

# *Radical Self-Care*

for Vicarious Trauma and Wellness

presented by Gemma Morgan, JD, RYT and Nicole Steward, MSW



# *Today's Presentation*

## MAIN TOPICS

Brief Intro

Guided practice

Stress, Trauma & ACEs

Vicarious Trauma

Radical Self-Care

Resilience & Wellness

Closing

*Gemma Morgan, RYT*

BE THE CHANGE YOGA &  
WELLNESS

*Nicole Steward, MSW*

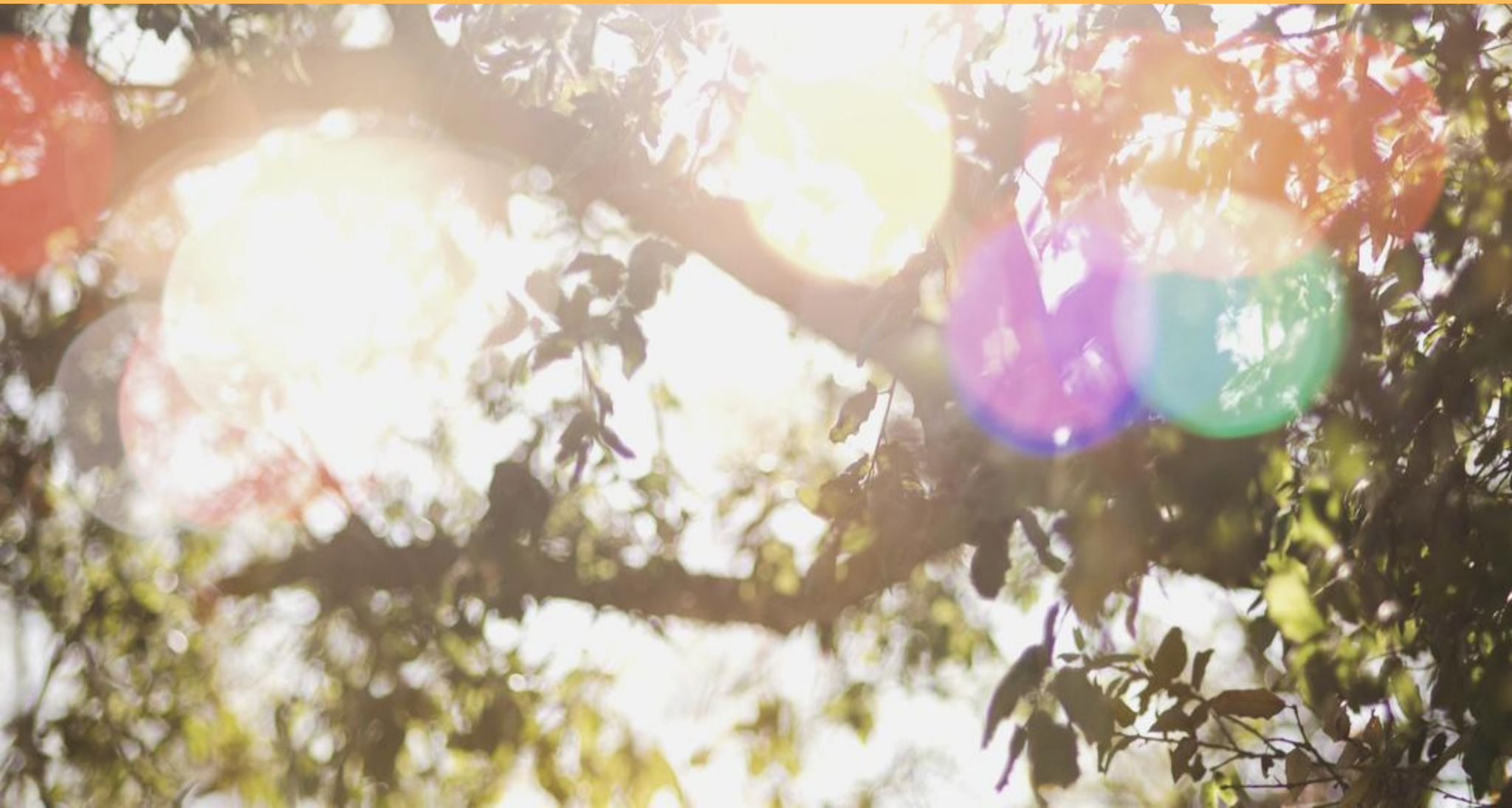
RADICAL TENDENCIES YOGA &  
MINDFULNESS EDUCATION





# *Guided Practice*

grounded, centered & present



WHAT'S YOUR

# WHY?

Consider what brought you to  
this work or what keeps you in  
this work.



”

The thought 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

# *Levels of Stress*

THE STRESS RESPONSE &  
NERVOUS SYSTEM IMPACT



Positive Stress



Tolerable Stress



Toxic Stress



# Types of Trauma

## DIFFERENT WAYS TRAUMA CAN SHOW UP



### **ACUTE**

One-time traumatic event



### **CHRONIC**

Multiple, different traumatic events



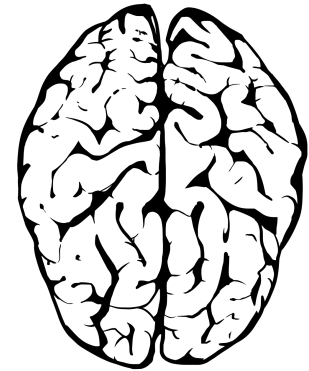
### **COMPLEX**

Ongoing, repeated trauma



### **SYSTEM-INDUCED**

Exposure to traumatic systems



"Traumatic events overwhelm the ordinary systems of care that give people a sense of control, connection, and meaning."

Judith Herman,  
Trauma & Recovery



# Adverse Childhood Experiences

UNDERSTANDING HOW TRAUMA  
IMPACTS US ALL

## 64%

of adults in the  
United States have  
experienced at least  
one ACE.

- PHYSICAL ABUSE
- SEXUAL ABUSE
- EMOTIONAL ABUSE
- PHYSICAL NEGLECT
- EMOTIONAL NEGLECT
- EXPOSURE TO DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
- HOUSEHOLD SUBSTANCE ABUSE
- HOUSEHOLD MENTAL ILLNESS
- PARENTAL SEPARATION OR DIVORCE
- INCARCERATED HOUSEHOLD MEMBER



# *Burn-Out*

## AN OFFICIAL MEDICAL DIAGNOSIS

Burnout results from working or striving for too long and/or with too much effort and energy expenditure.

BUSINESS INSIDER

JUN 9, 2018

57%

of tech employees  
surveyed said they were  
feeling burnt out by their  
jobs



# *Vicarious Trauma*

## **UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACTS**

The impact of being exposed to traumatic material/content while also straining to control one's emotional and empathic reaction to the traumatic event. The impact can be slow, subtle, and covert.

# Symptoms of Vicarious Trauma

## **ALTERED EMOTIONAL STATES**

Finding ourselves irritable or vacillating between strong emotions.

## **DISSOCIATION OR NUMBING**

Wanting to "be out of our bodies" or seeking ways to distract ourselves from the discomfort.

## **INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS/IMAGES**

Inability to get content or material out of your mind. Can impact sleep, work, and relationships.

## **CYNICISM & HOPELESSNESS**

Feeling like nothing will change or seeing people/situations in a negative light or presuming catastrophe.

# Impact of Vicarious Trauma



## OUR BRAIN

Absorbing others' trauma while controlling empathy negatively alters the brain's structure.



## OUR WORLD VIEW

We begin to translate the trauma we witness with the real world and begin to see threats where there are none.



## OUR HEALTH

Numbing for self-preservation & prolonged activation of the stress response can impact our physical health & wellness.



## OUR RELATIONSHIPS

Heaviness that we cannot share with others can still impact the nature of our relationships.



## **REDUCE OUR LEVEL OF EXPOSURE**

- Take time off/MH days
- Request support, seek help
- Engage with non-traumatic content

## **CREATE TOOLS & PRACTICES TO BUFFER THE IMPACT**

- Adopting some basic self-care tools
- Contemplative practices, connect mind & body
- Ways to find joy and connect with nature



# *Why Self-Care?*

## CARING FOR OURSELVES

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"If your compassion does  
not include yourself,  
it is incomplete."

– Jack Kornfield

# Buffering with Self-Care

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HEALTHY FOOD

PLENTY OF WATER

REGULAR EXERCISE

RESTFUL SLEEP

CONNECTION W/ OTHERS



# Radical Self-Care



## Remember & Reconnect

- Remember your past
- Reconnect with your WHY
- Reconnect with your passion



## Regulate & Rebalance

- Regulate our breath with Mindfulness
- Regulate our brains with basic self-care
- Boundaries to help rebalance work/life



## Rest & Restore

- Rest and sleep are vital to health
- Relaxation Response as antidote
- Restore your sanity regularly



# Radical Resilience

## HOW WE THRIVE

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Resilience is "the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness."

**Radical Resilience** is the moment-to-moment attuning to our experiences while engaging fully in the present. This allows us to notice what's coming up and pull into our supports it before things get out of control.



# Care vs. Carrying

## HOW WE CARRY THE WORK

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The definition of CARING is, "Displaying kindness and concern for others," and, "The work or practice of looking after those unable to care for themselves."

The definition of CARRYING is, "to support the weight of."





# Salt in Our Cups

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What we cannot control is like SALT;

We cannot control what comes into our lives;

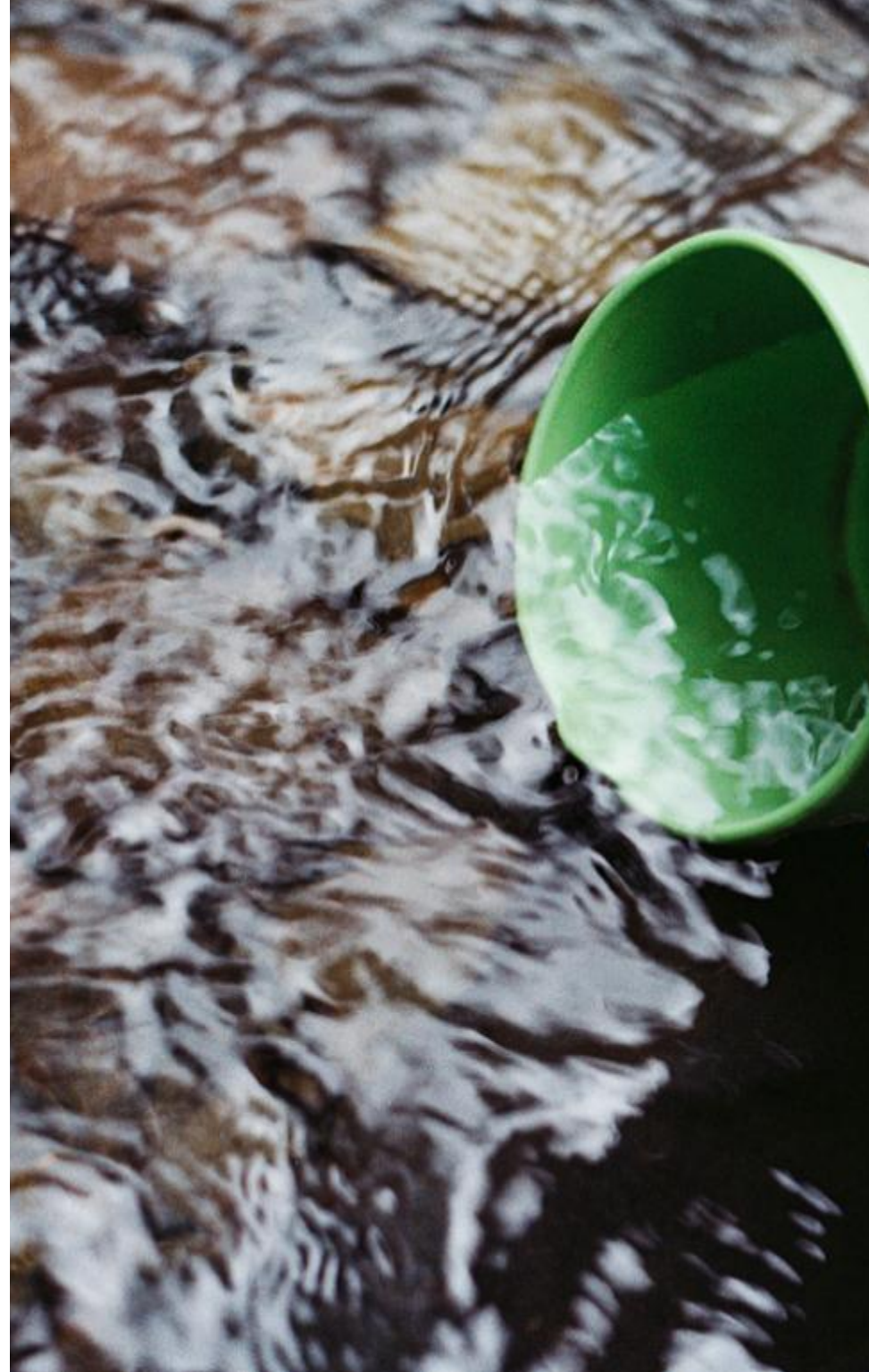
We can control how we handle what comes into our lives.



"Our true work is to create a container so immense that any amount of salt, even a truckload, can come into it without affecting our capacity to receive it."

SHARON SALZBERG

•LOVING-KINDNESS: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness



# *Let's Connect!*

**THANK YOU FOR THE WORK YOU DO!**

"IF YOU HAVE COME HERE TO HELP ME, YOU  
ARE WASTING YOUR TIME. BUT IF YOU HAVE  
COME BECAUSE YOUR LIBERATION IS  
BOUND TOGETHER WITH MINE, THEN LET  
US WORK TOGETHER."

-LILLA WATSON

**Gemma Morgan, JD, RYT**

@head\_on\_the\_ground\_yoga

**Nicole Steward, MSW**

@love\_ethic\_yoga

**Be The Change Yoga & Wellness**

[www.btcwellness.org](http://www.btcwellness.org)

