Taking “Care for the Caregiver” To the Next Level

Douglas W. Walker, PhD
Clinical Director – Mercy Family Center
New Orleans

Mercy

NCTSN
The National Child Traumatic Stress Network
Objectives

• Participants will be able to define the subtle difference among “Helping-Induced Trauma” types.
• Participants will be provided resources to measure and evaluate Compassion Fatigue in themselves and their organizations.
• Participants will be able to identify organizational factors that can reduce the risk of vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue and burnout.
• Participants will be able identify for themselves ways in which to build resiliency to protect themselves from work induced stress and trauma.
Secondary Traumatic Stress

Compassion Fatigue

Therapist Burnout

Vicarious Trauma
Secondary Traumatic Stress

AKA

Therapist Burnout

Compassion Fatigue

Vicarious Trauma
Secondary Traumatic Stress
Compassion Fatigue

“The naturally occurring behaviors and emotions resulting from knowledge about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other. It is the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person”

(Charles Figley, 1995)

“There is a cost to caring”
Secondary Traumatic Stress

Therapist Burnout

Compassion Fatigue

Vicarious Trauma
Therapist Burnout

“A state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion caused by long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations”
(Pines & Aronson, 1988)
Secondary Traumatic Stress

Compassion Fatigue

Therapist Burnout

Vicarious Trauma
Vicarious Trauma

Vicarious trauma has been defined as “the transformation that occurs in the inner experience of the therapist [or worker] that comes about as a result of empathic engagement with clients’ trauma material” (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995).
Symptoms Associated with Work-Induced Stress Caused by Working with Trauma Survivors

- Intrusive imagery of the client’s traumatic material
- Numbing or avoidance
- Distressing emotions
- Increased arousal
- Somatic complaints
- Impairment of functioning in social, family or professional roles
- Increased use of alcohol or drugs
Vocabulary

- Compassion Satisfaction
  - Positive aspects of working as a helper
- Compassion Fatigue
  - Negative aspects of working as a helper
- Burnout
  - Inefficacy and feeling overwhelmed
- Work-related traumatic stress
  - Primary traumatic stress direct target of event
  - Secondary traumatic exposure to event due to a relationship with the primary person
Professional Quality of Life

Compassion Satisfaction
• The positive aspects of helping
• “The good stuff”

Compassion Fatigue
• The negative aspects of helping
• “The bad stuff”
ProQOL.org

- ProQOL Website
CS-CF Model

Professional Quality of Life

- Compassion Satisfaction
- Compassion Fatigue
  - Burnout
  - Secondary Trauma
Compassion Satisfaction

- The positive aspects of helping
  - Pleasure and satisfaction derived from working in helping, care giving systems
- May be related to
  - Providing care
  - To the system
  - Work with colleagues
  - Beliefs about self
  - Altruism
Compassion Fatigue

- The negative aspects of helping
- The negative aspects of working in helping systems may be related to
  - Providing care
  - To the system
  - Work with colleagues
  - Beliefs about self
- Burnout
- Work-related trauma
Burnout and STS: Co Travelers

- **Burnout**
  - Work-related hopelessness and feelings of inefficacy
- **STS**
  - Work-related secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events
- **Both share negative affect**
  - Burnout is about being worn out
  - STS is about being afraid

© Beth Hudnall Stamm, 2009. Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL).
www.proqol.org. This test may be freely copied as long as (a) author is credited, (b) no changes are made without author authorization, and (c) it is not sold.
Relationships Are Complex

- Multiple spheres
  - Work environment
  - “People helped” environment
  - Personal environment

- Positive (CS) & negative (CF)

- Altruism CS can override CF

- Compassion Fatigue two parts
  - Worn out (BO) common
  - Frightened, traumatized (STS) rarer but powerful
Complex Relationships

Professional Quality of Life

- Work Environment
- Client Environment
- Personal Environment

Compassion Satisfaction (ProQOL CS)

Compassion Fatigue

- Exhaustion
- Frustration Anger

Depressed by Work Environment (ProQOL Burnout)

Traumatized by work

Secondary Exposure (ProQOL STS)

Primary Exposure
Measuring CS & CF: The *Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)*

- The ProQOL is free
- A 30 item self-report measure of the positive and negative aspects of caring
- The ProQOL measures Compassion Satisfaction and Compassion Fatigue
- Compassion Fatigue has two subscales
  - Burnout
  - Secondary Trauma
Well Established

• The ProQOL is the most widely used measure of the positive and negative aspects of helping in the world
• The ProQOL has proven to be a valid measure of compassion satisfaction and fatigue
• It has been used for over 15 years
• The measure was developed with data from over 3000 people
Easy to Use

- The ProQOL is easy to use
- It can be given individually or in groups
- It can be given online or at an individual computer
Easy to Score

• Full scoring
  – More detailed and specific information but takes longer
  – Better for research or administration

• The simplified scoring
  – Less specific but can be completed quickly and can be intuitively understood
  – Good for training situations
Not a Medical Test

- Helps understand the positive and negative aspects of helping
- Not a “psychological test”
- Not a “medical test”
- Can be viewed as a screening for stress-related health problems
People Bring Themselves

- Suicide Prevention workers include people with all types of education, training and income
- Some workers bring with them histories of difficult lives that may include trauma
- Some people have difficult family, economic, or other personal situations
People Bring Themselves

- People bring a past and a present to anything they do
  - Their schemas and beliefs
  - Their stigma beliefs
  - Their social support systems
    - Positive support
    - Negative support
  - Their history of trauma and illness
  - Their families and close others
  - Their economic situation
Interpreting Scores

• Scores on individual scales tell us about a person’s responses on each of the constructs
• Viewing the combination of scores helps us “paint a picture” of what the person is telling us
• Can be used to track an individual’s CS and CF
Resiliency Planning

• Individual, personally
  – The ProQOL can help you plan where to put your energy to increase our resilience

• Organizational planning
  – Can help organizations find ways to maximize the positive aspects and reduce the negative aspects of helping

• Supportive Supervision
  – The ProQOL can be used as information for discussions
Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

• Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

• Manual / Scoring Online Download Manual
Organizational Factors Impacting Vicarious Trauma in the Workplace

• Workload
• Education
• Organizational Culture
• Group Support
• Work Environment
• Supervision
• Resources for Self-Care
For More Information:

WWW.PROQOL.ORG
“Care for the Caregiver 101”
Coping with Stress

- Exercise 30 minutes daily
- Eat 5 Fruits & Vegetables daily
- Embrace an Optimistic Outlook
- Give and Receive Affection
- Organize your time effectively
- Cultivate Friendships
- Get 7-8 hours of sleep
- Live according to your Values
- Take Quiet Time
- Find balance in your life

NCTSN The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

Work/Life Connections-EAP
Beyond “Care for the Caregiver 101”

Organizational Structure and Culture

How we think about our moment-to-moment experience
Organizational Factors Impacting Vicarious Trauma in the Workplace

• Workload
• Education
• Organizational Culture
• Group Support
• Work Environment
• Supervision
• Resources for Self-Care
Workload

A more diverse caseload lessens the chance of vicarious trauma.

Education

Trauma-specific education also diminishes the potential of vicarious trauma. Information can help individuals to name their experience and provide a framework for understanding and responding to it.

Organizational Culture

The values and culture of an organization set the expectations about the work. When the work includes contact with trauma, they also set the expectations about how workers will experience trauma and deal with it, both professionally and personally.
Group Support

Both the burnout literature and the writings about vicarious trauma emphasize the importance of social support within the organization. Informal opportunities for staff to debrief and process traumatic material with supervisors and peers is helpful.

Work Environment

A safe, comfortable, and private work environment is crucial for those social workers in settings that may expose them to violence. Work sites, such as shelters or agencies located in high crime neighborhoods, may be so dangerous that workers may experience primary trauma, rather than vicarious trauma.
Supervision

Effective supervision (group or individual) is an essential component of the prevention and healing of vicarious trauma. Meaningful and consistent supervision creates a relationship in which the social worker feels safe in expressing fears, concerns, and inadequacies.

Resources for Self-Care

Agencies can make counseling resources available for all staff that interact with traumatic material. If there are many employees encountering the same type of trauma in the agency or within the larger community, agencies may consider the bringing outside resources to their organization. This is especially important if the agency as a whole has responded to an extraordinary traumatic event in their community.
Lessons from the Cognitive Triangle

- Stress or Trauma
- What we think
- What we do
- How we feel
We refuse to be present because we are seduced, entrained, mesmerized, or frightened into the future and the past...”” (Kabat-Zinn)

We have made our focus on the future and the past such a daily habit that we have no awareness of our present moment at all.
Being present only in this moment offers a safe haven in our minds to restore ourselves.

To just “BE” gives us permission to ignore the seduction of sifting through past failures or somehow changing what will happen for us with worry and fret.
“Nothing is to be clung to as I, me, or mine”

-Buddha
Pilot Programming in New Orleans February 6 & 7

• Compassion Fatigue Pilot.docx
douglas.walker@mercy.net