

July/August 2023

THE GRAPEVINE

North Shore Caregivers Newsletter



**'ONLY CONNECT': AN INTRODUCTION TO C-PTSD
(COMPLEX POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER)
PART I. AUGUST 2023
BY CAB (C.A. BRYSON)**

William Faulker wrote 'The past is never dead. It's not even past.'

It seems to me this century is the century of trauma: both 'big C' trauma and 'little c' trauma. In a way, the 20th century was too, what with the world wars. If you want an introduction to developmental trauma and C-PTSD (Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), I recommend you go to YouTube and watch the 'Transforming Trauma' podcast (NARM Training Institute, January 2020), hosted by Dr. Nadine Macasula and featuring psychotherapist, author, and college professor Brad Kammer, but reading Part I of my introduction to C-PTSD (Part II will be published in the late Fall of 2023), should get you started nicely.

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'Only Connect': An Introduction to C-PTSD (Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)

Part I. August 2023 (continued)

Details on the Course I took in C-PTSD:

June 2023, Embodied Philosophy

'Transforming Complex Trauma: The Neuroaffective Relational Model'

Instructor: Brad Kammer, NARM (NeuroAffective Relational Model)

Here are a few definitions:

PTSD: Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder—Also called 'shock trauma'. Characterized by a sense of threat or imminent danger. Currently recognized in the DSM-5.

C-PTSD: Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder—Developmental trauma characterized by challenges in relationships, resulting in a shame response, rather than pure fear, as in shock trauma or PTSD. In C-PTSD, we disconnect and shut ourselves down. Currently unrecognized in the DSM-5, but may be in the future.

Treatments for PTSD don't necessarily work for C-PTSD. As young humans, our primary objective is to be connected (think of British novelist E.M. Forster's famous words: 'Only connect' in *Howards End*.) If, as children, we suffer emotional abuse or neglect, our developmental growth is disrupted, leading to adaptive styles (discussed below.) C-PTSD can be passed down intergenerationally. Dr. Gabor Maté discussed this at length in his book 'The Myth of Normal: Trauma, Illness and Healing in a Toxic Culture.' (2022) But you can also read about it in Mr. Kammer's book on the subject: 'The Practical Guide for Healing Developmental Trauma.' This book will give you more detailed information on the Adaptive Styles and the 4 Pillars of NARM. (See Resources below for details on these and other books.)

The Adaptive Styles are:

- Connection
- Attunement
- Trust
- Autonomy
- Love & Sexuality

In this article I will discuss the first two (Connection and Attunement) and turn to the last 3 styles in my follow-up article next Fall.

You might resonate with 2 or 3 of the styles.

'Only Connect': An Introduction to C-PTSD (Complex Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder)

Part I. August 2023 (continued)

In the first two Adaptive Styles, connection and attunement, things that happen to us in early life are recorded in our bodies. If, as children, our caregivers were not attuned to our needs, (or told us off if we seemed too 'needy'), then the child disconnects from their needs and thus disconnects from themselves. Mr. Kammer explained that people have two basic needs: attachment and authenticity, and that in children, attachment always trumps authenticity.

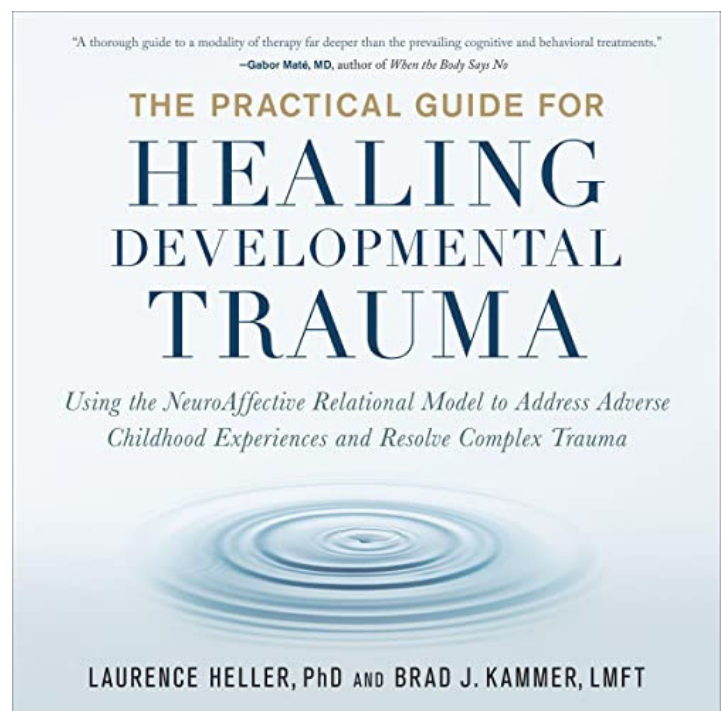
In the connection survival strategy, we often feel like 'outsiders' in later life. Furthermore, people with the connection strategy are often those with rich imaginations, who are also great healers and thinkers.

In the attunement style, people are often known as 'control freaks', to use contemporary parlance. Their internal dialogue goes something like this: 'I need to need but it doesn't feel safe to need. If I express my needs, I will be abandoned. Therefore, I must always be focusing on other people's needs.' Often those with this survival strategy become social workers, aide workers, or therapists. Burnout is common with this strategy, as are eating disorders.

Mr. Kammer, to illustrate his point, played a famous song by Simon & Garfunkel, which goes something like:

'I have my books
And my poetry to protect me.
I am a rock. I am an island.
And a rock feels no pain.
And an island never cries.'

For more information on C-PTSD, see the Resources below. I hope you have enjoyed this little 'tour' of the mysterious world of C-PTSD. More will follow, in next Fall's issue of The Grapevine.



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RESOURCES

NARM Training Institute
<https://narmtraining.com>

Embodied Philosophy
<https://www.embodiedphilosophy.com>

'The Practical Guide for Healing Developmental Trauma' by Brad J. Kammer and Lawrence Heller (the founder of NARM) (2022)

'The Myth of Normal: Trauma, Illness & Healing in a Toxic Culture.' by Gabor Maté (2022)

'The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind and Body in the Healing of Trauma' (2014)
(Available at North Vancouver City Library in the form of an e-book)

CAB 2023

Caregivers Need Care Too: Clarifying and Communicating Healthy Boundaries

Wednesday, September 20th, 1:00 - 2:30 pm

Ideally, we would take care of ourselves like we take care of loved ones. But sometimes this feels like an impossible task. What do we do then? How do we carve out the time and energy to take care of ourselves?

Clarifying limits and maintaining healthy boundaries are a crucial component of self-care. Lack of boundaries can lead to fatigue, resentment, anger, burnout and more. To balance demands, we need to add resources to our own health in the same way we deposit money into our bank accounts, fill our gas tanks and recharge our phone batteries.

Contact vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca or 604-982-3320 to register.

ABOUT DR. MELANIE BADALI

Dr. Melanie Badali is an award winning clinical psychologist with over 20 years of experience working as a psychotherapist, researcher, and educator. At the North Shore Stress and Anxiety Clinic, she helps people optimize their personal and professional potential using science-based strategies. A committed mental health advocate, she believes everyone should have access to mental health information and services. After serving on the Board of Directors for Anxiety Canada for 8 years, she is now on the Scientific Advisory Committee. She enjoys sharing what she knows about psychology through writing, public speaking, and media communication.



Box Breathing: Alleviating Caregiver Stress through a Simple Technique



Caregiving encompasses a noble and demanding responsibility. However, the role can also evolve into one that is excessively stressful, potentially leading to burnout and a decline in the well-being of caregivers. Thus, it is crucial for effective stress management practices to be seamlessly integrated into the daily routines of caregivers as they navigate their roles. One such practice gaining increasing popularity is "Box Breathing," a straightforward yet highly effective method that empowers caregivers to reduce stress and enhance their overall well-being. Box Breathing, also known as tactical or square breathing, comprises a structured breathing exercise designed to cultivate a sense of serenity and relaxation. This technique involves a sequence of actions – inhaling, retaining the breath, exhaling, and subsequent pause – creating a rhythmic pattern reminiscent of the sides of a square. Practitioners commonly adopt a 4-4-4-4 pattern, allocating a count of four to each phase. This rhythmic and controlled breathing pattern stimulates the body's relaxation response, which has demonstrated effectiveness in reducing stress, alleviating anxiety, and even enhancing cognitive performance.

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Box Breathing: Alleviating Caregiver Stress through a Simple Technique (Continued)

From a scientific perspective, the benefits of Box Breathing are unequivocal. The body's autonomic nervous system, responsible for regulating involuntary actions, responds to this deliberate sequence of breaths. Activation of the parasympathetic nervous system, colloquially termed the "rest and digest system," serves to mitigate the body's stress response. Consequently, the heart rate gently decelerates, blood pressure finds a lower and steadier rhythm, and cortisol levels decrease, collectively fostering a sense of calm and relaxation.

Benefits for Caregivers:

Stress Reduction: The ceaseless demands of caregiving frequently expose caregivers to chronic stress. However, regular incorporation of Box Breathing aids caregivers in effectively managing stress by promoting relaxation and curbing the release of stress-inducing compounds like cortisol.

Enhanced Focus: To offer optimal care, caregivers need to maintain unwavering focus. Through the practice of Box Breathing, caregivers can enrich their cognitive function by elevating oxygen supply to the brain, nurturing mental clarity, and sharpening their focus.

Emotional Equilibrium: Caregivers often find themselves in emotionally charged situations. Box Breathing emerges as a stabilizing force, anchoring emotional regulation, fostering balance, and deterring the escalation of negative emotions.

Enhanced Resilience: The journey of caregiving necessitates adeptly navigating an array of challenges. Consistent engagement in Box Breathing cultivates heightened emotional resilience, equipping caregivers to rebound from setbacks more effectively.

Conclusion:

Caregivers occupy a pivotal role within society, providing steadfast support to those who require it. However, the inherently demanding nature of caregiving can potentially impinge upon the caregivers' own well-being. Box Breathing presents itself as a user-friendly and efficacious technique, serving as a salient means for caregivers to reduce stress and fortify mental and emotional equilibrium. By seamlessly integrating this accessible practice into their daily routines, caregivers are empowered to not only surmount challenges and enhance resilience but also perpetuate a culture of compassionate care for their loved ones. As the corpus of scientific endorsement burgeons, the imperative of acknowledging Box Breathing as a valuable tool in caregivers' stress management toolkit becomes ever more pronounced.

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Box Breathing: Alleviating Caregiver Stress through a Simple Technique (Continued)

RESOURCES

Balban, Melis Yilmaz, et al. "Brief Structured Respiration Practices Enhance Mood and Reduce Physiological Arousal." *Cell Reports Medicine*, vol. 4, no. 1, Jan. 2023, p. 100895. PubMed Central, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.xcrm.2022.100895>.

"Box Breathing Benefits and Techniques." Cleveland Clinic, 17 Aug. 2021, <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/box-breathing-benefits/>.

Box Breathing: How to Do It, Benefits, and Tips. 1 June 2018, <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/321805>.

Ma, Xiao, et al. "The Effect of Diaphragmatic Breathing on Attention, Negative Affect and Stress in Healthy Adults." *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 8, June 2017, p. 874. PubMed Central, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2017.00874>.

CAREGIVER WORKSHOP: BE SAFE AT HOME

October 23, October 30, and November 6
3:00 - 4:30 pm

This 3-part educational workshop series, “Be Safe At Home”, is a comprehensive educational program designed to equip participants with essential knowledge and practical skills for screening the early signs of illness, potential home care issues, and prevent adverse events and hospital admissions for our loved ones. These workshops are ideal for family caregivers and people wanting to learn more about home care.

Contact vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca or 604-982-3320 to register.

ABOUT VICTORIYA

Victoriya Litargne is a Holistic Registered Nurse and founder of Vital Life Nursing who started her nursing career in 1994 in the Intensive Care Unit.

For the last 12 years she has dedicated herself to home care, working with people who require healthcare assistance and support in the community.

Vital Life Nursing was founded in 2019 as a long-time dream of Victoriya's to deliver holistic healthcare services. The company's vision is based on the principle that a patient's biological, social, psychological and spiritual aspects are interconnected. Vital Life Nursing services not only the person receiving care but also the person's family members.



SEPTEMBER EVENTS

<p>TUES 05</p> <p>CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (ZOOM)</p> <p>TIME: 6:30 - 8:30 PM</p>	<p>THURS 07</p> <p>MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON)</p> <p>TIME: 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM</p>	<p>WED 13</p> <p>KOREAN GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON)</p> <p>TIME: 2:00 - 4:00PM</p>
<p>MON 18</p> <p>PERSIAN GROUP MEETING (ZOOM)</p> <p>TIME: 6:00 - 8:00PM</p>	<p>WED 20</p> <p>BOUNDARIES WORKSHOP W/ REGISTERED PSYCHOLOGIST, MELANIE BADALI</p> <p>TIME: 1:00 - 2:30PM</p>	<p>WED 27</p> <p>BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON)</p> <p>TIME: 6:00 - 8:00PM</p>

OCTOBER EVENTS

<p>TUES 03</p> <p>CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (ZOOM)</p> <p>TIME: 6:30 - 8:30 PM</p>	<p>THURS 05</p> <p>MEN'S SUPPORT GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON)</p> <p>TIME: 10:30 AM - 12:30 PM</p>	<p>WED 11</p> <p>KOREAN GROUP MEETING (IN PERSON)</p> <p>TIME: 2:00 - 4:00PM</p>
<p>MON 16</p> <p>PERSIAN GROUP MEETING (ZOOM)</p> <p>TIME: 6:00 - 8:00PM</p>	<p>MON 23</p> <p>SAFE AT HOME WORKSHOP PART 1 W/ REGISTERED NURSE OF VITAL LIFE NURSING, VICTORIYA LITARGNE</p> <p>TIME: 3:00 - 4:30PM</p>	<p>MON 30</p> <p>SAFE AT HOME WORKSHOP PART 2 W/ REGISTERED NURSE OF VITAL LIFE NURSING, VICTORIYA LITARGNE</p> <p>TIME: 3:00 - 4:30PM</p>

Caregiver Interview: Melissa Wade

What has been your journey into caregiving?

My journey into caregiving started as a paid caregiver. I began volunteering in a care home at the age of 15 and went on to work in the field of community support. I have worked primarily with individuals with disabilities. I became a family caregiver a few months into the pandemic when my Dad's mental health and addiction worsened and he became homeless. It was a very challenging time because I was in BC and my Dad was in Ontario and many services were limited during the pandemic. With a lot of advocating, I was able to find him subsidized housing and connect him with some support services so that he could live independently. I'm no longer a caregiver to my Dad but am still working in the field of community services.



Tell us about your involvement with North Shore Community Resources and, specifically, how you came to be one of our valued volunteers?

My involvement with North Shore Community Resources began around the time that I became a family caregiver. I came across a posting for a Caregiver Support Program Coordinator with North Shore Community Resources. I was so excited by the opportunity and applied for the role. I got the job and really enjoyed it. After I moved on from my role as the Caregiver Support Program Coordinator, I continued on as a volunteer, co-facilitating the "Powerful Tools For Caregivers" 6 week psychoeducational program.

What do you feel are some benefits to attending an NSCR support group or workshop?

I think the number one benefit is connecting with other caregivers who truly get what you are going through. There is something about knowing that you're not alone in your experience as a caregiver that feels so supportive. I believe that peer support is the best kind of support. Also, being able to speak freely about the challenges of caregiving in a judgement-free space feels very helpful.

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Caregiver Interview (continued)

What do you do for your own self care? What keeps you busy and feeling positive?

Listening to other caregivers and going through the “Powerful Tools For Caregivers” training taught me a lot about prioritizing my own self care. I often felt a lot of guilt when I wasn’t focusing on others and their well-being. I had to learn to carve out time to care for myself because I could see how not doing so was causing me a lot of physical and mental health challenges. These days I make a point to do one thing that I love doing every single day - even if it’s just 15 minutes. Typically, my self care routine involves yoga, meditation, knitting or some other creative activity like making music. I also enjoy simple things such as going for a walk, being in nature, reading a book or just taking a few minutes to close my eyes and be still and quiet. However, the root of self care for me is having compassion for myself - it’s giving myself grace and permission to rest or enjoy time to myself.



CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a monthly support group specifically for family caregivers who support their loved ones – either living together or apart.

The group's goal is to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for anyone with the unique experience of caregiving for family members.

Program participants are welcome to encourage and invite others they feel might benefit from joining the group.

Monthly Meetings

**Next meetings: Tuesday, September 5
& Tuesday, October 3.**

Meetings are currently on the first Tuesday of each month from 6:30 – 8:30pm.

Currently we are meeting on Zoom. For the Zoom link, please contact NSCR directly.

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)

Contact

For more information, details, or to find out more about NSCR's caregiver support programs, please contact:

Vic Gailunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca

Or Phone: 604-982-3320





MEN'S CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a support group specifically for male caregivers who support their spouses or partners – either living together or apart.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, listening, and connecting for men with the unique experience of caregiving for their partners.

Program participants are welcome to encourage other men they feel might benefit from joining the group to join us.

Monthly Meetings

We are back meeting in-person at the NSCR Community Room. Our meetings run on the first Thursday of each month, from 10:30am-12:30pm.

Next 2 meetings:

September 7 & October 5.

Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Vic Gailunas (Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~
Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca

Pat Dean (Group Leader) ~ pdean@telus.net





KOREAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a wellness and education group specifically for the Korean community on the North Shore.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, learning, and connecting.

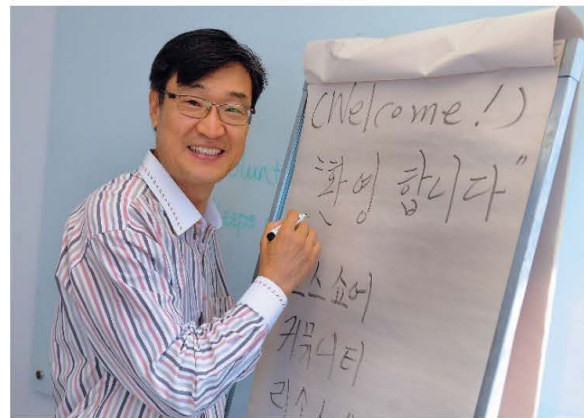
Program participants are welcome to join us for a 2-hour session, held entirely in Korean, with guest speakers, resources, group interaction, and creative arts.

Monthly Meetings

Meetings are in person in our NSCR Community Room. Our meetings run on the second Wednesday of each month, from 2:00-4:00pm

Next Meetings: September 13 & October 11

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)



Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Yoonwon Lee (Group Leader) ~ infocwtc@gmail.com

Vic Gailiunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailiunas@nscr.ca



PERSIAN WELLNESS AND EDUCATION GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a wellness and education group specifically for the Persian community on the North Shore.

The group was designed to create community and offer a time of sharing, learning, self-care and connecting.

Program participants are welcome to join us for a 2-hour session, held entirely in Farsi, with guest speakers, resources, group interaction, and music.

Monthly Meetings

We are currently meeting on Zoom. Our meetings run on the third Monday of each month, from 6:00-8:00pm.

Next Meetings: September 18 & October 16.

(photo credit – Paul McGrath)



Contact

For more information and details, contact:

Noushin Beheshtipoor (Group Leader) ~ noushinbeheshtipoor@gmail.com

Vic Gailunas (NSCR Caregiver Support Program Coordinator) ~ Vic.Gailunas@nscr.ca



CAREGIVER BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

North Shore Community Resources (NSCR) offers a support group specifically for people experiencing grief in the loss of a loved one. The group is designed to create community and offer a time of sharing stories and resources, listening, and connecting with others with similar experiences.

Wednesday, September 27, 2023 on Zoom, 6:00-8:00pm



As we move into the Fall, things can seem more pronounced for those experiencing loss. It is a good time to consider our well-being, how to find meaning in grief, but also in hope, rejuvenation and renewal of spirit.

For more information, to register, and for details, please contact:

Vic Gailiunas
Caregiver Support Program Coordinator
604.982.3320
vic.gailiunas@nscr.ca