



CTRI
CRISIS & TRAUMA
RESOURCE INSTITUTE

PowerPoint Slides for
On-Demand Webinar

Vicarious Trauma

Strategies for Resilience

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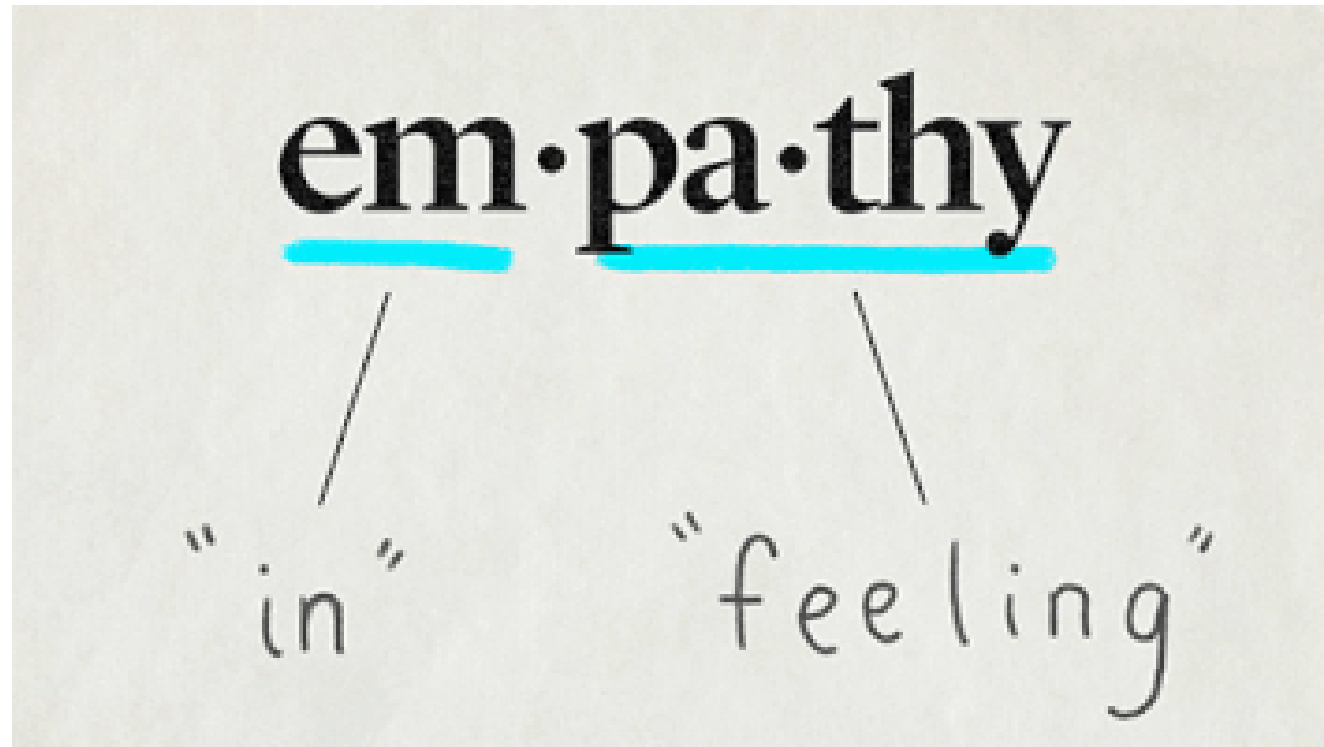
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WE ENVISION A WORLD WHERE EVERYONE IS TRAUMA-INFORMED.

GOALS FOR THE WEBINAR

- Describe the process of vicarious impact on a helper from working with others' trauma.
- Distinguish between the concepts of fatigue, secondary stress, vicarious trauma, and vicarious resilience.
- List four steps for healing and transforming vicarious impact into resilience.

AT THE HEART OF HELPING



THE GOOD NEWS

- Resonance → a whole-hearted and embodied shared experience
- Increases the capacity of both helper and client



RESONATING WITH SUFFERING



FLIGHT

FRIGHT



RESONATING WITH SUFFERING



FIGHT

FREEZE



POTENTIAL IMPACT

Secondary Trauma & Fatigue

- From repetitive exposure to others' trauma
- Helpers may experience similar symptoms
- “Cost of caring too much and too often”



**“In my work as a nurse in palliative care,
I am helping people die and supporting
their families. I often feel incredibly
drained, like I can’t give any more to
anyone, and I have a hard time stopping
thinking about my patients when I go
home at the end of the day.”**

NURSE, PALLIATIVE CARE

THE ACCUMULATION OF EXPOSURE

- Secondary stress
 - Compassion fatigue
- +
- Burnout – can be accumulated stress separate from exposure to trauma

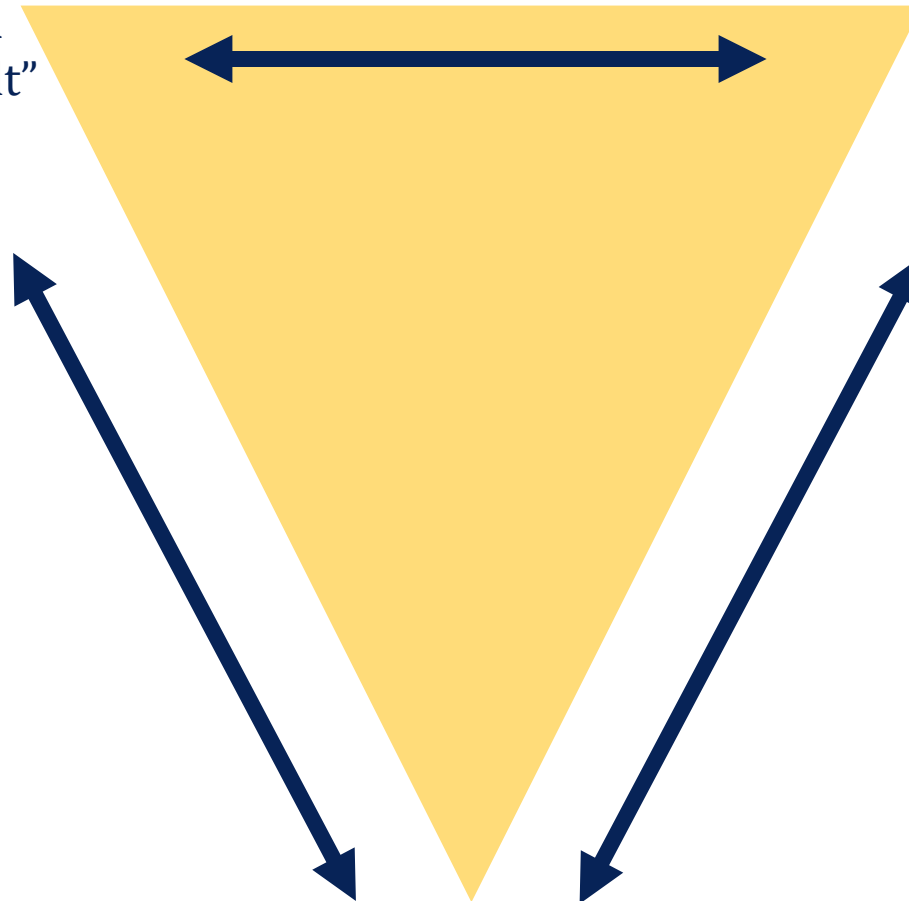
Can accumulate over time



UNCONSCIOUS EMPATHY

PERSECUTOR
"It's all your fault"

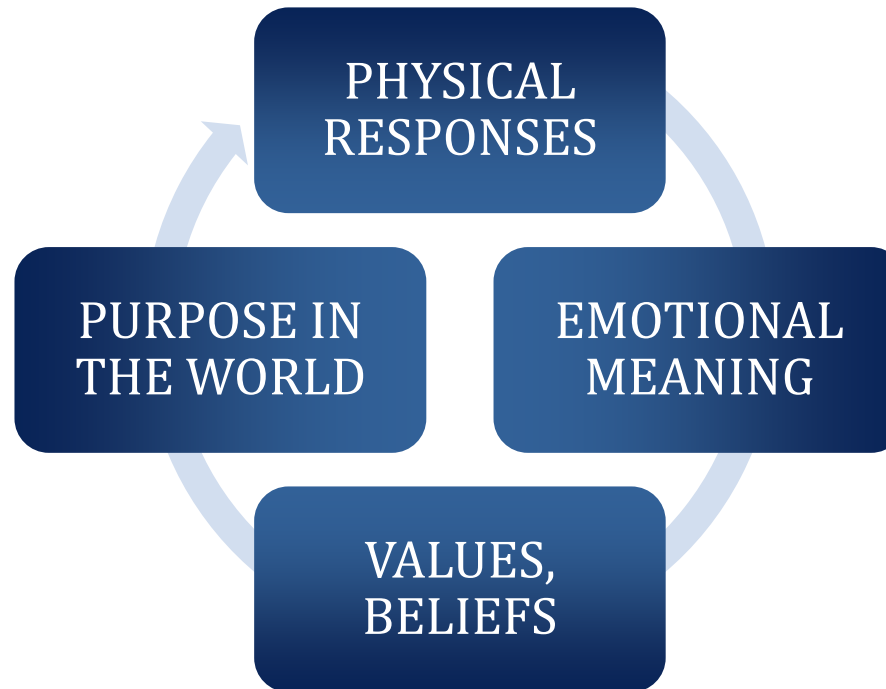
RESCUER
"Let me fix it!"



VICTIM
"I can't do anything about it!"

VICARIOUS IMPACT

Transformation of one's overall *internal environment*



VICARIOUS GROWTH

- Increased wonder and joy
- Feeling of greater connections with others
- Increased compassion and hope



STEP ONE: AWARENESS

- Recognize your own particular signs
- What does your *alarm* sound or feel like?
- Be proactive to assess health in many levels:
 - Individual
 - Workplace
 - Community & culture
 - Societal pressures

DIFFERENT KINDS OF IMPACT

Burnout	Compassion Fatigue	Vicarious Trauma
I don't care anymore	It hurts to care & I don't know if matters	I DO care – intensely
Loss of ideals & hope	Loss of energy & motivation	Possible loss of purpose; or over focus
Disengagement	Waning ability to engage	Over-engagement in some areas
Accumulates over time	Accumulates over time	Can be sudden; can wane with more experience

WORKPLACE EXPECTATIONS & RESOURCES

Important factors

- Clear expectations, policies
- Resources, training, time
- Work valued, fair compensation
- Support, clinical supervision
- Workplace culture & norms



COMMUNITY EXPECTATIONS & RESOURCES

Important factors:

- Historical & sustained community trauma
- Systemic oppressions
- Expectations of helpers
- Pressure of multiple roles for helpers
- Perception that helper's life should be problem-free

BROADER SOCIETAL PRESSURES

Important factors:

- Attitudes toward your role or clients
- Biases embedded in mainstream culture
- Systemic oppressions → “spiritual pain” when work feels opposed to what is humane or life-giving
- Helpers’ own identity and relation to positions of privilege or oppression

**“Society’s reactions to
traumatized people... seem to
be that bad things only happen
to people who deserve them.”**

VAN DER KOLK, MCFARLANE & WEISEATH, 1996

STEP TWO: TURN OFF THE ALARM

- Practice paying attention to your body's signals
- Build in rhythms of regulation
- Recognize your boundary
- Move, breathe, rest
- Nourishment, water, stretch
- Practice regularly, practice often



CONTAIN THE STORIES

- Develop a place and process for *you*
- Protect sacred space to reflect and tune in to self
- Talk about it within your work routine



STEP THREE: APPROACH MODE

- Building **safety** *internally* and *externally*
- Attending to how we use our efforts of **control**
 - *When do you overextend your influence or power?*
 - *When do you give up power too easily?*
- This may be in your work role or spill over into your personal life.



WHAT IS YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO RISK?

- Trauma changes boundaries
- Self-trust allows us to take risks
- Taking risks can build self-trust and allow us to structure more safety



BUILDING ESTEEM AND SELF-CARE

- Do you treat yourself with respect, care, & sincere kindness?
- Create the state of compassion
- Enrich and absorb it



INTIMACY – DO YOU LET OTHERS IN?

Personally

- Do you have a social net?
- Who is in your inner circle?
- Do you nurture these relationships?
- Are there some that are toxic and need to be adjusted?

Professionally

- Debrief with colleagues
- Humour and nurture
- Supervision
- Culture of openness to questions and vulnerability?

SELF CARE TO “WE” CARE

- Building collective sustainability
- Trauma tends to isolate people
- Create intentional ways of witnessing impact and fostering resilience in each other



STEP FOUR: EXPAND RESILIENCE

Dynamic process – ongoing and always changing

What have you learned from or been gifted by your clients?

Reflect with openness & gratitude



A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO RESILIENCE



WHAT BUILDS VICARIOUS RESILIENCE?

Intention and awareness

- Body sensitivity
- Attention to strengths & adaptation
- Trust in the process



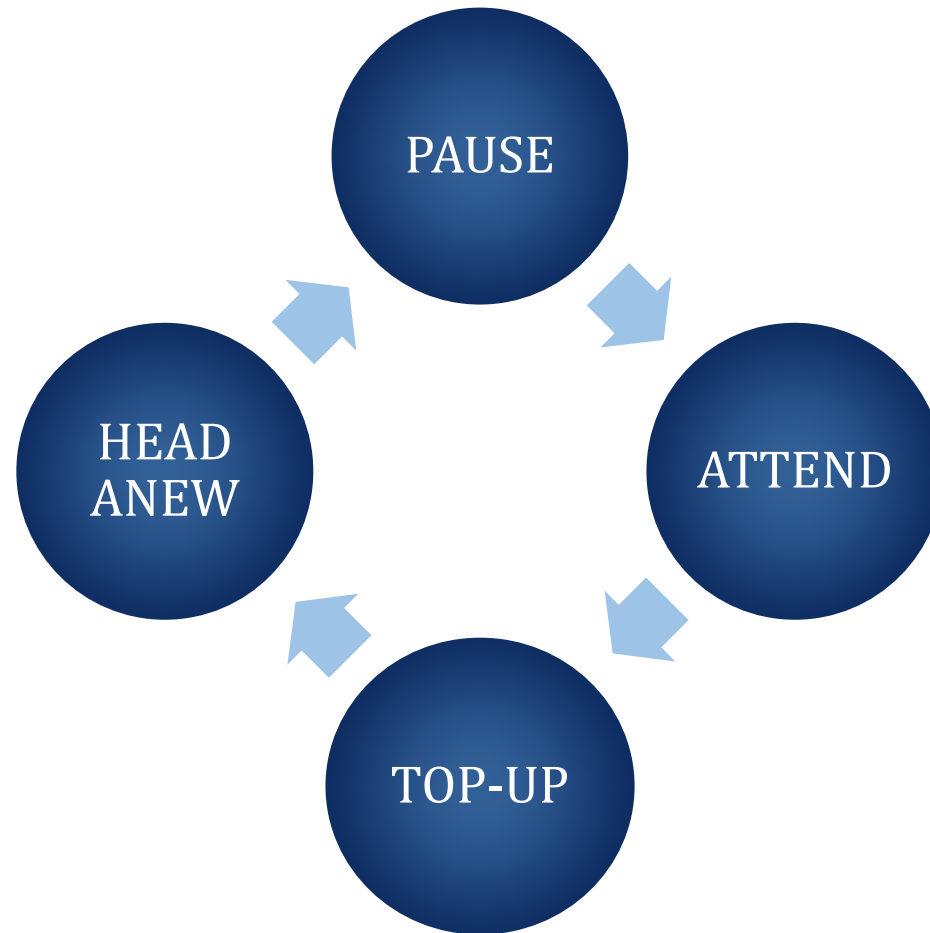
WHAT BUILDS VICARIOUS RESILIENCE?

Intention and awareness

- Commitment to one's own healing & learning
- Self & other kindness and compassion
- Acceptance & gratitude



PATH TO RESILIENCE



ADDITIONAL EVENTS & RESOURCES

- Other Public Workshops
- On-site Training
- Live and On-Demand Webinars
- Blog Articles
- Free Monthly Webinar

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