

Self-Care and Recovery



Welcome to the RecoveryU module on Self Care and Recovery. We know that in order to be effective peer support providers and professionals, we need to prioritize our own self-care and recovery.

Module Goals

1. Participants will be able to identify challenges helping professionals experience related to self care.
2. Participants will be able to recognize general and personal warning signs and symptoms of Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Traumatic Stress.
3. Participants will develop a plan for individual self care and be able to identify ways their agencies can support self care for all.



All resources and references are located in the Resources tab of this presentation.

By the end of this Learning Module, you will be able to: 1. identify challenges that helping professionals experience related to self care; 2. recognize general and personal warning signs and symptoms of Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Trauma; and 3. develop a plan for individual self care and be able to identify ways your agencies can support self care for all.

Theme 1: Helping Professions



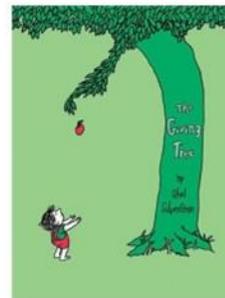
Why were you drawn to the Helping Professions? Are you kind, caring, compassionate? A natural helper or good listener? Do you want to give back to others? Many of us are drawn to the Helping Professions because we are natural caregivers or care-takers. We seek out roles as therapists, social workers, counselors, peer support specialists, service facilitators, teachers, and the like to make a difference in the lives of others.

Theme
1

Culture of Helping

Culture of Helping Professions:

- "giving selflessly"
- "putting others' needs before one's own"
- "carrying out one's duty no matter what the cost"



The Giving Tree
by Shel Silverstein

There is a "Culture of Helping" that runs through all of these different professions. This culture is reminiscent of the Giving Tree in Shel Silverstein's book. The tree gives of herself to the boy to make him happy and is happy herself. However, in giving, she ends up a stump with little left resembling her original self. Our culture encourages us to give selflessly, put others' needs before our own, and carry out our duty no matter what the cost. We need to be careful that we don't end up like the tree, having used up all our resources and having little left.

- Client's needs come first
- Available on call
- Long hours, large caseloads
- Minimal discussion about "Occupational Hazards" compared to other professions



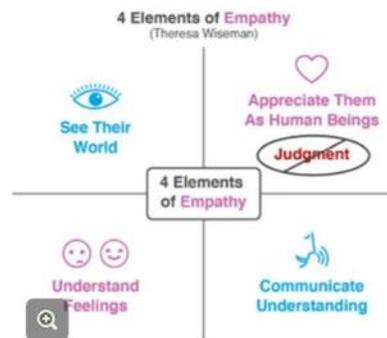
How many of you have experienced times when you put your clients' needs above your own? Have you waited to go to the bathroom because you were meeting with someone? Have you skipped lunch to make calls? Have you worked late to finish something and missed dinner with your family? Have you taken on an extra duty because it was needed?

Many of us make choices on a daily basis to help others and put our own needs on the back burner. We may be on call 24/7 and have to leave events to take phone calls, lose sleep due to crises, change travel plans because of on call duties, et cetera. Many people also work long hours and have large caseloads. Many other professions talk about Occupational Hazards regularly.

The Helping Professions, however, may talk about burnout or compassion fatigue but often not in the same context. We don't necessarily identify it as an occupational hazard and we certainly don't spend as much time trying to prevent it as other professions do with their occupational hazards. We have no OSHA looking out for our safety. The very nature of what we do leaves us open to a variety of potential occupational hazards.

Brené Brown on Empathy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ewwqu369Jw>



Peer Support Specialists are potentially vulnerable to Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Trauma because of their ability to empathize with others. Take a few minutes and watch this short video from Brené Brown on Empathy.

Peer Support Specialists focus on seeing the world from the other's perspective, appreciating them as human beings without judgment, understanding their feelings because they have similar feelings and communicating that understanding to the other person. Empathy is central to their role as Peer Support Specialists.



- Empathy both allows you to relate and creates a vulnerability to the traumatic experiences of others
- Similar experiences
- "close to home"

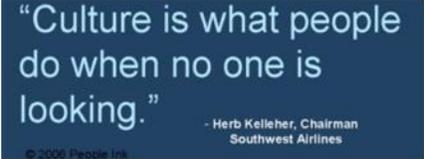
This empathy allows Peer Support Specialists to relate to others at a deep level, which also creates a vulnerability to experiencing the trauma that others have experienced. In addition to that vulnerability, Peer Support Specialists may also be vulnerable because their clients' experiences may be very similar to experiences they have had in their own lives.

This may be unexpected and could be triggering for the Peer Support Specialist. The ability to relate is a bit of a double-edged sword, and makes self care even more important.

Theme 1

Agencies & Self-Care

- Limited resources, funding
- Do more with less
- Lack of emotional risk management strategies
- What is the culture in your agency around self-care?

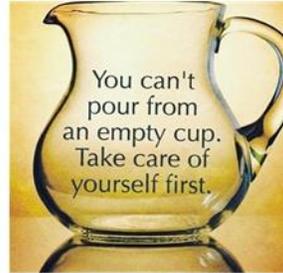


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Agencies may unintentionally put employees at risk for Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Trauma because of their limited resources. Many agencies find themselves trying to serve more people with less funding. They often don't allocate time and/or energy to staff well-being. And while agencies may have policies and procedures related to physical safety of staff, they don't put the same focus on emotional risk management strategies. Take a minute to think about the culture in your agency as it relates to self care. Are employees encouraged to take breaks, leave the office for lunch or take time off? Does your agency offer employee wellness activities? Do you feel supported? What does your agency look like on a daily basis? That will give you a pretty good idea of the culture of your agency.

Why is Self-Care Important?

You can't give what you haven't got.



Recharge our own batteries.

If the culture of helping professionals is to give selflessly, empathize with others and do more with less, why is self care important? It's not only important, it's crucial to our ability to effectively work with others. If we don't take care of ourselves, we won't have anything left to give to others. "You can't pour from an empty cup. Take care of yourself first."

Unlike the Giving Tree, we need to cultivate ways to replace what we give to others. We need to "recharge our own batteries." We'll spend some time exploring Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Trauma and identifying self care strategies to refill our own cups!

Theme 2: Compassion Fatigue & Burnout



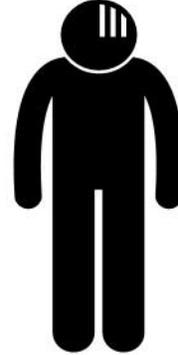
Peer Support Specialists face a number of occupational hazards including Compassion Fatigue and Burnout. Increasing awareness and developing a self care plan are crucial steps to protect yourself from these hazards.

Theme
2

Definition: Compassion Fatigue

"Compassion Fatigue is a state experienced by those helping people or animals in distress; it is an extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it can create a secondary traumatic stress for the helper."

Dr. Charles Figley



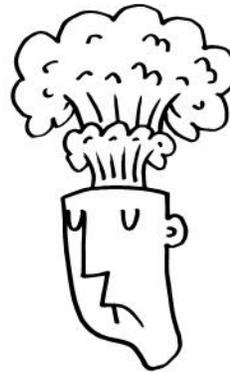
Let's start with some definitions. The term Compassion Fatigue was initially coined by Dr. Charles Figley. He described Compassion Fatigue as a state experienced by those helping people or animals in distress. It's an extreme state of tension and preoccupation with the suffering of those being helped to the degree that it can create a secondary traumatic stress for the helper. Compassion Fatigue is characterized by a continued desire to help others paired with overwhelming emotions related to being able to do so.

Theme
2

Definition: Burnout

"Burnout is a syndrome with dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment."

Chris Lloyd, Et al



Burnout, as defined by Chris Lloyd, Et al, is a syndrome with dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment. Burnout is characterized by a lack of ability to empathize with others.

Warning Signs of Compassion Fatigue

Symptoms of compassion fatigue can include:

- Excessive blaming
- Bottled up emotions
- Isolation from others
- Problems with intimacy and in personal relationships
- Substance abuse used to mask feelings
- Compulsive behaviors such as overspending, overeating, gambling, sexual addictions
- Legal problems, indebtedness
- Poor self-care (i.e., hygiene, appearance)
- Reoccurrence of nightmares and flashbacks to traumatic event
- Chronic physical ailments such as gastrointestinal problems and recurrent colds
- Apathy, sad, no longer finds activities pleasurable
- Anger and irritability
- Difficulty concentrating
- Preoccupied
- In denial about problems

Let's spend some time exploring the warning signs of Compassion Fatigue in more detail. There's a variety of signs to watch for that may indicate potential issues with Compassion Fatigue. Excessive blaming, bottled up emotions, isolation from others and problems with intimacy and personal relationships may be early indicators of Compassion Fatigue. The increased stress and avoidance of emotions puts one at risk for substance use and other compulsive behaviors, legal problems and/or poor self care. Individuals can also experience symptoms similar to PTSD, or Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, like reoccurrence of nightmares and flashbacks to traumatic events, chronic physical ailments, apathy, anger and irritability, difficulty concentrating, preoccupation, and denial.

Warning Signs of Compassion Fatigue

Symptoms of compassion fatigue can include:

- Reduced ability to feel sympathy and empathy
- Dread of working with certain clients/patients
- Receives unusual amount of complaints from others
- Voices excessive complaints about administrative functions
- Absenteeism – missing work, taking many sick days
- Impaired ability to make decisions and care for clients/patients
- Difficulty separating work life from personal life
- Disruption to world view
- Diminished sense of enjoyment of career

Additional warning signs can include reduced sympathy and empathy, which may lead to dread of working with certain clients or patients. Individuals may also receive an unusual number of complaints from others or have excessive complaints themselves

about others. This impacts enjoyment in work and may lead to increased absenteeism. Staff may find themselves struggling with making decisions and providing care to clients and patients. They may struggle with separating work life from their personal life and may experience a disruption to their world view. If you take some time to reflect on yourself and/or your colleagues, you may recognize some of the ways these warning signs appear in your work life.

Theme 2

Warning Signs of Burnout

Signs of Physical and Emotional Exhaustion:

- Chronic fatigue
- Insomnia
- Forgetfulness/impaired concentration and attention
- Physical symptoms
- Increased illness
- Loss of appetite
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Anger

Burnout has warning signs that can be broken down into Physical and Emotional Exhaustion, Cynicism and Detachment, and Ineffectiveness and Lack of Accomplishment. You'll note that some of these are similar to the warning signs for Compassion Fatigue and the differences lie in whether you maintain empathy for others (Compassion Fatigue) or lose that empathy (Burnout). Physically, you may be experiencing Burnout if you have chronic fatigue, insomnia, physical symptoms like chest pain, heart palpitations, shortness of breath, gastrointestinal pain, dizziness, fainting, and/or headaches, all of which should be medically assessed. You can also experience a weakened immune system and find yourself more susceptible to colds and the flu, et cetera. Burnout can lead to a loss of appetite as well. When experiencing symptoms of Emotional Exhaustion, individuals may also note anxiety, depression, and irritability, which leads to anger.

Warning Signs of Burnout

Signs of Cynicism and Detachment:

- Loss of enjoyment
- Pessimism
- Isolation
- Detachment



We may struggle with noticing signs of Cynicism and Detachment initially ourselves. However, our friends and family may notice changes before we do. They may see increased irritability or the apparent lack of enjoyment you experience with activities that used to bring you joy. They may also note an increase in pessimism and negative thinking. Perhaps you've gone from a "glass is always half full" outlook to a "glass is always half empty" outlook. You may also begin to isolate and avoid activities with others. This may happen slowly at first, turning down invites periodically until you find yourself not doing anything with others. All of this can culminate in detachment where you feel disconnected from life and those around you.

Warning Signs of Burnout

Signs of Ineffectiveness and Lack of Accomplishment:

- Feelings of apathy and hopelessness
- Increased irritability
- Lack of productivity and poor performance



We may also feel like we are very ineffective at our jobs or that we aren't able to accomplish anything. But Burnout is more than the day to day stresses you might feel with your workload. It's a daily dread you might feel related to your job. You may feel like you're "drowning in paperwork" every day or that there is no way to accomplish all

of the tasks you're expected to complete.

You may notice that you stop caring about your work and have an increasing sense of hopelessness and irritability. You may feel overwhelmed and unable to take action. This can snowball into a lack of action and ability to complete tasks, which only exacerbates the problem. At its worst, it can destroy relationships and careers. Again, think about yourself and/or the people you work with. Have you noticed any signs or symptoms of Burnout?

Theme 2

Strategies

Individual Strategies to manage Compassion Fatigue:

- Early Recognition: Professional Quality of Life Scale-ProQOL Version 5
- Improved Self-Care
- Assess life situation for balance, exercise, interests, debriefing, caregiving, de-stress strategies
- Part time work or seeing clients part time and doing other activities as part of job.



The good news is that we have a lot of tools and resources to combat both Compassion Fatigue and Burnout on an individual level and an organizational level. Early recognition is very important for individuals. We encourage you to take time to complete the Professional Quality Of Life Assessment, or the ProQOL Version 5. It's a tool to aide in recognition of Compassion Fatigue and can be accessed through the web for free at ProQOL.org.

The ProQOL is just one tool that can help you assess your life situation to identify areas you may need to focus on to decrease Compassion Fatigue. You may identify additional strategies that you can utilize to improve self care. This may take many forms, from increasing physical activity and exercise, incorporating mindfulness or meditation practices, or taking time for yourself.

You may find that you need to incorporate ways to debrief about some of the situations you work with. Perhaps you need to seek additional consultation, or supervision time. You also may find that you need to work part time or diversify the activities you do so that you are seeing clients part time and focusing on other activities the rest of the time. Each individual is different and you may find that at different times you may need to utilize different strategies.

Organizational Strategies to manage Compassion Fatigue:

- Discuss and recognize Compassion Fatigue
- Develop supportive work environments which include:
Debriefing, regular breaks, mental health days, peer support, assessing and changing workloads, professional development, and regular check in times

Your organization can also help to mitigate the effects of Compassion Fatigue by talking about signs and symptoms as well as strategies to help employees manage the effects. Recognition of Compassion Fatigue as an occupational hazard is important for organizations to proactively address these issues.

Employers can take steps to develop a work culture that supports employees and provides them with opportunities to address Compassion Fatigue. Providing opportunities to debrief about difficult situations and check in regularly with supervisors can be helpful in creating a supportive culture. Assure that employees have opportunities for regular breaks as well as mental health days and other forms of time off. Peer support may be helpful as well.

Ongoing evaluation and assessment about workloads can assist in balancing needs of clients with needs of staff. Opportunities for professional growth and development help offset some of the symptoms of Compassion Fatigue as well by helping staff stay abreast of developments in the field. By taking an active role in promoting a culture of support, organizations can help decrease the negative impact that Compassion Fatigue can have on staff and the clients they serve.

Individual strategies to manage Burnout:

- Personal reflection and assessment
- Set limits/boundaries
- Eat and Sleep regularly
- Take time for yourself
- Take time off
- Unplug
- Connect with others (friends, family, colleagues)
- Seek supervision/consultation



Many of the same strategies used to manage Compassion Fatigue can also be effective for Burnout and vice versa. The ProQOL Version 5 also explores symptoms of Burnout and can be a useful tool in self assessment. Taking time to reflect on your thoughts and feelings around your work can also help you identify potential signs of Burnout.

If you find yourself dreading work more often than not, it's probably time to implement some of these strategies. Set limits and boundaries at work as needed. Try to leave work at work. Take lunch. Eat and sleep regularly. Find ways to take time for yourself on a daily basis. Use your vacation time or other forms of time off. Work on unplugging for a period of time. Focus on connecting with others. Utilize supervision and consultation regularly.



This Self Care Wheel provides you with a variety of ideas to create a balanced life. Take some time and identify something in each area that you can focus on including in your life. What can you do to take care of yourself physically, psychologically, emotionally, spiritually, personally, and professionally?

Theme 2 Strategies

Organizational Strategies to manage Burnout:



- Effectively manage caseload numbers
- Provide supervision, peer consultation, etc
- Encourage use of personal time, mental health days, vacations, etc.
- Offer continuing education and professional development opportunities

Whether we're focusing on Compassion Fatigue or Burnout, organizations can help reduce these experiences by effectively managing caseload numbers and providing opportunities for supervision and peer consultation. Organizations can further support staff by encouraging the use of personal time, mental health days, vacations and other opportunities for time off. Opportunities for continuing education and professional development also combat the signs and symptoms of Burnout by engaging staff and revitalizing interest in skill development.

Theme 2 Strategies

STRATEGIES FOR ENCOURAGING STAFF WELLNESS IN TRAUMA-INFORMED ORGANIZATIONS

-  Encourage and incentivize self-care activities like counseling, meditation, exercise, and healthy eating.
-  Foster a culture that encourages staff to seek support, keeps caseloads manageable, and provides sufficient mental health and paid time off benefits.
-  Provide trainings that create awareness of chronic emotional stress and the importance of self-care.
-  Implement reflective supervision, during which trauma health care professionals and their supervisors meet to address feelings about patient interactions.

CHCS Center for Health Care Strategies, Inc. 

SOURCE: Strategies for Encouraging Staff Wellness in Trauma-Informed Organizations. Center for Health Care Strategies. December 2016.

The Center for Health Care Strategies has also identified ways, in four main areas, to encourage staff wellness in trauma-informed organizations. Encouraging and incentivizing self-care activities like counseling, meditation, exercise, and healthy eating is one way to promote staff wellness, as is providing trainings that create awareness of chronic emotional stress and the importance of self care.

Organizations that foster a culture that encourages staff to seek support, keep caseloads manageable, and provide sufficient mental health and paid time off benefits can also see improved staff wellness. And implementing reflective supervision, during which time health care professionals and their supervisors meet to address feelings about patient interactions, promotes staff wellness as well.

**Theme 3:
Vicarious
Trauma &
Secondary
Traumatic
Stress**



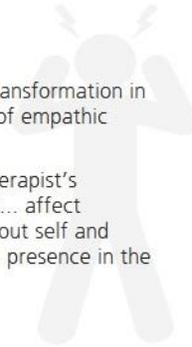
Peer Support Specialists and other providers in the Helping Professions are there for the individuals and families they work with. We are impacted by their stories day in and day out. And just as we talked about earlier, it's important to find ways to "refill your cup," because you can't give what you don't have. It's especially important to take care of ourselves to avoid the effects of Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Trauma.

Vicarious Trauma

Coined by Pearlman and Saakvitne (1995)

Using constructivist self-development theory, it is the permanent transformation in the inner experience of the therapist that comes about as a result of empathic engagement with clients' trauma material

The main symptoms of Vicarious Trauma are disturbances in the therapist's cognitive frame of reference, "identity, world view, and spirituality... affect tolerance, fundamental psychological needs, deeply held beliefs about self and others, interpersonal relationships, internal imagery, and... physical presence in the world" (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995, p. 280).

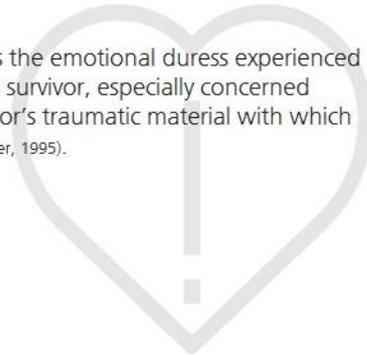


The term Vicarious Trauma was first coined by Pearlman and Saakvitne in 1995. Based on constructionist self-development theory, Vicarious Trauma is the permanent transformation in the inner experience of the therapist that comes about as a result of empathic engagement with clients' trauma material.

As Brené Brown discussed in the short video on Empathy and Sympathy, "empathy fuels connections, sympathy drives disconnection." As helping professionals, we work to "connect" with others using empathy. And as Brené Brown said, "in order to connect with you, I have to connect with something in myself that knows that feeling." When we hear about trauma that our clients have experienced, a part of us connects to that feeling, leaving us vulnerable to the effects of trauma, or vulnerable to Vicarious Trauma.

Secondary Traumatic Stress

Figley (1983) first defined secondary trauma as the emotional duress experienced by persons having close contact with a trauma survivor, especially concerned family members, a natural response to a survivor's traumatic material with which helpers may identify and empathize (Figley & Kleber, 1995).



The term Secondary Trauma was coined by Figley in 1983 and was first defined as the emotional duress experienced by persons having close contact with a trauma survivor, especially concerned family members, a natural response to a survivor's traumatic material with which helpers may identify and empathize. Secondary Trauma Symptoms mimic PTSD symptoms but may result in Secondary Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Theme 3 **Warning Signs of Vicarious Trauma**

Vicarious Trauma is associated with disruptions to schema in five areas:

1. Safety
2. Trust
3. Esteem
4. Intimacy
5. Control

Each representing a psychological need.
Each need/schema is experienced in relation to self and other.

In other words, we all have the need to believe the world is safe – that we are relatively safe from harm by ourselves and by others (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995).



Vicarious Trauma impacts the internal experience of the provider. It brings up disruptions related to safety, trust, esteem, intimacy, and control. Each of these represents a psychological need and each need is experienced in relation to self and others. Vicarious Trauma provokes a deep seated questioning of how safe we are in the world in relation to ourselves and others.

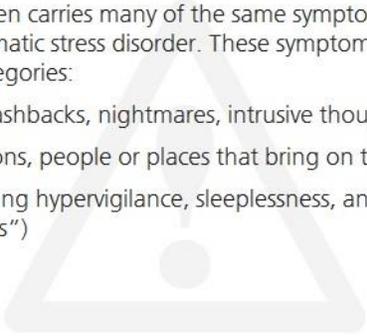
Theme 3 **Warning Signs of Vicarious Trauma**

Vicarious trauma often carries many of the same symptoms as first-hand trauma or post-traumatic stress disorder. These symptoms are usually grouped into three broad categories:

Intrusions, such as flashbacks, nightmares, intrusive thoughts

Avoidance of situations, people or places that bring on the intrusions

Hyperarousal, including hypervigilance, sleeplessness, and increased startle response (“jumpiness”)



The outward expression of this questioning creates the symptoms we can identify which look very similar to PTSD symptoms. They can be grouped into three broad categories. Intrusions, which include flashbacks, nightmares, and intrusive thoughts. Avoidance of situations, people or places that bring on the intrusions. And Hyperarousal, which includes hypervigilance, sleeplessness, and increased startle response or jumpiness. We can further identify symptoms that can be grouped together as Behavioral, Physical, Cognitive, Emotional, and Social.

Theme 3

Warning Signs of Vicarious Trauma

Behavioral symptoms:

- Sleep disturbances
- Nightmares
- Appetite changes
- Hypervigilance
- Exaggerated startle response, “jumpiness”
- Losing things
- Clumsiness
- Self-harm behaviors
- Negative coping – smoking, drinking, acting out



If you are experiencing Vicarious Trauma, you may notice a number of these behavioral symptoms: sleep disturbances, nightmares, appetite changes, hypervigilance, exaggerated startle response or jumpiness, losing things, clumsiness, self-harming behaviors or negative coping such as smoking, drinking or acting out.

Warning Signs of Vicarious Trauma

Physical symptoms

- Panic symptoms: sweating, rapid heartbeat, difficulty breathing, dizziness
- Aches and pains
- Weakened immune system



You may also notice some physical symptoms similar to panic symptoms: sweating, rapid heartbeat, difficulty breathing or dizziness. Additional warning signs can include aches and pains or a weakened immune system.

Warning Signs of Vicarious Trauma

Cognitive symptoms:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimization of your vicarious trauma • Lowered self-esteem and increased self-doubt • Trouble concentrating • Confusion/disorientation • Perfectionism | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Racing thoughts • Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities • Repetitive images of the trauma • Thoughts of harming yourself or others • Lack of meaning in life |
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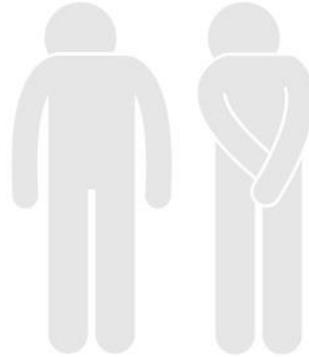


Vicarious trauma can also impact us cognitively. Individuals may minimize their vicarious trauma. They may also experience lowered self-esteem and increased self-doubt. They may experience trouble concentrating or confusion and disorientation. Additional warning signs can include perfectionism, racing thoughts, loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities, repetitive images of trauma, thoughts of harming yourself or others. Lastly, individuals may feel like they lack meaning in their life.

Warning Signs of Vicarious Trauma

Emotional symptoms:

- Helplessness and powerlessness
- Survivor guilt
- Numbness
- Oversensitivity
- Emotional unpredictability
- Fear
- Anxiety
- Sadness and/or depression



Emotional symptoms of Vicarious Trauma can include helplessness and powerlessness, survivor guilt, numbness, oversensitivity, emotional unpredictability, fear, anxiety, sadness and/or depression.

Warning Signs of Vicarious Trauma

Social symptoms:

- Withdrawal and isolation
- Loneliness
- Irritability and intolerance
- Distrust
- Projection of blame and rage
- Decreased interest in intimacy
- Change in parenting style (e.g., becoming overprotective)



Additional warning signs can include social symptoms such as withdrawal and isolation, loneliness, irritability and intolerance, distrust, projection of blame and rage, decreased interest in intimacy, or a change in parenting style. These social symptoms begin to reflect the change in worldview that people experience as a result of the internal changes that occur with vicarious trauma.

Warning Signs of Vicarious Trauma

Symptoms of exhaustion, hypervigilance, avoidance, and numbing often experienced by professionals working with, and family members of, people with PTSD:

- 
- A large, light gray warning sign icon with a white exclamation mark in the center, positioned behind the list of symptoms.
- Hopelessness
 - Inability to embrace complexity
 - Avoidance of clients
 - Sleeplessness
 - Chronic exhaustion
 - Minimizing
 - Inability to listen
 - Anger and cynicism
 - Fear
 - Physical ailment
 - Guilt

Professionals and family members of individuals experiencing PTSD may experience symptoms of exhaustion, hypervigilance, avoidance and numbing related to Secondary Traumatic Stress. Additional symptoms that Helping Professionals may experience include: hopelessness, inability to embrace complexity, inability to listen, avoidance of clients, anger and cynicism, sleeplessness, fear, chronic exhaustion, physical ailments, minimizing, and guilt.

Warning Signs of Vicarious Trauma



- Monitor yourself
- Take care of yourself
- Take time for yourself
- Separate yourself
- Limit yourself
- Help yourself
- Be honest with yourself
- Empower yourself
- Renew yourself

Many of the strategies we've already discussed for Compassion Fatigue and Burnout can also be effective in combating Vicarious Trauma. Self awareness is important and there are various tools you can use to monitor yourself. You may be able to identify specific symptoms that you experience and develop strategies to monitor them and intervene early. It's also important to take care of yourself on a daily basis. Take time each day for yourself. The Helping Professions by nature include a lot of interactions with others. You

may find it helpful to separate yourself periodically. It's also okay to set limits for yourself. We spend so much time helping others that it's important to also take time to help ourselves. Be honest with yourself. Find ways to empower yourself and renew yourself.

Theme 3

Strategies for Secondary Traumatic Stress

Prevention Strategies:

- Psychoeducation
- Ongoing skills training
- Clinical supervision
- Informal/formal self-report screening
- Workplace self-care groups (for example, yoga or meditation)
- Creation of a balanced caseload
- Flextime scheduling
- Self-care accountability buddy system
- Use of evidence-based practices
- Exercise and good nutrition



There are a variety of strategies you can utilize to prevent Secondary Traumatic Stress. You are participating in psychoeducation right now as well, as ongoing skills training. You can seek out clinical supervision and utilize informal or formal self-report screening. You can participate in workplace self care groups like yoga or meditation. You can work with your organization to create and maintain a balanced caseload or explore flextime scheduling. Work with your colleagues to create a self care accountability buddy system. Utilize the evidence-based practices you have to assist in your work with clients. And don't forget to work on maintaining regular exercise and good nutrition.

Intervention Strategies:

- Strategies to evaluate secondary stress
- Cognitive behavioral interventions
- Mindfulness training
- Reflective supervision
- Caseload adjustment
- Informal gatherings following crisis events (to allow for voluntary, spontaneous discussions)
- Change in job assignment or work group
- Referrals to Employee Assistance Programs or outside agencies



In addition to the prevention strategies we've just covered, there are a variety of intervention strategies that you can utilize if you are experiencing Secondary Traumatic Stress. If you are wondering if you're experiencing Secondary Traumatic Stress, you can utilize a variety of tools to evaluate yourself. Research suggests that cognitive behavioral interventions and mindfulness training can be very effective in addressing Secondary Traumatic Stress. Reflective supervision and caseload adjustment can also be very helpful. Informal gatherings following crisis events can allow for voluntary, spontaneous discussions to debrief after those events. Some individuals find that they need a change in job assignment or work group or referral to Employee Assistance Programs or outside agencies.

Theme 4: Personal Self-Care



Now, let's take a few moments to talk about personal self care.

Theme
4

Personal Self-Care

Drowning in Empathy: The Cost of
Vicarious Trauma | Amy
Cunningham:
[https://www.youtube.com/watch
?v=Zsaorjlo1Yc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zsaorjlo1Yc)
[Self care checklist](#)

*be good to
yourself*

Please take a few minutes to listen to Amy Cunningham as she talks about the Cost of Vicarious Trauma.

As helping professionals, it's imperative that we cultivate our own self care practices. If you haven't been putting your own oxygen mask on first, it's time to start focusing on you. Take Amy's homework challenge and find 10 minutes every day to incorporate some of the self care strategies we're about to explore. You can utilize the Self Care Checklist to identify where you are strong in self care and areas where you might want to increase self care activities.

Theme
4

Physical Self-Care

- Healthy Eating
- Exercise
- Sleep
- Mindfulness/Meditation
- Medical Care



There is a variety of ways that you can focus on your physical health. Healthy eating, exercise and sleep help maintain a good foundation for effective self care. Under stress, you may notice that you're eating more junk food or not working out regularly. You may also notice that you have disrupted sleep, difficulty falling asleep or difficulty staying

asleep. Engaging in mindfulness or meditation practices can help balance stress. Keeping up with your own medical care is also helpful! Have you engaged in any Physical Self Care activities today?

Theme 4 **Emotional Self-Care**



- Set limits
- Maintain your boundaries
- Make time for you
- Don't be a sponge
- Take time off
- Talk to someone

Our ability to empathize with the individuals we work with leaves us open to emotional vulnerabilities. Caring for ourselves emotionally is a key component of self care. We may need to set limits, maintain boundaries and make time for ourselves. It's okay to turn off and protect yourself. You don't need to be a sponge all the time. You can take time off when you need it. Find ways to talk to others, spend time with your friends, partner, or other people you're close to.

Theme 4 **Psychological Self-Care**

- Support group/therapy
- Self reflection/self assessment
- Reduce stress
- Set boundaries



While it's important to take care of our bodies, it's equally important to take care of our minds. We encourage others to participate in support groups and therapy because we understand the benefits of these practices. We can also benefit from participating in our own support groups or therapy. If you completed the Self Care Checklist, you are already participating in self-reflection or self-assessment.

Make this a regular part of your own self care and you will be able to adjust your self care strategies based on your current needs. Do you look for ways to reduce stress in your life? This is often a difficult task, as it may feel like there is nothing you can take off your plate.

However, upon closer inspection you may find ways to reduce stress by asking for help, eliminating additional stressors or utilizing supports. Another area where you can support psychological self care is by setting boundaries. It's okay to say no, or I'm not able to do that today or I'm not sure if I can do that, can I get back to you?

Theme
4

Spiritual Self-Care

- Meditating
- Lighting a candle
- Keeping a journal
- Spending time in nature
- Solitude



The effects of Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, Vicarious Trauma, and Secondary Traumatic Stress all weigh heavy on our hearts and souls. Spiritual self-care is crucial in reversing the effects of these experiences. We need to cultivate our spirits. There is a variety of ways to do this and you may find that there are things you are already doing that boost your spirit.

Do you meditate or pray? Sometimes lighting a candle and watching the flames dance can be a positive experience. Many people find journaling a useful tool or a gratitude list to focus on positives. Can you find ways to spend time in nature? Even a brief walk outside can boost your mood. Take time to notice nature's little miracles, or "smell the roses." We spend a large percentage of our time with others, and it can be helpful to spend some time in solitude as well. Can you find ways to spend time with yourself?

Seeking Solitude

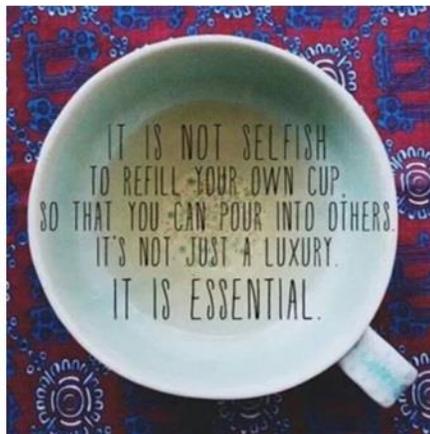
How can you experience more solitude in your life?

- When at home, check twitter/email etc. for only 5 minutes every hour.
- Find times to turn off your cell phone
- Go to a park/beach etc and read
- Have a slow/meaningful conversation with someone
- Exercise outdoors vs indoors in a gym
- Turn off the radio/TV/phone/computer



If you have a hard time thinking of ways to experience more solitude, here are some ideas you can try: when you're at home, check Twitter, email, et cetera for only 5 minutes every hour; find time to turn off your cell phone; go to a beach or park and read; have a slow, meaningful conversation with someone; exercise outdoors versus indoors in a gym; and turn off the radio, TV, phone, or computer.

Theme 5: Agency Self-Care



Now, let's take a look at agency and organizational factors that play a role in self-care.

Organizational symptoms of Compassion Fatigue include:

- High absenteeism
- Constant changes in co-workers relationships
- Inability for teams to work well together
- Desire among staff members to break company rules
- Outbreaks of aggressive behaviors among staff
- Inability of staff to complete assignments and tasks
- Inability of staff to respect and meet deadlines
- Lack of flexibility among staff members
- Negativism towards management
- Strong reluctance toward change
- Inability of staff to believe improvement is possible
- Lack of a vision for the future

We all need to work on our individual self care strategies, but it's also important to understand symptoms in our agencies and cultivate practices to combat them on an organizational level. We've already discussed some of the symptoms and strategies for improved agency self care.

Here is a pretty comprehensive list of the organizational symptoms of Compassion Fatigue. How many of them do you notice in your workplace?

High absenteeism; constant changes in co-workers' relationships; inability for teams to work well together; desire among staff members to break company rules; outbreaks of aggressive behaviors among staff; inability of staff to complete assignments and tasks; inability of staff to respect and meet deadlines; lack of flexibility among staff members; negativism towards management; strong reluctance towards change; inability of staff to believe improvement is possible; and a lack of vision for the future.

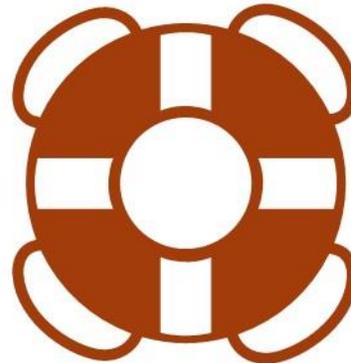
There are some agencies where this has become the culture. It is the "normal." We can work together towards changing this and cultivating a new "normal."



- Trauma-Informed
- Culture of compassion
- Training

Many agencies are focusing on becoming trauma informed. This focus not only helps create safe places for the individuals and families we work with, but also for the staff. By becoming more trauma informed, agencies may become more aware of the effects of trauma on staff. Creating a culture of compassion for clients and staff becomes an organizational goal. There are many resources out there for organizations wishing to become more trauma informed. Is your agency trauma informed? Have you noticed a difference for staff?

- Self Care groups
- Scheduled time available for self care
- Supervision
- Supervisors group
- Staff Meetings – Celebrate Successes
- Acknowledging each other
- Healthy Venting
- Share Inspirations
- Client Memorials
- Celebrations



Agencies can also create internal systems to provide support to staff. Some organizations have added self care groups for their staff, where they have opportunities to practice yoga, meditation or mindfulness, or other experiential activities. Perhaps your agency has implemented policies that encourage staff to take time off for self care or to utilize mental health days.

Supervision can be another place where staff can receive support and supervisors themselves may meet in a group to support each other. Another way agencies can offer support is through creating a supportive culture in staff meetings. You can start each

meeting with a success you celebrate or an acknowledgement to each other of successes. Having an opportunity for healthy venting can be helpful as well.

Staff can share inspirations, quotes, positive experiences, and celebrate successes. It can also be helpful to have a process for client memorials, allowing staff an opportunity to reflect, get support, and grieve losses. Being kind and compassionate with each other helps offset the effects of trauma.

Theme 5 **Supervision**



- Individual Supervision
- Group Supervision (peer-led)
- Training regarding:
 - Compassion Fatigue
 - Burnout
 - Vicarious Trauma
 - Secondary Traumatic Stress
- Ongoing Professional Development
- Empowerment and Resiliency

Individual supervision can give staff a place to discuss concerns they have about Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Traumatic Stress, as well as individual strategies for managing the effects. It's also helpful to be part of Group Supervision, where you have an opportunity to hear from your peers and recognize that you are not the only one experiencing these issues.

Ongoing training and conversations about Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Traumatic Stress can also help. Ongoing professional development can help staff remain energized and invested in their work. A strengths-based approach to supervision where staff are empowered and resiliency is recognized and supported can offer protective measures against these issues as well.

- Recognizing Success
- Honoring each other and organizations
- Finding meaning



Helping professionals spend a lot of time supporting people during the most difficult times of their lives. We see the pain and suffering that people experience and our ability to empathize with them brings some of that pain and suffering into our own lives. We work at carrying a message of hope to our clients and we need to start with cultivating that message of hope for ourselves. Finding ways to recognize success, celebrate progress and support each other helps carry that hope.

Agencies can also find ways to recognize staff internally and honor external organizations and the work they do to support clients. As we continue to support others, we can look for meaning and continue sharing the message of hope.

Module Review

1. Participants will be able to identify challenges helping professionals experience related to self care.
2. Participants will be able to recognize general and personal warning signs and symptoms of Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Traumatic Stress.
3. Participants will develop a plan for individual self care and be able to identify ways their agencies can support self care for all.



All resources and references are located in the Resources tab of this presentation.

We've discussed challenges that Helping Professionals experience related to self care.

The very nature of our work leaves us open to the effects of trauma and makes self care even more critical to our own well being and our ability to support clients.

We've defined Compassion Fatigue, Burnout, Vicarious Trauma and Secondary Traumatic Stress, and identified warning signs for each of them at individual and organizational levels. We've also discussed strategies to manage the effects at the individual and organizational level.

Participants have had an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences and identify ways they can "put their oxygen mask on first." Finally, we've discussed ways organizations can support self care and cultivate a supportive culture. As helpers, we want to be able to continue giving to our clients. To do so, we have to take care of our own resources to avoid ending up like the Giving Tree with nothing left to give. We need to continue to plant our own forests so we can support others on their own path to self care.