

Trauma and Hope



# Compassion Fatigue

## Northern Virginia CSA Symposium

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# Goals for the Day

- Understand compassion fatigue
- Have an awareness of how compassion fatigue impacts individuals and organizations
- Measure your own compassion satisfaction, burnout and STS levels
- Be able to identify steps of how to combat and/or prevent compassion fatigue

<b>Direct Trauma</b>	<b>Indirect Trauma</b>
Things that happen to you	Hearing about the traumatic experiences of others
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Kids spitting at you, kids fighting, kids throwing up on you, kids yelling personal insults/slurs</li></ul>	Indirect trauma very important to pay attention to for both direct staff and supervisors
These behaviors start to become normalized	

Threat of future exposure (waiting for the other shoe to fall)

**Guns/Mean Dogs/Drugs/Perpetrator**

**Fatal Domestic Violence Issue**

**Suicide**

**Media**

**Getting your tires slashed**

# Compassion Fatigue

A term used to describe a series of conditions with varying degrees of severity, all with similar, but distinctly different symptoms.

# Burnout

Prolonged exposure to a stressful and demanding environment is structurally conducive to burnout.

## Burnout Slowly Creeps in

Burnout is often related to your circumstances as an employee.

- Inability to make something happen
- Bureaucratic processes
- Paperwork
- Workload

# **Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)**

STS is the cumulative and damaging effects that happen after being chronically exposed others (client's) traumatic stories.

- Indirect trauma – it did not happen to you
- Listening to the details from a client can become traumatizing to you.

STS can hit suddenly, like a ton of bricks.

# **Vicarious Trauma**

The negative transformation of self that occurs as a result of empathy towards the client and the desire to “fix it” or a sense of responsibility to help.



# Burnout and STS are not the same

Burnout	STS
Creeps in slowly	Can happen after one event
Result of workload	Result of bad things happening
More closely related to depression	Closely related to PTSD
Apathetic/Don't care decision – whatever, neglectful	Bad state personal react based upon lens you are looking at – overreacting or underreact

# Organizational Tips

Know your employees and learn their concerns and worries. Provide a routine and specific way for staff to provide feedback or just check-in such as a weekly meeting or weekly supervision. Communication is key.

Require staff to take time off or a break when things get hard. Give staff the opportunity to activate different parts of their brain. Watch for signs and symptoms of compassion fatigue and get involved early.

# Tools to Help

- Training on self-care
- Training on trauma (for kids and for staff)
- Peer or clinical consultation support
- Ability to debrief with peers
- Involvement in decision making at upper levels
- Recognition for the challenges of implementing constant policy changes, workforce and turnover issues
- Supervisors must have time to be thoughtful, mindful, organized and purposeful.

Prevention is the Best Plan!

# Resilience Building – Keeping Yourself Sane

- Find your Space
- Be physically healthy – whatever that means to you
- Find a way to release endorphins (exercise is a good way)
- Put your oxygen mask on first – need time to refresh and regroup

# Resilience Building – Keeping Yourself Sane

- Set boundaries
- Figure out the meaning of life
- Insist on quality supervision
- Be in therapy if you need to be

**ANSWER THE QUESTIONS  
BASED ON YOUR WORK  
SITUATION**

# **PROQOL: Responses and Discussion**

**Compassion Satisfaction: The pleasure you derive from being able to do your work well.**

**The average score is 50.**

**About 25% of people score higher than 57**

**About 25% of people score below 43**

**If your score is below 40, you may find problems with your job.**



# **PROQOL: Responses and Discussion**

**Burnout: Can reflect the feeling that your efforts make no difference, or they can be associated with high workload or a non-supportive work environment.**

**The average score is 50.**

**About 25% of people score higher than 57**

**About 25% of people score below 43**

**If your score is above 57, you may want to think about what at work makes you feel like you are not effective in our position. If a high score persists, it may be a cause for concern.**

# **PROQOL: Responses and Discussion**

**Secondary Traumatic Stress: Developing problems due to exposure to other's trauma.**

**The average score is 50.**

**About 25% of people score higher than 57**

**About 25% of people score below 43**

**If your score is above 57, you may want to take some time to think about how you feel about your work and your work environment. Is there something concerning or frightening about your work?**

If you are concerned about your  
score, organization or anything  
you heard here today,  
Please Contact Us.



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# Thank you!

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