Françoise Mathieu, M.Ed., RP.
Executive Director

Managing the things we can’t unsee:
Key strategies to reduce the impact of secondary trauma exposure

- Tragic community event, Sept 2019
- Special Investigations Unit involved
- Staff member a witness
- Event captured on videotape
• State of the research on STS
• Gaps in the research
• WTF
• Warning signs
• 30 second recap

Who is impacted by a traumatic community event?

C-Platoon Kingston Police Communications Center
What if looking at evidence is part of your job?

Avoiding avoidance
What is a “normal” reaction to secondary exposure?

What happens when everyone goes home?

What’s wrong with sharing “war stories”?

What’s wrong with watching Forensic Files at night?
Where is the field at?


Assessing our Individual Risk Factors

Source: TEND ACADEMY LTD.

Image courtesy of Dr. Leslie Anne Ross, UCLA

Journal of Traumatology: Special Issue on Secondary Traumatic Stress June 2017

www.stsconsortium.com

Beyond Kale and Pedicures: Can We Beat Burnout and Compassion Fatigue?
**Current Work by STS consortium Members**

**Assessing the level of intervention**

- **EXPOSURE**
- **REACTIONS**
- **SYMPTOMS**
- **FUNCTIONAL IMPAIRMENTS**
  - **STS, PTSD, VT**

**INDIVIDUAL**
**TEAM**
**LEADERS**
**ORGANIZATIONS**

Source: Dr. Patricia Fisher (2018)

**The CE-CERT Model**
**Brian Miller, Ph.D., Salt Lake City, Utah**

A Components-Based Practice and Supervision Model for Reducing Compassion Fatigue by Affecting Clinician Experience

*Miller & Sprang (2017)*

**The Functional impairment due to Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale**
**Brian Bride, Ph.D., MSW. Georgia State University**

The Functional Impairment due to Secondary Traumatic Stress Scale (FITS) is a self-report scale that requires respondents to rate discrete or impairments in seven domains using a 5-point Likert scale. This presentation will present information regarding the development and initial validation of FITS.
The Vicarious Resilience Scale (VRS)
Kyle, Killian, Ph.D., LMFT. Boston.

Vicarious Resilience: the positive ways professionals may be impacted by clients’ resilience, healing and recovery from severe traumas (Killian et al, 2017).

High scores on the Vicarious Resilience Scale, which is significantly correlated with Compassion Satisfaction, Social Support, and High Morale and Locus of Control at work.

So, they have social support (and engage in Self Care, which is the responsibility to appropriately attend to our own and beloved colleagues’ healthy functioning).

Source: (Killian et al, 2017)

Gaps in the Research
• Lack of RCTs (other than mindfulness and compassion fatigue reduction)
• Need for more diverse subject pool (race, class, gender, professions, intersectionality)
• Multigenerational aspects of STS
• Continuing focus on individual strategies & vulnerabilities vs organizational & systemic
Gaps con’t

• Need for more focus on moral distress
• Workload relief?
• Addressing socio-political climates
• Focus on the functional health and STS literacy of leadership at all levels of our organizations
Your Warning Signs

Physical Symptoms

Behavioural Signs and Symptoms

How we transition...
Blurred Boundaries

Emotional warning signs

Beware of Being in Reactivity Mode
UNDERSTANDING THE WINDOW OF TOLERANCE

Source: mast.stmichaelshospital.com

How to widen the Window of Tolerance

Source: mast.stmichaelshospital.com

THREE SIMPLE GUIDELINES FOR HEALTHY LIVING

By Françoise Mathieu

www.tendacademy.ca

MIND-BRAIN-GENE

TOWARD PSYCHOTHERAPY INTEGRATION

JOHN B. ARDEN

https://drjohnarden.com
Walk vigorously for 45 minutes per day.

Restorative Sleep

What about coming home every day?
How do you transition?

Strategy: Resetting ourselves

Managing Trauma Exposure

Before
During
After

Preparation Activities

“They’re for emotional protection”

Learn basic grounding skills
Mindfulness App

Headspace.com

Yoga

"Hot Walk, Talk & Flush"

Dr. Patricia Fisher, Diana Tikasz, Tend Academy
Water and Stress Reduction

Talk about it, but don’t slime each other

Low Impact Debriefing

Step One: Self Awareness

Source: Mathieu (2012)

Low Impact Debriefing

Step Two: Fair Warning

Source: Mathieu (2012)

Low Impact Debriefing

Step Three: Consent

Source: Mathieu (2012)
Low Impact Debriefing

Step Four: Low Impact Disclosure

Source: Mathieu (2012)

Protecting Self During High Stress Moments

- Dual awareness
- Mini-breaks (sips of water)
- Shields up
- To picture or not to picture
- Resourcing

After: Processing and Resetting

Why we can’t always shut it off after a case

Source: Diana Tikasz, MSW. Tend Academy

Stress hormones

Source: Diana Tikasz, MSW. Tend Academy
F. Mathieu (2019) www.tendacademy.ca

Don’t watch trauma-filled media at night

- Regular rotation of heavy traumatic caseload


Don’t watch trauma-filled media at night


Access to timely and good quality debriefing & supervision

Access to timely and good quality debriefing & supervision

What works?
Managing Exposure

What works?
Managing Exposure

What works?
Managing Exposure

What works?
Managing Exposure
Debriefing and Supervision

Critical events?

Day to day?

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Protocol for Communities of Practice

1. Personal processing of vicarious trauma and emotional responses
2. Case Review and Peer Consultation
3. Professional Practice Supports

Finally:

www.tendacademy.ca

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RECAP:
Tools we discussed in 30 seconds or less
Your Warning Signs
Questions

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