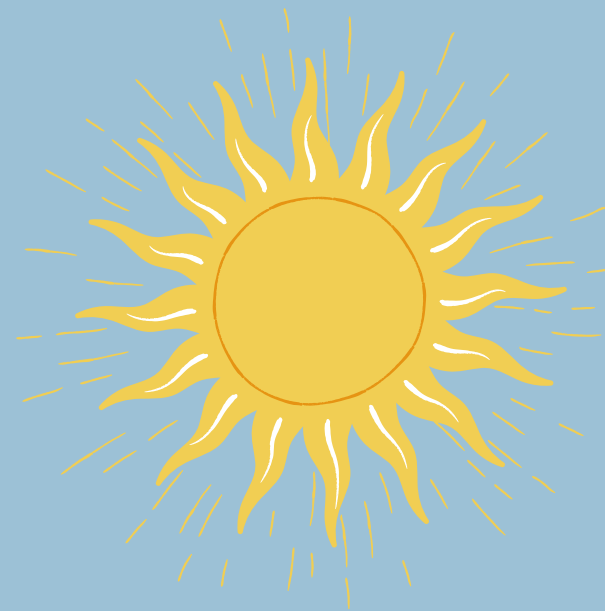




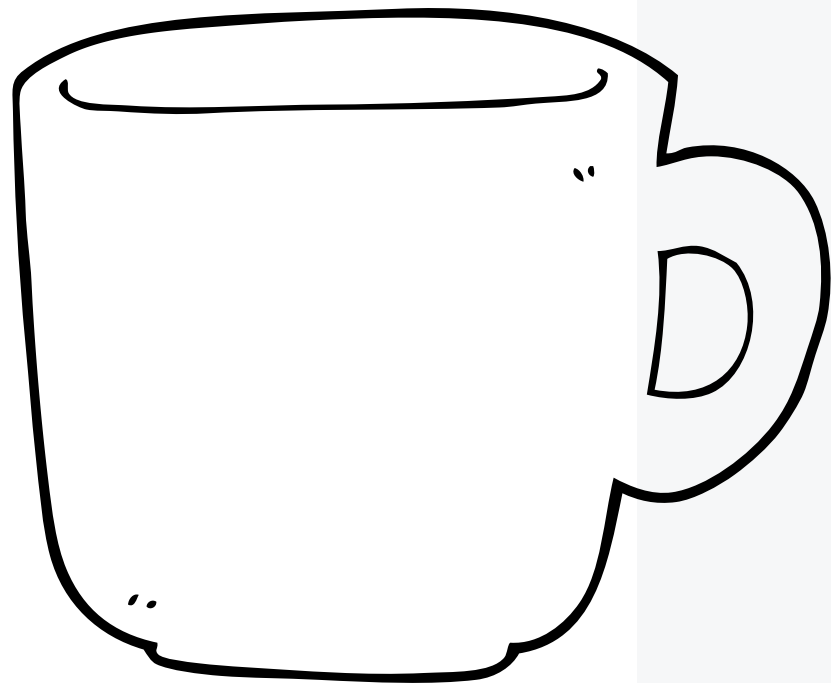
Other Strategies

- Increase your **self-observation** – incorporate mindfulness & body-aware practices
- Recognize and note your signs of stress, vicarious trauma, and feelings of burnout
- Take care of yourself emotionally - engage in relaxing and **self-soothing** activities
- Tend to your physical wellbeing
- Maintain a healthy work/life balance - have outside/other interests
- Be realistic about what you can accomplish; **delegate** the rest
- Don't take on responsibility for others' wellbeing; instead supply them with tools of support
- Balance + monitor your **media intake**
- Take **regular breaks**
- **Seek support** from colleagues, family, friends; If you need it, take up group or individual therapy to help you get through this
- Use peer support and opportunities to debrief as required

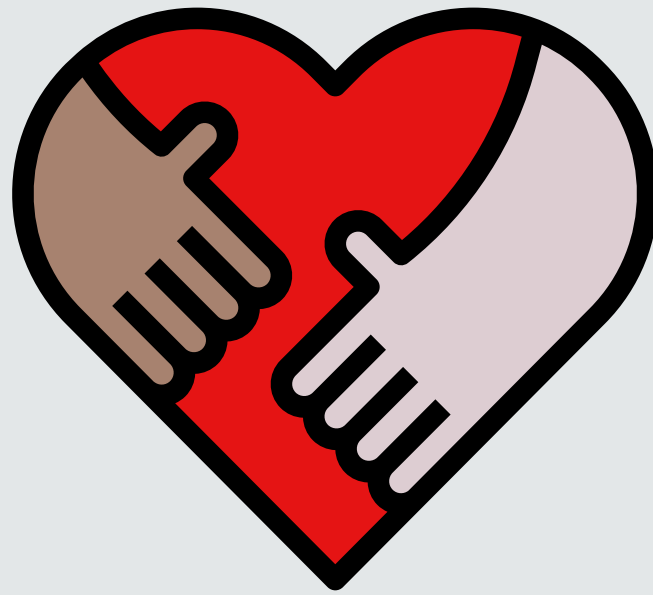
Adapted from Dr. Sheila Sweeney, LICSW (2021 RIShE Up & Make a Difference)!



Review: Levels of Filling Up Our Cups



- **Understand the signs**
- **Understand where we are**
- **Practice non-judgment
toward self & others**
- **Identify & dismantle harmful
thinking**
- **Create space/tend to mental health**
- **Recognize our own agency &
set necessary boundaries**
- **Advocate for organizational
change**
- **Apply it: make a plan**



Loving Kindness Meditation

An excerpt from Trauma
Stewardship, Laura van
Dernoot Lipsky

May I be free of suffering and the roots of suffering.
May you be free of suffering and the roots of suffering.
May we be free of suffering and the roots of suffering.

May I find peace and the roots of peace.
May you find peace and the roots of peace.
May we find peace and the roots of peace.

May I find joy and the roots of joy.
May you find joy and the roots of joy.
May we find joy and the roots of joy.

May I find wellness and the roots of wellness.
May you find wellness and the roots of wellness.
May we find wellness and the roots of wellness.

May I be free.
May you be free.
May we be free.





Helpful Self-Evaluation Tools

- Compassion Fatigue/Satisfaction Self-Test
- Professional Quality of Life Scale
- Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale
- Self Care Assessment





Resources to explore



- "Trauma Stewardship" by van Dernoot Lipsky
- "It's Not Drama, It's Vicarious Trauma" by Reed
- "Man's Search for Meaning" by Frankl
- "Burnout" by Nagoski & Nagoski
- "Second-Hand Shock: Surviving and Overcoming Vicarious Trauma" by Miller & Izzo
- "Help for the Helper: The Psychophysiology of Compassion" by Rothschild & Rand
- "The PTSD Workbook" by Williams
- "The Body Keeps the Score" by van der Kolk
- Dare to Lead Podcast
- Widen the Window: Training Your Brain and Body to Thrive During Stress and Recover from Trauma by Elizabeth A. Stanley, Ph.D.
- the Goop Podcast: the Burnout episode - [minimize stress and avoid burnout](#)
- [A Letter from a Trauma Worker](#)
- Guidebook on Vicarious Trauma: Recommended Solutions for Anti-Violence Workers
- [Article: There's a Name for the Blah You're Feeling: It's Called Languishing](#)
- American Institute of Stress website
- [Self-Care and Trauma Work](#)



Women's Advocates
Breaking the cycle of domestic violence

MAY IS

mental health awareness month

Join us for an online webinar:

5/4/2021

When Helpers Need Help: You
Can't Pour From an Empty Cup



5/11/2021

Healthy Communication +
Modeling Boundaries with Kids

5/21/2021

Conversation about Supporting the
Mental Health of Black Women

5/26/2021

Let's Talk About Boundaries

Register at www.wadvocates.org/events

Connect with us online!

Live chat at: www.wadvocates.org

24/7 Crisis Resource Line: 651-227-8284



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Like our page
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Follow us
[@womensadvocates](https://www.instagram.com/womensadvocates)



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