EFFECTS OF TRAUMA EXPOSURE ON CARE PROVIDERS

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LEARNING OBJECTIVES

➢ Examine Trauma Definition

➢ Identify Symptoms Related to Trauma Exposure & Ways It Affects Us

➢ Articulate Ways to Protect Relationships From Effects of Trauma Exposure

Trauma: Expanding the Definition

•Why?

Because…
some of the
hardest things
we see are NOT
always in the trauma bay.

Trauma: Expanding the Definition

- Deeply Disturbing or Distressing Experience
- Event that causes sense of horror and/or helplessness
- Threat to serious injury or death

Trauma: Expanding the Definition

- Sudden
- Unexpected
- Perceived as dangerous
- Diminishes our skills in coping

TRAUMA

Trauma: Expanding the Definition

- Single event
- Connected series of events
- Chronic lasting stress

Trauma: Expanding the Definition

"when one's internal resources are overwhelmed by one's external experience"

TRAUMA

Our Exposure

Clients, Stories, and Conditions that highlight:

- Poverty

- Abuse

- Pain

- Loss

- Anger

- Etc.

- Natural and Human-Made Disasters
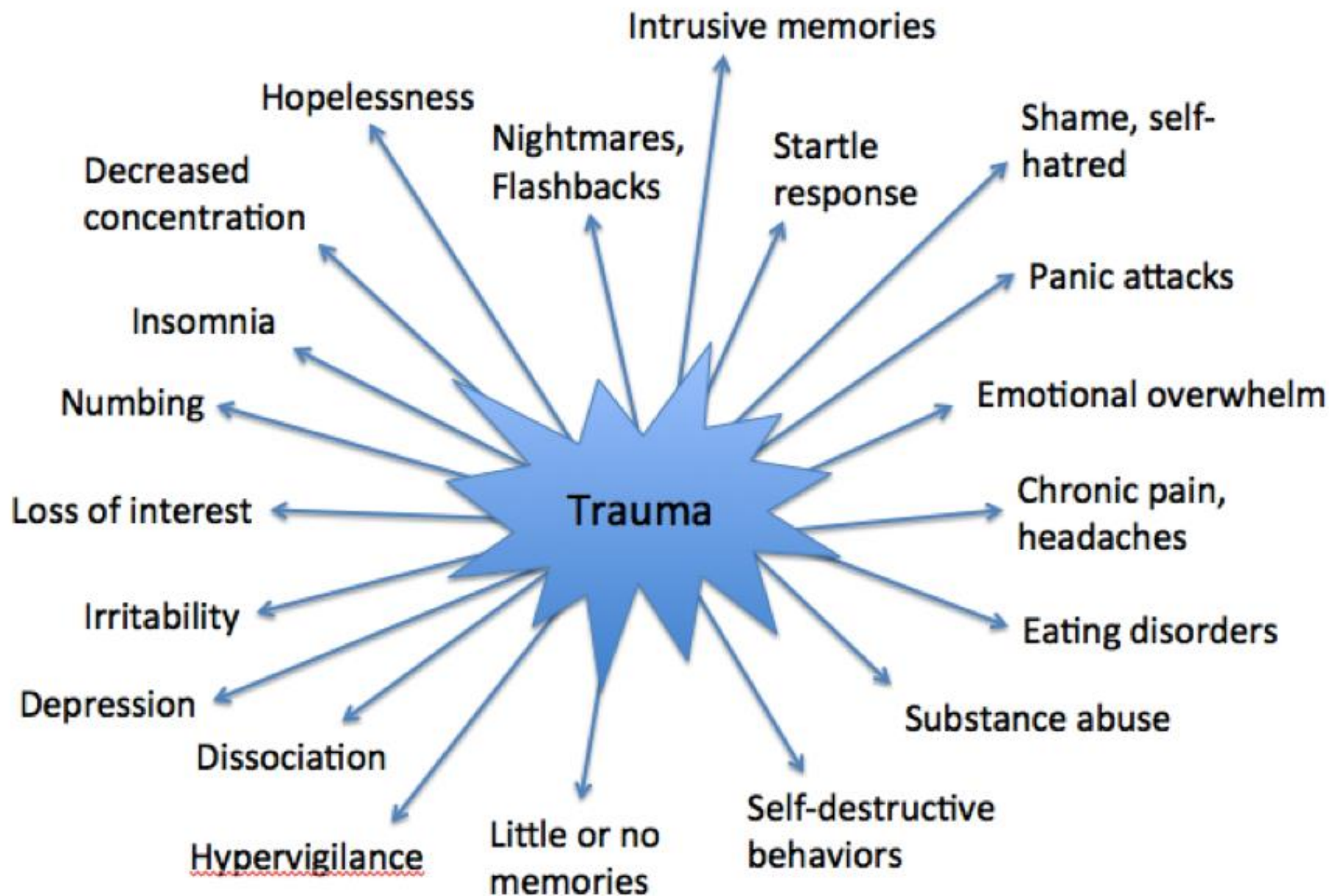
This all has consequences

(some) **Physical Consequences**

- Gastrointestinal Problems
- Cardiopulmonary Disease
- Heart Disease
- Ulcers
- Diabetes
- Neurological
- Chronic Exhaustion
- Insomnia

- Headaches (Migraines)
- Heartburn
- Hot/Cold Sweats
- Nausea
- Weight gain/loss
- Skin Breakouts (Hives, eczema)
- Sexual Dysfunction
- Frequent Illnesses

(some) **Mental Consequences**

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Fear
- Guilt
- Reduced Sense of Personal Accomplishment
- Conflict with Coworkers
- Angry Outbursts
- Difficulty Concentrating
- Issues with Safety, Trust, & Control

Intrusive memories

Hopelessness

Decreased concentration

Nightmares, Flashbacks

Startle response

Shame, self-hatred

Insomnia

Panic attacks

Numbing

Trauma

Emotional overwhelm

Loss of interest

Chronic pain, headaches

Irritability

Eating disorders

Depression

Substance abuse

Dissociation

Hypervigilance

Little or no memories

Self-destructive behaviors

Adapted from Janina Fisher

Some call it...

- Job Stress

- Chronic & Toxic Stress

- Vicarious Trauma

- Compassion Fatigue

- Secondary Traumatic Stress

- Burnout / Toasty / On Edge

"MY VOICE
WILL GO WITH YOU"

−MILTON ERICKSON TO HIS PATIENTS

THEIR VOICES GO WITH
US… THEIR STORIES
CHANGE US

-MICHAEL MAHONEY

Some Vocabulary

Some Vocabulary: Vicarious Trauma

Cumulative transformation of the inner experience (*cognitive schemas and belief systems*) resulting from empathic engagement with clients' traumatic experiences

(Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1995)

Some Vocabulary: Secondary Traumatic Stress

The natural and consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about traumatizing events experienced by a significant other – the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person.

(Figley, 1995)

Figley then coined the term "Compassion Fatigue" because a more user friendly term ☺

Some Vocabulary: Burnout

Result of prolonged stress or frustration, resulting in exhaustion of physical strength, emotional strength, and/or motivation

(Maslach, 2003)

Burnout	Vicarious Trauma, Compassion Fatigue	Secondary Trauma, Indirect Trauma
Cumulative, usually over long period of time	Cumulative with symptoms that are unique to each service provider	Immediate and mirrors client/patient trauma
Predictable	Less predictable	Less predictable
Work dissatisfaction	Life dissatisfaction	Life dissatisfaction
Evident in work environment	Permeates work and home	Permeates work and home
Related to work environment conditions	Related to empathic relationship with multiple client's/patient's trauma experiences	Related to empathic relationship with one client's/patient's trauma experience
Can lead to health problems	Can lead to health problems	Can lead to health problems
Feel under pressure	Feel out of control	Feel out of control
Lack of motivation and/or energy	Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder	Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder similar to client/patient
No evidence of triggers	May have triggers that are unique to practitioner	Often have triggers that are similar to the client's/patient's triggers
Remedy is time away from work (vacation, stress leave) to recharge or positive change in work environment (this might mean a new job)	Remedy is treatment of self, similar to trauma treatment	Remedy is treatment of self, similar to trauma treatment

Vicarious Trauma / Compassion Fatigue

Can result in a significant disruption in one's

- sense of meaning
- connection
- identity
- world view
- psychological needs
- beliefs about self and other
- interpersonal relationships
- sensory memory

Vicarious Trauma

Affects:

- *Memory*
- *Feelings*
- *World Views*
- *Sense of Safety*
- *Self-Efficacy*

Compassion Fatigue

- Depression
- Fear
- Isolation
- Helplessness
- Moodiness
- Emotional Numbing
- Resentment
- Workplace Dissention
- Inability to Relax
- Avoiding clients/patients/families

People Report…

- *Fear*
- *Anxiety*
- *Nightmares*
- *Negative "day dreams"*
- *Reduction in effective functioning*

- *Negative outlooks on life*
- *Increased use of sick time*
- *Substance Abuse*
- *Detachment from others*
- *Aggressive behaviors*

Chaplains are NOT that different
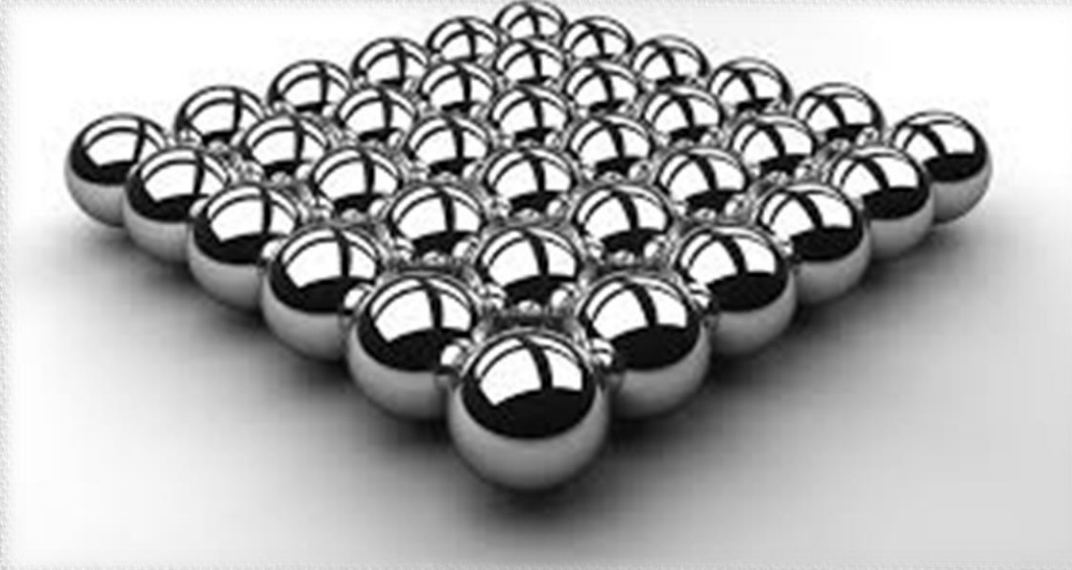
Encyclopedia of Trauma (edited by Figley)

- Chaplains have hyper-altruistic tendencies and a propensity to NOT acknowledge the same stress-induced symptoms they recognize in others

- THIS leaves chaplains particularly susceptible to physical, emotional, behavioral, professional, and inter personal burnout symptoms

- By definition we join sufferers in their pain and help find hope… which is a constant intense exposure

Encyclopedia of Trauma (edited by Figley)

- The accumulation of stressors OR single triggers can result in avoidance behaviors, numbing, workaholic tendencies, hyper-vigilance, difficulty concentrating, sleeping/eating/exercise problems and social withdrawal

- Critical times:

when another person's spiritual crisis

emulates our own → agonizing stress,

overwhelming chaotic feelings,

and profound self-doubt.

Encyclopedia of Trauma (edited by Figley)

- Some faith traditions divinely judge or divinely sanction pain

- Difficult questions (unanswered →doubt →confidence erodes)

- "Guilt by association"

For Chaplains:

(Galek, Flannelly, Greene, & Kudler, 2011; 389 participants)

- Burnout was positively associated with number of years in the same position

- Secondary Traumatic Stress was positively associated with number of hours per week working with traumatized clients (*this was true not just for hospital chaplains*)

For Chaplains:

(Galek, Flannelly, Greene, & Kudler, 2011; 389 participants)

- Burnout and Secondary Traumatic Stress was inversely related to social support from family and friends

- *Interesting point: support from institution (supervisors and co-workers) was only weakly related in part – people reported that they did not have those individuals as resources.*

For Chaplains:

(Galek, Flannelly, Greene, & Kudler, 2011; 389 participants)

In relation to burnout and secondary traumatic stress

- Education didn't matter for burnout

- Education slightly mattered for traumatic symptomology

- Women and older men were LESS likely to exhibit burnout

For Chaplains:

(Taylor, Flannelly, Weaver, & Zucker, 206; 66 Rabbis.)

- Compassion Fatigue & Burnout were over all LOW but both were higher among women then men

- Compassion fatigue was higher among those divorced and it increased with the number of hours the chaplain worked per week with victims of trauma & their families
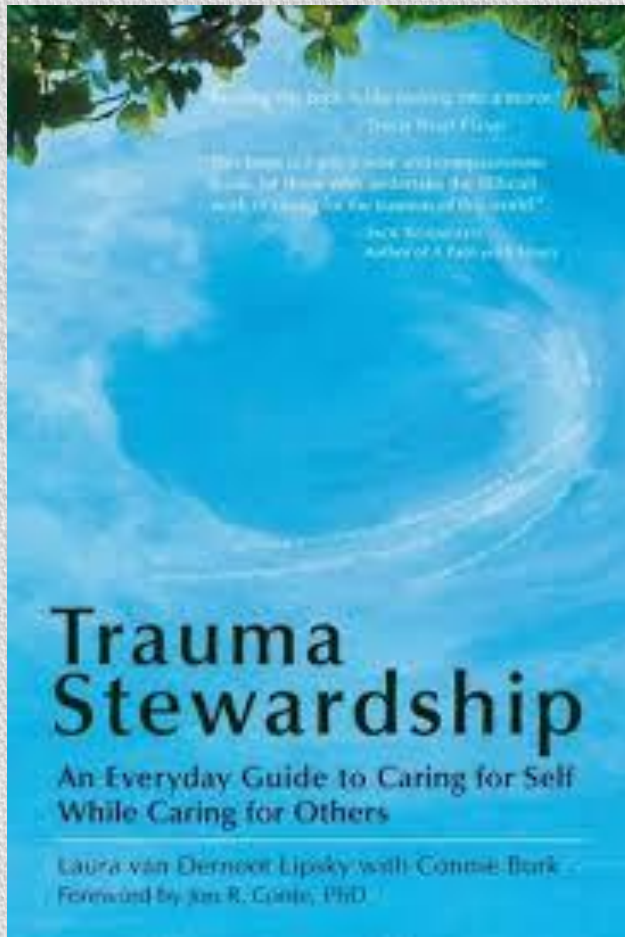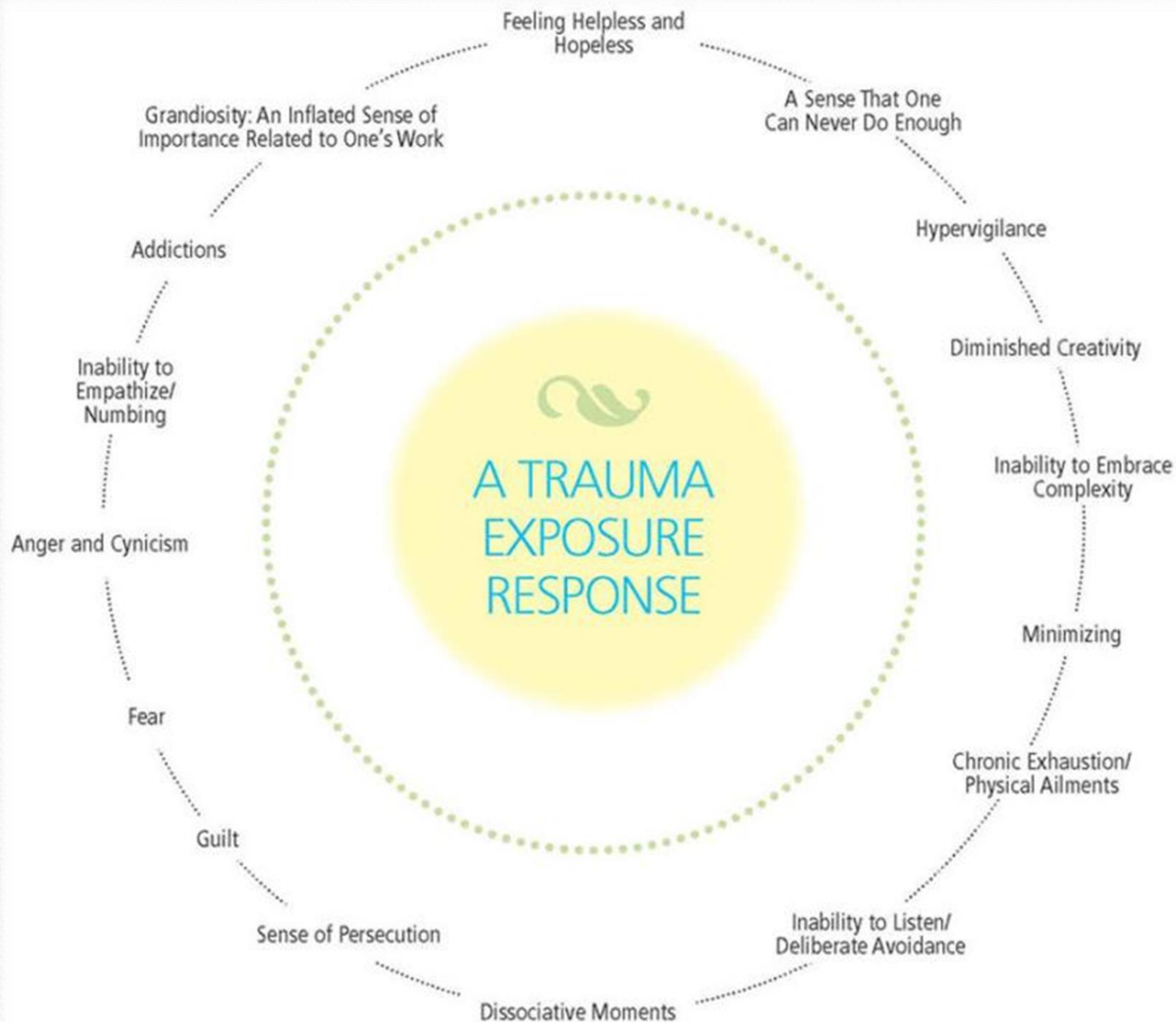
For Clergy:

- Clergy burn out because of systemic issues (ie., poor admin support, bureaucracy, poor working conditions)

- Others say interpersonal factors such as Type-A personalities, narcissism and perfectionism contribute to burnout.

Ted Talk – Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

Beyond the Cliff

A TRAUMA EXPOSURE RESPONSE

- Feeling Helpless and Hopeless
- A Sense That One Can Never Do Enough
- Hypervigilance
- Diminished Creativity
- Inability to Embrace Complexity
- Minimizing
- Chronic Exhaustion/Physical Ailments
- Inability to Listen/Deliberate Avoidance
- Dissociative Moments
- Sense of Persecution
- Guilt
- Fear
- Anger and Cynicism
- Inability to Empathize/Numbing
- Addictions
- Grandiosity: An Inflated Sense of Importance Related to One's Work

Diabetes

Heart Disease

Anxiety

Apathy

Ulcers

Blood Pressure

Guilt

Numbing

Anger

Cynicism

Insomnia

Inside Us...

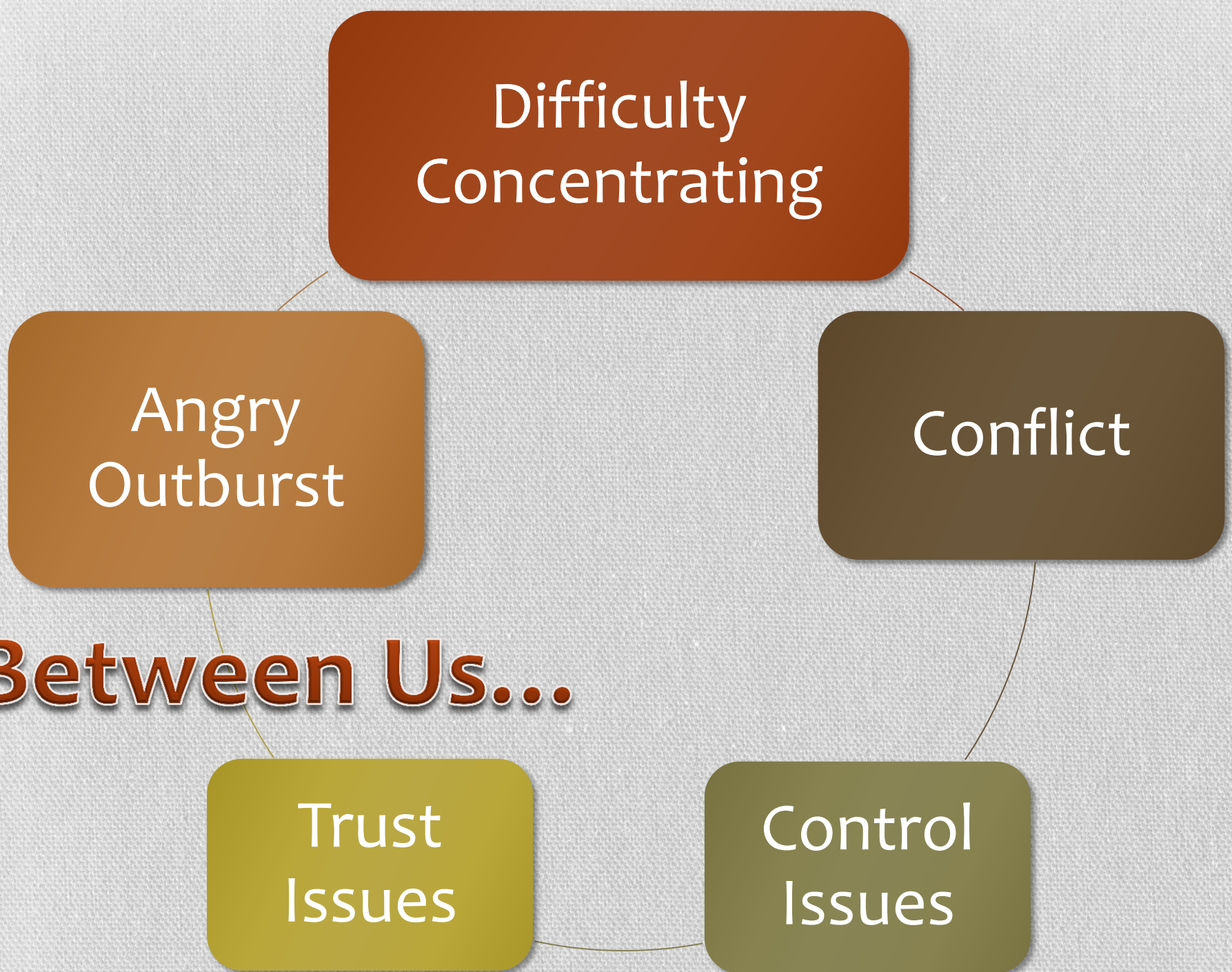"COMPASSION IS BEING WITH THE HURT PERSON AND DOING THE RIGHT THING AS A RESULT. COMPASSION STRESS IS NOT BEING ABLE TO LET GO OF IT" -FIGLEY

Watch out for Empathic Strain

- EMPATHIC WITHDRAWAL
  - Blank-screen façade
  - Intellectualization

- EMPATHIC DISEQUILIBRIUM
  - Uncertainty
  - Unmodulated affect

- EMPATHIC REPRESSION
  - Distancing
  - Denial

- EMPATHIC DEPENDENCY
  - Loss of boundaries
  - Over-involvement

-Wilson & Lindy, 1994

BUT WAIT…

☺ Vicarious Resilience ☺

For Chaplains:

(Levy, Conoscenti, Tillery, Dickerson, & Litz, 2011; 183 Air Force Chaps.)

- Chaplains did NOT report high compassion fatigue but instead spoke of POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL GROWTH following their exposure

- A small percentage (7.7%) did show PTSD signs which means they were not completely immune

Vicarious Resilience

- Process of clinicians learning about overcoming adversity from trauma survivors they work with and the resulting positive transformation and empowerment in those clinicians through their empathy for and interactions with clients.

What Fosters Vicarious Resilience?

- Unconditionally supportive social networks outside survivors families

- Protective personal characteristics of the person developed over time

- Psychological therapeutic interventions that focus on
    - Building strength in client
    - Fostering sense of personal control
    - Promotion and development of authentic relationships

Research has shown that practitioners…

- Gain an understanding that people CAN transform experiences

- Develop more realistic and less idealistic worldviews

- Gain deeper appreciations for their own lives

- Gain a greater sensitivity to prejudices

Practitioners also reported

- Increased empathy & compassion

- Profound sense of meaning

- Increased knowledge and awareness of issues

- Enhanced self-esteem

- Increased sense of hope that people endure & overcome trauma

Resilience Factors

- Optimism
- Self-Confidence
- Enjoy making plans and carrying them out
- Ability to control one's emotions
- Strong support system
- Have a purpose in life
- Gratitude
- Know one makes a difference
- High self-esteem
- Life has meaning

- Sense of Humor
- Flexibility
- Able to think through possibilities
- Spirituality and/or Religion
- Generosity
- Strong role models
- Willing to change
- Self-directed
- Adaptability
- Enjoys learning

- Steven Spidell D. Min. BCC

ABCs of Self- Care

AWARENESS
BALANCE
CONNECTION

Awareness

- Know your tolerance levels, boundaries, needs, feelings, resources, body sensations
- Know when your needs/ emotions/ sensations change

Balance

- Balance (harmonize) work and life
- Prioritize
- Re-evaluate
- Theory of thirds:
  1/3 work
  1/3 play
  1/3 rest

Connection

- Connect to LIFE-GIVING individuals
- Connect to bigger purpose or meaning
- Allow for at least one deep emotional connections with an individual who can be 100% there for you, to support and reflect your image back to you

True Self-Care…

- is completely about YOU
- benefits no one else
- is based on YOUR preferences/ context
- gives you life & energy
- deepens satisfaction → affects all other areas of your life
- hurts when you lose it
- is ongoing

Meditate
Sing
Pray

Journal
Read
Vacation

Eating Regularly
Exercising
Sleeping

Love Yourself
Allow Crying
Laugh

Create
A
Self-Care Plan

Fail to Plan = Plan to Fail

	Spiritual	Mental	Physical	Emotional
HOME				
WORK				
ANYWHERE				

Mental Health Self Care Wheel

PHYSICAL
Regular medical care
Eat healthy
Regular sleep
Exercise
Get a massage
Enjoy physical intimacy like
hugs & holding hands

PSYCHOLOGICAL
Take time for self reflection
Therapy or counseling
Meditation
Keep a journal
Be creative
Join a support group

EMOTIONAL
Explore a hobby
Cuddle with your pet
Community engagement
Practice self love
Cry
Laugh

SPIRITUAL
Practice forgiveness
Spend time in nature
Connect with a
spiritual community
Sing or dance
Yoga
Volunteer for a cause

PERSONAL
Plan & set goals
Spend time with family
Learn a new skill
Read a book
Make time for friends
Reflect on who you are
& what makes you special

PROFESSIONAL
Take your full lunch break
Leave work at work
Take mental health holidays
Learn to say NO
Use your vacation time
Set boundaries

cup of self love

QUESTIONS THOUGHTS

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