

Vicarious Trauma

And Self Care



PRESENTED BY
Donna Humetewa Kaye
Tribal Law & Policy Institute Consultants

In Preparation....

- ❖ This presentation will involve straight talk about trauma related situations and issues
- ❖ Self Awareness
 - ❖ Breathing
 - ❖ Emotions
 - ❖ Physical
- ❖ Debrief
 - ❖ Reach out to someone you trust.....

A Journey....

Vicarious Trauma

❖ Research

- ❖ Service providers often find treating survivors of childhood abuse stressful, because of survivors' resistance to change, their ways of relating to helpers, and the nature of the work.
- ❖ The nature of the work is particularly stressful when it involves listening to detailed descriptions of very painful, often horrific events; it may also involve helpers re-enacting survivors' early experiences of trauma and betrayal with them.
- ❖ Hearing and thinking about the stories one hears can continue well after the client has left the therapeutic interaction.

Palmer et al., 2001

Vicarious Trauma

- ❖ Historically,
 - ❖ Therapists' reactions to client traumas were regarded as either burnout or countertransference. These days, the term vicarious traumatization (VT) is used to describe therapists' trauma reactions resulting from exposure to clients' traumatic experiences

Countertransference is defined as redirection of a psychotherapist's feelings toward a client—a therapist's emotional entanglement with a client.

Vicarious Trauma

- ❖ Definition
 - ❖ The cumulative transformative effect on the helper of working with survivors of traumatic life events, both positive and negative.

VT & Burnout

❖ BURNOUT

- ❖ Burnout is something that happens over time, and as it builds up a change, such as time off or a new and perhaps a different job, can take care of burnout or improve it.
- ❖ Vicarious trauma, however, is a state of tension and preoccupation of stories/traumatic experiences described by clients.

Vicarious Trauma

- ❖ Working with trauma survivors greatly affects the helper and we must address the effects in order to protect both helper and clients.
- ❖ VT is unavoidable and is the natural consequence of being human, connecting to and caring about our clients as we see the effects of trauma on their lives
- ❖ The single most important factor in the success or failure of trauma work relates to the attention paid to the experience and the needs of the helper.
- ❖ We cannot meet the needs of our clients when we are overriding our own.

Vicarious Trauma

- ❖ VT impacts on areas of psychological need including: safety, trust, esteem, intimacy and control.

Vicarious Trauma

- ❖ Signs and Symptoms
 - ❖ Emotional numbing
 - ❖ Social withdrawal
 - ❖ Work-related nightmares
 - ❖ Feelings of despair and hopelessness
 - ❖ Loss of sense of spirituality
 - ❖ More negative view of the world
 - ❖ Reduced sense of respect for your clients
 - ❖ Loss of enjoyment of sexual activity
 - ❖ No time or energy for yourself

Managing VT

Managing VT

- ❖ Anticipating VT & protecting yourself includes strategizing the stress of your work and its potential impact on you.
- ❖ Strategies include:
 - ❖ Awareness
 - ❖ Balance
 - ❖ Connection

Managing VT

- ❖ A sense of balance is considered to be one of the key components to preserving a sense of identity and overall wellbeing. A healthy balance of work, rest, play, including socialization with friends and family is important in decreasing the effects of VT.
- ❖ Activities which assist the individual's personal tolerance levels, for example; journal writing; personal counseling; emotional support from partners, will assist the individual to reconnect to emotions

Managing VT

- ❖ Addressing signs of VT includes those things you do for self-care.
- ❖ Strategies include:
 - ❖ Self-care
 - ❖ Self nurturing
 - ❖ Escape

Managing VT

- ❖ Transforming the pain of VT includes things you do to transform the negative impact of the work into a connection with some positive aspects of meaning and community.
- ❖ Strategies include:
 - ❖ Create meaning
 - ❖ Infuse meaning in current activities
 - ❖ Challenge negative beliefs
 - ❖ Participate in community building

In Appreciation

- ❖ Be safe & take good care on your journey....