



Meeting the Needs of Higher Education Through Trauma-Informed Leadership

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CUPA-HR Webinar

Presenter



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As a result of participating in today's session, you will be able to...

- Define traumatic stress and describe the multiple ways in which trauma may be experienced within higher education.
- Discuss the body's trauma response system's impact on human behavior and psychology.
- Integrate elements of trauma-informed care into their leadership practice.
- Reframe problematic employee issues through a trauma-informed lens.



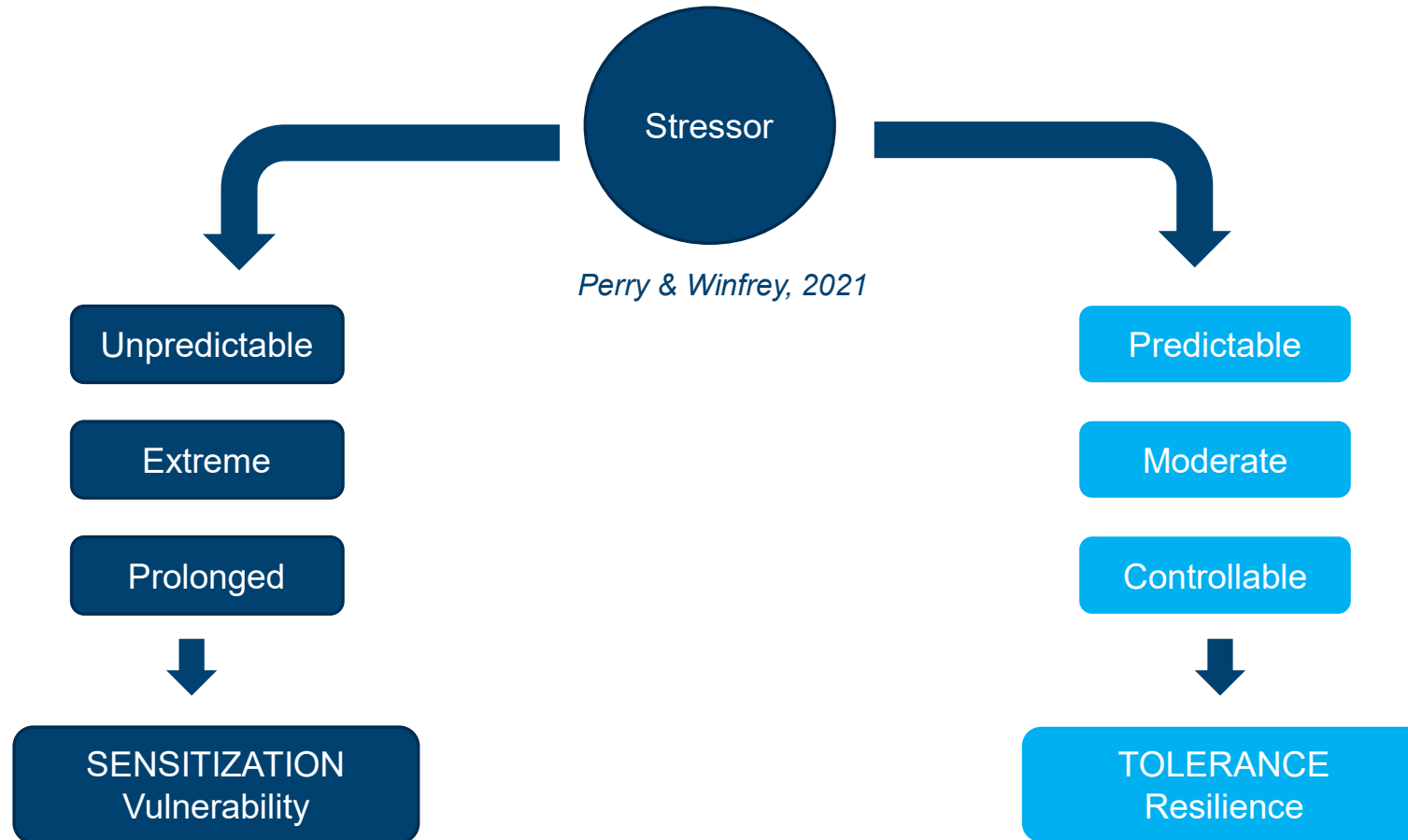
Let's Ground Ourselves for a Moment

- Close your eyes (if you're able and comfortable doing so)
- Sit in a comfortable position
- Pay attention to your body and breathing
- Listen

Using the Chat Feature...

- Name, Role, & Institution
- What comes to mind when you think of the word trauma?

Perry's Pattern of Stress Activation



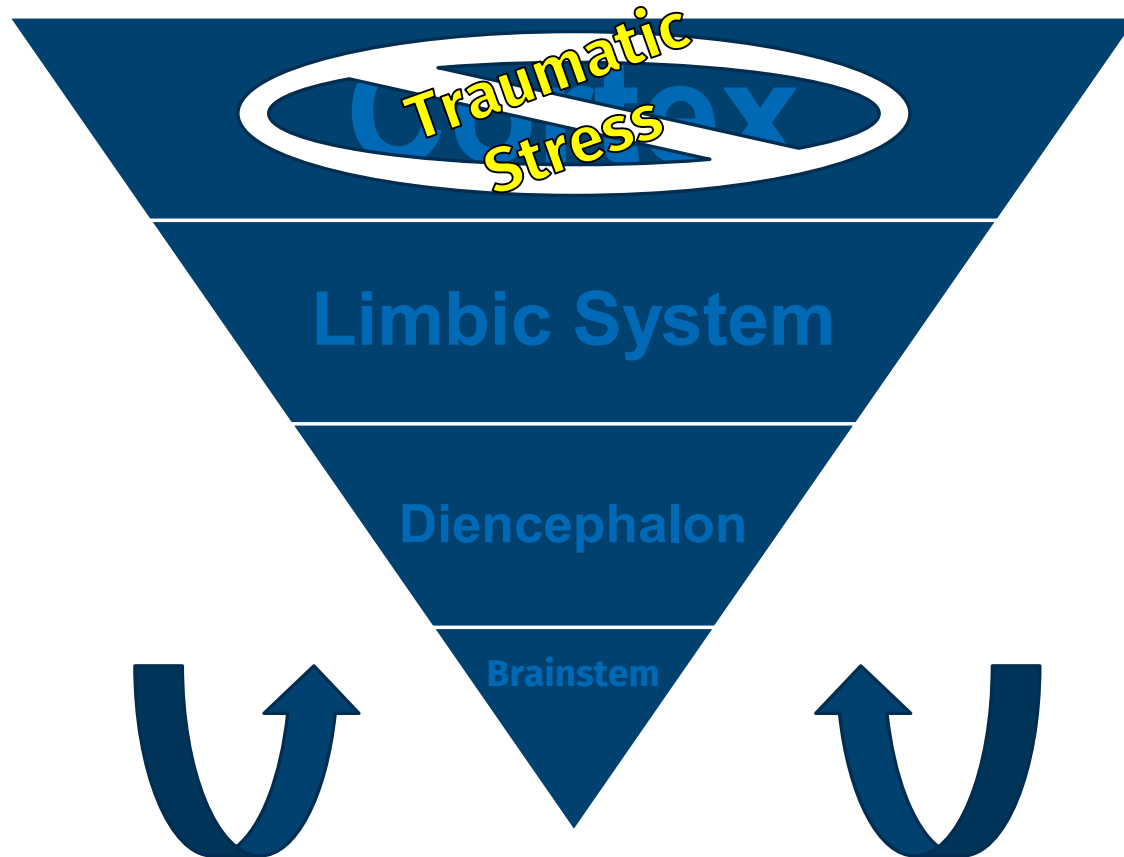
Describing Trauma

- **Acute:** Results from a single stressful or dangerous event.
- **Chronic:** Results from repeated and prolonged exposure to highly stressful or dangerous events.
- **Complex:** Results from exposure to multiple traumatic events.
- **Historical:** Cumulative emotional and psychological wounding from massive group trauma across generations.

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The Trauma Response System



Creativity | Thinking | Language | Values | Time | Hope

Reward | Memory | Bonding | Emotions

Arousal | Sleep | Appetite | Movement

Temperature | Respiration | Cardiac

Trauma Exposure Responses



Photo Credit: Margaret, (Lynch, 2017)

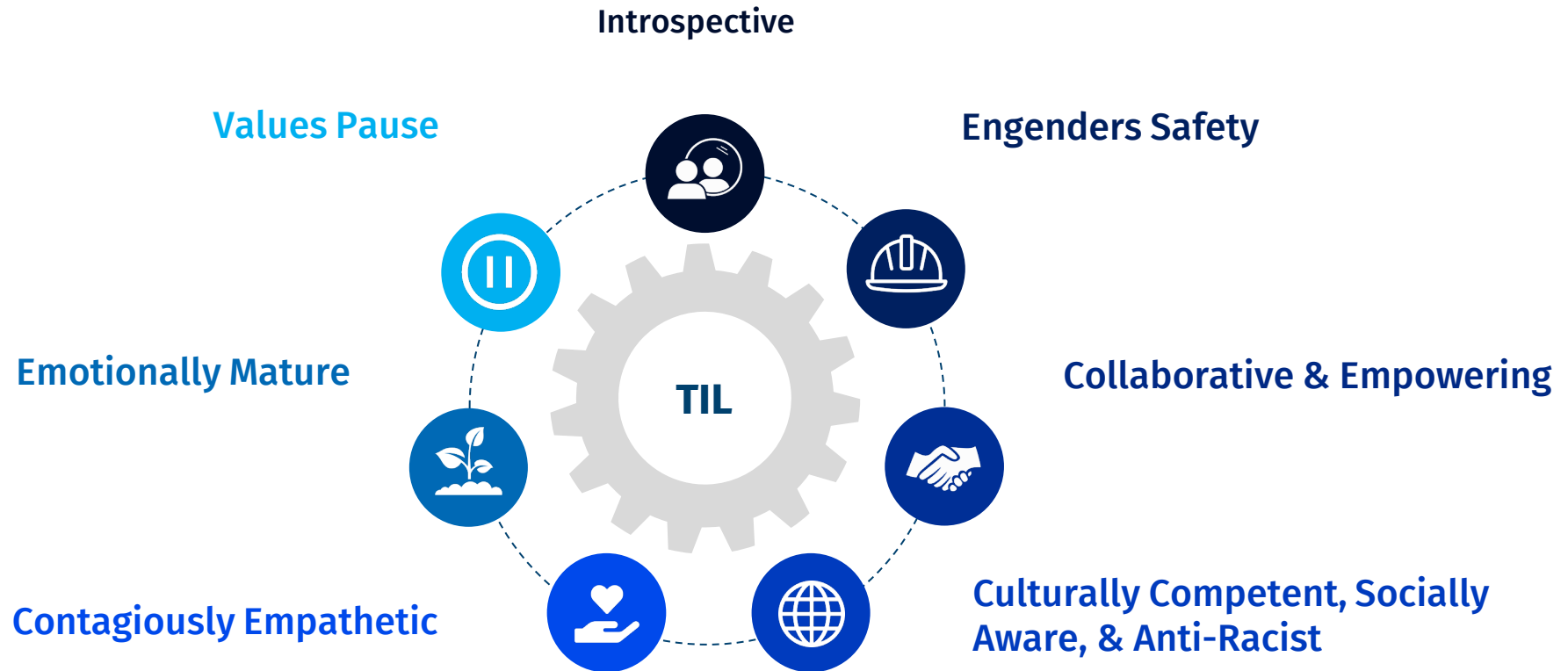
- Fear, Guilt, Anger, & Hopelessness
- Diminished Creativity
- Dualistic (Black & White) Thinking
- Sleep Disturbance & Chronic Exhaustion
- Hypervigilance
- Inability to Feel Empathy
- Minimizing
- Avoidance
- Withdraw
- Short-temperedness & Irritability

Poll Question

Which of these trauma-exposure responses have you noticed in yourself or others since the onset of COVID-19? (Select any that apply)

- Fear, Guilt, Anger, or Hopelessness
- Diminished Creativity
- Dualistic (Black & White) Thinking
- Chronic Exhaustion
- Hypervigilance
- Feeling Less Empathetic
- Minimizing
- Avoidance
- Withdraw
- Short-temperedness & Irritability

The Trauma-Informed Leader



Trauma-Informed Leaders are Introspective

- How is your leadership practice informed or impacted by your own past?
- What are your emotional triggers?
- How and when do you take time to check in with yourself?

“If you don't heal what hurt you you'll bleed on people who didn't cut you.” ~Unknown

Poll Question

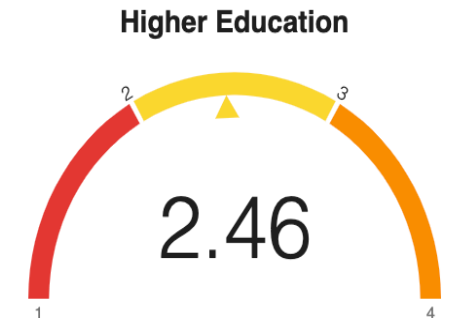
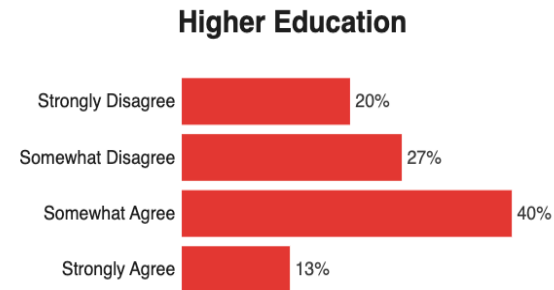
To what degree do you feel psychologically or emotionally safe at work?

1. Strongly agree
2. Agree
3. Neutral
4. Disagree
5. Strongly Disagree

Trauma-Informed Leaders engender safety

- When we feel unsafe, our stress activation system is triggered.
- Safety should be defined by those who are being served.
- Active listening, transparency, consistency, accountability, and respecting boundaries are first steps to cultivating safety.

To what degree would you agree that your place of employment is an emotionally/psychologically safe environment?



Trauma-Informed leaders are empowering and collaborative

- Empowerment looks like choice and voice.
- They create patterns of stress activation that develop resilience, not sensitization.
- Curiosity and input are highly valued and publicly recognized

Trauma-Informed Leaders are culturally competent, socially aware, & anti-racist

- Trauma (including historical, collective, and generational trauma) disproportionately impact those from historically marginalized backgrounds.
- Merely acknowledging current events and struggles is not enough.
- TIL's go out of their way to understand the perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds of others. Particularly focusing on understanding where their privileges may blind them to such experiences and perspectives.

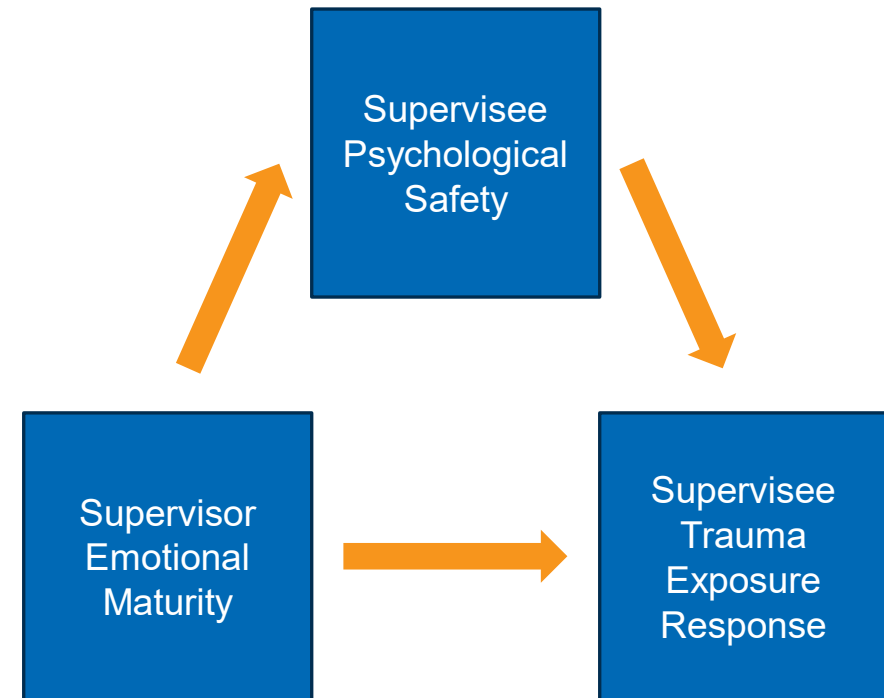
Trauma-Informed Leaders are contagiously empathetic

- Social psychologist Elaine Hatfield defined emotional contagion as “...how people who observe the emotions and behaviors of another tend to copy those emotions and behaviors.”
- What Happened to You v. What’s Wrong with You?
- Lead with and reward empathy and others will follow

Trauma-Informed Leaders are emotionally mature

“...thinking objectively and conceptually while sustaining deep emotional connections to others”
(Gibson, 2015, p. 27)

- Set realistic expectations
- Consistent in behaviors and responses (not capricious)
- Respect boundaries
- Flexible
- Apologize when mistakes are made
- Reflective
- Truthful



Trauma-Informed Leaders value pause

- Constantly being in stress reduces our ability to think creatively, complexly, and empathetically.
- Stress can be addictive, and folks may begin believing their productivity is tied to their stress levels.
- Priorities matter. We can't be everything to everyone at all times.
- Leaders must model the way.

Reflect: Think about a time when an employee or co-worker was struggling or behaved in a problematic way. Try to reframe their behavior(s) through a trauma-informed lens and how principles of trauma-informed leader could help to support the individual?

Common Trauma Exposure Response's

- Fear, Guilt, Anger, & Hopelessness
- Diminished Creativity
- Dualistic (Black & White) Thinking
- Sleep Disturbance & Chronic Exhaustion
- Hypervigilance
- Inability to Feel Empathy
- Minimizing
- Avoidance
- Withdraw
- Short-temperedness & Irritability

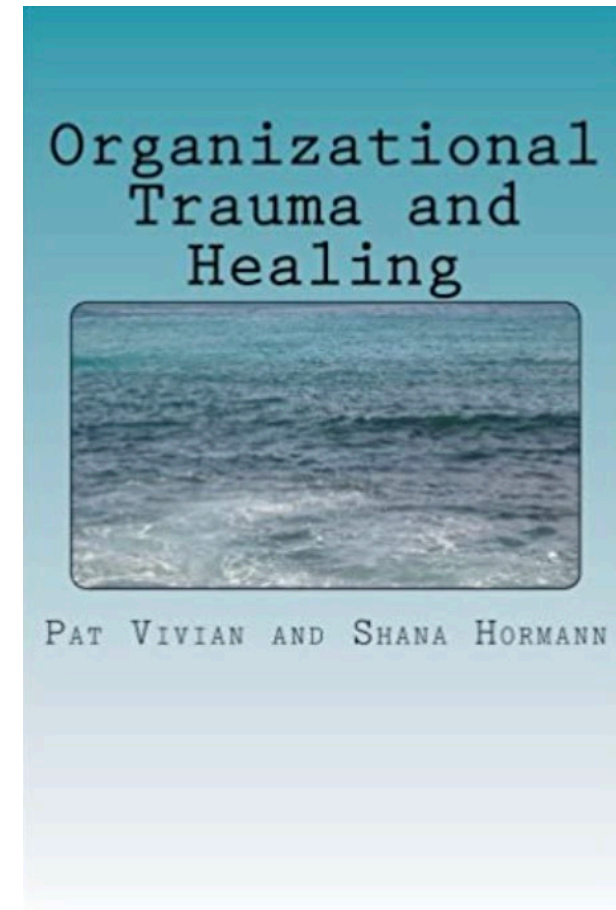
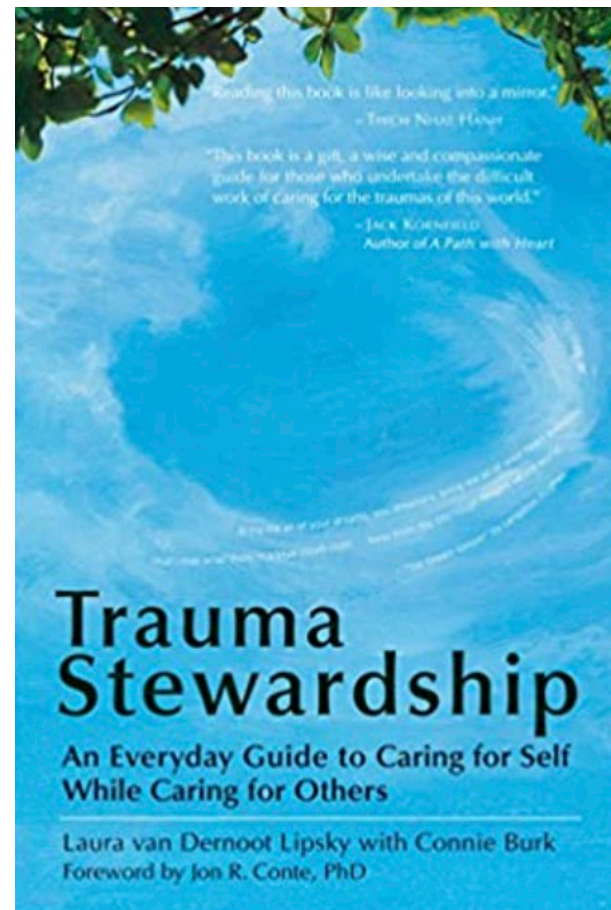
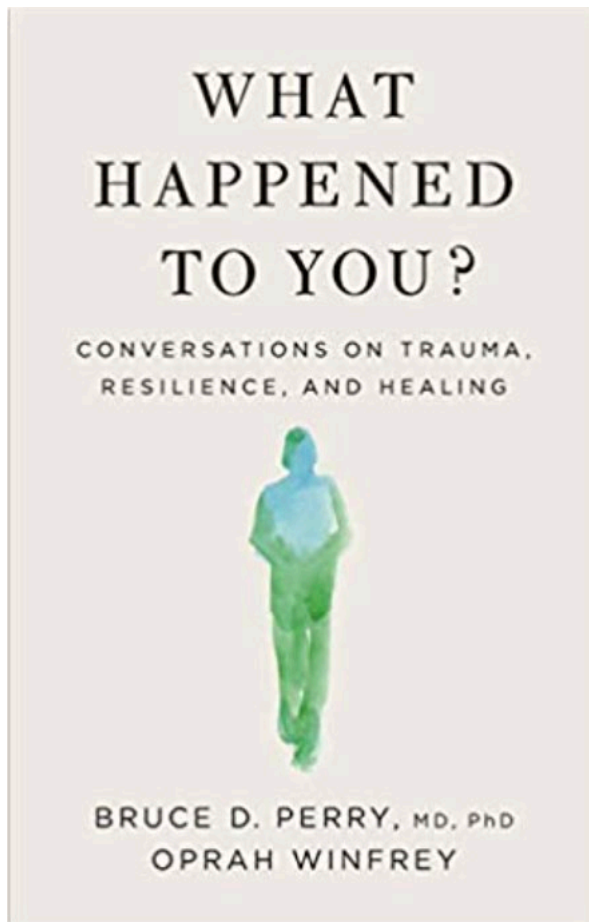
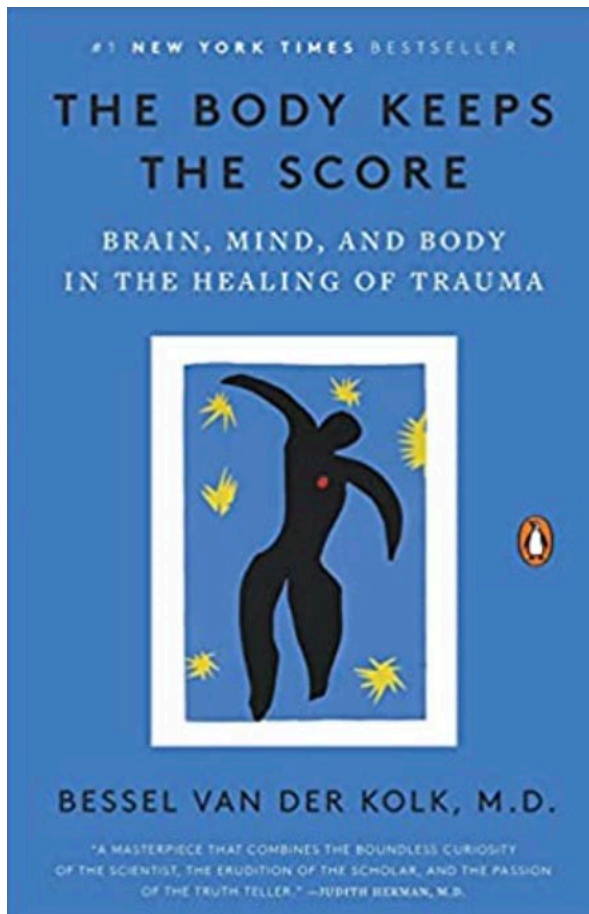
Trauma-Informed Leadership Principles

- Introspective
- Engenders Safety
- Collaboration & Empowering
- Culturally Competent, Socially Aware, & Anti-Racist
- Contagiously Empathetic
- Emotionally Mature
- Values Pause

Takeaways & Call to Action

- ✓ Trauma is individualized and has both physiological and psychological implications.
- ✓ Trauma-Informed Leadership starts from the inside out.
- ✓ Ask “What happened to you?” not “What’s wrong with you?”
- ✓ Higher education as a helping profession has an ethical responsibility to promote and incentivize trauma-informed leadership at all levels.

Trauma-Informed Leadership Starter Pack



Have a Question?



Submit questions to our presenters
using the Chat.



Thank You

Please complete your event evaluation

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