

# WORK-RELATED STRESS & TRAUMA: SUPPORTING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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*The relationship between healthcare professionals and their patients/clients is often very close, and this proximity can expose healthcare staff and volunteers to the distress and trauma experienced by the individuals they help. Healthcare professionals are often providing care to individuals who have been affected by trauma, violence, abuse, death, etc. – along with a myriad of other physical and mental health issues.*

*Empathy and the desire to alleviate the pain and suffering of patients and clients can dramatically enhance the connection between patients/clients and healthcare professionals. Unfortunately, this connection can also have a serious psychological impact on health professionals with long-term consequences if left unaddressed or untreated.*

There is a great debate on the correct terminology for this type of trauma, with a range of descriptions such as vicarious trauma, secondary trauma, and compassion fatigue.

emotional impact of work-related stress and trauma.

may last months or years, with triggers that can bring back memories of the trauma accompanied by intense emotional and physical reactions. Symptoms may include nightmares or that bring back memories of the trauma, heightened reactions, trauma-focused psychotherapy and potentially medications to manage symptoms.

people's trauma. Vicarious trauma can be described as a and mental health of a healthcare professional, permeating all

to healthcare professionals, caused by the emotional toll attempt to compartmentalize and/or create distance from empathy towards patients or clients.

trauma and can be potentially addressed by shifting to a new

Traumatic countertransference is when a healthcare professional relates to a patient or client in such a way that they unconsciously connect the patient or client with

healthcare professional, the relationship should always be compassionately professional along with the appropriate and necessary boundaries, and not a relationship dynamic

and unconscious, but the chemical and biological process

- Headaches, heartburn or rashes

- Social withdrawal

and self-soothing

- Feelings of disconnection, loss of purpose, or hope, etc.

into serious concerns including mental health disorders, detachment and social isolation, emotional distress, and substance abuse.

work-related stress and trauma. Organizational wellbeing  
in reducing the impact among staff. There are a number of  
and allows time for personal care. Notably, a programmatic  
material about mental health concerns and the support