Wisconsin Public Psychiatry Network Teleconference (WPPNT)

- This teleconference is brought to you by the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), Division of Care and Treatment Services, Bureau of Prevention Treatment and Recovery and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Department of Psychiatry.

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WPPNT Reminders

- Call 877-820-7831 before 11:00 a.m.
- Enter passcode 107633#, when prompted.
- Questions may be asked, if time allows.
- To ask a question, press *6 on your phone to un-mute yourself. *6 to remote.
Vicarious Trauma Toolkit
Practical Applications for Behavioral Health & Workplace Wellness
GOALS:

- Identify at least three behavioral health and wellness techniques that help alleviate and/or reduce VT symptoms.
OBJECTIVES:

- Define Vicarious Trauma (VT)
- Learn some of the signs of VT
- Learn some of the symptoms of VT
- Identify where signs and symptoms of VT might be or might have taken place
• Vicarious trauma is the emotional residue of exposure that [insert occupation] have from working with people as they are hearing their trauma stories and become witnesses to the pain, fear, and terror that trauma survivors have endured.

American Counseling Association (Oct., 2011)
Secondary Trauma

- Secondary trauma is nearly identical to VT; however, secondary trauma may occur suddenly in one encounter. VT is developed over a span of time. Symptoms are similar.
Burnout

- Burnout can be defined as the emotional or physical breakdown that is caused by prolonged stress and being overworked. Symptoms of VT and ST have gone on for a longer period of time at burnout.
MISUNDERSTOOD, OVERWORKED, UNDERPAID AND STRESSED... IT'S BOUND TO LEAD TO DEPRESSION... STILL ENOUGH OF MY PROBLEMS WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU?
Atlas of a Social Worker’s Brain

I can fix this.
I can fix this!

Where do I begin with this?

They didn’t cover this in school...

I could write a book...

Will this day ever end?

This is one screwed up life...

Just when I think I’ve heard it all...

Oh my, I can’t help this one
I haven't seen mother in three months, has she left us?

No son, she's just got a job as a Social Worker.
Vicarious Trauma
Signs vs. Symptoms

- Increased errors on work output is a (sign / symptom).
- Avoidance of job responsibilities is a (sign / symptom).
- Weight gain or loss is a (sign / symptom).
- Feelings of inadequacy is a (sign / symptom).
- Feeling trapped by work and deadlines is a (sign / symptom).
- Insomnia is a (sign / symptom).
- Working long hours is a (sign / symptom).
- Guilt is a (sign / symptom).
- Feelings of hopelessness is a (sign / symptom).
Vicarious Trauma
Physical Impact

- Physical exhaustion and fatigue
- Somatization: emotional stress that translates into physical symptoms, like getting sick more often, headaches, migraines, digestive issues, nausea, aches, tension, pain, etc.
- Difficulty sleeping or settling at the end of the day (or wanting to sleep too much)
- Reduced interest in sex due to feeling depleted
Vicarious Trauma
Psychological Impact

- Emotional exhaustion, reduced empathy and low patience
- More easily angry, irritable, cynical or resentful
- Shifts in your ability to relate with compassion to clients or loved ones
- Hypochondria (fear of developing severe physical ailments)
- Hypervigilance (on guard, anxious, paranoid, irrational fears)
- Problems in personal relationships outside of work due to reduced compassion
- Doubting your competence/skill as a helper
- Feeling helpless towards clients
- Depression (feeling hopeless about yourself, clients or the future)
- Suicidal thinking
- Diminished sense of satisfaction or enjoyment in your career
- Disruption of your worldview (e.g., difficulty trusting in people or viewing the world as unsafe as a result of hearing your clients’ experiences of trauma)
- Intrusive imagery (often related to client stories)
- Hypersensitivity (or insensitivity or numbness) to emotionally charged material
- Loss or altered sense of self or reality
Vicarious Trauma 
Behavioral Impact

- Distancing and isolating yourself from others
- Not engaging in activities you typically enjoy; low motivation
- Difficulty making simple decisions or clinical decisions that affect clients
- Missing work, or dreading or avoiding clients/patients
- Frequently changing jobs or leaving your field altogether
- Compromised care towards certain clients (disconnecting, merging/rescuing)
- Disordered eating or addictions to cope
- Difficulty separating work and personal life (impaired boundaries)
- Being the caretaker in your personal life outside of work
A study of 70 human rights workers in Kosovo who were responsible for collecting data on human rights violations revealed:

- 17.1% reported elevated levels of Anxiety
- 8.6% reported elevated levels of Depression
- 7.1% reported PTSD symptoms

(Holtz, Salama, Cardoza, & Gotway, 2002).
Another study of lay trauma counselors who had been trained to assist bank employees following bank robberies in South Africa indicated:

- 10% reported secondary traumatic Stress symptoms in the high or extremely high range

(Ortlepp & Friedman, 2002).
Further, a study of 173 child welfare workers exposed both to traumatic imagery through the stories of clients and direct exposure to trauma such as violence and threats indicated:

- 46.7% reported traumatic stress symptoms in the severe range

(Regehr, Chau, Leslie, & Howe, 2002a, 2002b).
Vicarious Trauma
Action Impact

Personal Story #1

The Teacher - https://www.linkedin.com/in/kenya-taylor-wash-med-2b823490

https://www.myips.org/site/default.aspx?PageType=3&DomainID=4&ModuleInstanceID=74&ViewID=047E6BE3-6D87-4130-8424-D8E4E9ED6C2A&RenderLoc=0&FlexDataID=32694&PageID=1

Baseline Behavior ➔ VT ➔ Action ➔ Action Induced Baseline Behavior
Personal Story #2

- The Business Owner-

https://www.tmj4.com/shows/the-morning-blend/a-local-organization-strives-to-prevent-violence

Baseline Behavior ➔ VT ➔ Action ➔ Action Induced Baseline Behavior ➔
“We’re encouraging people to become involved in their own rescue.”
STRESS
CLINIC

STEPPE OUT TO SMELL THE ROSES
I'm afraid you'll have to stay late tonight, I want you to attend this talk on work-life balance.
Vicarious Trauma
Self-Care & Coping

- Retreats
- Religious practices
- Spiritual practices
- Labored breathing
- Set Limits
- Stretch
- Online Counseling
- Reduce workload
- Seek out social support
- Adequate training and support
Behavioral health and wellness are essential to a successful, high performing workforce. Addressing the needs of employees help companies cultivate and achieve organizational success.

- How does your organization support behavioral health and wellness?
- Are there wellness screenings and support?
- Does your company offer wellness incentives?
- How can your organization support employee behavioral health and wellness?
- If given the opportunity, how would you implement behavioral health and wellness initiatives at your workplace?
- How important is behavioral health and wellness at your workplace?
- How much more successful could you be if your behavioral health and wellness needs were met at your workplace?
Vicarious Trauma
Resources & Information

- P Taylor Consulting Behavioral Health & Wellness
  www.ptaylorconsulting.com

- Milwaukee Mindfulness Practice Center
  www.milwaukeemindfulness.com

- The Toll of Trauma

- Mental Health of America
  http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/im-looking-mental-health-help-myself


