

# ADVOCATE MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS GUIDE

Resources and tools to support your  
mental health & wellness as an  
advocate and human

**PREPARED BY THE  
TEXAS COUNCIL ON FAMILY  
VIOLENCE**

More info at [www.tcfv.org](http://www.tcfv.org)

## WELCOME TO THE ADVOCATE MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS GUIDE

The Texas Council on Family Violence (TCFV) developed this guide to provide you with information, tools, and resources that can be used to support your mental health and wellness, both in your work as an advocate and in your personal life. We honor the dedication, passion, and courage you bring to your work with survivors of violence, and we acknowledge that exposure to trauma can take a physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual toll on your wellness. We also know that many advocates are survivors and we hold in our hearts that choice survivors make to engage in this work and the wealth of expertise that this brings.

While acknowledging that each person comes to domestic violence advocacy work with their own unique life experiences, we recognize that you experience trauma in your role as an advocate and may have experienced violence in the past and/or may currently be experiencing violence. We know that advocates who are Black, Indigenous or people of color (BIPOC) experience racism, discrimination, bias and microaggressions in all areas of life. Advocates deserve support through any of these experiences, and we believe wellness support is necessary for everyone working in the movement to end violence.

There are many ways you can choose to support your wellness and mental health that are not listed in this guide. Processing trauma with mental health professionals (service provider locators are listed in the guide), participating in support or therapy groups, spending time in nature, setting boundaries and limits, resting, engaging in body movement, caring for your physical and spiritual health, connecting with friends and loved ones, and engaging in different kinds of healing practices are just some of the many paths to wellness. We offer this guide as one avenue of support and invite you to take some time for yourself and review this guide to see what resources might align with your needs.

Additionally, while not every service, organization, and resource that you might link to through this guide has been evaluated by TCFV, we sought to offer different types of support from sources with established knowledge of domestic violence, trauma-informed practices, social work, and mental health counseling. We encourage you to utilize the resources that work best for you and share with us any we missed. If you want to let us know about your experience using this guide or have suggestions about other ways TCFV can support your wellness as an advocate, please feel free to contact Jen Mudge, Public Policy Coordinator, at [jmudge@tcfv.org](mailto:jmudge@tcfv.org).

We thank you for the vital, lifesaving work you do to keep Texans safe—and we hope you will offer yourself the care and compassion you offer to survivors every day!

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**"ANYONE WHO’S INTERESTED IN MAKING CHANGE IN THE WORLD, ALSO HAS TO LEARN HOW TO TAKE CARE OF HERSELF, HIMSELF, THEIRSELVES.”**  
**-ANGELA DAVIS**



# INFORMATIONAL RESOURCES ON MENTAL HEALTH, TRAUMA & WELLNESS

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## Articles, Reports and Info-and Tip-sheets

- [#Care4Advocates: COVID-19 Resources to Support Advocates' Well-being](#): Includes articles, webinars, and NRCDV radio episodes. (VAWnet)
- [Critical Incident Stress Debriefing](#)
- [Hogg Foundation Guide: Understanding Mental Health Systems and Services in Texas, 5th Edition](#)
- [How You Can Honor the Radical History of Self-Care](#) (Shine App)
- [I Look Across from Me and I See Me" Survivors as Advocates in Intimate Partner Violence Agencies](#) (Wood, L. (2017) Violence Against Women, 23(3), 309-329.)
- [Normalizing Rest](#) (Move to End Violence)
- [Radical Self-Care as Resistance #blackfeminisms](#) (Code Red for Gender Justice!)
- [Resource Guide for Coping with Secondhand Trauma](#): Contains many useful articles, toolkits, sites, and other resources. (Social Work License Map website)
- [SAMHSA Tips for Healthcare Professionals: Coping with Stress and Compassion Fatigue](#)
- [Secondary Traumatic Stress: A Fact Sheet for Organizations Employing Community Violence Workers](#) (National Child Traumatic Stress Network)
- [Self Care for Sustainability and Impact](#) (Move to End Violence)
- [Taking Care of Others by Taking Care of Yourself](#) (Move to End Violence)
- [TCFV Compensation Report](#): A detailed look at advocates' compensation
- [Understanding Traumatic Triggers](#) (National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health)
- [VOICE: Victim Services Occupation, Information, and Compensation Experiences Survey Technical Report and Summary of Findings](#) (Institute on Domestic Violence & Sexual Assault)
- [When Domestic Violence Takes a Toll on the Helpers](#) (domesticshelters.org)

## Books

- [Burnout: The Secret to Unlocking the Stress Cycle](#) (Emily Nagoski and Amelia Nagoski, 2020)
- [My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies](#) (Resmaa Menakem, 2017)
- [Overcoming Compassion Fatigue: A Practical Resilience Workbook](#) (Martha Teater and John Ludgate, 2019)
- [Set Boundaries, Find Peace: A Guide to Reclaiming Yourself](#) (Nedra Glover Tawwab, 2021)
- [The Age of Overwhelm: Strategies for the Long Haul](#) (Laura van Dernoot Lipsky, 2018)
- [The Body Keeps the Score](#) (Bessel van der Kolk, 2015)
- [The Compassion Fatigue Workbook: Creative Tools for Transforming Compassion Fatigue and Secondary Traumatization](#) (Françoise Mathieu, 2012)
- [Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others](#) (Laura van Dernoot Lipsky, 2009)



# MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE PROVIDER LOCATORS

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## General Mental Health Service Provider Locators

- [Mental Health TX Service Provider Locator](#): Search for individual, family, adolescent, and/or group counseling, protective services, crisis resources, community mental health services, and health/disability support groups in Texas.
- [Sondermind](#) and [Psychology Today](#): Search for a variety of counselors, therapists and other mental health service providers in specific geographic areas across the U.S.
- [SAMHSA Service Provider Locator](#): Search for mental health services, substance use services, healthcare centers, buprenorphine practitioners and Veterans Affairs services by geographic area across the U.S.
- [HHS's LMHA and LBHA Locator](#): Search for Local Mental Health (or Behavioral Health) Authorities, aging and disability resource centers, and area agency on aging in Texas.
- [HHS Locator for Aging, Disability, Behavioral, & Intellectual Disability Services](#): Search for HHS offices that offer aging, disability, behavioral health and intellectual or developmental disabilities services in Texas.

## Service Provider Locators for Providers Serving BIPOC and/or LGBTQ+ Clients

- [Innopsych](#): Search for therapists of color.
- [Therapy for Black Girls](#): Search for therapists serving Black women and girls.
- [The National Queer and Trans Therapist of Color Network](#): Search for therapists serving queer and trans BIPOC clients.
- [Inclusive Therapists](#): Search for therapists based on a variety of factors, such as cost, language, therapist identity and more.
- [The Loveland Foundation](#): Therapy funding assistance for Black women and girls.
- [Latinx Therapists & Speakers](#): Search for speakers and therapists that identify as Latinx.
- [Human Rights Campaign's Mental Health Resources for LGBTQ+ Community](#): Offers information on mental health, as well as crisis and suicide hotlines for the LGBTQ+ community.
- [PFLAG](#): Offers information, advocacy, support, and resources for the LGBTQ+ community, as well as families, friends and allies. There are PFLAG chapters throughout Texas, some of which offer support groups and listings for therapists who identify as, or specifically serve, LGBTQ+ clients.

# Exercises, Tools & Supports to Promote Wellness

## Calm the Body & Mind.

Grounding and calming exercises

- **Fingerhold Practice for Managing Emotions & Stress** (National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health)
- **Grounding Resources:** Created for survivors, but useful for all. Offers grounding resources to calm the body and mind, some of which are culturally responsive and/or available in multiple languages. (Anti-Violence Project based at the University of Victoria in Canada, on Lkwungen and WSÁNEĆ territories)
- **Grounding Techniques** (also available on a **pdf worksheet**): A variety of grounding techniques as well as information, exercises, and worksheets addressing a wide range of mental health issues. (Therapist Aid)
- **Psychology Tools:** Offers information, worksheets, exercises, self-help guides, and audio therapy resources for different mental health concerns. Available in over 60 languages.

## Take a breath.

Meditation and breathing practices

- **Diaphragmatic Breathing** (Coalition Ending Gender-Based Violence)
- **Free Guided Meditations** (UCLA)
- **10-Minute Guided Meditation for Beginners to Clear Thoughts with Jessamyn Stanley**

## Seek Info & Support.

Guides, assessments and peer support

- **21 Day Self-Care Challenge** (Move to End Violence)
- **Anti-Racist Self-Care Resources** (Harvard University)
- **Guidebook on Vicarious Trauma: Recommended Solutions for Anti-Violence Workers** (Health Canada)
- **PROQOL Self-Assessment** and **website**: Tools to assess professional quality of life, including compassion fatigue
- **Self-Care for Advocates Facebook Group**
- **Trauma-Informed Care Manual:** Pages 7-29 cover vicarious trauma, ways to address it, and considerations for supervisors in using trauma-informed approaches (Ohio Domestic Violence Network)



### App Spotlight!

**Liberate:** Created intentionally for people of color to reduce anxiety and stress through meditation.

## Find What Works For You.

Apps for wellness, meditation and support



**Insight Timer:** A free resource that offers a variety of guided meditations and relaxing music and sounds.



**Headspace:** Offers a variety of meditations, movement options, exercises and music.



**Shine:** Created by BIPOC innovators, this app supports wellness through meditations, stories, calming sounds and peer support.



**PTSD Coach:** Assists in managing symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder. Free, customizable and available in Spanish.



**Bloom CBT and Self-Care:** Offers cognitive behavioral therapy techniques to reduce stress and anxiety and improve sleep and wellness.



**Moodfit:** A comprehensive mental health and wellness app that offers a wide range of supports.



**Moodmission:** Created to help alleviate anxiety and depression, this app offers mood assessments and “missions” to address the user’s mood.



**Sanvella:** Offers different coping strategies and tools to promote wellness through self-care, peer support, coaching and finding a therapist.

# TRAININGS, WEBINARS & WEBSITES

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## Trainings & Webinars

- TCFV Training with Dr. Leila Wood: Advocate Career Satisfaction: Research on Occupational Stress, Peer Support and Supervision
- TCFV Training: Resilience and the VOICE Study
- TCFV Training: Trauma Series Episode 1, Episode 2 and Episode 3
- Webinar: Keeping Your Cup Full: Responding to Vicarious Trauma and webinar handouts (OCADSV)
- Webinar: Sustaining Ourselves in the Work: Trauma-Informed Approaches, Self-awareness, and Self-care (National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health)
- Webinar: Dealing with Loss and Uncertainty: Self-compassion, Resilience, and Narrative: Webinar 1 of the Self-Care & Healing During Covid-19 Webinar Series (VAWnet)
- Webinar Slides: Autocuidado 2021: Comenzando El Año con Estrategias Para Fortalecer Nuestro Bienestar y Nuestra Salud (VAWnet)

## Websites

- American Institute of Stress
- Anxiety and Depression Association of America
- Black Mental Health Alliance
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention: Mental Health Tools & Resources
- Compassion Fatigue Awareness Project
- Georgetown Behavioral Health Institute: Black Mental Health Resources
- Mental Health America
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)
- National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health
- National Council Mental Wellbeing
- Psychology Tools
- SafeSpace
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Agency (SAMHSA)
- Texas Health and Human Services
- Texas Suicide Prevention Collaborative
- The Mighty
- Trauma Stewardship Institute

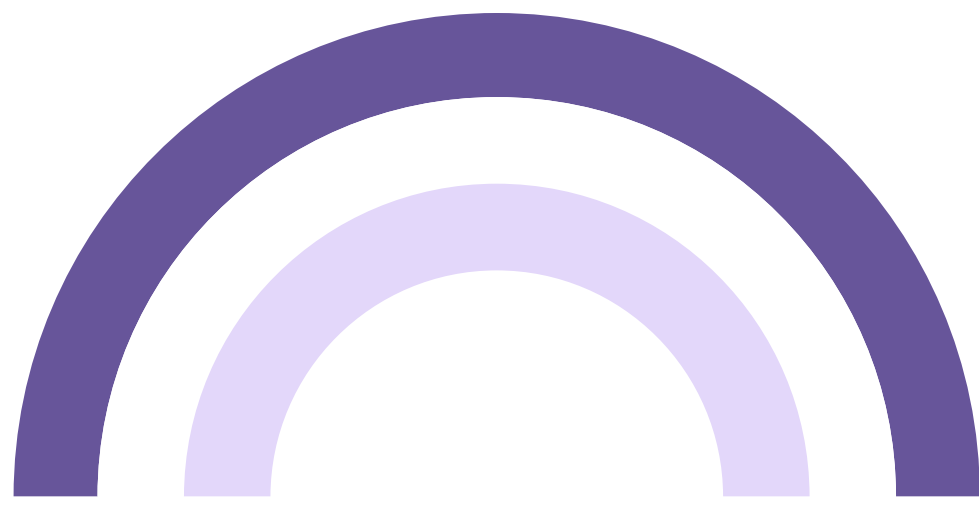


## RESOURCES FOR AGENCIES & AGENCY LEADERS

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- [Organizational Prevention of Vicarious Trauma](#): An article on the organizational factors in vicarious trauma and recommendations to prevent vicarious trauma.
- [ProQOL Assessment Tool](#): A tool that measures professional quality of life, focusing on compassion satisfaction and compassion fatigue.
- [The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit for Staff Wellness](#): This resource contains a step-by-step guide to strengthening your organization's response to vicarious trauma, including a Blueprint for a Vicarious Trauma-Informed Organization, a customizable organizational scoresheet and action plan, and organizational readiness guide for victim services. (U.S. Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime)
- [Tools for Transformation: Becoming Accessible, Culturally Responsive, and Trauma-Informed Organizations – An Organizational Reflection Toolkit](#): A resource intended to support organizations in building accessible, culturally responsive, and trauma-informed (ACRTI) programs, informed by survivors, advocates and clinicians and researchers. (National Center for Domestic Violence, Trauma and Mental Health)
- [Trauma-Informed Care Manual](#): A comprehensive guide to trauma-informed practice and protocols for domestic violence programs; pages 7-29 cover vicarious trauma and considerations for supervisors in using trauma-informed approaches (Ohio Domestic Violence Network)
- [Webinar: Concrete Strategies for Reflective, Strengths-based Supervision: Organizational Supports for Trauma-Informed Domestic Violence Services and Organizations Part I](#) (National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health)
- [Webinar: Concrete Strategies for Reflective, Strengths-based Supervision, Part II](#) (National Center on Domestic Violence, Trauma & Mental Health)





Some people  
only tell the stories  
of their struggles  
in the past tense.  
They only speak  
of all that was conquered  
and overcome.  
But I hope you know it is okay  
if you are the kind  
who is still travelling slow  
in the desert sun.  
It is okay to search for hope  
while you still feel  
undone.

You are free to thrive  
and be at peace  
even when there are not  
answers for everything.

Come alive,  
dear friend,  
come alive,  
in whatever way  
that looks like.

-Morgan Harper Nichols