

Tuesday, May 4, 2021: National Webinar

## **Part One of Healing Modalities: Trauma-Informed Approaches for Sustaining Our Resilience as We Work**

Our commitment and passion for the work we do is foundational to our effectiveness with survivors and their families. At the same time, consistent exposure to violence and trauma and the ongoing pandemic can negatively impact the people we support, the ways we do our work, and our organizations as a whole. These two workshops focus on strategies for expanding support for those of us who do the work with approaches that are accessible, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed in an effort to counter the ongoing impacts of trauma, to support healing, and to sustain both our empathy and resilience.

### **About the Presenter**

Cathy Cave, a founding partner of Inspired Vision, LLC, has over 30 years of experience as an administrator, facilitator and consultant specializing in culture, inclusion and disparities elimination, trauma informed services and supports, peer support, strength-based approaches, supervision and leadership coaching within a variety of systems. She uses her survivor, family, community, provider and administrative perspectives to facilitate organizational change at local, state and national levels. Cathy has provided technical assistance through the National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma and Mental Health, the Mental Health Empowerment Project, governmental agencies and advisory bodies, coalitions, and human service organizations throughout the country. She is the former Director for Cultural Competence for New York State Office of Mental Health and one of New York State's early trauma champions, coordinating county collaboratives and annual clinical training conferences.

# Trauma-Informed Approaches for Sustaining Our Resilience as We Work

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Cathy Cave

Senior Training Consultant,  
National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma, and  
Mental Health

Alliance for Hope

May 4, 2021

# NATIONAL Center on *Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health*

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## **US DHHS ACF FVPSA-Funded Special Issue Resource Center Dedicated to Addressing the Intersection of Domestic Violence, Trauma, Substance Use, and Mental Health**

- Comprehensive Array of Training & Technical Assistance Services and Resources
- Research and Evaluation
- Policy Development and Analysis
- Public Awareness

# Our Work Is Informed by...

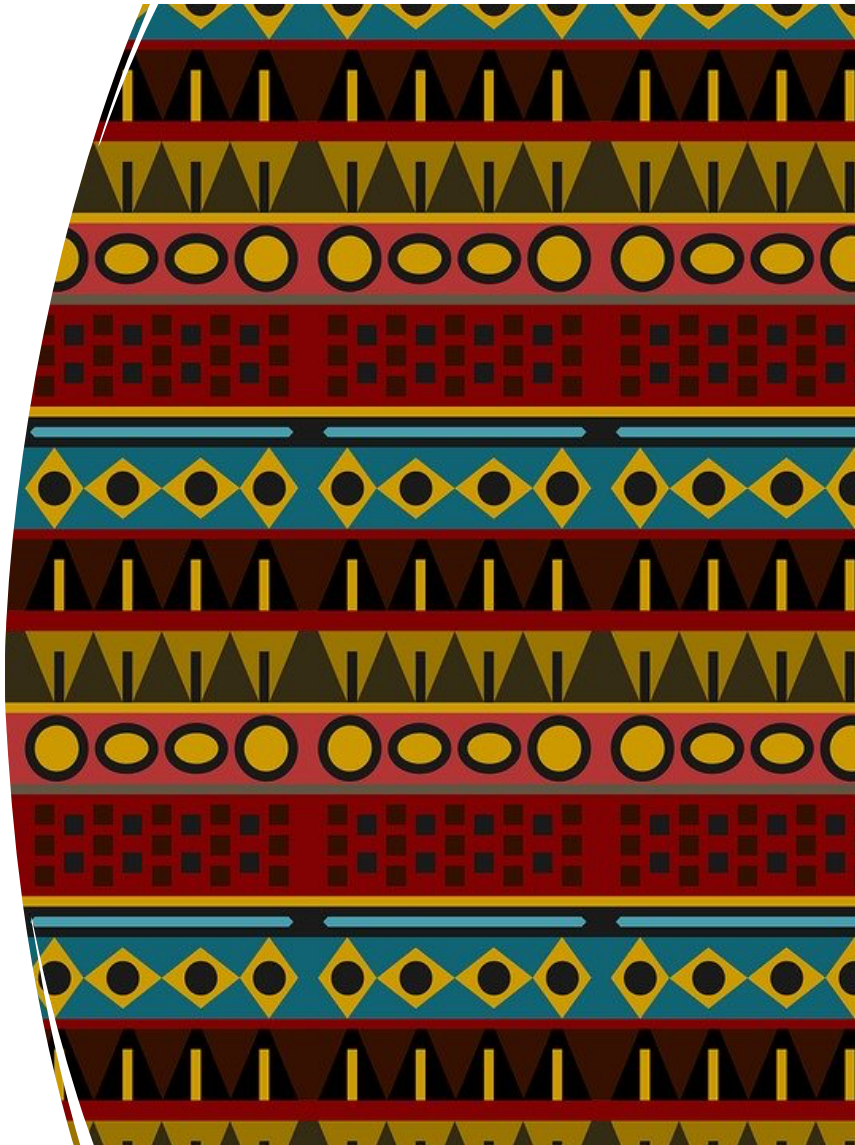


# Welcome

*...relishing the thin spiral of possibility...*

Carol Shields





**Staying  
Grounded  
and  
Connected  
to Ourselves  
and Each  
Other**

# Challenging Times Bring Additional Fear, Worry, and Disconnection

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Impacting how we show up,  
communicate, and engage!

# Unusual Adapting and Adjusting

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- Providing support in new ways
- Parenting and home schooling while working in our homes
- Caregiving for other family members in and outside of our homes
- Losing income, social contact and access to supports
- Grieving these losses
- We are not done with COVID-19 yet



# Impact on Our Work

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- Systems and resources are stretched
- Difficult to tap into the relationships we have built
- Ways we typically navigate may not be available
- There is greater need
- For those we support, the stakes are so very high
- Priorities rapidly shift
- What else?

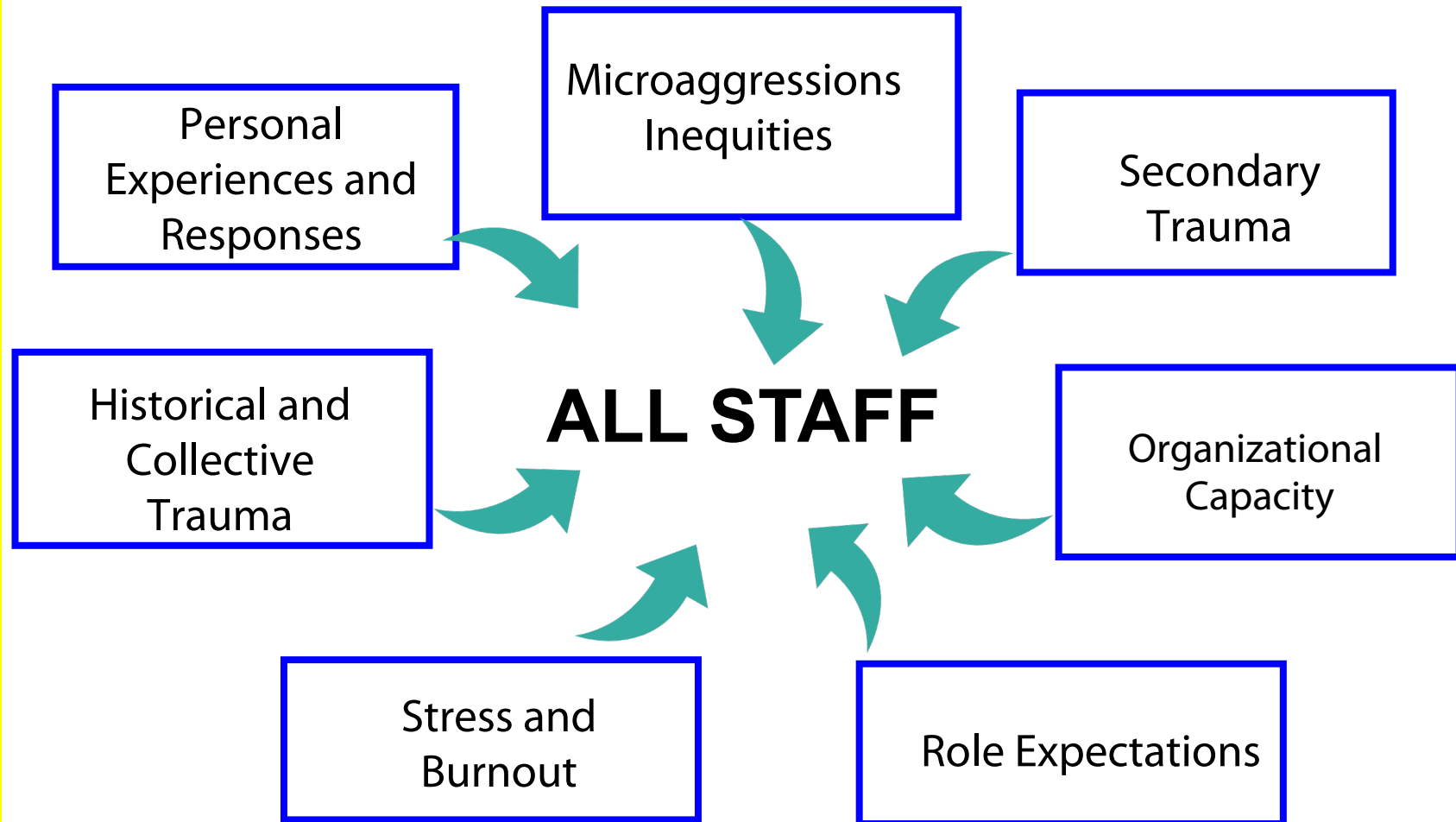
# **We All Have Everyday Stressors**

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- Family and financial concerns
- Impacts of our own and other's trauma histories on us
- Our own and other's mental health concerns and challenges
- Substance use, misuse and overdose
- Stretching our sources of resilience
- Stretching our healing and recovery supports
- What else?



# Staff's Experiences and Responses





# Potential Impacts on Anyone

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What have you noticed?

- Feeling it in our bodies
- Hearing it in our language
- Seeing it in the ways we behave
- Sensing it in our attitudes
- Stress can be motivating, chronic distress can be undermining physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually

# **Experience Shapes Us: How We Are, Think, and Engage**

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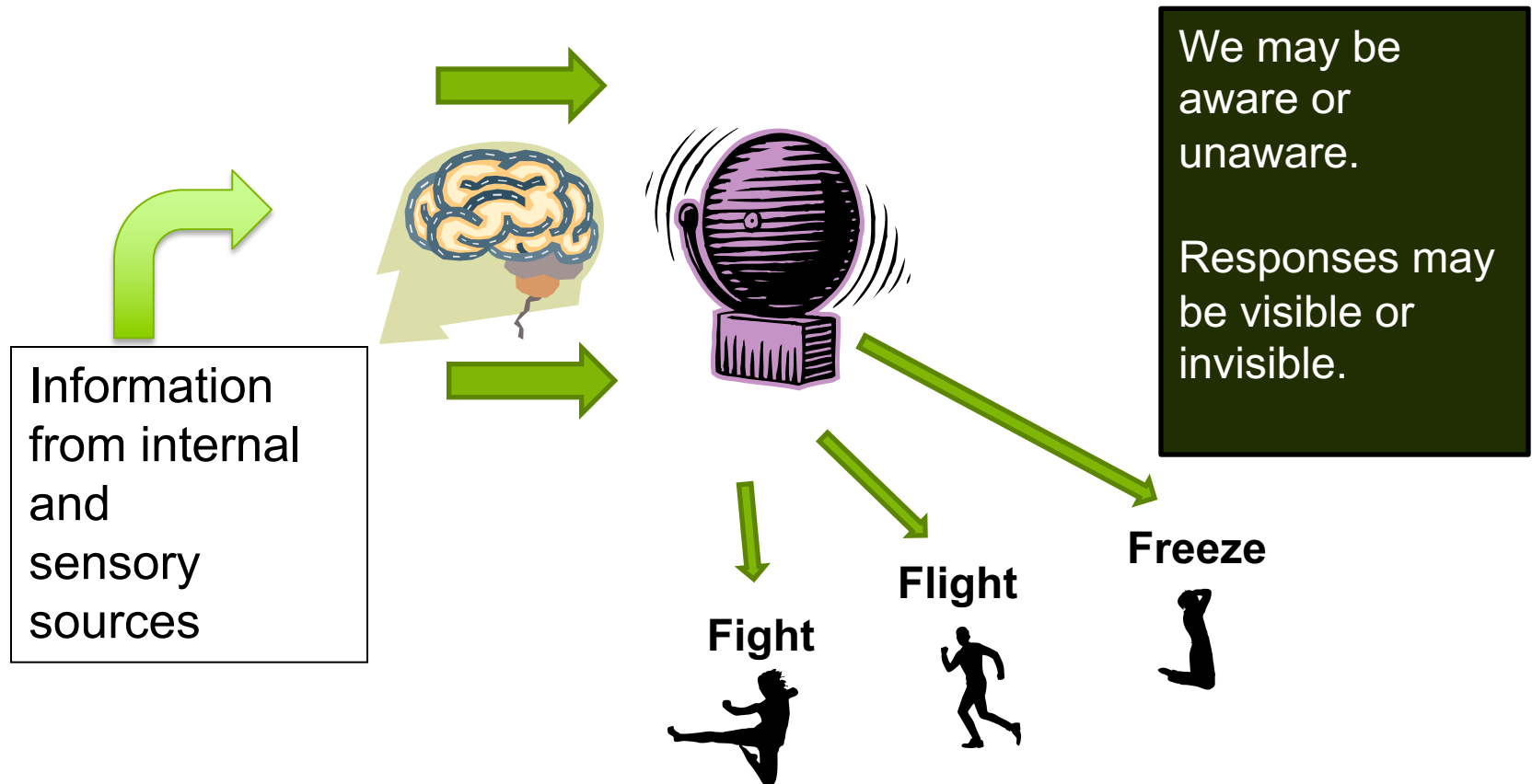


# Experience Can Impact Connection



Cave, 2014

# Trauma Responses: We are Wired for Survival...

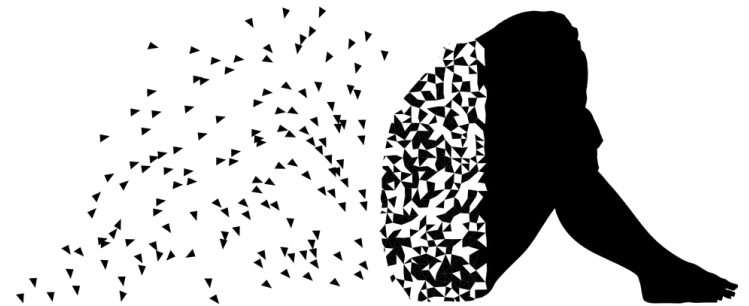


There are neurobiological and developmental impacts!

# Understanding Dysregulation

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- Thoughts
- Emotions
- Physical awareness (body placement and movement)
- Energy
- Felt sense of safety
- Felt sense of connection
- Presence in the here-and-now



# This May Look Like...

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- Being overwhelmed by or having strong reactions to seemingly “minor” irritants
- Scanning for danger, worry that something bad will happen
- Numbing, checking out
- Not being able to “get over” thoughts, feelings, and body sensations that are experienced
- Disengaging and avoiding interactions
- Minimizing or compartmentalizing
- Hyper-alert, difficulty with crowds, noises

# This May Also Look Like...

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- Challenges with communicating
- Negativity, waiting for bad things to happen
- Inability to focus, concentrate, or remember
- Flash backs
- Difficulty sitting still or relaxing
- Anger, over-reactions, or under-reactions
- Sleeping a lot or not enough
- Difficulty making decisions
- Substance use, misuse
- Others?



# Healing from Trauma Requires

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- Control over one's life and environment
- A sense of physical and emotional safety
- Ability to trust self and others
- Connection with trustworthy others

# **Proactive Approach for Our Work: Guide for Emotional Support**

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Negotiate with people you work with about what they need to support their feelings of safety and comfort before you begin meetings and conversations.

**Ask, “Is there anything we can do to help you feel safer and more comfortable while we talk?”**

And then work together to make that happen!<sup>20</sup>

# Guide for Emotional Support: Ask About What Helps

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- When you are overwhelmed or distressed, what does that look and feel like?
- What tends to add to your distress?
- What has helped in the past when you have felt this way?
- Are there things we can do (or not do) to support you?
- Ask about safety and work together to create it.

# How Do You Experience and Express Distress?

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## What supports your resiliency?

“In the thick of this work we often forget about our own needs until they are so big we can no longer meet them in simple ways.”

Shery Mead

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**ATTENDING TO OUR OWN NEEDS;  
SELF-AWARENESS  
AND SELF-CARE ARE KEY**

# What Is “Below The Surface” Impacts Our Relationships

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- We may blame and see other people as the source of the problem
- We may lose touch with our empathy
- We may respond to other's needs in ways that aren't helpful or supportive
- We feel bad about our responses
- It is hard to tell the difference between our own or other's distress and crisis

# Mind-Body Practices Help: Self-care, Prevention, and De-escalation

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- They can directly address the overwhelm or dysregulation in our bodies by calming the central nervous system
- Particularly helpful when we don't have words to express what we are experiencing or when talking about it increases agitation or distress

# Offering Mind-Body Practices

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- Are free, reliable, and always accessible
- Can be shared and learned
- Further connection with self
- Increase trust for ourselves
- Support general wellness and also serve as preventive practices

# Techniques to Help Build Our Resources and to Share

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- Breath work
- Movement
- Mindfulness
  - Meditation
  - Self-soothing
  - Grounding
- Visualization and imagination
- Take breaks

What else  
would  
you add  
to the list



- Service Participants (Survivor-Defined Approach)
- Personal and Organizational Strategies for Staff Support
- Practices that counter the impact of trauma on mind, body, and spirit
- Openness, flexibility, and options

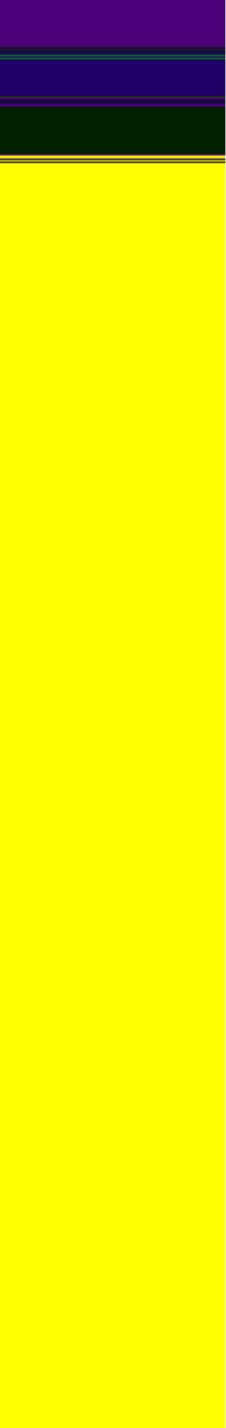


Make Space  
for Joy!

# Additional Resources

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- NCDVTMH Website [www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org](http://www.nationalcenterdvtraumamh.org)
  - Webinar Series 2016-2017 Trauma-informed Responses to Emotional Distress and Crisis (self-injury)
  - Suicide Prevention Resources
  - Model Medication Policy
  - Additional Resources and Tip Sheets for Advocates
  - Trauma-Informed Legal Advocacy Resources
- Millie Grenough. Oasis in the Overwhelm: 60 Second Strategies for Balance in a Busy World (2009).
- Laura van Dernoot Lipsky. Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others (2009); The Age of Overwhelm: Strategies for the Long Haul (2018)
- Virtual Room of Refuge by Truman Medical Centers  
<https://mailchi.mp/751f8d07b5db/virtualroomofrefuge>



NATIONAL  
**Center** on  
*Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health*

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US Department of Health and Human Services



# 5 WAYS TO PRACTICE SELF-CARE\*

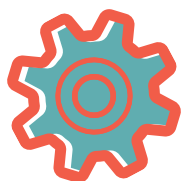
\*KEEP IN MIND: DIFFERENT APPROACHES BETTER FIT DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND SITUATIONS; AND THE SAME APPROACH MAY NOT WORK THE SAME WAY EVERY TIME

## BREATH WORK: SIT COMFORTABLY AND FOCUS ON YOUR BREATH



- Follow it without judgment and without changing it; just notice it for a while
- Slow it down to a four count breath: inhale 1, 2, 3, 4; exhale 1, 2, 3, 4
- Add an intention that moves you, like "inhale love, exhale fear"

## MOVEMENT: A SMALL ADJUSTMENT CAN MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE



- Whether sitting or standing, try adjusting your posture so it's more aligned
- To go deeper, move slowly and gently: pull stomach in, stretch up through the top of your head, tuck chin in slightly, relax your shoulders back and down
- If possible, take a walk or try yoga

## MINDFULNESS: PRACTICES THAT HELP KEEP US PRESENT



- Meditation - Direct attention inward; watch your thoughts without judgment
- Self-soothing - Utilize the senses: sight, sound, taste, smell, touch; carry a smooth stone or try essential oils
- Grounding - Be here, now; make a list of 10 things you notice where you are

## VISUALIZATION/IMAGINATION: MAY TAKE US ACROSS SPACE/TIME



- Practice replacing negative thoughts with positive ones
- Imagine yourself in a place that makes you happy: What do you see? What do you smell? What do you hear? How do you feel?
- Listen to visualization recordings

## TAKE BREAKS: REDIRECT ATTENTION



- Ask for and offer breaks, when needed
- Schedule breaks: chunk things out into blocks of time, refresh in between
- Do something that feels good: take a short walk, drink some water, enjoy a conversation, practice breath work or meditation



## Notes on Mind-Body Practices for Self-Reflection and Self-Care

### Facilitator Notes

Mind-body practices can support healing by calming the nervous system, reducing the impacts of stress, and serving as preventive practices to promote wellbeing. Examples include: breathwork, movement, and mindfulness practices. These practices are free, reliable, accessible, and they can be shared and learned.

Some people find mind-body practices especially helpful when there aren't words to describe feelings or experiences. It's important to keep in mind and share with participants: *\*\*different approaches better fit different people and situations; and the same approach may not work the same way every time.* For this reason, it helps to be familiar with a few options.

Before introducing the practices below, ask the group: "Has anyone has ever tried a mind-body practice? If so, what have you tried?" If time allows, participants can add to the benefits of mind-body work.

Each exercise listed here can be shared within a few to several minutes plus time for processing. These can be offered all together, one after the next, or spaced out over the duration of a workshop.

Welcome the group to try each practice, mindfully, and only to the degree that is comfortable for them today. If a participant would rather not, that's, of course, ok.

After each experience, invite participants to reflect. Ask questions like: "What did you notice? How do you feel? Do you feel/notice anything different from before? How might that learning/understanding be helpful?"

When sharing mind-body practices in their work, remind participants that a start is asking people if there are things that help when they're feeling distressed. People are resilient and may already be engaged in healing practices whether they refer to them as a mind-body practices or not. Build on what works. If someone is interested in learning more, participants can share what's worked for them, create opportunities to practice things like breathwork, self-soothing or grounding exercises, and offer resources.

1. Breathwork (or breathing exercises): Sit comfortably and focus on your breath
  - Invite the group to practice deep breathing (4 count breath).
  - The purpose is to slow the breath down and deepen the inhale and the exhale.
  - Ask participants to notice how they're feeling: "Before we start, how are you feeling? Energized? Tired? Something else? How's the breath?" (For most of us, our breathing is shallow – meaning that we're only using the top portion of the lungs.)
  - Ask participants to sit comfortably and focus on their breath for some deep breathing.
  - Tell them that they are welcome to keep their eyes open or closed, whatever feels best, and they can stop at any time.
  - Let them know for this deep breathing exercise, we're going to slow down and deepen the both the inhale and the exhale to a count of four.
  - Ask them to inhale and exhale to a count of four, meaning they'll slowly inhale while counting to four and then slowly exhale while counting to four (internal count) OR, if comfortable, the facilitator can lead a count that sounds like "Inhale for 1, 2, 3, 4; exhale for 1, 2, 3, 4."
  - Repeat a 3-5 times.
2. Movement: A simple adjustment can make a big difference
  - Invite participants to get up and move around the room/take a few minutes to stretch OR make some adjustments while sitting:
  - If facilitator is comfortable guiding: demo simple stretches for participants to follow OR ask participants to adjust in their seats to that their posture is more aligned:
    - i. To go a little deeper with seated adjustments, ask participants to: "Move slowly and gently: pull your stomach in, stretch up through the top of your head, tuck your chin in slightly, relax your shoulders back and down."
    - ii. To go even deeper with seated adjustments, "If you'd like to feel a little more energy, keep your stomach pulled in, place your hands on your lower back, slowly look up and back, and arch back a little; and, if you'd like to feel a little more relaxed, keep your stomach pulled in and slowly fold forward, resting your arms under your head on the table/your lap."
  - Whether it's standing and stretching or adjusting while sitting, remind participants to "Take a few deep, long breaths, combining breath with movement."

3. Mindfulness: Practices that help keep us present.

Ex. Self-soothing: Utilizing the five senses: sight, sound, taste, smell, touch

- Invite the group to try some approaches to self-soothing and to notice their feelings and responses.
- Facilitator can offer stones or beads for participants to touch or essential oils for participants to smell (Note: When in close proximity to others, check with them before applying scented stuff! Commonly used scents, like mint, citrus and lavender tend to be ok with most groups.)
- During a break, facilitator can invite participants to take time with their coffee, tea, noticing the scent and taste, the temperature, the feel of the cup in their hands...

4. Mindfulness: Practices that help keep us present.

Ex. Grounding: Being here, now

- Invite the group to participate in a grounding exercise and to notice their feelings and responses.
- For this exercise, participants can take mental notes or list things out, which can be helpful for processing.
- Ask participants to "First, bring attention to each part of your body; to start, feel your feet on the ground and weight of yourself in your seat/stance. Take a few breaths."
- Next, ask participants to "Make a descriptive list of the first 10 things you notice where you are. Be as detailed as you'd like. Take mental note/write a list."

5. Visualization/imagination: May be guided, may take us across space and/or time

- Invite the group to participate in a visualization or imagination event.
- For this exercise, participants can take mental notes or list things out, which can be helpful for processing.
- "Imagine yourself in a place you've been that makes you happy... It might be a place you've visited, or it might be a place you've dreamed of... Imagine yourself there now. Spend time with all of the details: What do you see? What do you smell? What do you hear? How do you feel? Take mental note/write things down."

## **Tools for Transformation: Becoming Accessible, Culturally Responsive and Trauma Informed Organizations**

### **Guide for Emotional Support**

Navigating conversations about mental health concerns can sometimes feel uncomfortable. Our own views and past experiences with mental health challenges in our work, lives, and communities can shape how we form relationships with people we intend to assist. There are ways we can approach these conversations that are transparent about our intentions and respectful of individual preferences regarding what is helpful in times of emotional distress. With our understanding of the impact of violence, coercive control and trauma, we can expect to regularly encounter people in our services who experience difficulty feeling grounded, connected, and physically and emotionally safe. By using approaches that are inclusive, accessible, culturally responsive and trauma-informed we can be respectful of individual's experience, honor the "whole person" and what they bring, and support survivors to implement self-defined strategies to feel connected, present and safe.

In conversations about mental health concerns, first, be sure your approach is in compliance with the Americans With Disability Act, the Fair Housing Act and the Civil Rights Act and to be sure your processes are not screening people out. Consider what you need to know and why, as well as what you need to document and why. In our work, the goals of these conversations are to offer comfort along with information that normalizes the effects of violence, and to determine what would be helpful and offer that support.

### **Information To Share With Everyone**

Offer information that normalizes the affects of abuse, sending the message that what survivors may be experiencing is common given their experiences. Also include information that lets people know what they might expect.

- We know that abuse can affect our emotional well-being and mental health. Many survivors experience...
- The services we offer everyone are...
- In the beginning it is often hard for people to settle in. There may be sounds or spaces that feel uncomfortable. Let us know if we can help.
- Some people find that they need a few days (or weeks) to catch up on sleep or to "just be."
- Sometimes after a few days of feeling more safer and more rested, people may find themselves feeling more distressed.

- If you are experiencing any mental health challenges or concerns and want help, there are a number of options we can offer, including access to mental health treatment, mind-body practices and peer support.”
- If you have concerns about how someone may try to use your mental health challenges, diagnosis or substance use against you that is something we can assist you with if you like.
- We don’t need to know what meds you are taking but if you would like any assistance regarding medications please let us know. This can include help with storage, reminders for taking medications, assistance with refills or medication changes, learning more about medications, concerns with insurance or with someone being abusive to you and controlling your medications.

### **Talking About What Helps**

Talking with survivors about what helps gives us an opportunity to create relationships based on listening, learning and offering what feels familiar and has been successful to people in distress. This process takes time and we may learn new ways to support someone over several conversations

What are the things that help you the most to stay grounded, calm and clear-headed, particularly when you are under stress or in an unfamiliar environment?

What are the kinds of things or situations that you find most challenging?

What can we do while you are here to have as little additional stress as possible?

What are the kinds of things you might find very challenging?

When you are overwhelmed or distressed, what does that look and feel like for you?

What does it look like on the outside to other people?

What tends to add to your stress or distress?

What has helped in the past when you have felt this way?

Are there things we can do to support you?

Are there things you do not want us to do in supporting you?

### **Emotional Support Plan: Identifying Feelings, Actions and Supports**

Tools, resources and supports I use and things I do that help me feel good, calm, relaxed, focused, grounded, clear-headed or safe

Things I would like help with while I'm here are:

### **Navigating My Challenges**

Inside when I might be feeling:

What it might look like on the outside to other people is:

Things I can do that might help in the moment are:

The physical or emotional signs that show that I am feeling worse are:

Things others can do to help in the moment are:

Things I do not want others to do:



## **Certificate of Participation**

### **Webinar Training**

**Part One of Healing Modalities: Trauma-Informed Approaches  
for Sustaining Our Resilience as We Work**

*Presenter: Cathy Cave*

**1.5 Hours**

**May 4, 2021**

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Casey Gwinn".

**Casey Gwinn, J.D.**  
Co-Founder and President  
Alliance for HOPE International

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gael Strack".

**Gael Strack, J.D.**  
Co-Founder and CEO  
Alliance for HOPE International