



OTHER VIOLENT  
COLD CASE  
CRIMES

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# Recognizing Vicarious Trauma and Burnout

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Michigan State University

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# About Me

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Academic research psychologist who studies sexual assault.

- Study the impact of trauma on health and well-being.
- Study survivors' disclosures & help-seeking.
- Over course of my career, I've studied **17,326** survivors' stories.



# About Me

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Academic research psychologist who studies vicarious trauma.

- Study impact of trauma exposure on advocates, nurses, police, prosecutors.
- Study impact of trauma exposure on researchers.
- Over course of my career, I've learned this affects **EVERYONE.**





Trauma affects everyone and everything in its wake.  
It creates a ripple effect of radiating pain and suffering.

Laura van Dernoot Lipsky



The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as being able to walk through water without getting wet.

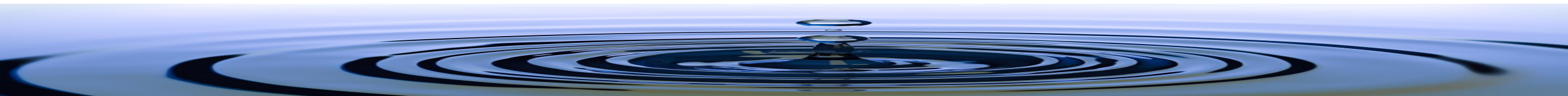
Rachel Remen



# Session Goals

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- 1 *Acknowledge* that exposure to trauma takes a toll on us.
- 2 *Describe* how exposure to trauma takes a toll on us.
- 3 *Examine* how exposure to trauma affects our health and job performance.
- 4 *Promote* supportive solutions at individual- and organizational-level.





1

# ACKNOWLEDGE

The Toll This Takes On Us





This is demanding work, gotta be *on* all the time, and tensions always running high and we're in the middle...

I've been terrorized and violated and scared to death, completely wrecked and ripped apart...

Every day, that's what a day in the office is for us, the worst of mankind ever day...we're right there, in their suffering...it hurts, it hurts us too...

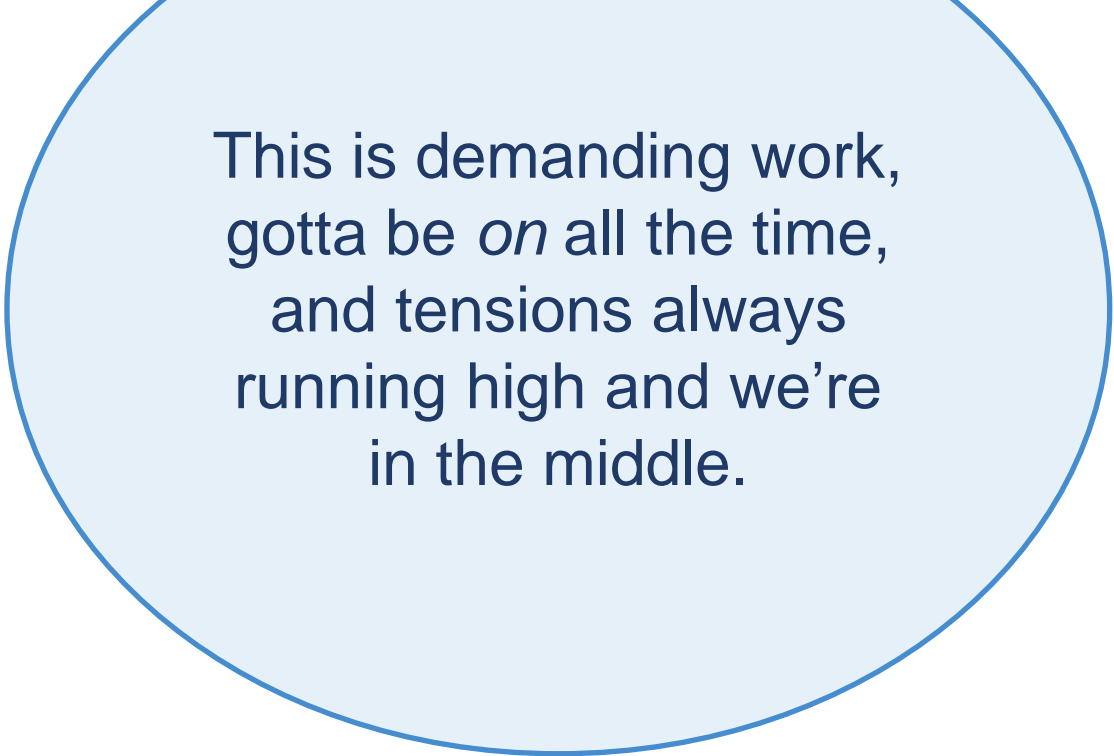
I'm so tired, no one gives a \_\_\_\_, whatever we ask for, the answer is always no. Just deal with it. Some days, I don't know, I think, can I keep doing this?

2

# DESCRIBE

The Toll This Takes






This is demanding work,  
gotta be *on* all the time,  
and tensions always  
running high and we're  
in the middle.



**STRESS**

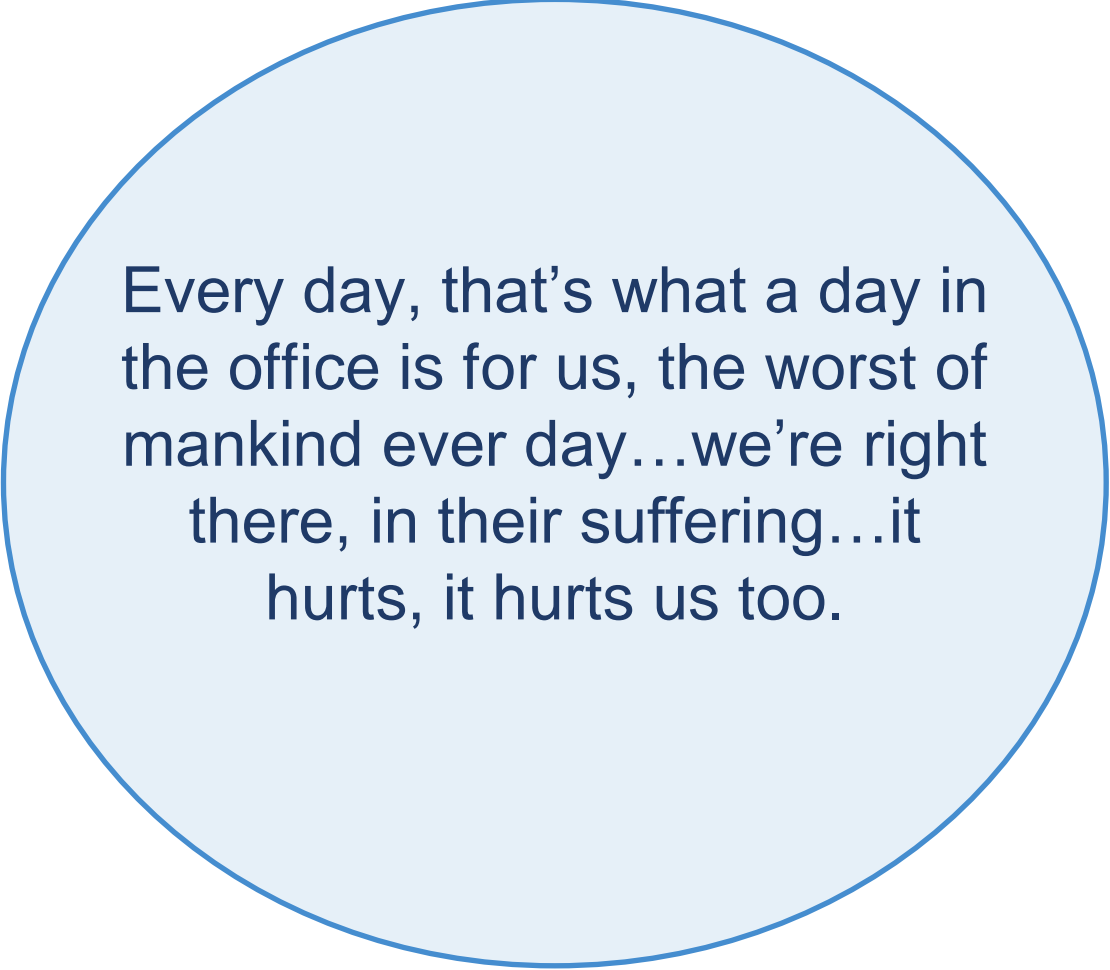




I've been terrorized  
and violated and scared to  
death, completely wrecked and  
ripped apart.



**TRAUMA**



Every day, that's what a day in the office is for us, the worst of mankind ever day...we're right there, in their suffering...it hurts, it hurts us too.



**VICARIOUS  
TRAUMA**

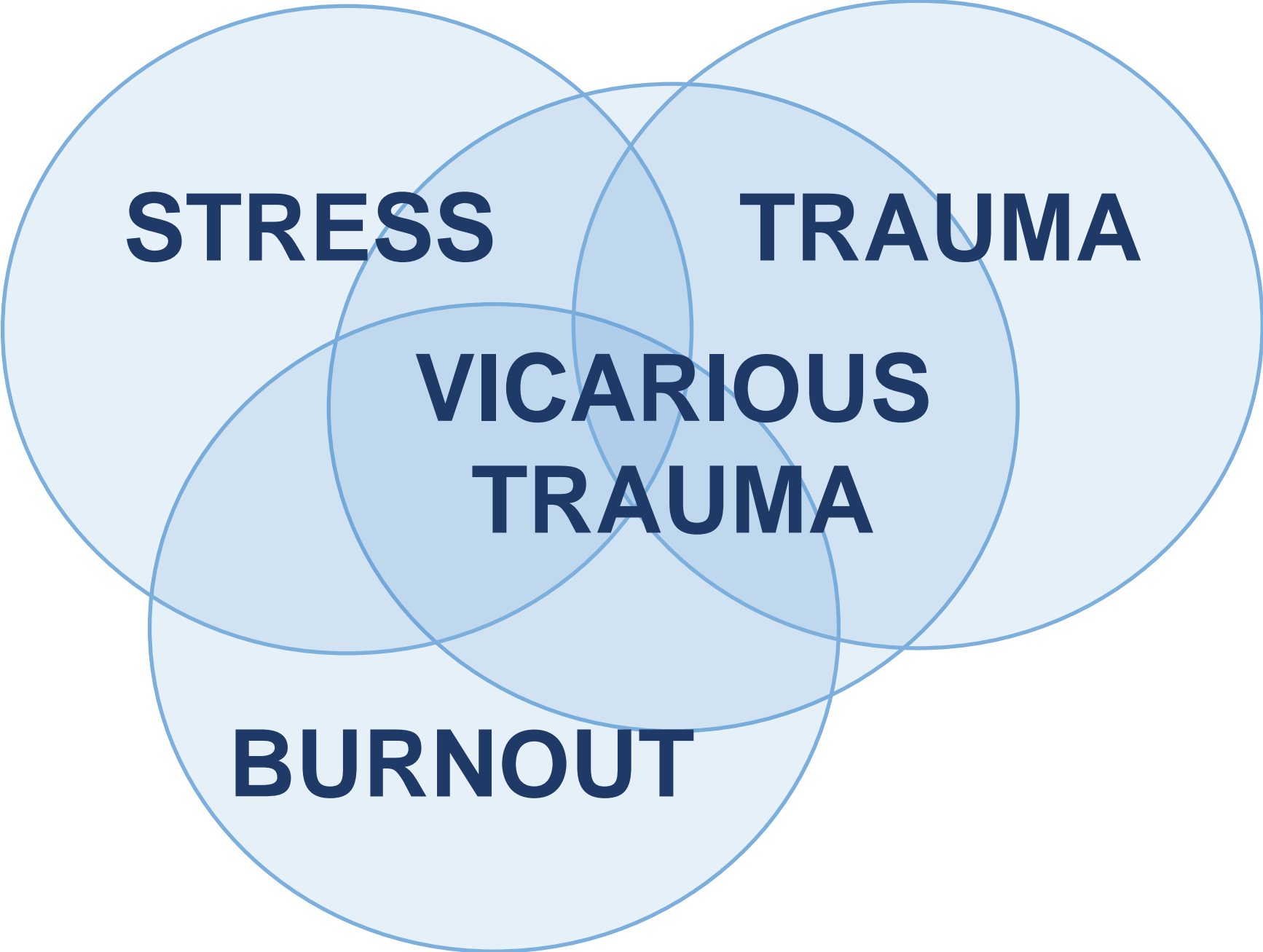


I'm so tired, no one gives a \_\_\_\_\_,  
whatever we ask for, the answer  
Is always no. Just deal with it.  
Some days, I don't know, I think,  
can I keep doing this?



**BURNOUT**





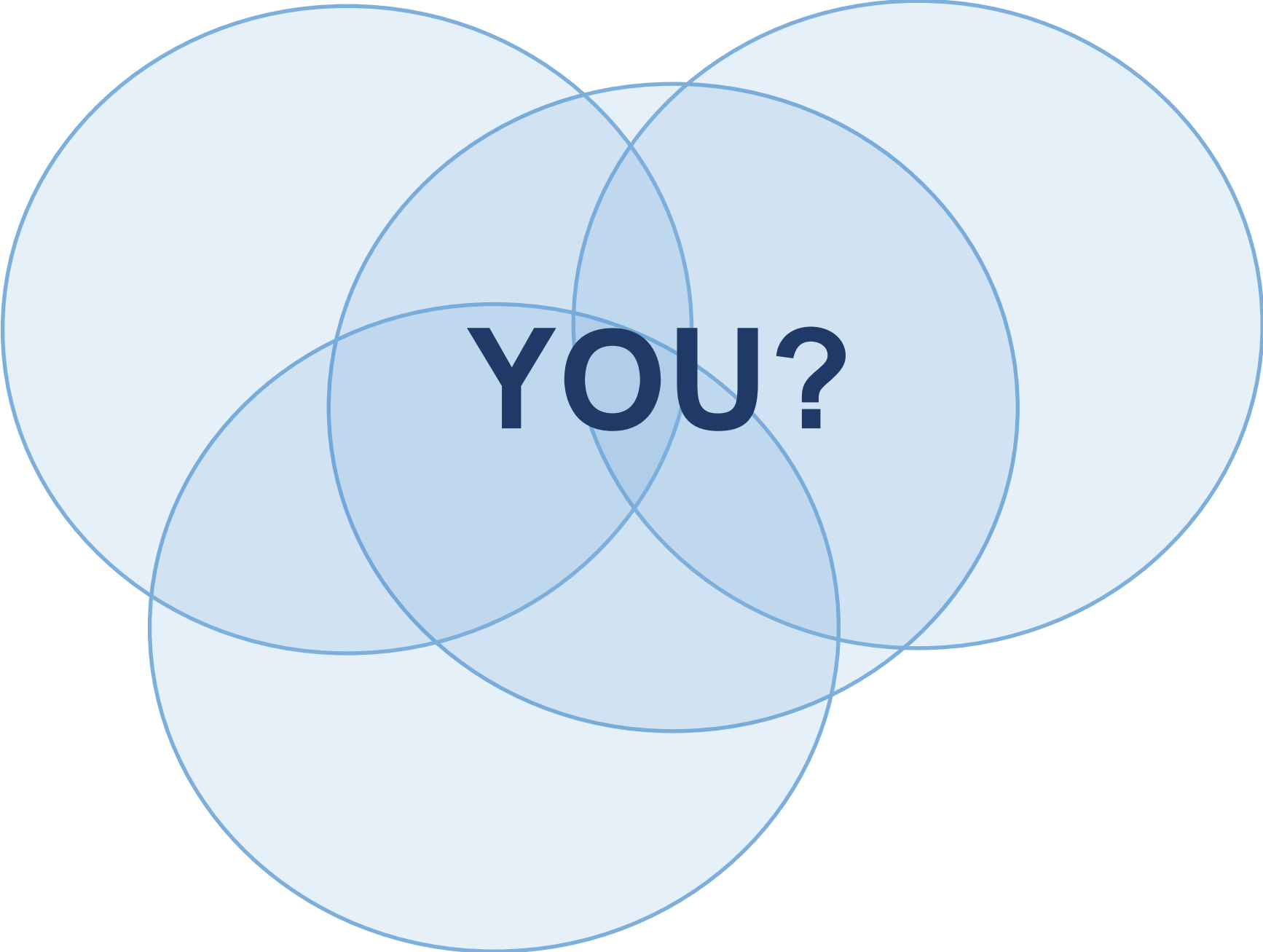
**STRESS**

**TRAUMA**

**VICARIOUS  
TRAUMA**

**BURNOUT**





**YOU?**



# What Is Stress?

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Stress is physical, mental, or emotional factors that causes bodily and/or mental tension.



Stress causes biochemical, physiological, and behavioral changes to adapt.



Uncomfortable experiences around & inside us that cause uncomfortable reactions within us.

# Sources of Stress

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## Environmental

Assaults the five senses.

noise, pollution, weather, traffic, disturbing images



## Social

Interpersonal interactions.

work, relationships, loss, conflict, oppressions, microaggressions



## Physiological

Bodily changes.

adolescence, menopause, injuries, illness



## Cognitive/Emotional

Our own thoughts and feelings.

interpretations, appraisals, coping

# What Is Trauma?

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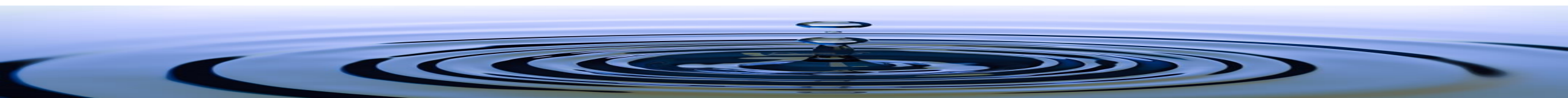
Trauma is the emotional and bodily response to a terrible event that threatens a person's life, bodily integrity, and/or sanity.



Examples: natural disasters, accidents, war, human rights abuses, criminal violence, scarcity & depravation.



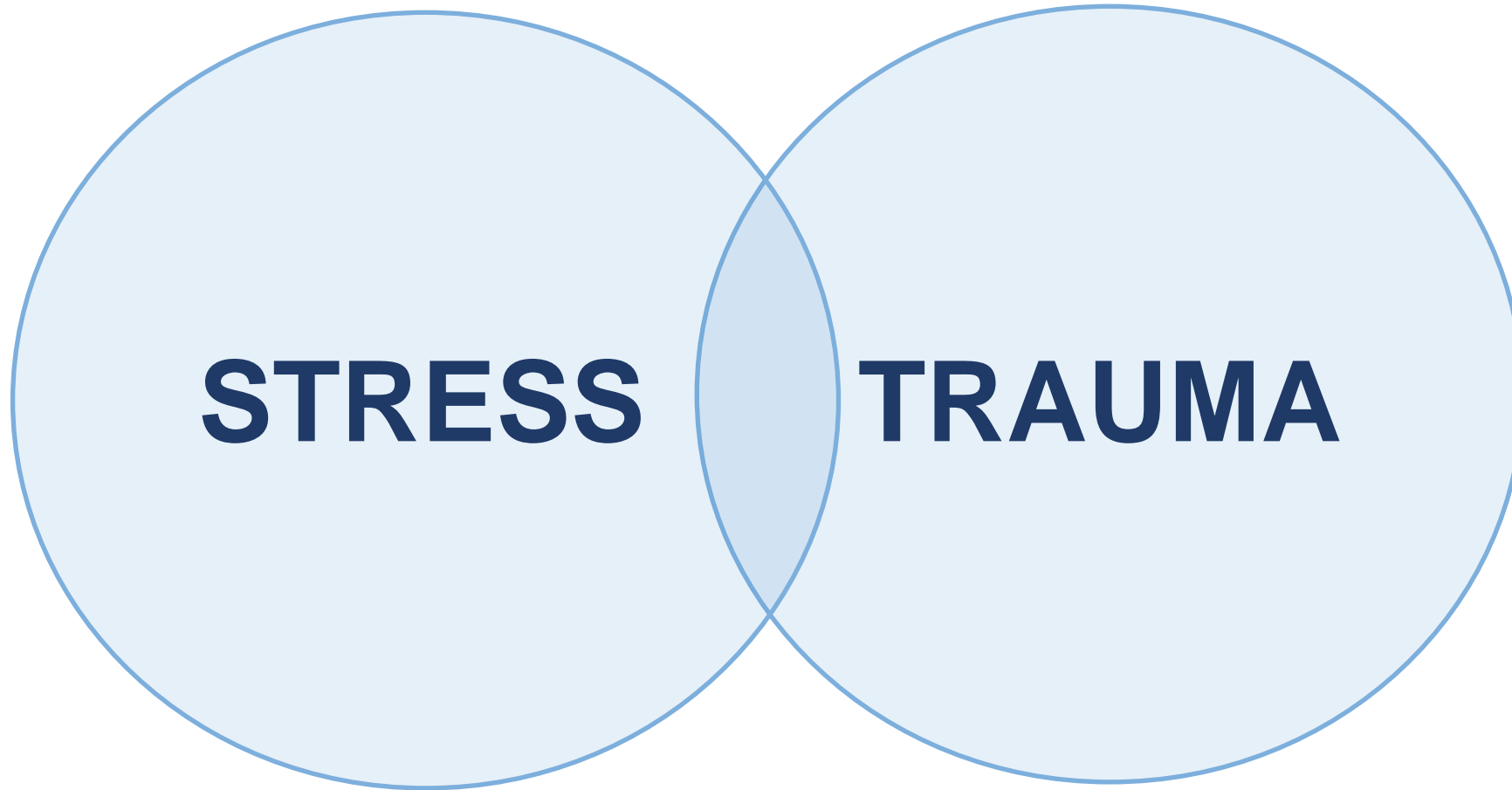
During the event, person's ability to integrate his/her/their emotional experience is overwhelmed.



**STRESS**

**TRAUMA**

**DISTINCT  
CONCEPTS**



**But They Can  
Co-Occur**



# What Is Vicarious Trauma?

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Vicarious trauma is the emotional and bodily response to sustained exposure to the trauma and suffering of other people.



Examples: working with victims of crime, working in disaster response, working in war/conflict zones.



The cumulative exposure and empathic engagement causes changes in providers' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

SOURCE: Cieslak et al. (2014); Figley (1995); Rothschild (2006)

# Who Experiences Vicarious Trauma?

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Everyone who works with victims of trauma (varies in duration, intensity).



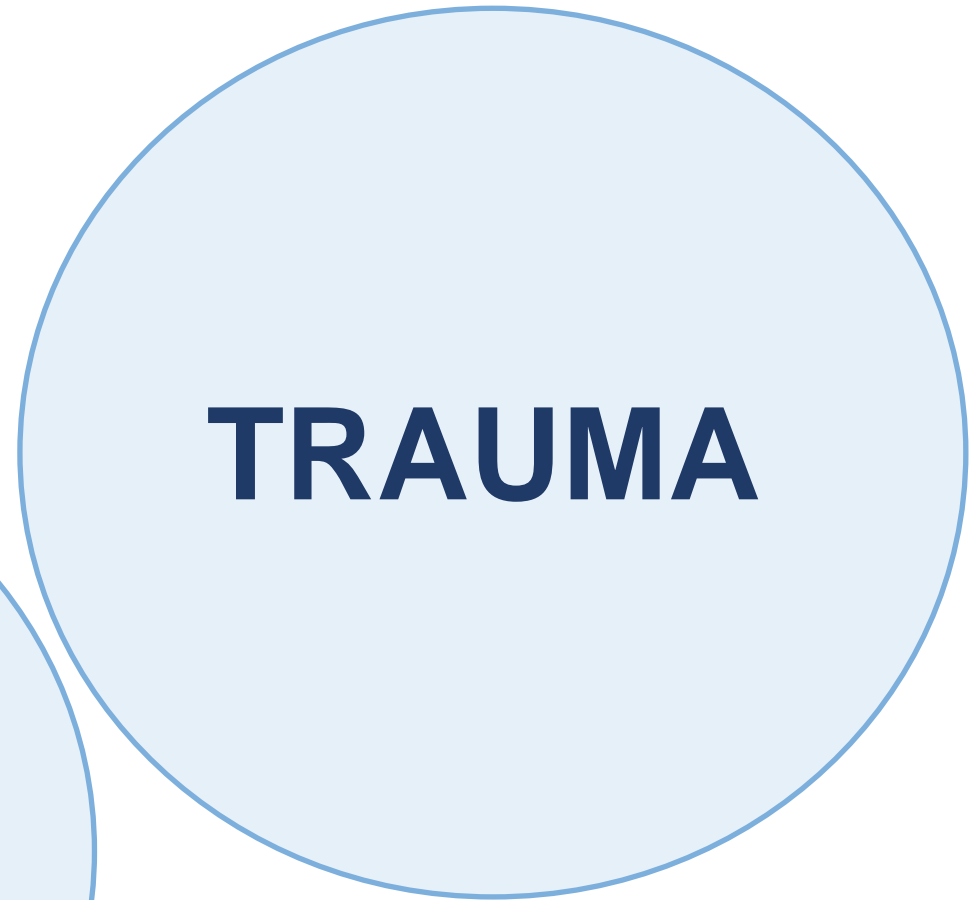
Experienced by professionals of all genders, ages, years of experience, and across all disciplines.



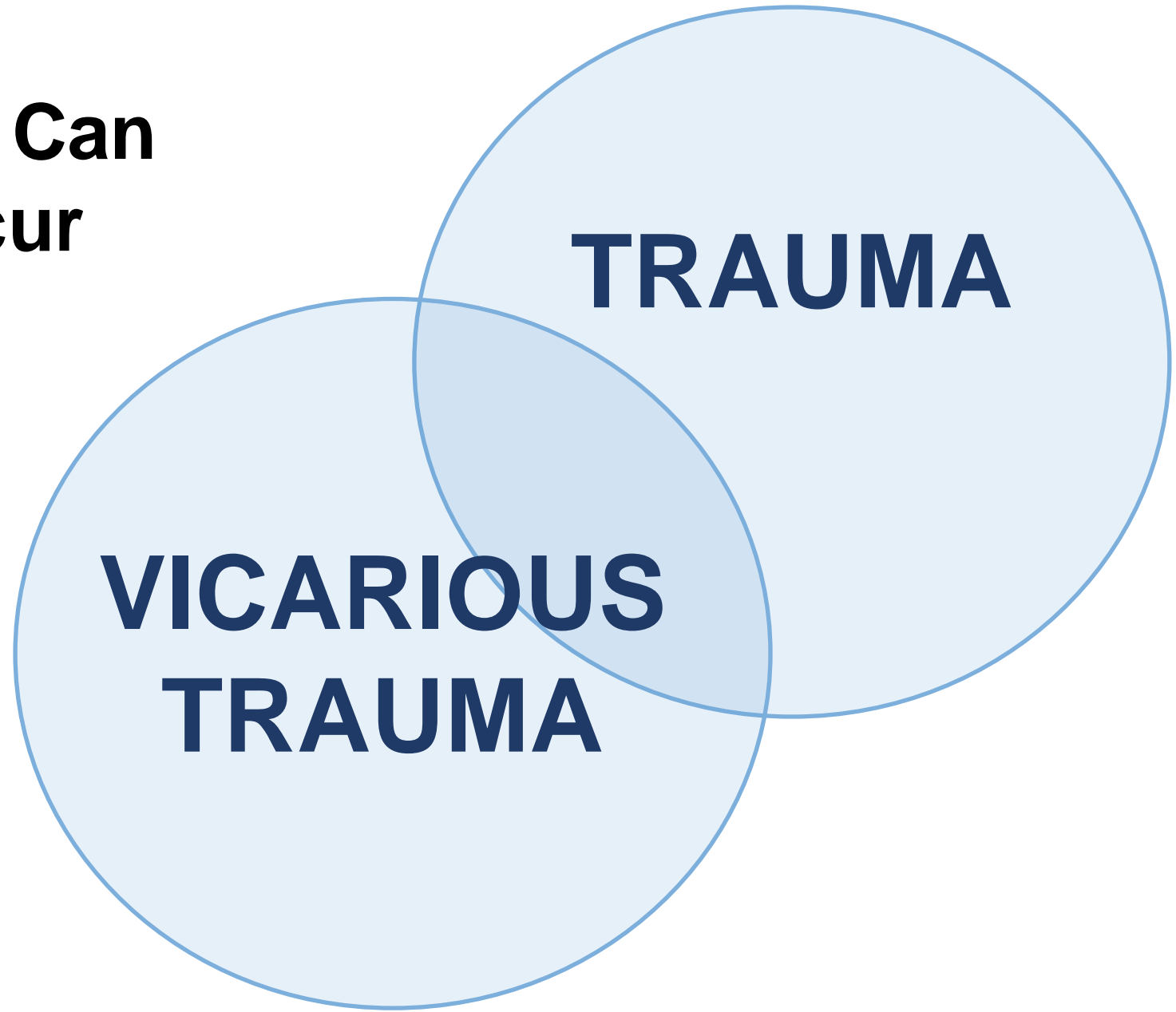
Happens whether you deliberately chose this kind of work or whether you were assigned this kind of work.

SOURCE: Cieslak et al. (2014); Rothschild (2006)

**DISTINCT  
CONCEPTS**



**But They Can  
Co-Occur**



# What Is Burnout?

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Chronic frustration with work environment that causes feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, apathy, cynicism.



Often caused by excessive workload, not enough resources to sustain work, lack of recognition and praise of work, constant conflict.



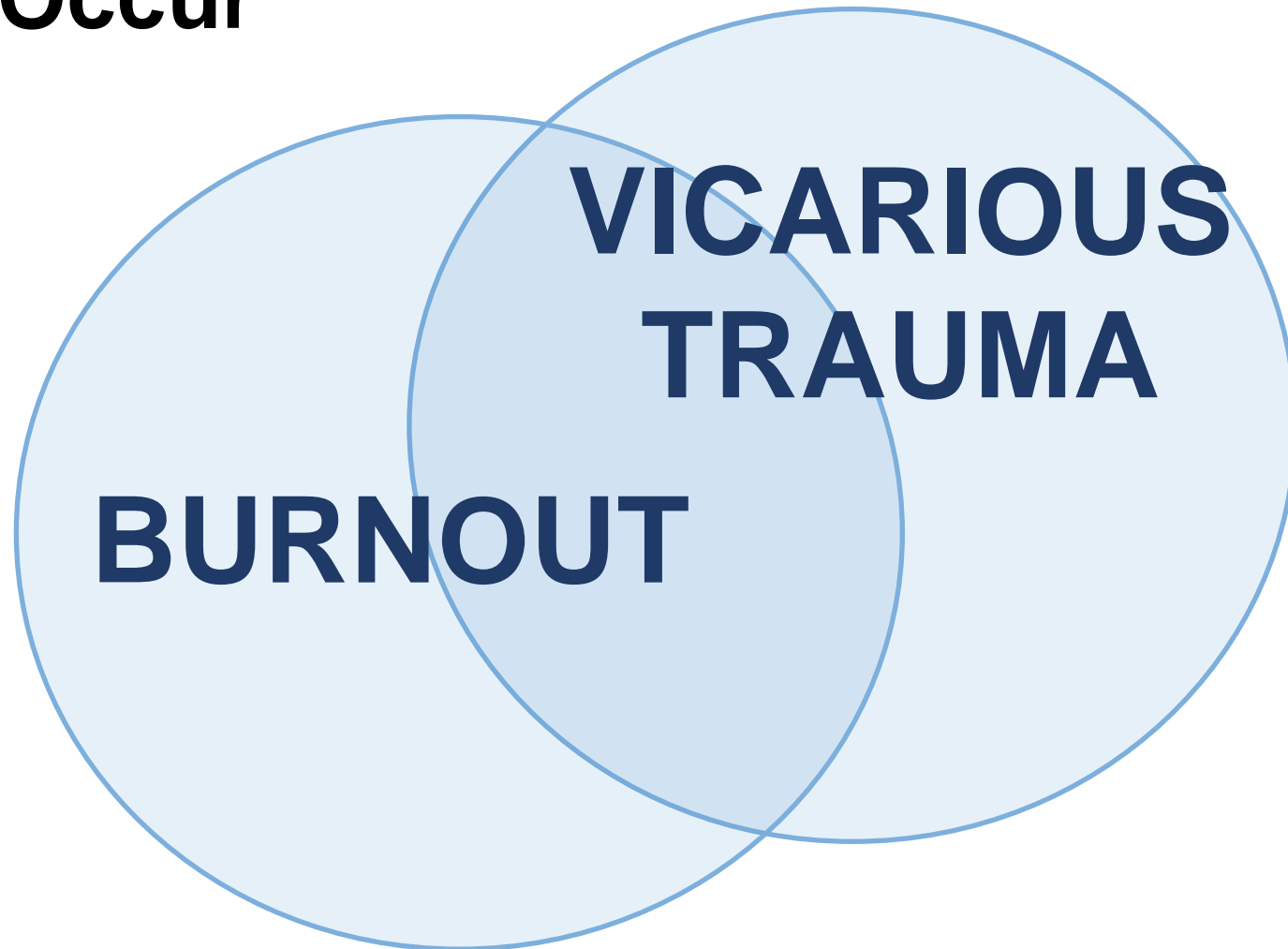
Burnout causes changes in providers' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

SOURCE: Cieslak et al. (2014); Maslach & Jackson (1986); Rothschild (2006)

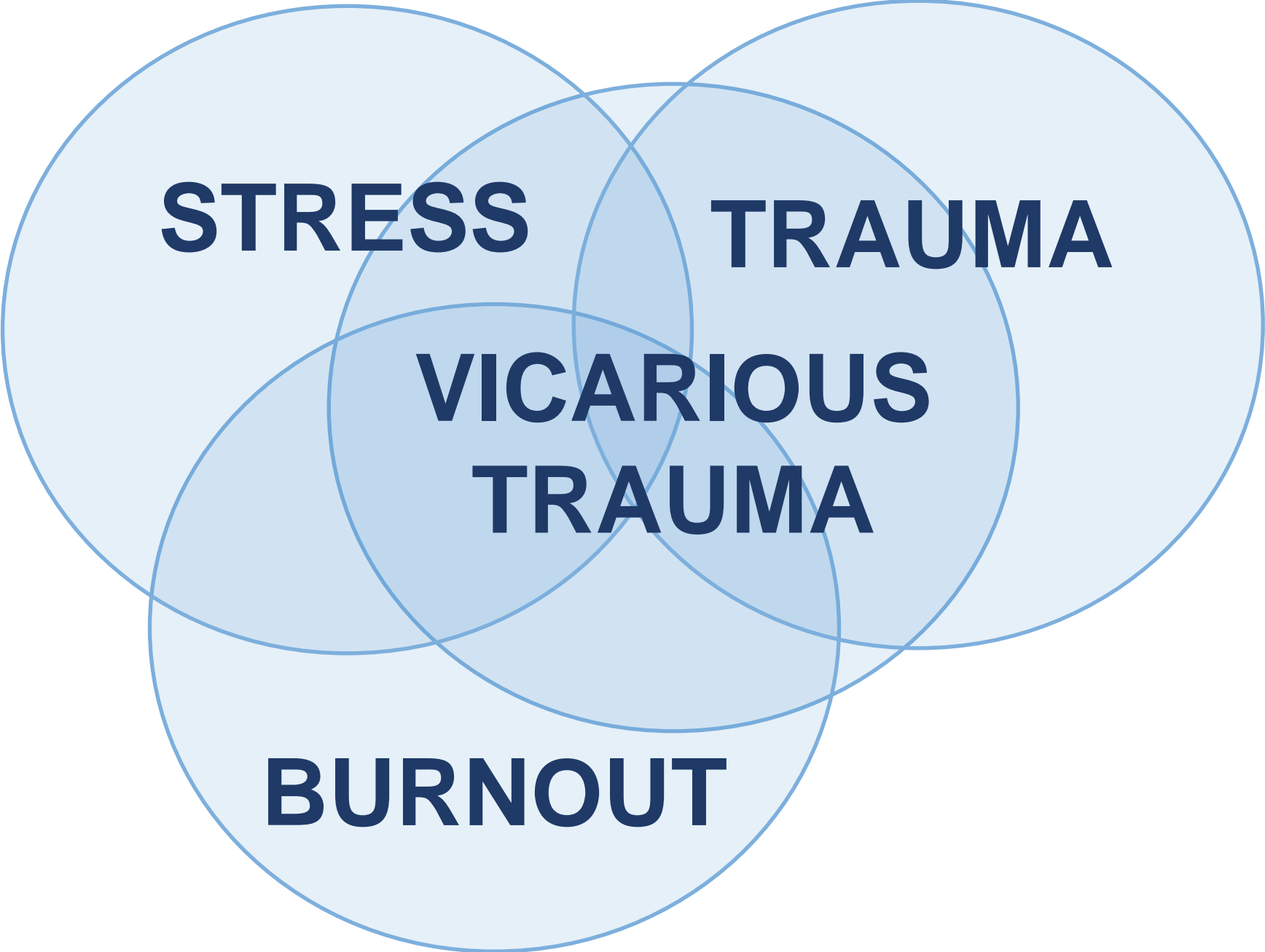
**DISTINCT  
CONCEPTS**



**But They *Often*  
Co-Occur**





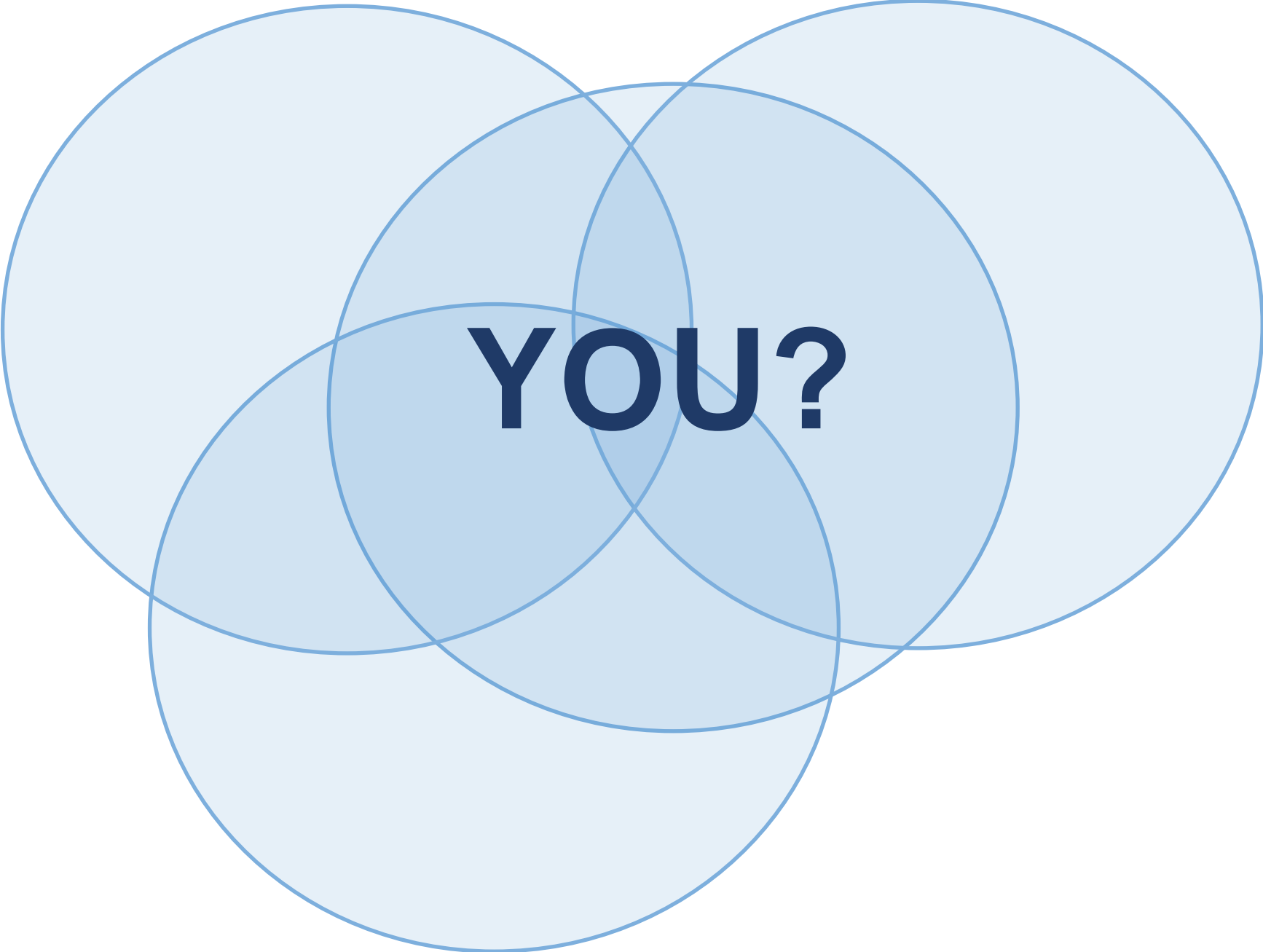


**STRESS**

**TRAUMA**

**VICARIOUS  
TRAUMA**

**BURNOUT**



**YOU?**

3

# EXAMINE

How Vicarious Trauma Affects Us



# The Impact on Our Health: Immediate

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 Increased heartrate

 Headache

 Increased breathing

 Fatigue

 Body temperature fluctuations

 Irritability

 Difficulty concentrating

 Upset stomach/GI distress

# Impact on Our Health: Long Term

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**Immunological** (increased inflammation)



**Infections** (upper respiratory system infections)



**Chronic diseases** (hypertension, GI conditions)



**Mental health** (anxiety, depression)








**Cognitive** (difficulty concentrating, impaired decision making, mistakes)



**Aging** (cellular degeneration)





# Impact on Our Job Performance

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-  Increases feelings of helplessness, powerlessness, apathy, cynicism.
-  Decreases your ability to listen carefully and negotiate conflict.
-  Decreases your creativity and problem solving.
-  Decreases your empathy and kindness.
-  Increases performance errors; decreases productivity.

# Impact on Our Organizations

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-  Affects the overall culture and performance of your organization.
-  Permits short-cuts and low-quality work to become the norm.
-  Decreases respect for colleagues and people you serve.
-  Decreases collaboration and cooperation.



4

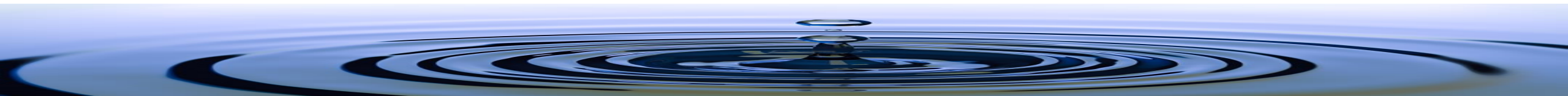
# P R O M O T E

## Supportive Solutions



# For You: In the Moment

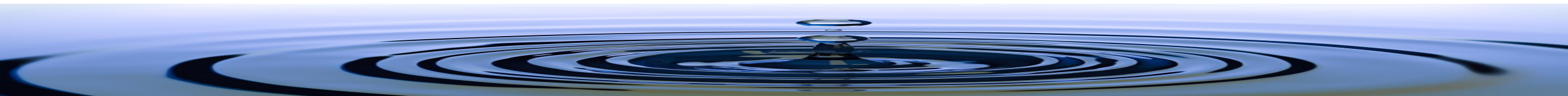
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**For You: In the Moment**

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***BREATHE***



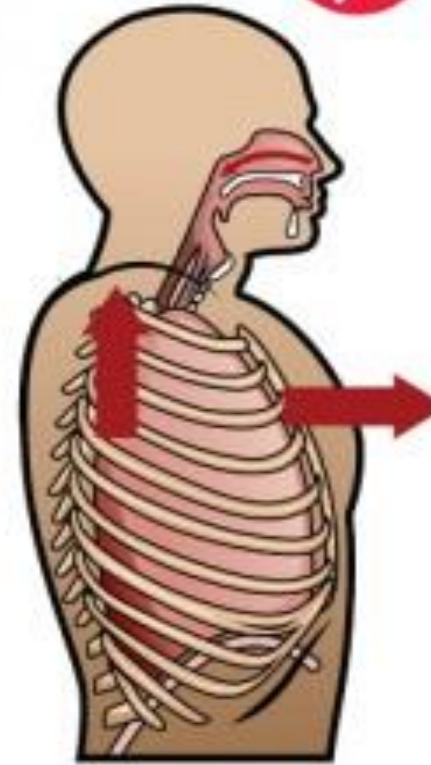
# Anatomy of Breath

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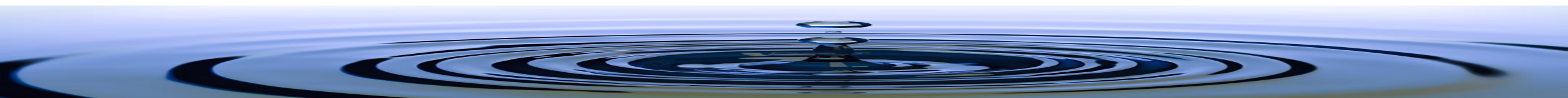
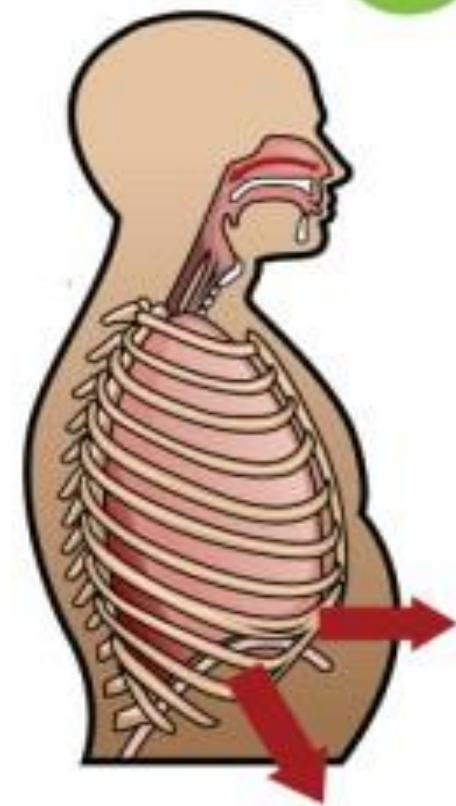
## Chest Breathing

- Utilizes chest
- Breath is shallow
- Heightened stress response
- Increase toxins
- Less oxygen to brain
- Overtaxes other body parts

Upper Chest Breathing



Belly Breathing

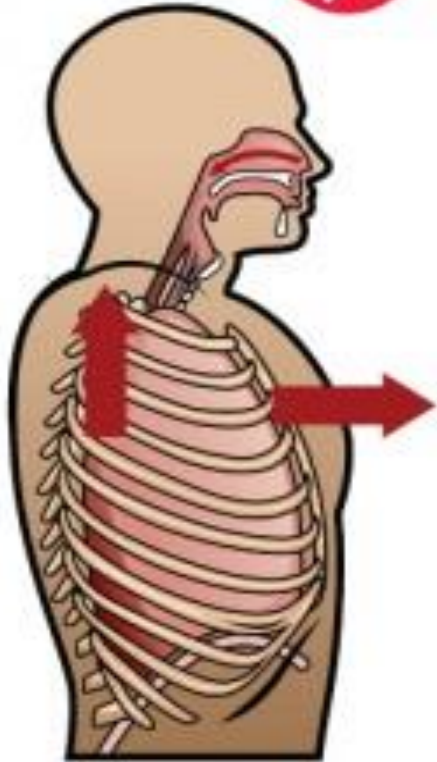




# Anatomy of Breath

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Upper Chest  
Breathing

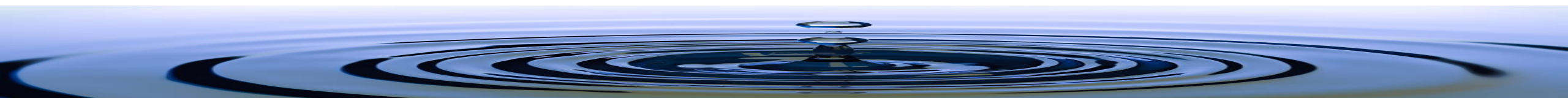


Belly  
Breathing



## Diaphragmic Breathing

- Engages the diaphragm
- Stimulates the vagus nerve
- Reduces heart rate
- Reduces jittery feelings
- Reduces mental fog



# For You: In the Moment

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## Take Five

Take five diaphragmic breaths while tracing the outline of your hand.



at your desk, under the table, red lights, in zoom meetings

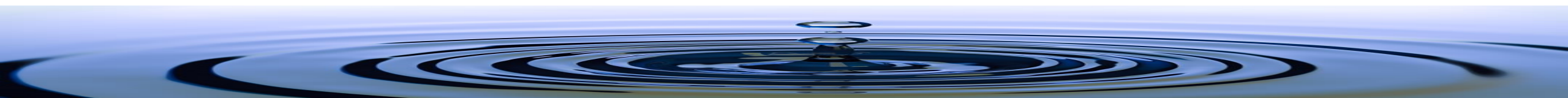
## Doorknob Breathing

Take a diaphragmic breath at every doorknob throughout your day.



front door, meeting door, office door, microwave handle, refrigerator handle

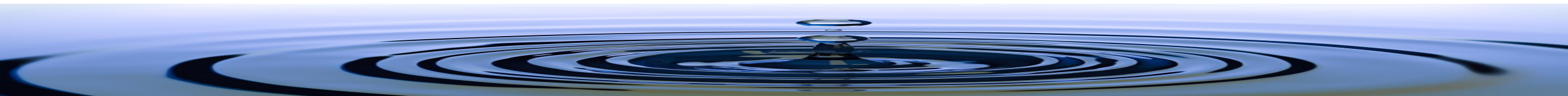
CREDIT: Amy Jeanguenat, Mindgen



# For You: Daily Routines

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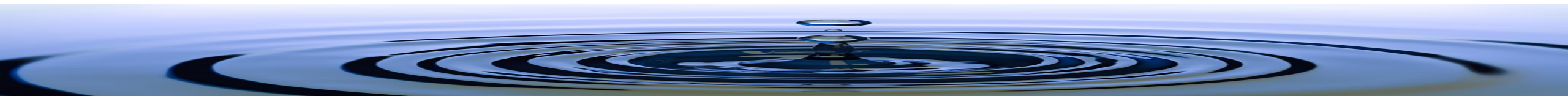
- 1 Get enough sleep
- 2 Maintain eating schedule
- 3 Get light exercise
- 4 Vary the work that you do
- 5 Do something you enjoy
- 6 Focus on what you do/did well
- 7 Learn from your mistakes (be gentle with yourself)
- 8 Laugh
- 9 Create quiet moments for reflection
- 10 Practice gratitude





# For You: Creating Work Boundaries

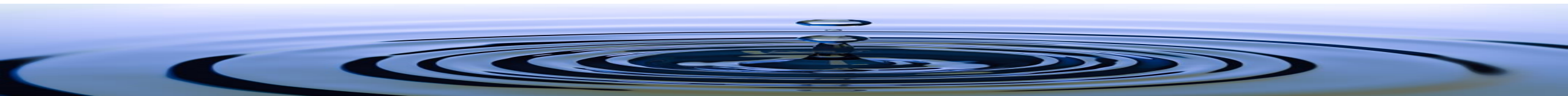
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# For You: Creating Work Boundaries

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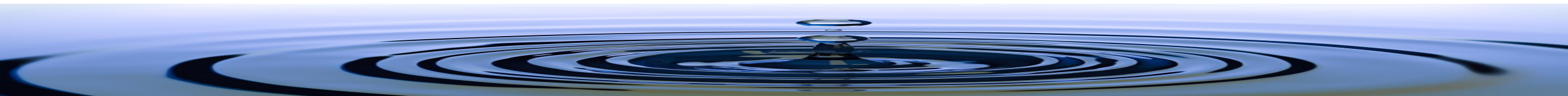
- Create a routine & ritual for *starting* work (make it a conscious act, talk to yourself as you do it).



# For You: Creating Work Boundaries

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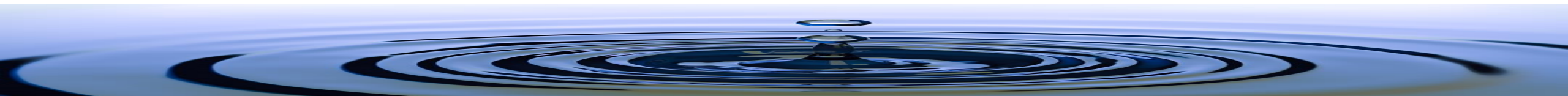
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- Allow yourself to feel what you need to feel *during* work time.



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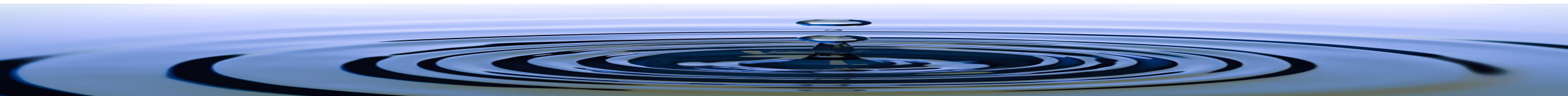
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- Discuss challenging experiences, cases, feelings with colleagues *during* work time.



# For You: Creating Work Boundaries

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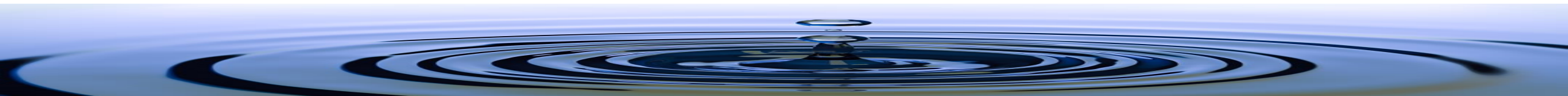
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# For You: Creating Work Boundaries

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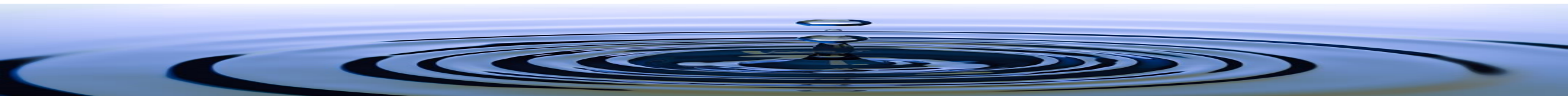
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- ☑ Allow yourself to feel what you need to feel *during* work time.
- ☑ Discuss challenging experiences, cases, feelings with colleagues *during* work time.
- ☑ Create a routine & ritual for *ending* work (make it a conscious act, talk to yourself as you do it).
- ☑ Leave work at work, especially if you socialize with work colleagues during non-work time.



# For You: Getting Support

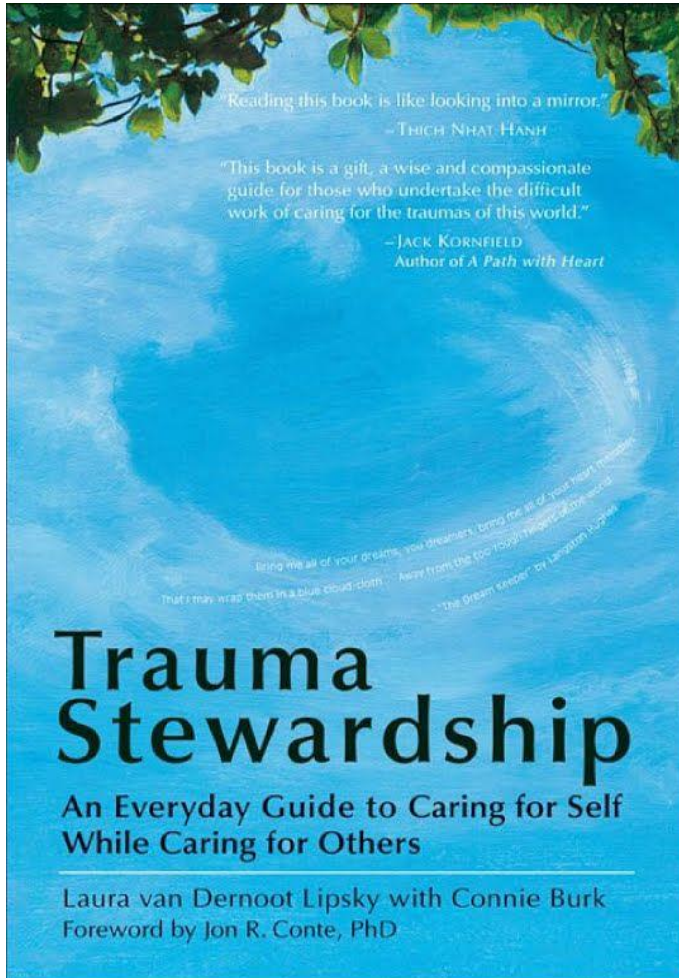
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I can't *BREATHE* my way  
through this anymore.





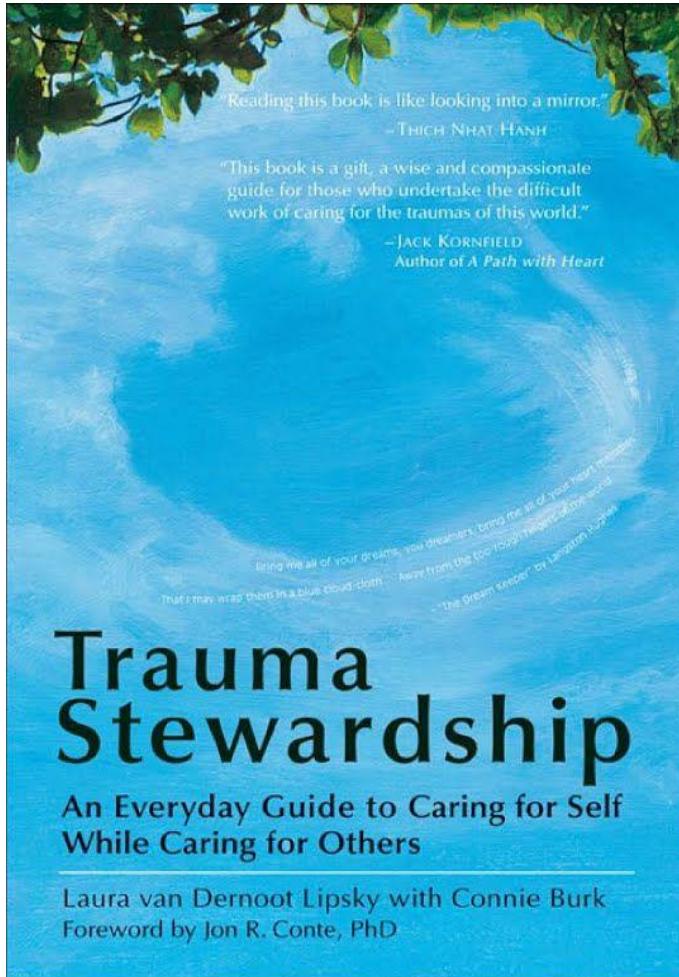
# Warning Signs



1. Feeling helpless and hopeless
2. A sense that one can never do enough
3. Hypervigilance
4. Diminished creativity
5. Inability to embrace complexity
6. Minimizing
7. Chronic exhaustion/physical ailments
8. Inability to listen/deliberate avoidance
9. Dissociative moments
10. Sense of persecution
11. Guilt
12. Fear
13. Anger and cynicism
14. Inability to empathize/numbing
15. Addictions
16. Grandiosity



# Warning Signs



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# Self-Assessment Tools

**Professional Quality of Life Measure**  
ProQOL.org



**HOME**

**THEORY**

**PROQOL MEASURE & TOOLS**

**POCKET CARD & HANDOUTS**

**USE THE PROQOL**

**PROQOL DATABANK**

**RESOURCE LINKS**

**FAQ**

**ABOUT US**

**CONTACT US**

**CS-CF THEORY**

**CS-CF THEORY MODEL**

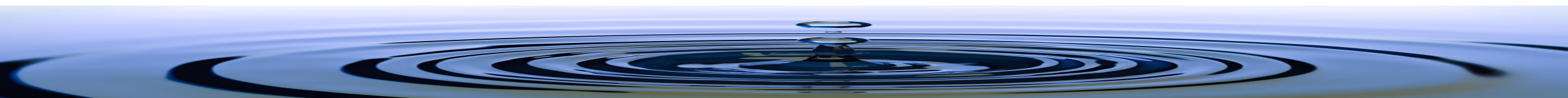
**COMPASSION SATISFACTION**

**COMPASSION FATIGUE**

**BURNOUT**

**SECONDARY TRAUMA**

**Professional Quality of Life:  
Elements, Theory, and Measurement**  
*Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue, Burnout,  
Secondary Traumatic Stress, Vicarious Traumatization, and Vicarious Transformation*





# Self-Assessment Tools

## Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue  
(ProQOL) Version 5 (2009)

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the *last 30 days*.

1=Never      2=Rarely      3=Sometimes      4=Often      5=Very Often

- \_\_\_ 1. I am happy.
- \_\_\_ 2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].
- \_\_\_ 3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.
- \_\_\_ 4. I feel connected to others.
- \_\_\_ 5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.
- \_\_\_ 6. I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].
- \_\_\_ 7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].
- \_\_\_ 8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].
- \_\_\_ 9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].
- \_\_\_ 10. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].
- \_\_\_ 11. Because of my [helping], I have felt "on edge" about various things.
- \_\_\_ 12. I like my work as a [helper].
- \_\_\_ 13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].
- \_\_\_ 14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].
- \_\_\_ 15. I have beliefs that sustain me.
- \_\_\_ 16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.
- \_\_\_ 17. I am the person I always wanted to be.
- \_\_\_ 18. My work makes me feel satisfied.
- \_\_\_ 19. I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].
- \_\_\_ 20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help] and how I could help them.
- \_\_\_ 21. I feel overwhelmed because my case [work] load seems endless.
- \_\_\_ 22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.
- \_\_\_ 23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].
- \_\_\_ 24. I am proud of what I can do to [help].
- \_\_\_ 25. As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.
- \_\_\_ 26. I feel "bogged down" by the system.
- \_\_\_ 27. I have thoughts that I am a "success" as a [helper].
- \_\_\_ 28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.
- \_\_\_ 29. I am a very caring person.
- \_\_\_ 30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.

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www.isu.edu/~bhtamm or www.proqol.org. This test may be freely copied as long as (a) author is credited, (b) no changes are made, and (c) it is not sold.

### WHAT IS MY SCORE AND WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

In this section, you will score your test so you understand the interpretation for you. To find your score on **each section**, total the questions listed on the left and then find your score in the table on the right of the section.

#### Compassion Satisfaction Scale

Copy your rating on each of these questions on to this table and add them up. When you have added them up you can find your score on the table to the right.

3. \_\_\_
6. \_\_\_
12. \_\_\_
16. \_\_\_
18. \_\_\_
20. \_\_\_
22. \_\_\_
24. \_\_\_
27. \_\_\_
30. \_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_

The sum of my Compassion Satisfaction questions is	And my Compassion Satisfaction level is
22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

#### Burnout Scale

On the burnout scale you will need to take an extra step. Starred items are "reverse scored." If you scored the item 1, write a 5 beside it. The reason we ask you to reverse the scores is because scientifically the measure works better when these questions are asked in a positive way though they can tell us more about their negative form. For example, question 1. "I am happy" tells us more about

- \*1. \_\_\_ = \_\_\_
- \*4. \_\_\_ = \_\_\_
8. \_\_\_
10. \_\_\_
- \*15. \_\_\_ = \_\_\_
- \*17. \_\_\_ = \_\_\_
19. \_\_\_
21. \_\_\_
26. \_\_\_
- \*29. \_\_\_ = \_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_

The sum of my Burnout Questions is	And my Burnout level is
22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

You Wrote	Change to	the effects of helping when you are not happy so you reverse the score
1	5	
2	4	
3	3	
4	2	
5	1	

#### Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale

Just like you did on Compassion Satisfaction, copy your rating on each of these questions on to this table and add them up. When you have added them up you can find your score on the table to the right.

2. \_\_\_
5. \_\_\_
7. \_\_\_
9. \_\_\_
11. \_\_\_
13. \_\_\_
14. \_\_\_
23. \_\_\_
25. \_\_\_
28. \_\_\_

Total: \_\_\_

The sum of my Secondary Trauma questions is	And my Secondary Traumatic Stress level is
22 or less	Low
Between 23 and 41	Moderate
42 or more	High

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# For You: Getting Support

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 Shame & Stigma



This literally happens to everyone.

 Career Consequences



VT negatively affects your job performance.

 Employee-Based Services



Are often very good (or work with private provider).

 Time

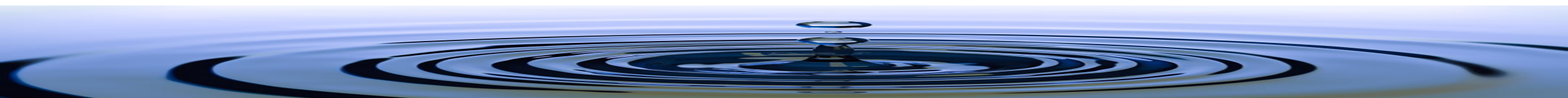


This is usually short-term work, like PT.

 It Won't Help

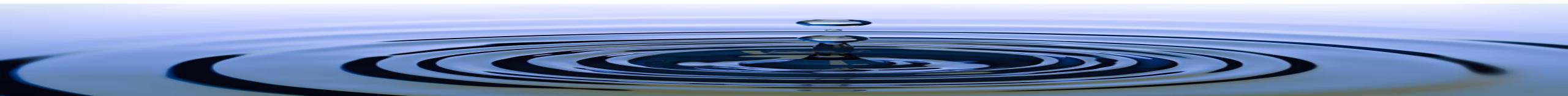


It does, you won't always feel this way.



# For Your Organization

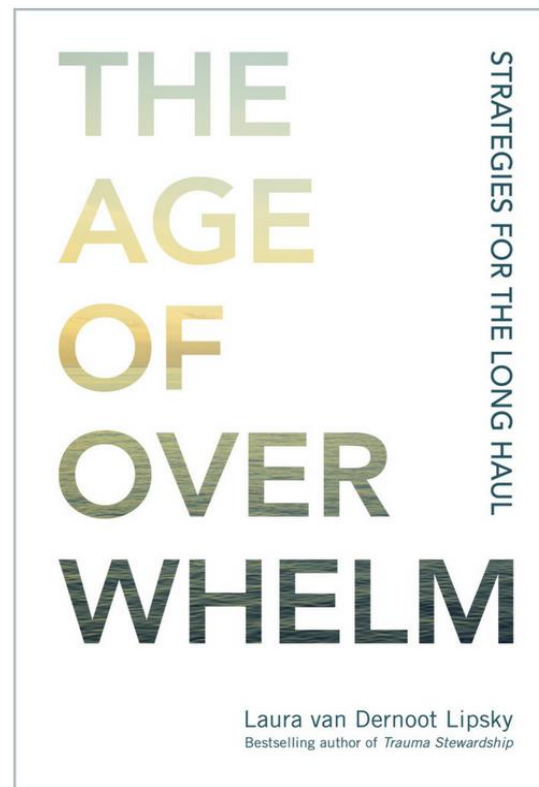
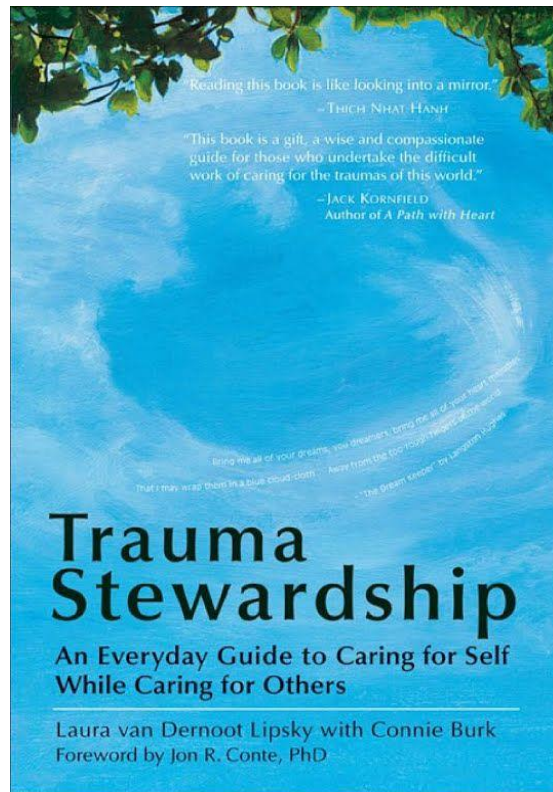
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# For Your Organization

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Training, education, workshops



# For Your Organization

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**1** Training, education, workshops

**2** Support daily routines & boundaries

## For You: Daily Routines

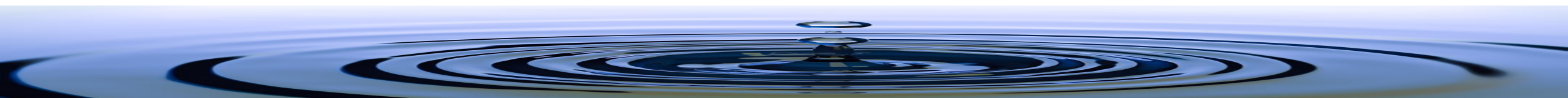
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- |                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| <b>1</b> Get enough sleep          | <b>6</b> Focus on what you do/did well                      |
| <b>2</b> Maintain eating schedule  | <b>7</b> Learn from your mistakes (be gentle with yourself) |
| <b>3</b> Get light exercise        | <b>8</b> Laugh  |
| <b>4</b> Vary the work that you do | <b>9</b> Create quiet moments for reflection                |
| <b>5</b> Do something you enjoy    | <b>10</b> Practice gratitude                                |

## For You: Creating Work Boundaries

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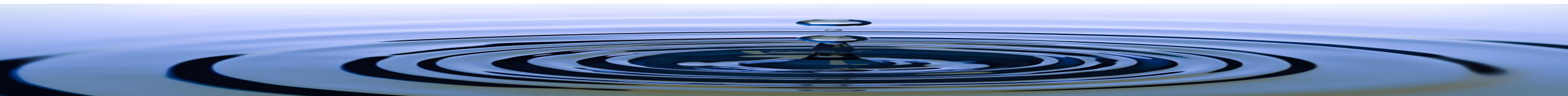
- Create a routine & ritual for *starting* work (make it a conscious act, talk to yourself as you do it)
- Allow yourself to feel what you need to feel *during* work time
- Discuss challenging experiences, cases, feelings with colleagues *during* work time
- Create a routine & ritual for *ending* work (make it a conscious act, talk to yourself as you do it)
- Leave work at work, especially if you socialize with work colleagues during non-work time



# For Your Organization

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- 1 Training, education, workshops
- 2 Support daily routines & boundaries
- 3 Vary work assignments & schedule breaks





# For Your Organization

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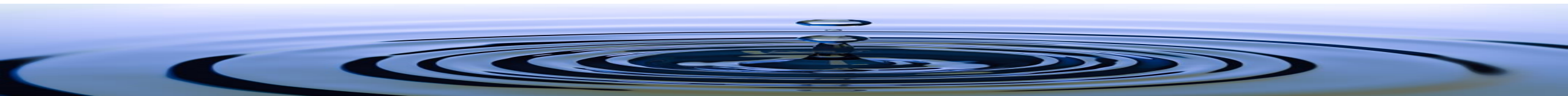
- 1 Training, education, workshops
- 2 Support daily routines & boundaries
- 3 Vary work assignments & schedule breaks
- 4 Normalize seeking support & create on-ramps to those programs



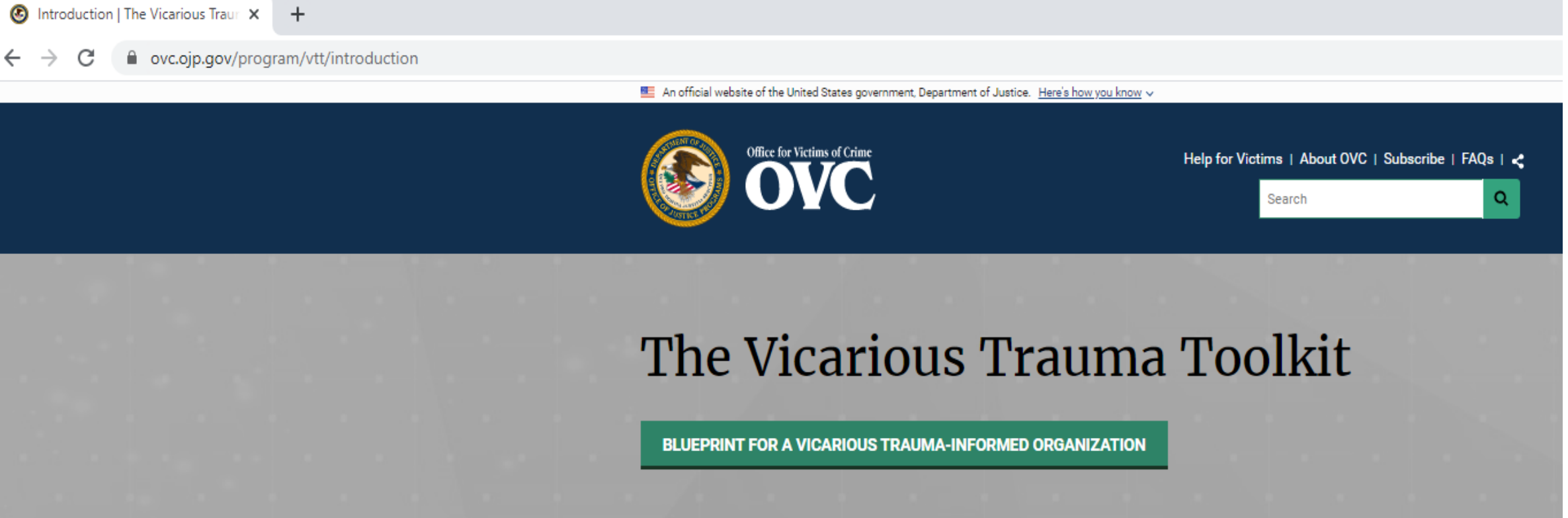
# For Your Organization

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- 1 Training, education, workshops
- 2 Support daily routines & boundaries
- 3 Vary work assignments & schedule breaks
- 4 Normalize seeking support & create on-ramps to those programs
- 5 Long-term organizational commitment




# For Your Organization





Introduction | The Vicarious Trauma x +

ovc.ojp.gov/program/vtt/introduction

An official website of the United States government, Department of Justice. [Here's how you know](#) v

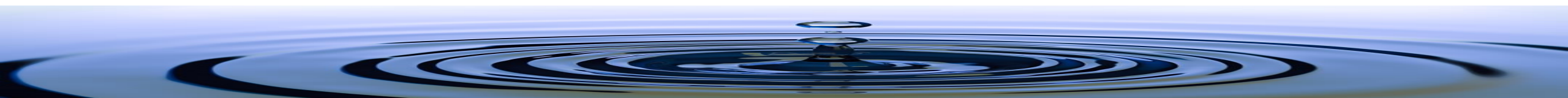
 Office for Victims of Crime  
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## The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit

**BLUEPRINT FOR A VICARIOUS TRAUMA-INFORMED ORGANIZATION**



# For Your Organization

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## Introduction

It takes courage to help child and adult victims of sexual abuse, assist survivors of acts of terrorism and mass violence, fight fires that may have taken people's lives, or respond to shootings and other crime scenes. It also takes commitment to do this work despite the personal, physical, emotional, and mental impact it can have.

The *Vicarious Trauma Toolkit* (VTT) was developed on the premise that exposure to the traumatic experiences of other people—known as **vicarious trauma**—is an inevitable occupational challenge for the fields of victim services, emergency medical services, fire services, law enforcement, and other allied professionals; however, organizations can mitigate the potentially negative effects of trauma exposure by becoming vicarious trauma-informed.

The VTT includes tools and resources tailored specifically to these fields that provide the knowledge and skills necessary for organizations to address the [vicarious trauma](#) needs of their staff. To begin exploring the VTT, select one of the disciplines below and visit the comprehensive [Compendium of Resources](#).

Victim Services



EMS



Fire Services



Law Enforcement



### Introduction

[Message From the Director](#)

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[Where Do We Begin?](#)

[The VT-ORG and Compendium](#)

[What is the VT-ORG?](#)

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[Compendium of Resources](#)

[Tools for Victim Services](#)

[Tools for EMS](#)

[Tools for Fire Services](#)

[Tools for Law Enforcement](#)

[Glossary of Terms](#)

[References](#)

[Bibliography](#)

# Concluding Thoughts





Trauma affects everyone and everything in its wake.  
It creates a ripple effect of radiating pain and suffering.

Laura van Dernoot Lipsky



The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as being able to walk through water without getting wet.

Rachel Remen



Get your boots.





Thank You! Questions?



# Contact Information

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OTHER VIOLENT  
**COLD CASE  
CRIMES**