Working together through the messy:

Sustaining energy, trust, and collaboration in community care

Françoise Mathieu, MEd, RP
Executive Director, TEND

tend.



Artist: Diane Black, Kingston, On.

1



2

Lake of the Woods KENORA

SAULT STE. MARIE

Cornwall ONTARIO CANADA

County of Renfrew Ontario . Canada

Peel Region

REGIONAL Children's Advocacy Centers

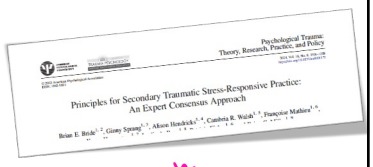
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Principles for STS-Responsive Practice: An Expert Consensus Approach

Bride, B. E., Sprang, G., Hendricks, A., Walsh, C. R., Mathieu, F., Hangartner, K., Ross, L. A., Fisher, P., & Miller, B. C. (2024).



SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS CONSORTIUM

4



5

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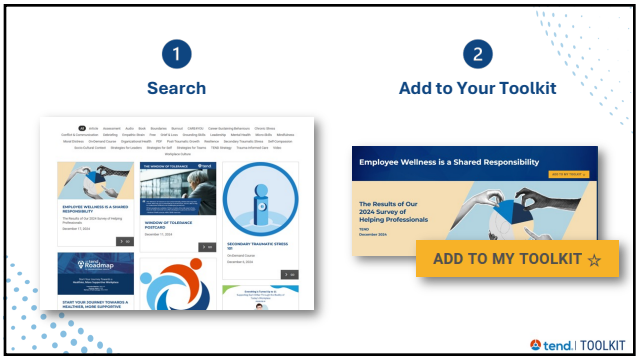
A Library of Resources for Helping Professionals



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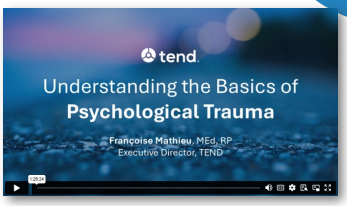


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RESOURCES

In your toolkit



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10



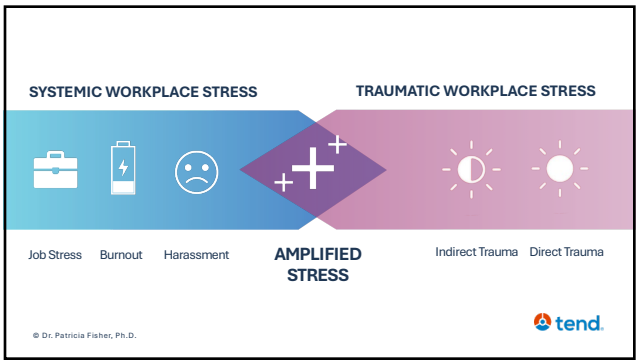
Artist: Diane Black, Kingston, On.

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What is unique about high-stress, trauma-exposed work?

12


SYSTEMIC WORKPLACE STRESS
TRAUMATIC WORKPLACE STRESS
Job Stress
Burnout
Harassment
AMPLIFIED STRESS
Indirect Trauma
Direct Trauma
© Dr. Patricia Fisher, Ph.D.
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13

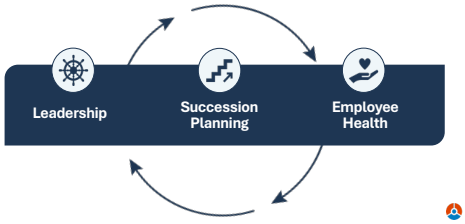

High stress + high trauma = high reactivity
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Who is impacted?
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The foundational factors are **critical and mutually interactive.**



Fisher, 2015

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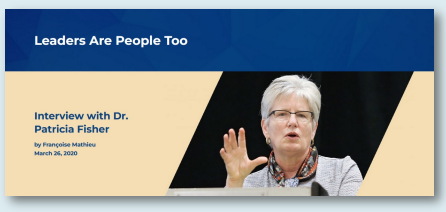


- Many leaders are struggling with stress effects.
- Few receive training in leadership and HR.
- Critical to all Org Health factors.

Fisher, 2015

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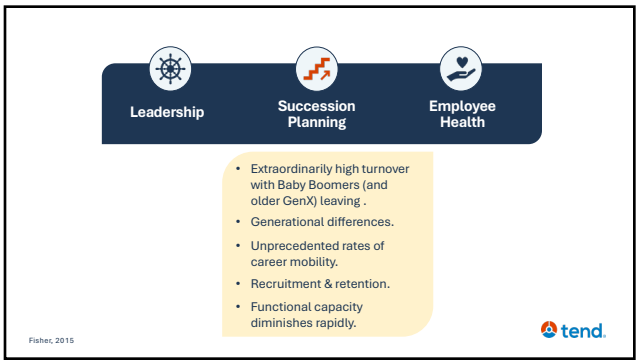
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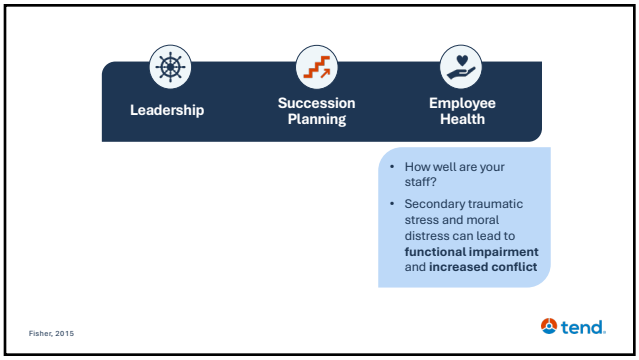
https://tendtoolkit.com/**leaders-are-people-too/**

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18


Leadership
Succession Planning
Employee Health
• Extraordinarily high turnover with Baby Boomers (and older GenX) leaving .
• Generational differences.
• Unprecedented rates of career mobility.
• Recruitment & retention.
• Functional capacity diminishes rapidly.
Fisher, 2015
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19


Leadership
Succession Planning
Employee Health
• How well are your staff?
• Secondary traumatic stress and moral distress can lead to **functional impairment** and **increased conflict**
Fisher, 2015
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How do we think clearly and stay well in the face of **uncertainty and rapid change?**
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21


Region of Peel
working with you
COVID-19 Response in Peel
PEEL'S COVID-19 REGIONAL COMMUNITY RESPONSE TABLE
Peel Region
Search...
Services
Menu
Home › Business and professionals › Community partnerships
Supporting community agencies
Strengthening community connection through Peel's Community Response Table.
Established in 2020, the Community Response Table brings together partners across Peel to identify emerging community needs, share information, and coordinate action. As part of Peel's broader Community Safety and Well-being Plan network, the table strengthens collaboration across sectors and supports timely, equitable responses to complex health and social challenges.
Purpose
The Community Response Table helps partners identify emerging issues, strengthen collaboration, and build community readiness through four key functions:
Identify emerging issues by monitoring community trends and needs
Coordinate action across sectors to address gaps and challenges
Share information and resources to support informed decision-making
Advance equity by incorporating diverse perspectives and lived experience

22



23


Transportation and Fleet Management Services

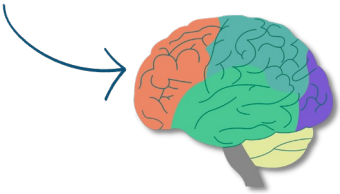
24

We **don't** all cope in the same way

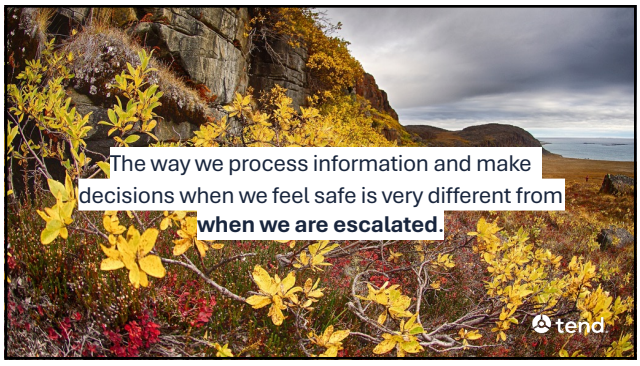


25

Our **prefrontal cortex**



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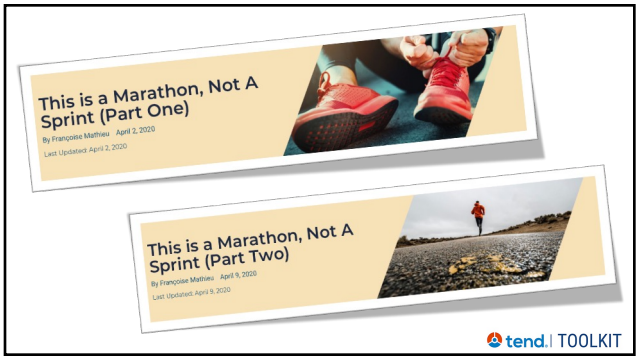
"Under extreme uncertainty, people tend to develop **threat rigidity** and a **degraded ability to interact and make decisions.**

They also **catastrophize**, filling a communications void with negative chatter, distorted interpretations, dire predictions, and fatalistic scenarios. [...]"

Timothy R. Clark, HBR, 2024

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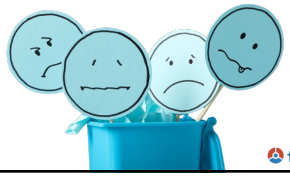
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29

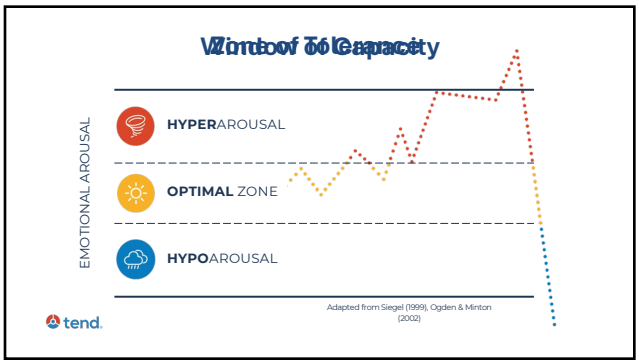
H.A.L.T.

(hungry, angry, lonely, tired)

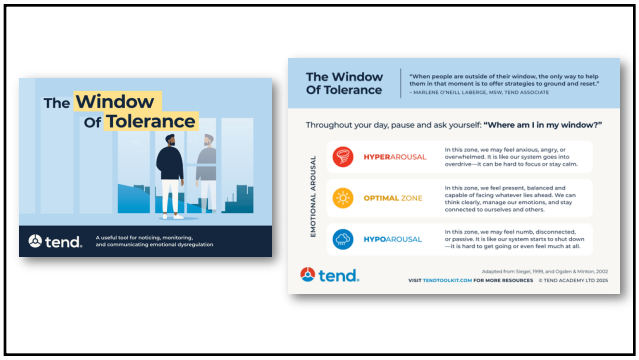


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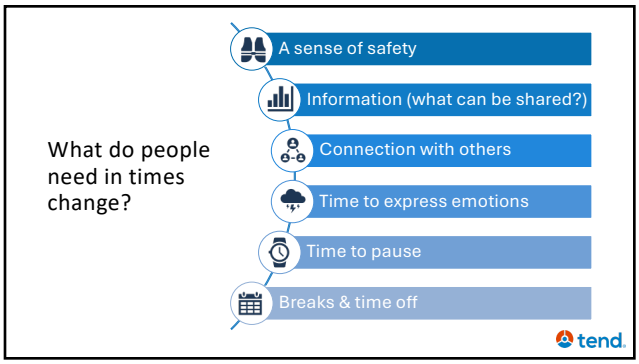
30


Window of Capacity
EMOTIONAL AROUSAL
HYPERAROUSAL
OPTIMAL ZONE
HYPOAROUSAL
Adapted from Siegel (1999), Ogden & Minton (2002)
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31


The Window Of Tolerance
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A useful tool for noticing, monitoring, and communicating emotional dysregulation
The Window Of Tolerance
"When people are outside of their window, the only way to help them in that moment is to offer strategies to ground and reset."
– MARLENE O'NEILL LABERGE, MSW, TEND ASSOCIATE
Throughout your day, pause and ask yourself: "Where am I in my window?"
EMOTIONAL AROUSAL
HYPERAROUSAL
In this zone, we may feel anxious, angry, or overwhelmed. It is like our system goes into overdrive—it can be hard to focus or stay calm.
OPTIMAL ZONE
In this zone, we feel present, balanced and capable of facing whatever lies ahead. We can think clearly, manage our emotions, and stay connected to ourselves and others.
HYPOAROUSAL
In this zone, we may feel numb, disconnected, or passive. It is like our system starts to shut down —it is hard to get going or even feel much at all.
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Adapted from Siegel, 1999, and Ogden & Minton, 2002
VISIT TENDTOOLKIT.COM FOR MORE RESOURCES © TEND ACADEMY LTD 2025

32


What do people need in times change?
A sense of safety
Information (what can be shared?)
Connection with others
Time to express emotions
Time to pause
Breaks & time off
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33



34

STRATEGY #1

Identify **what is already working** in collaborations and **what to carry forward**

35

A workforce that is **deeply anchored** by **peer solidarity** and a **shared passion** for the people you serve/help/support.

36

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37

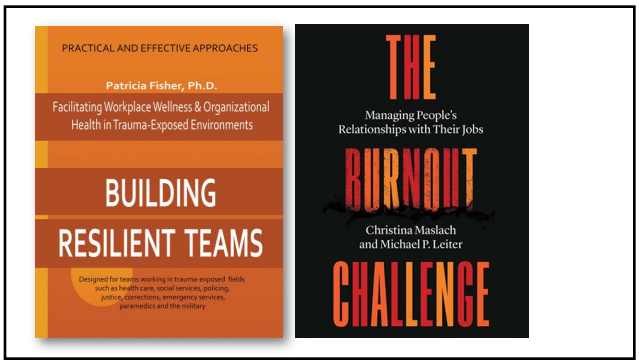
Limited training dollars?

- Start with your **supervisors/managers**
- Make sure **senior leadership** has the literacy to understand high-stress **trauma-exposed** work

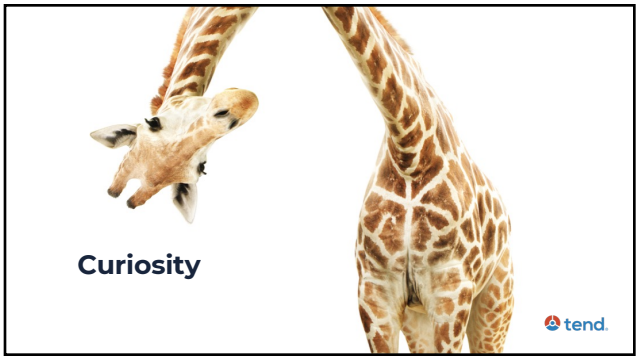
38



39


PRACTICAL AND EFFECTIVE APPROACHES
Patricia Fisher, Ph.D.
Facilitating Workplace Wellness & Organizational Health in Trauma-Exposed Environments
BUILDING
RESILIENT TEAMS
Designed for teams working in trauma-exposed fields such as health care, social services, policing, justice, corrections, emergency services, paramedics and the military
THE
Managing People's Relationships with Their Jobs
BURNOUT
Christina Maslach and Michael P. Leiter
CHALLENGE

40


Curiosity
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41

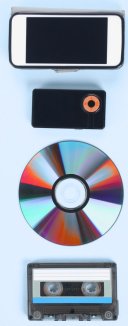

Lesson learned:
Let's stop dunking on "kids these days" (gen x,y,z, alpha)

42

What **generation** are you from?

How does that influence the way you:

- think about stress?
- seek support?
- view taking breaks or time off?



43



44

Cultivating Curiosity

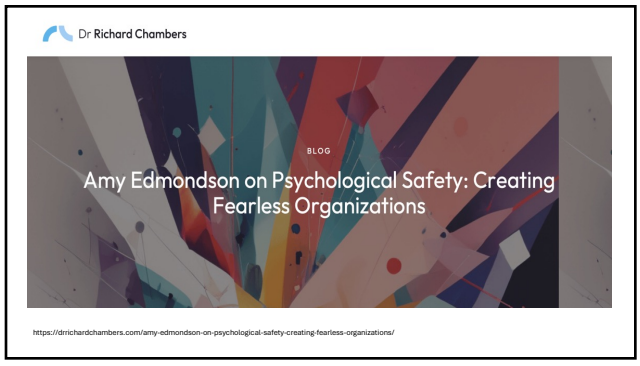
45



46



47



48

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Psychological Safety



49

Psychological safety

"

A belief that one **will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up** with ideas, questions, concerns, or mistakes, and that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking."

Dr. Amy C. Edmondson

https://amycedmondson.com/psychological-safety/

50



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51



52



Our internal state dictates our cognitive capacities

53

STRATEGY #2

Recognize **common friction points** in multi-disciplinary teams

54

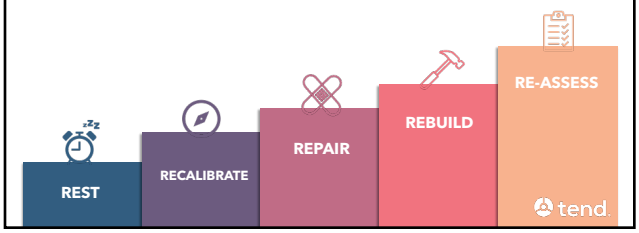
As leaders, sometimes we make mistakes even if our intention is good



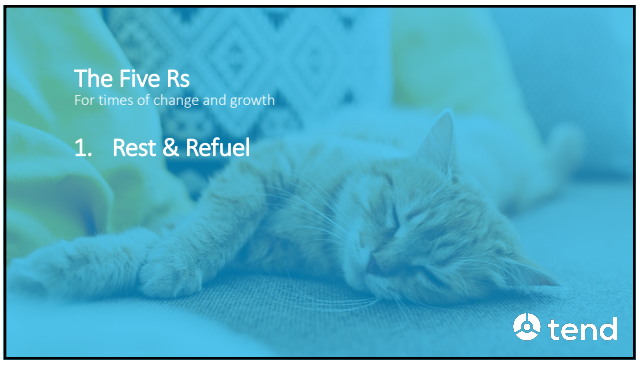
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THE FIVE Rs

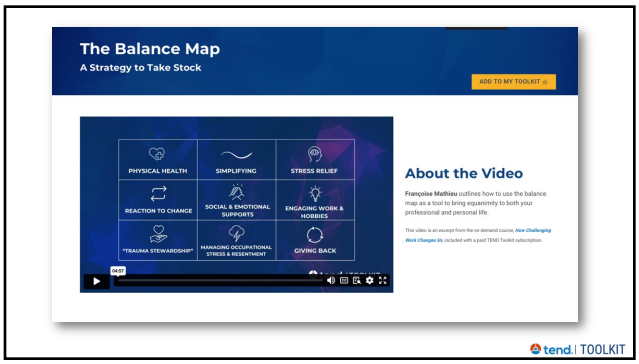
For times of change and growth



56



57


The Balance Map
A Strategy to Take Stock
ADD TO MY TOOLKIT
PHYSICAL HEALTH
SIMPLIFYING
STRESS RELIEF
REACTION TO CHANGE
SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL SUPPORTS
ENGAGING WORK & HOBBIES
"TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP"
MANAGING OCCUPATIONAL STRESS & RESENTMENT
GIVING BACK
About the Video
Françoise Mathieu outlines how to use the balance map as a tool to bring equanimity to both your professional and personal life.
tend | TOOLKIT

58


Micro-strategies are the most effective strategies
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Low Impact
Debriefing
Four steps to process difficult experiences with others
The Hot Walk & Talk Protocol
Three steps to support someone after a potentially traumatic event
The Window of Tolerance
A useful tool for noticing, monitoring, and communicating emotional dysregulation
Three Minute
Breathing Space
A simple and quick grounding strategy that can be used before, during, or after a stressful event
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59


The Five Rs
For times of change and growth
1. Rest & Refuel
2. Recalibration
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60



61


The Five Rs
For times of change and growth
1. Rest & Refuel
2. Recalibrate
3. Repair - Restore & Build Trust
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62


3. Repair – Restore & Build Trust
•Anger
•Moral distress
•Perceptions of fairness

63



Generally people feel more comfortable being in anger than in fear.

Diana Tikasz, MSW. RSW. TEND

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64



- Both anger & fear **cover over** our ability to be kind/compassionate.
- Anger and fear **take us out** of our prefrontal context which is why we can't be kind.
- We need to **make room/time to feel and express the anger appropriately first** so that we can naturally connect with our innate human ability to be kind.

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66



67

The Five Rs

For times of change and growth

1. Rest & Refuel
2. Recalibrate
3. Rebuild
4. Repair
5. Re-assess - Your Goals & Priorities

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68

STRATEGY #3

Use a simple practice for **honest conversations** when others see things differently

69

The **Rewards** of the Work | Discussion

- *What are the **biggest changes** you have experienced over your career?*
- *What **helped you to adapt** to these changes as individuals and as a team?*
- *What is **one important part of your world view or philosophy that has changed** during the time you have worked in the field?*

70

For leaders, sometimes the most powerful thing we can do is to acknowledge that an event is distressing



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71

"I couldn't solve it all. But at least at the end of the day, I could say that I **did my best** to try help each person with compassion and empathy."

-Rev John Borthwick, TEND Associate

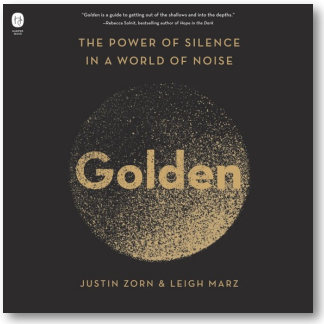


The TEND Toolkit. (2022, October). *Moral distress: When we can't do the right thing* [Video]. https://tendtoolkit.com/moral-distress-cant-do-the-right-thing/

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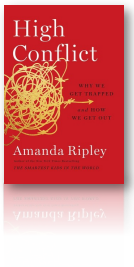
72

The art of Listening



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73



When you find yourself in high conflict situations, **ask these three questions**:

- Does it need to be said?
- Does it need to be said by *me*?
- Does it need to be said by me *right now?*

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74

W.A.I.T.

Why Am I Talking?

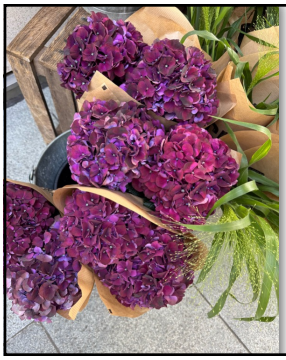
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75

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Where Can Curiosity Lead Us?

76



“Belles rencontres”

A significant, often unexpected **human connection** that enriches our perspective and brings our **shared humanity** to light.

77

What I learned from the mermaids

78



79



80

> “Community is what facilitates wellness to support hope, belonging, meaning and purpose.”
>
> Dr. Carol Hopkins
> Executive Director, Thunderbird Partnership Foundation
> https://wisepractices.ca

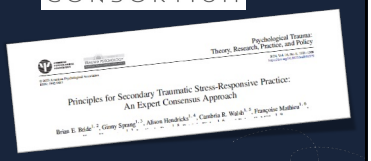


81

2024

Principles for STS-Responsive Practice: An Expert Consensus Approach

SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS CONSORTIUM

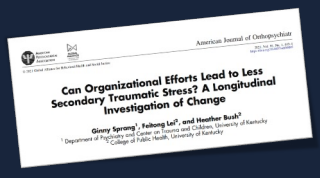

Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy

Principles for Secondary Traumatic Stress-Responsive Practice: An Expert Consensus Approach

Bride, B. E., et al 2024

82

Can Organizational Efforts Lead to Less Secondary Traumatic Stress? A Longitudinal Investigation of Change


American Journal of Orthopsychiatry

Can Organizational Efforts Lead to Less Secondary Traumatic Stress? A Longitudinal Investigation of Change

Ginny Sprang[1], Feihong Lei[2], and Heather Bush[1]

[1] Department of Psychiatry and Center on Trauma and Children, University of Kentucky [2] College of Public Health, University of Kentucky

Sprang, G., Lei, F., & Bush, H. (2021).

83