

Trauma Awareness and Resilience Strategies for Work and Life

John Collins

Disclaimer

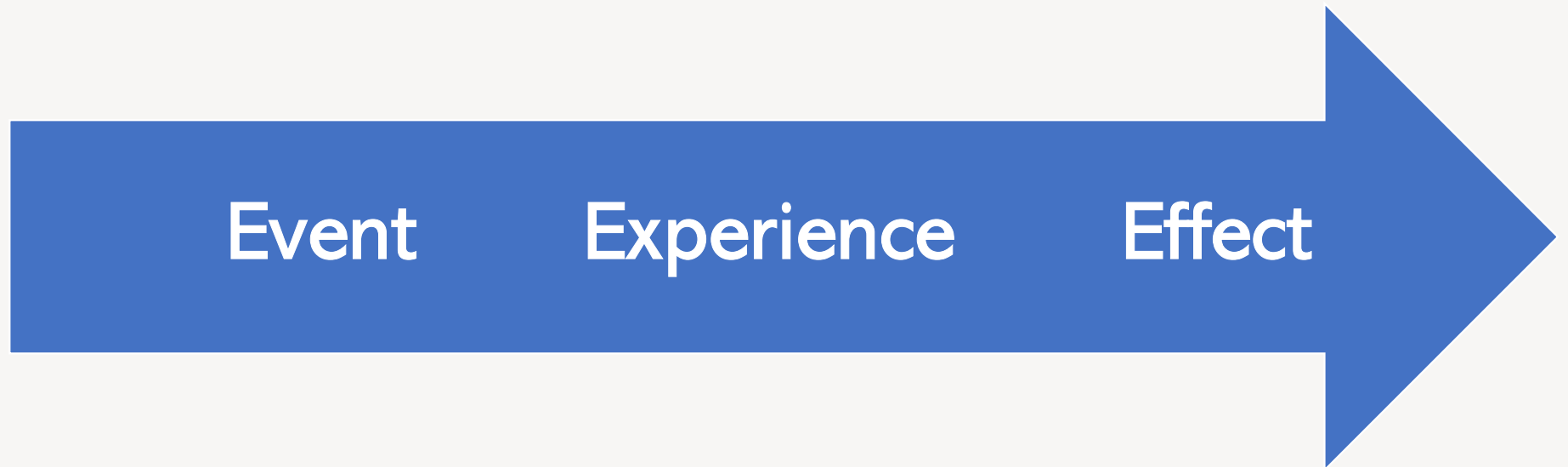
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Learning Objectives

- ✓ Define trauma related terms and recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma
- ✓ Understand the impact of stress, trauma, and constant pressure in our work
- ✓ Implement strategies and solutions for health, performance, and resilience
- ✓ Learn strategies to lead our teams to be more mindfully effective, prepared, and positioned to respond to changes and challenges

The Three E's



Defining Trauma

Trauma results from an event, series of events, or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being”

Secondary trauma is the emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another. (NCTSN, 2022)

Vicarious trauma is the emotional residue of exposure to traumatic stories and experiences of others through work; witnessing fear, pain, and terror that others have experienced; a pre-occupation with horrific stories told to the professional (American Counseling Association, 2016)

Traumatic Events

Traumatic events are events that involve overwhelming threat, that may or may not result in a trauma response (Mansfeld, 2017)

- Violence
- Physical, sexual, and emotional abuse
- Childhood neglect
- Living with a family member with mental health or substance use disorders
- Poverty
- Racism, discrimination, and oppression
- Violence in the community, war, or terrorism

Responses to And Symptoms Of Trauma

Emotional signs

- sadness
- anger
- denial
- fear
- shame

Psychological Symptoms

- nightmares
- insomnia
- difficulty with relationships
- emotional outbursts

Physical symptoms:

- nausea
- dizziness
- changes in appetite
- headaches
- gastrointestinal problems

Psychological disorders may include:

- PTSD
- depression
- anxiety
- dissociative disorders
- substance abuse problems

Long-term Impacts of Trauma

Difficulty
concentrating.

Anger,
irritability,
mood swings.

Anxiety and
fear.

Guilt, shame,
self-blame.

Withdrawing
from others.

Feeling sad or
hopeless.

Feeling
disconnected
or numb.

Defining Vicarious Trauma

The emotional residue of exposure to traumatic stories and experiences of others through work; witnessing fear, pain, and terror that others have experienced; a pre-occupation with horrific stories told to the professional (American Counseling Association, 2016)

- Secondary traumatization
- Secondary stress disorder
- Insidious trauma

Vicarious Trauma ≠ Burn Out

Long term stress reaction and process that occurs among professionals who work with people in some capacity (Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach, 1982; Maslach & Schaufeli, 1993)

Vicarious Trauma and Burnout

VT symptoms

- Empathic Strain
- Countertransference
- Poor Boundaries
- Compassion Fatigue
- Anger/Hostility
- Controlled Empathy
- Bystander Guilt

Burnout

- Avoidance
- Lack of focus
- Withdrawal
- Compassion Fatigue
- Depression



Self-Care Assessment & Stress Inventories

- **Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (STSS)**
- **Professional Quality of Life Scale (PROQOL)**
- **Self Care Assessment**
- **Compassion Satisfaction & Fatigue Scale**

***“If your compassion does not include yourself,
it is incomplete.”***

-Jack Kornfield



Resilience - from surviving to thriving

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or significant sources of stress... It means “bouncing back” from difficult experiences.

-American Psychological Association



Resiliency

Ability to
bounce back

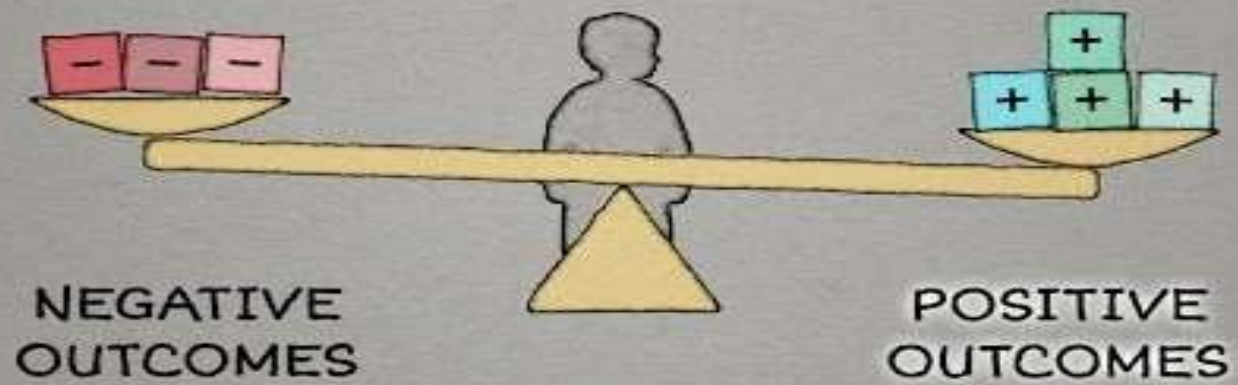
Adapt to
hardships

A skill that can
be built over
time

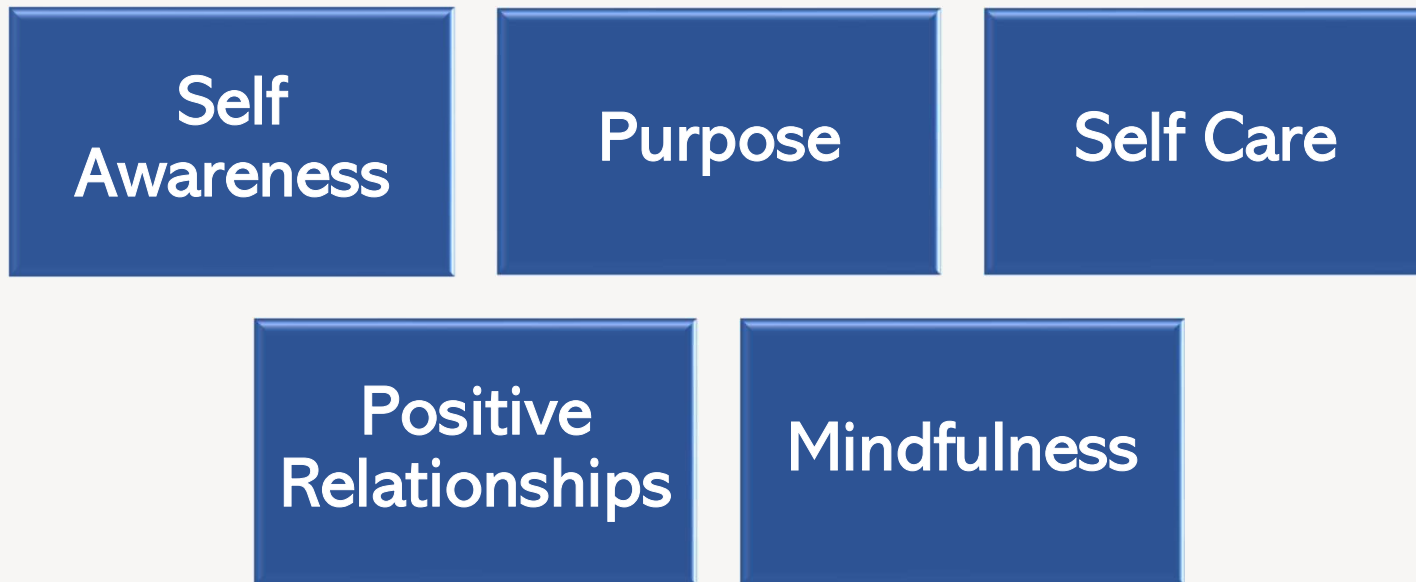
Thrive within
the stress

resilience may
experience
ebbs and flows





5 Pillars of Resiliency



ABC's method of self care

- **Awareness:** self awareness; recognize the signs and symptoms
- **Balance:** maintain a healthy balance between your personal life and professional work
- **Connect:** seek relationships or connections with positive sources and people



Self Awareness

Discover your
blind spots by
asking for
feedback

Identify your
emotional
kryptonite

Pay attention to
what bothers
you about other
people

Identify cognitive
distortions

Change your
mindset/Reframe

Know that life
isn't fair

Recognize the
signs and
symptoms

Purpose

Be proactive

Focus on the
present

Stay flexible

Focus on
what you
can change

Move
towards
your goals

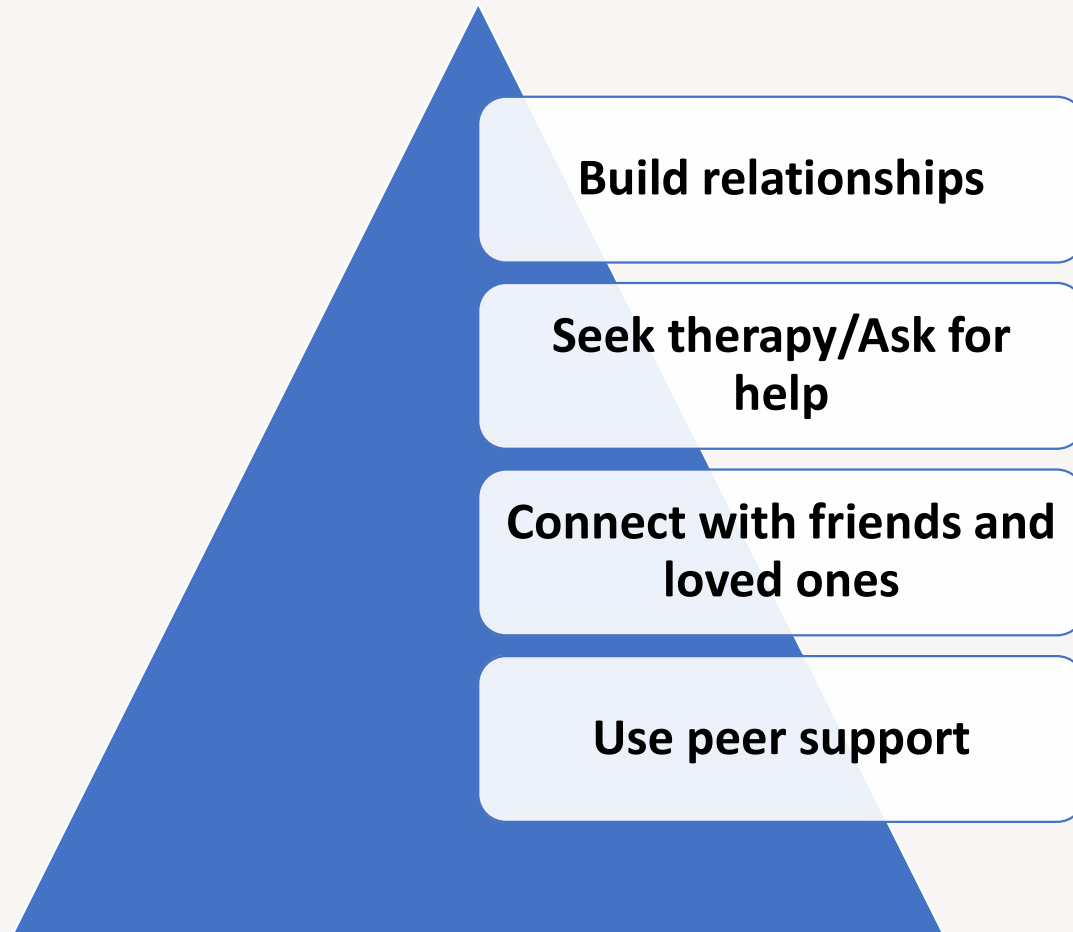
Self Care



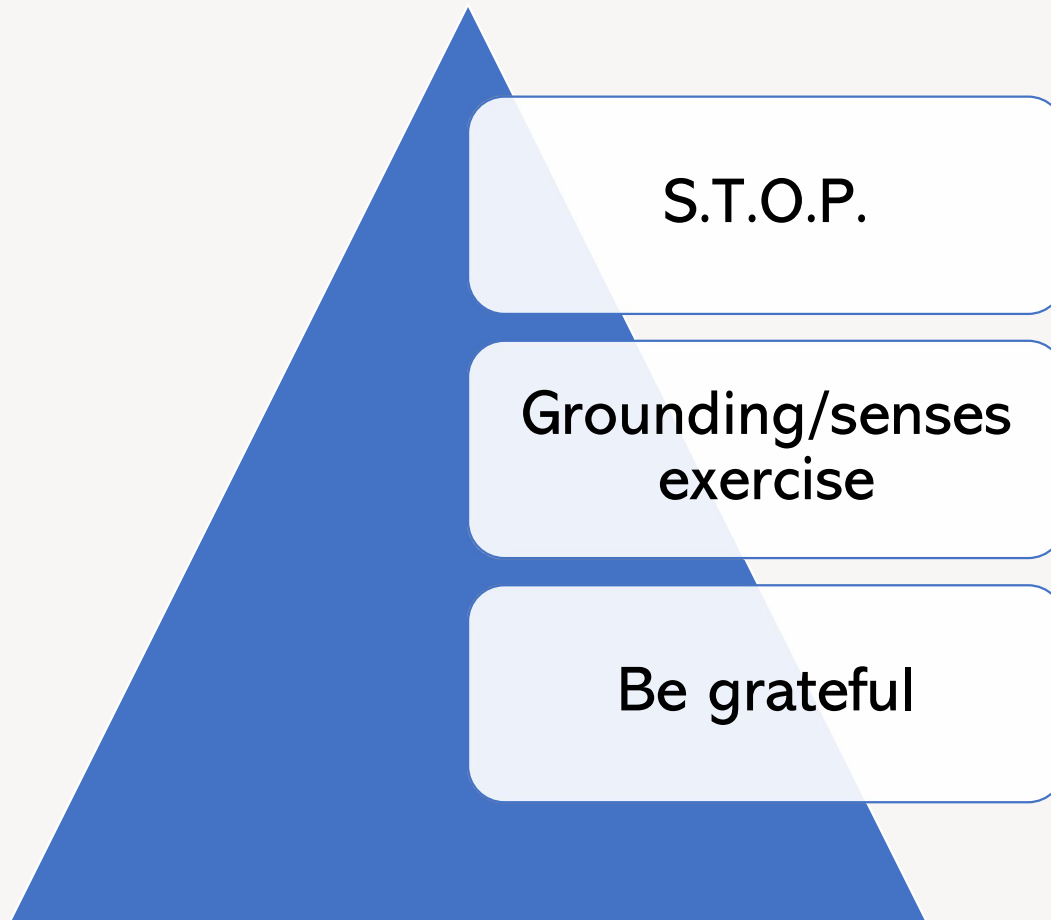
Coping and Prevention Techniques



Positive Relationships



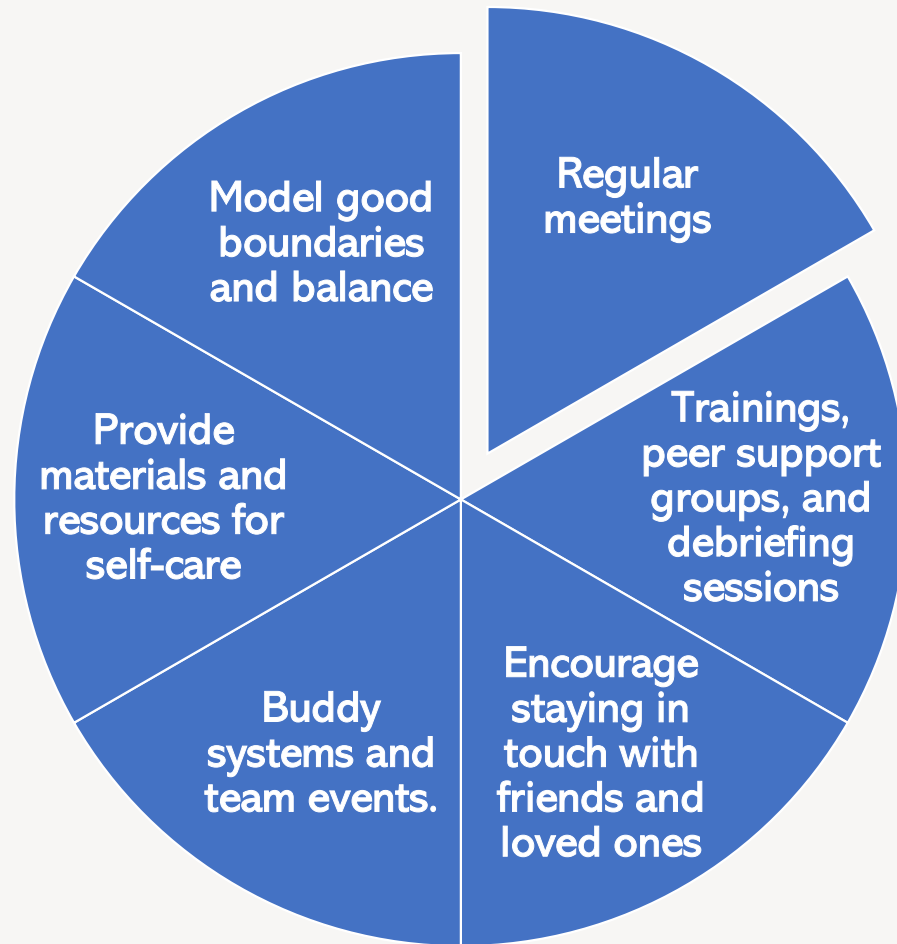
Mindfulness



Remember to.....

- Debrief
- Be flexible
- Learn about trauma
- Laugh
- Don't try to fix it

Strategies for Supervisors and Team Leads



When a colleague comes to you in crisis.....

- **LISTEN LISTEN LISTEN**

- Do not interrupt
- Let them talk about what they experienced
- Validate
- Don't try to fix it

Questions?

- John Collins
- john_m_collins@hotmail.com



References and Resources

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