

Work Related Trauma Exposure

You can experience trauma by validating another's trauma. Empathic listening to story after story of human suffering challenges deeply held beliefs, assumptions, and expectations, which can manifest as intrusive thoughts and images as well as other emotional and behavioral manifestations.¹

THE COST OF CARING

Burn Out Characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced feeling of personal accomplishment; result of general occupational stress.

Compassion Fatigue The profound emotional and physical exhaustion that helping professionals and caregivers can develop over the course of their career. It is the gradual erosion of all things that keep us connected to others; our empathy, our hope, and our compassion – not only for others but also for ourselves.²

Compassion Satisfaction Positive feelings derived from competent performance as a trauma professional. Characterized by positive relationships with colleagues, and the conviction that one's work makes a meaningful contribution to clients and society.

Critical Incident Any event that has a stressful impact sufficient to overwhelm the usually effective coping skills of an individual. These events are usually abrupt, powerful events that fall outside the range of ordinary human experiences.

Emotional Labor Enhancing Faking or suppressing emotions to modify the emotional expression.³

Moral Distress When one knows the right thing to do, but institutional constraints make it nearly impossible to pursue the right course of action.

Vicarious Trauma Refers to changes in the inner experience resulting from empathic engagement with a traumatized person. The primary symptoms are disturbances in the professional's cognitive frame of reference in the areas of trust, safety, control, esteem, and intimacy.



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¹ Evces MR. What is vicarious trauma? Quitangon G, Evces MR, Eds. Vicarious Trauma and Disaster Mental Health: Understanding Risks and Promoting Resilience. New York, NY: Routledge; 2015.

² Mathieu, F. (2012). The Compassion Fatigue Workbook: Creative Tools for Transforming Compassion Fatigue and Vicarious Traumatization. Routledge.

³Grandey, A. A. (2000). Emotional regulation in the workplace: A new way to conceptualize emotional labor. Journal of occupational health psychology, 5(1), 95.

Adapted from: National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Secondary Traumatic Stress Committee. (2011).

Secondary Traumatic Stress: A fact sheet for child serving professionals. Los Angeles, CA, and Durham, NC: National Center for Child Traumatic Stress.