

Secondary Trauma & Self-care

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What Is Secondary Trauma?

- + Secondary trauma is defined as indirect exposure to trauma through a firsthand account or narrative of a traumatic event. ...
- + Secondary traumatization is also referred to as compassion fatigue (Figley, 1995) and vicarious traumatization (Pearlman and Saakvitne, 1995).

Why this topic?

- + Child abuse and neglect are difficult subjects.
- + It's hard to see children subjected to abuse.
- + There's a cost to being the helpers.
- + Secondary trauma can be prevented and managed.

Goals of the Training

- + Increase awareness of Secondary Trauma
- + Provide tools to identify what you can change
- + Provide tools to help you protect yourself

What Causes Secondary Trauma?

- Exposure to others' traumatic experiences
- Isolation
- Unresolved personal trauma
- Highly empathetic personalities
- Inadequate training
- Lack of support
- High caseload

- + "Any professional who listens to children recount traumatic experiences is at risk of secondary traumatic stress.

According to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, secondary traumatic stress degrades our professional effectiveness and overall quality of life

Physical Reactions

- + Chronic tiredness
- + Sleep disturbances
- + Changes in appetite
- + Headaches
- + Upset stomach
- + Chronic muscle tension
- + Increased respiration and increased heart rate

Emotional Reactions

- + Feeling overwhelmed/emotionally drained
- + Feeling helpless
- + Feeling inadequate
- + Feeling angry
- + Feeling guilty
- + Sense of vulnerability
- + Increased mood swings
- + Irritability
- + Crying more easily or frequently

Behavioral Reactions

- Displays avoidance behaviors
- Isolation, withdrawal
- Poor self-care
- Restlessness
- Changes in alcohol or drug consumption
- Changes in relationships with others
- Become cynical

Cognitive Reactions

- Disbelief, sense of numbing
- Replaying events in one's mind
- Hypervigilance
- Decreased concentration
- Confusion or Impaired memory
- Difficulty making decisions or problem-solving
- Distressing dreams or fantasies

How Do We Prevent Secondary Trauma

Reframe the Experience

- Separate others' trauma from your personal experience
- Look at the situation from another perspective
- Ask for help from CASA staff when you feel overwhelmed or stressed – it may be time to take a break
- Practice setting boundaries – know your limits, learn to say no
- Prioritize what's important
- Make a plan in advance of problems

Practice Processing Emotions

- ▶ It can feel like your efforts are useless if negative emotions resurge. Deal with them by using the STOP technique:
 - ▶ **S**top
 - ▶ **T**ake a deep breath
 - ▶ **O**bserve your thoughts and feelings
 - ▶ **P**roceed



It's being aware and practicing mindfulness in the moment.

STOP TECHNIQUE

ARE YOU FEELING
OVERWHELMED? STRESSED? REACTIVE?
TRY THE STOP TECHNIQUE:

S

STOP. PAUSE WHAT YOU'RE DOING.

T

TAKE A SLOW, DEEP BREATH.

O

OBSERVE YOUR PHYSICAL SENSATIONS,
THEN YOUR THOUGHTS AND EMOTIONS.

P

PROCEED WITH A ONE-THING FOCUS.

Self-Care

Self Care

- + The practice of taking action to preserve or improve one's own health
- + The practice of an active role in protecting one's own well-being and happiness, particularly during periods of stress

In other words;

- + Self-care is what we deliberately do to take care of all aspects of our life

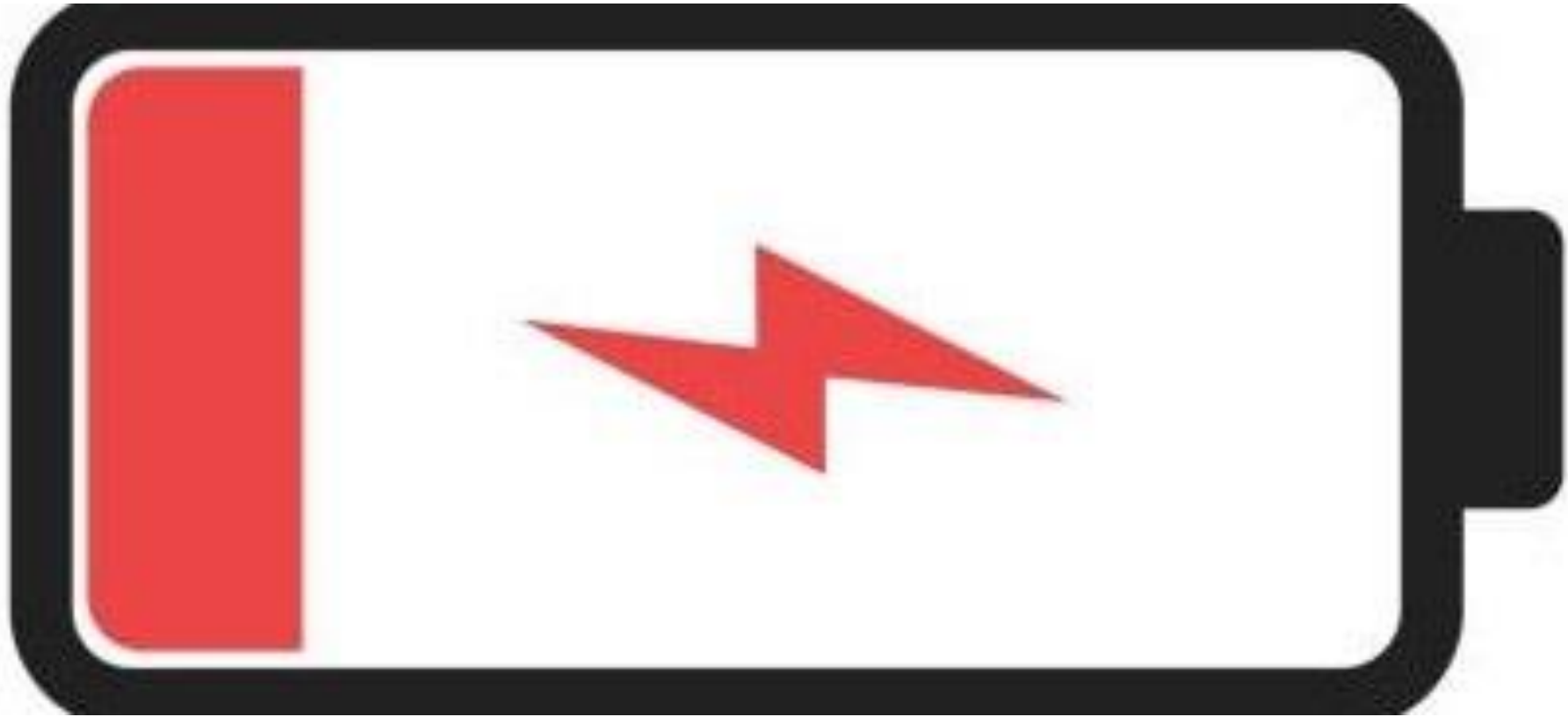
But I don't have time for self-care

- + It is not selfish to practice self-care

- + Flight attendants

We cannot help others if we are not safe

- + Self-care is a Priority, NOT a Luxury



- + You would not let your phone get this low
- + Do NOT let it happen to you

Three Challenges Associated with Self-Care

- + Lack of Time
- + Lack of Money
- + We don't believe we are worth it

Areas where self-care is needed

- + Physical
- + Psychological/Mental
- + Social
- + Spiritual
- + Emotional

Practical Tips for Self-care

Physical Care

- + Be kind and loving to your body
Appreciate your body
- + Nourish your body
Eat healthy and energizing food
- + Get enough sleep
- + Stay hydrated – drink plenty of water
- + Exercise to replenish your energy and manage stress

Practical Tips for Self-care Psychological and Mental Care

- + Read a good book
- + See an intellectually stimulating movie
- + Learn a new hobby or skill
- + Sign up for a class or workshop that interests you
- + Challenge yourself to learn something new every week

Practical Tips for Self-care

Social Self-care

- + Become involved in groups or communities outside work
- + Ask for help when you need it
- + Meet new people
- + Go for a walk with family or friends
- + Do not spend time with people who don't make you feel good about yourself
- + Maintain healthy, supportive relationships
- + Prioritize relationships with your family and close friends

Practical Tips for Self-care Spiritual Care

- + Take time by yourself to think or write
- + Take a walk by yourself
- + Meditate, pray or just reflect on what you're grateful for
- + Do something creative - paint/draw/sing/dance

Practical Tips for Self-care

Emotional Care

- + Have a heart-to-heart with a close mentor or friend
 - Keep in regular contact with Peer Coach and/or Supervisor
 - Attend Air and Shares
- + Ditch self-criticism and judgmental thinking
- + If necessary, seek support from a professional
- + Journal – write down your feelings
- + Go on a fun date with your significant other
- + Do a fun activity with your friends

SELF

Share

IS NOT SELFISH

Self-care Action Plan

Review the types of Self-care listed below and choose two areas you would like to improve over the next two months

- + Physical
- + Psychological - Mental
- + Social
- + Spiritual
- + Emotional

12 Steps to Self-care

- + If it feels wrong, don't do it
- + Say EXACTLY what you mean
- + Don't be a people pleaser
- + Trust your instincts
- + Never speak bad about yourself
- + Never give up on your dreams

12 steps to Self-care, cont.

- + Don't be afraid to say "No"
- + Don't be afraid to say "Yes"
- + Be kind to yourself
- + Let go of what you can't control
- + Avoid drama and negativity
- + Commit to loving yourself

The Bottom Line

“Maybe we can’t do all these things everyday. But if we make self-care a goal, and try to address all these factors regularly, then we will feel and function better.

The better we feel and function, the more we can do for the people and things we care about. And that’s a win-win.”

By Monique Tello, MD, MPH (November 16, 2017)
Harvard Health Publishing, Harvard Medical School