

Safer Society PRESS

Wounded Healers: Trauma Impact & Self Care
Dr. Jill Levenson, PhD, LCSW

SELF-CARE ISN'T SELFISH

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Learning Objectives:

01

Learn to understand your own work-related stressors through a trauma lens.

02

Identify and describe specific work-related stressors including vicarious and secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, moral injury, and burnout.

03

Explain how parallel processes between practitioners and clients can manifest in trauma-informed care.

04

Apply skills for building your own resilience and self-care plan.

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Understanding trauma is not just about acquiring knowledge.

It's about changing the way you view the world.

(c) Jill S. Levenson, PhD, LCSW 2021 Sandra Bloom (2007)

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Thinking about our clients
And ourselves...
Through the trauma lens.

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Beyond ACEs:
Variety of Traumatic Experiences throughout Life

Trauma:
Loss
Threat
Fear
Uncertainty

- Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- Adult Trauma
- The Trauma of Poverty
- Historical and Cultural Trauma
- Intersection of Stigma & Marginalization
- Privilege & Power
- Vicarious exposure to trauma – news, others, clients

Complex Trauma

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SAMHSA's 6 Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Care--
Because trauma exists when these things are absent.

Cultural, Historical, Gender relevance

Safety

Trustworthiness & Transparency

Peer Support

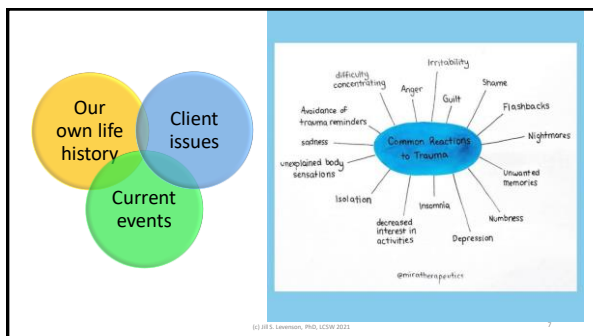
Empowerment, Voice & Choice

Collaboration & Mutuality

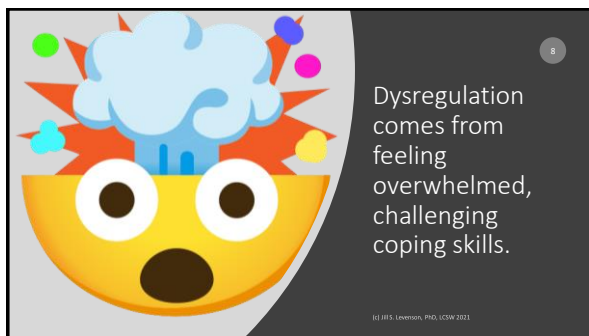
SAMHSA
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

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TRAUMA VAGUS NERVE PROCESSING

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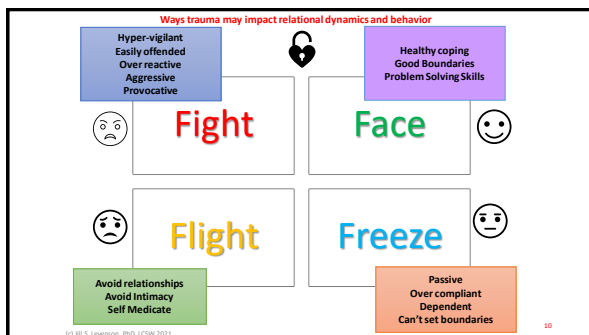
The Mind-Body Connection

CRISIS

WEAK (Everything is ok)
STRONG (Aaargh)

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Work-Related Traumatic Stress

- The "typical" stressors: **overworked, underpaid, under-appreciated, workplace drama.**
- Specific demands related to our client populations
- Repeatedly hearing stories of loss, harm, and struggle from clients
- Demands of remote working and/or return to F2F
- Competing demands of work/life balance, especially in the post 2020 world
- Stress of current events, 24-hour news, social media
- Interaction of external world/community trauma with one's own life and life of our clients
- ...What else???

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What are some of your most common work-related stressors?

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Occupational Hazards

Secondary traumatic stress

- Vicarious trauma
 - Worker may have various PTSD Symptoms related to hearing client narratives and interacting with client pain
- Compassion fatigue
 - Inability to empathize with clients anymore
 - Adoption of pessimistic worldview
- Moral Injury
 - Helplessness, powerlessness, futility
 - Often related to systemic barriers to our work
- Burnout
 - Worker becomes ineffective, apathetic, irresponsible, or even unethical.

Can you think of how some of these things manifest for you (or your workers)?

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Vicarious Trauma

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L415Vt21NXI>

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Vicarious Trauma

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Vicarious Trauma

- Fear or Anxiety
- Sleep or eating disturbances
- Hyper-vigilance
- Pre-occupation
- Intrusive Thoughts or Imagery
- Distrust or Cynicism
- Exhaustion
- Dysregulation or Maladaptive Coping
- Irritability or Impatience
 - (with clients or in your own life)

How are you?

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COMPASSION FATIGUE:

Stress resulting from helping or wanting to help people who are experiencing trauma or are suffering.

Atlas of a Social Worker's Brain

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PLEASE DO NOT DISTURB

I'M DISTURBED ENOUGH ALREADY

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Moral Injury

Autonomy, mastery, respect, and fulfillment are key to avoiding moral injury.

Simon Talbot & Wendy Dean (2020)

- Burnout is the end stage of moral injury, when clinicians are physically and emotionally *exhausted* with battling a broken system in their efforts to provide good care;
- when they *feel ineffective* because too often they have met with immovable barriers to good care;
- and when they *depersonalize* patients because emotional investment is intolerable when patient suffering is inevitable as a result of system dysfunction.

<https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2020/01/16/autonomy-mastery-respect-fulfillment-key-avoiding-moral-injury-physicians/>

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Moral Injury

- Not being able to help (medical personnel during covid)
- Needing to help someone you don't want to (client who caused harm)
- Feeling forced to betray a client (CPS report)
- Systemic barriers to proving help (obstacles to good services)
- Systemic infrastructure limitations (lack of equipment or supplies)
- Policies or procedures that seem unfair or unhelpful

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Secondary PTSD

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Vicarious Trauma

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOQWa-T1sh0>

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Work-related vicarious trauma happens to our clients too...

- First Responders
- Nurses, doctors, health workers
- Teachers
- Attorneys
- Journalists
- Others?

So how can we help apply these ideas to helping our clients as well as ourselves?

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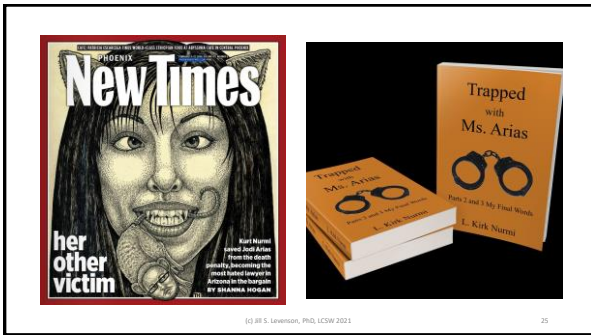
STARZ

Jillian Lauren

CONFRONTING A SERIAL KILLER

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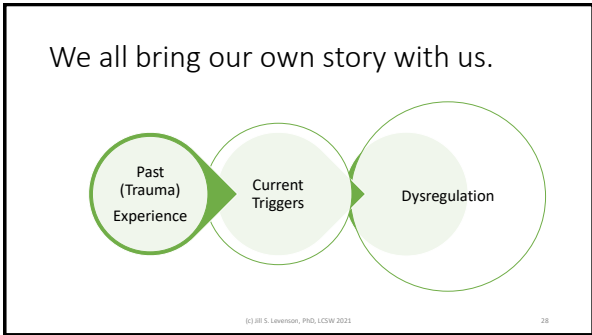


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What about YOU?

- If you are taking care of someone else, who is taking care of you?
- What happens to our immune system when we are tired or stressed?
- How has COVID redefined your "normal"?
- What are the hardest things to hear in your work?
- What about all the other scary things going on in the world?

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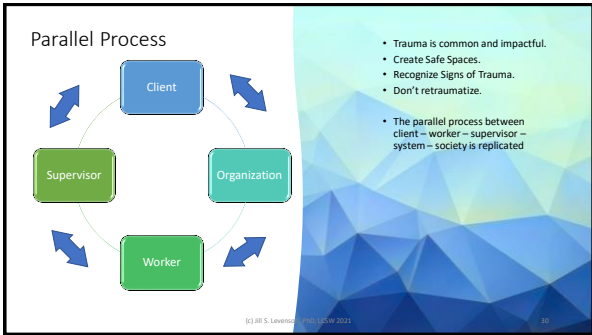
Creating a trauma-informed work environment: Taking care of our own!

ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS AS A BARRIER TO TRAUMA-SENSITIVE CHANGE AND SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

Author: Sarah C. Bloom

Chapter 4: Trauma-organized systems and parallel process

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Trauma-Informed Systems

Include a basic understanding of how trauma impacts the life of an individual seeking services, and the individuals who work within the system. There is a reciprocal and parallel process between the client, the helper, the supervisor, the organization, and the service delivery system.

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A significant number of clinicians may have trauma histories...

- *Wounded healers*

How might your own trauma impact work with clients?

How about your relationship with a supervisee, or your own response to supervision?

Relational issues:
Trust
Authority Figures
Power/Control
Conflict
Boundaries



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https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHewhs_4YMM



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<https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/vtt/introduction>

OVC

The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit

MEMORANDUM FOR A VICARIOUS TRAUMA-INFORMED ORGANIZATION

Introduction

It takes courage to help others and push through of mental illness, a vast network of acts of compassion and moral courage. Right now that may have taken unexpected time, or required to overcome and other stressors. It also takes commitment to do this work despite the personal physical, emotional, and mental impact it can have.


The Vicarious Trauma Toolkit (VTT) was developed on the premise that exposure to the traumatic experiences of other people—termed as **vicarious trauma**—is an inevitable occupational challenge for the folks of crisis services, emergency medical services, law enforcement, and other allied professions. Human organizations can mitigate the inevitable negative effects of trauma exposure by becoming trauma-informed.

The VTT includes tools and resources tailored specifically to these fields that provide the knowledge and skills necessary for organizations to address the practical/clinical needs.

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The reciprocal nature of trauma



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The stress Bucket <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kkl3y3OuyE>



FRIENDS & FAMILY STRESS
Family Friends

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Life Lesson: Put on your own Oxygen mask before assisting others.

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Promoting Self-Care

Formal and informal supervision

Do you feel safe sharing challenges and seeking support?

Breaks, Paid personal leave & Vacations

Unplugging from work nights & weekends

Setting boundaries with the work day

Team-building, encouraging positive relationships

Eating, Exercise, Nature

Breathing & Progressive Relaxation

Find ways to have FUN!

What Can You Do?

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

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BREAKING NEWS LIVE

Follow The Latest Developments

ALWAYS PLUGGED IN AND "ON": VIDEO CHAT, SOCIAL MEDIA, INTERNET, EMAIL, TEXTING CONNECTIONS & CHALLENGES? PROS & CONS?

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Working from home: Pros & Cons?

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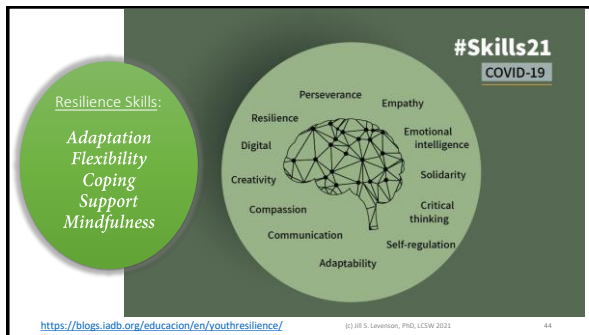
Working from home: Setting Boundaries with the Work Day

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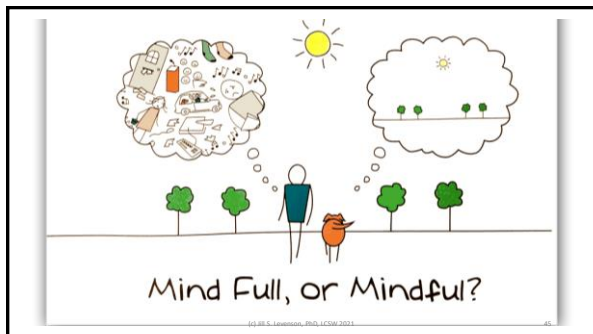
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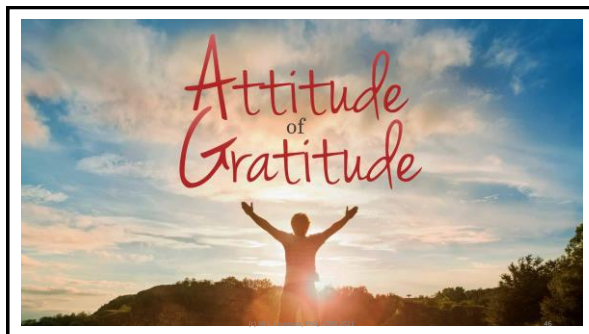
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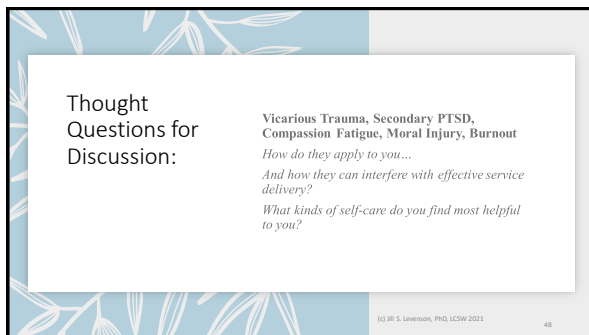
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