RECOGNIZING SECONDARY TRAUMA

DEFINITION
“Secondary trauma is defined as indirect exposure to trauma through a first hand account or narrative of a traumatic event. The vivid recounting of trauma by the survivor and the clinician’s subsequent cognitive or emotional representation of that event may result in a set of symptoms and reactions that parallel PTSD ... (it) is also referred to as compassion fatigue and vicarious traumatization.” [1]

COMPASSION FATIGUE SYMPTOMS

Cognitive: Lower Concentration, apathy, Rigid thinking, Perfectionism, Preoccupation with trauma

Emotional: Guilt, Anger, Numbness, Sadness, Helplessness

Behavioral: Withdrawal, Sleep disturbance, Appetite change, Hyper-vigilance, Elevated startle response

Physical: Increased heart rate, Difficulty breathing, Muscle and joint pain, Impaired immune system, Increased severity of medical concerns [2]

RESILIENCE STRATEGIES

Prevention should occur at both the individual and organizational levels

1. Balancing caseloads and accessible supervision (Professional Strategy)
2. Sufficient release time and safe physical space (Organizational Strategy)
3. Personal strategies, such as respecting one's own limits and maintaining time for self-care activities (Personal Strategy)
4. Self-nurturing and seeking connection (General Coping) [1]

SOURCES:
1. SECONDARY TRAUMATIZATION IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS. R. ZIMERING, S CULLIVER. PSYCHIATRIC TIMES. V 20, ISSUE 4. APRIL 1, 2003. AVAILABLE AT: HTTPS://WWW.PSYCHIATRICTIMES.COM/PTSD/SECONDARY-TRAUMATIZATION-MENTAL-HEALTH-CARE PROVIDERS. ACCESSED 09/06/19
2. SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES. US DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES. AVAILABLE AT: HTTPS://WWW.ACF.HHS.GOV/TRAUMA-TOOLKIT/SECONDARY-TRAUMATIC-STRESS ACCESS ED: 09/06/19