

Safe to Learn:

Trauma-Informed Training Practices for All Topics and Audiences

S.T.A.N.D. Meeting
November 8, 2024

Presented by Noël Duckworth

Let's Warm Up our Brains!

- ▶ Get out a piece of paper to write on (no typing, please)
- ▶ Write 1-2 things you hope to get out of today's training (no pressure to share)

- Rewrite using your non-dominant hand



Learning Objectives

1. Participants will articulate the prevalence and impact of trauma and adversity
2. Participants will describe how trauma impacts learning and the learning environment
3. Participants will identify healing-centered practices for their training programs

Agenda

Community Agreement

Poll

Trauma and Resilience

Trauma's Impact on Learning

Trauma-informed approach to
Training

Breakout Activity

Wrap-Up

Community Agreement

- ▶ Anything to change/add?
- ▶ All in agreement?



Poll

How familiar are you with the concept of using a trauma-informed approach?

- A) This is new for me and I'm ready to learn
- B) I've had some trainings on it and am still learning
- C) I've made changes to apply it in my training practice/work setting
- D) I've fully integrated a trauma-informed approach in my work and could teach a class on it

Definitions

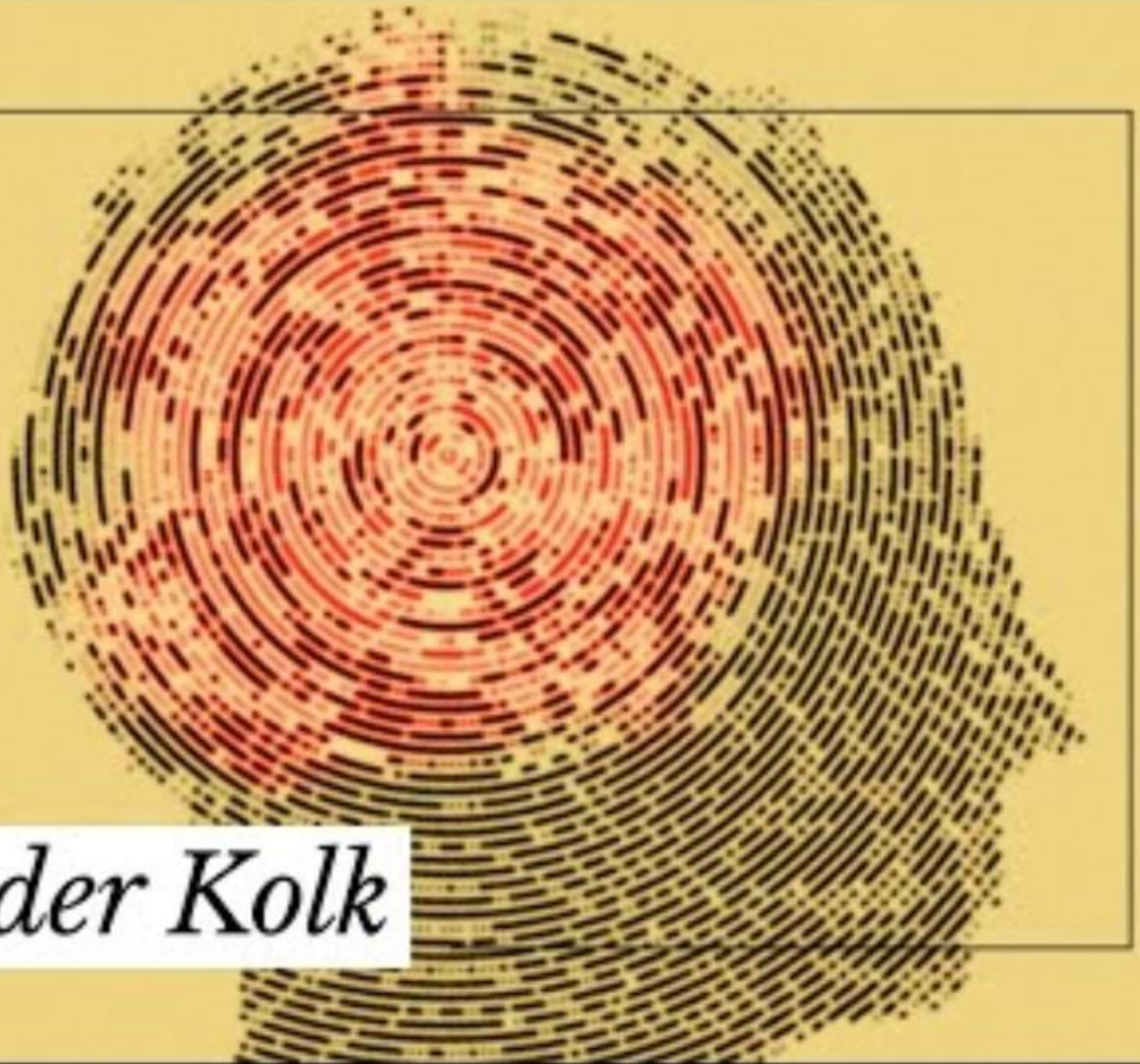
- ▶ **Trauma:** An event, series of events, or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.
- ▶ **Resilience:** The process and outcome of successfully adapting to trauma, tragedy or stress.





What is trauma?

Bessel van der Kolk



Trauma and Resilience

- ▶ It is not that trauma ends and resiliency begins, but the two can occur *simultaneously*.
- ▶ Important to put the term “trauma” in context
- ▶ Helpful to consistently point to the possibility of positive outcomes
- ▶ Essential to frame toward collective solutions



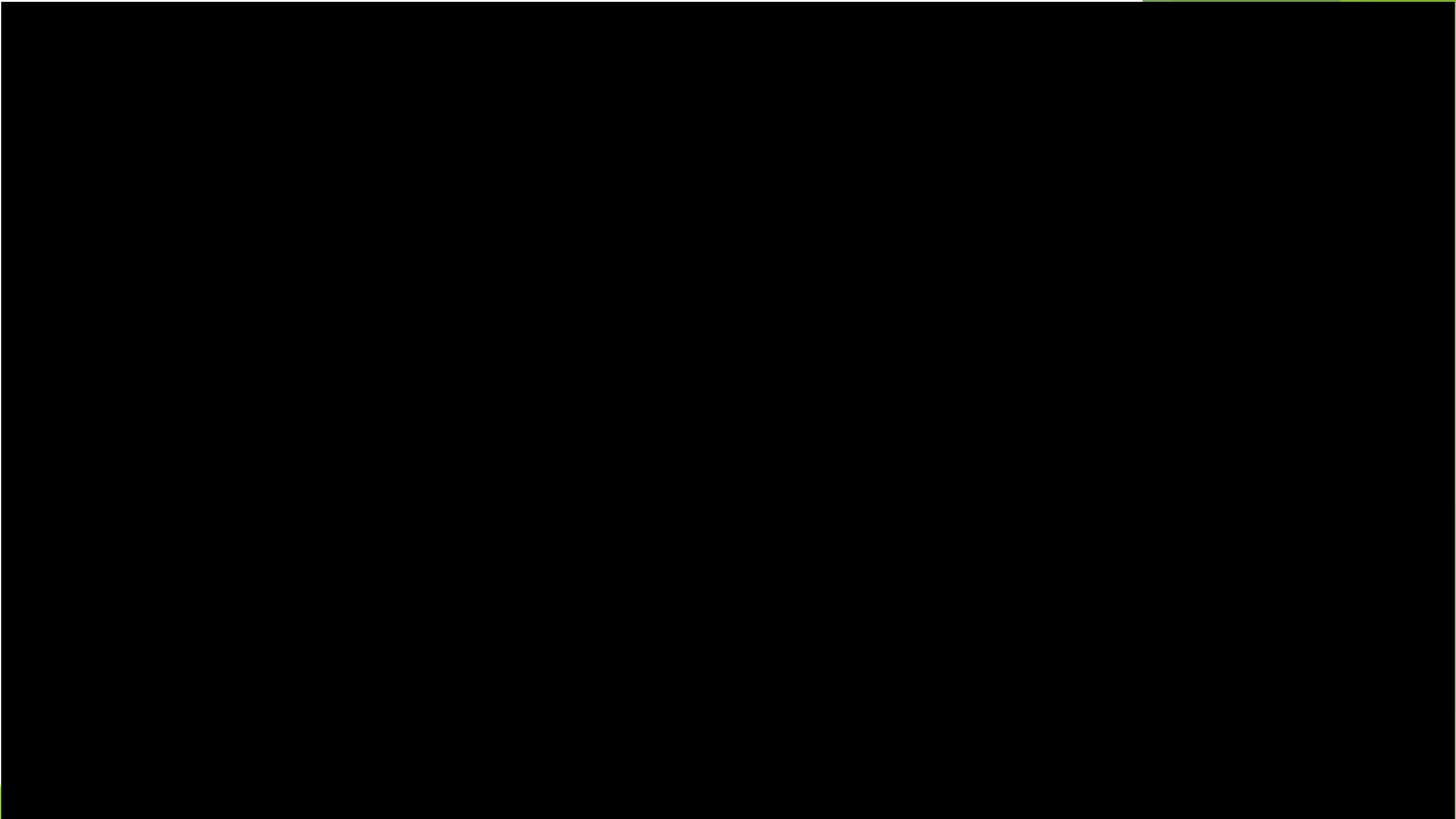


PACEs Connection thanks **Building Community Resilience Collaborative and Networks** and the **International Transformational Resilience Coalition** for inspiration and guidance. Please visit [PACEsConnection.com](https://www.pacesconnection.com) to learn more about the science of ACEs and join the movement to prevent ACEs, heal trauma and build resilience.

Definition: Historical and Cultural Trauma

Historical trauma refers to trauma inflicted in the past on members of a certain cultural group that may continue to have effects on the current generation.

Cultural Trauma refers to an overwhelming and often ongoing physical or psychological assault or stressor perpetuated by an oppressive dominant group on a cultural group through force, threats of force, or oppressive policies





How Trauma Impacts the Learning Brain

- ▶ Move from “learning brain” to “survival brain” when our nervous system is activated
- ▶ Memory challenges
- ▶ Adrenaline and cortisol impact our ability to concentrate
- ▶ Overactivated brains causing hypervigilance = Distraction
- ▶ Trauma triggers can happen anywhere and may generate an overwhelming emotional response

Trauma & Learner Identity

- ▶ Negative Self-Perception
- ▶ Narrative Construction
- ▶ Emotional and Cognitive Challenges
- ▶ Survival Mode
- ▶ Impact on performance, behavior, and relationships



Group Discussion

- ▶ In what ways might our trainings impact participants who have experienced trauma?

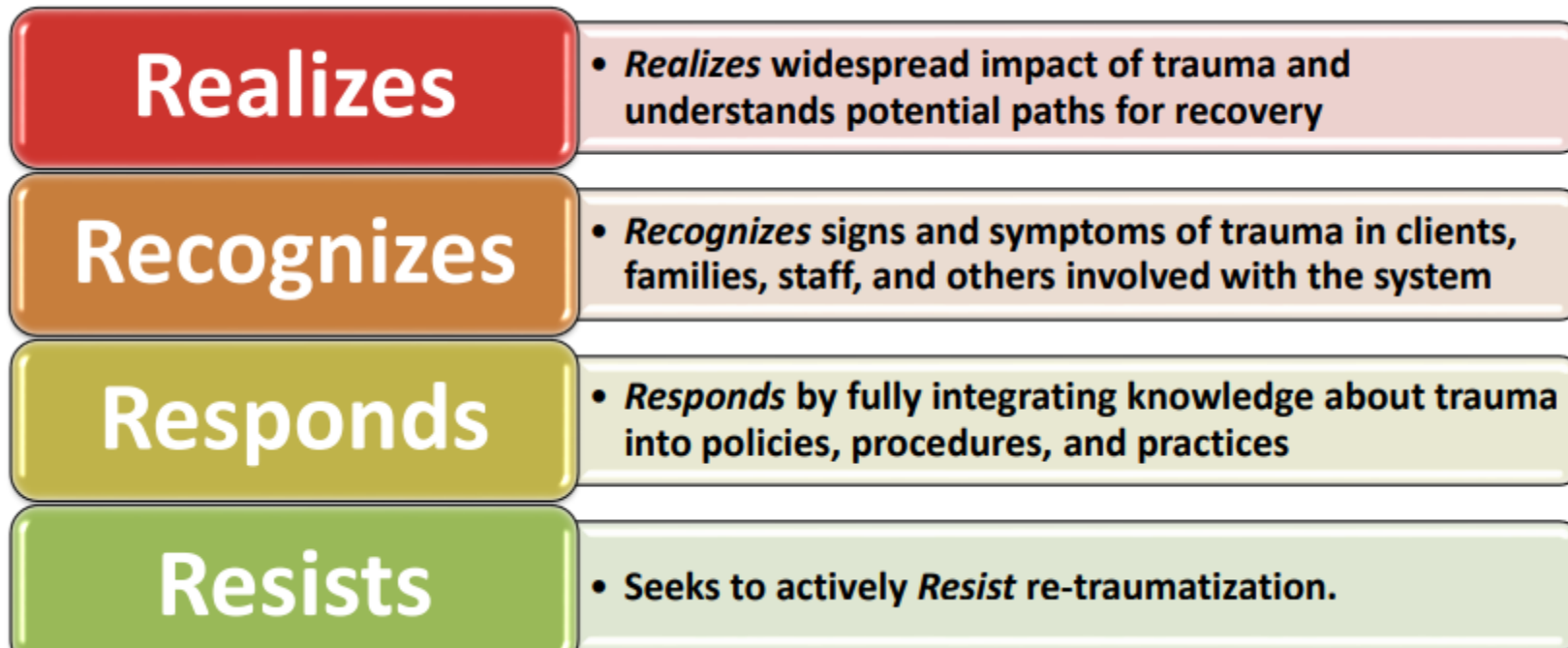


Trauma Signs/Symptoms in a Training Environment

- ▶ Tardiness, Missed Deadlines, Absenteeism or “Presenteeism”
- ▶ Concentration, memory or recall challenges
- ▶ Dysregulation may include: Deer-in-headlights look of fear, turning red, clenching fists, breathing more rapidly, getting visibly emotional, moving the body, not making eye contact, keeping very still and/or quiet, volatility from day to day
- ▶ Learners feeling overwhelmed, inept or helpless
- ▶ Expressions of frustration, anger, toxicity
- ▶ Apathy or seeming emotionless
- ▶ Perfectionism
- ▶ Sensory overload for Trainer - Constant Teams channel chats, calls coming in, emails flooding inbox

The Four R's

A Trauma-informed program, organization or system:



SAMHSA & CDC's Six Guiding Principles to a Trauma-Informed Approach



1. SAFETY



2. TRUSTWORTHINESS
& TRANSPARENCY



3. PEER SUPPORT



4. COLLABORATION
& MUTUALITY



5. EMPOWERMENT
VOICE & CHOICE



6. CULTURAL, HISTORICAL,
& GENDER ISSUES



A Healing-Centered Approach to Training

- ▶ Universal approach - assume all learners have experienced trauma
- ▶ Incorporate opportunities for learners to regulate their physiology
- ▶ Use learner-centered, strength-based thinking and language
- ▶ Look for the causes of behaviors
- ▶ Provide consistency, predictability, and choice-making opportunities

Vulnerability & Restorative Practices

- ▶ Create brave spaces
- ▶ Strive to meet needs of learners
- ▶ Be curious and authentic (not perfect)
- ▶ Acknowledge strong emotions
- ▶ Do our own internal work
- ▶ Promote gratitude
- ▶ Engage in restorative practices

**"Rarely, if ever,
are any of us healing in isolation.
Healing is an act of communion."
- Bell Hooks**

Practices for Healing-Centered Trainings



- ▶ Co-create healing spaces initially
- ▶ Create inclusive and respectful training settings
- ▶ Develop learner agency opportunities
- ▶ Create a flexible learning environment
- ▶ Acknowledge events, training content and issues that may be triggering
- ▶ Interrupt microaggressions
- ▶ Engage in contemplative practices
- ▶ Consider safety in the physical space
- ▶ Use memory strategies and tasks
- ▶ Reexamine training policies

Online Learning

- ▶ Confidentiality and consent are considered, including recording of the session
- ▶ Monitor safety
- ▶ Opportunities for check-ins
- ▶ Option to exit breakout rooms or invite trainer in
- ▶ Balanced attention to learners and participation levels

Healing-centered Program & Trainer Support

- ▶ Be aware of your own healing needs
- ▶ Model emotional regulation
- ▶ Establish program-wide check in routines
- ▶ Make resources and support visible
- ▶ Know your limits and Practice Self-Care

Breakout Scenario

- ▶ James has been tasked with preparing and giving a training to a staffing unit about a new protocol they are being required to follow. The protocol includes several new strategies impacting management/leadership as well as entry-level staff. However, James' portion of the training delivery is specifically for entry-level staff. The protocol aims to reduce safety concerns that were flagged in a recent audit.
- ▶ James has been given the roster of staff who will be assigned to attend the training. He's also been provided a video by a consultant to include as part of the training that shows a person getting severely injured on the job in order to underscore why the new protocol is important.

Your Take Away

► Something that:

- 1) Resonated with you that was new
- 2) Confirmed what you already knew
- 3) You can put into action right away



Resources

- ▶ [Trauma-Informed Advising, Teaching & Learning \(Adult Education\)](#)
- ▶ [Trauma and Learning: Impacts and Strategies for Adult Classroom Success - MinneTESOL Journal](#)
- ▶ [The Free Mindfulness Project - Free Resources](#)
- ▶ [21 Mindfulness Exercises & Activities For Adults \(+ PDF\)](#)
- ▶ [MBI-TAC addendum for online delivery](#)
- ▶ [Insight Timer App](#)



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Thank You!
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