

**Addressing the critical role of
Workplace Stress
&
Vicarious Trauma:
3 Key Tools to Manage Compassion**

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 Compassion Fatigue Solutions  Fisher & Associates Solutions

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Specialists in Trauma-Exposed Workplaces

Providing Strength-Based Approaches to Organizational Health and Workplace Wellness

People who provide the most important services to society routinely face some of the greatest stresses. We believe that these individuals have a right to grow in their work and lead rich and meaningful lives.

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We help social workers stay healthy



We work with helping professionals such as health care workers, police officers, paramedics, mental health professionals and teachers, helping them stay healthy in challenging environments.

[Learn more >](#)

How we help
Our goal is to educate, validate and encourage supportive connections. Compassion fatigue and Vicarious trauma are normal consequences of doing a good job.

Who we help
Health care professionals, mental health workers, child protection workers, police, paramedics, firefighters, palliative care workers, teachers, union leaders, family caregivers, and other helpers in related.

Who we are
Compassion Fatigue Solutions inc. is comprised of Françoise Mathieu, a certified mental health counsellor and compassion fatigue specialist and her outstanding team of associates who deliver training across the country.



Prior Training on CF/VT and Stress in Trauma-exposed Work?

A 3D illustration of a person standing next to a flipchart, pointing at it with a pen. The flipchart is blank.

What works?

Healthy individuals
Grounded practitioners
Healthy organizations

**The high stress
&
high trauma workplace**

**What do you expect to see as
consequences?**

- For individual health?
- For interpersonal relationships?
- Impacts on the organization?
- Impacts on clients & community partners

**The Consequences of High Stress and
Trauma Exposure**

Physical Responses

Increased risk for:

- Cardiovascular disease
- Fat & sugar metabolism
- Illness & disease
- Immune & endocrine system
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Pain

The Consequences of High Stress and Trauma Exposure

Mental Health Responses

Increased risk for:

- Mood disorders (depression & anxiety)
- PTSD
- Mental function (memory, concentration & attention)
- Self esteem problems
- Substance abuse & dependency

The Consequences of High Stress and Trauma Exposure

Interpersonal & Relationship Responses

Increased risk for:

- Emotionally numbing & withdrawal
- Family conflict & breakdown
- Poor communication
- Anger & aggression
- Defensiveness
- Negative attitudes

Key features of high stress, high trauma workplaces

- Absenteeism
- Presenteeism
- High workload
- Intense client sessions
- Communication challenges
- High turnover

**Key features of high stress,
high trauma workplaces**

- Grievances or increase of grievances
- Harassment complaints
- Short tolerance
- Diminished creativity
- Tension
- Change fatigue
- Sense of persecution

**High Stress/High Trauma
Workplaces = High Conflict**

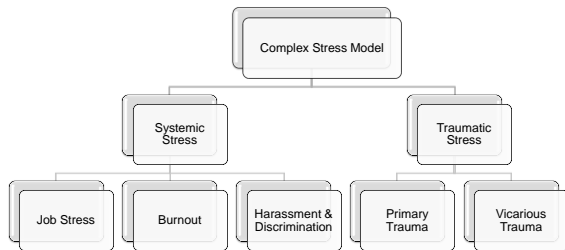
The reality of your work...

Helping Professionals:

Adding Trauma Exposure
to the mix.....

The "Complex Stress Model"

© 2007 Dr. Patricia Fisher, R.Psych.



The unique stress environment of trauma-exposed workplaces

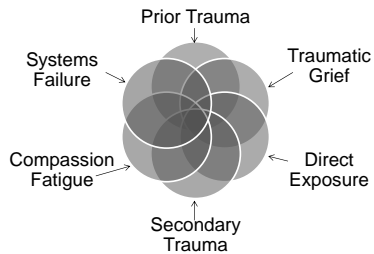


Image courtesy of Dr Leslie Ross, Children's Institute Inc. Los Angeles

Reflection/Discussion

- “Do you see yourself as working in a trauma-exposed field?”
- “Does it seem to you that stress is having an impact on your life?”
- “Do you see stress effects as playing a role in your workplace?”

Three Key Tools to Manage Compassion



Organization

Individual

Professional

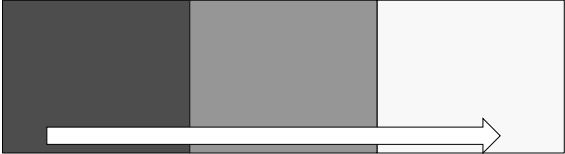
**#1
Organizational
Strategy**

Source: Saakvitne & Pearlman (1996)

Social Support



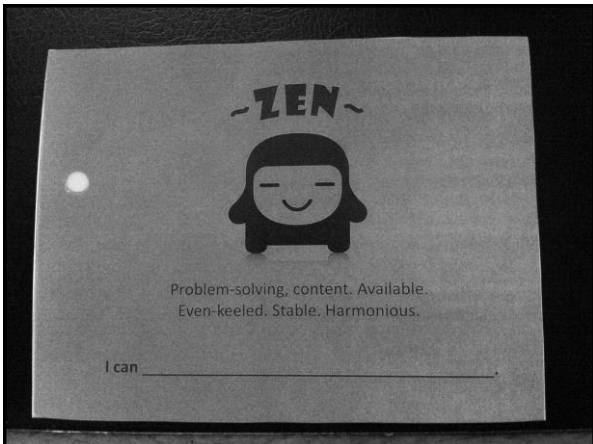
**The Warning Signs
Continuum**



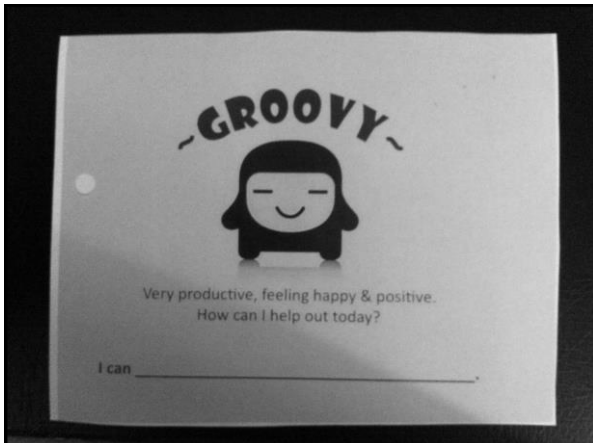
Heartland Family Services, Omaha



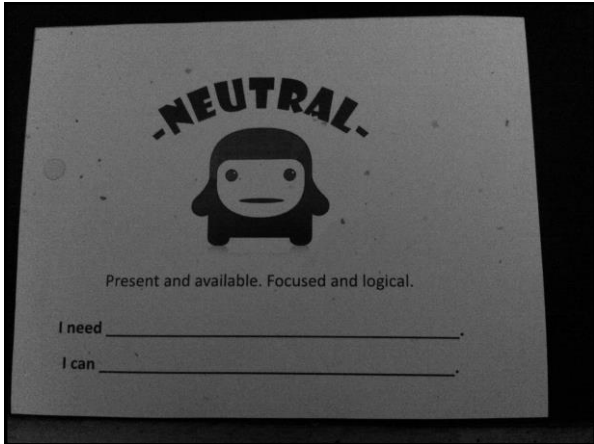


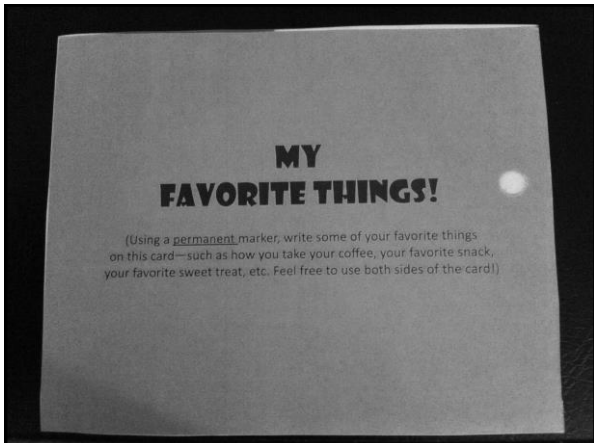


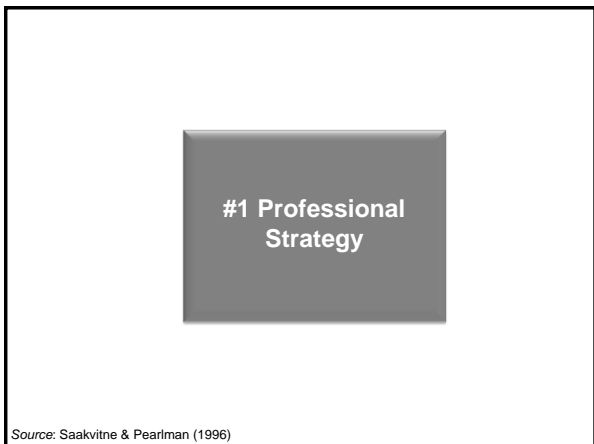












Access to timely and good quality debriefing & supervision

Linda Duxbury 2013 Report Recommendations



- Managers need proper training
- Managers need to be given enough time to grow into their role

The Most effective Strategy in reducing VT...

- Low impact debriefing (anti-sliming strategy)

Do we always need to share
all the gory details?



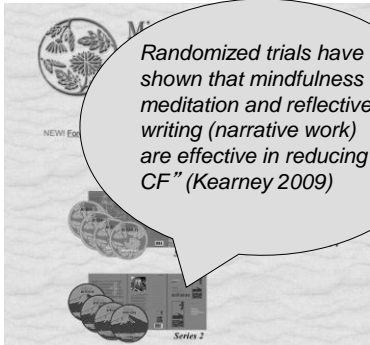
#1 Individual
Strategy

Source: Saakvitne & Pearlman (1996)

Developing **resiliency** through
relaxation training and stress
reduction techniques

Jon Kabat Zinn

“Stress Reduction in 6 parts” Video on Youtube



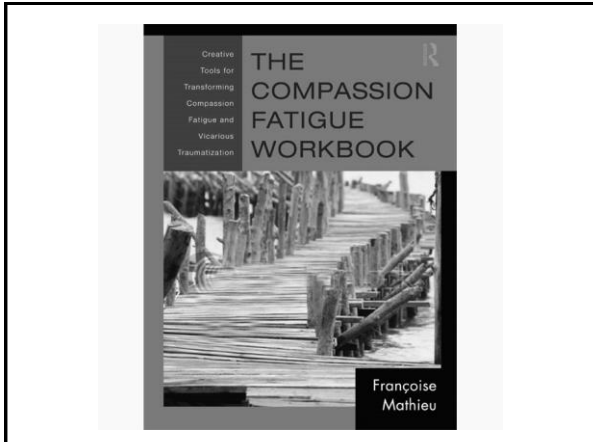
Randomized trials have shown that mindfulness meditation and reflective writing (narrative work) are effective in reducing CF” (Kearney 2009)

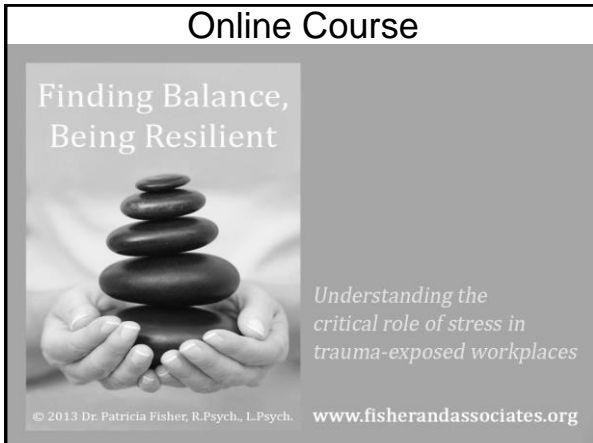
The Boring Stuff that Really works

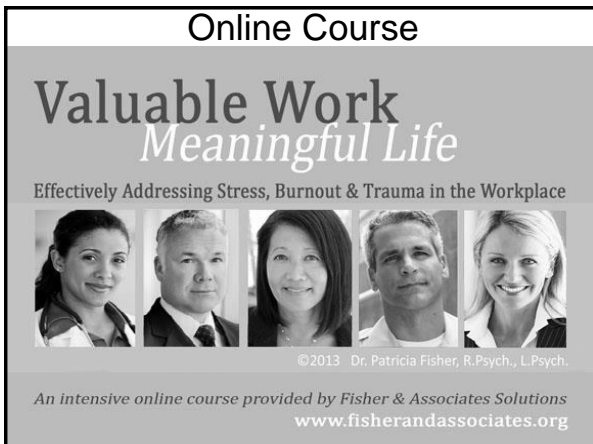
- Eating well – the 5/30 challenge
- Sleep debt test
- Exercise to manage stress

Making a Plan

- What do I need to do first?
- Further training?
- Book to read/Resource to purchase/Research?
- Partnering-support?
- Accountability
- What else?









Webinars

Walking the Walk: 6 hour CF course

Making Conflict Work: 2 hour course

Train the Trainer: 1 month course

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