EFFECTS OF TRAUMA EXPOSURE ON CARE PROVIDERS

Presenter: Alexandra Zareth Canales, M. Div, BCCi
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: 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”
Our Exposure

Clients, Stories, and Conditions that highlight:

• Poverty
• Abuse
• Pain
• Loss
• Anger
• Etc.

• Natural and Human-Made Disasters

This all has consequences
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
Trauma

- Intrusive memories
- Startle response
- Shame, self-hatred
- Panic attacks
- Emotional overwhelm
- Chronic pain, headaches
- Eating disorders
- Substance abuse
- Self-destructive behaviors
- Little or no memories
- Hypervigilance
- Dissociation
- Depression
- Irritability
- Loss of interest
- Numbing
- Insomnia
- Decreased concentration
- Hopelessness
- Nightmares, Flashbacks
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)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Burnout</th>
<th>Vicarious Trauma, Compassion Fatigue</th>
<th>Secondary Trauma, Indirect Trauma</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative, usually over long period of time</td>
<td>Cumulative with symptoms that are unique to each service provider</td>
<td>Immediate and mirrors client/patient trauma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Predictable</td>
<td>Less predictable</td>
<td>Less predictable</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Life dissatisfaction</td>
<td>Life dissatisfaction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Evident in work environment</td>
<td>Permeates work and home</td>
<td>Permeates work and home</td>
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<tr>
<td>Related to work environment conditions</td>
<td>Related to empathic relationship with multiple client’s/patient’s trauma experiences</td>
<td>Related to empathic relationship with one client’s/patient’s trauma experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Can lead to health problems</td>
<td>Can lead to health problems</td>
<td>Can lead to health problems</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feel under pressure</td>
<td>Feel out of control</td>
<td>Feel out of control</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of motivation and/or energy</td>
<td>Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder</td>
<td>Symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder similar to client/patient</td>
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<tr>
<td>No evidence of triggers</td>
<td>May have triggers that are unique to practitioner</td>
<td>Often have triggers that are similar to the client’s/patient’s triggers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remedy is time away from work (vacation, stress leave) to recharge or positive change in work environment (this might mean a new job)</td>
<td>Remedy is treatment of self, similar to trauma treatment</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Vicarious Trauma</strong></th>
<th><strong>Compassion Fatigue</strong></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affects:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Memory</td>
<td>Depression</td>
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<td>Feelings</td>
<td>Fear</td>
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<td>World Views</td>
<td>Isolation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of Safety</td>
<td>Helplessness</td>
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<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>Moodiness</td>
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<td>Emotional Numbing</td>
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<td>Resentment</td>
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<td>Workplace Dissention</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Inability to Relax</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Avoiding</td>
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<td></td>
<td>clients/patients/families</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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
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 interpersonal burnout symptoms.

By definition we join sufferers in their pain and help find hope... which is a constant intense exposure.
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.
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 overall LOW but both were higher among women than 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:
(Grosch & Olsen, 2000)

- Clergy burn out because of systemic issues (i.e., 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

Trauma Stewardship
An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others

Laura van Dernoot Lipsky with Connie Burk
Foreword by Jan R. Combs, PhD
A TRAUMA EXPOSURE RESPONSE

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

- Anxiety
- Apathy
- Blood Pressure
- Numbing
- Cynicism
- Guilt
- Anger
- Insomnia
- Diabetes
- Heart Disease
- Ulcers
Between Us...

- Difficulty Concentrating
- Angry Outburst
- Conflict
- Trust Issues
- Control Issues
“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 REPRESSION**
  - Distancing
  - Denial

- **EMPATHIC DISEQUILIBRIUM**
  - Uncertainty
  - Unmodulated affect

- **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
Shift Gears

Intervention

Prevention
ABCs of Self-Care

AWARENESS
BALANCE
CONNECTION
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Awareness</th>
<th>Balance</th>
<th>Connection</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Know your tolerance levels,</td>
<td>• Balance (harmonize) work</td>
<td>• Connect to LIFE-GIVING individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boundaries, needs, feelings,</td>
<td>and life</td>
<td>• Connect to bigger purpose or meaning</td>
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<tr>
<td>resources, body sensations</td>
<td>• Prioritize</td>
<td>• Allow for at least one deep</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Know when your needs/ emotions/</td>
<td>• Re-evaluate</td>
<td>emotional connections with an individual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sensations change</td>
<td>• Theory of thirds: 1/3 work</td>
<td>who can be 100% there for you, to support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/3 play</td>
<td>and reflect your image back to you</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1/3 rest</td>
<td></td>
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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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Spiritual</th>
<th>Mental</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>HOME</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WORK</strong></td>
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<td><strong>ANYWHERE</strong></td>
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cup of self love
QUESTIONS

THOUGHTS
References:


References continued:


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