Office of Juvenile Justice & Delinquency Prevention

Tribal Youth Resource Center

Secondary Trauma & Self-Care

Alicia Mousseau, Ph.D.
Training & Technical Assistant
Tribal Youth Resource Center
National Native Children’s Trauma Center
Presentation Roadmap

• Importance of addressing Secondary Traumatic Stress
• Differences between Primary trauma and Secondary Trauma
• Understand the unique factors that contribute to Secondary Traumatic Stress for Indigenous professionals working in tribal communities
• 3 Stages of preventing and mitigating Secondary Traumatic Stress at the individual & agency levels
• Self-care ABC’s
Why Talk About Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)?

- **Personally**, it affects staff who are exposed to work-related trauma
- **Professionally**, it contributes to worker turnover
- **Organizationally**, it impacts an agency’s ability to provide services

Saakvitne and Pearlman (1996)
The Process of Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress: 3 Stages

• **Knowledge**: Acquisition of information and skills
  • Accomplished by participating in this presentation

• **Recognition**: Identifying risk and exposure
  • Accomplished with peer support, supervision, and reflection

• **Responding**: Application and maintenance
  • Accomplished with self-care, supervision, peer support, and action
Stage 1: Knowledge
Trauma in the Workplace

A single event, multiple events, or a set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically and emotionally harmful or threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual’s physical, social, emotional, or spiritual well-being.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event(s)</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Effect</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Isolated</td>
<td>Vulnerabilities</td>
<td>Physical</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chronic</td>
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<td>Social</td>
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<tr>
<td>Random or Predictable</td>
<td>Protective Factors</td>
<td>Emotional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historical</td>
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<td>Behavioral</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secondary/Vicarious</td>
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<td>Spiritual</td>
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</table>
Secondary Trauma

The natural emotions and behaviors resulting from exposure to traumatic material and the stress of helping a traumatized or suffering person.

“Secondary trauma is the result of bearing witness to a traumatic event or series of events.” – (Mathieu, 2011, p. 13)

Possible forms of exposure

- Hearing stories
- Seeing images or videos
- Reading details of a report or case file
- Listening to graphic court testimony
- Graphic debriefing by a colleague
- Comforting a youth whose loved one dies
- A client returning to an unsafe placement
Related Concepts

• **Vicarious Trauma**
  Negative transformation in the helper that results from empathic engagement with trauma survivors and their trauma material, combined with a commitment or responsibility to help them
  - Disrupted spirituality/world view impact
  - Loss of meaning and hope
  (Pearlman & Saakvitne, 1966)

• **Compassion Fatigue**
  “The overall experience of emotional and physical fatigue that social service professionals experience due to chronic use of empathy when treating patients who are suffering in some way”
  (Newell & MacNeil, 2010)

• **Burnout**
  Syndrome with dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced feelings of personal accomplishment
  (Maslach et al., 1996)
Secondary Traumatic Stress in Indian Country

• Few studies have explored the impact of STS among American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) population
• AI/AN children are more likely than any other race to experience violence
• Due to the likelihood of trauma exposure, it is likely AI/AN helping professional are impacted by STS
Factors That May Impact STS in AI/AN Service Providers

- Small communities comprised of mostly those who identify as AI/AN
- Individuals often have close kinship ties with intermediate and extended family
- Many providers are from the community they work in
- Few formal resources in the community to treat STS
- Communities with high rates of trauma may experience added stress to local providers and agencies
  - This can negatively impact planning and implementation of cross-collaboration efforts to address primary trauma
- Effects of collective Historical Trauma

“We know the community and their background and their family members and everything so we’re probably more impacted than if we were in a large city area”

Caringi, Stanick, Trautman, Crosby, Devlin & Adams, 2015, p. 249
Lateral Violence

• When people who are both victims of a situation of dominance, turn on each other rather than confront the system that oppresses them both

• Occurs when oppressed groups/individuals internalize feelings such as anger and rage, and manifest their feelings through behaviors such as gossip, jealousy, putdowns and blaming

“When individuals feel inferior, inadequate and afraid, they take on the qualities of the oppressor as a way of acquiring strength and an illusion of power”

-Jane Middleton-Moz

http://definitions.uslegal.com/l/lateral-violence/
Factors Impacting STS Involved in Justice Systems

- Exposure to evidence of violence against a plaintiff or stories of childhood abuse of the defendant
- Violent acts or threats directed at professional
  - In one study of judges in Pennsylvania, 52% had received threatening messages
- High case loads and caseloads involving human-induced trauma
- Handling of criminal, family or juvenile cases
- Unprepared lawyers
- Uncooperative clients
- Conflicts with other professionals; lack of peer support and opportunity to debrief cases involving traumatic material
- Criticism of decisions
- Inadequate resources to meet professional responsibilities and demands
- Making decisions that will have a major impact on the lives of the parties involved

Risk & Resiliency Factors

- Personality and coping style
- Current life circumstances
- Spiritual resources
- Work style
- Past trauma history
- Social support
- Subjective perception of the event

Marrow, Benamati, Decker, Griffin, Lott (2012)
Stage 2: Recognition
Assessment of STS

- Can range from formal to informal
  - Informal
    - Self-reflection based upon knowledge of symptomology
    - Reflective supervision
    - Debriefing

National Child Traumatic Stress Network (2011)
Formal Assessment of STS

- **Professional Quality of Life Measure (Pro-QOL)**
  - Assesses STS and related conditions of burnout, compassion fatigue, and compassion satisfaction

- **Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (STSS)**
  - Measures three domains of traumatic stress specifically associated with secondary exposure to trauma: intrusions, avoidance and arousal

- **Secondary Traumatic Stress Informed Organizational Assessment (STSI-OA)**
  - Evaluates the degree to which an organization is STS-informed and able to respond to the impact of STS in the workplace

1. ProQOL 5 [http://proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html](http://proqol.org/ProQol_Test.html)
3. Sprang et al. (2014)
Professional Quality of Life Scale (ProQOL)

Compasion Satisfaction and Compasion Fatigue
(ProQOL) Version 5 (2009)

When you [help] people you have direct contact with their lives. As you may have found, your compassion for those you [help] can affect you in positive and negative ways. Below are some questions about your experiences, both positive and negative, as a [helper]. Consider each of the following questions about you and your current work situation. Select the number that honestly reflects how frequently you experienced these things in the last 30 days.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1=Never</th>
<th>2=Rarely</th>
<th>3=Sometimes</th>
<th>4=Often</th>
<th>5=Very Often</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I am happy.</td>
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<td>2. I am preoccupied with more than one person I [help].</td>
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<td>3. I get satisfaction from being able to [help] people.</td>
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<td>4. I feel connected to others.</td>
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<td>5. I jump or am startled by unexpected sounds.</td>
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<td>6. I feel invigorated after working with those I [help].</td>
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<td>7. I find it difficult to separate my personal life from my life as a [helper].</td>
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<td>8. I am not as productive at work because I am losing sleep over traumatic experiences of a person I [help].</td>
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<td>9. I think that I might have been affected by the traumatic stress of those I [help].</td>
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<td>10. I feel trapped by my job as a [helper].</td>
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<td>11. Because of my [helping], I have felt &quot;on edge&quot; about various things.</td>
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<td>12. I like my work as a [helper].</td>
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<td>13. I feel depressed because of the traumatic experiences of the people I [help].</td>
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<td>14. I feel as though I am experiencing the trauma of someone I have [helped].</td>
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<td>15. I have beliefs that sustain me.</td>
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<td>16. I am pleased with how I am able to keep up with [helping] techniques and protocols.</td>
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<td>17. I am the person I always wanted to be.</td>
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<td>18. My work makes me feel satisfied.</td>
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<td>19. I feel worn out because of my work as a [helper].</td>
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<td>20. I have happy thoughts and feelings about those I [help]. and how I could help them.</td>
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<td>22. I believe I can make a difference through my work.</td>
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<td>23. I avoid certain activities or situations because they remind me of frightening experiences of the people I [help].</td>
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<td>24. I am proud of what I can do to [help].</td>
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<td>25. As a result of my [helping], I have intrusive, frightening thoughts.</td>
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<td>26. I feel &quot;bogged down&quot; by the system.</td>
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<td>27. I have thoughts that I am a &quot;success&quot; as a [helper].</td>
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<td>28. I can't recall important parts of my work with trauma victims.</td>
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<td>29. I am a very caring person.</td>
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<td>30. I am happy that I chose to do this work.</td>
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Stress Warning Signs

- Being afraid to take time away from your daily activities
- Thinking the worst in every situation
- Reacting disproportionately
- Never taking a vacation
- Forgetting why you do your job
- Decreased performance at work
- Constantly not getting enough sleep
- Decreased social life

The National Center on Family Homelessness, 2008
Symptoms of STS

- Physical
- Emotional
- Behavioral
- Spiritual
- Cognitive
- Relational
Emotional Indicators of STS

- Anger
- Sadness
- Prolonged grief
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Hopelessness
- Emotional numbing
Physical Indicators of STS

- Headaches
- Stomachaches
- Lethargy
- Hyper-arousal
- Compromised immune system
- Sleep troubles
- Breathing troubles
Personal Indicators of STS

- Tendency to blame, mistrust
- Mood swings
- Irritability, intolerance
- Cynicism
- Isolation from family and friends
- Loss of support network
Workplace Indicators of STS

- Avoidance of certain clients, places, or situations
- Missed appointments
- Tardiness
- Lack of motivation
- Quick to anger and become argumentative
- Reduced productivity
Indicators within the Judicial System

High levels of stress may impede a judge/attorneys ability to:

• Consider relevant evidence
• May not recognize when a jury is not able to understand particularly complicated instructions
• Recognize when the court process (jurors, plaintiffs, defendants) need protection from potential stressors

Indicators within the Judicial System

Impact on clients

• Cognitive biases resulting from attorneys' secondary traumatic stress when working with clients may appear within the legal community as normative rather than bias-based or inappropriate.

• STS may render an attorney unfit to represent certain clients.
  • For someone overwhelmed by STS, it may be difficult to objectively assess material or substantial impairment v. non-material impairment.

Ways in Which My Life is Affected by Stress

• Ways in which my body reacts to stress?

• Ways in which my personal life is affected by stress?

• Ways in which my professional life is affected by stress?
Stage 3: Response
“Self-care is an ethical imperative. We have an obligation to our clients— as well as to ourselves, our colleagues, and our loved ones—not to be damaged by the work we do.”

- Saakvtne and Pearlman (1996)

The ABC’s of Self-Care

• Awareness
• Balance
• Connection

Marrow, Benamati, Decker, Griffin, Lott (2012)
Awareness
Activity: Between Zen and the End

- What does your Zen look like?
- What does your end look like?
- What are some of your warning signs that you are moving out of Zen and towards the end?

– (Klemann, 2010)
Top 10 Signs You’re Too Stressed

1. You find yourself hoping to get the flu, just so you have a reason to stay in bed for a day.
2. Your children shudder in fear when your boss’s name is mentioned.
3. You’ve wondered (more than once) if your cell phone would float when hurled into a river.
4. You start using a pencil instead of a pen to put dates with your partner in your schedule.
5. Medical journals or case files have become “light bedtime reading.”
6. Your best friends think you’ve moved away because they haven’t heard from you in so long.
7. You consider Red Bull a part of a balanced diet.
8. You fall asleep during trips to the dentist’s office, because it’s the only time you put your feet up.
9. You’re too tired to remember the name of your dog.
10. It takes you six days of vacation to even begin to feel relaxed, and six minutes back in the office to make you forget that you took a vacation at all.
Organizational Stress: Warning Signs

- High rates of staff turnover
- High rate of absences or tardiness
- Lack of communication and frequent miscommunication between co-workers and/or departments
- Less energy and motivation to do “extra” or to take sufficient time to do quality work as an organization
- A lack of emotional and/or physical safety in the organization
- Increased interpersonal conflicts between co-workers and/or between various parts of the organization
- Incomplete work
- Poor quality of work or service delivery
- Increase in customer/client complaints
- A negative atmosphere/low morale
- Missed deadlines

— (The National Center on Family Homelessness, 2008)
Balance
Personal Balance & Self-Care Activity

- Physical
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Professional
- Social
Professional Balance

- Maintain awareness of both the present moment and the larger context
- Accept limitations
- Focus on process rather than outcomes
- Seek help (peer or supervisory) after recognizing a problem
- Take advantage of individual professional help outside of work
- Put things in perspective
- Find the positive aspects of your job
- Acknowledge the negative parts of your job
Working Protectively by Making Adjustments to Practice

• Manage boundaries
• Employ both empathy and boundaries when relating to clients
• Process responses to clients in professional consultation (supervision)
• Do something very different between meetings with clients
• Attend to your own bodily responses and experiences
Connection
A Relationship Checklist

- **Part 1**: Who are you connected to? – List all the relationships and connections you maintain with people through the week, both in and outside of work.

- **Part 2**: The Relationship Pie – draw a circle and create space for everyone you are connected to based on the portion of time you spend with each person or group.

- **Part 3**: Assess how you are already connected and ideas for creating and sustaining relationships so they continue to be a source of strength for you.
Build in Supports on the Organizational Level

- Collegial support
- Forums to address STS
- Respect for workers
- Wellness activities
- Staff celebrations
- Full use of vacation leave
- High quality supervision
- Formalized debriefing process
High-Quality Supervision Makes Possible:

• Effective casework
• Clearly defined next steps and limits
• Increased provision of services
• Stronger assessment skills
• Stronger engagement skills
• Improvements in client goal attainment
Challenges to Self-Care

• Making time when all around you people seem to need your help.
• Feelings of guilt and shame for taking time for yourself.
• Believing those around you are doing fine, so you should be doing fine too.
• Lack of modeling or support from administration for self-care activities.
Holistic Plan of Self-Care

- Physical
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Professional
- Social
Maximize Positive Energy and Minimize the Negative

- Make meaning of trauma experiences
  - Cultural ceremony
  - Western methods of therapy
  - Post traumatic growth
- Incorporate the strengths and resiliencies inherent in tribal communities and American Indian culture
Organizational Strategies: Build in Supports

- Collegial support
- Forums to address STS
- Supervision availability
- Respect for workers
- Resources: mental health benefits, space, time

- Wellness activities
- Opportunities for staff celebrations
- Encourage use of vacation leave
- Offer mindfulness activities

Identify unhelpful thoughts + Reframe with helpful thoughts = Optimism

ACS Training Academy
Organizational Strategies: Understand What We Can’t Change

- Lower case loads
- Changing the past experiences of youth we work with
- Decrease our paperwork
# Self-Care Worksheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mind</th>
<th>Body</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current Practice</td>
<td>Current Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Practice</td>
<td>New Practice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Emotions</th>
<th>Spirit</th>
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<tr>
<td>Current Practice</td>
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</tr>
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<td>New Practice</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Thank you for your participation

Questions?
The Tribal Law and Policy Institute is a Native owned and operated non-profit dedicated to providing free publication resources, comprehensive training, and technical assistance for Native nations and tribal justice systems.

The Tribal Youth Resource Center provides culturally based and trauma informed training, support and technical assistance to all OJJDP-funded Tribal Youth Programs & Tribal Juvenile Healing to Wellness Courts grantees, as well as all interested federally recognized tribes.

Request Training & Technical Assistance:

Please visit: www.TribalYouth.org
Tribal Youth Resource Center | TribalYouth.org
(323) 650-5467 | TribalYouth@TLPI.org
8235 Santa Monica Blvd., Suite 211
West Hollywood, CA 90046