

# TRAUMA-INFORMED SOULCARE



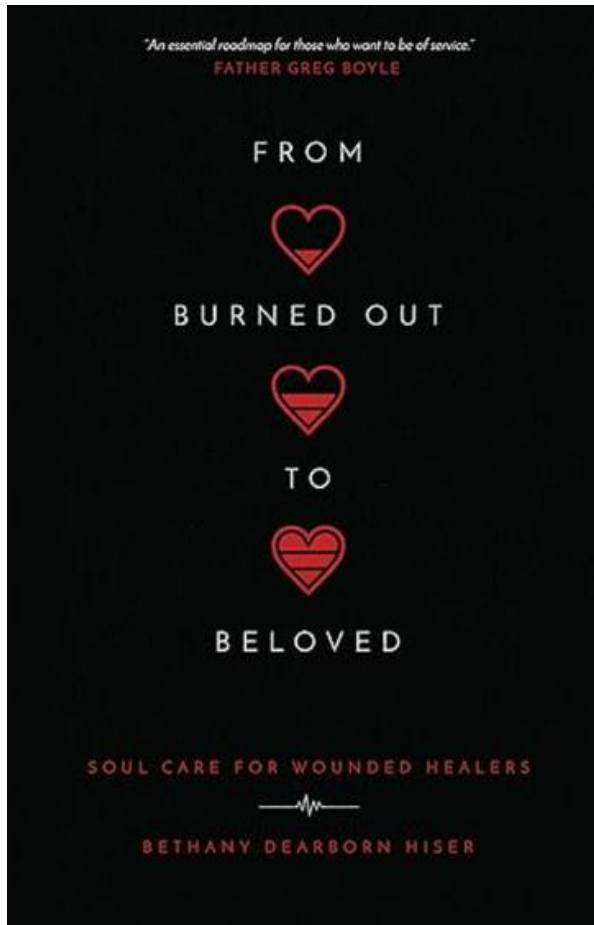
Soul Care for  
Wounded Healers



Bethany Dearborn Hiser, Spiritual Director, MSW  
Director of Soul Care for Northwest Family Life



# BELOVED & BROKEN



We need to know and  
tend to ourselves in  
order to be well, love  
others well, and  
because we are loved.



# TRAUMA-INFORMED SOUL CARE

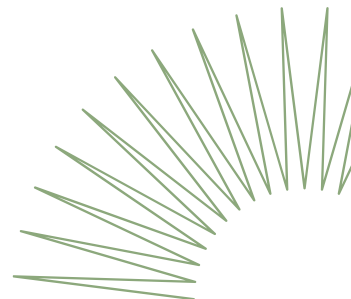
A practice of tending to one's whole self that is grounded in our core identity, connected to God, and in order to

increase  
resiliency &  
sustainability

love others as  
we love  
ourselves

improve  
effectiveness,  
avoid harm

It involves knowing who we are as beloved children of God,  
how we are impacted by trauma,  
and journeying towards recovery and healing.



# GOD IS OUR PROVIDER

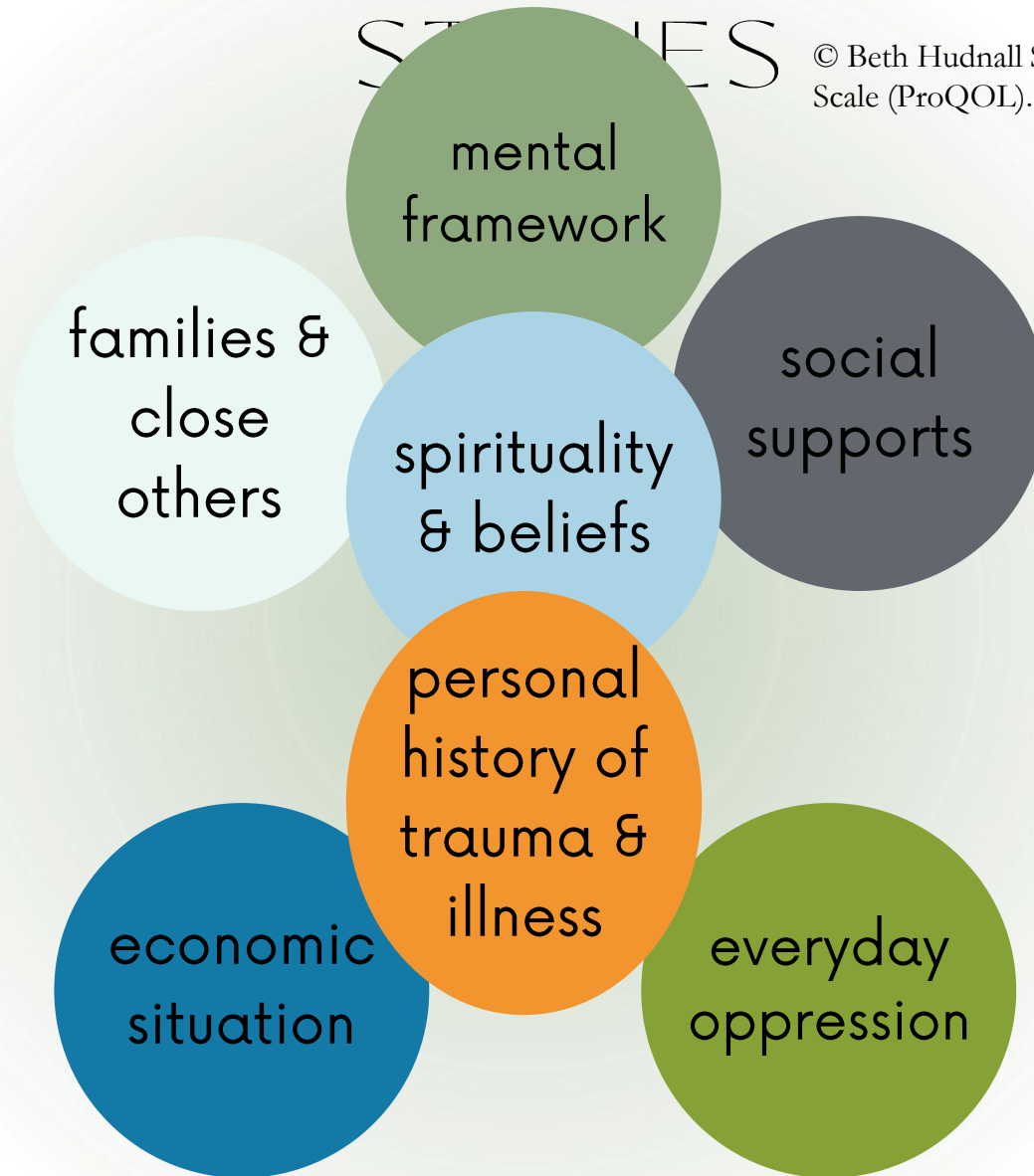
“And my God will meet all your needs according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.”

-Apostle Paul, letter to the  
Phillipians 4:19



# WE BRING OURSELVES & OUR SITUATIONS

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Scale (ProQOL). [www.proqol.org](http://www.proqol.org)



# FIREFIGHTERS & SOUL

When firefighters go into a burning house, they come out covered with ash.

Some carry prior trauma; they know what it's like to flee a burning house.

Many also experience everyday oppression. They feel like they're living in a burning house.

“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.

~Naomi Rachel Remen, Clinical Professor Emeritus, UCSF School of Medicine

# TRAUMA EXPOSURE RESPONSES

*Trauma Stewardship*, by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky & Connie Burk

- Feeling helpless and hopeless
- A sense that one can never do enough
- Diminished creativity
- Inability to embrace complexity
- Guilt
- Inability to listen/deliberate avoidance



# SECONDARY OR VICARIOUS TRAUMA

based on *The Compassion Fatigue Workbook*, by Francoise Mathieu

Secondary Trauma is the emotional distress and trauma symptoms (like PTSD) that develop in people who hear about or witness the traumatic experiences of others

Cumulative: thousands of stories

Affects our view of the world and others

Leads to symptoms like intrusive thoughts, anxiety, avoidance, and burnout.

Experienced by helping professionals and other caregivers



# TRAUMA LIKE A TSUNAMI

“Like the wave of a tsunami, [traumatic events] drown you and disable your normal strategies for dealing with difficulties. . . . They override your powers of both action and imagination.”  
~ Theologian Serene Jones

# COMPASSION FATIGUE

based on *The Compassion Fatigue Workbook*, by Francoise Mathieu

Compassion Fatigue is the physical, emotional, and psychological impact of helping others

Compounded by:

- The systems we work under
- Level of support
- Work with colleagues
- Altruism: sense of accomplishing what intended to
- Beliefs about self

Impacts our view of ourselves, the world, and others

Affected by and can lead to burnout



# BURNOUT

based on *The Compassion Fatigue Workbook*, by Francoise Mathieu

Burnout is the physical and emotional exhaustion due to low job satisfaction and feeling powerless and overwhelmed at work.

Many non-helping professionals suffer from burnout: call center, factory workers, etc.

Doesn't necessarily affect our view of the world and others, like compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma.

Burnout can make us more vulnerable to CF and VT

Compounded by organizational culture, work-place stress

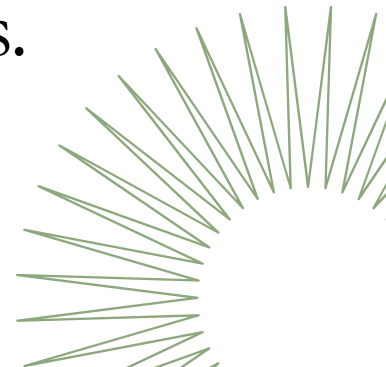


# TRAUMA-INFORMED REASONS TO CARE FOR OURSELVES

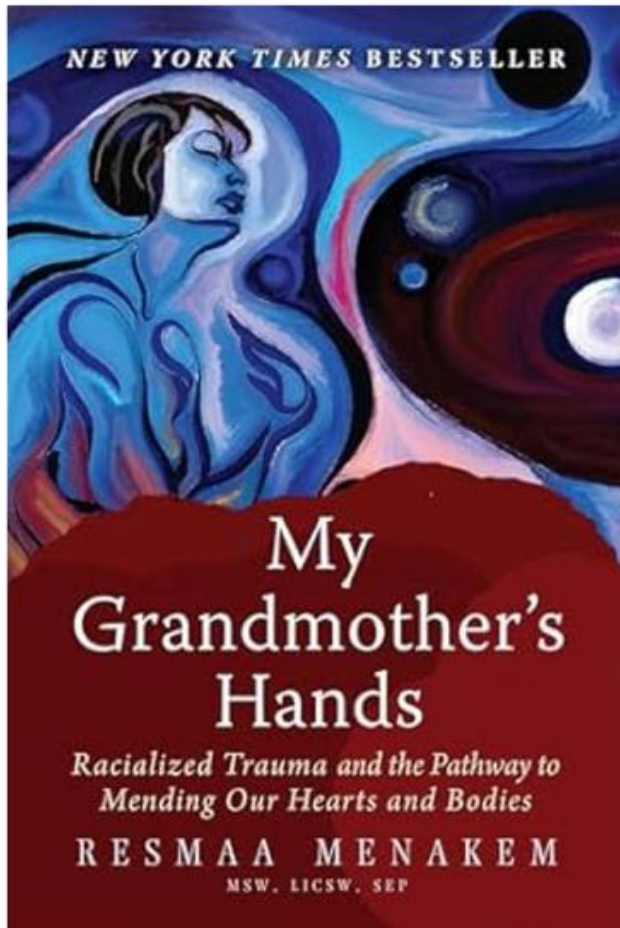
Trauma affects our capacity to make sense of  
the world.

Trauma affects our bodies and our attunement  
to our own needs.

Anxiety is contagious. We need to be grounded  
in order to present to ourselves and others.



# SETTLING OUR BODIES FOR CONNECTION



“A settled body enables you to connect with other bodies around you, while encouraging their bodies to settle as well.”

~ Resmaa Menakem



YOU ARE NOT WEAK FOR  
NEEDING SUPPORT OR  
BEING IMPACTED,  
YOU ARE HUMAN,  
CREATED WITH NEEDS.



# CULTIVATING CURIOSITY & SELF-COMPASSION

“No one is naturally wired to suppress their own needs in favor of meeting the needs of others. If you tend to sacrifice yourself in service of your family system, these values were likely transmitted to you at an early age, while your body's circuits were developing. So, if you have trouble prioritizing self-care, start with self-compassion...

Remind yourself of this truth: ‘Over the course of my earlier years, it must have been adaptive to be vigilant about the needs of others, and this vigilance overpowered my attunement to my own needs.’”

~Dr. Becky Kennedy,

*Good Inside: A Guide to Becoming the Parent You Want To Be*



# BASIC UNIVERSAL HUMAN NEEDS

<u>Maslow's Hierarchy</u>	<u>Nonviolent Communication</u>	<u>Trauma &amp; Recovery</u>	<u>Contemplative Outreach</u>
Physiological Safety Love & Belonging Esteem Self-actualization	Autonomy Celebration Integrity Interdependence Physical Nurturance Play Spiritual Communion	Safety Satisfaction Connection	Safety & Security Affection & Esteem Power & Control



ONE PARISH || ONE PRISONER

What if **every person releasing** from prison had a local community waiting to embrace them?

START A TEAM



UNDERGROUND  
MINISTRIES

# FREE-WRITE

- In order to feel cared for and care for myself, I need...
- My needs that are getting met are...
- My needs that aren't getting met are....
- Initially, I chose to do what I am doing because...
- And now....



# DISORDERED ATTACHMENTS

“Lacking spiritual freedom, we become excessively attached to persons, places, material possessions, titles, occupations, honors, and the acclaim of others. These things are good in themselves when order and directed by the love of God. They become disordered attachments or disordered loves when they push God out of the center of our lives and become key to our identity.”

~ Kevin O'Brien, *Ignatian Adventure*



# COMMON MISLED NEEDS

## Through Work/Parenting

Need for Impact

Need to be Heard

Need for Relationship and Intimacy

Need for Approval and Affirmation

Need for Identity and Self Worth



“Underlying the act of generosity there can be a need for approval and, sometimes even a need to exercise power, even spiritual power, over others. These needs may provide the energy to orient one’s life towards others, for the good of humanity, but at the same time they can tarnish our fundamental motivation, rendering it more or less self-serving...

What is most beautiful in them can become what is worst. Their generosity becomes their downfall, because it flows more from a need to feel wanted and loved than from a true desire for others to be well and free.”

~ Jean Vanier, Founder of L’Arche communities, from  
Becoming Human





How do you not accumulate  
secondary trauma?

INCREASE YOUR DAILY  
PRACTICE.



# CULTIVATING RHYTHMS OF REST RECOVERY

**REST:** recognizing need for rest and maintaining a daily practice

**EXHALE:** finding ways of expressing yourself through art, music, dance, play

**CONNECTED:** Connecting to God & meaningful relationships

**OPEN & honest** with people close to you, receiving professional support

**VULNERABLE:** Paying attention to your needs and honoring your limits

**ENERGY:** Saying yes when really able & willing, instead of just out of guilt or desire to please; saying no when don't have the capacity to truly be present.

**RETURNING:** Acknowledging when you've gotten suckered into old habits or hopped on the shame train, and return to a grounded state.

**YIELDING:** Asking for and receiving help; surrendering your strategies for happiness and praying for the grace to grow in interior freedom.



# PREVENTING BURNOUT

<https://www.headington-institute.org/resource/preventing-burnout/>

**Gratitude**

**Somatic Grounding Practices**

**Spiritual Practices:** meditation, spending time in nature, or connected to faith

**Social Support:** in professional and personal life

**Inner Work**

# ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITY

Counselors have a professional responsibility to “engage in self-care activities to maintain and promote their own emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual well-being”

American Counseling Association Code of Ethics

<https://www.counseling.org/Resources/aca-code-of-ethics.pdf>

“Recognize that their effectiveness is dependent on their own mental and physical health.” American Mental Health Counselors Association Code of Ethics

<http://www.amhca.org/learn/ethics>

# SMALL STEPS

## Transition Times:

- Wake-up
- Before work
- Midday/Lunch break
- Before getting home
- In-Between Appts
- Bedtime

## Two key elements:

- life-giving
- daily

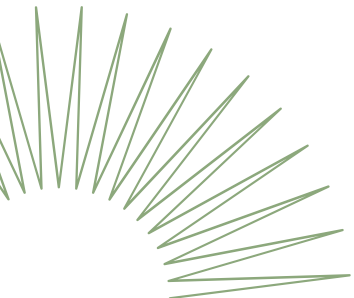
Weekly Sabbath & Quarterly Rest & Reflection



“There is a freedom that comes from being who we are in God and resting in God that eventually enables us to bring something truer to the world than all of our doing.

Sabbath keeping helps us to live within our limits, because on the Sabbath, in many different ways, we allow ourselves to be the creature in the presence of our Creator.

~Ruth Haley Barton, *Sacred Rhythms*



# CHOOSING A DAILY PRACTICE

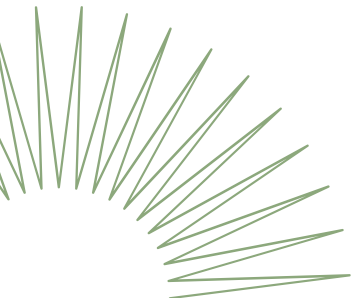
- Brainstorm practices that help you to be more grounded and live connected to God.
- Choose ONE very short and manageable practice you can engage in on a daily basis:
- What are the barriers to making it happen?
- What one practice might you consider setting aside that is not life-giving?



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# SOUL CARE FOR WOUNDED HEALER OFFERINGS

- Newsletter: <https://bethanydearbornhiser.substack.com/>
- Soul Care Groups and Workshops  
<https://www.bethanydearbornhiser.com/events>
- Guided Prayer Practices:  
<https://insighttimer.com/bethanydhiser>
- Burnout Prevention Resource List:  
[www.bethanydearbornhiser.com/resources](http://www.bethanydearbornhiser.com/resources)



# RESOURCES

## Websites:

- Headington Institute <https://www.headington-institute.org/resource/preventing-burnout/>
- Professional Quality of Life [www.ProQOL.org](http://www.ProQOL.org)
- Kristen Neff's Self-Compassion <https://self-compassion.org/category/exercises/>
- Embody Lab <https://www.theembodyleab.com/>
- Emotion Sensation Wheel: <https://lindsaybraman.com/sensation-feelings-wheel/>
- Genesis Process: <https://www.genesisprocess.org>

## BOOKS:

- Trauma Stewardship, by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky & Connie Burk
- My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies, by Resmaa Menakem
- The Body Keeps the Score, by Bessel van der Kolk
- Compassion Fatigue Workbook, by Francoise Mathieu

## Therapists:

- Northwest Family Life: <https://northwestfamilylife.org/counselors/>
- Psychology Today: <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists>
- Embody Lab: <https://www.theembodyleab.com/therapist-directory-find-a-therapist>



# WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

## How Trauma Can Affect Your Window Of Tolerance

