Brooklyn Heights Behavioral Associates presents:

Continuous Exposure to Trauma & Impact of COVID-19 on Frontline Workers

A workshop by clinicians
Jessica Powell & Morghann Sims

Research contribution by Sarah Palasick, Alexandra Roseman and Ethan Sapienza
Agenda

- Define Secondary Trauma
- Continuous Trauma Exposure/Stress
- Listening to your body re trauma symptoms
- Understanding Compassion Fatigue
- Define Compassion Satisfaction
- 4 R’s of Trauma-Informed Care
- Q & A
Understanding Secondary Trauma

- Figley (1995) describes secondary traumatic stress as “natural and consequential behaviors and emotions resulting from knowing about a traumatizing event experienced by a significant other (or client) and the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized or suffering person”

- What causes secondary Trauma for all healthcare and covid frontline workers:
  - End-of-life issues
  - Unfamiliar job tasks
  - Ethical decision making
  - Witnessing the suffering of patients
  - Disproportionate care or medical futility
  - Miscommunication
  - Demanding relatives of patients
  - Moral distress
  - Organizational Issues

Kelly, 2020; Trumello C. et al (2020); Van mol et al. (2015)
Contextual Factors
(e.g., emotional display norms & expectations, form/frequency of trauma exposure, support)

Secondhand Trauma
(e.g., witnessing, hearing about trauma)
& Empathic Engagement
(i.e., as a function of individual differences, emotional norms/expectations)

Individual Factors
(e.g., sociodemographics, empathy-relevant individual differences, personality, coping)

Empathy-Based Strain
(i.e., compassion fatigue, secondary traumatic stress, vicarious traumatization)

Adverse Occupational Health & Wellbeing Outcomes
(e.g., burnout, depression, anxiety, health)

Negative Work Affect, Behaviors, & Cognitions
(e.g., performance, turnover, satisfaction)

(Rauvola, R.S., Vega, D.M. & Lavigne, K.N, 2020)
Continuous Traumatic Exposure/Stress

Continuous Traumatic Exposure or Stress refers to the ongoing interaction or exposure to situations of threats or trauma.

This framework was originally introduced in South Africa, by researchers-practioners as a result of the apartheid.

Examples of this can be:

- Dealing with trauma on a constant or daily basis
- Exposure to trauma, violence and conflict on a daily basis

(Stevens et al., 2013)
Secondary Trauma Reactions

- Symptoms similar to PTSD, but from secondary exposure.
- Specifically relating to Covid-19 frontline workers have Insomnia and suffer from exhaustion.

Continuous Trauma Reactions

- Including avoidance
- Continuous hyperarousal
- Eventually lead to fatigue, anxiety, depletion, and incapacitation in almost all individuals
- May result in PTSD

Understanding Compassion Fatigue

- Compassion fatigue can cause burnout and secondary trauma

Compassion fatigue:

- The eventual and continual depletion of sympathy for others
- May cause mental and physical strains
- Result of prolonged and intense contact with patients
- Exposure to continuous stress
- Often times overlaps with concept of secondary trauma

Trumello C. (2020)
Compassion Satisfaction

- Compassion satisfaction (Trumello, 2020):
  - Represents the positive aspect of being a healthcare worker
  - Related to an empathetic attitude and inclination to take care of suffering patients
- These factors play a fundamental role in professional quality of life stress
- As compassion satisfaction goes down, compassion fatigue goes up
- Positive affect and personal/social factors are positively correlated with compassion satisfaction
- Higher levels of stress and burnout = lower levels of compassion satisfaction

Trumello C. (2020)
4 R’s of Trauma-Informed Care

- REALIZE the prevalence
- RECOGNIZE the impact
- RESPOND appropriately
- RESILIENCE through skill-building

PHCoE graphic, 2014


Q&A