Objectives

- Define Vicarious Trauma
- Discuss the Impact of Vicarious Trauma on advocates
- Explore individual self care strategies
- Explore organizational self care strategies
- Resources & Handouts

Why VT: In our own words

we are dying, we are social activist on the front lines
transforming the world with a back pack full of fear , guilt, shame, loneliness, resentment and anger that is killing us.

Dayanara Marte
Defining trauma?

How do you define vicarious/secondary trauma?

Vicarious trauma

the process of change that happens because you care about other people who have been hurt, and feel committed or responsible to help them.

Over time this process can lead to changes in your psychological, physical, and spiritual well-being.

A Transformation in the self of a trauma worker or helper that results from empathic engagement with traumatized clients and their reports of traumatic experiences.

Advocates have shared...

Over time, professionals working with survivors can develop a new view in some concerning ways:

- The world is a dangerous place
- People are not to be trusted

And some trauma survival traits can appear:

- Numbing
- Disengagement/Avoidance
- Hyper vigilance
- Physical illness
- Addiction
What the research tells us

- Impacts our ability as caregivers (Bober et al., 2005)
- Leads to higher rates of turnover (Van Hook, 2008)
- Self care strategies led to lower levels of secondary trauma & reduced turnover (Gordon, 2001)
- We are wounded and we heal in community (Bonnie Badenoch, 2016)
- We are taking in the equivalent of 174 newspapers information each day (Levitin, 2014)

What do you notice? How does trauma impact you and your co-workers?

Questions That Promote Cognitive Restructuring:

- Are these thoughts helpful?
- Do these thoughts contain thinking strategies?
- Are there alternative explanations?
- What would one say to a friend in this situation?
- How did one learn to think this way?
Barriers to self care
- Inability to embrace complexity
- Diminished capacity
- Hyper vigilance
- A sense that one can never do enough
- Feeling Helpless and hopeless
- Grandiosity ones identity becomes solely about work
- Addictions

More than half full!
- “Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.” — A Burst of Light: Essays
- “You have to learn to love yourself before you can love me or accept my loving.” — Eye to Eye: Black Women, Hatred, and Anger," Sisit [sic] Outsider

Core Strategies for Healing Trauma
- Breathing
- Pleasant Activities
- Diet and Nutrition
- Exercise
- Managing Procrastination
- Social Network
- Sleep Hygiene
Belly Breathing

- Herbert Benson’s Relaxation Response
- Put arms behind chair for three minutes
- Lungs increase by 10 times capacity
- Stomach extends itself releasing 90 percent of body’s stored serotonin
- Stomach presses on Vagus nerve

Pleasant Activities

- Identify simple, realistic and achievable pleasant activity to implement.
- Select date and time to do activity.
- Have backup time to set the pleasant activity if it does not get completed.
- Source: Control Your Depression by Lewinsohn

Healthy Eating Habits

- Identify eating patterns and strategies
- Under eating patterns
- Over eating patterns
- Drugs and alcohol patterns
- Role of caffeine with depression/anxiety
- Identify: simple, realistic and achievable goals
Exercise
- Identify exercise: type and amount
- Set start date/start time
- Goals:
  - Simple
  - Realistic
  - Achievable

Managing Procrastination
- Set simple, realistic and achievable goals
- Set start time and date not a deadline
- Motivation activates action
- Action activates motivation

Social Network
- Too Loose
- Too Dense
- Red Flag for under 5 people
- Address how to utilize one’s network
Sleep Hygiene

- How much sleep do you need?
- How much sleep do you get?
- Factor of lifestyle affecting sleep
- Medical factors to sleep
- Problem solving sleep issues

Organizational Strategies

- Regular and ongoing meetings with trauma-informed supervisors, co-workers, volunteers, and board of directors
- Policies and practices that support well-care
- Clear agency mission, values statements, and practices to address microaggressions and staff conflict
- Scheduled retreats
- Normalize engagement, discussion, and connection
- Job duties that are not trauma-related
  - EAP
  - Private counseling
  - Self-care cohorts and planning committees

Create your plan

- Be specific
- Consider your strengths and challenges
- Consider your capacity
- Consider your community supports
- Review & revise as needed
- Be gentle, curious, and consistent
Thank you for all you do to take care of yourself and others.

Resources
- Move to End Violence: 21-day Self-care challenge
- Move to End Violence: Finding your purpose: Tools for Transformational Leadership
  http://www.movetoendviolence.org/resources/finding-purpose-tools-transformational-leadership-development/
- UCLA Mindful Awareness Resource Center:
  http://marc.ucla.edu/body.cfm?id=22
- Living Well Website, Dr. David Lisak video on Neurobiology of Trauma:
- OCADV anti-racist organizational practices document:

The National Resource Center on Domestic Violence (www.nrcdv.org) provides a wide range of free, comprehensive, and individualized technical assistance, training, and specialized resource materials. You can access our publications online from the National Online Resource Center on Violence Against Women (VAWnet).

Contact us:
1-800-537-2238
nrcdvta@nrcdv.org

Online TA Request Form:
www.nrcdv.org/Tarequest.php