

# Helen Bader School of Social Welfare

*Improving lives and strengthening communities  
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- Criminal Justice
- Social Work



# Childhood Trauma and Effective Trauma Care: Part II

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# Agenda

- Explore trauma-responsive services in depth
- Discuss role of social workers in delivering trauma-related services in schools
- Examine vicarious trauma, the cost of caring for trauma-affected students
- Q & A

# Trauma Sensitive

- Trauma Learning and Policy Initiative
- Trauma sensitive schools:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vyQdOLI6d2c>

# Themes

- Trauma is prevalent
- Trauma can undermine learning & development
- Trauma affects regulation and relationships
- Safety is the guiding principle
- Safety is promoted thru family, belonging, compassion, support
- Socioemotional learning is critical for all learning
- Special staff, administrators, teachers all coordinated
- Teachers can ask for help/Consultation is normative
- Assessment is ongoing, and more than academic domains
- Any child can learn and transcend their situation
- Boston accents are awesome!

# What's missing?

- Trigger management
  - Avoid unnecessary triggers
  - Manage necessary triggers
  
- Trauma-Informed Approaches

# Trauma-Informed

- Psychoeducation (Paper Tigers)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdDr\\_nZOIXc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KdDr_nZOIXc)
- Proactive emotion regulation (mindfulness)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cJzcdeEaOBA>
- Reactive emotion regulation (Collaborative Treatment of Traumatized Children & Teens)
- Assessment
  - Exposure
  - (Symptoms: Briere with TSCL @ johnbriere.com)
- Referral
- Family systems

# Trauma-Focused

- Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Trauma in Schools or CBITS (<https://cbitsprogram.org/>  
start at 9:10 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yN3aPdLSdio>)
- Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavioral Therapy or TF-CBT (PRACTICE; <https://tfcbt.musc.edu/>)
- Expressive Therapies for Traumatized Children
- Trauma-Informed Family Systems Treatment



# School Social Workers

# How best to support classroom teachers?

- Teacher and student psychoeducation
- Pull out
- Reactive and proactive ER (TST)
- Family systems work
- Assessment; consultation; referral
- Others?

# Obstacles

- Strict behavioral interpretation of disruption
- Workload
- Time and resources involved in TS training
- Referral networks in the area
- Family resistance to school intervention
- Ongoing trauma in the lives of children
- Others?

# Vicarious Trauma

# Vicarious Traumatization

Definition: “**transformation** in the **inner experience** of the (practitioner) that comes about as a result of **empathic engagement** with **client’s trauma material...**”

- Negative transformation of helper based on exposure:
  - Explicit or implicit trauma material
  - Either Type I or II, but appears more so for II
- One develops own trauma symptoms (Primary & Secondary)
- **Burnout:** A state of chronic stress that leads to (a) Emotional exhaustion, (b) Depersonalization, & (c) Feelings of ineffectiveness or diminished accomplishment

# Symptoms & Consequences of VT

Primary Sx's of VT (Often referred to as Secondary Traumatic Stress)

- re-experiencing
- avoidance
- negative mood cognition and mood
- Hyperarousal

Secondary Symptoms of VT (Often thought of as VT proper)

- Disturbance in cognitive schemas or negative accommodations
- Disturbances of mental health/mood: depression, anxiety, etc.
- Relationship maladaptations: cutoff or merge
- Alterations in meaning-making: existential crises
- Poor judgment

# Inevitability of VT

- Some aspects of VT inevitable
- Vicarious post-traumatic growth
- How does one promote VPTG?

# Contributing Factors VT: Personal

- Trauma history
  - If acknowledged can enhance empathy,
  - Otherwise can increase likelihood of VT
- Avoidance: avoiding students in need or students' pain
- Young in the field (takes time to develop new schemas)
- Feeling overly responsible for student's growth
- No time or support to reflect on student's problem with another



# Contributing Factors to VT: Student

- Diminished self-capacities
  - Intense affect
  - Dissociation
  - Aggression
- Re-enactment
- Intense traumatic histories recounted

# Contributing Factors: Sociocultural

- High student need coupled w/limited school resources
- Nearly all students are trauma affected
- Limited professional development opportunities
- Limited coordination across school personnel

# What helps? Institutional

- Supervision/consultation:
  - Instrumental support
  - Affective support
  - Case conferencing
- Policy:
  - School-wide coordination
  - Trauma-sensitive and trauma-informed practices (EI or EB)
  - Opportunity to work with clients long enough to see growth
  - Professional development

# What helps? Individual

## Conceptual:

- Develop a theoretical base to guide work
- Take time to conceptualize student cases
- Professional support and specialized training

# What helps: Individual

## Attitudinal:

- Accept inevitability of VT (transformative)
- Recognize VT and VPTG can coincide
- Eudaimonic well-being model versus hedonic happiness model
- Accept limitations of services
- Focus on process as much as possible vs. outcomes

# What helps? Individual

Exquisite empathy: empathy with compassion

- Ability to attune with student
- Marshal warmth and support
- Differentiate from student
- Trust student's resilience
- Sometimes referred to as rational compassion

# What helps? Individual

## Other personal practices:

- Develop different professional roles if possible
- Individual counseling support
- Meaningful social network outside work
- Active spirituality (fellowship, meaning, rejuvenative practices)
- Mindful practice (outside work)
- Embrace complexity
- Active optimism
- Holistic self-care (physical, emotional, mental, aesthetic)
- Making meaning

Questions?



# Thank you

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