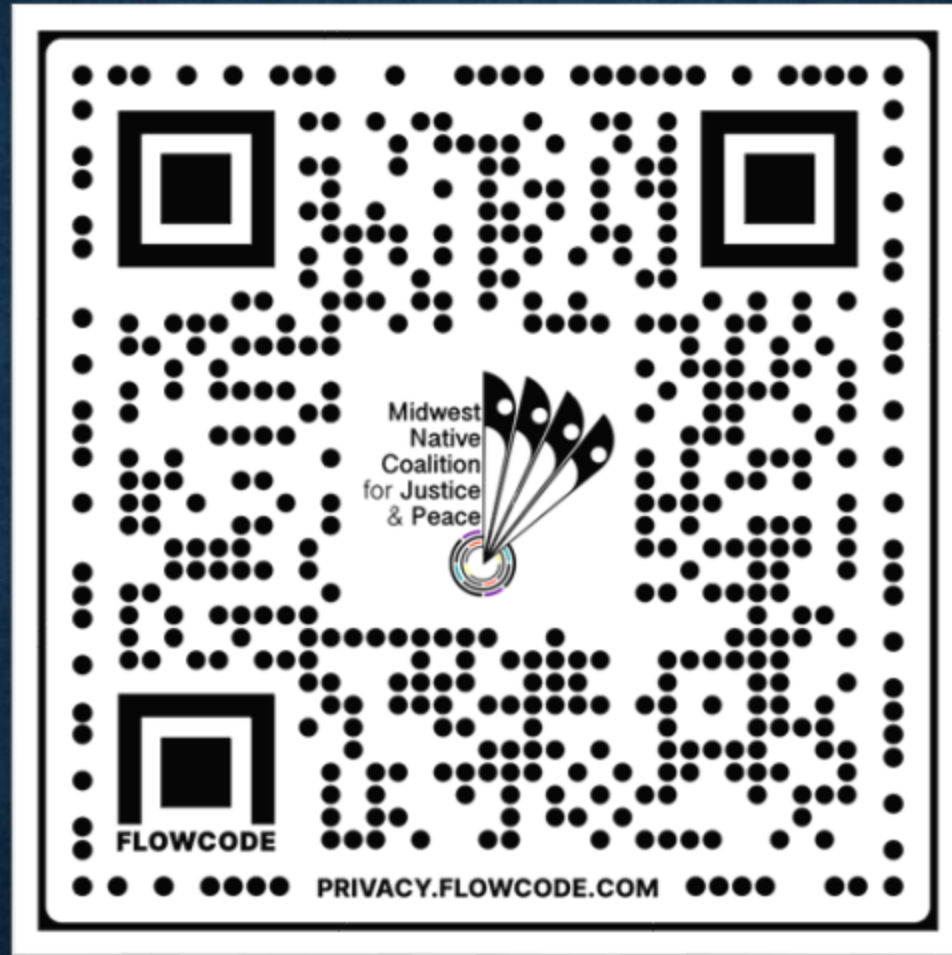


Supporting Longevity: The Strength of Strong Advocates and Strong Programs

Dorthy Stucky Halley & Shannon Buchanan



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OBJECTIVES

- The participant will:
 - Explore the complications vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout present for advocates and programs.
 - Identify effective safeguards for individuals and agencies
 - Enhance ability as individuals and agencies in moving from burnout and compassion fatigue to connection and compassion satisfaction

Trauma: What does it do?

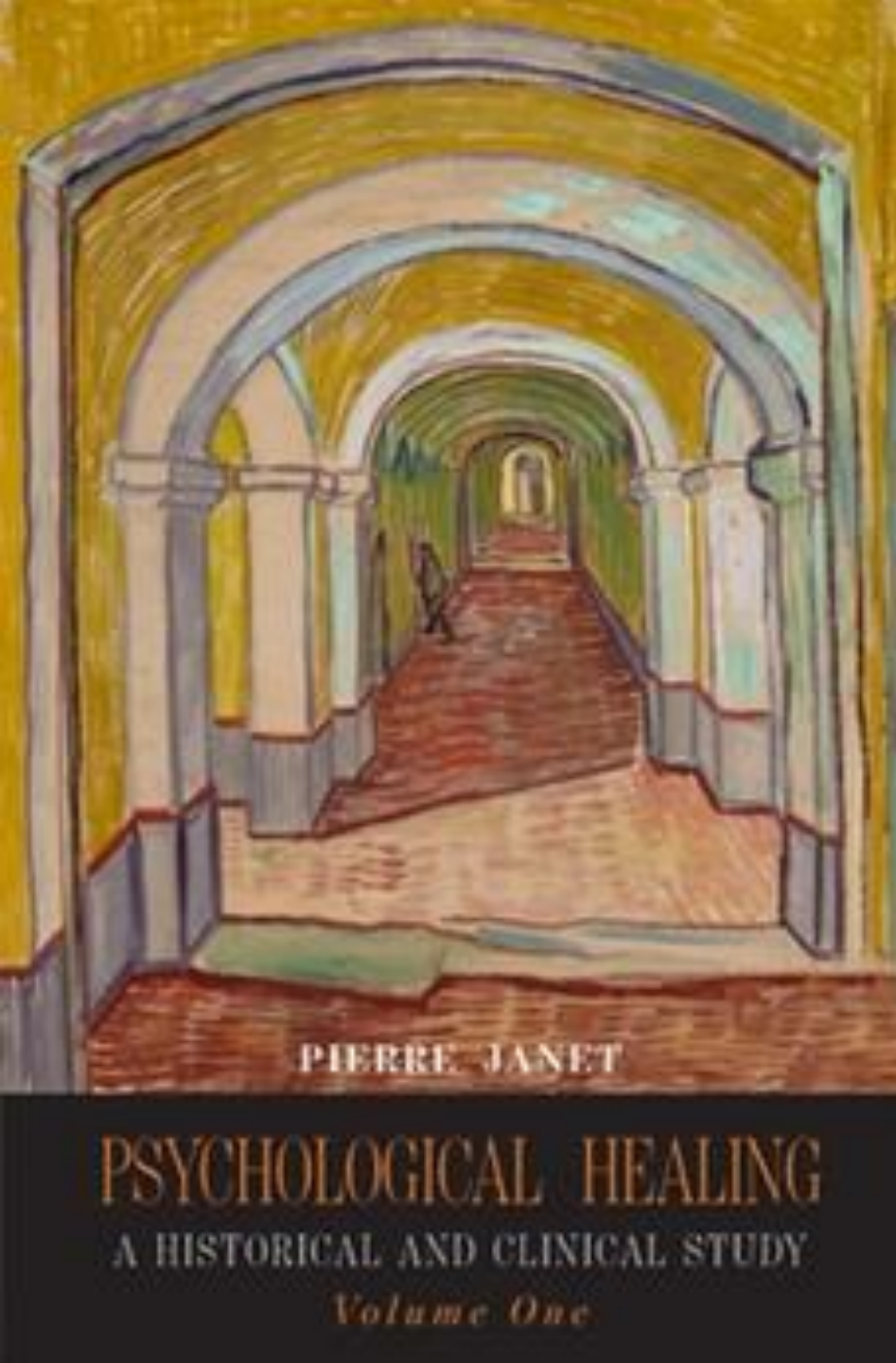
- *“Trauma, whether it is the result of something done to you or something you yourself have done, almost always makes it difficult to engage in intimate relationships.”*

--Van Der Kolk, p 13

Trauma disconnects us from our bodies, and disconnects us from others.

–Gabor Mate’,

The Wisdom of Trauma



- *“It is...as if their personality which definitely stopped at a certain point cannot enlarge any more by the addition or assimilation of new elements, all patients seem to have had the evolution of their lives checked...”*
- Pierre Janet, 1925, p 600. Janet was a pioneering French psychologist, physician, philosopher, and psychotherapist in the field of dissociation and traumatic memory.

- ‘When we are calm it is easy to live in our cortex, using the highest capacities of our brains [to reflect] But if something...intrudes on our thoughts...we become more vigilant and concrete, shifting the balance of our brain activity to subcortical areas... ‘(Perry, 2006:49)

TRAUMA-FILLED WORK MAKES US SUSCEPTIBLE

Vicarious, or
Secondary
Trauma

Compassion
Fatigue

Burnout

Creates a change
within ourselves
resulting from
empathetic
engagement with
trauma survivors,
resulting in us “taking
on” their traumatic
experience.

VICARIOUS TRAUMA

VICARIOUS TRAUMA

- Can have very similar impacts on us as our own trauma.
- Can happen from one event.
- Cumulative effect if not processed

The diminished capacity of a professional when experiencing distress at knowing about or witnessing the suffering of those they serve.

COMPASSION FATIGUE

COMPASSION FATIGUE

- Less and less empathy
- More and more restricted emotional expression
- Blaming
- Cumulative



**I can look directly at
someone, nod when
they are talking, maybe
even throw in a "yeah"
and still not hear a
single word they said...**

CAN YOU?



Condolences and funnies

Sometimes we need inspiration, reminders of the sad
but most of all, laughter. Choose positive.

A state of complete
mental, physical,
and emotional
exhaustion.

BURNOUT

BURNOUT

- Exhaustion
- Difficult to engage in activities you normally find rewarding
- Increasing sense of hopelessness
- Withdrawing from others
- Failure to get jobs completed
- Uncharacteristic Procrastination
- Underfunctioning
- Stop taking care of yourself

RECOVERY

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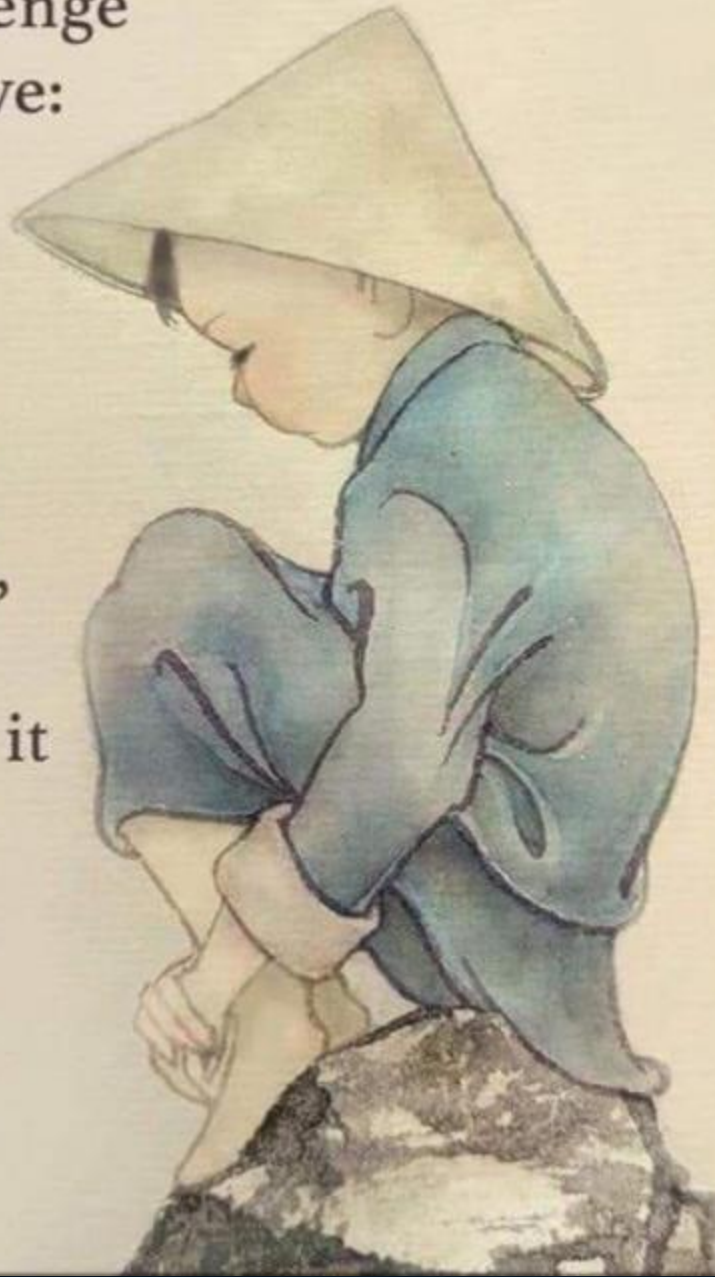
- Research shows that it is absolutely possible to recover from trauma. This is true even if the trauma was severe and occurred early in life.
- Positive interactions in all of our relationships not only improve our well-being but also help us to recover from trauma.

Kezelman and Stavropoulos, 2017

- This is also true about vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout.

“This, my dear, is the
greatest challenge
to being alive:

To witness
the injustice
of this world,
and not allow it
to consume
our light.



HOW DO WE FIND COMPASSION SATISFACTION?

Compassion satisfaction:

- is a conscious disciplined effort to see the difference we make in the lives of people we serve.
- can be shifting from a “defeated” mindset to a “solution focused” mindset.
- can be achieved through:
 - active participation in program activities: focusing on “successes”
 - initiatives that create system change.

“I have come to believe that caring for myself is not self-indulgent. Caring for myself is an act of survival.”
— Audre Lorde

INTENTIONAL SELF-CARE

- Personal self-care:
 - Promotes holistic health & well-being
- Professional self-care:
 - Promotes effective use of self in professional role while sustaining health & well-being
 - Recognize our limits & set healthy boundaries
 - Keep ourselves in check! Stay solution-focused. Notice when we're straying and ask for help when we need it.
 - Notice our trauma responses! What we hear may need addressed. (Action, Rest, Process)
 - Seek out trauma therapy when needed.

Healing & Recovery

*Malone & Frey

Action

Rest

Process

- *Understanding trauma as a failure of processing changes how we view vicarious trauma and its impacts on workers.*

--Malone & Frey, 2023

- Do I need self-care or do I need to process the trauma to which I have been exposed?
- Is my body reacting as though I have not escaped the trauma, or do I need to thoroughly rest before I can begin to process the trauma?
- If you are doing self-care when you need to be processing trauma, the unprocessed trauma itself will repeatedly return you to a fight or flight situation.

(Malone & Frey)

**PROCESSING
TRAUMA:
APPLICATION
OF THE “3
R’S”***

***PERRY & WINFREY**

Regulate

Relate

Reason

R #1: REGULATE

Two basic human tendencies are to be safe and to grow. Safety almost always trumps growth so that, if a choice has to be made, an organism opts for safety at the expense of growth.

--Malone & Frey, 2023

- Organizational challenges to safety
 - How do you show up?
 - What measures could be added to improve safety for your peers and those you serve?

R #2: RELATE

“To have a therapist who herself has worked on her story and doesn’t hesitate to share it can be very helpful to the patient because it creates trust, understanding, and a shared experience.”

--Alice Miller, For Your Own Good, p xi

ENLIGHTENED WITNESS

People who are willing, as helpers, to be the guiding light for those who are struggling. They provide the message, “I can go there with you and share the load, and we will be okay.”



Who made a significant impact on your life?

What did they do?

What was the message about you?

R #3: REASON

- Gain an understanding of the impacts of trauma we've experienced.
- Address this experience through the lens of our Enlightened Witness and Golden Shadow message
- Challenge destructive beliefs
- Learn what works for us
- Learn more about our own disregulation – and be reminded that we can be OK when we become emotionally activated.

Afraid

Something bad
might happen.

Sad

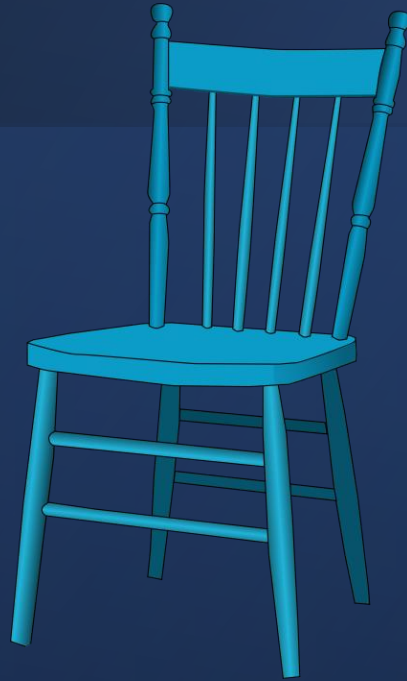
Something has
been lost.

Glad

Something
pleasant has
taken place.

Mad

Something
needs to change!



Three Chairs, and What They Can Tell Us About Ourselves...

IMAGINE IF WE TAKE CARE OF OURSELVES, AND REALLY ADDRESS OUR ADVERSE FEELINGS...

- We begin to take more responsibility for ourselves.
- We avoid much less.
- We begin to eliminate our unnecessary defense systems.
- We are more willing to be seen by others for who we are.
- People around us are less in danger as we have less to defend.
- We can be present for others. Really present.
- We can become solution-focused.
- We can become the professional enlightened witness that BOTH our colleagues & those we work with may need.

Other Questions?

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