If This is Just Baby-sitting, Why Can’t I Sleep at Night?: Addressing Vicarious Trauma in the Afterschool Field
Goals and Outline of the Workshop

Goals
1) Become more knowledgeable about vicarious trauma, and its impact.
2) Reflect on vulnerabilities and strengths for yourself and colleagues related to vicarious trauma.
3) Gain strategies for managing vicarious trauma and promoting resilience.

Outline
A) Presenter’s Interest and Relationship to Topic - 3 minutes
B) The Stakes for the Field - 5 minutes
C) How Vicarious Trauma Shows Up in Afterschool - 10 minutes
D) What is it? Ted x Talk - 18 minutes
E) Reflecting on Risk Factors - 15 minutes
F) Reflecting on Protective Factors - 10 minutes
G) Making Ordinary Magic for ourselves and our colleagues - 5 minutes
H) Take 10 - 5 minutes
Why me? Why This?

Why me?

*NOT because I am a mindfulness guru or a brain scientist

*A particular moment for me - Looking Back, Looking Forward

*Let me tell you a story.

Since then, at an uncertain hour, / That agony returns; / And till my ghastly tale is told, / This heart within me burns.
from “Rime of the Ancient Mariner”
Professionalizing the Afterschool Field is Essential to Quality

"We need to embrace common competencies, common research and practices to elevate the field overall. We need to create a career path for those who choose to stay in the field. The definition of the job needs to be changed.... We need to think about multiple pathways so that people can stay in the work."
Ellen Gannett, Director of the National Institute on Out-of-School Time

How have we internalized that mandate, and how do we need to own it?

Our lives shall not be sweetened
From birth until life closes
Hearts starve as well as bodies
Give us bread, but give us roses

From “Bread and Roses” Song by Mimi Farina
How does Vicarious Trauma Show Up in our Field?

**The Jabs**
- High stakes and high impact
- Under-resourced and under the radar
- Caught between systems - School, Funders, Regulators, Non-profits
- Under a microscope and under pressure

**The Knockout Punch**
- What lands at our doorstep
  “...many {Americans} are acutely aware that the American Dream is a more distant prospect for today’s children. The share of Americans who are confident life for today’s children will be better than it has been for today’s adults was only 21 percent in 2014, down from one-third in 2007…” The Brookings Institute
- What happens inside our doors
Drowning in Empathy: The Cost of Vicarious Trauma - Amy Cunningham, Tedx San Antonio
Ted Talk Takeaways

- What are some takeaways from this video?
- How did you connect with what Amy Cunningham refers to as “drowning in empathy” that might be specific to your role?
- Did anything about vicarious trauma, also known as compassion fatigue, surprise you?
Self Assessment on Risk Factors

Reflecting:

● What are some aspects of your role/job that might trigger vicarious trauma?

● How do signs and symptoms show up for you?

“Someone I loved once gave me a box full of darkness. It took me years to understand that this too, was a gift,”
Mary Oliver
Think of a resilient person that you know. Why do you consider that person to be resilient? Describe their risk factors. What protective factors do you believe the person has used in their life to help overcome risk and adversity? Has this person’s life taught you anything about how to navigate your life? If so, what have you learned? Turn and talk – 7 minutes

Complete the Devereux Adult Resilience Survey

“Ancient tales suggest that as long as humans have told stories, they have been intrigued with people who overcome adversity to succeed in life.” Ana Masten
“Resilience is common and it typically arises from the operation of normal rather than extraordinary human capabilities, relationships, and resources. In other words, resilience emerges from ordinary magic.”

Ana Masten, Professor at the Institute for Child Development at the Univ of Minnesota known for research on development of resilience and positive outcomes of children and families facing adversity.

What “Ordinary Magic” can you make in the coming period? For yourself? For your colleagues?

Write a Letter to your future self.

Share out.
“I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become.”

—Carl Gustav Jung
Resources

Understanding and Addressing Vicarious Trauma Curriculum -

Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction -
https://www.nyimc.org/events/list/?tribe_paged=1&tribe_event_display=list&tribe_eventcategory=102

Devereux Center for Resilient Children - https://centerforresilientchildren.org/

Mindfulness and Neural Integration: Daniel Siegel, MD at TEDxStudioCityED -
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiyaSr5aeho

Promoting Resilience, Ana Masten - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GJMU9jw9V_s
Thank you for your interest in the Devereux Adult Resilience Survey.

Authored by Mary Mackrain, the Devereux Adult Resilience Survey (DARS) is a 23-item reflective checklist that provides adults with information about their personal strengths. The information can be used to help individuals build on these strength, such as creativity and setting limits, so that they can better cope with adversity and the stresses of daily life.

Statistical analysis shows that the DARS is an excellent tool for providing adults with an opportunity to gain valuable insights, particularly in these four areas:

**Relationships**: The mutual, long-lasting back-and-forth bond we have with another person in our lives.

**Internal Beliefs**: The feelings and thoughts we have about ourselves and our lives, and how effective we think we are at taking action in life.

**Initiative**: The ability to make positive choices and decisions and act upon them.

**Self-Control**: The ability to experience a range of feelings, and express them using the words and actions society considers appropriate.

The purpose of the DARS is not to compare individual’s scores to the population, but to give adults, more specifically teachers, the opportunity to become aware of personal strengths and areas of need. Upon completion of the Devereux Adult Resilience Survey, individuals are encouraged to use the Building Your Bounce: Simple Strategies for a Resilient You Adult Journal. This journal provides suggested strategies for strengthening adults’ protective factors shown to support resilience.

It takes a fair amount of reflection and practice to change any negative thoughts we might have and to integrate new behaviors that are good for us. You are worth it. Even is you are already a strong, happy person you will want to continue building yourself up to maintain or increase your level of well-being.

Best wishes on your personal journey.

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Devereux Adult Resilience Survey (DARS)  
by Mary Mackrain

Take time to reflect and complete each item on the survey below. There are no right answers. Once you have finished, reflect on your strengths and then start small and plan for one or two things that you feel are important to improve. For fun and practical ideas on how to strengthen your protective factors, use the chapters in this book. For a free copy of the DARS visit www.centerforresilientchildren.org.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Not Yet</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relationships</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. I have good friends who support me.</td>
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<td>2. I have a mentor or someone who shows me the way.</td>
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<td>3. I provide support to others.</td>
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<td>4. I am empathetic to others.</td>
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<td>5. I trust my close friends.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Internal Beliefs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. My role as a caregiver is important.</td>
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<td>2. I have personal strengths.</td>
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<td>3. I am creative.</td>
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<td>4. I have strong beliefs.</td>
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<td>5. I am hopeful about the future.</td>
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<td>6. I am lovable.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Initiative</strong></td>
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<td>1. I communicate effectively with those around me.</td>
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<td>2. I try many different ways to solve a problem.</td>
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<td>3. I have a hobby that I engage in.</td>
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<td>4. I seek out new knowledge.</td>
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<td>5. I am open to new ideas.</td>
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<td>6. I laugh often.</td>
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<td>7. I am able to say no.</td>
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<td>8. I can ask for help.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Self-Control</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1. I express my emotions.</td>
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<td>2. I set limits for myself.</td>
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<td>3. I am flexible.</td>
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<td>4. I can calm myself down.</td>
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Common Stress Reactions
A Self-Assessment

Before the workshop begins, think about how you know you are experiencing stress and check no more than ten reactions you commonly have when under stress. This is for your personal use and will not be shared.

Behavioral:
- □ Change in activity levels
- □ Decreased efficiency and effectiveness
- □ Difficulty communicating
- □ Increased sense of humor/gallows humor
- □ Irritability, outbursts of anger, frequent arguments
- □ Inability to rest, relax, or let down
- □ Change in eating habits
- □ Change in sleep patterns
- □ Change in job performance
- □ Periods of crying
- □ Increased use of tobacco, alcohol, drugs, sugar or caffeine
- □ Hyper-vigilance about safety or the surrounding environment
- □ Avoidance of activities or places that trigger memories
- □ Accident prone

Psychological or Emotional:
- □ Feeling heroic, euphoric or invulnerable
- □ Denial
- □ Anxiety or fear
- □ Worry about safety of self or others
- □ Irritability or anger
- □ Restlessness
- □ Sadness, moodiness, grief or depression
- □ Vivid or distressing dreams
- □ Guilt or "survivor guilt"
- □ Feeling overwhelmed, helpless or hopeless
- □ Feeling isolated, lost, lonely or abandoned
- □ Apathy
- □ Over identification with survivors
- □ Feeling misunderstood or unappreciated

Physical:
- □ Increased heart rate and respirations
- □ Increased blood pressure
- □ Upset stomach, nausea, diarrhea
- □ Increased or decreased appetite which may be accompanied by weight loss or gain
- □ Sweating or chills
- □ Tremors or muscle twitching
- □ Muffled hearing
- □ Tunnel vision
- □ Feeling uncoordinated
- □ Headaches
- □ Sore or aching muscles
- □ Light sensitive vision
- □ Lower back pain
- □ Feeling a "lump in the throat"
- □ Easily startled
- □ Fatigue that does not improve with sleep
- □ Menstrual cycle changes
- □ Change in sexual desire or response
- □ Decreased resistance to colds, flu, infections
- □ Flare up of allergies, asthma, or arthritis
- □ Hair loss

Cognitive:
- □ Memory problems/forgetfulness
- □ Disorientation
- □ Confusion
- □ Slowness in thinking, analyzing, or comprehending
- □ Difficulty calculating, setting priorities or making decisions
- □ Difficulty Concentrating
- □ Limited attention span
- □ Loss of objectivity
- □ Inability to stop thinking about the disaster or an incident

Social:
- □ Withdrawing or isolating from people
- □ Difficulty listening
- □ Difficulty sharing ideas
- □ Difficulty engaging in mutual problem solving
- □ Blaming
- □ Criticizing
- □ Intolerance of group process
- □ Difficulty in giving or accepting support or help
- □ Impatient with or disrespectful to others

(adapted from CMHS (Rev. Ed., 2000))
How you think about work plays a big role in keeping you balanced and healthy and helping prevent and manage vicarious trauma.

Think about...

- Take some time to make some notes or discuss the answers to each of the sets of questions in items 1 through 5 above.
- Which of these sets of questions do you feel like you struggle the most with (maybe you don’t know the answers to those questions, or the way you normally think about work in that area is unhelpful). Why?
- Which of these question areas do you feel you are strongest in? Why? How does your thinking in that area help protect you from vicarious trauma?

How you do your work

Healthy thinking is good on its own, but even better if it’s linked to healthy practices at work. Here are some suggestions about how you can work in ways that help prevent and manage vicarious trauma.

- **Change some of the things that bother you**: Change some of the things that you can control that bother you (e.g., if your work place is grim and dirty, clean it up so that it doesn’t depress you).

- **Intentionally make choices when you can**: Make choices about things you can control (e.g., when to break for lunch).

- **Connect with (or disconnect from) people**: If you work mostly alone, find ways to connect with people during the day (e.g., take five minutes to ask how someone’s weekend was). If you work mostly with people, take small breaks, including time out from conversation during which you let your mind go to positive, secure, or comforting thoughts. This will help you remember to see people as individuals rather than tasks.

- **Try something different at work**: Look for opportunities to do something different from your usual work (e.g., write an article, offer to teach a workshop, collaborate with a colleague on a project, ask someone new for assistance). If you are in a job that’s very routine, try changing the order in which you do your usual tasks.

- **Write about your experiences at work**: Even making brief notes about your experiences at work can be helpful. It can be a good way to record something important and move it out of the center of your attention. Over time it can also help you learn about your job and yourself.

- **Find ways to retain or regain perspective during the day**: Find little ways to connect briefly with things or thoughts that nurture or refresh your spirit and help you see work in the context of the bigger picture. Some things people often find helpful are looking at pictures of loved ones, praying or meditating, imagining themselves in a refreshing place, and breathing exercises. These activities can help you calm your body as well as ground your mind.

- **Invest in professional networks and relationships with colleagues**: Knowing people who do similar work and sharing resources, strategies, and stories help bridge the sense of isolation that is often a part...