Heal the Healer: Prevention and Intervention Strategies for Secondary Trauma (STS), Compassion Fatigue (CF), and Burnout for Helping Professionals and Organizations

Leslie Anne Ross, Psy.D.
Vice President, Leadership Center
Co-Chair, NCTSN STS Collaborative Group

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Introductions

- Who are we?
- Who are you?
- Why are we here together today?
Caring Creates Risk: What Impact Does Trauma have on Individuals and Organizations?

What are you vulnerabilities?

How do you reduce your risk?

Where do your stories go at the end of the day?

How are you supporting your team?
“The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.”

Rachel Naomi Remen, *Kitchen Table Wisdom* 1996
Secondary Traumatic Stress

“The natural and consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatized event from another person, the stress from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or stressed person.”

(Charles Figley, 1995)

Vicarious Traumatization:

– “…refers to the cumulative effect of working with survivors of traumatic life events. Anyone who engages empathically with victims or survivors is vulnerable.”

(Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995)
STS results from exposure to trauma experienced by others, often in the workplace with no real threat of personal harm.

Secondary trauma symptoms are often indistinguishable from those of direct exposure:

- Nightmares, triggers
- Avoiding reminders
- Numbing, withdrawal
- Hyper-vigilance
- Trouble concentrating
- Quick to anger
## Occupational Stressors: Direct Exposure and Prior History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CPS-Related Stressor</th>
<th>% witnessing event (N=49)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dangerous neighborhood</td>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drug abuse by client</td>
<td>90</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty and homelessness</td>
<td>86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Physical abuse of child</td>
<td>84</td>
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<td>Educational neglect</td>
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<td>Poverty and lack of food</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sexual abuse of child</td>
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<td>Criminal activity by client</td>
<td>76</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty and lack of healthcare</td>
<td>69</td>
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<tr>
<td>Death of a client due to illness</td>
<td>47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Death of a client due to accident</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>Death of a client due to unknown cause</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Death of a client due to murder</td>
<td>24</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

From: Erika Tullberg, MPA, MPH, ACS-NYU Children’s Trauma Institute
**Burnout** is a state of emotional, mental, and physical **Exhaustion**…

Often with feelings of **Hopelessness** and difficulty in dealing with work or doing your job effectively.

- Feels like my efforts don’t make a difference
- The job is changing me into a different person
- I have a reduced feeling of personal accomplishments
- Often related to high workload or a non-supportive work environment
Wellness Break
Multiple Exposure: Increased Risk

Prior Trauma

Burnout

Compassion Fatigue

Secondary Trauma

Traumatic Grief/Loss

Direct Exposure
Impact on the Individual...

**Cognitive effects**
- Negative bias
- All-or-nothing
- Loss of perspective or critical judgment
- Threat focus
- Decreased self-monitoring
- Intrusive thoughts

**Social impact**
- Reduction in collaboration
- Withdrawal, loss of social support
- Factionalism
- Conflict-easily angered
- Isolation
- Difficulty trusting
- Avoidance

**Emotional impact**
- Helplessness
- Hopelessness
- Overwhelmed
- Depression
- Worry – realistic and unrealistic fears
- Anger/Irritability
- Feeling numb
- Hypervigilance

**Physical impact**
- Headaches
- Tense muscles
- Fatigue/sleep difficulties
- Nightmares
- Stomach problems/nausea
- Feeling jittery
- Frequent illness
- Absenteeism
Have you noticed a change in your world view?

"I liked recess a lot better before the safety helmets."
Think about how working with traumatized kids affects your:

- beliefs about the world
- spiritual beliefs
- sense of self, groundedness and emotional stability
- sense of personal and family safety
- trust of yourself and/or others
- the way you judge people
- sense of control
- ability to be alone, or to be with others
- relationship to your body
Workplace setting may be an important predictor of STS (Sprang, Craig and Clark, 2012).

*Unsupportive work environments* may have a powerful influence on STS development above and beyond dose of trauma exposure.
If you are patient in one moment of anger, you will escape a hundred days of sorrow.

We have been programmed for centuries for fight or flight, which is overkill in discussions with family, friends or neighbors.

The first step is to de-escalate yourself.

Allow others to have their feelings,

Whether they make sense to you or not.
Compassion Satisfaction, Compassion Fatigue, and Burnout in a National Sample of Trauma Treatment Therapists (Craig and Sprang 2010)

This study investigates the impact of EBPs in a national sample (n=532) of self-identified trauma specialists

“Continuous and prolonged exposure to the stress of working with the myriad of trauma related stressors experienced by clients can lead to various responses including burnout, compassion fatigue, and compassion satisfaction.”

- Case-load percentages of PTSD clients predicted levels of compassion fatigue and burnout.
- Younger therapists experiences more burnout while more experienced therapists reported more compassion satisfaction.
- Implementing EBP’s generally reduced reported compassion fatigue and burnout.
It only takes 10% of the population in alignment to create change!
How do we create a culture of wellness and resiliency?

Maya Angelou said: If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.
Developing Resiliency Through:

Relaxation Training and Stress Reduction Techniques
Find a partner……

• (ideally someone you have not worked with before)

Share

• Risk factor you/your organization is most vulnerable to
• A strategy/practice that is already working for you/your organization
As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep physical path, we walk again. To make a deep mental path, we must think over and over the thoughts we want to dominate our minds.

Henry David Thoreau
How do you move your body?
What goes in your body?
Making a commitment to Wellness
1% change
THE RESILIENCE ALLIANCE

Promoting Resilience and Reducing Secondary Trauma Among Child Welfare Staff

Reactivity Color Zone

Be cool monitor your heat level

ACS-NYU CHILDREN’S TRAUMA INSTITUTE
SEPTEMBER 2011
Facts about Optimism

Optimism is the skill of focusing on the positive — without denying the negative — and channeling one’s energy towards what is controllable.

Optimistic people:

- Tend to have greater motivation, greater resilience, more positive moods, higher achievement and a greater sense of control.
- Tend to feel and perform better.
- Tend to have more positive relationships.
“I’m right there in the room, and no one even acknowledges me.”
Workplace Strategies

- Supportive Work Environment
- Resiliency Building Activities
- Organizational support
- Training/Supervision
- Team building activities
- Celebrations
- Use Vacation Leave Time
- Buddy System
Do we always need to share all the gory details?

- Step One: Self Awareness
- Step Two: Fair Warning
- Step Three: Get Consent
- Step Four: Low Impact Disclosure
LASSIE! GET HELP!!
Promoting Protective Factors

Buddy/Support System

Supportive Work Environment

Compassion Satisfaction

Training/Risk Reduction

Reflective Supervision

Experience: Time on the Job

Wellness Practices
THE COMPASSION FATIGUE WORKBOOK

Françoise Mathieu

Compassion Fatigue Solutions

Tools & resources for helping professionals

Compassion Fatigue Solutions provides skill-based workshops, consulting services and training materials focusing on compassion fatigue, self-care and workplace wellness.

Workplace wellness
Practical workshops and presentations for helping professionals, administrators and volunteers.

Team Building
A cost effective way to offer professional development & team

Self Care
Free articles, book recommendations and links to help you look after yourself no matter how demanding your work is.

Compassion Fatigue
A range of free resources for more information on sustaining staff and

A new website! Welcome
OCT 17, 2010
Hi to you all and sorry for the long silence as I was working on the migration of my website and blog to this new platform (and thank you to my web wizard James Boardmore of Pointy Design for all his hard work). Why the change? Well, first of all I
Trauma Stewardship

Laura van Dernoot Lipsky
Founder and Director of the Trauma Stewardship Institute and author of *Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others*, has worked directly with trauma survivors for 26 years.
NEW NCTSN Resources!!

Secondary Traumatic Stress
A Fact Sheet for Child-Serving Professionals

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

Each year more than 30 million children in the United States endure the trauma of abuse, violence, natural disasters, and other adverse events. These experiences can give rise to significant emotional and behavioral problems that can profoundly disrupt the children’s lives and bring them in contact with child-serving systems. For therapists, child welfare workers, case managers, and other helping professionals involved in the care of traumatized children and their families, the essential act of listening to trauma stories may take an emotional toll that compromises professional functioning and diminishes quality of life. Individual and supervisory awareness of the impact of this indirect trauma exposure—referred to as secondary traumatic stress—is a basic part of protecting the health of the worker and ensuring that children consistently receive the best possible care from those who are committed to helping them.

Our main goal in preparing this fact sheet is to provide a concise overview of secondary traumatic stress and its potential impact on child-serving professionals. We also outline options for assessment, prevention, and interventions relevant to secondary stress, and describe the elements necessary for transforming child-serving organizations and agencies into systems that also support worker resiliency.

How Individuals Experience Secondary Traumatic Stress

Secondary traumatic stress is the emotional distress that results when an individual learns about the firsthand trauma experiences of another. Its symptoms mimic those of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Accordingly, individuals affected by secondary stress may find themselves re-experiencing personal trauma or notice an increase in arousal and avoidance reactions related to the indirect trauma exposure. They may also experience changes in memory and perception, alterations in their sense of self-efficacy, a depletion of personal...
There is an App for that...

GPS for the Soul measures your heart rate and heart rate variability, which taken together are a proxy for stress, and then connects you with the things that help you course-correct -- from music and poetry to breathing exercises and pictures of your loved ones.

GPS for the Soul lets you play one of the guides we have assembled for you, or create your own. GPS for the Soul's activity feed lets you see how your friends are feeling and what guides resonate with them.
Finding Balance

How do we collaborate to create a culture of resilience and wellness?

- Staff well-being
- Training/practice
- Team Building
- Work-load Balance
- Work/Life Stress
What’s Next?

What are you taking away that will help you know:

1. What to do in the moment?
2. What to do in the workplace?
3. What daily practice will you commit to in order to increase wellness and resilience?
Thank you!

Resources & Contact Information:

- **Children’s Institute, Inc.**
  - [www.childrensinstitute.org](http://www.childrensinstitute.org)

- **National Child Traumatic Stress Network**
  - [www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org)

- **NCTSN Learning Center**
  - [http://learn.NCTSN.org](http://learn.NCTSN.org)

- **Leslie Anne Ross, Psy.D.**
  - [lross@childrensinstitute.org](mailto:lross@childrensinstitute.org)