



win

**Breaking the Cycle of Homelessness
for Women and their Children**



SELF CARE: AN EMPLOYEE RIGHT AND AN ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY



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Session Objectives:

- Discuss and define frontline staff professions and the societal context in which they exist
- Explore the concept of trauma exposure response as it relates to individuals and organizations
- Identify opportunities for organizations to take an active role in creating healing and trauma informed environments for staff

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Founded in 1983, Win (at the time Women in Need) began as a shelter for four homeless women and their combined six children. Today, Win is the largest provider of shelter and supportive housing to homeless families in NYC.

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Win Academy is designed to identify and promote the use of Evidenced Based Practices (EBPs) that are most effective for providing support and services to homeless families through:

- Formalized training in Evidence Based Practices
- On site implementation support
- Consultation to agency leadership

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**None of this would be possible
without our frontline staff**

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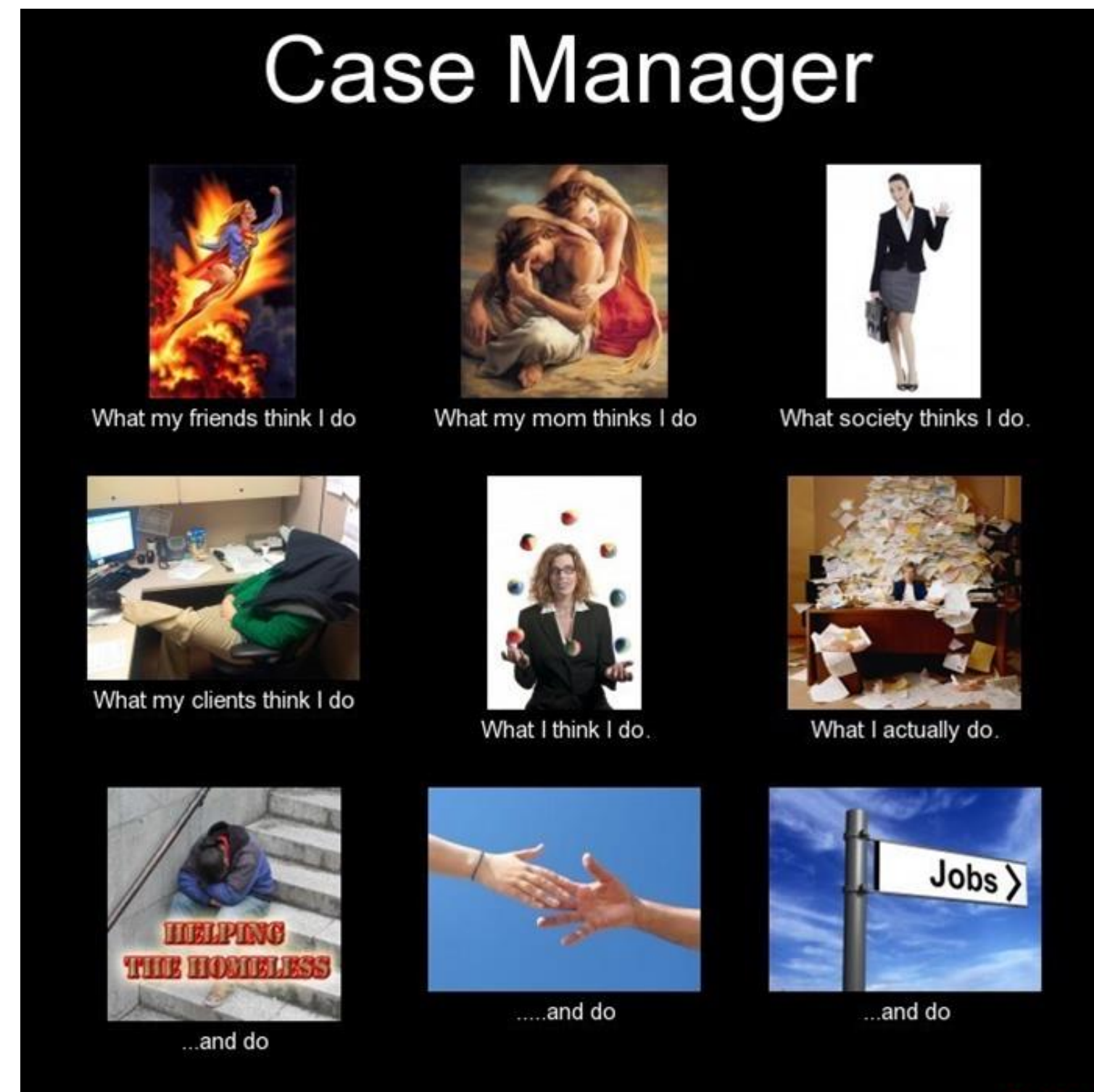


Frontline Staff:

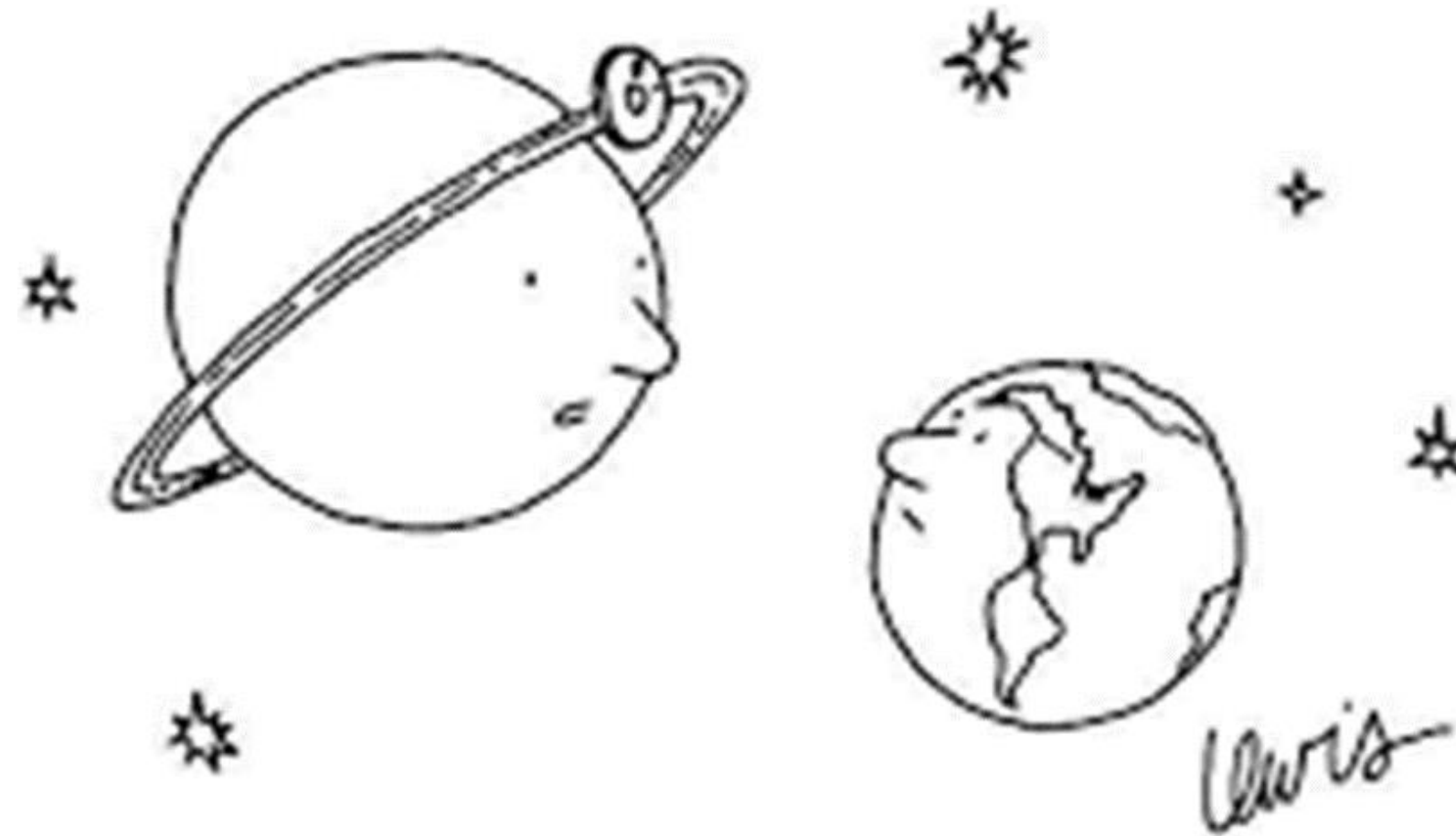
- Carry out agency missions each and every day
- Are increasingly asked to do more with less
- Often work in spaces that make their jobs more difficult to do (i.e., cramped, shared)
- Often have lower wages as compared to professionals in other fields
- Are often disproportionately female and people of color and affected by many of the same “isms” that affect their clients (racism, sexism, capitalism and other oppressions)

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Societal Context



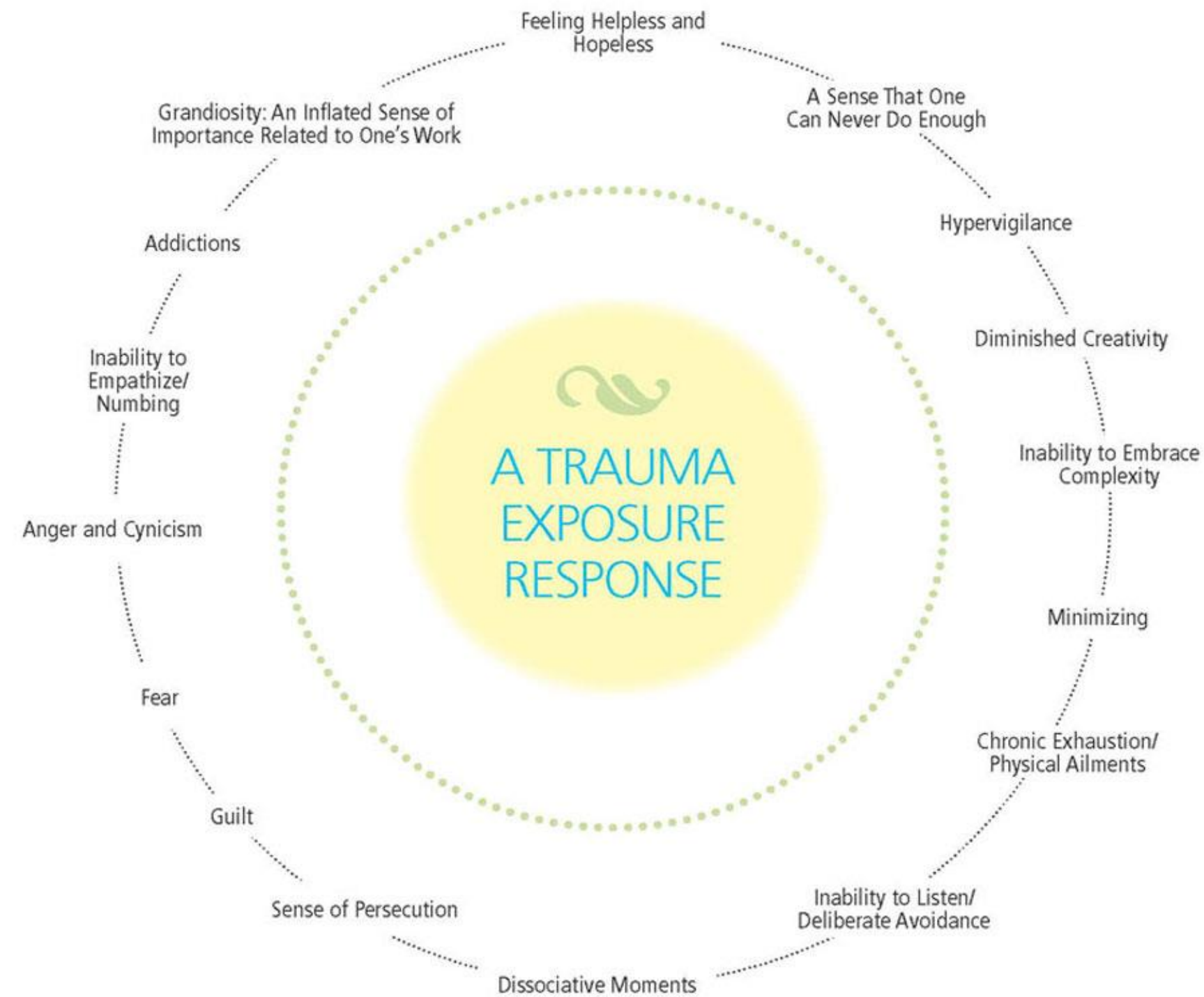
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“I’m afraid you have humans.”

Lewis, Eric. "I'm afraid you have humans." Cartoon. Published October 14, 2002. New Yorker Magazine

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Trauma Exposure Response

A trauma exposure response may be defined as the transformation that takes place within us as a result of exposure to the suffering of other living beings or the planet.

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The Risks:

- High rates of staff turn-over
- High rates of absences or tardiness
- Lack of communication and frequent miscommunication between co-workers and/or departments
- Increase in interpersonal conflicts between co-workers and/or between various parts of the organization
- Missed deadlines
- Incomplete work
- Poor quality of work and/or service delivery
- Increase in client complaints
- A negative atmosphere/low morale
- Less energy and motivation to do “extra” or to take sufficient time to do quality work as an organization
- A lack of emotional and/or physical safety in the organization

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"We're encouraging people to become involved in their own rescue."

Twohy, Mike. "We're encouraging people to become involved in their own rescue." Cartoon. Published July 28, 1997. New Yorker Magazine.

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Self Care versus Community Care

“Self-care is about the individual caring for their own basic physical needs, whereas community care is focused on the collective: taking care of people together, for everything from basic physical needs to psychological and even spiritual ones. Community care is a recognition of the undeniable cooperative and social nature of human beings and involves a commitment to reduce harm simply through being together.”

Community Organizer Nakita Valerio

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So, what can we do?

How can we create environments that are healing and trauma informed for staff so that they can in turn create these environments for clients?

- Putting safety at the forefront
- Collaboration
- Choice
- Empowerment
- Trustworthiness

Case Example: Traumatic Incident Staff Support Policy

Traumatic Incident Staff Support

- Support sessions following any incident in the workplace that involves real or perceived risk or harm to staff and/or residents
- Support sessions are held by a Win Academy facilitator with an optional follow up body-based session led by a yoga/meditation instructor

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Evolution, Next Steps and Opportunities for Advocacy:

- Creating a formal structure for staff to hold on-site trauma support sessions in the absence of Win Academy facilitators
- Creation of a Trauma Informed Care Committee to continue the work of creating healing environments for both staff and clients
- Continuing to develop a culture, policies, and procedures that prioritize staff well-being and that view staff care as essential to quality client care
- Resources allocated to provide staff with opportunities to take care of themselves (trainings, mental health days, retreats)

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Get social and be part of the Way to Win!
Follow us. Like us. Get involved and spread
the word. You can help change the lives of
thousands of NYC homeless families.

#HomeHopeWin