

Brooklyn Heights Behavioral Associates presents:

**Effectiveness of Group Therapy For Healthcare
Workers Coping with Secondary Traumatic Stress
& Other Strategies**



A workshop by clinicians
Jessica Powell & Morghann Sims

Research contribution by Sarah Palasick, Alexandra Roseman and Ethan Sapienza

Agenda

- ❑ Vicarious Trauma
- ❑ Signs of Vicarious Trauma
- ❑ Coping with Lockdown and Moral Injury
- ❑ Managing Mental Health in Healthcare
- ❑ “Witness Positions”
- ❑ EMDR
- ❑ Vignettes
- ❑ Benefits of Psychoeducation & Prevention Workshops
- ❑ Benefits of Group Intervention/Peer Support
- ❑ Q&A

Vicarious Trauma (VT)

Pearlman and Saakvitne describe vicarious trauma as “a process through which helping professionals inner experience about the self and world is negatively transformed as a result of empathetic engagement with trauma survivors.”

- ❑ VT develops over time and affects a person's professional and social identity
- ❑ VT can manifest in the professional through portraying cynicism, fear, sadness, and despair
- ❑ VT can also result in isolation in the working environment due the stigmatizing attitude of the victim's work colleagues and management
- ❑ VT shows up in everyone differently



Lack of self control

Isolation from others



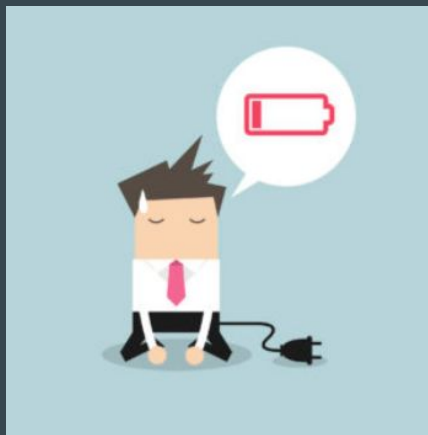
Questioning career choice



Emotional blunting



Sleeping problems and nightmares

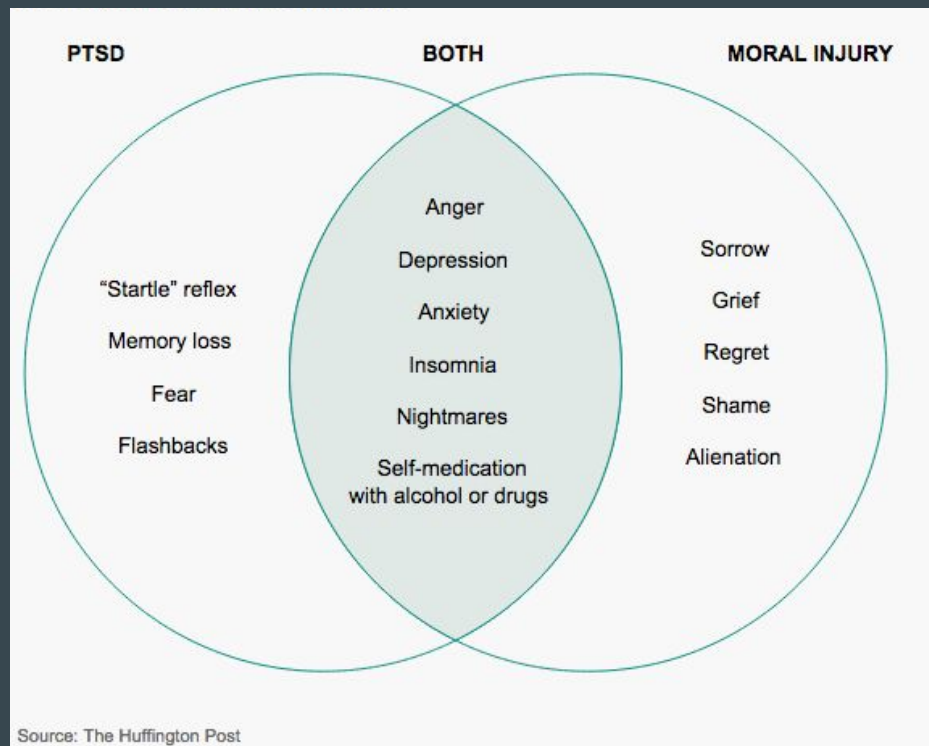


Reduced energy/exhaustion

Despair and hopelessness



Coping with Lockdown and Moral Injury



Managing Mental Health in Healthcare

There are increased risk of moral injury and mental health problems when dealing with challenges of the covid-19 pandemic

- ❑ Healthcare managers need to proactively take steps to protect the mental wellbeing of staff by:
 - ❑ Holding space and room for reflection
 - ❑ Making sure future tasks are as feasible as possible and not damaging
 - ❑ **Prioritize** mental health care
 - ❑ Psychosocial support needs to gradually be incorporated in emergency preparedness (China model)

“Witness Positions”



1. Competent and Effective
2. Incompetent and Ineffective w/ Power.
3. Incompetent and Ineffective
4. Competent but Ineffective

FIGURE 1. The four witness positions of Weingarten’s witnessing model [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com

Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR)

EMDR is (Keenan & Royale, 2008) The procedure in EMDR makes use of right, left, visual, kinaesthetic, and auditory stimulation while the client mentally focuses on traumatic experiences (usually memories).

Traumatic Memory

1. An image
2. A physiological reaction to said image
3. A negative evaluation of the self in reaction to this image

Keenan & Royale (2008)



Bruce's Story

- ❑ Formerly in the armed forces= empowerment
- ❑ Current Police Officer= “them vs us” mentality
- ❑ Feelings of helplessness, isolation & stigmatized
- ❑ Intrusive images:
 - ❑ Trauma around murder accidents and suicides→ depression
- ❑ Professional identity = negative → to despair and anger
- ❑ Committed to using EMDR

Outcomes:

- ❑ Positive feelings of being strong vs vulnerable, able to take care of his own welfare and positive evaluations of self
- ❑ 15 months later- Feeling great about his work and optimistic about the future

Uniqua's Story



- ❑ 43 years old
- ❑ Been a nurse for 3 years
- ❑ Lives with husband that suffers from off and on depression, after his father died 6 years ago
- ❑ Has a 45 year old client with Covid-19
- ❑ Patient's mother just died last year from Covid-19
- ❑ Patient also feels isolated and finds out that one of their children has separation anxiety
- ❑ In 3 days client goes on the ventilator



Benefits of Psychoeducation & Prevention Workshops

Increase
Self Compassion and Self Care

Lanza, Roysircar and Rogers(2018)

Self Compassion

- Enhances Resiliency
- By lessening reactions to negative circumstances
- Lowers fear of failing
- Increase motivation to be better
- Improve communication and relationships with others.

Self Care

- Giving quality care
 - Acting on the best interest of the patient
 - Making sure they are at their best professionally
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Benefits of Group Intervention and Peer Support:

Increase
Psychosocial Support

Prati and Pietrantonio (2010), Hoyt et al., (2010) Weingarten, K., Galvan-Duran, A. R., D'urso, S., Garcia, D. (2020).

- ❑ Increase psychosocial support
 - ❑ Shared space to talk in comfort
 - ❑ Ability to release frustrations
 - ❑ Express Challenges and be heard
 - ❑ Opportunity to grieve
 - ❑ Decreased stress
 - ❑ Lower PTSD Symptoms
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Q&A