FEBRUARY 2023

TAKING CARE ROUNDTABLE: WHAT WE HEARD REPORT

MATTHEW PEARSON AND DAVE SEGLINS
CO-CHAIRS, TAKING CARE ROUNDTABLE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sobering. Inspiring. Long overdue.

That's how some participants described the Taking Care Roundtable, an industry summit held in Ottawa at Carleton University's Dominion-Chalmers Centre over two unseasonably-warm days in late October.

Global experts, top newsroom leaders, journalism educators, and industry stakeholders came together to tackle the urgent findings of the Taking Care report published in May 2022. As authors of that report, we invited leaders to this roundtable for a first-of-its-kind cross-industry forum to talk openly and honestly about mental health and the urgent need to develop practical solutions to improve well-being in our profession.

What emerged was a clear understanding that we are at a reckoning point. The industry – from journalism schools to newsrooms large and small – must change to meet its "duty-of-care" to journalists' mental health, well-being and exposure to trauma on the job, and recognize the ways these overlap with issues of equity and inclusion. To do otherwise is to continue causing harm.

An ever-growing body of research – from the groundbreaking work of Dr. Anthony Feinstein, who delivered a keynote address at the Roundtable, to our own Taking Care report – documents high levels of stress, burnout, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder across the industry and makes a compelling case for adopting new tools and best practices to better support our people.

Despite the myriad challenges, however, there is hope. While many aspects of the news industry are driven by competition and the need to be first, the discussion around mental health is a space where cooperation and goodwill are beginning to flourish. We are bolstered by the development of industry working groups and invite others to join us. Everyone benefits when the psychological health and safety of media workers becomes a core industry value.

While this report - which was written and produced by Carleton University research assistants Tariro Hlahla, Manuel Baechlin, Hafsatou Balde and Catriona Koenig - offers a detailed account of what was heard at the Taking Care Roundtable, let us underscore several key points:

1. Talk and acknowledge mental health: We must become smarter, and normalize discussion about mental health in our work, to end stigma and expand tools and practices that support well-being.

2. Understand duty of care: News organizations and journalism schools must live up to their duty-of-care to their people with respect to mental health, well-being and exposure to trauma.

3. Develop newsroom protocols: Organizations must adopt trauma-aware protocols on how best to cover major trauma stories before, during and after disturbing events, such as covering a racist attack, a natural disaster or mass shooting. News supervisors must also better monitor team members' cumulative "trauma load" to protect them from overexposure to disturbing images and content.

4. Combat online hate and harassment: If news organizations aren't doing so already, they must join the industry-wide effort to call on social media platforms, police, and government to take action. News organizations must also ensure support is available to journalists who are subject to abuse, in particular the Black, Indigenous, racialized and women media workers who receive so much of it.

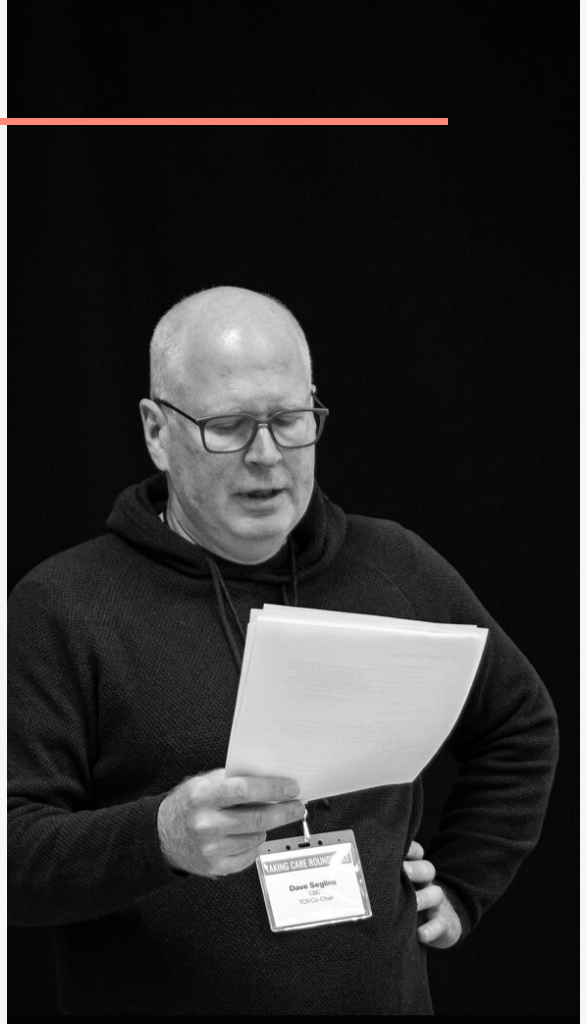
5. Protect freelance and precarious workers: News organizations must pool resources to create a peer support program to be managed and operated by and for freelancers. News organizations must also develop an industry-wide code of conduct for treatment and support of freelancers.

6. Take care of vulnerable sources: The news industry has a great responsibility to sources who are victims or survivors of trauma who routinely share their stories with journalists. News organizations must develop sensitive, trauma-aware approaches and embed this in onboarding, training, and broader newsroom culture.

7. Collaborate, don't compete: Though competition and being first is a bedrock of the industry, on this issue, news organizations must realize that working together on mental health best practices serves everyone's interests. Resources, training materials, and other successful initiatives should be shared and scaled up so as many journalists and media workers as possible can benefit. Journalism schools must adopt a similar perspective on this issue.

The Taking Care Roundtable was a great start. We must now harness the energy and spirit of collaboration it sparked to make our industry stronger and more sustainable for all of us.

Matthew Pearson and Dave Seglins
Co-chairs, Taking Care Roundtable
February 2023



KEYNOTE #1 – JOURNALISM AND MENTAL HEALTH

A SPEECH BY DR. ANTHONY FEINSTEIN
PROFESSOR OF PSYCHIATRY, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

KEY THEMES

- The research around trauma and moral injury is evolving and demonstrates the impact stress and exposure to trauma can have on the psyches of journalists.
- Journalists are less likely to seek professional help for their mental health even when they have been through a traumatic experience.
- There are treatments available for journalists when trauma occurs and they need to be made readily accessible.
- Traits such as resilience and risk-taking may have genetic components that can predispose a person to mental health vulnerabilities.
- Journalists are often expected to cope with content stressors, process stressors and life stressors with no assistance from the industry.
- There are several signs to look out for in a coworker who may be struggling. This is why it is important for managers and editors to keep a healthy line of communication with their employees.
- Newsrooms must actively fight against perpetuating stigma related to mental health, and emphasise tools for well-being such as self-care and treatment options.

WHAT WE HEARD

Dr. Anthony Feinstein began his keynote by reflecting on a realisation that he came to many years ago – there was a gap in research covering trauma in the journalism industry. As a neuropsychiatrist at the University of Toronto, he has conducted numerous studies on the impact that trauma and reporting had on journalists. Several of these studies looked at wars, conflicts and other traumatic events, analysing the effects on the journalist covering them. For example, journalists working in Syria reported very high rates of depression. Nearly every case showed increased rates of PTSD symptoms, such as avoidance and flashbacks, as well as depression, anxiety and self-medicating, which was attributed to a lack of social support often found in a bureau. Meanwhile, journalists covering cartels in Mexico would often be threatened by the cartel, resulting in trauma. Despite this, many Mexican journalists were less likely to seek psychological help.

Psychological help can lessen the negative impacts of trauma. "Therapy can make a profound difference," Feinstein noted. He also mentioned strong personal relationships as another protective factor against mental health issues. He then spoke about moral injury, defining it as, "injury done to a person's conscience when they witness, perpetrate or fail to prevent acts that transgress their own moral and ethical values." Consequences of moral injury include doubting oneself, social withdrawal, and feelings of hopelessness and cynicism.

"You don't have to wait for something traumatic to happen."

Feinstein's research on risk taking behaviours and resilience showed that there may be some genetic and epigenetic mechanisms involved in whether a journalist develops mental health problems.For example, an identical twin study showed that the expression of the DLX1 gene is related to higher levels of anxiety, which led to the twin with the higher gene expression taking fewer risks, because they were more anxious. Another example is found with monoamine oxidase, which is an enzyme that decreases dopamine levels. The reduced dopamine levels are associated with less risk taking, which was also confirmed in the twin study.

In regard to helping journalists who are in distress, there are many different challenges posed. Several symptoms of mental health issues, such as avoidance, clash with a journalist's goals and hinder their ability to work at their typical optimal level. Feinstein described two different types of stressors that affect journalists. The first is content stressors, which include being exposed to mentally taxing situations at work such as witnessing conflict. The second is process stressors, which includes the daily responsibilities that can pile up and overwhelm a journalist, like deadlines. There are also life stressors that we all face privately.

To determine if a fellow journalist is struggling, Feinstein said, "There's a whole long list of things to look out for." These include emotional components, like irritability, anxiety and sadness. You may also notice psychosomatic effects like poor sleep, changed appetite and increased vigilance. It's important that managers and editors (while also paying attention to their own mental health, since they can also be affected by these stressors) reach out to their staff and maintain a healthy and communicative relationship.

There should be conversations before particularly difficult stories so everyone can plan ahead. “You don’t have to wait for something traumatic to happen,” Feinstein said. During the story process, reminders of how to get support can make a big difference, and after the story is done, managers should be diligent about keeping in touch with their journalists and making sure they receive any help they need.

The newsroom environment is another important factor in determining a journalist’s well-being, particularly its stance on stigma. “Stigma has hung over my profession for decades,” said Feinstein, before speaking about ways to reduce stigma in the workplace. “One has to accept that emotional responses are normal,” he added, explaining that distress needs to be seen as normal and treatable.

Furthermore, there must be systems in place for mental health support that are there for journalists even before a crisis has struck. “News organisations should have an easy-to-use confidential system for journalists to access therapy,” Feinstein stated.

The topic of self care was also highlighted in the talk. “That’s the key, these moments of respite unrelated to work,” Feinstein said. He spoke about the many different ways to care for oneself on a daily basis: maintaining a healthy diet and exercise, practising good sleep hygiene and spending time with loved ones. While these are all important, other factors that may be forgotten include limiting your time on social media, switching off the news and consuming moderate levels of alcohol if you choose to drink. There are also many treatments available for those who may be struggling with their mental health, such as cognitive behavioural therapy and medication.

“News organisations should have an easy-to-use confidential system for journalists to access therapy.”

WHAT ARE WE DOING WELL? WHAT IS NEEDED IN THE INDUSTRY?

A BREAKOUT SESSION

The first breakout session of the Taking Care Roundtable brought media professionals together to explore the questions: what are we doing well and what is needed in the industry to address mental health, burnout and trauma.

The attendees broke off into five smaller groups and, after 30 minutes of discussion, reported back to the full group the following points.

THESE WERE SOME OF THE GENERAL AREAS WHERE THE INDUSTRY IS DOING WELL, ACCORDING TO PARTICIPANTS:

Recognition

- People within the industry are talking more about mental health and well-being amongst their colleagues in and outside of the workplace.

Peer support

- People within the industry are reaching out more to their colleagues for help or to offer their support.
- Freelancers who otherwise don't have a big organization directly behind them are building peer support networks.

Benefits

- Mental health benefits including financial aid for therapy and the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) are now being offered within the industry.
- Company insurance is offering family services, which can sometimes also include free counselling outside of the employee's benefits.
- Mental health days are being given to media professionals without needing justification or without the days coming out of their sick days.

Work-life balance

- Reporters can get breaks without having to disrupt others in the newsroom who would otherwise have to "pick-up" after the reporter.

J-schools

- Students currently in J-Schools have greater awareness about mental health and well-being and are more vocal when demanding change within the industry.

Calling out bullying

- In the past, bullying was common in the workplace, but views within some have changed. In modern newsrooms, bullying is called out by others and "bullies are informed that their behaviour will not be tolerated," one participant said.

THE AREAS THAT REQUIRE IMPROVEMENT OUTWEIGHED AREAS WHERE THE INDUSTRY WAS DOING WELL.

SOME OF THE GAPS INCLUDE:

Link between race and trauma

- Racialized journalists don't feel supported in newsrooms.

Public disconnect

- The public isn't aware of what journalists do and why they do it.
- The public is oblivious of the stress and impact that the job has on the journalists covering traumatic stories.

J-School training

- The skills and experiences of students coming out of J-school often vary and there is a lack of education on how to interact with trauma victims once in the field.

Untrained counsellors

- Counsellors being recommended to media professionals, including many of those available through EAPs, are not specifically trained to support journalists.

Attitudes

- There is a large generational gap towards mental health and well-being; those in senior positions have more power, but can be less likely to prioritize mental health in the workplace.

Lack of foresight

- Problems are often dealt with after the injury rather than having preventative measures so that problems are minimal.

Access to services

- Too many steps are currently required to acquire health services and benefits.
- Human resources rely on internal protocols which can make it harder for media professionals to access services.
- Freelancers don't have access or limited access to services and benefits from the organizations they work for.
- Benefits that journalists receive are not adequate. Organizations often offer three to six counselling sessions per year.

Funding

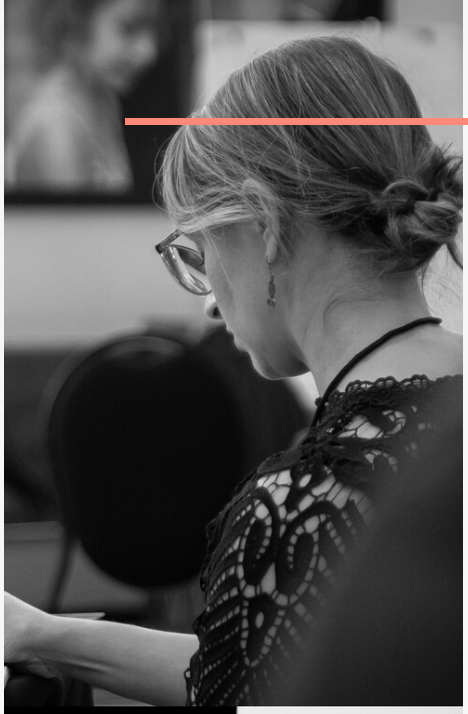
- Not enough funding is being allocated for therapy.
- Full-time freelancers are not given a feasible budget to give them the flexibility to sometimes say no to a stressful assignment.

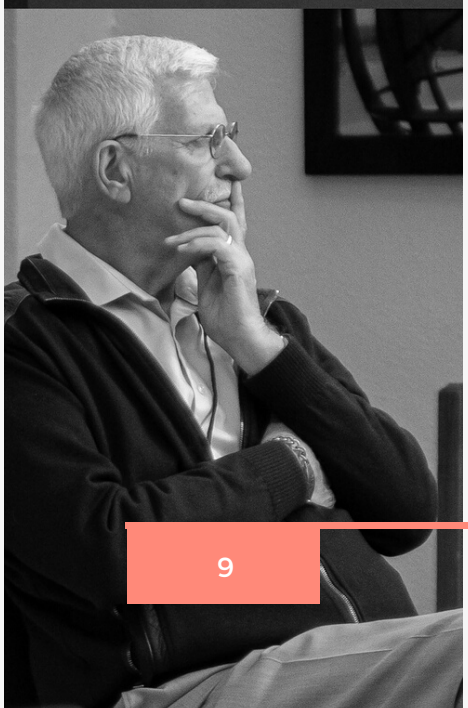
EAP

- There is a lack of understanding of what EAP is and what it can do.

Deadlines

- Workload and deadlines are often caused by a fake sense of urgency.
- The news is fast paced with quick turnarounds that make the well-being of journalists a second priority.





ONLINE HATE AND HARASSMENT

THIS INDUSTRY UPDATE WAS PRESENTED BY BRENT JOLLY, PRESIDENT OF THE CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF JOURNALISTS

Targeted online harassment and hate towards Black, Indigenous and women of colour has become a new norm for many racialized journalists in Canada. “This is something that shakes the foundation of our craft,” Jolly said.

He shared some of the progress he and several media organizations have had so far in discussions with law enforcement, social media platforms and the federal government in relation to online hate and harassment. “This is not a one-pronged, easy-to-solve problem,” he stated.

As of October, Jolly said law enforcement are taking online hate and harassment more seriously and aimed to enforce consequences. Jolly said the government was looking to introduce an online hate bill, but so far no bill has been introduced. He said social media companies did not have interest in participating in the crackdown of online hate and harassment.

> “THIS IS NOT A ONE-PRONGED, EASY-TO-SOLVE PROBLEM."

KEYNOTE #2 – TRAUMA SUPPORT FOR JOURNALISTS

A SPEECH BY BRUCE SHAPIRO
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE DART CENTER FOR JOURNALISM AND TRAUMA

KEY THEMES

- All journalists need a good self-care plan.
- The industry has a duty of care to its people and should shift from crisis response to crisis prevention.
- Newsroom culture needs to address both trauma and burnout.
- Repeated stressors can lead to physiological injury.
- Social isolation is a major risk for developing PTSD.

WHAT WE HEARD

The past few years have been a period of extraordinary stress and upheaval, said Shapiro, who joined the Taking Care Roundtable by Zoom. The resulting impact on journalists continues to be exceedingly great. Discussing trauma support is therefore a press freedom issue, he said. Modern trauma experienced by journalists include repeated exposure to negative COVID-19 stories, graphic imagery, working on stories that deal with abuse and interviewing traumatized subjects.

To tackle how the journalism industry can provide support on these modern issues, it is first important to distinguish stress from burnout and what might lead to burnout. Burnout is rooted in the neuroscience of stress, resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed. “Dazed and confused. That defines burnout to me,” Shapiro said. Key symptoms include feelings of energy depletion or exhaustion, increased mental distance from one’s job or feelings of negativism or cynicism. “Good” journalists stereotypically know how to ride stress, but when it goes on for too long it can cause the brain to fatigue. Extreme levels of this stress then leads to injury. The question is how to balance peak performance without succumbing to such an injury. “We need to be thinking in a new way about stress in general, and trauma,” Shapiro said.

This can be difficult, as journalism can sometimes be a trauma-facing profession. Trauma and their originating causes for stress are therefore multi-level. They could be direct, when the journalist is a personal witness or present at the scene. They could be vicarious, through empathetic engagement with sources. They could be secondary and resulting from graphic or distressing imagery. They could also be moral, external or any combination of these stressors over time.

If a stressor is not continuous, journalists may experience distress but can also recuperate. However, should physiological injury develop, it can be distinctly bad for journalists because the side effects break down all of the necessary skills needed for work to be completed. It can result in more extreme breakdowns and health concerns. It undercuts news judgement, makes meeting deadlines impossible and prevents relationships from being forged inside and outside of the workplace.

Common newsroom signs, which tend to show up as persistent change, include missed deadlines, lateness, increased sick absence, anger, minor accidents, spaciness, irritability, depression, a lack of interest and a lack of concentration. As a result, the newsroom and organizations can experience fragmentation, conflict and mistrust.

This prompted Shapiro to ask, whose job is it to deal with these signs and symptoms? “When we’re talking about psychological safety for journalists [...] it’s at every level,” he said. Journalists should practise basic self-care and receive peer support training. Editors and managers should complete baseline safety planning, and newsroom leaders should set duty of care policies and maintain consistent communication as they play a critical role in dealing with the effects and mitigations of health risks.

A resilient journalist is a well-rested journalist, Shapiro said. Editors and managers should ensure that assignments are calibrated in a way that lets journalists use different muscles and craft different neurological strengths. This gives the journalist time to rest one strength while enhancing another.

“I do believe all journalists need a good self care plan,” Shapiro stated.

For journalists themselves, a self-care plan includes knowing the signs of stress, limiting technology when it is not required to give the brain time away from the screen and staying grounded by lowering arousal (focussing on deep breaths, doing exercise, learning meditation).

Other key self-care steps include:

- Limiting substance use.
- Actively maintaining positive collegial connections.
- Having family or partner support (social isolation is a major risk for PTSD).
- Regulating trauma loads.
- Sleeping.

Being a self-care role model in the newsroom as a manager is critical. Do not take on more than others are expected to do, so that they do not see a need to compete or work more to maintain the same professionalism.

Taking a before, during, and after approach to psychological safety is also recommended. Before engaging in a project that is likely to contain stressors, trauma awareness should be maintained, alongside a sleep plan. “Engage in watchful waiting,” Shapiro stated in regards to newsroom employers. Risk assessments should be completed, and any necessary resources should be obtained. During the event, basic biological needs should be considered, and after the event, attention should be placed on persistent changes in work performance. Checking up on journalists a month after an assignment has concluded is also recommended. These check ups should not be emotional ones. Instead they should focus solely on what went right and what was challenging. Always presume resilience, but educate and normalize any distress responses that might occur and share information and resources.

A few general principles for trauma support include:

- Acting before the crisis hits.
- Focussing on the immediate workplace as well as external factors.
- Emphasising peer support.
- Viewing physical and online safety as part of psychological safety.
- Recognizing workplace ethics and tasks as part of psychological safety.
- Identifying trauma-trained referral pathways.

Ethical leadership and trauma aware standards call for well-articulated missions, building a culture of learning, giving meaning to such events and avoiding moral injury .“It’s very important that it’s not a one size fits all; every initiative should be tailored accordingly,” Shapiro said. There is no one concept that will work to cover all trauma support needs for every organization and newsroom. Every environment has its own culture and trauma workflow, so adjust to it accordingly.

“It’s very important that it’s not a one size fits all; every initiative should be tailored accordingly.”

SOLUTIONS? A VIEW FROM THE FRONTLINE

A PANEL DISCUSSION WITH FRONTLINE JOURNALISTS DARREN CALABRESE, RAISA PATEL AND CURT PETROVICH, MODERATED BY PROF. NANA ABA DUNCAN, CARTY CHAIR IN JOURNALISM, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION STUDIES AT THE CARLETON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION.

KEY THEMES

- Toxic J-school culture.
- Being first on the scene.
- Freelance work.
- Online hate and harassment.

WHAT WE HEARD

Historically, the mental health and well-being of media professionals was not a priority. Even before setting foot in newsrooms, the culture in J-Schools around the country has often affected the mental health of its students.

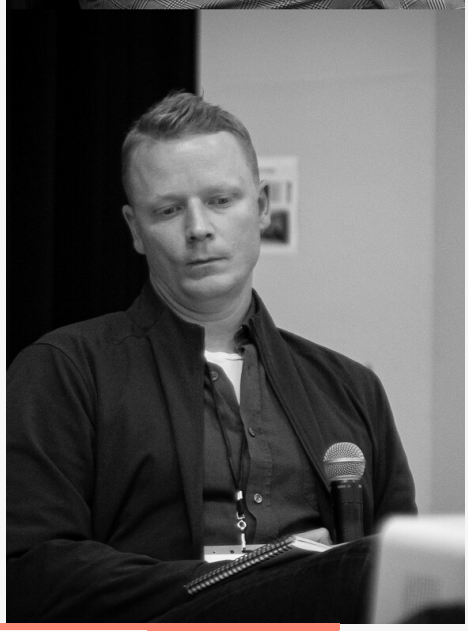
"If you're not crying in the shower at the end of the day, you're not doing it right," was how Toronto Star national politics reporter Raisa Patel put it.

Like many in the industry, her experience in J-school was far from perfect. From staying long hours on campus to meet deadlines to the lack of proper training on how to interact with trauma victims for stories, mental health was not a priority, Patel said. There were times when she and classmates feared some members of the cohort would not make it out of the program alive, she said.

The panel agreed that although younger journalists are slowly changing the toxic environment in J-schools by being more vocal about mental health, there's still a long way to go. The general consensus was that change needs to happen from the top down, rather than relying on younger journalists or students for that change.

The lack of mental health focus in journalism programs and within the industry made veteran journalists resistant to accepting that they might be struggling and need help. Many suffered from burnout, with some even being diagnosed with PTSD from work related trauma. "No story is worth it. I'm proud of the work that I did, but it came at an enormous cost," said Curt Petrovich, a CBC News journalist who was diagnosed with PTSD in 2014.

"If you're not crying in the shower at the end of the day, you're not doing it right."



The toll that covering trauma-filled stories has had on reporters' mental health is greater than is visible to the public. Being the first on the scene of a terrible accident involving children could have a greater negative impact on journalists who are parents. However, the false urgency created by the industry makes the reporters believe that they must be the first one on the scene and ready to cover the story no matter how traumatic the scene may be.

The fear of not getting hired again following a mental health struggle is one that the panel related to strongly. Journalists in the field said they continued to work on hard assignments even if their mental and physical health slowly deteriorated. For freelancers, the stakes were reportedly even higher, with no backing from media organizations. "We were told as freelancers, if you become a problem, the phone stops ringing," said freelance photojournalist Darren Calabrese. Calabrese said he struggled with his mental health after an assignment, and lost numerous job opportunities because he asked for help. Having expressed his personal battles with his mental health, calls simply stopped coming in.

The lack of support and general awareness towards freelancers experiencing trauma is significantly higher than awareness towards full-time employees supported by organizations. Although support for staff employees is also lacking, freelancers don't even have the option of basic financial or organizational support to better take care of their health.

Frontline journalists experience different forms of harm, including from the comfort of their homes. During the 2022 Freedom Convoy blockade, many racialized female journalists received large amounts of online hate and harassment, which affected their mental well-being.

Patel's experience reporting during the blockade and its aftermath was one that she did not expect, and she said it changed her life and countless others. Racialized female journalists were in the front lines and on the receiving end of horrid online harassment and attacks. Examples included racial slurs, sexist slurs and death threats without having actually been in the field to cover the stories. "You don't need to go somewhere to experience harm as a journalist," Patel said.

Media professionals who tried to defend the journalists being targeted online became targets themselves. At first, many seemed to care and offer support to the journalists targeted, said Patel. After a while, people stopped asking how she was doing. The industry failed to check in on its reporters' months down the line even though the harassment didn't stop.

Ultimately, some journalists created peer support groups to fill in the void. It helped them vocalize their experiences with others experiencing similar harassment.

"We were told as freelancers, if you become a problem, the phone stops ringing."

KEYNOTE #1– TRAUMA-AWARE REPORTING AS A KEY TO JOURNALIST WELL-BEING

A SPEECH BY JO HEALEY
SENIOR JOURNALIST AND TRAUMA TRAINER

KEY THEMES

- Journalists should always be mindful of the victims and survivors of traumatic events, before, during and after the interview process.
- There are six main factors journalists should use for sensitive reporting: Honesty, Acknowledgement, Accuracy, Consent, Control and Compassion.
- Journalists should look after themselves throughout the process and seek support for their own traumas and emotions.
- Reporting on traumatic events and sensitive stories is not an exact science, and it is OKto make mistakes as long as you hold yourself accountable. Do the best you can do.
- Interview subjects are human beings, too.

WHAT WE HEARD

Trauma reporting is not a "one-size-fits-all," began Jo Healey, a journalist for 30 years and the author of Trauma Reporting, A Journalist's Guide to Covering Sensitive Stories. Based in the U.K., Healey trains journalists worldwide how to work with victims and survivors. She began her keynote presentation on trauma reporting and covering sensitive stories by explaining that traumatic things can happen to ordinary people. Healey said we tell our stories best through these people and who these events impact. She teaches reporters to centre their process around the interviewee, and to be mindful that every case and person is different. "Never lose sight of the person being interviewed," Healey said. "They give us so much."

Healey spoke with families, children and survivors about their past experiences being interviewed for sensitive stories. She worked with them to develop six factors that journalists should use for sensitive reporting. Healey uses the acronym "HAACCC" to encapsulate these factors: Honesty, Acknowledgement, Accuracy, Consent, Control and Compassion.

Honesty
Healey listed honesty as the first factor in sensitive reporting because it is extremely difficult to regain a source's trust and confidence when you lose it. Journalists are not here to trick someone into sharing their story. Healey said to identify yourself as a journalist, and to be honest and transparent about the interview process throughout the experience.

Acknowledgement
Acknowledgement is something so simple, yet journalists often forget to say sorry. Healey advises reporters to say they're sorry for what the interviewee is going through. Reporters can also show acknowledgement through checking in on the source after the process, like asking how they're doing outside of interview time. "There is a conflict, sometimes, in being a human being and being a reporter," Healey said. "It's not an exact science."

Accuracy
Healey reminded attendees that people who have experienced traumatic events haven't chosen to endure something horrendous. Checking facts is extremely important, and accuracy comes with time. Even if you are in a hurry to meet a deadline, don't make your subject feel rushed. Ask for deadlines to be extended. Facts cannot be compromised.

Consent
Ongoing consent is essential for sensitive reporting. Contact your source; don't just show up and invade their space. Make them aware of the entire process and manage expectations. Find out where the story will be broadcasted. Get authority for every photo; don't assume that consent has been given.

Control
Offer choices, involve the interviewee, explain the process. Give them the ability to say only what they want to share. Talk to your interviewee and be collaborative. Do they want to be labelled as a victim or a survivor? What are they comfortable with? Where do they want the interview to take place? People may have to deal with other stressors such as funeral homes, the police, etc. In response, a journalist should be the one to slow things down and give the subject control. Enable your sources to feel empowered, Healey said.

Compassion
Reporters should show compassion through sensitivity, respect, empathy and dignity. A reporter must have a conversation with the source before and after the interview to establish these factors. During the interview, questions should not come across as judgements. There should be a recognition to understand and learn from the interviewee. A reporter should also be mindful of the subject's culture and practices. For instance, should you leave your shoes on if you enter their house?

Healey included some additional tips for reporters outside of these six factors:

- Ask easy, short questions to children.
- Speak slowly.
- Don't shy away from emotion and don't be dismissive. If a source cries during an interview, the journalist should give them space to cry. Turn off the cameras if they ask, and give them time.
- Check in with the interviewee after the piece has been published.

During a Q and A that followed Healey's talk, some Taking Care Roundtable participants raised concerns about being realistic in tricky situations. In some newsrooms, managers and bosses that are far-removed from the content of this training may not be as flexible as needed. For example, if an interview subject would like to have a photo removed from a website or story after it is published, a manager might deny the request. Also, journalism is a competitive career. Sometimes reporters have to be a bit more aggressive to get a story first. To these issues, Healey said "Do the best you can do," and to think of the person being interviewed. Approach the situation with humility. "Don't lose sight of why we do this," she said. "It's not a statistic, it's a person."

A large part of the training Healey conducts also emphasises looking after yourself as a journalist. We all have our own traumas, and interviewing a trauma survivor or victim may bring up your own emotions. Healey suggests practising grounding techniques and breathing for anxiety on the scene. Afterwards, she advises talking to a colleague who will respect your views and understand what you're going through. "Do what works for you to help yourself," she said.

"There is a conflict, sometimes, in being a human being and being a reporter."

INSPIRING INITIATIVES & BUILDING THE FUTURE

SOME PARTICIPANTS AT THE TAKING CARE ROUNDTABLE SPOKE ABOUT PROJECTS THEY ARE WORKING ON TO HELP FURTHER **MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION AND SUPPORT** WITHIN AND ACROSS THE INDUSTRY.

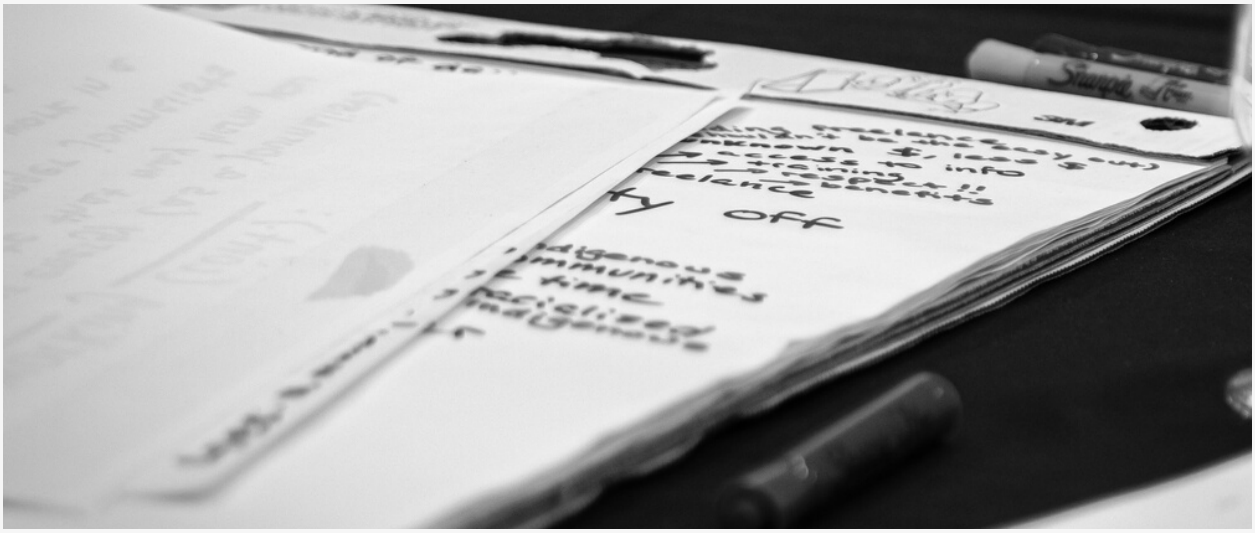
TRAUMA-INFORMED REPORTING IN J-SCHOOLS

Matthew Pearson is a journalism professor at Carleton University and a research collaborator for the Taking Care Report. He is working on implementing trauma training into J-schools. Starting at Carleton, Pearson is piloting a 0.5 credit course in January 2023 on trauma-informed reporting for upper year undergraduate and graduate students . The course will use a theoretical approach to reflect on reporting. Students will look at what went well and what could be improved on in terms of sensitive stories in their journalistic experiences to-date. Pearson will provide scenarios for students to work with to further develop their skills. Pearson is also working on implementing more trauma-informed workshops in J-schools.

THE WELL-BEING IN NEWS ADVISORY GROUP

The Well-being in News Advisory Group is a working group of media members. Collectively, they have recognized that most news organisations are struggling in terms of trauma and journalism, work stress and mental health. Dave Seglins, a member of the advisory group and a research collaborator for the Taking Care Report, is working with CBC and La Presse to develop a pilot project on industry training. This project will be delivered first to CBC and La Presse newsroom leaders and reporters. In the future, the goal is to provide a trauma-informed curriculum and share lesson plans to all newsrooms and J-schools. This will prepare students, new journalists and further educate seasoned reporters to make changes within the industry for better mental health and trauma-informed reporting.

TASK END DATE



CANADIAN TRAUMA SUPPORT NETWORK

Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) across Canada often offer a generalized service. EAPs do not provide specialised assistance for news organisations and the unique stressors that come with working in the media. The Dart Center for Journalism and Trauma recently received a grant from Google to develop a pilot project for a Journalism Trauma Support Network (JTSN). The JTSN is a program of therapists specifically trained in supporting journalists. They receive training on journalism culture in order to provide empathetic and accurate help. Currently, a lot of trauma support for Canadian journalists is being provided through psychologists in the United States. Not only is it outsourced, but it is not yet widely available. Dave Seglins is pushing for local, improved support outside of the EAP specifically for journalists.

PEER SUPPORT FOR FREELANCERS

Darren Calabrese is a freelance photojournalist who has experienced trauma in the field. At the Taking Care Roundtable, he said, “I found that I was lost, because I did not know where I could go as a freelancer who had no insight into the EAP.” Overall, Calabrese said there is a lack of mental health support for freelancers, and funding to receive established support is a barrier. As a solution, he is proposing a weekly peer support group for freelancers. This group would meet online with physicians present to educate freelancers about trauma, and provide aid to those who need it. This group needs to be funded so freelancers can afford it. Calabrese said he may have reached out for help earlier if he had the knowledge about the pathway that his trauma would lead him, and that a peer support system as a freelancer is particularly important.

TASK START DATE END DATE

SEEKING EMPLOYEE INPUT, EXPERIENCES

David Beers, founding editor of The Tyee, sent out an online survey to his staff to receive feedback about mental health, well-being and exposure to trauma. This survey consisted of 28 questions that invited staff to share experiences they've had, factors that came into play, what's going well and what needs to be improved. This questionnaire allowed Beers to take note of topics surrounding race, gender, self-care, moral injury, burnout, pandemic stress, isolation and culture within the workplace. Beers encouraged other media organizations to work with staff, as opposed to forming opinions as management in a hierarchical style. This creates spaces for people to voice their concerns in an ongoing effective process.

REPORTING ON INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

Duncan McCue is an Anishinaabe journalist working for the CBC. He said there is a two-pronged problem in the media with reporting on Indigenous peoples: Stereotypes and cultural gaps. These issues have resulted in a lack of trust from Indigenous communities. McCue has created a couple of resources that journalists can use to report on Indigenous communities and decolonize journalism. First, there is the Reporting in Indigenous Communities guide for Canadian journalists, students and newsrooms. Second, McCue teaches a CBC workshop called Reporting in Indigenous communities. This has brought training to CBC bureaus across the country for journalists to learn about Indigenous culture and terminology. Third, McCue wrote a textbook called Decolonizing Journalism. This extensive textbook contains information on the notion of humility, adapting the practise and how to work in Indigenous communities. END DATE

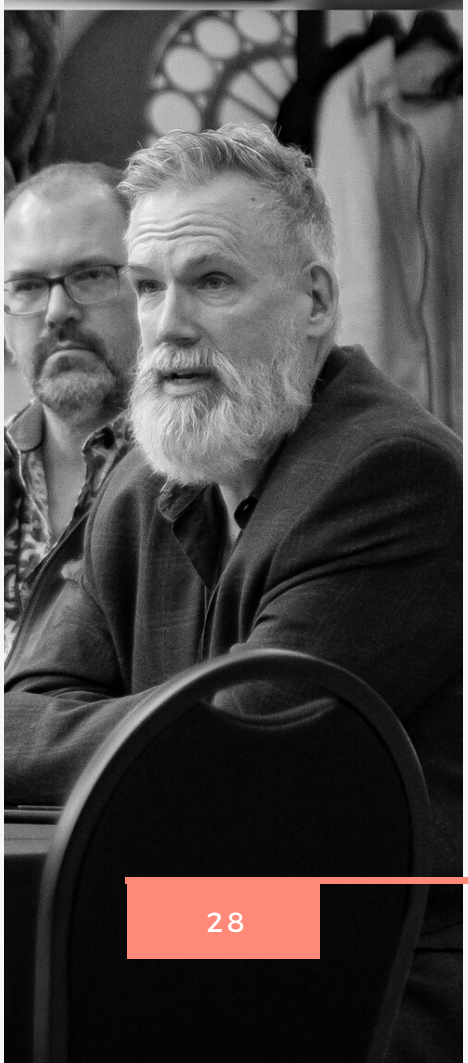
MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING FOR NEWSROOM EMPLOYEES

Sandra Martin is the head of newsroom development at The Globe and Mail Toronto. While she said the publication does not yet have a grand plan, it is working to address two key areas. The Globe wants to develop a policy of reporting on Canadian communities as problems arise and continue to exist. This would mean staying current with news while highlighting longstanding problems. They also want to develop tactile next steps, such as counselling options and mental health first-aid. Martin said that at the Globe and Mail, one person from every department is trained on mental health first aid.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

A BREAKOUT SESSION

This breakout session allowed attendees to join one of five groups focusing on specific topics surrounding journalism and sensitive reporting. Each group brainstormed recommendations for the industry to create a better environment for its journalists. They were then asked to summarise their discussion in one sentence.



WHAT WE HEARD

EDUCATION

- Journalism schools need to educate students on mental health topics throughout their entire degree. These topics cannot be covered adequately with just one trauma-focused course. Topics include learning about active listening, how to be resilient and a general understanding of symptomatology.
- Journalism students are not prepared enough for newsrooms. Journalists in practice should collaborate with J-schools to close the gap between academia and how the industry functions. This means more opportunities to learn interviewing skills and how to practise self-advocacy in the workplace.
- Instructors should implement compassionate, flexible teaching, especially when it comes to assignments that must be completed outside of school.
- J-schools should communicate with each other and share lesson plans that are known to be effective

The industry needs to collaborate with J-schools.

NEWSROOM PRACTICES

- The industry has a duty of care. This means it is responsible for informing journalists of all occupational hazards. “The industry needs to acknowledge that trauma exposure is an occupational hazard and a risk to the psychological health of news professionals,” one group member said.
- Specific practices should be issued in response to traumatic events, which requires unions and HR organisations to be trauma-informed and dedicated to protecting their employees.
- There should be protocols in place, such as limits on how often a journalist is exposed to trauma in a short period of time. Before an assignment, journalists should be briefed on potential exposures to trauma and plan ahead.
- Employers should be responsible to speak up and advocate for their journalists when exposures to trauma occur. They should offer mental health services, time off, therapy and support.

The industry needs to take a truly trauma-informed, employee-centred approach.

WHAT WE HEARD

PEER SUPPORT

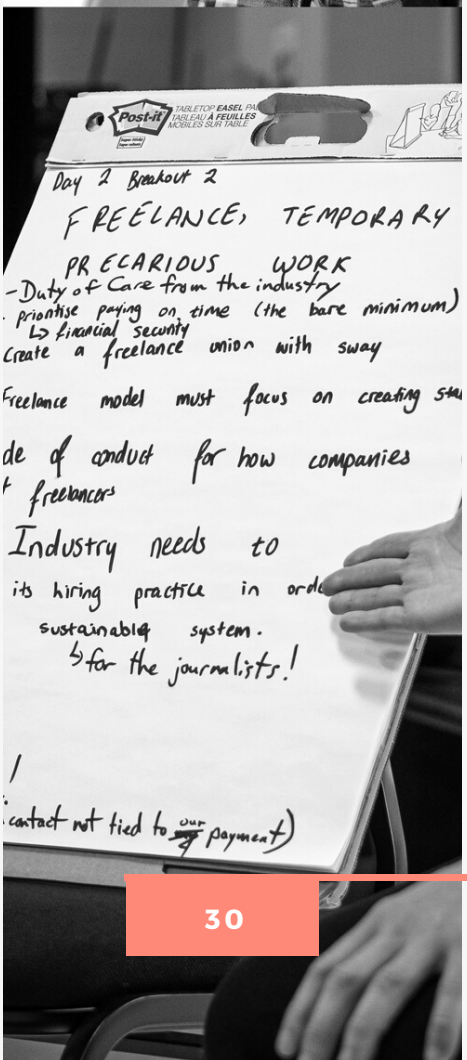
- There should continue to be open, supportive group chats and online meeting spaces that allow for healthy, informal communication among peers. These networks can span across provinces, stay within journalism establishments or be focused on a specific group (e.g. racialized workers).
- Journalists and employers should work together to institutionalize group chats so that grievances can be addressed, while also respecting the brain trust that is assumed within a chat. This means that it should be clear when a chat is informal with a specific purpose of support, and when a chat may be aiming to achieve a goal within an institution formally.
- These group chats should ensure equitable practices through dividing the labour amongst its members.

The industry needs to have peer support networks that are well-versed in available resources and allow members to think out loud and seek collective wisdom.

INCLUSION AND WELL-BEING

- The industry must realize inclusion and mental health go hand in hand. Marginalized communities are at the centre of this conversation. There is an overlap between duty of care and equity that needs to be emphasised in the industry.
- A directory of trauma-trained, anti-oppression specialists should be created as a resource. For example, the directory should include mental health professionals who are aware of journalism-specific issues.
- Information about mental health needs to be more accessible. This education should be available for marginalized people and the resources should include those with proper representation.
- Organizations must be held accountable. Ways to address stigma and promote well-being include education during onboarding and initial training sessions, unlimited sick days without penalties on the sick person and their team, and normalizing asking questions about mental health in exit interviews to understand the pressures of the job.
- Departures from traditional newsroom attitudes should be welcomed, not feared. For example, hierarchies can be loose in nature and promote transparency amongst employers and employees.

The industry needs to base equity within the intersection of journalism and well-being.



WHAT WE HEARD

FREELANCE, TEMPORARY AND PRECARIOUS WORK

- The industry must acknowledge that by keeping freelance work unsustainable, it is ultimately doing a disservice to readers because freelancers frequently leave journalism. Employers should recognize this symbiotic relationship and advocate for institutional support for freelancers.
- An industry standard should be created that outlines a clear code of conduct that employers must follow. This would guarantee respectful practices and treatment of freelancers.
- Freelance unions should push for contracts or retainers to be offered. Efforts should be undertaken to ensure all working freelancers are aware of existing unions and how to join them.
- Programs that offer bursaries to freelancers to seek mental health support should be proliferated.
- Relationships between employers and freelancers should be formed and nurtured so the freelancer's work is valued and they can reach financial stability. This could be facilitated by a journalist in the newsroom that takes on a role as a liaison between the company and its freelancers.

The industry needs to reassess its hiring practices in order to create a sustainable system for the journalists.

REFERENCES

LINKS TO RELEVANT SITES, ORGANIZATIONS AND INFORMATION

- Taking Care: A report on mental health, well-being & trauma among Canadian media workers
- Canadian Journalism Forum on Violence and Trauma
- Well-being in News blog
- Reporting in Indigenous Communities guide
- Decolonizing Journalism textbook
- Canadian Association of Journalists site
- Dr Anthony Feinstein's studies
- DART Center for Journalism and Trauma
- Trauma Reporting resource
- Journalism Trauma Support Network (JTSN)

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Taking Care Roundtable was envisioned as a way to continue the urgent dialogue and search for practical solutions raised by **Taking Care: A Report on Mental Health, Well-being and Trauma Among Canadian Media Workers**, which was published by the Canadian Journalism Forum on Violence and Trauma in May 2022.

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