

The Trauma Stewardship Institute's MAP FOR MANAGING ONE'S LIFE

DAY

When I woke up, I will protect my morning. I won't reach for: news, social media, work/school updates. Anyone who needs me for anything. This helps me avoid being flooded by cortisol first thing.



For optimal coping, I must tend to my nervous system. Given it's continuously anticipating & reacting to my surroundings, I need conditions in place that prevent me from becoming saturated and, ultimately, rupturing.

Tactic #1 - Limit exposure to anything unnecessary that adversely affects my nervous system.
Tactic #2 - Metabolize, efficiently, anything that starts to accumulate in my nervous system.
Note to self: While I have my own nervous system, it may be helpful to consider the nervous system of my home, of where my loved ones spend time, of my community, etc. and how those nervous systems, too, can become saturated, and rupture, over time.

When navigating a pandemic and systematic oppression and structural supremacy and the climate crisis and democracies in peril and my job/school, and caretaking and my life in general...

My day begins

And if it's been one of those days, I'll remember Jeff U's mantra: Forgive yourself every night, recommit every morning.

Pema Chödrön says, "Death is certain, your time of death is uncertain. How do you want to spend your time?" Ask myself once a day, am I spending my time - in life - how I want to be? If so, how can I further support myself? If not, what concrete changes can I make?



6 days a week (unless medically advised against it), I'm getting my heart rate up and breaking a sweat. Thinking to myself: Anything that has accumulated in my nervous system over the past 24 hours, may it be completely released so I can show up for this next 24 hours...

How's my consumption? Need help with any of my addictions? Substances/screen time/coffee/constantly criticizing/overindulging/being over scheduled/shopping, etc? Be mindful of my attempts to distance myself from eat distance feelings my feelings. With news and social media, be deliberate and mindful. If/when, both what I'm taking in and what I'm putting out. Reminder: the degree to which I'm dedicated to social and environmental justice does not equal time spent digitally dived in.

< REACTIVITY > → INTENTIONALITY
In the spirit of striving to Do No Harm, I will pause and think before I speak/post/heat/reply/engage. Despite the negativity bias headlines throughout society today, I will practice extending grace and humility, over & over + remember the merit of approaching life with a beginner's mind.



Sleep = critical. What is my bedtime tonight? How can I sequence my evening so I can shut it down by then & not get into sleep-debt. Set a reminder to: Give all my electronics and screens their own bad time, an hour before mine.

When and where possible, be around animals and take a moment to notice the reduction in stress hormones and how regenerating even a moment or two can be.



BLOOD PRESSURE + SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM ACTIVITY → IMMUNE SYSTEM + ELEVATED MOOD

Look outside, be outside. When I'm in a meeting, during a class, to work, to play, when I have a few mins for a break, if even for a moment or two, feel the unassailable power nature has on my health - on all levels.

Understand that every day I may be influenced by moments small & large, mundane and significant, that continuously arise, like waves. These waves, and how I experience them, may have deep undercurrents from what has come before me via inter-generational oppression, inter-generational trauma, and epigenetics. Sometimes it may make sense, or not, but even if it's not my strong suit, acting with self-respect and compassion towards myself, is essential. Historical, forces beyond what meet the eye can impact me in ways I may not understand or be conscious of and I will remember Jack Kornfield saying, "If your compassion does not include yourself, it is incomplete."

Engage in mindfulness to assist my nervous system in staying regulated and countless other health and mental health benefits. Tai chi, qi gong, yoga, meditation. All portable and accessible and even a few minutes here or there can provide the right scaffolding.



Decision fatigue & cognitive overload can be debilitating. Simplify my surroundings & my routines. Be mindful of hydration + glucose levels. Track when my mental acuity is high and maximize those times.



What's going well? What am I grateful for? What am I psyched about? Who can I thank? Repeat a-1-1 day.

Have I done anything edifying for myself today? Actually connected with someone I care about? Taken a moment to laugh or find levity in a nourishing way? Be transported by art?



Our systems & structures have a moral mandate & an ethical obligation to create sustainable environments within which we work, learn, and engage. When they do, let us pause, notice + give thanks. When that's not the case, we can decide if/when/how to engage. While these choices may be fraught and complex, I hope refuge can be found in Howard Thurman's offering, "Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go do that, because what the world needs, is people who have come alive."

Tiny's SURVIVAL GUIDE

THE TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP INSTITUTE'S

PROTECT YOUR MORNINGS

[or whenever you wake up]
less cortisol, more intentionality.



GO OUTSIDE

[or look outside]

perspective, context + something larger than this.



BE ACTIVE

[avoid stagnation]

in body, mind, spirit.

CULTIVATE RELATIONSHIPS

those that are edifying + healthy.

NURTURE GRATITUDE

what is one thing, right now, that is going well?

DETOX



if navigating addictions
be wise + safe

limit news + social media.

SPEND TIME WITH ANIMALS

↓ stress hormones, ↑ comfort.



METABOLIZE WHAT YOU'RE EXPERIENCING



re-regulate your nervous system.

SIMPLIFY

[less is more]

be aware of decision fatigue + cognitive overload.



ADMIRE ART

the gift of feeling transported.



LAUGH

pure humor = a sustaining force.

FOSTER HUMILITY & EXTEND GRACE

self-righteousness + hubris = unhelpful.

SLEEP



to cleanse + repair brain + body.

CLARIFY INTENTIONS

how can i refrain from causing harm, how can i contribute meaningfully?

BE REALISTIC + COMPASSIONATE

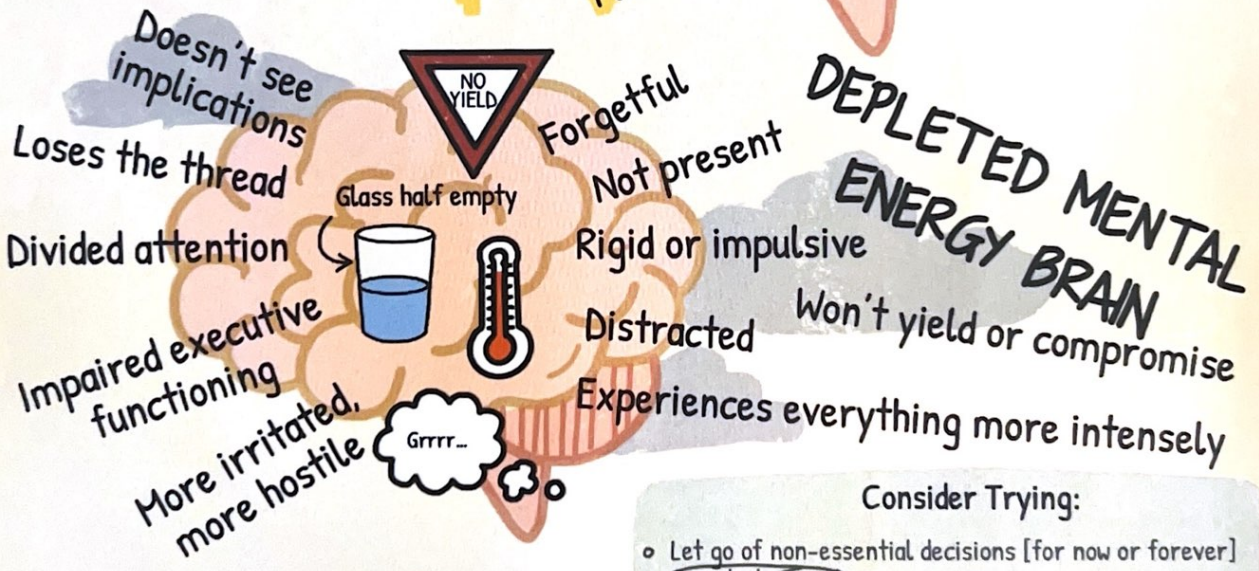
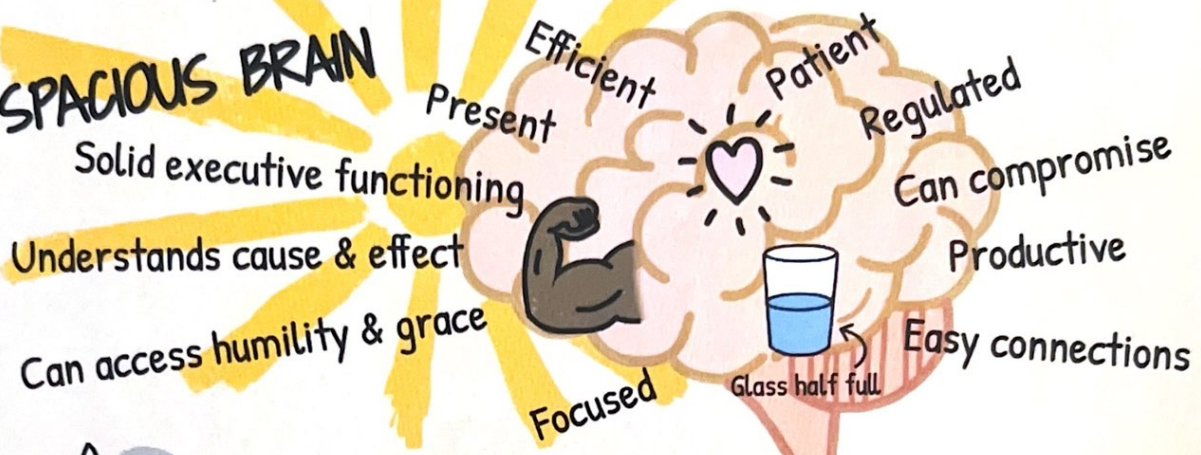
[with yourself]

be mindful of the quality of your presence. it means so much to others.



THE TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP INSTITUTE's take on
DECISION FATIGUE & COGNITIVE OVERLOAD

SPACIOUS BRAIN



Some Contributing Factors:

- Systematic oppression & structural supremacy
- Trauma
- Day-to-day triaging
- Social media & screen distractions
- The news
- Caretaking
- Opportunity cost signaling
- Multi-tasking & interruptions
- False urgency
- Fatigue/low blood sugar/dehydration
- Chaotic atmosphere
- # of decisions already made
- Not taking breaks
- Existential stress

Consider Trying:

- Let go of non-essential decisions [for now or forever]
- Overdeployment
- Minimize likelihood of wandering attention
- Maximize effectiveness of breaks
- Be mindful of cortisol & adrenaline
- ↓ urgency & maintain perspective
- Holistic health [nutrition, hydration, movement, etc.]
- Time outside
- Nervous system resets [acupuncture, cold h2o, mindfulness practices, animals, etc.]
- Notice what's going well
- Avoid impulse decisions
- Front-load during high mental acuity times
- Implement habits
- "Why am I doing what I am doing?"
- Know when to call it a wrap
- Sleep
- Simplify

Tool: Interrupting Microaggressions

MICROAGGRESSION EXAMPLE AND THEME	THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION EXAMPLE	COMMUNICATION APPROACH
<p>Alien in One's Own Land To a Latino American: "Where are you from?"</p> <p>Ascription of Intelligence To an Asian person, "You're all good in math, can you help me with this problem?"</p> <p>Color Blindness "I don't believe in race."</p>	<p>"I'm just curious. What makes you ask that?"</p> <p>"I heard you say that all Asians are good in math. What makes you believe that?"</p> <p>"So, what do you believe in? Can you elaborate?"</p>	<p>INQUIRE Ask the speaker to elaborate. This will give you more information about where s/he is coming from, and may also help the speaker to become aware of what s/he is saying. KEY PHRASES: "Say more about that." "Can you elaborate on your point?" "It sounds like you have a strong opinion about this. Tell me why." "What is it about this that concerns you the most?"</p>
<p>Myth of Meritocracy "Everyone can succeed in this society, if they work hard enough."</p> <p>Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles Asking a Black person: "Why do you have to be so loud/animated? Just calm down."</p>	<p>"So you feel that everyone can succeed in this society if they work hard enough. Can you give me some examples?"</p> <p>"It appears you were uncomfortable when ___ said that. I'm thinking that there are many styles to express ourselves. How we can honor all styles of expression—can we talk about that?"</p>	<p>PARAPHRASE/REFLECT Reflecting in one's own words the essence of what the speaker has said. Paraphrasing demonstrates understanding and reduces defensiveness of both you and the speaker. Restate briefly in your own words, rather than simply parroting the speaker. Reflect both content and feeling whenever possible. KEY PHRASES: "So, it sounds like you think..." "You're saying... You believe..."</p>
<p>Second-Class Citizen You notice that your female colleague is being frequently interrupted during a committee meeting.</p> <p>Pathologizing Cultural Values/Communication Styles To a woman of color: "I would have never guessed that you were a scientist."</p>	<p>Responder addressing the group: "___ brings up a good point. I didn't get a chance to hear all of it. Can ___ repeat it?"</p> <p>"I'm wondering what message this is sending her. Do you think you would have said this to a white male?"</p>	<p>REFRAME Create a different way to look at a situation. KEY PHRASES: "What would happen if..." "Could there be another way to look at this..." "Let's reframe this..." "How would you feel if this happened to your ___..."</p>
<p>Second-Class Citizen Saying "You people...."</p> <p>Use of Heterosexist Language Saying "That's so gay."</p>	<p>"I was so upset by that remark that I shut down and couldn't hear anything else."</p> <p>"When I hear that remark, I'm offended too, because I feel that it marginalizes an entire group of people that I work with."</p>	<p>USE IMPACT AND "I" STATEMENTS A clear, nonthreatening way to directly address these issues is to focus on oneself rather than on the person. It communicates the impact of a situation while avoiding blaming or accusing the other and reduces defensiveness. KEY PHRASES: "I felt ___ (feelings) when you said or did ___ (comment or behavior), and it ___ (describe the impact on you)."</p>
<p>Second-Class Citizen A woman who is talked over.</p> <p>Making a racist, sexist or homophobic joke.</p>	<p>She responds: "I would like to participate, but I need you to let me finish my thought."</p> <p>"I didn't think this was funny. I would like you to stop."</p>	<p>USE PREFERENCE STATEMENTS Clearly communicating one's preferences rather than stating them as demands or having others guess what is needed. KEY PHRASES: "What I'd like is..." "It would be helpful to me if..."</p>

Adapted from Kenney, G. (2014). *Interrupting Microaggressions*, College of the Holy Cross, Diversity Leadership & Education. Accessed on-line, October 2014. Kraybill, R. (2008). "Cooperation Skills," in Amster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual*, 5th Edition, pp. 116-117. LeBaron, M. (2008). "The Open Question," in Amster, M. and Amstutz, L., (Eds.), *Conflict Transformation and Restorative Justice Manual*, 5th Edition, pp. 123-124. Peavey, F. (2003). "Strategic Questions as a Tool for Rebellion," in Brady, M., (Ed.), *The Wisdom of Listening*, Boston: Wisdom Publ., pp. 168-189.

Tool: Interrupting Microaggressions

MICROAGGRESSION EXAMPLE AND THEME	THIRD PARTY INTERVENTION EXAMPLE	COMMUNICATION APPROACH
<p>Color Blindness "When I look at you, I don't see color."</p> <p>Myth of Meritocracy "Of course he'll get tenure, even though he hasn't published much—he's Black!"</p>	<p>"So you don't see color. Tell me more about your perspective. I'd also like to invite others to weigh in."</p> <p>"So you believe that _____ will get tenure just because of his race. Let's open this up to see what others think."</p>	<p>RE-DIRECT Shift the focus to a different person or topic. (Particularly helpful when someone is asked to speak for his/her entire race, cultural group, etc.) KEY PHRASES: "Let's shift the conversation..." "Let's open up this question to others...."</p>
<p>Myth of Meritocracy In a committee meeting: "Gender plays no part in who we hire."</p> <p>"Of course she'll get tenure, even though she hasn't published much—she's Native American!"</p> <p>Second-Class Citizen In class, an instructor tends to call on male students more frequently than female ones.</p>	<p>"How might we examine our implicit bias to ensure that gender plays no part in this and we have a fair process? What do we need to be aware of?"</p> <p>"How does what you just said honor our colleague?"</p> <p>"What impact do you think this has on the class dynamics? What would you need to approach this situation differently next time?"</p>	<p>USE STRATEGIC QUESTIONS It is the skill of asking questions that will make a difference. A strategic question creates motion and options, avoids "why" and "yes or no" answers, is empowering to the receiver, and allows for difficult questions to be considered. Because of these qualities, a strategic question can lead to transformation. Useful in problem-solving, difficult situations, and change efforts. KEY PHRASES: "What would allow you..." "What could you do differently...." "What would happen if you considered the impact on..."</p>
<p>Traditional Gender Role Prejudicing and Stereotyping In the lab, an adviser asks a female student if she is planning to have children while in postdoctoral training.</p>	<p>To the adviser: "I wanted to go back to a question you asked _____ yesterday about her plans for a family. I'm wondering what made you ask that question and what message it might have sent to her."</p> <p>To the student: "I heard what your advisor said to you yesterday. I thought it was inappropriate and I just wanted to check in with you."</p>	<p>REVISIT Even if the moment of a microaggression has passed, go back and address it. Research indicates that an unaddressed microaggression can leave just as much of a negative impact as the microaggression itself. KEY PHRASES: "I want to go back to something that was brought up in our conversation/meeting/class" "Let's rewind _____ minutes..."</p>

CONSIDERATIONS:

- The communication approaches are most effective when used in combination with one another, e.g., using impact and preference statements, using inquiry and paraphrasing together, etc.
- Separate the person from the action or behavior. Instead of saying "you're racist", try saying "that could be perceived as a racist remark." Being called a racist puts someone on the defensive and can be considered "fighting words."
- Avoid starting questions with "Why"—it puts people on the defensive. Instead try "how" "what made you"
- When addressing a microaggression, try to avoid using the pronoun "you" too often—it can leave people feeling defensive and blamed. Use "I" statements describing the impact on you instead or refer to the action indirectly, e.g., "when _____ was said..." or "when _____ happened..."
- How you say it is as critical as what you say, e.g., tone of voice, body language, etc. The message has to be conveyed with respect for the other person, even if one is having a strong negative reaction to what's been said. So it is helpful to think about your intention when interrupting a microaggression—e.g., do you want that person to understand the impact of his/her action, or stop his/her behavior, or make the person feel guilty, etc. Your intention and the manner in which you execute your intention make a difference.
- Sometimes humor can defuse a tense situation.

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