

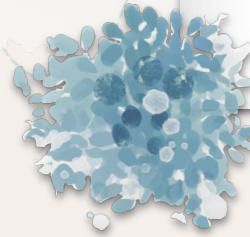
# Compassion Fatigue & Libraries



# Introductions

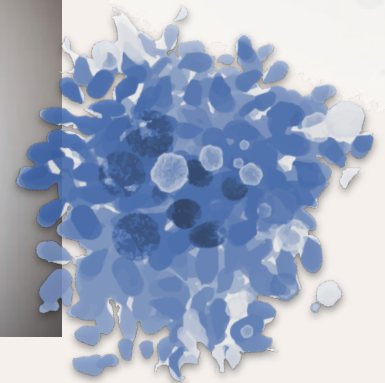
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# Agenda

**Defining compassion  
fatigue in public  
libraries.**

**Trauma and  
our bodies.**

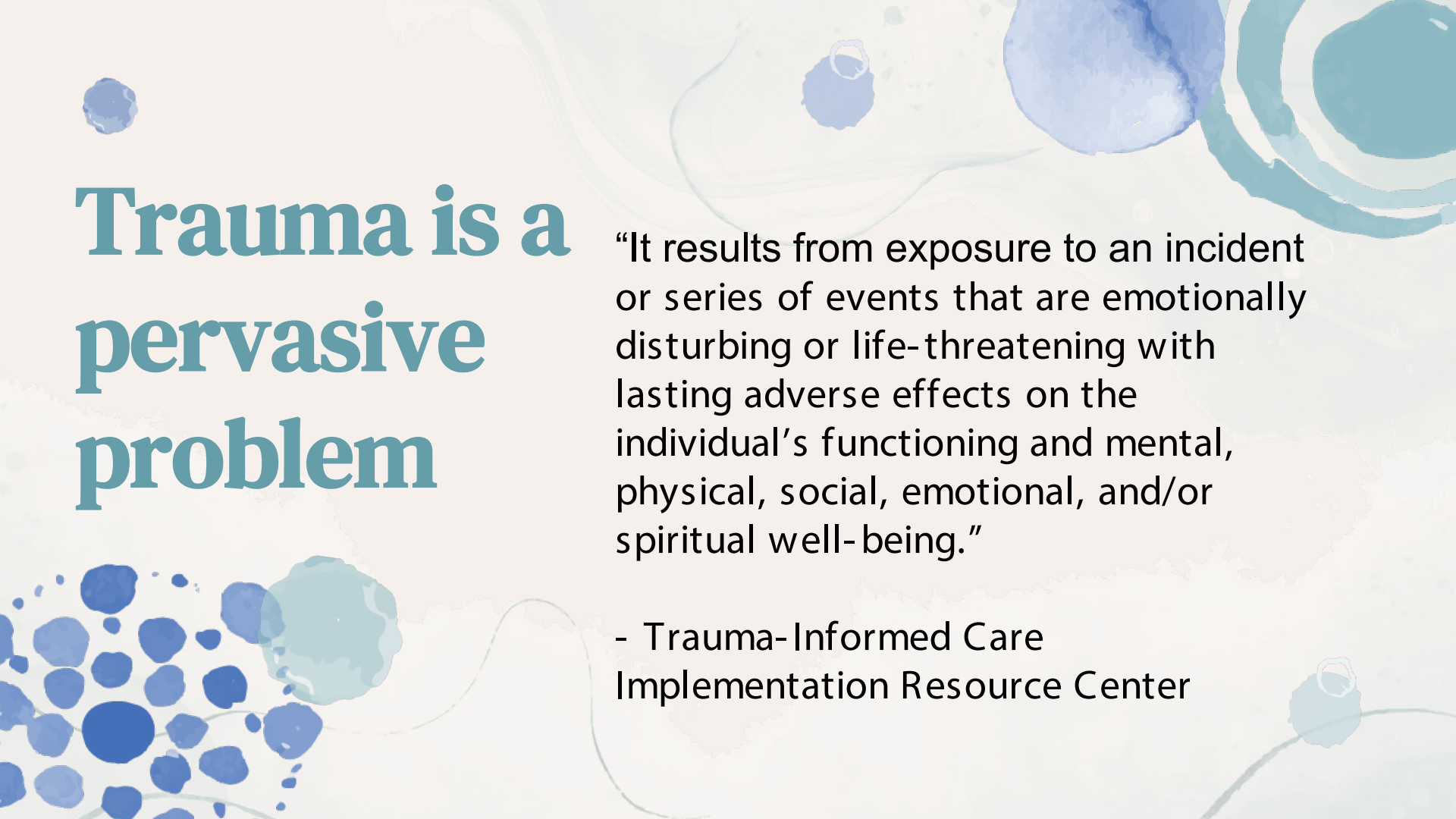
**How do we help  
ourselves?**



# What is Compassion Fatigue?

The profound emotional and physical exhaustion that helping professionals and caregivers can develop over the course of their career as helpers.

- Francoise Mathieu



# Trauma is a pervasive problem

“It results from exposure to an incident or series of events that are emotionally disturbing or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual’s functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, and/or spiritual well-being.”

- Trauma-Informed Care  
Implementation Resource Center

# What's the difference?

01

## Primary Trauma

Trauma that happens to you.

02

## Vicarious Trauma

Cumulative exposure to traumatic stories or images.

03

## Secondary Trauma

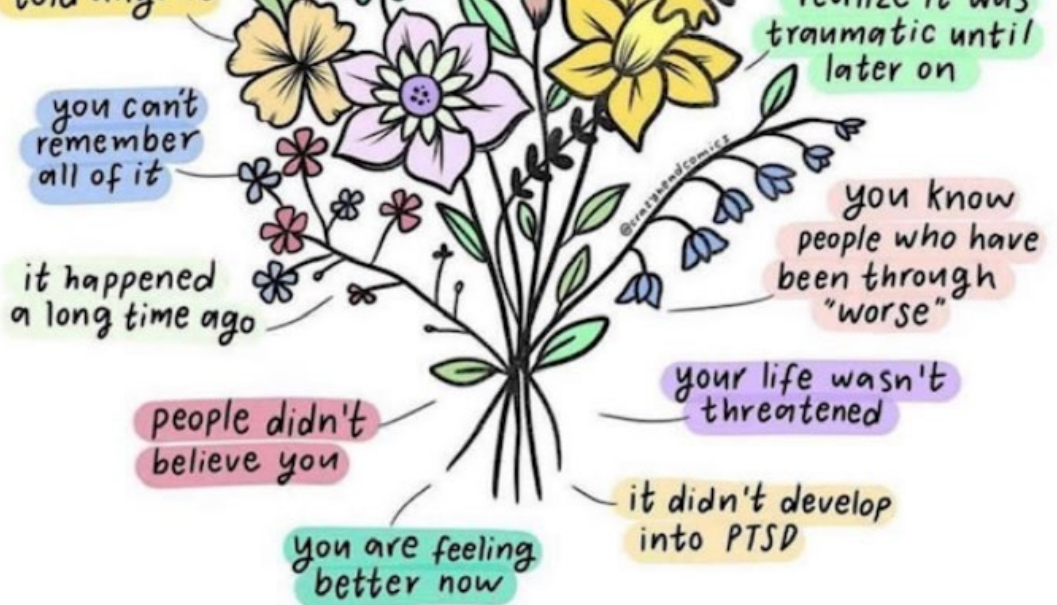
Witnessing a traumatic experience.

04

## Burnout

Exhaustion due to low job satisfaction or feelings of powerlessness.





you can't remember all of it

it happened a long time ago

people didn't believe you

you are feeling better now

realize it was traumatic until later on

you know people who have been through "worse"

your life wasn't threatened

it didn't develop into PTSD

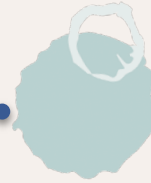
@brayandcozier

# Low Impact Debriefing

**Self  
Awareness**



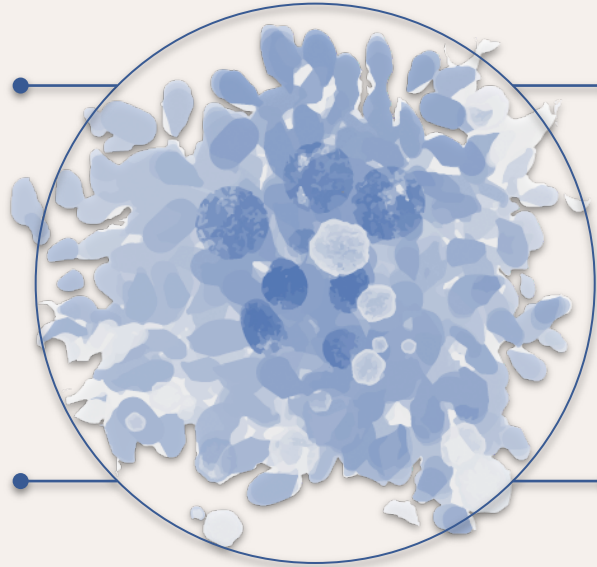
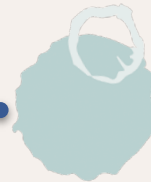
**Fair  
Warning**



**Consent**

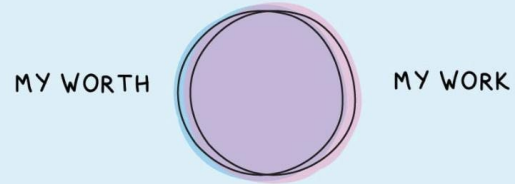


**Limited  
Disclosure**

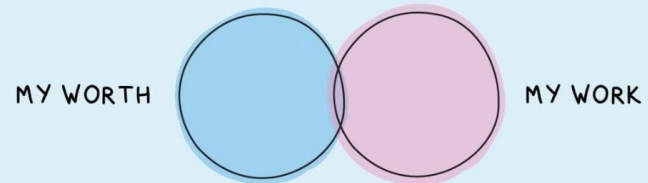




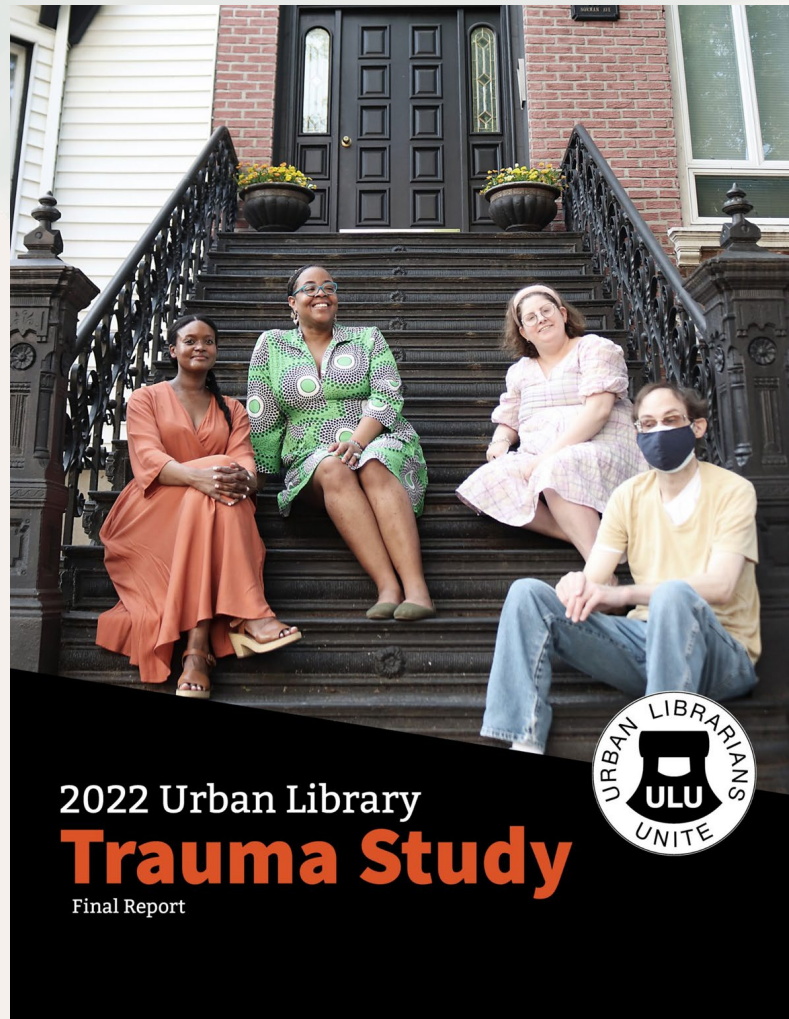
## WHAT I BELIEVED



## THE TRUTH



@LIZ ANDMOLLIE



2022 Urban Library

# Trauma Study

Final Report



# How does this impact library workers?



**68.5%**

Have experienced violent or aggressive behavior from patrons.

**85%**

Have experienced trauma in the workplace and have shared it with others.

**83%**

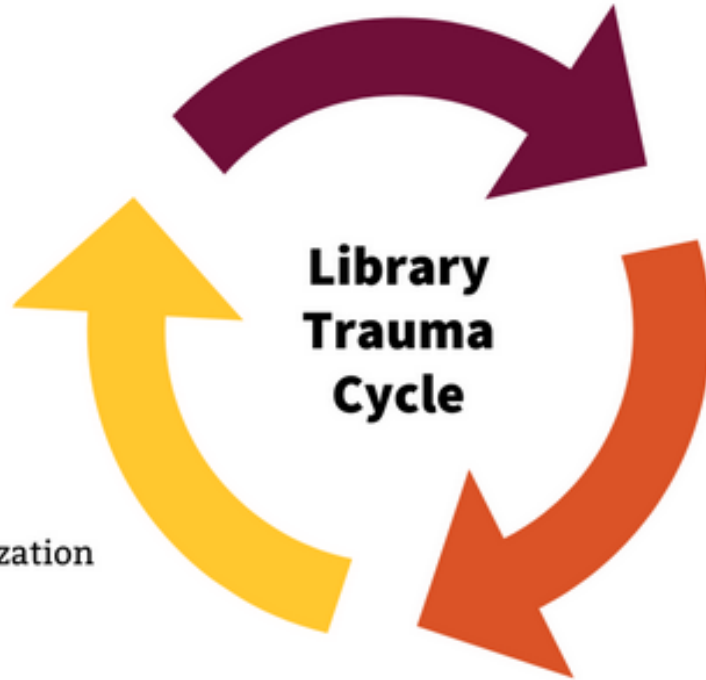
Stated that they received support from another member of staff.

Outside  
Stressor

**Library  
Trauma  
Cycle**

Professional  
Community  
Response

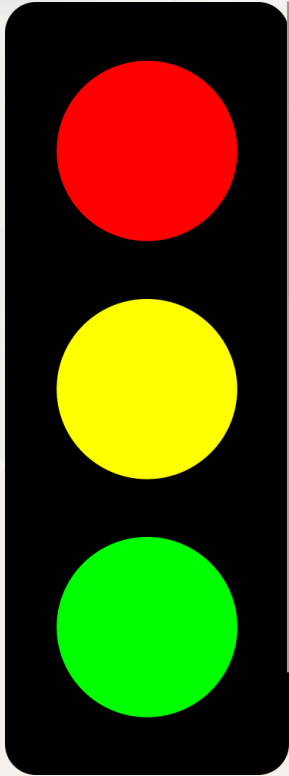
Internalization



# Group Share



**In what ways do we as  
library workers  
experience compassion  
fatigue?**



**LIFE THREAT**

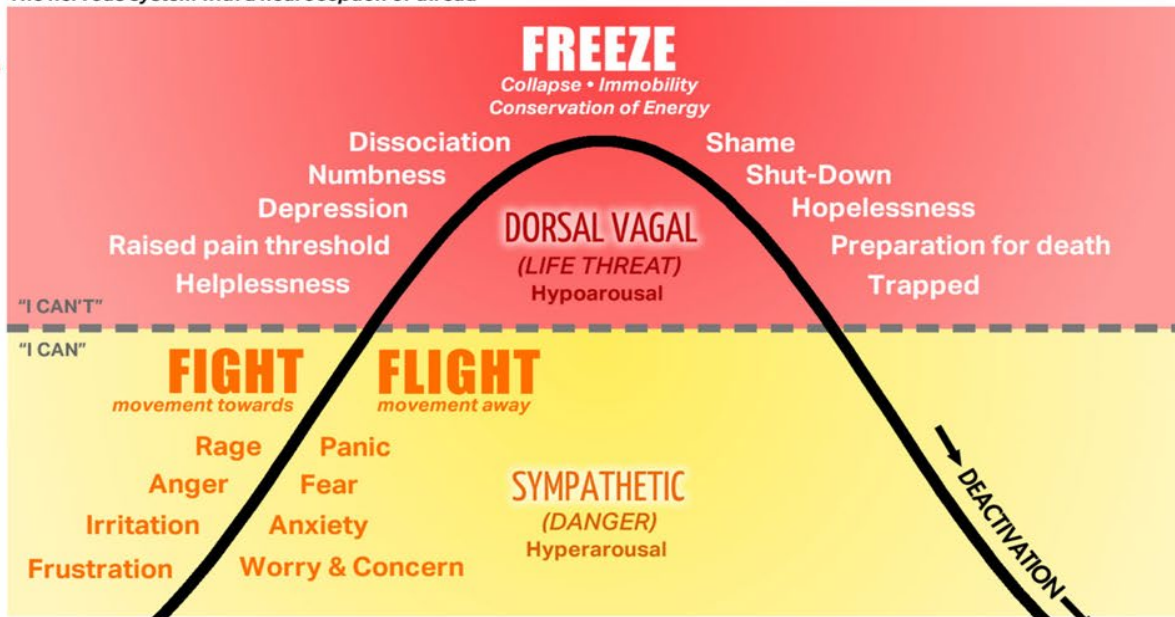
**DANGER**

**SAFETY**



# POLYVAGAL CHART

The nervous system with a neuroception of threat:



The nervous system with a neuroception of safety:



VVC is the beginning and end of stress response.  
When VVC is dominant, SNS and DVC are in transient blends which promote healthy physiological functioning.

## PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

DORSAL VAGAL COMPLEX

### Increases

Fuel storage & insulin activity • Immobilization behavior (with fear)  
Endorphins that help numb and raise the pain threshold  
Conservation of metabolic resources

### Decreases

Heart Rate • Blood Pressure • Temperature • Muscle Tone  
Facial Expressions & Eye Contact • Depth of Breath • Social Behavior  
Attunement to Human Voice • Sexual Responses • Immune Response

## SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

### Increases

Blood Pressure • Heart Rate • Fuel Availability • Adrenaline  
Oxygen Circulation to Vital Organs • Blood Clotting • Pupil Size  
Dilation of Bronchi • Defensive Responses

### Decreases

Fuel Storage • Insulin Activity • Digestion • Salivation  
Relational Ability • Immune Response

## PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

VENTRAL VAGAL COMPLEX

### Increases

Digestion • Intestinal Motility • Resistance to Infection  
Immune Response • Rest and Recuperation • Health & Vitality  
Circulation to non-vital organs (skin, extremities)  
Oxytocin (neuromodulator involved in social bonds that allows immobility without fear) • Ability to Relate and Connect  
Movement in eyes and head turning • Prosody in voice • Breath

### Decreases

Defensive Responses

**STRESS**  
**SYMPATHETIC**

**CALM**  
**PARASYMPATHETIC**

PUPILS EXPAND

PUPILS SHRINK

FAST & SHALLOW  
BREATHS

SLOW, DEEP  
BREATHS

HEART PUMPS  
FASTER

HEART SLOWS

GUT INACTIVE

GUT ACTIVE



**So let's talk about self-care.**







# Limiting Beliefs



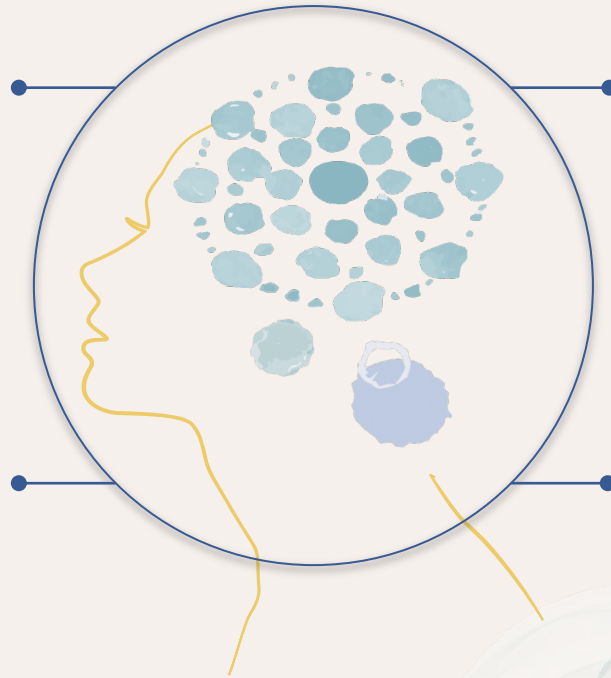
**Your needs come first.**



# Overcoming Limiting Beliefs

**“What if I’m wrong?”**


**Create  
Alternative  
Beliefs**



**“How is this  
belief serving  
me?”**

**Test the  
Alternative  
Beliefs**





# self-care

*/self · kare/ noun*

**The active process of making  
your body and mind a  
pleasant place to inhabit by  
filling your own cup first.**

**-Amazon inspirational quote mental health poster**



# **Macro Self-Care VS Micro Self-Care**

# Targeted Micro Self-Care



**Grounding**



**Energizing**



**Relaxing**

# Shifting Perceptions

**External Locus Of  
Control**

**Internal Locus of  
Control**

Dysregulated ← ----- → Regulated

Victim ← ----- → Empowered

Demand ← ----- → Choice

Outcome Driven ← ----- → Process Driven

# Final Thoughts

**What can we  
do to take  
care of  
ourselves?**



**Personally**



**Organizationally**

# Bibliography

- Resilience for Professionals by the Counseling Education Center and Sydney Elks, MA LPC.
- Laura van Dernoot Lipsky: Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others
- Rick Hanson: Hardwiring Happiness
- Patricia Katopol: Enough Already: Compassion Fatigue
- Ashley Davis Bush: Little and Often: Using Micro-Practices for Self-Care
- Fobazi Ettarh: Vocational Awe and Librarianship: The Lies we Tell Ourselves
- Fobazi Ettarh and Chris Vidas: The Future of Libraries: Vocational Awe in a “Post-COVID” World
- Urban Libraries Unite: Urban Library Trauma Study
- Trauma Informed Care Resource Center



# Resources

## Books and Articles

- Grounding Techniques: 30 Examples & How They Help by Nicole Arzt, LMFT
- No Time for Self-Care? Simple MicroPractices to the Rescue by Ashley Davis Bush, LICSW
- Simple Self-Care for Therapists: Restorative Practices to Weave Throughout Your Day by Ashley Davis Bush, LICSW
- A Beginner's Guide to the Polyvagal Theory by Deb Dana
- The Comfort Book by Matt Haig
- 10% Happie by Dan Harris
- Micro-Moments of Self-Care from A to Z by The Juniper Center Counseling & Therapy
- Real Self-Care by Pooja Lakshmin, MD
- The Compassion Fatigue Workbook by Françoise Mathieu
- Selfcarefully: A Self-Helpish Book About Caring for Yourself by Gracy Obuchowica

## Videos

- How Does Breathing Impact the Brain? by Dr. Yewande Pearce
- Hardwiring Happiness with Dr. Rick Hanson at TEDxMarin 2013

# Resources Continued

## Podcasts

- [Being Well Podcast](#) with Dr. Rick Hanson and Forrest Hanson
- [Happier](#) a podcast with Gretchen Rubin
- [The Happiness Lab](#) with Dr. Laurie Santos
- [Unlocking Us](#) with Brené Brown
- [Life Kit](#) from NPR

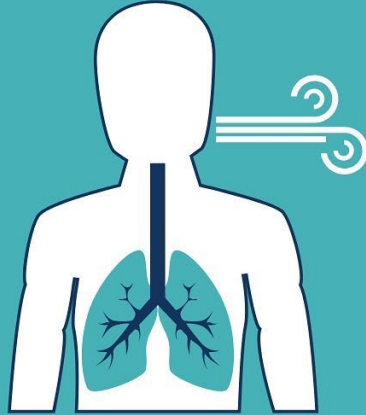
## Apps

- [Mindfulness Coach app](#) developed by U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs National Center for PTSD (free)
- [Smiling Mind](#) (free)
- [Amaha: Mental Health Self Care](#) (free app; limited content without a subscription)
- The Fabulous- Build Better Ha
- [The Mindfulness App](#) (free app; limited content without a subscription)
- [Calm](#) (free app; subscription required offers 7-day free trial)
- [Clarity](#) (free app; subscription required offers 7-day free trial)
- [Fabulous](#) (free app; subscription required offers 7-day free trial)

## Deep Breathing Exercise for Stress Relief

### 3 - 4 - 5 Vagal Breathing Exercise

This breathing exercise stimulates your vagus nerve which can help parasympthetic nervous system function.



.....

Gently inhale through your nose for a count of 3, ensure to use belly breathing for this.

Hold your breath for a count of 4.

Gently exhale through your nose for a count of 5.

Start with several rounds and up to 5 minutes.

[#taoofstrength](#)

[www.tao-of-strength.com](http://www.tao-of-strength.com)

# A SIMPLE GROUNDING TECHNIQUE TO COMBAT ANXIETY



1

ACKNOWLEDGE 5  
THINGS YOU CAN  
SEE AROUND YOU

2

ACKNOWLEDGE 4 THINGS  
YOU CAN TOUCH RIGHT  
NOW

3

ACKNOWLEDGE 3 THINGS YOU  
CAN HEAR (EXTERNAL NOISES  
OR INTERNAL, LIKE BREATHING)

4

ACKNOWLEDGE 2 THINGS  
YOU CAN SMELL AROUND  
YOU (A PENCIL, SOAP)

5

ACKNOWLEDGE 1  
THING YOU CAN  
CURRENTLY TASTE

