

VICARIOUS TRAUMATIZATION

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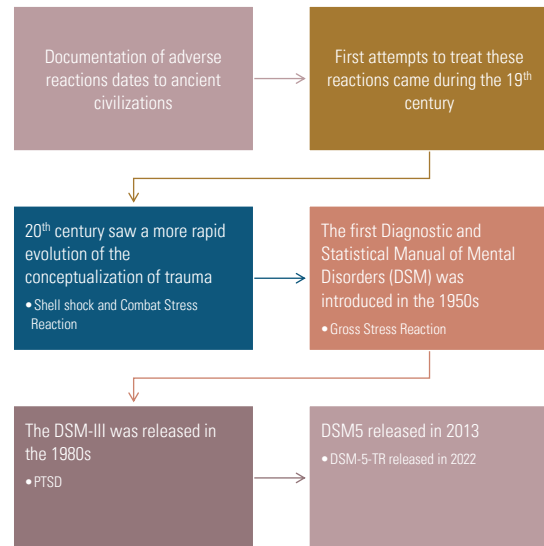
WAUKESHA COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

1

WHAT IS TRAUMA?

2

A BRIEF HISTORY



3

WHY IS THE DSM-5-TR IMPORTANT?

- “Experiencing repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s) (e.g., first responders collecting human remains; police officers repeatedly exposed to the details of child abuse).”
- Formally recognizes the concept of vicarious trauma
- Up to this point, the traumatic events were something that needed to be directly experienced firsthand

4

VICARIOUS TRAUMATIZATION

"Indirect exposure to a traumatic event through a firsthand account or narrative of that event."

• The Psychology Group

Vicarious traumatization is a *negative* reaction to the exposure of the traumatic experiences of others

Results in trauma-related symptoms

The individual starts to share the same negative world view as the individual who directly experiences the event

5

OTHER RELATED CONCEPTS

- Controlled Empathy
 - Constant monitoring of emotional state and expression of said state
 - Taking in information without outwardly showing emotional reaction
- Burnout
 - Tends to build gradually
 - Leads to a change that alleviates or improves the sense of burnout

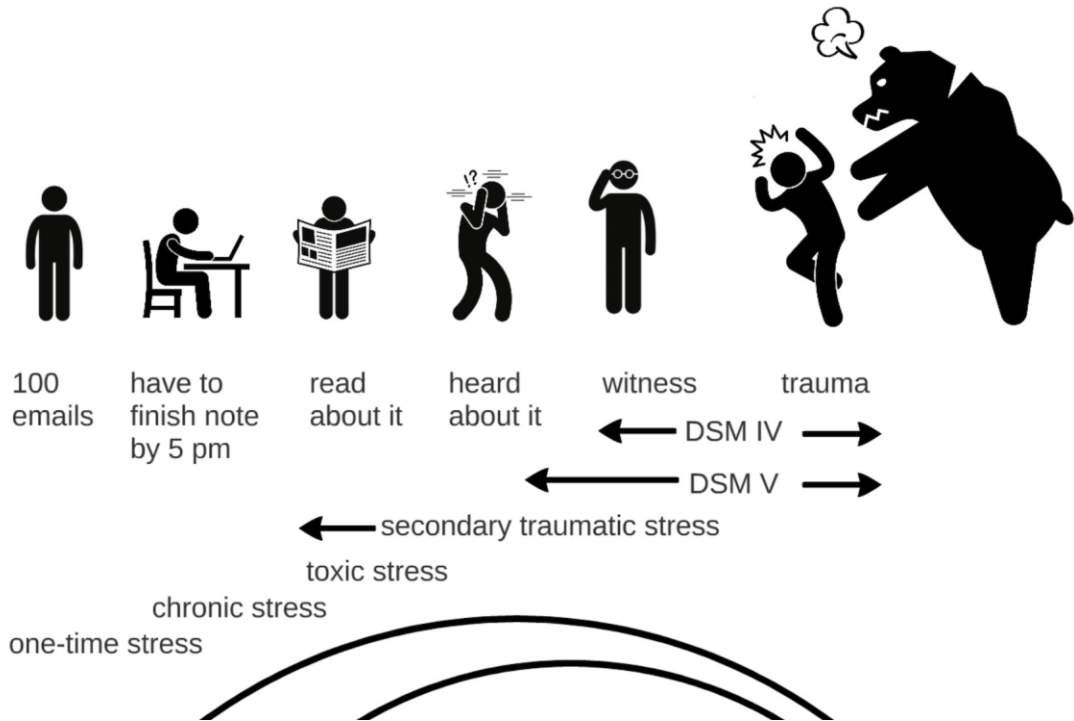
- Compassion Fatigue
 - Tends to happen quickly
 - Decreased compassion towards others

The expectation that we can be immersed in suffering and loss daily and not be touched by it is as unrealistic as expecting to be able to walk through water without getting wet.

- Naomi Rachel Remen

jessicadolice.com

6



7

FACTORS THAT LEAD TO VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Organizational factors

- Unrealistic expectations, “top-down” management styles, high levels of demands, tolerance of bullying

Personal factors

- Inadequate self-care practices, unresolved trauma, poor boundaries, lack of support network, ineffective coping skills

8

EFFECTS OF VICARIOUS TRAUMA

Chronic stress disrupts many systems within the body

Trauma and stress can rewire your brain

9

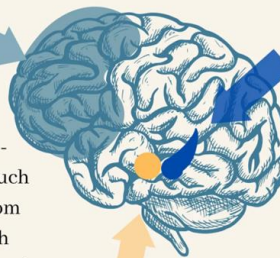
HOW TRAUMA AFFECTS THE BRAIN

Prefrontal Cortex

Rational thinking - regulates emotions such as fear responses from the amygdala - with PTSD this has a reduced volume

Hippocampus

Responsible for memory and differentiating between past and present - works to remember and make sense of the trauma. With consistent exposure to trauma, it shrinks.



Amygdala

Wired for survival, when active it is hard to think rationally. The more hyperactive the amygdala is, the more signs of PTSD are present.

@PSYCHOTHERAPY.CENTRAL

10

AUTONOMIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

SYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

- Fight or flight
 - Increased heart rate and respiration
 - Digestion slows
 - Adrenaline released
 - Pupils dilate
 - Fat and glucose released for energy

PARASYMPATHETIC NERVOUS SYSTEM

- Rest and digest
 - Digestion resumes
 - Adrenaline decreases
 - Heart rate and breathing slow

11

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE IN DAILY LIFE?

- Behavioral changes
 - Frequent tardiness or absences
 - Irritability
 - Impatience
 - Decreased interest
- Interpersonal struggles
 - Isolation/avoiding being alone
 - Conflict with peers
 - Poor communication
 - Inappropriate boundaries
- Job performance
 - Increase in errors
 - Poor concentration/forgetfulness
 - Avoidance of responsibilities
- Values/beliefs
 - Negative world view
 - Poor self-image
 - Apathy
 - Blaming others

12

VICARIOUS TRAUMA

A trauma response in someone who hasn't directly experienced the traumatic event themselves, but has seen or heard about it from someone else



Signs Include:



Difficulty in managing emotions



Feeling numb or disconnected



Change in beliefs about people, the world, and life in general



Fatigue or problems sleeping



Startling easily



Loss of meaning in life



Excessive worry or anxiety



Withdrawal from people and situations



Compassion fatigue (less empathy over time)



Survivor guilt

WMHI thewmhi.com

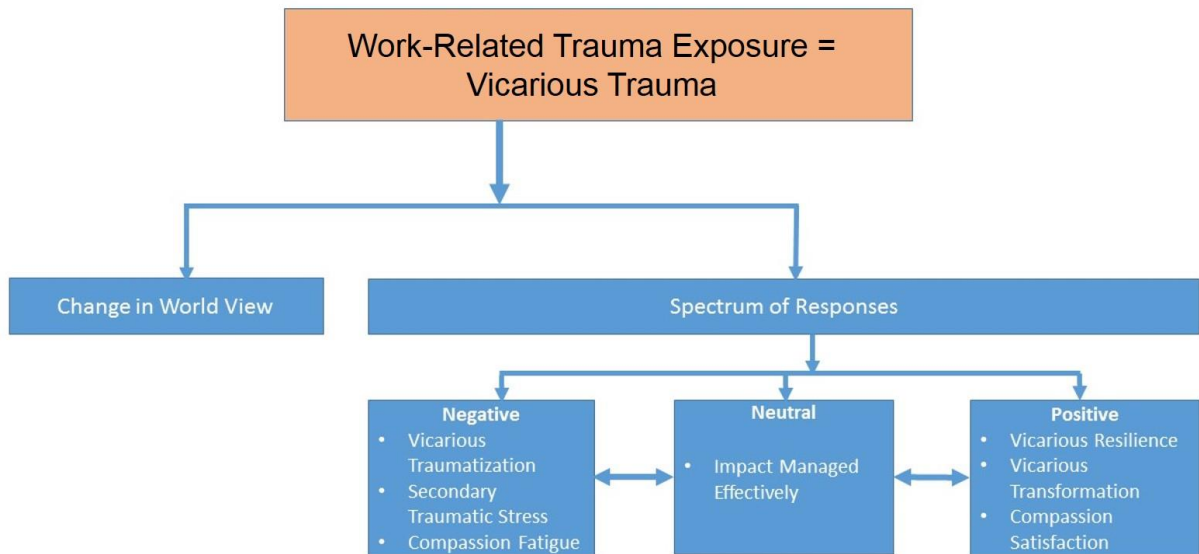
13

Intrusion	Avoidance	Cognition & Mood Changes	Arousal & Reactivity Changes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involuntary & recurrent memories • Traumatic nightmares • Flashbacks • Intense or prolonged distress after exposure to reminders 	Avoiding trauma-related <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thoughts • Feelings • People • Places • Conversations • Activities • Objects • Situations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can't recall key features of event • Negative beliefs about self or world • Distorted blame • Persistent fear, horror, anger, guilt or shame • Diminished interest in activities • Feeling alienated • Inability to feel positive emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritable or aggressive • Self-destructive • Hypervigilance • Exaggerated startle response • Problems with concentration • Sleep problems

POSTTRAUMATIC STRESS AND ACUTE STRESS DISORDERS SYMPTOMS

14

Vicarious Trauma Toolkit Model



15

COPING WITH VICARIOUS TRAUMA


- Debrief with peers and/or supervisor on a regular basis
- Establish and maintain appropriate work/life boundaries
- Engage in light exercise
- Use vacation time
- Maintain healthy sleep routines and get adequate sleep
- Practice meditation and mindfulness
- Eat and hydrate appropriately
- Remember moderation when consuming alcohol
- Seek professional help when necessary



16

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GROUNDING TECHNIQUE

A calming technique that connects you with the present by exploring the five senses.

				
5 things you can see	4 things you can touch	3 things you can hear	2 things you can smell	1 thing you can taste

SQUARE BREATHING

inhale 2... 3... 4

rest 2... 3... 4

hold 2... 3... 4

breathe



exhale 2... 3... 4

ZENCARE