

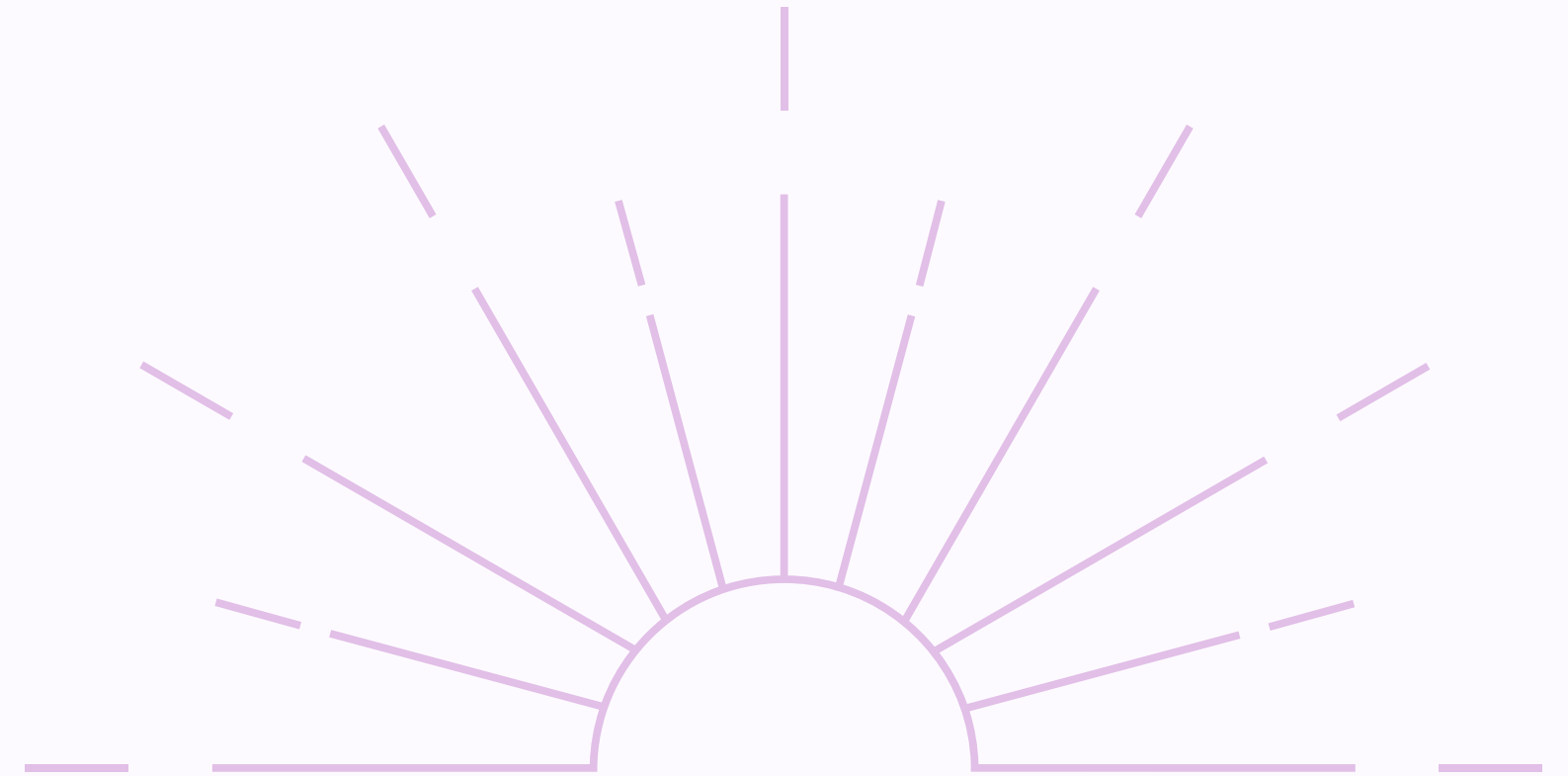
LESSONS FROM THE FRONTLINES

Preventing Burnout in Healers and Helpers

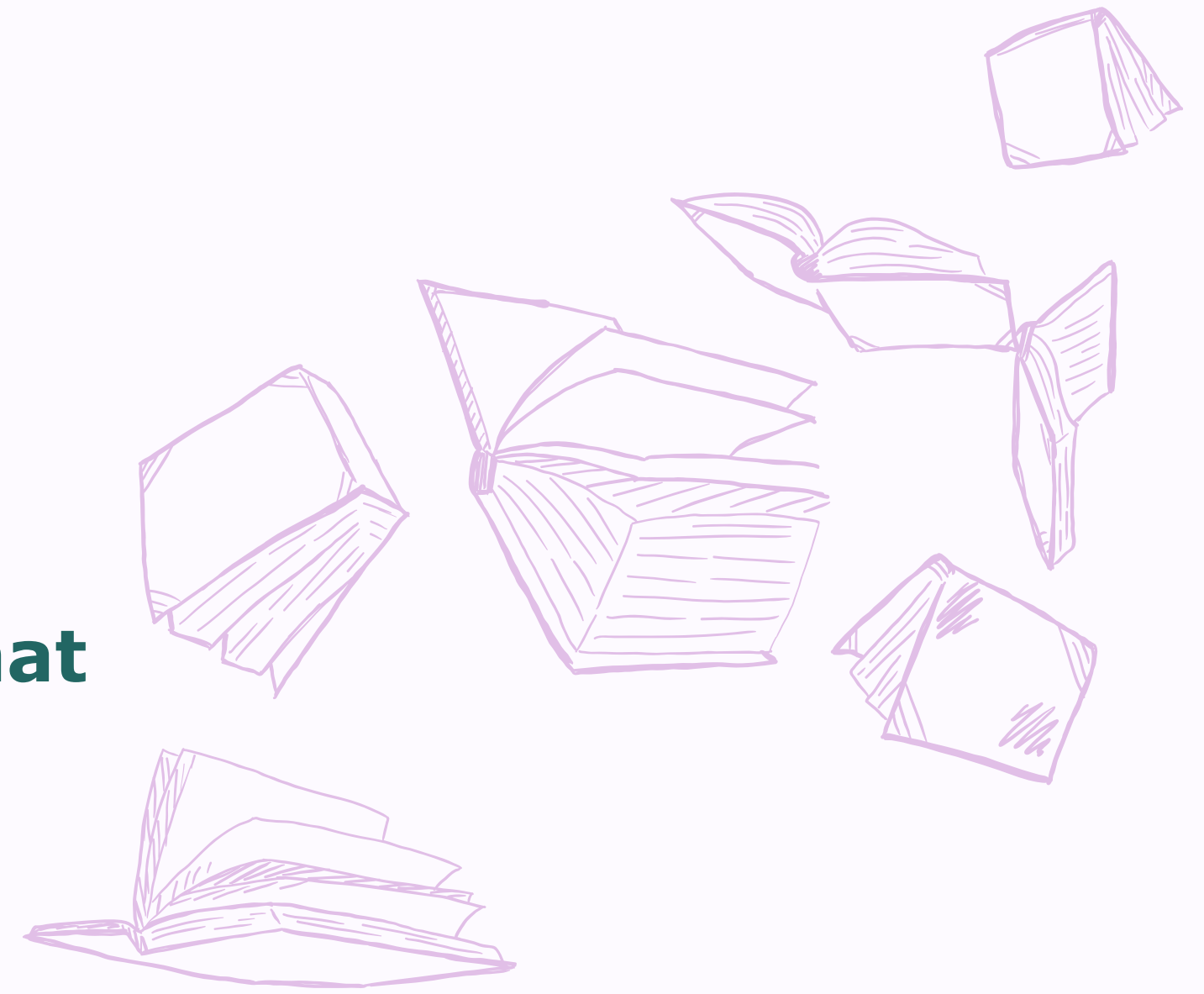
C. Oktober 2025

IMPORTANT RULES

- Use the Q&A
- Hold Space for Others LIVED Experiences
- Be Curious
- Take Space as You Need It



- 1. Identify personal and professional burnout risk factors.**
- 2. Explore evidence-based resilience and self-care strategies.**
- 3. Discuss stress-reduction techniques that can be incorporated into daily work.**
- 4. Review individualized burnout prevention plans.**
- 5. Q&A**



LEARNING OBJECTIVES

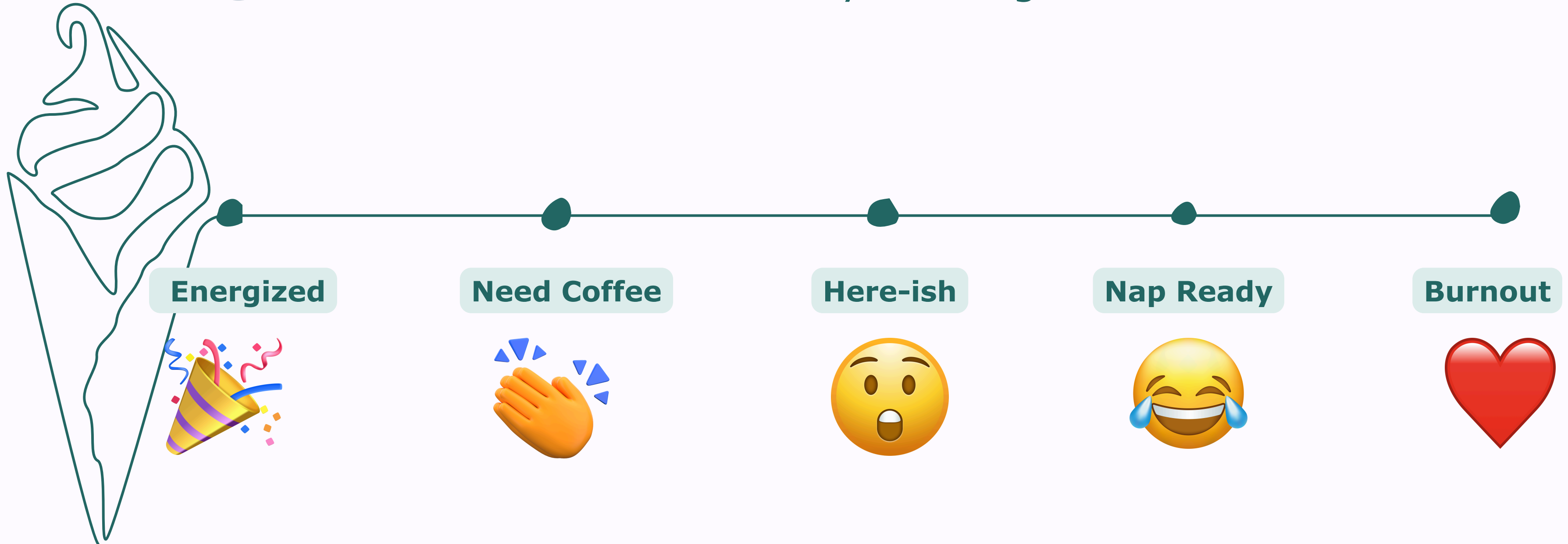
ABOUT WORKSHOP

This is not brand-new information. I'm not claiming to have thought a thought that was never thought or attempting to convince you that you have burnout or a workplace that is causing harm. This is an invitation to look at things again, maybe in a new light.

The Lavender Project is a grassroots organization that was created to help LGBTQIA2S+ individuals in rural communities. We specialize in education and advocacy.



ICE BREAKER: Where are you at right now?





HEALERS AND HELPERS

Those who have answered ANY call to help, the sacred and privileged who do not shy from the suffering.

BURNOUT

Exhaustion—physical, emotional, or mental—**and** reduced motivation, performance, and negative attitudes.





SECONDARY TRAUMA

Our bodies stress response to supporting and/or seeing the trauma of others. Also known as **the experience of being in community.**



**COMPASSION
FATIGUE IS
NOT BURNOUT.**

Why we shouldn't ignore burnout

Look at what one drop can make.

- Toxic relationship with Compassion fatigue
- Frequent exposure numbs us to our entire range of feelings.
- 78% less effective at our job.
 - Dangerous and harmful to those we serve
- Negative feedback loop

We were not made to simply survive;
You are meant to
Thrive.



12. Burnout Syndrome

"If I do not take a break, my body will take one for me". I have reached an unsustainable amount of exhaustion and have a mental or physical collapse. May require medical attention.

1. Compulsion to Prove

Filling the space with ambition; the need to say and show that I can handle whatever is happening right now. This starts as a positive push to get the job done and do it well.

11. Hopelessness

If I am prone to depression, it's about here that I have slipped into it. I am exhausted and completely detached and apathetic. I may think nothing will ever get better.

10. Empty

Deep bone hollowness. Emotional fatigue. There is nothing or no one with me in this moment. I may take risk seeking behaviors to try and "feel something".

9. Full Depersonalization

I can no longer see a long future plan or process. I am focused on a moment at a time. Everything becomes very mechanical so I can just get through it. I may not see mine or others value.

8. Behavioral Changes

The changes to myself are now noticeable to everyone who I interact with, rather than just those who I am closest with. I cannot hide the level of depletion anymore.

7. Withdrawal

I begin isolating rather than just minimizing my interactions with others. At this point, I am most vulnerable to my maladaptive coping skills or picking up a socially acceptable vice.

6. Denial

"I'm fine. This is Fine. Everything is FINE." All emotional changes are blamed on the heavy workload. My ability to socialize and be rational noticeable decrease.

2. Working Harder

Pushing myself to just do the work; taking on more responsibility. How much I do here is directly tied to "how much I have to prove".

3. Self-Neglect

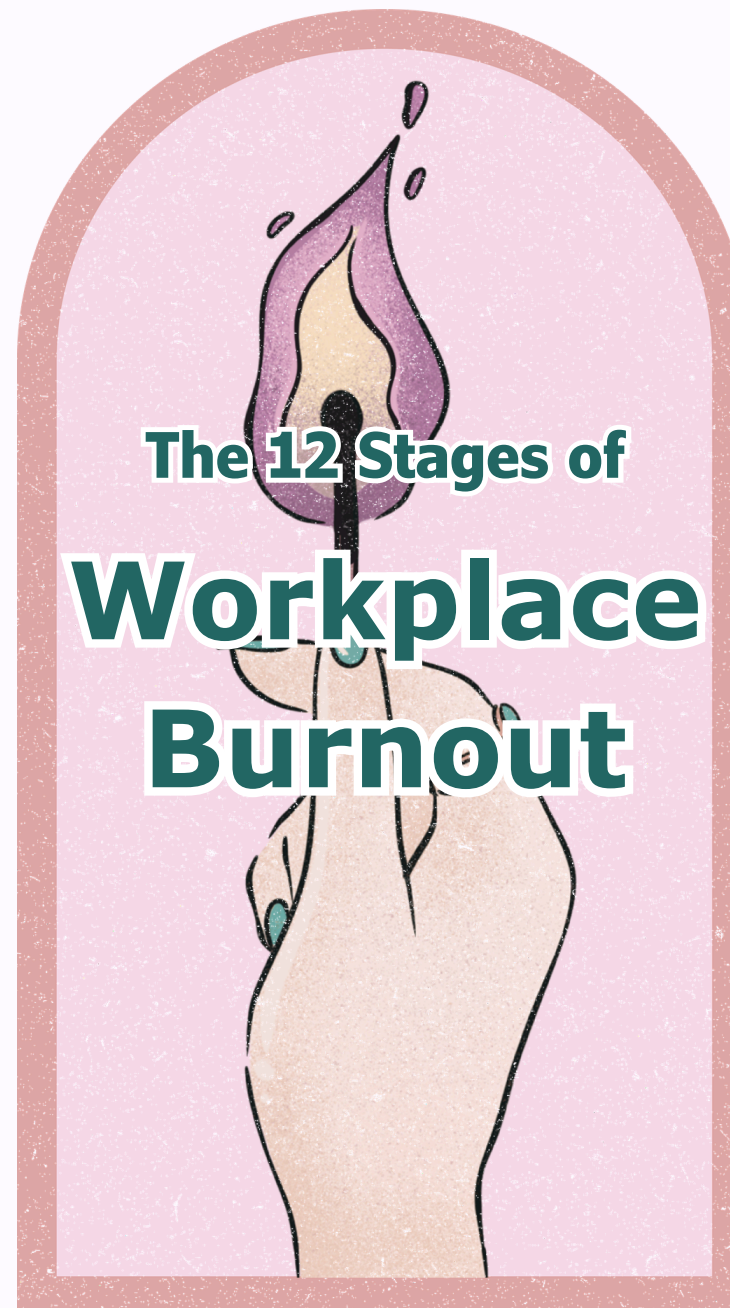
I begin to neglect my needs in order to achieve the work. Less breaks, less water, change in eating habits, change in self-care. I am spending less time on the things I enjoy.

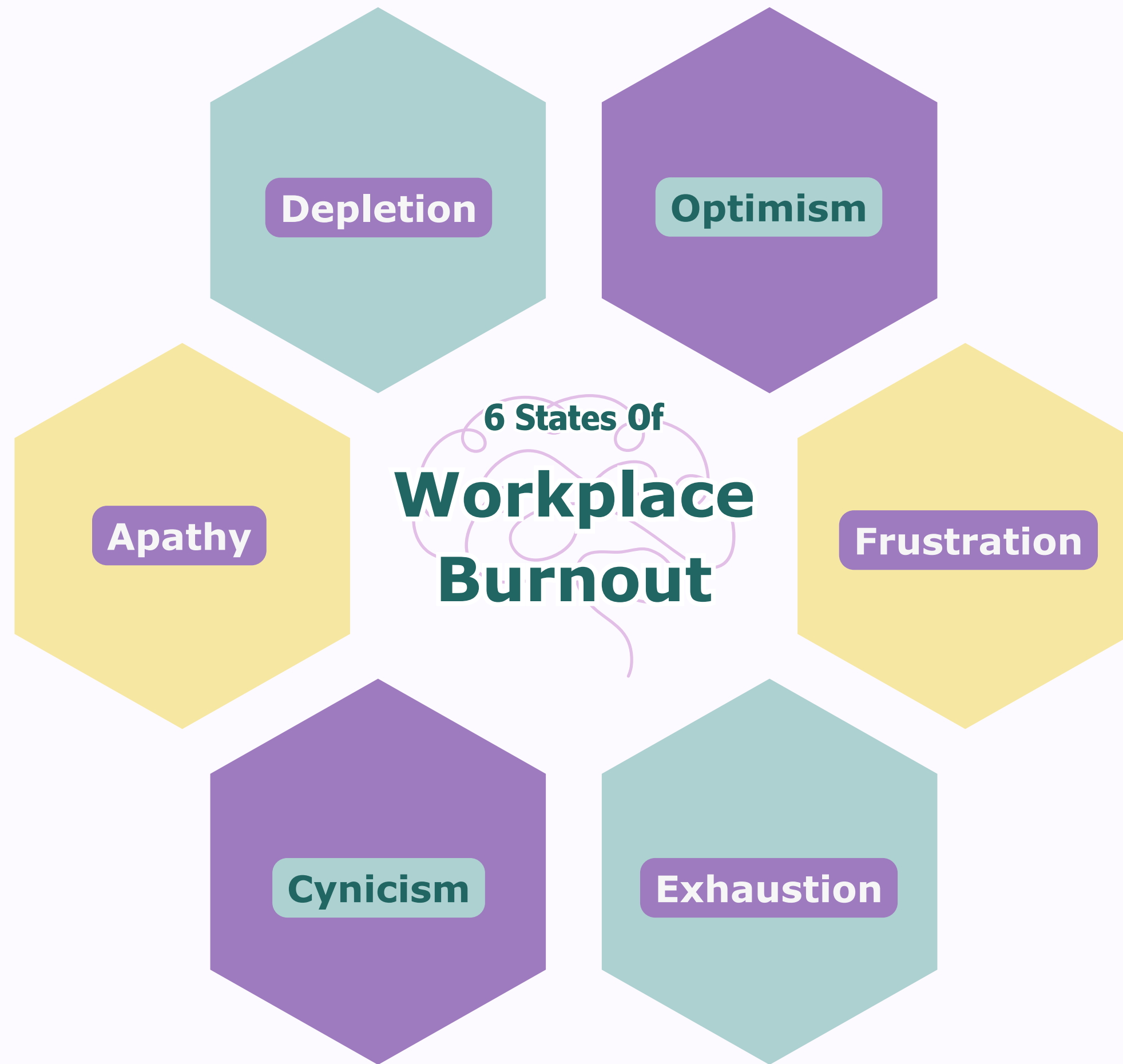
4. "Rationalizing"

I may know that something is off, I may notice the physical symptoms, but my response to that is to blame away the burnout. "Work is hard, we've been busy, we've been short staffed, etc."

5. Revision Of Values

I start to lose my emotional edge, and I am rearranging my time to accommodate work. Less social interactions with peers and family. I can't shut the box.





Root Causes

Caregiving

Hands on doing the help of supporting others, Dependent care responsibilities

Workload

High volume of clients and cases. Wearing 6 hats and expected to be everywhere all at once. Crisis intervention work, serving venerable communities, serving communities we belong to - physically and identity.

Administrative Load

Hands on work meets Mount Paperist. Keeping up with paperwork, training, document, document, document.

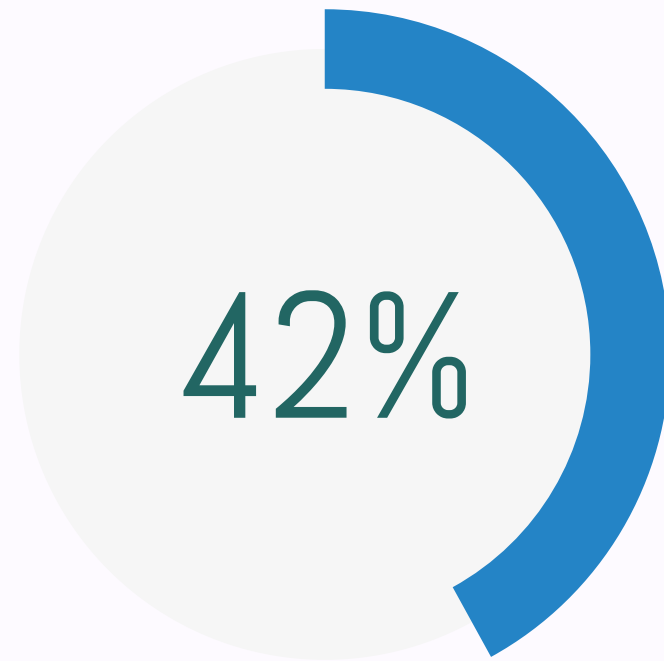


Scheduling

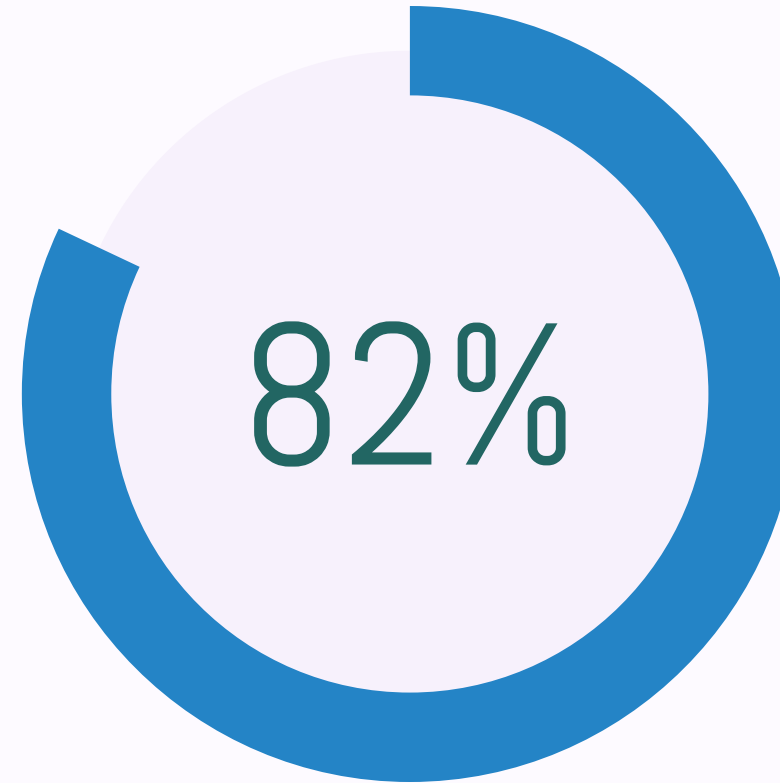
Not enough hours in the day, not enough bodies on the floor, limited autonomy on building schedule, 7 days a week of cheerful Helpful service required

Organizational

How the agency, program, department, team, or leadership has aligned (or designed) culturally, structurally, and values wise. Are profits or people at the center of the system? Lack of correct support or diversity.



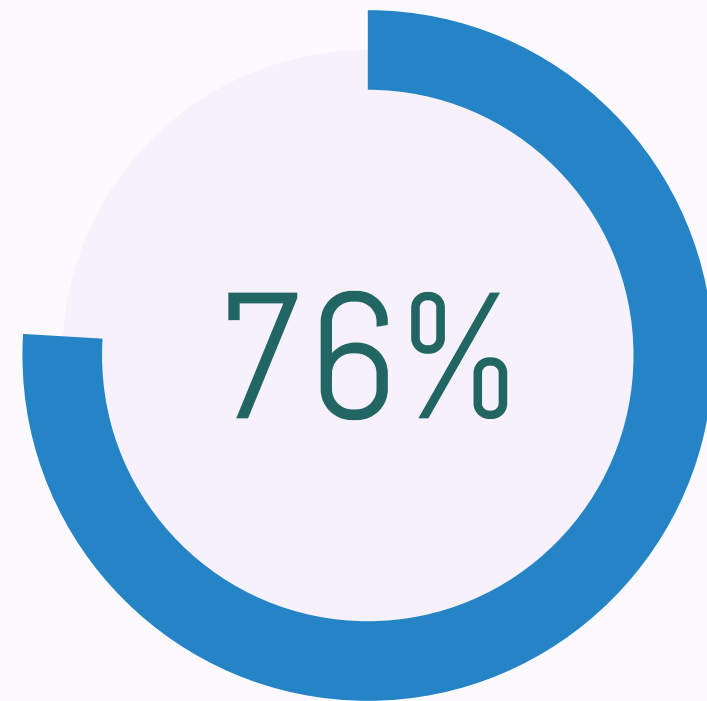
Lawyers Burnout



**LE Mental Health
effected***



**Advocates
Burnout**



**Social Workers
Burnout**



SELF CHECK-IN

Close your eyes or soften your gaze. Take a deep breath in through your nose... sip sip... and out through your mouth.

Gently scan your body. Think about:

- Where am I carrying stress or tension right now?
- What does burnout feel like in my body?



SELF-CARE AND RESILIENCY

Where we have the most control over prevention and recovery.



Barriers to Accessing Self-Care

Caregiving

- Limited Time with Patients
- Daily Emotional Labor
- Frequent Trauma Exposure
- Unpredictable Environment
- Stigma
- Politicalization of Helpers/Healers

Workload

- Excessive Workload and Hours
- Disconnect Between Decisions and Values
- Unrealistic Expectations

Administrative Load

- Paperwork Requirements
- Poor Care Coordination

Scheduling

- Limited Flexibility
- Limited Off Time
- Personal Time Limited
- Multiple Roles in Life

Organizational

- Limited Autonomy and Voice
- Lack of Support
- Lack of Impactful Leadership
- Workplace Culture

Personal

- Risk Factors
- Support Needs
- Marginalizations



What else? What are YOUR biggest barriers?

BREATH

EAT WELL

EXERCISE

**SPARK
JOY**

SLEEP



**WHAT THEY
ALWAYS SAY**

PRAY

**TIME
MANAGEMENT**

GET HELP

GROUNDING

**CHANGE
JOBS**

CUPS ARE A SPECTRUM

Before we talk about the dirty 8 letter word (self-care) let's ground ourselves in reality: **Everyone's** capacity and recovery needs are unique to them. *The cups are different.*

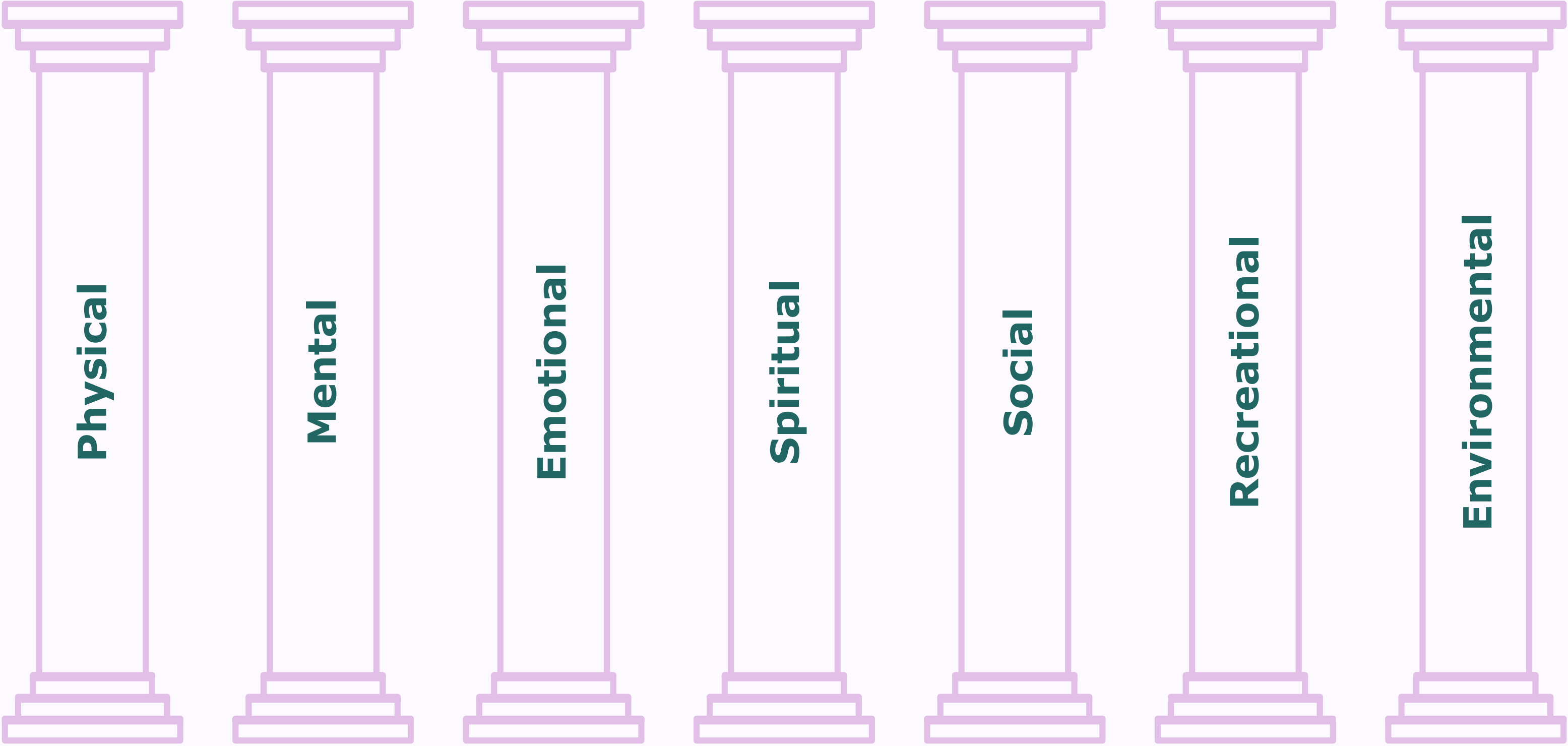


AGENCIES SHOULD BE SPOTTERS



While it is really important for individuals on the team to build their strength: **Staff cannot be successful in preventing burnout alone.** capacity and recovery needs are unique to them. *The cups are different.*

Seven Pillars of Self-Care



The diagram consists of seven identical, stylized purple pillars arranged in a horizontal row. Each pillar has a multi-tiered base and a matching multi-tiered capital. The pillars are evenly spaced and serve as a visual metaphor for the seven domains of self-care.

Physical

Mental

Emotional

Spiritual

Social

Recreational

Environmental

EVIDANCED-BASED PRACTICES

Things that have a positive impact on BOTH self-care and resiliency.

- Trauma Stewardship
- Rhythmic Movement
- Exit Buddies
- Eat the Frog
- Self-Compassion
- (Actual) Connection
- Passion Project



TRAUMA STEWARDSHIP

How we: Come to this work and community, how we are affected by it, and how we understand and grow from experiences.





RHYTHMIC MOVEMENT

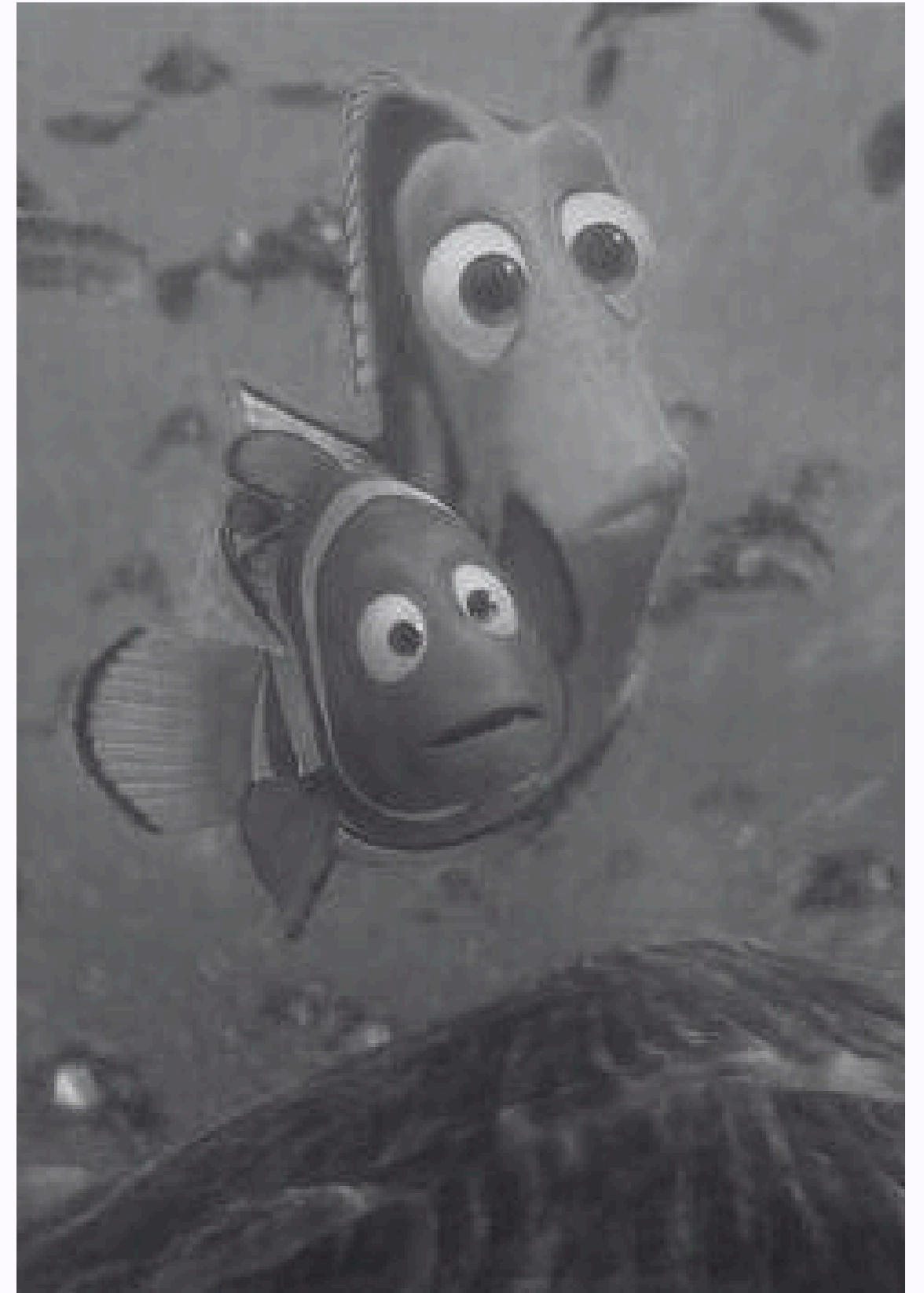
“Movement activities the
memory of safety.”
-Dr. Bruce Perry

Heavy emotional states
hate a moving target.
Dancing and joy have
always been tools of the
resistance.

EXIT BUDDY

Those in my micro spaces I know I can reach out to for encouragement and support who also hold me accountable.

The goal is to have at least one person across all the spaces I step into.





EAT THE FROG

Set a timer and do the most dreadful/tedious/difficult/time consuming tasks at the start of the day. Works for those who are both internally and externally motivated.



Self-Compassion

Beyond self-care, we need to give ourselves space, grace, and thanks.



Actual Connection

Setting specific time on a regular basis to spend time with professional peers. Debrief and hold space often.

Organizational Strategies

Workload & Scheduling

- Enforce **protected break times** and **no-meeting zones**
- Limit on-call shifts or rotate fairly across staff
- Implement **realistic caseload guidelines/support**
- Encourage **flexible scheduling** when possible

Communication & Debriefing

- Build in **routine debriefs** after high-impact work
- Normalize **brief emotional check-ins** at the start/end of meetings
- Provide access to **clinical supervision or peer reflection** rounds

Culture

- Leadership **models healthy boundaries and transparency**
- Open **discussion** of burnout and compassion fatigue **without stigma**
- Recognize and **reward emotional labor**, not just outcomes

Policy & Practice

- Create and uphold “**no after-hours email**” policies
- Offer **wellness time off** or **mental health days**
- **Provide paid training** on trauma stewardship and self-care

Physical Space

- Designate **quiet rooms** or decompressing zones
- Provide **grounding kits** or tactile coping tools at workstations
- Make water, snacks, or comfort items easily accessible

Parts Reflections

- Head – What happened (facts)?
- Heart – How did it feel (emotions)?
- Hands – What will I do next time (action)?

Peer Circles

Gather small group, often.
One person shares, others
only listen—no fixing.

Responses are limited to:

- “Thank you for sharing.”
- “I’ve experienced something similar.”
- “That sounds really hard.”

Sprinkle Sprinkle

- What felt heavy today?
- What do I need before I go home?
- What can or was learned from this?
- What’s one thing that can be let go of right now?

Check-Outs

Close meetings with:

- 3 things that went well
- 2 things that could improve
- 1 thing I’m taking away / feeling / need

INTENTIONAL DEBRIEF



**WE HEAL IN
COMMUNITY.**



WHEN/IF

The best time for me to do something is now. Living in my head is moving to a crowded neighborhood.

SPIRAL OUT

Showing up intentionally allows my light to continue to call in others.



Burnout Prevention Plan

What Are Your Burnout Cues?

What tasks or situations leave me feeling most emotionally or physically drained?

When during my day or week do I feel most stressed?

What are my early signs that burnout might be setting in?

How Can I Set Better Boundaries?

When are my clear start and stop time for work?

When was the last time I actually took a full lunch or break?

Am I responding to messages or emails outside of work hours? Why?

What's one responsibility I can delegate or share this week?

What Nourishes Me?

What is one thing I can do daily that makes me feel recharged?

What activities can I do in less than five minutes to relax or slow down?

What \$5 or less treat lifts my mood?



Burnout Prevention Plan

Who Is In My Corner?

Who can I talk to that "gets it" when I'm overwhelmed?

Which mentor or supervisor can I check-in with and have I done it lately?

Who can I text when I need a little encouragement?

What Needs to Change?

What's one small adjustment I can make to reduce my load this week?

Do I need to have a conversation with leadership about capacity or support?

These are the dates for a break, day off, or planning something restorative.

What's one new goal or opportunity that could bring energy back into my role?

How Am I Handling Emotional Fatigue?

What reminds me why I do this work?

When I feel emotionally tired, what helps me ground?

Am I allowing space for joy and fun, even in small moments?







**QUESTIONS,
COMMENTS,
CONCERNS?**

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Scan to connect