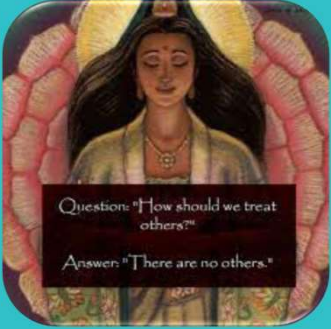




# CARING FOR THE TEAM: VICARIOUS TRAUMA, RESILIENCE AND WELLNESS

EARLY CHILDHOOD MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE SEPTEMBER 23, 2021





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## OBJECTIVES



- At the end of this Session the participant will be able to:
  - Differentiate Stress, Trauma, Secondary Trauma, Vicarious Trauma (VT) and burn-out.
  - Identify the areas of the brain that are affected by stress and trauma and how they vary in responsiveness.
  - Explore how stress and trauma affects behavior in youth and families and potentially in ourselves and our teams.
  - Identify who is at risk of VT.
  - Explore ways to mediate the effects of VT, in yourselves and your team.
  - Identify the important components and values of your own life's journey.
  - Identify ways to increase resiliency for you and your team.
  - Create an individualized VT wellness self-care plan.


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POLL



■ Signs of Stress

■ Choose all that apply for each of the 4 domains.



3

SIGNS OF STRESS IN OURSELVES AND OUR TEAM



CURRENT EVENTS

• Stressors

• Fires

• Race relations

• COVID-19


• Politics

■ Trauma Work

■ Job stressors

■ Family needs...etc.

SIGNS OF STRESS



PHYSICAL

• Palpitations

• Lump in throat

• Low energy


• Insomnia

• Unexplained pains

• Dry mouth

• Difficulty in swallowing

• Nervousness & shivering



EMOTIONAL

• Agitation

• Irritability


• Depression

• Loneliness

• Low Self Esteem

• Mood Swings

• Difficulty to relax



BEHAVIOURAL

• Constant anxiety

• Racing thoughts

• Forgetfulness

• Dis-organization

• Inability to focus

• Poor judgement

• Increased pessimism



PSYCHOLOGICAL

• Fidgeting, pacing

• Procrastination

• Substance abuse

• Nail Biting

• Increased isolation

• Relationship issues

• Avoiding responsibilities

• Unbalanced appetite

■ \*\*\*Too much at once


[https://www.google.com/search?q=signs+of+stress&rlz=1C1GCEA\\_enUS906US906&sxrf=ALeK01610dwydBD\\_b\\_ufH4Fj11Rg98LA1599608263313&source=inms&itbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi-0MGS3drAHUO7awKHQNIC68Q\\_AUoAXoEABQAw&biw=1920&bih=937&safe=active&ssui=on#imgsrc=OFD4-loT3vg1QM](https://www.google.com/search?q=signs+of+stress&rlz=1C1GCEA_enUS906US906&sxrf=ALeK01610dwydBD_b_ufH4Fj11Rg98LA1599608263313&source=inms&itbm=isch&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwi-0MGS3drAHUO7awKHQNIC68Q_AUoAXoEABQAw&biw=1920&bih=937&safe=active&ssui=on#imgsrc=OFD4-loT3vg1QM)

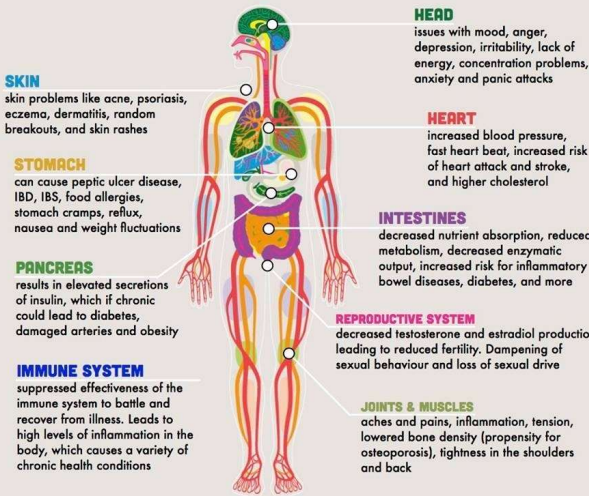
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# How **STRESS** Affects The **BODY**

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**SKIN**  
skin problems like acne, psoriasis, eczema, dermatitis, random breakouts, and skin rashes

**STOMACH**  
can cause peptic ulcer disease, IBD, IBS, food allergies, stomach cramps, reflux, nausea and weight fluctuations

**PANCREAS**  
results in elevated secretions of insulin, which if chronic could lead to diabetes, damaged arteries and obesity

**IMMUNE SYSTEM**  
suppressed effectiveness of the immune system to battle and recover from illness. Leads to high levels of inflammation in the body, which causes a variety of chronic health conditions

**HEAD**  
issues with mood, anger, depression, irritability, lack of energy, concentration problems, anxiety and panic attacks

**HEART**  
increased blood pressure, fast heart beat, increased risk of heart attack and stroke, and higher cholesterol

**INTESTINES**  
decreased nutrient absorption, reduced metabolism, decreased enzymatic output, increased risk for inflammatory bowel diseases, diabetes, and more



**REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM**  
decreased testosterone and estradiol production leading to reduced fertility. Dampening of sexual behaviour and loss of sexual drive

**JOINTS & MUSCLES**  
aches and pains, inflammation, tension, lowered bone density (propensity for osteoporosis), tightness in the shoulders and back

<http://allthingsnaturalorganic.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/image5.jpg>

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# SECONDARY/VICARIOUS TRAUMATIC STRESS



## Secondary Traumatic Stress and Related Conditions: Sorting One from Another

**Secondary Traumatic Stress** refers to the presence of PTSD symptoms caused by at least one indirect exposure to traumatic material. Several other terms capture elements of this definition but are not all interchangeable with it.

**Compassion fatigue**, a less stigmatizing way to describe secondary traumatic stress, has been used interchangeably with the term.

**Compassion satisfaction** refers to the positive feelings derived from competent performance as a trauma professionals. It is characterized by positive relationships with colleagues, and the conviction that one's work makes a meaningful contribution to clients and society.



**Vicarious trauma** refers to changes in the inner experience of the therapist resulting from empathic engagement with a traumatized client. It is a theoretical term that focuses less on trauma symptoms and more on the covert cognitive changes that occur following cumulative exposure to another person's traumatic material.

**Burnout** is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced feeling of personal accomplishment. While it is also work-related, burnout develops as a result of general occupational stress; the terms is not used to describe the effects of indirect trauma exposure specifically.

<http://www.nctsn.org/resources/topics/secondary-traumatic-stress>

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# SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF VICARIOUS TRAUMA





- Emotional numbing
- Social withdrawal
- Work-related nightmares
- Feelings of despair and hopelessness
- Loss of sense of spirituality
- More negative view of the world
- Reduced sense of respect for your clients
- Loss of enjoyment of sexual activity
- No time or energy for yourself
- Finding that you talk about work all the time (can't escape)
- Sense of disconnection from your loved ones
- Increased sense of danger (reduced sense of safety)

- Increased illness or fatigue
- Increased absenteeism
- Greater problems with boundaries
- Difficulties making decisions
- Reduced productivity
- Reduced motivation for your work
- Loss of sense of control over your work and your life
- Lowered self esteem, lowered sense of competence in your work
- Difficulties trusting others
- Lessened interest in spending time alone
- Less time spent reflecting on your experiences
- Increased fear for safety of children or loved ones
- Sense of cynicism or pessimism

<https://www.blueknot.org.au/Workers-Practitioners/For-Health-Professionals/Resources-for-Health-Professionals/Vicarious-Traumatization>

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# WHO IS AT RISK FOR SECONDARY OR VICARIOUS TRAUMATIC STRESS?



- The development of secondary traumatic stress is recognized as a common occupational hazard for **professionals working with traumatized children**.
- Studies show that from 6% to 26% of **therapists** working with traumatized populations, and
- Up to 50% of **child welfare workers**, are at high risk of secondary traumatic stress or the related conditions of PTSD and vicarious trauma.
- Any professional who works directly with traumatized children, and is in a position to hear the recounting of traumatic experiences, is at risk of traumatic stress.
- Risk appears to be **greater** among individuals who are highly empathetic by nature or have unresolved personal trauma.
- Risk is also higher for professionals who carry a **heavy caseload of traumatized children**; are **socially or organizationally isolated**; or feel professionally compromised due to **inadequate training**.
- **First Responders: Police Officers, Emergency Medical Technicians, Emergency Room Personnel, Nurses, Fire Fighters**

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OFFICIAL FILM TRAILER – PORTRAITS OF PROFESSIONAL CAREGIVERS: THEIR PASSION. THEIR PAIN.

LIVE WELL  
SAN DIEGO



<https://youtu.be/Zs9IHpcjVel>



<https://thumbs.dreamstime.com/z/helping-hands-abstract-design-isolated-white-background-53157679.jpg>

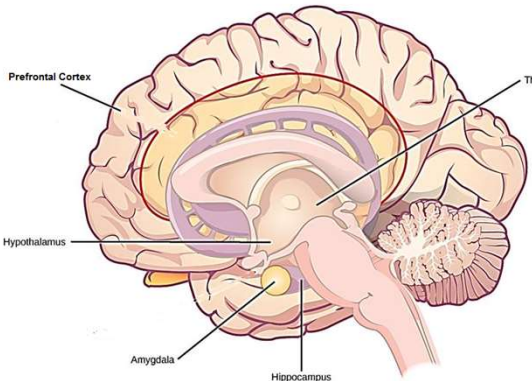
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What Happens to the Brain during a Traumatic Event?

LIVE WELL  
SAN DIEGO

- Fight or Flight Response stays activated (sympathetic response)
- Amygdala is overstimulated
- Hippocampus/memories functioning lessened
- Frontal lobe/executive Functioning lessened
- These functions are said to have become dysregulated



PTSD and the Brain



[http://vaveteran.org/33-5/33-5\\_reidlyon.html](http://vaveteran.org/33-5/33-5_reidlyon.html)

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# Emotional Dysregulation

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- Exaggerated emotional response to stimuli
- Easier to become aroused/vigilant
- Trade-off between evaluation of potential threats vs. ability to utilize higher-level brain functions
- Decreased ability to voluntarily shift attention
- Mood and anxiety symptoms and behavioral symptoms surface
  - *We want to learn how to shift from sympathetic nervous system activation to parasympathetic nervous system activation*

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# TRAUMA-INFORMED CARE FOR OURSELVES AND OUR TEAM MEMBERS

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- Trauma-Informed Care
  - Our goals are to:
    - provide support and understanding,
    - while helping trauma survivors regain a sense of control and empowerment,
    - and to avoid unwittingly re-traumatizing each other
    - *"Trauma-informed systems and services minimize the risk of re-traumatizing individuals and/or families, and promote safety, self-care, and resiliency." HHSA*

<https://blogs.psychcentral.com/caregivers/2015/06/7-ways-to-avoid-re-traumatizing-a-trauma-victim/>

<http://traumainformedcareproject.org/>


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Managing Stress



Joys

Meaning



Values

Emotional Safety Plan

1.

2.



3.

4.

5.

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Draw Grid: Values that Guide Your Life





Values	%	R

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LIFE'S JOURNEY: KNOW YOURSELF





KNOW YOURSELF



- Understanding Yourself:
  - Who are you?
  - What are your Values?
  - What is important to you?
  - Who/What do you hope to become?
- Activity: Vertical Line
  - Solo Activity
- Living your values.

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LIFE'S JOURNEY: THE JOYS!



WHAT BRINGS YOU JOY 😊



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## KNOW YOUR WHY/MEANING



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SAN DIEGO

- Why do you do this work?
- What Brings Meaning to your work?
- Add to tree.

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## LIFE'S JOURNEY: WELLNESS





LIVE WELL  
SAN DIEGO



### CONCEPTUALIZE WELLNESS

- Embrace wellness:
  - Want Lifestyle patterns that represent health that are beyond a problem focus.
  - Embrace a personal and professional commitment to your own wellness and self-care. Not just about self-care though is it?
  - Many activities can also help you down-regulate. Let's explore.
- Activity – Wellness inventory – Large group
  - What do you do to take care of yourself? Nurture yourself?
    - Mental
    - Physical
    - Social
    - Emotional
    - Spiritual

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WELLNESS INVENTORY					    LIVE WELL SAN DIEGO
Mental/Cognitive	Physical	Social	Emotional	Spiritual	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I can do this.</li><li>• This too shall pass.</li><li>• You got this.</li><li>• - to +</li><li>• Helps the children/families</li><li>• Recognize rumination – can I fix it right now?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Exercise</li><li>• Hiking</li><li>• Walking</li><li>• Eating</li><li>• Sleeping</li><li>• Dr. Appts.</li><li>• 5 senses – 5 things you see, 4 things you hear, 3 things you can touch, 2 things you smell, 1 thing you taste.</li><li>• Breathing – heart rate slows as breathe out</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Family</li><li>• Friends</li><li>• Crafting</li><li>• Hobbies</li><li>• Community Events</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Cry/<b>Feel</b> Emotions</li><li>• Therapist/healer</li><li>• Pets</li><li>• Friends</li><li>• Family</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meditation</li><li>• Mindfulness</li><li>• Faith/Prayer/Gatherings</li><li>• Song/Music</li><li>• Nature</li><li>• Alternative medicine</li></ul>	

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LIFE’S JOURNEY: RESILIENCY		    LIVE WELL SAN DIEGO
EMBRACE RESILIENCE		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Embrace Resilience:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Resilience is the ability to restore balance following a difficult experience and integrate it into the backdrop of one’s total life experience.</li><li>▪ Can difficult events give us strength, wisdom, teach us patience, perseverance, empathy?</li></ul></li><li>▪ Find Meaning:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Create meaning – what do you believe in/value?</li><li>▪ Infuse meaning in your current activities</li><li>▪ Approach life wholeheartedly</li><li>▪ Challenge negative beliefs</li><li>▪ Participate in community/team building</li></ul></li></ul>		

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EMOTIONAL SAFETY PLAN



DEVELOP AN EMOTIONAL SAFETY PLAN

- Be specific
  - Movie, book, TV show, blanket, old loved sweatshirt
  - Food/Cooking
  - Socializing – list of go to friends – helps down-regulate
  - Cognitive techniques to help down-regulate, this too shall pass
  - Actions that are tried and true – to help down-regulate
    - Walk, dance, sing, beach, bathe, journal
  - At work –what can you do?
    - Remind self of why we are here, bring whole heart
    - Team meetings to reinforce togetherness, we got this, wholeheartedly.
    - Watch cynicism, negativity
    - Create a TEAM resiliency Tree ☺
    - Create joyful moments/activities

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Resiliency Plan (self or team!)



Cultivate Joys



Live your Values

Know your Why/Meaning:  
*Protect Children, Help Families, Make the World a Better Place, etc.*



Emotional Safety Plan

1. BFF at Work/Home – Go to Person
2. Teaming – video conferencing, etc.
3. Supervisor
3. Take a Walk/Run
4. Find a Quiet Place/Meditate/Mindfulness
5. Deep Breathe
6. Gratitude
7. Remind Self of Why/Meaning
8. Bring whole heart
9. Cognitive Strategies that work for you

It will get better, I have support, I can do this, what can I learn from this?

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LIVE AN AUTHENTIC LIFE:  
BE THE BEAUTIFUL HUMAN YOU ARE 😊



BE AUTHENTIC

- Authenticity:
  - Be Genuine.
  - Know who you are and what's important to you as a human being.
  - Attain balance to honor yourself and your beliefs
  - Know what brings you joy!
  - Embrace resiliency. What brings you hope? What keeps you going?
  - Embrace wellness
  - Find meaning for yourself
  - Develop an emotional safety plan
  - Take these exercises back to your TEAM.
- We are all unique and wonderful human beings with so much to offer. And with a life to enjoy!

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RESOURCES FOR TAKING CARE OF YOU





- <https://211sandiego.org/>
- Self help and support groups
- Books and other publications
- Online resources
- Licensed mental health professional
- Spiritual Counselor
- Social Support
- <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>



Thank you for all that you do!  
Remember to take care of you too 😊

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## RESOURCES, CONT.



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