



Vicarious Trauma

The Cost of Caring



Partnering to build brighter futures

SELF-CARE CHECK-IN

HOW ARE YOU
FEELING?

WHAT ARE
YOUR NEEDS
TODAY?

WHAT ARE YOU
GRATEFUL FOR?

TAKE 1 MIN TO
BREATHE AND
GROUND
YOURSELF

WHAT DO
YOU WANT TO
ACCOMPLISH TODAY?

Step out
and take a
break

Engage your
senses

Stand up;
stretch

Debrief –
who can
you talk to?

Mindful Meditation Minute



BE PRESENT

I want you to let yourself be here, in this moment in time.





Objectives



Provide an overview of vicarious trauma and its impact.



Discuss the differences between various trauma types and terms to promote better understanding and identification to address vicarious trauma.



Contextualize concepts by examining systemic issues that can contribute to vicarious trauma and compassion fatigue.



Learn about ways to address vicarious trauma, including self-care and collective care strategies.

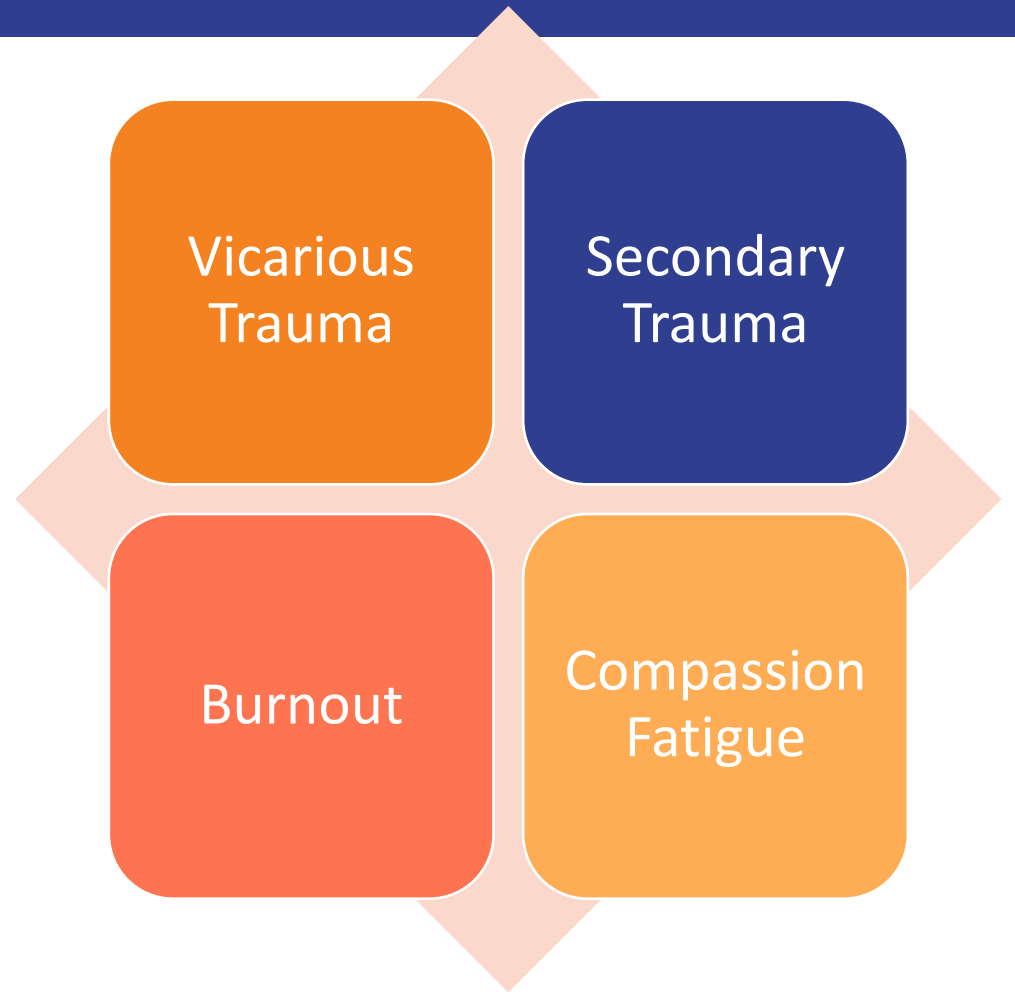
Vicarious Trauma

What is Vicarious Trauma?

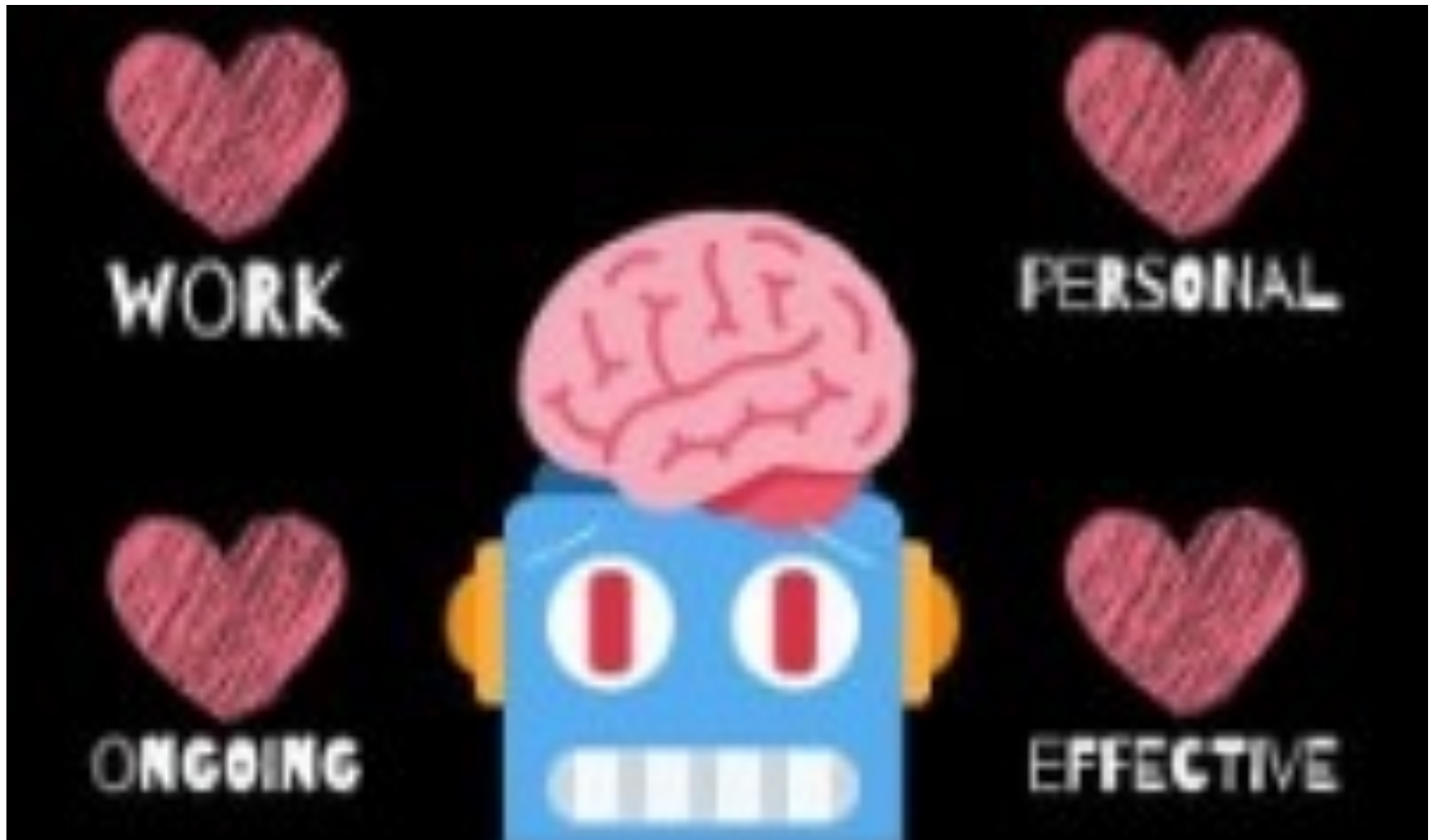
Vicarious Trauma refers to the ***cumulative*** effect of working with survivors of traumatic life events. Anyone who engages empathically with victims or survivors is vulnerable. (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995.)


- Includes:
 - Identity
 - Sense of Safety
 - Ability to Trust
 - Self-esteem
 - Intimacy
 - Sense of Control

The Caring Traumas

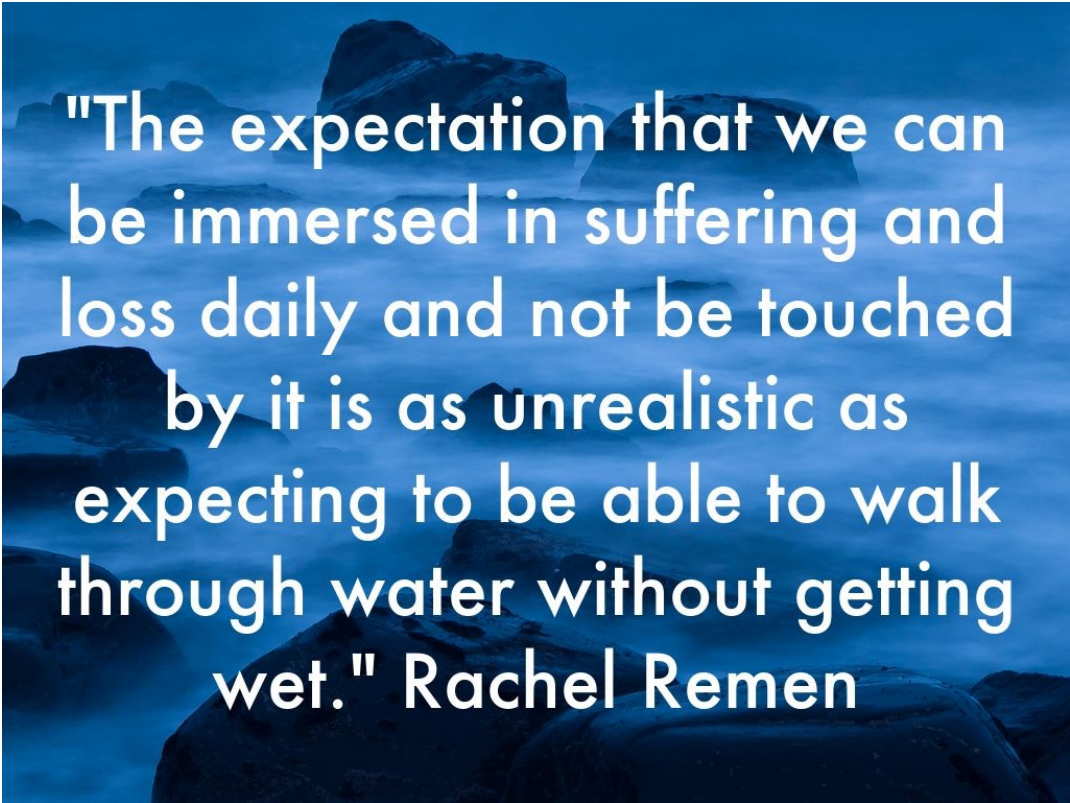


Vicarious Trauma Clip





Why Care
About
Vicarious
Trauma?



"The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet." Rachel Remen

Signs of Vicarious Trauma

Emotional	Behavioral	Physical	Spiritual	Cognitive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolonged grief. • Prolonged anxiety. • Prolonged sadness. • Irritability. • Labile mood. • Depression. • Agitation/anger. • Changed sense of humor. • Tuning out. • Feeling less safe in the world. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolation. • Avoidance. • Numbing. • Staying at work longer. • Not being able to separate work from personal life. • Increased alcohol consumption. • Undertaking risky behaviors. • Avoiding people or duties. • Difficulty sleeping. • Changed eating habits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headaches. • Hives or rashes. • Heartburn. • Migraines. • Stomach ulcers. • Tics. • Anxiety. • Hot Sweats. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed relationship with meaning and hope. • Lack of sense of purpose. • Decreased sense of agency. • Reduced sense of connection to others. • Challenged to maintain a sense of self as viable, worth loving, deserving. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cynicism. • Becoming judgmental of others. • Negativity. • Thinking about clients' traumas when at home/not at work. • Difficulty thinking clearly, concentrating, and remembering things. • Difficulty making day-to-day decisions.

From *Living Well*, Australian organization supporting male survivors of sexual assault



Factors that increase risk:

- Social isolation
- Longer tenure of work/years of exposure
- High number of direct contact hours
- Lack of diversity in caseload
- Lack of workplace supports
- Lack of supervision
- Organizational culture of “selflessness and sacrifice”





The Silencing Response

The Silencing Response refers to the helper's inability to attend to the stories/experiences of their clients by redirecting to material that is less distressing or uncomfortable (Baranowsky, 2002).



Signs Include:

Changing the subject

Providing pat answers

Being angry or sarcastic with clients

Using humor to change or minimize the subject

Blaming clients for their experiences

Faking listening

Not being able to pay attention

Being afraid of what is going to be said

Suggesting the person just "get over it"

Negative Responses to Exposure to VT

Burnout

When your body, mind, and soul slows down, and is often caused by overworking and high levels of prolonged stress. People suffering from burnout may experience physical or mental collapse and fatigue. (Transitional Support)

Compassion Fatigue

It refers to a physical, emotional and spiritual fatigue or exhaustion that takes over a person and causes a decline in his or her ability to experience joy or to feel and care for others (Alameda County Behavioral Health Care).

Secondary Traumatization

The emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand trauma experiences of another (The National Child Traumatic Stress Network)

Vicarious Trauma

Refers to the cumulative effect of working with survivors of traumatic life events. Anyone who engages empathically with victims or survivors is vulnerable. (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995.)





Compassion Fatigue



Reflection Questions

How has work with trauma survivors affected your connection to the work?

How has work with trauma survivors changed your world view?

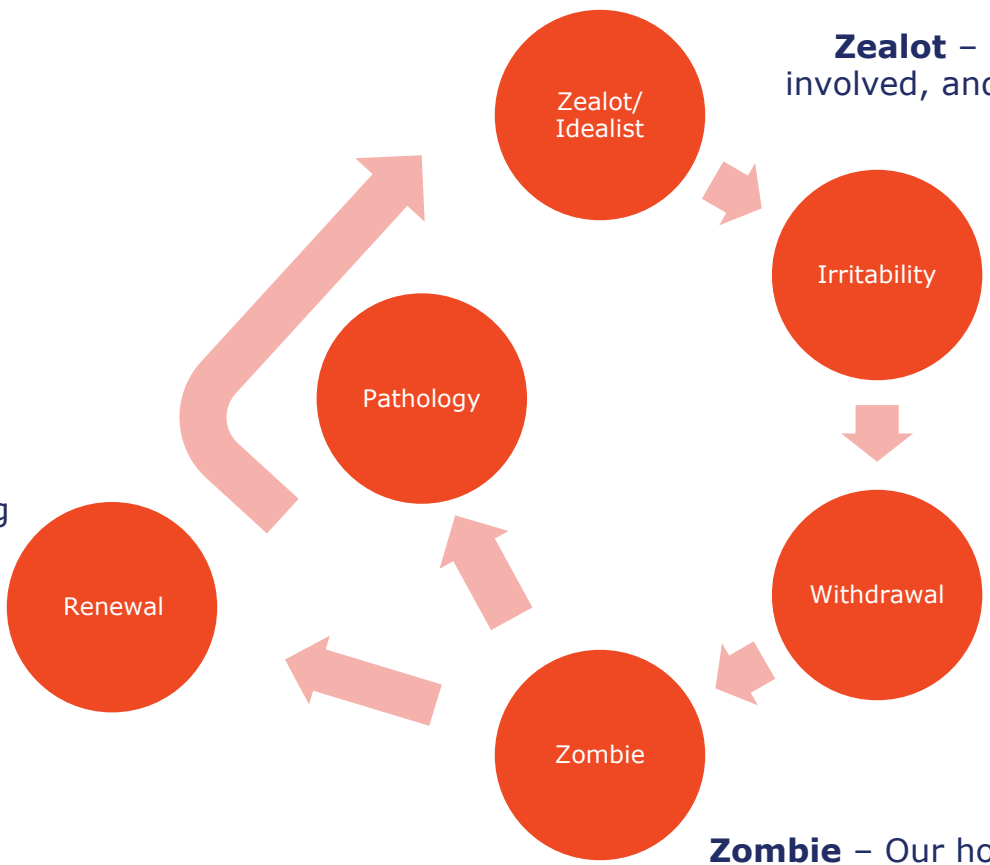


What is Compassion Fatigue

- **Compassion** fatigue refers to the ***emotional and physical burden*** felt as a result of providing service to, working with, or empathetically connecting to others that diminishes the capacity to empathize with or experience compassion for others.



Pathology/ Renewal - We come to a fork in the road where we either continue deeper into compassion fatigue to a place of *pathology and victimization* (overwhelmed, leaving the profession, changing positions and repeating the cycle, somatic illness) or take a turn towards *maturation and renewal* (hardiness, resiliency, transformation).



Zealot – We are committed, involved, and available to save the world.

Irritability - We see the imperfect nature of the systems and people around us. We begin to distance ourselves from clients, their families, coworkers and friends. We notices our anger, cynicism, diminished creativity, and sadness.

Withdrawal – The shield we put up to block the pain and sadness of our work becomes thicker. It’s more difficult to empathize with others. Clients become irritants.

Zombie – Our hopelessness turns to rage. We view those around us as incompetent or ignorant. We silo ourselves.

Adapted from Eric Gentry (2012) and the Compassion Resilience Toolkit





What is Your Compassion Fatigue Recovery Plan?

Questions

