

STILL HERE, STILL WORKING

Trauma-Informed Workforce Wellness Training

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Regulate



Relate



Reason



REGULATE:

Take a moment to make the
Ordinary New...

Step 1: Scan for something ordinary

Step 2: Be curious for 10–15 seconds

Step 3: Notice what shifts



RELATE:

The Unexpected Twin:

- Think of one ordinary thing you've done this week.
- Drop it in the chat.
- Notice who shares your “ordinary twin.”



REASON

The Shared Experience

- You are not alone in this
- You are not broken
- You are not weak
- You are responding normally to abnormal circumstances
- Your experience is real and matters

Why This Matters — The Data

Research shows employees who survive layoffs experience:

- ↓ 41% decrease in job satisfaction (Kivimaki, 2000)
- ↑ 65% increase in voluntary turnover risk (Trevor & Nyberg, 2008)
- ↑ Significant increase in health problems and stress
- ↓ Reduced trust in leadership and organizational commitment
- ↓ Decline in team cohesion and collaboration

What We Mean by Change

Organizational disruptions include:

- Layoffs and position eliminations
- Budget cuts and resource reduction
- Program closures and service cuts
- Leadership turnover and culture shifts
- Mergers, acquisitions, and restructuring
- Policy changes that affect how you work

The Elephant in the Room

"At least you still have a job"

- Dismisses real pain and loss
- Creates pressure to perform gratitude
- Silences legitimate grief
- Isolates those who are struggling



Types of Loss After Change

Individual losses:

- Colleagues and daily connections
- Projects and programs you built
- Job security and predictability

Collective losses:

- Team culture and institutional memory
- Mentorship relationships
- Organizational trust and morale

Survivor's Guilt

"Why them and not me?"

Common experiences:

- Relief mixed with shame
- Guilt about still having income
- Hypervigilance about job security
- Difficulty celebrating personal success
- Emotional numbness or disconnection

The Changed Workload

Same mission ÷ fewer people = impossible math

- 2-3 jobs redistributed to you
- Same deadlines, fewer hands
- 'Temporary' arrangements that become permanent
- Guilt about saying no
- Exhaustion becomes the new normal

TAKEAWAY #1: The Grief-Work Balance

Naming Loss While Functioning

Daily 3-Minute Grief Accounting:

- Set a timer for 3 minutes
- Name ONE specific loss without minimizing
- Write it or say it aloud
- Example: "I lost daily collaboration with Maria"
- Then return to your day with that loss acknowledged

What Trauma-Informed Means

Four Core Principles:

- Safety — physical and emotional security
- Choice — honoring individual autonomy
- Collaboration — shared decision-making
- Trust — consistency and transparency

These apply to individuals, teams, AND organizations

These are only 4 of 6 briefly synthesized principles from SAMHSA's TIC Principles

What Doesn't Help

Individual responses that harm:

- "Just be grateful you have a job"
- "You need to be more resilient"

Organizational responses that harm:

- Silence about what happened
- 'Business as usual' expectations
- Resilience training without structural change
- Celebrating 'lean' operations

What Does Help

Individual strategies:

- Name what happened honestly
- Acknowledge your own loss and grief
- Set and maintain boundaries

Collective strategies:

- Create space for team acknowledgment
- Advocate for realistic workloads together
- Build peer support networks
- Push for structural, not just individual, solutions

The Reality of Burnout

Burnout is an occupational injury, not a personal weakness

Three dimensions (Maslach):

- Emotional exhaustion — completely depleted
- Depersonalization — cynicism and detachment
- Reduced efficacy — feeling ineffective despite effort

**You don't prevent burnout by being tougher—
you prevent it by changing conditions**

TAKEAWAY #2: The Impossible Workload Inventory

Making the Invisible Visible

Create your "Cannot-Do List":

- A private written inventory of tasks
- Document what's mathematically impossible
- Example: "Cover 2 eliminated positions (80 hrs)
in my 40-hour role = impossible"
- Update weekly
- Share with trusted colleagues or supervisors

Practical Strategy: Boundaries

You cannot pour from an empty cup

Individual boundaries:

- Leave at a specific time
- No email after hours
- "I can do A or B—which is priority?"

Collective boundaries:

- Team agreements about response times
- Shared 'no meeting' blocks
- Mutual support for saying no

Practical Strategy: Micro-Recovery

Small moments of restoration throughout the day

- 60 seconds of deep breathing between meetings
- Brief walk at lunch—even 10 minutes helps
- Camera off during one video call
- A song that grounds you
- Step outside for fresh air
- Cup of tea without multitasking

Practical Strategy: Connection

You don't have to do this alone

- Find people you can be honest with
- Build peer support networks at work
- Connect with affinity groups if available
- Maintain relationships outside work
- Know who gives energy vs. who drains it
- Consider professional support (EAP, therapy)

TAKEAWAY #3: Micro-Boundaries & Collective Protection

Sustainable Pacing Through Pre-Decided Limits

Non-Negotiable Micro-Boundaries:

- No email after 7pm weekdays
- 15-minute walk at lunch
- 48-hour response to non-urgent requests

Collective Protection:

- Share boundaries with trusted colleagues
- Support each other's limits
- Advocate together for sustainable practices

For Managers and Leaders

Model trauma-informed practice:

- Acknowledge the change honestly—name what happened
- Create space for difficulty—not just productivity
- Model boundaries yourself—leave on time, take breaks
- Advocate upward for realistic workloads
- Check in with individuals authentically
- Protect your team from unreasonable demands
- Examine your own impact on team stress

When Culture is Part of the Problem

You cannot fix toxic culture alone

Your options:

- Document and advocate for change
- Build alliances with like-minded colleagues
- Protect yourself within the situation
- Emotionally divest from dysfunction
- Consider whether staying serves you

Individual resilience cannot heal systemic harm

Organizational Accountability

What trauma-informed organizations DO:

- Acknowledge change honestly and publicly
- Provide adequate time and resources for transition
- Redistribute workload realistically
- Create formal spaces for grief and processing
- Examine policies for equity impact
- Measure wellbeing, not just productivity
- Hold leadership accountable for culture

What You Can Control

In chaos, identify your anchors:

- Your boundaries — how much you give and when
- Your choices — how you respond and prioritize
- Your support network — who you reach out to
- Your self-compassion — how you talk to yourself
- Your meaning — what matters to you beyond work
- Your exit strategy — whether you stay or go

Three Takeaways Summary

1. The Grief-Work Balance

- 3-minute daily grief accounting
- Name losses without minimizing

2. The Impossible Workload Inventory

- Your "Cannot-Do List"
- Document systemic dysfunction

3. Micro-Boundaries & Collective Protection

- Small, pre-decided limits
- Share and support each other's boundaries

Moving Forward

One day at a time

One decision at a time

One moment at a time

- Healing isn't linear
- Setbacks are part of the process
- Be patient with yourself and others
- Progress looks different for everyone

Key Research & Resources

Academic foundations:

- Dr. Pauline Boss — Ambiguous Loss Theory
- Dr. Thema Bryant — Trauma, Healing & Liberation
- Dr. Christina Maslach — Burnout Research
- Dr. Adia Harvey Wingfield — Race & Professional Work
- Dr. Della V. Mosley — Black Women's Workplace Wellbeing
- Dr. Kenneth Doka — Disenfranchised Grief
- Dr. Arlie Hochschild — Emotional Labor

Final Reflections

Your experience matters.

Your grief is legitimate.

Your boundaries are necessary.

Your wellbeing is non-negotiable.

**You matter—not just as a productive employee,
but as a whole human being with inherent worth.**

Questions & Closing

Questions?

Reflections?

Final thoughts?

Thank you for being here.

Thank you for your honesty.

Thank you for witnessing each other.