



# Trauma Informed Supervision



Partnering to build brighter futures



# Learning Objectives

Review how staff and organizations are impacted by trauma

Deepen understanding of the role of the supervisor in creating and perpetuating trauma informed team culture and enhancing staff resilience

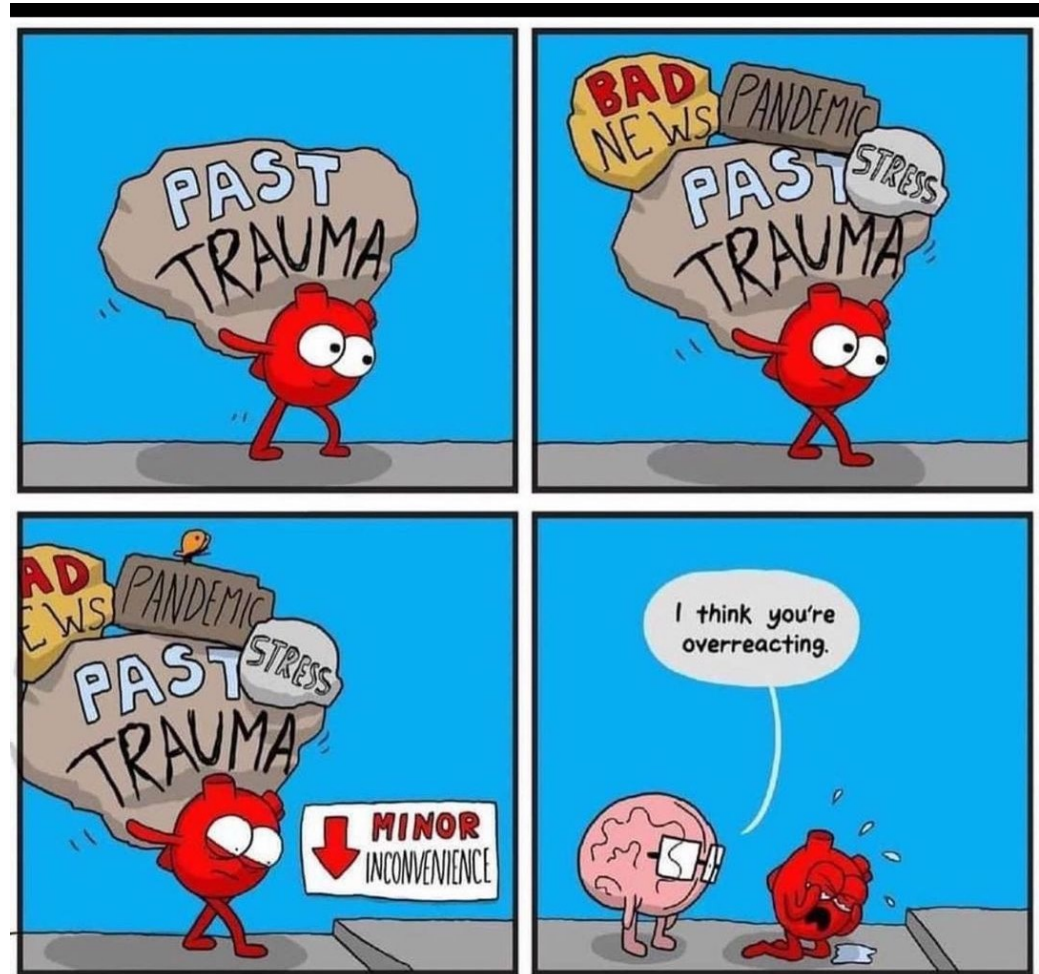
Explore techniques for providing trauma informed supervision

# Mindful Minute



# Self-Care Check

- Step out and take a break
- Engage your senses
- Stand up; stretch
- Debrief – who can you talk to?





# Why are you interested in Trauma Informed Supervision?



# Trauma Informed Supervision



# Four R's of Trauma Informed Supervision

## Realize

Supervisors have a basic realization about trauma and how it can affect staff and programs

## Recognize

Supervisors are able to recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma

## Response

Supervisors respond to staff by practicing a trauma-informed approach

## Resist Re-Traumatization

Trauma-Informed supervisors work to avoid retraumatizing staff and participants

Realize



# How Trauma Impacts the Organization



## Compassion Fatigue

Refers to a physical, emotional and spiritual fatigue or exhaustion that takes over a person and causes a decline in his or her ability to experience joy or to feel and care for others.

(Alameda County Behavioral Health Care)

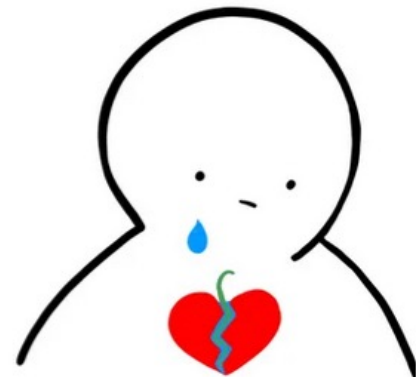
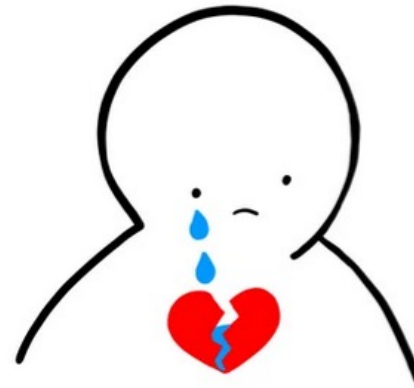
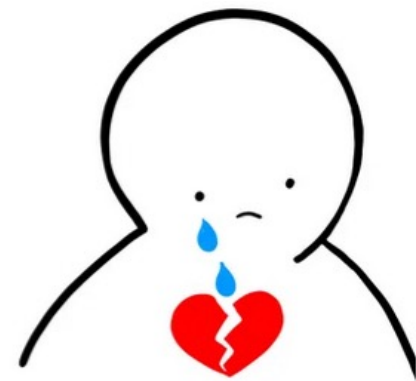
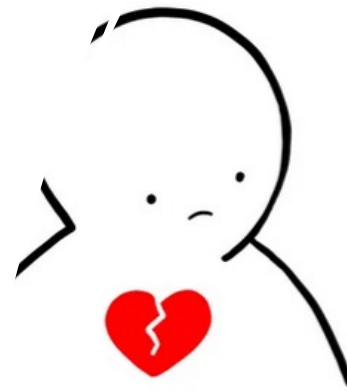


## Vicarious Trauma

Refers to the ***cumulative*** effect of working with survivors of traumatic life events. Anyone who engages empathically with victims or survivors is vulnerable. Impacts sense of identity, safety, ability to trust, self-esteem, intimacy and control.

(Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995)

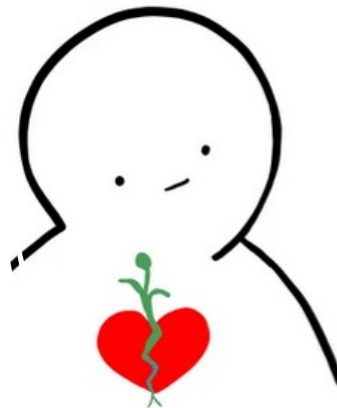
# Trauma & Its Impact



Unique position of being a supervisor

Power struggle – being in the middle between organizational structures & people

**Name 1 based on your experience**



# Trauma & Its Impact: **Vicarious Trauma**



**WHAT IS  
VICARIOUS TRAUMA?**  
**AND HOW CAN PARENTS OVERCOME  
COMPASSION FATIGUE?**

# Naming Workplace Traumas

What steps have you taken as a supervisor to **identify** or **address** one of these workplace traumas for yourself or staff?



**Stressful  
Events**



**Organizational  
Stressors**



**Physical  
Stressors**



**External  
Threats**

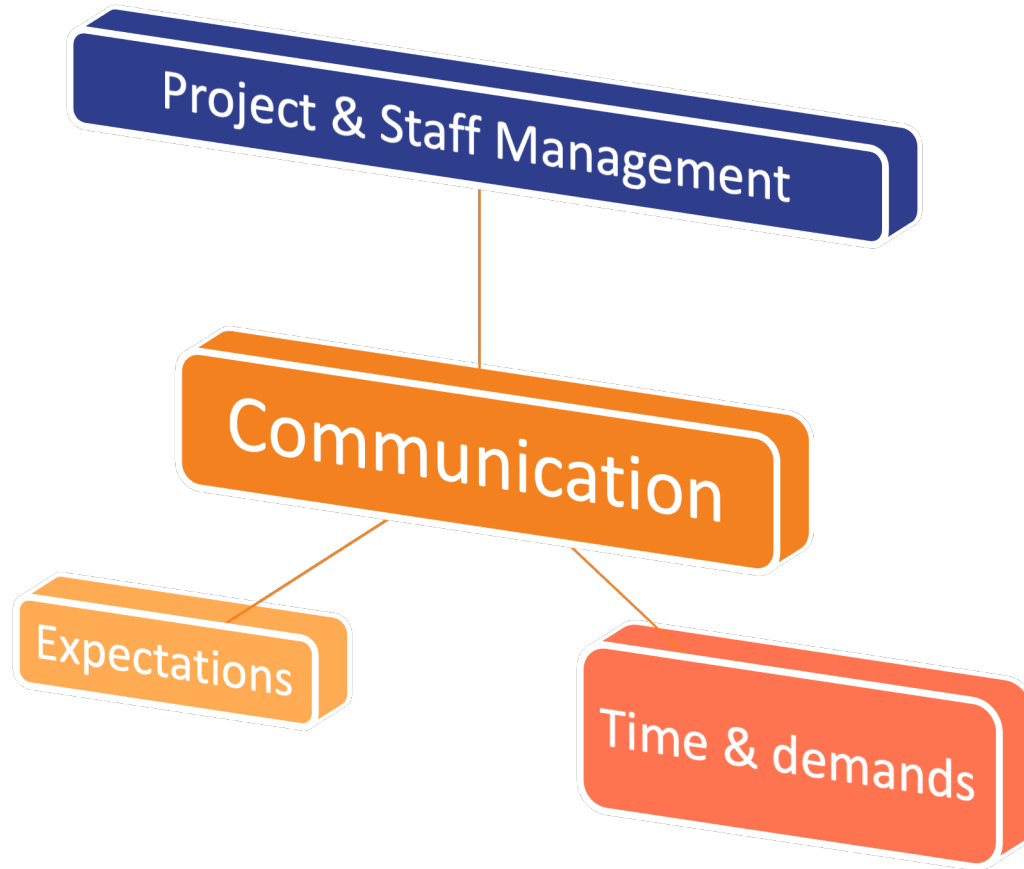
Recognize

What do you struggle with as supervisor? A lack of ...





# Supervisor Infrastructure



# How to prepare staff to identify workplace trauma?

- **Reflective Supervision Practice**
- Train all staff on recognizing the signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue , vicarious trauma, and impact of trauma
- Provide an emotionally and physically safe space for staff to disclose the positive and negative impact of their work
- Respond appropriately to staff disclosures
  - Listen to their story and thank them for their vulnerability
  - Offer support
  - Allow the staff member to be the expert of their experience
  - Share resources that might be helpful
  - Partner with your staff to identify their strengths, resources and needs



# Preparing Staff Requires

Identifying and naming our current workplace spaces and interactions as supervisors. Any strategy will require a shift in our behavior during specific time and places. Without this, our actions will not materialize. We cannot prepare staff as an idea but rather with concrete points.

- Supervision Time
- Onboarding as continuous
  - New Staff, new projects or changes in responsibilities
- Communication
  - Debriefing
- Crisis Planning for future incidents
- Planning Ahead
  - Short- and long-term perspectives
- Containing Stress to time periods
- Open to implement supervisee feedback
- Transparency



## Our Protective Role

- Supervision offers practitioners the chance to debrief and explore alternative perspectives
- Critical strategy in helping practitioners to address challenges and to prevent, mitigate, and heal vicarious trauma.
- Serves as a buffer; promotes staff retention and reduces turnover.
- Identify and address capacity needs and demands – not just tasks but partnership

# Recognizing Your Self

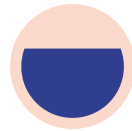


## Role

What is your style, role, and preference?

What is your emotional capacity?

What are your boundaries?

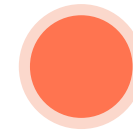


## Needs

Do you prioritize your expectations and capacities?

What is your relationship with your supervisor?

What could be delegated or shifted?



## Perspective

How do you reflect and integrate?

What perspective do you feel is missing?


How do you honor your contributions as a leader within team and in org?

Respond



## A Brief Moment for Reflection...

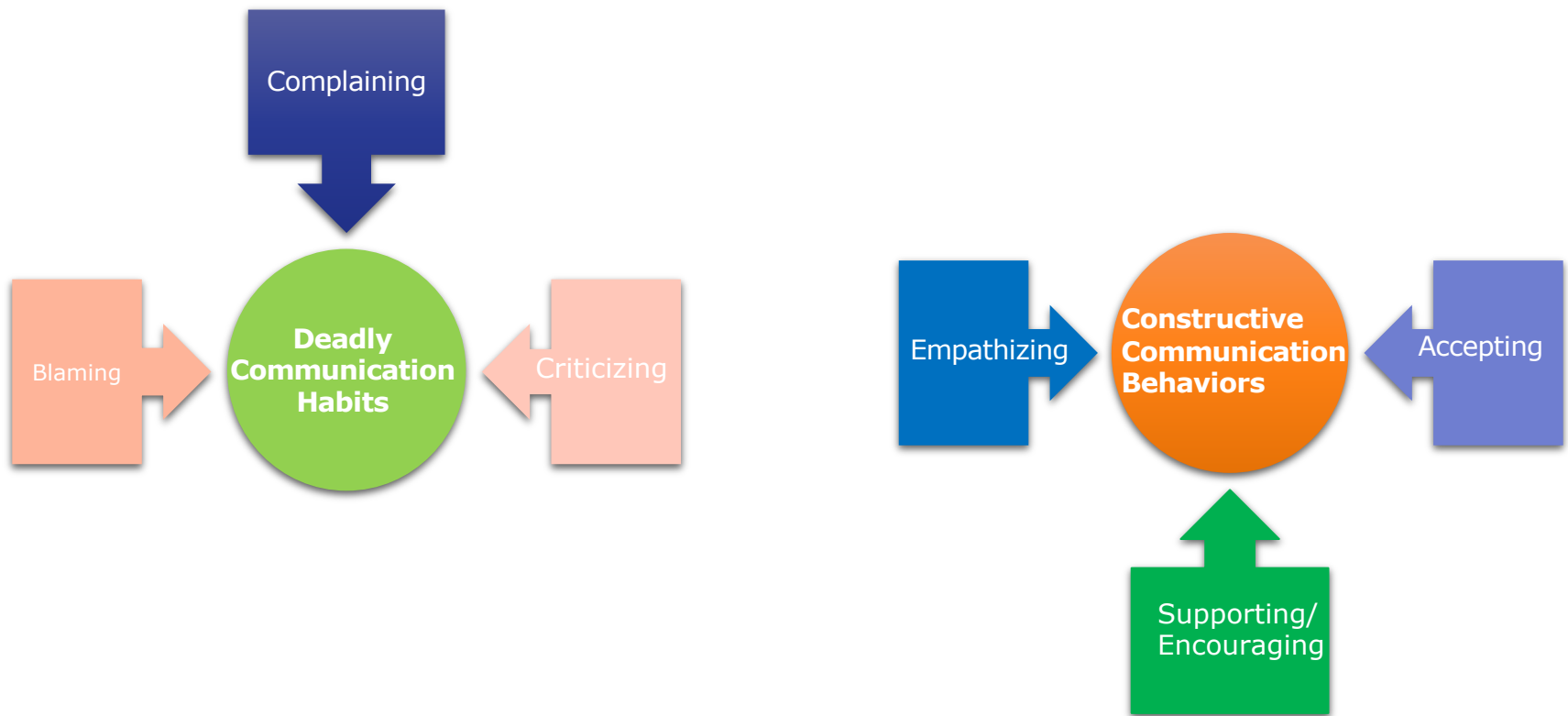
Think back to a supervisor that you've had in the past/currently. Think of your worst experience that you can recall. What was it about that experience that made it negative?



Now, think about the best experience that you've had with a current/former supervisor (could be the same supervisor or not). What was it about that experience that was positive and stood out?

Stopped here due to exciting group discussion!

# Turning Deadly Communication Habits into Constructive Ones





# Six Principles of Trauma Informed Care

## Safety

Throughout the organization, staff and the people they serve, whether children or adults, feel physically and psychologically safe; the physical setting is safe and interpersonal interactions promote a sense of safety.

## Trust & Transparency

A state in which staff and clients can believe that those they work with are operating with honesty and a genuine commitment to their well-being. This state is built over time and is supported by accountability, well defined roles and expectations, and clear communication.

## Voice & Choice

Allowing individuals the maximum possible autonomy and control. This means allowing individuals be given choice and flexibility around the way that they deliver or receive care

## Empowerment & Resilience

Approaching our work from the perspective that every individual is fully capable and that our focus should be in continuing to build capacities, encourage master, and prioritize growth

## Collaboration & mutuality

Approaching our work as a partnership with others, in which one perspective is valued over others, where services are collaborative within and across systems, and where multiple perspectives are incorporated in development, planning and implementation of organizational initiatives.

## Cultural, Historical, & Gender Issues

The organization actively moves past cultural stereotypes/ biases and incorporates policies, protocols, and processes that are responsive to the racial, ethnic and cultural needs of individuals served and recognizes and addresses historical trauma.

Resist Re-Traumatization



# Continuously Engaging the 4 Rs

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# Four Aspects of Being a Supervisor



**Boss:** makes and stands by difficult decisions



**Director:** in charge of the tactics; the way things are done.



**Leader:** accountable for the vision



**Manager:** responsible for the people

**EMOTIONAL**  
Coping effectively with life and creating satisfying relationships

**FINANCIAL**  
Satisfaction with current and future financial situations

**SOCIAL**  
Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well-developed support system

**SPIRITUAL**  
Expanding our sense of purpose and meaning in life

**OCCUPATIONAL**  
Personal satisfaction and enrichment derived from one's work

**ENVIRONMENTAL**  
Good health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being

**INTELLECTUAL**  
Recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills

**PHYSICAL**  
Recognizing the need for physical activity, diet, sleep and nutrition

Adapted from Swarbrick, M. (2006).  
A Wellness Approach. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 29(4), 311-314.

# Supervisor Self-Care

- Meet regularly with colleagues for support
  - Avoid isolation
- Evaluate job-specific challenges to self-care
  - Work performance
  - High stress environment
  - Commutes
- Record and review successes
  - What has worked well?
- Include self-compassion
  - Giving yourself grace
- Remind yourself that knowledge does not translate into activity
  - “I know exactly how stressed I am”

From Self-Care and Wellness for Supervisors by Shauna Eberhardt, PhD, LAC, LPCC



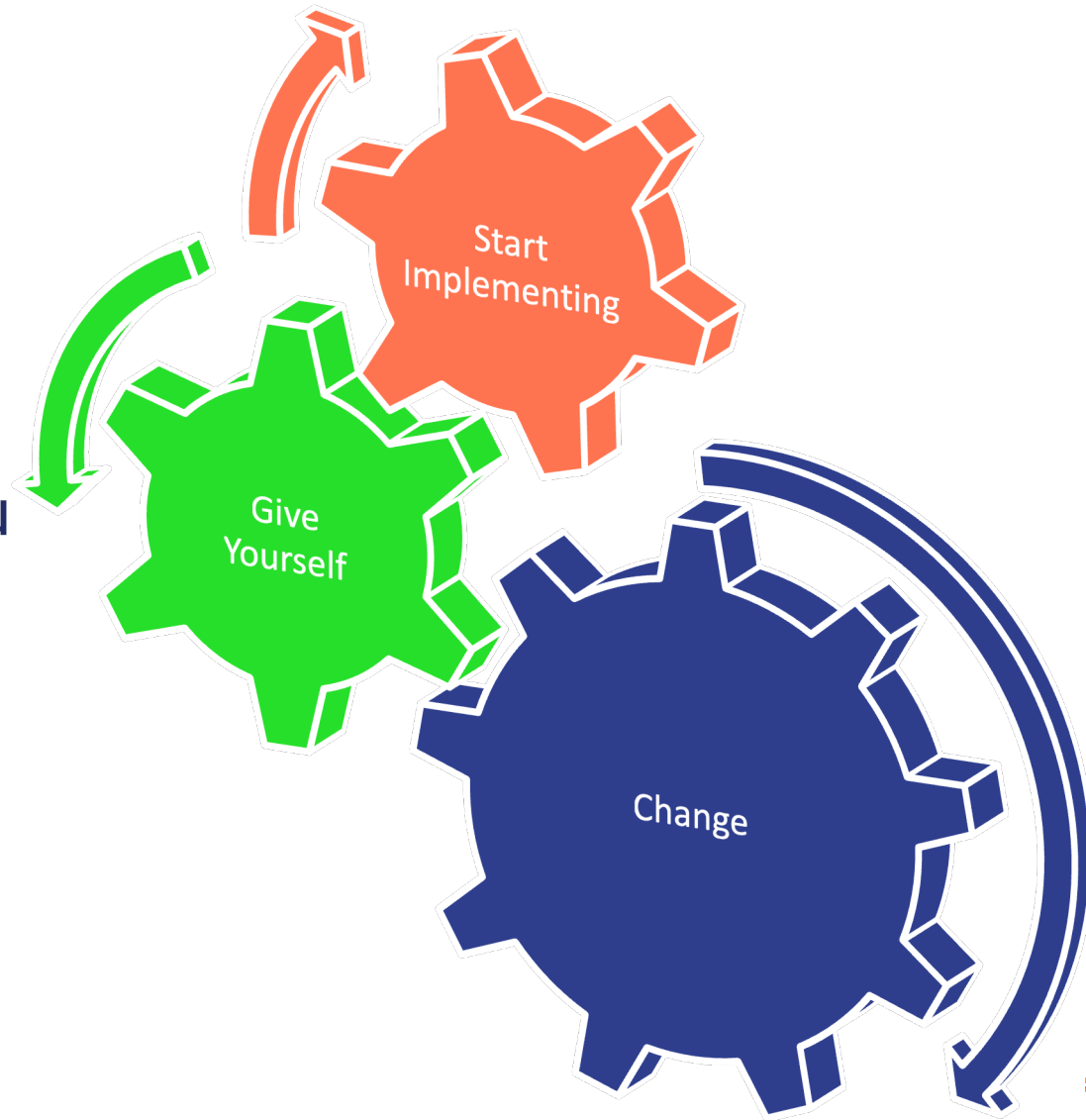


## Building a Culture of Collective Care

- Be aware of any sensitive issues or subjects that may need a trigger warning
- Be aware of any major issues happening in the personal lives of your staff that may require their attention or may impact their lives or work
- Respect when staff tell you they need to be offline
- Learn to say no and empower others to flag unreasonable expectations and timelines
- Communicate clearly about any unresolved issues with an individual team member
- Limit channels of communication for work
- Spend 10 minutes at the beginning of a call catching up on life and personal updates with the team member you are speaking to
- Have a team meeting or check ins to chat about non work-related issues
- Do not work on weekends and ensure no one else does by not emailing other team members during that time. If it is urgent, save the email as a draft before sending it out on Monday

**As a supervisor, it is crucial to do self-reflection.**

Think about:  
What are you willing to:





# Questions

