

## Vicarious Trauma, Self-Care & Team Support

Brief definitions from the attendees

### What is Vicarious Trauma?

- Work with vulnerable people impacts on the self
- Taking on trauma of the client
- Impacts on own perspective / life

### What is Secondary Trauma?

- Impact of images (doesn't have to be work based)
- Seeing / hearing news can cause it
- Sense of helplessness

### What is Burnout?

- Work exhaustion, not necessarily trauma related
- Can no longer relate / care or empathise (compassion fatigue related)
- Saturated / giving up

Identifying symptoms of Vicarious Trauma

<u>Psychological</u>	<u>Behavioural</u>	<u>Physical</u>
Sleep problems	Picking up client behaviour	Nightmares
Negative outlook	Edgy	Look exhausted
Overwhelmed	Crying alot / easily	Gain / lose weight
Anger	Less tolerant	Headaches
Guilt	Isolate self	Backaches
Productivity drop	Eating habits change	Fee nervous / jumpy
Overinvolved	Excessive drinking	Feeling sick
Difficulty switching off	Smoking more	Fatigue
Difficulty prioritising	Neglect, or compulsively exercise	Increased sickness
Lack of motivation	Increased complaining / moaning	
Loss of boundaries	Drop hobbies	
Internal change	Obsessive behaviours worsen	
Trying to save	Blaming (clients/ staff/ family)	

## How to guard against Vicarious Trauma?

Team (ideas through group discussion and art making)

- Clear boundaries
- Not here to save - here to guide and support
- Clear roles
- Pre-arranged timings
- Realistic expectations
- Good communication within the team
- Understanding of responsibilities
- Schedule and protect reflective time / team support
- Discuss / feedback at end of day

Individual (points derived from art making exercise)

- Exercise
- Social life
- Family
- Music
- Nature
- Humour
- Love

General (points noted throughout workshop)

- Build in breaks (take lunch)
- Leave work at work
- Clear focus
- Solid time keeping
- Assertiveness
- Ability to say no
- Recognise what you HAVE done / achieved
- Prepare clients for session with information about what they can expect
- 'What we can do' message pre-prepared and available
- Done lists / board of achievements
- Talk within the team - communication
- Build compassion
- Build understanding of different roles
- Have clear roles
- Time together as a team that is not only task focused
- Block abuse together - support colleagues
- Encourage a culture of staff loyalty, and team support

Self care

What are some steps that can be taken to overcome symptoms of vicarious trauma

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What are some steps that can be taken to guard against symptoms of vicarious trauma

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Choose one thing to focus on from your suggestions above, to try out for the next week:

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A future team meeting could include in the agenda some minutes to remember what brought you toward this line of work, and consider the skills or personal qualities that make you effective.

**PROQOL** sheets included for measuring your own levels of burn out and compassion satisfaction.

Links to further resources and workshop dates: [www.socialarttherapy.com/what-is-vicarious-trauma](http://www.socialarttherapy.com/what-is-vicarious-trauma)

Free online vicarious trauma and self-care training materials by the Headington Institute are here: [www.headington-institute.org/overview](http://www.headington-institute.org/overview)

A session further looking at coping mechanisms, including setting and maintaining boundaries is on 17th November 2016 at Doctors Of The World clinic in Bethnal Green, 7-9pm. Check [www.socialarttherapy.com/self-care-workshops](http://www.socialarttherapy.com/self-care-workshops) for an updated schedule and email [clinic@doctorsoftheworld.org.uk](mailto:clinic@doctorsoftheworld.org.uk) to confirm your attendance, the workshop is free of charge.