

LIGHTLY EDITED FILE

National Resource Center on Domestic Violence

Dealing with Loss and Uncertainty:

Self-Compassion, Resilience, and Narrative

June 23, 2020

2:30 - 3:30 p.m.

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>> Hi, everyone.

Welcome to our webinar session for today.

My name is Ivonne Ortiz, I am the training manager for the NRC DV and we're so happy that you're joining us.

We are going to be starting in three minutes.

But, first, I wanted to tell you a couple of things about our system.

I know that some of you are already introducing yourselves in the chat.

Please remember that this chat is public and everything that you write is going to be shared with our participants.

If you need to chat with one or both of the presenters, please just make sure that you send a private message.

You should be able to see our PowerPoint slides.

It has pretty red flowers and it has our logo, National Resource Center on Domestic Violence.

If you're having issues with your system, please let us know.

Also, it's important to know that you have the option of using our 1-877 number, and our very own Breckan is manning the chat today so she is going to be sharing that number if you have issues with your audio by using your computer.

So you can call in as well.

I think that's all that I have right now.

We do hope that you enjoy the session.

We are really really excited.

And, remember, this is part 1 of the series.

Next week we have part 2 and July the 7th we have part 3.

So make sure that you're registered for the three sessions.

I see that Breckan just added the number.

And please please use the chat, not just to, you know, chat with one another but also if you want to share any resources, make sure that you put the link there.

So enjoy our session and we'll be starting in one minute.

>> Good afternoon, everyone.

We're so excited to see everyone chatting, introducing themselves in the chat box, we're excited to see everyone from all over the country, outside of the country, again, thank you so much for taking time this afternoon, this morning, this evening, depending on where you're joining us from for this webinar.

My name is Arlene Vassell, I am the vice president of programs, prevention and social change for the National Resource Center on Domestic Violence. Again, thank you for joining and welcome to our webinar titled Dealing with Loss and Uncertainty:

Self-Compassion, Resilience and Narrative part 1 of the self-care and healing, surviving and thriving in the midst of a pandemic, a community response to loss and grief to COVID-19 webinar series.

And Ivonne just gave you the information and Breckan in the chat box gave you some additional information about the webinar series.

I would like to welcome my sisters and colleagues.

They'll be presenting the information today, and I'm really excited to hear from them and I'm really excited for you to hear from them as well.

Ghia Kelly is a faith leader, visionary and social justice advocate.

A native of Miami, Florida, she has a passion for empowering individuals and helping them reach their maximum potential, both naturally and spiritually.

Ghia is the founder and CEO of The Gift of Truth, Incorporated, a faith-based organization and ministry that seeks to create opportunities and safe spaces for individuals to learn, heal and grow.

She is also a certified life coach, trainer and public speaker with expertise in several areas, such as domestic violence, sexual violence, emotional health, racial equity, systems change, and spiritual identity and purpose.

Ghia holds a bachelor of science in public management, a master's degree in clinical social work, and she is currently pursuing her doctorate in transformational leadership.

Ooh, Dr. Ghia, I love it, Dr. Kelly.

She's an ordained elder and has dedicated her life to empowering women, advocating against injustice, and ministering to the whole person -- body, soul and spirit.

Ghia resides in Tallahassee, Florida, with her husband and her three beautiful children.

Carolina Bautista Velez is a certified professional coach and mindfulness teacher with over 17 years of professional experience.

She is the owner of C. Velez Consultants and Metamorphosis Coaching.

I'm sorry if I messed that up.

Carolina's work is rooted on social justice, cultural humility and antioppression framework.

As a certified life coach, Carolina offers a space to cultivate reflection, resilience, autonomy and strength where her clients can focus on learning sustainable tools to navigate desires, social conditioning, goals, and difficulties.

Carolina has been an advocate for survivors of domestic and sexual violence for many years, providing direct

services, creating programs for human trafficking survivors, and training organizations across the country on how to provide social justice and cultural-informed services to survivors.

Carolina holds a degree in clinical psychology with a specialization in social psychology.

She's an immigrant, Latinx, social changer, who believes in the power of individuals and collective liberation.

Now we'd like to learn more about you, and you've shared a lot of information with us about where you're joining from.

If you haven't yet, introduce yourself and tell us where you're joining from.

Ghia will now begin her presentation and Carolina will follow directly after.

Thank you, all, so much for joining us.

And I'm excited about our presenters.

>> Good afternoon.

Good morning.

Wherever you are in the world.

It is truly my honor to be able to be here and just to share with you all what's in my heart because I think that, you know, we focus so much on so many other things and, so, today we get a time to really focus on

ourselves and our health and our healing as a people.
And, so, Arlene has done an amazing job of reading our bios, but, really simply, I am an advocate at heart. You know, that is the work that is core to my being, so even though I'm not currently in the movement, you know, advocacy is something that you become, it's not something that you do.

And, so, as you can see from this slide, I've worked in the movement for a long time, so I am at home amongst advocates, many of you all I see from domestic violence center and shelters and coalitions all around the nation.

And, so, I am at home with you all, but alongside that, you know, what keeps me grounded as well is my beliefs, is my belief system, the core who I am.

So today, don't worry, I won't be preaching to anyone, but I will be sharing just some tools on how do we make it through this time that we have found ourselves in.

And, so, before we get started and dig in a little deep into this, I want to have a moment of reflection

because a lot has transpired in our nation and our world, quite frankly.

Over the past four months there has been literally a whirlwind, right, that has happened to us from COVID to Black Lives Matter to the protesting to the loss of a sense of safety to racism to Breonna Taylor to protests

to riots to mask wearing to not being able to go to Wal-Mart each and every day or whatever it is that you do, working from home, home schooling, all of these things have now become the new norm for us and, so, I want us to kind of ground ourselves and really reflect on that for just a moment and just really kind of take that in, that this is where we are and because it's where we are, it is imperative that we embrace that so that we can begin to move forward.

I know that many of you all are at different places in this process, right.

Some of us are still trying to wrap our heads around it.

Some of us have not been able to really sit still.

Some of us have sat still and have been able to process a bit further than others.

And that's okay.

We're all at different places.

But I want to take a moment and just kind of embrace that, a moment of silence, if you will, just to kind of take these things in.
Nice deep exhale.

All right.

So now we can move forward.

So we are truly in unprecedented times in which we

live.

So some of the things that I've identified that you all can probably identify with as well is that, you know, we have experienced, as a nation, as a world significant loss and loss is really self-defined.

And we'll talk a little bit more about loss.

Particularly how to deal with loss as it relates to grieving.

But we've experienced loss, and even as I'm talking, if you all want to just chat in some of the ways that you may have experienced loss during this time.

And there's, again, a whole number of things that we can identify, but feel free to chat in whatever you feel comfortable sharing as it relates to loss.

But loss is definitely something significant that has happened to us.

Alongside loss is uncertainty, right?

What's going to happen?

Like there's question marks all over.

When do we go back to work?

When do things return to normal?

When do our children go back to school and be safe?

There's a lot of questions.

There's a lot of uncertainty around this pandemic, around the racial tension that we're facing in our state that has not been -- that has not been something

that people of color that we have ever lost sight of,
but now we see that our nation has now begun to
understand that systemic racism is still very much
alive, that in many instances it is not overt, but it
is there, and, so, we have to also embrace that, right.
Okay.

I see some of you all chatting in.

And I want to honor some of the losses.

Moments of freedom.

Feeling safe, absolutely.

Loss of time with family and friends.

Losing family members, right.

Man, it's just so much.

So thank you, all, for sharing.

Losing just a sense of just being with other people,
you know, some people have not seen their family
members in a long time.

And, so, we want to honor that, that that is a
significant loss.

Uncertainty, reflection.

So one thing you'll learn about me is that I'm always
looking for the positive in any situation.

And, so, I will not say that this pandemic has not
proven to be very difficult.

I would not put on to say that dealing with racism as a

person of color has not been daunting, has not been exhausting, having to educate people on the challenges that we face and the disparities that are faced.

However, in the midst of every situation, I believe that there is always opportunity.

Okay?

I want to make sure that I put that, I am a person full of hope, and I believe that hope is what keeps me going.

And, so, bit end of my 30 minutes with you all, I hope that hope is what you are left with.

If nothing else, if you don't remember my name or you don't remember anything I said, if I can just leave you all with hope, then I have come what I have come to do. And, so, this pandemic has also forced us to begin to reflect, right?

Many of you all are probably can see virtually start shaking your head, like I have a moment of reflection, because this pandemic and being on shutdown and not being able to do the things that we have typically done has helped us to really reflect on our lives, right, to begin to think about what is important, because I don't know about you all, but for me, I was so busy in doing life, right?

That I didn't have time to really reflect on what is important to me.

[pause to set up the captions again, pod went away]

>> You have had to reprioritize your life.

Where there was that routine has now been interrupted, right?

So now we have to prioritize and reprioritize what is important to us.

For me, personally, I have had to reprioritize family, I have had to reprioritize my own self-care and health and well-being, I have had to reprioritize even my values as a concern, and also I have had to reprioritize my advocacy and the things that I invest my energy in because I believe that as an advocate you don't necessarily advocate for everything at the same time.

There are seasons for certain things to take precedence.

So, in this time I've had to reprioritize that.

And, so, you all may be able to identify with that as well, having to reprioritize.

And if you want to give some examples in the chat, please feel free to do so of ways that you have to reprioritize things.

Because we have been interrupted.

So there has been some loss, some uncertainty, some reflection, and, most importantly, some

reprioritization.

So the next thing, as we explore loss, loss is a very difficult thing, but it is a part of life.

The more you live, you know, you will experience loss.

Some of us have experienced more loss than others.

Some of us have experience, you know, loss very early in our lives.

Some of us have, you know, have not experienced a lot of loss and that is beautiful, but at some point in our lives, we all will experience loss and, so, the thing about loss is that if you experience loss, it is absolutely a natural response to grieve that loss.

And, so, I want to help to identify for some of you all where you are emotionally because some of you all, like me, may be at a point where you just feel emotionally overwhelmed or there may be a sadness there, right?

There may be a sense of feeling alone, feeling lost, and for some of you all, it is because you are grieving the losses that we've identified a few moments back, you're grieving the loss of your sense of safety, we are grieving the loss of even feeling safe in our country, right.

For people of color, there is a grieving of not being able to be in relationship with our co-workers on a daily basis.

The sense of grieving, just the idea that we were

further along in our nation than we are.

There was a grieving that is happening collectively amongst us all, and grief is natural.

For many of us, there is this desire to suppress grief, but that, in fact, is unhealthy.

Right?

Because grief is a natural response, it is a healthy response.

And, so, although there is no right or wrong way to grieve, there are healthy ways to grieve.

And, so, I want to give you the space and the encouragement to grieve this time, to grieve what you have lost, to grieve where you are emotionally and to be okay with that and, most importantly, not to rush yourself through your grieving process.

If you all have ever dealt with a loss of a loved one and that grieving process can be very difficult, but it is different for every person.

Some people grieve in a certain amount of time, and they go through a certain process.

And other people, it may take a longer time.

So it's okay if you don't grieve in the same way that another person grieves.

But you have to grieve.

Right?

You have to grieve.

And, so, some of the losses that we've seen, as you all have already identified is the loss of loved ones who have died from COVID, who have been sick or even the near death experiences or just seeing the amount of death on our news and seeing the way that people of color have been disproportionately affected by this virus, right?

Other losses include losses of jobs and financial stability because of the way that this has now impacted our economic system and, so, many people are left, you know, grieving the loss of maybe a career that they have built or maybe your significant other may have lost their job and, so, you're grieving with them during that time.

You can grieve the loss of a cherished dream.

Maybe the dream, you know, that, you know, for racial reconciliation and now you're realizing that that is a little bit further in the future than it is right now.

And, so, we grieve that loss that we are in a place of a progression in the area of racism and then to now realize that black and brown bodies are being killed at numbers that are alarming and, so, having to grieve that, grieving for our black and brown children and our boys as they navigate this scary world, that is a loss, and that's something to be grieved.

And then, lastly, the loss of safety, the loss of safety, just not feeling safe.

I mean, the masks that we wear is to keep us from the -- is to keep us from the virus.

But you all, there is another loss of safety that we are experiencing as well.

And as a black woman, I can tell you that I don't feel safe.

And we all know that in this movement to end violence against women, women have dealt with this all of our lives, this sense of not feeling safe in certain environments.

So now that has been heightened because not only am I unsafe -- feeling unsafe for being a woman, but I'm also feeling unsafe because of the color of my skin.

And it is not always that someone will take my life, but it's just a lack of safety or security in feeling equal.

Right?

That is also a loss of safety, that I don't feel safe in majority white spaces because I do not feel necessarily like I'm accepted.

So it's not always a fear of death or impending, you know, harm to my physical body, but sometimes our spirit can also feel unsafe because we know that we are

not experiencing the same levels of opportunity and equality that other people are experiencing.

And, so, we have to grieve that.

That is a lot right there, right?

That is a lot to take in.

But the beautiful thing about grief is that there is a process, there is a beginning and there is an end.

And, so, the sooner you allow yourself to grieve, the sooner you can reach the place of what we call acceptance.

It doesn't mean that it goes away.

It doesn't mean that it's not painful anymore.

But there is a place of healing.

There is a place of being able to move beyond it.

And, so, we'll talk about that in just a little bit.

And I love the conversation that is happening in the

chat room that you all are amen'ing me.

I know I'm a minister, but I love the amens and all of that good stuff.

But I see that you all hear my heart, right?

That the sense of safety is huge, and I also want to acknowledge the fact that people are grieving, that they cannot put language to their grief, and that, too, is okay because when you don't necessarily know why you're grieving, you have to trust that your body knows.

And, so, I'm going to give some tools on how to press in to that a bit because we have to listen to our bodies.

We have to understand that when we don't have language, our body, our hearts, our souls and our spirits, they have language, okay.

All right.

So I want to move into a very familiar model.

I'm a clinically trained social worker.

So some of you all may be as well, or therapists.

I know that our next presenter is a psychologist.

So there may be other clinicians as well.

But some of you all may be very familiar with the stages of grief.

And there are different variations of this model.

Some have added to it.

But I just wanted to acknowledge just a very basic framework for us looking at the stages of grief.

And this is what's called a Kubler-Ross model.

And there's five identified stages.

Again, as you Google this or do your research, there's a lot more.

Some people have added more stages to it, have twisted the language.

But for this presentation I want to look at these five

because I think they will give us some level of framework to use as we look at our grieving process. And, so, the first stage that you're going to see is what we call denial.

Denial, and some of us may be in that stage, and that's okay because it, too, is a part of the process, and denial really says, you know, this is not really happening.

That's what denial sounds like.

This cannot be happening to me.

I cannot be in this place.

Our nation is not in this place.

That man did not kill that man in broad daylight in eight minutes and 46 seconds.

That did not happen to Breonna Taylor.

That did not happen to Ahmaud Arbery.
This can't be where we are.

Our President did not say that.

Okay.

At all get what I'm sayin', right?

I am in denial that we are in this place.

I am not ready to embrace that our ancestors marched and picketed and lost their lives, I'm almost getting emotional, for us to still be where we are.

Right?

This is not what our white allies joined the picket

lines for.

This is not what my ancestors picked cotton for.

For us to be still trying to achieve the American dream, whatever that is.

Now, we are not still in a place where blacks and brown people and transgender people and all different kind of people with different levels of ability, that we are not looked at and valued as human.

We can't still be there.

We can't still be there.

So denial.

Denial is a part of this process, right?

I will not accept it.

I will not accept that this is where we are.

The other thing that comes out of denial, the next stage is anger.

And some of you are already feeling it.

Some of you are already there.

I go in and out sometimes.

I go from being very sad to being pissed off because now it's not that I'm denying it, right, I'm mad about it.

I realize that this is really happening.

I'm realizing that our black men are being hunted like animals and I'm pissed off about it.

I'm mad that -- okay.

I'm the only one, right?

I'm mad and I have a right to be because I don't feel safe anymore.

And I don't know what the world will look like in the next 20 years for my young children.

I do not know what next week holds as it relates to the coronavirus and where our nation is going.

I do not know what the next presidential election holds.

I don't know.

So I'm angry about that.

And some of that anger is because we do not have the amount of control to really -- or feel like we have the control to change anything.

And, so, anger is a part of the grieving process.

Angry, because we don't know what the future holds.

That's right.

So anger is a key part of this process.

And if you're angry, that's okay.

The next stage is bargaining.

So we go from denying it, to not wanting to accept it, we step into anger, right.

And then there's a bargaining that happens.

And bargaining sounds like, man, if only I would have...

Or, God, if you can change this situation, I promise...

You fill in the blank.

It's a bargaining.

Like if I can just wake up and this be a bad dream,
right?

Yeah.

Like, I'll do anything to get out of this, right, for
this not to be my reality.

Okay.

And then there's depression.

And I prefer to use sadness instead of depression.

But that is what the model calls it.

And for some, you know, depression is something that
they struggle with.

I know for some it may be hard to say that or not want
to voice to depression or to not to want feel like your
level of sadness meets the clinical definition of
depression.

But this is not necessarily talking about a mental
health type of depression.

It's just a feeling of immense sadness.

And, so, it's okay to feel that way.

It's okay to be sad.

It's okay to have this sense of sorrow, right, for
where we are.

Yeah.

It's okay to want to be there for a minute and it's healthy to be there.

And then the last stage is acceptance.

And for some when you're in the denial stage, acceptance may seem so far away.

Right?

It can seem so far away.

But acceptance is a place -- it's a process there.

And I was just about to clarify, and I love, I see that, Casey, you've already stated this in the chat, but the reason why I use this particular graphic is because it shows that there is an interweaving between these stages.

And, so, this is not a linear process.

You can go from denial to bargaining to acceptance, back to anger.

There's no cyclical way that this happens.

So you can go from one stage to the next.

There are some that have felt like, you know, they've gone from anger to depression and then back.

So it really depends on your process.

So there's not one way to do this.

So thank you for clarifying that.

So wherever you find yourself in the process, just know that there is an end and that you take your time to get

there, however long it takes, you get there, but you have to press into it and lean into it and not be afraid to sit alone and really hear what your heart has to say.

I'll say that again.

Sometimes you cannot be afraid to sit in silence, to sit alone with yourself so that you can hear what your heart has to say.

And, so, my question that I want to pose is what story are you telling yourself?

We have a lot of narratives that are going forward.

MSNBC has a narrative, Fox, I'm not really a news person, but whatever your favorite news outlet is. Social media has a narrative, the Republicans have a narrative, the Democrats have a narrative, the Christians have a narrative.

I mean, everybody has a narrative.

But what's most important is what narrative you are telling yourself.

And, so, we cannot allow outside influences to shape our narrative of what we tell -- the story that I'm telling Ghia, okay.

What are you telling you?

What story are you believing?

And, so, that's why the self-care and the pressing in

to hearing what your heart and your spirit is saying is so important so that you can also evaluate the narrative that you have believed.

All right.

And, so, it is important that you narrate your own story.

Are you telling yourself a story of fear and anxiety and doom and gloom?

Or are you telling yourself a story of hope?

So what that looks like is, you know, the story of fear is saying, this will never get better.

You know, it really goes back to that self-talk.

I'm saving you all a co-pay on therapy, y'all. This is all it is, is learning how to change your

thought pattern and, so, your narrative for fear and anxiety is, this is it.

This will never get better.

Right?

There's no way out of this.

COVID is going to kill everybody.

We're never going to reach a place of racial reconciliation.

Black folks will never be equal.

So that's what -- that's the narrative that now breeds fear and anxiety and hopelessness.

Right?

But the narrative of hope says, this is a really bad time, but things are going to get better.

I have to -- I choose to believe that things are going to get better.

I have to believe that this is not the end.

I have to believe that our political climate will get better.

That empathy about begin to penetrate our political system.

I choose to believe that women, hallelujah, will be empowered, y'all see me, and will be empowered in some way.

I choose to believe that there will be equality among blacks and whites and our Latin brothers and sisters.

I choose to bring forth a message of hope to myself.

Right?

And, so, you have to ask yourself what story am I believing.

What story am I telling myself.

What story am I allowing others to tell me.

So you can choose will you embrace the story of the narrative of others or you reject it.

Right?

Okay.

Good.

So you have to check your personal narrative.

And this is a quote that I think is very befitting and it says, "it is the story of self-narrative that determines the shape of the expression of our lived experience."

All right.

And, so, what that is saying in very plain language is that how you feel and how you behave is directly connected to the story that you tell yourself.

The way that we feel and we behave is directly connected to what we tell ourselves.

So you have to check your narrative.
And it's okay to have a moment where you're in a sucky mood, it's okay to want to whine and complain.

That is your business.

But we cannot stay in that place of hopelessness.

We cannot stay in that place of defeat and discouragement.

We have to pull ourselves up, you know, pull ourselves out of it and begin to instill in us a sense of hope.

Our ancestors could not stay in their roots, right?

They did not -- Harriet Tubman did not create the system of freedom that she did for so many people by staying in a place of despondency and there was no hope.

There has been a vision of hope.

Dr. Martin Luther King had to have a vision of hope that continuously led him through the difficult times. So you too have to have a vision of hope that things will get better.

I will find employment, I will get out of this, I will move forward, I will get the strength that I need to come up out of this.

So it's about your narrative.

And this is really simple.

What are you choosing to wear, guys?

Are we wearing our faith?

For me, my faith is my belief in a higher power, in

God, but your faith may be in -- whatever it is that

you put your hope in, are you choosing to wear that or are you choosing to wear fear?

Every day we have to get up and make a decision to dress according to our narrative.

And I thought that this was very powerful in that it showed these things in a t-shirt form because it shows us that the faith that we employ or the fear that we employ, they have the ability to clothe us, they become a part of us, they become our outward expression.

So we have to now make a very conscious decision, am I going to clothe myself in fear and worry and anxiety?

Or am I going to clothe myself in faith believing that

the impossible is possible, believing that things will get better?

So we have to choose what we wear.

This speaks for itself.

Fear is a liar.

That is just so powerful to me.

And, again, we understand that we work with women who know fear, right?

We deal with -- we have worked with survivors of domestic and sexual violence so we're not minimizing fear as in the fear that protects us when we are in a place of danger.

But what I am talking about is the fear that paralyzes us, the unhealthy fear.

So fear can either protect us or it can paralyze us.

And, so, we should never want to operate in a level of fear that keeps us from moving forward to the things that are important to us.

And, so, I'm not talking about, again, fear that genuinely comes out of a response of being in danger.

I'm not talking about that.

But I'm talking about the unhealthy fear that comes to keep us from moving forward and keeps us from opening our mouths and advocating, that keeps us from speaking out against injustice, that keeps us from really moving forward in the way that we should go.

All right.

So fear is a liar.

And some of you all have already said it, but Carolina says it, that fear is false information appearing real. Absolutely.

That was one of the things that I was going to say, is that it's false information that is appearing real.

And I'm going to give you all this for free.

But in order to conquer fear, right, you must identify and uproot the lie that you believe. So when you find yourself dealing with fear, you have to go back -- again, we're going back into that place of self, really sitting with ourselves, right, and really evaluating where we are, and go back and try to pinpoint what lie did I believe along the way that caused fear and anxiety to now breed in my life.

And, again, I'm not talking about the fear that may be clinically diagnosed or the anxiety, but you all get where I'm going with this.

So I want to clarify that.

But if you want to conquer this unhealthy sense of fear, then you need to go back and identify and uproot, right, with the truth the lie that you believe.

And, so, it can be very -- a simple lie, like things won't ever get better.

I got to go back and undo that and put the truth -- no, I put hope there, things will get better, I don't know when, but I believe that it will.

All right.

So we are wrapping up, and the last thing that I want to give you all is just some strategies for maintaining your personal peace.

It is so important in these times that while we cannot control, you know, what is going on in our nation, while we can't control how people feel about us and think about us, what we can control is our own faith, we can control our own narrative and we can take control of our own peace.

And, so, these are just some really simple strategies that you all can employ in your time of reflection.

And, so, the first one is shift your focus.

If you're focused, what you feed is what will grow.

So ask yourself, what is my diet?

What am I feeding on?

What am I focusing my affections on?

What am I spending most of my time consuming?

Because what you focus on is what will grow.

So we want to shift our focus from doom and gloom to a more positive, healthy way of viewing things.

The next thing is self-care.

Take care of yourself, guys.

Be kind to yourself, be kind to yourself, give yourself a break, give yourself a hug, give yourself a pat on the back because you're really doing an amazing job. You're holding it all together.

I have three children, y'all.

Y'all know I'm not okay.

With the home schooling.

But I have to pat myself on the back every now and then because I'm doing the best that I can with what I have. So be good to yourself.

The next thing is be grateful, gratitude is an amazing way to keep the heart happy.

And, so, please practice daily gratitude.

For me it's something as simple as finding something to be grateful for because when you have a heart of gratitude, it's kind of hard to complain, it's kind of hard to focus on all the things that are going wrong. So, you know, try to think of five things or one thing, if that's all you got, that you are grateful for.

The next strategy is mindfulness.

And I know our next presenter is going to talk a little bit more about this, but mindfulness is, you know, just, for me, it's spending time alone with yourself and your thoughts and your feelings and just really having moments of solitude and stillness and being able

to live in that moment.

So I encourage you all.

I don't have -- you know, sometimes the bathroom is my only place of solitude.

But wherever I can get it in, I get it in.

So be mindful, you know, be mindful and have moments to be able to be unified within yourself, body, soul and spirit.

And then helping others, helping others.
We cannot become so wrapped up in what's going wrong in our lives that we forget that there are other people that need us.

And, so, a good way to also keep the heart happy is to give back, is to find someone else that you can pour back into, that you can encourage.

There's nothing like giving an encouraging word to someone when you yourself need one.

But it's something beautiful about that.

And, so, we don't want to forget to give back.

And I know that you all are a group of advocates and people that are doing amazing work.

So your daily work is so imperative.

So I just want to celebrate the awesome work that you are doing on behalf of survivors and their children.

And, so, thank you so, so much for spending time with me.

And, lastly, we're going to get through this together.

We are going to get through this together.

You need other people.

We need each other.

I need you.

You need me.

And if we can come together in a sense of unity, then

we can get through this together.

And, so, this webinar is -- that's the message, that

together we will get through this.

So thank you so much for your time today.

I appreciate each and every one of you.

And I just speak blessing over everyone.

Thank you.

>> Thank you so much, Ghia, thank you for being a

messenger of hope.

Like as you started off with, if nobody gets anything

else, I hope you get hope.

We have so much more.

I made so many notes.

What's the story, what's the story that you're telling
yourself, that resonated.

What really resonated with me the most is my body, soul
and spirit has language when I don't have the words.

So thank you so much for that.

Thank you for all the gems that you dropped.

And now I'm really excited, Carolina, if you could take it away.

Thank you so much again for your time.

So I'm looking forward to your presentation as well.

We had a question that came up.

I'll wait until the end to bring it up.

You touched on the question -- ooh -- you touched on the question, but I just want to make sure that I

acknowledge Lynnette, we saw your question, and I'll pose it to both presenters at the end.

Thanks.

Carolina, take it away.

>> Let me just unmute myself.

Oh, my goodness!

Ghia, I feel so much hope and empowerment and validation for all the feelings that we have the right to feel in this moment.

So thank you so much for such a powerful presentation.

And, again, hi, everyone.

My name is Carolina Bautista Velez.

Thank you, Arlene and the staff of the National Resource Center for inviting me today to share with all of you.

I am an advocate, as many of you.

Has been in the front lines of advocacy.

And, yeah, I am so, so excited to be here with you.

So in my presentation today, after Ghia's presentation, it's -- a very -- I don't know the word to use but I'm going to lean a little bit more into what she said in how it makes sense in our brain that we share all of that common humanity to react and respond in the ways that we are responding in this moment.

So I want us to take a few seconds just to come back, just to come back, if you would like to close your eyes or lower your gaze, whatever feels more comfortable for you in this moment.

And just take a deep breath.

Breathing in all the hope, the awareness, the understanding that Ghia brought to us in this presentation.

Breathing in the care and compassion that you might be needing in this moment for yourself.

So take that in with every inhale.

And with every exhale take out all the action and the hope and the resiliency and empowerment that our communities have passed on to us through generations.

Breathing in the caring, the soothing, the compassion that we need in this moment.

And breathing out all the action and resiliency and empowerment that we will continue moving forward.

Thank you, all.

And whenever you're ready, you can open your eyes and come back to the presentation.

So one of the things I'm going to focus on a little bit more is the part of self-compassion, and that self-compassion, I would like to hear from others if you are aware of that word, compassion, and how that manifests in your life.

So if you would like to use the chat, I would love to know a little bit more from you.

What is that compassion?

How does it manifest for you?

Why it's important in this moment in our life, in our personal life, in the world.

So, the definition that I brought for you is compassion is the concern for the alleviation of the suffering of other beings.

Yes.

Thank you.

Some people are sharing being kind to ourselves, the daily practice of recognizing those outside of myself, yes, thank you.

All of these things, compassion, when we talk about compassion, we're talking about not only compassion for others but compassion for self as well.

And I love that you guys are sharing that because that

really gets missed in the conversation, that that compassion is only for others but not for ourselves. And something to think about is when Ghia was sharing those powerful words, when we think about our clients, right, that we work with, our family members, our friends that come to us with a difficult situation that they're going through in this moment, a reaction to them is of caring, right?

It is the tone of our voice, I am so sorry you're going through this in this moment.

We hug.

We express that compassion and caring.

And also when someone else brings their suffering to us, another thing that happens there is that we tell them that this is not going to last forever.

But if I ask you to reflect on when we are the ones that are going through something different, when we are going through something difficult, how do we talk to ourselves?

Do we embrace ourselves and say, I am so sorry, Carolina, that I'm going through this in this moment. Or is it okay to be feeling this way.

That voice is not as compassionate as the one that we offer others, right?

That voice might be very judgmental, why am I going

through this again?

This is never going to go well.

I am always thinking that I'm not enough, that I'm not going to come out of this.

So when we think about self-compassion, and I think someone brought up that question in the chat, the question is treating ourselves with the same kindness as we would treat a friend when things are going wrong. That is self-compassion.

It is different than being selfish.

Selfish means that we are doing only this for us and we are not including others in that circle of compassion.

But what we notice is that with compassion we tend to be more compassionate towards others than towards ourselves.

And self-compassion means that we just include ourselves in that circle of compassion.

That's it.

So Kristin Neff is a professor, a psychology professor in Texas, and the person that came up with a very inclusive definition of self-compassion that has helped me to navigate the complexity of my identity as an immigrant, as Latinx, as queer, as a nonblack person of color in a world that has brainwashed with antiblackness.

So this is a tool that I love to share with others

because this self-compassion has allowed me to explore these identities in the way that I relate to others, in a more compassionate way and responding more strategically outside.

So what Kristin Neff said is that in order to be more self-compassionate, first of all, we need to bring mindfulness.

And mindfulness is just the art of being present in this moment knowing that we are suffering.

And the sentence might be, wow, I am really suffering in this moment.

I am really struggling in this moment with someone that was commenting before, right, that grieving, I know I'm grieving, but I don't know what I'm grieving.

So the first step is that mindfulness, recognizing in this moment that I am not well that I am being impacted by everything that is going on in this moment.

The second thing is that common humanity, that suffering is part of everyone's life.

We experience suffering in different levels.

And we experience suffering from different systems, but that is a common humanity.

We are not excluded from suffering.

And the third thing is the self-kindness.

And when we talk about self-kindness, it includes an

invitation of action to alleviate the suffering on ourselves and on others.

So what's very important for me to know because I experienced something something in our field called compassion fatigue.

And I would like to know, you know, I was one person, very fatigued of all the things and the systems of oppression, right, that was going around my clients and everything, but it is not really compassion fatigue that we suffer.

It is empathy fatigue.

Empathy is that we resonate with the pain of others.

When we use the self-compassion and compassion for others, when we recognize that there is a moment of suffering and we alleviate that pain in our suffering ourselves, we are more qualified, we are more able to respond to the suffering of others, to the suffering of our clients, of the people around us, of our families.

So, again, it's not selfish.

It is, in fact, the most collective way for liberation.

So I would love to hear from some of you, why don't we do this?

Why, if we know that it is difficult for us that we have the judgment, right, going on towards us, that we are more empathetic and compassionate towards others but not towards ourselves, why is it so difficult to do

it?

I'm going to give a little bit of space to ask you to reflect on that.

Why is it so difficult to include ourselves in that circle of compassion?

As Ghia was saying, right, to recognize that we are doing what we can with what we have in this moment.

Yes, Carla, thank you.

We expect ourselves to be perfect.

That we don't have role models in our culture, right.

It is so much easier, yes, to feel for others.

You're not alone for everyone that is sharing.

Cultural pressure, yes, feeling selfish, yes.

We live in a society where we have been told as women a lot, right, we are supposed to take care of others and not ourselves.

As people of color, we are supposed to not express but accommodate to everything, right, to the mainstream culture, to systems that are around us.

Yes, we need to unlearn this.

So what I want to bring you is that this expression from a psychologist that I love and I wanted to share it with you.

Our brain has negativity bias.

We are velcro for the bad and Teflon for good.

When we think about our brain, first of all, as many of you have stated, we have not been taught how to take care of ourselves.

We have not given the permission that we matter and that in order for others to matter, in order for us to not see the other as different and separate, we need to be able to come to peace and understanding of all of the complexities and identities that are inside of us. So our brain is velcro for bad, is velcro to absorb all the bad that is going around the world, is velcro to negativity, is velcro to seeing the news and say, we're not going to go out of this, what is happening is terrible, or this is a problem that I'm never going to be able to go out.

We are wired for this because of our survival brain, because of evolution.

With evolution to be able to survive in the wild, we needed to be alert, to recognize all the bad around us, to be able to respond and not get killed, right.

So in order for us to really take a moment to bring the goodness, to think about the hope and the resiliency to tap into the practices of what our ancestors, that are the ones that have been keeping us alive through generations, we need to be able to stop, we need to be able to be mindful, because if we don't stop, our brain is wired to go towards the bad and not embrace the

goodness in us.

So this is not a class of the brain, but I just found throughout the years that knowing that we are not alone in this, that our brain is wired for threat, we have more permission to recognize the common humanity in each one of us.

So when we are under threat, we go, if this is the sample of the brain, to a resilient place.

The thing is that after that limbic, we have a mammal brain.

And the mammal brain is more of the middle area, right, where we tap into something very important, when someone asks about, what about if we don't recognize it, Ghia stated, then we need to trust what is in our body, the messaging that is in the middle brain, in our mammal brain, to be able to know our body because when this frontal cortex comes in with our limbic brain, when we flip out the frontal cortex, when we are under threat, when we see our people getting killed, when we are exposed to police brutality, when we Latinx recognize the antiblackness that we have brainwashed through generations, it is very easy for my frontal cortex to not engage anymore and go into fear, into blame, into the mechanism of fight, flight or freeze. So when Ghia says tapping into that messaging, we can

only tap on that through practices of mindfulness,
through practices of feelings, through practices that
our ancestors have used over generations.
I would love to hear what are some of those practices
that our generations have used throughout the years,
throughout centuries to be able to go from this fear
and threat and bring down the frontal cortex to engage
and continue from a more grounded way.

So I would love to hear from you some of those
practices.

I know dance, music, mindfulness, painting.

What are other things that our communities have used
through generations to be able to keep ourselves alive?

This is the moment that we can tap into those.

Connection with nature.

Yes, thank you.

Prayer.

Yes, religion.

Storytelling.

Yes.

Connection with family.

Cooking together.

Yes.

All of these examples, reading the Bible and prayer,
self-care, as simple as making yourself a priority.

Yes.

Humor.

Dancing.

Thank you for sharing.

What this does in our brain is that it figures out from this more primitive brain and it serves us very well, right, it informs us of threat, right, it informs us that violence really happens, that some people, maybe black bodies are scared of being outside because of systems of oppression and antiblackness.

And in order for us, other allies to be able to come together and protect, we need to come out of this reptilian brain in both our prefrontal cortex and respond as an ally, respond and protect the people that need to be protected in this moment.

So that is just an explanation.

I am just trying to see the responses in the chat.

Yes.

So I'm going to go back to something that what was said in the chat.

When we think about self-compassion, most people think that self-compassion or compassionate practices are just soothing practices, soothing practices and that they are very inactive.

And this model of self-compassion talks about two types of self-compassion.

The yin self-compassion, which is the one that when we ask the question to ourselves, what do I need in this moment, we are able to recognize through mindfulness if what we need is, for example, a soothing touch, calming ourselves before responding, more of that soothing mechanism.

But there is another part of compassion that is the yang compassion.

And that yang compassion is the compassion that make us protect ourselves and protect others.

The yang compassion, which also fear is compassion, is the one that make us act in the world against injustice.

The yang compassion is the one that makes us say no to an abusive relationship.

The yang compassion, as someone was saying, is the one that help us set clear boundaries.

So this yin and yang compassion, finding the middle ground of when do we need to be still and when do we need to act in the world to protect ourselves, to protect our communities, to motivate ourselves for change, that goes to what Ghia was saying, what is the narrative, what is the narrative that we are telling ourselves.

Is the narrative coming from what are reptilian, basic brain is telling us that is wired to live in the past

or the future?

That is what the brain is wired, to live in the past or to live in the future, anticipating for threat.

If that is the story that we are believing in that moment, we're not going to be able to bring compassion for us and for others.

So that is the invitation to respond from that brain.

This phrase, between stimulus and response, there is a space.

In that space is our power to choose our response.

I will add what Ghia was talking about, that space is our power to choose what we tell ourselves.

In that response lies our growth and our freedom.

That is what our freedom is.

Mindfulness and compassion, it's not an invitation to be inactive.

In fact, it is an invitation to include ourselves in that circle of compassion, to not get burned out by everything that is happening in the world that is so, so much in that space where we take that mindfulness, that storytelling, that is the freedom to be able to respond in a more grounded, to set up the boundaries that we need and to tell the story that really we need to hear from us in a moment when we struggle.

It is so important also for, as women, and for us,

people of color, black, indigenous people of color, to be able to recognize what we are telling ourselves

because we are bombarded by other people telling the stories about us for us.

When we are grounded, we are able to embrace our stories and to come out and recognize that common humanity that we are not alone, it is what we need to do, and we are going to stand up and we're going to start telling the stories, we're going to continue practicing, embracing and reclaiming the practices of our ancestors that are so important, has been important throughout history and in this moment in time is so important for us to continue embracing.

I will be able to respond more to the question later, I think, in the question and answer.

But someone is asking who are black, indigenous people. There is a term right now that, you know, that the word that has been used is people of color, but it is very important to recognize blackness, the antiblackness that also -- within communities of color that are nonblack and recognizing also indigenous people.

So the term is BIPOC, to be more inclusive of black, indigenous, people of color.

It's just a term that includes everybody and also it brings up the identities that are really really under attack throughout history and the federal system of

oppression.

So thank you for asking.

So what are some practices that I can leave with you to be able to move towards this more self-compassion, towards reflecting more into these stories that we're telling ourselves and others about us.

So soothing touch is a practice of self-compassion, and I don't know if I have enough time, Arlene or Ivonne, to go into this.

It seems like we are doing okay with time.

>> Yeah, you're okay with time.

[Overlapping conversation]

Carolina: Perfect.

So I would like to invite you to engage in a little practice of finding soothing touch.

Why soothing touch is important?

Soothing touch is important because our limbic brain, as we were talking, is preverbal.

So when we talk during moments of suffering, when we are angry, when we are devastated, maybe words don't resonate much in that moment to help us much in that moment when we are suffering.

But our preverbal brain responds excellent to that.

So when we are feeling that we don't know what is happening, we feel angry, we feel a lot of grieving, this soothing touch is something that you can use.

I use it when I am in circumstances where I'm not able to say, oh, let me take a moment of self-care and go away and take a, I don't know, a bath with bubbles.

Right?

We need self-care practices that we can use in the moment that we are suffering.

So soothing touch, let's practice this.

I invite you to close your eyes or lower your gaze or you are more than welcome to continue looking at me in the webinar.

And just take a deep breath.

Calming our nervous system.

Recognizing that it's a lot of information that we are taking in.

The breath is a tool that we have available at any moment.

We can tap into at any moment to send a signal to our nervous system to calm down.

And I would like for you to bring one or two hands over your heart.

And just practice holding your hands on your heart.

No judgment.

No understanding.

Just feeling, what do I feel when I bring these hands in my heart, when I feel it touching my clothes?

Is this a gesture that I can use maybe when I'm going through a difficult moment.

And just experiment how it feels.

Now I invite you to bring your hands around your arms, like if you are giving yourself a hug.

And just try to feel if giving yourself a hug in moments of suffering, if you ask yourself, what do I need in this moment, is that something that you might be able to offer yourself.

Does it feel soothing.

Now I invite you to bring maybe your hands on your face.

Around your cheeks, like, you know, like a grandparent or someone that is older than you holds your face between their arms and see if that is a gesture that you could use when you're suffering.

You can also practice by folding your hands on your lap and rocking slowly.

Just a small movement.

All of this is to be able to say, I'm here for you, the same way that we will tell a friend that is suffering or someone that we see suffering, offering ourselves what we need in that moment.

I'm here.

So you're more than welcome to open your eyes, if you are -- if you have your eyes closed, and just come back

to the virtual room.

That is just a small exercise on bringing ways that we can embrace, you know, what we don't feel, what we cannot give words in moments of suffering, soothing touch is very very important.

Another thing that I use, you know, I am a consultant on diversity and antioppression, and I facilitate conversations that are not very easy in many moments. So soothing touch for me when I'm leading or when I'm in front of a client, I will not bring my hand over my heart, but I do hold my hands on my lap and that sends a message to my brain, I'm okay.

Things are going to be okay.

Calming my nervous system to be able to engage in more present way.

Thank you for your comments.

Yes.

Powerful, self-touch is very important.

And I bring the brain because it is very important to understand that we are not alone in this.

Our brains are wired to go into fight, flight, freeze mode.

To search for threats around us.
To be overwhelmed by all of the things that are happening in this moment.

So learning and embracing the practices that we already know, that we just need to reclaim from our ancestors, from our culture the practices that everybody has been mentioning in the chat, that is our freedom, that is our way for our collective and individual liberation. Another practice is compassionate break.

I don't think that I'm going to be able to go through this whole practice in this moment because of time, but I want you to read the quote that I put in the presentation.

Be careful how you are talking to yourself because you are listening.

We are listening.

And this compassionate break practice would invite us to do is to incorporate the three components of self-compassion.

I have invited you to think, to bring to mind a moment of suffering.

It can be that we saw something in the news that was really disturbing and it really affected us.

It can be a situation with our partners, with us home schooling our children now, any situation that is difficult.

And using mindfulness to recognizing that moment that we are suffering.

Then moving into offering ourselves, that we are not

alone.

Ghia mentioned it in her conversation, we are not alone in this suffering.

We share suffering with everybody, not the same suffering, I'm not talking about that we share the same suffering because we definitely don't.

But what I'm saying is common humanity is suffering is part of this living condition as human beings.

And then the third step of offering ourselves the yin or the yang of compassion.

So those are two tools that we have access to to bring to ourselves.

I think they will send the presentation to the participants.

I mean, my presentation, you will see more information about the resources on mindfulness and self-compassion, some links there.

So thank you so much for listening, for engaging in the presentation, for participating in the chat, and I hope that these seeds of knowledge and understanding are really helpful for us to continue doing our work

towards a more compassionate world for ourselves, for our families, and for everybody.

As closing, a moment of self-compassion can change your entire day.

A string of such moments can change the course of your entire life.

So may we all remember that and continue moving forward for our liberation and deliberation of everybody.

Thank you.

>> Thank you so much, Carolina.

Oh, wow.

And several nuggets I got from your presentation as well.

The main one is reclaiming the practices of my ancestors because that is where my freedom is and it's connected to our collective liberation.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for the reminder of that.

Before we close out, we had a couple questions, so I wanted to pose the questions to you and Gia.

There was two questions for you.

Janet had asked, how do we separate our self-focus as selfishness and self-compassion?

That's one.

And the other question from Janet, if someone has not been raised to feel cherished and worthy, how can they move forward towards self-compassion?

>> Carolina, can you hear me?

>> I'm sorry.

I think that I lost connection for one moment.

>> Okay.

>> Can you hear me?

>> Yes, I can hear you.

And I'll repeat the question.

>> Okay, great.

>> There's two questions for you and there's one question for Ghia before we close out.

The one for you -- well, two -- how do we separate out self-focus as selfishness and self-compassion?

That's one.

And then the other one is, if someone has not been raised to feel cherished and worthy, how can they move toward self-compassion?

So those are the questions for you.

Ghia and Carolina.

>> Yes, yes.

Thank you for that question, Janet.

Self-focus, when we talk about self-focus, it is more of a perception of self-indulgence, right?

It is that example of, I am only here for me and I am not thinking about anybody else.

What self-compassion calls is for the long term.

It's not a self-indulgence process or focus.

Self-compassion thinks about the long haul, what am I doing here, what do I need in this moment to respond to

my need because I know that my need is intrinsically connected to the person in front of me, to society, and to our families.

So that is the difference between that self-focus and selfishness compared to the self-compassion.

In fact, we practice self-compassion because we know that when we are grounded, when we are more compassionate to ourselves, we can practice that yang of compassion towards others and act in the world.

>> Ooh!

Ooh!

Thank you.

All right.

Thank you for that.

And, Ghia, you already touched on the response to the question that was directed to you.

But I just want to make sure that you hear it and I acknowledge Lynn.

Can one go from denial straight to depression without experiencing anger or bargaining?

So you did respond, but I just wanted you to hear the question that was asked.

>> Yeah.

I think we talked about it being -- not doing them in a cyclical or linear way.

So there's definitely a way for someone to go from one

stage to another and back again.

So it's just, you know, it's different for each person.

Definitely.

>> All right.

All right.

Perfect.

So, in closing, thank you so much.

>> I think that I didn't -- I think there was another question that you asked me, I didn't address.

Someone asking if someone has not been raised to feel cherished and worthy, how can they move toward self-compassion?

>> Absolutely.

>> We already touched on the brain, right?

There is a network that we have in the middle of our brain that takes us to that place of unworthiness because, the person that asked, we have not been raised to embrace who we are in all of our identities.

And the practices that we have been talking about, mindfulness, knowing that mindfulness is not for everybody, so finding your own practice, tapping into the healing practices of your ancestors to see if you can create the space between that makes you believe that you are not worth it and the response, the narrative, as Ghia was talking about, that we respond

with towards what society or the people that raised us or other people, family members, have made us believe about ourselves.

So it is in that space between the stimulus response that we embold the practices that we will be able to tap into self-compassion.

>> Awesome.

>> And I just want to add to that a tad bit, if it's okay.

This is Ghia.

Just about, you know, the whole -- Janet's question about not being raised that way and how do we tap in. And I just wanted to add to what Carolina just said. I think we have to do the work of going back to that place.

And, again, it's a learned behavior.

So I just want to stress that it can be unlearned.

It's something that you can learn for yourself.

And, so, it may be a process, it may not happen overnight.

But this whole idea of being kind and gentle and going through your processes and trusting your heart and all that good stuff is going to be very useful in unlearning this idea of not being worthy or not being -- you know, whatever it is.

And so I just wanted to also add that it's a learned

thing and it can be unlearned.

You just have to be willing to go through that process of unlearning it.

And replacing it with something new.

So affirmations and all that kind of stuff is going to be very helpful in changing that narrative.

>> Okay.

Thank you.

>> Yes, thank you so much, Ghia.

Yeah.

Yeah.

With intention.

>> All right.

So we have about three minutes, so, first, I want to thank NRCDV for just the amazing work, tech support behind the scenes, Justine is there, Ivonne is providing support, our training institute manager, Breckan, is our chat box extraordinaire that's keeping up with the chat box and everything that's happening there, Angie's on captions, thank you so much, Angie, and all of our NRCDV staff that contributed to this awesome awesome webinar.

And then to our speakers, we have two minutes, any closing words from you, Ghia and Carolina?

One minute each.

And that will send us on our way with lots of hope.

Thank you so much for your practices, your words of wisdom, and your hope.

And the last voices that I want to hear would be your voices.

So parting words?

>> This is Ghia.

I just want to say thank you all for joining us and just want to -- just encourage you all to be good to yourself.

That's all.

Just take care, do whatever you need to do to be good to you.

And I'm sure you all will be good to the world.

So thank you so much for joining us.

>> Yeah.

Thank you.

This is Carolina.

Thank you to the National Resource Center and thank you for everybody that is participating in this webinar today.

And my wish is that may we all remember our worthiness.

May we all welcome all of our identities, of the complexities of who we are and may we all continue existing because our existence is resistance.

So may we all continue showing up in the world in a

more intentional way.

>> Thank you so much.

Thanks, everyone.

Be good to yourself.

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