

## Vicarious Trauma

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## Agenda

- Setting the stage with both the room and context
- Shared language
- Symptoms
- Dealing with Client death
- Self care strategies
- Tips for supervisors



## Client Trauma

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) suggest 2/3 of the population has at least one adverse experience
- ACES score increases drastically when sexual orientation, gender, ethnicity and socioeconomic status are factored in
- ACES scores are associated with both psychological and medical conditions
- Trauma Symptoms are adaptive and protect them from subsequent abuse



Bloom and Farragher, 2011

## Staff Trauma

- All of us hire from the general population, thus many of us have experienced our own ACES
- Staff can be triggered by our clients and our clients' stories
- Secondary Traumatization or Compassion Fatigue
- Countertransference and the stress of our work can hinder our ability to be present with clients



Bloom and Farragher, 2011

## Organizational Trauma

- Organizations are not machines and can also be traumatized
- Reflect on how your work environment has impacted your stress during the past 6 months
- Work stress decreases innovation, creativity, morale and professional development
- It also can influence how present we are with our clients



Bloom and Farragher, 2011

## 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



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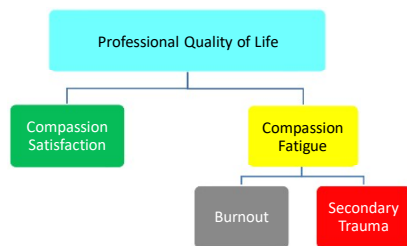
## Ted Talk Video Clips



## Ted Talk Video Clips



## CS-CF Model



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## Symptoms of Vicarious Trauma

- Decreased sleep
- Nightmares about clients or of their trauma
- Hopelessness about client's ability to heal
- Fear of not doing enough

American Counseling Association Fact Sheet #9



## Symptoms of Vicarious Trauma

- Distorted World View
- Anhedonia
- Decrease Job Satisfaction
- Decreased Sense of Accomplishment
- Increase or decrease in eating
- Use of negative coping skills

American Counseling Association Fact Sheet #9



## Behaviors associated with Vicarious Trauma

- Increased irritability
- Staff conflict
- Difficulty having relationships
- Frequently being late and/or missing work
- Avoiding client work
- Excessive work hours
- Learned helplessness



## Learned Helpless Example

- <https://youtu.be/47rQkTPWW2I>



## 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



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## 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



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## 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



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## PROQOL

- Please take some time to take the Professional Quality of Life Scale



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## 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



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## Clinical Examples

- Vicarious Trauma related to worldview
- VA Desensitization



## Countertransference

- Three different types of countertransference
- Are you peers responding in a similar fashion
- Critical to know your baseline and monitor departure
- Examples of Countertransference



## Burnout

- A story about my first experience with Burnout



## Losing Clients

- Sharing my first lost client
- Second guessing and point of diminished returns
- Countertransference
- Seek support
- Death is a sticky thing



## Management Response to Client Death

- Create a menu of options for your colleague that has lost a client
- Offer safe space to process
- Disclose you own experiences or fears with losing clients
- Supervisors can assist with both the hard and soft side of loss



## Permission to care for yourself

- Self-care can feel selfish, but critical to wellness
- Reverse Golden Rule
- Must care for yourself to continue to care for others
- Holistic self-care and facets of self



## Discussion

- Take a few minutes to discuss self-care strategies with those around you



## Self-Care Strategies for Individuals

- You plate at Thanksgiving
- Delegate and ask for help
- Transition plan home
- Have you team develop self-care strategies



F. Mathieu, National Council for Behavioral Health

## Self-Care Strategies for Individuals

- Learn to say no and unpack the compliment
- Limit exposure to trauma outside of work
- Exercise
- Develop your plan and know your warning signs
- Develop your code



F. Mathieu, National Council for Behavioral Health

## Self-Care Strategies for Managers

- Encourage employees to develop their own self-care plan
- Encourage staff to have a support group or consultation time
- Allow staff to take small breaks as needed
- Develop huddles
- Conduct regular check-ins with staff
- Acknowledge success and accomplishment
- Model your own self-care techniques



F. Mathieu, National Council for Behavioral Health

## Creating a Culture of Self-Care

- Discuss during team meetings
- Wellness Committee
- FISH Committee



## Creating A Culture of Self-Care: Bounce Back Project

- <https://youtu.be/RB-4DYJbjd8>
- 3 Good Things
- Gratitude Letters or Gratitude Wall
- Random Acts of Kindness



<http://www.bouncebackproject.org/>