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**Understanding Leadership's Role in Recognizing and Navigating Secondary Trauma
Exposure to Create a Positive, Supportive, and Healthy Workplace**

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M.S. in Leadership
Winter 2023

Granite State College

Why this Project?

Who Am I?


- Programs Director at one of 12 crisis centers in NH
- Supervise two teams with continuous exposure to trauma

Why this topic?


Without addressing the exposure to secondary trauma and understanding how to navigate and recognize it effectively, clients, children, colleagues, funders, and other stakeholders in social services professions will be deeply impacted.

The Problem?

Professionals in social services agencies play an essential role in assisting trauma victims.

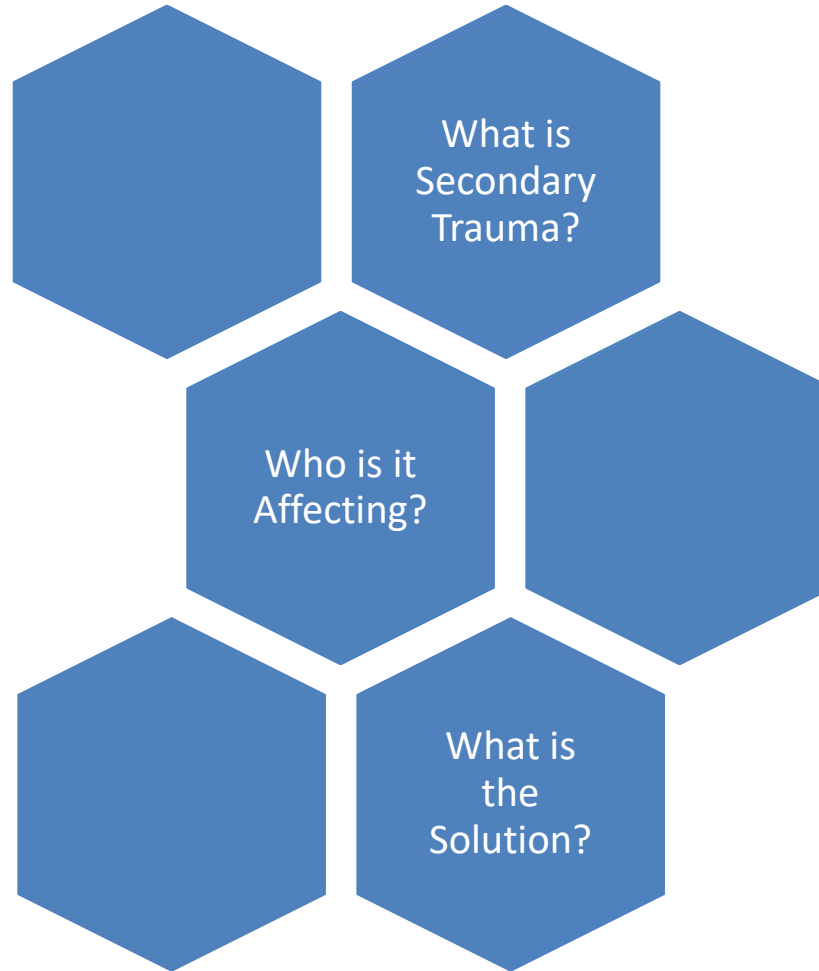


However, research shows that secondary exposure to trauma can have lasting effects on the professionals helping the victims.

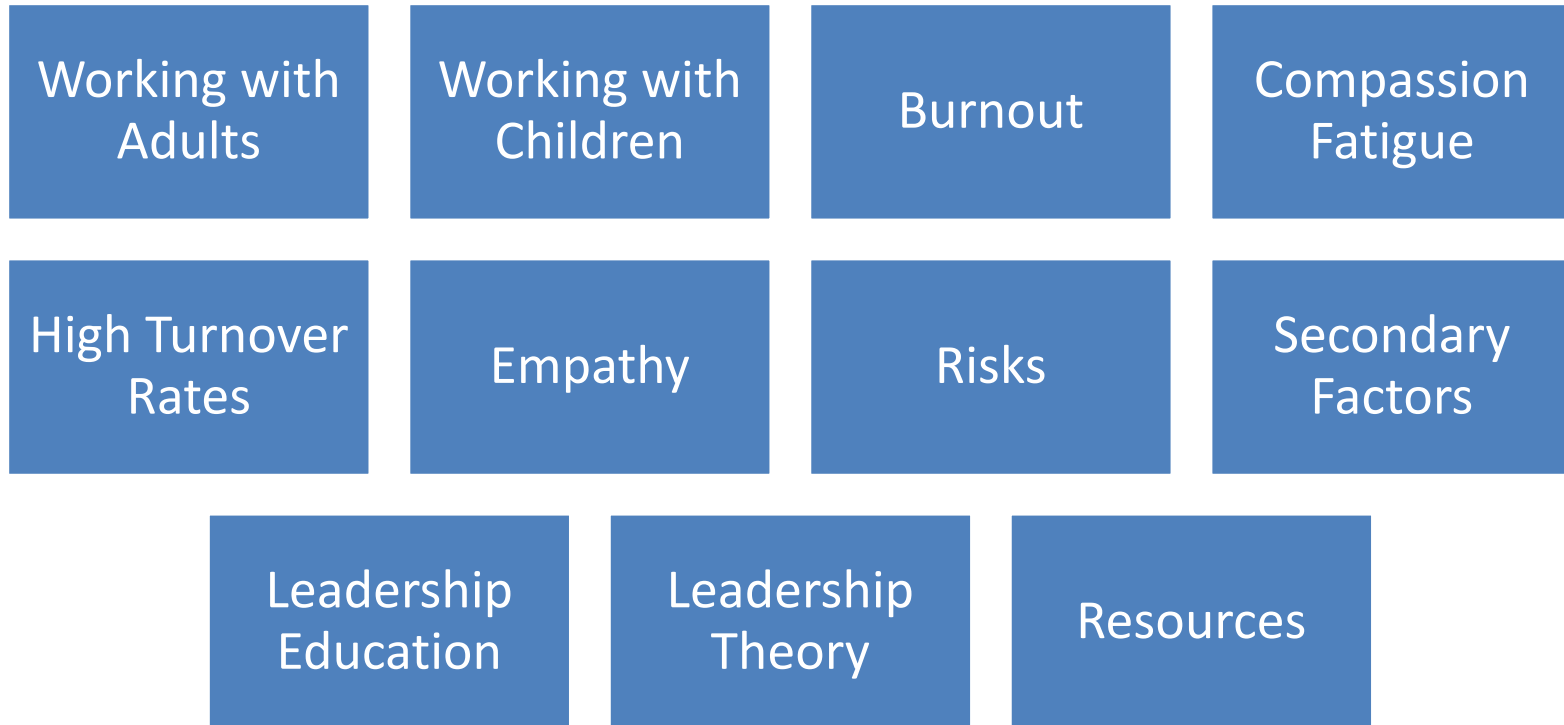


As a result, exposure may result in negative psychological responses, including secondary traumatic stress (STS), vicarious trauma (VT), burnout, and compassion fatigue.

Purpose of the Literature Review



Literature Review



Methodology

Multiple articles were used to examine the prevalence of secondary trauma in social services providers for this research.

Surveys were completed by supervisors at crisis centers, law enforcement agencies, DCYF, the Child Advocacy Center, and Mental Health providers.

The purpose of the surveys was to get a sense of best practices and what each organization is doing as a way for employees to process traumatic experiences and lessen exposure to trauma.

Results



The overall theme present in the survey was that an attentive direct supervisor makes a huge difference.



Several leaders and managers shared their policies on self-care and employee benefits, such as paid time off and wellness initiatives.



Having policies in place is not enough if leaders are not taking the initiative to check in with their staff effectively and not recognizing the need for help.

Creating a Positive, Supportive & Healthy Workplace



Supervision



Trauma-Informed
Care Training



Balance



Consistent Self-
Care



Resources/
Benefits



Administrative
Support

Conclusion

AS A LEADER, YOU CAN:

- Promote self-care & prioritize staff care
- Divide responsibilities & ensure diverse workloads
- Offer professional training & encourage staff development
- Create opportunities for staff to connect with the community outside of work
- Provide resources

KEY TAKEAWAY:

By understanding how secondary trauma affects social services professionals, we can help leaders and organizations develop and target interventions that promote healthy coping responses to the inevitable traumatic nature of the work.

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