



CAEH Training &
Technical Assistance



Mindfulness as “We Care”

Sustaining Ourselves in Frontline Housing First work

Developed by Brian Dean Williams
Nanaimo, 2019-02-06

Introductions, in pairs



- Who or what is sustaining you in this work?
- What do you want to pay more attention to, in terms of sustaining yourself in this role?

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Risks to us as frontline staff:

Vicarious trauma:
cumulative effect of
working with traumatized
clients: interference with
helping professional's
feelings, memories, self-
esteem, and/or sense of
safety

Compassion fatigue:
stress reducing our ability
to engage
compassionately with
others

Addiction: as way to
soothe the above



“I don’t think as therapists and community workers we’re burning out. The problem of burnout is not in our heads or in our hearts, but in the real world where there is a lack of justice. The people I work alongside don’t burn me out and they don’t hurt me – they transform me, challenge me, and inspire me. What harms me are the injustices and indignities suffered by clients and my frustrating inability to personally change the unjust structures of society they struggle with and live in.”

-Vikki Reynolds, “Resisting Burnout with Justice-Doing” (2011)



The importance of effectiveness

We have good evidence across time that feeling effective and purposeful is a sustaining factor for therapists and social workers. “Our sustainability is connected to knowing and believing that our work matters.” (Reynolds, 2015, p. 36)

Important to solicit clear feedback and to know if what we’re offering is or isn’t working. If it isn’t, having the professional humility to either change approaches or offer another helper or service that might be more effective.

Mathieu, Hubble, and Miller (2015) point out that over time, the most effective ‘Supershrinks’ tend to “place the outcome of treatment over involvement with clients (p. 5)

Finding that delicate and divine balance between therapeutic love and letting go.
Prioritizing client’s life improving over our need to hang on.

“Being effective and improving are the best medicine for what ails the healer’s heart” (Mathieu, Hubble, Miller, 2015, p. 10 over time)

SELF-CARE IS NOT SELFISH





**“We Care”
vs.
Self Care**

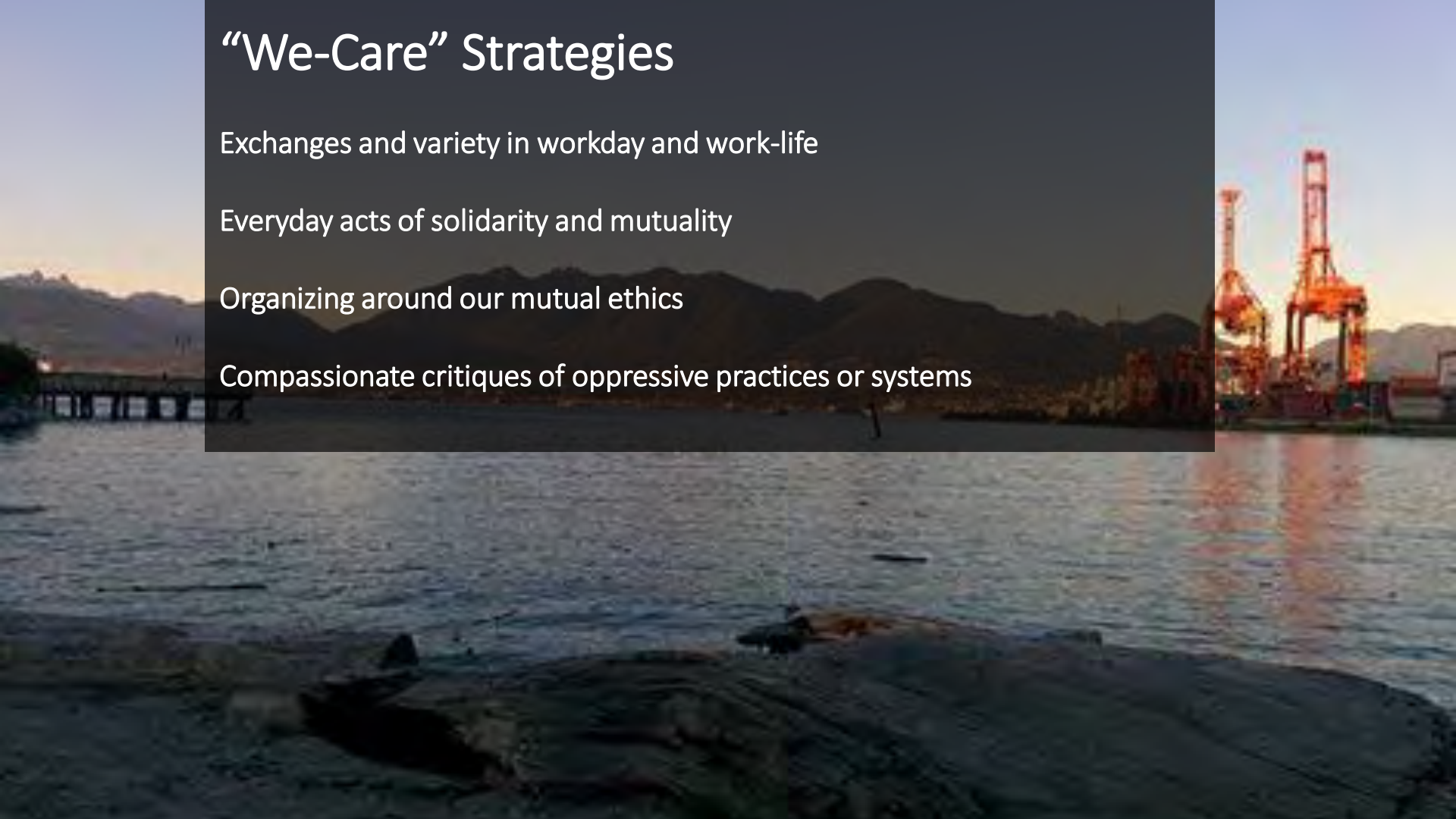
“We-Care” Strategies

Exchanges and variety in workday and work-life

Everyday acts of solidarity and mutuality

Organizing around our mutual ethics

Compassionate critiques of oppressive practices or systems





“We-Care” Strategies


Celebrating and centering
successes / victories

Taking scheduled breaks and
respecting boundaries

Co-visioning plan with peers or
supervisor

Exploring spiritual beliefs /
connections

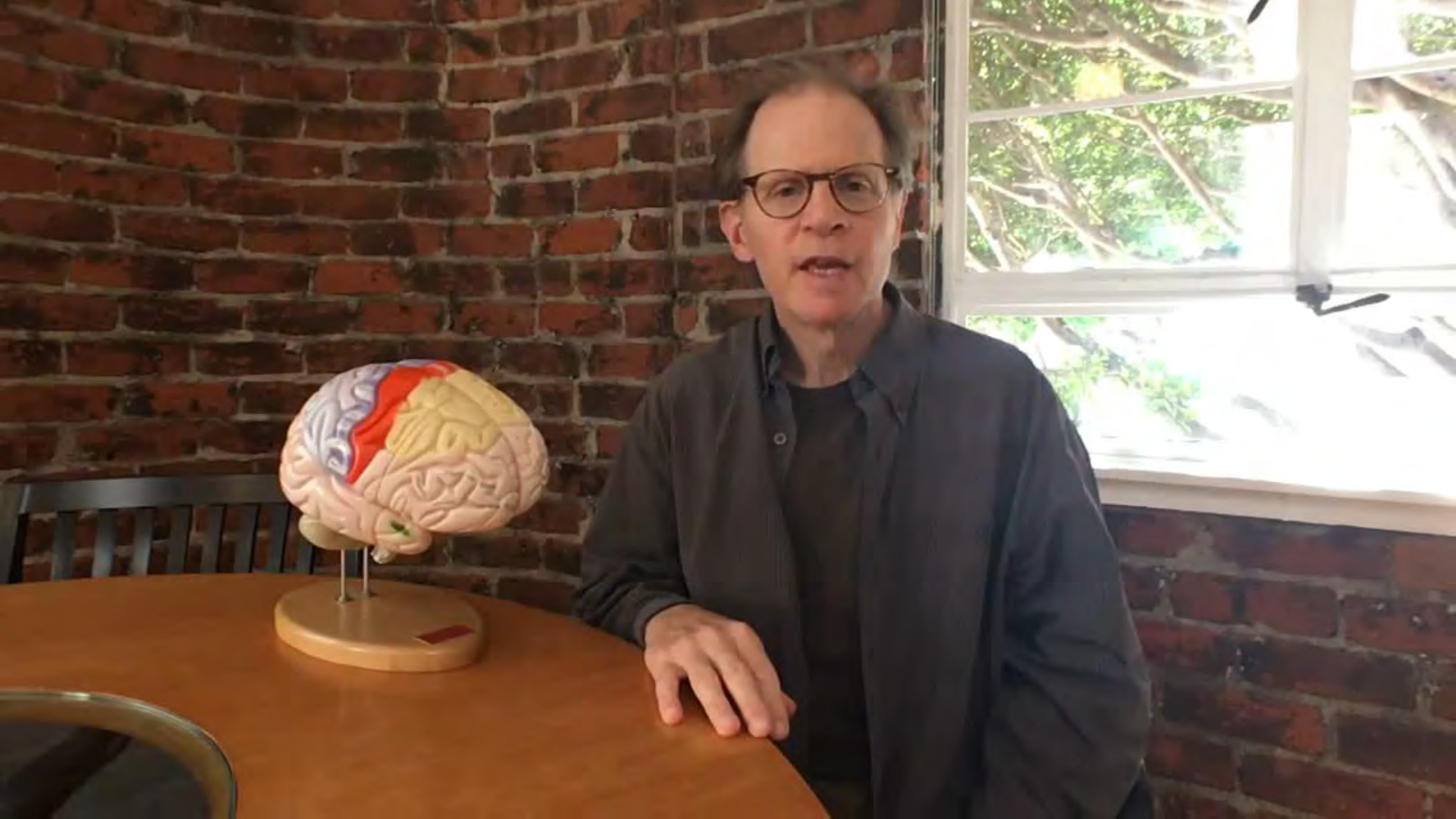
Taking care of our bodies

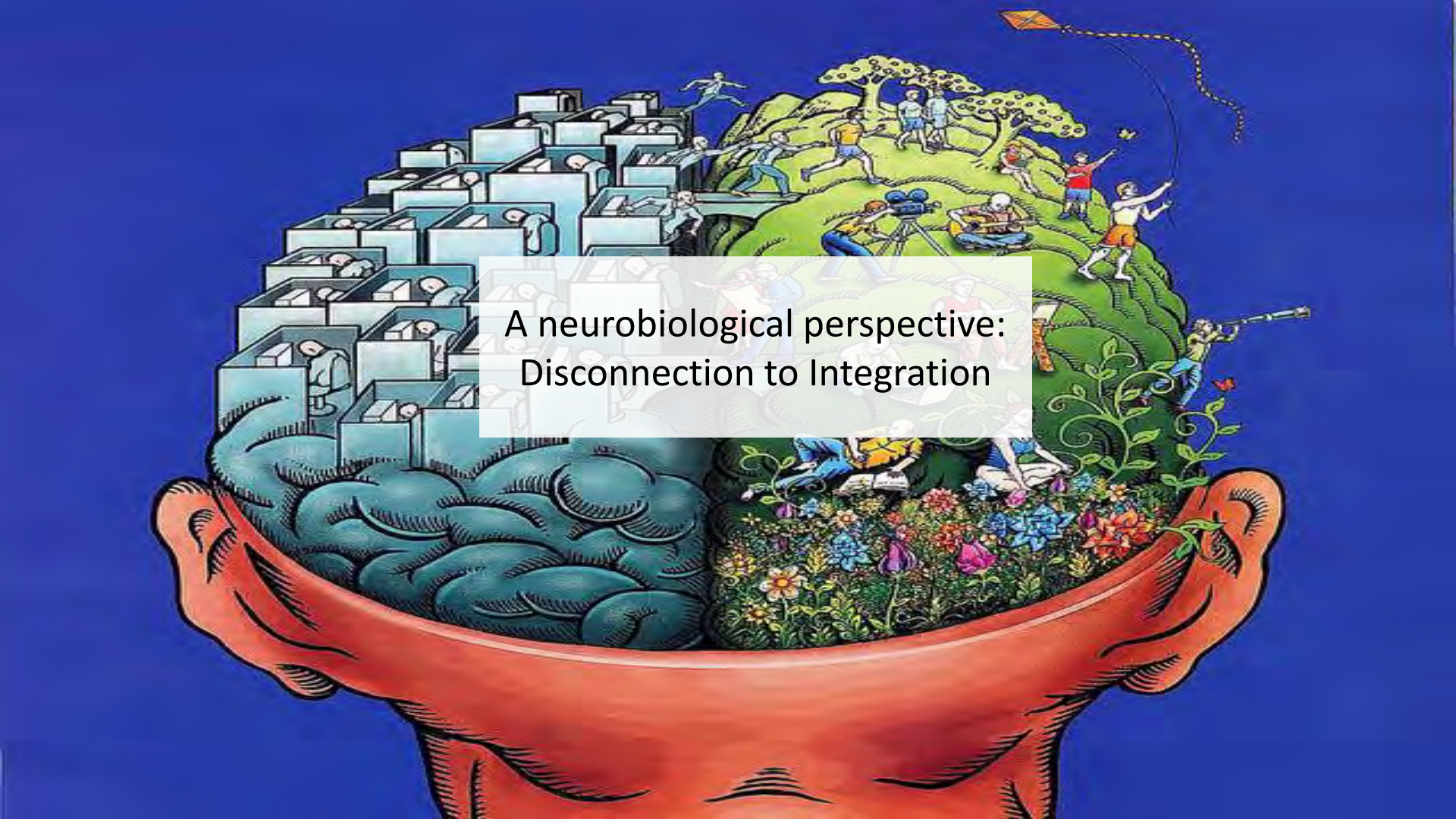
A top-down view of a diverse group of people, likely students, gathered in a circle. Their hands are stacked in the center, with fingers pointing towards the middle. Many of the individuals are wearing blue wristbands with the word "EMFASIS" printed on them in white. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source coming from above, highlighting the hands and the wristbands. The overall atmosphere is one of unity and collective effort.

What is your already team doing for “We Care” that is sustaining you collectively?
If you use your imagination, what could you do together to strengthen this for your team?

What is Mindfulness?

- Paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment (Kabat-Zinn)
- Generosity (Michael Stone)
- Re-remembering / Integration (Daniel Siegel)
- A collection of practices that help us to Wake Up



A conceptual illustration of a brain in a red bowl. The brain is divided into two halves. The left half is a city with blue buildings and people walking. The right half is a garden with green hills, trees, and people playing. A text overlay is in the center.

A neurobiological perspective:
Disconnection to Integration

"Not thinking of you."



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ZEN BIRTHDAY CARD

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A photograph of two men sitting on a snowy rooftop. The man on the left has dark curly hair and is wearing a dark blue jacket and a black headband. The man on the right has brown hair and is wearing a black jacket over a light blue shirt and tie, along with black gloves. They are both smiling and appear to be in conversation. A large, semi-transparent white circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing text.

Relevance to frontline work

- ✓ Therapeutic Presence
- ✓ Stress reduction
- ✓ Safety



A close-up, low-angle shot of a field of golden wheat. The stalks are tall and thin, with several heads of wheat in focus. The background is a soft, out-of-focus blue sky with light, wispy clouds. The overall tone is warm and natural.

Breath Awareness



I'm meditating on my inability to meditate due to the fact that when I meditate I can't stop thinking about how I can't meditate because I'm thinking about my inability to meditate. Is that correct?

Mindful Eating



OUT TO LUNCH



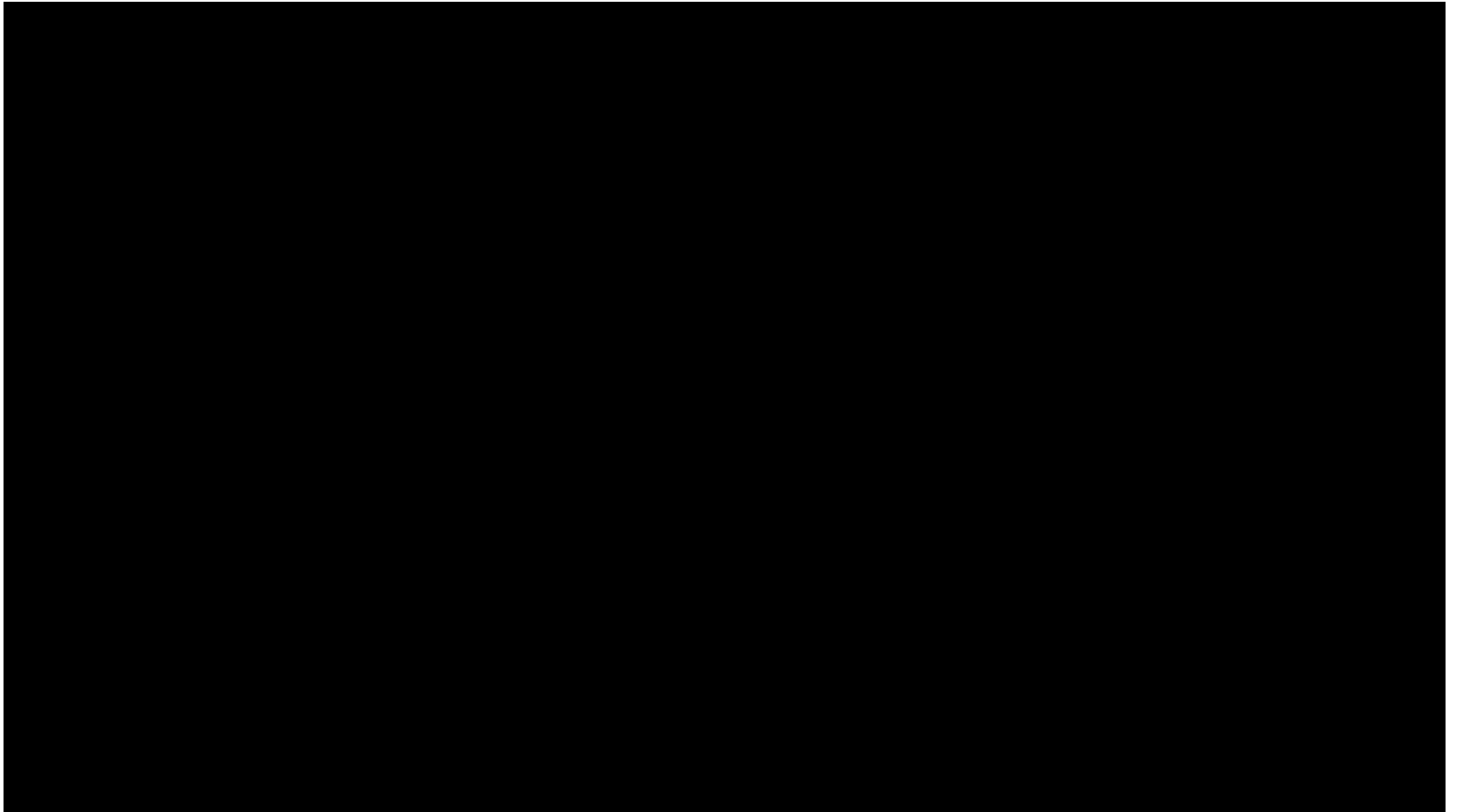




Mindful Walking



6 Sense Practice



“Formal” Practice



“Informal” Practice



A close-up photograph of a white bowl filled with vibrant red salsa, garnished with green herbs. The bowl is surrounded by several golden-brown, triangular tortilla chips. The background is dark, making the food stand out.

S.A.L.S.A.: working with “Spicy” emotions and patterns

S top

A llow

L et Go

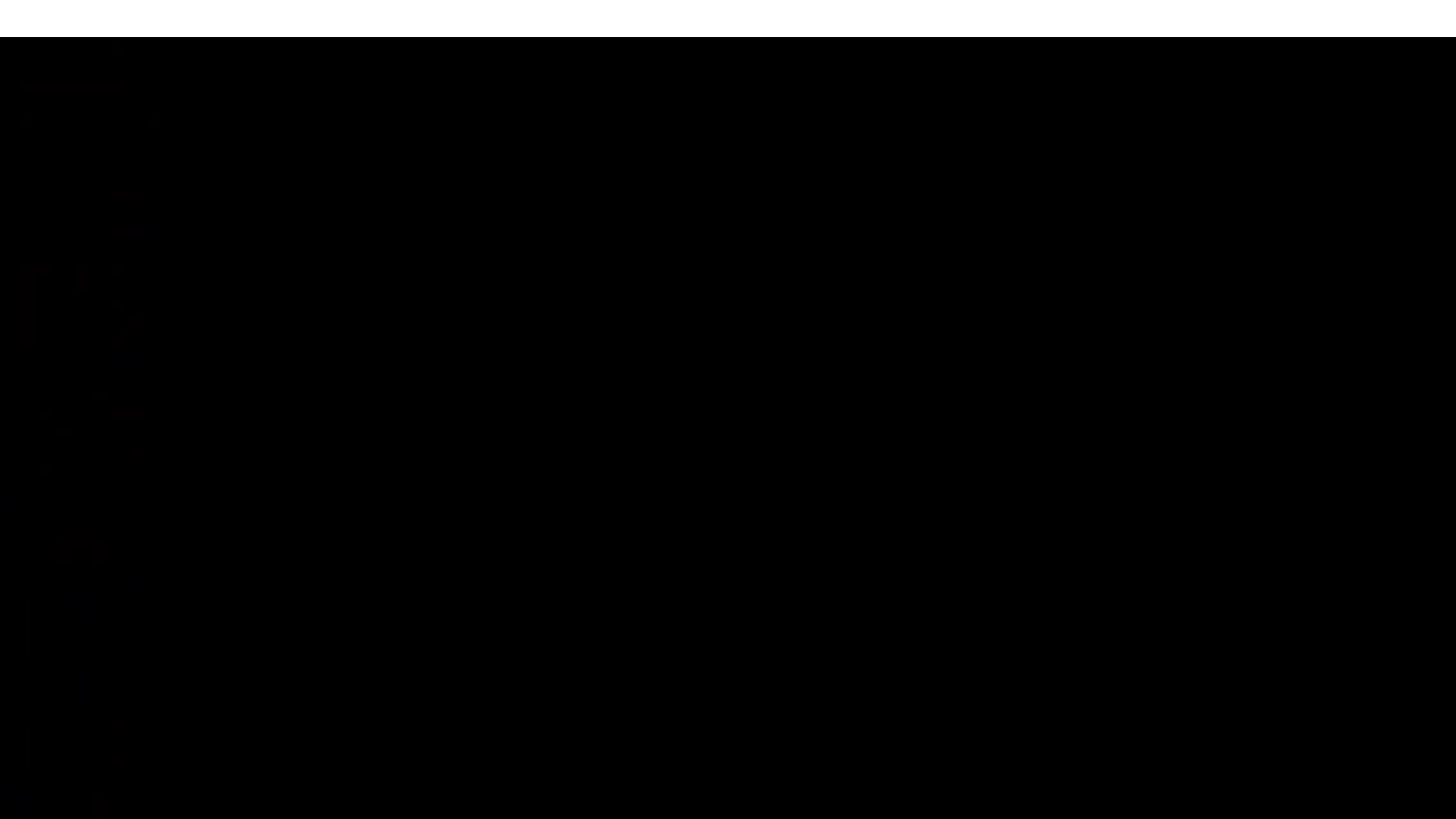
S ee Change

A ct with
Integrity

Your Feedback is really important to us

Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/VictoriaTIC>



Noble
Speech:
T.H.I.N.K.

- T rue
- H elpful
- I ntentional
- N ecessary
- K ind



newyorkercartoons



*“That reminds me of the thing
I was going to say next regardless.”*

—

Council Practice

- Speak from the Heart – ask **“What does this circle really need to hear from me right now?”** When speaking from the heart, members in council should choose their best words, keep it to point, be concise
- Listen from the Heart – Deep listening is tuning in to the other person and acknowledging their thoughts and feelings as a fellow human being.
- Get to the Heart of the Matter – Councils are authentic and sincere, responsive rather than reactive.
- Be spontaneous – open to the **moment and trust yourself; don’t be** formulating your responses while other people are talking, be present (Michael Wallace, Matt Fogarty, Larry Hobbs)



Questions/Discussion

A scenic landscape photograph showing three people sitting on a rocky mountain peak, looking out over a valley. The valley features several blue lakes, green forests, and snow-dusted mountains in the distance. The text "Questions/Discussion" is overlaid in the center of the image.

Thank
you!

Resources

<http://dulwichcentre.com.au/articles-about-narrative-therapy/>

<http://www.vikkireynolds.ca/>

<http://www.2stories.com> (Julie Tilsen)

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

Article by Brian Williams and Barbara Baumgartner:

<http://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/ijcyfs/article/view/12900>

Becoming An Insider: Narrative Therapy Groups Alongside People Overcoming Homelessness

Article by Barbara Baumgartner and Brian Williams – ask Brian for copy!

https://medium.com/@ginwright/the-future-of-healing-shifting-from-trauma-informed-care-to-healing-centered-engagement-634f557ce69c?fbclid=IwAR3-9Z_K7QMjWqZhFO2dshqg8q4R2EvM2iKy3AAx4gCoKOWVDyaJqXDANec

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Additional Training

available through:



CAEH Training &
Technical Assistance



<http://www.caeh.ca>

<http://training.caeh.ca>

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Homelessness
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