



PAST THE PANDEMIC  
GUIDE  
FOR TEAMS



Department of Psychiatry  
SCHOOL OF MEDICINE  
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS



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## INTRODUCTION & BACKGROUND

In June 2020, the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus recruited experts on the subject matter of stress, trauma, disaster relief, and coping strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Virtual live sessions in a psychoeducational didactic format were offered to health care workers in the state of Colorado. This program launched in collaboration with ECHO Colorado, initially called Past the Pandemic: Mental Wellbeing for You & Your Patients, implemented 10 cohorts totaling over 900 participants. After completing this program, participants reported feeling less professionally isolated, more capable of handling their stress and worry, and confident to act as a local resource within their workplace or community.

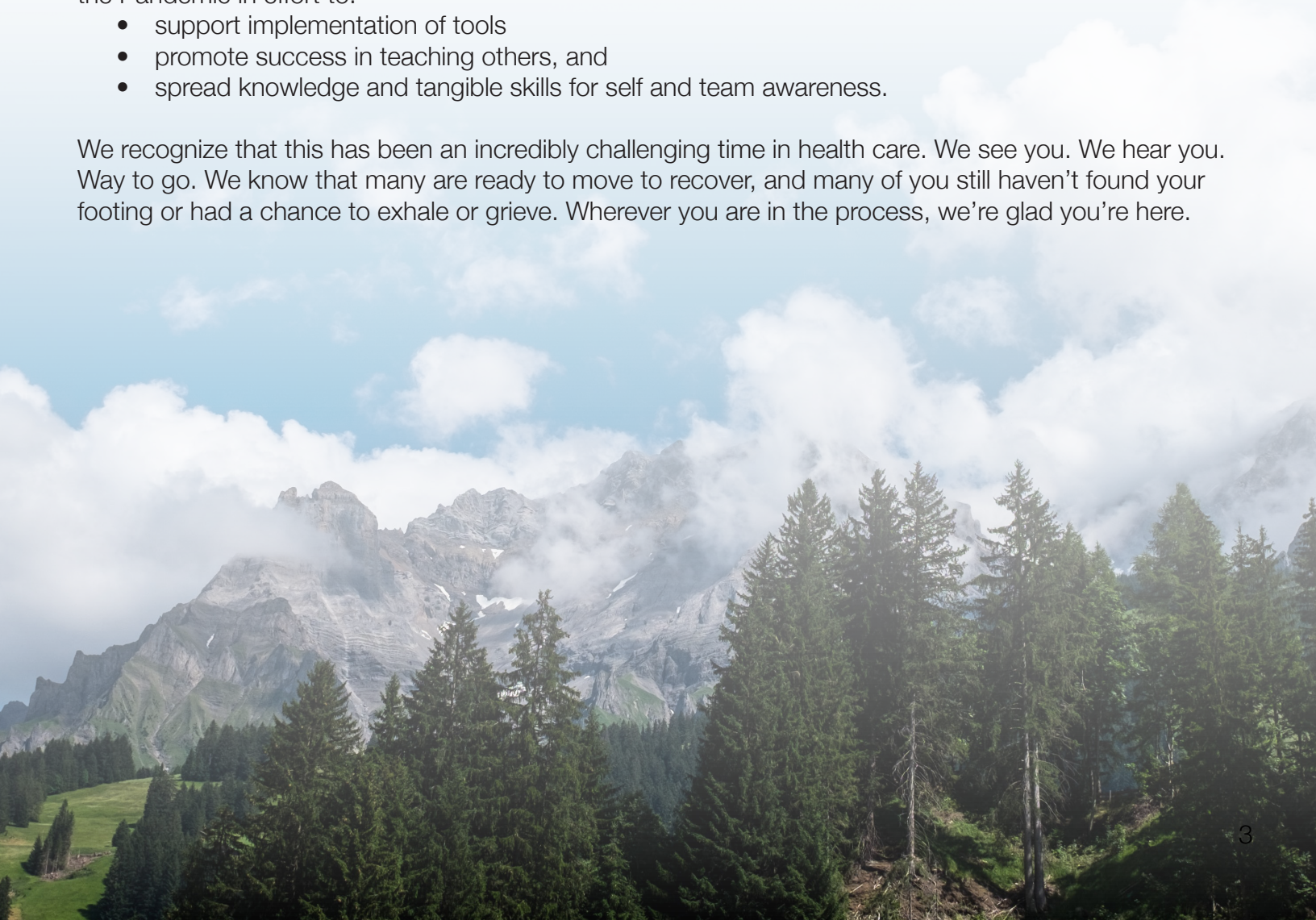
Following the success of this program, now called Past the Pandemic: Coping in COVID, a new series and workshop curriculum was developed. This series, Past the Pandemic: Beyond Burnout, is a second iteration of programming and was built with the goal of helping individuals bring this material back to their teams to improve both individual and team wellbeing.

Special thanks to Responder Alliance for the contribution of the curriculum & modified Stress Continuum for Individuals and teams, as well as practices and worksheets for planning implementing support for teams. The stress continuum framework is built on the contribution from Combat and Operational Stress First Aid.

Resource Objective: This Guide is built to inform best practices for utilizing the material learned in Past the Pandemic in effort to:

- support implementation of tools
- promote success in teaching others, and
- spread knowledge and tangible skills for self and team awareness.

We recognize that this has been an incredibly challenging time in health care. We see you. We hear you. Way to go. We know that many are ready to move to recover, and many of you still haven't found your footing or had a chance to exhale or grieve. Wherever you are in the process, we're glad you're here.



## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Section B

### STRESS CONTINUUM FOR TEAMS

**CONCEPT**

Again, refer to the individual Stress Continuum model on page 4 in the PTP Toolkit.

How might this model apply to teams or organizations? Here is an adaptation of the Stress Continuum for the Teams.

READY	REACTING	INJURED	CRITICAL
Team Approach To Overwhelm	Normalizing Depletion	Resources Scarce	Cliques And Hierarchy
Transparency	Transactional Communication	Communication Silos	Gaslighting
Connection	Mistakes Are Personal	Rigid Perspectives	Lack Of Trust
Curiosity Culture	Requests For Help Are Criticized	Members Undervalued	Culture Of Blame
Requests For Help Met With Support	Staff Dreading Work	Suffering In Silence	Fear At Work
Sense Of Mission	Mission Drift	Helplessness	Vulnerability Punished
Mission Satisfaction		Mission Fatigue	Hopelessness
			Moral Injuries

ADAPTED FROM COMBAT AND OPERATIONAL STRESS FIRST AID BY LAURIA MCCLADREY | RESPONDERBALANCE.COM

**REFLECTION**

What color best reflects where your team, agency, or organization is trending toward in this moment?

Reflect on what team attributes are present when it's trending toward the **green**. What are those practices, considerations, policies or environments in place? If your team hasn't been green in a while, reflect on a time in your life when you were on a "green" team.

Review the Stress Continuum in orange or red. Are there characteristics that resonate with your own team? What are some barriers, depletions or stressors your team is facing?

Finally, consider the reciprocal impact of where individuals and teams are trending, and how an individual might be impacted based on where the team is trending on the Stress Continuum, and vice versa.

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This Guide provides information for how to conceptually think about team and systemic wellness and depletion in the workplace. If you plan to share these tools with your team, please refer to the next page for "Guidelines for Approach". Each section of this Guide will contain an element to introduce a Concept, a Reflection or sharing piece, and Time-Based Suggestions for Implementation. The **Concept** section will provide an introduction to the material. The **Reflection** section will allow you as an individual to interact with the material and in exercises to promote reflection of the concepts. The **Time-Based Suggestions** for Implementation are intended for individuals who wish to bring these concepts back to their teams and offers different strategies to do so.

We encourage you to bring as many collaborators, shareholders, contributors and leaders into the conversation as possible to encourage systemic or organizational change. While we provide many suggestions, we encourage you to be thoughtful about

how you adapt and implement these concepts on your own. Consider your specific team's needs, your team's culture, as well as your own bandwidth, leadership strengths and skill set, and authentic style.

We recommend that you review and refer to the original Past the Pandemic Mental Wellbeing Toolkit (referred to in this document as "The PTP Toolkit") as you use this guide, especially if you have not attended one of our programs or workshops. More information about our programs can be found at [www.pastthepandemic.org](http://www.pastthepandemic.org). It is best to introduce these concepts to others from a place of grounded experience and growing wisdom that will allow you to act as a model of implementing and sharing these concepts.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us with comments, questions, or feedback.

We would be happy to connect with you!

*Mandy, Leslie & Laura*  
*Pastthepandemic@CUAnschutz.edu*

Congratulations on taking the next step to your own journey of wellbeing in the workplace.

We are continually learning from teams as they innovate and bring this into their own microcultures, so please reach out to share what you've tried, and what has worked. We are here to support you.



If you are a leader bringing these concepts to your team or team meetings, please consider the following guidelines:

- **Consider YOUR goal in using and sharing these resources.** Are you trying to build more camaraderie and teamwork? Are you mobilizing more resources for your team? Are you concerned for some of your team members? Are you making an effort to change the culture of wellbeing in the work place?

***Rationale:** Workplace wellness and team culture can be a daunting task. Naming achievable goals allows for your own sense of mission satisfaction, as you work toward larger goals in your workplace culture.*

- **Set realistic expectations.** Recognize and name **YOUR TEAMS** capacity to implement change in the current moment. Where might your team currently be trending on the Stress Continuum? Change takes time, especially in effort to change a culture. Small doses of effort and initiative can go a long way. Help your team reflect on what's already working, where they need to be seen or heard, and where they hope for growth or improvement. Be sure to consider factors such as:
  1. Structure and size of your team.
  2. Familiarity of team members between one another and the system.
  3. Other environmental, cultural, or socio-political stressors that may be impacting your team
  4. Adding on more responsibility to learn these concepts during “protected time” versus in addition to everything else they already have on their plate.

***Rationale:** Some workplace efforts can be discouraging if the team does not have capacity to engage and respond. Identifying team capacity for new information and efforts can help to set realistic expectations and eliminates personal feeling of rejection if teams are not open to initiatives.*

- **Time management.** Consider the amount of time **YOU** have to work with your team. See suggested tables throughout the Guide based on time allowances. Be specific to name the goal (and hopeful outcome) of what you're offering to your team with any intervention you use in this Guide.

***Rationale:** Workplace resilience can feel overwhelming when you have so many other tasks to complete. Designating the amount of time you can comfortably spend in support of colleagues and peers helps prevent your own sense of overwhelm and models setting boundaries to those working with you.*

- **Create safety.** Think about what it's like to feel safe and be vulnerable with others. Respect others' viewpoints, and only share what feels relevant to the conversation at hand. Ask those present to maintain the group's confidentiality to prevent gossip and gaslighting.

Recognize the impact of stress level, context, team culture, and individual levels of burnout when asking people to contribute to these conversations. Is important to contain the conversation by being specific with what you ask others to share, so people feel comfortable to share opinions, ideas, and experiences, but do not share so much that it is hard to manage.

***Rationale:** The above elements affect the psychological safety within the team, what exercises or topics in this Guide you decide to implement, as well as how much progress you may be able to make. If you are concerned about a specific team member, find a separate time to meet with them to share your concern. Refer to page 15 in the PTP toolkit for language and how to start a conversation.*

- **Discuss guidelines for sharing at the beginning of any conversation with colleagues.** See Appendix A for specific guidelines to share in the chat or with your team.

***Rationale:** It is much easier to return to a shared agreement than trying to create one in the midst of a conflict or conversational direction that does not support wellness. Establishing guidelines for safety create team cohesion and structure, which creates safety.*

- **When holding hard conversations, normalize and validate concerns,** even if there are not any answers or resolutions. Such as: "I'm hearing you say \_\_\_\_\_. It absolutely makes sense, given that\_\_\_\_\_."

("I'm hearing you say you feel overworked and underappreciated. It absolutely makes sense, given the nature of our short staff and high volume of patients, without much reprieve.") "I understand that you're feeling overwhelmed. If that happened to me, I would feel the same way."

Allow others to share if they've experienced similar things.

***Rationale:** Many people need to use time to feel heard and supported. Often wellness efforts involve teaching but not listening or validating. Peers often reflect that the best part of this conversation is the feeling that they are not alone, and the chance to identify and share how they are feeling.*

- **Be a source of ongoing support.** Try not to abandon these concepts after introducing them. Check in periodically or on a regular or semi-regular basis. Make it known that you care about the workplace culture, but that the journey of change is a process and takes time. Offer yourself or other resources as support when challenges arise for staff or providers.

## STRESS INJURIES FOR TEAMS

### CONCEPT →

Reflect on the various ways in which you think about stress. Refer to page 4 in the PTP Toolkit. Remember the individual Stress Continuum including the concept of stress injury (e.g. burnout). Consider the various ways you have been impacted by stress, stress injury, and burnout as an individual.

This might be a new approach and language to notice and label individual and **team stress**. The term Stress Injury for occupational stress was defined in combat operations in the Combat and Operational Stress Manual as Operational Stress Injury, and is used widely in Canada as Occupational Stress Injury. For first line responders, Laura McGladrey defines stress injuries.

*“Stress Injuries are common, predictable, exposure injuries that are reversible and treatable when recognized.”*

If we can name and respond to stress or stress injury as it occurs, we can then follow up with effective, supportive strategies to reduce the impact of stress in our lives. While there often feels like there is less sense of control when responding to team stress injuries, it is also important to remember to not blame the team. Teams, and organizations can be injured by unrelenting stress and mission misalignment, just as individuals can be. Instead, we hope to name the type of injuries your team is experiencing, brainstorm possible green choices for teams, and recognize barriers to implementing green choices.

### REFLECTION ☁️

Think about the accumulation of stress you and your colleagues (we) have experienced not just in the pandemic, but also beforehand. Chances are, if you (or the team) were feeling reactive and in the “yellow” before COVID-19, you were even more likely to experience stress injury and accumulation of stress throughout the last several years.

There are many characteristics of Stress Injuries. They exist on a **continuum**. We don't just wake up one day and have PTSD. There are **early signs** during the accumulation of stress, as well as opportunities to intervene to mitigate the impact of this **physical injury** type. Stress injuries affect our relationships, and our ability to enjoy our lives. Although they are often depletion injuries, we can **support and treat** them if we can recognize them. Finally, **Traumatic stress injuries are more likely to occur when we're already in a state of stress and depletion.**

AS A LEADER... 

This section may be uncomfortable to implement or discuss with your team if YOU are also impacted by or experiencing stress injury within the team setting. Do your best to allow space and respect for everyone's opinions without needing answers. As a leader, it is most important to self-monitor and allow your team to feel heard and seen, even if you do not have a resolution to the problems. The first step in getting a team out of the "red" is to name the type of injuries your team is experiencing or has faced in the past. **Making team members feel seen and heard is the first step.**

**TIME-BASED SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION** 

5-10 minutes

**Reflect and brainstorm** some evidence of stress injuries on your team. **Ask** individuals to list examples of stressors they feel the team has endured or behaviors that you may see as a result of mounting stress. If appropriate, write their responses down on a whiteboard or type in the chat, etc

*Possible examples:*

- *Moving physical locations*
- *Change in leadership not hearing concerns*
- *Feeling like the team cannot give quality care due to demands or hospital overwhelm*
- *Only having 50% of our staff*
- *Losing a lot of staff to travel nursing*
- *Multiple patient deaths without time to process*
- *Having to train so many new staff while being exhausted or understaffed.*
- *Change in leadership*
- *People being short with one another*
- *Irritability or negativity toward patients and colleagues*

**Share** the definition of Stress Injury above with your team.

**Ask** your team: "Can teams get stress injured, too?"

+ 15 minutes

**Share a video** that introduces the concept of stress and the Stress Continuum model, by Laura McGladrey and Steve Berkowitz.

**Click here to watch "Surge Capacity: A Message to Our Medical Workers"**

**Name** burnout as a stress injury within your team, and that some or all of us have experienced some level of burnout throughout the pandemic response and into recovery. Allow time and space for other ah-ha's or comments that arise from watching the video.

**Rationale:** One of the major mitigating influences to reduce burnout/stress injury is a supportive team 8



where you feel understood, valued, and heard. Hence, the goal of this team guide is to create a sense of community that fosters these connections and helps reduce burnout and mitigate team stress.

## GET CREATIVE!

+ 5-10 minutes: (Use as an icebreaker if your team is not openly sharing their stressors with each other)

**Ask** colleagues to name a magical wish. If I had a magic wand, I would...

Examples might be to show more appreciation to the nursing staff, get my leadership to understand how hard we're already working, add 10 more providers to our hospital staff, make COVID disappear, etc.

**REFLECT** what you've heard: You may consider writing these on a whiteboard or repeating them back. Take a minute or two to allow time to witness what we're all facing and what we're all hoping for. *If you are in a virtual meeting, consider using a Word Cloud to launch this exercise at Mentimeter.com.*

**Rationale:** *While we all know we don't have a magic wand, this exercise allows us to share our deepest areas of concern and witness each other. We can express our fatigue with the ongoing and unrelenting nature of the pandemic, share our wish for more support, share our frustration about the staffing levels, without placing specific blame.*

## STRESS CONTINUUM FOR TEAMS

### CONCEPT →

Again, refer to the individual Stress Continuum model on page 4 in the PTP Toolkit.

How might this model apply to teams or organizations? Here is an adaptation of the Stress Continuum for the Teams.

### TEAM STRESS CONTINUUM

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Curiosity Culture	Requests For Help Are Criticized	Members Undervalued	Culture Of Blame
Requests For Help Met With Support	Staff Dreading Work	Suffering In Silence	Fear At Work
Sense Of Mission		Helplessness	Vulnerability Punished
<b>Mission Satisfaction</b>	<b>Mission Drift</b>	<b>Mission Fatigue</b>	Hopelessness
			<b>Moral Injuries</b>

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### REFLECTION 🧠

What color best reflects where your team, agency, or organization is trending toward in this moment?

Reflect on what team attributes are present when it's trending toward the green. What are those practices, considerations, policies or environments in place? If your team hasn't been green in a while, reflect on a time in your life when you were on a "green" team.

Review the Stress Continuum in orange or red. Are there characteristics that resonate with your own team? What are some barriers, depletions or stressors your team is facing?

Finally, consider the reciprocal impact of where individuals and teams are trending, and how an Individual might be impacted based on where the team is trending on the Stress Continuum, and vice versa.

## TIME-BASED SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### 5 minutes

- **Ask** where your team members are trending on the Stress Continuum as an INDIVIDUAL.
- **Ask** where they feel the TEAM is trending on the Stress Continuum currently.
- **Remind** them there are no right or wrong answers. Normalize and validate all answers. This gives you a pulse for where the team is at. This question is most effective when responses are anonymous. There are no right or wrong answers, the goal of this exercise is to increase awareness of the team's perception of stress.
- **Ask** people (type in chat or call out) what contributes to the color they chose. What pushes them toward the green? Toward the orange/red zones? (more on this in the Team Battery section)
- **Brainstorm** how to implement the Stress Continuum model into your team, the space you share, your team culture, and team meetings or gatherings. See “[Get Creative](#)” section below for ideas.

*See examples of Poll questions in Supplemental Materials, Appendix A. Upload these into regularly scheduled Zoom meetings so they are already there and easy to launch.*

### + 5 minutes

Additional questions to promote conversation:

- What might happen if an individual trending toward the green walks into an orange or red team?
- What would happen if an individual who was struggling and trending toward the orange or red walks into a team that was trending toward the green?

**Validate** that the environment (and how we show up) plays an important role in how people feel and perform at work.

### + 10-20 minutes

- **Ask:** What would our team look like in the green? Yellow? In the orange or red zones?
- Complete your Team Stress Continuum with specific attributes in each category. See Blank Stress Continuum for the Team in Supplemental Materials, Appendix D1 and fill out together.

## TIPS FOR LEADERS

If individuals express frustration about systems and depletions they don't have control over, refer to “Barriers for Green Choices” section.

Follow up by asking them to reflect on **one green choice** they can make for themselves and for the team that will create more capacity and reflect positive changes. Offer help or space to support this green choice if possible.

## GET CREATIVE

Here's your chance to use fruit, skittles, post-it notes, magnets or other color-coding systems to ask where people feel they are trending on the Stress Continuum both as an Individual and as a Team. This encourages self-monitoring as they walk into the workplace. Place the items in an area where people feel safe to choose their color in the corresponding color zones. Some teams hang a large white poster and leave post it notes out for the team to add onto whenever they can. Some teams order drinks based on where they're trending to elicit more awareness and humor!



## TEAM BATTERY

### CONCEPT

Read the first two paragraphs on the top of page 7 from the PTP Toolkit to introduce the Battery Snapshot. Notice the Battery Snapshot worksheet. If you haven't done so already, list 3-5 charges and 3-5 depletions on your individual Battery Snapshot (see image on page 7 in PTP Toolkit). Battery charges may also be referred to as "green choices."

Depletions are what limit our capacity to respond to stress. Charges are what create more capacity to deal with our stress. Similar to the Individual Battery Snapshot, teams also experience charges and depletions on a systemic level. These can impact how BOTH the individuals within the team AND the team itself are trending on the Stress Continuum. The team is both the sum of its parts, as well as a unique organism in and of itself. Your individual battery charges and depletions may affect your Team Battery, and vice versa.

### REFLECTION

**Reflect** on some of the specific charges and depletions you feel your TEAM is experiencing as a unit, in effort to create your own TEAM battery snapshot. See an example on the next page (examples provided may/may not apply to your team).



## BATTERY SNAPSHOT

### WHAT CHARGES THE BATTERY?

- Carved out time together
- Open communication
- Words of appreciation
- Words of affirmation
- Feeling heard/understood
- Transparency of policies
- Expectations and resources
- Non-work related social events
- Regular check-ins
- Being fully staffed
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### WHAT DRAINS THE BATTERY?

- Isolation
- Lack of clear rules and expectations
- Juggling priorities/responsibilities
- Fears related to COVID
- Lack of feeling valued
- Staffing Issues
- Administrative Burnout
- Lack of shared accountability
- Leaders not being present
- Demand/complexity of patient cases
- Task overload
- Documentation requirements
- Sociocultural or political themes weighing on some individuals
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## TIME BASED SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION...

5 minutes

**Complete** the Team Battery exercise above but allow individuals to name charges and depletions on their own time. Consider finding a place to keep these visible and/or where people may come back to add other ideas. Use platforms like Jamboard (on google), Slack, or another secure platform your team uses to communicate. You can also have people write their charges on green post-it notes and depletions on red post-its and create a space to post them.

+ 10 minutes

**Complete** the Team Battery exercise together and collect charges and depletions by:

- Writing them on a white board
- Typing them directly into electronic copy in Appendix D1. Share your screen as you collect and type in responses, and distribute to your team afterwards.
- Doing a Jamboard together, which allows individuals to add to it later ([jamboard.google.com](https://jamboard.google.com))

+ 20 minutes or more

**Encourage** your team to look at their individual and team batteries and consider the lack of balance in charges and depletions as a barrier. **Ask** them:

- Are you able to remove some of the barriers to green choices?
- If not, how can you adjust or take away some depletions that you have control over, or have boundaries around some of your green choices?

*“Sometimes a green choice isn’t doing a green thing, but rather it involves NOT doing a red thing or taking away a depletion. Also consider if you are overwhelming yourself with too many green choices and consider what is truly important to you right now in this moment. Be flexible to give yourself what you need, even if it’s not what you originally thought. This approach will help you have boundaries and efficacy in your choices and what makes something a green choice.”*

- Consider following up with Team Resiliency Plan in SECTION F or Green Choices Worksheet in Appendix D3.

## TIPS FOR LEADERS...



*The PTP Toolkit offers specific suggestions for implementing individual green choices. We encourage you to also reflect on those, as this Guide will focus on green choices for the Team.*

### At a leadership meeting...

Share the Stress Continuum for Teams image. Explain the concept of team injury and the predictable nature of stress when there is scarcity of resources. Ask the small group of leaders to identify where the people they serve would place the team on the Stress Continuum, and discuss battery drains and charges for those they serve. If time, ask for possible solutions to increase green choices or alleviate drains.

For more ideas to increase battery charges in different areas within the workplace setting, see Green Choice Worksheet for Teams in Appendix D3, or refer to Cultural Changes in the Workplace in Section F.

## STRESS INJURY FORMATION FOR TEAMS

### CONCEPT →

This is a concept that may help your team identify some of the areas that are contributing to individual and collective burnout. It is easy to say “I am feeling burned out” without really understanding why and what’s contributing to it. Someone who just experienced multiple patient deaths could be impacted by traumatic stress. This, alone, could lead to them being stress injured. They could also be going through personal struggles at home and task overwhelm at work, so their depletion stress would also contribute. If they feel helpless in their work, they may also struggle with a little bit of mission stress. All of these pieces can add up to stress injury formation, and exploring these types allows you the awareness to appraise how much of each type, if any, are contributing to stress impact, and likely leading to stress injury.

Notice this image of Stress Injury formation as you read through the next section.



Here are the various ways we can be stress impacted. You may not have all of these, and they may not be equal in terms of stress impact. It is helpful to hone in on the type in order to recognize how to notice them, name their impact, and then work towards mitigation. Each may contribute to the formation of a Stress Injury.

**DEPLETION STRESS:** The themes, experiences, and environments that contribute to our individual or team battery being drained without reprieve, rest, or recharge. When resources are running low, individuals simultaneously and collectively experience depletion stress.

*Sounds like: “I can’t do this anymore. I’m exhausted.”*

**MISSION STRESS:** The stress or moral injury caused by an accumulative effect of mission misalignment. *Sounds like: “This is not what I signed up for. This doesn’t align with how I was trained.”*

**TRAUMATIC STRESS:** An impactful, often sudden, event or series of circumstances that lead to one or multiple team members facing an inability to cope, process or achieve their occupational goal due to *overwhelm of the nervous system*. *Sounds like: “I am numb and shutting down.”*

**STRESS INJURY:** the cumulative effect of one or multiple types of stress injury listed above that result in impact, impairment, and loss of efficacy and normal functioning. Stress injuries form as a result of a combination of one or more of the above types of stress impact. Stress injuries are reversible and treatable when recognized.



## REFLECTION

Look at the Individual and/or Team Battery Snapshot you have completed. In the depletion column, reflect on what type of Stress Impact each depletion may be considered. Is that Mission Stress? Depletion Stress? Traumatic Stress? Would you add any other depletions to your Battery based on these categories?

*Can teams be stress injured, too?*

Reflect on how stress injuries may lead to more depletion, further injury in the workplace, and impact your relationships (both at home and at work). If you have been stress injured, it is likely that this occurred while in a state of chronic stress.

## TIME BASED SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION...

### 5-10 minutes

**Ask** your team to list an example of each type of Stress Impact (Depletion, Mission, Traumatic) based on your team setting, population, and patient experience. Brainstorm together. These concepts are not granular and instead are exploratory.

**Offer space** when possible to work on the Green Choice Worksheet for Teams in Appendix D3 or the Team Recovery Plan in Appendix D4 to start brainstorming possible solutions for those interested.

### + 10 minutes

**Share** the Team Battery you completed as a group. Go through the depletions column and ask your team: “Which type of Stress Injury is this depletion? Depletion, Mission, Traumatic, or a combination?”

**Record** answers by adding them to the Team Battery Snapshot you already completed or by:

- Writing them on a white board
- Using post-it notes and spreading them out on a wall, and leaving post it notes out for the team to add onto whenever they can
- Doing a Jamboard together, which allows individuals to add to it later ([jamboard.google.com](https://jamboard.google.com))

### + 20 minutes or more

**This can be a difficult exercise. If you have time, follow up with space for connection and integration by offering a lunch to your team, going to happy hour, or going for a walk together.**

TIPS FOR LEADERS... 

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The power of this exercise is demonstrating to team members that their leader understands how hard things are right now and intends to make it better, but not to fix immediately. The ultimate goal is **connection** and the ability to **speak honestly** about what team members are facing. Leaders who help name the issues and the barriers to resolving these sources of depletion and stress injury is a step in the right direction for cultural change. Provide hope that you are shedding light on some of the reasons your team may be struggling, feeling depleted, or feeling unheard/unseen.

**Remind** your team that there are tangible tools available to mitigate individual impact of stress injury The PTP Toolkit offers specific suggestions for implementing **individual** green choices.

## BARRIERS TO GREEN CHOICES

### CONCEPT →

Sometimes regaining a sense of control and efficacy also means evaluating areas we are not in control of. This includes systemic barriers that may be in place for years and will take time to change. Recognizing the things within our sense of control that we can do contributes to building self-efficacy and wellbeing. Oftentimes when circumstances seem impossible, **we need each other** to connect, get through, and endure challenge. This also means naming the barriers to making cultural changes in the workplace. Notice the image below and begin to think about the specific and thematic areas of your life and work you do have control over and reflect on those.



### REFLECTION 🧠

**Refer** to your Individual and Team Battery Snapshots. Look at the charges column and consider where you feel stuck or powerless implementing green choices. Write down **your own** barriers of creating more capacity for yourself or others in the workplace. Some of these things may be within your control, and some may not.

- **Time:** Do you find it hard to carve out time for yourself or these green choices?
- **Feeling obligated:** Is it hard to say “no” to things on your plate, even when you probably should?
- **Overwhelm:** Do you find it hard to complete and manage all your tasks or feel powerless in getting everything done?
- **Limited resources:** How often are barriers due to resources or finances?
- **Energy:** Think of your own barometer of energy as a possible barrier. If you do not have time or energy to take action on your green choices, are you really in a place to help others? (the concept of putting your mask on yourself before helping others on the airplane rings true here, too!)

Consider how these same barriers affect **the team**:

- **Time:** Does your team find it hard to fit everyone's schedules together to connect, have regular meetings, or fulfill your mission?
- **Feeling obligated:** Is it difficult to take time off? Do you do things outside of your job description because you feel pressured to do so?
- **Overwhelm:** Are there too many tasks with not enough people to complete? Is your team going through a change, physically, systemically or within staffing or leadership?
- **Limited resources:** Is your team fully staffed? Are projects or initiatives easily funded? Do you have what you need to complete your job? Are you overwhelmed with referrals?
- **Energy:** Do people show up to work exhausted? Call out sick often? Complain often?

## TIPS FOR LEADERS...

This can be a discouraging or difficult section to lead for your team, as you are listening to what is draining to people's batteries and what is getting in the way from being well. However, sharing authentically what people are struggling with provides the opportunity for change and offers hope to your team that things won't remain as they are.

Remember to take time to care for yourself, as you likely facing struggles and depletions that the team is not aware of. It could be helpful for you to do this exercise with someone who shares similar leadership responsibilities and who understands your situation or struggle.

## TIME BASED SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION...

### 5 minutes

This content is most effective in a group setting as described below. However, if you don't have that ability, you can also encourage your team to take out their Battery Snapshots and write down specific barriers that get in the way of making green choices or doing things in the "charges" column. Provide a list of examples as shown on previous page (Time, Resources, etc).

### 10-15 minutes

**Share** the Team Battery and read some of the charges. **Remind** your team it is important to brainstorm green choices as the goal is to prevent accumulation of stress.

**Ask** your team: What are some green choices you hope or wish we could make?

You can also **make a visual list** of the green choices in the chat, on a whiteboard or on a Jamboard.

**Brainstorm and discuss** the barriers to implementing these green choices with your team. **Refer** to the types of barriers listed on prior page for ideas or questions to ask.

"Now that we know what might help our team trend toward the green, let us be honest and lean into the hard conversation of why some of these can or cannot happen. Consider internal, external, individual, systemic, administrative, financial, and leadership perspectives. There are things we may not

have control over, versus the areas we may be able to change.”

**See a list of some barriers below but be sure to make it specific to your team.**

- Lack of support from leadership
- Insufficient funds to promote forward moving culture
- Lack of staff to implement changes
- Leadership is stress injured
- Learned helplessness
- Lack of support within the organization
- Not enough regular time together to connect and create capacity for change
- Collective burnout

**+10-20 minutes:**

**Identify** a few green choices your team CAN make together in the next few weeks and brainstorm how to make that happen. Use the Green Choices worksheet in Appendix D4 to document ideas.

**Rationale:** Even a small action step to trend toward the green communicates to the team that things are changing. This, then, sends a message of hope.

## TEAM RESILIENCY PLAN (PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID)

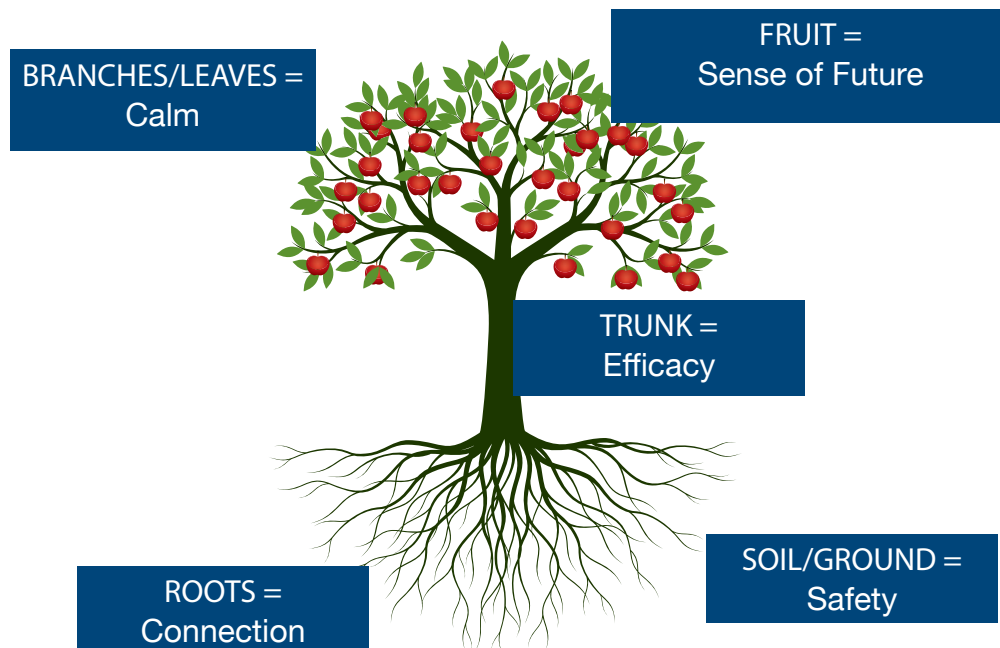
### CONCEPT →

In 2007 Hobfall and colleagues brought together a worldwide panel of experts on the study and treatment of people and communities exposed to disasters and mass violence in order to come to a consensus on best principles for psychosocial intervention during these times of great stress and trauma. Following this discussion of empirical evidence, they identified five principles that should be used to guide and inform intervention and prevention efforts at the early to mid-term stages following disasters and traumas (and we have now extrapolated this to a worldwide pandemic).

This image was created to help visually to help describe the relationship between these elements and the unique importance of each element to helping us grow, persist, and thrive, both as a team and as individuals. It is called the Individualized Resiliency Plan, which draws from the 5 themes or areas of Psychological First Aid.

### REFLECTION 🧠

Refer to pages 22 and 23 in the PTP Toolkit, which provides a series of questions to help explore each of the 5 areas. If you have not done so already, list 3-5 examples in each section of the IRP (Individualized Resiliency Plan). The Toolkit offers guided questions to complete the



## TIME BASED SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION...

### 5 minutes

This content is most effective in a group setting as described below. However, if you don't have that ability, you can also encourage your team members to reflect on team resiliency and recovery and complete the worksheets in Appendix D3 and D4 in their own time and share their ideas with you as time allows.

### 10-20 minutes

As a group, **complete** the Green Choice Worksheet for Teams (Appendix D3) if you haven't already. **Ask** for ideas, **provide** your own, and **celebrate and validate** all answers. Once you have completed it, consider this to be your Team Resiliency (Recovery) plan. **Brainstorm** how to implement at least one area of **actionable change in each column**.

**If your team has difficulty completing the Green Choice Worksheet (AKA Team Recovery Plan), refer to additional reflection questions** in Team Resiliency Plan in Appendix D4 to brainstorm and guide answers.

You may find that you are already meeting some areas of psychological first aid, while others may need a lot of work.

As you complete the Green Choices worksheet with your team, you will see that the answers naturally meet the 5 areas of Psychological First Aid (Safety, Efficacy, Connection, Calm, & Sense of Future) and you can reflect this to your team as you complete it.

You may consider labeling which of these 5 areas of Psychological First Aid are met within the Team Recovery Plan, as shown in example in Appendix D3.

### +10-15 minutes

- **Share** the Team Battery Snapshot and refer to the charges column. **Label** which area (Safety, Connection, Efficacy, Calm, or Sense of Future) the green choice meets to fulfill psychological first aid. Reinforce that green choices ARE psychological first aid to mitigate impact of stress injury and chronic stress.
- **Encourage** individuals to not only think about team resilience, but their own individual resilience and what green choices they can make to mitigate stress injury impact in their own personal and professional lives. **Encourage** them to complete the Green Choices Worksheet on page 34 of the PTP Toolkit, which will hopefully lend to their own sense of efficacy and help themselves and the team trend towards the green!
- **Provide additional resources** as needed or upon request. **Remind** your team that if they feel they need to work on their green choices more as an individual, **refer** them to one of the Past the Pandemic programs such as the LIVE series or Canvas Course. More info can be found at **www.pastthepandemic.org** in About tab.

# CULTURAL CHANGES IN THE WORKPLACE



**Share visuals of the Stress Continuum model around the workplace.** Some teams have made badge cards with the Stress Continuum with resources and how to ask for help on the back.

**To eliciting awareness embedded in culture, ask the Stress Continuum question to your team often. This helps your team members increase practices of self-monitoring.** Some teams are using built-in structured time such as monthly or quarterly meetings or “Grand Rounds” to poll everyone at the beginning of the meeting. If you are in a virtual meeting, poll your team at the beginning to check in. If you are in person, use Mentimeter.com or PollEverywhere.com to implement poll questions.

See examples of Poll questions in Supplemental Materials, Appendix A. Upload these into regularly scheduled Zoom meetings so they are already there and easy to launch.

**Check in with one another often.** Ask one another where one is trending on the Stress Continuum and why. Support green choices if possible. Sometimes a green choice is helping others find and make a green choice. Assist with practical help when possible.

**Greet your coworkers.** Remain kind, even if you are struggling and are having a bad day. Thank each other for your hard work and how their effort makes a difference in your team. See page 14 in the Toolkit for common traps that lead to disconnection and how to overcome those barriers to connection.

**Encourage use of PTO.** Avoid blame, punishment or gaslighting if a team member is taking PTO. Support use of taking vacation and utilizing sick time when needed. Model healthy out of office automatic email replies to encourage emails to be held off until your return or to allow 1-2 business days after you return for a reply.

**Consider implementing policies that promote self-monitoring and self-care.** Ask leadership to build in “Wellness Days.” Some teams have implemented a policy to allow staff to utilize one planned Wellness Day per month and use their “sick time” instead of vacation days. This sends a message that you care about your team’s individual and collective wellbeing. It also allows the team to support one another when using their Wellness Days, as clinic or organizations have time to plan for this person not being at work. This can be thought of as a prevention plan (allowing time for self-care to prevent burnout and create more capacity to mitigate stress impact) or as an intervention if someone is truly needing a day off to care of their personal needs, is stress injured, or burning out. Policies like this allow people opportunities to mitigate stress injury and reduce potential negative outcomes, like getting sick, chronic depletion, or even resigning. Taking a planned break from our stress allows us to come back stronger and perform better.



**Consider implementing “crisis standards of care”.** This may be especially important if you are short staffed. It can be difficult as leaders to create a culture of care if resources are low, your team is depleted, and work needs to be done. Ask how you can scale back what actually NEEDS to be done, versus what is okay to delay, scale back, or restructure in order to continue offering your service. This can be written up and utilized if needed, and if done in advance, prevents leadership from decision fatigue.

**Take care of one another.** Remember we are all human at the end of the day. It is likely that you may be unaware of what someone else is going through. If you are frustrated with your coworkers, remember they may be doing the best job they can with the resources and coping strategies they have available to them. Have compassion, even when you are frustrated. Fostering a sense of camaraderie strengthens both individuals and teams.



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: GUIDELINES FOR APPROACH: “GROUP AGREEMENTS”

Feel free to share this list of guidelines when discussing these topics with your team on a PowerPoint slide or handout, or copy/paste in the Chat if you are logged in virtually. Here are some that we have found helpful to share:

### Group Agreements:

1. Be present & participate.
2. Enjoy learning together.
3. Ask questions and share ideas.
4. Allow for equal “air time” and sharing among participants.
5. Practice electronic hygiene.
6. Delay distractions, but please take care of personal needs and self-monitor or step away if you need to.
7. Speak respectfully to and about others.
8. Choose to share what feels relevant to advancing the emotional healing or learning for the group, versus “unloading” onto others.
9. Remember to access your Resources if you need additional support:
  - [Www.PastthePandemic.org](http://www.PastthePandemic.org) for curriculum & additional resources, including the Past the Pandemic toolkit under Resources tab.
  - Well-being Support Line (for Healthcare Workforce and Educators in CO): 303-724-2500
  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
  - Colorado Crisis Services: 1-844-493-8255 or Text TALK to 3855
  - **(List your organization-specific resources.)**

## APPENDIX B: EXAMPLES OF POLL QUESTIONS

POLL Question #1: Where are you trending on the continuum today?

- (1) Green(ish) / Ready
- (2) Yellow(ish) / Reacting
- (3) Orange / Injured
- (4) Red / Critical
- (5) Unsure

POLL Question #2: Where is your team trending on the Stress Continuum?

- (1) Green(ish) / Ready
- (2) Yellow(ish) / Reacting
- (3) Orange / Injured
- (4) Red / Critical
- (5) Unsure

POLL Question #3: What did you list that may deplete your battery?

- (1) Long hours
- (2) Lack of sleep or problems sleeping
- (3) Relationship or parenting problems/stress
- (4) Commute to work or work transitions
- (5) Lack of time for exercise or other fulfilling activities
- (6) Inability to say “no” / Lack of boundaries
- (7) Lack of support within organization or team
- (8) General work stress
- (9) General COVID-19 stress/uncertainty
- (10) Other: Type in chat if you are comfortable

POLL Question #4: What did you list as things that energize or fill up your battery?

- (1) Time with friends or family
- (2) Meditation or mindfulness activities
- (3) Exercise or movement
- (4) Being outside
- (5) Animals or pets
- (6) Balanced nutritional eating or structured meal times
- (7) Taking vitamins or medications
- (8) Therapy
- (9) Other natural supports (church, social groups/clubs, community organizations, volunteering)
- (10) Gratitude practices or volunteering/donating

Poll Question #5: What do you anticipate as stressors or concerns upon reintegrating in-person services in the home and going back to the office?

- (1) Driving / commuting
- (2) Charting and other time-consuming tasks
- (3) Socialization in the home with clients and families (e.g. sensory overload, meeting for the first time, etc)
- (4) COVID-related concerns and fears (lack of research, how virus is transmitted, who is vaccinated)
- (5) Myself or someone close to me getting sick
- (6) Wearing masks all day

- (7) Work/life balance or general exhaustion
- (8) School/daycare scheduling concerns
- (9) Less time with family or loved ones (less time for interests/hobbies)
- (10) Other (type in chat)

Poll Question #6: What do you feel you may need in terms of support moving forward? What might be team battery charges?

- (1) Clear, consistent, and open communication
- (2) More regular team meetings
- (3) Buddy system (matched with a peer)
- (4) Decreased client case loads
- (5) Hybrid model options
- (6) Feedback forms
- (7) Smaller group support/supervision/consultation meetings
- (8) More wellness-based activities, retreats and curriculum for professional development
- (9) other

## **APPENDIX C: TIPS FOR CHANGING THE CULTURE AT TEAM MEETINGS**

**If you are leading a meeting, try these questions to kick off with connection:**

- What's one green choice you've made today or this week?
- Name something that is draining your battery right now that you think you could actually change.
- Name a green choice you haven't done in the last week that you could do today or tomorrow.
- Check in with different sections of the IRP ("What is meeting need of safety for you right now? What is helping us feel connected? What is missing for you?")
- What's your battery check on connection?
- On Calm?
- How have you been completing the stress cycle? (Creativity, Physical Affection/Touch, Laughing, Crying, Physical Movement)

**If you are in person...**

- Leave post-it notes corresponding to the 4 Stress Continuum colors (Green/Yellow/Orange/Red) out on a table for people to label and post where they are at as they walk into a team meeting. Invite them to write a reason why.
- Leave a bulletin board, dry erase board, or wall of post-its in a commonly shared area (office entrance, break room) for individuals to post their green choices they have made this week, and replenish it each week.

## APPENDIX D1: TEAM STRESS CONTINUUM AND BATTERY SNAPSHOT

If you are filling these out electronically, fill out in the PDF and be sure to save it as a new PDF!


### TEAM STRESS CONTINUUM

READY	REACTING	INJURED	CRITICAL
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

*Adapted from Combat and Operational Stress First Aid by Doria & Choi, 2020*

### TEAM BATTERY

## BATTERY SNAPSHOT



WHAT CHARGES YOUR TEAM?

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WHAT DRAINS YOUR TEAM?

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**EXAMPLES HERE OF SC & BATTERY**



## APPENDIX D2: GREEN CHOICE WORKSHEET FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

### GREEN CHOICES FOR THE INDIVIDUAL

HEALTH	AT WORK	OUTSIDE OF WORK	RELATIONSHIPS	SURVIVAL TOOLS
1.	1.	1.	1.	1.
2.	2.	2.	2.	2.
3.	3.	3.	3.	3.

*McGladrey, 2020*

**SHOW EXAMPLE HERE**

**GREEN CHOICES FOR THE TEAM**

## APPENDIX D3: GREEN CHOICE WORKSHEET FOR TEAMS

### GREEN CHOICES FOR THE TEAM (TEAM RECOVERY PLAN)

TRAINING	CONNECTION	CULTURE	RITUALS	RESOURCES
1	1	1	1	1
2	2	2	2	2
3	3	3	3	3

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### EXAMPLES



## APPENDIX D4: TEAM RESILIENCY PLAN (PSYCHOLOGICAL FIRST AID)

Use the following prompts to brainstorm and create your own **TEAM RESILIENCY PLAN**.

### SOIL/GROUND = Safety

How can you be a source of support and safety for others? Who do you feel safe around? How does your team name and create safe spaces for sociopolitical events that may be on individual's minds for those who need that space? Where do you feel safe at work? What health precautions does our organization take?

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### TRUNK = Efficacy

What provides you mission satisfaction? Do you ask for what you need from leadership or colleagues? How can you support others in their goals or projects? What small (or big) accomplishments or impact has your team made today/this week/this past year? What is your favorite part of your work? What role do you play on the team?

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### ROOTS = Connection

What built-in support does your team offer in its structure? How do individuals access that support? What does your team do to promote collective approaches or comradery? How does your team get together outside of work? Do you feel a sense of community at work? Do you have fun at work?

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BRANCHES/LEAVES =  
Calm

What opportunities does your team have to access mindfulness or calming practices? How can you be more compassionate to your team members and toward your own productivity? Do you give yourself permission to take breaks? How can your organization support using PTO or taking lunch?

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FRUIT =  
Sense of Future

What short term or long-term plans in your personal or professional life are you looking forward to? What gives you a sense of purpose, meaning and hope? What informs your mission? Does your mission need to change to fit the current climate and needs?

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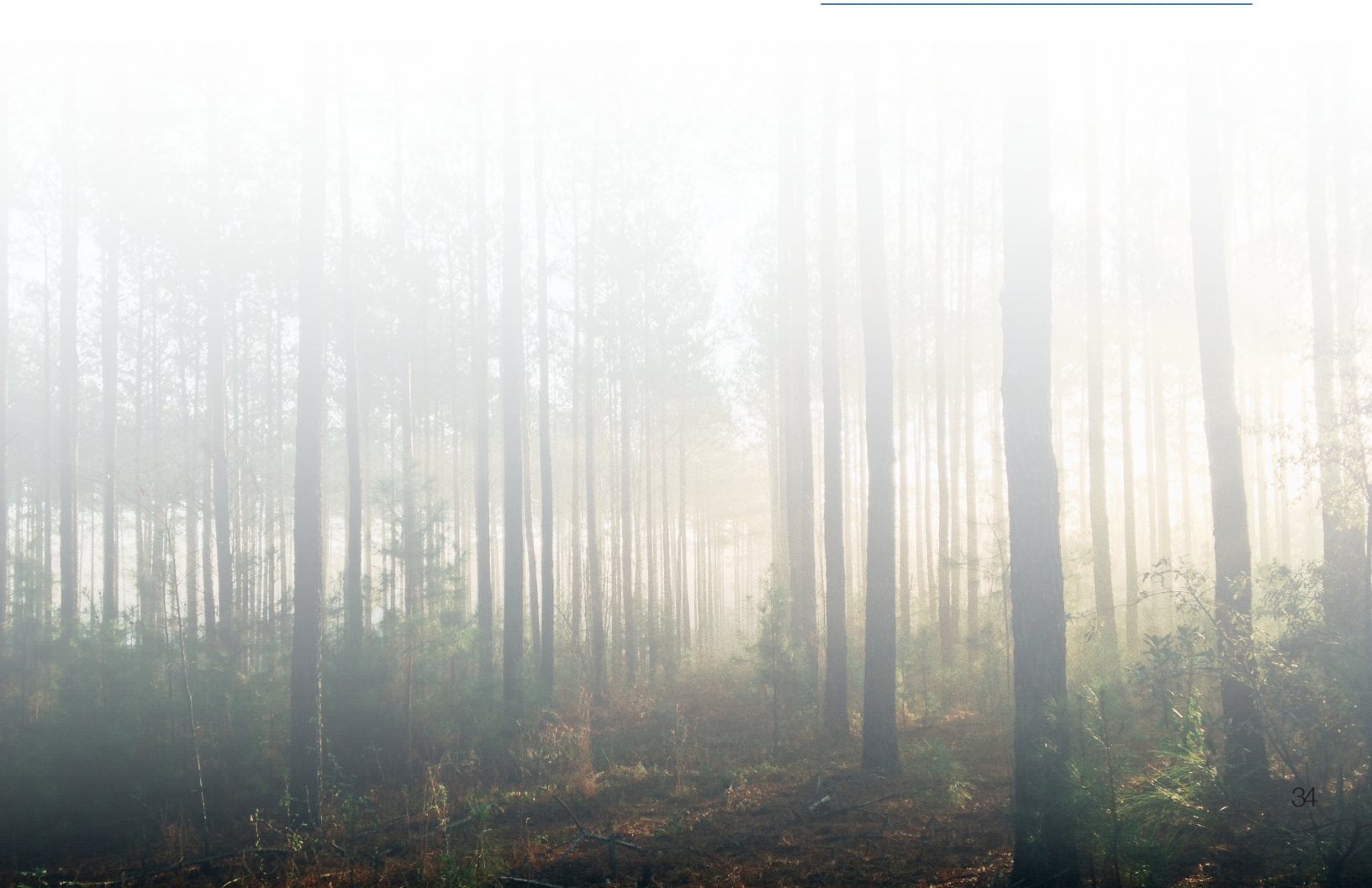
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**EXAMPLE OF TEAM RECOVERY PLAN**

