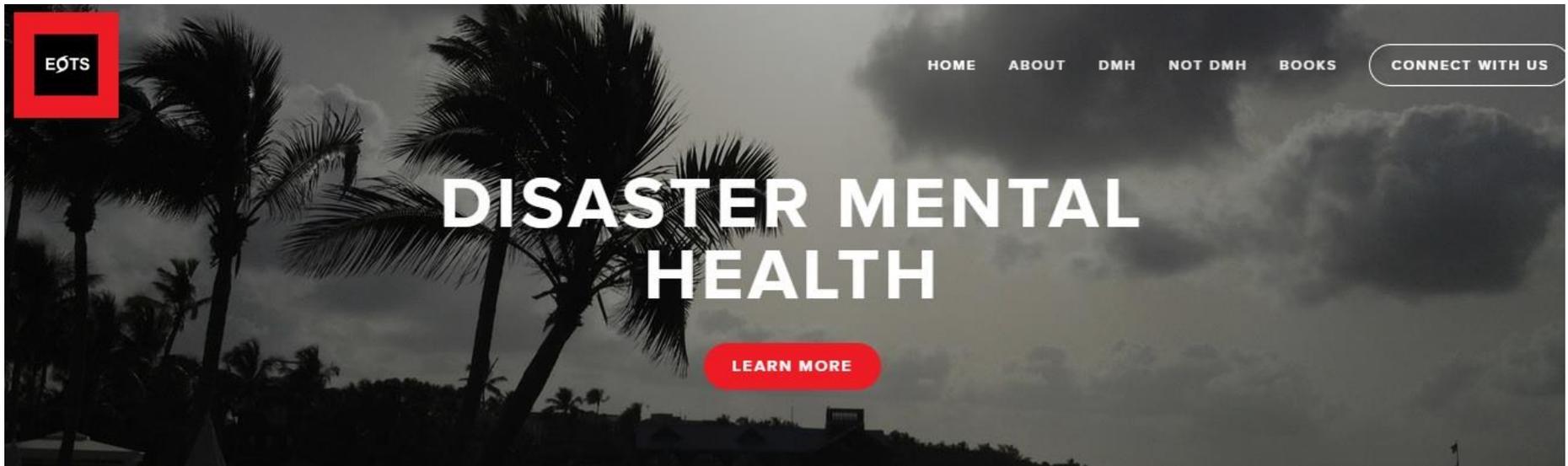


Self Care for Caregivers

To view and download the pdf versions of the printed handout and/or these slides please visit:

eyeofthestorminc.com

and click on the two * at the bottom of the page
(just above the address)

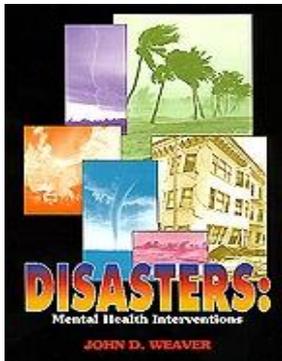


John D. Weaver, LCSW

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- ▶ Founding partner - EYE OF THE STORM, Inc.
- ▶ Therapist at Olivewood Counseling
- ▶ Former Casework Supervisor and DCORT Coordinator for Northampton County Mental Health
- ▶ Author of several articles, chapters, and books including *Disasters: Mental Health Interventions* (1995, Professional Resource Press)
- ▶ American Red Cross DMH Volunteer since 1992 including service at the 1994 USAir crash in Pittsburgh, the 1996 ValuJet crash in the Everglades, the 2001 crash of United Flight 93 in Shanksville, and the World Trade Center relief operation in NY
- ▶ Friendly on **Facebook**; linking on **LinkedIn**; pinning on **Pinterest**, “tweeting” on **Twitter**,...



What is your worst
professional memory?

and...

What is your best?

How long does it take
you to recall each?

Was it faster/easier for
recalling worst
memories?

Negative moments tend to be firmly etched into our long-term memories for easy recall when we least want them, but may most need them.

***People are almost always
changed by the traumatic
events they face during their
lives....***

***....but they need not be
damaged by those events.***

John Weaver

DAMAGE MODEL

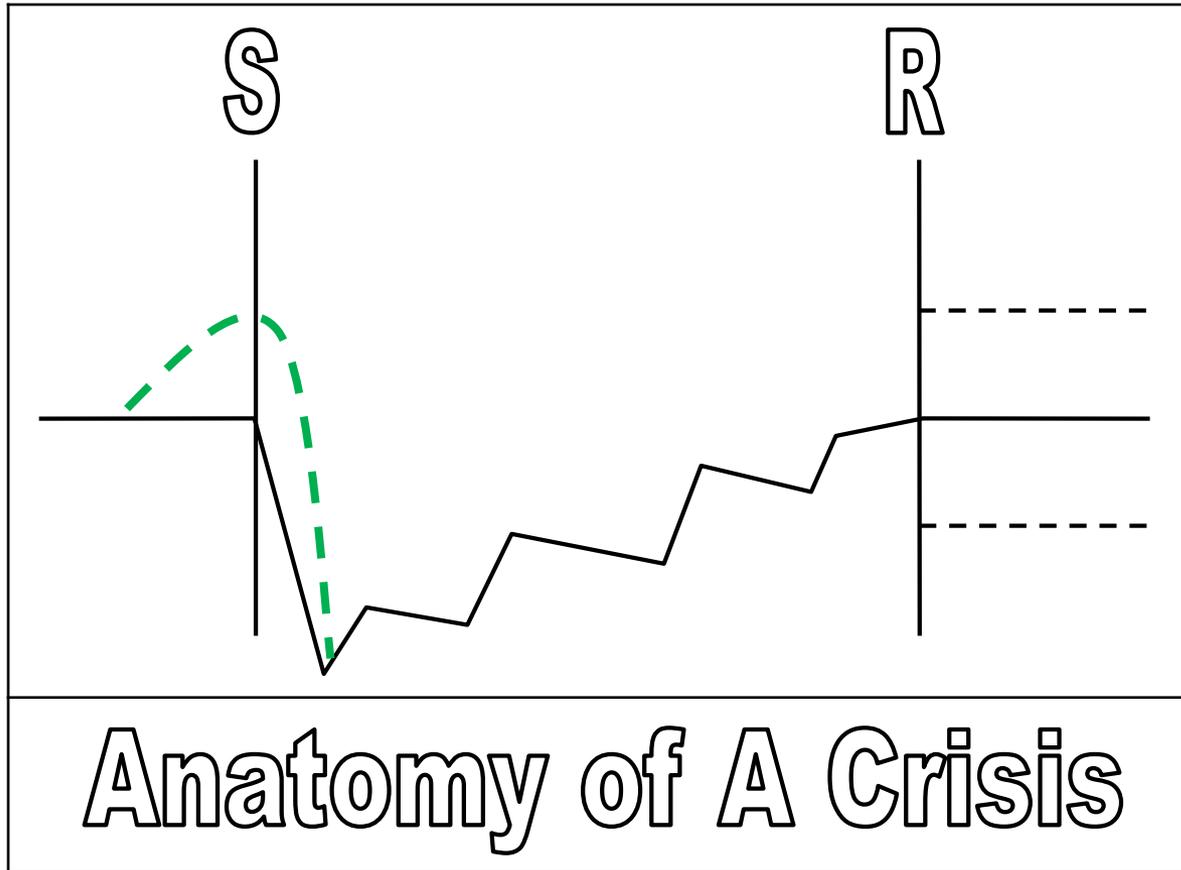
(focus on *illness* or *pathology*)

VS.

CHALLENGE MODEL

**(focus on *wellness*, *strengths*,
resiliency, and *self-protection*)**

Life-Changing Moments



Event, Perception, Response, and Resolution

The Resiliency Reframe

“Changed but not damaged”



Stressful events tend to build character,
making us stronger and wiser.

***Character cannot be developed
in ease and quiet.***

***Only through experience
of trial and suffering
can the soul be strengthened,
ambition inspired,
and success achieved.***

(Helen Keller)

***That which does not kill us
makes us stronger.***

Friedrich Nietzsche

(or was it Kelly Clarkson)

We will all have reactions to the stressful situations we face.

This is perfectly normal.

**When traumatized persons
are encouraged
“*to speak and to be heard,*”
many will overcome their pain
and transform themselves.**

**Lifton, R. J. (1993). *The Protean Self: Human Resilience
in an Age of Fragmentation*. Chicago:
University of Chicago Press.**

***The grief that does not “speak”
in some way –
through crying, talking, rituals,
tributes, or creative expression –
remains unresolved.***

York, Sarah. (2000). *Remembering Well, Rituals for Celebrating Life and Mourning Death*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

PORTRAITS OF PROFESSIONAL
caregivers

THEIR PASSION | THEIR PAIN

A film about the emotional impact on professionals who care for others.



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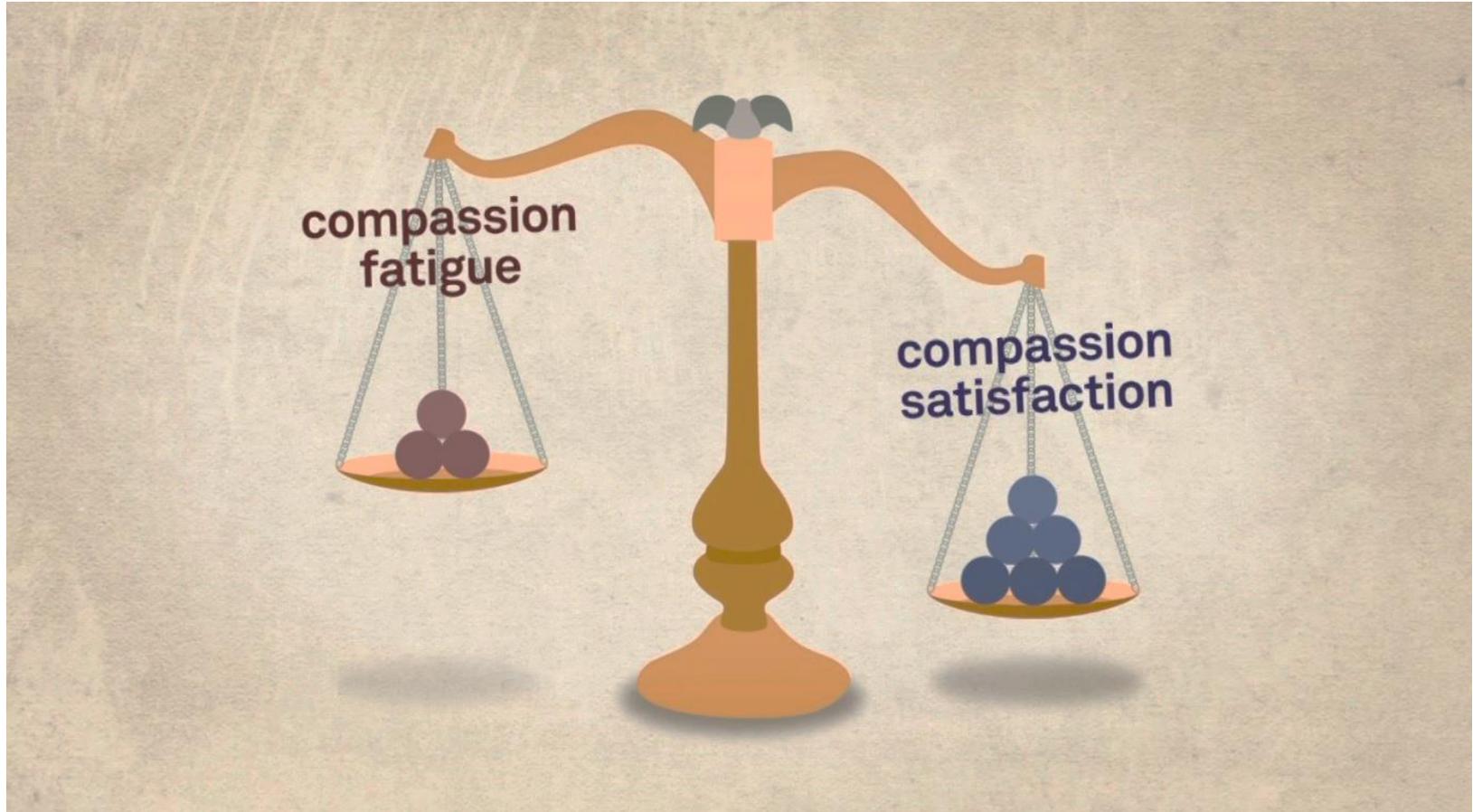
<http://caregiversfilm.com>

There is a cost to caring.
(Charles Figley, 1995)

Other names:

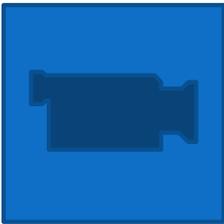
- burnout
- "rustout"
- compassion fatigue
- secondary traumatic stress
- co-traumatization

Caregiving is both High Risk (CF) and High Reward (CS)



We all have our own “Psychological Achilles Heel” and we all have our own “Tell”

- ▶ Learn what pushes your buttons & triggers your personal reactions to trauma (thoughts, reactions, and memories that are associated with various sights, sounds, smells, and traumatic life events).
- ▶ Learn your “tell” (e.g., eye twitch, neck pain, sore joint, upset stomach, bowel problems, tears, etc.) that indicates when you need to step back for a while.



What is the most emotionally stressful aspect of your work and your professional role?

What is your psychological “Achilles heel” and your “tell” ?

What is one example of compassion satisfaction that comes from your professional experiences?

What is your safety plan?

Basic Self Care

- ▶ **Shifts** - stick to them
- ▶ **Breaks** - take them
- ▶ **Days Off** - more than other assignments
- ▶ **Diet and Hydration** - healthy mix and moderation
- ▶ **Exercise** - helps mitigate the stress
- ▶ **Boundaries** - maintain them
- ▶ **Social Support** - got to have it
- ▶ **Journaling Helps** - defuse / process feelings



Peer Support (the best form of social support)

Pain that is shared is easier to bear.
Connect with peers for:

- Safe (private) sharing of stories and venting of feelings;
- Emotional support; and the
- Wisdom that comes from the *been there, done that* perspective

It also avoids the problem of traumatizing friends/family members with your nasty stories.

Beware the “Downshifted Brain”

A stressed-out brain will instinctively revert to survival mode – a simple-minded, less creative, more inflexible, overly-protective, and often angry-edged (black and white) thinking style that will work against the probability of effective communication, analysis, problem-solving, and finding collaborative, best-practice outcomes.

CONTROL

The less control a person feels he or she has in a stressful situation, the more traumatic and potentially overwhelming it will seem to be.

PREDICTABILITY

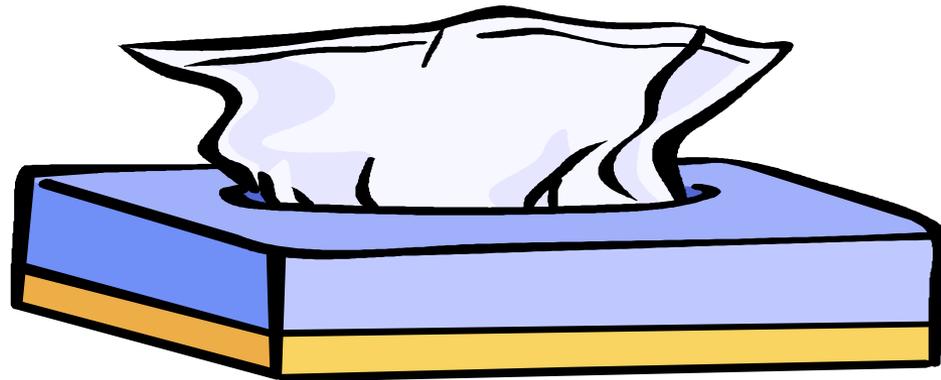
The more uncertain and unpredictable a situation is, the more traumatic and potentially overwhelming it will seem to be.

STRESS INOCULATION

Discovering and sharing some ideas about what is to come helps add to a sense of control and predictability during stressful times.

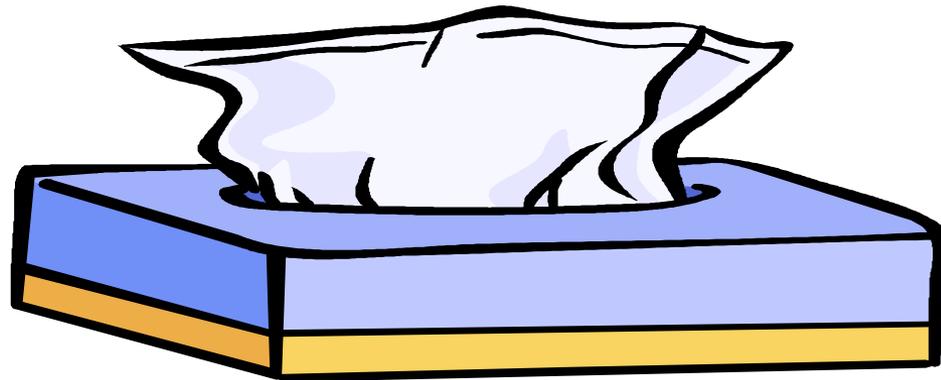
Someone you are helping
starts to cry...

Should you offer a tissue ?

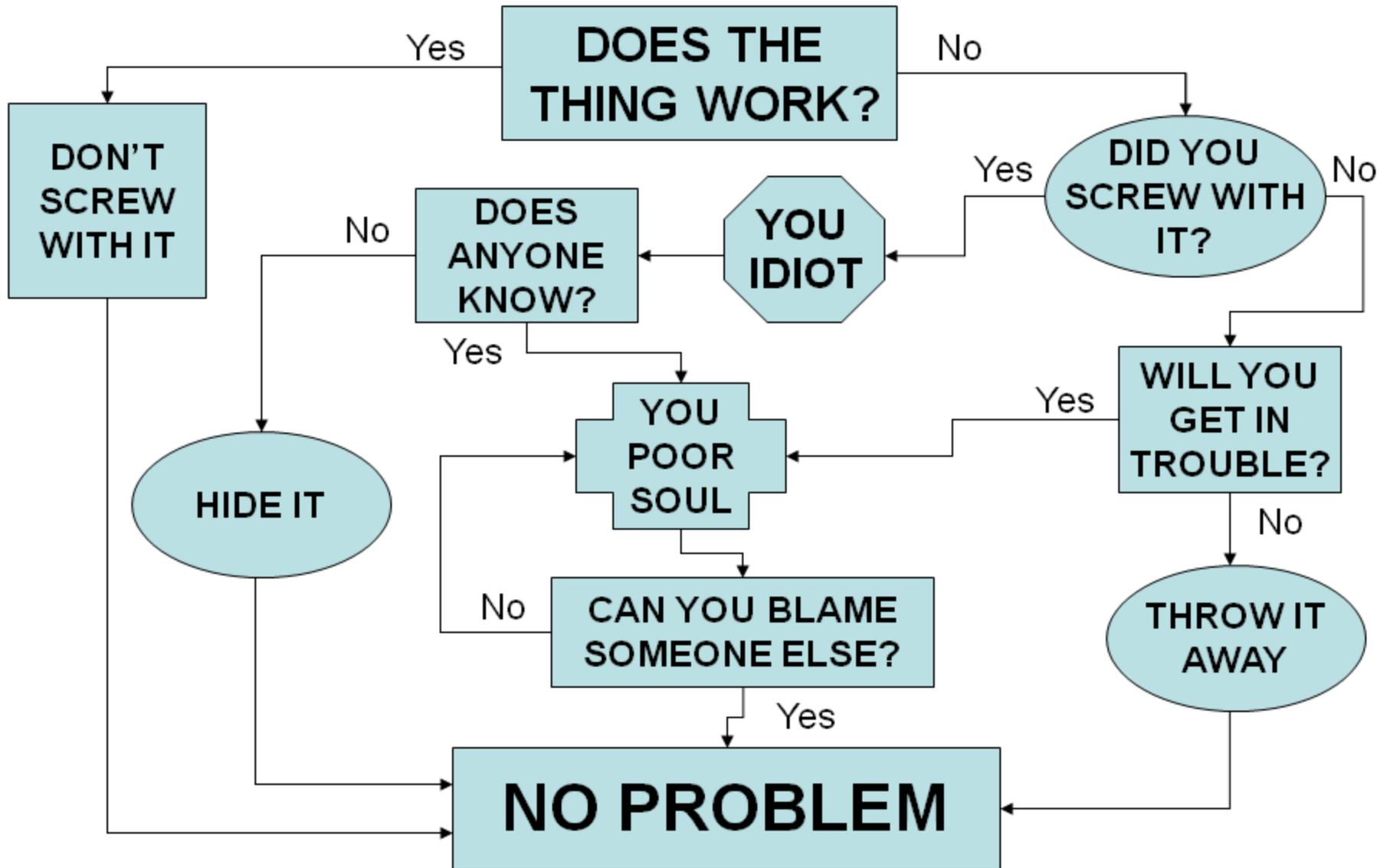


Someone you are helping
tells you their story and you
start to cry...

Is this a problem?



PROBLEM SOLVING FLOWSHEET



Dealing with all of this...

- ▶ Do not wallow in the details that help reinforce the most painful memories of messy cases (e.g., avoid the detailed press accounts about victims).
- ▶ Balance your workday/workweek with good time management (blend time at your desk with travel and/or physical activity).
- ▶ Use hobbies and social activism (service in a different setting like coaching, joining a choir, etc.) to channel some of your energy.

After Getting the Degree(s) and the License(s)...

- Set goals for your career
- Specialize
- Write (e.g., *Help Starts Here*)
- Volunteer (it adds career balance and experience)
- Consider joining us at the  American Red Cross
(or helping another relief organization)

NASW Code of Ethics – section 6.03 Public Emergencies

Social workers should provide appropriate professional services in public emergencies to the greatest extent possible.

Turning heartbreak into hope.



To learn more about the
American Red Cross
please visit:

<http://www.redcross.org> – home page

<http://www.redcross.org/support/volunteer> - volunteer

**Thanks for participating
in this session.**

See you down the road!

