

Vicarious Trauma Mitigation Key Talking Points

- 1.) The work professionals within the criminal justice system does is intense. It includes child abuse, sexual assault and rape, domestic violence, stalking, human trafficking, murder, death... plus there are competing priorities: family, community, court, paper work, staff duties, inspections and audits, etc. There is so much to balance that it requires a conscious commitment to be a holistic and healthy person.
 - 2.) Taking the time to regularly self- reflect on our own self-care practices, the reasons and intentions on why we do what we do, our satisfaction with work, our own traumatic experiences and our personal levels of vicarious trauma.
 - 3.) **Vicarious trauma** is the emotional residue of exposure that counselors have from working with people as they are hearing their **trauma** stories and become witnesses to the pain, fear, and terror that **trauma** survivors have endured (American Counseling Association).
 - 4.) The impact of vicarious trauma is real, measured and devastating to both responders and the people that we serve.
 - 5.) Vicarious trauma can also negatively impact an agencies/organizations ability to provide quality services.
 - 6.) Too often “likeability” equals “credibility”. In agencies that suffer from high degrees of vicarious trauma employees begin to blur the lines of professionalism and a toxic culture begins to emerge. For example: reenactment of client complications, victim blaming, slut shaming or gossip.
 - 7.) We can learn a great deal from science, for example, in forensic science, **Lockard’s** exchange principle: with contact between two items, there will be an exchange. The criminal leaves and takes trace something behind and the responder leaves and takes something behind. Trauma is the scene and as listeners/responders to trauma- we both leave something and take something from the experience.
 - 8.) Secondary Trauma is not something that is easily controlled. You cannot pick and choose what impacts you and, in some cases, how it affects you.
 - 9.) Striving to be healthy, whole and professional is more than just a “personal self-care” issue. **It is also a client issue.** Crime victimization represents some of the most vulnerable moments in our lives, we deserve responders who are healthy, whole and professional.
-



10.) It is our job to say: “I’m going to help this person feel understood, safe, in control, competent, and cared for”.

11.) “Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. When you gaze long into the abyss, the abyss gazes also into you” ~Friedrich Nietzsche

12.) TIRC has over 150 different elements.

13.) There is an agency/ organizational responsibility to institutionalize vicarious trauma mitigation. It is very difficult because each staff person is an individual, but it must be “considered a key element” of the job.

14.) We all owe it to ourselves, loved ones, organizations and clients to have comprehensive and holistic self-care plans on both the individual and institutional level.

15.) Our clients deserve to have professional and experienced staff who can serve them in a healthy way. Self-care is about you and it is not about you. It is clearly an ethical responsibility.