

## Fostering Individual and Collective Healing Across the Generations

### Growing Resilient Communities

5<sup>th</sup> Annual Gathering of Collaboratives and Tribal Nations Addressing ACEs.

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## Learning Objectives



Foundational understanding and shared language on how toxic stress and historic, collective trauma impact leadership and relationship.



Insights into how deepening self-awareness and healing practices can interrupt the intergenerational transmission of wounds.



Practical skills to counter reactive, emotional decision-making and foster strategic thinking skills.



An intersectional view of how tending to our own wholeness affects our relationships, work and healing justice impact.



## What Brings You Joy?



## Grounding

## Trauma

**Individual trauma** results from an event, a series of events or set of circumstances experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life-threatening with lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, social, emotional, or spiritual wellbeing". SAMHSA's Concept of Trauma and Guidance for a Trauma-Informed Approach | SAMHSA Publications and Digital Products

**Collective Trauma:** happens to large groups of individuals and can be transmitted inter-generationally and across communities. War, genocide, slavery, terrorism and natural disasters can cause collective trauma.  
<https://www.preventioninstitute.org/publications/adverse-community-experiences-and-resilience-framework-addressing-and-preventing>

**Historic Trauma:** refers to the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding of an individual or generation caused by traumatic experience or event. Dr. Donald Warne on Impact of Unresolved Trauma on American Indian Health Equity:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=157Wk02eW1I>

## Vicarious or secondary trauma

"is a process by which a professional's inner experience is negatively transformed through empathic engagement with client's trauma material" (Killian, K. 2008).

It shows up as anxiety, trouble sleeping, difficulty concentrating, anger. It can accumulate over time.



## Accumulating or unresolved stress

It comes out anonymously, or to those closest to us.



If your barometer is set high all the time, no possibility of going to zero or resetting.

## Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Can cause changes in the architecture of the brain that affect everything from physical growth to emotional development to the capacity to make healthy decisions as an adult.

It also increases the risk of alcoholism, depression, liver disease, intimate partner violence, STIs, smoking and suicide.

(MDH Health Disparities Report, 2013)

**Trauma informed care** broadly refers to:  
A set of principles that guide and direct how we view the impact of severe harm on mental, physical, and emotional health.

The term runs the risk of focusing on the treatment of pathology (trauma), rather than fostering the possibility (well-being).

Lacks understanding of historic and collective trauma

**Reframe as Healing Centered**

Shawn Ginwright, PhD

<https://medium.com/@ginwright/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f527c669c>

## Reframing: Healing Centered

Healing centered models go beyond understanding and identifying trauma and view trauma as more than an individual experience.

Asset driven approach that advances a collective view of healing, and re-centers culture as a central feature in well-being.



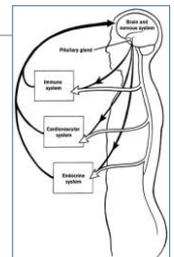
## Survival Brain

## Our response to danger

Danger signals the body's response – hormones released for ACTION.

Fight/flight/freeze response natural and normal, except when it isn't.

Fear or anxiety triggers the body to maintain levels of cortisol and adrenaline, resulting in inflammation and reduced immune functions.



### The Role of Cortisol

- Balanced levels of cortisol are **essential for the body to function properly**.
- When stressed for a long periods of time, the **brain's internal thermostat resets and tells the adrenal glands to maintain this higher level of cortisol as though it were normal**.
- Chronically elevated levels can impair: **immune function, reduce muscle mass, increase fat, impair memory and learning, destroy brain cells, cause anxiety and sleep problems, and damage stomach, kidneys, and heart**.

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### What gets in your way?



### TRIGGERS or REMINDERS

Events or situations that create highly emotional response.  
 Limbic system hijacks us, we are no longer in control.  
 Triggers are personal, often the result of past wounds.  
 Automatic reaction, but we can choose a response.

**Develop discipline around not *reacting* and shift to more resourceful, strategic state before taking action.**

### Habits

Habits are unconscious, repetitive actions.  
 Can be influenced by identity.  
 Individuals, organizations, movements all have habits.



## Personal Habits

## Organizational Habits

SUPPORTIVE	OR NOT
Clear lines of communication,	Lack of clarity in strategic vision,
Manageable case/work loads,	Overwhelming work loads,
Debrief, support offered,	Lack of teamwork,
Actively modeling self care,	Oppressive environment, gossip,
Flexible work time/space,	No flexibility in hours,
Professional and personal development.	Few growth opportunities,
Abundance mindset.	Scarcity mindset.



## Habits That Constrain

- Short term/incremental thinking,
- Speaking to the choir,
- Defining our work by that which we oppose,
- Defining campaigns around funding cycles or crisis (reactivity),
- Over-reliance on process and structure,
- Choice avoidance.



## Regenerative Practices

- \_\_\_\_\_
- Make space and time
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Eyes on the horizon
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Align strategies to the horizon
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Tending to our wholeness
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Move with the ready, willing and open
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Go Big (many small efforts take as much energy as big ones)
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Focus, focus, focus
- \_\_\_\_\_
- Move quickly and commit to the long path

## Healing the Connective Tissue

Our kuleana – sacred responsibility – to interrupt the transmission of the dominant trauma narrative and practice.

We cannot allow ourselves to be diminished or defined by the noise.

Tend to your wholeness so that you may be ready when called upon.

Lean into wholeness, not away from brokenness.



## Margaret Wheatley

“The intent of any mindfulness practice is to learn to know yourself, not to become peaceful. Knowing how your mind works makes it possible to stay present and engaged in hypercharged situations without losing your cool”.

(Who Do We Chose to Be? p. 265. Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2017)

## Benefits of Meditation

Positive impact on depression, anxiety, pain management, substance abuse, ADHD

Changes brain activity, enhances functioning in conflict monitoring and improves attention

Results in decreased stress, lower blood pressure and blood sugar, and improved mood

([The Center for Mind Body Medicine](#))



## Nutrition

Links between trans fats and depression established.

Cortisol triggers cravings for sugar, fat, & carbs, which are then effectively stored at the waistline and can lead to an imbalance in blood sugars.

Imbalanced blood sugars can result in feeling tired, moody, or having poor concentration. And Type 2 diabetes.



## Toxic Stress, Trauma and Nutrition

The Transformation, by James S. Gordon, M.D., Harper Collins, 2019



Damages the small intestine and interfere with the absorption of nutrients



Interferes with the production of digestive enzymes in liver and pancreas



Damages the microbiome, which plays a role in brain functioning

## Restorative Sleep

Turn off electronics 1 hour before sleep.

Some studies link inadequate sleep to short term memory loss and weight gain.

Sleep deprivation ramps up the amygdala.

Teens reporting less than 8 hours per night more likely to report depression.



## Movement is Essential!

Increases the capacity of blood vessels, allowing for the delivery of oxygen, water and glucose to the brain

Optimizes the brain's focus and performance

Provides greater sense of mastery and confidence in the body

Serotonin is released with movement, leading to a greater sense of well-being



## Slowing Down

## Pema Chödrön

*"Not causing harm requires staying awake. Part of being awake is slowing down enough to notice what we say and do. The more we witness our emotional chain reactions and understand how they work, the easier it is to refrain [from harm]. It becomes a way of life to stay awake, slow down, and notice."*

## Recommendations for Practical Self Care

Organizational	Individual
Leadership counts – modeling self-care shifts social norms.	10 - 15 minutes a day of spaciousness to start
Establish self-care as core competency – which does not reduce accountability to show up!	Music, movement, ceremony, nature, nutrition, sleep, gratitude, body work, reflection, prayer, social supports, breath work, art.
Actively address poor organizational habits.	Commit to identifying and shaving away negative personal habits. Practice noticing triggers and using new tools to self-regulate.
Invest in personal and professional skill building.	Read, experiment with new practices, find what resonates. Apps!

## Books



## Let's Continue the Conversation

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