Georgia State University | Andrew Young School
School of Social Work

CHILD WELFARE TRAINING COLLABORATIVE

A PROFESSIONAL *Excellence* PROGRAM

In partnership with

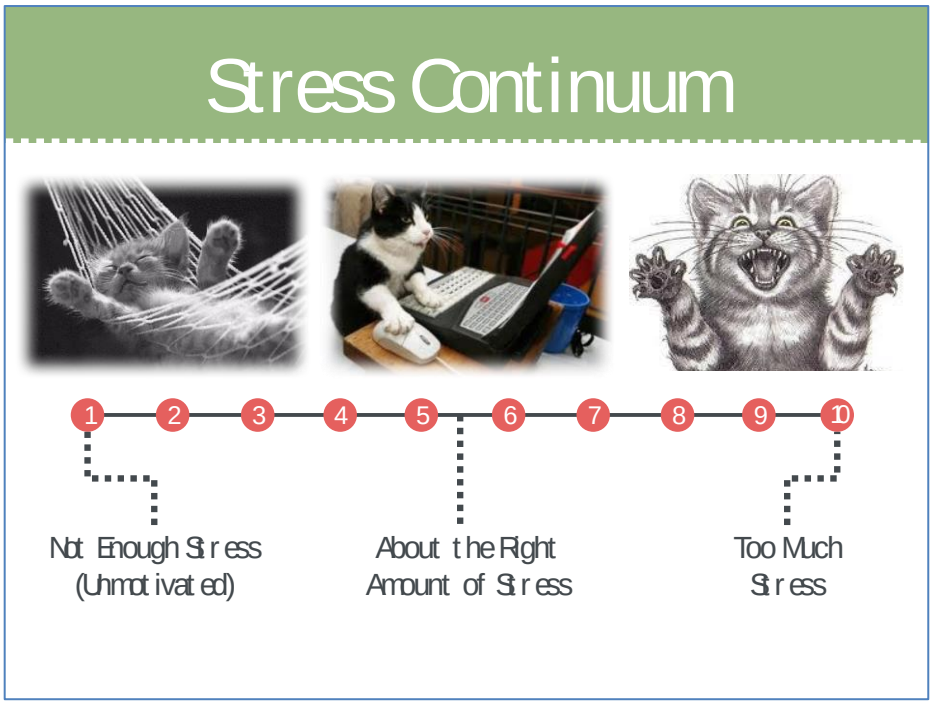
Georgia Division of Family and Children Services

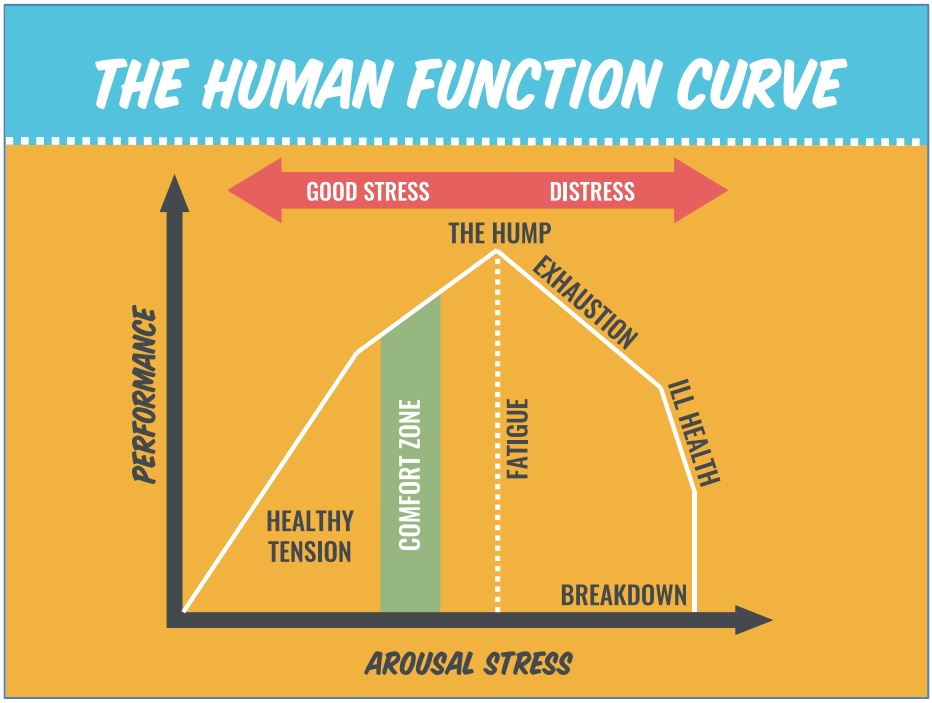
Recognizing and Managing Secondary Traumatic Stress Workshop

October 2019

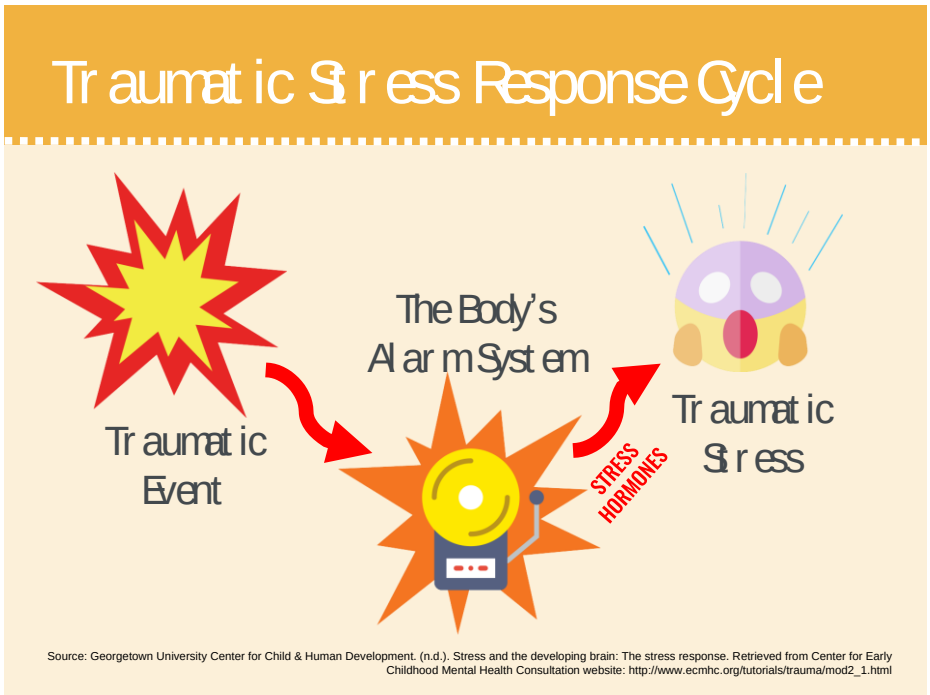
http://www.peprogram.gsu.edu
http://www.cwtc.gsu.edu

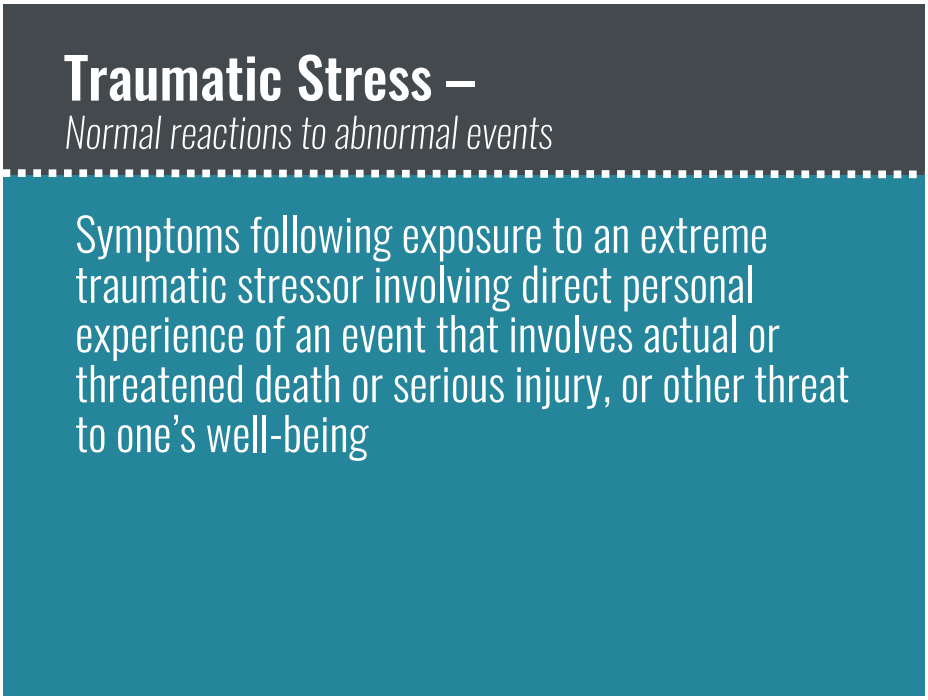
Understanding Stress





Traumatic Stress





Secondary Traumatic Stress vs. Burnout

Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS)

- The natural consequent behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced by another person.
- When helping professionals experience any of the array of human responses to trauma as a result of their work with traumatized clients.
- Professionals who are having symptoms of STS and not recognizing and managing them tend to numb out and not enter into empathetic, caring, working relationships with the clients.
- STS is more "treatable" than burnout. With education and recognition, STS is manageable.

Compassion Fatigue

- Synonymous with STS
- Reduced capacity or interest in being empathic or bearing the suffering of clients

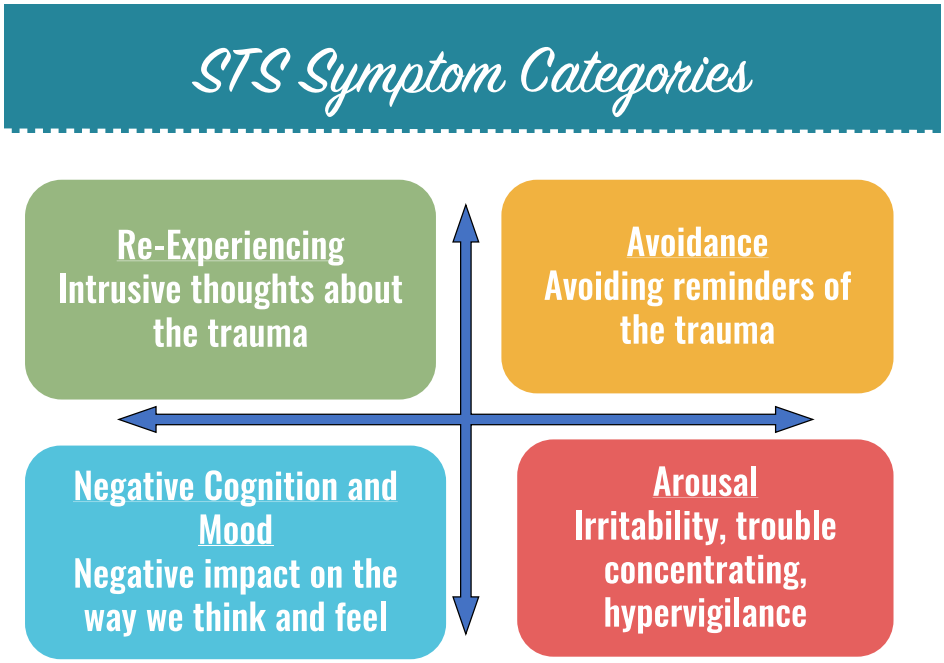
Vicarious Traumatization

- Another aspect of STS
- The transformation in the inner experience of the professional helper that comes about as a result of empathic engagement with traumatic material.
- Changes in the professional's "worldview" as a result of exposure to the trauma experienced by others

Burnout

- Not a crisis event; develops over time.
- Physical, mental, emotional exhaustion due to long-term involvement in emotionally demanding situations.
- Symptoms include: negative attitudes toward work, people, and life itself; disillusionment; inability to cope with the work environment.
- Comes from many sources that do not involve trauma. Most sources of burnout are related to systemic issues within a work organization. These include: unbending rules and procedures, communication problems, long workdays, demanding and overbearing boss, too many clients, etc.

Secondary Traumatic Stress Symptoms



STS symptoms are a normal reaction to work with traumatized clients. Symptoms become a problem when they cause distress and impairment.

Distress and Impairment

Are you bothered by the symptoms?

Are the symptoms influencing your relationships?

Are you withdrawing from activities and losing social support as a result?

Is it impacting how you do your work?

Is it impacting your effectiveness at work?

ABCs of Self-Care

Awar eness

Know your own needs, limits, emotions, and resources

Be aware of stress-related symptoms

Monitor stress symptoms over time

Assess your self-care activities

Complete the self-care assessment included in your handouts. Mark how frequently you engage in the activities listed.

Strategy 1
Complete a Self-Care Assessment

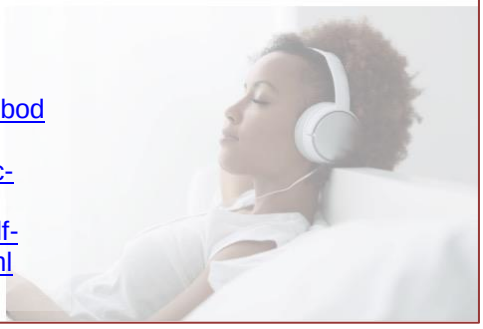
Areas that you rate low (for example, 1, 2, or 3) are areas of need for you. Areas that you rate high (4 or 5) are strengths for you.

Brainstorm feel good songs

Strategy 2
Song Playlist

Create a playlist for your phone or computer

Read about the benefits of music https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-17770/6-scientific-reasons-to-add-music-to-your-self-care-regimen.html



Self-Care Assessment

Directions: Using the scale below, rate how frequently you engage in the listed self-care activities.
5 = frequently **4** = occasionally **3** = rarely **2** = Never **1** = It never occurred to me

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PHYSICAL SELF-CARE

____ Eat regularly
___ Eat healthy
____ Exercise
____ Get regular medical care for prevention
____ Get medical care when needed
____ Take time off when sick
____ Dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, sing, or do some other physical activity that is fun
____ Get enough sleep
____ Take vacations or mini vacations
____ Take time for self /time away from telephones
____ Other:

PSYCHOLOGICAL SELF-CARE

____ Make time for self-reflection
____ Have your own personal psychotherapy or counseling
____ Write in a journal
____ Read literature that is unrelated to work
____ Engage your intelligence in new areas or new activities
____ Decrease stress in your life
____ Notice your inner experience – listen to your thoughts, judgments, beliefs, attitudes, and feelings
____ Practice receiving from others
____ Say no to extra responsibilities
____ Other:

EMOTIONAL SELF-CARE

____ Spend time with others whose company you enjoy
____ Stay in contact with important people in your life
____ Give yourself affirmations
____ Identify comforting activities, objects, people, relationships, places and seek them out
____ Allow yourself to cry
____ Find things that make you laugh
____ Express your outrage in social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
____ Play with children
____ Other:

Self-Care Assessment (continued)

Rate how frequently you engage in the listed self-care activities.
5 = frequently **4** = occasionally **3** = rarely **2** = Never **1** = It never occurred to me

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SPIRITUAL SELF-CARE

____ Make time for reflection
____ Spend time with nature
____ Find a spiritual connection or community
____ Be open to inspiration
____ Cherish your optimism and hope
____ Be aware of nonmaterial aspects of your life
____ Try at times not to be in charge or the expert
____ Be open to knowing
____ Meditate
____ Pray
____ Sing
____ Have experiences of awe
____ Contribute to causes in which you believe
____ Read inspirational literature
____ Other:

PROFESSIONAL SELF-CARE

____ Take a break during the workday (e.g., lunch)
____ Take time to chat with co-workers
____ Make quiet time to complete tasks
____ Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
____ Set limits with clients and colleagues
____ Balance your caseload/workload so no one day or part of a day is "too much"
____ Arrange you work space so it is comfortable and comforting
____ Utilize regular supervision or consultation
____ Negotiate your needs (benefits, pay raise, time off)
____ Have a peer support group
____ Develop a non-trauma area of professional interest
____ Other:

BALANCE

____ Strive for balance within your work-life and workday
____ Strive for balance among work, family, relationships, play and rest

SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEM – Quality of my social support system. Area of strength or area of need?

Adapted from: *Transforming the Pain: Workbook on Vicarious Traumatization* Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (Norton, 1996)

ABCs of Self-Care

BALANCE

Maintaining balance between personal and professional life

Read the internet article: 37 Tips for a Better Work-Life Balance.

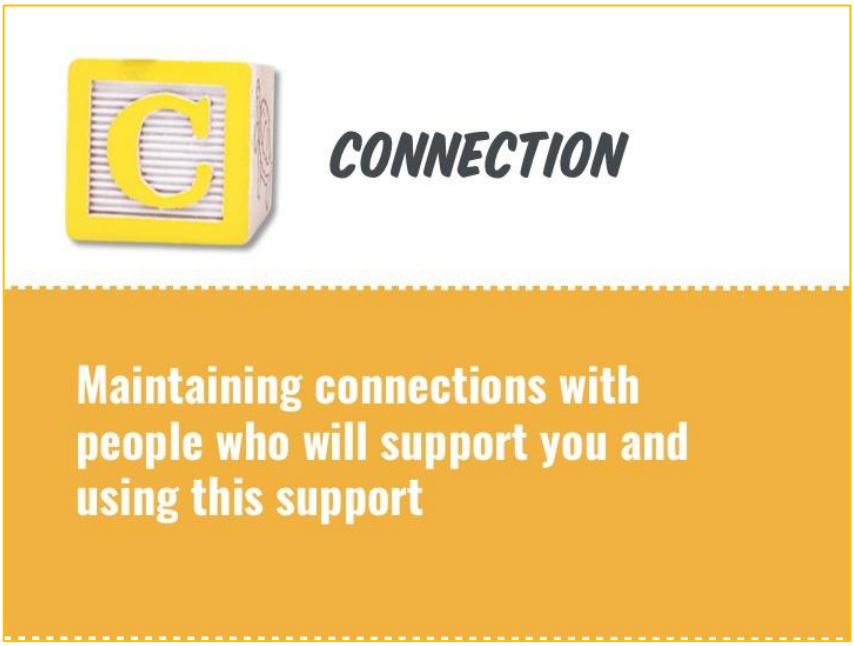
Choose **at least 3 tips** to put into practice.

Download article from: https://muse.cm/SyV3yC

Strategy 3
Choose and Begin Work-Life Balance Practices

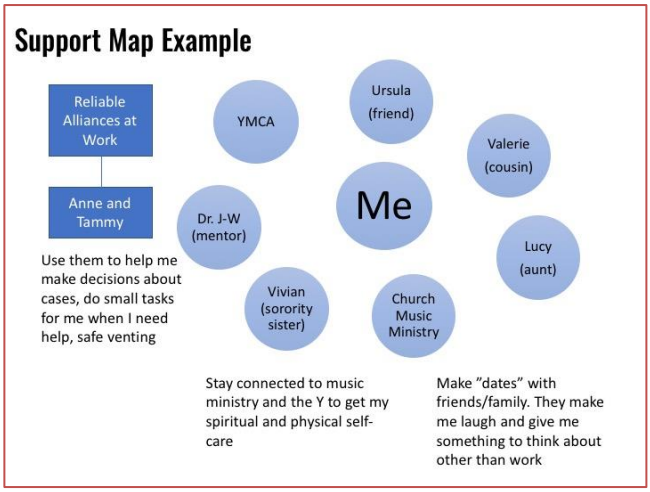
Download article:
https://muse.cm/SyV3yC

ABCs of Self-Care



- Identify your supportive family, friends, and organizations (outside workplace)
- Identify your reliable alliances (at work)
- Create a map (with yourself in the middle) of these relationships.
- Write at least 3 specific ways to use these relationships to help you manage job-related stress.

Strategy 4
Map Your Support System



ABCs of Self-Care

CONNECTION

Maintaining a connection to why you are doing this work and the rewards of the work

Identify at least 5 positive work experiences (about the work with families or experiences in your workplace).

Write each one on a separate index card. Add to this collection over time.

Review your Meaningfulness of Work cards on days when things are **not** going so well.

Strategy 5
Write Meaningfulness of Work Card

Self-Care Plan

Directions: Use this worksheet to develop your plan for self-care.
Consider:

- Your self-care self-assessment ---needs and strengths in each of the domains
- Your assessment of your support system outside of work and at work (peers and supervisor)
- The strategies discussed in the STS workshop

Share your plan with someone in your support system who can help keep you accountable

1. Identify at least three things in each area that you can commit to doing.

Personal
In my personal life, I am making a commitment to myself to do the following regarding self-care:
(Consider all areas: physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual)

Professional
In my professional life, I am making a commitment to myself to do the following regarding self-care**:**

Work-Life Balance

I am making a commitment to myself to do the following to create better work-life balance.

2. **Choose one strategy in each category that you will commit to try <u>during the next week. Highlight or underline these strategies.</u>**