Vicarious Trauma and Posttraumatic Growth
Identification and Interventions

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Personal Inventory

You will only be asked to share what you feel comfortable with.
Learning Objectives

- Participants will be able to:
  - Define vicarious trauma and post-traumatic growth
  - Identify their own symptoms of vicarious trauma and growth
  - Create a self-care plan to reduce symptoms of VT
What is Vicarious Trauma?

- Other names often used in place of “vicarious trauma”
  - Traumatic Countertransference
  - Secondary Traumatization
  - Posttraumatic Stress Disorder

- Similar, but not quite the same as:
  - Burnout
  - Compassion Fatigue
Working Title of Vicarious Trauma

- A negative transformation due to working with and caring about trauma victims.
- Includes elements of PTSD, along with changes in:
  - Identity
  - Worldview
  - Self–Soothing capacities
  - Sense of safety
  - Capacity to trust others and maintain intimacy
Risk factor for VT

- Negative coping skills
- Stress
- Being female
- Own trauma history (research is mixed)
PTSD Diagnostic Criteria

- **Re-experiencing of trauma**
  - Recurrent dreams
  - Acting or feeling as if events were recurring
  - Flashbacks or intrusive memories

- **Avoidance of trauma-related stimuli**
  - Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, etc.
  - Inability to recall important aspects of the trauma
  - Markedly diminished interest in certain activities
  - Feelings of detachment or estrangement

- **Persistent symptoms of arousal**
  - Irritability or outbursts of anger
  - Difficulty concentrating
  - Difficulty falling or staying asleep
  - Exaggerated startle response

- **Negative cognitions/distortions**
  - Undue sense of guilt/blame
  - Sense of shame connected to events
  - Distorted worldview
  - Depressive symptoms
How might these symptoms manifest in healthcare providers?
Self-awareness Worksheet

Circle the items that you experience as a result of doing this work.
What professions are vulnerable to vicarious trauma?

- Mental health clinicians working with victims
- Law enforcement
- Child protective workers
- Firefighters
- Emergency care workers
- Residents
- DSS caseworkers
What are some examples of impactful events, situations, or triggers for you?
What is Vicarious Posttraumatic Growth (VPTG)

- Positive effects due to working with trauma victims.
- Psychological change that mirrors the positive growth in trauma survivors
- Examples?
What determines VT or VPTG

- Organizational factors
- Personal strategies
- Individual characteristics
- Social support
How to prevent/treat VT and increase VPTG:

- Increase organizational awareness and support
- Help clinicians develop self-awareness towards symptoms of vicarious trauma
- Opportunities to witness client/patient PTG
- Develop prevention plans
  - Professional plan
  - Personal plan
Develop a Self-Care Plan

- Physical/Medical
- Psychological
- Emotional
- Spiritual
- Work Place/Professional
- Balance
Self-Care Plan

Rate how often you do each of the following and then create your own self-care plan.
Questions?
**References**
