

Secondary Traumatic Stress: Strategies for Prevention and Resilience in Health Providers

Karen VanDeusen, Psy.D., LMSW

Ineke Way, Ph.D., LMSW

WMU School of Social Work

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Overview

1. Participants will distinguish burnout, vicarious trauma, and secondary traumatic stress (STS).
2. Participants will acquire knowledge about self-assessment tools and identify own strengths and needs related to STS.
3. Participants will acquire knowledge about trauma-informed organizations.
4. Participants will acquire knowledge about evidence-based self-care strategies.



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Trauma

Results:

"From an event, series of events, or set of circumstances

That is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or threatening, and

That has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being"

<http://media.samhsa.gov/traumajustice/traumadefinition/index.aspx>



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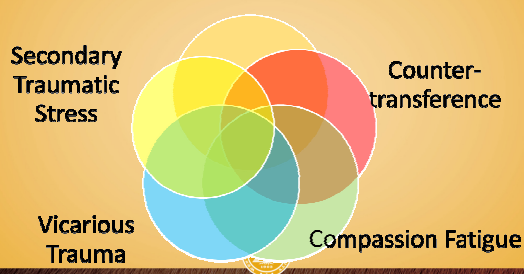
"...We are stewards not just of those who allow us into their lives but of our own capacity to be helpful..."

(Conte, J. R., in L. van Dernoot Lipsky, 2009).



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STS and Related Terms



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Secondary Traumatic Stress

- Emotional distress resulting from one or more experiences of indirect trauma exposure (Newell & Nelson-Gardell, 2014)
- Results in PTSD-like symptoms, alterations in memory, perception, and self-efficacy
- May also result in changes in trust, safety, and independence (NCTSN, 2011)



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STS in Workers: PTSD-like Effects

- Intrusive thoughts, and
- **Avoidance** (Brady et al., 1999; Cohen & Collens, 2013; Kassam-Adams, 1995; Steed & Bicknell, 2001; Way et al., 2004)
- Emotional numbing (Farrenkopf, 1992; Schauben & Frazier, 1995)
- **Hypervigilance** (Jackson et al., 1997; Steed & Bicknell, 2001)



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Risk and Protective Factors

- Risk factors include:
 - Female gender, trauma history, highly empathic, high caseload, insufficient training, feeling isolated, and newer to the field
- (e.g., Cunningham, 2003; Knight, 2010; Pearlman & MacLan, 1995)
- Protective factors include:
 - Engage intentionally in personal and professional self-care strategies
 - Seek professional help when needed/ prevention strategy



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Personal Self-Assessment and Action Plans

- ProQOL 5 (Stamm, B. H., 2009)
- Self-Care Assessment (Butler, L. D. adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Associates (1996)
- VT Support Systems Exercise (Wilgocki, J., n.d.)
- VT Action Plan (Headington Institute)
- STS Emergency Plan (Rinfrette, E. S., n.d., retrieved from <http://socialwork.buffalo.edu/resources/self-care-starter-kit/develop-your-emergency-plan.html>)



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Organizational Perspective on STS



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Trauma-Informed Organizations

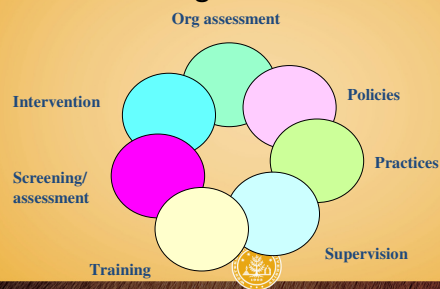
- Realize the wide impact of trauma and understands potential paths for healing,
- Recognize the signs and symptoms of trauma in staff, clients, and others, and
- Respond by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures, practices, and settings.”

<http://media.samhsa.gov/traumajustice/traumadefinition/index.aspx>



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Components of Trauma-Informed Organizations



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Trauma-Informed Policies

- Policies
 - Screening / initial assessments
 - Resilience framework
- Human resources policies
 - Hiring interview
 - Paid time off
 - Health insurance coverage
- Orientation and training for staff



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Supporting Staff to Reduce / Address STS

- Normalize STS effects as a part of doing this work
- Ongoing support for how workers are doing
- Critical incident debriefing

Knight, 2013; Pryce et al., 2007; Sommer, 2008



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Organizational Self-Assessment

- Involves input from multiple stakeholders
- Assesses current organizational practices
 - Program procedures
 - Formal policies
 - Trauma screening and services
 - Administrative support
 - Staff training
 - Human resources practices
- Provides basis for planning



Harris & Fallot, 2001

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ProQOL



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Questions?

Karen VanDeusen

karen.vandeusen@wmich.edu

Ineke Way

ineke.way@wmich.edu



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Further Reading

- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2014). *Trauma-informed care in behavioral health services*. Treatment Improvement Protocol (TIP) Series 57. HHS Publication No. (SMA) 13-4801. Rockville, MD: Author.
- van Dernoot Lipsky, L., with Burk, C. (2009). *Trauma stewardship*. San Francisco: Barrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.
- Wicks, R. J. (2008). *The resilient clinician*. New York: Oxford University Press.



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