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# The Cost of Compassion

Presented by Dr Richard Cash



# Agenda

- Understanding trauma and alcohol and other drugs
- How other people's trauma exposure can affect us
- Safe approaches for everyone
- Managing the impacts

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# Trauma is universal

80%  
Alcohol and other  
drug settings



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# Trauma is universal



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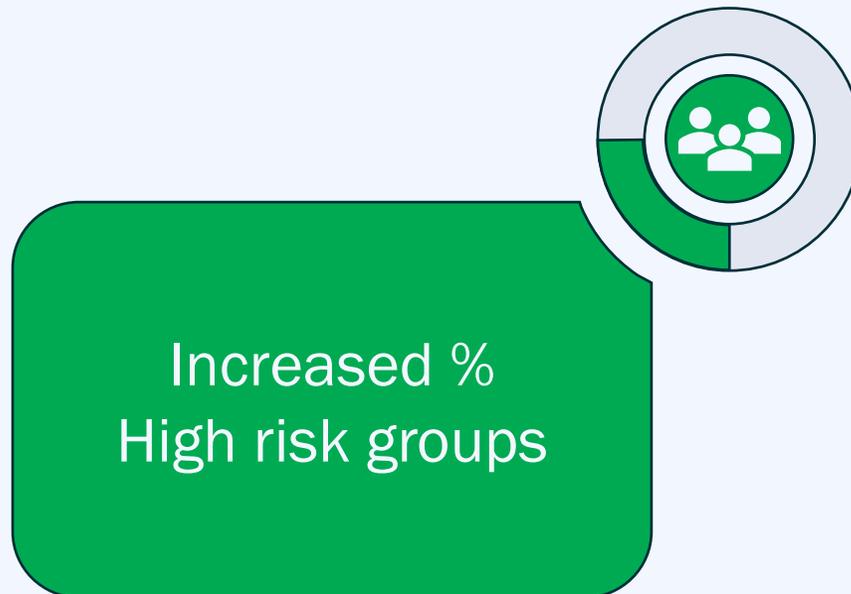
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*Dore et al, 2012; Swift, Darke & Torok, 2013*

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# The impacts go beyond mental health

## Mental health conditions

Strong emotions: Fear, grief, loss, anger, shame

Difficulties managing emotions

Problems with study, work and relationships

Impulsivity and risk taking

Social isolation

Changed beliefs about self/world

Physical health problems

Substance use and other addictions

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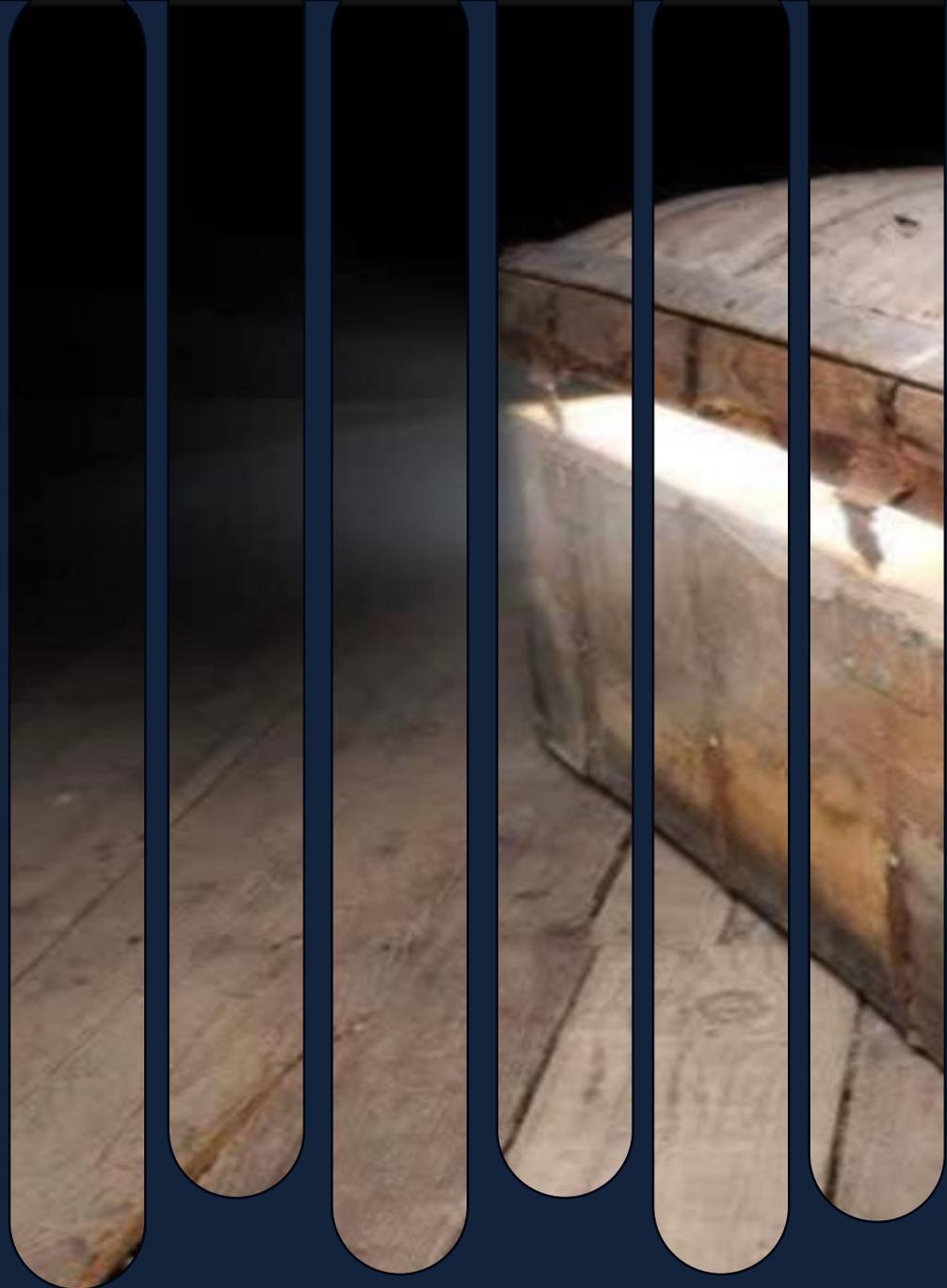
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**What makes us reluctant to  
'go there'?**



**We risk institutionalised hopelessness**



## We can foster hope

Most people recover

Dealing with the **barriers to recovery** is the key

# We can provide the right help

Trauma responsive

Trauma specific

Trauma informed







## How do helpers react to trauma?

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# What affects you the most?



Specific trauma experiences



Expressed emotion



Awareness of risk and vulnerability



Role and resource limitations



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**Vicarious trauma**



**Traumatic stress exposure**

# Burnout



# Compassion fatigue



# Moral injury



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**Making treatment safer for everyone**



# Safe therapeutic responses



Demonstrate understanding



Safe exploration of trauma impacts



Help make sense of experiences

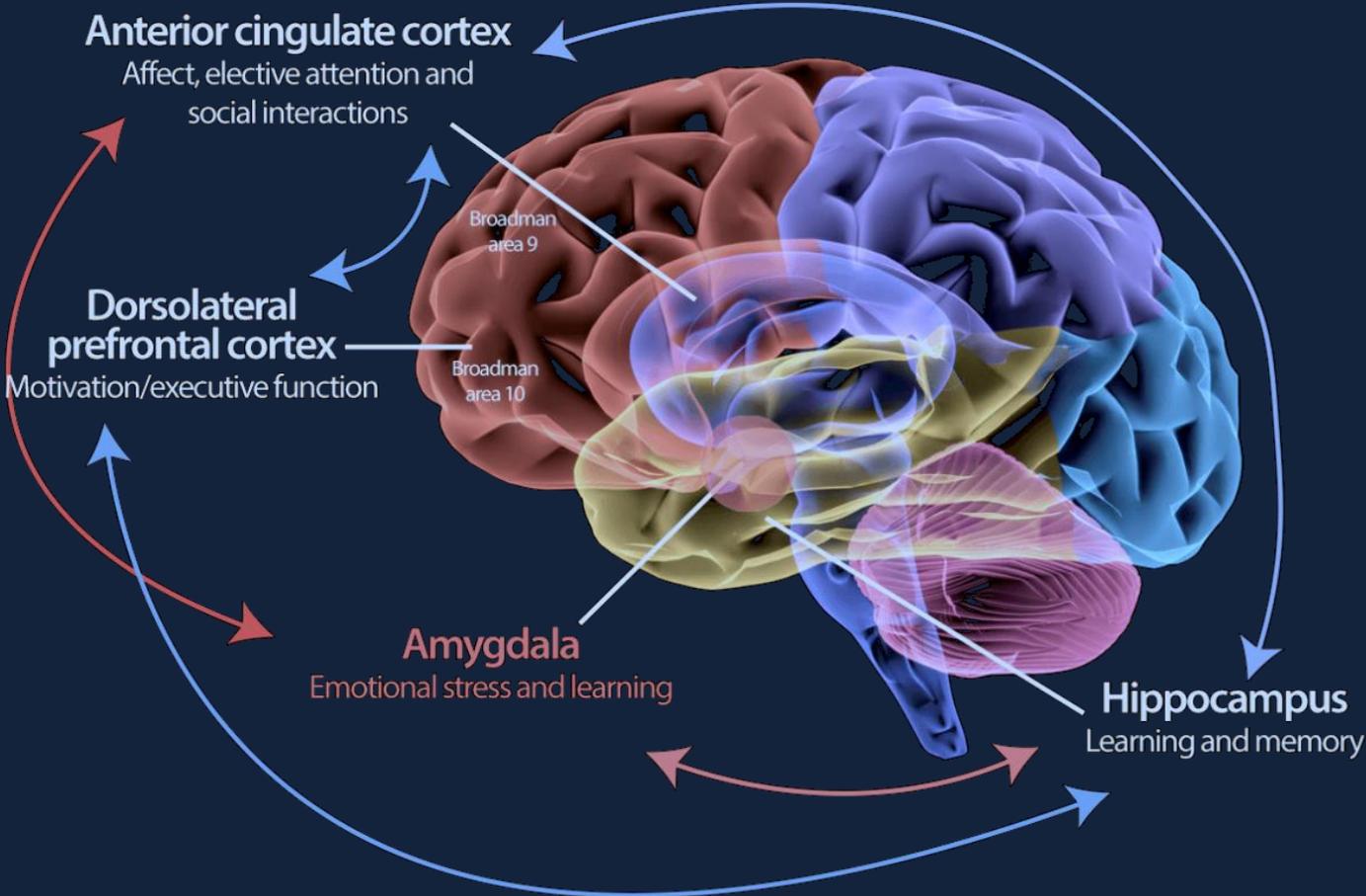


Plans for meaningful change



Build predictability and control

# Helping make sense of experiences



The image is a vertical split-screen composition. The left half shows a forest engulfed in bright orange and yellow flames, with dark tree trunks silhouetted against the fire. The right half shows a close-up of a thick, black, charred tree trunk. A small, vibrant green plant with several leaves is growing out of a hole in the bark of the charred trunk. The background behind the charred trunk shows a landscape of dead, skeletal trees and charred debris under a clear sky.

**Taking about what is most important**

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Have you spoken to anyone about this before?

When you think about this, or are reminded of it, what is that like for you?

How do you respond?

What do you do to cope?

How well is that working?

Would you be open to looking at other ways of coping?

Who supports you?

What situations are really tough?

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# Managing disclosure



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# Reducing risk and distress

Risk taking and impulsivity

Strong reactive emotions

Avoidance

Social isolation and disadvantage

Problem solving and decision making



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# Being resilient ourselves





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# My self care

How do I find meaning in my work?

What themes or topics impact me most?

How do I leave work at work?

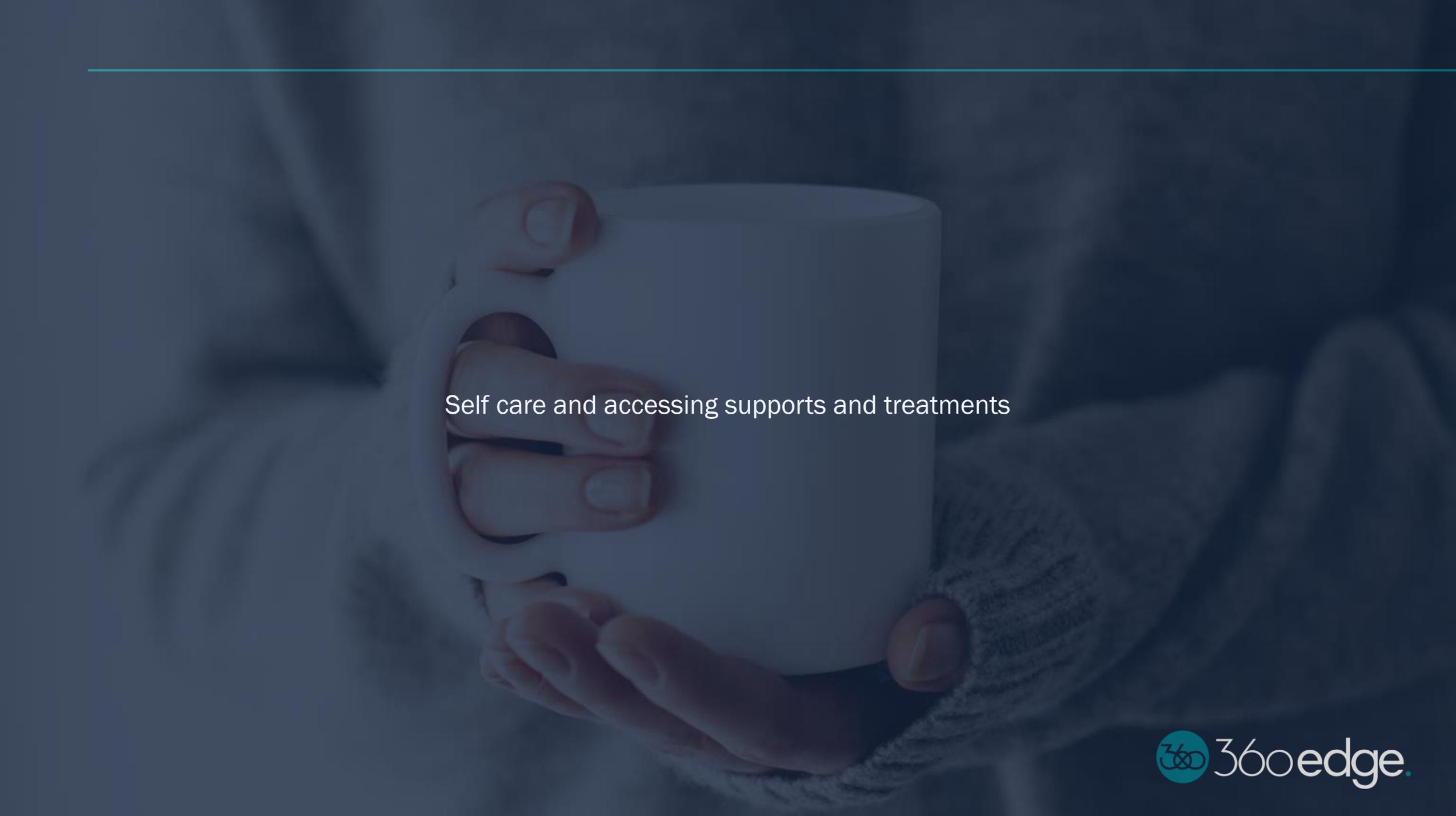
How do I unwind and destress?

How do I stay healthy and safe?

What could I do more of to look after myself?

How would I know if I needed more support?

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A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding a white ceramic mug. The person is wearing a light-colored, textured sweater. The background is a soft, out-of-focus grey. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter.

Self care and accessing supports and treatments



**Any questions**



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## Trauma Informed Practice



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## DBT for AOD

Essential elements of dialectical behaviour therapy



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## Trauma Inside Out

A two day masterclass in responding to trauma

MASTERCLASS



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## Lived Experience in Professional Practice



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## Emotion Regulation

Skills for managing client distress



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Upcoming workshops



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1300 988 184 | [richard@360edge.com.au](mailto:richard@360edge.com.au) | [360edge.com.au](http://360edge.com.au)