



# Supporting Employee Mental Health Actions for Supervisors

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# Center for Workplace Mental Health

Darcy Gruttadaro, J.D., Director  
[Workplacementalhealth.org](http://Workplacementalhealth.org)



**The world is changing ... and**

**Mental health is taking center  
stage.**

# Extremely Challenging Times



**COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Racial & Social Justice  
Protests**

**Economic Downturn**

Sustained Fear & Stress

Collective Grief & Loss

Social Distancing & Isolation

Extreme Disruption

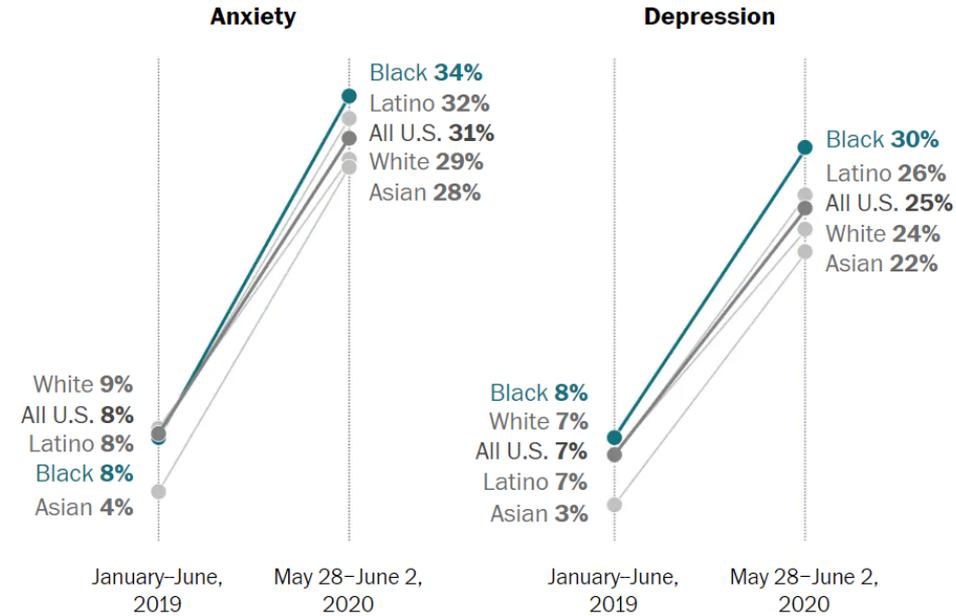


A trifecta

# Surge in Depression & Anxiety

## Anxiety and depression symptoms have more than tripled since 2019, with black Americans shouldering the heaviest burden

Percent screening positive for anxiety or depression



Washington Post  
US Census data  
6.12.2020

Indicators of Anxiety or Depression Based on Reported Frequency of Symptoms During Last 7 Days															
Select Indicator															
Symptoms of Anxiety Disorder or Depressive Disorder															
Symptoms of Anxiety Disorder or Depressive Disorder															
Week Label	/ 21 -	May 28 - June 2	June 4 - June 9	June 11 - June 16	June 18 - June 23	June 25 - June 30	July 2 - July 7	July 9 - July 14							
Group	% CI	Percent	95% CI	Percent	95% CI	Percent	95% CI	Percent	95% CI	Percent	95% CI	Percent	95% CI	Percent	95% CI
<b>National Estimate</b>															
United States	- 35.1	35.5	34.8 - 36.1	36.1	35.2 - 37.0	36.0	35.2 - 36.8	36.1	35.4 - 36.9	37.8	37.0 - 38.5	39.0	38.3 - 39.6	40.3	39.4 - 41.2
<b>By Age</b>															
18 - 29 years	- 49.2	49.3	47.4 - 51.2	49.3	46.8 - 51.8	48.7	45.5 - 51.8	50.0	47.6 - 52.4	49.4	47.2 - 51.5	50.4	47.7 - 53.0	55.0	52.7 - 57.2
30 - 39 years	- 41.1	40.6	39.2 - 42.0	41.5	39.7 - 43.3	40.3	38.5 - 42.1	40.8	39.3 - 42.4	44.1	42.5 - 45.8	45.9	44.5 - 47.3	46.8	45.2 - 48.4
40 - 49 years	- 37.4	36.9	35.3 - 38.6	39.0	37.2 - 40.9	38.4	36.5 - 40.2	38.5	37.0 - 40.0	39.7	38.1 - 41.3	40.0	38.5 - 41.5	41.6	39.8 - 43.3
50 - 59 years	- 35.4	33.6	31.9 - 35.4	36.0	34.0 - 38.1	35.8	33.6 - 38.0	36.3	34.5 - 38.2	37.4	35.8 - 39.1	38.3	36.5 - 40.0	39.8	37.7 - 41.8
60 - 69 years	- 29.1	27.0	25.6 - 28.5	27.4	25.4 - 29.5	27.7	26.0 - 29.4	27.4	25.7 - 29.1	29.1	27.5 - 30.6	30.8	29.3 - 32.3	31.8	29.7 - 34.0
70 - 79 years	- 21.2	21.7	19.3 - 24.2	19.0	16.9 - 21.3	21.7	19.2 - 24.3	19.3	17.2 - 21.6	23.4	21.2 - 25.8	24.5	22.5 - 26.7	21.4	19.4 - 23.6
80 years and above	- 27.5	19.2	14.7 - 24.4	18.6	13.9 - 24.0	17.6	13.4 - 22.4	14.6	10.8 - 19.2	20.5	15.8 - 25.9	25.6	20.5 - 31.1	18.9	15.3 - 23.0

**Surge in mental health and substance misuse conditions will overtax an already fragile system.**

**Models show projected rise in rates of suicides and overdoses.**

# Two New Guides Released ...



**Working Remotely During COVID-19:  
Your Mental Health & Well-Being**

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) is presenting new and unique major challenges. We are navigating uncharted waters with this virus making it important to find new ways to work and interact while also taking care of our mental health and well-being.

Many are teleworking full-time for the first time, isolated from co-workers, friends and family. Our daily living routines are disrupted causing added anxiety, stress and strain physically, mentally, and financially. It is completely natural for this disruption and uncertainty to lead to anxiety and stress. Now more than ever, we all must take care of our mental health and well-being. As we protect ourselves against potential exposure to the Coronavirus, keep in mind that social distancing does not mean social isolation. This resource provides practical tips on taking care of our mental health and well-being.

**Over 200K page views!**

**Released in June**

**A TOP PRIORITY:  
Employee Mental Health & Wellbeing  
During & Beyond Covid-19**

Employers recognize their workforce as a highly valuable resource. Over the past months, employers of all sizes and representing diverse industries began to focus more effectively addressing workplace mental health. No longer was it an afterthought, but a business imperative.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, our nation is experiencing a surge in people reporting signs of depression, anxiety, and other serious mental health distress. Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows nearly a doubling of people reporting signs of depression.

[Workplacementalhealth.org](https://www.workplacementalhealth.org)

A modern office interior with large windows, a wooden table, and pink chairs. The room is bright and airy, with natural light streaming in from the windows. The ceiling is exposed concrete with some ductwork and lights. The floor is a light-colored, polished material. The overall aesthetic is clean and professional.

What can employers do?

**LEAD**

# LEAD ... in a changing world

**L**eadership      Reassure, normalize, show empathy, make MH visible!

**E**ffective Communication      Routine, listen, be available, be a trusted source

**A**dapt to Change      Policies, practices, expectations, style, flexibility

**D**ouble down on Access      Prevention, support, EAP, MH & SUD care

## Strengthen Prevention

**Share signs of common MH conditions**

**Promote early and easy access to care**

**Share stress management strategies**

**Promote resiliency**

**Form Employee Resource Groups**

**Promote meditation & mindfulness**



# Improving Access to Services & Supports

EAP: what does the data show?

Digital Options?

Onsite care?

Health plan?

- **Tele Mental Health:** sustain momentum
- **The Collaborative Care Model:** PC on front lines.



Infographics and The Path Forward:  
<http://workplacemantalhealth.org/Employer-Resources>

# Contact Information

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**Center for Workplace Mental Health**

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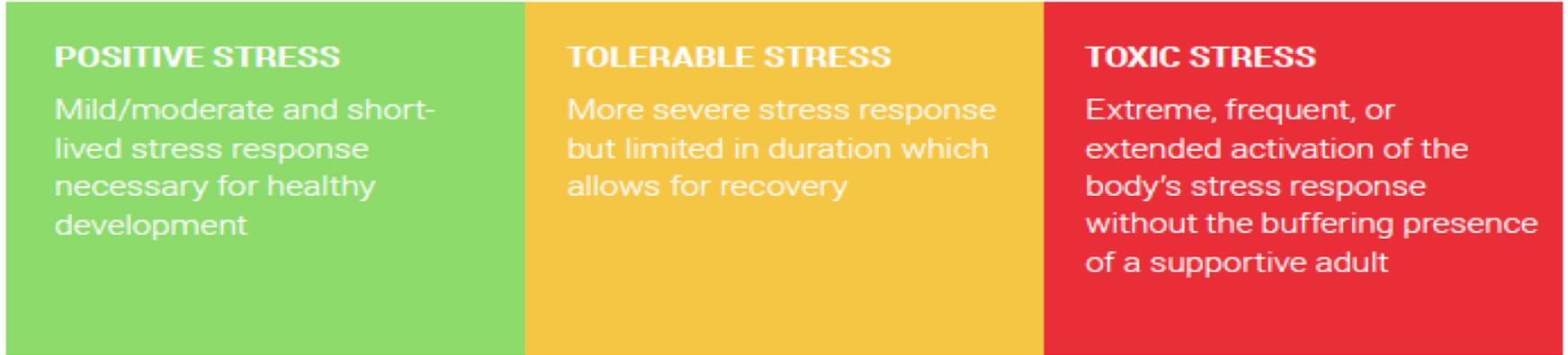
**@darcygrutt**

**Visit: [www.workplacementalhealth.org](http://www.workplacementalhealth.org)**

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Trauma-Informed Lens Consulting



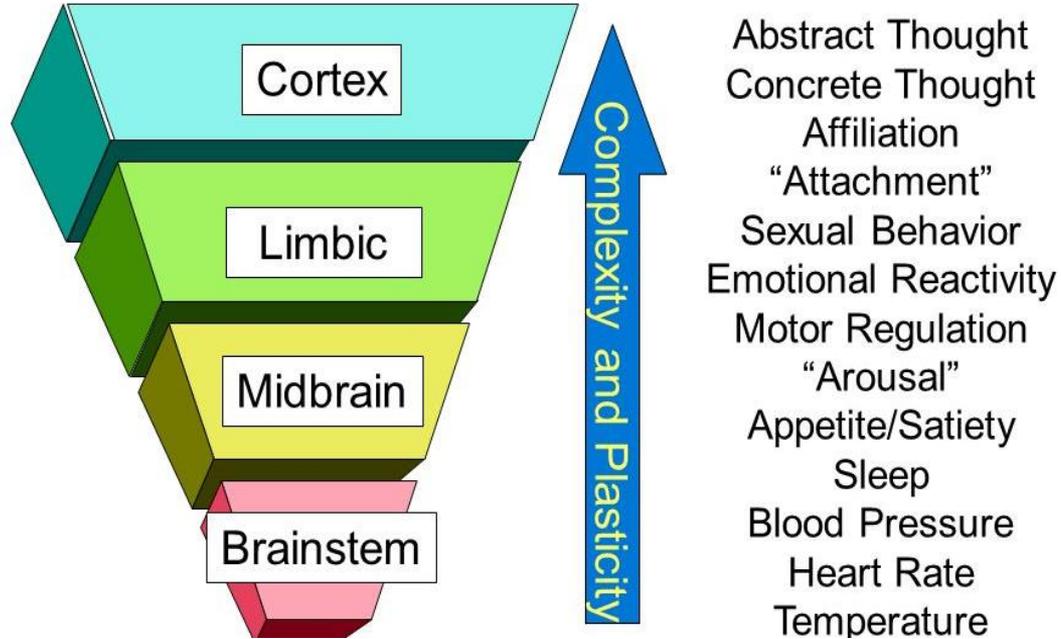
# Continuum of Stress



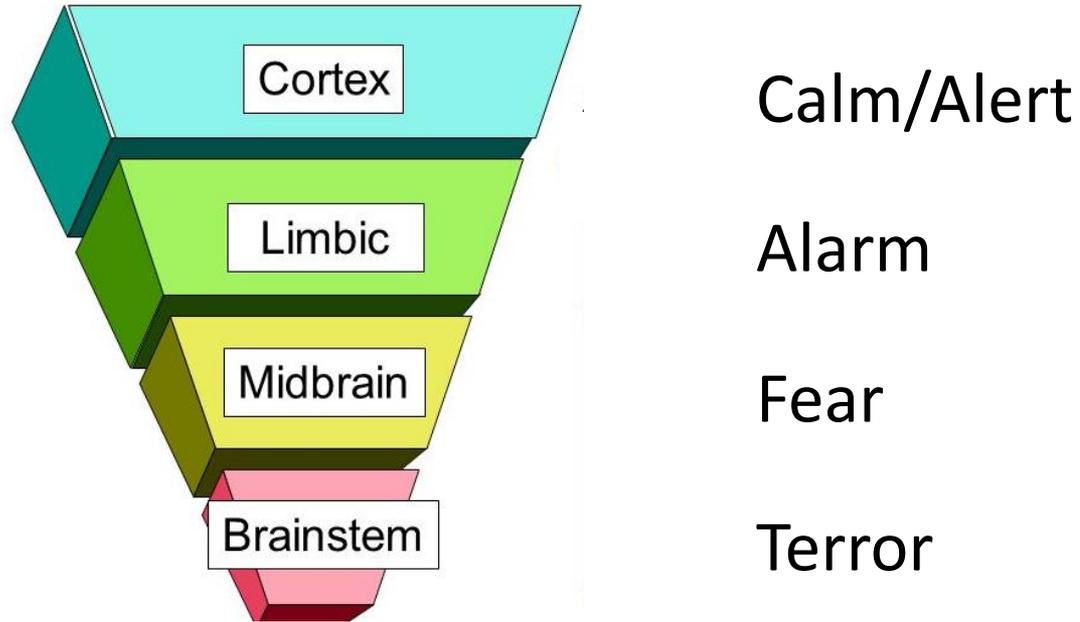
Intense, prolonged, repeated and unaddressed

Social-emotional buffering, parental resilience, early detection, and/or effective intervention

# Hierarchy of Brain Development



# Activation of the Stress Response System



# Regulation

## The basic strategy for quieting our lower brain

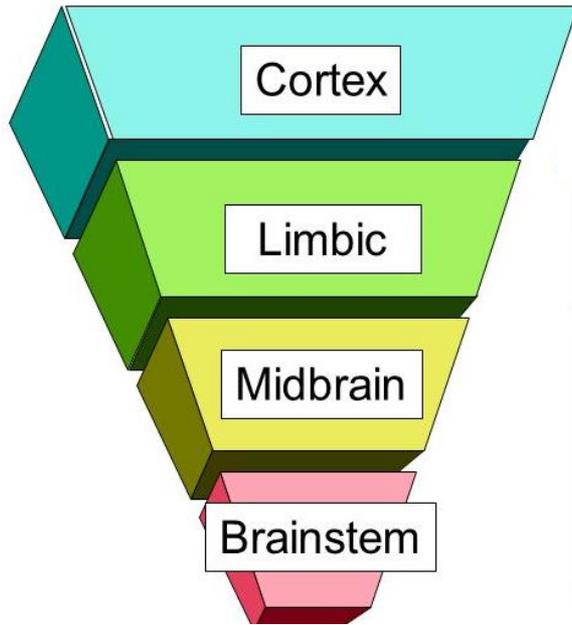
*“**Regulation** is the ability to monitor and control our behavior, emotions and thoughts, altering them in accordance with the demands of the situation.” J.L. Cook/G.Cook*

*“**Regulation** give us the ability to put time and thought between a feeling and an action.” Bruce D. Perry*



# 3 Strategies for Regulation

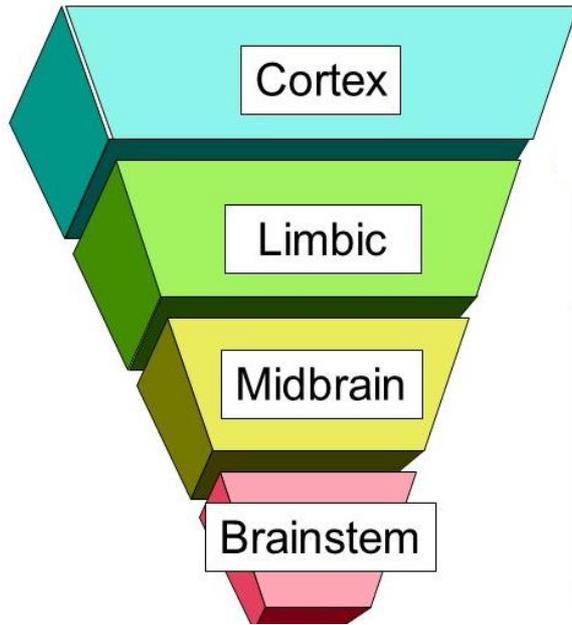
## #1 – Top Down



- Journaling
- Self-compassion
- Mindfulness
- Reflection
- Healthy boundaries
- Clear expectations
- Gratitude practices
- Cultural humility
- Problem solving
- Pause between stimulus & action

# 3 Strategies for Regulation

## #2 - Bottom Up



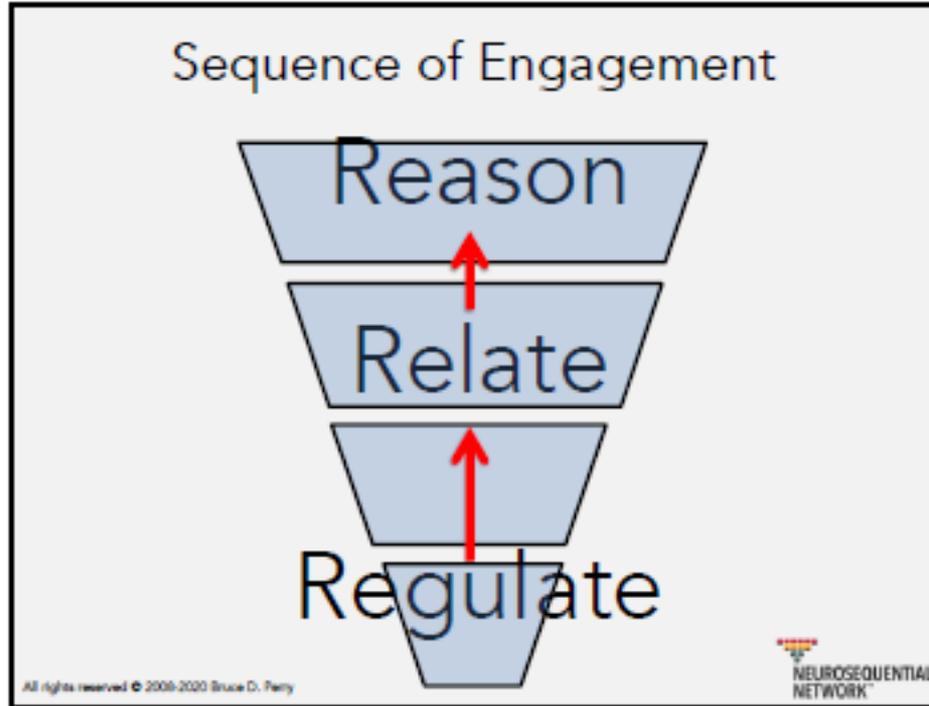
- Focused breathing
- Grounding exercises
- Regulated day
- Calming spaces
- Sensory and calming tools
- Exercise and movement
- Music
- Visual calming exercises
- Alternative workstations

# 3 Strategies for Regulation

## #3 - In Relationship with Others

- Peer support groups
- Mentor and buddy systems
- Huddles
- Vulnerability exercises
- Empathy exercises
- Group movement exercises
- Celebrations
- Recognition activities
- Crucial conversations

# Regulate, Relate, Reason



# Safety

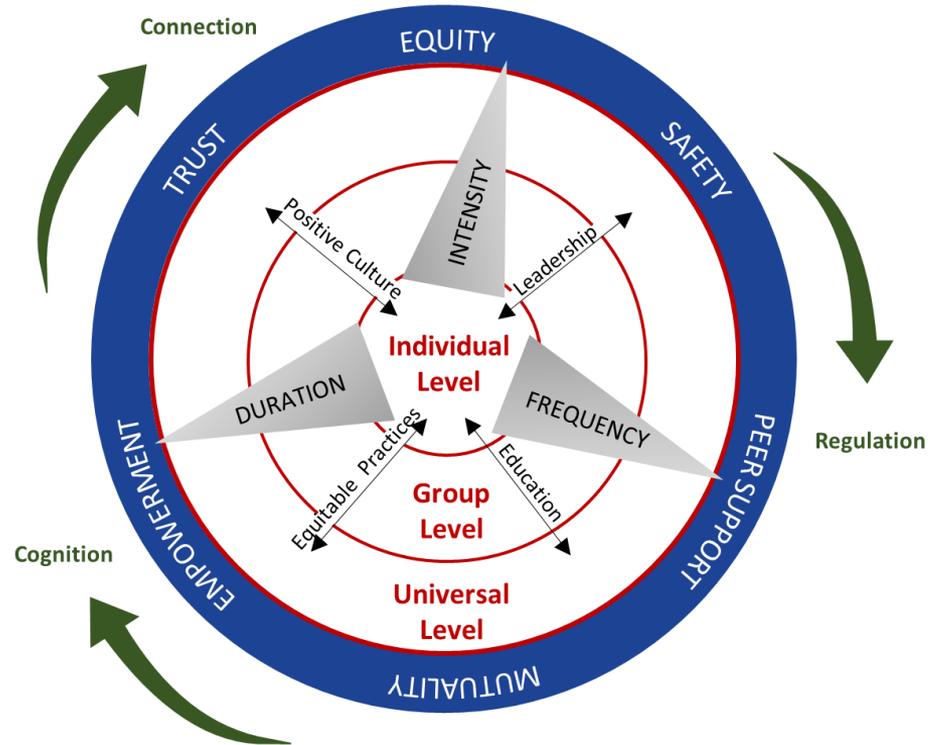
- Create a positive culture that prioritizes physical, emotional and psychological safety for every individual
- Model vulnerability
- Practice regulation
- Practice [self-compassion](#)

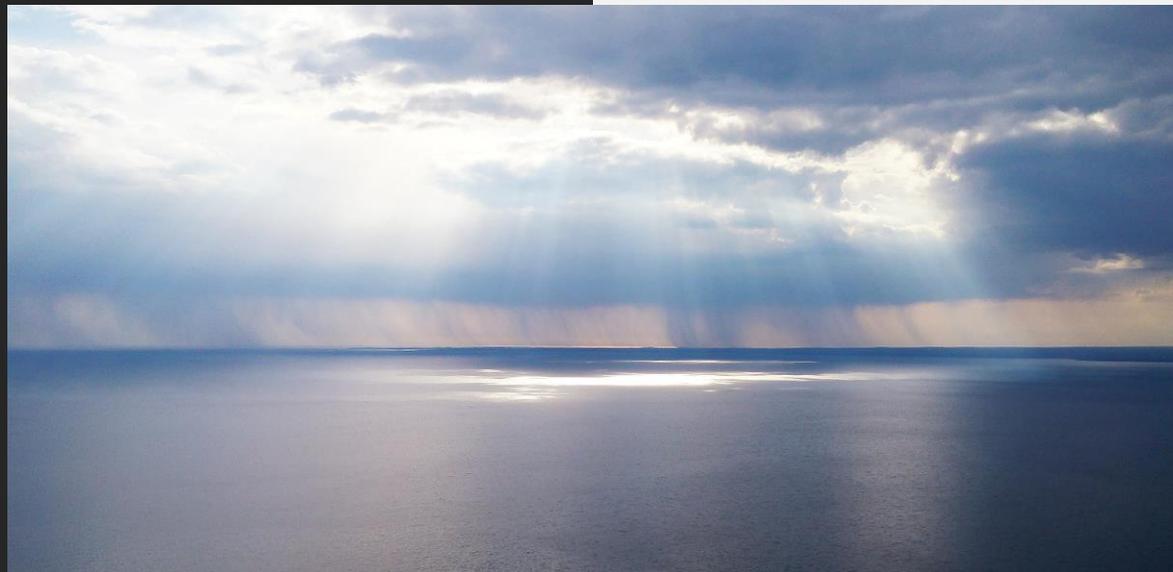


Neff, K., Self-compassion  
Johnson, K. March 2020

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2014

# Workforce Resilience Model





Remember  
You are doing the  
best you can  
and it is enough

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**Thank you for your time!**

**Karen Johnson**

Trauma-Informed Lens Consulting

<https://traumainformedlens.net/>

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# SAFER

Safe Actions For Employee Returns

## Mental Health Resources

- [Stress and Mental Health Playbook](#)
- [Mental Health Issue Brief](#)
- [Managing Employee Stress and Anxiety](#) (and accompanying webinar)
- More resources at [nsc.org/mentalhealth](https://nsc.org/mentalhealth)



# SAFER Reminders

- [Risk Assessment Workshops](#)
  - Future Dates: September 21, October 6, November 10
- [Organizational Vulnerability Assessment Tool](#)
- [Employee Perception Surveys](#)
- [COVID and Technology Webinar Series](#)

**Thank you!**

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