

## Definitions of Various Types of Stress

### BURNOUT

Burnout (BO) refers to emotional and physical exhaustion resulting from both occupational and personal stressors. If you are experiencing burnout you may feel exhausted, cynical and low in energy. You may be struggling to fully participate or even to stay engaged in your work. More severe burnout can lead people to feel that their personal contributions at work are meaningless or insignificant. Burnout is defined as prolonged work stress. Burnout can be experienced by busy educational professionals regardless of the populations they serve. Burnout can reduce the quality of care being provided. Self-awareness and monitoring for early signs of burnout can significantly improve provider functioning.

### SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

STS (Secondary Traumatic Stress) is work-related secondary exposure to extremely traumatically stressful events. STS is about being AFRAID. Secondary Traumatic Stress is an element of Compassion fatigue and is related to Vicarious Trauma. STS is about your work-related, secondary exposure to extremely stressful events.

STS includes symptoms similar to PTSD that can occur in providers who frequently listen to trauma histories. STS symptoms include re-experiencing, avoidance, and hyperarousal. It has cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal aspects as well, including anger, low mood, and social isolation. STS can also lead to a reduction in self-efficacy. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment.

### COMPASSION FATIGUE

Compassion fatigue (CF) is stress resulting from exposure to a traumatized individual. CF has been described as the convergence of secondary traumatic stress (STS) and cumulative burnout (BO), a state of physical and mental exhaustion caused by a depleted ability to cope with one's everyday environment.

CF (Compassion fatigue) is broader than STS. It can happen to any caregiver who has direct or indirect contact with trauma survivors and it is characterized by the emotional strain experienced when working with individuals coping with traumatic stress. It also includes more general symptoms of burnout (e.g., emotional exhaustion). CF may occur in other professional and caregiving experiences as well, such as working with the chronically ill.

### VICARIOUS TRAUMA

VT (Vicarious trauma) is the emotional residue of exposure that counselors 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. VT describes the cognitive, emotional, social, and behavioral changes that may occur while working with traumatized individuals. Educators' views about self, others, and the world may change. In particular, views of trust, safety, control, and esteem, may be called into question.

### ADDITIONAL DEFINITION INFO

STS (**Secondary Traumatic Stress**), CF (**Compassion fatigue**), and VT (**Vicarious trauma**) are overlapping terms that can apply to providers who work with those who have experienced traumatic stress. Despite differences, the terms are often used interchangeably. Both **compassion fatigue** and **vicarious trauma** can lead to **burnout**. It means that symptoms have been happening on a regular basis for a long time and longer-term support will likely be necessary to recover. In extreme cases, **burnout** can lead to serious physical and mental illness. The **difference between secondary trauma** and **vicarious trauma** is that **secondary trauma** can happen suddenly, in one session, while **vicarious trauma** is a response to an accumulation of exposure to the pain of others.

## What Does Emotional Health Look Like?

- Being self-aware. Being in tune with your emotions
- The ability to express healthy emotions. Having self-control over your reactions
- Being aware of other people. Reading what other people are feeling through their eyes and body language.
- Able to be emotionally connected to others. Being able to have empathy for others

**Accurate self-perception (self-aware) Romans 12:3** *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.*

- Self-regard – who we are in Christ
- Self-actualization - purpose
- Emotional Self-awareness – connected to self (know thy self)

**Healthy stress management tools. Matthew 11:28** *Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*

- Flexibility – with structure
- Stress Tolerance – management and skills to handle good and bad stress
- Optimism – attitude, positive outlook – trust in the Lord

**Healthy self-expression (healthy emotions) Philippians 4:5-6** *Let everyone see that you are considerate in all you do. Remember, the Lord is coming soon. Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank him for all he has done.*

- Emotional Expression - communication
- Assertiveness – conflict skills
- Independence - interdependence

**Ability to make decisive decisions. Proverbs 11:14** *Where there is no counsel, the people fall, but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.*

- Problem Solving – decision making
- Reality Testing – real world view – knowing the difference between real and fantasy
- Impulse Control – delayed gratification – self-control

**Interpersonal support and interaction (emotionally connected to others). Ecclesiastes 4:12** *And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him—a threefold cord is not quickly broken.*

- Interpersonal Relationships – connectedness with others – friendship - community
- Social Responsibility – concern for the world around us – community connections
- Empathy – caring – ability to care for others – put yourself in their shoes