



Wounded Healers:
Trauma Impact &
Self Care

Dr. Jill Levenson, PhD, LCSW



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1

1

Learning Objectives:

01

Learn to understand your own work-related stressors through a trauma lens.

02

Identify and describe specific work-related stressors including vicarious and secondary trauma, compassion fatigue, moral injury, and burnout.

03

Explain how parallel processes between practitioners and clients can manifest in trauma-informed care.

04

Apply skills for building your own resilience and self-care plan.

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2

2

Understanding trauma is not just about acquiring knowledge.

It's about changing the way you view the world.

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Sandra Bloom (2007)

3

Thinking about our clients
And ourselves...
Through the trauma lens.




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4

4

Beyond ACEs:
Variety of Traumatic Experiences throughout Life

Trauma:
Loss
Threat
Fear
Uncertainty



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)

Adult Trauma

The Trauma of Poverty

Historical and Cultural Trauma

Intersection of Stigma & Marginalization

Privilege & Power

Vicarious exposure to trauma – news, others, clients

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5


5

SAMHSA's 6 Key Principles of Trauma-Informed Care-
Because trauma exists when these things are absent.

Cultural, Historical, Gender relevance

Peer Support


Empowerment, Voice & Choice



Safety

Trustworthiness & Transparency

Collaboration & Mutuality



Bloom, S. L. (2013). Creating sanctuary: Toward the evolution of safe societies. Routledge.
SAMHSA. (2014). SAMHSA's concept of trauma and guidance for a trauma-informed approach. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.
APA (2013). DSM-5
Van der Kolk, B. (2014)
Herman, J. (1992)

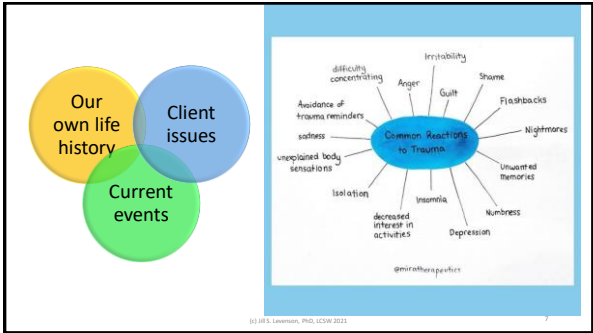
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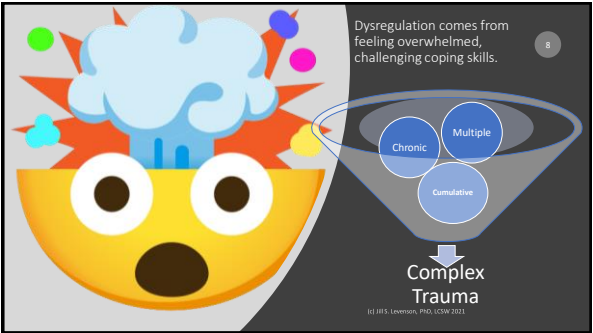
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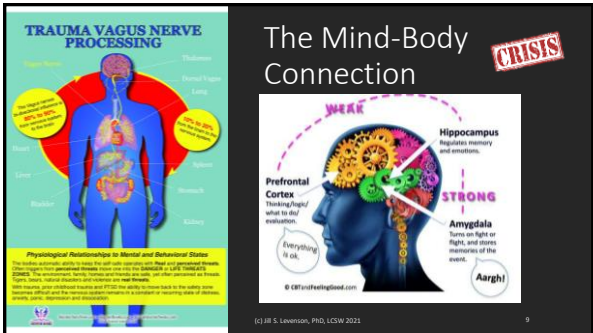
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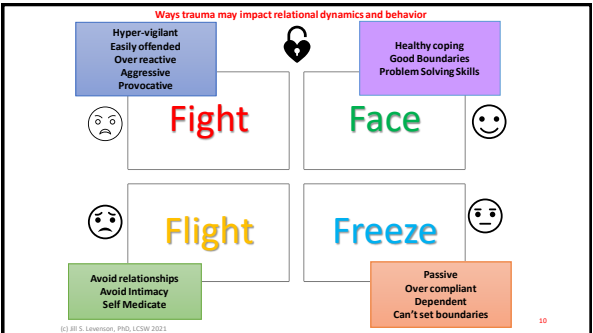
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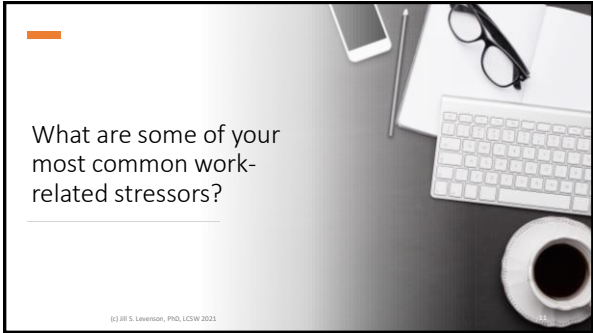
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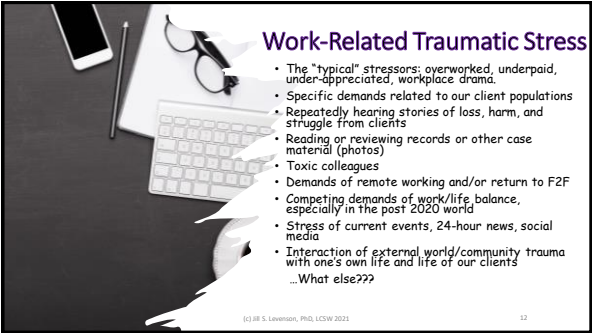
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12

Occupational Hazards

Secondary traumatic stress

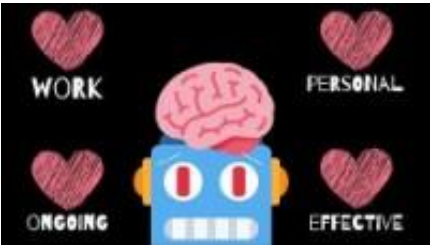
- Vicarious trauma
 - Worker may have various PTSD Symptoms related to hearing client narratives and interacting with client pain
- Compassion fatigue
 - Inability to empathize with clients anymore
 - Adoption of pessimistic worldview
- Moral Injury
 - Helplessness, powerlessness, futility
 - Often related to systemic barriers to our work
- Burnout
 - Worker becomes ineffective, apathetic, irresponsible, or even unethical.

Can you think of how some of these things manifest for you (or your workers)?

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Vicarious Trauma



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L415Vt21N0I>

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14



Vicarious Trauma

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15

Vicarious Trauma

- Fear or Anxiety
- Sleep or eating disturbances
- Hyper-vigilance
- Pre-occupation
- Intrusive Thoughts or Imagery
- Distrust or Cynicism
- Exhaustion
- Dysregulation or Maladaptive Coping
- Irritability or Impatience
 - (with clients or in your own life)

How are you?

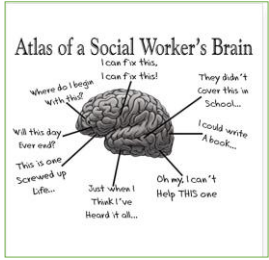
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16

COMPASSION FATIGUE:

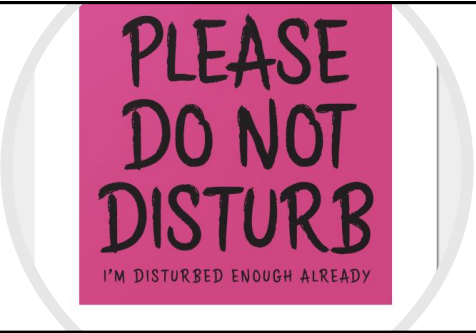
Stress resulting from helping or wanting to help people who are experiencing trauma or are suffering.

Atlas of a Social Worker's Brain



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18

Moral Injury

Autonomy, mastery, respect, and fulfillment are key to avoiding moral injury.

Simon Talbot & Wendy Dean (2020)

- Burnout is the end stage of moral injury, when clinicians are physically and emotionally exhausted with battling a broken system in their efforts to provide good care;
- when they feel ineffective because too often they have met with immovable barriers to good care;
- and when they depersonalize patients because emotional investment is intolerable when patient suffering is inevitable as a result of system dysfunction.

• <https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2020/01/16/autonomy-mastery-respect-fulfillment-key-avoiding-moral-injury-physicians/>

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19

Moral Injury

- Combat / War
- Not being able to help (medical personnel during covid)
- Needing to help someone you don't want to (client who caused harm; or do something you don't believe in)
- Feeling forced to betray a client (CPS report)
- Systemic barriers to providing help (obstacles to good services)
- Systemic infrastructure limitations (lack of equipment or supplies)
- Policies or procedures that seem unfair or unhelpful

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20

Avoidance

Hyperarousal

Re-experiencing

Negative thoughts

How are you?

Secondary PTSD

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21

Vicarious Trauma

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DOQWa-T1sh0>

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22

Work-related vicarious trauma happens to our clients too...

- First Responders
- Nurses, doctors, health workers
- Teachers
- Attorneys
- Journalists
- Others?
- So how can we help apply these ideas to helping our clients as well as ourselves?

THE NEW YORK TIMES #1 BESTSELLER

I'LL BE GONE IN THE DARK

ONE WOMAN'S OBSESSED SEARCH FOR THE COLDEST KILLER EVER

MICHELLE MCNAMARA

(c) Jill S. Levenson, PhD, LCSW 202123

23

STARZ

Jillian Lauren

CONFRONTING A SERIAL KILLER

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24



25



26

What about YOU?

If you are taking care of someone else, who is taking care of you?

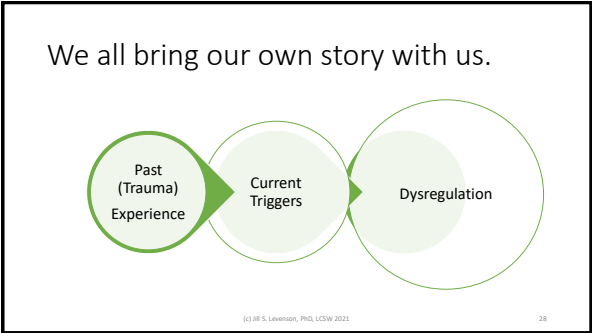
What happens to our immune system when we are tired or stressed?

How has COVID redefined your "normal"?

What are the hardest things to hear in your work?

What about all the other scary things going on in the world?

27



28

A significant number of clinicians may have trauma histories...

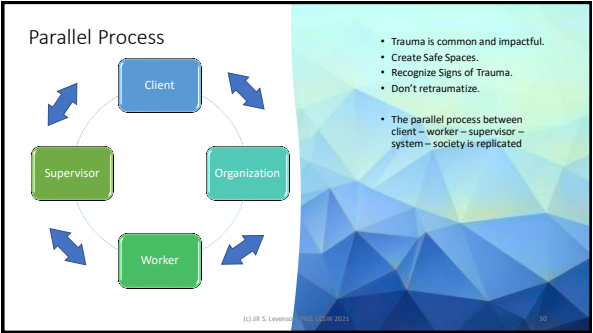
• Wounded healers

How might your own trauma impact work with clients?

How about your relationship with a supervisee, or your own response to supervision?

Relational issues:
Trust
Authority Figures
Power/Control
Conflict
Boundaries


29



30

Trauma-Informed Systems

Include a basic understanding of how trauma impacts the life of an individual seeking services, and the individuals who work within the system. There is a reciprocal and parallel process between the client, the helper, the supervisor, the organization, and the service delivery system.



Dr. Sandra Bloom

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31

31

Creating a trauma-informed work environment: Taking care of our own!



Chapter 1
Trauma-organized systems and parallel process
Sandra L. Bloom



ORGANIZATIONAL STRESS AS A BARRIER TO TRAUMA-POSITIVE CHANGE AND SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION
Sandra L. Bloom, PhD
National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators
Washington, DC 20004
www.napcw.org
Illustration: Building Resilience: The National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators, 2019. All rights reserved.

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32

32

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XHewhs_4YMM



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33

33

<https://ovc.ojp.gov/program/vtt/introduction>



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34

34



The reciprocal nature of trauma



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35

35



CODE OF ETHICS
OF THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS
2021 Amendments
NASW Code of Ethics: Self-Care and Cultural Competence



"Professional self-care is paramount for competent and ethical social work practice."
NASW CODE OF ETHICS, 2021 REVISION
socialworker.com

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36

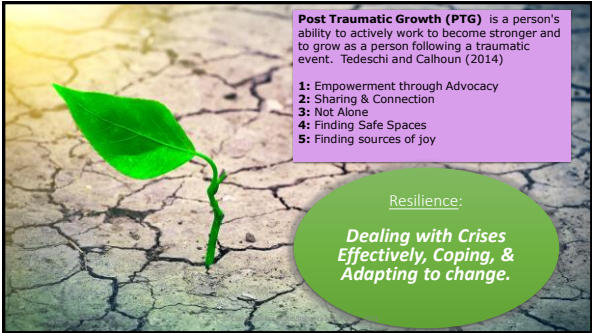
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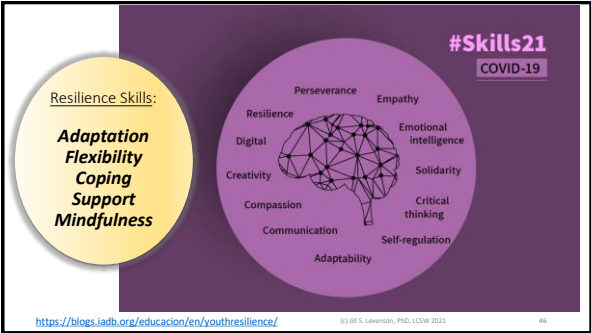
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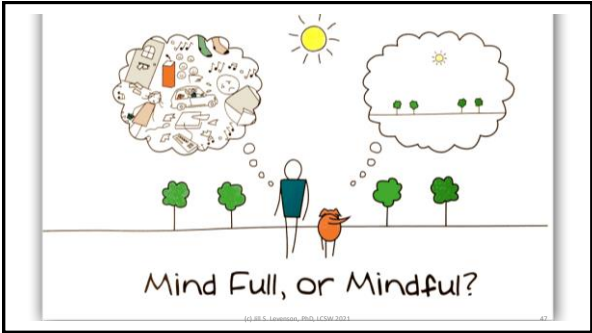
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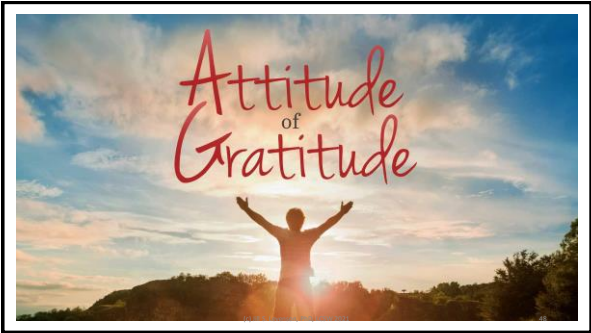
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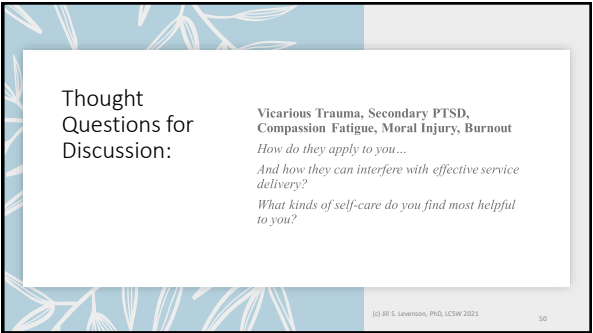
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