

Strategies to Address the Impacts of Working in Trauma-Exposed Workplaces

Or How to Keep on Doing This Important Work and Stay Healthy!

Cambria Rose Walsh, LCSW
Project Director
TIPs Center

Material Drawn from the Child Welfare Trauma Training Toolkit 3rd Edition

Starting with a Story

Emotional Trigger Warning



Complex Stress Model: Understanding Trauma-Exposed Workplaces

Systemic Stresses	Trauma-Exposed Workplace Stresses

Harassment Moral Distress Exposure to trauma material

Direct Experience of Trauma Burnout

Complex Stress Model Copyright (symbol) 2001 Dr. Patricia Fisher R Psych., www.tendacademy.ca

Trauma-Exposed Workplaces: Increased Risk

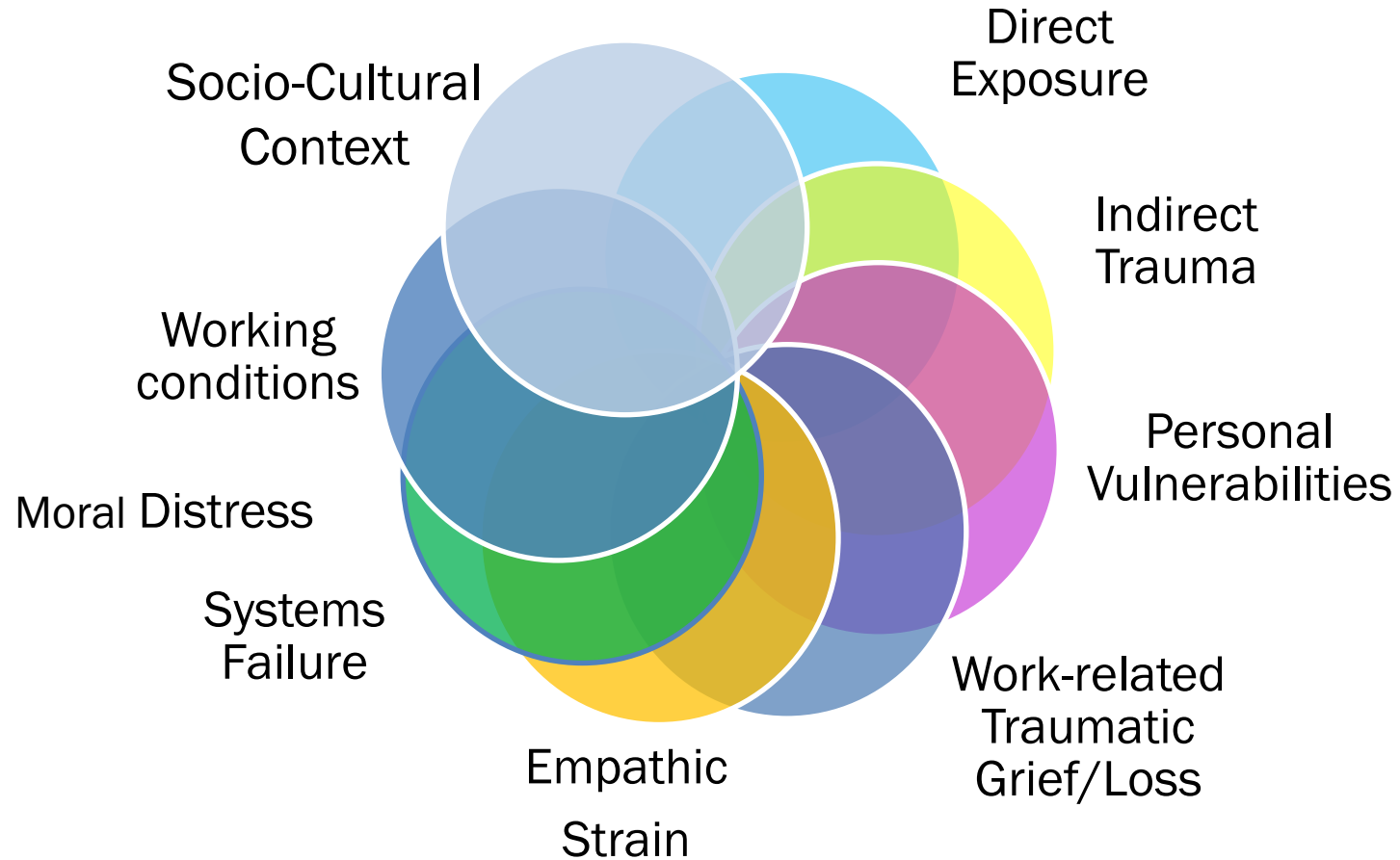
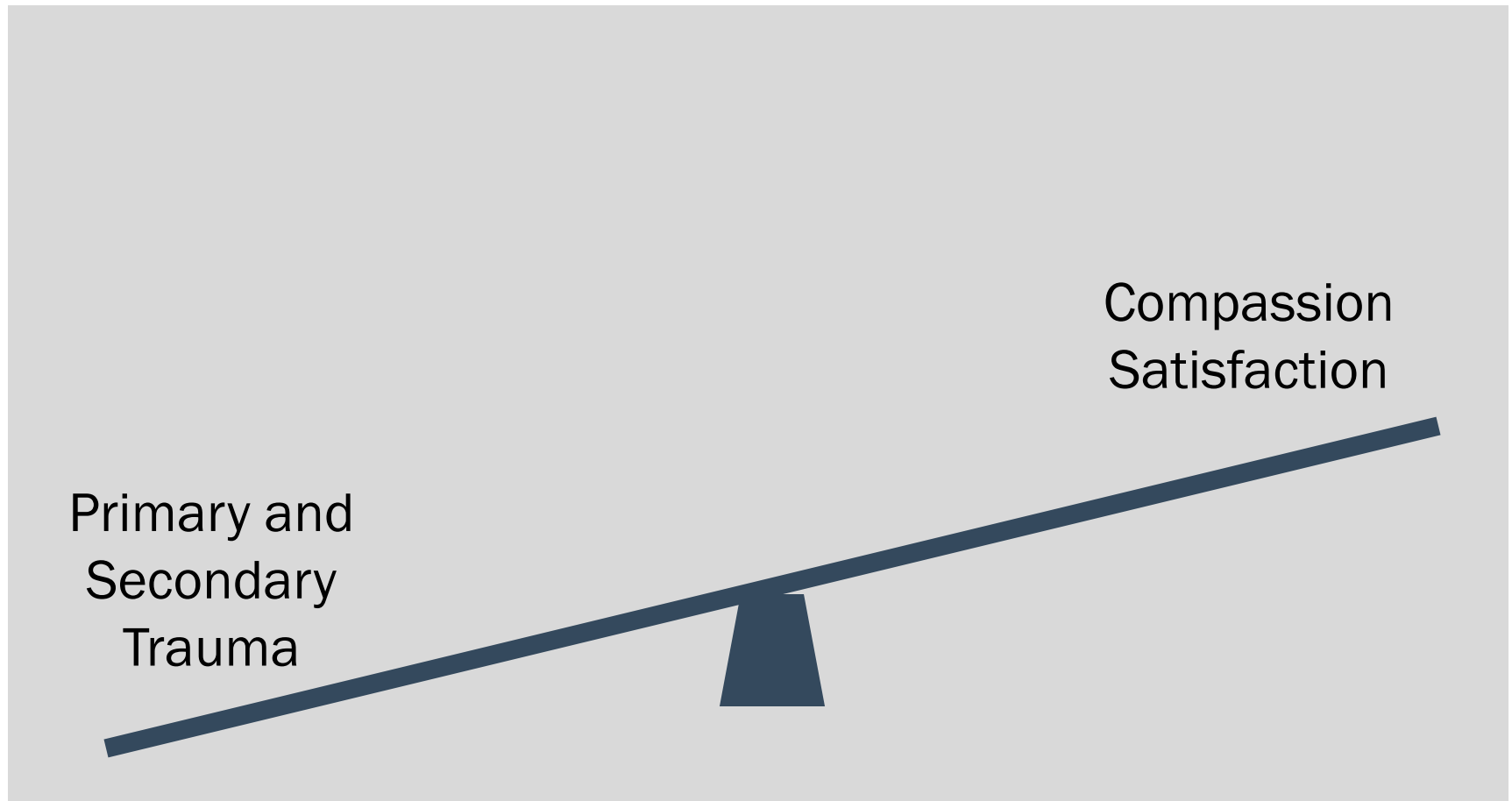


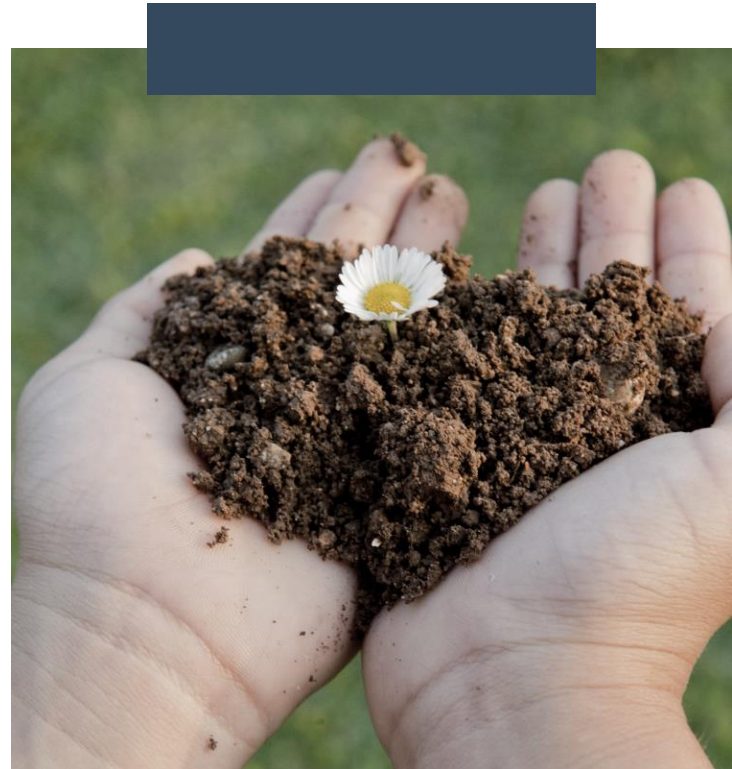
Image courtesy of Dr. Leslie Anne Ross, Children's Institute Inc. Los Angeles and the STS Consortium

Balancing



What Can We Do?: Addressing Secondary Trauma

- Self-Awareness
- Self-Care+
- Active Coping
- Skill Acquisition
- Support



Strategy #1: Self-Awareness



- Know your signs and symptoms
- Look at what coping mechanisms have helped in the past and apply them to the present
- Develop an action plan to improve coping skills

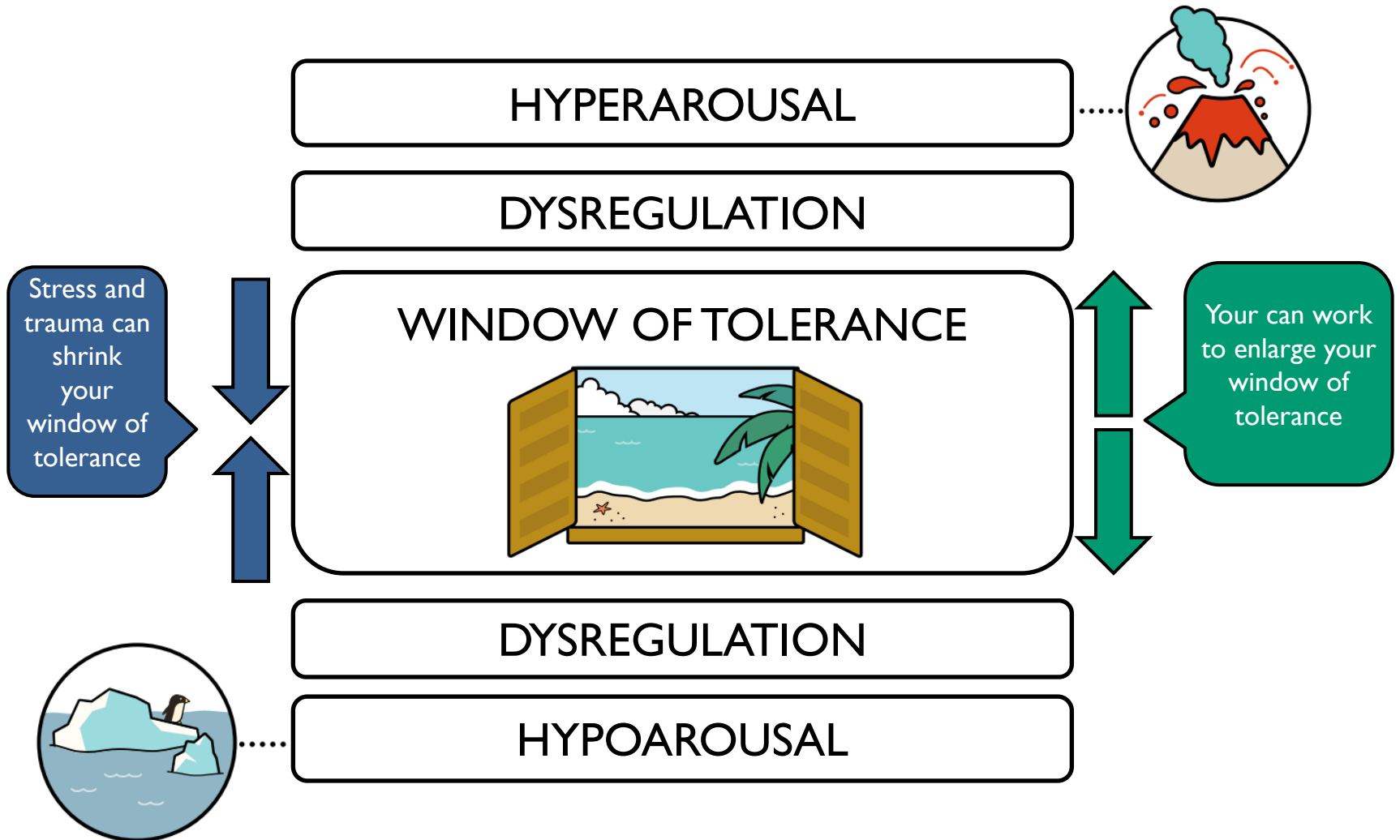
STS Signs and Symptoms

- Avoidance (including of certain clients)
- Preoccupation with clients/client stories
- Intrusive thoughts/nightmares/flashbacks
- Arousal symptoms
- Thoughts of violence/revenge
- Feeling estranged/isolated/having no one to talk to
- Feeling trapped, “infected” by trauma, hopeless, inadequate, depressed
- Having difficulty separating work from personal life

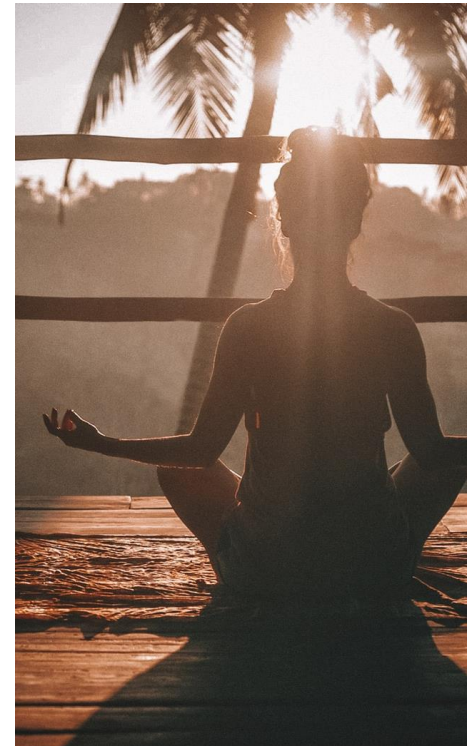


WTF

How Trauma Can Affect Your Window of Tolerance

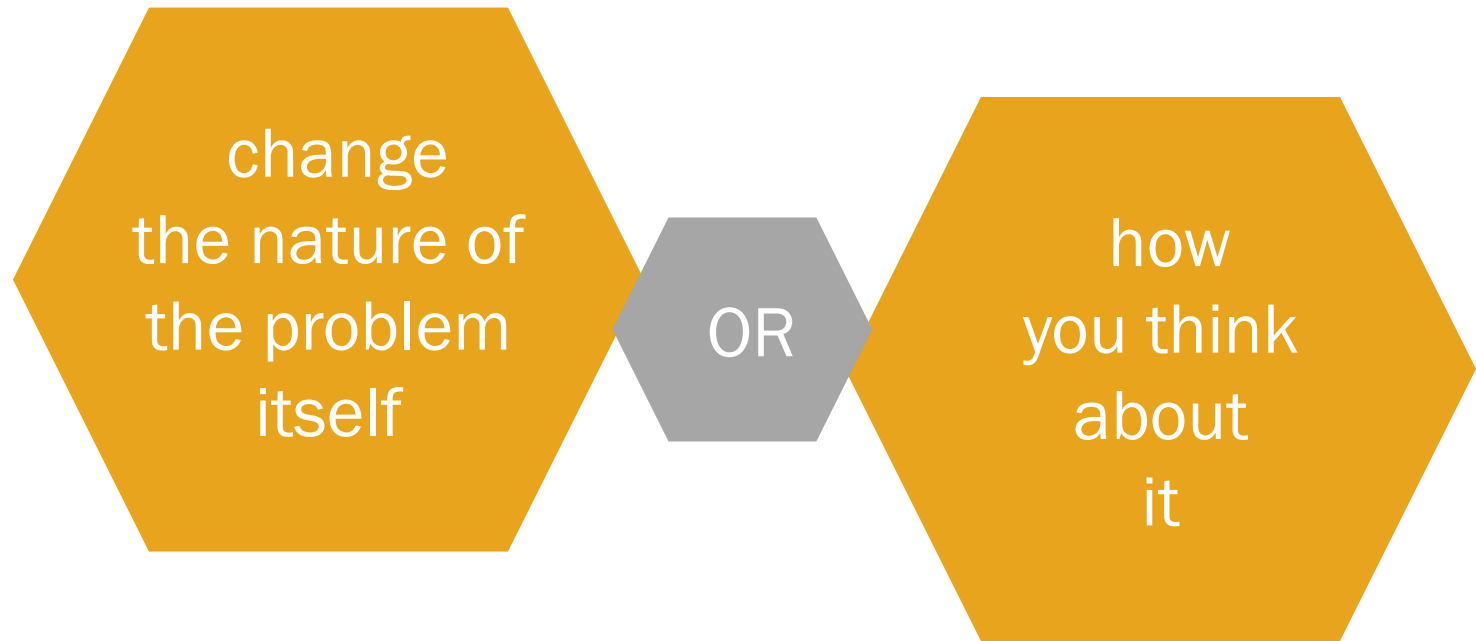


Strategy #2: Self-Care +



Strategy #3: Active Coping

Behavioral or psychological responses designed to:



Strategy #4: Skill Acquisition



- Increase competence in areas where you are challenged
- See difficult clients or difficult circumstances as skill challenges instead of threats

Strategy #5: Support



- Don't let yourself do it alone. This work can be hard.
- Have support systems within and outside of work to help you when you are noticing signs of STS.

Low Impact Debriefing

- Self-awareness
- Fair Warning
- Consent
- Limited Disclosure



From TEND Academy www.tendacademy.ca

What Can We Do?

Recap of Strategies

- Know the signs and symptoms of STS for yourself and your colleagues.
- Be aware of how you use supervision, peer support and when additional support may be needed.
- Find ways to celebrate successes and remind yourself of the rewards of the work.
- Develop an action plan to address STS and update it as needed.



For Further Information

Cambria Rose Walsh, LCSW

cwalsh@rchsd.org

www.tipscenter.org (coming soon!)

STS Consortium

<https://www.stsconsortium.com/>

National Child Traumatic Stress Network

www.NCTSN.org

TEND Academy

<https://www.tendacademy.ca/>