



Vicarious Trauma: An Overview



VDSS Office of Trauma & Resilience Policy (OTRP)

The VDSS Office of Trauma & Resilience Policy (OTRP) was established in 2022 to live into the commitment of DSS to become a more trauma-informed and healing and resilience-centered agency.



What is

The Science of Hope?

Hope is the belief that your future can be better than today, and you have the power to make it so! Hope is not a wish - it can be measured, and you can learn how to use it to reach your goals.

Create Pathways that will Lead to Your Goals

Pathways are routes to your goals. You may have to adjust pathways when there are obstacles along the way.

Use Willpower to Keep Moving Forward Toward Your Goals

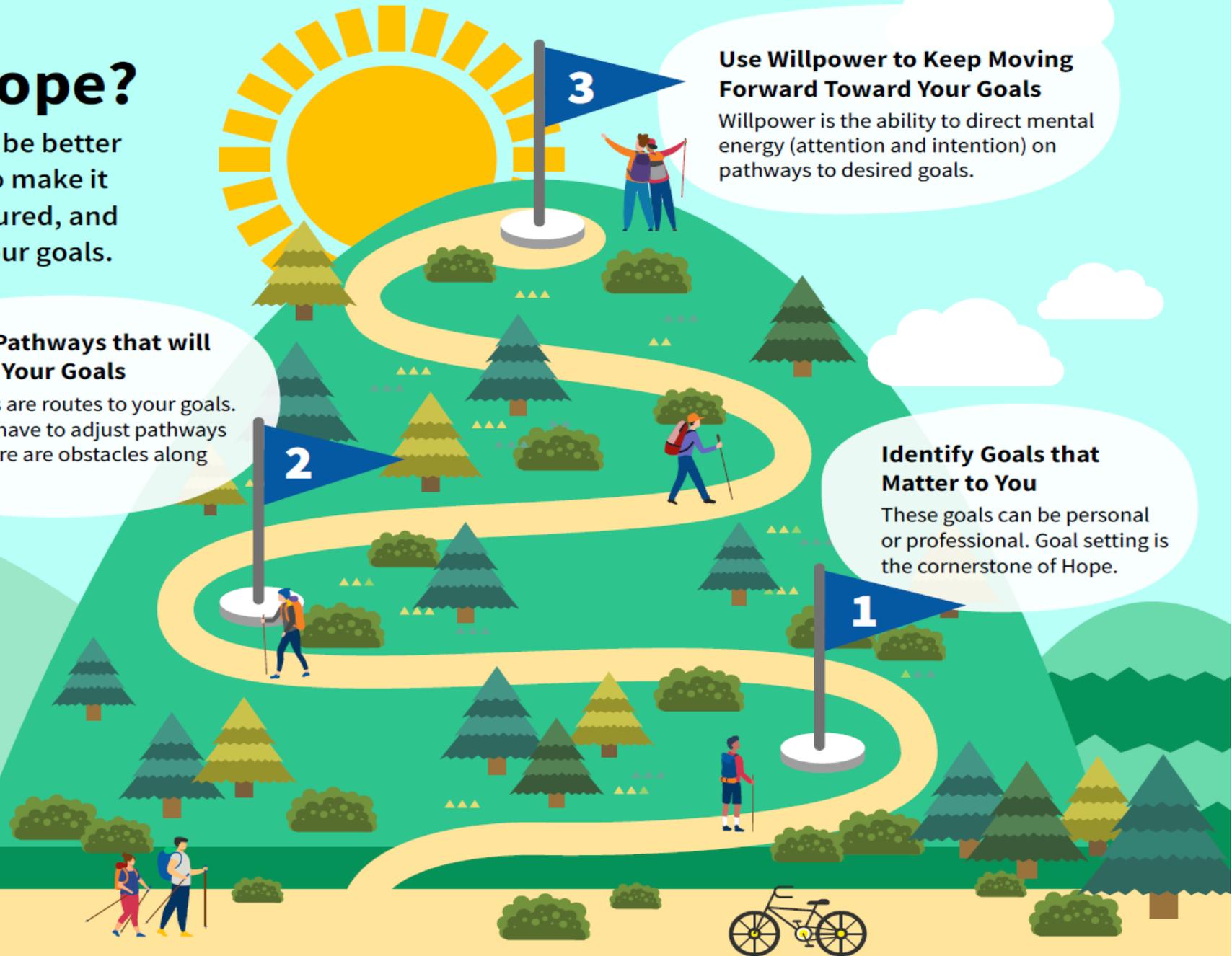
Willpower is the ability to direct mental energy (attention and intention) on pathways to desired goals.

Identify Goals that Matter to You

These goals can be personal or professional. Goal setting is the cornerstone of Hope.

Why implement the Science of Hope?

VDSS is becoming a hope-centered agency to facilitate culture change that fully embodies trauma-informed and healing-centered policy and practice and cultivate well-being.



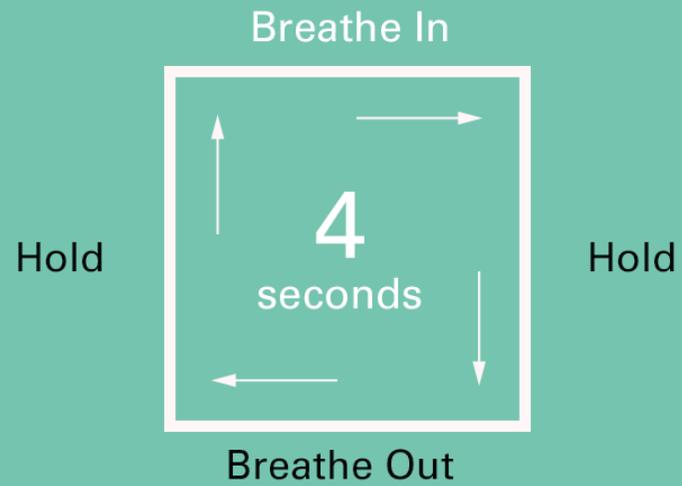
VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF
SOCIAL SERVICES



Learning Objectives:

- » Develop a strong foundational understanding of terminology related to trauma.
- » Discuss the impact of vicarious trauma on individuals and organizations.
- » Explore individual and organizational strategies to mitigate vicarious trauma.

The Impact of the Work





Who's in the room?

Name, pronoun

Where are you from?

Your role at VDSS

Risk being seen in all of your glory. – Jim Carrey

Why Are We Here?

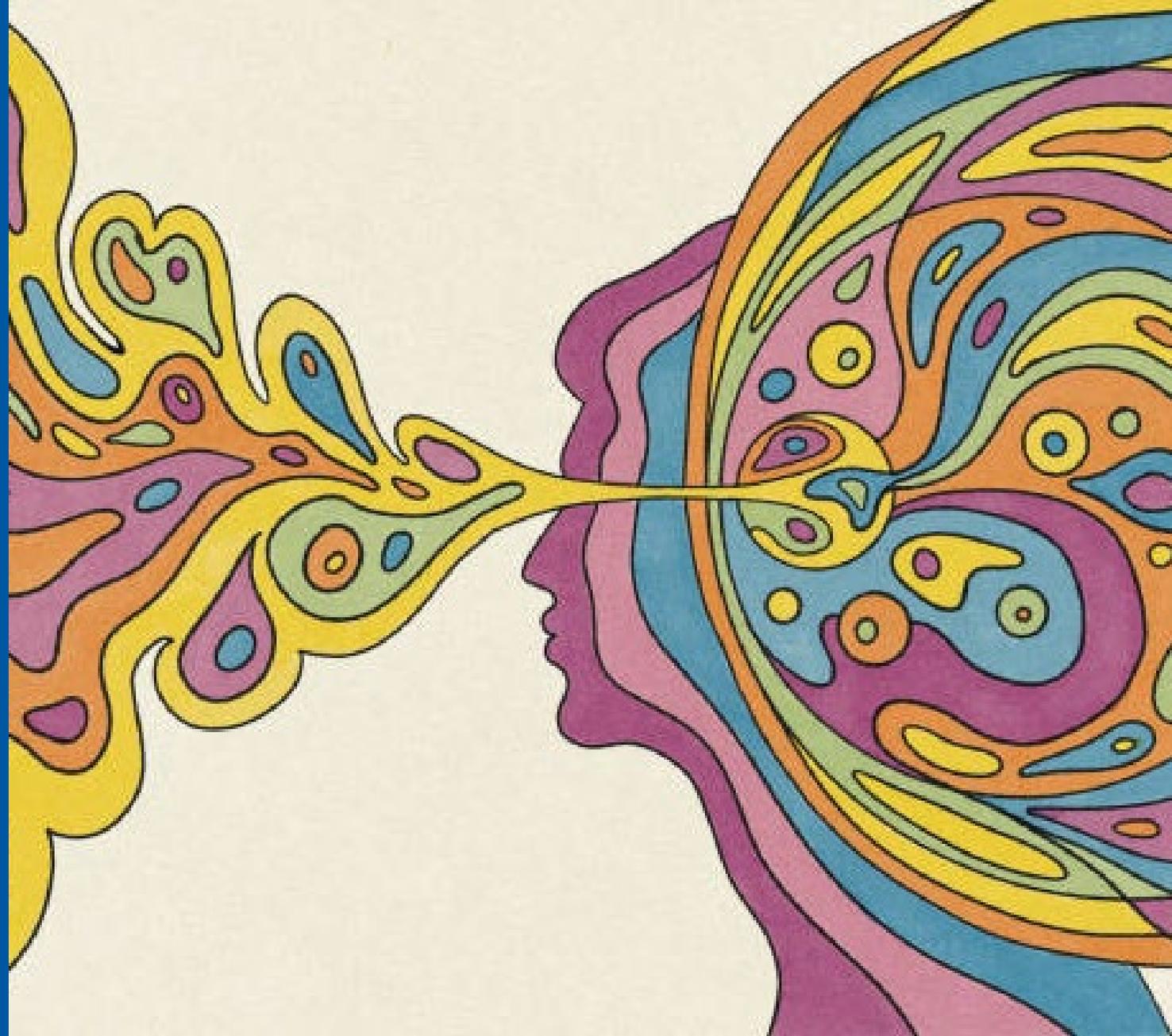
- » Individual Costs of Vicarious Trauma: emotional health, physical health, relationships, decision making, inability to sustain meaning and/or purpose
- » Organizational Costs Vicarious Trauma: high absenteeism, presenteeism, turnover, performance issues

Building a Foundation of Language

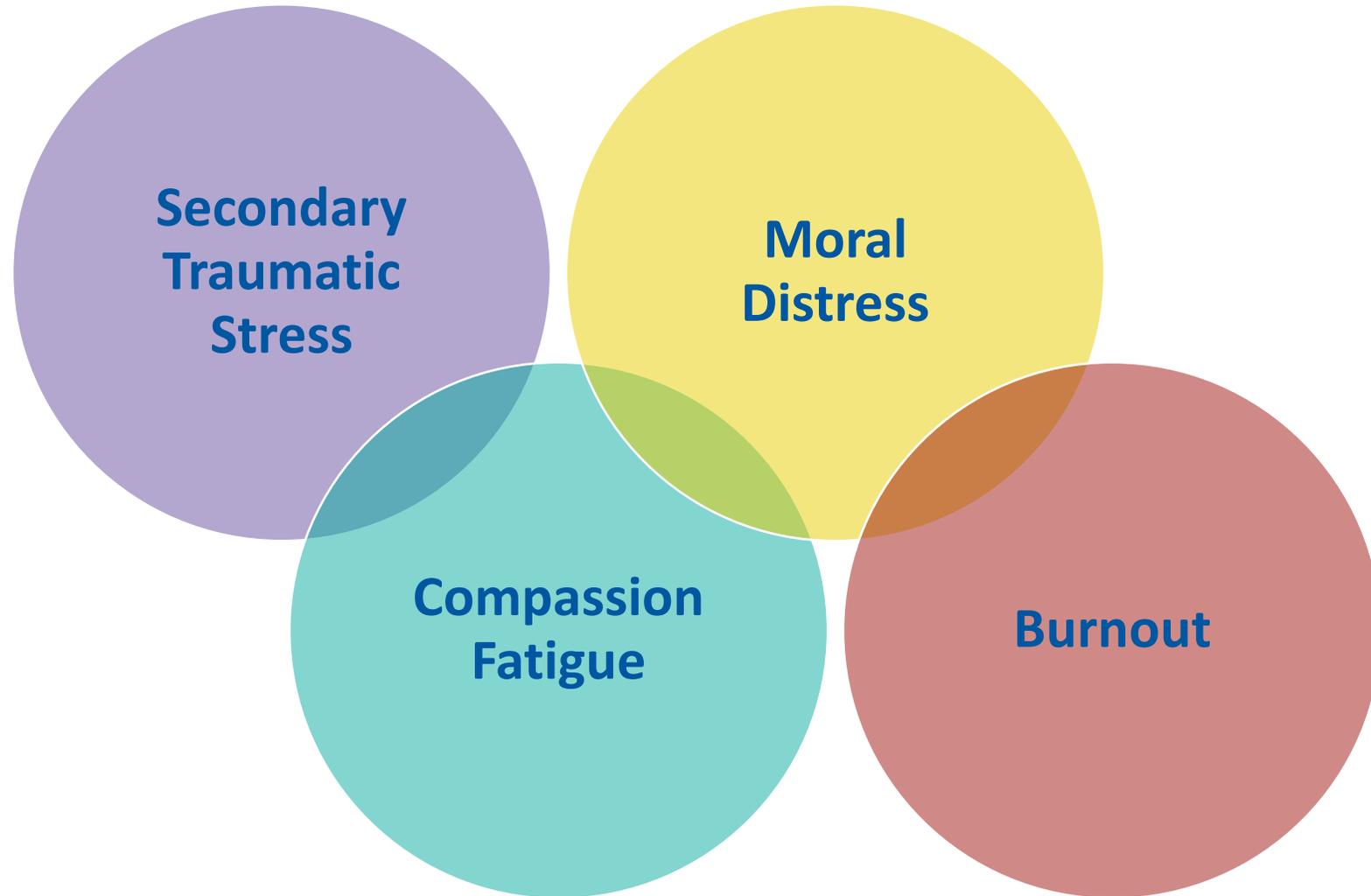
Trauma results from an **event**, series of events, or set of circumstances that is **experienced** by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse **effects** on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

US Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration [SAMHSA]

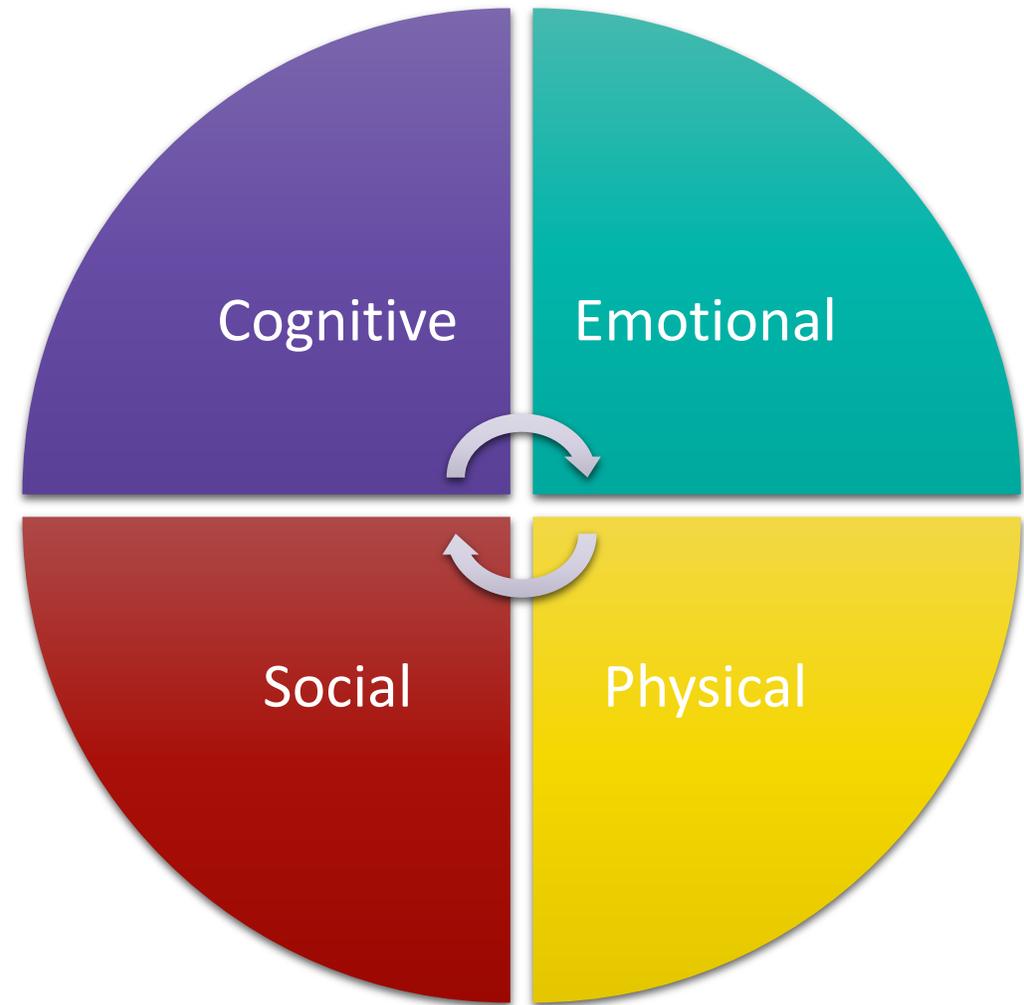
Vicarious trauma is a negative reaction that occurs when a person is exposed to the trauma of another. As a result, the person's worldview may shift, and they may experience symptoms that can negatively impact their life and their work.



Terms Related to Vicarious Trauma



Impact of Vicarious Trauma on Individuals



Impact of Vicarious Trauma on Individuals



COGNITIVE

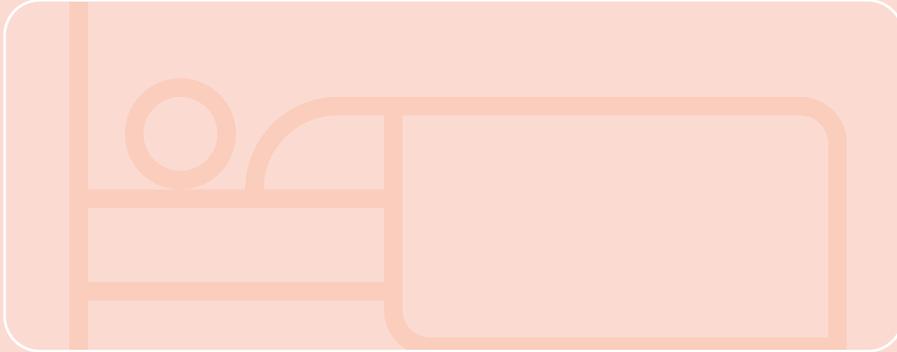
- Disconnected
- Distracted
- Inability to embrace complexity
- Intrusive thoughts



EMOTIONAL

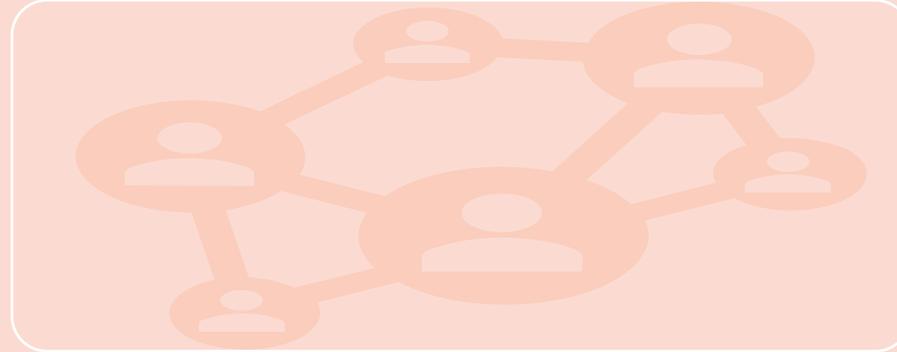
- Hopelessness
- Excessive worrying
- Guilt
- Anger and cynicism

Impact of Vicarious Trauma on Individuals, cont.



PHYSICAL

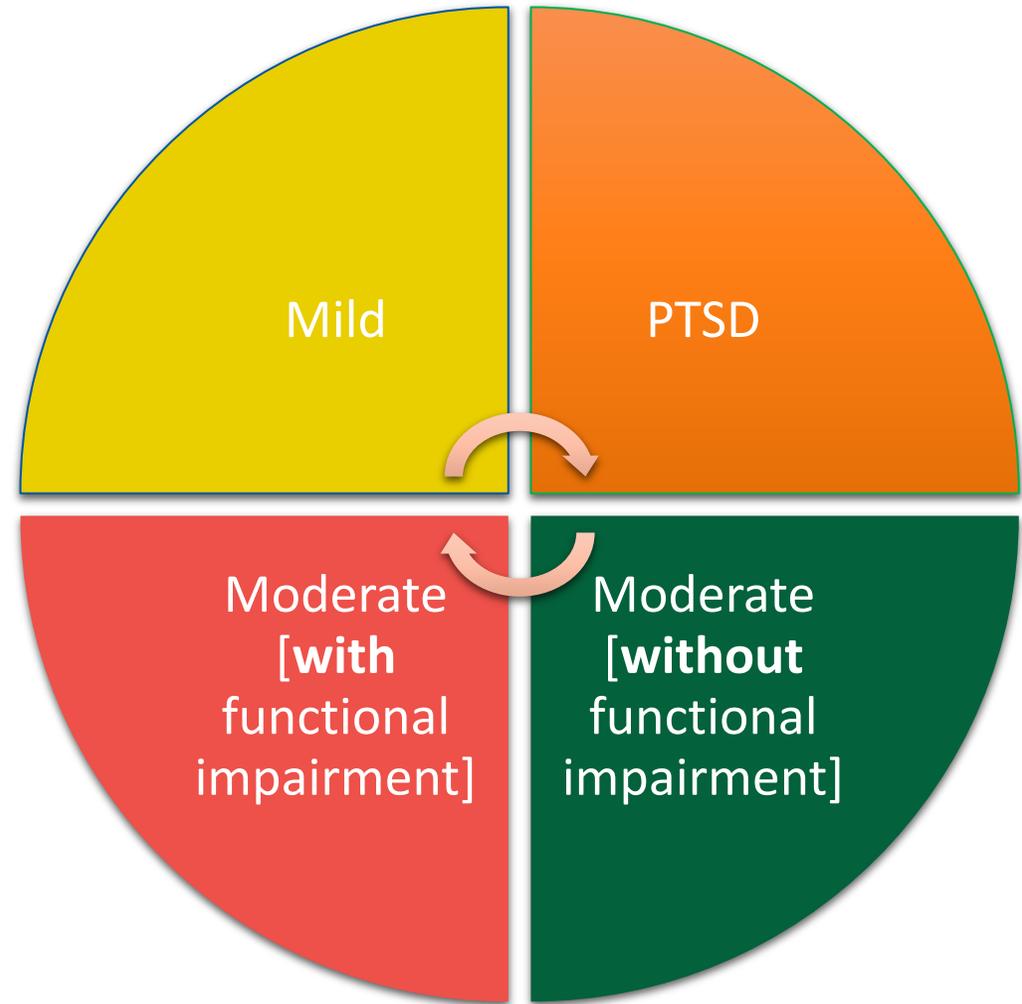
- Sleeping too much/too little
- Prone to getting sick
- Eating too much/too little
- Substances use to cope



SOCIAL

- Avoidance
- Isolation
- Difficulty accepting help/
helping others
- Inability to empathize

Vicarious Trauma is Non-Linear

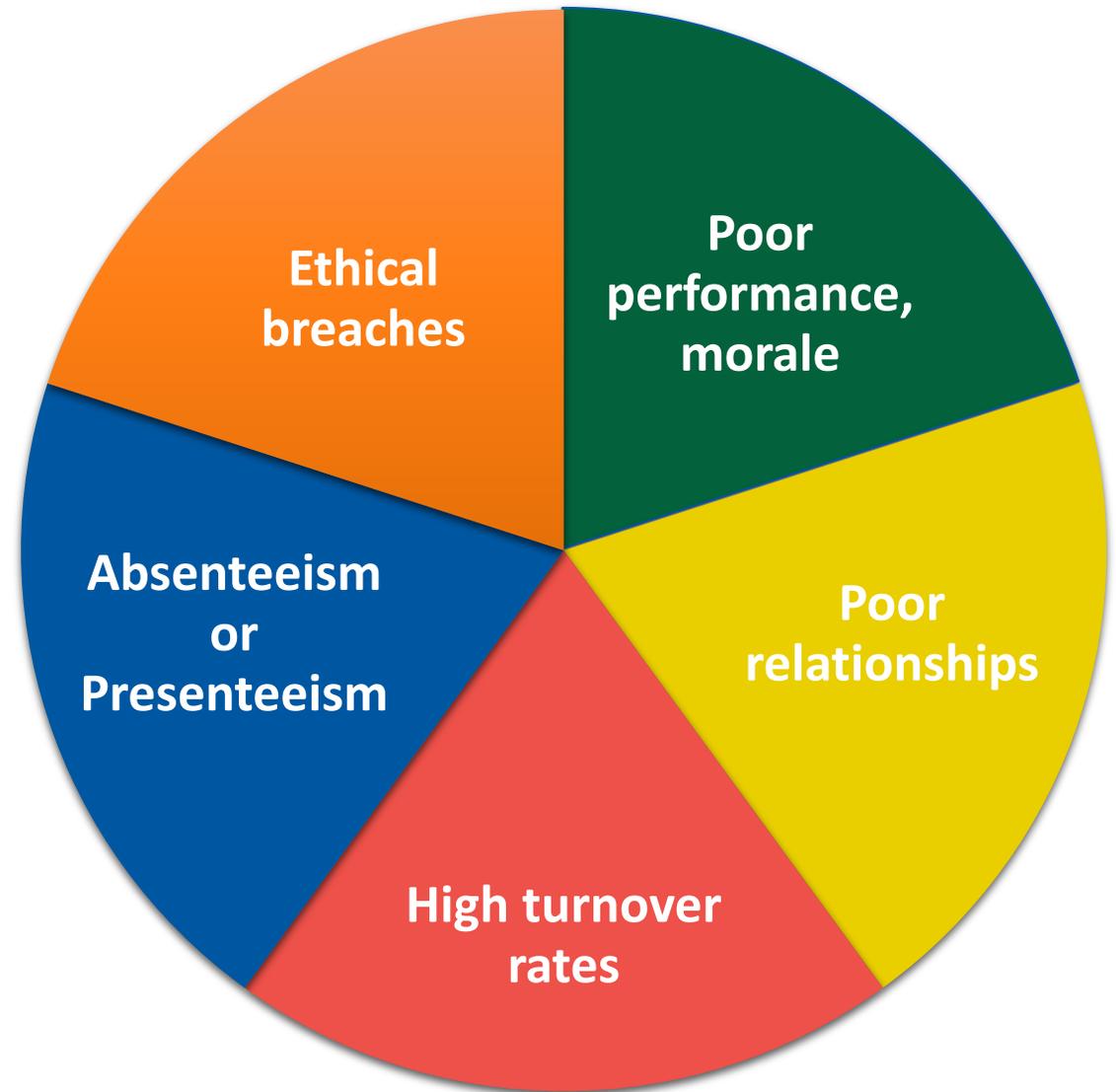


Disproportionate Impact

- Individuals who hold marginalized identities
- Individuals that have personal experiences of discrimination/microaggressions
- Individuals that are asked to contribute lived experience related to cultural or historical trauma



Impact of Vicarious Trauma on Organizations



Let's Talk

Consider how these elements of vicarious trauma resonate with your own experiences.

- What is this conversation bringing up for you?
- How did you first notice the impact your job was having on you?
- How have you noticed vicarious trauma impacting the organization?



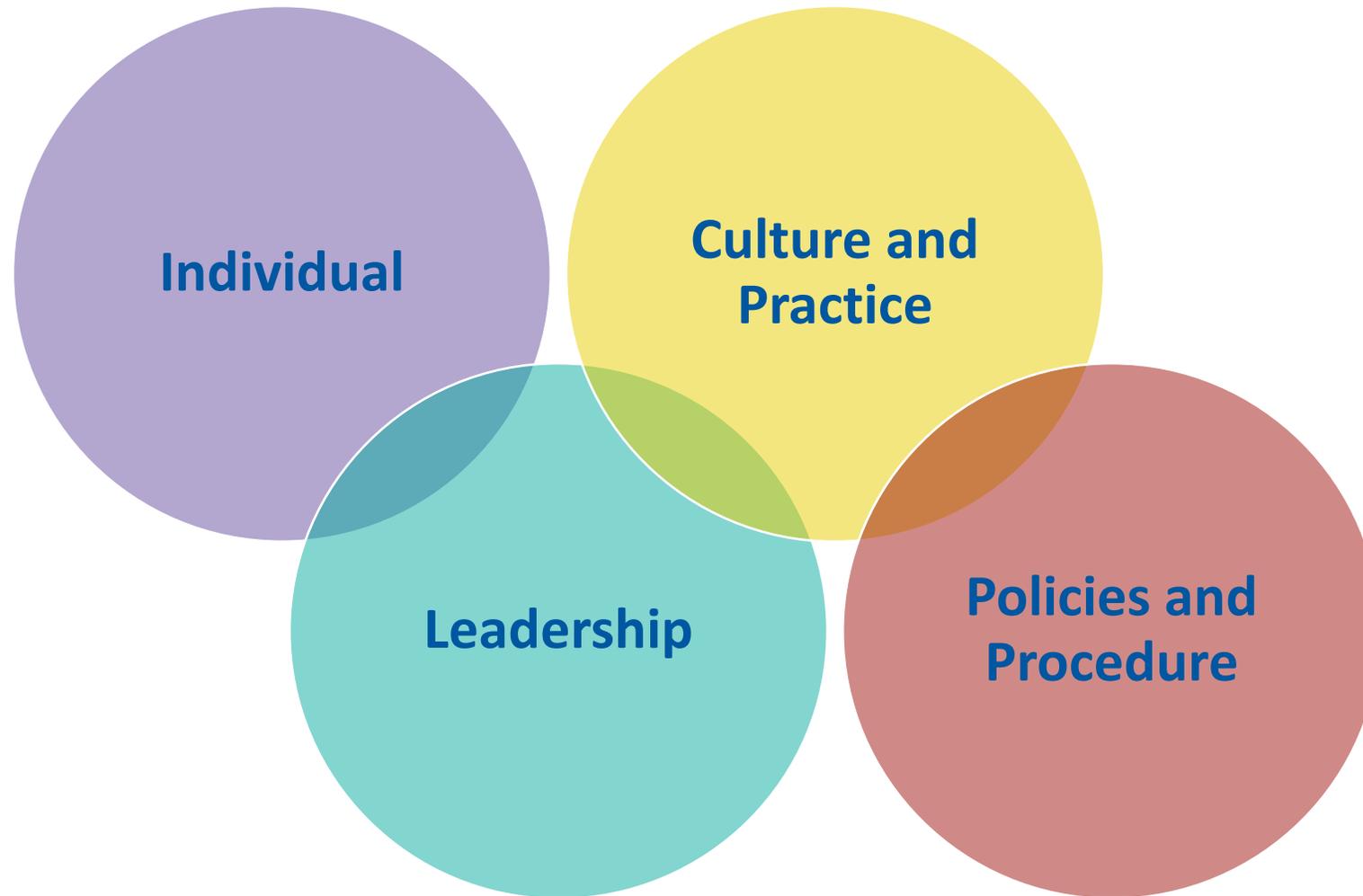
STRATEGIES



Both individual and organizational approaches are needed to address vicarious trauma.



Strategies to Mitigate Vicarious Trauma



Individual Strategies to Mitigate Vicarious Trauma

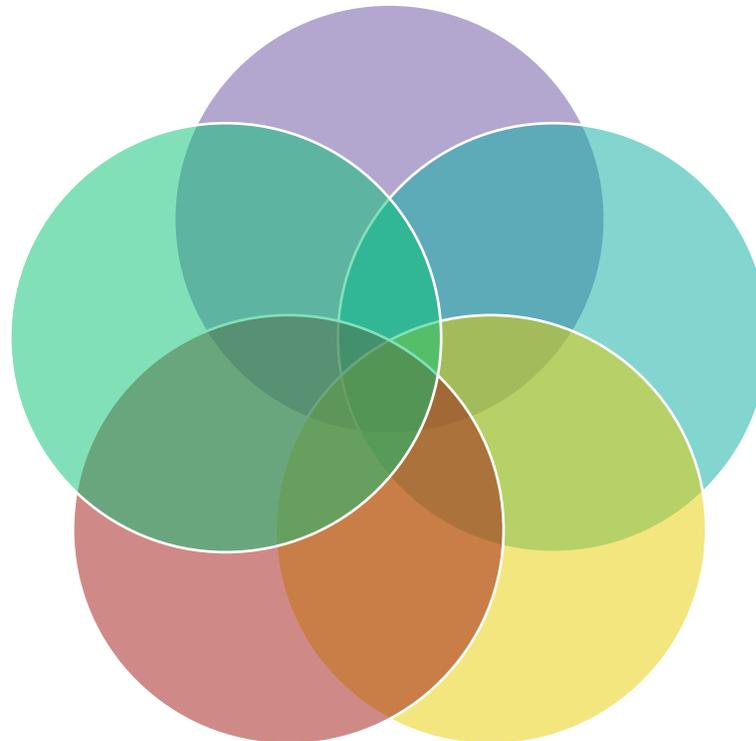
Compassion Satisfaction

Resilience Building

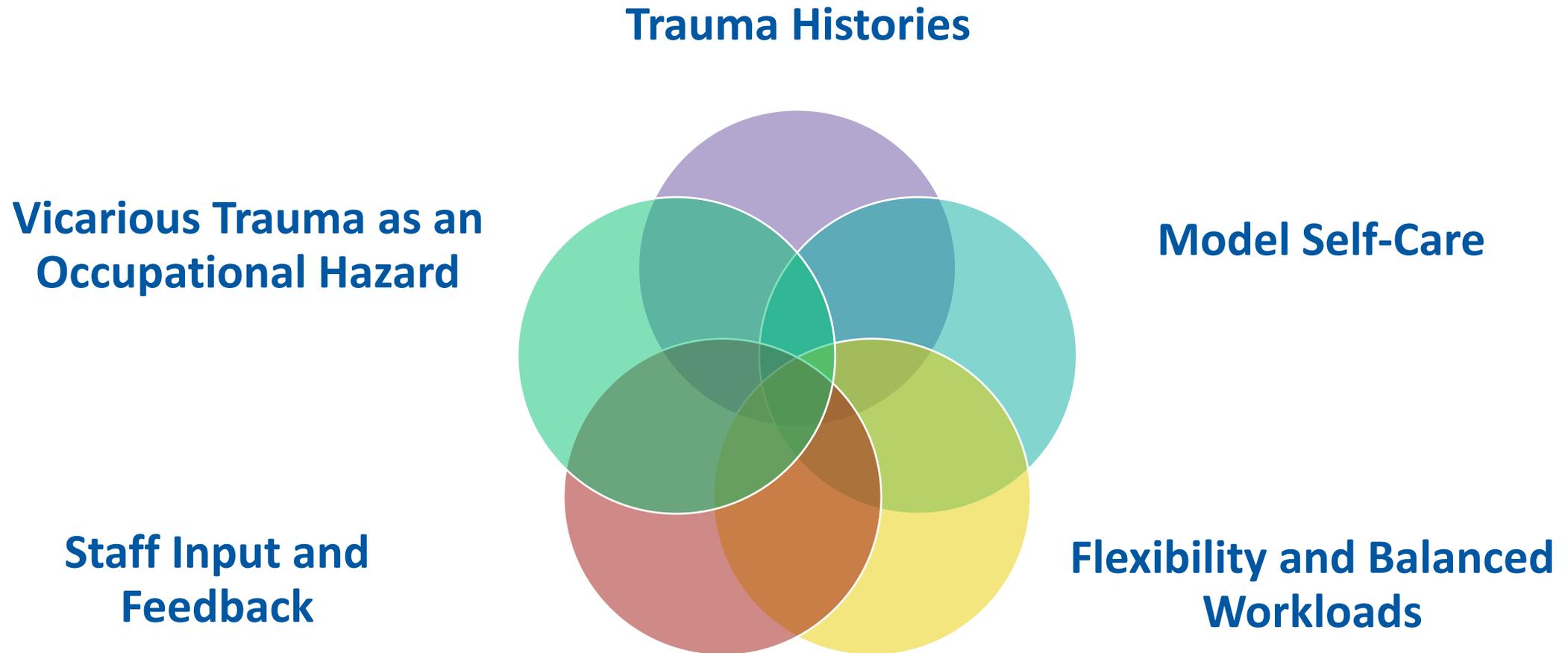
Healthy Support
Systems

Reflective Practices

Race, Culture, and
Identity



Leadership Strategies to Mitigate Vicarious Trauma



Culture & Practice Strategies to Mitigate Vicarious Trauma

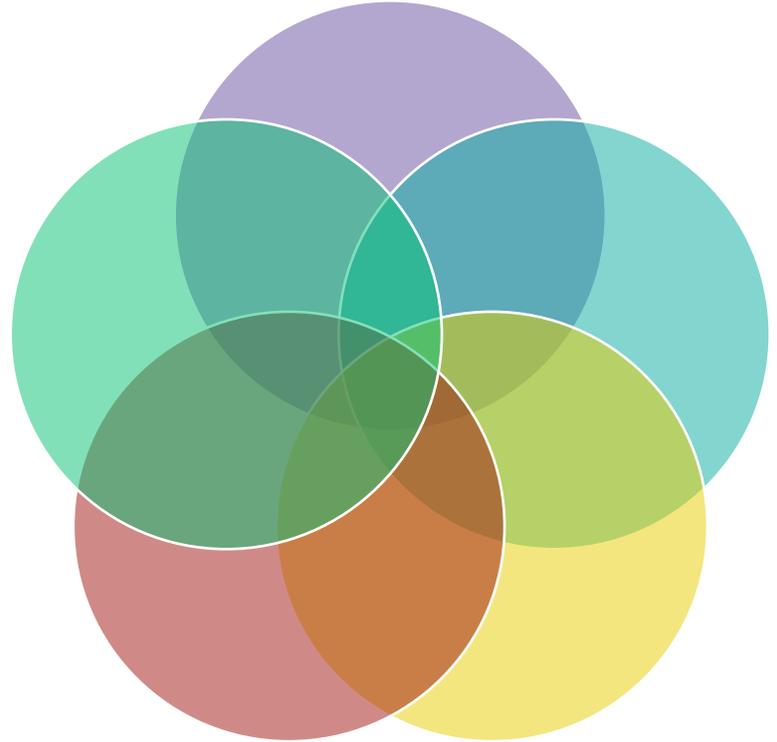
Connect and Reflect

Resources for Staff

Peer Support

Celebrate

Cultivate Hope



Policies & Procedure Strategies to Mitigate Vicarious Trauma

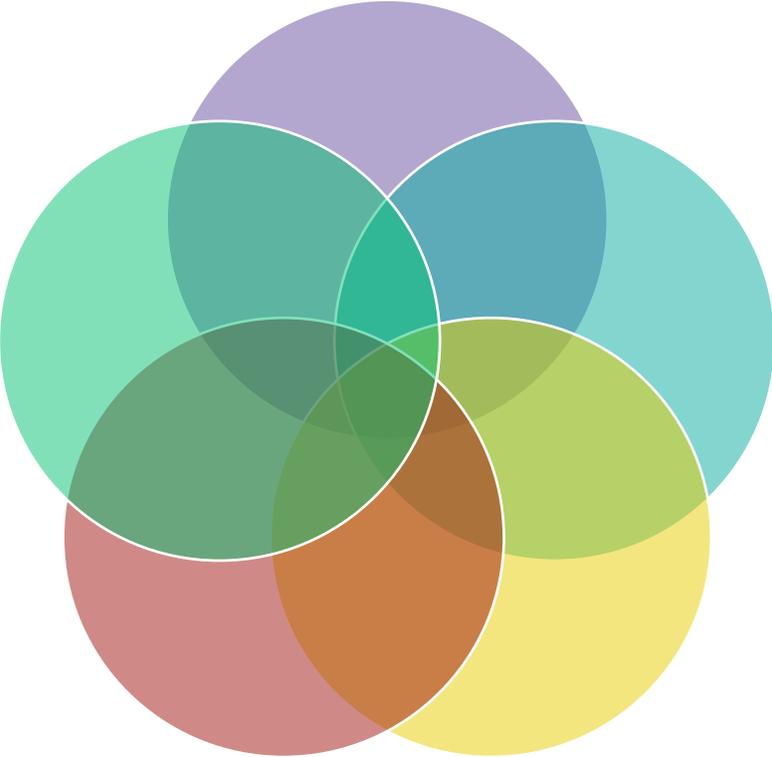
Support

Accessible, culturally relevant resources

Organizational Assessments

Trained Supervisors and Managers

Transparency and Staff Input



Where Do We Go From Here



Additional Resources:

- » [Resilience, Balance, and Meaning: Supporting Our Lives and Our Work in High Stress, Trauma-exposed Workplaces](#)
- » [Pause – Reset – Nourish \(PRN\)* to Promote Wellbeing](#)
- » [The Surgeon General’s Framework for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being](#)
- » [The Secondary Traumatic Stress Informed Organization Assessment](#)
- » [Virginia HEALS: Trauma-informed Agency Self-Assessment \(TIASA\)](#)

Please let us know what you thought of the training:

