

# Runaway and Homeless Youth Training & Technical Assistance Center

## Secondary Traumatic Stress and Vicarious Trauma

What is it?	What do I need to know about it?
<p><b>Secondary Traumatic Stress:</b> Similar to compassion fatigue but triggered by trauma work and characterized by symptoms of PTSD.</p>	<p><b>Who:</b> Mental health clinicians who treat people with trauma-related disorders are particularly vulnerable</p> <p><b>Risk factors:</b> The integration process in trauma treatment, personal history of trauma, and blaming or shaming attitudes from supervisors</p> <p><b>Protective factors:</b> Balancing trauma work with other types of clinical practice; supportive culture; specialized trauma training; regular supervision; psychotherapy; strong social support network; self care and coping skills</p>
<p><b>Vicarious Trauma:</b> Cumulative transformation shifting a person’s worldview, undermining one’s sense of trust, safety and control and disrupting psychological and/or interpersonal functioning.</p>	<p><b>Symptoms:</b> Loss of energy; nightmares; interpersonal difficulty; cynicism; feelings of hopelessness and despair; increased emotionality or numbness; dissociation or depersonalization</p> <p><b>Risk factors:</b> Heavy trauma work, particularly with violence, human-induced or sexual trauma and/or child victims; stigmatizing organizational culture; poor training; inadequate supervision</p> <p><b>Protective factors:</b> Regular clinical supervision, personal therapy, well-developed coping skills, sense of humor, and other behaviors that promote comprehensive wellness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical: nutrition, sleep and exercise</li> <li>• Emotional: psychotherapy, developing self-awareness and mindfulness</li> <li>• Cognitive: using imagination and building problem solving skills</li> <li>• Spiritual: yoga, meditation, involvement in church or other spiritual activities</li> <li>• Interpersonal: fostering interpersonal relationships</li> </ul>



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### For More Information about Secondary Traumatic Stress and Vicarious Trauma:

Canfield, J. (2005). Secondary traumatization, burnout, and vicarious traumatization: A review of the literature as it relates to therapists who treat trauma. *Smith College Studies in Social Work*, 75(2), 81-101.

Newell, J. M., & MacNeil, G. A. (2010). Professional burnout, vicarious trauma, secondary traumatic stress, and compassion fatigue: A review of theoretical terms, risk factors, and preventive methods for clinicians and researchers. *Best Practice in Mental Health*, 6(2), 57-68.

Thompson, I. A., Amatea, E. S., Thompson, E. S. (2014). Personal and contextual predictors of mental health counselors' compassion fatigue and burnout. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 36(1), 58-77.

Williams, A. M., Helm, H. M. & Clemens, E. V. (2012). The effect of childhood trauma, personal wellness, supervisory working alliance, and organizational factors on vicarious traumatization. *Journal of Mental Health Counseling*, 34(2), 133-153.