

A hand holding a magnifying glass over an old map with a compass rose and various hand-drawn symbols.

**Supervision through the Looking Glass:
How to See and Respond to Trauma in the Workplace**

**SHARE! Supervision of the Peer Workforce
Virtual Conference**

April 17, 2024

Presenters



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Through the Looking Glass

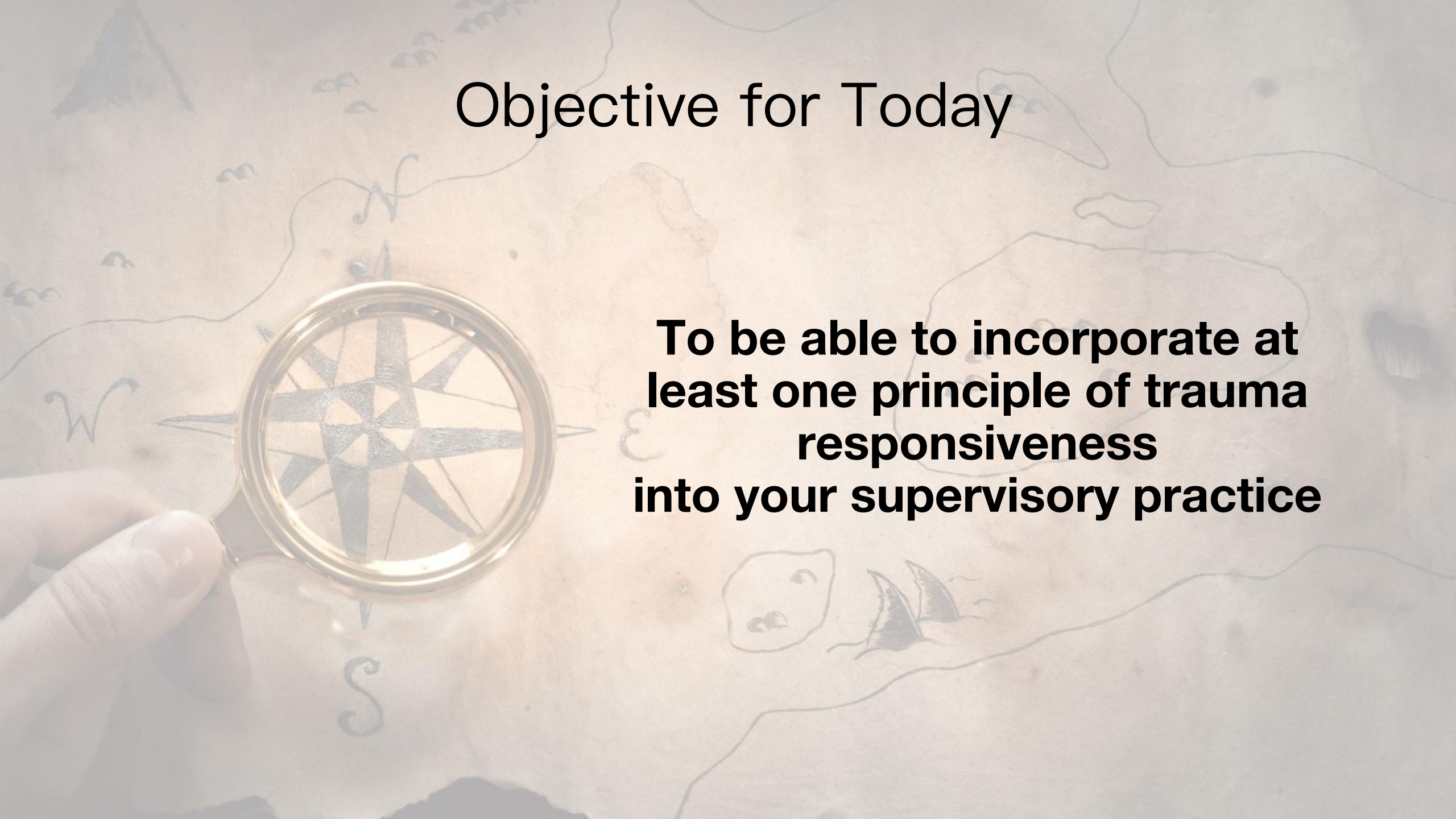


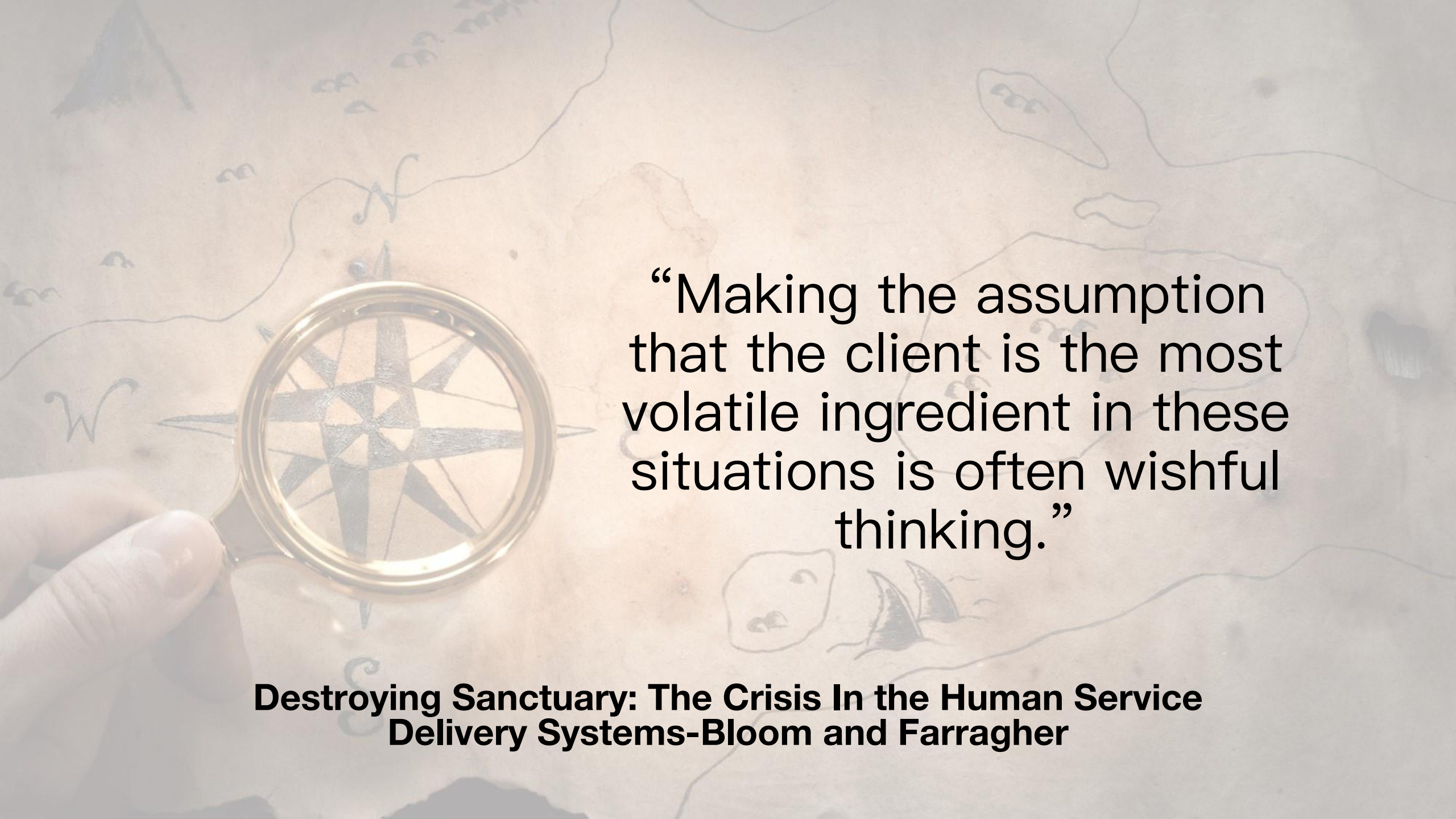
Short clip from *Alice Through the Looking Glass*

Message: What is can feel like supervisors enter the world of being peer-informed and trauma-responsive.

Objective for Today

To be able to incorporate at least one principle of trauma responsiveness into your supervisory practice



A hand is holding a magnifying glass over an old, weathered map. The map features a prominent compass rose in the center, with various geographical outlines and handwritten text. The magnifying glass is positioned over the compass rose, highlighting it. The background is a textured, aged paper with some water damage and faint sketches of a face and a bird.

“Making the assumption that the client is the most volatile ingredient in these situations is often wishful thinking.”

Destroying Sanctuary: The Crisis In the Human Service Delivery Systems-Bloom and Farragher

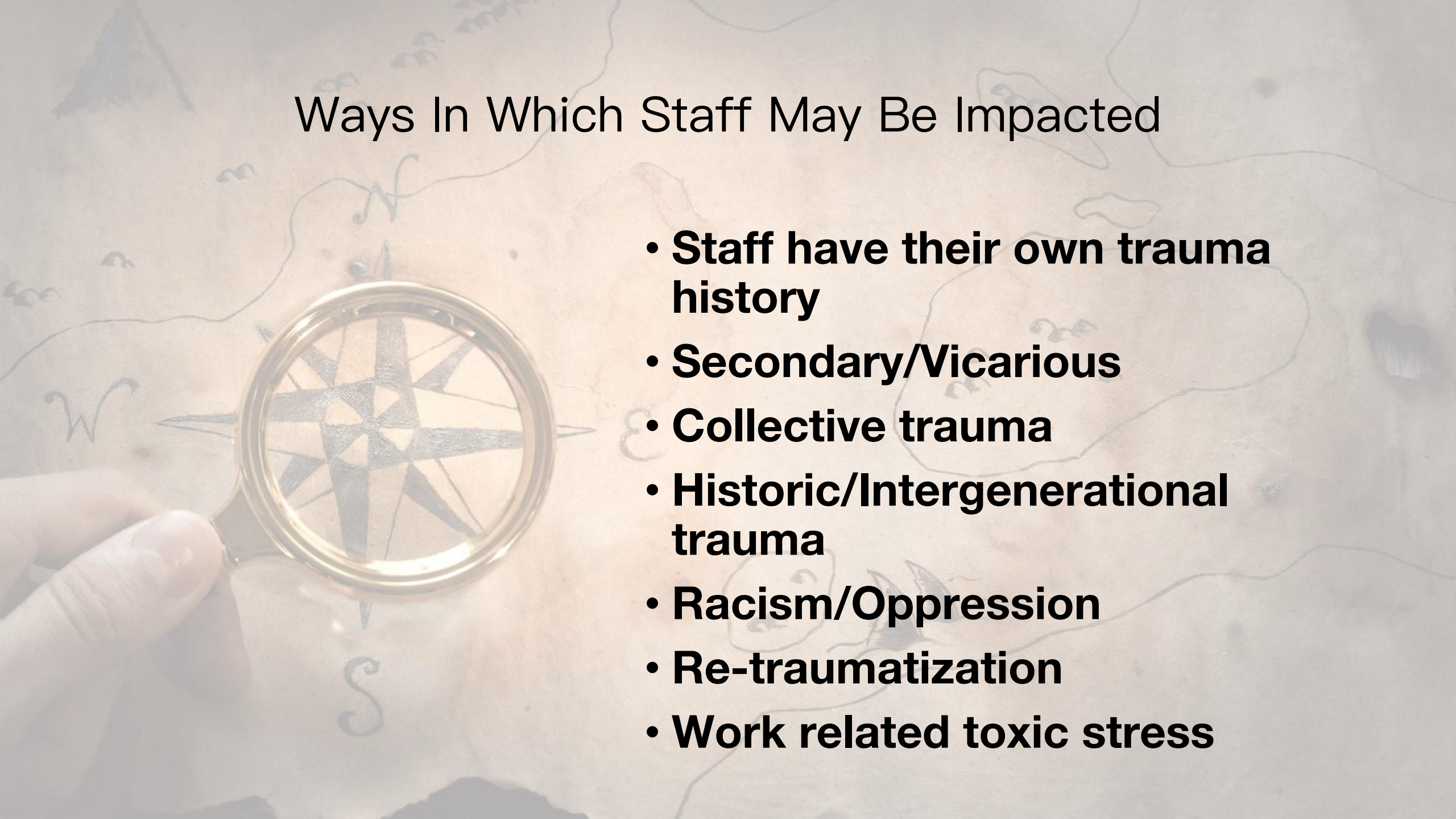
Why Is This Important?

A hand is holding a magnifying glass over a compass rose on an old, weathered map. The map features various symbols, including a mountain peak in the top left, a tree in the bottom right, and the letters 'W', 'E', and 'S' scattered across the surface. The background is a textured, light brown color.

- **Focus is traditionally on individuals we collaborate with through services however, staff can have their own issues that can influence the dynamic**
- **Not limited to peer staff**
- **Can create barriers when a trauma lens is not used**
- **Can cause harm when not understood**

Ways In Which Staff May Be Impacted

- **Staff have their own trauma history**
- **Secondary/Vicarious**
- **Collective trauma**
- **Historic/Intergenerational trauma**
- **Racism/Oppression**
- **Re-traumatization**
- **Work related toxic stress**



5 Principles of Trauma Responsiveness

- **Safety**
- **Choice**
- **Collaboration**
- **Trustworthiness**
- **Empowerment**

Safety

“As leaders, we need to focus on prioritizing physical, emotional and psychological safety in every interaction and process”

--Johnson, K., National Council, 2020

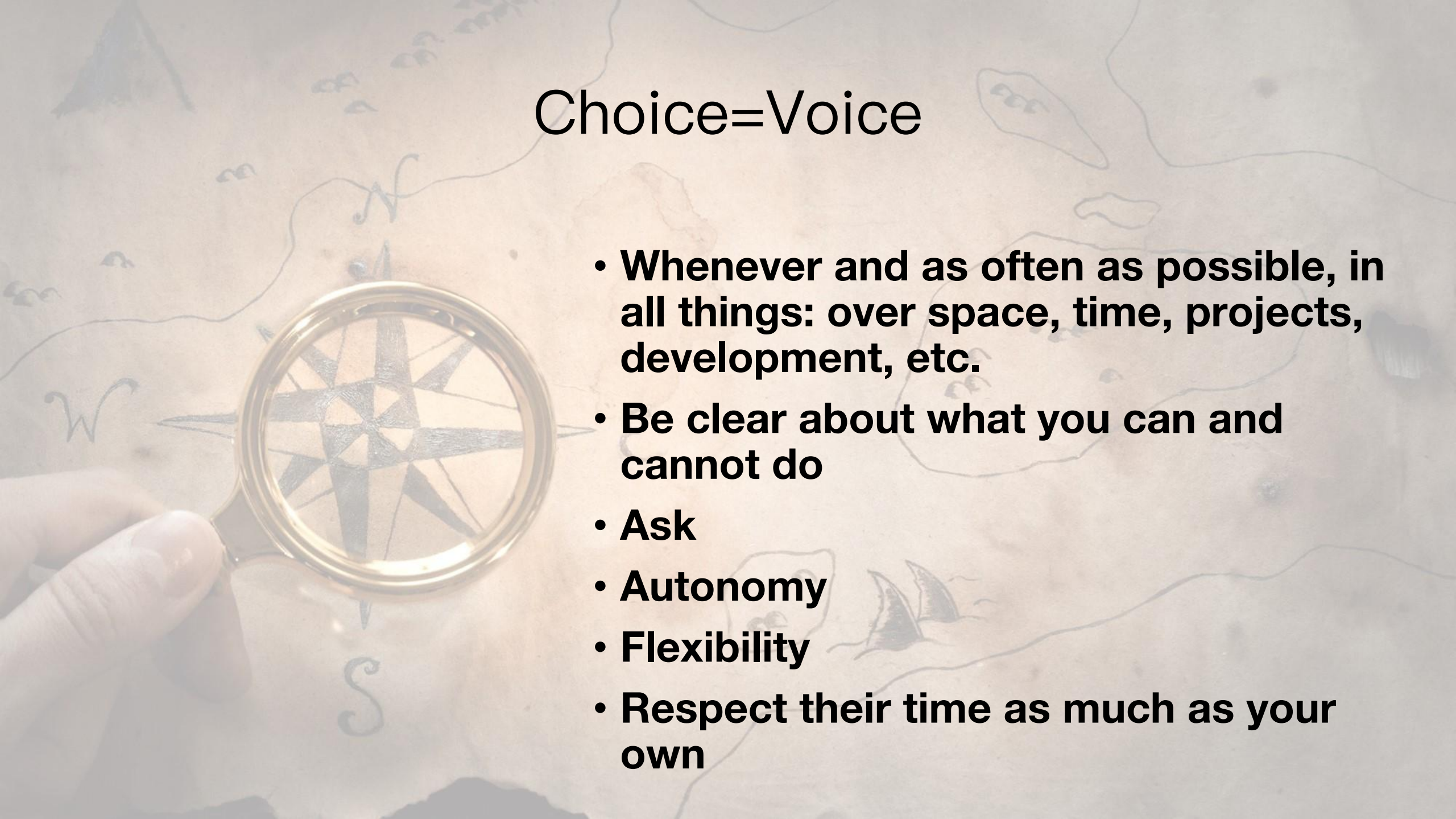
Promoting Safety During Supervision

- **Set an intention together**
- **Manage your energy**
- **Try not to yell, or be retaliatory**
- **Take a moment, regroup, breathe, center (however you can)**
- **Document and provide copies**
- **Follow through**
- **Model**
- **Minimize surprises**
- **Create learning opportunities from errors**
- **Recognize vulnerability as strength**



Choice=Voice

- **Whenever and as often as possible, in all things: over space, time, projects, development, etc.**
- **Be clear about what you can and cannot do**
- **Ask**
- **Autonomy**
- **Flexibility**
- **Respect their time as much as your own**



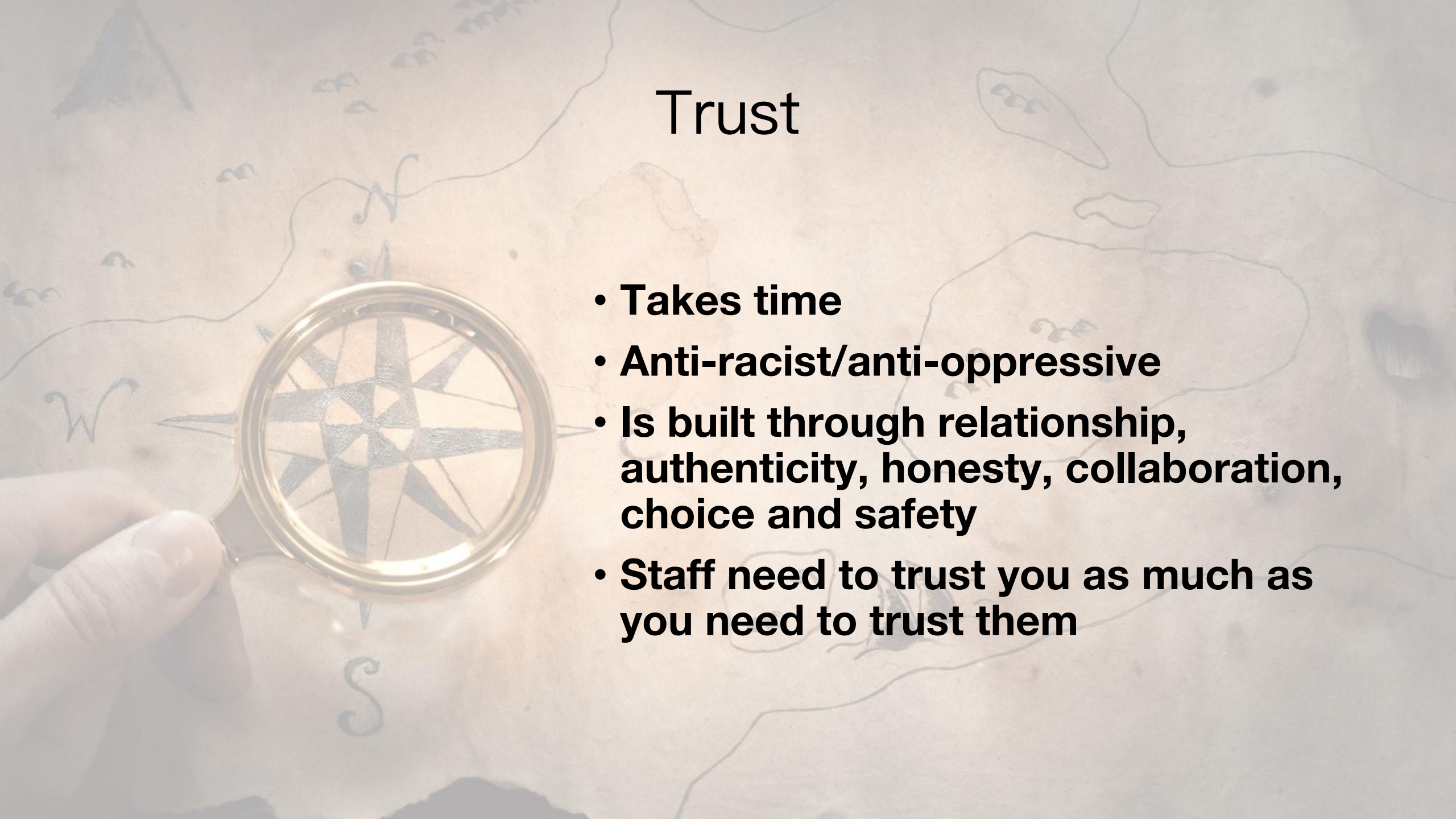
Collaboration

A hand holding a magnifying glass over a compass rose on an old map. The map is aged and yellowed, with various symbols and lines. The compass rose is a four-pointed star with smaller points in between, and the magnifying glass is held over it, highlighting the center. The background is a textured, light-colored surface.

- **Minimize power and control**
- **Ongoing assessment of whether you are both moving toward the same goals**
- **Support professional development and training**
- **Recognize their character strengths and highlight them**
- **Mutual listening**
- **Treat as expert in what they know**

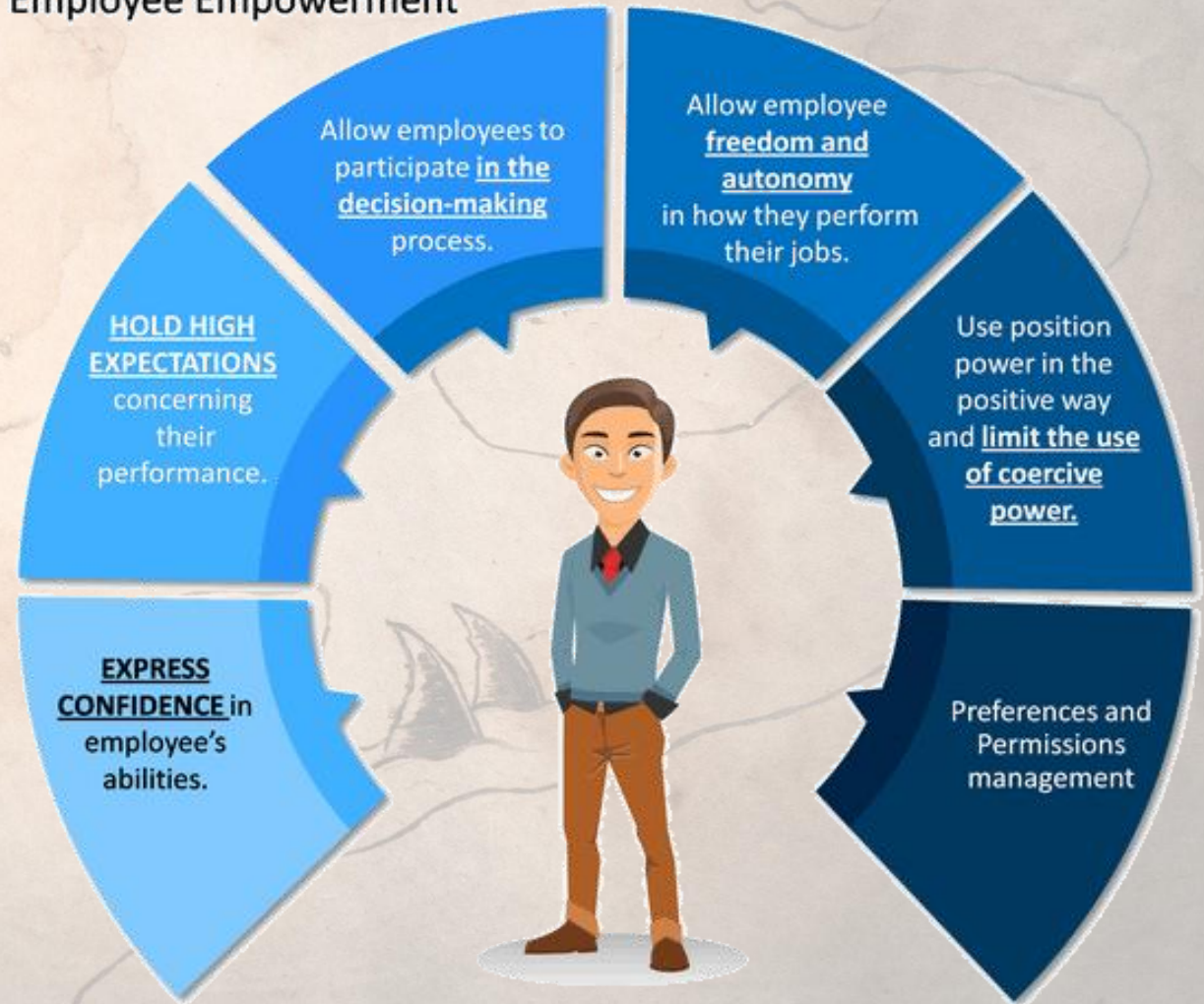
Trust

- **Takes time**
- **Anti-racist/anti-oppressive**
- **Is built through relationship, authenticity, honesty, collaboration, choice and safety**
- **Staff need to trust you as much as you need to trust them**



Employee Empowerment

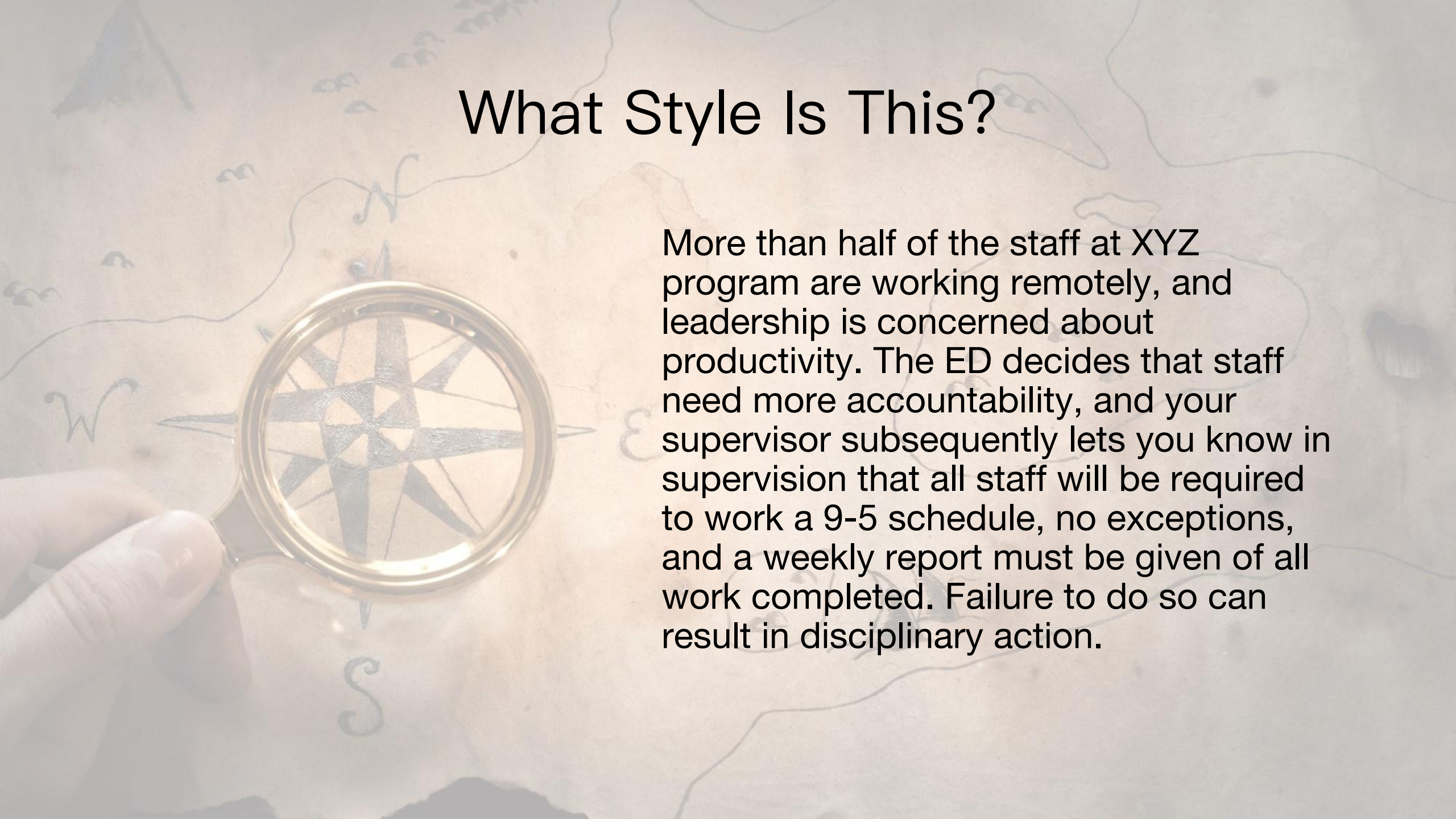
Ways of Employee Empowerment



Supervision Styles That Can Activate Staff Trauma

- **Authoritarian: Staff cannot be trusted, I am the boss**
- **Bureaucratic: Staff have little voice and choice, inflexible**
- **Task oriented: focus is always on product, rarely on development or celebration**

What Style Is This?

A hand is holding a magnifying glass over a map. The map features a compass rose with the letters N, S, E, and W. The background is a textured, light-colored surface with faint map lines and symbols.

More than half of the staff at XYZ program are working remotely, and leadership is concerned about productivity. The ED decides that staff need more accountability, and your supervisor subsequently lets you know in supervision that all staff will be required to work a 9-5 schedule, no exceptions, and a weekly report must be given of all work completed. Failure to do so can result in disciplinary action.

Alternatives: Key Approaches

- **Strengths Based**
- **Supportive**
- **Collaborative**
- **Educational/mentoring**

Strengths Based


- **Moving beyond recognition of skills, although that is also important**
- **Cultivation of traits that allow staff to flourish and thrive in the workplace**
- **Character strengths that allow staff to feel a part of something bigger than themselves, be recognized and valued, and express who they are**
- **Love of learning, leadership, teamwork, fairness, humor, prudence, judgement, to name a few**

How to Strengths Spot


A hand holding a magnifying glass over a map with a compass rose. The map is a light-colored, textured surface with faint blue lines and letters. The magnifying glass is held over a compass rose, which is a star-shaped symbol with eight points. The hand is visible on the left side of the image, holding the handle of the magnifying glass.

- **Label:** Name the strength you notice. What do you observe?
- **Explain:** Give an explanation for your observation. What were they doing when you noticed the strength?
- **Appreciate:** Express appreciation/affirmation. Why do you value that strengths expression? How is it an asset to their role?

Supportive/Collaborative Supervision

- 
- A hand holding a magnifying glass over a compass rose on an old map. The map is aged and yellowed, with various lines and markings. The compass rose is a four-pointed star with smaller points in between, and the magnifying glass is held over it, highlighting the center.
- **Does not excuse behavior but seeks to understand it**
 - **Shared power**
 - **Accountability without retribution**
 - **Listens and affirms without enabling or crossing boundaries**
 - **Works jointly to problem solve**

Educational/Mentoring

A hand holding a magnifying glass over a compass rose on an old map. The map is aged and yellowed, with various symbols and lines. The compass rose is a four-pointed star with smaller points in between, and the magnifying glass is held over it, highlighting the center.

- **Regularly assessing and providing training opportunities**
- **Modeling the care of self, minimization of power differentials, and emotional/psychological safety**
- **Supporting professional development/specializations and expertise**
- **Do as I do, not as I say**

Trauma Lens: What is everyone bringing to the table?

Asking what happened here? Rather than what is wrong here?

Developing an understanding of the possible existing issues through relationship building

Using that understanding to navigate discomfort and difficult conversations

Anti-racist/Cultural Humility

- **Amplify the voices of your staff**
- **Come from a place of not knowing**
- **Push back on hierarchal power structures that center whiteness (power over).**
- **Self-assess, self-evaluate, self-awareness**
- **Celebrate and promote health and wellbeing over productivity-less stress=improved morale=increase in productivity by default**

Trauma-Informed Supervision

- **Recognition of the prevalence of trauma**
- **Sensitivity to trauma and activation**
- **Recognize re-traumatizing cultural practices**
- **Minimize power and control**
- **Address training needs of staff**
- **Behavior understood as adaptive coping**
- **Objective, neutral language**
- **Supportive**
- **Transparent systems (Trust)**
- **Collaborative responsibility**

Vignette

- **The ED has asked to speak with you, telling you in an email they have some concerns they want to address with you. She sets up a zoom call for 4:30 PM Friday afternoon, and you received this email Tuesday. No other details were provided, and no one on the team has any information.**
- **You deal with anxiety and have a trauma history of your own, experiences that led you to want to work in this field. However, these aspects of your life are not known to your team, with the exception of one colleague, who also shares a similar history. Uncertainty and ambiguity create a great deal of stress for you, but as a supervisor yourself, you feel that its your role to just handle it.**
- **Not knowing what has happened to require that email, and dealing with the additional stressors of trying to supervise a team during the post COVID workforce shortage, you find yourself feeling really unwell by Friday. You are snapping at staff, and feel extra activated.**

Trauma Lens

Using a trauma lens, answer the following:

- **Which of the 5 principles might you need right now?**
- **How might you consider expressing this to your supervisor?**
- **What support would be helpful for you?**
- **How can you communicate to your staff the place you found yourself all week?**

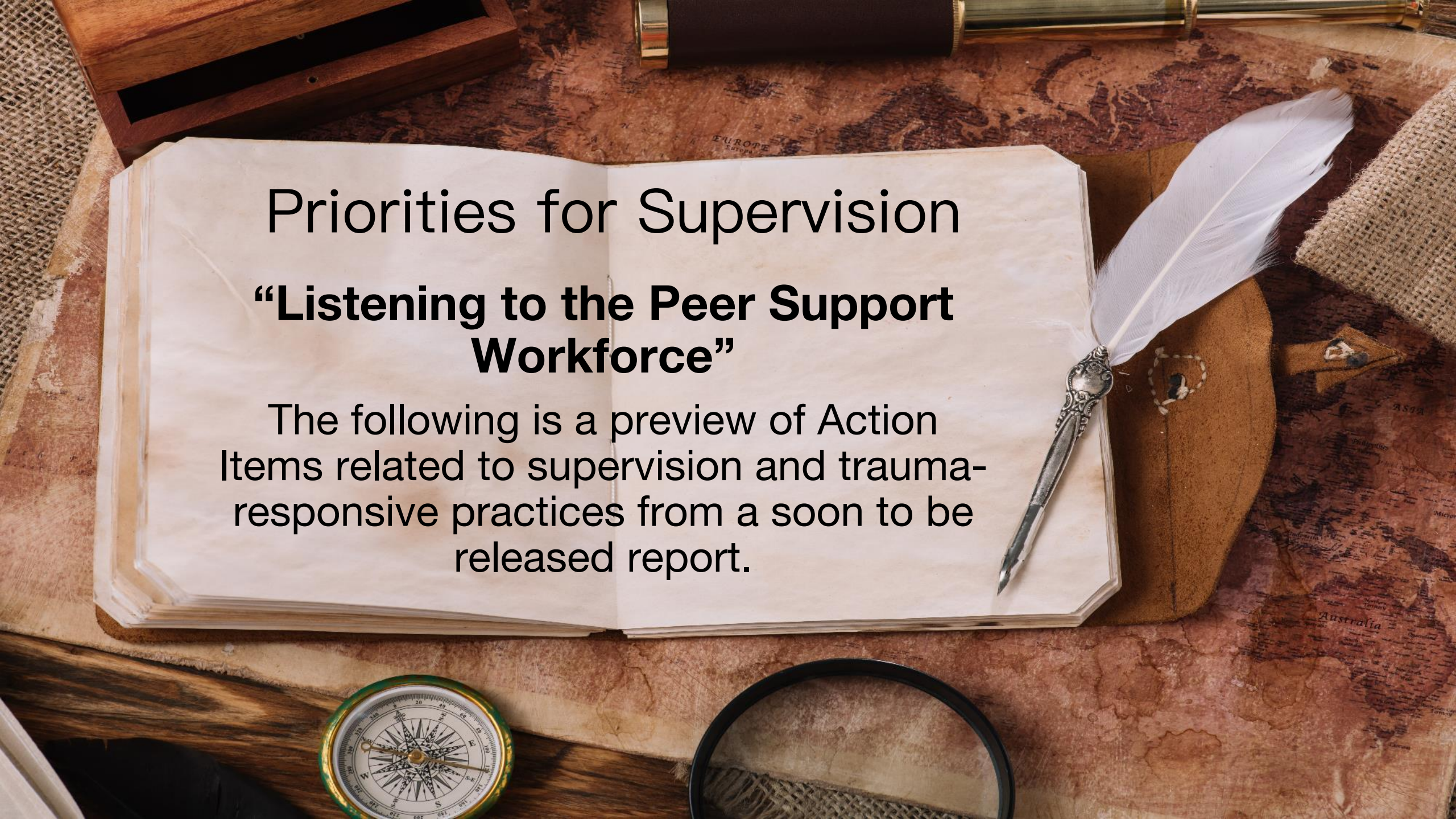
Questions/Comments



Stretch Break



Grape Picking Exercise

An open notebook with a quill pen, a compass, and a magnifying glass on a wooden desk. The notebook is open to two pages. The left page is blank, and the right page contains text. A quill pen is resting on the right page. A compass is visible in the bottom left corner, and a magnifying glass is in the bottom center. The background is a wooden desk with a map of Europe and Australia visible.

Priorities for Supervision

“Listening to the Peer Support Workforce”

The following is a preview of Action Items related to supervision and trauma-responsive practices from a soon to be released report.

Excerpts from Top Ten Priorities

A hand holding a magnifying glass over a map with a compass rose. The background is a light-colored map with a compass rose in the center. The magnifying glass is held by a hand on the left side, and the lens is focused on the compass rose. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

#7 Assure that all peer specialists are supervised by a person who either identifies as a peer themselves or has extensive training in peer values and practices.

#8 Provide trauma-informed workplaces, as well as trauma-informed services.

Top Ten Priorities — Action Items

Four Stakeholder Groups:

- **Policy Makers and Funders**
- **Employers**
- **Supervisors**
- **Peer Specialists (people in peer roles)**

Peer-Informed Supervision



Reuling, J., Cronise, R. & Wolf, J.
(2024).

Peer–Informed Supervision

What Policy Makers/Funders Can Do:

- Require “supervision certification”
- Ensure training for a “supervision certification” is created and delivered by experienced peer specialists
- Fund regional, state, and national networks for supervisors to regularly meet with other supervisors
- Continue to fund technical assistance centers as resources for supervisors
- Fund research on best practices for supervisors
- Offer ways for peer specialists to receive college credit for relevant lived experience
- Create an exchange program for supervisors to trade places with other supervisors to learn how supervision is done in other locations)

Peer–Informed Supervision

What Employers Can Do:

- Commit to hiring or advancing supervisors with prior experience as peer specialists
- Require current non-peer supervisors to complete the same training as the peer specialists
- Contract with peer-run organizations for supervision
- Create a succession plan for peer specialists to take supervisory roles
- Establish a “peer-run division” within the organization
- Provide incentives for non-peer supervisors to attend peer conferences (to learn from peers)
- Create a work environment that is safe for clinicians to disclose their own lived experiences without negative career consequences

Peer–Informed Supervision

What Supervisors Can Do:

- Appreciate the opportunity to work with peer specialists; not view it as “extra work”
- Develop a handbook for getting the most from supervision
- Create a network for supervisors to regularly meet with other supervisors
- Seek feedback from experienced peer professionals on essential skills for peers to take on a supervisor role
- Work with peer specialist staff to create supervision co-reflective practices
- Gather stories from peer specialists to share hopeful messages

Peer-Informed Supervision

What Peer Specialists Can Do:

- Invite supervisors to share relevant aspects of their own lived experience
- Ask what is most important to and for the supervisor during co-reflective supervision
- Use supervision as an opportunity for sharing values and practical approaches to peer specialist competencies
- Ask the supervisor and non-peer staff to shadow the peer specialists on the job

Trauma-Informed Workplaces

Reuling, J., Cronise, R. & Wolf, J.
(2024).



Trauma-Informed Workplaces

What Policy Makers/Funders Can Do:

- Create feedback sessions that give equal power and the opportunity for all to share their ideas
- Make public meetings safe spaces for marginalized communities to have leadership roles
- Invite those in marginalized communities to create training on trauma-informed, culturally responsive practices
- Provide model policies for returning to work regardless of the cause (personal or family leave)
- Create performance indicators to be able to measure how well culturally responsive trauma-informed services and supervision are being implemented

Trauma-Informed Workplaces

What Employers Can Do:

- Recognize trauma is about power and power dynamics
- Create safe and comfortable spaces for members of marginalized communities and trauma survivors
- Train all staff to be trauma-aware and culturally-responsive
- Support trauma recovery for all staff not just peer staff; address toxic or hostile work environments
- Seek feedback on how well leadership messages about the organization's culture match the actual

Trauma-Informed Workplaces

What Supervisors Can Do:

- Be aware that some (but not all) peer specialists are trauma-informed
- Recognize that being trauma-informed and achieving workplace wellness are closely linked
- Create visual reminders for all staff to ask, “what happened?” instead of “what’s wrong with you?”
- Discuss how generational trauma impacts individuals and the whole team
- Recognize that “belonging” is different than being “included”
- Offer staff paid time off (PTO) after high stress or traumatic work situations; don’t require staff to use PTO for self-care after extremely stressful situations

Trauma-Informed Workplaces

What Supervisors Can Do (continued):

- Support staff returning to work after being out regardless of the cause (whether personal or family leave)
- Include trauma awareness and cultural responsiveness on performance evaluations
- Educate all staff how peer specialists can be (often are) retraumatized by their work
- Teach peer specialist staff how to avoid being retraumatized when sharing their own stories or hearing others' stories

Trauma-Informed Workplaces

What Peer Specialists Can Do:

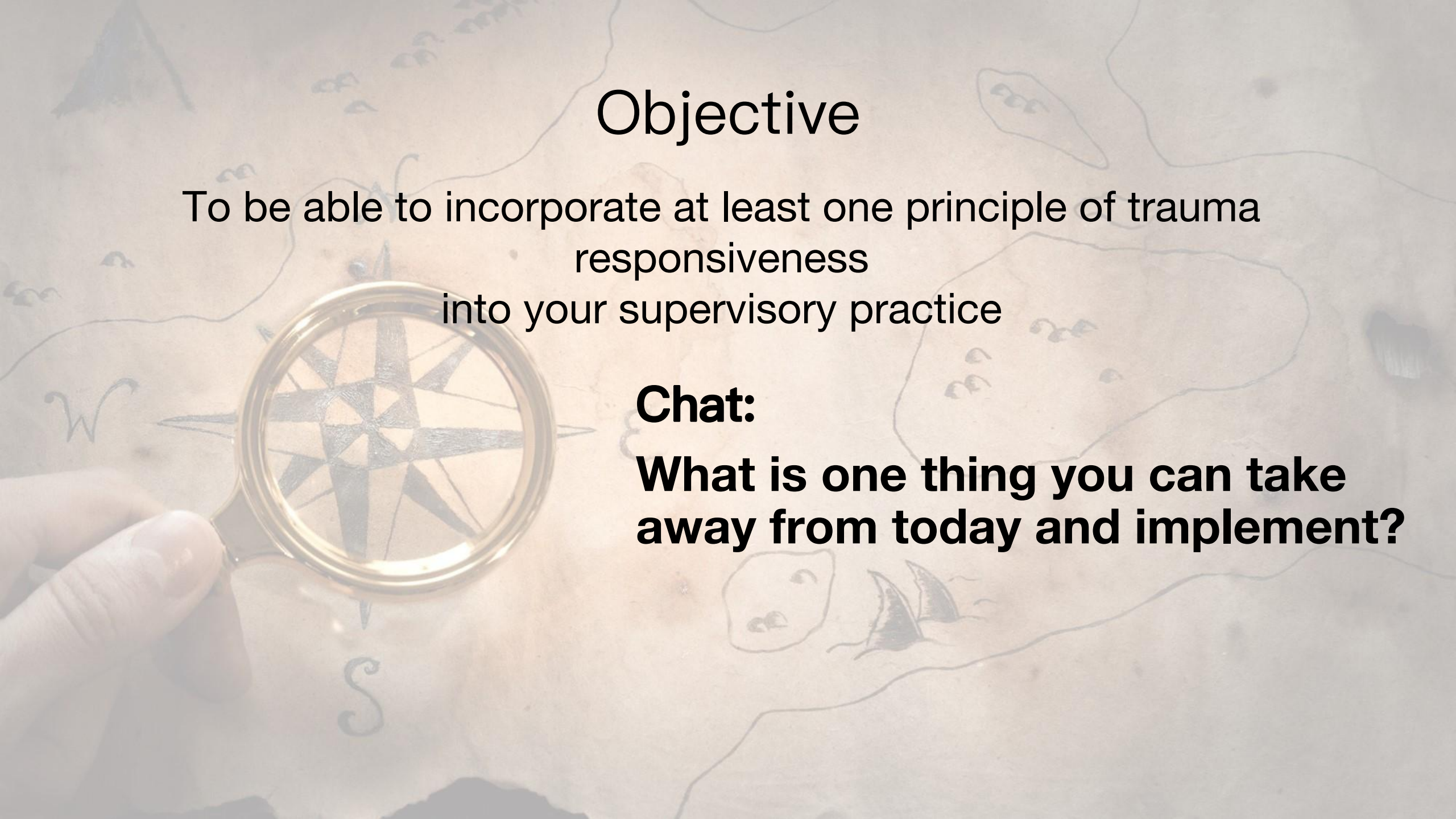
- Believe that “real change starts from within”
- Acknowledge that trauma healing first occurs at the individual level
- Pay attention to your own use of recovery-focused and trauma-aware language, and asking what happened, not what’s wrong
- Use strength-based, culturally responsive approaches particularly with BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities
- Talk with those from marginalized communities about their experience of receiving (or not receiving) trauma-informed, culturally responsive peer services
- When necessary, remove yourself from traumatizing situations for personal wellness and self-care

Objective

To be able to incorporate at least one principle of trauma responsiveness into your supervisory practice

Chat:

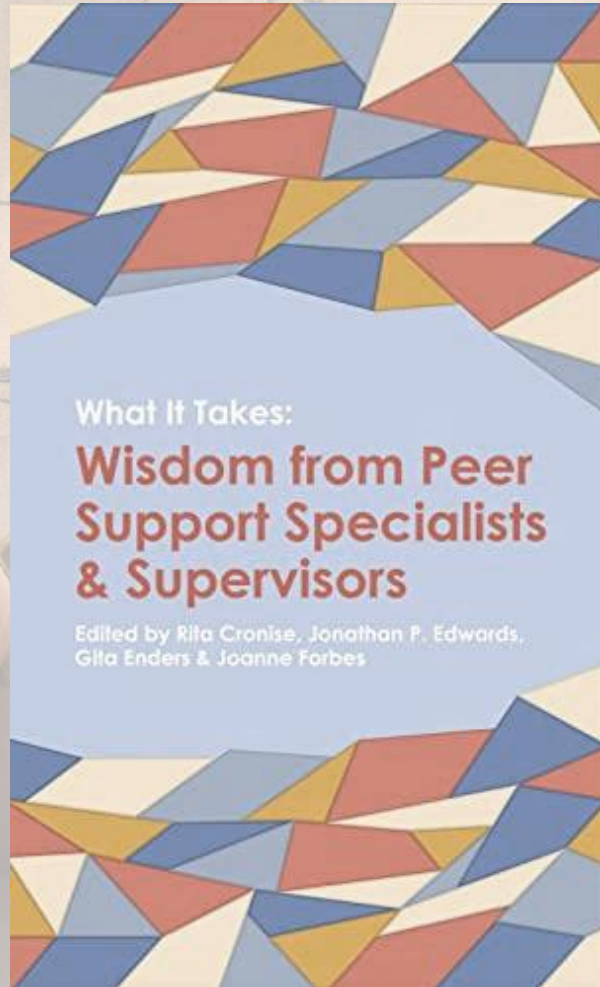
What is one thing you can take away from today and implement?



Questions/Comments



Resource



- **Edited by Rita Cronise, Dr. Jonathan P. Edwards, Gita Enders, and Dr. Joanne Forbes**
- **40+ contributions by experienced peer specialists and supervisors.**
- **All proceeds go to the National Association of Peer Supporters (N.A.P.S.)**
- **Available on Amazon**

Contact Us



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National Association of Peer Supporters (N.A.P.S.) (2019). National Practice Guidelines for Peer Specialists and Supervisors. Washington, D.C. [Click here.](#)

Reuling, J., Cronise, R. & Wolf, J. (2024, pending). Listening to the Peer Support Workforce: TopTen Priorities and Action Items by Peer Specialists (Release pending)

SHARE! Supervision Conferences (previous sessions): <https://shareselfhelp.org/programs-share-the-self-help-and-recovery-exchange/supervising-peers-conference>

(M.A. Jones, 2015)
(Employee Empowerment)