

Welcome to

Debriefing and Mutual Support: Establishing and Embedding Communities of Support in Our Work

THE TRAINING WILL BEGIN SHORTLY! WHILE YOU'RE WAITING...

Icebreaker Question
(answer in the chat)
What's your favorite Valentine's Day candy/treat?

Survey & Certificate of Completion
Available following the training.
CEUs available for LCSWs, LMFTs, LPCCs, and LEPs

Connect With Us!   

VISIT CALTRIN.ORG & SCAN TO LEARN MORE 

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Hi, We're CalTrin!

Who we are

- The California Training Institute
- Funded by the State of California, Dept. of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) to support child abuse prevention through professional development and extended learning opportunities.
- Designed for staff of family strengthening and child abuse prevention organizations in California, including Family Resource Centers, Child Abuse Prevention Councils, community-based organizations, and other child and family serving systems.

What we offer

- Live webinars & small group training
- Virtual, self-paced courses
- Job aids & other resources

This training was made possible with funding from the California Department of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention. Any opinions, findings, conclusions, and/or recommendations expressed are those of the CEBC, CalTrin and do not necessarily reflect the views of the California Department of Social Services.

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UPCOMING TRAININGS

mark your calendars!







Visit caltrin.org to view and register for upcoming webinars or workshops

 February 20 Protective Factor of the Month: Parental Resilience	 March 4 Cultural Considerations for Integrating Racial Socialization in TF-CBT
 February 21 Learning to Talk about Anti-Asian Racism	 March 6 Special Considerations and Support for Expectant and Parenting Youth
 February 25 Research and Practice Innovations in Healing Interpersonal and Racial Trauma	 March 11 & 25, April 8 Becoming a Trauma-Informed Leader: Preparing for and Implementing Change at the Personal and Team Levels

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Before We Begin...

DURING		AFTER
 The notetaking slides are in the chat now!	 Review interactive features for today's session. Locate the controls on the toolbar at the bottom of your screen.	 Complete the survey to receive your Certificate of Attendance. CEUs available for LCSWs, LMFTs, LPCCs, and LEPs.
 This presentation is NOT being recorded.	 External AI assistants are not allowed in CalTrin trainings due to California privacy laws.	 A follow-up email will be sent to all participants within two days.

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Debriefing and Mutual Support: Establishing and Embedding Communities of Support in Our Work

Presented by Diana Tikasz, MSW, RSW

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Speaker SPOTLIGHT



- Began her career as an early childhood educator, which eventually led to a desire for trauma-focused work
- Has worked in various Employee Assistance Programs where she has specialized in working with individuals who are feeling stressed by their personal and/or work life
- Has provided numerous workshops to helping professionals in the area of empathic strain/vicarious trauma and occupational stress

Diana Tikasz, MSW, RSW

Associate, TEND Academy

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Debriefing & Mutual Support (D/MS)

Establishing & Embedding Communities of Support
in Our Work

Diana Tikasz
MSW, RSW, TEND Associate



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We will discuss...


- Identify key components that cause some debriefing practices to be more harmful than helpful.
- Name four trauma-informed approaches to debriefing and mutual support (D/MS).
- Prepare an eight-step agenda for facilitating an effective group D/MS practice.



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Bar Chart Icon

Poll Question

How are you connecting with one another right now?

Select all that apply

- 1 On the fly
- 2 Regularly scheduled time as a group
- 3 Sharing tasks when someone is overloaded
- 4 Mainly after a critical incident
- 5 No opportunity to connect due to busy schedule
- 6 No opportunity to connect due to working virtually or in the community
- 7 On breaks or lunch only

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What is **debriefing**?




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Military

- Information you need *before* you go on a mission
- Review of what happened *after*

Healthcare

- Briefs, huddles, debrief, mutual support


Trauma work

- Procedures to aid in recovery after a traumatic event

What is **debriefing**?

Robb, D. A. (1986). Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development. *Practice: A Journal of Healthcare Research and Quality*, 10(3). Available online: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pract.2016.03.001>

Kennedy, J. (2000). The current status of psychological debriefing. *BMJ*, 320(7248), 1123-1124. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.320.7248.1123>



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What is *debriefing*?

IMMEDIATE NEED

ONGOING NEED

Following a traumatic event that has threatened the physical or psychological well-being of your team

Regular check-ins and mutual support to address the chronic stressors and trauma-exposed workplace

Miller, B. (2023). *Critical incident first aid: Guide for children's advocacy center supervisors*. Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center.

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What is trauma exposure?

DIRECT EXPOSURE

Happening directly to you or in front of you.

INDIRECT EXPOSURE

Experiencing it second-hand.

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Four Sources of Stress Injury

TRAUMA	LOSS	INNER CONFLICT	WEAR & TEAR
<p><i>Due to "An out of control, frightening experience that has disconnected us from all sense of resourcefulness or safety or coping or love."</i> (Tara Brach)</p> <p>Examples: Direct trauma exposure Indirect trauma exposure Critical incident</p>	<p><i>Due to the loss of people, things, or parts of oneself.</i></p> <p>Examples: Client death Colleagues leaving Significant changes in workplace culture</p>	<p><i>Due to behaviours or the witnessing of behaviours that violate moral values.</i></p> <p>Examples: Moral injury Moral distress</p>	<p><i>Due to the accumulation of stress from all sources over time without sufficient rest and recovery.</i></p> <p>Examples: Empathic strain Chronic stress</p>


Watson, P., & Westphal, R.J. (2020). *Stress first aid for health care workers*. National Center for PTSD. <https://www.ptsd.va.gov>

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IMMEDIATE NEED	ONGOING NEED
Following a traumatic event that has threatened the psychological or psychological well-being of your team	Regular check-ins and mutual support to address the chronic stressors and trauma-exposed workplace

Miller, B. (2023). Critical incident first aid: Guide for children's advocacy center supervisors. Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center.



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What is the impact of adverse events?



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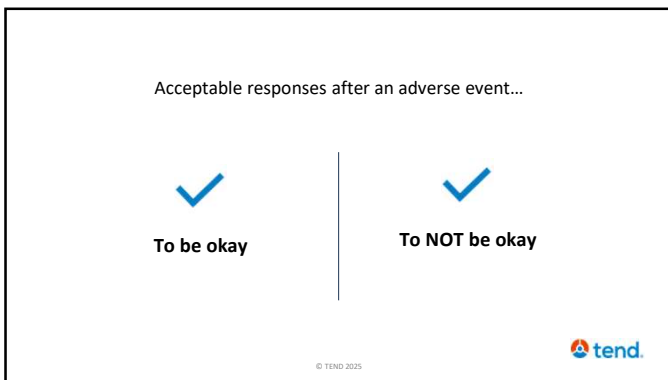
Not everyone is impacted the same way.



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IV. REACTION PHASE
(Go around in circle)

What was the worst part of this situation for you, personally?
Without changing the outcome, what part would you eliminate?
What part of the event has bothered you the most?

➤ Allow rapid ventilation of the stressful experience.

Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)

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Why some debriefing practices may be more harmful than helpful.

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“Debriefing is a form of exposure. None of our trauma or phobia treatments would subject a client to the trauma material without **adequate and skillful preparation** and the **full consent** of the client.”

- Dr. Brian Miller

Miller, B. (personal communication, March 13, 2023)


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**Consider a time in the distant past when
you felt distressed...**

What did you need from others?
What was helpful?



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When healthcare staff felt anxious during COVID, they reported the following needs...

- Hear Me
- Protect Me
- Prepare Me
- Support Me
- Care for Me

Understanding and Addressing Sources of Anxiety Among Health Care Professionals During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Shanafelt, T., Ripp, J., & Trockel, M. (2020). Understanding and addressing sources of anxiety among health care professionals during the COVID-19 pandemic. *JAMA*, 323(21), 2139-2144. doi:10.1001/jama.2020.5893

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Poll Question

Does your workplace offer staff debriefing after a potentially distressing event?

1 Yes

2 No

3 Unsure




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- Promoting safety, calmness, connectedness, self-efficacy, & validation
- Encouraging referrals & service navigation (when possible)
- Considering the entire range of potential secondary trauma stress reactions



What works?



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**Psychological First Aid:
A “Common Sense” Model**

“PFA is not a new intervention. Rather, it is better conceptualized as documenting and operationalizing good common sense – those activities that **sensible, caring human beings would do for each other anyway.**”



Shultz, J. M., & Forbes, D. (2013). Psychological First Aid: Rapid proliferation and the search for evidence. *Disaster Health*, 3(1), 9–32. <https://doi.org/10.1155/1528-3206>

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The Eight Actions of PFA


1. Contact and Engagement
2. Safety and Comfort
3. Stabilization (if needed)
4. Information Gathering on Current Needs and Concerns
5. Practical Assistance
6. Connection with Social Supports
7. Information on Coping
8. Linkage with Collaborative Services

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network and National Center for PTSD. (2006). *Psychological first aid: Field operations guide* [2nd edition]. https://www.nctsn.org/sites/default/files/resources/pfa_field_operations_guide.pdf


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Psychological First Aid for Children's Advocacy Center Supervisors (PFA-CAC)




- Provides overview of the concepts, principles, and the eight core actions of PFA.
- Directed toward supervisors and leaders in CACs regardless of professional training or background.
- Tertiary and secondary. Up to the first 30 days following a potentially traumatic event.

Miller, B., Brymer, M., Louie, K., & Hangartner, K. (2024). *Psychological first aid guide for children's advocacy center supervisors*. Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center.



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HOT WALK & TALK

A protocol for supporting others after a difficult, upsetting, or traumatic event

(Fisher, 2012)

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Employee Assistance Programs: The Good, the Bad, & the Ugly

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IMMEDIATE NEED

Following a traumatic event that has threatened the psychological or psychological well-being of your team

ONGOING NEED

Regular check-ins and mutual support to address the chronic stressors and trauma-exposed workplace

Miller, B. (2023). Critical incident first aid: Guide for children's advocacy center supervisors. Southern Regional Children's Advocacy Center.

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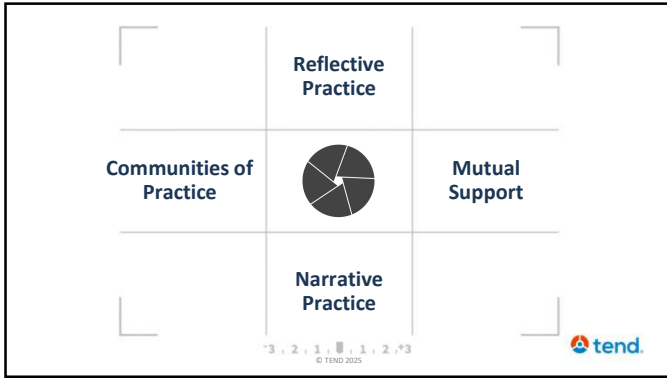
<p>COMPASSION SATISFACTION</p> <p>The positive "consequence" of helping behaviors.</p> <p><small>(Stamm, 1998)</small></p>	<p>TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP</p> <p>The ability to be fully present in the face of hardship, pain, or suffering without taking it on as our own.</p> <p><small>(van Dermoot Lipsky, 2010)</small></p>	<p>VICARIOUS RESILIENCE</p> <p>The positive impact on our own personal growth as a result of exposure to others' resilience.</p> <p><small>(Hernandez, 2007)</small></p>
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**Broadening the Lens:
Trauma Informed Approach to On-Going Support**

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Reflective Practice

- Continuous learning
- Can be done alone or with others
- May increase empathy (compassion) and professionalism

Sakshi D. A. (2018). The reflective practitioner: How professionals think in action. Temple Smith.
Lancaster, J. (2022). Reflective practice in medicine and nursing professional healthcare. Routledge.

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“

We don't learn from experience...
we learn from reflecting *on* experience.”

- John Dewey

”

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 Reflective Practices

Write 3 sentences, Repeat
Using a Reflective Team



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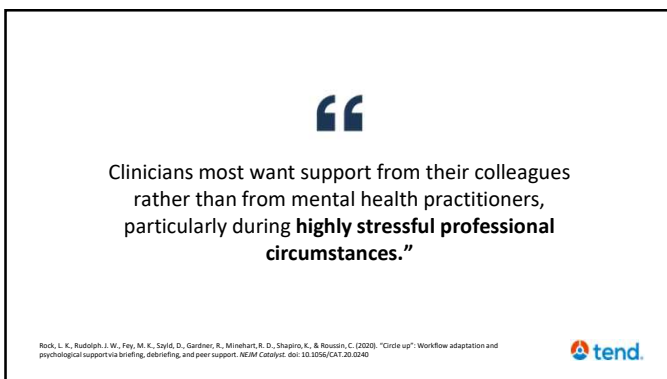
Mutual Support

- Micro check-ins
- Proactive peer support
- Connectedness & belonging

Rock, L. K., Rudolph, J. W., Fey, M. K., Sybil, D., Gardner, R., Minehart, R. D., Shapiro, K., & Roustin, C. (2020). "Circle up": Workflow adaptation and psychological support via briefing, debriefing, and peer support. *NEJM Catalyst*. doi: 10.1056/CAT.20.0240





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“

Clinicians most want support from their colleagues rather than from mental health practitioners, particularly during **highly stressful professional circumstances.**”

Rock, L. K., Rudolph, J. W., Fey, M. K., Sybil, D., Gardner, R., Minehart, R. D., Shapiro, K., & Roustin, C. (2020). "Circle up": Workflow adaptation and psychological support via briefing, debriefing, and peer support. *NEJM Catalyst*. doi: 10.1056/CAT.20.0240



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Poll Question

Does your workplace currently have something in place for regular check-ins with peers?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Unsure

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
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“Social support is not the same as merely being in the presence of others.

The critical issue is reciprocity: being truly heard and seen by the people around us, feeling that we are held in someone else’s mind and heart. For our physiology to calm down, heal, and grow, we need a visceral feeling of safety.”

- Bessel van Der Kolk

van der Kolk, B. A. (2014). *The body keeps the score: Brain, mind, and body in the healing of trauma*. Viking.

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GIVE when you notice emotion

<p>Get that it's emotion and tune into the emotion you detect</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go there, drop your agenda. Just listen. Connection, not information. We do not need to resolve emotion.
<p>Identify (Note: describing or naming the emotion or behaviours may be an internal step, rather than shared)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can I check in with you? It looks like you weren't expecting this news. I'm noticing you're quieter than usual today.
<p>Validate by acknowledging feelings</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It's overwhelming – everything you've been going through. I wish I had more answers. I hear you're scared. I'm worried too and I'm not leaving her bedside until she is safe.
<p>Explore to understand better</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell me more. What is worrying you the most? I think it can be helpful to talk about it. Would you mind telling me what's on your mind?


Rock, L. K. (2020, April 11). Laura K Rock: Don't answer feelings with facts. The BMJ Opinion. <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2020/04/11/laura-k-rock-dont-answer-feelings-with-facts/>
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


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Narrative Practices

- Stories help us make sense of the world
- Helps us get “unstuck”
- Conversations can transform our workplace culture






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A Narrative Practice Exercise

The Six-Word Story


Conflict > Action > Resolution




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Communities of Practice

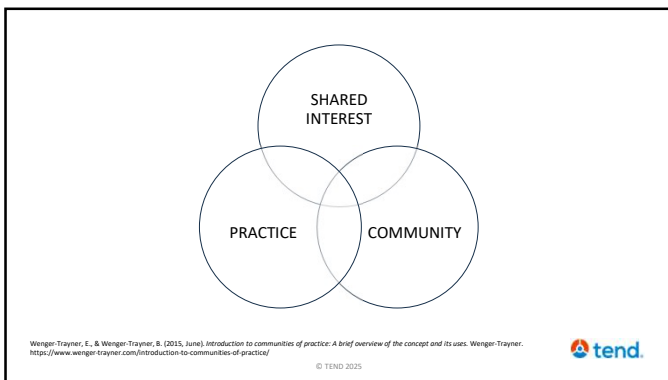
- Defined by a shared domain of interest
- Members help one another & share information
- Development of a repertoire of resources



Wenger-Trayner, E., & Wenger-Trayner, B. (2015, June). Introduction to communities of practice: A brief overview of the concept and its uses. Wenger-Trayner. <https://www.wenger-trayner.com/introduction-to-communities-of-practice/>




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- Co-regulation
- Reduce trauma reactions and symptoms
- Reduce moral distress
- Grow the rewards of the work


Why are debriefing practices important for trauma-exposed work?



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What format would be helpful in **your** work environment?



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- Who will facilitate?
- Who will participate?
- How many?
- How often?
- How long?
- What time?
- Why are we meeting?
- What is our purpose?
- Open or closed format?





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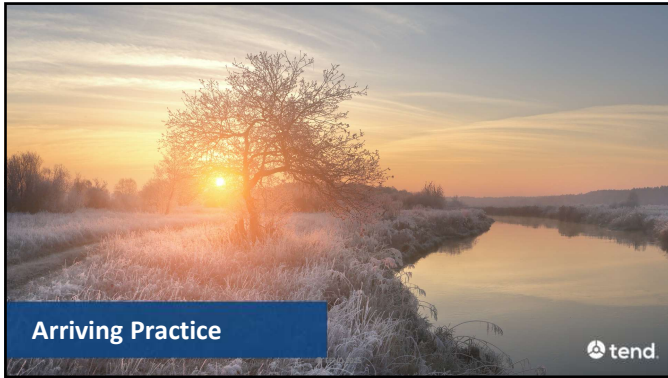
Group Format

-  Arriving Practice
-  Welcome, Introductions, & Guidelines
-  Check-In
-  Impact of Our Work Discussion
-  Review of Helpful Skills & Strategies
-  Specific Topic Discussion
-  Rewards of the Work Discussion
-  Check-Out



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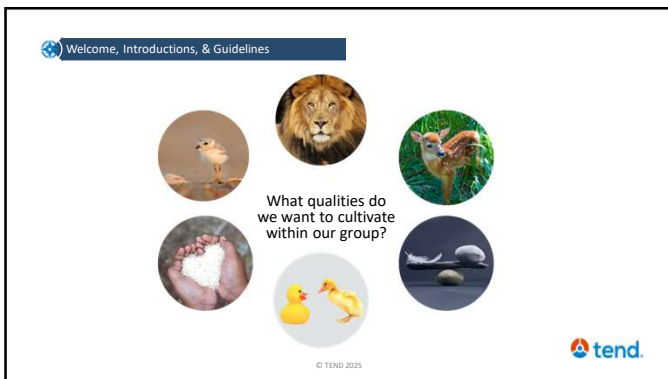
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Welcome, Introductions, & Guidelines

SAMPLE GUIDELINES

- 1 We recognize and honour diversity. Each person's history, experiences, and coping process will be understood and respected through a trauma-informed lens.
- 2 We will honour confidentiality. "What happens in Vegas, stays in Vegas."
- 3 We will create a judgement-free zone.
- 4 We will resist the urge to "fix" others' problems and concerns.
- 5 Introverts & extroverts
- 6 We will use Low Impact Debriefing strategies.

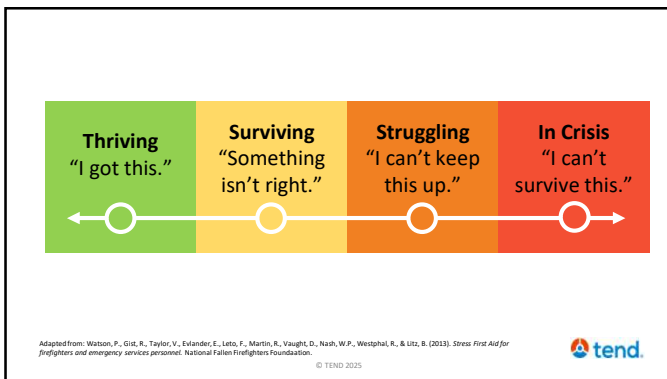
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Check-In 

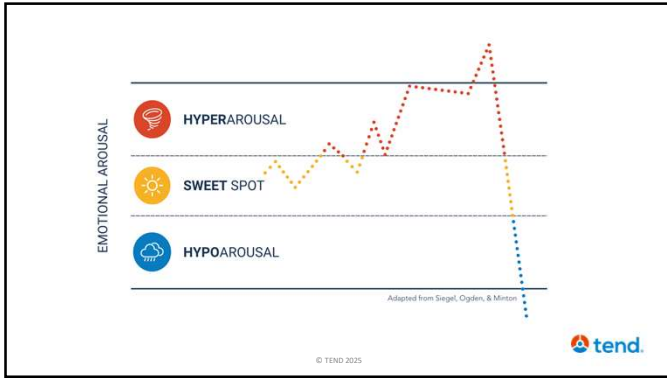
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Adapted from: Watson, P., Gitt, R., Taylor, V., Evlender, E., Leto, F., Martin, R., Vaught, D., Nash, W.P., Westphal, R., & Utz, B. (2013). *Stress First Aid for firefighters and emergency services personnel*. National Fallen Firefighters Foundation.

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Low Impact Processing

1. Self-Awareness
2. Give Fair Warning
3. Get Consent
4. Share only what is necessary, no graphic details

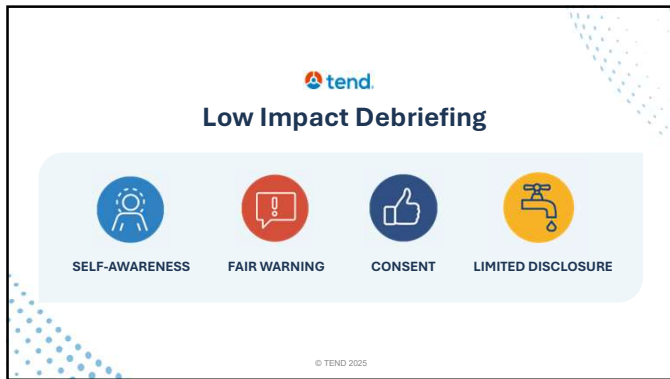
Mathieu, F. (2012) Compassion Fatigue Workbook

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BmI6mfj_Srg

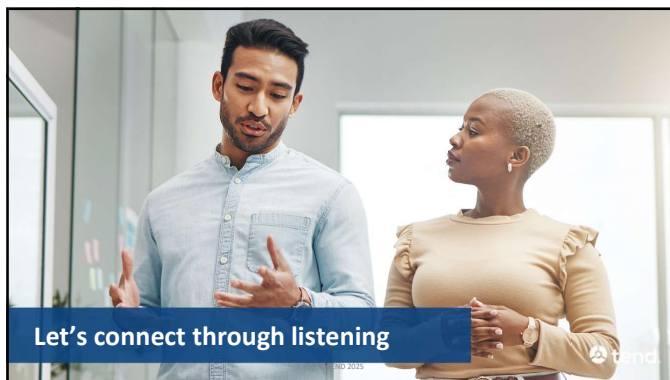
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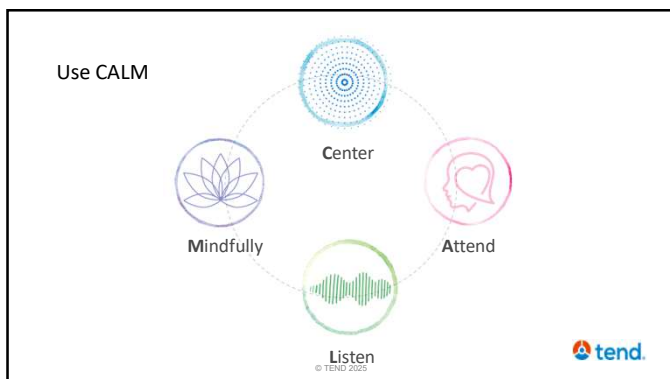
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May you be...

- Peaceful, safe, calm, happy

May you be free from...

- Anger, suffering, worry, pain




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Listen for...

- Shifts in narrative
- Micro practices
- Strategies that you want to underline




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Additional Considerations For Listeners



Un-mirroring



“To picture or not to picture”



Triggers

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“

For a helper to minimize the risks to her emotional and physical well-being, she needs to be able to find ways to balance her empathic engagement, regulate her ANS arousal, and maintain her ability to think clearly.”

Rothschild, B. (2022). *Help for the helper: Preventing compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma in an ever-changing world* (2nd ed.). Norton Professional Books.
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Three Steps to Activate the Vagus Nerve

 TUNE IN	 BREATHE	 CONNECT
<p>How does your body feel? (Shoulder's tensing up, stomach knotting, etc.)</p>	<p>Use slow, deep breaths to self-regulate. Exhale longer than inhale.</p>	<p>Connect with loved ones (friends, families, pets)</p>

Abramson, A. (2020, April 10). If there was ever a time to activate your vagus nerve, it is now. *Elemental*.
<https://elemental.medium.com/it-there-was-ever-a-time-to-activate-your-vagus-nerve-it-is-now-222768068850>
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Self-Compassion in the Moment

- 1 “This is a moment of suffering” (Mindfulness)
- 2 “Suffering is part of being human” (Common Humanity)
- 3 “May I give myself the kindness & understanding I need, as I would give it to others” (Self-Compassion)

Neff, K. (2015). Self-compassion: The proven power of being kind to yourself. William Morrow Paperbacks. © TEND 2025



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Specific Topic Discussion



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Sample Topics

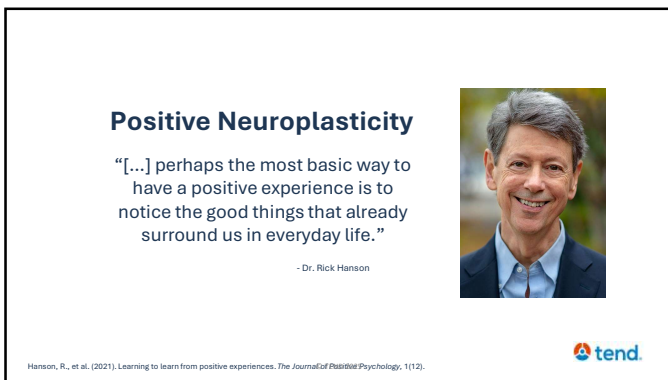
- Article review
- Rumination
- Sleep strategies
- Systemic frustrations
- Major change
- 'Case' discussions or review

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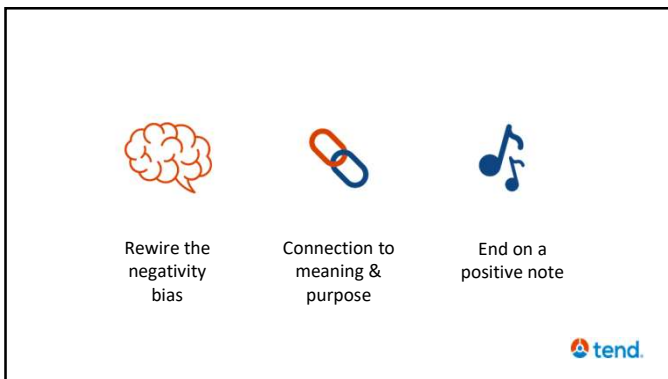
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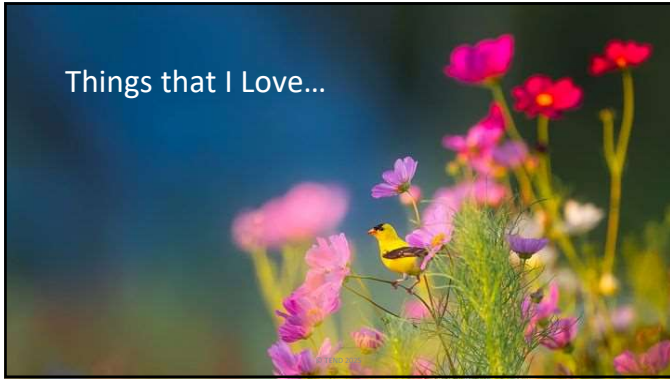
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On-going support practices are often the first to go.
Yet, it is the **one thing** that we can least afford to lose under
high-stress, trauma-exposed conditions.


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


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Barriers to debriefing

- Lack of time
- Lack of safety or trust
- Stigma & culture of stoicism
- Negative experiences of debriefing
- Different coping styles not being respected





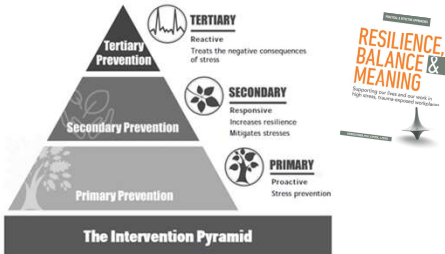
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Make a plan **before** there's a crisis.




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The Intervention Pyramid

Fisher, P. (2016). Resilience, balance & meaning: Supporting our lives and our work in high stress, trauma-exposed workplaces. Fisher & Associates.



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Thanks for joining us!

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Survey and certificate in the chat now
 - LCSWs, LPCCs, LMFTs, and LEPs – complete additional survey section to receive CEUs
- Follow-up email with resources within two days
- Watch your inbox for the next issue of *CalTrin Connect*

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FOLLOW US! AND CHECK OUT TRAINING REPLAYS ON YOUTUBE!

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