



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Mental health for all

Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
La santé mentale pour tous



years of
community
ans dans la
communauté

LET'S TALK MENTAL HEALTH!

TENDING TO OUR MENTAL HEALTH AS ADVOCACY PRACTITIONERS

Rebekah (Bekah) Sears, Canadian Mental Health Association,
formally of Mennonite Central Committee

February 19, 2024



Justice
Coalition of
Religious

A LITTLE ABOUT ME



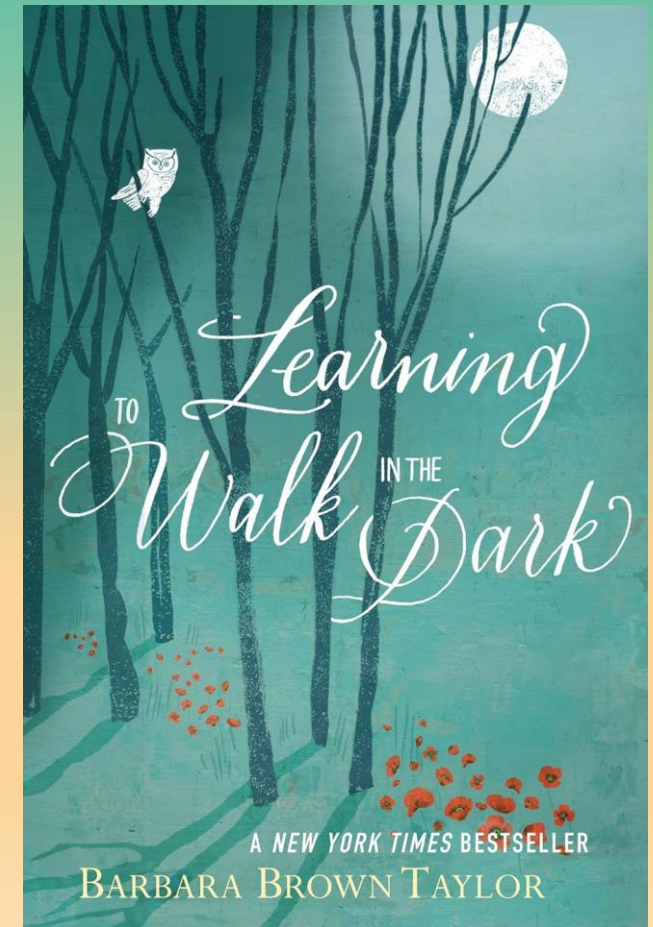
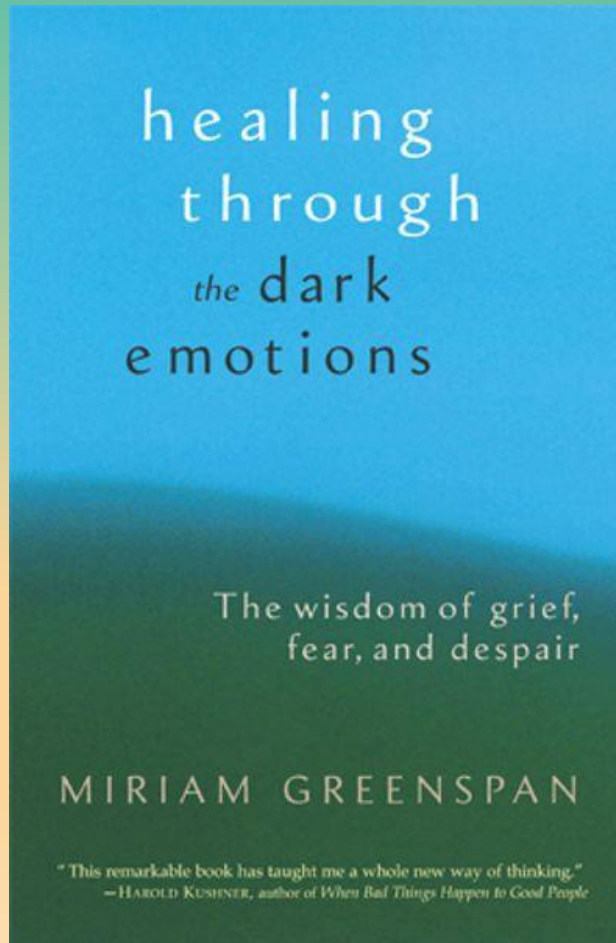
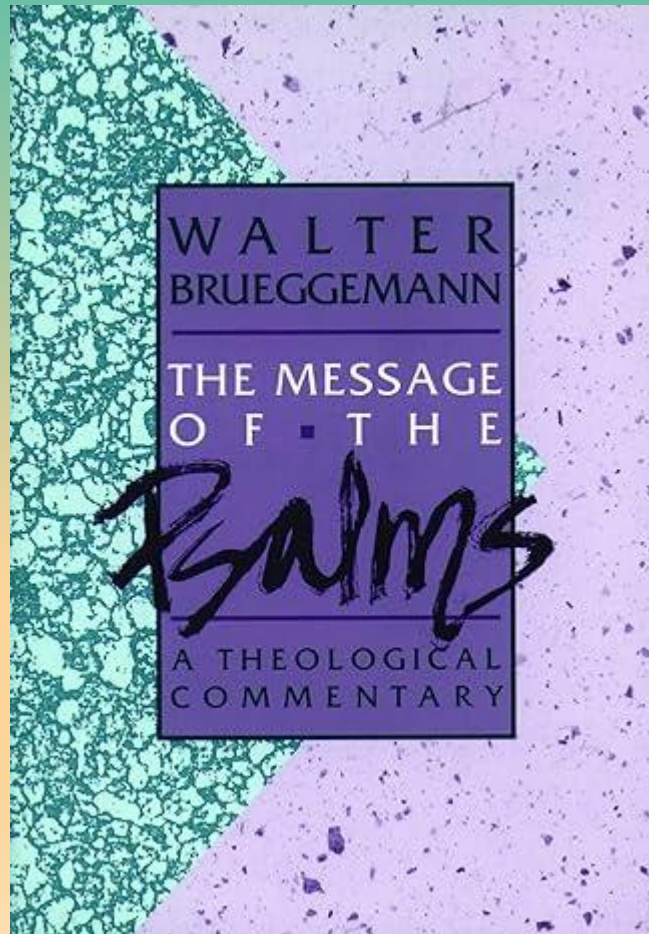
EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH AND THE PSALMS

Portion of Psalm 22: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning? Oh my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but find no rest.

Portion of Psalm 44: “Rouse yourself! Why do you sleep, Oh Lord? Awake! Do not cast us off forever! Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?”

Portion of Psalm 88: “I am overwhelmed with troubles and my life draws near to death. I am counted among those who go down into the pit; I am like one without strength...darkness is my closest friend.”

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE PSALMS AND DARK EMOTIONS



A CALL TO SUPPORT EACH OTHER: THE EARLY CHURCH

From Acts chapter 2: 42-47

⁴² They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. ⁴³ Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. ⁴⁴ All the believers were together and had everything in common. ⁴⁵ They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. ⁴⁶ Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

MENTAL HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS

- The 5 in 5: we all have mental health
- 1 in 5 people in every given year will experience a mental health challenge of illness
- By the time someone reaches 40 there is a 50% chance they have or have had a significant mental health challenge or a mental illness(es)

THE NONPROFIT ADVOCACY SECTOR AND MENTAL HEALTH: WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES

“The reality is that we work amid oceans of pain and there will always be more clients in need than we can possibly help,”

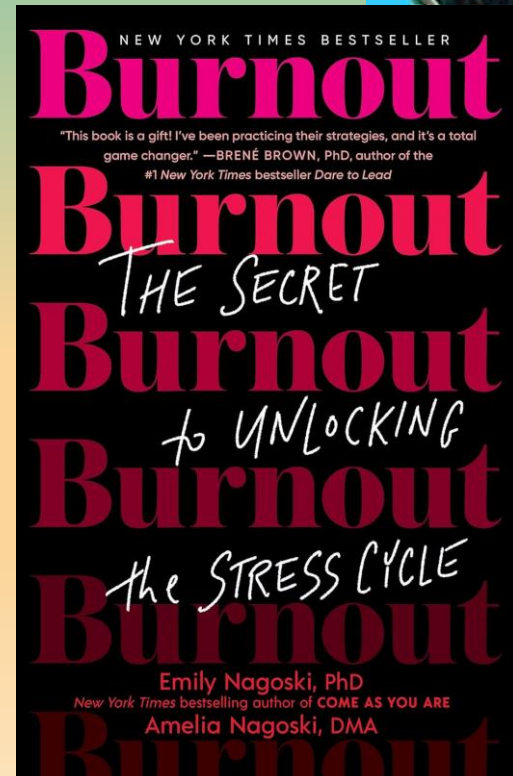
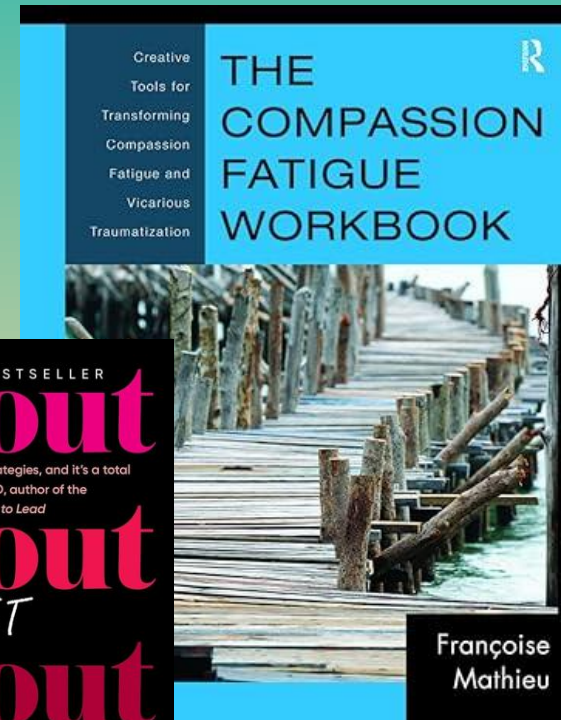
-Francois Mathieu, Founder of the Tend Academy

1. Challenges for people with an existing mental health challenge(s) or illness(es)

CHALLENGES TO MENTAL HEALTH CONT'D

2. Challenges from the overall context: persistent exposure to trauma, plus the weight of the need and the pressure to get the job done

- A. Burnout
- B. Compassion Fatigue or Empathetic Strain
- C. Secondary Traumatic Stress or Vicarious Trauma
- D. Other Stressors, including lack of control and stagnation



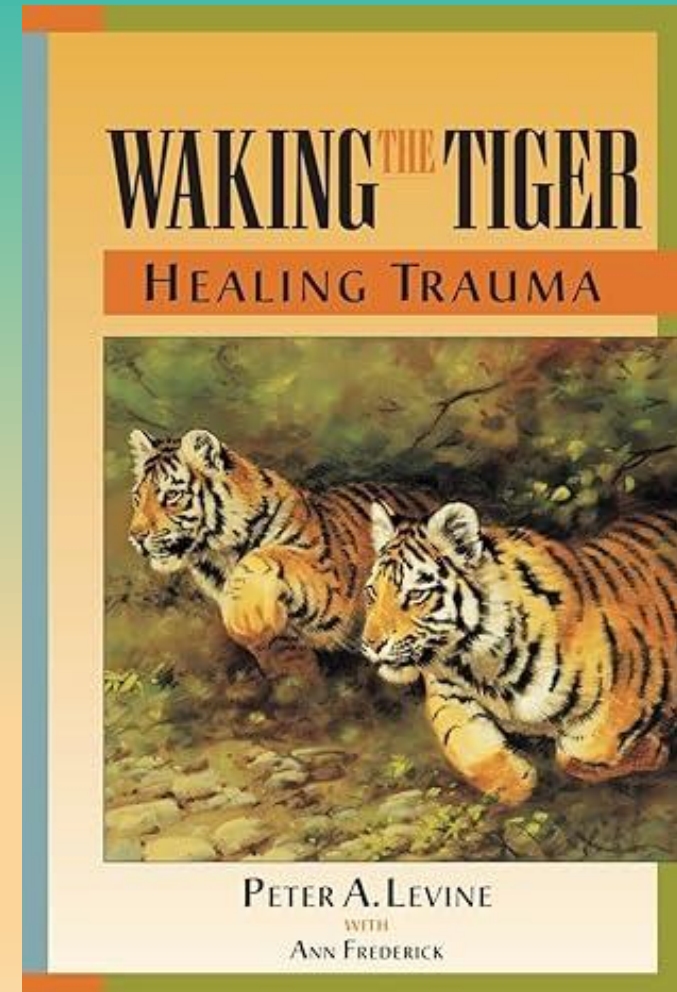
CHALLENGES TO MENTAL HEALTH CONT'D



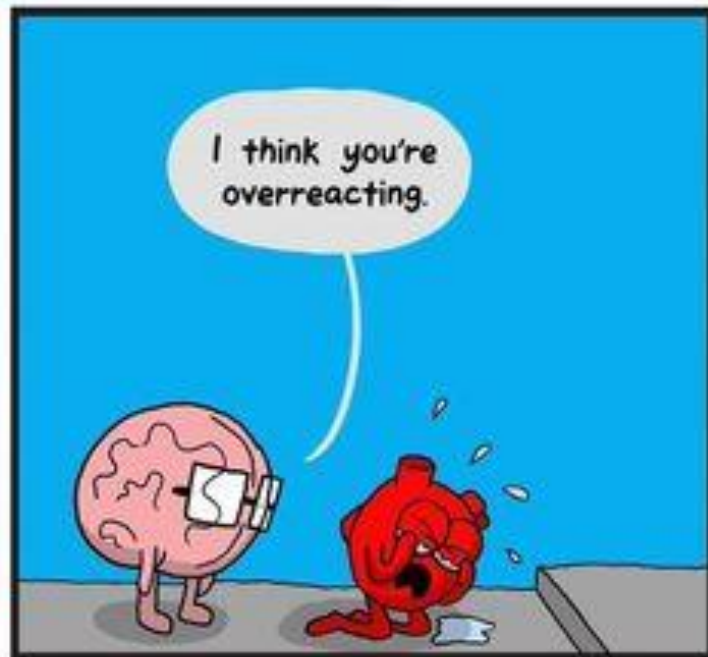
3. Challenges from a sector that is not equipped to lead on the risk factors for mental health

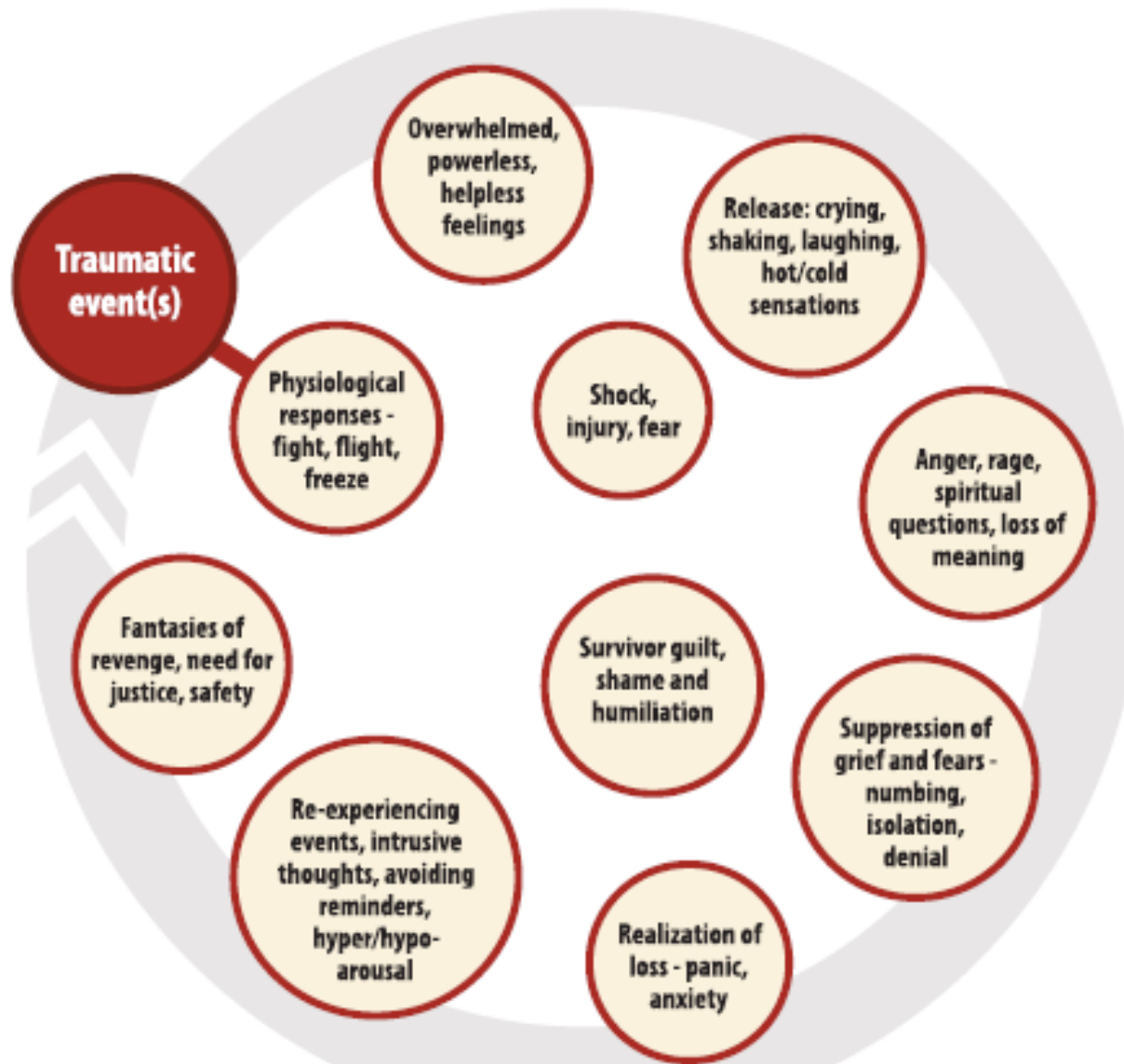
UNDERSTANDING TRAUMA

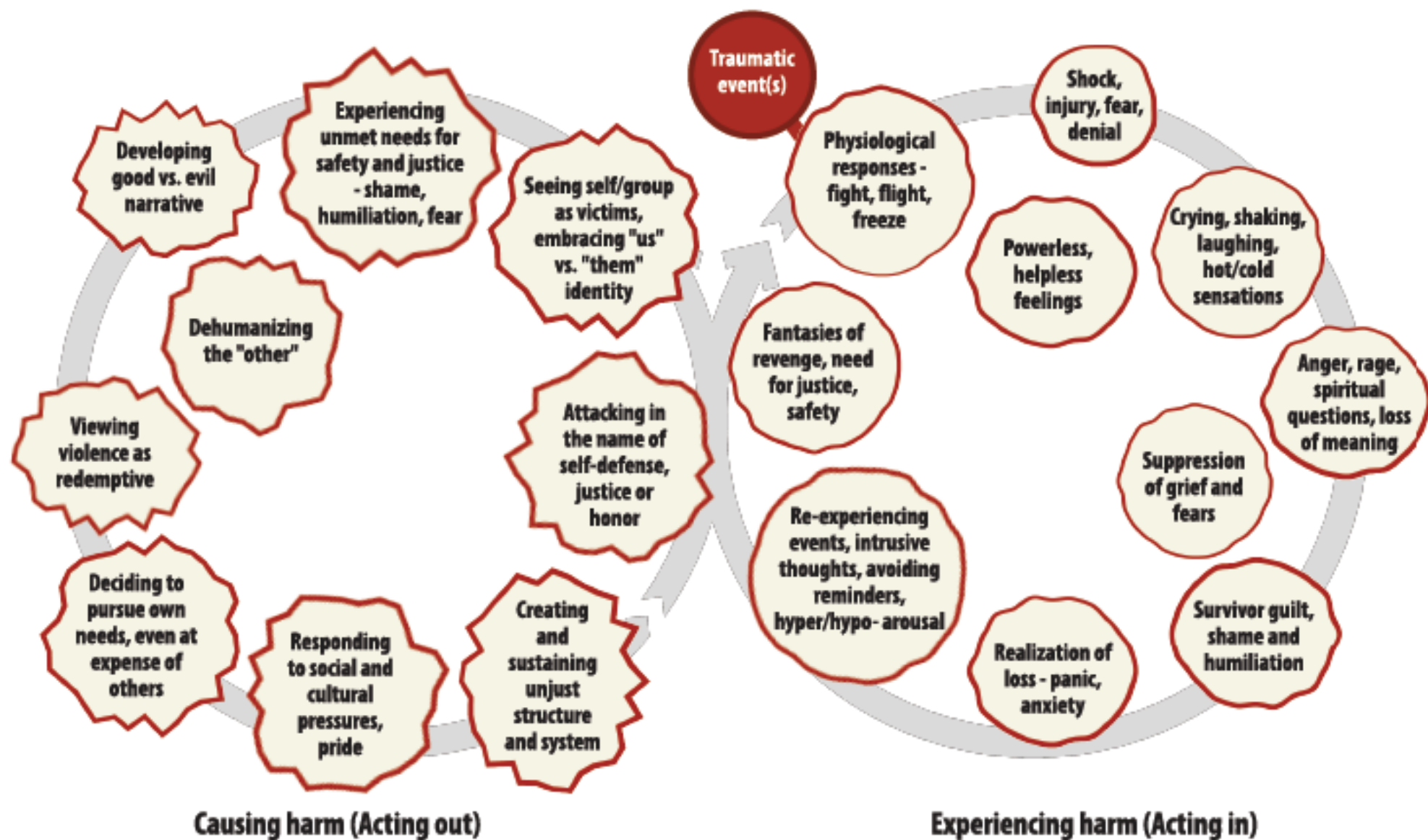
- Traumat – meaning *wound* in Greek
- Single event or cumulative trauma
- Acute (immediate) or post traumatic stress
- Childhood or youth trauma
- Collective trauma (Historical, cultural and structural trauma)
- Secondary or vicarious trauma



From stress to trauma: when our ability to respond to threat is overwhelmed







WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT: INDIVIDUALS

EDUCATION AND AWARENESS



Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
La santé mentale pour tous



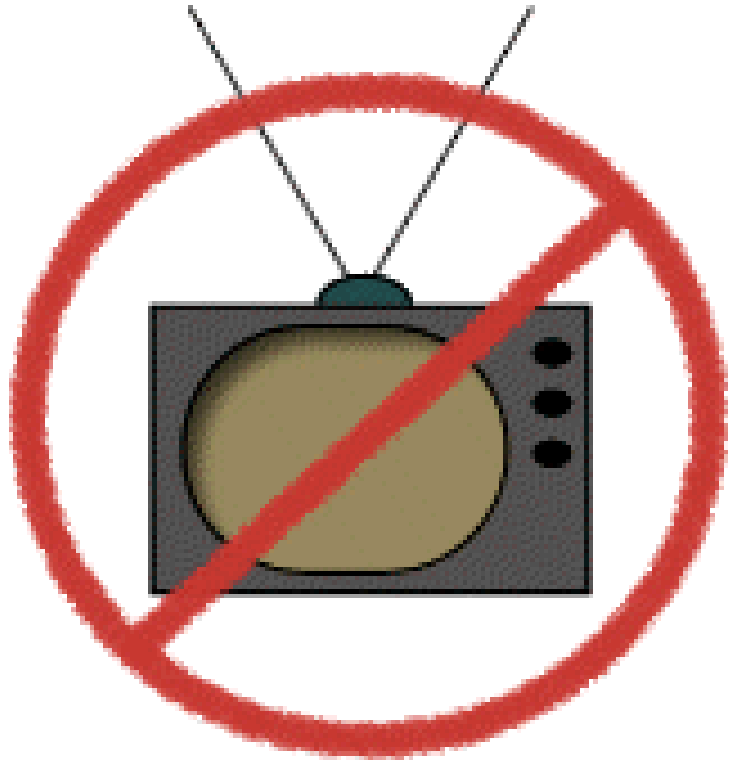
WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT: INDIVIDUALS CONT'D

PRACTICING RESILIENCE



WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT: INDIVIDUALS CONT'D

PRACTICING SELF CARE, SEEKING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES



WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT IT: ORGANIZATIONS

RECOGNIZE THE IMPACT, TRAUMA-INFORMED POLICIES,
LOOK FOR RESOURCES



Association canadienne
pour la santé mentale
La santé mentale pour tous



QUESTIONS/COMMENTS?

Thanks so much!