



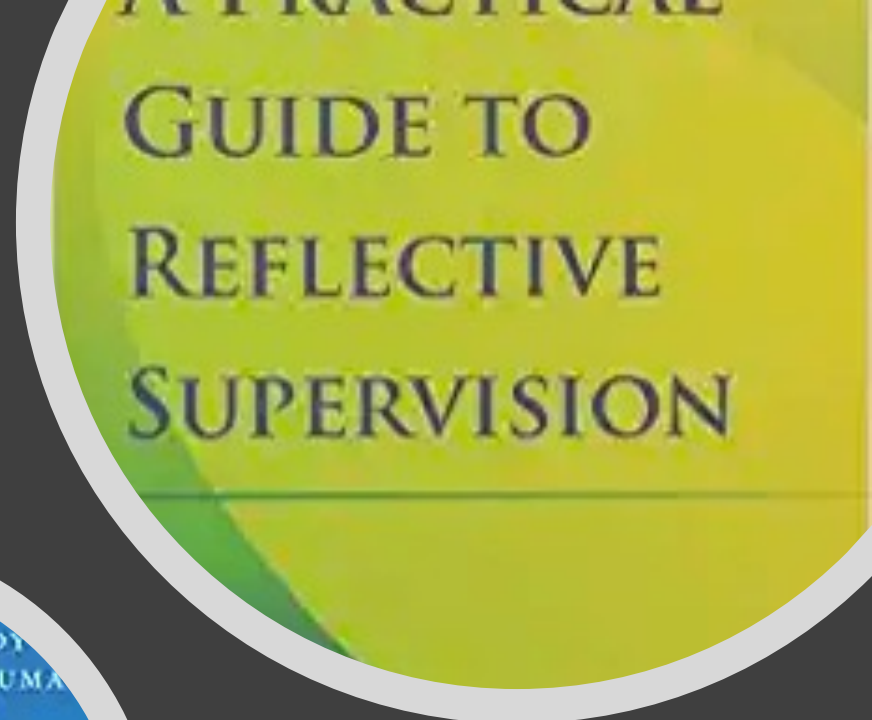
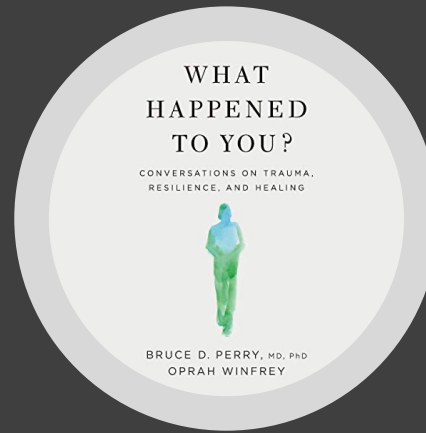
CENTER FOR  
CHILD & FAMILY  
HEALTH

# Understanding and Addressing Secondary Traumatic Stress (STS) in a CAC Setting

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# POSITIONALITY

How do I identify and come to this work of understanding and addressing secondary traumatic stress?



# OUR TIME TOGETHER

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## Will center

- connection
- conversation
- reflection
- planning



# DEFINING TERMS

# WHAT IS TRAUMATIC STRESS?



Exposure to events that involve threats of **injury, death, or danger** during which intense **terror, anxiety, and helplessness** are experienced.



Can occur via **direct experience, witnessing** the event, or even **hearing about** the event.



**Intense physical effects**, including rapid heartbeat and breathing, shaking, dizziness, and/or loss of bladder or bowel control.



Reactions **vary with age**, but even very young children experience intense reactions.

(Gerrity, 2013; NCTSN, 2010)

# WHAT IS SECONDARY TRAUMATIC STRESS?



Exposure to events that involve threats of **injury, death, or danger**



Can occur via **witnessing, thinking, reliving, hearing about** the event.



**Intense physical effects**, including re-experiencing, avoiding, arousal, changes in thought and mood.



Reactions **vary with time and life circumstances**, but STS is an occupational reality of working with humans.

It all adds up...





# WORKFORCE STRESS DOES NOT PREDICT YOUR FUTURE.





# RESILIENCE



# Defining Resilience

Resilience is **not**:

- Dichotomous (have/don't have)
- A single strength, characteristic, or attribute
- An outcome
- Fixed or static across the lifespan
- “Bouncing back” after a traumatic experience or event



(Masten, 2001; Walsh, Pauter, & Hendricks, 2020)

# Who is responsible for workforce resilience?



You



Co-workers



Supervisors



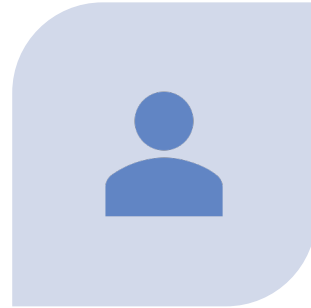
Organization



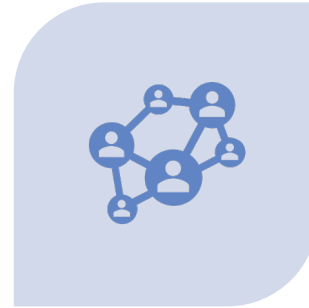
# SELF/WE-CARE MYTHS



WE SHOULDN'T  
HAVE OUR OWN  
FEELINGS ABOUT  
THE PAIN AND  
SUFFERING  
AROUND US-  
IT'S JUST THE  
JOB.



SELF-CARE IS  
ALL THE  
RESPONSIBILITY  
OF THE  
INDIVIDUAL  
EMPLOYEE.



WELLNESS IS  
ALL THE  
RESPONSIBILITY  
OF THE  
AGENCY.



SELF-CARE IS  
SOMETHING  
INDIVIDUAL  
PEOPLE  
SHOULD DO AT  
HOME.

# TRAUMA-INFORMED PRACTICES THAT MAY REDUCE WORKFORCE STRESS

Low Impact Debriefing (vs. Sliming)

Routines around starting and stopping (Choice)

Set up, respect and protect processing time  
(Reflection)

Remembering/Reevaluating the 'Why?'  
(Narrative)



# PLAN FOR OUR TIME TOGETHER

## Share

- Share signs of Workforce Stress



## Identify

- Identify personal, agency, and community steps that reduce Workforce Stress



## Choose

- Choose one action to implement



## TRUTHS TO HOLD FOR OUR TIME TOGETHER

- Emotions, stress or trauma reactions are not a sign a weakness
- What you have experienced does not control your future
- Thinking matters, stories we tell have power
- It is Ok to speak in rough draft
- Connection is what helps us heal and build resilience
- Take away lessons learned, not other's shared details

Any  
Questions



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# EVALUATION



D4 - STS in a CAC

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