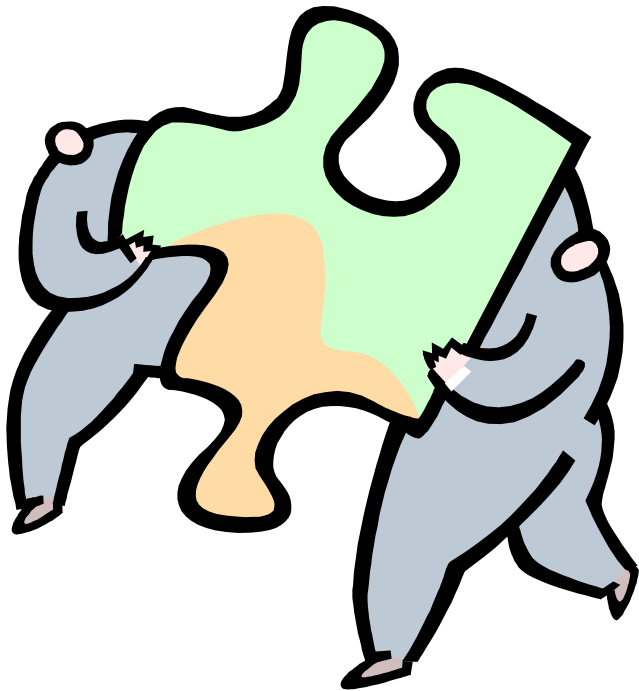


Operationalizing the Talk 2.0: Building Our Roadmaps to Address Vicarious Trauma for Staff



Supportive Housing Network of
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Describing VT

Vicarious Trauma
happens when we
accumulate and carry
the stories of trauma—
including images, sounds, details—
that we hear and witness, which then
impact our bodies, minds, and our
worldview.

-adapted from the Joyful Heart Foundation



Types of Vicarious Trauma

Acute VT

- Response to a **specific story/details** that feels new in some way
- Similar to **immediate response** of trauma victims (intrusive thoughts, nightmares, hyperarousal)

Cumulative VT

- Response to **many stories/details** over time, not a specific story/details
- Similar to **response of survivors to repeated trauma** (changes in frame of reference, worldview, difficulty managing emotions)

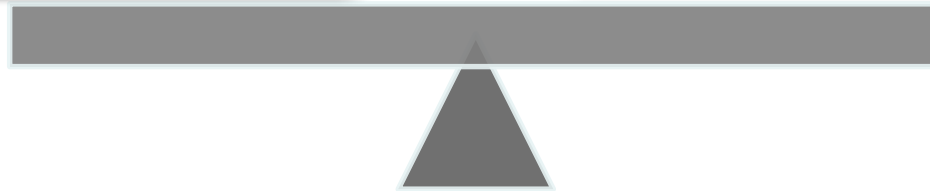
Is it Burnout... or Vicarious Trauma... or Both?

Burnout

Burnout can occur in any kind of workplace, when resources are limited, workloads feel unmanageable, expectations feel unrealistic, etc.

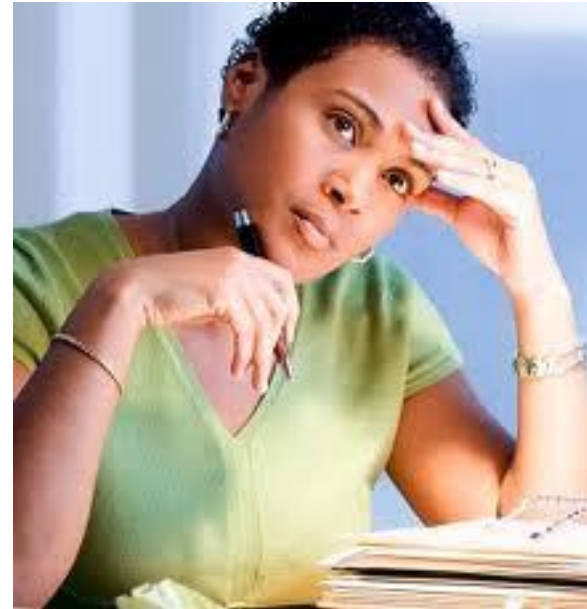
Vicarious Trauma

Vicarious trauma, on the other hand, is a unique, and is an inevitable effect of working with trauma survivors.



Your Own VT

- Please complete the self assessment (Professional Quality of Life Scale).
- This is private and we will not ask you to share specific responses.



Negative Myths About VT: How would you debunk them?

"I'm the only one
who feels this
way. There must
be something
wrong with me."

"We're supposed to
be able to handle
this stuff. I just
need to be
stronger."

"If I took
better care of
myself, this
wouldn't
happen."

"If I talk
about it, I
might lose
my job."



Obstacles to safe VT discussions	Ways to address obstacles and increase safety for VT discussions
Taboo, stigmatized—no one talks about VT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debunk negative VT myths • Discuss VT as an inevitable part of our work • Discuss VT in group meetings • Talk openly about your own VT and how you manage it
Feels too intrusive or intimate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open the door, let supervisee walk in • Build trust over time • Bring up in response to specific cues, not as a general supervision topic
Supervisor concerns about boundaries and what disclosures might result from asking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on how VT is impacting the staff person's work • Frame VT discussions in the job context • Continue to hold staff accountable for performance • Be familiar with your role

It can be helpful when supervisors...

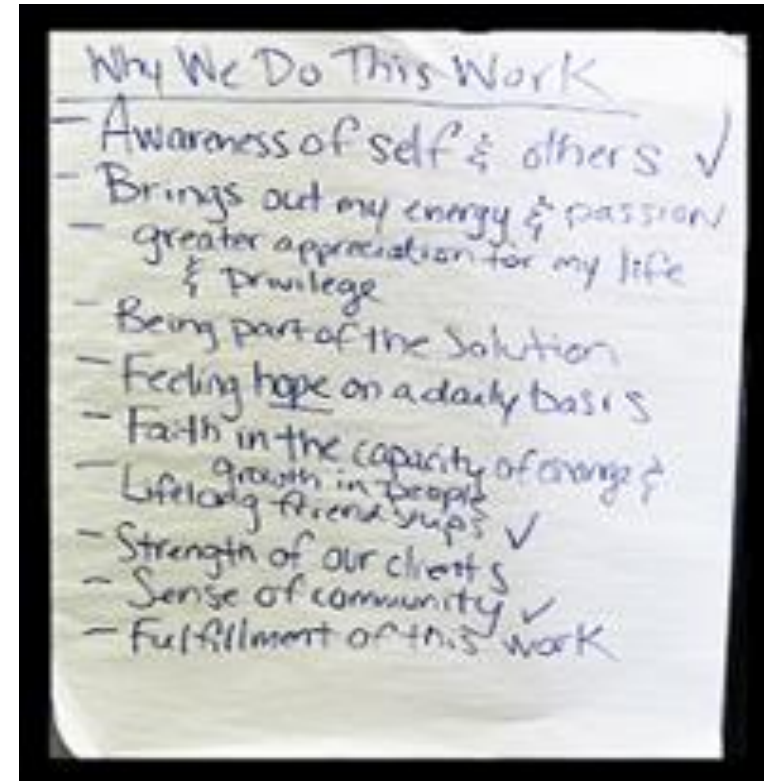
- Share information about VT and strategies for managing it
- Help worker identify whether VT is happening and identify which elements of VT are occurring
- Help worker identify potential techniques for managing VT
- Identify ways worker can still do the job

It's not the supervisor's responsibility to...

- Process or uncover the roots of the worker's vulnerability to VT (e.g. past or current traumatic experiences)
- Take over for worker when worker is struggling with VT
- Fix the VT

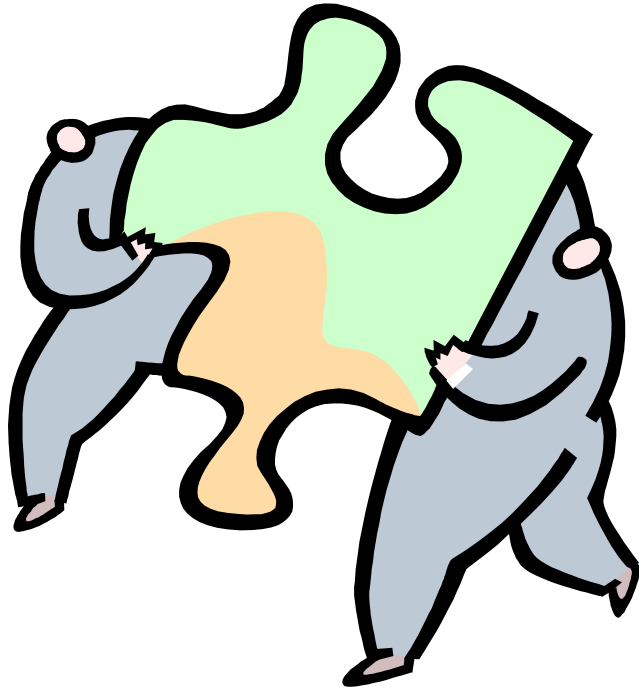
Making Meaning

This work
impacts us...
in negative AND
positive ways.



Notes from one program

Closing



THANK YOU!

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