Secondary Trauma –
What is it, why should I be concerned about it and what can I do about it?

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June 9, 2016

Objectives for today

- Define Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)
- Identify signs and symptoms of STS
- Identify at least 5 strategies that they can use to mitigate the negative impact of STS.
- Describe at least 2 strategies that supervisors can use to support staff from developing STS.
- Develop a personalized plan for self-care

Warning: We are going to get personal today. If it is too much at any point feel free to step out.

Compassion Fatigue

- Compassion Fatigue – a potential consequence of working with individuals
- Results in “a loss of ability to empathize with clients” (Knight, 2013, p. 228)
- Fear and anxiety dwell within compassion fatigue (Killian, 2008)
Compassion Fatigue
- Clients do not have to be traumatized for a worker to experience Compassion Fatigue
- Often Secondary Traumatic Stress is associated with Compassion Fatigue
- Importance of doing self-care to reduce likelihood of Compassion Fatigue

Compassion Satisfaction
- Opposite of Compassion Fatigue
- “Sense of reward, efficacy, and competence one feels in one’s role as a helping professional” (Killian, 2012, p. 33)
- Efficacy – to be beneficial; produce change

Reflection
- What resonates as you think about compassion fatigue? Do you think you have experienced that behavior?
- As you reflect upon compassion satisfaction – what resonates for you? What brings you satisfaction in your current employment?
**Burnout**
- 3 dimensions
  - Diminished personal accomplishment
  - Emotional exhaustion
  - Depersonalization (feeling detached from oneself or the situation) or cynicism
- Result of chronic exposure to stress in the workplace
- Impact to person's perception of self and others and impacts the work environment
  - Poor job satisfaction
  - Work performance
  - Lack of commitment to employer
  - Lack of overall well being

Maslach & Jackson (1981); Kim, Ji & Kao (2011); Lizano & Barak (2015)

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**Reflection**
- What stands out for you as you think about burnout?
- What differences do you see between burnout and compassion fatigue?
Secondary Traumatic Stress
- Emotional distress and disruption of functioning caused by associating with someone who has been traumatized (Figley, 1995; Bride 2007)
- "... the stress from helping or wanting to help a stressed person especially a child." (Figley, 1995; Henry, 2012)

Who can be impacted by STS?
- Helping profession – nurses, social workers, doctors, teachers, etc.
- Caring family member or friend
- STS can occur suddenly without warning

Statistics related to STS
- National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2011) – 6% - 26% of therapists working with traumatized individuals are at high risk of developing STS
- Some study suggest up to 50% of child welfare are at high risk of developing STS
Statistics related to STS
- Bride (2007)
  - 249 social workers in the study
  - 70.2% experienced at least one symptom of STS in previous week
  - 15.2% met criteria for PTSD

Impact of Secondary Traumatic Stress

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cognitive effects</th>
<th>Social Impact</th>
<th>Emotional impact</th>
<th>Physical Impact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Negative bias, pessimism,</td>
<td>Reduction in collaboration</td>
<td>Helplessness</td>
<td>Headaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All-or-nothing thinking,</td>
<td>Withdrawal and loss of social</td>
<td>Hopelessness</td>
<td>Tense muscles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Loss of perspective and</td>
<td>support</td>
<td>Feeling overwhelmed</td>
<td>Stomachaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>critical thinking skills,</td>
<td>Hystericalism</td>
<td></td>
<td>Fatigue/sleep difficulties</td>
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<tr>
<td>High level focus – new</td>
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<tr>
<td>clients, peers, supervise</td>
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<td>co-enemy</td>
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<td>Decreased self-</td>
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<tr>
<td>monitoring</td>
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</table>

Henry, 2015

Impact of Secondary Traumatic Stress
- PTSD symptoms –
  - Intrusive thoughts
  - Distressing Dreams
  - Dissociative reactions (ie – flashbacks)
  - Avoidance
  - Distorted Thinking
  - Hypervigilance
  - Etc.

DSM V – PTSD (p. 271 – 280)
Impact of Secondary Traumatic Stress

- Workplace implications –
  - Higher rate of absenteeism
  - Greater health care expenses
  - Staff – client relationship hampered
  - What does this do to outcome of services?
  - Staff – client relationship boundaries blurred
  - What can this do to outcome of services?
  - Or worse?

Whitfield & Kanter (2014); Knight (2013); Figley (1995)

Reflection

- What resonates with you as you reflect upon Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)?
- How much of your case load consists of individuals that have been traumatized?
- What differences do you see between compassion fatigue, burnout and STS?

Check In

- If anyone is feeling anxious or concerned about this topic, you are welcome to step out.
- I encourage you to check in with someone.
Self-Assessment

- Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)
- Assesses:
  - Compassion Satisfaction
  - Burnout
  - Secondary Traumatic Stress
- Page 1 – Complete Self-Assessment (last 30 days)
- Page 2 – Tells you how to score it
- Page 3 – Explains your scores

We need to embrace what is happening for each of us ...

- Acknowledge the stress of being in the helping profession
- Feel ok about expressing our feelings to others
- Validating one another
- Understanding that this springs up from our caring and compassion
- Recognize how widely STS is experienced by others

Reducing impact of STS

- Self-Awareness
- Balance personal and professional life
- Ask for help
- Self-Care
  - Physical
  - Mental
  - Emotional
  - Spiritual
- Self-Care Assessment Worksheet
  Transforming the Pain: A Workbook on Vicarious Trauma - Saakvitne, Pearlman & Staff of TUCAAP (Norton, 1996)
Let’s Make a Plan
- Personal Plan
- Just for the next 2 weeks ...
- What are you going to do?
  - Be specific
  - Keep it manageable
- Who is going to do it? Who needs to be involved to make this work?
- When will it be done? Set a date

Looking Ahead
- Opportunity to do some self-reflection …
  - What happened as a result of this plan? What did you learn? What should you do different next time?
- Back side is blank for future copy making
- Do this type of activity weekly or bi-weekly
- Take the ProQOL again in the future to stay self-aware
- Email will be sent to Heather
  - ProQOL
  - Personal Care Plan

Circle of Safety
- [Image of a circle with various hands and labels like Supervisor, Staff, Administration, etc.]
- [Text: Henry, 2015]
The Bigger Picture

- Role of the supervisor
  - Understand STS
  - Provide regular supervision
  - Inquire of the staff member’s feelings about their work.
    - How are you feeling today?
    - What’s your goal for our meeting today?
  - Encourage to discuss cases cognitively and affectively
  - Caution that supervision does not become a therapy session

The Bigger Picture

- Organizational opportunities to address STS ...
  - Trauma Informed Administration
  - Policies and practices that are realistic
  - Mentoring programs for new staff
  - Support supervisors providing supervision
  - Education and training regarding STS for all staff
  - Case assignments being distributed “fairly”
  - Employee Assistance Program

Organizational Self-Assessment

- The Secondary Traumatic Stress-Informed Organization Assessment (STSI-OA)
  - Sprang, Ross, Blackshear, Miller, Wrabel, Ham, Henry and Carling (2014)
- Assesses:
  - Promotion of resilience building activities
  - Promotes safety
  - Examination of policies & procedures
  - STS Knowledge
- Accessible through the University of Kentucky, Center on Trauma & Children, http://www.uky.edu/CTAC/node/234
Next Steps

- Share with your table mates ...
- Identify one thing you are taking away from today?
- Identify one thing you can do for yourself to mitigate the impact of secondary traumatic stress?
- Identify one thing you can share with your supervisor about secondary traumatic stress?

Reference List:

- NCTSN – The National Child Traumatic Stress Network
- Dr. James Henry, WMU & SWMCTAC

Reference List:

- Southwest Michigan Children’s Trauma Assessment Center (SWMCTAC)