

trigger personal trauma: for those who have experienced trauma, traumatic material can trigger emotions and memories of the event

be extremely stressful (without vicarious trauma or triggering)

- general wear and tear we experience trying to cope with our environment
- fatigue, apathy, insomnia, lack of concentration, crankiness, irritability, reactive, poor memory, lowered immune response, digestive problems, headaches, etc.
- stress symptoms can be physical, mental, behavioral and emotional

result in vicarious trauma which is the emotional residue of exposure from:

- hearing/seeing others' trauma stories
- bearing witnesses to the pain, fear, and terror that trauma survivors have endured
- can cause the same reactions in the listener/viewer as if you have experienced the trauma itself

"You know that feeling when you're reading for criminal law and the sexual assault and murder cases start to really get to you? You feel triggered, but you don't understand why because you're sitting at the safety of your desk with a coffee in hand. This is vicarious trauma".
(Paige Marvel during 2L)

Listening to, reading or watching stories of trauma can:

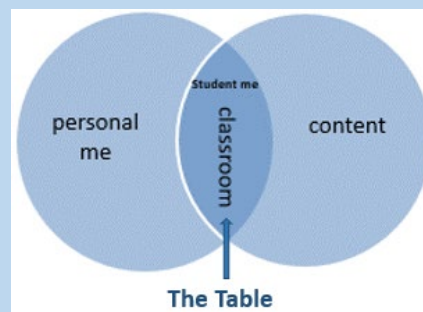
have no impact

- some may question "is there something wrong with me?"
- not everyone is triggered or stressed by traumatic material, and/or you may already have enough resilience and strategies in place to cope

Create boundaries

Establish boundaries:

- to contain what is yours and what is content
- to be able to engagement in content without enmeshment
- to maintain objectivity



- Imagine a table in between you and you classroom/study materials
- Leave the sensitive content there on the table, don't bring it inside your body/brain, this allows you to be objective which is the best position to be in when trying to cope with sensitive materials.
- Affirmation to use: "Leave it on the table", "It's not my experience", "It's on The Table", "This is content only"
- Use additional regulation strategies to help you form and keep the boundaries strong
- Don't forget self-care after

Know your PACE

- Think of functioning in four categories 'PACE'
- Get to know your distress signs. Look for changes from your normal PACE.
- Be aware and check in with your pace regularly

- Physical** heart racing, muscle tension, nausea, chest pain, stomach aches, headaches, sweating, trembling, etc.
- Action** procrastination, increase in alcohol/coffee/comfort foods, avoidance, etc.
- Cognition** trouble concentrating or remembering, unhelpful thinking habits, obsessive thoughts, etc.
- Emotion** anxious, crying, depression, irritability, hypervigilant, angry, frustrated, etc.

Create regulation and distress tolerance strategies

BRAIN: Stress response: shut down of cortex, amygdala takes over = lost access to information + increased emotional reactivity

Regulation response: To gain cognitive control and focus and to stay present, try [self talk](#), [The Table](#), [mindfulness](#), or [thought stopping](#)

Stomach: Stress response: digestion shut down + adrenalin released into system = nausea

Regulation response: To disperse adrenalin try [exercise burst](#), snack, tea, carbonated drink

Heart: Stress response: blood rushes to heart to power body = increased and erratic HR

Regulation response: To slow heart rate try deep, slow [breathing](#)

Muscles: Stress response: tighten to power body + blood is drawn away from extremities to bigger muscles = muscle tension and cold numb, tingling fingers

Regulation response: To relax the muscles and body and turns off the stress response, try [Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#), [toe breathing](#), sensory ring, brain stress ball

These are general distress tolerance strategies:

- which can be [used in the moment](#) – class, studying, exams, networking, interviews etc.
- will need to [individualize](#) for best results
- will need to [practice](#) for best results – if you introduce a new skill when your brain and body are stressed it will raise your reactivity even more
- be [proactive](#) with your strategies – write them out and put on your laptop and on your bathroom mirror – every time you see the note take a breath, relax your muscles and say some empowering self-talk

Regulation Instructions:	
Self-talk (cognitive focus)	"Leave it on the table", "It's not my experience", "It's on The Table", "This is content only", "I can relax my body", "This is normal just keep it steady", "Just breathe", "This too shall pass", "I can do it" or "I am triggered but I can settle myself"
The Table (boundary formation to remain objective)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imagine a table in between you and your classroom/study materials • Leave the sensitive content there on the table, don't bring it inside your body/brain, this allows you to be objective which is the best position to be in when trying to cope with sensitive materials. • Affirmation to use: "Leave it on the table", "It's not my experience", "It's on The Table", "This is content only" • Use additional regulation strategies to help you form and keep the boundaries strong • Don't forget self-care after.
Mindfulness (being present, not ruminating about past, or future)	Pay attention to the internal and external world in this moment, open up your senses, and notice: "In this moment I can see.....", "In this moment I can hear.....", "In this moment I can smell....", "In this moment I can touch/feel....." and "In this moment I can taste...."
Thought Stopping (cognitive control)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stop! Say the word "STOP" loudly in your mind, you can combine this with a small pinch or snap a rubber band around your wrist at the same time. 2. Deep breath: Breathe in through your nose, push the air down deep into your tummy, breathe out through your mouth. Visualize yourself gathering up the negative thoughts (and emotions) and blowing them out with your breath. Say to yourself: "Blow it away" or "Let it go" 3. Affirmation: Say your affirmation to yourself loudly in your mind: "I know this, I got this".
Deep breathing (turns off stress response)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Push the air down into your tummy. 2. Concentrate on moving your tummy and keeping your chest still. Focus on the sound and feel of your breathing...in.....out.....in.....out.....in through your nose.....push the air deep into your tummy.....then breathe out through your mouth.....in and out.....in and out.
Exercise bursts (disperses adrenalin)	5 jumping jacks, 5 sit ups, shake the body (or parts of the body)
Progressive Muscle Relaxation (relaxes the body)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tense the muscles....hold....feel the tension 2. Release....feel the muscles relax. Repeat. 3. Tense and relax different parts of the body (shoulders, hands, toes, stomach, jaw) in turn.
Toe Breathing (combines breathing and PMR)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Breathe in through your nose and visualize the air moving down your body all the way to your toes. 2. Use the air to push your toes into the ground. Feel the tension...hold. 3. Release your toes and push the air back up your body and breathe out.

before class/studying:

- Build tolerance by creating and practicing coping skills.
Can create a strategy which is specific for you and your circumstances
- When you know you may be triggered or content will be difficult, be proactive with your strategies to build resiliency and increase holistic self-care: diet, exercise, social support, sleep, wellbeing.
- Be proactive with your strategies. Write them out and put on your laptop and on your bathroom mirror. Every time you see the note practice your strategies.
- Become aware of your PACE to distress, and quickly intervene with strategies when noticing your distress.
- Build boundaries, try the Table
- Talk to your professor.
- Pre-brief or counselling with a counsellor.

during class/while studying:

- Be aware – monitor for signs of distress
 - Take breaks
- Use grounding techniques and your strategies: breathing, the table, self-talk, muscle relaxation etc.
- If possible use a sensory experience to ground in the moment: drink some water, put your hands under cold running water, use a stress ball or sensory ring
 - Remind self of role and boundaries

after class/studying:

- Debrief with a counsellor
- Talk with your professor, or friend
 - Process emotions
 - Self-care
- Review and reflect, what went well, strengths based, do more of this
 - Review and reflect, what didn't go well, how do I need to address this before next class

Respectful Communication

involves the ability to effectively assert your own views and fully listen to the views of others

everyone is entitled to their opinions and feelings, and everyone practices acceptance of others' opinions and feelings even if they differ

IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A UBC STUDENT

This is particularly important with emotionally challenging information

Respectful communication is using your communication skills to listen and accept the views of others while expressing your own views with the expectation that it will also be accepted and acknowledged. This is particularly important when there is emotionally challenging information.

- Open and respectful dialogue creates... safety to share, understanding, meaningful dialogue, transferable skills
- IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A UBC Student: "The University of British Columbia has responsibility for and is committed to providing its students, staff and faculty with an environment dedicated to excellence, equity and mutual respect. Personal harassment and bullying are harmful to a respectful environment and therefore have no place at UBC."

Caring for others and yourself

OTHERS

- I noticed...the conversation upset you....
- Is there anything you need right now?

SELF

- I noticed...the conversation upset me....
- Is there anything I need right now?

No matter how respectful conversation is, the content can still raise emotions. Be thoughtful and compassionate to your own and others' emotional responses and check in with them. Check in with self as well afterwards and do self care.

Resources:

What is counselling? Could be a debrief, learning strategies, personal growth, processing triggers, trauma work (long term – specialist referral)

- kline@allard.ubc.ca M-F | 8.30-4.30 | 604.822.4928
- [UBC Counselling](#) M-F | 8.30-4.30 | 604.822.3811
- [UBC Student Assistance Program \(SAP\)](#) 24/7 | 1.833.590.1328 | UBC student community counselling | immediate and short term
- Community counselling (Anna can assist you in connecting, and explaining studentcare extended health reimbursement)
- Allard Lawyer Wellbeing Mentors: lawyers who have experienced wellbeing concerns who are happy to share their experiences with students

Resources for Indigenous students

UBC Services

- kline@allard.ubc.ca M-F | 8.30-4.30 | 604.822.4928
- [UBC Counselling](#): Indigenous Counsellor: Renee Avitan | FNHL | 604.822.3811
- [UBC Student Assistance Program \(SAP\)](#) Indigenous counsellors | 24/7 | 1.833.590.1328 | UBC student community counselling | immediate and short term
- Allard Lawyer Wellbeing Mentors: Indigenous Mentor (Michif)

Community Services

- [National Indian Residential School Crisis Line](#) 24-hour offering support services and crisis referrals: 1-866-925-4419
- [Indian Residential School Survivors Society \(IRSSS\)](#)) provides essential services to Residential School Survivors, their families, and to those dealing with intergenerational trauma. Call toll free: 1-800-721-0066
- [Hope for Wellness Help Line](#) - phone or chat 24-hour mental health counselling, via phone 1-855-242-3310 or chat Line
- [KUUUS-US](#): 24-hour provincial Aboriginal Crisis line for:
 - Adult/Elder Crisis Line: 250-723-4050
 - Child/Youth Crisis Line: 250-723-2040
 - BC Wide Toll Free: 1800-KUU-US17 (1800-588-8717)
 - Métis Crisis Line BC Toll Free: 1833-MétisBC (1833-638-4722)
- [First Nations Health Authority Mental Wellness & Counselling Support](#) offers a list of providers registered with health benefits

Have questions or need support?
Allard Law Student Wellbeing
kline@allard.ubc.ca
604.822.4928