

Team Building After a Crisis: Clinician Self-Care

CHRISTA M. MARSHALL, PSY.D., LCP
MARSHALL PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES, PLLC
ROCHESTER, NY

Slide Co-Creator:
Brian L. Meyer, Ph.D., LCP
PTSD-Substance Abuse Specialist
McGuire VA Medical Center
Richmond, VA

Disclosure

- This project was supported by Grant No. 2019-DC-BX-K012 awarded by the Bureau of Justice Assistance. The Bureau of Justice Assistance is a component of the Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs, which also includes the Bureau of Justice Statistics, the National Institute of Justice, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, the Office for Victims of Crime, and the SMART Office.
- Points of views or opinions in this document are those of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position or policies of the U.S. Department of Justice.

Disclosure

- Dr. Marshall used to work for the Department of Veterans Affairs. The views expressed in this presentation are solely those of the presenter and do not represent those of the Veterans Health Administration, the Department of Defense, or the United States government.
- There are no financial conflicts to disclose.

The Issue

Exposure to Trauma at Work



Exposure to Trauma

- We work with people who can be dangerous.
 - All of them abuse drugs.
 - They are all at risk of overdose.
 - Most have histories of trauma.
 - Many have considered suicide, and some have tried it.
 - Some have histories of violence.
- We are likely to experience exposure to all of these.



Exposure to Trauma



- We don't know how common these exposures are.
- In your work, how many of you have been exposed to
 - Details of traumatic stories.
 - Team members who have hurt themselves or died.
 - people who have :
 - tried to kill themselves while in your program.
 - committed suicide while in your program.
 - tried to kill others while in your program.
 - committed homicide while in your program.
 - overdosed while in your program .
 - died from overdose while in your program.

Exposure to Trauma: A Survey

- **Who:** 500 audience members attending Dr. Meyer's NADCP Conference Presentations
- **What:** 16 questions pertaining to traumatic exposures.
- **When:** 2018 NADCP Conference
- **Why:** To find out what trauma people have been exposed to at work.
- **How:** 403 out of 500 surveys were returned and analyzed.



Exposure to Trauma- Survey Results

- 99% (399/403) had at least one “yes” response.
- 1% (3/403) had all “yes” responses.
- 98.5% of respondents said “yes” to “Hearing details of traumatic stories.”
- 32% said that participants had killed themselves while in the program.
- 7.7% said that participants had killed others while in the program.
- 44% said that participants had died from overdoses.
- 2.7% said that team members had killed themselves.
- 80% said that team members had experienced burnout.

Yes

No

Results of Exposure

Primary Traumatization
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
Secondary Traumatic Stress
Traumatic Grief
Brownout
Burnout
Turnover

Primary Traumatization

Trauma results from a(n)  event
series of events
set of circumstances

that is experienced by and individual as  physically harmful
emotionally harmful
life threatening

that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's  functioning
mental health
social connections
emotional welfare
spiritual well-being

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in DSM 5



PTSD is characterized by

- Exposure to a severe life-threatening event.
- Repetitive re-experiencing of the event.
- Avoidance of stimuli associated with trauma.
- Negative moods and thoughts.
- Changes in arousal, such as:
 - Difficulty concentrating.
 - Feeling constantly “on guard.”
 - Heightened startle response
 - Problems sleeping.
 - Irritability or aggressive behavior.

Important Note

Secondary Traumatization is a **NORMAL** response to an **ABNORMAL** level of exposure to traumatic events.

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

Secondary traumatic stress is the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the first hand trauma experiences of another. Its symptoms mimic those of PTSD.

Risk Factors

- Personal history of trauma.
- Overidentification
- Empathic
- Isolation at work
- Lack of systemic resources

Symptoms

- Avoidance
- Negative Mood and Thoughts
- Irritable, angry
- Insomnia
- Worsening of eating habits
- Ruminative thinking
- Thoughts of retribution
- Fears for own safety and that of loved ones.
- Preoccupation with work and/or working longer hours.
- Engaging in excessive screen time.
- Feeling cut off from others.
- Feeling distrustful of others.

Important Note

It is not unusual to experience one or more of these STS symptoms from time to time.

Normally, these periods do not last more than two weeks.

Traumatic Grief

Trauma

Exposure to actual or threatened death

- Intrusive images
- Distressing dreams
- Intense distress
- Psychological reactivity
- Avoidance of activities
- Inability to recall
- Detachment
- Loss of interest
- Irritability and anger
- Purposeless regarding future

Traumatic Grief

Death of a loved one with distressing preoccupation

- Avoidance
- Difficulty acknowledging death
- Detachment
- Shock
- Emptiness
- Anger over death
- Purposeless regarding future

Influenced by:

- Suddenness
- Violence
- Sense of Injustice
- Loss of Important Attachment

Grief

Death of a loved one

- Reminiscing
- Grief dreams
- Yearning

- Disbelief
- Shock
- Numbness
- Irritability/anger

Brownout



- Brownout precedes burnout
- It occurs when someone
 - Disengages
 - Becomes discontent
 - Becomes lethargic
 - Loses interest in work
- It may result in sick leave and/or vacation in an attempt to recharge.
- A survey of 1,000 executives by Corporate Business Concepts found:
 - Brownout is more prevalent than burnout
 - 40% of the population experiences brownout
 - 5% of the population experience burnout

10 Signs of Brownout

1.

You **work long hours**, but without any real interest in your job. The work itself is a dull slog and lacks intellectual challenge or stimulation.

2.

You feel as if you **never really finish tasks**. There's always more to do.

3.

You no longer know where your career is going and **don't make important decisions**.

4.

You **contribute the minimum** in meetings and have little interest in new suggestions. You're the person who pours cold water on other people's ideas.

5.

You'll **use any excuse not to show up**. A headache becomes a migraine and a cold is always a flu.

You check emails when you get up in the morning and in bed before you go to sleep. You are **glued to your smartphone** on holidays, on weekends, and even during social occasions.

6.

Physically you've started to suffer. You're out of shape, you eat junk food, you don't get enough sleep, and you've given up exercising.

7.

You've **lost your sense of humor** and tend towards passive aggressiveness and surliness. If anyone (in work or outside) asks you have things are going, you tend to snap or answer in monosyllables.

8.

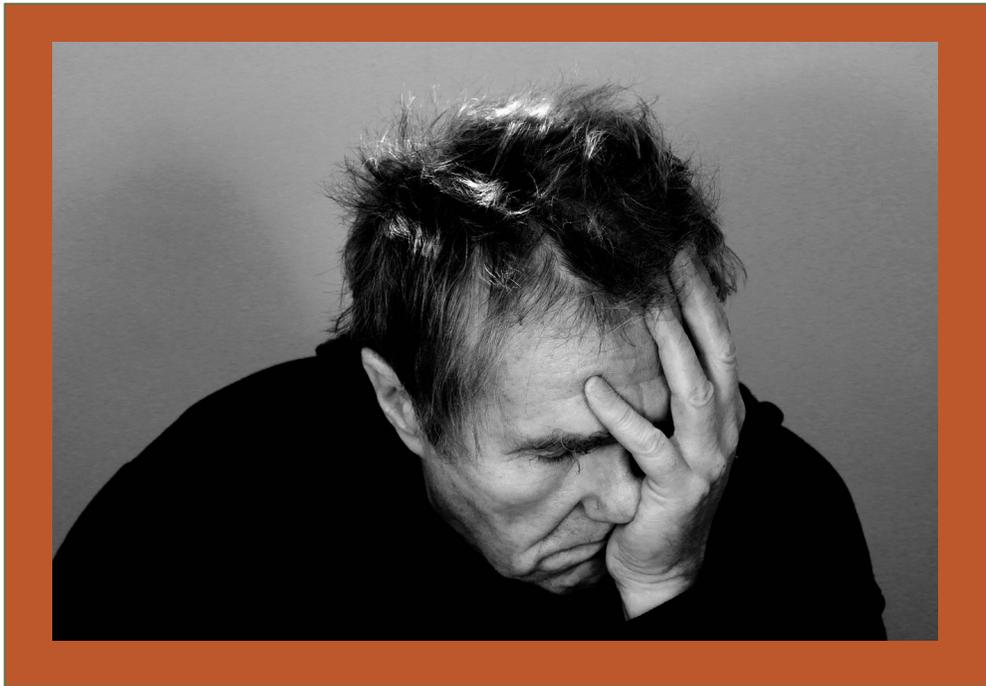
Family **life is no longer what it once was**. You come home late to watch TV and show little interest in your spouse and children. Friendships have withered on the vine and outside interests have been forgotten.

9.

You don't **hate your boss**, but they're moody and unpredictable. You never know whether they'll like or hate a given piece of work.

10.

Burnout



Signs of Burnout

- Chronic exhaustion
- Problems with attention and focus
- Headaches, stomach aches, chest tightening, dizziness, etc.
- Increased illness
- Loss of appetite or heavy overeating
- Cynicism and detachment
- Feeling ineffective

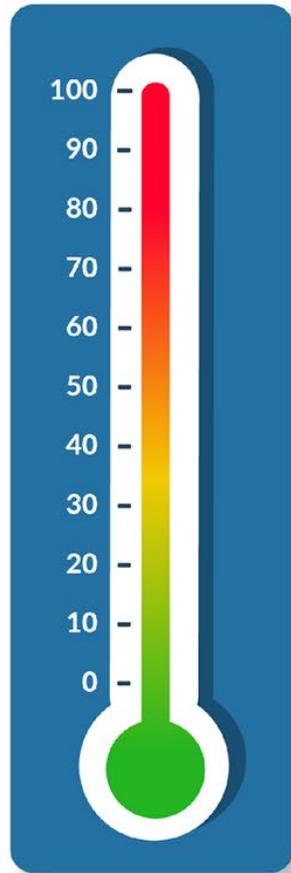
Turnover

- Turnover can result from:
 - primary traumatization
 - secondary traumatic stress
 - brownout warnings
 - burnout.
- It disrupts team dynamics
- It takes time for a new person/people to develop the knowledge of both drug courts in general and your court in particular.



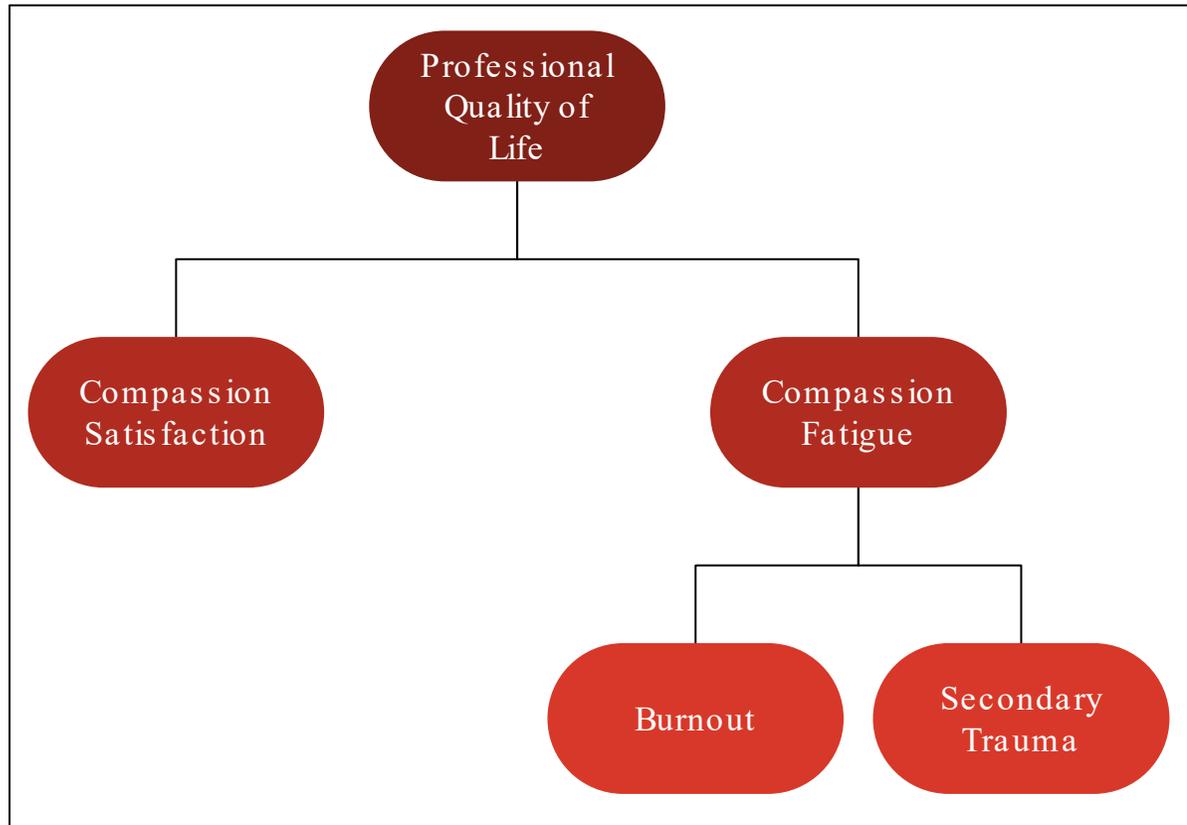
Self-Assessing Trauma

Self-Assessment: Subjective Units of Distress



- 100** Highest anxiety/distress that you have ever felt.
- 90** Extremely anxious/distressed.
- 80** Very anxious/distressed; can't concentrate. Physiological signs present.
- 70** Quite anxious/distressed; interfering with functioning. Physiological signs may be present.
- 60** Moderate-to-strong anxiety or distress.
- 50** Moderate anxiety/distress; uncomfortable, but can continue to function.
- 40** Mild-to-moderate anxiety or distress.
- 30** Mild anxiety/distress; no interference with functioning.
- 20** Minimal anxiety/distress.
- 10** Alert and awake; concentrating well.
- 0** No distress; totally relaxed.

Self-Assess for STS



- Conduct periodic self-assessments
- Use evidence-based assessment instruments:
 - Professional Quality of Life Scale
 - Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale
- Helpers tend to underestimate their STS.
- The best evaluators tend to be their spouses/partners (Jaffe et al., 2009).
 - Also, close family members and friends.
 - Ask them if you have changed or if you show signs of STS.

Preventing Traumatization

High Performing Teams

Developing Resilience

Mindful Meditation

Preemptively Building a Strong Team

High-Performing Teams



Research has found that high-performing teams consistently do four things:

- Trust and empower
- Share common goals
- Make decisions in service of the common good
- Foster a sense of belonging

Leaders on these teams:

- Don't always have the 'right' answer.
- Focus on areas that are going well.
- Work to use strategies that are shown to already be effective.
- Recognize that the majority of teams have the motivation and ability to be successful.
- Avoid micromanaging.

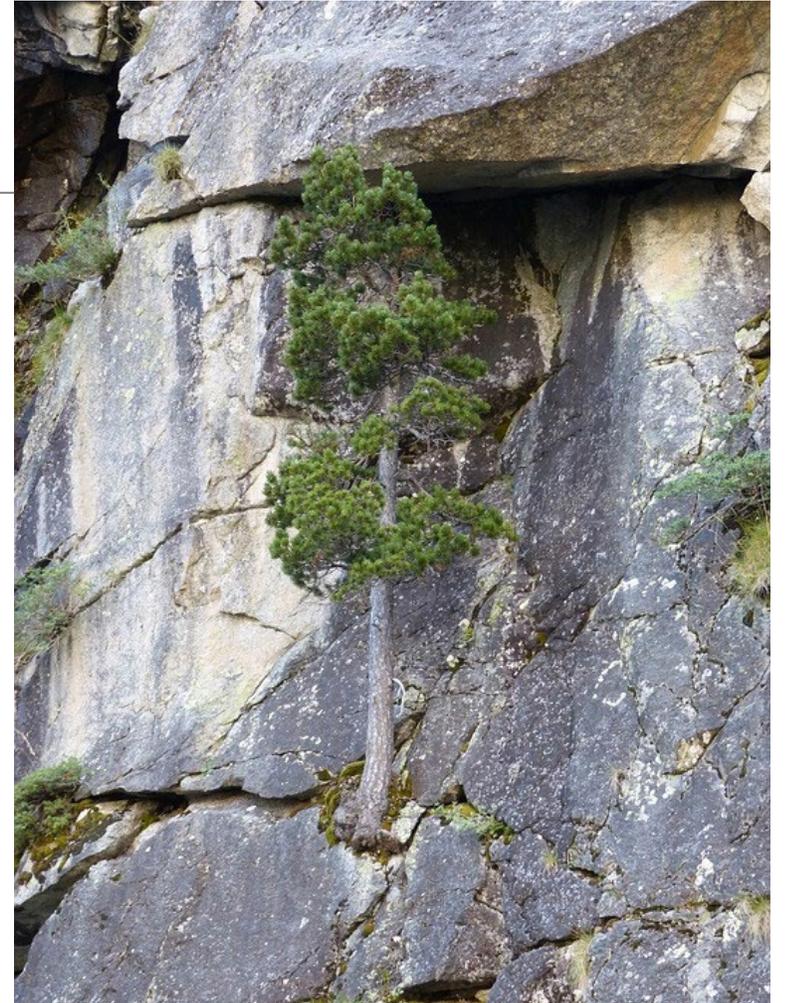
The goal:

- Having common goals that are reinforced through future decisions.
- Team members have a similar understanding of the future.

What is Resilience?

“Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress ...”

- Ordinary, not extraordinary
- It does not mean the absence of distress or emotional symptoms
- Not a “trait”
- Involves thoughts, behaviors, and actions.



Factors Involved in Resilience

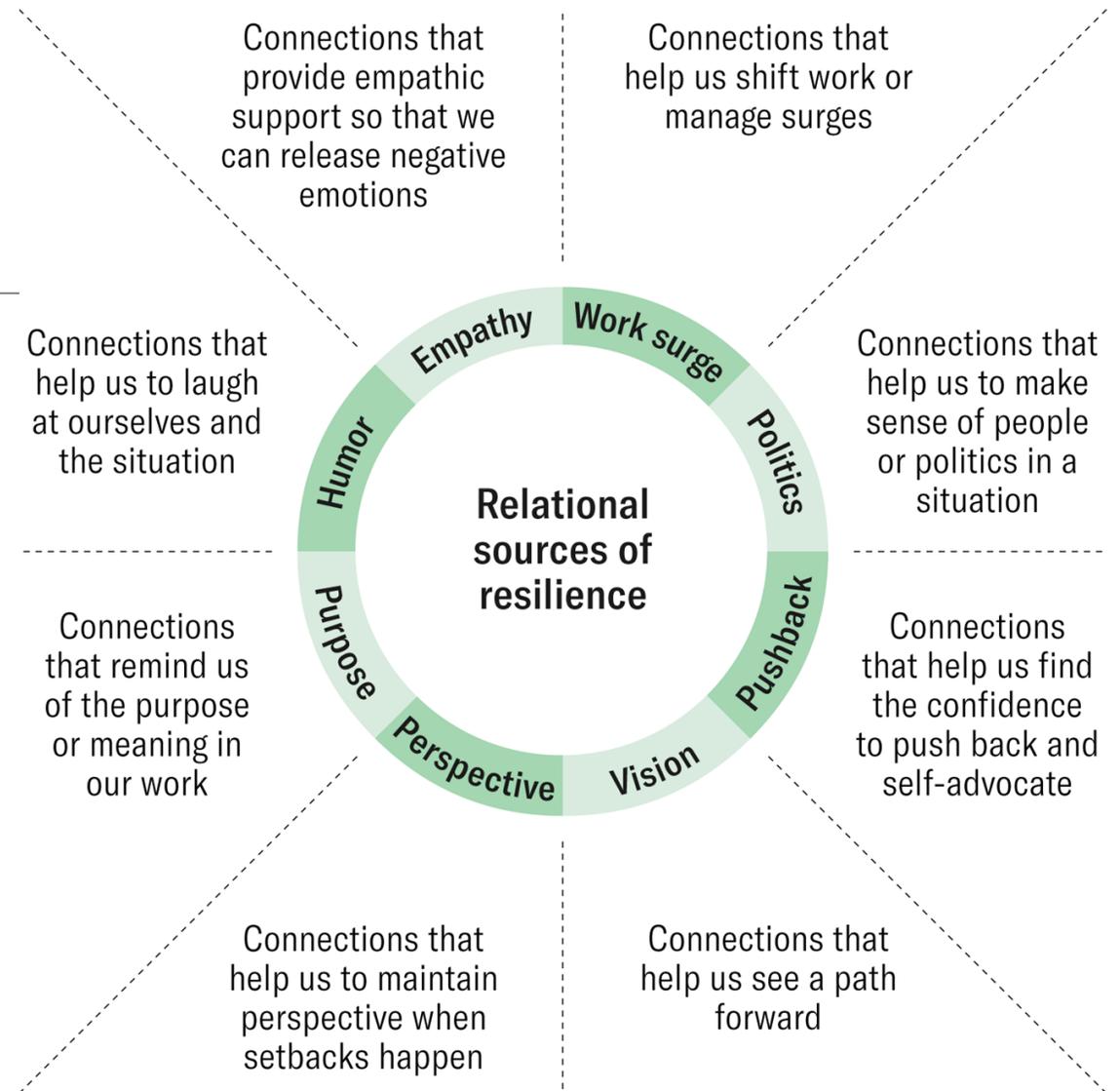
1. Supportive relationships inside and outside of one's family.
2. The capacity to make realistic plans and take steps to carry them out.
3. A positive view of yourself and the confidence in your strengths and abilities.
4. Skills in communication and problem solving.
5. The capacity to manage strong feelings and impulses (I.e., distress tolerance).
6. Engaging in self-care

.... In other words, these are **all things someone can cultivate** within themselves.

Assessing Resilience

What Are Your Top Relational Sources of Resilience?

A well-developed network of relationships can help you rebound from setbacks. Identify the spheres that are most important to you. Are you falling short in some categories?



Source: Rob Cross, Karen Dillon, and Danna Greenberg



The Benefits of Mindfulness

Mindful Meditation

- Mindfulness shifts the brain into a state of calm.
- Regular practice can shift the nervous system baseline.

❖ Physical

- Boost Energy Levels
- Improves Sleep
- Reduces Chronic Pain
- Improves Heart Function
- Helps with Digestive Problems

❖ Mental

- Relieves Stress
- Reduces Anxiety
- Improves Mood and Happiness
- Boosts Concentration and Focus
- Improves Self-Esteem

One-Minute Mindfulness Exercises

1. Yawn and stretch for 10 seconds every hour.
2. Three hugs, three big breaths exercise.
3. Stroke your hands.
4. Mindfully eat a raisin (or chocolate).
5. Clench your fist and breathe into your fingers.
6. Stop, stand up, and breathe.
7. Mindful breathing for one minute.
8. Loving-kindness meditation.
9. An aspiration.



Preemptively Building a Strong Team



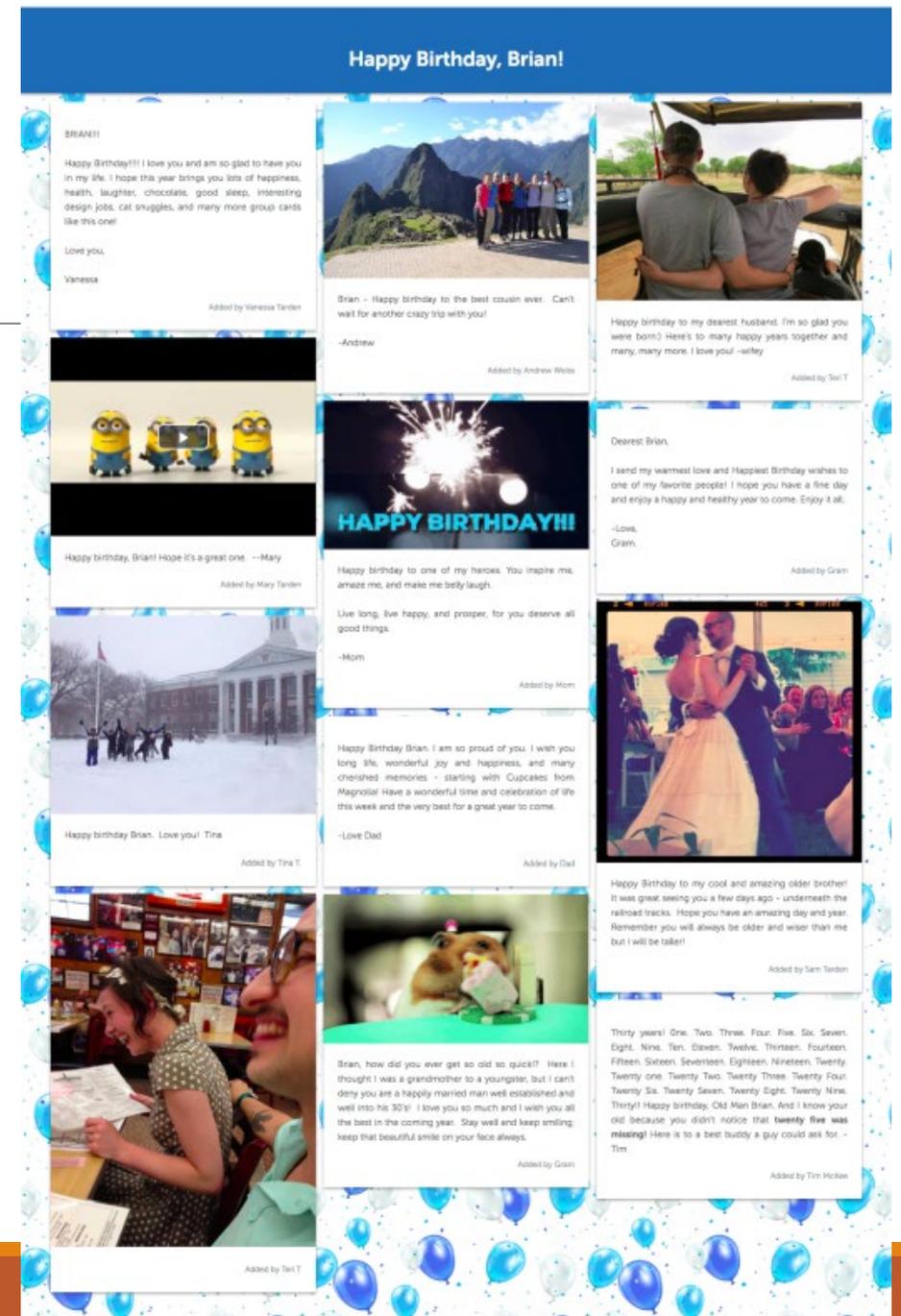
- Board Game Gatherings
- Lunch and Learns
- Grab Bag of Creativity
- Volunteering Together
- Virtual Coffee Meetups
- Start Meetings with an Ice Breaker
- Virtual Book Club

Preemptively Building a Strong Team

- Implement No-Meeting Times:
 - Select a time for breaks for the entire team.
 - Research suggests that working in smaller chunks of time can actually increase productivity.
 - Example Schedule:
 - work, 30 minute team wide break, work, 1 hour team wide lunch break, work, 30 minute team wide break, work
 - Allows people to take a break during the day without
 - worrying that they are missing something
 - having to wait on someone to return that's on a break.
 - Provides times during the day for coffee meetups, taking a walk, or tending to personal things.

Preemptively Building a Strong Team

- Celebrate Events, Birthdays, and Achievements with Kudo Boards.
 - <https://www.kudoboard.com/>
 - Provides a virtual space to post messages and pictures
 - Kind of like a virtual card.



Managing Existing Trauma

Strategies for an Individual



Kanter's Law

Rosabeth Moss Kanter

Professor at Harvard Business School

“in the middle, everything looks like failure”

(Kanter, R.M., 2009)

12 Ways to Reducing STS



1. Known the signs and symptoms of STS
2. Assess yourself annually
3. Take breaks at work
4. Ensure 6.5-7.5 hours of sleep/night
5. Eat Healthy foods in healthy amounts.
6. Exercise regularly
7. Engage in spiritual life
8. Engage in a hobby that has nothing to do with work.
9. Set boundaries between work and home.
10. Schedule and accumulate pleasant activities.
11. Deal with your personal history.
12. Obtain regular training on trauma and its effects.

Intervening When You Experience STS

1. Engage or re-engage your support network.
2. Re-balance work and life.
3. Reduce exposure to work-related and trauma-related books, movies, internet content, and news.
4. Practice self-soothing: baths, music, massages, etc.
5. Take vacations.
6. Start a journal, including what you are grateful for.
7. Be creative: sing, dance, write, draw, sculpt.
8. Spend time with healthy children.
9. Practice self-compassion.
10. Practice mindfulness meditation.
11. Engage in regular yoga



Radical Acceptance

Radical Acceptance is the willingness to experience ourselves and our life as it is.

A moment of Radical Acceptance is a moment of genuine freedom.

-Tara Brach,
from Radical Acceptance

- The refusal to accept emotional pain is the basis of suffering.
- Accepting reality as it is, not as we want it to be.
- Neither fighting reality nor avoiding it.
- Letting go of the desire to have things as we want them to be transforms suffering into ordinary pain, which is part of life.
- Radical acceptance is an active choice that requires an inner commitment.

Managing Existing Trauma

Strategies for Teams



Address Systemic Safety Concerns

- Trauma-related symptoms may be the result of feeling unsafe with offenders.
- Address practical concerns with practical solutions wherever possible.
- Review best practices for courtroom safety
 - <https://cdm16501.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/facilities/id/170>
- If your court does not have an emergency management plan, create one.



Group Acknowledgement of Trauma



- Avoiding the fact of the death will make it more painful.
- The team must engage in some discussion about the loss and how it is affecting them.
- Each person is given an opportunity to say something.
- This is NOT group therapy.
- It is a group mourning, like we do at a person's home when someone dies.
- Food is helpful.
- It is time-limited.

What To Do When an Employee Discloses a Mental Health Condition

- Experts say:
 - Thank them for telling you.
 - Listen
 - Tell them you want to support them, but don't promise unrealistic things.
 - Don't make it about you.
 - Maintain confidentiality.
 - Consider what changes you can make.
 - Ask for help from others/Refer them to other resources.
 - Make yourself "tell-able"
- Advice for implementing this into practice
 - Be a role model so people feel comfortable reaching out.
 - Be flexible when you can.



The Stockdale Paradox

Admiral Jim Stockdale

Was held captive for 7 years in a
prison camp.

“In times of crisis,
those who emerge stronger
are the ones who embrace the negative reality
while remaining positive for the future.”

Managing Through Crisis

Harvard Business School



When Your Employee Discloses a Mental Health Condition



Stop Softening Tough Feedback

by Dane Jensen and Peggy Baumgartner



Do You Know Burnout When You See It?



3 Steps to Better Virtual Meetings

by Scott D. Anthony, Paul Cobban, Natalie Painchaud, and Andy Decker



WFH Is Corroding Our Trust in Each Other



Help Your Team Beat WFH Burnout

by Bobbi Thomason

26 JAN 2021 | Harvard Business Review



Make Time for Small Talk in Your Virtual Meetings



The Secret to Building Resilience

by Rob Cross, Karen Dillon, and Danna Greenberg



Giving Critical Feedback Is Even Harder Remotely

A Final Thought

We have an obligation to our clients,
as well as to ourselves, our colleagues,
and our loved ones,
not to be damaged by the work we do.

Karen Saakvitne and Laurie Pearlman, 1996

Resources

Mindfulness Books

- *Mindfulness for Beginners: Reclaiming the Present Moment - and Your Life* (2011), Jon Kabat-Zinn
- *Radical Acceptance* (2012), Tara Brach
- *The Miracle of Mindfulness* (1999), Thich Nhat Hanh
- *Meditation for Beginners* (2008), Jack Kornfield
- *How to Meditate* (2013), Pema Chodron

Mindfulness Meditation CDs

- *Guided Mindfulness Meditation Series 1, 2 & 3*, Jon Kabat-Zinn
- *Mindfulness Meditation*, Tara Brach
- *Natural Awareness*, Pema Chodron
- *Guided Meditation*, Jack Kornfield
- *Plum Village Meditations*, Thich Nhat Hanh

Guided Mindfulness Meditations

- <http://www.va.gov/PATIENTCENTEREDCARE/resources/multimedia/index.asp>
- <http://www.fammed.wisc.edu/mindfulness-meditation-podcast-series/>
- <http://health.ucsd.edu/specialtes/mindfulness/programs/mbsr/Pages/audio.aspx>
- <http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22>

Dealing with Trauma Exposure

- *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others* by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky
- *Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* by Karen Saakvitne and Laurie Pearlman
- *The Resilient Practitioner: Burnout and Compassion Fatigue Prevention and Self-Care Strategies for the Helping Professions, 3rd Edition* by Thomas Skovholt and Michelle Trotter-Mathison
- Self-Care Workbook:
http://www.figleyinstitute.com/documents/Workbook_AMEDD_SanAntonio_2012July20_RevAugust2013.pdf
- When Compassion Hurts:
https://www.beststart.org/resources/howto/pdf/Compassion_14MY01_Final.pdf
- Secondary Traumatic Stress in child-serving systems:
http://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdfs/secondary_traumatic_tress.pdf

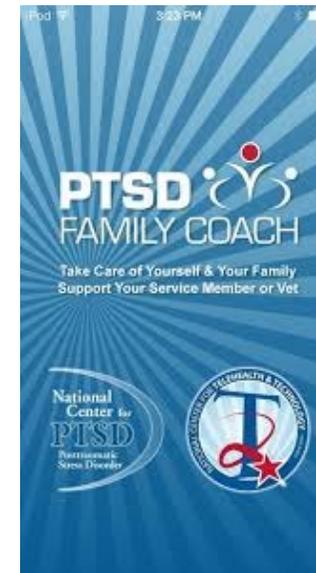
Online MBSR Courses

- Free online MBSR course: <http://palousemindfulness.com/selfguidedMBSR.html>
- Online video course: <http://www.soundstrue.com/store/the-mbsr-online-course-3226.html>

Self-Help Mobile Applications

<http://www.t2health.org/mobile-apps>

- Breathe 2 Relax
- PTSD Family Coach
- Stop, Breathe, and Think
- Mindfulness Coach



Self-Help Mobile Applications

<http://www.militarymentalhealth.org/articles/media>

- Positive Activity Jackpot
- Virtual Hope Box
- Provider Resilience



References

- American Psychological Association. (2012). *Building your resilience*. <https://www.apa.org/topics/resilience>
- Centre for Clinical Psychology. (2018). *Suds-thermometer*. <https://ccp.net.au/suds-thermometer/>
- Cross, R., Dillon, K., & Greenburg, D. (2021, January 29). *The secret to building resilience*. Harvard Business Review.
- Gallo, A. (2021, February 23). *When your employee discloses a mental health condition*. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2021/02/when-your-employee-discloses-a-mental-health-condition>
- Jaffe, P.G., Crooks, C.V., Dunford-Jackson, C.B., & Town, M. (2009). Vicarious trauma in judges: the personal challenge of dispensing justice. *Juvenile and Family Court Journal* 54(4):1 - 9. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1755-6988.2003.tb00083.x>
- Kanter, R.M. (2009, August 12). *Change is hardest in the middle*. Harvard Business Review. <https://hbr.org/2009/08/change-is-hardest-in-the-middle>
- Kleweno, P. & Gerend, P. (2020, March 20). *How to make your teams stronger in a crisis*. Bain & Company. <https://www.bain.com/insights/how-to-make-your-teams-stronger-in-a-crisis/>
- Linehan, M. (n.d.) *Marsha Linehan on Radical Acceptance*. Byron Clinic. <https://byronclinic.com/marsha-linehan-radical-acceptance/#:~:text=What%20is%20Radical%20Acceptance%3F,and%20let%20go%20of%20bitterness.>
- Maloney, D. (2020, January 24). *7 team-building activities to move forward as one*. Slack.com. <https://slack.com/blog/collaboration/team-building-activities-move-forward>

References

Olvera, M. (n.d.) *10 remote team-building activities for low and high trust teams*. The Predictive Index.

<https://www.predictiveindex.com/blog/remote-team-building-activities/>

Regehr, C., & Sussman, T. (2004). Intersections between grief and trauma: Toward an empirically based model for treating traumatic grief. *Brief Treatment and Crisis Intervention*, *4*(3), 289–309. <https://doi.org/10.1093/brief-treatment/mhh025>

Rigby, R. (2015, September 30). *Not quite burnout, but still a problem*. Gulf News. <https://gulfnews.com/lifestyle/not-quite-burnout-but-still-a-problem-1.1592713>

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (2021). *Trauma and Violence* <https://www.samhsa.gov/trauma-violence>

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network. (n.d.) *Secondary traumatic stress*. <https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care/secondary-traumatic-stress>