

Not Taking Responsibility Made Me a Better Therapist and Mentor

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NOT TAKING

RESPONSIBILITY

???????





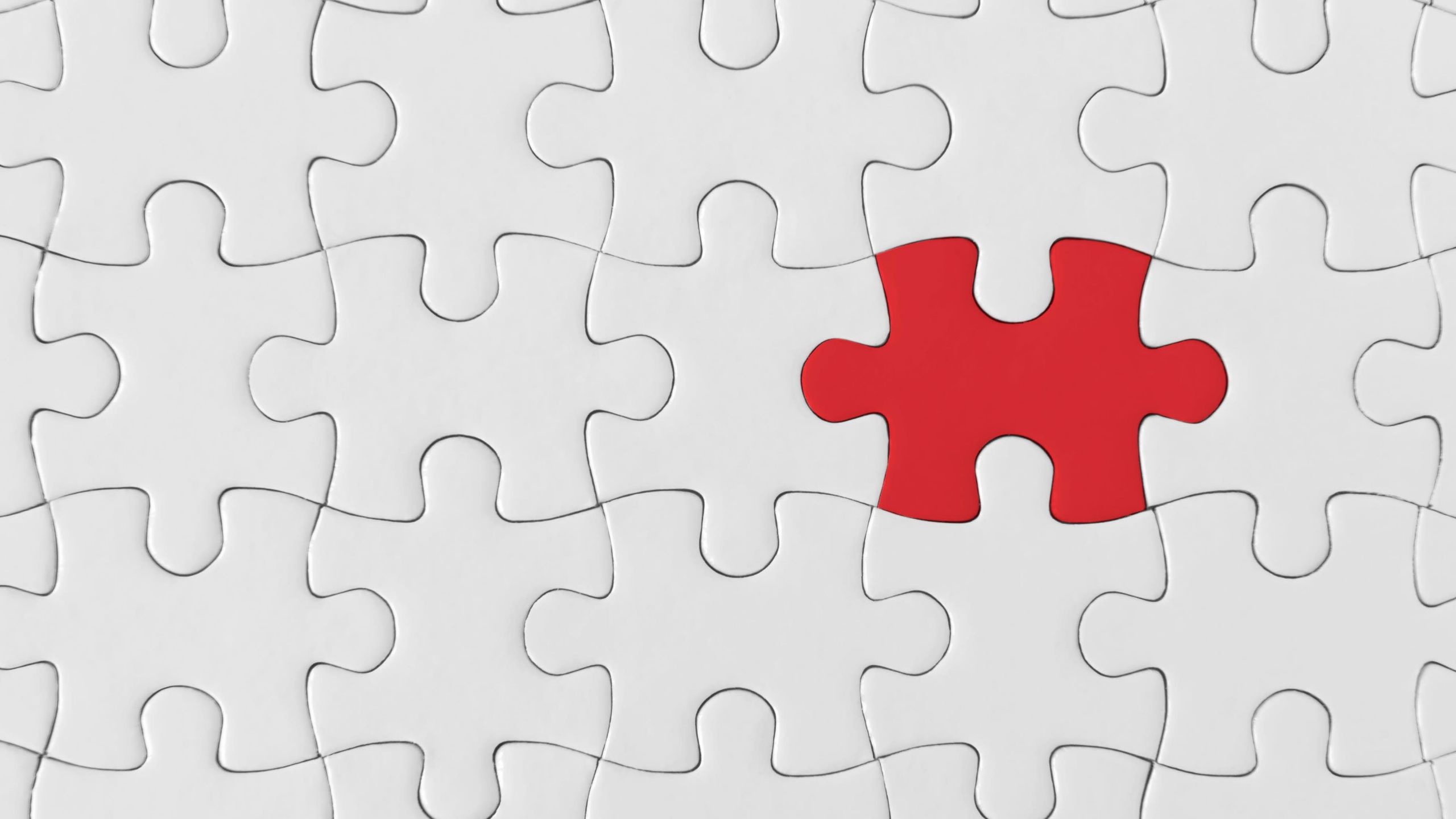


PARK AV

E 33 ST

ONE WAY

ONE WAY











The Healing

A wide-angle photograph of a two-lane asphalt road winding through a rural landscape. The road has a dashed yellow center line and white edge lines. On either side of the road are rolling hills covered in green grass and patches of yellow wildflowers. In the distance, there are clusters of trees with autumn-colored foliage. The sky is a clear, pale blue with a few wispy white clouds. The overall mood is peaceful and open.

The Journey



- “...the ability to ‘feel with’ others when we are exposed to their distress and suffering while recognizing that the emotions we experience are external to oneself...”
- Neuroscience of empathy – anterior medial cingulate cortex, anterior insula – same brain location as our own emotional experiences
- Creates connection
- Risk – easy to take on others’ pain

(Hofmeyer, Kennedy, Taylor 2020; Klimecki 2015)




- “...a ‘feeling for’ others who are in pain with warmth, empathic concern, capacity to understand their perspective and intentions, and having...a motivation to act ... to relieve their pain.”
- Neuroscience of compassion - medial orbitofrontal cortex, ventral striatum – areas linked to reward and affiliation processing, creates positive feelings
- Focused on action
- Collaborative - Guide others to formulate a new path

(Hofmeyer, Kennedy, Taylor 2020; Klimecki 2015)



“I want to
help others”

Why?

- Compassion Satisfaction
 - Feels good to help
 - Doing meaningful work is rewarding
 - Take pleasure in doing the work well
 - Wired for connectedness
 - Pattern of Other-directedness
 - Unresolved pain and trauma
- 

Burnout



- Any profession
- Gradual onset
- “syndrome resulting from chronic work stress that has not been successfully managed”
(WHO, ICD-11)

Compassion Fatigue

- Professionals witnessing suffering of others
- Rapid onset
- “extreme state of tension & preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped....” ~Figley 1995
- Empathy Fatigue?



Burnout/Fatigue Risk factors

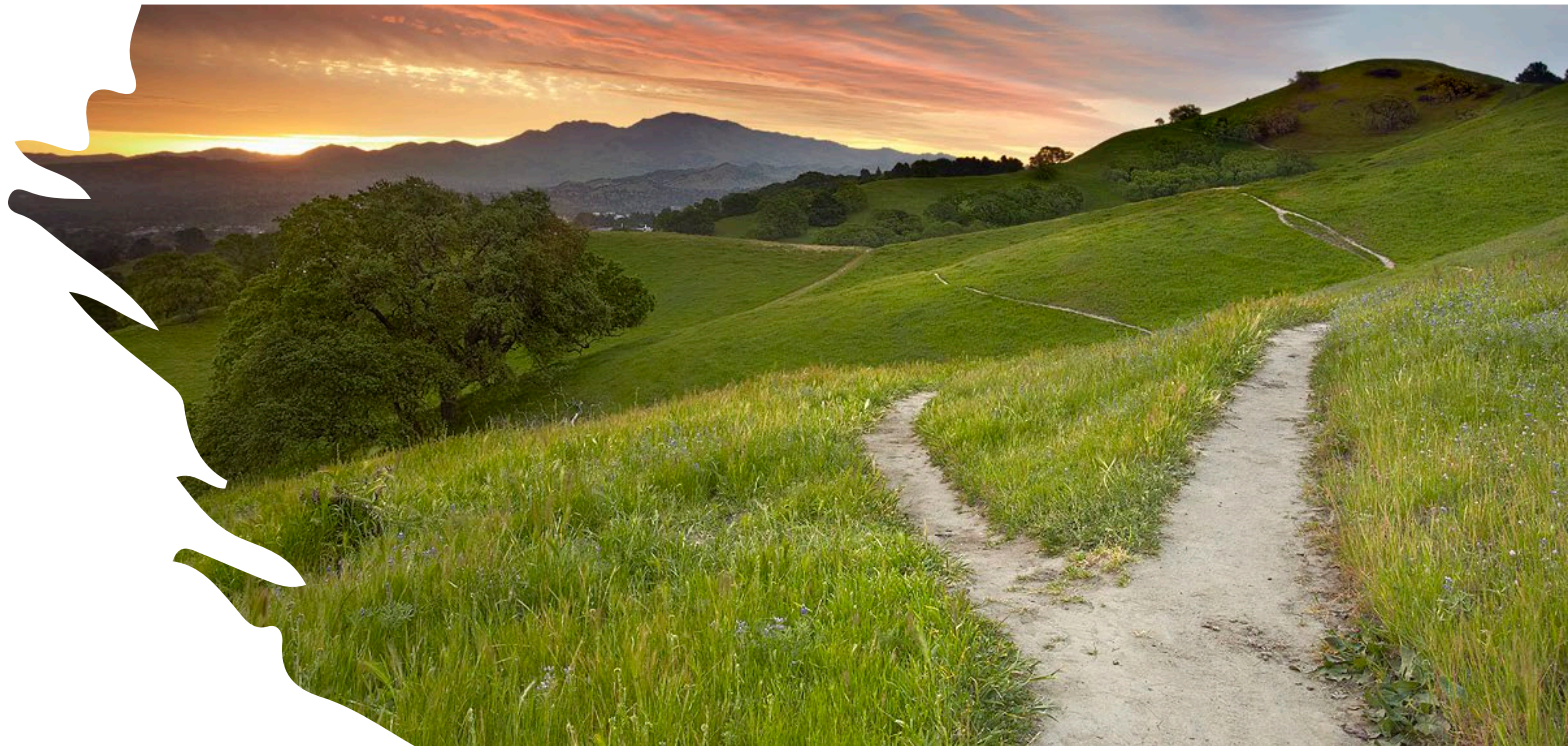
- Helping profession, such as health care
- Little or no control over your work
- Unclear job expectations
- Extremes of activity - monotonous or chaotic
- Lack of social support - feel isolated
- Heavy workload and work long hours
- Struggle with work-life balance

Individual Signs and Symptoms

- Exhaustion – physically, mentally, emotionally drained
- Depersonalization – disconnected, numb, hardened
- Lack of personal accomplishment – reduced feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction, “achievement void”
- Existential/ spiritual – meaningless, worthless, hopeless
- Feelings of isolation, hypervigilance or fear
- Emotional volatility
- Chronic physical symptoms – headaches, GI distress, neck/shoulder pain
- Self-medicating behaviors – substances, food, spending
- Relationship problems
- Denial

Responses to Fatigue

- Continue to sacrifice themselves
- Fear of caring too much
 - Directive, detached, depersonalized care
- Leave the profession
- Seek help and balance





... does not cause fatigue

Empathic communication and compassion in healthcare



- More effective and resilient clinicians
- Higher morale
- Improved quality of care
- Fewer patient complaints
- Improved patient satisfaction
- Better concordance with medical advice
- Decrease of anxiety and distress
- Improved diagnosis, clinical outcomes
- **Create a strong relationship**

It isn't the load that weighs you down

it's
the
way
you
carry
it

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Empathic Distress Fatigue

Better descriptor than “Compassion Fatigue”
Empathy with a Lack of Self-Other Distinction

“Self-orientated” perspective

Take on others’ pain as own

- Make assumptions
- Personal distress
- Misunderstand

Hofmeyer 2020, Jeffrey 2016, Russell 2015



Self-other Distinction

- Self as separate
- Compassion, empathy, care and concern for the other
- Empathy: ...the ability to ‘feel with’ others when we are exposed to their distress and suffering while recognizing that the emotions we experience are external to oneself....



Empathy

- Come alongside
- See world through their eyes
- Feel their pain
- Understand their loss



Who is this person?

- Who is this person?
- Each person responds uniquely
 - Trauma, loss
- Open-ended questions
- Stop. Listen. Really listen.
- Sit in the pain. Don't try to make it better.
- Reflect to make sure you understand
- Ask permission to use your skills to help guide them



Empathy



Compassion

The table creates a space

Differentiates my
responsibility from theirs

Lack of self-other distinction
→ Responsibility FOR



Responsible FOR

When I feel Responsible FOR others, I am really trying to CONTROL them...

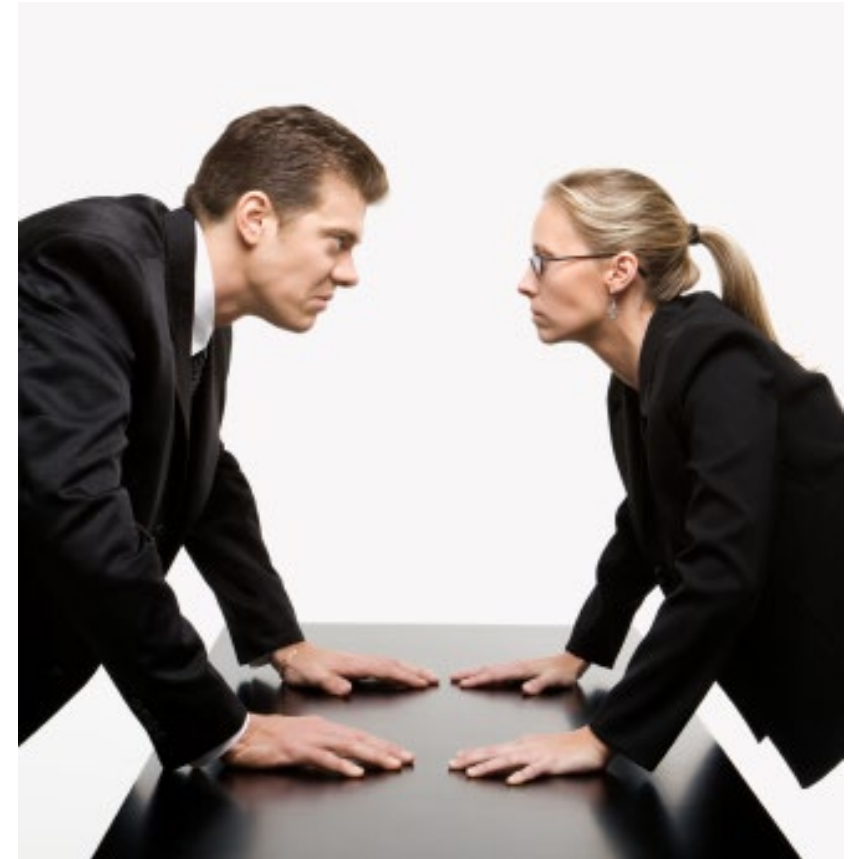
I: Fix, Protect, Rescue, Control, Carry their feelings, Don't listen

I **feel**: Tired, Anxious, Fearful, Liable

I **am concerned with**: The solution, Circumstances, Being right, Details, Performance

I **become**: a negative manipulator

I **expect**: the person to live up to my expectations



Responsible To

When I feel Responsible TO others, I am trying to HELP instead of control...



I: Show empathy, Encourage, Share my experiences, Confront, Level, Am sensitive, Listen

I feel: Relaxed, Free, Aware, High self-esteem

I am concerned with: Relating person to person, Feelings, The person I believe that if I share myself, the other person has enough to make it.

I expect the person to be responsible for himself and his own actions.
I can trust and let go.
I am a helper and guide.

~Anonymous

Responsible For

When I feel Responsible FOR others, I am really trying to CONTROL them...

I: Fix, Protect, Rescue, Control, Carry their feelings, Don't listen

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Resilience
Self regulation
Self awareness
Self Care



Know Your Signs - Reflect

Self-awareness



- Taking problems home
- Can't stop thinking or dreaming
- Is this part of my role? Do I feel that I am the only one who can meet this person's needs?

Know your Signs - "Helping"



- Feel for the Righting Response
You need to ..., You should ...
It would be better if you ...
- Am I/we fixing the problem rather than empowering the person?
 - Provide resources – allow them to find their own solutions
 - Resist the tendency to do FOR - "If I don't do it for them...."



Know yourSelf

Self-Care

Our work demands much from our hearts and humanity

Fill up → Pour Out → Repeat

- Process the day... then put it away
- Restore, Refill, Replenish
 - Engage all 5 senses
 - Make a list, Practice daily

What brings you energy? Rejuvenation? What makes you smile on the inside? What do you love to do?

Know your limits

Life demands much from our hearts and humanity

- What am I taking in?
- What am I pouring out?
- Ask for help





Rehab is a relationship
of which Empathy & Compassion
are components...

We are responsible to allow and
guide our partners to take
responsibility for themselves

Choose the path which protects
your 'self' and allows presence and
connectedness

Thank you....

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Resources

- Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project – Patricia Smith
<http://compassionfatigue.org/>
- Compassion Resilience Toolkit
<https://compassionresiliencetoolkit.org/healthcare/compassion-resilience/>
- Professional Quality of Life Measure 5 (ProQol 5) -
<https://proqol.org/proqol-measure>
- Brene Brown – Empathy
<https://brenebrown.com/videos/rsa-short-empathy/>

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