


**INTRODUCTION TO CE-
CERT: SKILLS FOR
REDUCING BURNOUT
AND SECONDARY
TRAUMATIC STRESS**

Lauren Garder, LPC-S



1

**SELF-CARE IS
PROFESSIONAL
COMPETENCY**

Reduce secondary traumatic stress by gaining skills to process
the work as *you do it* in healthier ways.



2

**WHAT IS SECONDARY
TRAUMATIC STRESS?**

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

"The emotional duress that results when an individual hears about the firsthand
trauma experiences of another."

(National Child Traumatic Stress Network, n.d.)

3

BURNOUT VS. SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

- **Burnout** can include mental or emotional exhaustion, overwhelm, supervisory frustrations, and/or reduced sense of accomplishment
- Burnout can develop as a result of **occupational stress within any field**
- **Secondary traumatic stress (STS)** is a reaction to the trauma content within your work

4

SIGNS OF SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

Mood:

- Difficulty talking about their feelings or how the work impacts them
- Free floating anger and/or irritation
- Diminished joy toward personal accomplishments or things they once enjoyed

Physical:

- Over- or under-eating
- Sleep impacted by clients
- Muscle tension

Changes in thinking:

- Intrusive thoughts of one's personal trauma history or clients with especially severe trauma histories
- Fears that every situation will turn into a traumatic event
- Self-destructive thoughts regarding capabilities/responsibilities

5

SIGNS OF SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

Changes in work behavior:

- Poor concentration
- Staff conflict, poor communication, lack of collaboration
- Blaming clients, loss of ability to conceptualize clients
- Increased errors at work, avoidance of work, over-involvement in work
- Superhero behavior, blaming others
- Change in motivation, timeliness, feeling exhausted by the work more than filled

Change in feeling and coping:

- Feeling as if alcohol or other substances are needed to cope
- Social withdrawal
- Pessimism, disconnection, disproportionate anger
- Constantly feeling indifferent, apathetic

6

RISK FACTORS

- Personal trauma history, working with clients whose stories mirror your own
- Isolation
- Overworked—time or case load
- Limited professional experience, lack of training in vicarious trauma and/or resources to perform work
- Working with marginalized populations and individuals

7

ASSESSING AND TAKING CARE

- Shift our thinking to **when** not **if** secondary traumatic stress happens to me
- Destigmatize within our teams and organizations
- Individual, supervisory, and organizational responsibility to reduce frequency and intensity of STS

8

Assessing and Taking Care

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly assess ourselves <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase skills for during work • Utilize supervision • Work-life balance • Access resources when needed • Supervisors <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflective supervision • Training for teams • Proactive response | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizational <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time to do, time to reflect • Flextime scheduling • Physically safe spaces • Culture around STS • Resources: EAPs, access to support groups, training |
|--|---|

9

MYTHS ABOUT WELLNESS AND SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS

- Empty your cup at work, fill it up on your own time
- Work and personal life can and should be permanently separated
- Feeling less is the secret to being resilient
- Twisted boundaries, "Don't work harder than your client"
- Compassion is a finite resource

10

COMPASSION FATIGUE IS A MISNOMER



11

COMPASSION FATIGUE IS A MISNOMER

- **Compassion is a renewable resource**
- Even after our most tiring days, one thing people often look forward to is going home to someone or something they love
- The job isn't hard because we lack compassion
- **Compassion is a skill not a virtue**

12

COMPASSION SATISFACTION	<p>"Compassion satisfaction refers to the positive feelings derived from competent performance as a trauma professional. It is characterized by positive relationships with colleagues, and the conviction that one's work makes a meaningful contribution to clients and society."</p> <p><small>(National Child Traumatic Stress Network, Secondary Traumatic Stress Committee, 2011)</small></p>
------------------------------------	---

13

COMPONENTS FOR ENHANCING CAREER ENGAGEMENT AND REDUCING TRAUMA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-informed • Skills-based • Goal is conscious oversight <p><small>(Miller & Sprang, 2016)</small></p>
---	--

14

EXPERIENTIAL ENGAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do I do with the difficult feelings from this work? • Reframing and sitting with the discomfort of the challenges in this work • Reframe success
------------------------------------	---

15

EXPERIENTIAL ENGAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anger towards those who cause harm• Seeing the physical effects of abuse• Frustration and fear around clients returning multiple times• De-escalation and clients who need more skills than you have• System failures
--------------------------------	---

16

EXPERIENTIAL ENGAGEMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recognizing feelings• Honoring them• Focus on internal reaction more than client behavior• Leaning in to being with people, opening up to the experience• “What do I do with the hurt?”
--------------------------------	--

17

REFLECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are some ways I can be honest with myself about intense and uncomfortable feelings about this work?• How can I build naming my feeling into my day?• What situations do I avoid the most, and which can I open myself up to?
-------------------	---

18

REDUCING RUMINATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Replaying difficult moments from the work day or client challenges • Containment and “letting it pause”
----------------------------	--

19

REDUCING RUMINATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What if they go back? • What should I have said differently to the child welfare worker? • Did I push too hard to leave? • Did I convey the safety risks appropriately?
----------------------------	--

20

REDUCING RUMINATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognizing • Anchoring/containing/quick note • Social engagement • ACES (the good kind) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action-oriented • Concrete • Experiential • Specific
----------------------------	---

21

REFLECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is it like when I try to permit myself to let it go? Do I feel guilty, unable?• “Is there anything I need to do about this right now?”• What are my best ACEs?
-------------------	---

22

CONSCIOUS NARRATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every day we tell ourselves a story about our work- we must choose whether that is intentional or not, helpful or not
----------------------------	---

23

CONSCIOUS NARRATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nothing I do matters• The system is broken • There will always be harm, but it does not have to be to the same person or by the same person• A body with 4 legs and no fingers would not be effective
----------------------------	--

24

CONSCIOUS NARRATIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is your WHY?• Before work/experiences• During• After (consolidation)• Wrapped in is a desire to grow professionally and a belief in mastery
----------------------------	---

25

REFLECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which of the narratives speak to you the most? Before, during, or after?• Which is the hardest to find joy in? Who do I work with that I can talk to about this?
-------------------	---

26

REDUCING EMOTIONAL LABOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the real emotional labor?• Research on nurses in emergency departments
---------------------------------	---

27

REDUCING EMOTIONAL LABOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curiosity• Radical empathy and candor• Commitment to being true and helpful• Congruence
---------------------------------	--

28

REDUCING EMOTIONAL LABOR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I don't know how this will turn out• I didn't expect this to go so poorly• Demonizing the person causing harm ignores the very real positive experiences survivors may have with that person• <i>You can be deeply compassionate without being deeply depleted.</i>
---------------------------------	--

29

REFLECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do you know the difference between common enemy and common goal?• What do I need to radically accept about this work? Is it about the systems, the people we serve, or something else?
-------------------	---

30

PARASYMPATHETIC RECOVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time in fight or flight• Hotline ringing, clients who no-show, high volume walk-ins
---------------------------------	--

31

PARASYMPATHETIC RECOVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mindfulness, grounding• Movement<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stretching• Walking• Screen break
---------------------------------	--

32

PARASYMPATHETIC RECOVERY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time to do and time to reflect<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizational responsibility• Team approach• Time off• Finding your person
---------------------------------	---

33

REFLECTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where or how can I build this in to my day? • What are some ways I protect my work-life balance?
-------------------	---

34

SUMMARY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experiential engagement- <i>stay with it</i> • Reducing rumination- <i>set it down</i> • Conscious narrative- <i>control your meaning</i> • Reducing emotional labor- <i>be true and helpful</i> • Parasympathetic recovery- <i>rest is necessary</i>
----------------	---

35

WRAP UP	
<p>Categories of STS Symptoms</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intrusive thoughts • Avoidance • Altered cognitions (changes in reasoning, feelings) • Arousal 	<p>Skills for caring for STS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letting your feelings digest • Reducing intrusion/rumination • Bridging your WHY with altered cognitions • Addressing arousal through parasympathetic recovery • Promoting social connection

36

THANK YOU

- Lauren Garder, LPC-S
- Lauren@laurengarderlpc.com
