

# Taking Care of the Caregiver

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# Introduction and Objectives

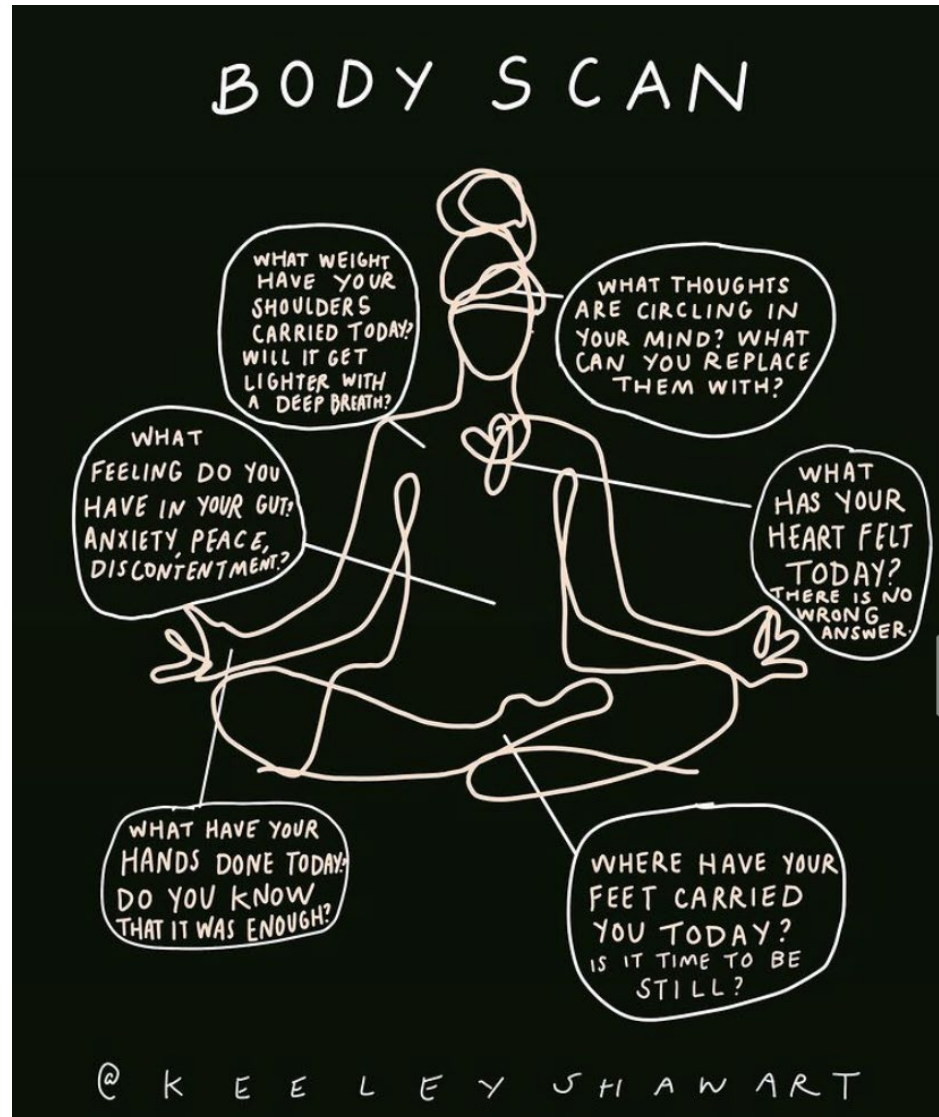
- Participants will understand the difference between self-care and self-soothing strategies.
- Participants will learn effective strategies for building community to sustain the self-care plan.
- Participants will develop a personal self-care plan.
- *Who are the caregivers?*

# Starting Place

- “Something profound in someone telling you what you already know.” –Bill Hoy



# Progressive Muscle Relaxation



# Why Is Caring for Ourselves as the Caregiver Important?

- Self care is not *selfish*. Self care assists us to become a better caregiver for others; you cannot continue to give if your cup is empty.
- Self care is an important part of managing our trauma intake so we can prevent chronic stress from adversely impacting our physical and mental health.
- Self care helps to boost physical, emotional, and general wellbeing, and helps to provide a sense of balance.
- Self care increases our ability to function in the most effective way in all areas of our lives.
- Incorporating regular self care into our lives assists with increasing our ability to cope with the difficult situations that life brings our way.

# My Connection





# Diane's Thoughts

- Allow respite
  - Keep planning, even when it doesn't work
  - Concept of time
  - Jealousy
  - Guilt
  - Shifts in supports
  - Normalcy of working
- "They were an anchor in the sea of insanity."



# Common Caregiver Stressors and Feelings

- Role Changes
- Living in the Unknown, Living in the Gray Space
- Changes in Social Supports/Unmet Expectations of Social Supports
- Faith/Spiritual/Religious Impacts
- Assumptions and Expectations
- Financial Stressors



# Common Caregiver Stressors and Feelings

- Balancing Your Own Needs and Commitments with Caregiving Responsibilities
- Loneliness, Isolation and at the same time, Limited Time Alone
- Grief and Loss, and Change
- Guilt
- *There is no “right or wrong” way to experience or to feel. Every experience has validity.*

# Symptoms of Stress

- Difficulty sleeping
- Weight gain or loss
- Stomach pain
- Irritability
- Teeth grinding
- Panic attacks
- Headaches
- Difficulty concentrating

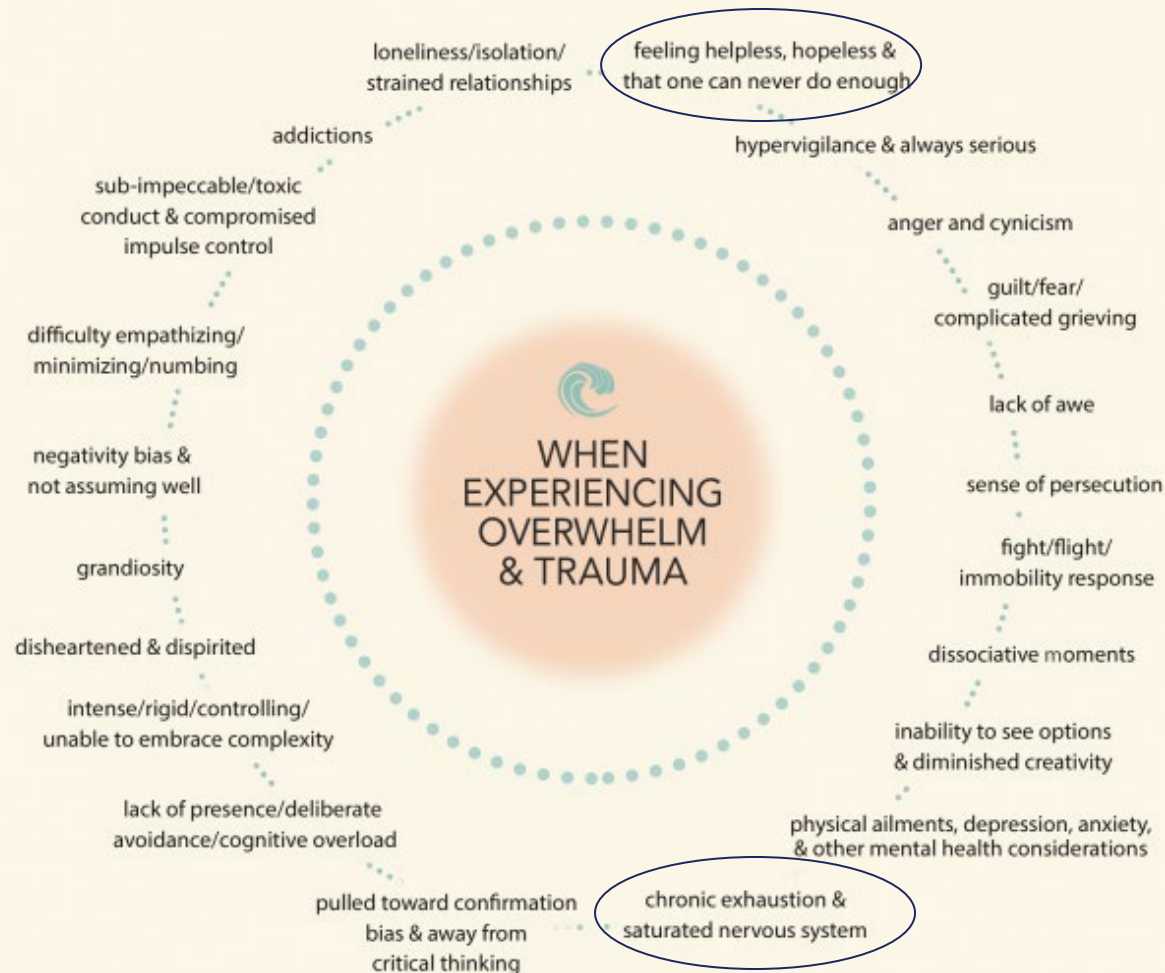


# Caregiver Stress and Burnout

- Increased overwhelmed feelings
- Constant worry
- Increased sadness, hopelessness or helplessness
- Sleep changes (too much or not enough)
- Appetite changes/weight changes (increase or decrease)
- Often fatigued (emotionally, physically)
- Loss of interest in activities you once enjoyed
- Becoming sick, developing pain or other physical concerns
- Withdraw from loved ones
- Substance abuse

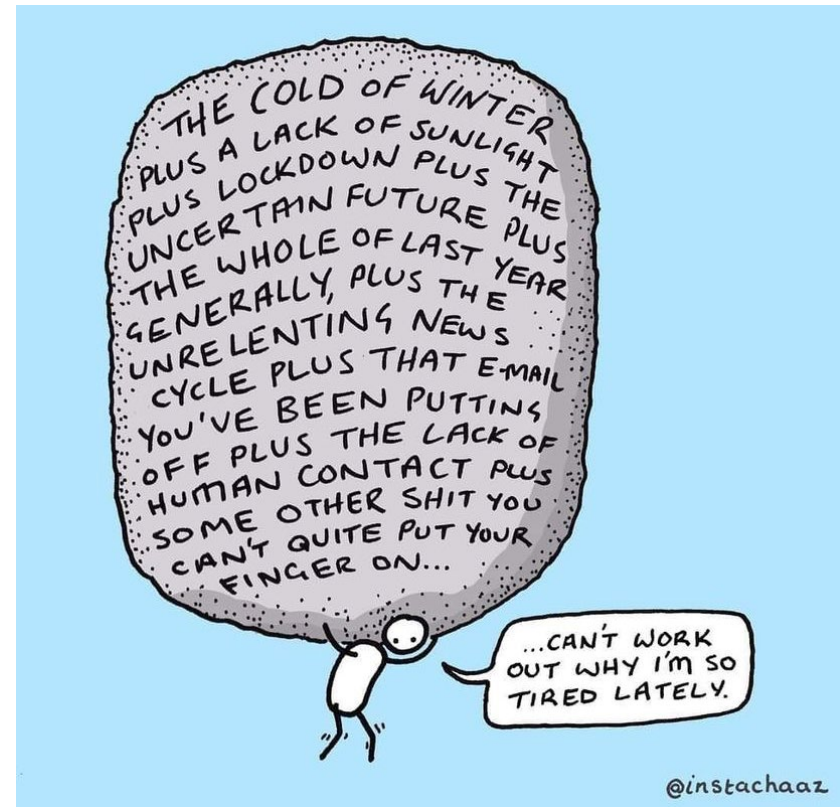
*\*If you have ongoing or increased concerns in any area, it may be helpful to make an appointment with a physician or a therapist to further discuss these concerns.*

# Warning Signs of Trauma Exposure



# Barriers to Caring for Ourselves

- Time limitations
- Lack of energy
- Fear of being perceived as weak or vulnerable
- Other responsibilities
- Believe in the value of production
- Poor ability to self-assess





# Definitions

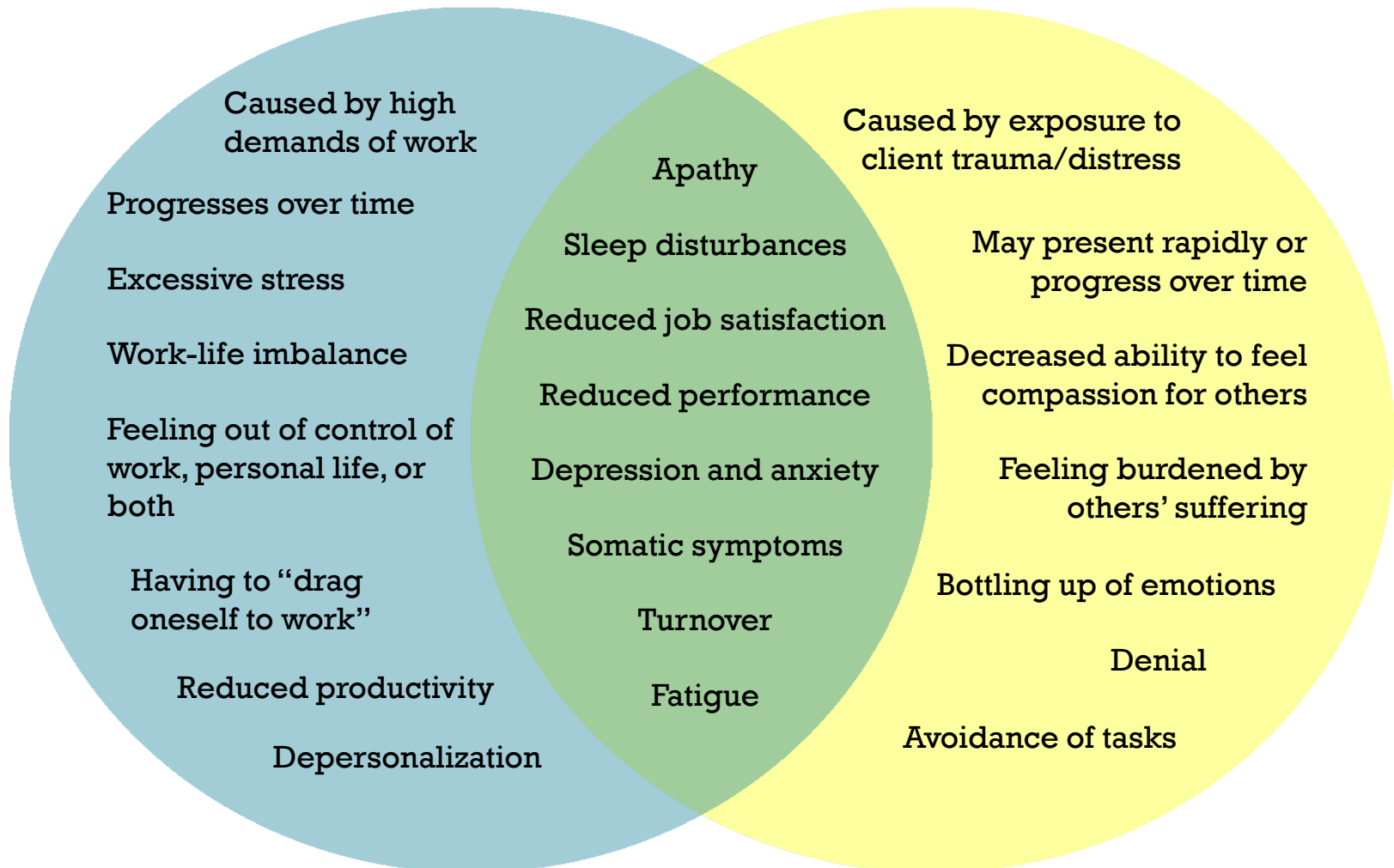
**COMPASSION SATISFACTION** is the pleasure one derives from being able to do his/her work well.

**COMPASSION FATIGUE** is emotional residue or strain of exposure to working with those suffering from the consequences of traumatic events.

**BURNOUT** refers to the cumulative process marked by emotional exhaustion and withdrawal associated with increased work load and institutional stress, not trauma-related.

## BURNOUT

## COMPASSION FATIGUE



# PREVENTING COMPASSION FATIGUE

## COMPASSION FATIGUE RISK FACTORS

High expectations  
of work

Idealistic  
worldviews

The view that  
self-care  
is selfish

A lack of  
strong personal  
boundaries

An overdeveloped  
sense of  
responsibility

## COMPASSION SATISFACTION SUPPORTERS

Adjusting  
expectations in  
response to  
reality

Focusing on  
the good

Accepting  
the bad

Viewing self-care  
as essential to  
mental and  
physical health

Setting  
compassionate  
boundaries



CLICK TO READ 3 MINDSET TIPS TO PREVENT  
COMPASSION FATIGUE ON [THEWELLNESSSOCIETY.ORG](http://THEWELLNESSSOCIETY.ORG)

# High Cost of Burnout

- Physiological impacts of chronic stress
  - Hypertension, skin conditions, GI distress, diabetes, weight changes
- Depression, anxiety, trauma symptoms (e.g. disturbing dreams, intrusive thoughts)
- Impacts on personal life
  - Irritability
  - Exhaustion
  - Disengaging from loved ones

(Jackson, 2014)

# Impact on Clients

- Turnover of trusted professionals
- Disrupts continuity of care
- Impacts clinical judgment and decision-making
  - Assessment and intervention skills
  - Engagement with clients
- Negatively impacts quality and consistency of services
- May lead to client mistrust

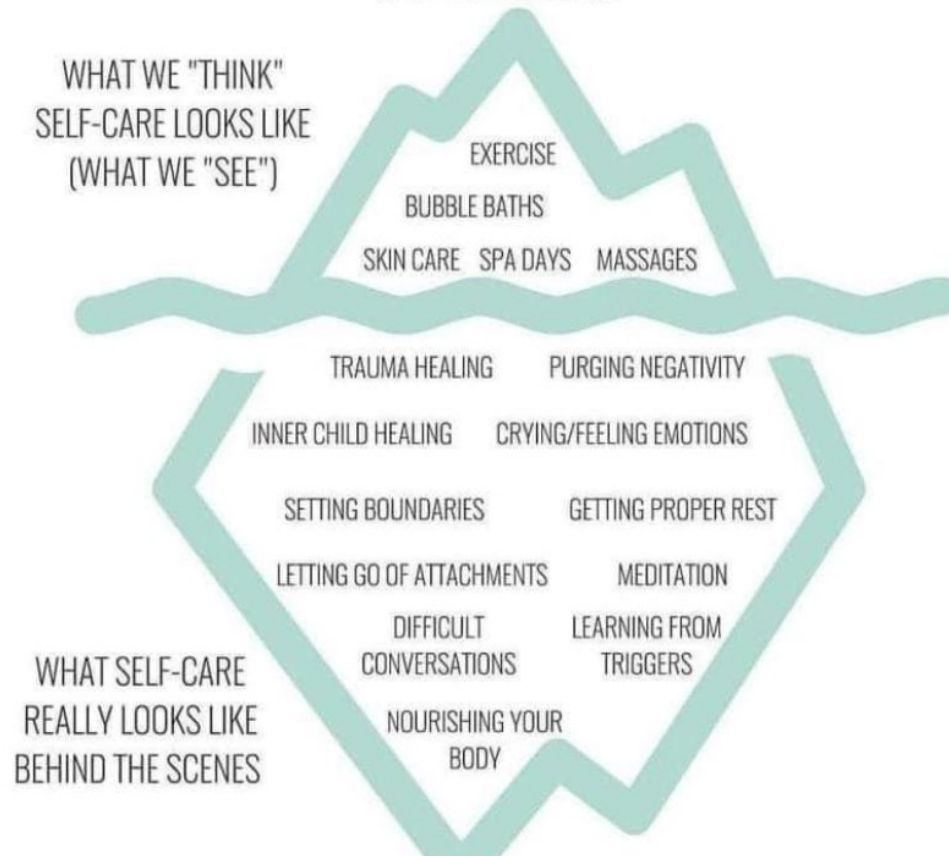
(Jackson, 2014; Kim & Stoner, 2008)



# Self-Care Iceberg

## THE SELF-CARE ICEBERG

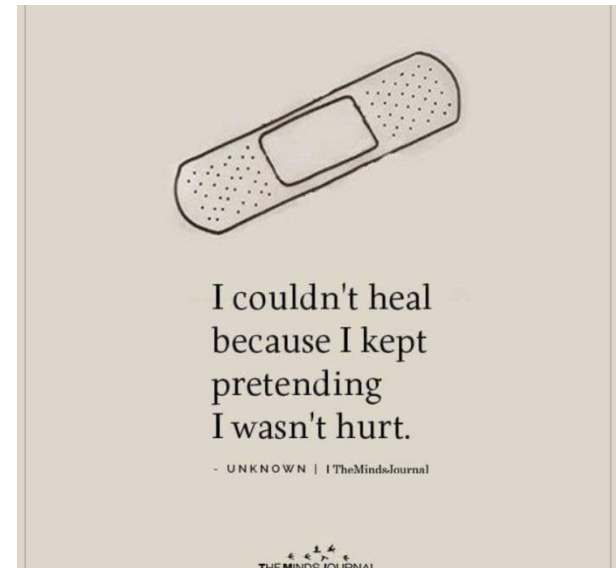
@heatherderanja



# Self-Awareness

- What is your trauma intake level right now?
- Awareness
- Balance
- Connection
- Good Communication

(Gamble, 2002)



# Self-Care Assessment



# Measures that Help Prevent Burnout

- Mindful meditation and reflective writing
- Adequate supervision and mentoring
- Sustainable workload
- Supportive work and family community
- Promotion of fairness and justice in the workplace
- Development of self-awareness skills
- Practice of self-care activities
- Continuing educational activities
- *Accepting what you cannot control*

## THINGS YOU CAN CONTROL

**YOUR SLEEP ROUTINE**

**HOW YOU SPEAK TO YOURSELF**

**WHO YOU FOLLOW ON  
SOCIAL MEDIA**

**WHAT YOU EAT**

**YOUR MINDSET**

**THE WAY YOU TREAT OTHERS**

**YOUR LEVEL OF HONESTY**

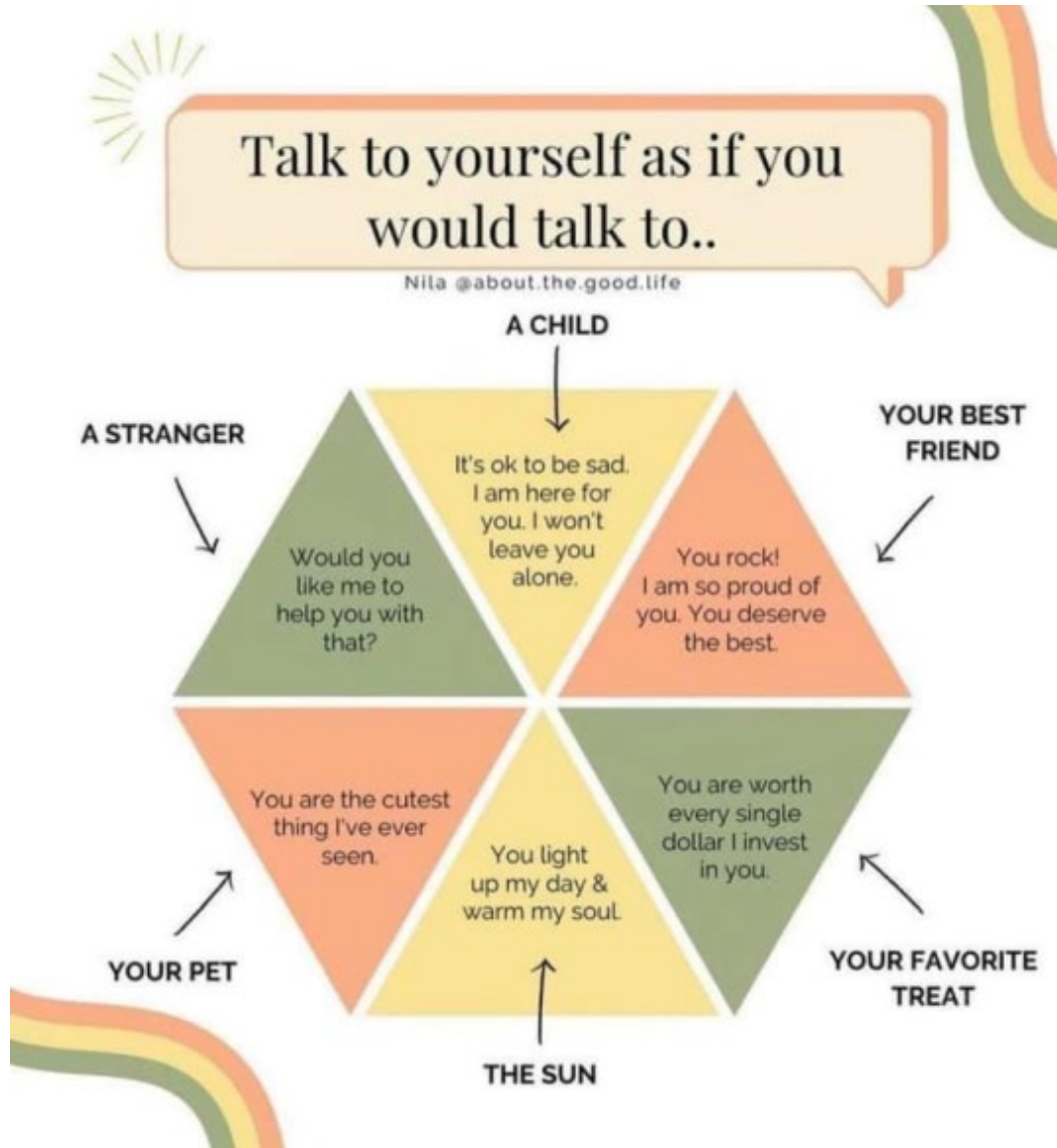
**YOUR OUTLOOK**

**HOW SOON YOU TRY AGAIN  
AFTER YOU FAIL**

@thefabstory



# Reduce Shaming Language



# What do we need in our toolkit?

- Recognition of our own basic needs for good nutrition, ample sleep, lots of water, and exercise/movement
- Supportive friends we can trust and rely on
- Honor our emotional and spiritual needs
- Readily accessible self-soothe strategies
- Laugh out loud

(Jackson, 2014)

# Advice from 4-year-old

- Take a breath
- Take a bath
- Hold hands with a friend
- Go poop

# Stress Management Techniques

- Exercise
- Meditation or Mindfulness
- Taking a break
- Eating a healthy meal
- *Vent about the situation*
- Prioritize and schedule
- Reduce workload
- Take a vacation
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and nicotine
- Get more sleep
- Talk to someone
- Rest, if you are sick

# Self-Care Essentials

- Look for signals in your body that you need to slow down
- Identify values and priorities
- Awareness of capabilities and limitations
- Create and maintain boundaries
- Learn when to say “No.”
- Permission and encouragement to NOT work harder and longer

(Jackson, 2014)



# *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.

haha!

**LAUGH**

pure humor = a sustaining force.

**FOSTER HUMILITY  
& EXTEND GRACE**

self-righteousness  
+ hubris = unhelpful.

**SLEEP**

zzz...

to cleanse + repair brain + body.

**CLARIFY INTENTIONS**

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

**BE REALISTIC + COMPASSIONATE**

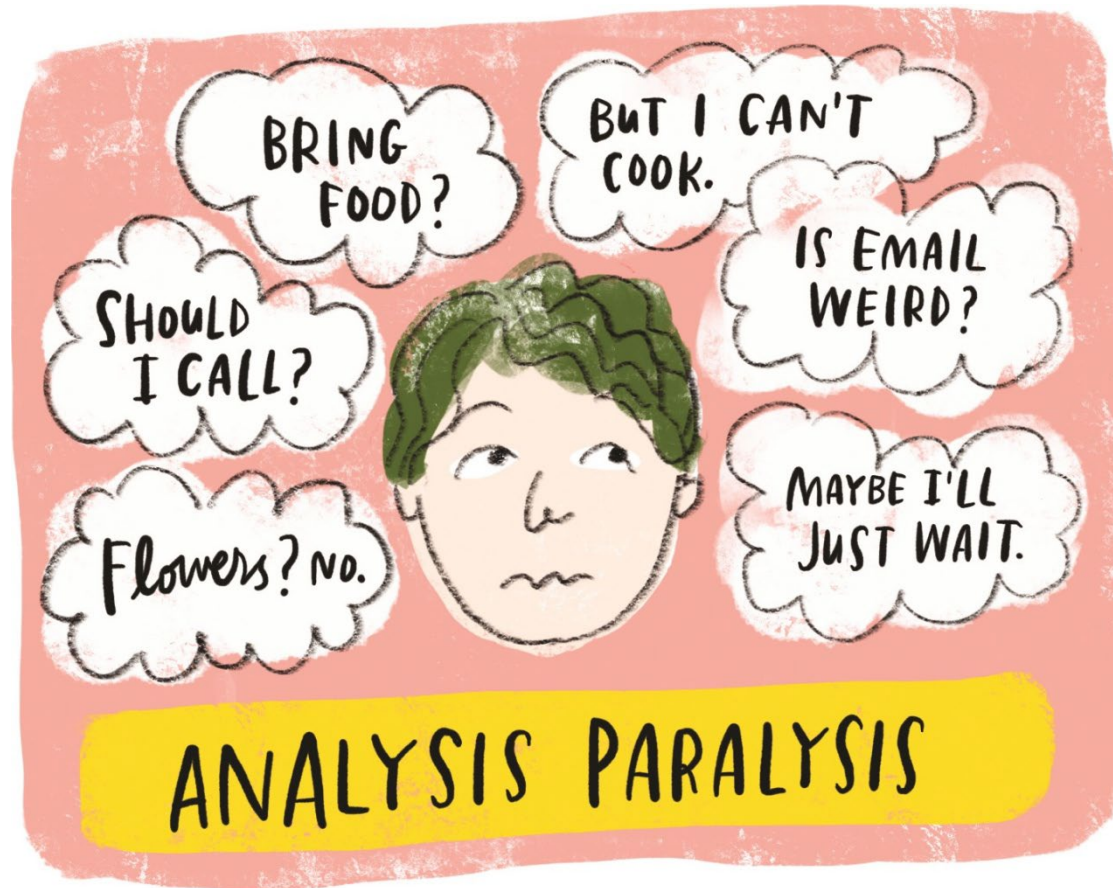
[with yourself]

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

# Tips for Utilizing Self Care

- Have at least one tool that can be used anywhere, anytime
- Make your self-care goals realistic and attainable
- Making self-care intentional, schedule you first
- Reduce trauma intake
- Have routine for commute or arrival at home
- Be a “mirror” not a “sponge”

# Communication



# What You Say



# What They Hear



# What You Say





# What They Hear





# What You Say



# What They Hear



# What You Say



# What They Hear

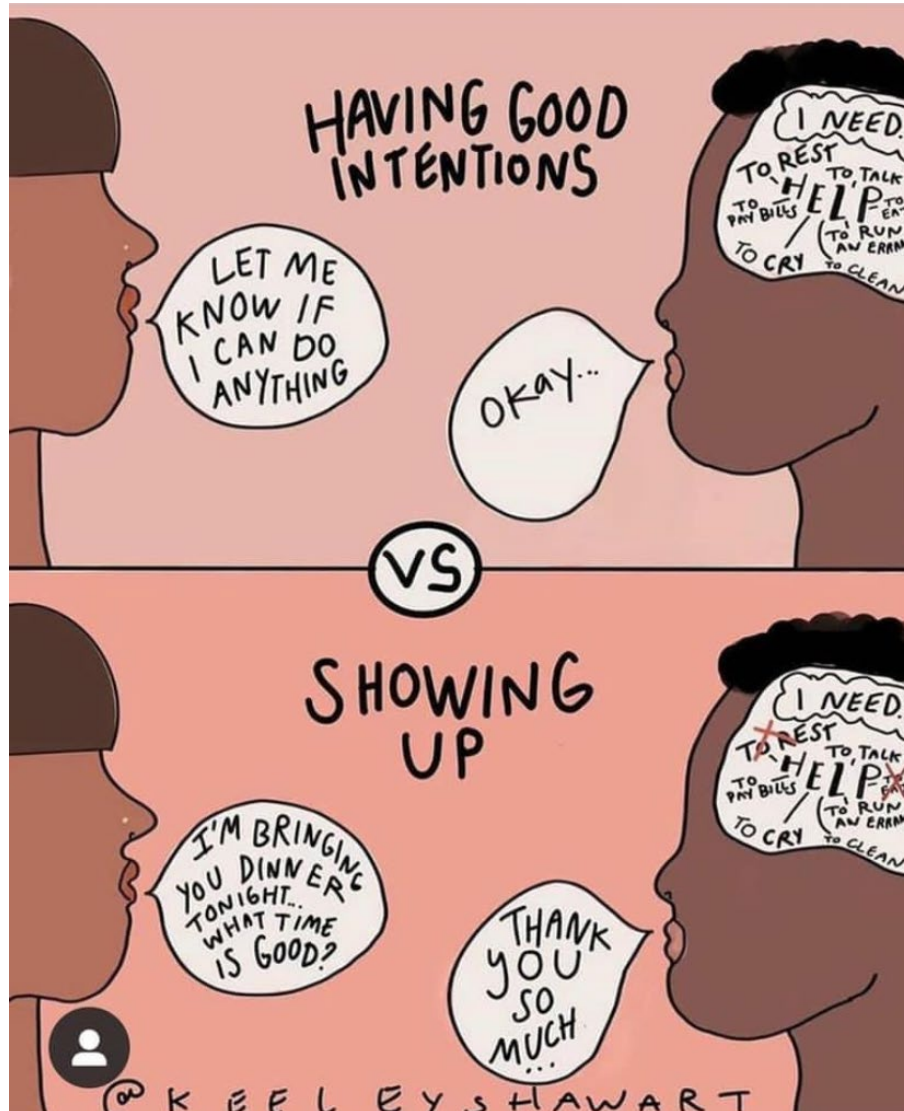


# What You Say



# What They Hear





# What NOT to Say

- “I know how you feel.”
- “Just get over it.”
- “You’re so brave and strong.”
- “Remember, there is always someone worse off than you.”
- “I know how you feel.”
- “How are you, really?”

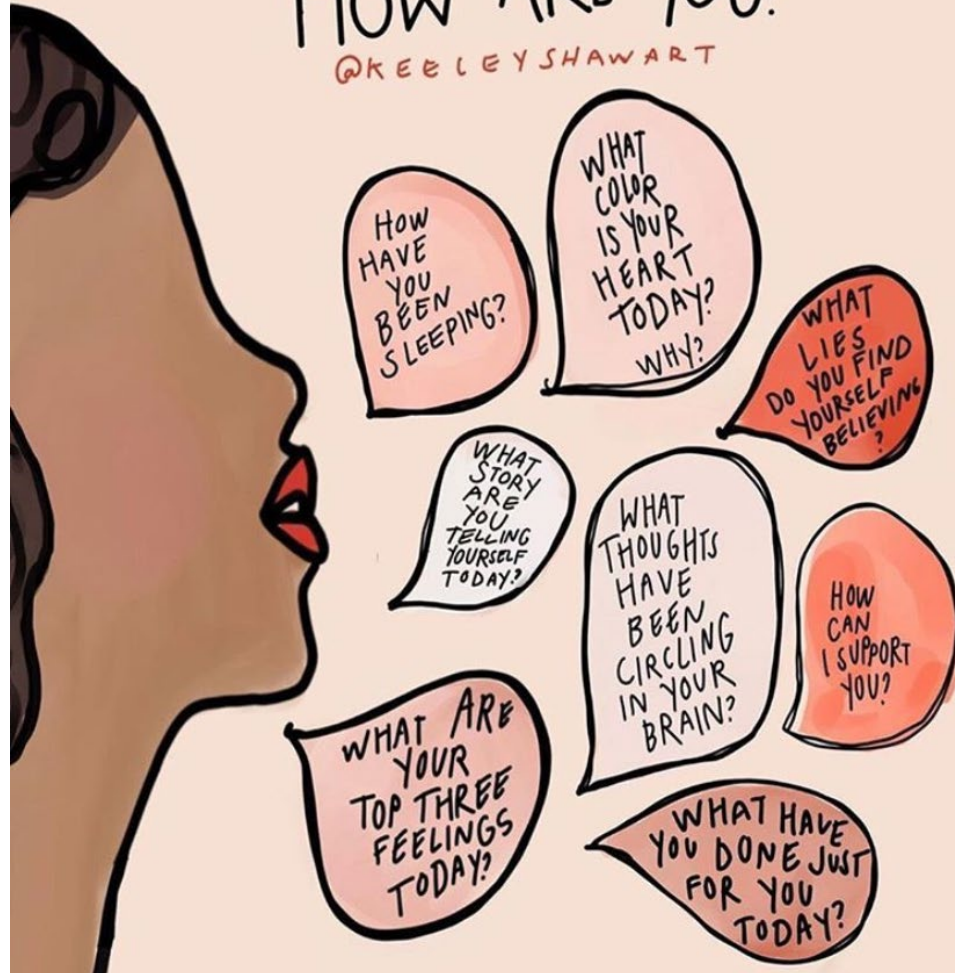


# What to Say

- “I don’t know what to say.”
- “I am here.”
- “Have you seen...?”
- “Would you like to talk about it?”
- “I will not forget (insert name).”
- “How is today?”

# INSTEAD of "HOW ARE YOU?"

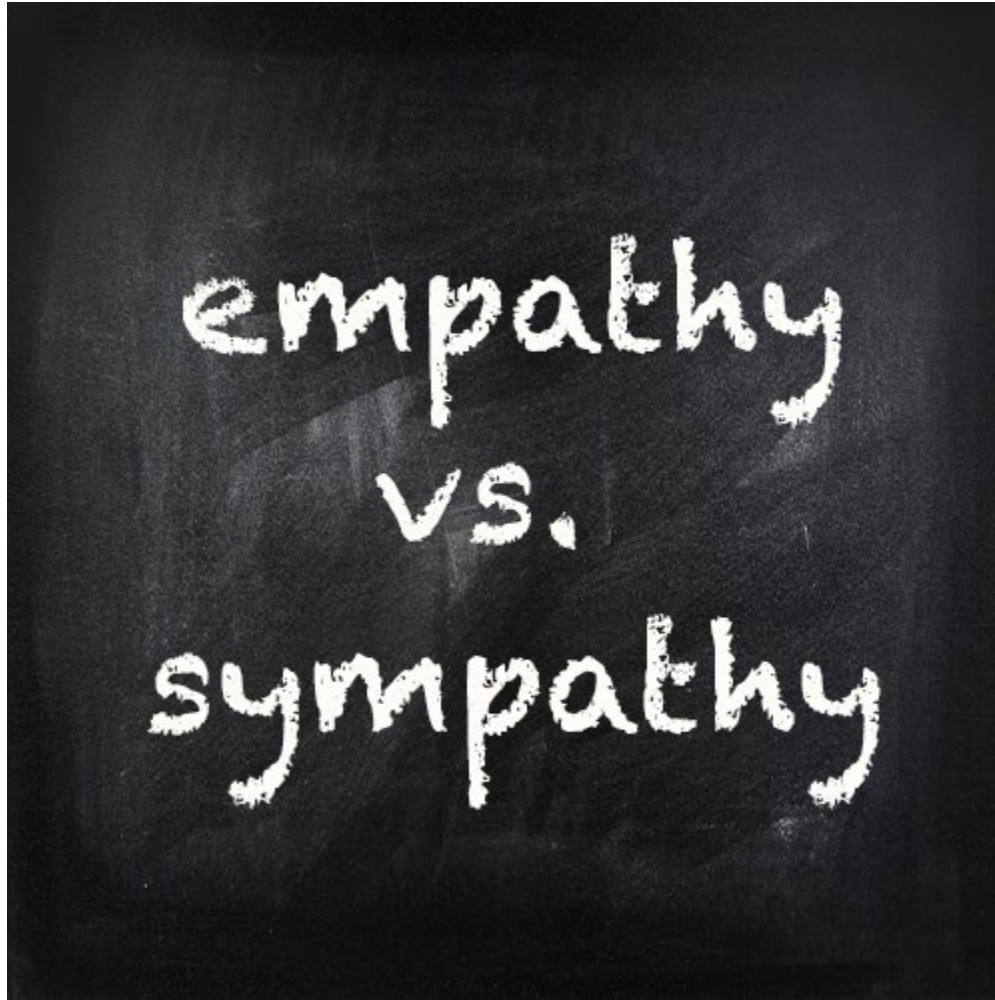
©KEELEY SHAWART



“In tragedy, there’s not a lot you can say to make it better. But there is a lot you can say that makes it worse. ”

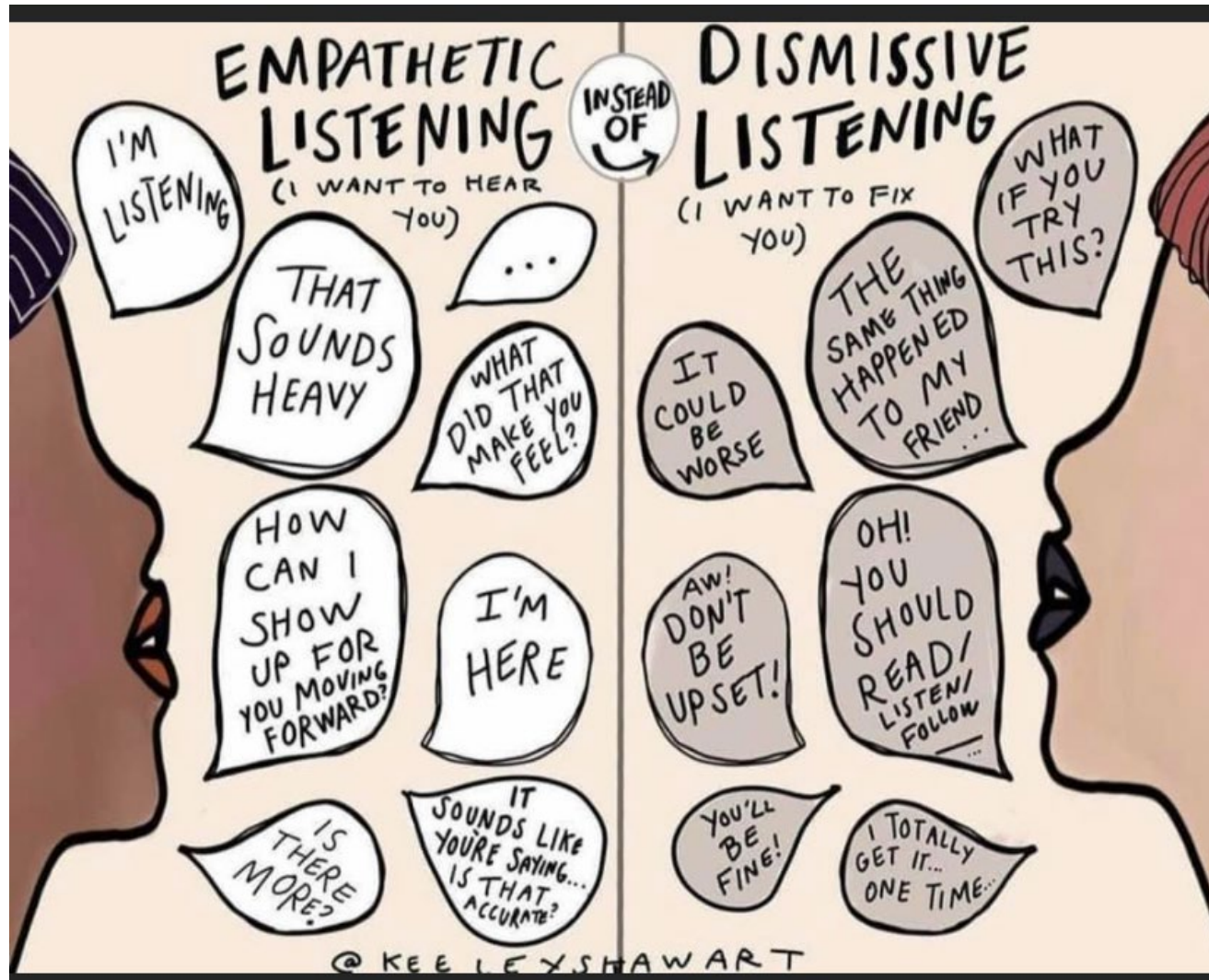
--The Morning Show

# Empathy vs. Sympathy



Empathy:  
“feeling  
with”

Sympathy:  
“feeling for”





# Community Care

”

Shouting "self-care" at  
people who actually need  
"community care" is  
how we fail people.

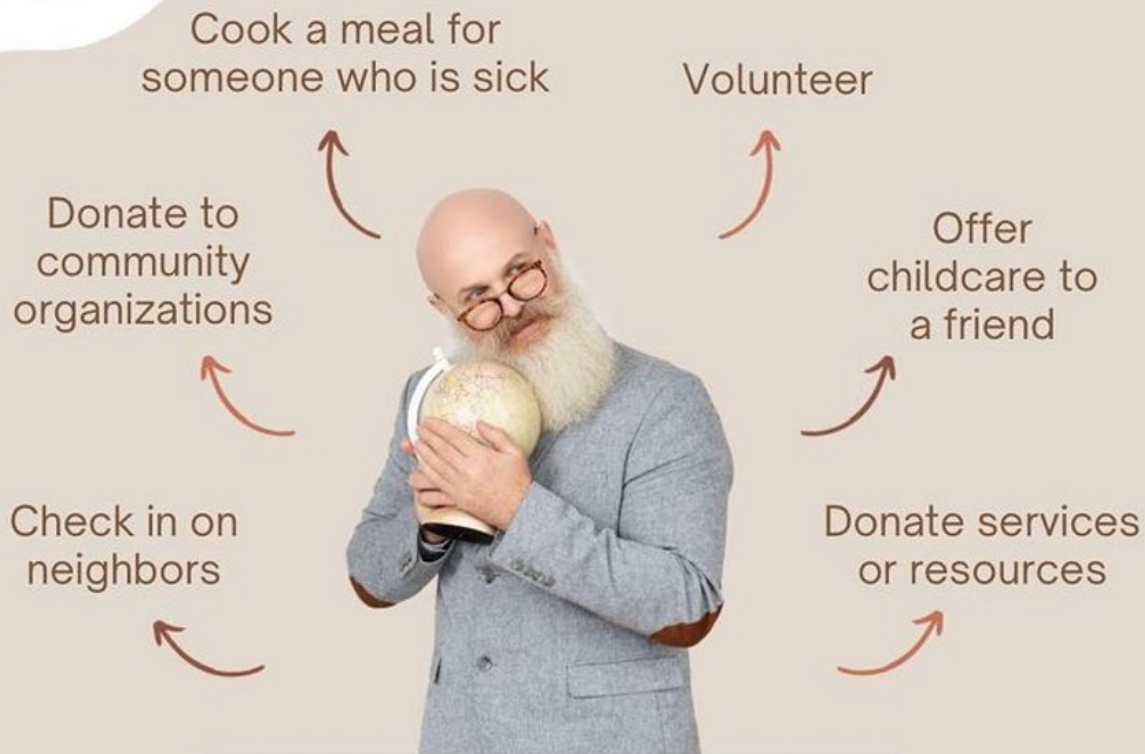
- Nakita Valerio

“

# Community Care

- Perceived social support in the workplace decreases likelihood of burnout and turnover
- A trusted colleague may be better equipped to identify signs of overwork and point them out
- Recognize there is no one-size-fits-all approach to self-care

(Kim & Stoner 2008, Rossi et al. 2012)



## 6 Ways to Practice COMMUNITY CARE



@drlaurenfogelmersy



# Outcomes

- By practicing community care we can:
  - Reduce compassion fatigue and burnout
  - Increase engagement
  - Promote retention
  - Become better stewards of our limited resources
- These all lead to what is most important: the best possible service for our clients

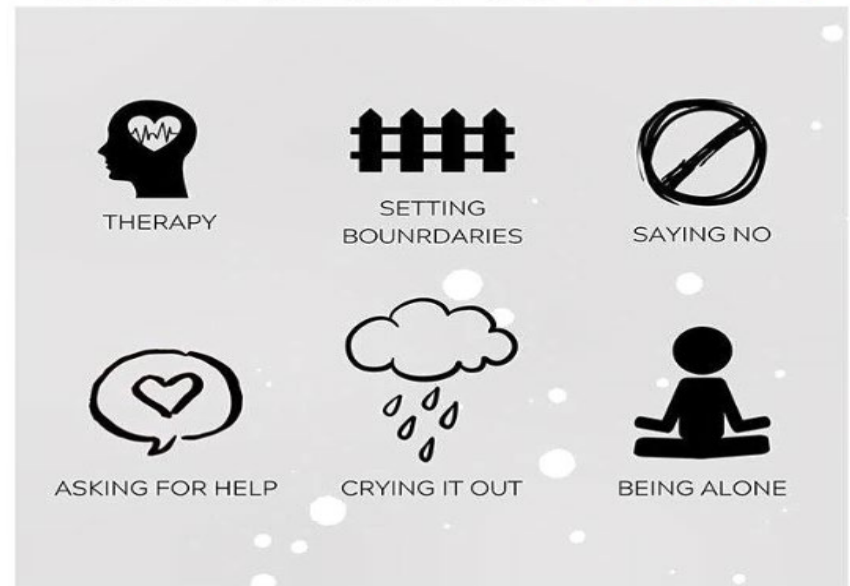
# Planning

- What matters most to you in your daily life?
- What routines are non-negotiable to feeling like yourself?
- When do you feel healthiest? Least healthy?
- What aspects of your work life do you find most enjoyable? Most stressful?
- What aspects of your life outside of work do you find most enjoyable? Most stressful?
- How do you recognize that you need to slow down?
- How could your community recognize that you might need help?

# Self-care vs. Self-Soothing

- Self-care is what you do preventatively to keep from getting upset.
- Self-soothing is what you do to calm down and reset when you are upset.

## FORMS OF SELF-CARE THAT AREN'T SO PRETTY



@karissaleifken

# Grounding

## SIX WAYS TO PRACTICE GROUNDING

with anxiety + intense emotions



### body

lay on the ground,  
press your toes into  
the floor, squeeze  
playdough



### 5 senses

wear your favorite  
sweatshirt, use  
essential oils,  
make a cup of tea



### self- soothe

take a shower or  
bath, find a  
grounding object,  
light a candle



### observe

describe an object  
in detail: color,  
texture, shadow,  
light, shapes



### breathe

practice 4-7-8  
breathing: inhale  
to 4, hold for 7,  
exhale to 8



### distract

find all the square  
or green objects in  
the room, count by  
7s, say the date



THE GROWLERY

# Making Room

- “Maybe it’s okay to allow it all to exist without necessarily compartmentalizing it, to accept without guilt that we can have fulfilling parts of our lives even as we feel sorrow about illness and also grieve the loss of our patients, and to find room for all of it happen: room for grief, for relief, for misery, for joy.”

(Chodron, 2000)

# The Antidote to Burnout

- Fostering a healthy organizational culture that encourages and affirms community and self-care.



# Resource

## Caring for Those Who Care

Meeting the needs  
of diverse family  
caregivers

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[diverseelders.org/caregiving](https://diverseelders.org/caregiving)



# HOW CAN PROVIDERS BETTER SUPPORT AFRICAN AMERICAN AND BLACK FAMILY CAREGIVERS?

## ● **Identify and include relevant family members in person-centered care planning**

- Revise Patient Demographic Forms and/or Adult History forms to identify whether a patient is providing care for a friend or family member
- Expand your organization's definition of "family" to include friends, neighbors, and others outside of the traditional family structure



# HOW CAN PROVIDERS BETTER SUPPORT AMERICAN INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE FAMILY CAREGIVERS?

- **Develop culturally and linguistically competent in-office material for training, information on caregiving, disease information, and intervention outreach**
  - Avoid words such as “caregiver burden”
  - 6th grade reading level or lower
  - Use images with representation of American Indians/Alaska Natives

# HOW CAN PROVIDERS BETTER SUPPORT ASIAN AMERICAN FAMILY CAREGIVERS?

## ● **Provide culturally competent referrals and resources**

- Dissemination of culturally competent in-office material for training and information
- Affordable and in-language referrals

## ● **Develop in-language caregiver support groups**

- Resolve social and linguistic isolation
- Provide support network for older adult LEP caregivers

# HOW CAN PROVIDERS BETTER SUPPORT HISPANIC FAMILY CAREGIVERS?

- **Recruit, promote, and support a diverse workforce that understands/represents the culture of the community**
  - Cultural representation among providers is important for Hispanic/Latinx caregivers and older adults (Terlizzi et al., 2019)
  - Easier communication, improved patient and caregiver outcomes

# HOW CAN PROVIDERS BETTER SUPPORT SOUTHEAST ASIAN AMERICAN FAMILY CAREGIVERS?

## ● **Disaggregate data that is collected on intake forms and in healthcare settings**

- Better understanding of challenges and resiliencies unique to SEAA communities

## ● **Development of in-language caregiver support groups**

- Nearly half of SEAA caregivers indicate being the only person available to provide care
- Improve mental health and reduce isolation
- Creation of safe place to share concerns and learn from others
- Better caregiver outcomes

# HOW CAN PROVIDERS BETTER SUPPORT LGBT FAMILY CAREGIVERS?

- **Collect information on gender identity and sexual orientation to better understand the needs your patients and caregivers**
  - Edit demographic intake tools to collect information about sexual orientation and gender identity
  - Reflect the words people use to describe their identities and relationships
- **Ensure that your organization's nondiscrimination policy includes sexual orientation and gender identity, and any use of the word of “family” makes it clear that chosen families also count.**

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