



NYCON

# Meaningful Self-Care in the Workplace

1

## Agenda

- What is a Healthy Workplace?
- Stress & the Brain
- Compassion Fatigue & Burnout
- Self-Care
- Benefits of Self-Care
- ABC's of resilience
- Self-Care & Culture
- Psychological Safety
- Cultural Self-Assessment

2

# What is a Healthy Workplace?

A healthy work environment celebrates innovation and individuality. It encourages collaboration and teamwork while providing employees with the flexibility and autonomy they need to reach their personal goals. Healthy work environments are also safe, both psychologically and physically.

**It exemplifies & encourages self-care.**

3



Self-Care  
+  
Employee Care  
=  
Healthier Workplaces

4

## What does it Look Like?

- Flexibility
- Compassion
- Positive values
- Lower turnover rates
- Team collaboration
- Goal-oriented projects
- Growth & encouragement
- Respectful & open communication

5

## Stress & the Brain

6

# Stress & Trauma

Stress is the neurological and physiological shift that happens in your body when you encounter an external (work, family, time, money) or internal (body-image, identity, memories, etc.) threat.

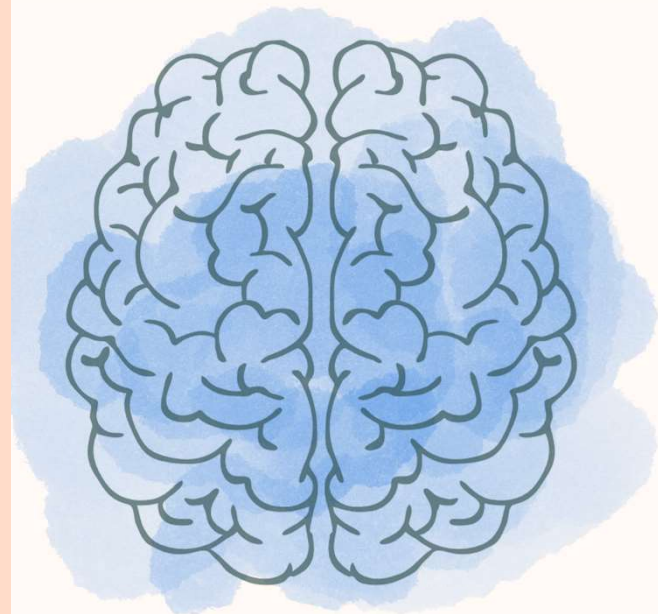
It is an adaptive response that helps us cope by initiating a “cascade” of neurological and hormonal activity. Different systems are prioritized and de-prioritized, leaving our bodies ready to run.



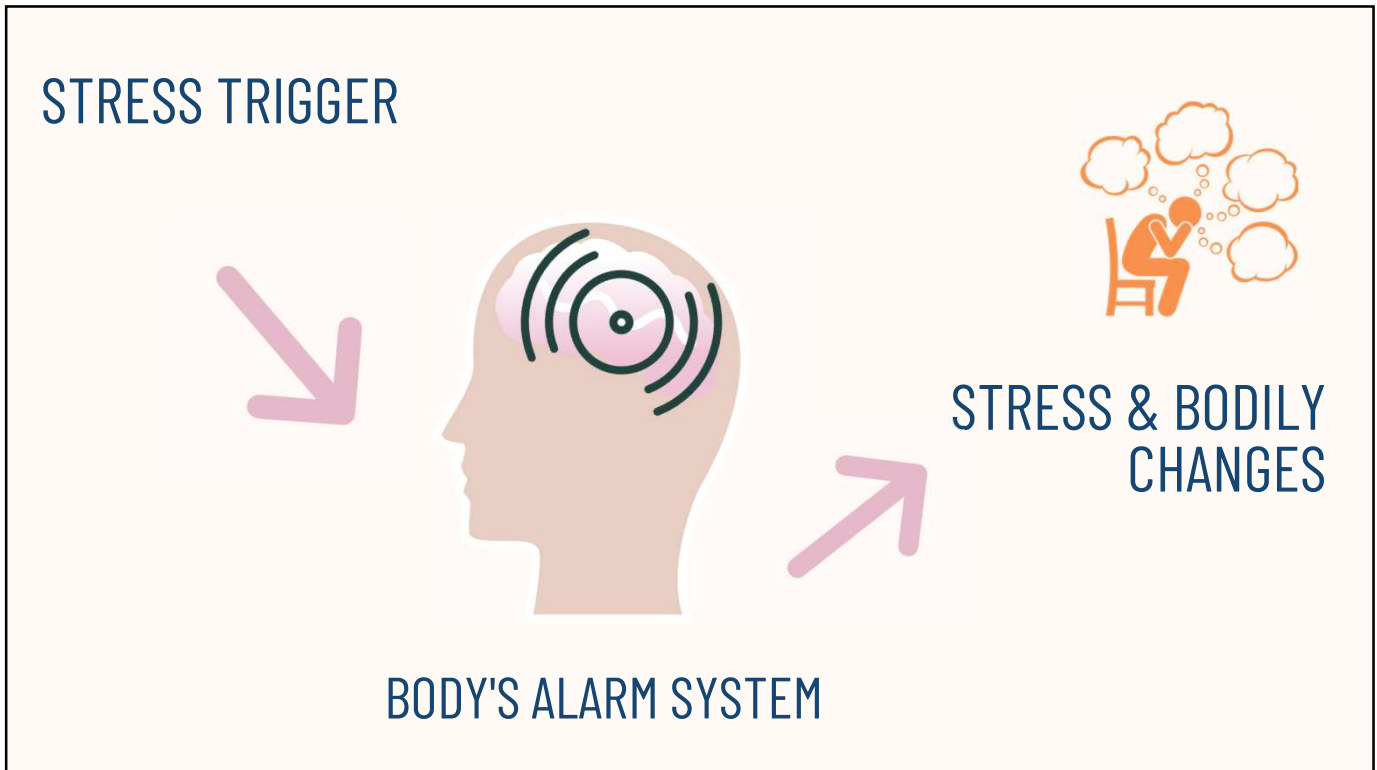
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## PRE-FRONTAL CORTEX

- Thinking/Logical Brain
- Manages other brain regions and emotions
- Responsible for personality, focusing our attention, and decision making
- Drastically impaired in traumatic situations



8



9

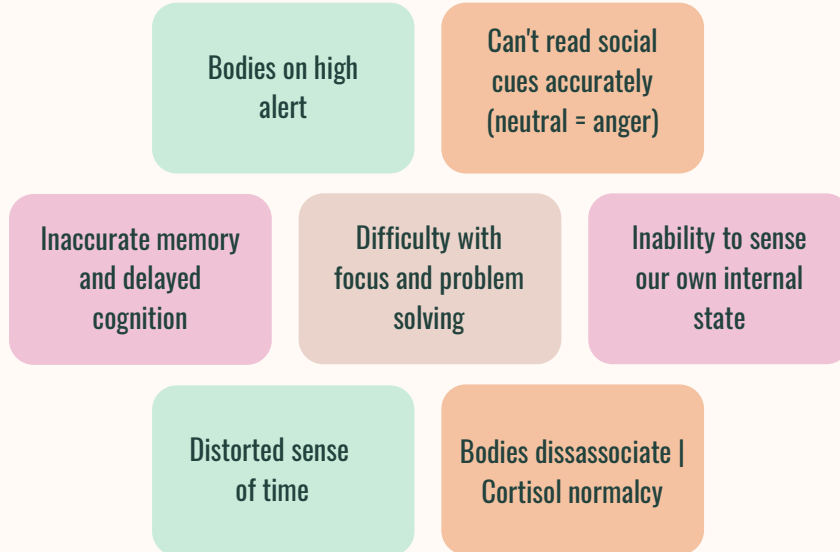
**MID-BRAIN AND LIMBIC SYSTEM**

- Animal brain
- Main focus is survival
- Manages reflexes, breathing, heart rate & balance regulation
- Determines threats & stores strong fear memories
- Signals FIGHT, FLIGHT or FREEZE response, manages stress response

A stylized illustration of a human brain, showing the two hemispheres. The brain is rendered in a light green color with darker green outlines. It is surrounded by soft, watercolor-like splashes of green and teal, giving it a textured, artistic appearance.

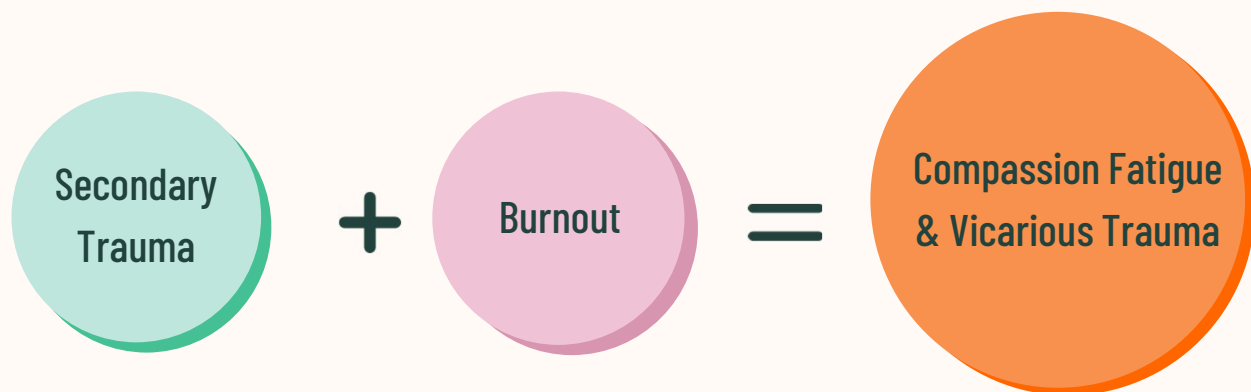
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# Chronic Stress & Trauma



11

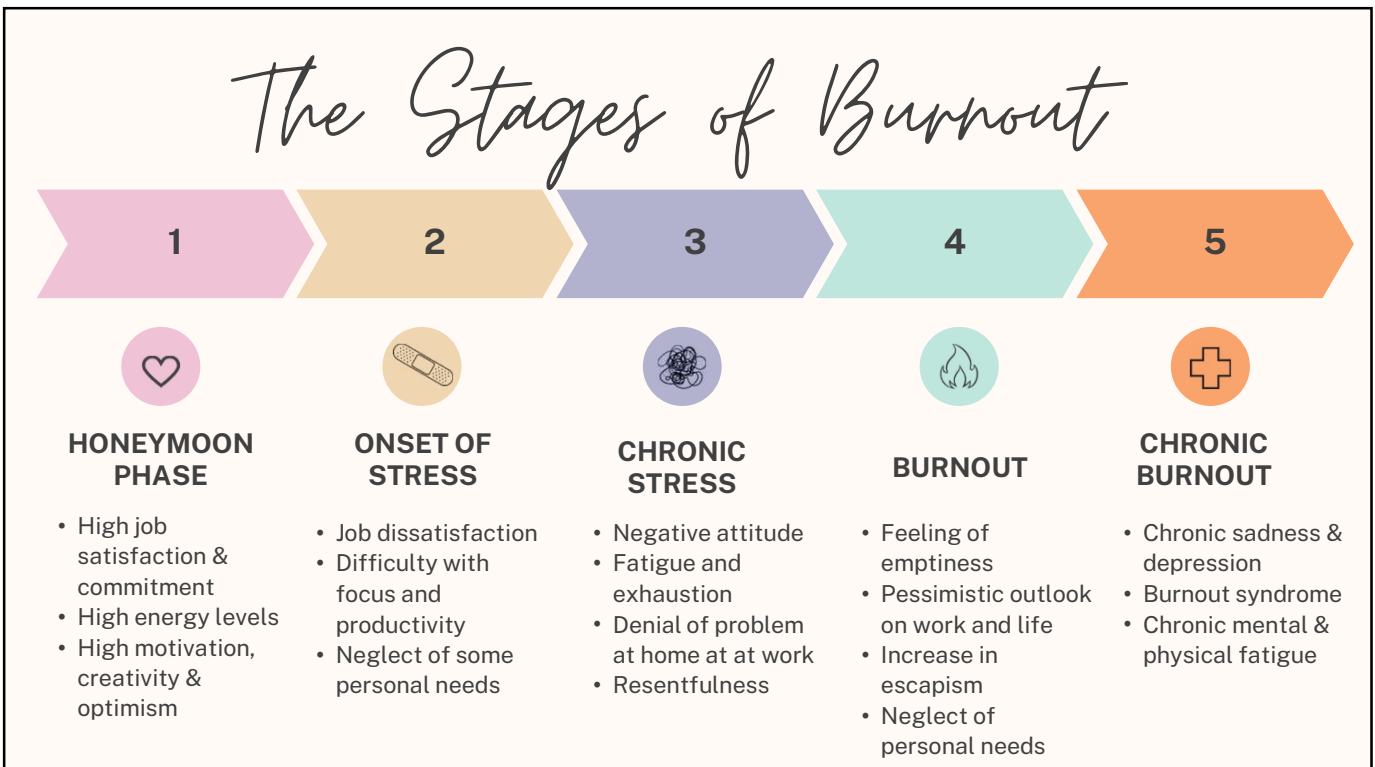
# What's the Difference?



12



13



14



15

*What leads to burnout?*

- High workload and unrealistic deadlines
- Lack of communication and support/supervision from management
- Lack of support
- Lack of role clarity- expectations are "moving targets"
- Lack of autonomy- little or no control over your work
- Unfair treatment- favoritism, unfair compensation, lack of recognition etc.



16



# Effects of prolonged stress on the body

## BRAIN

Difficulty concentrating, anxiety, depression, irritability, mood, mind fog

## CARDIOVASCULAR

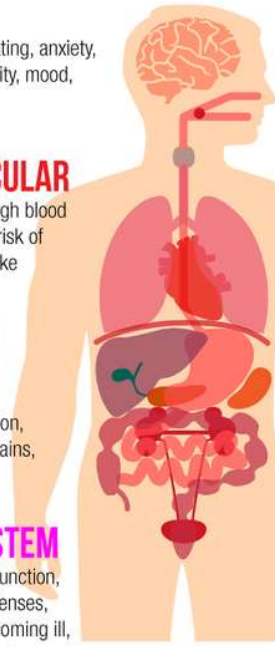
higher cholesterol, high blood pressure, increased risk of heart attack and stroke

## JOINTS AND MUSCLES

increased inflammation, tension, aches and pains, muscle tightness

## IMMUNE SYSTEM

decreased immune function, lowered immune defenses, increased risk of becoming ill, increase in recovery time



## SKIN

hair loss, dull/brittle hair, brittle nails, dry skin, acne, delayed tissue repair

## GUT

nutrient absorption, diarrhea, constipation, indigestion, bloating, pain and discomfort

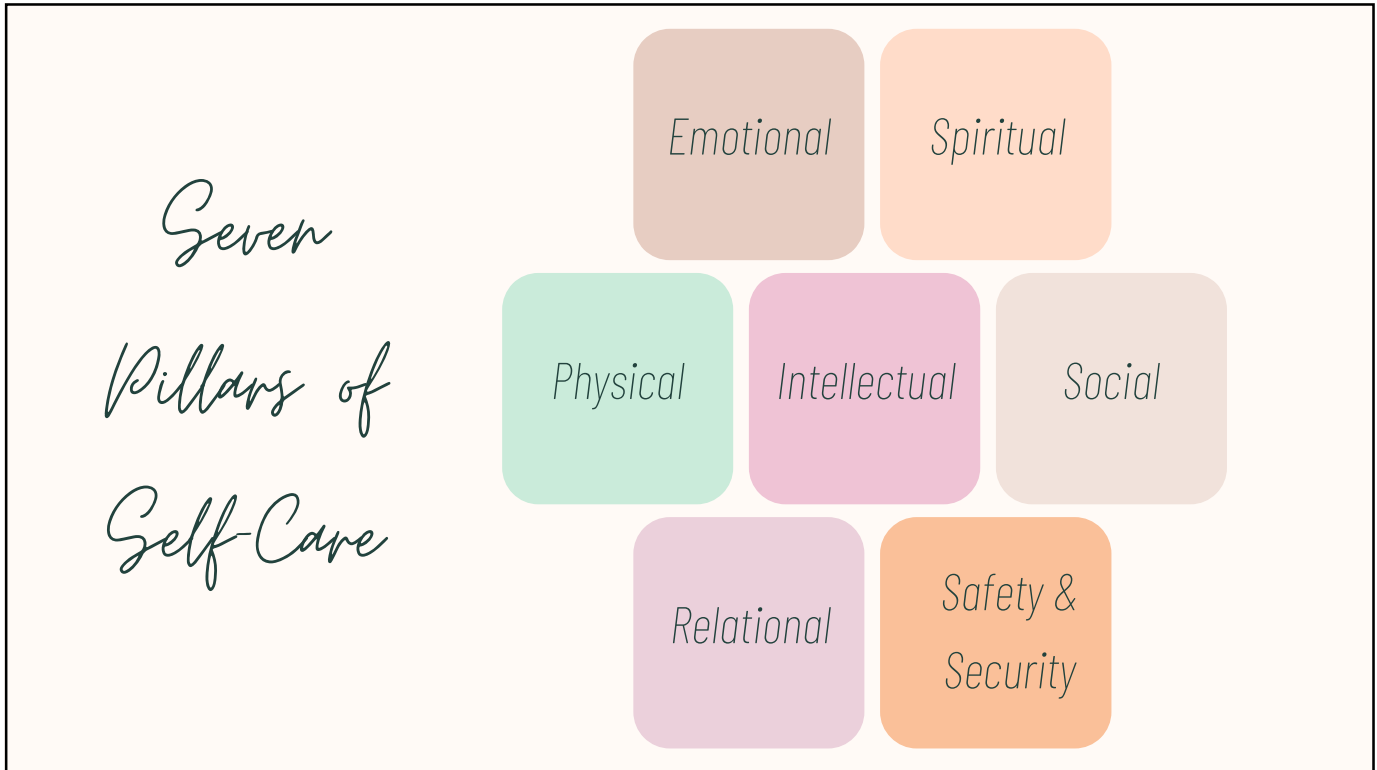
## REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM

decreased hormone production, decrease in libido, increase in PMS symptoms

17

# Self-Care

18



19



## Self Care-Pillars

- **Intellectual self-care**, such as book-learning and engaging in critical thinking.
- **Social self-care**, or enriching relationships outside of your immediate family. Various communications, boundary setting, etc.
- **Relational self-care**, strengthening your familial relationships, spouse, children, parents, etc.
- **Safety & Security self-care**, ensuring your personal, environmental & financial safety & security. This includes affordable healthcare, and access to mental health services when needed.

20



## Self Care- Pillars

- **Emotional self-care**, such as self-talk, weekly bubble baths, saying “no” to things that cause unnecessary stress, giving yourself permission to take a pause, or setting up a weekly coffee date with a friend
- **Physical self-care**, such as prioritizing sleep, adopting an exercise routine you can stick with, or choosing healthy and nourishing foods over highly processed ones
- **Spiritual self-care**, such as attending a religious service, spending time in nature, meditating, incorporating regular acts of kindness into your day, or keeping a gratitude journal

21



## Benefits of Self-Care

- Take care of your physical and psychological health.
- Manage and reduce stress.
- Recognize your emotional and spiritual needs.
- Foster and sustain relationships.
- Achieve balance in different areas of your life.
- Healthier nervous system

22

# ABC's of Resilience

23

## Awareness

*What are the things that knock me down & can I learn to recognize them? Pay attention to and notice the following during and after a stressful event:*

- How we think (thoughts and decision making),
- The way we feel (our emotions),
- How we are physically (our physical responses to stress), and
- What we do (what non-typical behaviors do we exhibit)

24

# Being "Well"

- Improving our physical wellbeing
- Improve our activities
- Improving wellbeing through connections

25

# Coping

- Challenging your stressors
- Managing your thoughts
- Getting support

26



27

What "counts" as  
self-care?

28

## Science Backed Activities

- Exercise
- Yoga
- Meditation
- Cognitive Behavior Therapy
- Mindfulness
- Chores & Repetition
- Massage
- Nature
- Travel

29

## Self Care at your Desk

30

## Self Care Isn't Everything

- Self-care is not only about individual workers, it is also about organizations and communities (culture).
- Organizations have an ethical mandate of a "duty to train," wherein workers are taught about the potential negative effects of the work and how to cope.

*"When self-care is prescribed as the antidote for burnout, it puts the burden of working in unjust contexts onto the backs of us as individual workers."*

*-Vikki Reynolds*

31

*Employee's Role*



**PRACTICE  
SELF CARE**

*Manager's Role*



**PROMOTE HEALTHY  
WORKPLACE  
CULTURE**

32



# Healthy Environments

*Addressing Culture = Combating Burnout*

33

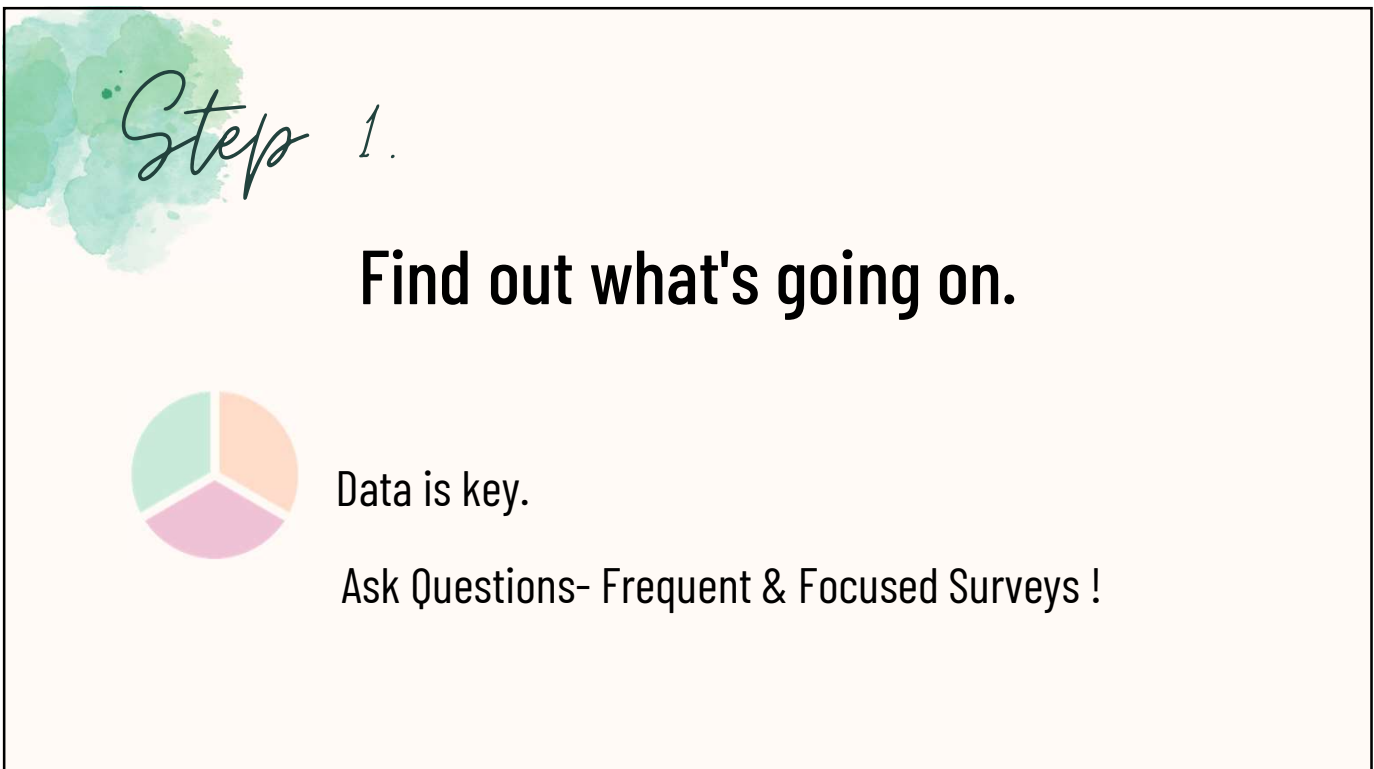
*In the chat:*

What are some examples of work culture that impacts staff negatively?

34



35



36



## Step 2.

### **Focus on guiding & coaching people.**

Create opportunities for connection, and connect individually with employees.

Role model kindness & respect

Assist in managing workload stress & ask questions

37



## Step 3.

### **Create Space for Highly Engaged Communication**

Communicate with clarity and provide basic training on communication for staff.

Role model open communication

Communicate honestly

Ensure psychological safety to promote free, respectful communication

38

Step 4.

## Model a Healthy Workplace Culture

Role-model vulnerability and a healthy work-life balance

Create learning opportunities and support for leadership.

Encourage employees to use vacation time

Offer an EAP and /or promote workplace wellness

Encourage employee feedback

39

*Psychological Danger*



40



41



42



# Mentoring

- **Mentoring is about a relationship between two people**
- **Mentoring focuses on career development through:**
  - Skill and experience building
  - Sharing of insights and ideas
  - Evaluation and constructive feedback
  - Candor, trust, and confidentiality
- **Provide support and reflection, don't take on their struggle**
- **Can deepen impact of cross-training**
- **Can support broader Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion strategies**

43



# Cultural Self-Assessment

- How is your organization structured?
- Does your organization embody its mission?
- Is your organization people-oriented or task-oriented?
- What motivates employees?
- Do you have any remote work options?
- Are employees encouraged to use their benefits & vacation?
- How is failure addressed?
- Is your company collaborative or competitive?
- What does leadership look like in your company?
- Are there any organizational subcultures?

44

# Breaking it Down

**Learn what motivates your workforce.** Practice active listening and respond to the needs and desires of your employees.

**Increase organizational emotional intelligence (EQ).** EQ leads to empathy, trust, motivation, idea generation, better teamwork, and stronger relationships.

**Reward hard work.** Ensure that your employees are receiving compensation for what they are giving; if they give more, give them more back, in whatever way you can..

**Adopt a culture of psychological safety.** Psychological safety is the single greatest differentiating factor for the highest-performing teams.

45

## THREE MINUTE BREATHING SPACE

Developed by Diana Tikasz, MSW, RSW



### FIRST MINUTE



#### NOTICE ANY SOUNDS YOU HEAR

What sounds are near or far?  
Notice how the sounds arise and disappear  
Every time that you notice your thoughts wander, simply and without judgement, return to the sounds

### SECOND MINUTE



#### NOTICE ANY BODY SENSATIONS

What parts of your body are warm or cold?  
Notice the sensations of contact with the chair or with your clothing  
Whatever you notice is perfectly fine and does not need to be changed in anyway. Just notice.

### THIRD MINUTE



#### NOTICE YOUR BREATH

Where do you notice your breath- is it at the nostrils, the chest, the belly?  
Notice the expansion and the settling of the body as you breathe  
Can you follow the full inhale and exhale of breath?

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46

*How do you Score?*

**Professional Quality of Life- [ProQOL](#)**

47



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48