

Self and Collective Care of Youth-Serving Adults

Students are at the center of our work. At the same time, adults in our school communities need support in order to show up for the young people they serve.

How might we create cultures of care not only for youth, but also for youth-serving adults?

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With Lucy Vezzuto, PhD and Candice Valenzuela, MA
REL Webinar Part III
April 8th, 2016

Where have we come from and are we going today?

Webinar #1 Trauma and Resilience 101

March 14th 2016

Webinar #2 Fostering Positive Youth Development: Opportunities to Reframe the Conversation About Trauma

April 1, 2016

Webinar #3 Self and Collective Care of YouthServing Adults

Today

Objectives

- ❑ Gain language and frameworks for why and how supporting youth-serving educators is critical to burnout, secondary stress, and compassion fatigue prevention
- ❑ Identify areas of strength and areas of growth in support for youth-serving adults
- ❑ Develop strategies to apply self and collective care practices to current professional role in participants' communities

Agenda

1. Why is this conversation even necessary?
2. Burnout, Compassion Fatigue, and Secondary Trauma
3. Self and Collective Care: Healing in Practice
4. Spotlight in the Field
5. Strategies for Renewal
6. Close



Realms of Trauma Informed Care

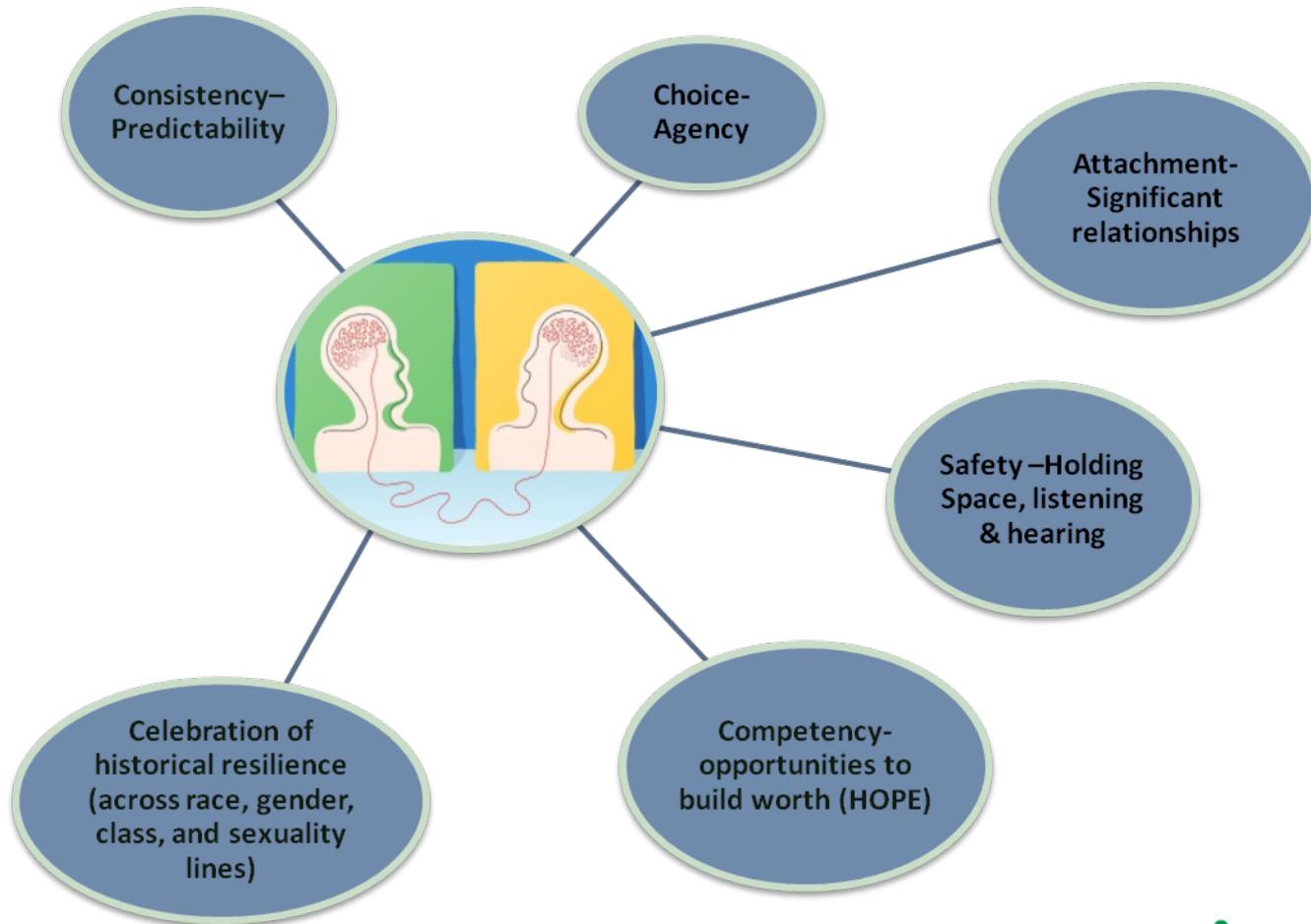
Self

Services

Structures

Systems

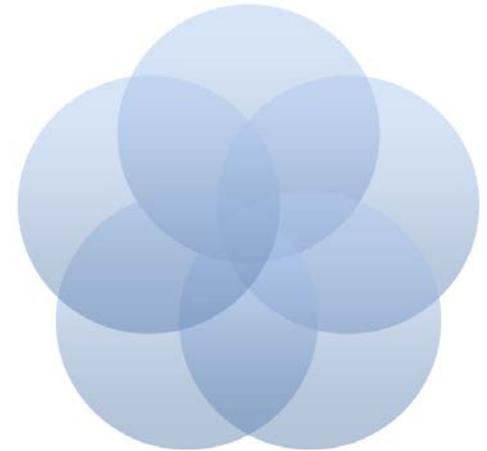
Principles of Trauma Informed Care



Educator self and collective care

- So what?

- It is a teacher retention issue and a student outcome issue
- The danger of pathologizing community violence and environments characterized by distress and damage; Empathy as the interrupter
- Grappling with ambiguous loss: attachment, detachment, inconsistent relationships
- Educators are often the frontline leaders, but not given the societal acknowledgement of their role: disenfranchised trauma
- While we know that the student-teacher relationship is critical for such youth, teachers are not trained or prepared to interact or secondarily experience their students' trauma



Resourceful relationships (student-teacher)

These relationships are fundamental for students' development of social and navigational capital...

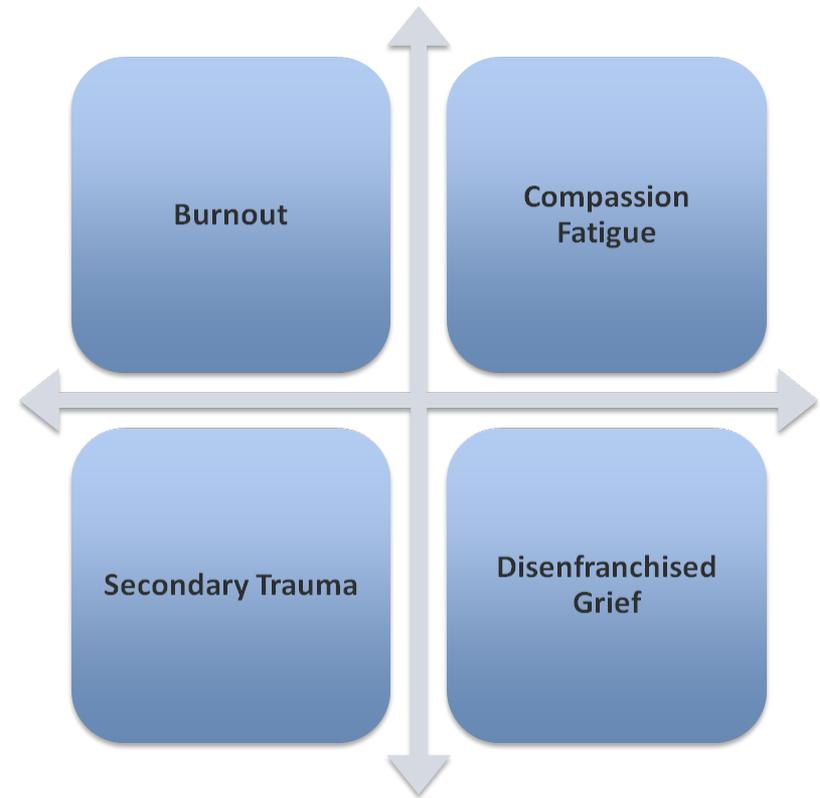
And also a source of internal tension for our own sustainability.

The challenge is providing youth with guidance and structure while preserving our own mental health.

Definitions:

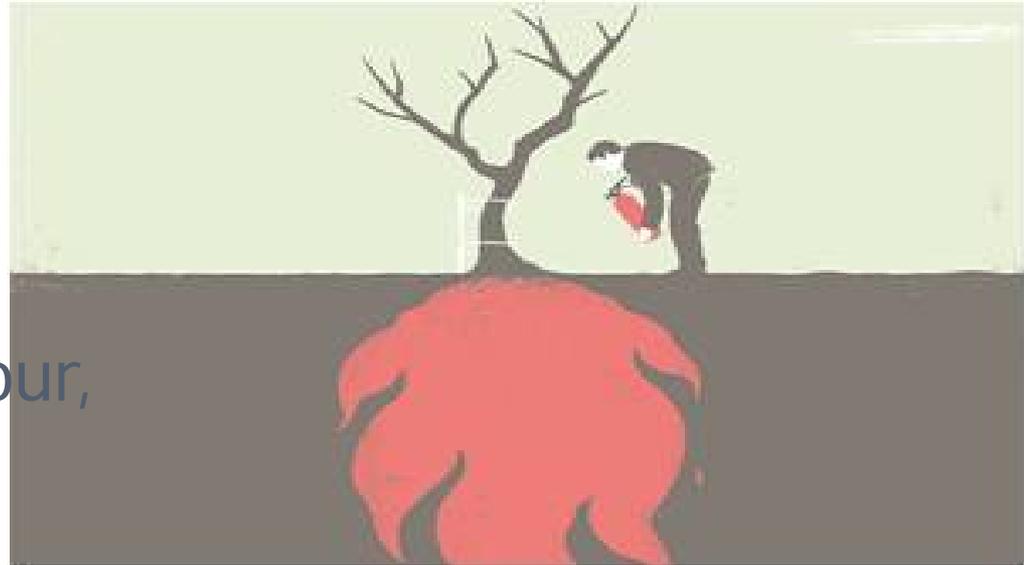
What are we actually experiencing?

“There are two ways of spreading light: to be the candle or the mirror that reflects it.”
- Edith Wharton



What's the frame?

- Transactional theory (Lazarus and Folkman, 1987)
- Meaning making (Armour, 2013)
- Constructivist Self-Development (Saakvitne, Tenne, and Affleck, 1998)



2. Self & Collective Care: Healing in Practice

“Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.” – Audre Lorde

Actions of Care Wheel



Adapted from "Self-Care Assessment Worksheet" from *Transforming the Pain: A workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* by Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996). Created by Olga Phoenix Project: Healing or Social Change (2013)

“Life doesn’t make any sense without interdependence. We need each other, and the sooner we learn that, the better for us all.”
- Erik Erikson

Why Collective Care?

The myth of self-care

The higher the perceived support, the higher sense of efficacy, the more willingness to cope with practitioner challenges

(Sela-Shayovitz, 2009)

The responsibility for competent, ethical, professional relationship making is with us, not with our students.

(Wingo et al., 2010)



Spotlight in the Field: Lucy Vezzuto, Orange County Department of Education

Lucy A. Vezzuto, PhD, a Fulbright Scholar in Education, manages the Student Mental Health and School Climate Initiative for the Orange County Dept. of Education. She provides training and technical assistance in the prevention and early identification of student mental health issues for adults who serve youth. She is a certified trainer for the International Institute for Restorative Practices. She is a founding member of the OCDE Institutional Review Board and is a member of the Orange County Health Care Agency Mental Health Steering Committee. She has been tenure-track and adjunct faculty in teacher education at universities in California, North Carolina, Washington, and Brunei Darussalam in Southeast Asia. She created a school climate survey for middle school students that include eleven domains of school climate and two domains of student emotional health including stress-anxiety, and depression. Dr. Vezzuto developed and conducts training for the Resilient Mindful Learner Project, a training on stress management and resilience for educators and their students.



Resilient Mindful Learner Project Aims

Support the academic, social and emotional development of students by promoting...

1. Teacher resilience, stress management skills, and capacity to embody mindful awareness
2. Student resilience, healthy stress coping skills, mindful attention and self-regulation

<http://www.ocde.us/healthyminds/>



Mindfulness: Emerging Research on Teachers



- Reductions in teacher psychological symptoms and burnout; classroom organization and self-compassion
- Teacher stress management, the creation and sustenance of supportive relationships in the classroom, and a positive classroom climate
- Reductions in teacher stress and improvement in teacher performance
- Reductions in teacher stress and anxiety and increased self-compassion and emotional balance of educators of children with special needs

(Flook et al., 2013; Roeser et al., 2012; Jennings et al., 2009; Jennings et al., 2011A; Jennings et al., 2011B; Solaway, 2011A; Sollaway, 2011B; Gold et al., 2010; Poulin, 2009; Benn et al., 2012)



Embodiment



- Well-regulated and resilient teacher
- Mindfully present and a role model for their students
- Integrating stress reduction practices into their daily classroom routines



Resilient Mindful Learner Initial Pilot Program Elements

- 30 hours of after-school training
- Day-long mindfulness retreat
- Teacher partners for support, observations
- Resilience plan
- Toolkit of stress-reduction and mindful awareness practices promoting teacher decision making
- Classroom visits and coaching by program facilitators
- Demonstration of teaching practices for colleagues



Resilient Mindful Learner

Curriculum Overview

- Adult and youth resilience
- Adult and youth stress physiology
- Neuroscience of stress
- Types of youth stress
- Impacts on mind, body, learning and performance
- Stress risk and protective factors
- Test anxiety practices
- Youth stress management pedagogy
- Relaxation response benefits
- Adaptive and maladaptive coping
- Variety of relaxation practices
- Mindfulness as stress reduction
- Stress management for students-three step approach
- Calm and supportive classroom & school environment



Teacher Survey Results (on next slide)

* $p < .05$

	N	Range	Pre-Mean	Mid-Mean	Post-Mean
Mindful Attention Awareness Scale	13	1-6	4.02	4.13	4.33
Maslach Burnout Inventory	--	--	--	--	--
• Emotional Exhaustion Frequency	13	0-6	2.5	2.28	2.26
• Emotional Exhaustion Intensity	13	0-7	3.37	2.74	3.00
• <i>Personal Accomplishment Frequency</i>	13	0-6	4.51	4.93*	4.8
• Personal Accomplishment Intensity	13	0-7	5.05	4.97	4.82
• <i>Depersonalization Frequency</i>	13	0-6	1.21	.78*	.80*
• Depersonalization Intensity	13	0-7	2.25	1.62	2.05
<i>Perceived Stress Scale</i>	13	0-40	17.77	11.77*	17.00
Teacher Stress Inventory	--	--	--	--	--
• Personal/Professional Stressors Frequency	13	0-6	3.63	3.47	3.37
• Personal/Professional Stressors Intensity	13	0-5	3.22	3.12	2.89
• Professional Distress Frequency	13	0-6	1.91	1.83	2.18
• Professional Distress Intensity	13	0-5	2.21	2.08	1.93
• <i>Discipline and Motivation Frequency</i>	13	0-6	3.43	2.37*	2.42*
• <i>Discipline and Motivation Intensity</i>	13	0-5	3.38	2.72*	2.32*
• <i>Emotional Manifestation Frequency</i>	13	0-6	1.64	1.20*	1.68
• Emotional Manifestation Intensity	13	0-5	2.14	1.82	1.71
• Behavioral Manifestation Frequency	13	0-6	.92	.87	.89
• Behavioral Manifestation Intensity	13	0-5	1.87	1.25	1.19
• Physical-Fatigue Manifestation Frequency	13	0-6	1.21	.90	1.33
• Physical-Fatigue Manifestation Intensity	13	0-5	1.56	1.32	1.47
<i>CES-D Scale (Depression)</i>	13	0-60	11.57	5.46*	10.85



Resilient Mindful Learner **Professional Impact**

"I have a few students that have untreated ADHD and emotional disturbances and ...the mindfulness has just kept my relationship with this particular student positive and productive and it has allowed me to breathe instead of react to him and his needs and his behaviors."



Resilient Mindful Learner **Professional Impact**

“I feel like I am way more mindful in my choice of words in correcting or discipline. I definitely will hesitate, and think about what mood is this going to create ...I am more mindful with my words...”

“There are less problems it seems like. The kids just come in in a calmer state and the class is running calmer and I’m reacting calmer.”



Resilient Mindful Learner

Personal Impact

“And another thing it has helped me with is just sleep...to fall asleep.”

“I had a particularly stressful school year and I can't tell you how many times I got into my car and started breathing. And it made a huge difference for me to be able to do that.”



Spotlight in the Field: Candice Valenzuela, Oakland Unified Public Schools

Candice Valenzuela hails from Watts, CA, Candice Rose Valenzuela feels a strong connection to her African American, Mexican and Native American and working class roots. After teaching high school English and Creative Writing for nine years, Candice completed her Masters in East-West Psychology and now dedicates her time to providing training, coaching and healing support to urban teachers in the Bay Area, while continuing her studies in the art of healing. Highlights from her work include designing wellness integration curriculum tool for teachers, consulting high schools on design and implementation of staff development around trauma, healing, and school culture and created the website <https://www.teachertalkstrauma.wordpress.com/> that serves as a valuable resource. Candice has training in indigenous folk healing and curanderismo, restorative justice (Tiers I and II) and has received many honors such as the Oakland Unified Superintendent's Teacher Quality Award, the Teachers for Social Justice Award, and most importantly, voted "Teacher Most Likely to Never Give Up on Students" by her students.

The Teacher HEALTH Project



The Teacher HEALTH project restores urban educators' inner sense of well-being, power and purpose by providing them with holistic education, ancestral learning, and transformative healing.

- Independent community project inspired by 10+ years as an urban educator and my work coaching teachers & studying indigenous healing methodologies
- <https://teachertalkstrauma.wordpress.com/>



“Framing ourselves as traumatized does several things... it acknowledges that oppression causes harm. That it impacts our bodies, minds, emotions, souls, communities, relationships, environment... everything... I believe that unhealed trauma is the most dangerous force on earth” - Aurora Levins Morales

“Healing is our Birthright” - Atava Garcia Swiecicki, MA, RH



- Home and School
- Honor Openings and Closings
- Trigger the nervous system to turn “off”
- Culturally significant
- Opportunities to connect in community
- Allow for vulnerability

Teacher Healing Circles



- Safe, teacher led space
- Share experience, stories, wounds
- Affirm resilience and voice
- Acquire and practice new self care skills
- Take healing into our own hands



Sample “agenda”

- Meditation
- Setting intentions
- Listening Circle or Expressive Arts
- Closing activity (song, prayer, ritual to close and share)





“As a 2nd year teacher, I spent most of my first year teaching running around looking for mentors, advice, chances to observe classrooms etc. I talked to many people, but there were some deep issues (including how my gender and students perception of me affects my teaching person, my desires to teach students more than just academics, dealing with sexual harassment as a young, female teacher of color etc.) that were affecting my sanity on a deep level because I couldn't find people to process these things out loud with.”

The teacher circles helped me understand my experiences and made me feel affirmed, empowered, and energized to find solutions. I left our meetings feeling heard, validated, and affirmed.”

Take-Aways



- Model healing and self-empowerment
- Advocate for institutions to support this work
- Daily rituals create intentional space for healing to occur at home and in school
- Teacher circles are community care in action

4. Strategies for Renewal

“Exhausted when saying yes, guilty when saying no.”

- Skovholt and Trotter-Mathison, 2011

Burning Out to Sourcing the Flame

	Burnout Creation	Burnout Prevention
Element 1	Work Overload	Sustainable Workload
Element 2	Lack of Control	Feelings of choice and agency
Element 3	Insufficient Rewards	Recognition and affirmation
Element 4	Unfairness	Equity, respect, justice
Element 5	Value conflict	Meaningful, valued work
Element 6	Job-person incongruity	High job-person fit
Other	--	--

Adapted from Skovholt and Trotter-Matheson's take on Maslach and Leiter's 2008 model

- Boundaries: emotional, physical, spiritual
- Identify your Practitioner Joy
- Colleagues and Students as the Influencers and Primary Teachers
- Realignment: Self as Hero to Client as Hero

What are some of your own?

What support do educators report to need after a student death?

Implications for other connected events and experiences

Who?	What?
Educators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing commitment to wellness. Benefits from a practice of self-knowledge and mindfulness. • Teachers can unite and together create a culture of directly addressing the event: primary mediating factor for ongoing stress for students is the social cohesion of the adults in their environment.
School-site leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership must be trauma-informed and sensitive to the variety of ways that staff might react, as well as the different needs of each adult staff member. School environments can either mitigate or exacerbate emotional distress among teachers. • Communicate: memorial, death details, support resources. • Make space for teacher-led support groups.
School Districts and systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check your policies: Teachers in the study frequently complained of having to use personal time to attend a student's memorial, and this prevented some from attending. • Consistently assess if the services provided are impactful and meeting educator's needs. • Reexamine how the impact of gun violence on the school is addressed and provide distinct services for teachers and their school leadership.

IF we want students to arrive to school
ready to learn,

Then we need to want teachers to arrive to
school
ready to teach,

And school leaders to arrive to school ready to
lead.

Let's expand the realms of trauma-informed care and
resilience oriented approaches to all stakeholders

Please contact us for more information



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For more resources and references and access to the entire webinar series:

<https://relwest.wested.org/events/329>

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Thank you