

Calm in Chaos



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Montana
Public Health
Training Center

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN TODAY

- Mindfulness - The Container
- The Autonomic Nervous System
- Secondary Trauma
- Compassion Fatigue
- Mindset effect
- Building resilience
- Boundaries
- Self Regulation Skills



Self-Regulation and Executive Function

Mindfulness is an excellent way to build certain attention skills, which are part of a larger set of vital skills that allow us to plan, focus, remember important things, and multitask more effectively.

Mindfulness is broad and includes many forms of **active** and **passive** practices

These skills are known as **executive function skills**, and they involve three key types of brain functions:

1. **Working memory:** our cache of short-term memories, or information we recently took in;
2. **Mental flexibility:** our ability to shift our focus from one stimulus to another and apply context-appropriate rules for attention and behavior;[be]
3. **Self-control:** our ability to set priorities, regulate our emotions, and to resist our impulses (Center on the Developing Child, n.d.).

These skills are not inherent but are learned and built over time.

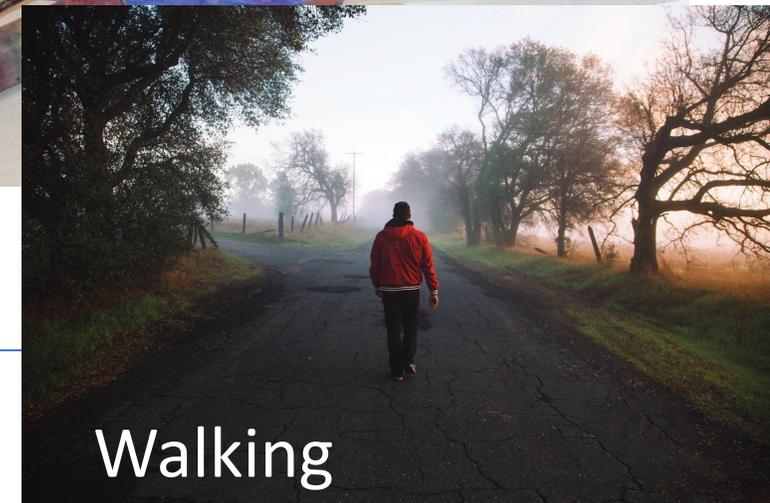
Yoga



Art Making



Walking



Mindfulness - “THE CONTAINER”

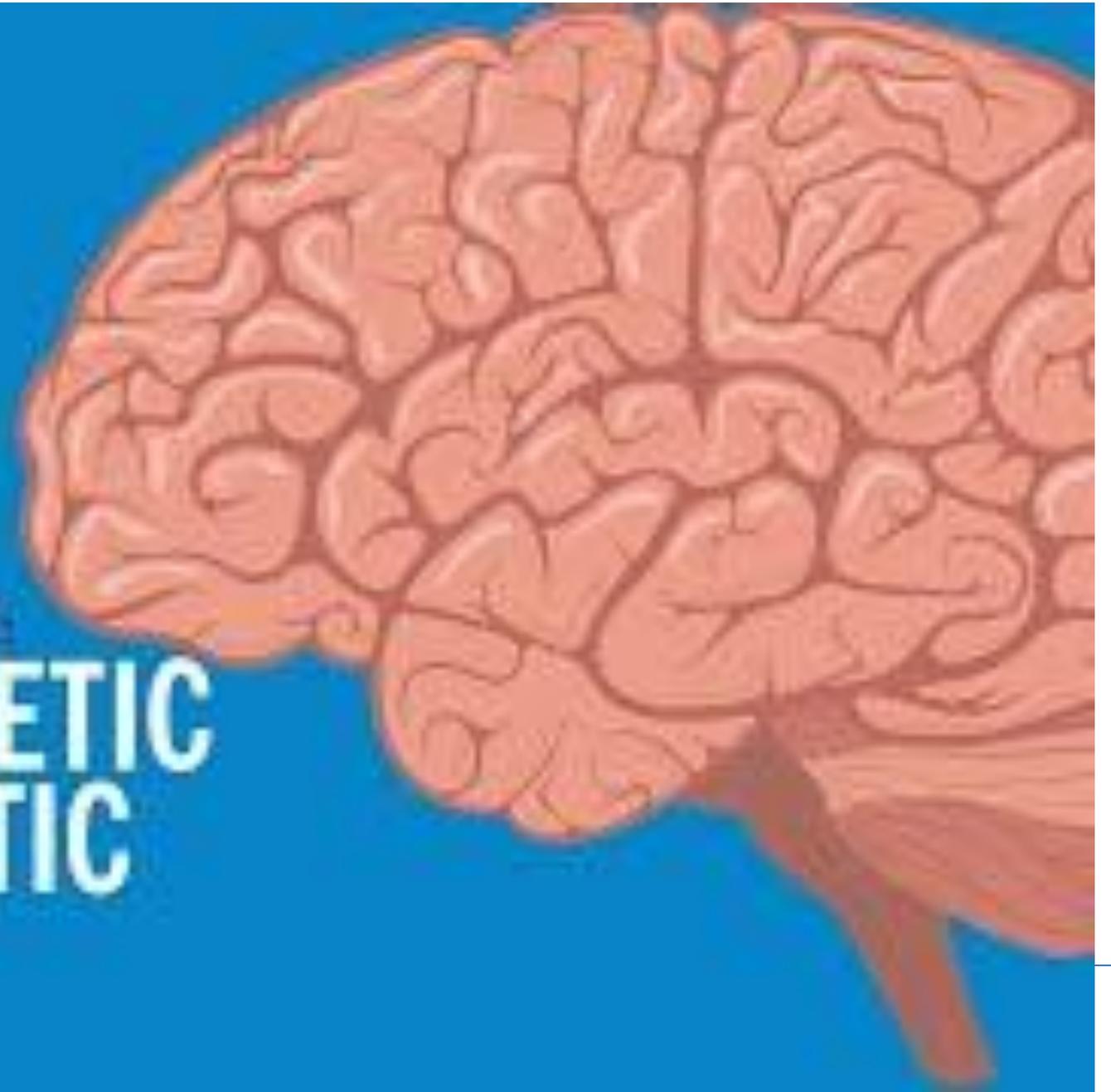
- Clearing
- Brain Break
- Reset nervous system
- Brain ready to learn
- Self regulation skill



The Autonomic Nervous System: Sympathetic vs. Parasympathetic, Explained



AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM: **PARASYMPATHETIC VS. SYMPATHETIC**



“Compassion Fatigue is a state experienced by those helping people or animals in distress; it is an extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it can create a secondary traumatic stress for the helper.”

com•pas•sion fa•tigue

noun

indifference to charitable appeals on behalf of those who are suffering, experienced as a result of the frequency or number of such appeals.



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Compassion fatigue encompasses the *emotional, mental, and physical effects* of caretaking on individuals.

Compassion Fatigue can create changes in the way you view and make sense of the world as a result of the cumulative effects of working with trauma survivors over time.

These changes can occur in five areas:

- Sense of safety
- Ability to trust others
- Self-esteem
- Intimacy
- Sense of control



Who is at risk of Compassion Fatigue?

- Healthcare professionals
- Long-term care professionals & volunteers
- Helping professionals
- Caregivers of children & adults with special needs
- First responders
- Pastors, chaplains & humanitarian workers



What Causes Compassion Fatigue?

Compassion fatigue is caused by working with or providing care for people experiencing significant **trauma, suffering, or distress**.

Prolonged exposure to **traumatic stories** and events can ultimately result in **emotional exhaustion**, especially in stressful work environments with high stress or inadequate support.

Common triggers of compassion fatigue include:

- Supporting someone through grief
- Responding to car accident scenes
- Witnessing or hearing about domestic violence or abuse
- Identifying with a client or patient who has a shared background or experience
- Working with difficult cases with no clear solution or resources
- Hearing about the injury or death of children
- Helping someone severely injured or ill

COMPASSION FATIGUE



Compassion Fatigue Symptoms

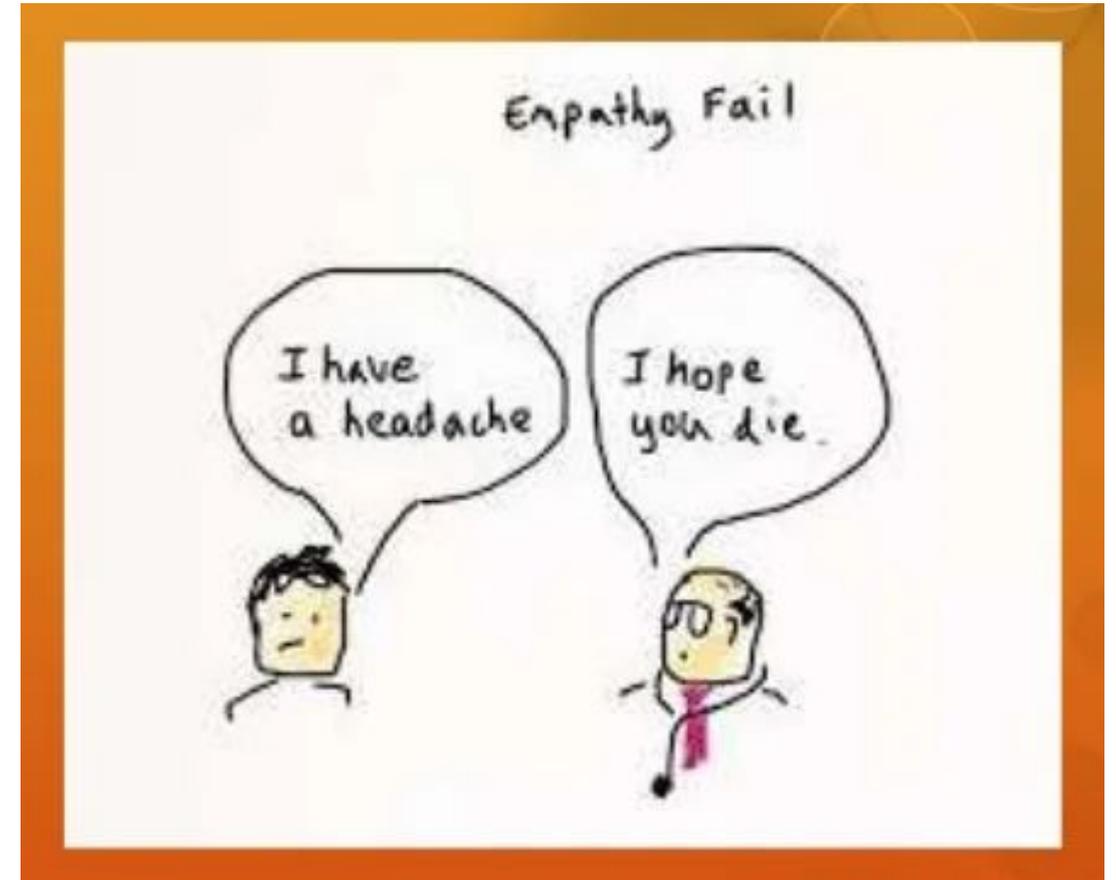
Over time, managing these experiences can become difficult, leading a person to become desensitized to the suffering of others.

Some may also seem more irritable or angry and lash out at loved ones.

Others may retreat inward and struggle with low mood and depression.

Common symptoms of compassion fatigue include:

- Physical, spiritual, emotional, and [mental exhaustion](#)
- Irritability
- Hopelessness and helplessness
- Feeling overwhelmed by the pain and suffering of others
- Self-isolation
- Anger
- Sadness
- Reduced empathy
- Inability to tolerate stress
- Overly sensitive or insensitive to the emotional experiences of others



Stages of compassion fatigue



- Zealot

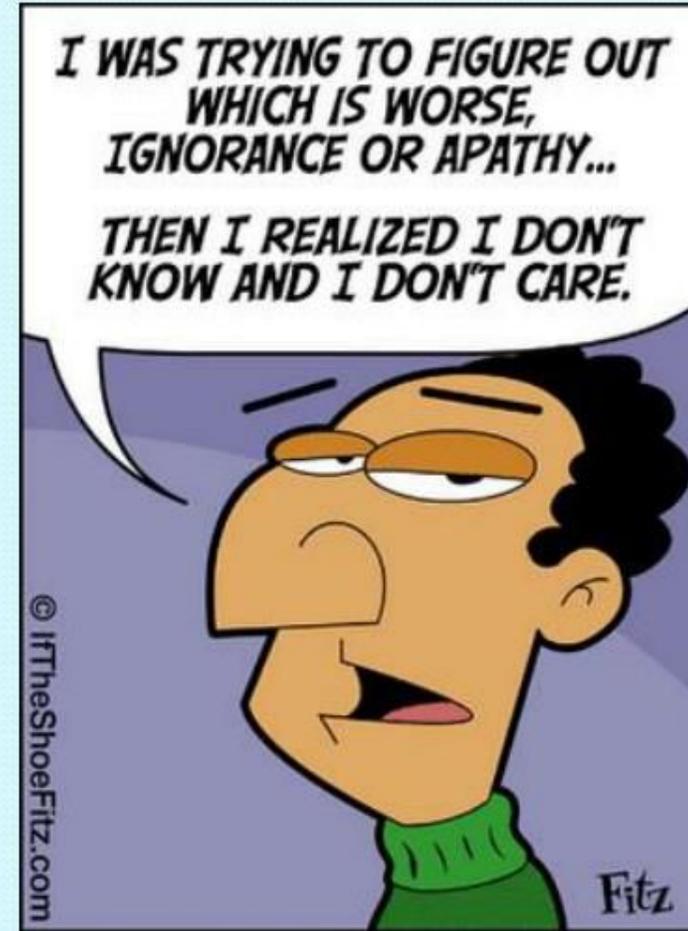


- Irritability



- Withdrawal

- Zombie



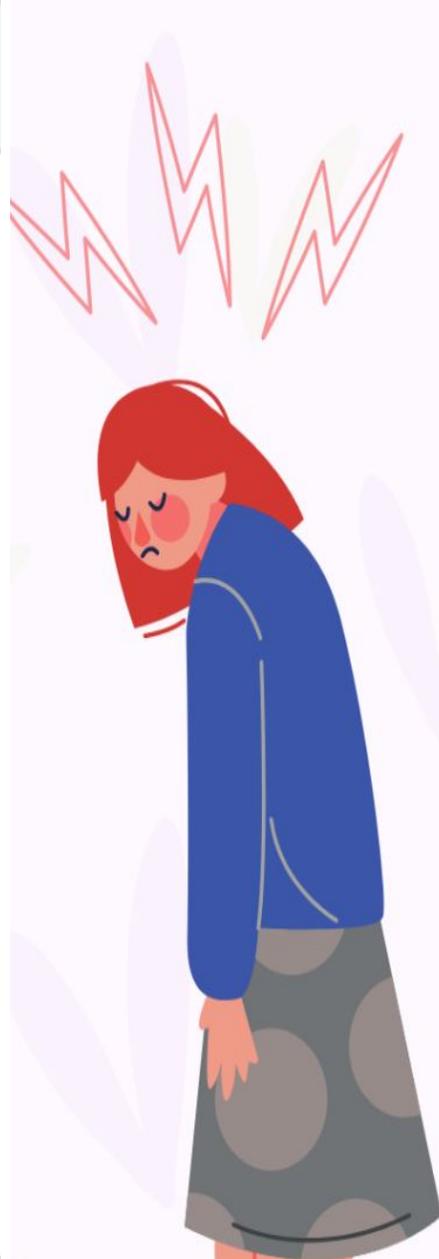
Compassion fatigue

Cause: dealing with victims of trauma; exposure to traumatic material

Symptoms of compassion fatigue in caregiving:

- Headaches
- Gastrointestinal issues
- Mood swings
- Depression
- Irritability, anger
- Hopelessness, pessimism
- **Weakened sense of empathy**
- **Being violent toward a loved one or neglecting them**

Managing compassion fatigue early on can lead to a quicker recovery time than burnout.



Burnout

Cause: stress and overworking

Symptoms of caregiver burnout:

- Withdrawal
- Depression
- Irritability, anger
- Changes in appetite
- Difficulty sleeping
- Exhaustion (emotional and physical)

Burnout develops gradually and has a longer recovery time.



The Impact of Workplace Stress

The toll of **constant stress** in the workplace is not just mental; it's physical too.

These triggers not only prompt our **nervous system** into a state of heightened alertness but also affect our **immune systems**.

Chronic workplace stress can lead to **exhaustion, burnout,** and various **health issues**, affecting both our **personal** and **professional** lives.





TOOLS

Boundaries in the workplace



WELLNESS TOOL

Values Exercise - Pick 6

Playful	Integrity	Usefulness	Wealth	Joy		
Wealth	Respect	Spontaneous	Happiness	Status	Gratitude	
Love	Openness.	Success	Family	Discipline	Truth	
Achievement	Bliss	Empathy	Friendship	Hard work	Patience	
Authenticity	Educated	Wisdom	Fun	Intuition	Adventurousness	
Peace	Strength	Faith	Creativity	Justice	Compassion	
Loyalty	Care-giving	Ambition	Forgiveness	Courage	Calm	Grace

Mindset Effect

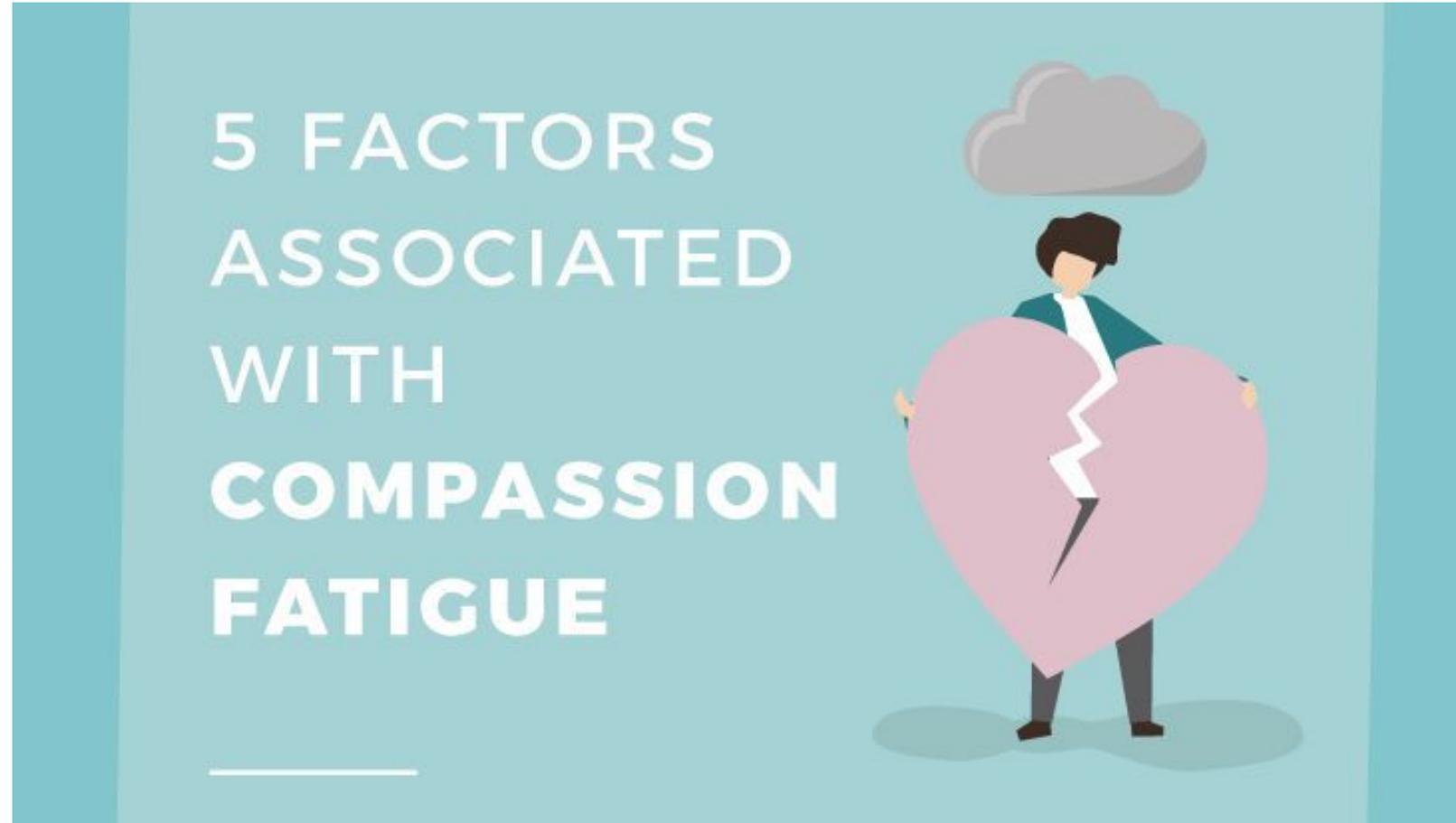
1. Idealistic Worldviews

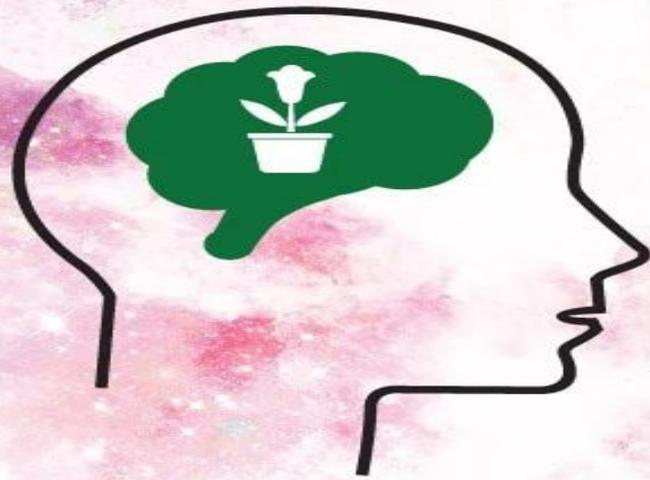
1. The Belief that Self-care is selfish

1. A lack of strong personal boundaries

1. An overdeveloped sense of responsibility

1. Expectations - Hard Worker





Growth Mindset

Embraces challenges.

Believes intelligence and abilities can be improved.

Effort helps you master new skills.

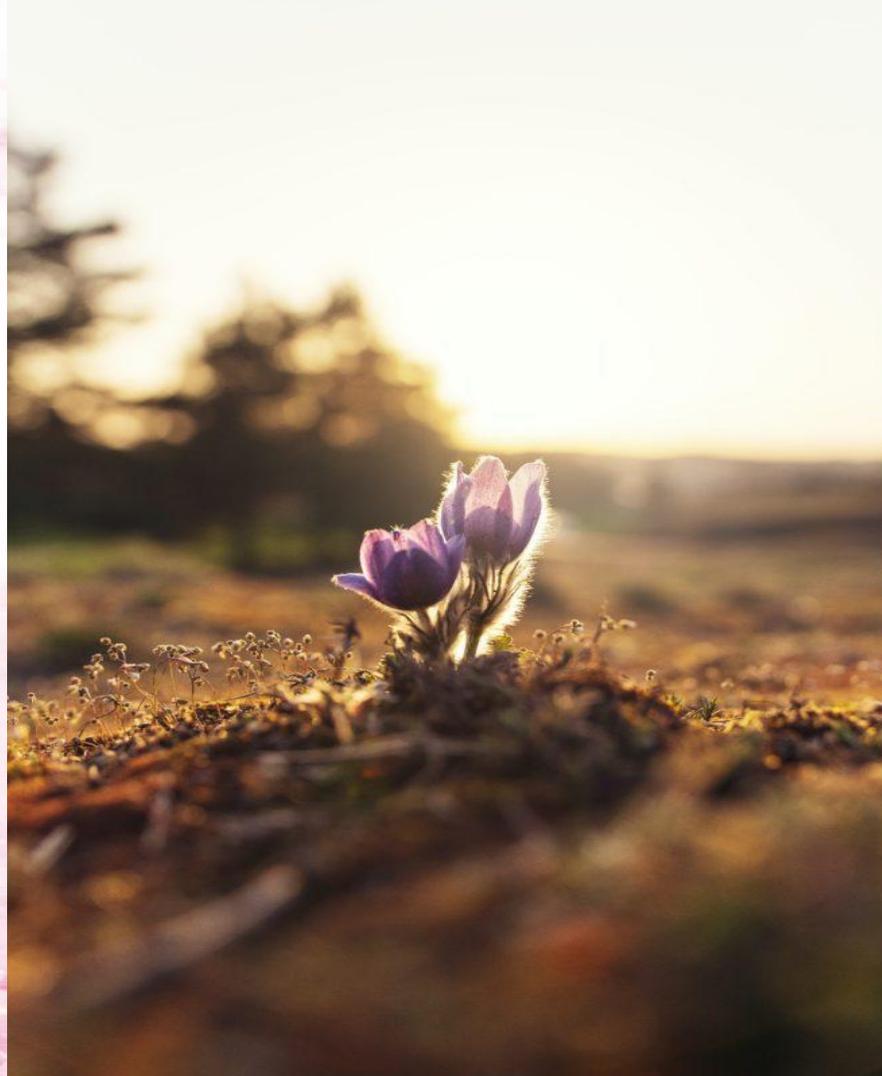
Failures are an opportunity to learn and grow

Reflects on setbacks and uses them as lessons.

Receives feedback from others well.

Celebrates other people's successes

What is your mindset?



Fixed Mindset

Avoids challenges.

Believes intelligence and abilities are fixed.

Effort means you're not already good enough.

Failures mean you're a failure.

Blames others for setbacks.

Becomes defensive when critiqued.

Feels threatened by other people's successes.

Increasing Resilience - What is your mindset?

A number of factors have been identified as crucial in enhancing resiliency, which allows you to continue to cope, function, and maintain wellness while being exposed to secondary trauma.

These include **personal** and **professional strategies**.

Personal Strategies for Resilience

- **Identify Stressors**
- **Focus on what you can control**
- **Plan Breaks**
- **Self-care**
- **Social support**
- **Mindset - “YES, and....”**

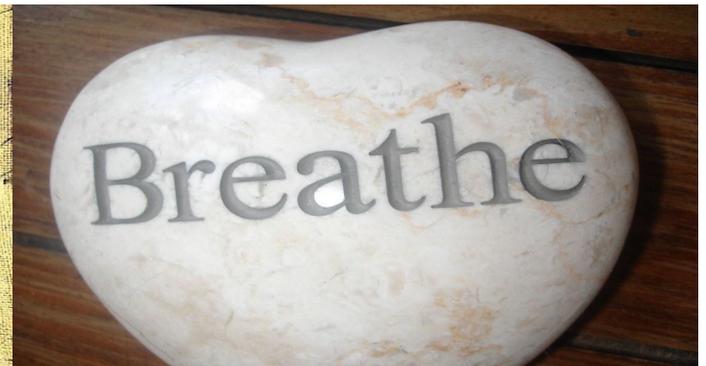
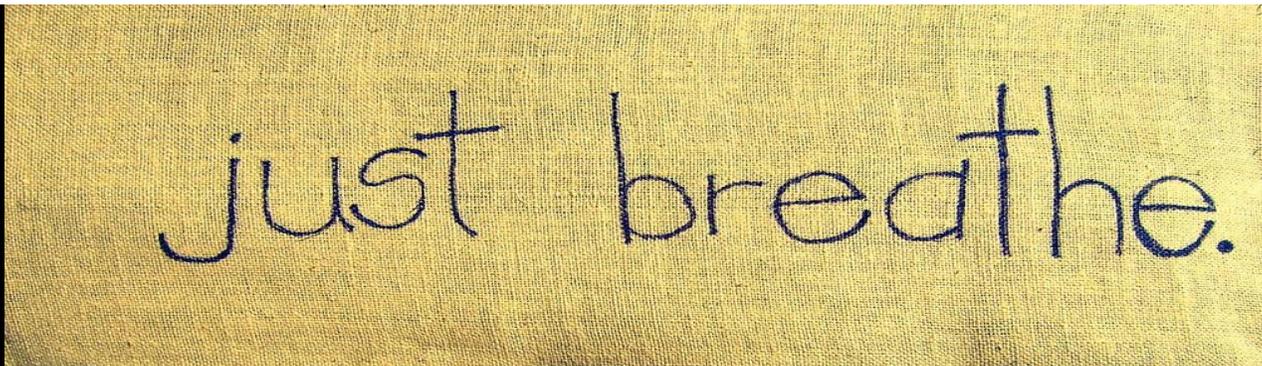


More Self Regulation Skills

- Breathing

Breathe mindfully. Breathe in through your nose as you expand your belly and out through the mouth. Focus on the exhale, not the inhale. Contrary to popular belief, the exhale is what slows our heart rate.

- Laughing
- Smiling
- Singing
- Humming - vagus nerve



Self Regulation

Accessing the NOW

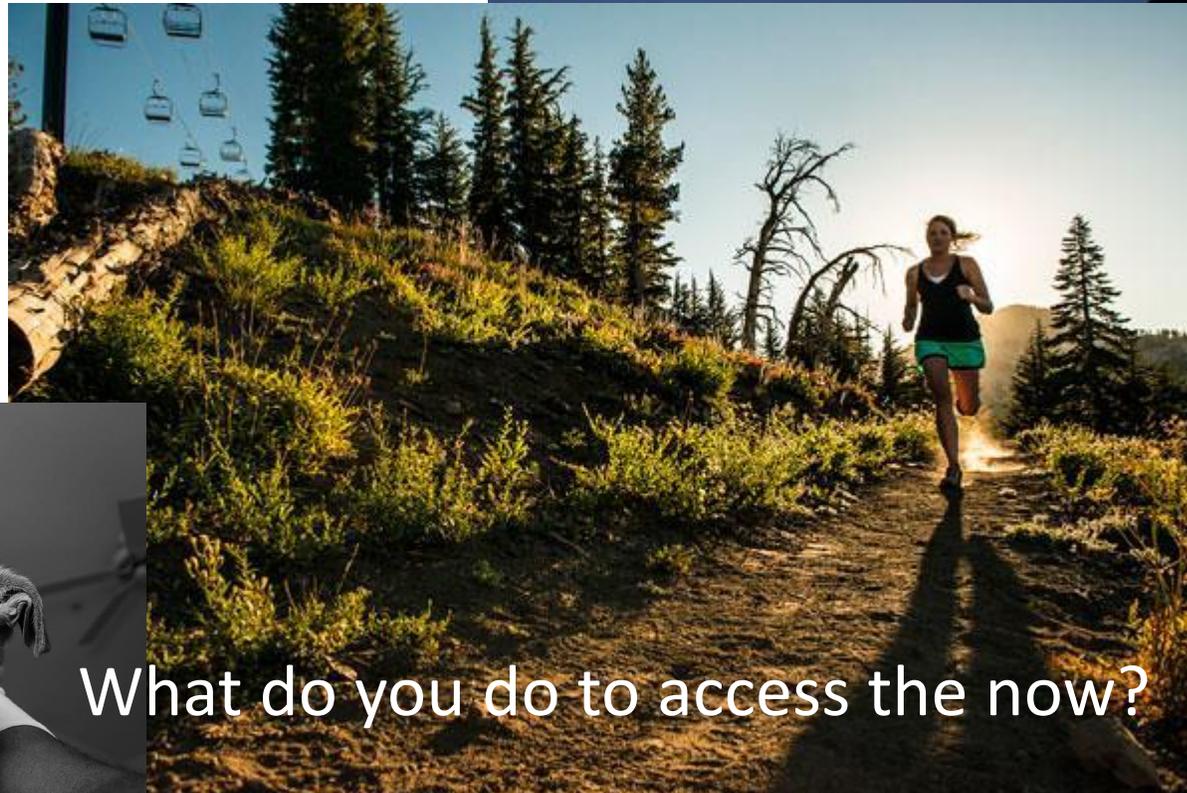
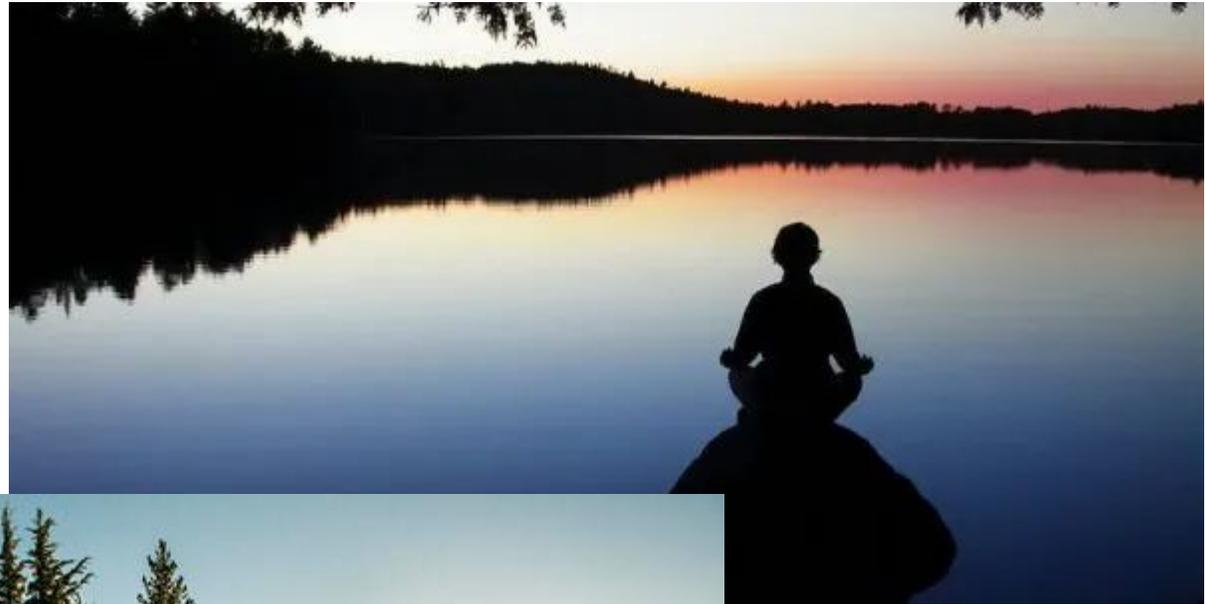
Nature

Exercise

Animals

Cooking

Gardening



What do you do to access the now?



Thank you for attending!

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