

The Next Revolution:

*How We Can Respond to Vicarious
Trauma and Transform Victim
Services in the Process*

“There is a soul weariness that comes with caring. From the daily doing business with the handiwork of fear. Sometimes it lives at the edges of one’s life, brushing against hope and barely making its presence known. At other times, it comes crashing in, overtaking one with its vivid images of another’s terror with its profound demands for attention...” (Stamm, 1995)

This Session

- Understanding the Evolution of Victim Services
- Recognizing Vicarious Trauma
- Creating the Next Revolution

Roundtable Discussion

- Monday, October 31st
- 11:00am EST
- Roundtable Discussion by Phone
- Dial 949-270-2290 and access code 5024
- Recording Available

Understanding the Evolution of Victim Services

The First Agenda

- Shelter for Battered Women
- Legal Protection
- Public Awareness
- Advocacy

Evolution of the Agenda

- Funding
- Collaborations Across Systems
- Batterer- and Life- Generated Risks (Jill Davies, 1998)
- Comprehensive Victim Services
- Challenges Within the Movement

Recognizing Vicarious Trauma

Definition of Vicarious Trauma

- Negative Changes of the Inner Experience of the Helper Resulting From Work With Trauma Survivors
- Changes in Beliefs, Feelings, Judgments and Beyond
- Individual Process

(Saakvitne & Pearlman, 1996; McCann & Pearlman, 1990; Figley, 1995)

“Vicarious Trauma is the experience of bearing witness to the atrocities committed against another. It is the result of absorbing the sight, smell, sound, touch, and feel of the stories told in detail by victims searching for a way to release their own pain. It is the instant physical reaction that occurs when a particularly horrific story is told or an event is uncovered. It is the insidious way that the experiences slip under the door, finding ways to permeate the counselor’s life...

Vicarious trauma is the energy that comes from being in the presence of trauma and it is how our bodies and psyche react to the profound despair, rage and pain...The invasive and intrusive horrors infiltrate and make their mark. The waves of agony and pain bombard the spirit and seep in, draining strength, confidence, desire, friendship, calmness, laughter and good health.” (Jan Richardson, 2001)

One-Page Handout on
Secondary and Vicarious Trauma
at www.isu.edu/~bhstamm

Impact of Vicarious Trauma

- Personal Impact
- Professional Impact
- Organizational Impact

(Yassen, 1995)

Creating the Next Revolution...

To best respond to vicarious trauma and transform ourselves—and our services—in the process!

Response to Vicarious Trauma

- Assessment Tools (Stamm, 1995-2002) and Practices
- Best Practices for the Individual and the Organization (Richardson, 2001; Bell et al., 2003; Palm et al., 2004)
- Critical Factors
- Benefits of Change

Professional Quality of Life Assessment
at www.isu.edu/~bhstamm

Best Practices

- Plan
- Assessment
- Support
- Meaning
- Awareness
- Training
- Support
- Practice

Revolutionary Roadmap

1. Review Opportunities and Create Checklist for Action
2. Involve Battered Women and Staff in Process
3. Create Support Structure
4. Evaluate Your Progress
5. Maintain Integrity
6. Advocate and Celebrate!

Conclusions

- Questions and Comments
- Additional Resources
- Parting Thoughts
- Acknowledgements

“So where is the hope amid this much suffering? I believe it is in the nurturance of the individual within the sustenance of community...I believe this is a task too difficult to be done entirely alone; that it can only be done, not by the community, but in the context of community.” (Stamm, 1995)

Bibliography and Other Resources

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- Davies, J. *Safety Planning With Battered Women*, 1998.
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- Palm, K., M. Polusny, & V. Follette. Vicarious Traumatization: Potential Hazards and Interventions for Disaster and Trauma Workers. *Prehospital and Disaster Medicine* 2004; 19 (1): 73-78.
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