

Self and Collective Care

Many providers who work with children and families affected by trauma are feeling more strain right now. Ongoing conflict, displacement, and uncertainty—both globally and in the U.S.—can increase feelings of burnout, compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, and moral injury.

Families who have lived through crisis, conflict or forced displacement, may feel less safe during times of global crisis, community turmoil, or pervasive change or uncertainty, and need more support. At the same time, providers are often holding multiple and cumulative stories of fear, loss, and disruption. When helpers are asked to promote safety and stability in contexts they cannot control, this tension can strain their own regulation and wellbeing. These reactions are normal human responses to difficult and ongoing conditions. Recognizing this helps reduce self-blame and create spaces for compassion, connection, and care for the care providers. This article serves as a brief resource outlining strategies to support individual and collective care.

During times of increased uncertainty, stress, and upheaval, providers are often bearing witness to pain, suffering and fear while also simultaneously processing and managing their own feelings and reactions. The [window of tolerance model](#) can be a helpful tool to help us recognize this impact and bring awareness to ways in which we can mitigate it. As our window of tolerance naturally shrinks, we may be noticing hyper and/or hypo-arousal, as illustrated below. Noticing these signs is an important first step towards supporting regulation, balance and care – for ourselves and for each other.

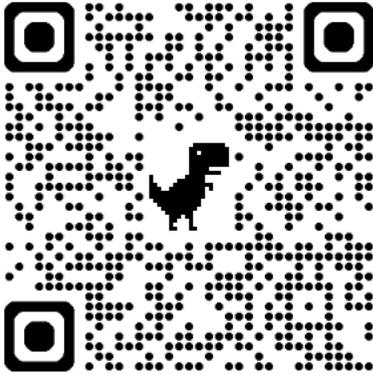


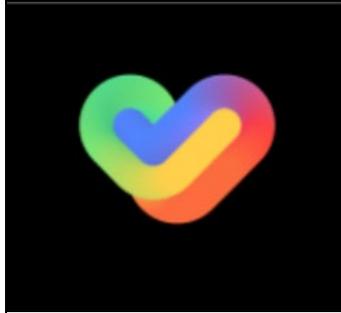
Infographic adapted from Dr. Dan Siegel, NICABM, 2019

We can take steps to support a return to our window of tolerance by utilizing restorative coping strategies both individually and collectively to create opportunities for different types of rest and restoration:

- Creative activities like writing or drawing;
- Sensory immersion and restoration such as taking a walk in nature or utilizing the five senses grounding practice;
- Spiritual restoration such as prayer or meditation;
- Mental restoration like learning a new skill or journaling;
- Emotional restoration, such as spending time with loved ones, pets or community;
- Social restoration through the creation and participation in safe spaces for connection and listening; this can be done in person, virtually, and in affiliation or community groups;
 - o Tapping into compassion – the emotional state of benevolence and warmth – which is proven to increase our sense of social affiliation, unity and connection;
- Physical rest such as sleeping, or physical restoration such as exercise or gentle movement.

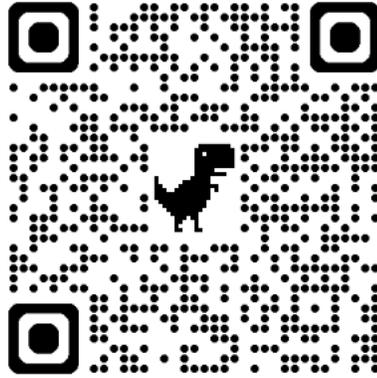
Some favorite resources from the CARRE team that help us support individual and collective care include:

<p>UCLA Mindful a project of Mindful Awareness Research Center (MARC)</p> 	<p>Free Meditation Recordings, available in multiple languages:</p> 	<p>Mindfulness App:</p> 
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How We Feel Project

How We Feel Project webpage:



How We Feel App:



Greater Good Center at UC Berkeley - Learn research-based practices to develop more resilience to stress. A happiness break in your day.

Website with multiple resources:



Podcasts – Science of Happiness & Happiness Break (Episodes in Spanish)

