

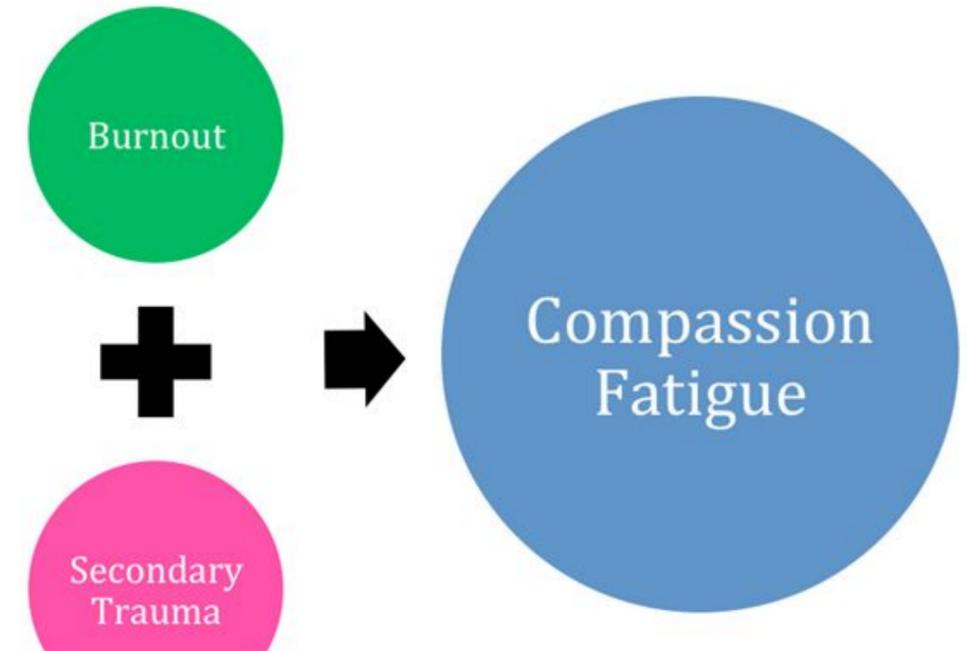


COMPASSION FATIGUE

Understanding the Relationship between Trauma, Empathy & Burnout

As elucidated emotional empathy enriches our relationships with others, but it becomes a problem when we are overwhelmed by our emotional response to other people's distress, sometimes leading to burnout or vicarious (secondary) trauma. Emotional empathy can also distract us from having an accurate judgment of what the other person needs. Our capacity to perceive and resonate with others' suffering, allows us to feel and understand their pain. This skill in responding mindfully to others' pain results in us remaining equanimous whilst also motivating us to respond with compassion.

The ability to demonstrate compassion and kindness to ourselves and others and express a deep understanding of what they are experiencing or going through is a wonderful skill. We must, however, take steps to ensure ongoing feelings of empathy towards others don't tip us over the edge where we come out of our window of tolerance. Although empathy is an important skill in social connection, leadership, and career success, it is important to find a balance. This is where mindfulness can help.

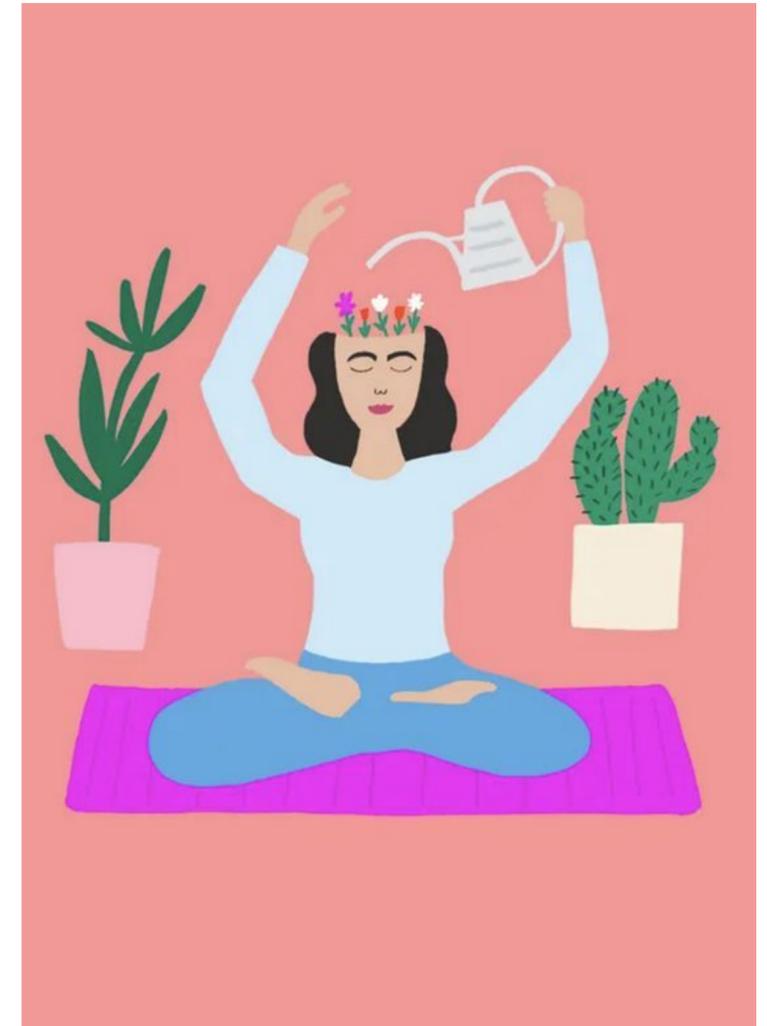


Minimizing the Impact of Secondary Trauma

Vicarious trauma (or secondary trauma) refers to an individual's psycho-emotional reactions due to his or her exposure to others' traumatic experiences. For professionals who are working with traumatized populations, vicarious trauma becomes a much more serious issue because it can potentially compromise the individuals' health and well-being.

Mindfulness can help us to overcome emotional exhaustion and vicarious trauma. We can learn effective self-directed techniques and tools to maintain *equanimity* in the face of danger and human suffering, thereby reducing the incidence of secondary or vicarious trauma, PTSD, burnout, or other stress-related health concerns.

Mindfulness is a useful tool for regulating emotions by increasing awareness and developing *flexibility* and *adaptability* in responding to our own emotional experiences. Mindfulness encourages acceptance rather than avoidance of our experiences and decreases rumination about past and future events that can exhaust our energy. When we are mindful and accept sensations and thoughts that arise, we likely reduce our emotional numbing.



VICARIOUS TRAUMA

VIPP TRAINING DR KAREN GRANT



IN THE SETTLEMENT SECTOR - OUR STRESS IS UNRECOGNIZED BY THE PUBLIC

WE HAVE TO TAKE CARE of each other

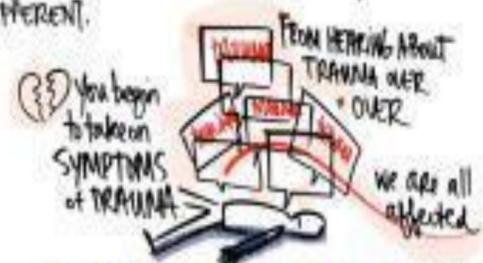
RISK:



Do you WANT a HELPLESS client?

LIFE EXPERIENCE COMPOUND THEIR PERILS of 'NO CONTROL'

your JOB: HELP them REMEMBER THEIR SKILLS



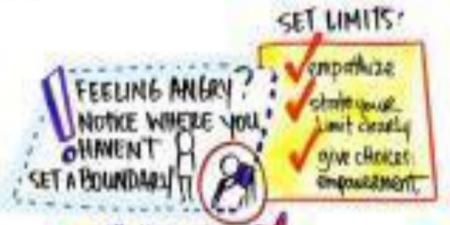
♥ YOUR REACTIONS CHANGE because you CARE ♥

The GOOD NEWS:

vicarious trauma IS NOT PERMANENT!

A.B.C.

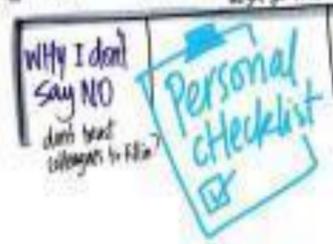
AWARENESS BALANCE CONNECTION



THE HARDEST AREA THE IMMIGRATION SETTLEMENT WORKERS



RISKY BEHAVIOUR	WHY?	OUTCOME	BENEFIT if YOU STOP
showing up sick	don't let client down	colleagues are frustrated from us not getting sick	get well faster



Vulnerable Immigrant Population Program @VIPP Training Day

Early signs of internal and external signals of trauma outside the window of tolerance

Before we can respond to trauma or burnout, we first need to recognize it. It is important to notice the nonverbal cues that someone is struggling with traumatic stress. We can assess trauma through direct conversation (i.e. reading facial expressions and noticing nonverbal cues) as well as by paying attention to the following basic internal and external signals that suggest someone may be experiencing trauma and outside of their window of tolerance:

- Muscle tone extremely slack (collapsed, noticeably flat affect)
- Muscle tone extremely rigid
- Noticeably pale skin tone
- Hyperventilation
- Exaggerated startle response
- Excessive sweating
- Noticeable dissociation (person appears highly disconnected from their body)
- Person reports feeling they are a long way away
- Person cannot hear our voice and/or constantly asks others to repeat questions
- Person is staring off into space without blinking and not responding to any questions
- Person loses sense of time and cannot remember what happened previously
- Consciousness appears to fluctuate—you notice the person “isn’t there” or seems preoccupied with internal distraction
- Person cannot maintain continuity of story or experience in conversation (e.g., jumping from topic to topic)
- In conversation with the individual who is experiencing trauma, you may begin to feel foggy, confused, or like you’re floating. This can be a sign that the person you’re connected with is dissociating
- Emotional volatility (enraged, excessive crying, terror)
- Disorganised speech or slurring words
- Reports of blurred vision
- Inability to make eye contact during interviews/interactions
- Reports of flashbacks, nightmares, or intrusive thoughts



Early Warning Signs of Vicarious Trauma, Burnout and Empathic Distress Fatigue.

- Feeling emotionally exhausted and drained (unable to perform basic tasks). Nothing left in the tank.
- Depression, guilt
- Increased negative thought patterns
- Sense of hopelessness
- Reduced ability to feel empathy towards other individuals, including clients, employees, or family/friends
- A sense of resentment towards demands being put on you at work and home/ decreased job satisfaction
- Feeling unappreciated
- Difficulty concentrating or focusing
- Change in appetite or sleep habits
- Frequent headaches or muscle pain
- Lowered immunity, frequent illnesses
- Increased conflict in relationships
- Withdrawal from friends/ family emotionally
- Feeling trapped and defeated
- Detachment, feeling alone in the world
- Loss of motivation, passion, or drive
- Feeling nothing (apathy).

